

The richness diversity brings:
Diverse languages and literacies in
early childhood education.

Christine Edith Ball

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Supervisor: Dr Christine Jenkin

Table of Contents

List of Tables	iv
List of Abbreviations	v
Attestation of Authorship	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Abstract	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Overview	1
Positioning myself as the researcher	2
Childhood and early career	2
Becoming involved in the community	3
Working with refugee and migrant adults	4
Lecturing in early childhood education.....	4
Visiting early childhood centres and meeting teachers	5
Research question	6
My introduction to te reo Māori	6
The diversity of the North Shore	7
Theoretical perspective	8
Methodology.....	9
Findings	9
Structure of this thesis	10
Conclusion.....	11
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature	12
Introduction	12
Theoretical perspective	13
Language rights.....	16
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	16
New Zealand Bill of Rights	17
The changing global context	17
Government responses to diversity	19
<i>Te Whāriki</i> : Early childhood curriculum.....	19
Biculturalism or multiculturalism?	20
Government initiatives since <i>Te Whāriki</i>	21
Bilingualism.....	23
Biliteracy	24
The benefits of bilingualism	24

Teaching strategies which promote bilingualism	25
Literacy.....	30
Assessment of dual language learners.....	32
Attitudes to home language use.....	32
Language attrition	36
Summary	38
 Chapter 3: Research Procedures	 39
Introduction	39
Methodological framework	40
Research procedures	42
Focus groups.....	43
Interviews	45
Recruitment of participants	46
Participants	48
Data collection	49
Running the focus groups.....	49
Conducting the interviews.....	51
Data management.....	52
Data analysis	52
Ethical considerations	54
Summary	56
 Chapter 4: Research Findings.....	 58
Introduction	58
Home languages supported.....	60
Role of bilingual teachers.....	62
Home language communication	65
Children	65
Parents and caregivers	66
Belonging and identity	68
Promotion of emergent literacy	71
Benefits for all children.....	73
Attitudes to home language use.....	75
Parent attitudes.....	75
Management attitudes	78
Teacher attitudes	79
Other challenges	81
Summary	84

Chapter 5: Discussion	86
Introduction	86
Promoting bilingualism	87
The role of bilingual teachers	89
Home language communication	92
Children	92
Parents and caregivers	94
Belonging and identity	95
Promotion of emergent literacy	97
Benefits for all children	99
Attitudes to home language use	100
Parent attitudes	100
Management attitudes	101
Teacher attitudes	103
Other challenges	105
Summary	106
 Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	109
Introduction	109
Research question	110
Strategies for promoting bilingualism.....	110
Research contribution.....	112
Argument of the thesis	113
Significant findings	114
Implications	115
Recommendations and further research	116
Strengths and challenges of this study	118
Concluding comments.....	120
 References	121
 Glossary.....	135
 Appendices	137
Appendix A: Focus Group Questions	137
Appendix B: Interview Questions.....	138
Appendix C: Recruitment Flyer.....	139
Appendix D: Participant information sheet.....	140
Appendix E: Consent Forms	144
Appendix F: Confidentiality Agreement.....	146

List of Tables

Table 1: Expression of ethical principles	56
Table 2: Teacher participants in this study.....	59

List of Abbreviations

AIT	Auckland Institute of Technology
AUT	Auckland University of Technology (formerly AIT)
CALD	culturally and linguistically diverse
DLL	dual language learner
ECE	early childhood education
ELL	English language learner
ELP	English Language Partners
ERO	Education Review Office
ESL	English as a second language
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages, or English as a second or other language
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
LEP	limited English proficient
LOTE	language other than English
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NSCC	North Shore City Council
NEP	non English proficient
UNCROC	<i>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>

Attestation of Authorship

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

Christine E Ball

In accordance with the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC), the final ethics approval for this research project was granted on 23 December 2010 (Ethics Approval Number 10/278).

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He aha te mea nui o te Ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata!
What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people, it is people!

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¹ The whakataukī used in this thesis have been mainly accessed from <http://www.korero.maori.nz/forlearners/proverbs.html>. The quotation in the title of this thesis comes from the whakataukī I have quoted at the beginning of Chapter 2. The Kōrero Māori website has been developed by Te Taura Whiri i te reo Māori – the Māori Language Commission – in order to raise awareness about the Māori language by increasing opportunities for people to learn and use it.

Sue, Viv and Yvonne, and especially those that I worked closely with on the Intro Cert team: Desma, Yvonne, Viv, Huhana and Nicky D. Now that I have taken early retirement, I miss you all. Arohanui.

The early childhood sector is deservedly proud of *Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mo nga mokopuna o Aotearoa*, our bicultural curriculum. I have appreciated the biculturalism of both the School of Education Te Kura Mātauranga and the early childhood sector in Aotearoa. It has been a privilege attending early childhood conferences and gatherings where tikanga Māori was observed, taking part in powhiri on the university marae, beginning and ending the day with karakia in the classroom, observing the blessing of food, reading te reo Māori in study guides and on signage, and honouring speakers and departing colleagues with waiata. I will never forget the memorial service for our colleague Nancy.

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Abstract

Both the children who attend and the teaching staff in Auckland early childhood services are increasingly linguistically diverse. The literature has established that the continuing development of the home language alongside the acquisition of English results in the most favourable educational outcomes for the child and the family.

This study investigated the teaching practice used by a group of eleven qualified early childhood teachers working in diverse mainstream English-medium centres on Auckland's North Shore. The group included both bilingual and monolingual teachers. The project aimed to discover whether the teachers were using strategies which support children's home languages and promote bilingualism and biliteracy. The research question was:

What teaching strategies are used to meet the language and learning needs of young children with diverse languages and literacies?

The theoretical perspective was sociocultural theory, which is based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological-contextual model. This model showed that children's development is best understood within the sociocultural context of the family, educational setting, community, and broader society. A qualitative methodology was used because I wanted to bring teachers together, to talk to each other, to share lived experience (Mutch, 2005), to tell me their stories.

Data collected at two focus groups and two semi-structured interviews during 2011 were coded and analysed to identify the eight emerging themes. The findings were that this group of teachers were all using a linguistically responsive pedagogy, consistent with the literature, to foster bilingualism and biliteracy. However, there were some challenges, as some parents and some other teachers they had worked with, were not convinced that the use of home languages in centres is positive for minority language children who are beginning to learn English.

As most of the research in this area has been conducted overseas, this study helps to fill a gap in the Aotearoa New Zealand literature on teaching linguistically diverse children in mainstream early childhood services.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Korerotia oku painga kia ngaro, aku mahi kore taki.

Notice what I am good at and the things I am not good at (yet) diminish.

Overview

For too long there has been a deficit approach (Adair & Tobin, 2008; Cummins 2001a; Genishi & Dyson, 2009) taken towards linguistically diverse children. The whakataukī (Māori Language Commission, n.d.) which heads this chapter reminds us to accentuate the positive. It is time to notice what linguistically diverse children are good at; to value their existing language and literacy skills, and to build on those. Much has been written internationally about a positive approach to the teaching of young children whose home language is a language other than English (Baker, 2000, 2006; Barratt-Pugh 2000a, 2000b; Beller, 2008; Bialystok, 1988, 1997, 2001; Cummins, 1979, 1999, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2009; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007; Makin, Campbell, & Jones Díaz, 1995; Nemeth, 2009; Tabors, 2008; Vukelich, Christie & Enz, 2008). Little, however, has been published on bilingualism in Aotearoa New Zealand, apart from studies of bilingual Māori/English programmes and the teaching of te reo Māori in kōhanga reo (language nests), where children are immersed in the indigenous language, Māori.

The focus of this research is on children who speak community languages, the languages brought to Aotearoa New Zealand by migrant and refugee communities. The purpose of the research was to establish local early childhood teachers' practices. I wanted to discover best practice when working with children whose first language is not English. The setting for this study was early childhood education (ECE). In Aotearoa New Zealand, five is the age at which most children leave ECE to start primary school, so the study focusses on children under five. I was interested to explore early childhood teachers' beliefs about language learning, and their attitudes to bilingualism and biliteracy.

In this thesis, I examine how a group of North Shore early childhood teachers promote bilingualism. My research also investigated parents' desires and aspirations for their children's language and literacy development. Parents were not approached or used as participants, but some parents' views were shared by the teacher participants. Some of

the bilingual teachers reflected on their experiences as parents as well as on their teaching practice. I wanted to find out whether bilingual teachers were using more than one language in their teaching, because research suggests that bilingual teaching is good practice. There is little New Zealand research (Cullen, Haworth, Simmons, Schimanski, McGarva, & Kennedy, 2009; Foster-Cohen, 2003; Harvey, 2011; May, 2005; McCaffery, 2010; McNaughton, 2002; Terrini, 2003a, 2003b) into this aspect of bilingualism (the maintenance of community languages), and I am not aware that anyone else has researched this topic on the North Shore.

Because it is important to establish a personal context for this research, I begin this chapter by explaining where I position myself as the researcher and why I chose this topic. Later in the chapter, the research question for this study is presented. It is useful in this first chapter to background the North Shore of Auckland, where this research project took place. The theoretical perspective of this thesis, sociocultural theory, is introduced in this chapter and discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. The methodology and significant findings of this study are briefly introduced. The final section of this chapter provides an overview of the other chapters that comprise this thesis.

Positioning myself as the researcher

In qualitative research, the subjectivity of the researcher is accepted as a core characteristic which influences the choice of topic, the methodologies selected, and the interpretation of data. As qualitative researchers, we are encouraged to reflect on the values we bring to our research, and how these affect the project. We cannot be neutral, as we bring our own world views, which are shaped by our personal values (Ratner, 2007). May (2001) states that “researchers should be aware of the ways in which their own biography is a fundamental part of the research process” (p. 21). Prior experiences of the researcher are important, as well as the experiences of those researched (May, 2001). I declare my position (Mutch, 2005), by sharing some of the life experiences which have contributed to my view of the world and led me to this current research.

Childhood and early career

I grew up on Auckland’s North Shore in the 1950s and 1960s when it was a rather monocultural, monolingual area. We were exposed to little cultural or linguistic diversity. There were few Māori living in our suburb, and at that time I was not aware of any marae on the North Shore. I studied at University of Auckland before there was a Department of Māori Studies, and began my career in education by training as a

secondary school teacher in 1970. My first teaching position in 1971 was at Onehunga High School in Auckland, where I taught general English, history and social studies.

Auckland was not then a diverse and multicultural city as it is now, although migrants from the Pacific Islands were living here, and more were arriving on a regular basis. Adolescent children from these families attended Onehunga High. Some of these Pasifika students had been living in New Zealand for years, and achieved well with a curriculum delivered entirely in English language. However, other Pasifika students who had arrived more recently had little English, or none at all, and did not cope with being placed in mainstream classes.

The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) specialty did not yet exist in New Zealand. At that time there were no special teachers or special classes for these students. The newly arrived Pasifika students sat at the back of the room, and most of what happened in class seemed incomprehensible to them. When they had to hand in written work, or sit a test, they could write only a few lines. Failure was inevitable. These students left school as soon as they were legally able, at age fifteen, and went into unskilled work. As a young teacher in my twenties, my heart went out to these students from the Pacific Islands, but I did not know how to help them.

Becoming involved in the community

When my first child was born, I left teaching to become a fulltime mother, as many middle-class Pākehā² women did at that time. While raising our three children, I became involved as a volunteer in adult education, through Parents' Centre, an organisation which informed and empowered parents, and La Leche League, which offered breastfeeding education and support. I found that I enjoyed teaching adults more than I had enjoyed teaching at secondary level.

Once my youngest child was at school, I began to consider how to re-enter the work force. I discovered a volunteer training course to become an ESOL Home Tutor, teaching English language to adult refugees and migrants in their homes. This was being offered through a polytechnic, Auckland Institute of Technology (AIT)³, on their North Shore campus. When I saw the volunteer training advertised, I remembered my experience with the Pasifika students in the early 1970s, and the opportunity to develop

² New Zealander of European descent

³ In 2000, AIT became a university and changed its name to Auckland University of Technology (AUT).

some skills in teaching English as a second language excited me. After completing the training, I taught English language to a young Chinese mother with two small children, and found this work rewarding. This experience and my co-ordinator's encouragement led to further study and I completed the Certificate in Language Teaching to Adults, taught at AIT's city campus.

Working with refugee and migrant adults

In 1992, I was appointed to a part-time position as co-ordinator of the volunteer English language teaching programme at AIT, ESOL Home Tutors North Shore. For the next fourteen years I worked in this role, visiting adult migrants and refugees in their homes and assessing their language needs, training hundreds of volunteer tutors, and establishing community classes for adults. The organisation and its staff grew exponentially as the North Shore's migrant population increased. I continued to study part-time, completing a Diploma in English Language Teaching at the University of Auckland in 1997. My hours increased and I became manager of the North Shore branch. I loved working with migrant and refugee families, and learning about their diverse cultures. I became aware of some of the language issues these families were facing. One of these was maintaining the home language in their children. Sometimes parents would share with me their sadness that their children had 'moved to English', and were no longer interested in using the home language.

Lecturing in early childhood education

In 2005, my years with ESOL Home Tutors⁴ ended. I remained with AUT, and took up a lecturing role in the School of Education Te Kura Mātauranga, teaching on a pre-degree introductory course in early childhood education. Many of my students had home languages other than English. Some were mature students who had made the move to New Zealand as adults, and had children in the education system here. Others were young people, often school leavers, who had come to New Zealand with their families as young children. Some of these students still struggled with English literacy, and even with the spoken language.

New Zealand universities use International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examination results as criteria for ESOL students' entry to university, unless they have received their secondary education in New Zealand, when instead, entry criteria is based on National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) results from school.

⁴ The organisation has since changed its name to English Language Partners.

Some ESOL students, however, are unable to achieve the NCEA entry level, so cannot enrol in degree study. The pre-degree course I taught on had open entry, which offered another chance to these students. I would ask students who were struggling with English language how long they had lived in New Zealand, and was often surprised to hear that they had been in our education system since primary school. I realised that we were not meeting the language needs of many young people. I believed that it should be possible for them to grow up bilingual in New Zealand, and have the required fluency and standard of literacy in English to be successful in their chosen careers.

Visiting early childhood centres and meeting teachers

My work included visiting early childhood centres on the North Shore, where I still live, as an evaluative lecturer for AUT early childhood education student teachers on teaching practicum. Because of my background, it was the children and student teachers who had a home language other than English who particularly interested me. I would enquire if student teachers had been able to communicate with children who shared their home language. The responses to this question suggested that there was a range of views among teachers about the use of home languages in their centres. I began to read the literature on bilingualism and teaching culturally and linguistically diverse children in early childhood education. When I enrolled in the Master of Education programme in 2006, it was not difficult to choose my research topic.

The city of Auckland and the part of it where I live, the North Shore, had become more culturally and linguistically diverse. This was reflected in the diversity of the students at every level of the education system. I knew that my research would be about people. Specifically it would be about early childhood teachers, the diverse children they teach and their diverse families. It would also be about their interactions with each other; and their perceptions of each other. Further, it would be about the teachers' beliefs about language learning and how these impacted on their professional practice. What I wanted to discover could not have been found out through a quantitative approach. I needed to hear teachers' stories about their practice, about their partnerships with parents and families, about children's learning. I wanted to explore teachers' beliefs about and attitudes to English language learning and home language retention, and what they could tell me about parents' beliefs and attitudes, and their management's beliefs and attitudes about and to these matters.

Research question

This study aimed to discover what a group of North Shore early childhood teachers believed about teaching culturally and linguistically diverse children, and how their beliefs and understandings were reflected in their practice. The participants included both monolingual and bilingual teachers. I wanted to know whether the bilingual teachers were using both their languages in their teaching, and if so, how they were using them. I was also interested in how the monolingual teachers viewed the use of home languages in the centre, and whether they used any teaching strategies that promoted bilingualism. The research question was:

What teaching strategies are used to meet the language and learning needs of young children with diverse languages and literacies?

My introduction to te reo Māori

I begin each chapter of this thesis with a whakataukī (Māori Language Commission, n.d.) which is linked to the topic of the chapter, because I value these proverbs for the wisdom they impart, using imagery from our Aotearoa environment. I choose to call myself Pākehā, rather than European New Zealander, because my family have lived in Aotearoa for generations. Yet my first opportunity to learn te reo Māori was not until I was in my forties. Diploma in English Language Teaching students were required to experience being a language learner. I chose to learn te reo Māori, and fell in love with the language. Te reo Māori is rooted in Aotearoa. No other language has that special connection to our land, our whenua. Every part of this country has a te reo Māori name, as do our birds, trees and plants. Many te reo Māori words have become part of New Zealand English.

There have been two languages used here since the 18th century. More recently, many other languages have been brought here, as families from many cultures choose to make Aotearoa their home. This thesis has language maintenance as one of its themes. Te reo Māori is a vulnerable language. It is important that it is kept alive. We can celebrate that young children of many cultures and languages are learning te reo Māori in early childhood, because their teachers are making the commitment to incorporate te reo Māori me ōno tikanga Māori in their teaching (Jenkin, 2010).

However, now we need to acknowledge and value all the home languages that children bring to early childhood, and ensure that children grow up bilingual, rather than

allowing English to replace their mother tongue. Tragically, this has already happened for many Māori children. By the 1980s, te reo Māori was no longer the home language for most Māori families. Most parents had not learned te reo Māori themselves, so could not pass it on to their children as their mother tongue. It was the realisation that te reo Māori was in danger of becoming an extinct language that led to the birth of Te Kōhanga Reo movement, and other initiatives for revitalisation of te reo Māori (Research New Zealand, 2007). Nevertheless, it is unlikely that any children will arrive at English-medium early childhood centres with te reo Māori as their home, or first, language. Māori families committed to making te reo Māori their family's language send their children to kōhanga reo. At mainstream centres, te reo Māori is taught as a second or other language, and for that reason, is not included in this thesis. We in Aotearoa must learn from our history, and not repeat the mistakes of the past. One child, two languages (Tabors, 2008), or three, or more.

Ko taku reo taku ohoho, ko taku reo taku mapihi mauria.
My language is my awakening, my language is the window to my soul.

The diversity of the North Shore

Auckland's North Shore (Te Raki Pae Whenua) is home to 5% of Aotearoa New Zealand's population (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a⁵). The area is so named because it lies to the north of the Waitemata Harbour, and is accessed from the central city by the Auckland Harbour Bridge. The North Shore was formerly a city in its own right, but has now been absorbed into the Auckland 'Super' City. The area is perceived by many as being wealthy and middle-class, perhaps because of its beautiful coastline and beaches. But in fact, it is diverse both in socio-economic terms and in its ethnic diversity.

Many early childhood centres on the North Shore are culturally and linguistically diverse, reflecting changes in the local population, which has become increasingly diverse over the last 20 years (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a). In 1996, there were 24,000 North Shore residents who spoke a language other than English, Māori, or New Zealand sign language, the three official languages of New Zealand. By 2001, this number had increased to 35,000 and by 2006 to 50,000 (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a).

⁵ This is the most recent census, as the 2011 Census was cancelled due to the major earthquake in Christchurch in February 2011.

Much of the rapid population growth (11%) between 2001 and 2006 was brought about by immigration (North Shore City Council [NSCC], 2008a).

The most recent census showed that 25% of the North Shore's people spoke two or more languages (Statistics New Zealand, 2006b). After English, the next most common language spoken was Korean, used by 4.1% of the community (Statistics New Zealand, 2006b). Koreans were actually outnumbered by ethnic Chinese who made up 7.8% (NSCC, 2008a), but their first languages were divided between Mandarin, Cantonese and other Chinese languages (NSCC, 2008b). Indian ethnicity was 2.4%, Filipino 1.3% and other Asian ethnicities (including Japanese, Indonesian, Sri Lankan and Thai) made up 2.9% (NSCC, 2008a), making a total of 18.6% of the North Shore's population of Asian ethnicity (NSCC, 2008b). Ethnicities present in smaller numbers were Samoan 1.4%, Middle Eastern (including Iranians, Iraqis and Egyptians, who would be speakers of Farsi or Arabic) 1.3%, Tongan 0.9%, other Pasifika 1.2% (NSCC, 2008a).

Migrants from East Europe, who are classified as Other European ethnicity, have brought their home languages to the North Shore: Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian, Serbian, Croatian, and Macedonian (English Language Partners [ELP] North Shore, 2012). One of the largest migrant groups is from South Africa, and a large proportion of these families have Afrikaans as their home language (NSCC, 2008b). Small numbers of South American migrants speak Spanish or Portuguese (ELP North Shore, 2012). There are also small refugee communities who speak Kurdish (Kurds from Iraq), Pashtu (Afghanis), Khmer (Cambodians), Karen (Burmese), and some African languages (ELP North Shore, 2012). In 2012, English Language Partners North Shore reported that they were working with adult English language learners who spoke 56 different home languages (Penman, 2012). Many of these families would have children attending early childhood education centres and kindergartens.

Theoretical perspective

Because of the diversity of languages and cultures in early childhood centres on the North Shore, this thesis is underpinned by sociocultural theory, which was first described by the Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1978). According to his theory of child development, children learn through social relationships embedded in their culture. Their relationships from birth, or perhaps even before birth, shape their experiences and their learning (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). In other words, their knowledge is culturally mediated (Vygotsky, 1978).

Humans are social beings who first develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through their home language (Brooker & Woodhead, 2010). The inter-relationship of language development and thought was explained by Vygotsky (1962), as being the connection between language and the development of mental concepts and cognitive awareness. Sociocultural theory does not replace the earlier theory of internally driven development, but sees the internal, or psychological, always linked in complex ways to the social and cultural influences of the child's home environment (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). Sociocultural theory and its influence on *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education [MOE], 1996)⁶, the early childhood curriculum, will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Methodology

Eleven early childhood teachers from nine different centres were recruited as the participants, using convenience sampling and snowballing techniques (Mutch, 2005). Seven of the teachers were bilingual, and four were monolingual English speakers. Nine of the participants attended one of two focus groups, held three weeks apart in April and May 2011. Two participants were interviewed in October 2011, using a semi-structured interview guide. Audio transcripts were then analysed for recurring themes.

Findings

This study found that this group of teachers were promoting bilingualism by acknowledging and using children's home languages in their centres. The bilingual teachers had an important role, and were using their home languages in their teaching. Children were communicating with each other in their home languages, and home languages were used to communicate with parents and caregivers. Children's sense of identity and belonging, and their emergent literacy, were being promoted through the use of home languages. All children, and not just those who had a home language other than English, were benefitting from the diverse language and literacy environment in the centres that these teachers represented.

The participants reported, however, that in some other centres they had experienced, the attitudes of management and some teachers were less positive towards the use of home languages in centres. Some managers and teachers believed that a policy of 'English

⁶ Because *Te Whāriki* is referred to so frequently in this thesis, this citation will now only be used for direct quotes from the document.

language only' was in the best interests of children whose home language was not English.

There was evidence that there was a range of views among parents about the use of their children's home language in their centre. Some were happy that their children had this support, and encouragement to retain their home language. Others, however, preferred to keep use of the home language to the home, and would have liked teachers to focus on teaching their child English. There was some indication that parent views may be changing as our society places increasing value on bilingualism.

Finally, the participants agreed that home language use in early childhood centres does present some challenges, such as balancing the use of home languages with modelling English, monitoring children's social competence, and a perceived need for interpretation of conversations with parents. These were, however, definitely outweighed by the benefits, not only for children who were emergent bilinguals (García, 2009; García, Kleifgen & Falchi, 2008), but for all the children.

Structure of this thesis

This thesis is made up of six chapters. This chapter has provided an overview of the research project. I have positioned myself as the researcher, describing the life journey that has led me to explore this particular topic. The cultural and linguistic diversity of Auckland's North Shore has been discussed. The research question has been presented and the theoretical perspective which underpins this thesis, sociocultural theory, has been introduced. Brief summaries of the methodology and the findings have been presented. The structure of this thesis has been set out in this section.

In the next chapter, I will review in depth both the international and the local literature on teaching young children who have home languages other than English. In Chapter 3, the design and execution of this study will be discussed, and ethical considerations will be addressed. Chapter 4 will reveal the findings from this study. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the findings in the light of the international and local literature on diverse languages and literacies in early childhood education. Finally, the concluding chapter will consider the implications of this study and make recommendations for action and for further research.

Conclusion

As our society becomes increasingly diverse, it is essential that Aotearoa New Zealand's early childhood teaching practice is firmly based on the large body of international research in this vital area. A deficit approach (Adair & Tobin, 2008; Cummins 2001a; Genishi & Dyson, 2009), which sees children from language minorities as a problem to be solved, is no longer acceptable. Young children with minority home languages need to be regarded by their teachers as dual language learners (Nemeth, 2009) and emergent bilinguals (García, 2009; García et al., 2008; Genishi & Dyson, 2009). The use of one's home language is a human right (United Nations [UN], 1989). We must build on these children's potential to be bilingual adults who will enrich and serve their communities.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

E koe koe te tui, e ketekete te kaka, e kuku te kereru.

*The tui sings, the kaka chatters and the kereru coos:
This is a reflection of the richness diversity brings.*

Introduction

This whakataukī celebrates diversity, using the imagery of the different calls of native birds of Aotearoa. Who would want all our birds to sing the same song? The diversity of children's home languages enriches early childhood education, just as the diversity of birdsong enriches the forest.

This research project studied a group of early childhood teachers on Auckland's North Shore, to discover teaching strategies they used to meet the language and learning needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) children. In order to establish a context for this study, the review of the literature considers first the rapid diversification of early childhood education (ECE), globally and in Aotearoa New Zealand. The existing knowledge on the best teaching strategies to use with CALD children who attend English medium ECE settings in an English-dominant society is identified via a sweep of the large body of international literature which responds to linguistic diversity in ECE, and the smaller amount of literature which is New Zealand-based. The methodology used and the methods of data collection are discussed in Chapter 3.

Because of the vast amount of literature, especially internationally, this study is limited to linguistic diversity and, therefore, excludes cultural diversity, cultural practices and the anti-bias curriculum. Neither does it include the language immersion models of early childhood education which have evolved in Aotearoa New Zealand: kōhanga reo, which have the goal of revitalisation of te reo Māori, and Pasifika language nests, which aim to give children a strong foundation in their home language. These models have their own body of literature, and are areas of study in their own right. Instead, this study focusses on how teachers address language diversity in mainstream ECE settings in New Zealand.

It is, however, difficult, or even impossible, to divorce language from culture because the literature establishes the close links between language and preservation of culture and identity (Barratt-Pugh, 2000a; Cummins, 2001b; Kaur, 2010). Nevertheless, the

focus of this literature review is language, in particular children's home languages, because, as Cummins (2000, 2001a), Gonzalez-Mena (2006, 2011), and Jones Díaz and Harvey (2007) warn, the minority languages spoken by young children are vulnerable in an English-dominant education system. Without bilingual support, it is difficult for young children to add English without losing their "precious home language" (Kaur, 2010, p. 47).

Education which replaces the home language with English is now regarded as subtractive (Baker, 2006; Cummins, 2000; Gonzalez-Mena, 2011; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007; Makin, 2003; Tabors, 2008). Internationally, an additive model of education is advised (Adair & Tobin, 2008; Baker, 2006; Cullen et al., 2009; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2009a; Tabors, 2008; Vukelich et al., 2008). In an additive bilingualism model, young children learn English while continuing to be supported in the development of their home language. They have the opportunity to become bilingual and biliterate (literate in both languages).

In acknowledgment of the additive bilingualism model, the terms used to describe children learning another language in addition to their home language have changed. Nemeth (2009) uses the term dual language learner (DLL) in preference to English language learner (ELL), as it acknowledges the "linguistic strengths" (Espinosa, 2009, p. 9) that minority language children bring to the centre, and the fact that their home language will be supported and will continue to develop, alongside the new language. (For the remainder of this thesis, the new language will be assumed to be English, as this study took place in an English-dominant context.) Older terms, like ESL, ESOL, LOTE, NEP, LEP and now ELL (see List of Abbreviations) are falling out of favour, because a child who is learning English should not be seen in deficit terms, but as an emergent bilingual (Baker, 2000, 2006; Cummins, 2001a, 2001b; Drury, 2007; García, 2009; García et al., 2008; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Nemeth, 2009).

Theoretical perspective

This thesis is underpinned by sociocultural theory, a theory of child development based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological-contextual model, which showed that children's development is best understood within the sociocultural context of the family,

educational setting, community, and broader society. Children are born into families which are situated in a culture, and from birth are surrounded by the language of their culture, which they learn as their mother tongue or home language. Their family's culture and language are the source of the child's identity, sense of belonging and self-esteem (Gonzalez, 2009; Gonzalez-Mena, 2006, 2011).

In the 1980s the work of the Russian educator Vygotsky (1962, 1978) was rediscovered in the West. His sociocultural theory has had a major impact on language and literacy teaching (Spodek & Saracho, 1993). Vygotsky (1978) saw language and literacy as cultural tools, acquired within the family and the culture. Bruner and Haste (1987) and Rogoff (2003) extended the theory, developing the concepts of scaffolding and co-construction. In scaffolding, learners are supported to achieve teacher-established goals (Cullen et al., 2009), whereas co-constructed learning places teachers and learners on an equal footing, where the "meanings and practices of all cultures" (Cullen et al., 2009, p. 5) are valued. The child's knowledge is, therefore, as valid as the teacher's knowledge.

A sociocultural curriculum "acknowledges the individual child and the knowledge, skills and attitudes that child brings to their learning and development. It acknowledges that learning begins at home, and the early childhood services and the wider community provide further opportunities for learning" (Education Review Office [ERO], 2011, p. 53). Because culture and language are critical components of children's development, and learning is socially mediated (Cullen et al., 2009), teacher practices cannot be developmentally appropriate unless they are responsive to cultural and linguistic diversity (Gonzalez, 2009; Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000).

Early childhood centres should be communities of learners (Bruner, 1996; Cullen et al., 2009; MOE, 2005a; Rogoff, 2003) in which each child is valued, and teachers have high expectations of all children (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009a). If teachers have lower expectations of them based on their culture and language, children cannot develop and learn to their full potential (Barratt-Pugh, 2000a; Comber & Reid, 2007; Department for Education and Skills, 2003; Han, 2012).

Language is a sociocultural tool (Cullen et al., 2009; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978), learned through children's closest relationships. It is through the home language that children's knowledge and understanding begin to grow (Brooker & Woodhead, 2010; Gonzalez, 2009). Literacy is a sociocultural practice (ERO, 2011) and includes "not

only reading and writing, but also listening, talking, viewing, drawing and critiquing” (ERO, 2011, p. 8). Literacy can even more broadly include music, movement, dance, visual arts, media and drama (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009a). Children starting ECE already have a wide range of literacy skills (Barratt-Pugh, Rivalland, Hamer, & Adams, 2006; ERO, 2011). To build on these, teachers must get to know the children and their families, to understand their social and cultural context (Gonzalez, 2009; Hedges, Cullen & Jordan, 2011).

Current thinking on bilingualism takes a sociocultural perspective (Gonzalez, 2009). An additive approach (Gonzalez-Mena 2006, 2011; Tabors, 2008), where the second language is learned alongside the home language, respects the child’s sociocultural context within a community of learners where differences are “legitimated” (Cullen et al., 2009, p. 4). In fact, second language acquisition theory, as applied to young children, has been challenged over the last fifteen years. A number of researchers (Baker, 2011; Cummins, 2009; García, 2009; May, 2011) advocate the now well-established bilingual theoretical position, which sees two languages being learned simultaneously, from the beginning of the child’s language acquisition. When young children are exposed to multiple literacies, and literacy develops simultaneously in more than one language, bilingual theory refers to this as biliteracy. A sociocultural pedagogy involves participation in cultural practices, shared learning activities and a holistic approach to literacy learning (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009a; Cullen et al., 2009; Gonzalez, 2009; MOE, 1996).

A sociocultural perspective is transformational for teachers’ practices. Children’s languages and cultures are accepted and valued as a crucial part of the child’s sense of self, and the source of the child’s self-esteem and self-confidence. Furthermore, the child’s home language is recognised as the vehicle for their learning, and the foundation for the learning of other languages and for the development of literacy. The curriculum reflects the languages and cultures of the children attending the service, so that they can learn holistically, building on what they already know. Every child is equally valued and high expectations are held for all of them. Because the child is seen as a member of a family and a community, where a major part of their learning occurs, teachers work in close partnership with parents.

In Aotearoa New Zealand the equal partnership with parents is recognised in the following whakataukī, which acknowledges the contributions of family/whānau and teachers respectively to a child's learning:

Nāu i whatu te kākahu, he tāniko taku.
*You weave the cloak, and we add the border.*⁷

Language rights

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, 2008), Cummins (2000, 2001a, 2009) and Ball (2010) have written comprehensively on children's language rights in education and resisting the subtractive global spread of English. Raised bilingual from birth in officially bilingual Finland, now semi-retired in Denmark, Skutnabb-Kangas has worked for the linguistic human rights of minorities for five decades. She uses the term linguicism, defining it as linguistically argued racism, and advocates for biocultural diversity, a concept linking linguistic and cultural diversity with biodiversity in the environment – both precious heritages to be cherished, protected and nurtured (Skutnabb-Kangas, Maffi, & Harmon, 2003). Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins (1988) and Ball (2010) all argue for children's right to learn in their home language, and for multilingual policies in education. Skutnabb-Kangas, and more recently Ball (2010), have worked with United Nations and UNESCO on matters relating to indigenous and minority languages.

The two documents most relevant to this thesis are the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* [UNCROC] (UN, 1989) and the *New Zealand Bill of Rights* (New Zealand Government, 1990).

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

New Zealand is one of 195 countries which have made an international commitment by signing UNCROC (UN, 1989). This was not merely a gesture: our government must ensure that children's rights are upheld, and compliance is monitored and reported on by the United Nations (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], n.d.).

⁷ This whakataukī is from the website of the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI), a division of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER).

On home languages, UNCROC (UN, 1989) is clear:

The education of the child shall be directed to...the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values (UN, 1989, Article 29c).

In those States in which...linguistic minorities...exist, a child belonging to such a minority...shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture...or to use his or her own language (UN, 1989, Article 30).

The monitoring committee has since issued a statement (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2005) in support of early childhood educators working in close partnership with parents, reflecting research on funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). When early childhood teachers support the continuing development of the home language, they are complementing the parents' role, and helping to ensure that children reach their fullest potential (Brooker & Woodhead, 2010).

New Zealand Bill of Rights

New Zealand also has its own legislation protecting language rights. Section 20, Bill of Rights Act states: "Rights of minorities: A person who belongs to a...linguistic minority in New Zealand shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of that minority, to...use the language of that minority (New Zealand Government, 1990). Breaches of the Bill of Rights are investigated by the Human Rights Commission, which also undertakes annual reviews of language policy and practice and has identified as a priority the development and implementation of a national languages policy (Human Rights Commission, 2011).

The changing global context

Globalisation and the growing mobility of people are contributing to increased cultural and linguistic diversity in most Western countries. This is having a significant impact on the numbers and diversity of minority language children in education systems (August & Shanahan, 2006; Cummins, 2001a; Department for Education and Skills, 2003; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007; Tabors, 2008; Terrini 2003b). In the USA, UK and Australia, the fact that large numbers of children speak a language other than English at home has forced their governments to respond (Barratt-Pugh et al., 2006; Department for Education and Skills, 2007; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007; Tabors, 2008).

Recognising that literacy in English is essential to academic achievement in every subject at school, and to later educational and economic opportunities, the USA and UK governments have funded major reports on educating CALD students (August & Shanahan, 2006; Department for Education and Skills, 2003). These were compiled by panels of experts, who extensively reviewed the international literature on becoming literate when the home language is not English. Both reports concluded that oral language proficiency and literacy in the first language facilitated literacy in English. They recommended maintaining English learners' home languages while they learned spoken and written English.

Since 1989, the Australian government has promoted bilingualism via a policy of maintaining and developing children's home languages alongside the acquisition of English, stated in *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia: Sharing our Future* (Commonwealth of Australia, 1989). Early Childhood Australia (2005, cited in Barratt-Pugh et al., 2006⁸) established principles which included educators respecting the child's home language and culture and using them to build and extend children's language and literacy. These principles are incorporated in *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009a), the first national Australian early childhood curriculum.

The *Early Years Learning Framework* (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009a) has a strongly sociocultural perspective: "Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood and a wider community" (p. 7). It reflects the research evidence which has demonstrated the importance of children's home languages being acknowledged and encouraged. Its outcomes have the perspective of language as a sociocultural tool (Cullen et al., 2009; Rogoff, 2003), and the principle that "children learn about themselves and construct their own identity within the context of their families and communities" (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009a, p. 20).

Fleer (2003) admired *Te Whāriki* for its depth of applied sociocultural theory and felt that it reflected a "much-needed paradigm shift in early childhood education" (Fleer, 2003, p. 262). While the influence of *Te Whāriki* on *Early Years Learning Framework*

⁸ I have been unable to locate the original source.

(Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009a) is acknowledged, Australia now has a curriculum which goes even further in its sociocultural perspective.

New Zealand and Australia are now among the most culturally and linguistically diverse nations in the world (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007). In New Zealand, immigration (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a & 2006b) and the refugee resettlement policy (Verbitsky, 2006) have resulted in an increasingly diverse population, as discussed in Chapter 1. This trend has been particularly noticeable since the 1980s, when government policy changed to allow immigration from more non-English speaking countries (Spoonley, Peace, Butcher & O'Neill, 2005). Many children growing up in New Zealand learn a home language before being introduced to English at their centre or kindergarten (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007). As Meade (Teaching and Learning Research Initiative [TLRI], 2008) observes, “we’re heading towards the situation where children who come from European New Zealand backgrounds will be in the minority” (p. 2).

Government responses to diversity

The New Zealand government’s response to increasing linguistic diversity in early childhood is now assessed through a scrutiny of the early childhood curriculum and its associated documents, and strategic plans published by successive governments since 2002.

Te Whāriki: Early childhood curriculum

Te Whāriki was developed from a sociocultural theoretical perspective (Cullen et al., 2009; ERO, 2011; Jenkin, 2010). Our early childhood curriculum has been admired internationally (Brooker & Woodhead, 2010; Fler, 2003) for the way it draws on knowledge about children and their development, while building on the values of families and communities and supporting “children’s transition from home to schooled knowledge” (Brooker & Woodhead, 2010, p. 35).

Sociocultural theory underlies this statement in *Te Whāriki*:

The early childhood curriculum supports the cultural identity of all children, affirms and celebrates cultural differences, and aims to help children gain a positive awareness of their own and other cultures...each early childhood service should ensure that programmes and resources are

sensitive and responsive to the different cultures and heritages among the families of the children attending that service (MOE, 1996, p. 18).

Linguistic diversity and emergent literacy theory are acknowledged in the strand on Communication: “the environment should be rich in signs, symbols, words, numbers, song, dance, drama and art that take account of and extend the children’s different understandings and cultures” (MOE, 1996, p. 73).

Some guidelines on bilingualism are given in the Communication strand of *Te Whāriki*: “Adults should respect and encourage children’s home language. Policies should be in place to support children for whom English is not the home language and to support those who do not have verbal skills” (MOE, 1996, p. 73); “Children develop ...confidence that their first language is valued” (p. 76), “...familiarity with an appropriate selection of the stories and literature...art, craft, songs and music valued by the cultures in their community” (pp. 78-80), “and...some awareness of other community languages” (p. 73).

Although we are fortunate in New Zealand to have a curriculum which is philosophical, rather than prescriptive (Fleer, 2003), there is critique about whether *Te Whāriki* goes far enough in promoting bilingualism (Fleer, 2003; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007; McLachlan & Arrow, 2011). Despite the statements that all community languages are acknowledged and built on, Terrini (2003b) identified a lack of resources, skilled personnel and specialist advisory services to support educators. New Zealand, unlike Australia, does not have a language policy (Human Rights Commission, n.d.; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007). There is a lack of policy and minimal information on bilingualism and biliteracy in community languages in early childhood (Harvey, 2011; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007; McLachlan & Arrow, 2011). Jones Díaz and Harvey (2007) interpreted this as little value being placed on “less privileged literacies” (p. 211). This thesis will be an important contribution to the New Zealand literature on teacher strategies for working with linguistically diverse young children.

Biculturalism or multiculturalism?

Te Whāriki has “brought together two world views which sit alongside each other” (Fleer, 2003, p. 250), those of Pākehā and Māori. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the terms bicultural and bilingual primarily refer to the dominant Pākehā or introduced culture and English language, alongside tikanga Māori me ōno te reo Māori, the indigenous culture and language. The British Government and Māori became partners with the signing of

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) in 1840. This partnership is recognised in New Zealand law and in the education system.

Although *Te Whāriki* acknowledges other cultures and community languages, their voices are not heard as strongly as Pākehā and Māori voices. There is no detail on how teachers should “respect and encourage” (MOE, 1996, p. 73) home languages, or help the child “feel confident that their first language is valued” (MOE, 1996, p. 76), or what policies should be in place to “support children for whom English is not the home language” (MOE, 1996, p. 73). Finally, *Te Whāriki* does not specifically state that print in the children’s home languages should be part of the centre’s environment. Consequently, many centres are still not doing any of these things to support home languages and promote bilingualism (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007; Kaur, 2010; McLachlan & Arrow, 2011).

Many teachers have found the multilingual aspects of *Te Whāriki* difficult to implement, as they have with the bicultural curriculum (Jenkin, 2010). Carr and Rameka (2010) described *Te Whāriki* as having “authentically ‘multicultural’ dimensions” (p. 40), but Fler (2003) felt that two cultures and world views dominated it, and that “the next step is to develop a multicultural curriculum, thus giving more voice to...other groups living in Aotearoa New Zealand” (p. 251).

Government initiatives since *Te Whāriki*

Te Whāriki has not been revised since 1996. Government initiatives since then have reflected the priorities of the government in power. *Pathways to the Future: Nga Huarahi Aratiki. A Ten Year Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education* (MOE, 2002) aimed to “increase the participation of Māori and Pacific Island children” (p. 3). But there was no mention of the retention of home languages or bilingualism (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007). Terrini (2003b) saw this as “a lack of real commitment to a broader notion of multiculturalism” (para. 35). She felt that children and families from minority cultures other than Māori and Pasifika were still being regarded as “other” (para. 35), that their voices were not being heard, and their needs were not being addressed.

Kei Tua o Te Pae, Assessment for Learning: Early Childhood Exemplars (MOE, 2005a, 2005b), however, brought a new focus on sociocultural assessment (Carr, 2001), acknowledging “multiple cultural lenses on assessment and learning” (MOE, 2005a, p. 4). The exemplars demonstrated how bilingual educators could support biliteracy by

making links with home literacy practices, emphasising that assessment affects children's view of themselves as learners and "plays a key role in identity formation" (MOE, 2005a, p. 2). Teachers were encouraged to ensure that assessments included contributions from home and reflected the diversity of the learning community (MOE, 2005b).

But with a change of government, another strategic plan, *Statement of Intent* (MOE, 2009a), signalled renewed emphasis on targeting resources to increasing participation of Māori and Pasifika children in early childhood. Again, the retention of other community languages was ignored, despite the growing diversity of the population (McLachlan & Arrow, 2011). *Literacy Learning Progressions* (MOE, 2010), for the professional guidance of primary teachers, did acknowledge literacy as a sociocultural practice, and noted that English language learners have diverse needs, but again there was no mention of bilingualism or biliteracy (McLachlan & Arrow, 2011).

In 2011, the Education Review Office took a leadership role, providing guidance on bilingualism and biliteracy in its report *Literacy in Early Childhood Services: Teaching and Learning* (ERO, 2011). Based on the reviews of 353 services, this report highlighted sociocultural theory and the need to support children's home languages:

emergent or early literacy is very much a social practice that develops in social contexts rather than through formal instruction. Early childhood educators therefore need to consider and incorporate home and community literacy practices into their teaching and learning programme (ERO, 2011, p. 4).

The report cited May (2005) that children who are fluent in their first language are more likely to be fluent in English. ERO (2011) raised the issue of parent attitudes and aspirations for their children: "in some services, educators believed that because parents wanted their children to learn English, they should provide little opportunity for children to speak their first language" (p. 28), and rejected this stance. They commended centres which informed parents about best early literacy practice and who encouraged parents to share home literacy practices at the centre (ERO, 2011, p. 28).

Educators at the services reviewed had proficiency in almost 60 languages other than English and te reo Māori, and their languages often reflected the home languages of the children enrolled (ERO, 2011). Yet few services mentioned encouraging first language

development, when asked about strategies used for teaching literacy (ERO, 2011). Many teachers believed that language maintenance should happen at home (ERO, 2011). ERO commended bilingual educators who used home languages in their teaching and in conversations. This report on literacy learning and teaching echoed international research: “when home literacy practices greatly differ from primary school practices, children can experience difficulties...effective literacy practices in early childhood services can help build a bridge between early literacy practices in the home and literacy practices at school” (ERO, 2011, p. 4).

Bilingualism

Makin et al. (1995) defined bilingualism as a person’s ability to move easily from one language to another, and to be fluent in both. Tabors and Snow (2001) used it more broadly to mean “individuals who have been exposed to at least two languages, no matter what their level of proficiency in the languages” (p. 176). Governments use the term to describe students who are functioning, or living and learning, in more than one language (Department for Education and Skills, 2005; Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2005), without implying full fluency in all languages.

Bilingual theory explains that young children who learn a second language simultaneously with their first, or under the age of three, can achieve native levels of proficiency in both (Baker, 2011; Cummins, 2009; Foster-Cohen, 2003; García, 2009; May, 2011). Research has established that they “are able to differentiate the grammatical systems...from very early on” (Meisel, 2004, p. 110). By the age of two, bilingual children talk about their bilingualism and choose the language they use according to who is talking to them (Meisel, 2004).

Sequential or consecutive language acquisition describes children learning a second language after their home language is partly established (Baker, 2011; Tabors, 2008). Children can learn a new language without losing their first, because they are capable of knowing at least two languages, and being truly bilingual (Barratt-Pugh, 2000a; Cummins, 2001a; Foster-Cohen, 2003; Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2005; NAEYC, 2009b; National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007; Tabors, 2008). More children in the world are bilingual than monolingual (Baker, 2006; Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2005; Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 2012). Cummins (2001a) explains that “languages nurture each other when the educational environment permits children access to both languages” (p. 18). Researchers (National Scientific

Council on the Developing Child, 2007) have assured parents and educators that there are no problems or risks involved in children being exposed to more than one language in the critical period for language learning (the years before five), because it is known that “the human language faculty has an endowment for multilingualism” (Meisel, 2004, p. 112).

Biliteracy

However, biliteracy, the ability to read and write in two languages, is harder to achieve than bilingualism. In the second and third generations of immigrant families it has been found that individuals who have high oral skills in both languages may have limited literacy skills in one of them (Butler & Hakuta, 2004). This is because literacy is usually taught, rather than acquired. Teachers can encourage early writing in home language by providing vocabulary cards in the appropriate languages to get children started (Nemeth, 2009), and displaying environmental print in home languages, supported by the literature which states that “young children are able to recognise and produce different script systems” (Barratt-Pugh, 2007, p. 135).

Bilingual children can show initial confusion in the early stages of literacy acquisition if the two languages have different scripts, but Bialystok (2001) found that the confusion disappeared by the age of five. Many emergent literacy experiences take place in the home, in the home language, and children bring these experiences to the centre (Barratt-Pugh, 2000a; Cullen et al., 2009). If literacy in the first language is supported, skills are transferred to literacy in the new language (Barratt-Pugh, 2000a; Cummins, 1979, 2000; Krashen, 1992) because “literacy learning happens in all languages and a positive approach to diversity supports all children’s literacies” (Makin & Whitehead, 2004, p. 90).

The benefits of bilingualism

Being bilingual is not only of benefit to the child, but also to the family, the community, and society. Australia’s language policy states that if children lose their home languages, “resources are wasted which might otherwise enrich both the individual and the wider society...languages are a valuable national resource” (Dawkins & Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991, pp. 14-15). Cummins (2001a) agrees that “to squander the linguistic resources of the nation by discouraging children from developing their mother tongues, is quite simply unintelligent from the point of view of national self-interest, and also represents a violation of the rights of the child” (p. 17).

A considerable number of authors state that bilingualism is beneficial for all children (Baker, 2000, 2006, 2011; Cummins, 1979, 1999, 2000, 2001a, 2001b; Foster-Cohen, 2003; Han, 2012; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007; Gonzalez-Mena, 2006, 2011; Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 2012; Makin et al., 1995; Yoshida, 2008). Furthermore, monolingual children also benefit from a multilingual environment (Makin & Whitehead, 2004; NAEYC, 2009b; Vukelich et al., 2008) because it is valuable learning for them to experience different languages and scripts: “This is an important part of their literacy learning” (Makin & Whitehead, 2004, p. 88). Children’s experiences with different writing systems expand their metalinguistic and cognitive concepts (Bialystok, 1997). Gonzalez-Mena and Eyer (2012) note that the term ‘dual language learners’ can include English-speaking children who learn another language at their centre. Learning even basic greetings in other children’s home languages enables English-speaking children to begin communication with their peers (Vukelich et al., 2008). In language-rich environments, all children can explore other languages as well as their home language.

Major government reports have recommended children being supported to retain their home language, while learning the dominant language (Department for Education and Skills, 2003, 2005; August & Shanahan, 2006, 2008). Brooker & Woodhead (2010) explain why: “starting preschool...in a second language has adverse effects on children’s development and learning, including their cognitive and linguistic skills, and these effects may persist over time” (p. 38). CALD children attending English-only programmes may be at risk of semilingualism, where individuals cannot communicate effectively in either language, which is a risk factor for school failure (Dixon, Wu & Daraghmeh, 2012). This is not only a problem for the individual, but for society. Modern economies require a literate workforce (ERO, 2011), and those without literacy tend to remain in low socio-economic groups and are more likely to experience unemployment.

Teaching strategies which promote bilingualism

When children enter English-only fulltime childcare environments in infancy, home language loss can be “inevitable” (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007, p. 204), because there is insufficient input of the home language. Children are capable of learning two languages simultaneously (Baker, 2011; García, 2009; May, 2011), but this requires similar quality and quantity of input in both languages (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007). Teachers need to emphasize and support home language use both in the centre and at home (Bardige & Segal, 2005; Kirmani, 2007; Tabors, 2008). Anyone

who knows the child's language, whether they are staff, family, or student teachers, should be encouraged to use that language with the child (NAEYC, 1995).

A bilingual or multilingual model, where the children's home languages are spoken by one or several teachers who are committed to bilingualism, and feel comfortable using their first language in their teaching, is the ideal (ERO, 2011; Gonzalez-Mena, 2011; Makin et al., 1995; NAEYC, 1995; Tabors, 2008). Teachers and parents need to recognise that "the bilingual educator can be a strong advocate for family and community members" (NAEYC, 1995, p. 6). Bilingual teachers provide opportunities for children to hear and use their home language, they facilitate communication with families, can support families in maintaining their home language (NAEYC, 1995), and help other staff to understand what it is like to be part of a linguistic and cultural minority (Tabors, 2008).

The presence of bilingual teachers sends a message to the community that more than one culture and language are valued (Tabors, 2008). However, it would be impractical to ensure that a staff member spoke the home language of every child. This raises equity issues, but Makin et al. (1995) believed that this was not a valid reason for not allowing bilingual teaching. They recommended that centres try to employ staff who represent the languages and cultures of the community, and that overseas-trained staff with appropriate qualifications be given equal opportunity.

If teachers do not speak the child's language, they can learn some words and phrases, showing "a willingness to take risks similar to the risks asked of children as they learn a second language" (NAEYC, 1995 p. 7). Researchers believe that this effort by teachers helps to validate and affirm the child's language, and shows respect and esteem for the child's culture (NAEYC, 1995; Terrini, 2003b). It also builds rapport (Gonzalez, 2009) with the child and allows some basic communication (Vukelich, et al., 2008).

The curriculum should support children's home culture and language (NAEYC, 1995). Group activities which acknowledge all home languages with greetings and songs learned by all the children build the self-esteem of the CALD children and promote an appreciation of diversity (Bardige & Segal, 2005; Nemeth, 2009; Vukelich et al., 2008). All children need to feel that they are part of a caring, supportive, respectful community of learners (Cullen et al., 2009; NAEYC, 2009a). Hearing and seeing their home language and culture in daily interactions, and sharing their cultural funds of knowledge

with others, gives dual language learners the reassurance that they are part of such a community.

Good practice is to encourage children who share a language to communicate with each other in home language because this builds confidence, develops language and thinking skills, and shows children that their first language is valued (Genishi, 2002; Smith, 2009). There is no evidence that preschool children acquire a second language faster than older children (Beller, 2008; Paradis, Kirova, & Dachyshyn, 2009). Becoming as fluent as a native speaker child takes several years. Meanwhile, communicating in home language allows children to interact and form relationships before they have learned to relate to other children in English (Beller, 2008). Pairing a new bilingual child with a child who has acquired more English, a buddy or peer partner, is helpful (Nemeth, 2009; Vukelich et al., 2008).

“An accepting and child-oriented educational style should afford each child the time he or she needs, without pressuring such children to communicate verbally” (Beller, 2008, p. 35). Nemeth (2009) values “cultural authenticity” (p. 33) in children’s play, providing props from the children’s cultures which encourage them to use their home languages. Speaking is important because oral language is recognised as a literacy skill which lays the foundations for reading and writing (Barratt-Pugh et al., 2006; MOE, 2009c; Smith, 2009; MOE, 2010).

As well as teachers and other children, parents play a very important part in the development of bilingualism. An essential strategy for teachers is to work in partnership with parents to support children’s home languages. Parents are the first teachers, providing children’s earliest learning experiences in the context of the home language and culture (McLachlan, 2007; NAEYC, 1995; Tabors 2008). The mother or primary caregiver is a crucial source of language exposure for the child (Dixon et al., 2012). “If the parents stop speaking their first language, the children may lose it quickly. Then they will not have the advantages of being bilingual” (Department for Education and Skills, 2003, p. 2). Sharing responsibility for children’s development with parents and other members of the community is a clearly stated value of *Te Whāriki* (Carr & Rameka, 2010).

The literature (Bialystok, 1997; Department for Education and Skills, 2003; Gonzalez-Mena, 2006) agrees that the child’s home language should not only be acknowledged, but given support to further develop as the foundation for learning other languages.

Early childhood teachers have a “crucial role” (Tabors, 2008, p. 176) in helping parents develop strategies to support and maintain the home language. Parents need to be encouraged by teachers to continue to use and develop their child’s home language at home and to find ways of motivating their child to continue using it, such as attending their community events where the home language is spoken (Baker, 2000; Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009b; Dixon et al., 2012; NAEYC, 1995; National Literacy Trust, n.d; National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education, 2009; Smalltalk, n.d.; Tabors, 2008).

A useful strategy suggested in the literature is utilising bilingual teachers to welcome parents, and communicate regularly with them in their home language. This creates a link between home and centre that supports the child’s development (Gonzalez, 2009; Makin et al., 1995). If there are no teachers who speak the families’ languages, Nemeth (2009) and Vukelich et al. (2008) suggest that the centre find parent volunteers or community cultural brokers to bridge the language barrier. Parent/teacher meetings, if necessary with an interpreter, create opportunities to consult with parents about their aspirations for their children (Bardige & Segal, 2005; Drury, 2007).

When teachers are prepared to put themselves into the role of learner (Tabors, 2008; Terrini 2003b), they can draw on the funds of knowledge families have. Funds of knowledge is a concept used to describe the cultural resources, body of knowledge and skills possessed by families and communities (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005). It is well established that the best teaching builds on prior knowledge (Brooker & Woodhead, 2010). The funds of literacy knowledge concept obliges teachers to connect with each child and their family by making the effort to understand and know about their family situations, their language and their culture (Comber & Reid, 2007; Cullen et al., 2009; McLachlan, 2007). This approach attempts to change teacher perceptions of working-class or poor communities by viewing them in terms of their strengths and resources, in contrast to a deficit approach (Gonzalez et al., 2005).

Early childhood teachers need to recruit the support of families, including extended family, involve them in the learning and development of their children, and encourage them to share aspects of their culture, such as their language, their songs, and their written script, at the centre (Gonzalez, 2009; Kirmani, 2007). Cummins (2001a) promotes this sociocultural approach: “Children's cultural and linguistic experience in

the home is the foundation of their future learning, and we must build on that foundation, rather than undermine it” (p. 20).

Diverse literacies should be acknowledged and encouraged (Barratt-Pugh, 2000b; Love, Burns & Buell, 2007). Literacy experts believe that including non-English materials and resources, to the extent possible and practical, can help to support children’s first language and their emerging literacy in it, while they acquire oral proficiency and emergent literacy skills in English (Nemeth, 2009; Paradis et al., 2009). Children should, if possible, be given opportunities to hear stories read in their home language, and to see the script of their language, in books and displayed as environmental print (Cummins, 2001a; Love et al., 2007; MOE, 1996; Nemeth, 2009).

The early childhood period is a critical time for young children to develop their language and emergent literacy skills (Barratt-Pugh, 2000b; National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007; Tabors & Snow, 2001), which are the foundation for reading and writing. Educators who are knowledgeable about the print/script conventions of the languages represented at the centre and who enable emergent bilingual children to see and use the script of their own language as well as the written form of English, are supporting biliteracy (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007).

A sociocultural pedagogy includes strategies which promote bilingualism (Gonzalez, 2009). The literature (Gonzalez-Mena, 2006, 2011; Tabors, 2008) shows that all CALD children benefit from the use of their home language in their centre. This is particularly true for the youngest children (Baker, 2011; García, 2009; Gonzalez, 2006; Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 2012; May, 2011). Strategies which have been found to support children’s home languages include the employment of bilingual teachers who are supported to teach bilingually (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007; Makin et al., 1995); the use of words, phrases and songs in home languages by monolingual teachers (NAEYC, 1995; Nemeth, 2009); encouraging children to interact in their home language (Cummins, 2001a; Nemeth, 2009); strong partnerships with parents and incorporating their funds of knowledge in the curriculum (Gonzalez, 2009); and assessment which recognises children’s strengths (Genishi & Dyson, 2009; MOE, 2005a, 2005b; NAEYC, 2005).

Literacy

In emergent literacy theory, developed in the 1980s, it is understood that literacy learning is a process that begins at birth. The child is an active participant, encouraged through participation with adults in meaningful activities, learning in the context of their family, extended family and community (McLachlan, 2007; Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000). Oral language develops first, and in most societies⁹ forms the basis for literacy, which is facilitated by experiences the child has with their family and in their community (Barratt-Pugh, 2000b).

Sociocultural theories of literacy followed in the 1990s, based on Bourdieu's (1977) theory of cultural capital. Cultural capital can be defined as "knowledge and competence which is valued and leads to success in terms of status, wealth and mobility" (Barratt-Pugh, 2000b, p. 4). In the early childhood field, it can be further defined as "the storehouse of experiences, knowledge and attitudes a child can capitalise on when going to school, given the practices of schooling" (McNaughton, 2002, p. 21).

When a child from an English-speaking family starts attending a centre, their cultural capital is recognised by teachers who share that culture (Barratt-Pugh, 2000b, 2007; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007; Harvey, 2011; Nash, 1993). However, when CALD children bring their linguistic and cultural capital, or funds of literacy knowledge (Moll, 1992) into an English-speaking environment, there can be a lack of congruence and continuity between home and school literacy practices (Barratt-Pugh, 2007; Martello, 2007). These children may find that their capital is not recognised. Even young children are aware of the power relations (Cummins, 2001b, 2009; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007; Pacini-Ketchabaw & de Almeida, 2006) between speakers & learners of English. In this situation, "code-switching can be an empowering process" (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007, p. 208), because it enables bilingual children to make use of their diverse knowledge & language systems.

The Education Review Office (ERO, 2011) supports the current view that "emergent or early literacy is very much a social practice that develops in social contexts rather than through formal instruction" (p. 4). This is a contemporary, sociocultural perspective of literacy, which sees it as a social and cultural practice in diverse communities (Barratt-

⁹ This happens in all languages that have a written form. Some languages exist only in oral or spoken use (Skutnabb-Kangas et al., 2003).

Pugh, 2000b, 2007; Comber & Reid, 2007; Jones Díaz 2007; Makin, 2003). This perspective has led to “recognition that what counts as literacy is inextricably entwined with power” (Makin, 2003, p. 327).

A print-rich environment which includes only English and te reo Māori leaves other CALD children marginalised, because the social literacy practices of their home and community are not included (Barratt-Pugh, 2000b; Makin, 2003). They may experience a disjuncture between the literacy they see at their centre and the literacy they see at home (Barratt-Pugh, 2000b; Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2010; Makin, 2003; McLachlan, 2010; McNaughton 2002). When teachers give status and recognition to some literacy practices, and not others, this disadvantages some children and potentially leads to different educational outcomes (Barratt-Pugh, 2000b). Whereas, when the literacy practices children bring from home are recognised and built on as they learn new forms of literacy, there is a ‘meeting of minds’ (Bruner, 1996; McNaughton, 2002).

Oral proficiency precedes literacy in both languages (MOE, 2009b). It is therefore vitally important that children become proficient in their spoken home language first, and then in spoken English (at a developmentally appropriate level for their age) because literacy is based on the spoken language (August & Shanahan, 2006). Research indicates that both oral proficiency and emergent literacy in the home language support literacy development in English. “Language minority students are not blank slates” (August & Shanahan, 2006, p. 5), but bring varied levels of development in their spoken home language, and a range of literacy experiences in that language, to their English-dominant educational environment (Bialystok, 1997, 2001; Bialystok, Luk, & Kwan, 2005; Kaur, 2010; Tabors & Snow, 2001).

It is important that teachers are aware of the transferability of literacy skills (August & Shanahan, 2006; Barratt-Pugh, 2000b; Bialystok et al., 2005). Bialystok (1997) found that four and five year old bilingual children understood better than monolingual children the symbolic representation of print, and that learning a character system helped Chinese children understand the principles of an alphabet system. The literature (August & Shanahan, 2006; Tabors & Snow, 2001) recommends that parents support both oral fluency and literacy in the home language.

Tabors & Snow (2001) state that “children with a strong foundation in their home language and continuing support for that language through home activities such as book

reading are developing skills which will transfer to English later” (p. 163). But if parents regard English as the language of literacy and do not engage in literacy activities in the home language, children miss out on an important part of the emergent literacy process (Tabors & Snow, 2001). Teachers are urged to adopt the strategy of educating parents about bilingual literacy development, because support in the home language has a direct impact on children’s literacy development in English.

Assessment of dual language learners

The literature agrees that a dual language approach should be used in the assessment of dual language learners, taking into account not only the child’s stage of English language learning, but also continuing gains in the home language (Dixon et al., 2012; NAEYC, 2005, 2009c; Kirmani 2007; Nemeth 2009; Tabors, 2008). Teachers need to recognize children’s strengths and provide opportunities for them to achieve outside of their English language limitations (NAEYC, 1995; Nemeth 2009; Tabors 2008).

There is a risk that language issues may go undiagnosed in a CALD child, or conversely that special needs may be inaccurately diagnosed, if they are assessed only in English. Whereas it used to be thought that bilingualism caused language delay (Yoshida, 2008), now it has been shown that when children who are being supported to continue developing in their home language are assessed in both their languages, they can score higher than monolingual children (Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 2012; Tabors, 2008).

In New Zealand, children can contribute to their assessment, by sharing in the construction of learning stories, defined by Carr and Rameka (2010) as “narratives which describe their growing interest and expertise in aspects of the world around them” (p. 40). *Kei Tua o Te Pae* (MOE, 2005a, 2005b, 2009b, 2009c) encourages a sociocultural approach to the learning stories of bilingual children (Carr, 2001; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007). This approach validates the “languages, cultures and literacies central to children’s formation of identities as members simultaneously of several communities” (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007, p. 212).

Attitudes to home language use

Despite the body of knowledge that has been presented, confirming that bilingualism is the best outcome for minority language children, the literature (Tabors, 2008; Cummins, 2000, 2001a, 2009) acknowledges that the use of home languages in education settings is still controversial. A discourse regarding English as the language of success has

become normalised in many English-dominant countries (Harvey, 2011; Pacini-Ketchabaw & de Almeida, 2006). The view of the child as a learner of English rather than as a speaker of another language or languages has contributed to a deficit view of CALD children's competencies (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007).

Management have responsibility for providing educational leadership to the teaching team, by ensuring that appropriate philosophy statements and policies, firmly based on the current body of research-based knowledge, are in place. Jones Díaz and Harvey (2007) assert that it is "vital to have informed policy" (p. 211) relating to each child's right to use of their home language. Children have the right to learn in two languages, because "the lived experiences of children are critical to literacy learning, and children's bilingual identities in literacy practices need to be validated in policy, pedagogy and practice" (p. 211).

ERO's (2011) report on literacy in early childhood services has a strong emphasis on literacy acquisition in CALD children. ERO (2011) found that literacy was often not mentioned in policies, philosophies or other written documents, resulting in a lack of shared understanding among the teachers. They posited that the lack of specific literacy guidelines in *Te Whāriki* had led to "variable advice and support for educators from leaders in services" (p. 35). They noted that current research about literacy in early childhood is not gathered together in an easily accessible form.

A self-review focussing on literacy was sent out to centres prior to ERO's visits (ERO, 2011). Only a few services identified that their philosophy mentioned that they valued first languages and cultures. Less than a third of services reported having recent professional development that was related to literacy. "Very few services mentioned... encouraging first language development" (ERO, 2011, p. 45). There was little recognition shown that "different groups of children respond in different ways to different literacy activities" (p. 47). Yet the pre-visit questionnaire identified that many bilingual teachers worked in the services reviewed. ERO (2011) concluded that there were many centres where literacy practice needed to improve, particularly in the pedagogy used with minority language children.

Teachers work within the educational climate established by management at each centre, or chain of centres. They are not free to put their personal philosophy into practice, but require a mandate from management to do so. Bilingual teachers bring their linguistic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977, Nash, 1993) to their work, but it is

not always recognised by management. In profit-driven services, management can be more responsive to parent demand, as noted by ERO (2011).

Teachers in the 21st century are expected to be culturally competent (Colombo, 2005; NAEYC, 2010; Terrini, 2003a). In other words they should “respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, seeing and living; celebrate the benefits of diversity; and have an ability to understand and honour differences” (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009a, p. 16). The literature over the last twenty-five years has made clear that bilingualism has educational advantages that will help to ensure academic success for the child (August & Shanahan, 2006; Cummins, 2000; Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2005; Department for Education and Skills, 2005).

But there are still teachers who seem to be unaware of this literature (Dixon et al., 2012; Drury, 2007; Kaur, 2010; Tabors, 2008). Kaur (2010), a bilingual teacher educator, reflected on her experiences working in some early childhood centres in New Zealand. She was disappointed to see a deficit approach taken by other teachers, and believed that children who start ECE with rich home language experiences “are often judged for their lack of spoken English, and therefore misjudged” (Kaur, 2010, p. 48). She observed that monolingual teachers often misinterpreted children’s silence as a lack of knowledge or literacy skills, and was concerned by the “lack of support for other languages” (Kaur, 2010, p. 47).

Tabors (2008) laments that the “single container theory” (p. 179) is still accepted by so many teachers. This erroneous belief conceptualises that there is limited cognitive capacity for learning language (Dixon et al., 2012), like a single container. It leads to assumptions that the container can become full, and needs to be emptied of the home language before the new language can be learned. This paradigm results in a belief that when children retain their home culture and language, they are less capable of identifying with the mainstream culture and learning the mainstream language (Cummins, 2001a). It also assumes confusion when two languages become a ‘mixture’ in one container (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2005; Tabors, 2008). Jones Díaz and Harvey (2007) describe teachers with these beliefs as “paralysed by their own monolingualism” (p. 207).

A more accurate model is the “multiple container theory” (Tabors, 2008, p. 179), which envisions each language having a separate container, with an unlimited number of containers possible. The containers can continue to be filled simultaneously. In fact the

second and subsequent containers are already partly filled, due to the child's existing knowledge of how language works, which can be transferred across to new languages (Barratt-Pugh, 2000b; NAEYC, 2009b).

Tabors (2008) explains that these models represent the subtractive and additive models of second language learning (Baker, 2006, 2011). Teachers who believe in the subtractive model still advise parents to abandon the home language, whereas teachers who understand the additive model give parents "important advice related to strategies that they need to use to support development in the first language" (Tabors, 2008, p. 180).

The way teachers teach can be affected by their personal beliefs about how children learn, referred to by Bruner (1996) as intuitive theories or folk pedagogies. It is essential that teachers' intuitive theories are challenged during their initial training, and that they continue to be updated about current research-based theory of the child's mind, and how languages are learned, via ongoing professional development (Bruner, 1996; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2000).

There is agreement in the literature (Brooker & Woodhead, 2010; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Tabors, 2008; Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2000) that ECE teachers need to be better prepared for teaching CALD children, and teachers themselves have reported that they felt under-prepared in terms of specific teaching strategies to use (Daniel & Friedman, 2005). Wong Fillmore and Snow (2000) recommended that all teachers be given training on children's language development, language diversity, socio-linguistics and second language learning and teaching. Tabors (2008) agreed: "Business as usual is no longer possible...new information, new attitudes and new practices" (p. 182) were required. Genishi and Dyson (2009) reiterated that teachers should have access to pre- and in-service professional education on teaching CALD children, to enable teachers to understand that "diversity is the norm" (p. 145).

Parents' attitudes to bilingual teaching are not always positive. Adair and Tobin (2008) found that Mexican immigrant parents' attitudes were "complex and conflicted" (p. 141). While parents appreciated bilingual teachers communicating with them in Spanish, their prime concern was that their children learned English before elementary school (Adair & Tobin, 2008). They understood the concept of language loss, and knew of Mexican families whose children no longer spoke Spanish, but believed it was "the [centre's] job to teach English and theirs to teach and maintain Spanish" (Adair &

Tobin, 2008, p. 141). Pacini-Ketchabaw and de Almeida (2006) reported that many Canadian parents also believed that development of the home language was a parental responsibility.

Adair and Tobin (2008) concluded that many immigrant parents have ideas about early childhood education which “differ from notions of quality and best practice held by early childhood educators and their professional organisations” (p. 147). They urge teachers to meet with families, giving parents an opportunity to “talk through their ambivalence and uncertainty about what is best for their children” (p. 148). This advice is echoed in the literature (Bardige & Segal, 2005; Barratt-Pugh, 2000b; Nemeth, 2009).

In New Zealand also there is sometimes a disparity between teachers’ understanding of best practice with minority language children, and their parents’ aspirations for them. ERO (2011) expected teachers to “differentiate their programme” (p. 24) for children of different home languages, to meet their specific needs, but found the quality of this provision was variable. Educators sometimes responded to parental pressure to introduce formal structured literacy teaching, which ERO considered inappropriate, rather than following the sociocultural and holistic view of literacy promoted by *Te Whāriki*.

ERO (2011) recommended that teachers incorporate home language literacy practices, to “build a bridge” (p. 4) between home and centre. They encouraged teachers to involve parents and community members in home language literacy teaching and learning, but found that some teachers were unable to “justify their literacy practices to parents” (p. 29). Teachers need to have current knowledge of research and recommendations for best practice so that they can explain their practice to parents with confidence (ERO, 2011; Tabors, 2008). It is a crucial part of the professional teacher’s role to make current information about bilingualism and biliteracy available to children’s families (Baker, 2000; Barratt-Pugh, 2000b; Tabors, 2008).

Language attrition

Simply growing up in a bilingual family or community does not ensure bilingualism (Dixon et al., 2012; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007). Families “struggle to preserve their minority languages in English-speaking societies” (Kaur, 2010, p. 47). Research (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007; Paradis et al., 2009; Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke, 2000; Tabors, 2008; Tabors & Snow, 2001; Wong Fillmore 1991) has shown that early exposure to

‘English-only’ environments can cause language attrition, also known as language shift or loss, and prevent children from becoming bilingual.

Children pick up attitudes to language, and if they sense negativity towards their home language and come to believe that it is ‘inferior’ to English, and of less use to them, they may reject the home language (Gonzalez-Mena, 2006, 2011; Tabors & Snow, 2001; Wong Fillmore, 1991). Meisel (2004) agreed that “it is well known that bilingual children sometimes use one of their languages more reluctantly or that they avoid using it altogether” (p. 105).

Pacini-Ketchabaw and de Almeida (2006) reported that language attrition is very common among children in Canada, despite additive bilingualism having been advocated there for many years (Cummins, 1979, 1999, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2009). They blamed “dominant discourses of monolingualism” (Pacini-Ketchabaw & de Almeida, 2006, p. 312) from government and media, which had influenced attitudes of parents and teachers, many of whom believed that fluency in English was the key to academic and employment success, and that the home language was an “impediment to success” (p. 316).

Jones Díaz and Harvey (2007) believe that the lack of research into early childhood language shift in Australia and New Zealand has resulted in “silences around children’s decreasing abilities to retain adequate levels of bilingual proficiency due to early exposure to dominant ‘English only’ early childhood and primary educational experiences” (p. 205). Clark (2005) researched the self-talk of children from diverse language backgrounds in New Zealand kindergartens. She was surprised to find that even when the children were using private speech, intended only for their own hearing, they spoke in English. In contrast, Nemeth (2009) advises teachers to give CALD children the time to engage in the “all-important self-talk, described by Vygotsky” (p. 18), to give them a break from the constant pressure to communicate and learn in English. Children need an environment that is supportive of bilingualism and encourages their continuing use of their home language, or they move to the exclusive use of the dominant language (Jones Díaz, & Harvey, 2007; NAEYC, 1998; Wong Fillmore, 1991).

Summary

The literature (NAEYC, 1998; McNaughton, 2002; Comber & Reid, 2007) agrees that excellent teaching builds on what children already know and can do. A strong basis in the first language promotes achievement in the second language (Cummins 1979, 2000, 2001a; Gonzalez-Mena, 2011; Tabors, 2008). Bilingualism has positive effects on not only children's linguistic development, but on their long term educational outcomes (August & Shanahan, 2006, 2008; Cummins, 2001a; Department for Education and Skills, 2003). Early childhood teachers looking for guidance on teaching children of diverse languages and literacies will find a consistent message in both international and New Zealand literature. Bilingualism has educational and social advantages for all children (Cummins, 1979, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2009; Gonzalez-Mena, 2011; Tabors, 2008).

Bilingual children achieve more success in their education, while maintaining their links with their family and culture. They have more self-confidence, can learn other languages more easily, and have enhanced career opportunities (Foster-Cohen, 2003). Bilingual teachers who speak community languages are an asset and must be supported to use all their languages in their teaching (ERO, 2011; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007; NAEYC, 1995, 2009b). Effective teachers work in partnership with parents and families, acknowledging the funds of knowledge they bring, which can be shared with all children (Cummins, 2001b; Gonzalez et al., 2005; Hedges et al., 2011; Kaur, 2010).

Major government reports on raising the achievement of minority ethnic students (August & Shanahan, 2006, 2008; Department for Education and Skills, 2003, 2005) have concluded that bilingualism is crucial to achieving this goal. Globalisation and language diversity will continue to be significant social trends (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007). It is essential that governments and education systems acknowledge diverse languages as a national and international resource (Cummins, 2001a; Dawkins & Department of Education, Employment and Training, 1991). Early childhood teachers have a vital part to play in promoting and preserving this resource, by educating parents about the advantages of bilingualism, by helping children to retain their bilingual identities (Harvey, 2011) and their family ties (Cummins, 2001b; Tabors, 2008) and by “preparing them to live in a new world” (Kaur, 2010, p. 48). There is no justification in the literature for a policy of ‘English language only’ in early childhood education.

Chapter 3: Research Procedures

Ahakoā he iti he pounamu.

Although it is small, it is greenstone.

Introduction

This whakataukī is used with humility by the giver, when presenting a small gift. Pounamu, or greenstone, is a precious stone to Māori, with even small pieces being valuable. This small study is my humble gift to children of diverse languages and their families, and to the teachers, both bilingual and monolingual, who work alongside them supporting children's languages to grow and flourish.

Research can be described as “organised commonsense” (Punch, 2009, p. 10), and the question can be asked, “If you want to know how people understand their world and their lives, why not talk to them?” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. xvii). This qualitative research project involved me, as the researcher, talking to teachers, in an organised way. My purpose was to understand how some North Shore early childhood teachers were meeting the educational needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse children they taught. The study also considered to what extent their practice reflected the recommendations of international research in this vital area of education. I invited early childhood teachers, both monolingual and bilingual, who taught in culturally and ethnically diverse centres on Auckland's North Shore, to share their experiences and their beliefs about teaching young children who have a language other than English as their home language.

The primary objective of my research was to find out what the teachers believed about teaching culturally and linguistically diverse children, and how their beliefs and understandings were reflected in their practice. Specifically, I wanted to know whether the bilingual teachers were using both their languages in their teaching, and if so, how they were using them. I was interested in what the monolingual teachers thought about the use of home languages in the centre, and whether they used any teaching strategies that promoted bilingualism.

The research was designed to answer this question:

What teaching strategies are used to meet the language and learning needs of young children with diverse languages and literacies?

In this chapter I will discuss the methodological framework and data collection methods chosen for this research project. I will report on the recruitment of the participants, whose profiles are provided in Chapter 4. I will then detail the process of collecting the data and explain how the data were managed and analysed. Finally, the ethical considerations relevant to this study: voluntary participation, informed consent, do no harm, avoid deceit, data analysed and reported faithfully and in particular, confidentiality, are discussed. The Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK) granted approval for this research project on 23 December 2010 (Ethics Approval Number 10/278).

Methodological framework

The first decision that I as the researcher needed to make was whether to use quantitative or qualitative methodology, or both, in a mixed method approach (Tolich & Davidson, 2011). Quantitative research is an approach that “reduces numerical data to quantifiable explanations” (Mutch, 2005, p. 223). Methods such as questionnaires and surveys are used to collect statistics which can be generalised to a bigger population. The researcher usually starts with an idea, or hypothesis, and gathers evidence to prove or disprove this (Mutch, 2005). I rejected this methodology in favour of qualitative methodology, for reasons that I will now explain.

In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research starts with the “assumption of multiple, socially constructed realities” (Tolich & Davidson, 2011, p. 33). Rather than gathering data from large samples, it “looks in depth at fewer subjects through rich description of their thoughts, feelings, stories, and/or activities” (Mutch, 2005, p. 223). Instead of starting with a hypothesis, in qualitative research the key ideas come from the data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Mutch, 2005). In qualitative research, “theory should not precede research but follow it” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 18).

Qualitative research is based on an interpretive paradigm or model in which the researcher endeavours to understand “the subjective world of human experience” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 17). It is inductive rather than deductive (Tolich & Davidson, 2011). A deductive approach is sometimes known as a top-down approach. The researcher starts with a hypothesis which is tested with specific data. In contrast, an inductive, or bottom-up approach, begins with specific data which are analysed for patterns and regularities. The researcher forms a tentative hypothesis which can be explored, and finally develops conclusions or theories (Trochim, 2006).

Qualitative research starts with individuals, and tries to understand their actions and their interpretations of their world (Cohen et al., 2011), assuming that human behaviour is based on the person's beliefs and intentions (Tolich & Davidson, 2011). Interpretive research is small-scale and subjective, setting out to understand and describe human actions and meanings, rather than to identify causes.

I as the researcher have a personal involvement, and I am seeking individual perspectives which enable me to understand and explain (Cohen et al., 2011). Qualitative research has the potential to allow me, and the reader of the subsequent findings, to “stand in the shoes” (Tolich & Davidson, 2011, p. 72) of those researched. I need to ensure that the research findings will “resonate” or “feel right” to the participants (Tolich & Davidson, 2011, p. 33). My interest in home languages, as explained in Chapter 1, began when I was a volunteer tutor of English language to a Chinese mother with two young children. This interest, and desire to learn more, increased once I was working at AIT in the role of supporting migrants and refugees to learn English and settle successfully in New Zealand.

My first experience of being a researcher was in the 1990s. I returned to university part-time as a mature student, and, as part of the requirements for a postgraduate Diploma in English Language Teaching, I carried out a research project on adult learners, exploring the strategies they used to help themselves learn English language as mature, autonomous adults (Ball, 1997). Due to my limited understanding of research methodology at that time, I thought that statistics were a necessary part of any research project. So for that research, I used mixed methods (Mutch, 2005; Punch, 2009): specifically a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The aspect of the research I enjoyed most was the interviews and the thematic analysis of them. My dissertation was brought to life by the quotes from the stories of the participants. They used humour and pathos to describe their efforts as adult learners to learn the language of their new country, and their discovery of both academic and non-academic strategies to help themselves.

Beginning another research project in 2010, I was better prepared. I now knew that qualitative research was a legitimate research methodology in the social sciences and education (Mutch, 2005; Punch, 2009; Tolich & Davidson, 2011). My focus had changed to young children, as I was by then a lecturer in early childhood education at AUT University. Nevertheless, my special interest remained language acquisition, now

specifically the learning of English as an additional language by the young children of families whose home language is not English. I had also developed a strong interest in language maintenance: how young children could learn English without losing their home language.

I wanted to hear from teachers about the social reality of the early childhood community in my local area at this time in Aotearoa New Zealand's social history. It would be necessary to bring teachers together, to encourage them to engage in discourse; that is, to talk freely with each other, and to share lived experience (Mutch, 2005), to elicit the type of data I needed. I would be looking for teachers' stories.

Research procedures

I was mindful throughout this project that the validity of my findings depended on the quality of each stage of the research: thematising, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying and reporting (Bourdieu et al, 1999). Because I wanted teachers to engage with each other to exchange views, share experiences, and tease out ideas, focus groups were chosen as the principal method of collecting the data.

Both focus groups (also known as group interviews) and individual interviews are "particularly well suited for studying people's understanding of the meanings in their lived world, describing their experiences and self-understanding, and clarifying and elaborating their own perspective on their lived world" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 116). Researchers often use a case study approach when they are seeking narratives, and I was hoping to hear stories, but I also wanted group interaction. Reassurance came when I discovered that when using focus groups, the researcher "looks for the key narrative or narratives within and across the groups" (Tolich & Davidson, 2011, p. 123). Further, Punch (2009) notes that "there is a storied character to much qualitative data" (p. 190), even when data is not explicitly asked for in story form.

I had also decided that some interviews might be necessary to tease out matters for exploration if that did not occur in the focus groups. Because there had been no Korean teachers included in the focus groups, I decided to include two semi-structured individual interviews with two more participants. It seemed important to include Korean participants, as Koreans are the largest language minority on the North Shore (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a). At the time of the original recruitment for focus groups, there were no Korean teachers available. Later in the year of data collection, I

became aware of two Korean teachers who had recently completed their teacher training and had graduated since the focus groups had taken place. Both had worked in centres during their training. They kindly agreed to be interviewed individually.

I was also interested to see centre policies on working with culturally and linguistically diverse children and their families. I planned to analyse these documents for the practices which they promoted, and identify any differences between policy and actual practice. However, none of the participants were able to provide such a policy. In the absence of documentation, triangulation was achieved in this study via data triangulation (Punch, 2009), as the data came from a number of sources: different teachers, working in different centres.

Focus groups

One definition of a focus group is a “group interview structured around a series of questions designed to elicit participants’ perspectives on a particular topic” (Morgan, 1988, p. 12). Another is “a discussion that occurs among a group of people who share some characteristic” (Tolich & Davidson, 2011, p. 138). At a focus group, the researcher is a facilitator, encouraging the participants to share thoughts, experiences and even emotions about a particular issue (Punch, 2009). Focus groups have a clear agenda, which enables participants to discuss from the same focal point (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2006).

An advantage of focus groups over interviews is that the group situation, with interaction between participants coming from different experiences and perspectives, helps to frame the data (Ryan & Lobman, 2007). I was particularly interested in bringing teachers from a range of early childhood services, and a variety of personal backgrounds, together so that they could find areas of agreement, as well as areas where they had different points of view.

Focus groups, run well, can provide a “powerful tool for gaining insight into the opinions, beliefs and values” of the participants (Tolich & Davidson, 2011, p. 126). The facilitator needs to establish a climate where different views are welcomed and respected, because “the aim of the focus group is not to reach consensus about, or solutions to, the issues discussed, but to bring forth different viewpoints on an issue” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 150).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) believe that “group interviews...could be helpful in the process of ‘indefinite triangulation’ by putting individual responses into a context” (p. 704). Ryan and Lobman (2007) make the point that early childhood education settings are “political spaces” (p. 64) and teaching can be an isolated activity. Participating in a focus group may enable participants to consider and discuss issues that “are often left unaddressed” (p. 64), for reasons of time constraints, and other pressing business in the day-to-day life of an early childhood centre. I hoped that this opportunity to meet with teachers who they had not met before, for an exchange of ideas on this important topic, would be valuable professional learning for each of the early childhood teachers involved, as well as providing me with the data I needed for my research.

However, a focus group is not just about bringing a number of people in to the same room to talk (Krueger, 2008). Careful consideration must be given to the size of the group, selection of the participants, the purpose of the discussion, and the facilitation of it. Waldegrave (1999) states that six to twelve is the ideal number for a focus group. Hinds (2000) suggests between seven and ten participants; Tolich & Davidson (2011) suggest between six and ten, but note that market research companies invite ten people to attend, expecting two to be ‘no-shows’.

Because I would not have the support of an observer/assistant (Tolich & Davidson, 2011), I decided to restrict each group to six participants to enable each to have plenty of time to express her¹⁰ views within the two hour time limit planned. Furthermore, this would minimise technical problems with audio recording. In addition, less expertise in facilitation is necessary to guide discussion with six participants than with a larger group. As numbers increase, the group dynamics become exponentially more complex, and it can be hard to achieve balance in the group interaction (Punch, 2009).

Two focus groups were planned to gather sufficient rich data. Focus groups are “inexpensive, data-rich, flexible, stimulating, recall-aiding, cumulative and elaborative” (Punch, 2009, p. 147). Facilitation of the focus groups was supported by the prior preparation of a focus group guide (Appendix A) based on the literature review. Tolich and Davidson (2011) recommend asking only a few questions, as the purpose is to get discussion started, and then to guide or facilitate it. It is important that the questions are

¹⁰ All participants in this study were female, reflecting the predominance of women in early childhood teaching.

open-ended, and invite the participants to draw on their own experiences and express diverging opinions.

Group interaction provides rich data, but does not enable “a long and precise set of questions” to be answered (Tolich & Davidson, 2011, p. 140). The facilitator’s role is to guide the discussion so that the group stays focussed on the research question and does not get off topic (Tolich & Davidson, 2011). Ideally, when a participant expresses an opinion, it will be “tested, challenged and reframed immediately” by the group (Tolich & Davidson, 2011, p. 126).

Interviews

The role of the researcher is different in interviews to what it is in focus groups. As stated earlier, at focus groups the researcher’s role is more that of a moderator or facilitator, whereas in individual interviews, the researcher is the interviewer (Punch, 2009). A qualitative interview is a “social relationship” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 139) and requires sensitivity. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) state that the interviewer is the “research instrument” (p. 84) and rather than using a method, the interviewer has to become skilled at the “intellectual craft” (p. 84), of interviewing, developed through training and practice. Postgraduate students “learn by doing” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 92) as they undertake simplified projects under close supervision.

Before the first interview, indicative interview questions should be prepared (Appendix B), based on the literature review, but the researcher needs to be mindful that in qualitative research, the interview is less structured and more open-ended than in quantitative research (Punch, 2009). The semi-structured interview is a popular choice because it allows questions to be re-ordered and expanded, new directions to be taken, and further probing to be done (Cohen et al., 2011). The interviewer uses interpersonal skills to establish a rapport with the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), so that the other person is able to relax and respond to questions in an unrehearsed, natural way.

To be effective, the interviewer needs to develop the skill of active listening, which is as important in interviews as the mastery of questioning techniques (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The interviewer needs to listen to not only what is said, but “how it is said” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 138), and needs to have an accepting and open attitude to whatever is said. There should be flexibility, allowing the interviewee to raise matters which may not have been included in the planning (Cohen et al., 2011). The interviewer must know the research topic well, know what is to be asked about, and

have a good ‘ear’ for themes, in order to decide which areas to probe more deeply with second questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Interviewing can be compared to a game of chess, in that intuitive skills are required, rather than fixed rules (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

In order that participants feel safe to speak of confidential matters, and so that both the interviewer and the interview subject can focus their concentration on the interview, the location chosen for interviews needs to be private, quiet and free of any interruption (Punch, 2009).

Recruitment of participants

Twenty centres seemed ample to recruit twelve participants. I hoped to recruit six teachers who were native speakers of English, and six who were speakers of English as an additional language, and to have three from each category at each focus group. Twenty centres on Auckland’s North Shore were visited to deliver recruitment flyers, (see Appendix C). They were selected through convenience sampling, “a form of non-probability sampling that uses convenient participants” (Mutch, 2005, p. 216). This way of recruiting a sample “saves time, money and effort, but at the expense of information and credibility” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.28). However, with time and budget constraints, convenience sampling “takes advantage of cases, events, situations or informants that are close at hand” (Punch, 2009, p. 162). I used my prior knowledge of the cultural and linguistic diversity of children and staff of centres I had visited as an evaluative lecturer. Centres known to be predominantly Pākehā in teacher culture, and lacking in diversity in terms of the families represented, were not included.

In order to recruit participants, I visited centres in person, introduced myself, or reconnected with those who already knew me, explained briefly the research I was doing, and asked the manager to place the flyer I had brought on the staff notice board. This advertisement (see Appendix C) stated the topic of the research and the subject matter of the focus groups, and invited interested qualified teachers, both bilingual and monolingual, to contact me directly, in confidence, if they were willing to participate.

I did not plan to recruit participants directly via centre owners/managers, as these people are in a relationship of unequal power with their staff (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). The intention was that teachers contacted me directly so that there was no coercion from management, and their confidentiality was protected. Participants had the right to

choose whether they participated or not. Coercion describes a situation where participants feel forced or obliged to participate (Mutch, 2005). A maximum of two teachers were recruited from any one centre, and they attended different focus groups, enabling them to speak freely and honestly, and in confidence.

Following the principle of ‘informed consent’, the teachers who responded to the flyer were sent the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix D) about the research and understood the subject matter of the focus groups before they agreed to take part. They had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered. Those who agreed to participate were asked to sign two copies of the Consent Form (Appendix E), one copy for the participant, and the other for me, as this was a form of contract between us (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). I posted these out with a prepaid, addressed envelope. On the evening of each focus group, I checked that I had a signed consent form for each participant before the focus group began, as “research is a partnership that needs to be carefully negotiated before starting” (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 55). I made it clear to participants that they could withdraw their consent up until the data collection was completed (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). As a teacher myself, I planned to facilitate discussion among professional teachers in a spirit of professional partnership.

Vockell (2008) observed that almost always “initial research plans will be reworked” (para. 73). What I had not taken into account in my recruitment planning was that early childhood centres are small, informal work places, where staff work closely as a team. My visits to centres usually resulted in a friendly welcome, and soon there was a team discussion taking place about my research, and which of the team members could best help me with it. I found that potential participants were not prepared to commit themselves until they knew the date and time of the focus groups, so decisions about these arrangements had to be made there and then, based on the availability of the participants. Contrary to my concerns around confidentiality, most participants were happy to discuss these arrangements in front of their managers, and in fact three managers became participants. Two were the only people from their centre to take part. The other manager and her team member attended different focus groups. Only one participant chose to contact me later by phone, and make confidential arrangements to attend a focus group.

I found that the personal approach was essential to recruit the participants. I visited centres late afternoon, around 5.30pm, hoping to speak to staff after most of the children

had left for the day. However, some centres had already closed. In these cases, I left the recruitment flyer in their letterboxes. There were no responses to this impersonal approach. I believe that if I had mailed the recruitment flyer to centres, the response rate would also have been poor. Establishing a personal connection is a very effective method of recruitment. One of the participants supported me by suggesting two other North Shore teachers who she felt sure would be interested. This is known as the ‘snowballing’ method of recruitment (Tolich & Davidson, 2011). Her colleagues did accept the invitation to become participants, so that was very helpful. I showed my special appreciation of this with an extra *koha*, the gift of a recent book on my research topic, which included strategies for practising teachers (Nemeth, 2009). I would like to have been able to give this book to each participant, but budget constraints prevented this.

Participants

Recruitment was more difficult than I expected, because teachers are busy people and many have commitments with their own children in the early evening. The final total number of participants at the focus groups was nine: four at the first, and five at the second. I invited teachers to be involved, but I had to be careful not to place too much pressure on them. In one particular case, I felt sure that the person would be happy to take part, as she was a former student of mine, and we had had a good relationship. She did initially agree to be a participant. However, the timing was not good for her. On reflection, she decided that she already had an extra commitment at the time of the focus groups (family from overseas visiting), and she felt able to email me to tell me that she had changed her mind. Of course, I accepted her decision graciously, and let her know that I fully understood why she had reached this decision. I was disappointed, but I also admired her ability to say ‘no’, rather than take on too many commitments. Because I sometimes visited her centre when I was evaluating student teachers’ practices, when she *was* able to decline, I felt reassured that participants did not feel coerced to participate.

Because Korean and the Chinese languages are the most commonly spoken languages after English on the North Shore (NSCC, 2008b), I planned to include teacher participants from these linguistic communities in the focus groups. I was able to recruit participants who spoke Mandarin and Cantonese, but I was disappointed that no Korean-speaking teacher was available to attend either of the focus groups. This was

one of the reasons I decided to add individual semi-structured interviews with two Korean early childhood teachers whom I was subsequently able to recruit.

It was important to include Korean voices in this research because from my previous work with the community English language organisation, I was aware that the North Shore Korean community was large and active. I understood anecdotally that they strongly valued their language and culture, and many intended to raise their children to be bilingual, despite growing up in an English language environment, where the education provided by the state was in the dominant language.

From my recruitment process, I was able to include eleven teacher participants in this study (see Table 2 in Chapter 4), four native speakers of English, and seven for whom English was an additional language. They taught at nine different centres, and ranged from very experienced teachers to newly qualified teachers. An interpreter was not necessary for this research, as qualified teachers are required by New Zealand Teachers' Council to have achieved a minimum fluency in the English language. All the teachers participated in the medium of English language without any difficulty.

Data collection

Running the focus groups

The focus groups were held in the early evening from 6pm to 8pm, to avoid any conflict with teaching commitments. The two focus groups were planned to be three weeks apart, so that transcription of the first group could be completed and thematic analysis could begin, and any necessary adjustments could be made to the questions for the second focus group. The venue was the AUT University North Shore Campus, away from the participants' workplaces. Participants were given clear instructions about where to park, in a well-lit secure car park, as the groups would finish after dark. The focus groups began and ended on time, acknowledging that the participants were busy people, with other commitments. Each focus group opened and closed with a karakia, acknowledging te reo Māori as the original language of Aotearoa New Zealand. This is an established practice in ECE in Aotearoa.

Participants were made welcome and comfortable, and hospitality was extended with finger food and non-alcoholic beverages, acknowledging that they had come straight from work. The beverages available included green tea, to acknowledge participants from an Asian heritage. The venue was a carpeted classroom in the new education building, chosen because it had tea and coffee-making facilities, and toilets located

within the building. Also I thought that the participants would be interested to see the new building, especially designed for the education of teachers. Cleaners agreed to clean this room last, after 8pm.

Arrangements made to bring a number of participants together in one place for a focus group are always vulnerable, because life is unpredictable (Tolich & Davidson, 2011). Researchers and participants are human beings, and their attendance at any gathering can never be guaranteed. Researchers must be prepared for the unexpected to happen, and need to be adaptable and flexible. When sufficient participants do arrive for a focus group to take place, the researcher needs to make the most of this opportunity, and should express gratitude and appreciation to the participants in appropriate ways.

On the night of the first focus group, only four of the six invited participants were able to attend, because of a clash of commitments in one case, and a misunderstanding about the date in the other. The second focus group fared better, with the arrival of five of the six expected participants. It was fortunate that these participants were still able to come. Over refreshments before we got started, they were discussing the severe tornado that had hit the North Shore that day, at 3pm. None of the centres where the five participants worked had been affected, but they had all received phone calls that afternoon from Ministry of Education staff in Wellington, checking that their staff and children were safe and well. On reflection, I was grateful that these five teachers had honoured their agreement to attend the focus group that night, after a day of atrocious weather and such a frightening event. They were true professionals.

At the first focus group, I ensured that the two audio recorders (one was for backup purposes) were turned on before everyone introduced themselves over the refreshments. Participants were made aware that the recorder was recording. Starting recording at this point made it possible to identify the speakers later when listening and transcribing the recording. It also meant that I was able to capture conversation related to the research topic which took place before the focus group actually began. Some participants were more relaxed and spoke more freely at this point, than when I was facilitating the discussion (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Due to difficulties with having food in a classroom at the first focus group, at the second the refreshments were served in a communal area near to the kitchen facilities, where eating and drinking are permitted. The challenge then was to bring this socialising part of the evening to a conclusion, and move the participants into the adjacent classroom

where the audio recorders were set up, and to get the focus group under way. With all the talk about the tornado, the focus group scheduled for 6pm did not actually get started until 6.30pm. I believed it was important to conclude the evening at 8pm, as promised, so the second focus group ran for only an hour and a half, whereas the first took the full two hours. It was not possible at the second group to have the audio recorder running during initial introductions, as it was set up next door in the classroom.

The previously prepared focus group guide (see Appendix A) was used to provide initial questions, but I adapted it as discussion progressed. The participants' experiences, views and opinions were accepted, respected and recorded. I was aware that as the facilitator or interviewer, "your role is to interview informants, not to cross-examine them" (Tolich & Davidson, 1999, p. 117). With hindsight, I was pleased that I had decided to restrict the number invited to each focus group to six. Even with the small numbers present, I was aware that quieter participants needed more encouragement to express their point of view.

In addition to audio recordings being made, I took handwritten notes during the discussion, indicating the speaker in the margin with the use of initials. These notes proved invaluable during transcription, when it would otherwise have been difficult at times to identify which participant was speaking. At the conclusion of the groups, I thanked the participants warmly for their involvement, and showed my appreciation with a *koha*, a thank you card which included a petrol voucher to cover their mileage. They were accompanied to their cars in the car park.

Conducting the interviews

Five months after the two focus groups, two semi-structured individual interviews of one hour duration took place, using a prepared interview guide (see Appendix B). These were with the Korean teachers who were recruited later, as earlier explained. Both teachers signed a consent form (see Appendix E). I offered the interviewees a choice of venue: a booked meeting room at the AUT University library, or my office at the university. Cafes were ruled out as a suitable venue due to lack of privacy and possible technical issues with audio recording in a noisy environment.

The first participant chose a meeting room in the library at the weekend. This proved to be an ideal venue; it was private, quiet and free of interruption. The second chose my office at the university, during the working day, as she was not teaching every day. This was less ideal. I put a notice on the door stating that a research interview was

taking place, and asking not to be interrupted. Unfortunately, the phone rang twice during the interview. I answered it because the ringing was intrusive, and explained to the callers that I was interviewing and would call back. However, these interruptions disturbed the flow of the interview. I now regret that I offered my office as a venue. It was not a suitable venue, and I would not use it in any future research.

The value of having a back-up recording system was demonstrated during one of the interviews. Somehow, the digital audio recorder was not activated, and did not record. Fortunately the older technology, the tape recorder, did successfully record the interview. I thanked both participants on completion of the interview, and presented them with a koha, a gift and card.

Data management

Vockell (2008) observes that “the human mind is a fast and effective organizer and recognizes patterns in data, but it is not too effective in storing large amounts of finite bits of data” (para. 56). Researchers must use data management systems. Data for this research project were managed both in hard copy, and electronically in Microsoft Word. I found it useful to save relevant articles in PDF form in electronic folders indicating their topic. Transcripts were stored electronically as soon as they were produced from the audio tapes. The tapes themselves, consent forms, and handwritten notes taken during focus groups and interviews were securely stored in separate drawers of a locked filing cabinet. Endnote software was used to record literature used, and notes taken from the literature. It was not, however, used to generate the list of references or the citations. As a part-time student, I found that I was not using the software frequently enough to become totally familiar with it, or to build up a trust in it. I felt more secure creating references and citations manually. I now regret this decision, and would use Endnote to its full capacity in any future project.

Data analysis

Data analysis was a crucial part of the research process. “Research generally employs carefully designed procedures and rigorous analysis” (Mutch, 2005, p. 19). It began during the focus groups and interviews, when I was making “analytical decisions” (Tolich & Davidson, 2011, p. 197) about when to move on to the next question, when to prompt and probe for more depth, and when to explore side streets, or decide to follow the main road. I indicated by an asterisk in the margin of my handwritten notes, when I felt that a significant theme was emerging.

A professional transcriber, who signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix F) was employed to transcribe the audio tapes of the two focus groups. She was provided with my handwritten notes made in exercise books, to assist her in identifying the speakers, and in some cases, clarifying what was said. This saved me many hours of work. Vockell (2008) observes that qualitative research is “enormously labour intensive” (para. 59). I did, however, listen to all the tapes myself several times. Firstly, I was checking the transcription, and having been present at the focus groups, unlike the transcriber, and being familiar with early childhood terminology, which she was not, I was able to make corrections to ensure the transcriptions were as accurate as possible. I transcribed the two interviews myself. This was a smaller task as they covered a shorter time period, and there was not the need to identify the speaker, or any difficulties with speakers speaking at the same time.

The transcripts of the focus groups were printed out and mailed to each of the participants for member checking (Punch, 2009). This method was chosen to preserve confidentiality, as emails can easily be forwarded to other people. However, I felt that it was appropriate to email the transcripts of the individual interviews to the interviewees for checking. This gave them the opportunity to correct any errors in transcription or to clarify their responses further (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). Participants nominated the email address which they wished me to use, to ensure privacy. It was pleasing to receive several replies making corrections and these changes were made to the transcripts.

Once all the data is collected, qualitative researchers “make interpretations of it, impose a meaningful structure, develop variables, and finally present their readers with their understanding of the social entity with which they have been involved” (Vockell, 2008, para. 56). During repeated listening to the tapes, it became clear that certain themes had emerged (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Tolich & Davidson, 2011; Vockell, 2008) from the participants’ thick description of their teaching experiences. Punch (2009) defines thick description as “the emphasis in qualitative research on capturing and conveying the full picture of behaviour being studied – holistically, comprehensively and in context” (p. 360). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) add that researchers themselves should “cultivate their ability to perceive and judge thickly (i.e. using their practical wisdom) in order to be ethically proficient, rather than mechanically follow universal rules” (p. 67).

Electronic colour highlighting was used on the transcripts to identify the themes that emerged from the data, and to make the links between parts of the transcripts which related to the themes. Punch (2009) refers to this as coding. Vockell (2008) describes the process: “Data are pieced together to help determine patterns...and key links that pull together data” (para. 76). In this way, I attempted to “bring together in a meaningful fashion as many items of data as possible into a meaningful whole” (Vockell, 2008, para. 76). An Excel spreadsheet was set up, with columns for each theme. On the vertical axis, each participant was listed. This enabled a logical analysis of the data to be made, while preserving the essential fact of which participant provided the information.

Computer software such as Excel has greatly assisted the process of analysing research data. Mutch (2005) observes that “technical skill in collecting and analysing the data” (p. 19) is required by the researcher. I found that Excel was a great support in the task of data analysis, but it was still a time-consuming process. The next stage of the data analysis process was interpretation, bearing in mind that “it is not the thick, rich descriptions - quotations, vignettes...etc. - that demonstrate the descriptive validity of the report, but all of these combined with the interpretive perspective make the overall presentation valid” (Vockell, 2008, para. 76).

In this chapter so far, I have discussed focus groups and interviews, the recruitment of the participants, and the actual data collection. I have also discussed how I managed this data and have described the approach to data analysis taken in this study. Emergent themes became apparent during the focus group and interview processes.

With the data analysis, the already emergent themes were confirmed. Finally, the data were interpreted in the light of the literature reviewed. All these processes needed to be carried out ethically. This chapter concludes with consideration of the ethical principles that were relevant to this study.

Ethical considerations

All research which involves human participants carried out by staff and students at AUT University must receive prior approval from AUTEK, the AUT Ethics Committee. The preparation of the ethics application gave me the opportunity to consider and plan for the ethical issues raised by this research project. It was important to protect the participants from any harm. An ethical researcher aims to produce knowledge

“beneficial to the human situation while minimising harmful consequences” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 249).

Tolich and Davidson (2011) discuss the key principles for ethical conduct by social science researchers: voluntary participation, informed consent, do no harm, avoid deceit, and confidentiality or anonymity. They emphasise that focus group research is invasive, and can never be anonymous, or confidential. Participants are brought together for focus groups, and interact with each other. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. They suggest that this “ethical dilemma” (p. 158) is dealt with by making it clear in the information given to potential participants at the recruitment stage that confidentiality cannot be assured, but focus group participants will be asked not to divulge who else was present, or what was said. In this way, participants are forewarned, and give their consent to participate being fully aware that confidentiality cannot be promised. This involves the principle of *caveat emptor* or ‘buyer beware’ (Tolich & Davidson, 2011, p. 158).

This was the approach taken in this study. As the researcher, I could not be responsible for the behaviour of members of the focus groups (Davidson & Tolich, 2003), but the consent form asked participants to agree not to divulge either who the other participants were, or the views/opinions expressed. I asked participants to share the name of the centre where they worked only if they wished to do this, and requested them not to ask each other for this information, to preserve confidentiality. Participants were invited to choose a pseudonym to be known by at the focus groups if they preferred that to the use of their own personal name. In fact, none of the participants did that, so I chose the pseudonyms used in this thesis.

“Researchers are obliged to record, analyse and publish their data in ways which prevent the recognition of individuals” (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 78). Reputations and privacy must be protected, as a thesis is public information (Vockell, 2008). When this project is completed, participants will be sent a summary report of the research findings and recommendations. They will be informed how to access the final thesis online in due course, once it has been examined and published. Neither participants’ names nor the centres or suburbs where they work have been revealed in this thesis or the summary report. I have also been careful not to include other details which would enable participants or centres to be identified by those who know them and read this work.

The ethical principles listed by Tolich and Davidson (2011), plus a final one on ethical data analysis and reporting, and how these were attended to in this research project, are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Expression of ethical principles

Ethical Principle	Focus Groups and Interviews
Voluntary participation and informed consent	Participant information sheets were given to each potential participant and opportunity was provided to ask questions prior to participation. Each teacher made an individual decision to participate. Their managers would only know participants were involved if the participant volunteered that information. All participants signed consent forms.
Do no harm	Respondents were able to choose whether they answered questions, to safeguard them from unwitting harm. Participants could withdraw up until the time at which data collection was completed.
Avoid deceit	No deceit was involved. All questions asked by participants were answered.
Confidentiality	In focus groups participants are visible, and named. However, the consent form asked everyone not to reveal who else was there. Colleagues from the same centre were in different focus groups. The transcriber signed a confidentiality agreement. Pseudonyms have been used in the final thesis.
Data analysed and reported faithfully	Transcripts of the focus groups and interviews were given to participants and there were opportunities for corrections and comment. Peer checking of analysis occurred.

Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the methodological framework and the research procedures relevant to this research project. A qualitative approach was most appropriate for this study, empowering participants to provide rich accounts of their experiences with, and their perceptions of, teaching young children from minority

language groups. Focus group interviews and semi-structured individual interviews were ideal research techniques for collecting data for this research project, allowing participants to share their stories with the researcher and each other at the focus groups, and with the researcher at the interviews. I endeavoured to achieve interpretive validity by correctly interpreting the activities and feelings of the teachers in the study, in the way that they themselves would interpret them (Vockell, 2008). I have identified ethical issues relevant to this project and have reflected on them now that the data collection process is complete. The next chapter will discuss the findings of the study, elucidated from the thematic data analysis.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

Ka whangaia ka tupu, ka puawai.

That which is nurtured, blossoms and grows.

Introduction

This whakataukī suggests that for a plant, an animal, a child, a talent, a skill, to flourish, then it must be nurtured. Children's home languages need to be nurtured by their teachers, if they are to blossom and grow with the child. If languages are ignored, like neglected plants, they will wither and die (Wong Fillmore, 1991).

This chapter presents key findings from this study which set out to understand how North Shore early childhood teachers were meeting the needs of linguistically diverse young children. As discussed in the previous chapter, data were gathered from two focus groups and two interviews. The objective of these was to allow the eleven early childhood teachers the opportunity to talk about their teaching experiences and tell stories which would help me as the researcher to understand what they knew about bilingualism. I was interested in whether they were using teaching strategies that would help minority language children develop and learn language and literacy in both English and their home language.

Data were analysed for emerging and recurring themes that would provide an appreciation of strategies used by these teachers to promote bilingualism. Quotes and vignettes in this chapter have been selected based on the richness of their content, and their ability to illustrate each theme. In order to provide an overview of participants, some background information is displayed in Table 2 on the next page.

Seven of the teachers had English as an additional language and four were monolingual speakers of English. Five taught in privately-owned centres, three in public kindergartens, and three at community and church not-for-profit centres. All but one worked with children over two years old.

Table 2: Teacher participants in this study

Focus Group/ Interview	Pseudonym	Home language	Role	Type of centre	Age group
Focus Group 1	Millie	Tongan	Manager	Privately-owned	3 ½ to 5
	Cheryl	Afrikaans	Teacher	Privately-owned	Over 2s
	Jan	English	Head Teacher	Public Kindergarten	3 ½ to 5
	June	Tagalog (Filipino)	Teacher	Public Kindergarten	3 ½ to 5
Focus Group 2	Jeanette	English	Teacher	Privately-owned	3 ½ to 5
	Lorraine	English	Teacher	Public Kindergarten	3 ½ to 5
	Min Jun	Mandarin	Teacher	Community Not for Profit	Over 2s
	Shelley	English	Owner/ Manager	Privately-owned	Mixed 0 to 5
	Jenny	Cantonese Mandarin	Teacher	Community Not for Profit	Over 2s
Interviews	Eun Hee	Korean	Teacher	Community Not for Profit	Over 2s
	Agnes	Korean	Teacher	Privately-owned	Over 2s

There were eight main findings in this study, which are summarised before being discussed in detail. The study found that children's home languages were being supported; bilingual teachers had an important role; communication was taking place in home languages between the children, and with parents and caregivers; home languages were being used to support children's identity and sense of belonging, and their emergent literacy; and all children were benefitting from the diverse language and literacy environment.

However, participants reported a variety of attitudes to the use of home languages in centres. This chapter will explore the varied attitudes of parents, of centre management, and of members of the teaching profession. Finally, some other issues around home language use also emerged, as home languages in mainstream early childhood centres on Auckland's North Shore still presented some challenges.

Home languages supported

The main finding of this study was that both bilingual and monolingual teachers acknowledged and supported the home languages of the young children they taught. They also accepted that early childhood teachers had an important role in teaching English language. Teachers had personal beliefs about the importance of acknowledging and supporting home languages. Asked about the benefits of the child hearing and using their home language at the centre, they were passionate:

Identity, sense of belonging. It makes them comfortable as well. Children who have their own culture, their own language, they need to use it. They need to know who they are, where they come from. (Jan, FG1)

Moreover, the national early childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki* advocates for the child's close connection with their family and community:

When you look at the curriculum and the importance of family and community...if you acknowledge that family is most important to the child, then their first language, and relating to grandparents, and cousins, is just absolutely vital, isn't it? (Lorraine, FG2)

Participants recognised that developing and maintaining the home language was essential to ensure children's close ties to their families were preserved, while acknowledging that children growing up in Aotearoa New Zealand also needed to become fluent in English:

It's important to have grandparents at home, because they can't speak English. Good for the third generation to communicate [with them]. (Min Jun, FG2)

Teachers were aware of the changes in the ethnic makeup of their communities which had resulted in increased language diversity, and of the need for their teaching practice to reflect these changes:

Auckland is really multicultural. We must help children to understand how important their home language is, to value their language and their culture. Let them feel proud of themselves. It's very important, because these children are the next generation. They are New Zealanders. They not only speak English, they also have their own language. It's a huge benefit to New Zealand society. (Min Jun, FG2)

All the centres represented by participants used enrolment and record-keeping systems that enabled them to know the child and the family, and to be aware of the child's language development in both the home language (or languages), and in English. It was

routine practice at their centres to ask parents to provide some key vocabulary in the home language:

The enrolment form...at the back of that, All About Me. So the parents can give information about the child, and another language the child uses at home. I always ask the parents to [provide] some of their language. We ask for simple words, so we can use them in the centre, how to say 'hello' and that. (Millie, FG1)

As the example from Millie shows, teachers demonstrated their willingness to learn some basic words and phrases in the children's home languages, and to use these in their caring and teaching. Both monolingual and bilingual teachers were doing this, and saw it as a way they could reach out to children across the language barrier, and convey respect for the child's home language.

Several teachers talked about the use of home languages at mat time¹¹. Their centres were using greetings from the home languages to ensure that every child felt welcomed, and heard their home language being acknowledged:

What we try to do in morning mat time is say hello to them in their language. I feel our main job is to learn this. Everybody else should say hello too, in Korean, or Mandarin, depending on where they're from. (Cheryl, FG1)

Cheryl believed that learning to greet each child in their home language was the minimum expectation for teachers. Teachers were encouraging all the children to learn these home language greetings and believed that this helped to develop relationships between children of different ethnicities, promoted inclusion, and taught children about diverse languages.

Millie encouraged the use of home languages in learning to count at mat times. Her centre already used te reo Māori and Millie's own home language, Tongan, in teaching numeracy. The words for the numbers one to five were recorded on a whiteboard, in English alphabet letters, as a prompt for the teachers. More languages were added as the opportunity arose, for instance when bilingual student teachers were at the centre on teaching practicum:

¹¹ This is the term commonly used in New Zealand for group time, when learning is teacher-directed.

We just had a student [teacher] from India. One of her goals is to extend language. So I said to her, 'Why don't you introduce your own language?' Because we don't have Hindi...Use numbers from one to five?' And it was just amazing. Now she's gone but we use that [Hindi] all the time now. (Millie, FG1)

As a parent of bilingual children, June was aware of the pressures, conscious and unconscious, on children to shift to the dominant language, in other words, to conform to the majority. She believed it was important for them to hear their language being used at their centre:

It encourages them to learn their home language. Some older children are ashamed of other people hearing them speak their own language. But if you start in early childhood, they see everyone's cool with that. (June, FG1)

Hearing their language used in an English dominant environment normalises it for children. Monolingual children become used to hearing other languages spoken, and learn to accept this as part of living in a diverse society. Participants in this study, particularly bilingual teachers, but also monolingual teachers to the best of their ability, were promoting bilingualism by acknowledging and supporting children's home languages. Nurturing these languages was allowing them to blossom and grow.

Role of bilingual teachers

It was interesting that both the bilingual teachers and the monolingual teachers valued the work of bilingual teachers. The four monolingual teachers acknowledged the importance and necessity of bilingual teachers, and some expressed regret that currently they did not have any bilingual teachers on their staff. The seven bilingual teachers had an important role in their centres. They were using both their languages in their teaching, and felt that they were valued and appreciated by the rest of their team. Bilingual teachers were happy that they could use their home language to support children and other staff, for instance by helping other teachers learn useful phrases in the children's home languages:

Her key carer sometimes comes and finds me and says "Eun Hee, how to say 'Have a good sleep' and 'Time to eat lunch,' 'Hello,' in Korean? She asks 'Am I saying it right?' – the pronunciation. (Eun Hee, Int. 1)

June illustrated how, as a bilingual teacher, she could help other teachers to understand a child's behaviour, and avoid misperceptions:

There was a child...who appeared to be really naughty, because during mat time he was misbehaving, not listening. But when I talked to him in our language, he was so respectful... I told my fellow teachers, 'He's really respectful, actually. I was talking to him, and he said he didn't understand what you were saying. That's why during mat time he's just looking around.' Their perception about the boy changed. (June, FG1)

Min Jun, a Mandarin-speaking participant who taught in a centre where 20% - 30% per cent of the children were Mandarin-speaking, shared how she promoted teacher/child conversations in home language:

When they start, I always encourage them to speak their first language. I can reassure them...other staff ask me to tell them [things], to make sure they understand. When I worked with an under-two group, any time I spoke to an English-as-a-second-language child, [who was] Chinese, I would speak both - English and then Chinese. (Min Jun, FG2)

Min Jun regarded the use of home language with the children as a transition strategy. She acknowledged that parents want their children to learn English, and over many years of teaching at her centre, had often assured parents that this would happen, supported by her bilingual teaching at the beginning:

Parents send their children to the centre for the purpose of learning English, to get ready for school. Gradually, they settle, make friends, they use more English than Chinese. (Min Jun, FG2)

Teachers in this study believed that children who have a teacher who can speak their home language are fortunate, and benefit from bilingual teaching. Bilingual teachers provided examples of how they could help support language development, by using both their languages in their teaching:

A Filipino child was making a house. He was saying [to another child] 'Stop destroying my bahay!' I said, 'He can't understand the word 'bahay'. Say 'house'. He didn't have that concept yet, of which is English and which is Tagalog...he's frustrated because other children can't understand. (June, FG1)

All bilingual teachers felt that it was important for children to have adult role models who were bilingual and who were using both their languages in their work:

Bilingual teachers are very important, a role model for children to see someone confident in using both languages in the mainstream, and when they grow they will keep their own language and English because they have seen a teacher using their language, and taking the class, and they are so proud. So they will speak Chinese or Korean, and they will also speak English. (Agnes, Int. 2)

Bilingual teachers were modelling bilingualism and showing children that both their languages were valuable and worthwhile. They were supporting children to have bilingualism as a goal. They felt rewarded when they saw how much children were supported by having a bilingual teacher:

I really find it fulfilling, on my part, as a teacher, to be able to help. (June, FG1)

Bilingual teachers realised that they also had an important role in communicating with families, and developing those essential links between the centre and the children's homes:

My role is like a bridge between the family and the centre. (Min Jun, FG2)

All teachers acknowledged that it could be distressing for children starting at a centre if none of the adults spoke their language:

One little girl...she's Arabic [speaking]...[she had] no English, and she cried for the first few days...It's hard [the teachers] not being bilingual, but you can use your resources to find something the children are interested in. That helps them, makes them feel secure. (Jan, FG1)

However, they agreed that, realistically, it was not possible to cover all of the children's languages:

At the moment we've got a Romanian child and he's struggling a bit. He's finding it very difficult because the parents don't speak English and he doesn't speak English. (Cheryl, FG1)

Here the participants reflected on the frustration teachers feel when they are unable to communicate with a child or the parents. They were aware of the value of bilingual teachers, but were also conscious that the ideal of having a bilingual teacher for every minority language was not achievable:

I love the diversity in our centre. I think it's really valuable to have a diverse staff, to cater for the diverse community. But that doesn't necessarily mean we have the languages of the children who attend the centre. Although I do think that having diverse staff draws people [of different cultures] in. (Lorraine, FG2)

However, Lorraine believed that even if their language was not spoken by a teacher at the centre, diverse families still felt more comfortable if they could see that the staff included teachers of diverse ethnicities. The diversity of the community was being reflected in the staff of the centre.

Home language communication

Participants were enthusiastic in sharing anecdotes which illustrated genuine communication in home languages happening in their centres: between teachers and children, between children, with parents and caregivers, and among parents. The children had frequent opportunities to hear diverse languages being used.

Children

The strategy of encouraging children to communicate in home language was used by all participants. This group of teachers were reassured by hearing children using their home language. They knew that normal language development was taking place, and that, in due course, the children would also start speaking in English:

We've got two little girls, they're Korean. They get together, they jabber away...I encourage them to speak in their own language. (Jan, FG1)

An experienced teacher recognised that it may be some years before a child's English language was as rich and complex as their use of their home language. Meanwhile, they could use their mother tongue to express their thoughts more fluently:

I like children being able to have those in-depth conversations, which I think are really hard to have, if you're struggling with another language. (Lorraine, FG2)

One participant provided metalinguistic evidence that children were aware that they had been using their home language, and that they felt positive about this:

When mummy or daddy come to pick them up and ask 'What did you do today?' the children say, 'We talked about [...] in my language.' (Millie, FG1)

Some of the teachers were being proactive in encouraging children to express themselves in their more developed home language. June had observed that Filipino children were choosing to communicate in English:

The Filipinos [children] in our kindergarten speak in English with each other, even if they're struggling [with the language]. They probably assume that they need to talk in English. I tell them that I can translate for them [if they speak in Tagalog]. (June, FG1)

June explained that in the Philippines, Tagalog is spoken at home, but English is the language of the education system. Although she had not discussed this with parents, she guessed that they assumed it was the same in New Zealand, and had told their children that they must use only English at kindergarten.

These teachers encouraged older children to support younger ones who shared their home language:

We use the buddy system...when we've got children from the same cultures. It's really nice, if the [new] child's unsettled, for them to take their hands. We've got some older children who will take on that responsibility, and [say], 'Come with me, I'll be your friend' [in home language]. Just that reassurance, and the child settles. (Jeanette, FG2)

Participants recognized the importance of children being encouraged to use their home language to communicate with their peers. They knew that this contributed to children's social and emotional development, and also to their language development in both languages. Caring for children younger than themselves helped to develop the values of empathy and responsibility.

Parents and caregivers

Participants agreed that the use of home language facilitated good communication with parents and caregivers. They valued having bilingual teachers on the staff, or volunteers who could communicate with families, especially at the time of enrolment:

Really important to have some sort of translator, so there's as little misunderstanding as possible. We were fortunate to have some teachers who were bilingual and able to help the transition to us. (Jeanette, FG2)

They felt that once families were settled in, relationships and trust developed, but effective communication at the beginning of the relationship was crucial, and was enhanced by having a bilingual teacher or volunteer interpreter involved. Teachers

reported that they had used bilingual parents as interpreters to communicate with other parents:

We have to use what we can in our community because we don't have teachers with different languages, unfortunately. We've got a couple of parents that have got good English. One's Japanese and one's Chinese. And we use them to translate for other parents who don't have English. (Jan, FG1)

It could be a challenge to find someone to fill the interpreter role. Participants agreed that sometimes an older child is used:

We're always trying to get a supporting person who can come in with them...a translator... if there's no English on the parents' side, we'll invite an older sibling...somebody to come in so that there is open communication. (Jeanette, FG2)

Bilingual teachers believed that their presence enabled good ongoing communication with children's families and caregivers. Difficulties can arise and it is vital to be able to communicate with parents:

If a situation happens at the centre...the parents or the grandparents...I explain and talk to them [in Mandarin], they appreciate. (Min Jun, FG2)

The linguistic capital of adults is acknowledged by giving them the opportunity to use their own language, rather than struggling in English. Participants understood that sometimes parents could speak some English but were embarrassed by their lack of fluency, and they empathised with them:

Parents may have English, but they don't want to speak English with us, and that's fine. (Jan, FG1)

They agreed that in many families, both parents were working fulltime, and grandparents brought children to the centre. Filipino grandparents chose to talk to June because she spoke their language:

We have grandparents who are not confident at all. I notice if they don't see me...they rush out. But if I'm inside, they stay and talk to me and ask about things. (June, FG1)

Teachers described special events held to acknowledge cultural festivals, and other occasions when families are invited to participate. These gave parents and/or grandparents the opportunity to meet and talk to other families who spoke the same home language:

We celebrate Chinese New Year. Korean, Chinese, Japanese wear their costumes. Grandparents are very happy. They look forward to the New Year celebrations. During the year we have several chances to invite parents in...gives them a good opportunity to meet other parents who speak the same language. Grandparents feel really appreciative. They can invite [other children] to their home afterwards to play. (Min Jun, FG2)

Participants recognised that these events played an important role in bringing together families who shared a language, and facilitated their children being able to play together outside the centre, supporting home language development.

It was reported that most centres had greetings in the scripts of the home languages displayed near the entry. One participant reflected on who was intended to see these:

The position of that greeting is more for the parents...it isn't at eye level for the children. (June, FG1)

June recognised that these greetings made families feel welcomed, and also that their home language was acknowledged. When the participants were asked if any information was made available to families in their home languages, it appeared that only the public kindergartens were doing this. The Kindergarten Association provides brochures in home languages:

[We have] our pamphlets that we give out to parents, 'What do I learn at Kindergarten?' in English, Korean, Maori, Samoan, Chinese, Tongan. (Jan, FG1)

Jan acknowledged that this was a benefit of being part of a larger organisation – resources could be shared. But even so, this limited information was currently offered in only five community languages. The multilingual context in New Zealand makes translation of forms and information for families a challenge for centres.

Belonging and identity

Stories were told providing evidence that hearing the home language supported the child's identity and sense of belonging in the centre. Teachers believed that being allowed to use their home language, and having the benefit of a bilingual teacher, increased children's confidence and self-esteem. They thought that a gradual transition to the centre was very important:

We've got about 20-30% English as a second language - most of them are Chinese. Any new children before they start, we encourage them to visit us...they can get familiar with the teachers, the environment and the children as well...Chinese children say, 'Can we speak Chinese?' I think it helps them. (Min Jun, FG2)

Before they start, Chinese children in this centre have already met a teacher who speaks their language, and found out that they are encouraged to use their home language. Min Jun believes that this allays their fears and helps them to settle in happily. Other participants were also convinced of the value of having someone who could speak the child's language present while the child adjusted to the centre environment:

We've got a new little Indian girl [K.] and we have a part-time reliever [teacher] who is an Indian lady [who speaks her language]. K. feels really comfortable with her. For a few weeks, K. did not settle well. But on days the reliever came, she was fine. If the reliever was not there, we had to ring K's mum, she had to speak on the phone with her [in home language] and sometimes mum even had to come back to the centre in the middle of the day. (Eun Hee, Int.1)

Eun Hee explained that because the relieving teacher was not present every day, this situation was almost like an experiment. It was clear to all the teachers, and the child's mother, that the presence of a teacher who spoke her language made an unmistakeable difference to the child's disposition, and ability to cope without her mother, in those early weeks at the centre.

Other instances of children being reassured by hearing their home language over the phone were provided:

If the child is really upset, we say, 'Phone? You want to talk to Mum?' The child knows 'phone'...we ring the parent [and] tell them 'Talk to your child.' Parents understand. (Min Jun, FG2)

None of the teachers reported that parents did not want to be phoned during the day so that they could speak to their child in their home language.

Cheryl had used her Afrikaans language to meet the emotional needs, and manage the behaviour, of children from South Africa. She thought that the home language captured the child's attention because it was familiar:

With the twins...they speak English well now but I speak to them in Afrikaans when they're really upset. Also sometimes they are very active...if you speak to them in English they just carry on and don't listen. So I speak to them in Afrikaans and suddenly they take notice. (Cheryl, FG1)

Teachers had developed strategies for making a connection with children who did not yet speak English. Several participants had discovered that children responded positively to music from their own culture, and songs in their home language. Teachers were being innovative in accessing music and songs from other cultures:

[On]YouTube you see a lot of different languages: nursery rhymes, 'Twinkle Twinkle' in Chinese...I had a practicum where we sang Indonesian songs. I talked to a mum. I asked about the child's favourite Indonesian song. She gave me the titles and I did some research on YouTube and found they were famous songs. And when S. heard it [an under two] she was really surprised to hear her own language. (June, FG1)

The participants told me that they encouraged a family member to stay with all children while they were settling in. This was especially important for non-English speaking children, giving the child support in the home language during this transition time:

One of the things we do at kindergarten is parents or family can stay as long as they like. We often have grandparents staying. (Lorraine, FG2)

Shelley, a childcare centre owner, described how she ensured that minority language children were emotionally settled before being left all day, by requiring that a family member stayed for part of the day for several weeks:

Children with English as a second language actually need a longer transition period. We ask for three to four weeks. We reassess, week by week...by the fourth week we send the parent off to have coffee...so the child is well and truly settled in before the parent starts work. (Shelley, FG2)

Shelley believed that a child who could not comprehend English was more vulnerable than a child from an English-speaking background, and needed a longer transition time. She had found that this prevented emotional distress:

We don't have the home language, so we have the longer transition period and that's the way that we've been able to stop the fretful crying and upset. We try to help that child assimilate into our centre. (Shelley, FG2)

A Korean bilingual teacher spoke of how she empathised with all children from other languages and cultures when they found themselves in an English language environment that did not reflect their culture in any way:

If they haven't got any [bilingual] teacher, haven't got any resources, and no one speaks [their language], no one recognises [who they are]...that's why for me it's not only my language. Any child of different ethnicity in the centre, I try to approach and just listen and stay with them, because it's harder for them, because nobody values them, nobody recognises who they are. I do that for any child, give the recognition: 'It's alright, you are here, and I know you are here, even though we can't speak with each other, we can connect with the feelings.'
(Agnes, Int.2)

Being from a minority culture and language herself, Agnes was able to recognise how these children were impacted by the enormity of suddenly being in an environment that reflected only the majority culture. Without a common language, she had been able to make an emotional, even spiritual, connection. Perhaps young children could identify that she, like them, was of a minority ethnicity, and not part of the mainstream culture. Other participants also talked about what could happen when a child was left abruptly in a centre where no-one spoke their language:

A Korean child was crying...very upset. We didn't have a Korean teacher. The child just kept on crying till he fell asleep, exhausted. It was a big challenge for us...we couldn't respond to the child.
(Jenny, FG2)

Teachers found that it was more challenging to form a responsive, reciprocal relationship with a new child when there was no shared language. They agreed that sudden transitions were hard on the child, and on caring teachers, who did not like to see children in distress.

Promotion of emergent literacy

In all the centres represented, emergent literacy was being promoted to some extent through the use of home languages. The teachers showed a varying degree of awareness of the importance of emergent literacy skills being transferred across languages.

Bilingual participants described the strategy of using both their languages in their literacy teaching, to build a strong foundation for the development of literacy in English, and also literacy in the home language:

When I read books, start with literacy...I often speak both languages to Chinese children to help them to understand. Although they can't speak English back to me, they are building up their understanding, gradually. We have Chinese [language] books... They love their own stories...we often go back to their portfolios. I read them in Chinese, look at the pictures. 'Fish, fish!' 'Mama, papa.' I make each child an album with photos. I think it's important to speak both languages to them, not just one language. It helps them get more vocabulary in English. (Min Jun, FG2)

This experienced bilingual teacher understood that her use of both languages helped to develop the Chinese children's English. She knew that her bilingual teaching assisted them to develop emergent literacy in both English and Chinese, and that the two languages nurtured each other.

June described how she read aloud bilingually in English and Tagalog languages:

I read in English and then translate it into our [Tagalog/Filipino] language so they can follow. (June, FG1)

She understood that reading in both languages gave the Filipino children the immense learning benefit of having a story read to them aloud, before they had developed enough English language to understand the story read only in English.

Participants had found strategies to use the script of the home language to promote emergent literacy:

During sign-in, when the children arrive, they look for their names, and put them on the board. We have the name of a Thai girl written in her language, but she also has her [name in] Roman alphabet letters. We also have two Arabic-speaking children. We have their names in Arabic [script]. So they get to recognise their [script]. (June, FG1)

Some teachers had also acknowledged home literacy practices by involving families in making home language literacy resources:

Here's a camera. Please make a book about your family at home. You put [the captions] in Arabic. I can write the English. And that's worked really well because the Arabic child identifies the Arabic [script]. (Jeanette, FG2)

This activity achieved many educational outcomes. Teachers got to know the child and the family better, links were made between the child's home and the centre, parents learned that literacy in the home language was still relevant for their child, and transfer of literacy skills between the home language and English was promoted.

Some teachers reported with enthusiasm that children were developing literacy in both their languages:

By the time he left us, he was speaking a lot of English, and he was able to share his culture with us: talking to us, counting, writing his name in Japanese and in English. (Jeanette, FG2)

The focus group discussion around the emergent literacy process in minority language children proved to be a useful exchange of understandings for the participants. Some of them had a deeper knowledge than others of the value of bringing home literacy practices into the centre. This meant that some participants took suggestions for biliteracy strategies back to their centres from the focus group.

Benefits for all children

Participants told stories which suggested that all children benefitted from a diverse language and literacy environment. Use of home languages in the centre is stimulating and interesting, for all children:

I was talking in Filipino with one of the children. This boy from Kurdistan said, 'I'm going to learn Chinese, like you'. I said 'We're not speaking Chinese, we're speaking Filipino'. I think it's positive that he's challenged, or inspired, to learn another language. (June, FG1)

June believed that this child's world view had expanded as a result of this interaction. He was setting himself learning goals. Eun Hee recounted a conversation where a Chinese child learned about Korean people:

One child, he thought all the Asian peoples are Chinese. He said 'You are Chinese, aren't you?' [to the Korean child], but when he heard Korean [language] he said 'But this is not Chinese! What language are you speaking?' I explained to him that I am Korean and I speak Korean, and G's mum can speak Korean, so we can communicate together. (Eun Hee, Int.1)

Eun Hee realised that hearing a new language spoken had created an opportunity for this child to discriminate between two Asian languages, and learn about an ethnicity he had not known about.

Teachers believed that it was educationally and socially beneficial for children to have the opportunity to learn a new language. At Min Jun's centre, all children had the opportunity to learn a little in each other's languages:

The children feel very proud of themselves. They build up their relationships. They make friends. They play together outside of the centre. (Min Jun, FG2)

Asked how non-Korean children responded to her bilingual teaching, Agnes reflected:

Quite natural, they just accepted it. Not only the Kiwi children, but all other nationalities enjoyed it. They learned the [Korean] language very fast. They know a few words - numbers and colours. The children wanted to be involved in the Korean activities. So keen to listen, catch a few words. It happened every day. The Kiwi children slowly learned the language. (Agnes, Int.2)

These stories suggest that these young children not only learned language easily, but enjoyed the experience. Being part of a multilingual environment had opened up language learning opportunities for them.

Teachers believed that it was positive role modelling for children when their teachers made the effort to learn words and phrases in the language of a new child who was settling in:

Good for other children to listen and to hear this other language being used in daily life. (Agnes, Int. 2)

They had found that songs in other languages could be appreciated by all the children:

The other children were dancing to it so it was really fun. Those who could not understand [the words], just enjoyed the music. With YouTube they have the visuals. They could see that the song was about ducks and geese. (June, FG1)

Teachers felt that there were also benefits in children seeing the scripts of other languages in the centre environment. They had noticed that when children's names were displayed in the script of their own language, other children noticed and responded:

It's also good with the other children. They recognise that this is not ABC. So they were looking and saying, 'Why is it like that?' So it's also an opportunity to explain that's how they write their name in their language. (June, FG1)

All children at this kindergarten were developing valuable concepts about diverse literacies. Participants concurred that bilingualism had a benefit for everyone and not only for the individual. They believed that young children who experienced multilingual environments accepted diversity in language use as normal. This included children from monolingual families. Teachers felt that all the children would grow up

with positive attitudes, and be more tolerant and accepting of different languages than previous generations.

Attitudes to home language use

Participants reported that they had experienced varied attitudes to the use of children's home languages in centres: from parents; from other teachers; and from centre management (here they were usually reflecting on previous workplaces, rather than their current centre). They had found that there was sometimes a discrepancy between the knowledge they had as professionals, and philosophies and policies in place at centres, or indeed the lack of language and literacy policies. Usually the centre philosophy was determined by the owner, often influenced by the views of the customers, the parents.

Parent attitudes

Teachers had experienced a variety of responses from parents to the use of home languages with their children. Some parents were bringing their home languages into the centre, and others were delighted that their child was learning a new language:

I teach children to sing in Chinese and Korean. Korean parents help us. Not only Chinese and Korean [children participate], lots of New Zealand children. Parents come to me and say, 'It's amazing, my [non-Chinese] child can say a Chinese poem at home'. (Min Jun, FG2)

June, a Filipina teacher trained in New Zealand, was able to speak from a parent's perspective, as well as from a teacher's point of view:

When we first moved here...I wasn't...confident that my children would speak English fluently because they tend to go back and forth between [their] two languages. So what I did as a parent was I provided a copy of key words like 'water', or 'toilet', and provided a translation. (June, FG1)

Other participants agreed that parents could be uncertain about how much English their children would be able to use, or understand, in a new environment with new people, speaking English with different accents. Providing key words in the home language gave some parents reassurance that their children's needs would be met by the teachers, especially in areas of care like food, drink, and toileting.

However, teachers recognised that, on the other hand, some parents had different aspirations for their children:

An Indian [parent] has two girls. He's not encouraging any Indian things with them...They [the parents] have been here for a long time. 'I change my life.' That is what he said to me. (Millie, FG1)

Other parents believed that home language maintenance was the responsibility of parents, and not teachers' concern. Agnes, a Korean teacher, talked about the attitude of some Korean parents to the use of Korean language with their children:

I didn't have any positive reaction from the parents to using the home language, because they expect the children to learn English at the centre. They think it is enough to learn their own language at home. They want their children to learn the different language at the centre. They ask us to use the English language, and they prefer to go to a Kiwi teacher to ask. This is the reality. (Agnes, Int.2)

This was a difficult situation for her, as a bilingual teacher. Jenny, a parent of young children herself, speaks Cantonese and Mandarin, and could understand why some parents wanted their children to hear only English at the centre:

The bottom line: parents always want their children to learn English. They like having a bilingual teacher only when their child is new to the centre...they think 'Too many Asian teachers.' I can't blame them...they are desperate to learn English. (Jenny, FG2)

Participants discussed how they responded to parents when their views on home language use differed from the teacher's professional views. The following comment was typical:

When you talk to parents and tell them how important it is [for children] to be strong in their first language, they go [pulls a face]... [I tell them] 'It's really important that you don't mix the [languages] at home, because it's really hard, how does the child stay strong in one language?' (Lorraine, FG2)

The teachers agreed that parents were relieved when teachers told them that their child would learn English quickly:

I explain to the parents, 'You don't have to worry about whether they speak good English. Their English is fine. They will learn...they will catch up very fast because they're so young.' I say 'The most important thing is that they have to have one language that is really strong.' (Min Jun, FG2)

These teachers tried to help parents to understand how important it was for their child to stay strong in the home language. They reported that some parents definitely wanted their children to grow up knowing two languages:

We had a Korean boy. He had friends he could talk to in Korean. The parents wanted him to learn English but they also wanted him to be bilingual. (Millie, FG1)

They were aware that on the North Shore, many children were taken to home language schools by their parents:

The parents really encourage it because they take their children to schools in the weekend. They want them to have English but they want them to keep their language too. (Jan, FG1)

But they recognised that not all parents felt that it was important for their child to keep developing in the home language. Sometimes these teachers felt that their role was to promote bilingualism to parents:

I did meet some parents who said 'I want my child to avoid any Chinese at home. I want him to learn English here [in NZ].' I said 'Why? He's fortunate enough to learn both languages at the same time! It's smart to learn both languages. Don't worry about his English.' Their purpose was to send the child to the centre to learn English. 'He's in New Zealand' [they said]. [I said], 'Don't forget you're Chinese. Speak Chinese at home. There will be a benefit for the child.' (Min Jun FG2)

Learning stories are the current form of assessment in New Zealand early childhood centres. They are shared with parents, who are invited to respond or comment. A sociocultural view of assessment is promoted by the Ministry of Education (2005a, 2005b). The *Early Childhood Exemplars* include learning stories and parent responses to them written in home languages. One of the bilingual teachers had trialled writing learning stories in the family's home language:

We tried putting it [a learning story] into the language of home. Learning stories are a [official] document. What the parents want to see is just English. I had this experience...some parents were concerned. (Jenny, FG2)

This teacher had made a genuine effort to communicate with parents in the home language about their child's learning, but it was not appreciated by these parents. They expected communications from their child's centre to be in English. However, another bilingual teacher felt that Chinese parents' attitudes were changing, and she was seeing more understanding of the value of bilingualism:

Talking with the parents today, more and more parents understand that keeping their first language is very important, at home. Rather than a few years ago, when they thought they just wanted their child to learn English. [Now] they think it's an advantage to speak both languages. (Min Jun, FG2)

Min Jun believed that it was because some New Zealand schools were now teaching Mandarin, that more Chinese parents could now see advantages in their child growing up knowing both Mandarin and English.

Management attitudes

Participants with management roles were supportive of the use of home languages in the centre environment. When asked about children communicating in their home languages, they were enthusiastic:

I think it's important for us not to discourage them. It's important for us to encourage them. (Millie, FG1)

Even though I don't understand, that's their language, that's their comfort zone. (Shelley, FG2)

We've got a Japanese boy [who] doesn't speak any English, but we've got a Japanese girl and we've buddied them up. She's got good English so she can tell us what he wants. She will start talking to him and just sort of soothe him which is really good. We can pick up on her [Japanese] words as well. (Jan, FG1)

They saw the value of bilingual resources, and asked parents to help with providing them, or created some themselves:

We've had Arabic children so we have books [in Arabic script]. We ask the families who go overseas to get us a book. (Shelley, FG2)

I make some Tongan books myself. Like numbers, and a little book on the family, 'My brother', all in Tongan. They're good resources...you can use them with the children to support their language. (Millie, FG1)

We've just done Space. We said, 'We'll focus on star and sun.' We asked the different parents from different cultures what star and sun meant to them and we could put that up for the children. (Jan, FG1)

I had been planning to review centre policies as part of the methodology for this study, but when I asked about documentation, none of the participants were able to provide a centre policy on cultural and linguistic diversity.

I was not surprised that there was no criticism of the participants' current management (this would have been taking a risk), but stories were told of previous experiences of

unfavourable management attitudes to the use of home languages. Because they were aware that managers have different expectations on this, when starting work at a new centre, bilingual teachers had taken care to gain approval before using their home language with children:

When I was on practicums, the teachers were not very happy at all with my speaking Afrikaans. They told me to speak English. Even though I didn't speak it much, just little sentences here and there. [So at my present centre] I cleared it. I asked, 'Is it OK if I speak Afrikaans?' They were pleased and they encourage it, because it does help the children to feel more at home. (Cheryl, FG1)

June teaches at a public kindergarten where she is encouraged to use her home language. She believes that she was employed there to provide better communication and liaison with children and their extended families from the Philippines:

In the ERO [Education Review Office] report [for this kindergarten] there was a comment about lots of Filipinos: 'How are you going to support them?' ...I really felt the importance of having someone...because I was thinking, this child, if I wasn't here...nobody would really understand what he's trying to say. (June, FG1)

Some other centres also appear to have an informal policy of employing bilingual staff:

I think in the North Shore area, the centres try to [have] many different ethnicities of teacher. It's not only Korean and Chinese, but other ethnicities, even Russian. I think that's a good way, to have different languages that can be heard, and [children] can see all the different ethnicities of the teachers. (Agnes, Int.2)

However, simply employing bilingual staff does not ensure that a linguistically responsive pedagogy is practised. Bilingual participants in this study all had management support of their bilingual teaching. But several recounted past experiences of centres where there was no mandate for the use of home languages. Monolingual teachers and those in management roles supported home languages in their practice, but this support had not been formalised in centre policies.

Teacher attitudes

The varied attitudes of teachers in general to the use of home languages in mainstream early childhood centres were revealed through stories told by participants, based not only on their present centres, but also on past experiences. Some of the bilingual teachers agreed that they had received mixed messages from management and other teachers about the use of their home languages in their teaching. Sometimes tensions developed with colleagues over taking too much time, or favouring particular children.

They felt that there was a need for policy to legitimate their bilingual teaching. Monolingual participants in this study valued the role of bilingual teachers and saw their employment as an ethical commitment to families.

Agnes had worked in a childcare centre where the children's home language was not welcome:

They [the teachers] did that to Korean children...when they use the Korean language between the children [they] tell them to use English. And the Kiwi children picked that up, and then they told off the Korean children too: 'English! English!' (Agnes, Int.2)

But she has also had positive experiences at centres where teachers encouraged her to use Korean language with Korean children when she was a student teacher on practicum:

When I do some activity with the children, I used the Korean language too, like counting, and colours, and songs, like we have the Korean version of 'Twinkle, Twinkle', or 'Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes'. (Agnes, Int. 2)

Teachers had asked her to add vocabulary labels in Korean language to the existing ones in te reo Māori and English that were placed around the centre. This is a biliteracy strategy.

Millie is supportive of bilingual student teachers on practicum using their home language:

I always encourage my student [teachers]. When we have students [with] other languages, I encourage them to participate [in home language] because when they're gone we can use those resources for other children when they come in. I think it's important for us. (Millie, FG1)

Eun Hee, however, recounted a friend's discouraging practicum experience:

One of my [Korean] friends...her Associate Teacher wasn't happy, because they had a group of Korean children there, four boys, who were always speaking Korean together, and they liked to hang out together. At mat time, they were very quiet, and not really joining in. My friend thought that she could support them by speaking in Korean with them. But the AT said 'They are here to learn English, not Korean, and I would like to see you speaking English more, rather than Korean, to them.' (Eun Hee, Int.1)

Although the existing body of knowledge supports children learning in both their languages, there are still strong views held by some parents, teachers and management,

and also by politicians, about language use and the implications of multilingual policies. In New Zealand English is the language of power (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007), and those who do not have it as a home language want it, both for themselves, and for their children.

Other challenges

Finally, some other challenges presented by the use of home languages in centres emerged. Sometimes parents expressed concern about interactions which took place in home language:

We do get comments from parents. Sometimes they're not positive. They are about the behaviour of one child that's detrimental to another child in the group. Because they're speaking in their [home] language we can only read their body language. We don't always know what's going on...there's one group I'm thinking of... they were intimidating one of the children. That's really hard to pick up. (Lorraine, FG2)

Teachers had concerns about children being unpleasant to each other or one child being controlling when home language was being used:

I have found when they talk to each other in the home language, one [child] is a bit dominant. I suppose this goes with their personality. She will say, 'You sit down. You sit on the chair' in their language. The other one will follow. (Millie, FG1)

But despite these issues, the participants all believed that children needed the opportunity to communicate in their first language, and that it would be wrong to try to stop the use of home languages.

Jan, Head Teacher at a public kindergarten, sometimes had issues with student teachers around overuse of their home language:

I felt that she wasn't interested in all the other children. She was only interested in her culture – two children. I said, 'Look, you're here to get this practice with everybody, and while I respect your culture and that you're using your language, which is great, you have to be able to communicate with all the children. (Jan, FG1)

Jan explains to bilingual students that they need to balance the use of the home language with some children, with the use of English with the majority of the children. They could not be seen to favour certain children.

Millie, a centre manager, had decided that her teachers needed to learn some basic words and phrases in the children's home languages:

We have got a challenge for the future. They have to learn some Mandarin. They have to learn some words...so it helps with the children, when they say 'toilet', they need to know. Also they have to learn some Māori as well. It's a challenge for them. I think that's my challenge, getting the staff to get familiar with that. (Millie, FG1)

She acknowledged that for staff there was a dual challenge: the expectation that they were able to use te reo Māori words and phrases appropriately in their teaching (MOE, 1996), and now also an expectation that they learned key words in the home languages of all the children from different ethnicities. For monolingual adults who had not learned another language before, this could seem daunting.¹²

The issue that generated the most discussion among participants, however, was whether home language conversations between bilingual teachers and parents/caregivers should be interpreted for the benefit of other teachers. It became clear that there were different opinions on this issue. It was one of the monolingual teachers who raised the matter:

Do other teachers expect you to translate? Do they want to know what they [parents] are saying? Are they concerned about what you say to the parents? (Lorraine, FG2)

Another monolingual teacher responded:

I've been in that situation and I've said to the other teacher, 'What did you say to the parents?' Because I felt quite foreign, you know. I didn't really know what was going on. (Jeanette, FG2)

Some of the monolingual teachers then defended the right of bilingual teachers to have conversations with parents without being expected to provide a translation:

There's got to be trust. If you don't trust your other teachers... (Shelley, FG2)

The monolingual teacher who had raised the matter, perhaps more out of curiosity than concern, reflected on typical teacher conversations in English with parents, which happen every day:

¹² Learning new language as an adult is a complex and demanding task (Scheffler, 2008).

Would you ask a teacher who was talking to a parent in English, what they had said? If you saw them talking [but could not hear], would you ask what that conversation was about? (Lorraine, FG2)

One of the bilingual teachers then responded:

You asked if I speak Chinese to parents... If other staff are around, I always tell them [what was said]. I think it is a part of being a professional, having respect. When other staff talk to parents [in English], you understand what they say. It's not fair for them, when I speak in Chinese. They don't understand. That relationship [is important]. (Min Jun, FG2)

Min Jun had clearly thought about this issue, and decided that her relationship with colleagues was too important to risk any misunderstandings. Monolingual teachers then supported her, agreeing that the issue was 'respect' for colleagues:

It's about respect, isn't it? (Jeanette, FG2)

And wanting you to be part of the team. (Lorraine, FG2)

Min Jun gave an example of when she would interpret for colleagues:

Even when they [parents or grandparents] point to something, if they're concerned about what we do, they see I translate to the other staff. Other staff can...be aware of that. (Min Jun, FG2)

She took care to include her colleagues if family members shared concerns about any aspect of teachers' professional work. The families could see that she shared everything they talked to her about. The discussion concluded with a rounding-off statement by a monolingual teacher:

We had an incident with a grandparent. So the teacher translated to the grandparent [in home language] and then she said, 'I'm telling the [other] teacher in English what I've just told you.' I mean, it is about respect. So the granddad knows what's happening between the teachers. So we all know. (Jeanette, FG2)

The participants at this focus group appeared to reach a consensus at this point that home language conversations with parents/caregivers should be interpreted, out of respect for colleagues, and also so that everyone was 'on the same page'. It was interesting that no-one raised the issue of confidentiality. There must at times be conversations in English with parents which teachers choose to keep confidential, rather than sharing the information with all teachers on the staff.

On reflection, I believe that this discussion about interpretation suggests that the position of the bilingual teacher can be rather isolated, especially if there is only one bilingual teacher on the staff. Bilingual teachers are probably aware that language issues are sensitive and sometimes controversial, and they have learned to tread carefully to avoid conflict and promote harmony.

Summary

In setting out to discover how a group of North Shore early childhood teachers were meeting the language needs of linguistically diverse children, this study made some interesting findings. This chapter has outlined eight significant findings from the data. Overall, the study found that all of these teachers were convinced of the benefits of bilingualism. The four monolingual teachers reported that they respected and appreciated the work of bilingual teachers. The bilingual teachers believed that their role was important, and that their centres, and many parents, valued their contribution.

In all nine centres represented, teachers believed that home languages were welcomed, and used to the extent that was possible, given the linguistic abilities of their staff. In centres without bilingual teachers, parent volunteers were used as interpreters, and teachers informed me that they endeavoured to learn basic words and phrases in home languages to facilitate communication with young children only just beginning to learn English.

In all centres represented in this study, teachers stated that children were encouraged to communicate with their peers in their home language. The participants believed that children using their home language were supported in their sense of belonging and their identification of self. The extent to which home language use, and the visibility of home languages in the centre, impacted on bilingual children's emergent literacy development was understood in more depth by some teachers than others. This will be discussed further in the next chapter. All the participants declared that a diverse language environment benefitted all children, both those who were bilingual and monolingual children.

However, there were challenges shared. Not all parents, teachers, and centre managements are convinced that home language use in mainstream early childhood centres in New Zealand is of benefit to minority language children. Some still believe that an English language only environment is the best way to support children to

become fluent and literate in English. This means that bilingual teachers who wish to use their linguistic strengths by teaching bilingually have to choose their workplace accordingly.

Other issues presented deserve further discussion in the early childhood profession. One of these is the ethical issue around interpretation of conversations which take place with parents in home languages. Another is the matter of monitoring children's communication with each other when the teacher does not understand the language they are speaking. This has implications for the teaching of social competence. Finally, the issue of how bilingual teachers and student teachers should balance the use of English and their home language arose. In the next chapter, aspects of the findings are discussed in more detail in the light of the existing literature.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Ma te huruhuru ka rere te manu.

Adorn the bird with feathers so it can fly.

Introduction

This whakataukī uses the imagery of a bird - without feathers, it could not fly – to convey the message that people need to be given appropriate tools in order to succeed. All teachers want their students to fly. To empower linguistically diverse children to fly, we must provide them with feathers: the tools, skills and dispositions they need to navigate our education system, and to soar in to adult life.

In the previous chapter, eight themes were identified through the thematic analysis of the focus group and interview data. In this chapter, those eight themes are discussed in the light of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Teaching strategies, or best educational practices (Gonzalez, 2009) that meet the language and learning needs of young children with diverse languages and literacies are identified and discussed. The literature indicated that bilingualism should be the goal for all children who have home languages other than the dominant community language, which in the New Zealand context is English. All the participants in this study agreed that bilingualism was the ideal educational outcome for linguistically diverse children. Each teacher shared her experiences of teaching strategies used to foster bilingualism in her centre.

Of the eight themes identified in this study, seven were consistent with the literature. These included the main finding, that bilingualism was encouraged by teachers acknowledging and using home languages in the centre (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007; Nemeth, 2009; Tabors, 2008). This study found that bilingual teachers had an important and valued role, as also indicated in the literature (Cummins, 2001a, 2009; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Makin et al., 1995). Home languages were being used for genuine communication in the centres, between bilingual teachers and children and their family members, and between children who shared the same language, which is regarded in the literature as best practice (Beller, 2008; Nemeth, 2009; Vukelich et al., 2008). The participants believed that home language use in their centres was supporting children's "bilingual identities" (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007) and their sense of belonging in the centre. This is also consistent with the literature (Bardige & Segal, 2005; Cullen et al., 2009; Cummins, 1999, 2001b).

Additionally, participants were supporting the development of literacy in emergent bilinguals by bringing home literacy practices in to the centre, a highly recommended strategy (Barratt-Pugh et al., 2006; McLachlan, 2007, 2010; Jones Díaz 2007). The finding that some participants showed deeper understanding of contemporary sociocultural literacy theory than others (ERO, 2011) will be discussed later in this chapter. All participants agreed that all children, monolingual and bilingual, benefit from a linguistically diverse environment, again consistent with the literature (Bialystok, Luk, & Kwan, 2005; Makin & Whitehead, 2004; Skutnabb-Kangas, Maffi, & Harmon, 2003).

This study found that, beyond this group of teacher participants, attitudes to home language use and bilingualism varied among parents, centres' management, and teachers in the field, with some not supporting home language use in centres. It was noted in the literature (Tabors, 2008) that it can take a long time for academic knowledge to become generally accepted, and for people to change their personal beliefs. This is because they have to make a paradigm shift in their thinking, rejecting old knowledge which they have believed to be true (Arrowsmith-Young, 2012).

The final outcome of this study, concerning some of the challenges of home language use in centres which were raised by participants, was unable to be located in the literature. These concerns deserve further exploration. As sociocultural theory is the theoretical perspective of this thesis, in this chapter each of the themes will be examined through a sociocultural lens. Finally, it is important in this chapter to identify teaching strategies that other early childhood teachers could possibly use to support young children and their families to achieve the goal of bilingualism.

Promoting bilingualism

The main finding of this study was that this group of teachers were promoting bilingualism through the use of a linguistically responsive pedagogy (Harvey, 2011; Tabors, 2008). The participants understood that “continuing development in one’s first language can support the learning of English and wider cognitive development” (Department for Education and Skills, 2003, p. 2). They knew that it was vital for children to become strong in their home language, because language and literacy skills in the first language are transferred to English (August & Shanahan, 2006, 2008). They based their practice on their knowledge that development of the home language creates the foundation for learning other languages (Gonzalez-Mena, 2006; National Literacy

Trust, n.d.; Paradis et al., 2009; Tabors, 2008). They helped parents to understand that full proficiency in the first language contributes to the development of English (Cummins, 2001a; Gonzalez-Mena, 2006; Tabors, 2008).

Jenny, a multilingual participant raised in Malaysia, shared that she had language development issues herself. Her home language was Cantonese, the language at primary school was Malay, and the medium at high school was English. She felt that she was not strong in any of these languages, so when she came to New Zealand, she enrolled in an English course, because she needed one language that was strong. Based on her own experience, she can confidently advise parents on the importance of keeping home languages strong.

It is the responsibility of all teachers to promote home languages, and not only bilingual teachers (NAEYC, 1995; Nemeth, 2009; Tabors, 2008). Agnes described a young Kiwi teacher who enthusiastically learned songs in Korean from a CD and sang them with all the children, obviously enjoying it as much as they did. Korean children, who had until then been shy and silent, warmed to her. Agnes believed that this teacher's strategy, and the stronger relationships that resulted, empowered and motivated Korean children to learn. This teacher used her personality and her commitment to diversity to make a connection with these children.

Gonzalez (2009) has developed the "ethnic-educator philosophy" (p. 2) which posits that the teacher's personality is the most important tool in the teaching of young diverse children, especially those from a low socio-economic status background. Teachers do not have to be from ethnic minorities themselves, or speak a minority language, to be successful with diverse children. Rather, they need to have developed social and moral responsibility, and see themselves as mentors, advocates, liaisons, and cultural bridges between the mainstream school (or centre) culture and young diverse children and their families.

Teachers' attitudes, expectations, cultural beliefs and values, knowledge level, and familiarity with diverse languages and cultures, have been found to be factors that affect their teaching (Gonzalez, 2009). Any teacher can choose to make a commitment to respecting and celebrating diversity among her students, and to believing in and nurturing their potential. Teachers who make that choice then need to become "knowledgeable about pedagogical models and strategies that meet the diverse educational needs" (Gonzalez, 2009, p. 2) of diverse young children. All the teacher

participants in this study appeared to have made that choice. They had discovered teaching strategies which enabled them to connect with CALD children, and they were motivated to learn more about linguistically responsive pedagogy.

For parents, the challenge of maintaining the home language in their children, while living in an English-dominant society, is huge. They have to balance their concerns about home language preservation with their aspirations for their children in the new country (Adair & Tobin, 2008; Brooker & Woodhead, 2010; Pacini-Ketchabaw & de Almeida, 2006). Teachers used the strategy of providing encouragement to parents to keep using the home language at home, and to find ways of motivating their children to keep developing in it (Baker, 2000; Drury, 2007; National Literacy Trust, n.d.; Smalltalk, n.d.)

“We encourage you to keep your home language. It’s great for the children to be bilingual...It opens doors for them here and back in their [home] country. Please, please, keep your own language.” (Jan, FG1)

Participants showed understanding of the sociocultural theory underpinning the early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki* (Carr, Hatherly, Lee & Ramsey, 2003; Cullen, 2003; Fleeer, 2003). They understood that the home language is the ‘glue’ which holds the family together, and how important it is that children can continue to communicate in depth with their parents, siblings and extended family (Cummins, 2001a; Han, 2012).

The role of bilingual teachers

Harvey (2011) researched the linguistically responsive pedagogy of five bilingual teachers working with bilingual children in English-medium ECE services in the Auckland region. She found that the presence of a bilingual teacher enabled the definition of children as ‘bilinguals,’ avoiding a view of the child as “a language learner rather than a user of languages” (Harvey, 2011, p. 32) which is usually the case in English-medium settings (Cummins, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2008; Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins, 1988). Bilingual teachers provide the crucial home language input needed in educational settings – bilingualism does not happen without support (Wong Fillmore, 1991; Paradis et al., 2009).

This study supports Harvey’s (2011) finding that bilingual teachers give a voice to bilingual children and their families. Bilingual teacher participants believed that they had a valuable role in their centres. They reported that they used home languages to have conversations with children, and to support their learning. Nemeth (2009) states

that it is a sign of a high quality programme when bilingual staff are having rich, interesting conversations with children in their home language, and using it to “foster learning rather than just using it for classroom management” (p. 22). Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tongan, Tagalog and Afrikaans languages were being used by bilingual teachers in this study to have rich interactions with children, and these teachers were well aware of the learning benefits that these children were experiencing.

Bilingual teachers in this study agreed with Nemeth (2009) and Patè, (2009) that non-English-speaking children can be judged as having behaviour problems, when their lack of engagement is actually caused by their inability to understand. This type of judgment reflects a deficit approach (Baker, 2000, 2006; Cummins, 2001a, 2001b; Drury, 2007; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Nemeth, 2009), where teachers focus on what a child cannot do, rather than identifying the child’s strengths. Bilingual participants saw it as their role to advocate (Gonzalez, 2009) for these children. The question in the ERO report for June’s kindergarten, asking how Filipino children would be supported, had assured June that her use of Tagalog in her teaching was pedagogically appropriate and appreciated by her colleagues. All the bilingual teachers in this study were convinced that their use of home languages was important for children, especially those who were just beginning to learn English:

So I think I built up a good relationship with them because I could speak the same language. They felt safe, comfortable and secure.
(Min Jun, FG2)

It was a matter of concern, however, that some of the bilingual teachers in this study indicated that once children knew English reasonably well, it was no longer necessary to use the home language with them. In fact, the literature strongly recommends the continuing use of home language by bilingual teachers, alongside English use, in order to maintain the home language and prevent language attrition or loss (Dixon et al., 2012; Gonzalez-Mena, 2006, 2011; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007; NAEYC, 1998; Paradis et al., 2009; Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke, 2000; Tabors, 2008; Tabors & Snow, 2001; Wong Fillmore 1991). Bilingual teachers need this information in order to justify to parents and colleagues their continued use of home language with emergent bilingual children. Families may wish their children to be bilingual, but if their children only ever hear English being used in their centre, this is unlikely to be achieved (Makin et al., 1995). However, in an atmosphere supportive of the home language, it is less likely to be lost (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007; Tabors, 2008).

Language and literacy are sociocultural tools (Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). An additive approach (Adair & Tobin, 2008; Baker, 2006; Cullen, et al, 2009; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; NAEYC, 2009b; Tabors, 2008; Vukelich, et al, 2008), where English is added to the home language rather than replacing it, respects the child's sociocultural context (Cummins, 2000, 2001a; Gonzalez, 2009; Tabors, 2008). Genuine ongoing communication between bilingual teachers and children provides children with a meaningful space to use their home language outside the home, and enables them to continue their development as emergent bilinguals (Jones Díaz, & Harvey, 2007; Kaur, 2010; NAEYC, 1998; Wong Fillmore, 1991). In this study, June reflected on the need to motivate children to maintain their home language. Young children use language for a purpose, to communicate in real situations. They are not interested in learning a language for academic purposes. They need to be shown that their home language can be used for genuine communication:

They have to understand why they have to learn [their home language]. I tell my children, we're going back to the Philippines every so often. And you won't have any friends if you don't learn the language. I was telling them if you can speak the language you can get real good bargains, shop for toys, so they have motivation. (June, FG1)

The strategy that many activities should be presented in both English and the child's first language is recommended, as concepts learned in one language are transferred to the other (Makin et al., 1995; Gonzalez-Mena, 2011; Tabors, 2008). Nemeth (2009) agrees: "in general, teachers should provide some degree of daily support for each child in her/his own language" (p. 20), because a child's home language is their major tool for learning (Brooker & Woodhead, 2010, p. ix). Bilingual teachers in this study were using this strategy to support children's learning.

Simply employing bilingual teachers, however, is not enough. They must be given a mandate to use their home language(s) in the ways described above, to actively support bilingualism. Education Review Office (2011) critiqued centres which employed bilingual staff but were not using them to provide differentiated instruction or rich language interactions in home languages and literacies. One of the items in the Education Review Office (2011) self-review sent out to centres prior to their visit was "our educators are aware of and understand bilingualism and biliteracy". (p. 41). Bilingual teachers need the support and encouragement of management and colleagues who are well-informed on language and literacy development in CALD children. The bilingual teachers in this study believed they had that support.

Home language communication

The literature (Genishi, 2002; Nemeth, 2009; Smith, 2009; Tabors, 2008) supports the use of home languages for genuine communication in the centre. Children should be encouraged to use their home language with their peers (Beller, 2008; Vukelich et al., 2008). Bilingual teachers enable enhanced communication and development of relationships with parents and extended families (Adair & Tobin, 2008; Makin et al., 1995). It is beneficial for children to hear adults role-modelling (Gonzalez, 2009) their home language. This normalises and validates it for them.

Children

All participants in this study used the strategy of encouraging children to communicate with each other in their home language, believing that children were fortunate if there was another child who shared their language. Beller (2008) and Paradis et al. (2009) agree that it is very important for children to continue to socialise and build relationships in their home language while learning the new language. This contributes to their social and emotional wellbeing, and their development of communication, thinking and social skills in the home language, which will transfer to English, and lay the foundations for literacy in both languages (Barratt-Pugh et al., 2006; Genishi, 2002; MOE, 2009c; MOE, 2010; Nemeth, 2009; Smith, 2009).

Moving to English language only in the educational environment increases the risk that the home language will 'plateau' and cease to develop as the child matures. As discussed above, being able to continue using their home language ensures that children are dual language learners (Nemeth, 2009), developing in two languages simultaneously. Cummins (2009) opined that "active suppression of students' language and culture" (p. 262) which had historically occurred in English-dominant education systems, had now been replaced by "benign neglect, a less obvious but perhaps equally effective conduit for coercive relations of power" (p. 262). But the attitude of some New Zealand teachers (not involved in this study) to children's use of their home language can still be construed as "active suppression of...language and culture":

They [the teachers] did that to Korean children...when they use the Korean language between the children, [they] tell them to use English. And the Kiwi children picked that up, and then they told off the Korean children too: 'English! English!' (Agnes, Int.2)

Agnes reported that mainstream children picked up the attitude role-modelled by teachers, and bullied the Korean children. A policy of English language only breaches

both the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UN,1989) and the *New Zealand Bill of Rights* (New Zealand Government, 1990), both of which uphold the right of children in Aotearoa New Zealand to use their home language. Parents are entitled, and should be advised, to lodge a complaint with the Human Rights Commission if their children's language rights are denied (Human Rights Commission, 2011). Brooker and Woodhead (2010) queried whether there was sufficient coverage of respect for cultural diversity and the universal rights of the child in teacher pre-service and in-service training.

Conversely, a sociocultural pedagogy involves strategies which promote bilingualism, including the encouragement of children's use of home languages in their play, and shared learning activities in home languages (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009a; Cullen et al., 2009; MOE, 1996). Nemeth (2009) recommends the strategy of involving bilingual children in activities that enrich the language interactions in the centre, such as setting up small groups of children to work together in their shared home language, or having them perform a song in home language. Cultural performances promote literacy (ERO, 2011). Participants in this study were using these strategies.

Jeanette, a monolingual Pākehā, remembered a time in Aotearoa New Zealand, predating the above rights instruments, when Māori children were forbidden to speak te reo Māori at her rural school. This experience had stayed with her, and contributed to her present positive attitude towards children communicating in home language:

I can still remember, 'We don't speak that language here!' In the playground, the children were told off for using Māori. Keep the languages going, I say. (Jeanette, FG2)

All teachers in this study, both bilingual and monolingual, understood the importance of children communicating with each other in home language, and encouraged children to do this. They buddied confident children with new arrivals who spoke their language, providing home language support for the younger child. They knew that as children developed their English language ability, they would also form relationships with children who did not share their home language, and they would communicate with them in English. In this way, both the child's languages were being nurtured.

Parents and caregivers

To parents from non-Western cultures, the concept of teachers and parents working in partnership may be unfamiliar (Gonzalez, 2009). They may expect teachers to be the 'experts', and may assume that the centre will be an English language only environment. But a sociocultural approach, where parents are recognised as the most important and influential people in children's lives, promotes strong partnerships with parents and incorporates their funds of knowledge in the curriculum (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009a; Cullen et al., 2009; Gonzalez et al., 2005; MOE, 1996).

The literature suggests that at the first meeting with parents at enrolment, some key written information about the centre should be given to them, in the home language, if possible (Nemeth, 2009; Terrini, 2003b). At public kindergartens, brochures for parents were available in some community languages, but the large number of languages on the North Shore makes the provision of information in home languages challenging for centres. Nemeth (2009) suggests the strategy of recruiting parents on to a Translation Committee, to assist with preparation of home language materials.

Also at enrolment, participants put themselves into the position of language learners, asking parents to provide some key words in their language to enable staff to meet the child's basic needs, as suggested in the literature (Kirmani, 2007; NAEYC, 1995; Nemeth, 2009). Teachers in this study saw this strategy as part of their professional practice, inviting parents to work in partnership with them, as required by *Te Whāriki*. As recommended in the literature (NAEYC, 2009b; Nemeth, 2009; Vukelich et al., 2008), if a bilingual teacher was not available, they used an interpreter, often a parent volunteer or, failing all else, a sibling, to gain as much knowledge about children's existing language skills as possible. These language records are referred to frequently in the literature (Kirmani, 2007; McLachlan, 2007; Vukelich et al., 2008) with Nemeth (2009) calling them "home language surveys" (p. 21). At this first meeting with parents, participants in this study signalled through their use of these strategies, that the child's home language was respected and was important.

Bilingual teachers in this study reported that their ongoing regular communication with parents and family members was beneficial for creating the important links between home and centre, which are strongly recommended in the literature (Bardige & Segal, 2005; Drury, 2007; Makin et al., 1995). Any issues which arose could be resolved smoothly:

*If a situation happens at the centre...the parents or the grandparents...
I explain and talk to them, they appreciate. (Min Jun, FG2)*

Conversely, centres without bilingual teachers described communication breakdowns which had occurred. They used parent volunteers or cultural brokers, as suggested by Nemeth (2009) and Vukelich et al. (2008), to interpret for them on important matters, like allergies and teacher-only days.

Belonging and identity

A child's home language is the vehicle for their cultural identity, as well as the major tool for learning (Chang, 1993; Kaur, 2010; Kirmani, 2007). Brooker and Woodhead (2010) state that "coping with a different language of instruction at preschool, or with conflicting values and expectations, can be very challenging for young children, and can have long-term implications for learning" (p. ix). Cummins (2001a) warns that "whether we do it intentionally or inadvertently, when we destroy children's language and rupture their relationship with parents and grandparents, we are contradicting the very essence of education" (p. 16). Kaur (2010), an Indian teacher living in New Zealand, shared that her "scariest thought was of my children losing their language, culture and identity" (p. 47).

The participants showed an understanding that identity is closely connected to the home language, as stated in the literature (Cummins, 2001a, 2009; Gonzalez-Mena, 2006, 2011). Teachers in this study agreed that it was desirable for children to maintain their home language. June, the Filipina teacher, is aware that her wish for her own children to maintain the Tagalog language while living and being educated in New Zealand, will require commitment from her as a parent. Several participants mentioned that they were pleased when children had grandparents living here who did not speak English, because they believed this would ensure that the children continued to develop in the home language and culture, through rich interactions and quality time spent with grandparents.

However, teachers in this study expressed concern that some parents had decided to make English their family's home language, now that they lived in New Zealand, a danger that Brooker and Woodhead (2010) warn teachers about.

If the child only speaks English, and he is Chinese, it is hard for him to live in the future...he has to know where he comes from, and which language he can speak. At the moment, maybe the parents are happy about it, but I hope it is not too late to realise. (Agnes, Int.2)

The participants advocated with parents, as recommended by Gonzalez (2009), for children to be raised to be bilingual. Interestingly, a Filipina child whose mother now spoke to her in English was motivated to develop her Tagalog when she realised that June spoke the Filipino language. The child could count to ten but asked June to teach her the numbers after ten in Tagalog. When June heard the child singing a nursery rhyme in Tagalog, she invited her to perform at mat time, a strategy recommended by Education Review Office (2011). Having a Filipina teacher helped this child to conceptualise her identity as a Filipina New Zealander, which Gonzalez (2009) states is an important reason for having a diverse teaching team.

She was sharing her culture. I told her it's OK to use her own language. (June, FG1)

Min Jun has taught in her centre, which has a large proportion of Chinese children, for fifteen years. She was not aware of any Chinese families where the children had moved to English and no longer spoke the home language. Min Jun is well-respected in her community. She gives wise, professional advice on language development and maintenance to Chinese parents. She believes that her centre attracts so many Chinese families because they know that she is a Mandarin speaker, and their child will receive bilingual support from her.

Kirmani (2007) believes that teachers need to treat each child's name with respect, by learning to pronounce it correctly, because their name is an important part of children's identity and self-esteem. Teachers in this study encouraged families to keep using home language names, and made an effort with pronunciation of them. A strategy recommended is that teachers display children's names with photos, and say them as often as possible, so that English-speaking children learn the names, and positive peer relationships develop (Vukelich, et al., 2008).

Participants believed that emotional support, nurturing, and gradual transitions, were especially important for children who do not have English, and are therefore not yet able to express their preferences or their fears in words. They had adopted strategies recommended in the literature (Gonzalez-Mena, 2006, 2011; Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 2012; Nemeth, 2009; Vukelich et al, 2008), like making mat time at the beginning of

the day a welcoming time, when teachers connect with each child by name and greet them in their home language. They helped children to connect with each other and learn each other's names, through practising these multilingual greetings, and learning songs in home languages.

Participants recognised that mat time can be a stressful experience for children who are not yet able to understand very much of what is said, and therefore find it hard to concentrate. Nemeth (2009) noted that “newer curriculum models are reducing or eliminating” (p. 25) group teacher-directed time in diverse centres, in favour of more small group learning and differentiated teaching. Education Review Office (2011) also recommends the strategy of differentiated instruction for children of different ethnicities and languages.

Bourdieu's (1977) contribution to sociocultural theory was the concept of cultural and linguistic capital, discussed in Chapter 2. A linguistically responsive pedagogy affirms the linguistic and cultural capital of families and children, ensuring bilingual identities (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007).

Promotion of emergent literacy

As Dyson (2001) states, “learning, especially learning an expressive system like written language, is not divorced from one's identity and history, but, of necessity, embedded within it” (p. 139). Literacy learning has been reconceptualised in the light of sociocultural theory. A contemporary, sociocultural perspective sees literacy as a social and cultural practice in diverse communities (Barratt-Pugh, 2000b, 2007; Comber & Reid, 2007; Jones Díaz 2007; Makin, 2003).

The participants in this study realised that in order to make links with children's home literacy practices, which is considered in the literature (Barratt-Pugh et al, 2006; ERO, 2011) to be a very important literacy strategy, they needed to have literacy resources in children's home languages. These were not easy to locate locally, so they used the strategy of asking parents to donate books and music CDs in their family's language, as recommended by Bradford (2009). Teachers also made use of bilingual picture books from public libraries:

I use [bilingual books] a lot. I bring the [bilingual] Wombles from the library, or I bring a Korean book, and give the children the English version. (Agnes, Int.2)

Paradis et al. (2009) recommended the online International Children's Digital Library (n.d.), a source of digital children's picture books in many languages and scripts. Teachers in this study were not aware of this site. However, participants recognised that music and songs are a form of literacy, with one centre involving parents in teaching songs in home languages to all children, and all centres encouraging cultural performances, which are regarded as an important literacy strategy (ERO, 2011).

A sociocultural pedagogy involves a holistic approach to literacy learning (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009a; Cullen et al., 2009; MOE, 1996). Participants regretted that the current government had stopped producing resources in Pasifika languages, despite research by McCaffery (2010) which confirmed the value of home language literacy resources for Pasifika children living in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Some centres asked parents to provide the child's name in the home language script for name recognition, where children arriving at the centre find their own name on a card and display it, a literacy strategy advised in the literature (Love et al., 2007; Nemeth, 2009). They had noticed that this strategy had resulted in not only bilingual children learning to write their names in both their literacies, but also in learning about other literacies for monolingual English-speaking children, which is discussed later in this chapter. Participants from other centres said they would use this strategy in future.

'This is Korean language; this is how Korean people write. Can you see any difference in the letters?' One child responded 'There's a circle inside!' (Eun Hee, Int.1)

All centres had greetings in home languages displayed near their entrance, but on reflection participants realised that these were designed for parents to see, and were not at children's eye level. In some centres, bilingual teachers had been encouraged to place home language labels around the centre, alongside the existing ones in English and te reo Māori, a literacy strategy recommended by Barratt-Pugh (2000b) and Makin (2003).

Bilingual teachers in this study used the strategy of reading stories aloud in English and in home languages. At large mat times, there were time constraints, so they preferred to read to children as individuals or in small differentiated groups, as advocated by Education Review Office (2011) and Nemeth (2009). This is good teaching practice. The children are hearing the English language modelled, guessing the meaning from the

pictures, and having the meaning confirmed through the translation. Prediction is an important reading skill (Barratt-Pugh et al, 2006).

Some participants showed deeper understanding of contemporary sociocultural literacy theory than others did. Parents and family members were being invited to share their culture with the children in activities like cooking, but few participants mentioned “drawing on parents’ knowledge of their child’s home literacy practices” (ERO, 2011, p. 30) by inviting them to “teach games & songs, read stories, go on walks, field trips or just visit to have home language conversations with the children” (ERO, 2011, p. 22). Only Min Jun mentioned using parents to teach songs in home language. These activities draw on parents’ funds of literacy knowledge (Cummins, 2001b; Gonzalez et al, 2005; Moll, 1992). Both the international and New Zealand literature (Bardige & Segal, 2005; Colombo, 2005; Doull, 2010) recommend that parents are invited to read, or tell stories, to children in their home language, either during the normal session, or at special literacy events. This strategy shows parents that their home literacy practices are valued (ERO, 2011), and that they can support their children’s developing literacy (August & Shanahan, 2006; Tabors & Snow, 2001).

Benefits for all children

Participants had observed that a multilingual environment benefitted all children. The early years are the optimal time for language learning (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007) and teachers reported how interested and enthusiastic children were to learn greetings, songs, poems, words and phrases in new languages. This was not formal structured learning, but learning in a meaningful social context, developmentally appropriate for children of this age (ERO, 2011; NAEYC, 1998). Monolingual parents had expressed their surprise and delight about their child’s language learning.

Participants reported that children were also curious and interested in diverse literacies, as indicated by Barratt-Pugh (2000a, 2000b, 2007). Using Korean language picture books in her teaching, Eun Hee had drawn the attention of all children to the script, inviting them to compare it with the English alphabet, and children had responded with perceptive comments. Learning to read requires the development of close observation skills, which enable discrimination between symbols which are very similar but different (Barratt-Pugh et al, 2006). Having the opportunity to see diverse scripts and compare them sharpens children’s eye for detail (Makin & Whitehead, 2004). In the

early stages of literacy, dual language learners will often combine elements of their own language's script with English alphabet letters (Bialystok, 2001; Barratt-Pugh, 2000b). If other children have been exposed to a variety of scripts, they may be more tolerant and understanding of this practice, realising that some children are learning to write in not only one language, but two (Gonzalez-Mena, 2011).

A multilingual environment also develops tolerance towards other languages and literacies (Cummins, 2001a, 2009). June noted that children can become embarrassed, even ashamed, about using their home language, when they realise that it is a minority language. They may experience teasing or bullying from English-speaking children, as reported by Agnes. But when teachers role-model acceptance and celebration of language diversity, children learn these values too: "If children live with ridicule, they learn to be shy...if children live with tolerance, they learn to be patient...if children live with fairness, they learn justice" (Nolte, 1954/1972, para. 1).

That's how we start to build a society that's non-discriminatory. We start with the young ones. They are used to different faces, different languages. (June, FG1)

An early childhood setting is a sociocultural context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It should be a community of learners (Bruner, 1996; Cullen et al., 2009; MOE, 2005a; Rogoff, 2003) where the "meanings and practices of all cultures" (Cullen et al., 2009, p. 5) are valued. All children's languages and knowledge are valid, and through co-constructed learning, teachers and children learn from each other. Every child develops self-esteem, identity, pride in their own heritage and respect for the heritages of others (Gonzalez, 2009).

Attitudes to home language use

Parent attitudes

It is acknowledged in the literature that parents may encourage their children to learn a language other than the one used at home, because it offers social or economic advantages (Brooker & Woodhead, 2010). Parents can be influenced by monolingual discourses which regard the home language as an "impediment to success" (Pacini-Ketchabaw & de Almeida, 2006, p. 316). It may be that they feel that it is the parents' responsibility to develop and maintain the home language, and not the teachers' concern (Adair & Tobin, 2008; Pacini-Ketchabaw & de Almeida, 2006).

Parents can be pushy; they know what they want for their children. They come to New Zealand saying, 'My child will speak English, my child will go to an English school.' (Shelley, FG2)

Participants reported that they had experienced these attitudes from some parents. Brooker & Woodhead (2010) state that “parents’ views must be listened to if programmes are to meet local needs” (p. 35), but also remind teachers that “at the same time, respecting cultural diversity is not an alternative to ensuring children’s basic rights” (p. ix). Children have the right to use their home language (UN, 1989; New Zealand Government, 1990).

Teachers are currently working in a policy vacuum. Ministry of Education policy on bilingualism and biliteracy is urgently required (Harvey, 2011; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007). Centre policy based on this would allow teachers to “justify their literacy practices to parents” (ERO, 2011, p. 29). Because Educational Review Office (2011) uses a broad sociocultural definition of literacy, the term “literacy practices” includes the use of both home languages and literacies in centres.

Not all parents, however, resist the use of home languages with their children. Participants reported that other parents are contributing to centre programmes from their funds of literacy knowledge (Moll, 1992; Comber & Reid, 2007; Cullen et al., 2009; McLachlan, 2007), and want to see their children develop fluency in both their languages.

I think parents like seeing children of the same culture [as their own] in the centre. It's much harder when they come in, when it's an individual [only one child with that home language]. Being able to link in with another family. (Shelley, FG2)

It would be supportive of both parents and teachers if information in community languages was made available to parents here, as it is in other countries, on recommended strategies for raising a bilingual child (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009b; National Literacy Trust, n.d.; National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education, 2009; Smalltalk, n.d.).

Management attitudes

The literature (ERO, 2011; Pacini-Ketchabaw & de Almeida, 2006) acknowledges that teachers need strong leadership from their management in the area of bilingualism and biliteracy. The participants in this study with management roles were showing leadership in the fostering of bilingualism. Millie encouraged her student teacher to

teach children to count in Hindi, her home language, while Shelley invited student teachers to share their culture and language:

When I have a student [teacher] from another culture, I say, 'Tell us. This is your culture'...even though we don't understand each other [language], we're building those bridges to come together, to do our best to understand where each other's coming from. (Shelley, FG2)

Trainee teachers would leave these centres feeling that their ethnicity and language had been recognised, and that they had contributed to the awareness of diversity at the centres. They will know that home languages are valued there, and will be encouraged to develop their ability to teach bilingually.

The participants in this study felt fortunate to have the backing of their management for the support they gave home languages, but noted that in other centres they had experienced, there was no support from management for bilingual teaching or the encouragement of children's home languages. McLachlan (2007) recognised that it is difficult for educators to keep up to date with theory and appropriate practice. Her research has shown that many teachers are still using "the eclecticism of theory and practice" (p. 26) that she documented 10 years ago.

McLachlan (2007) had particular concerns for literacy development in children for whom English is not a first language, because she believed that many teachers were unfamiliar with the literacy as social practice lens, and therefore not aware of the importance of knowing what literacy experiences children have had at home. She believed it was crucial that in the transition from home to centre or school, links were made for the child between home literacy practices and the literacy practices of the educational setting. This required teachers to know as much as possible about the child's home language and culture, and to carefully monitor the child's progress in literacy in English, so that early intervention and extra support could be put in place where needed.

Te Whāriki was published sixteen years ago, and has not been revised. It was underpinned by sociocultural theory, and therefore acknowledges children's sociocultural context, and home languages as sociocultural tools, but it is not strong in providing teaching strategies to promote bilingualism (McLachlan, 2010; McLachlan & Arrow, 2011).

The body of research knowledge on bilingualism and biliteracy (Barratt-Pugh, 2007; Harvey, 2011; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007) and on literacy development (McLachlan, 2007, 2010) has grown steadily over the years since *Te Whāriki* was written. Our curriculum needs to be updated to reflect current knowledge and to require management to institute teaching strategies which promote bilingualism and the retention of children's home languages (Fleer, 2003; McLachlan & Arrow, 2011).

Teacher attitudes

Teachers in this study supported children's home languages, but felt that they needed more support from the Ministry of Education now that they were working with such diverse groups of children. They queried the policy that CALD children generate extra funding for schools, but not for early childhood centres.

It would be great if we could get bilingual teachers in all centres...with the dominant [minority] languages. Maybe the Ministry of Education can come up with an idea? It would be very helpful for everyone. (Jenny, FG2)

They would like to be able to access advisors fluent in community languages. For example, it was difficult to identify language delay when no-one at the centre spoke the child's language and the child was silent. Teachers could sometimes discuss the child's language development with parents, but believed that this was not always satisfactory.

The lack of funding and advisory support at early childhood level for working with linguistically diverse children (Terrini, 2003b) reflects the common belief that young children pick up new languages quickly and without any apparent effort (Tabors, 2008). In fact, it can be years before they catch up with monolingual English-speaking children (Cummins, 2000, 2001a). Although research (Gonzalez-Mena, 2011; Tabors 2008) shows that continuing development of the home language supports the acquisition of the new language, early childhood teachers still have a responsibility to ensure that CALD children learn English.

This thesis has focussed on bilingualism, and the continuing development of the home language to support that goal, but teachers in this study also shared that they have needed to develop their skills in teaching English. Language is "caught" (Gonzalez-Mena, 2011, p. 369), rather than taught, at this age. Teachers have learned to be more intentional in their speech, ensuring that they are modelling vocabulary in context, and remembering to make comments and statements rather than asking questions which children are not yet able to answer, strategies recommended by Tabors (2008) and

Vukelich et al. (2008). Teachers in this study have appreciated professional development opportunities to increase their skills and strategies for teaching English in a way that is meaningful for young children. This is important because well-developed spoken English is associated with English reading comprehension and writing skills when bilingual children go to school (August & Shanahan, 2006).

The participants differed in their views on the main purpose of early childhood education, as discussed by Gonzalez-Mena (2006, 2011). Several felt that parents send their children to an English language setting in order for them to learn English so that they will be successful at primary school. This parental view is reported by Adair and Tobin (2008). Teachers with this belief felt that they had a responsibility to prepare children for school. Min Jun believed that her bilingual teaching helped Chinese children to achieve a good standard of English by the time they were five.

On the other hand, Lorraine, a monolingual kindergarten teacher, had a different view. For her, the goal was for children to be able to form relationships, feel secure at the centre, be able to communicate their needs, and learn through following their interests, a view consistent with Tabors (2008). These differing views reflect diverse views in society about the purpose of early childhood education.

Bilingual teachers in this study saw themselves as a bridge between the centre and the child's family, a metaphor used by Gonzalez (2009). They reported that they advocate for CALD children when their behaviour is being judged by monolingual teachers, as urged by Kaur, (2010), Gonzalez (2009), and Patè (2009). Colombo (2005) and Delpit (1995) believed that occasions which bring families and teachers together provide an opportunity for teachers to hear children and parents communicating in their fluent home language. This experience can change teachers' preconceptions and attitudes to CALD children and their families, as reported by Harvey (2011), and enable them to develop more empathy, as children are best understood within the sociocultural context of their family (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Gonzalez, 2009). If teachers have lower expectations of children based on their culture and language, CALD children cannot develop and learn to their full potential (Barratt-Pugh, 2000b; Comber & Reid, 2007; Department for Education and Skills, 2003; Han, 2012).

Other challenges

The final theme consists of challenges when home languages are used in centres. Although these cannot be related directly to the literature, all of them deserve further exploration and discussion by the early childhood profession.

Early childhood teachers use the opportunity to teach social competence (Gonzalez, 2009) when they overhear children being unpleasant to each other. But when these interactions are taking place in another language, teachers reported that it can be difficult for staff to realise what is happening:

They were speaking their own language. I knew they were saying 'You can't play with us.' I asked them, 'Are you using nice words today?'
(Jan, FG1)

Participants agreed that this was not a reason to discourage home language use, but that teachers needed to be aware of body language, and be prepared to intervene, as they do with all children when behaviour is inappropriate. The concept of social competence is likely to vary between cultures, and cultural values are one of the most subtle and difficult areas to learn about when migrating to a new country. When diverse cultures are represented within a centre, teachers need to ensure that all families and children have a shared understanding of the behaviours that are expected of them.

Bilingual student teachers using their home language with children, while on teaching practicum at a centre, emerged as an issue. These potential bilingual teachers are encouraged by their lecturers to use both of their languages in their teaching. In their study, they are exposed to the views of international experts (Gonzalez-Mena, 2006, 2011; Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 2012; Tabors, 2008) who promote the use of home languages, and who alert teachers to the risk of children losing their home language when they enter an English-only environment. Stories told by participants suggested that student teachers could be receiving different messages from their training providers, and from practising teachers in the field, on the use of their own home language. But it could be a matter of balance. In their enthusiasm, student teachers may be overdoing their use of home language, or focussing inappropriately only on children who speak their language. More guidance is required for them, as it is for bilingual teachers, from Ministry of Education or Education Review Office, on how to balance use of their languages.

However, the ethical issue of whether home language conversations with parents should be interpreted, for the benefit of other teachers, emerged as the most serious concern. Bilingual teachers need guidance here from their profession, as their position can be an isolated one. It has been reported in the literature (Harvey, 2011) that they sometimes have to justify their bilingual pedagogy to colleagues, when it seems to monolingual teachers that it takes too much time, or favours certain children. Some of the monolingual participants, seeking a fair and just resolution of this issue, reflected that teacher conversations with parents in English are not always audible to other staff, or may take place simultaneously, and are therefore not shared with other teachers.

I've had students who have been fluent in Chinese and they've spoken to Chinese parents in Chinese...I didn't feel threatened... [they] would always say, 'Do you want to know the English translation?' I said, 'No, no, it's fine'. (Shelley, FG2)

The concern with interpretation is an example of a monolingual discourse (Harvey, 2011; Pacini-Ketchabaw & de Almeida, 2006), reflecting that multilingualism in the workplace is a fairly recent phenomenon in New Zealand. However, the right of adults to use their own language has been protected by the law for over 20 years (New Zealand Government, 1990). Moreover, the literature (Cullen, et al, 2009; Gonzalez et al, 2005; Gonzalez, 2009) has urged teachers to build rapport with parents and to work in partnership with them.

Insistence on the interpretation of home language conversations reflects an 'English only' ideology which is still widespread in New Zealand and internationally. English is a power language. The concerns of some English monolinguals about the use of other languages, without interpretation being provided, is about institutionalization of unequal power relations in education (Baker, 2011; Cummins, 2009). Critical multiculturalism seeks to raise our awareness that simply learning about other cultures does not bring about change in the way people of different ethnicities and languages relate to each other (May, 1999; May & Sleeter, 2010).

Summary

This study aimed to appreciate the strategies that were used by a group of early childhood teachers on Auckland's North Shore to promote bilingualism in their teaching practice within a sociocultural context. This chapter has highlighted the important findings of the study and how they related to the literature. I examined the teachers' beliefs about how best to approach educating linguistically diverse young children in

New Zealand, and discussed teachers' pedagogy and identified strategies for maintaining children's home languages, while also ensuring that they acquire English.

The valuable role of bilingual teachers has been recognised, and the strategies they use to implement a linguistically responsive pedagogy have been explored. It has been suggested that all diverse centres need bilingual teachers on their staff. It may not be possible to provide a bilingual teacher for every language represented at centres, but reflecting the diversity of the community in a diverse teaching team is still considered to be essential.

Teachers reported that they recognised the importance of communication in home languages being facilitated in centres, between teachers and children, between teachers and parents/caregivers, among the children themselves, and among families. They understood that language cannot be separated from culture, and that it is vital for children to continue to develop in their home language while acquiring English, in order to preserve their identity and their sociocultural context within their family and community.

Emergent literacy was being promoted to some extent by bringing home language literacy practices in to centres. But, as the Education Review Office (2011) observed in their report, based on reviews of hundreds of centres, more could be done in this area. Some literacy specialists believe that literacy for all children, bilingual and monolingual, is not being well implemented in many centres (McLachlan, 2010; McLachlan & Arrow, 2011). There is a need for current research-based literacy theory to be made available to educators in easily accessible form (ERO, 2011).

It seemed that all children were benefitting from their teachers' use of strategies to support linguistic diversity. Yet it was reported by participants that not everyone is in favour of home language use in centres. The varied attitudes of parents, management and teachers in general were considered in this chapter. Cummins (2001a) observed that a linguistically responsive pedagogy was still controversial in many countries, resulting in a wide variation of policies and practices. This seems to be the case in New Zealand also.

Historically, culturally and linguistically diverse children living in English-dominant societies have been regarded as a 'problem' and have been "prescribed participation in English-medium services as a remedy" (Harvey, 2011, p. 34). It is time that this deficit

view of language diversity was relegated to the past. A sociocultural perspective respects and celebrates linguistic and cultural diversity. Children are seen in their sociocultural context, and it is recognised that culture is inherent in language. Retaining their home language allows children to continue to be active members of their sociocultural communities. Educators have a responsibility to use teaching strategies which ensure that young children's home languages are nurtured. With feathers, the birds will fly into "bilingual futures" (Harvey, 2011, p. 4).

In the concluding chapter, suggestions are provided for future research possibilities that arise from this research, the challenges of this research are discussed and recommendations are made with regard to the implications of these findings for early childhood teacher recruitment, pre-service education and ongoing professional development.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Ko te manu e kai ana i te miro, nōna te ngahere.
Engari, ko te manu e kai ana i te mātauranga, nōna te ao.

*The bird that consumes the miro berry, owns the forest.
However, the bird that consumes knowledge, owns the world.*

Introduction

This whakataukī is the te reo Māori equivalent of the well-known Chinese proverb ‘Give a man a fish and you have fed him for one day: Teach him how to fish and you have fed him for life’. Both proverbs extol the lifelong benefits of education, which gives us the tools for independence and widens our horizons from the immediate context to the international one. A linguistically responsive pedagogy in early childhood builds strong foundations for school and gives “lifelong access to bicultural heritages and bilingualism” (AKTESOL, 2012, p. 1).

This study explored the experiences of a group of North Shore early childhood teachers and the strategies they used with young children who were potentially bilingual. It examined teachers’ beliefs about and attitudes to bilingualism, and the use of home languages in the centre environment. It was focussed on eleven early childhood teachers who accepted an invitation to be part of a focus group, or to be interviewed, on the topic of diverse languages and literacies in early childhood education. Some were very experienced teachers, while others were in their first year of teaching since completing their training. Seven of the teachers were bilingual, having English as an additional language. Four teachers were monolingual native speakers of English. They taught in nine different centres.

A large body of literature on diverse languages and literacies in early childhood education was identified. Most of these studies were international, from the USA, Canada, the UK, and Australia. Not very much literature is situated in a New Zealand education context, or specific to the New Zealand early childhood sector. There is a lack of literature in New Zealand focussing on bilingualism in early childhood education, especially concerning languages other than te reo Māori or the Pasifika languages (Terrini, 2003b). This study was designed to help address this gap in the New Zealand literature. I have provided insights into some North Shore early childhood teachers’ beliefs and practices around teaching culturally and linguistically

diverse children, as captured in the lived experiences and thoughts shared in the focus groups and interviews.

This research aimed to examine the teaching of young emergent bilingual children from the perspectives of monolingual and bilingual early childhood teachers working on Auckland's North Shore. As the researcher, I have "attempted to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5), but there are no right answers. Each teacher spoke from her own world view and this research project has facilitated their voices being heard.

Research question

The research question was:

What teaching strategies are used to meet the language and learning needs of young children with diverse languages and literacies?

In this thesis, this question has been answered through the voices of the participants. They have individually and collectively described the teaching strategies they used to meet the needs of linguistically diverse children. In Chapter 5, I made the links to the literature, which demonstrated that this group of teachers were using strategies which are regarded as best practice internationally.

Strategies for promoting bilingualism

Many teaching strategies that promote and foster bilingualism emerged in this study, both from the literature and from the data. The overarching theme that emerged from the data was that home languages were being used and heard in all nine centres represented by participants, and that bilingual teachers were being supported to use their home languages with emergent bilingual children and with their families and caregivers. Furthermore, bilingual teachers were teaching bilingually, and not simply using their home languages for management purposes (Nemeth, 2009).

Even in the centres where there were currently no bilingual teachers, strategies which promote home languages and bilingualism were being used. Parent volunteers were being recruited to support the monolingual teachers by acting as interpreters for parents and caregivers, and ensuring that important information was received and understood (Tabors, 2008). Children were being not only permitted but encouraged to communicate with peers in their home language (Beller, 2008). This trend, I believe,

will continue as bilingual student teachers on practicum were being supported to use their home languages in their teaching practice, and to communicate with children's family members in their home language. All centres were using the strategy of asking for key caring vocabulary in the home language and teachers were making an effort to learn these words for using with the children.

Cultural diversity was being reflected in displays at the centres which included environmental print in home languages, especially greetings. A few centres were also using the strategy of children's names being displayed in home language script for name recognition purposes. Some teachers were going even further, asking for key words in the current learning theme to be provided in home languages, for example the words for sun, moon, and star as part of a space theme. Some were involving families in the creation of home language literacy resources, such as a book about the child's family, with photos, and captions in the home language and English. All of these strategies involving both the oral and the written language have been shown to promote the development of emergent literacy in both languages, also known as biliteracy.

Children's sense of identity and belonging were being fostered through the use of their home languages and the cultural displays, and also by the music, dance and songs of their culture being used in the centre. Teachers were being innovative in sourcing home language resources for teaching from the internet, including YouTube. Family members were being invited into centres to share their funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005), which could be seen when a Japanese mother made sushi with children. Some centres organised cultural events for special occasions like Chinese New Year, which brought families with the same home language together.

All these multilingual and multicultural teaching strategies were benefitting all children at the centre, who all had the opportunity to expand their world view and to learn a little of another language. Parents of monolingual children were delighted that their children were learning songs and poems in other languages, and equally, emergent bilingual children were being introduced to new languages and cultures. All children were, therefore, becoming accustomed to a multilingual environment and thus learning the values of tolerance, empathy and social justice.

In summary, these teaching strategies to promote bilingualism are:

- Encouragement of use of all the children's home languages in the centre – by teachers, children, parents and community members;
- Appointment of bilingual teachers who speak the dominant community languages, and giving them encouragement to use their home language in their teaching practice;
- Encouragement of everyday communication in children's home languages, between children and teachers, between teachers and parents/caregivers, and among the children themselves;
- Supporting children's sense of identity and belonging by including their language in the curriculum through songs, poems and stories, and encouraging cultural performances;
- Making diverse literacies visible in centres through environmental print, picture books in home languages, making bilingual resources and using internet resources like www.childrenslibrary.org; www.globalkidsoz.com.au/; www.multiculturalkids.com/ and www.multiculturalchildren.co.nz/;
- Working in partnership with parents, using their home language skills to help achieve all of the above;
- Involving *all* children in these activities because they will all benefit and their encouragement will support emergent bilingual children.

If all teachers and managers took on these strategies, we would ensure that children born into families who have a home language other than English, could grow up bilingual, fluent and literate in English *and* in their home language. They would take pride in their dual heritage and contribute to the richness of this country's diversity.

Research contribution

I believe that this study has made a contribution towards providing evidence for the benefits of a linguistically responsive pedagogy. There is little New Zealand literature on this aspect of bilingualism. Most of the focus until now has been on te reo Māori and the Pasifika languages, and increasing the participation of these groups in early

childhood education. But, as discussed in Chapter 2, New Zealand is now one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world (Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007). At least 56 different home languages are spoken on Auckland's North Shore (ELP, 2012). The children attending early childhood centres reflect this linguistic diversity.

Yet centres are responding to diversity in different ways. The centres represented by the participants in this study are responding positively, actively seeking teaching strategies that enable them to meet the language and learning needs of young children with diverse languages and literacies. The participants were aware that they could do even more, and were hungry for professional development in this area.

Nevertheless, they told stories of their own and others' past experiences in other centres which appear to indicate that some centres are not responding to linguistic diversity. This appears to be because management or other teachers have their own beliefs about what is best for minority language children living in an English-dominant country. They are convinced that being submersed every day in English language is the key to learning English. Bruner (1996) referred to these individual beliefs, unsubstantiated by research, as intuitive theories or folk pedagogies.

It appears that some parents are also uncertain about the best strategies for promoting bilingualism in their children. Some believe that it is their own responsibility to maintain the home language, and that it is the responsibility of the education system to teach their child to speak English and become literate in English. A small number even appear to believe that the best strategy is for the whole family to move to speaking English only. It is vital that the existing knowledge on languages nurturing each other, and the "proven relationship between a child's literacy in their first language and the overall outcomes for their education in an English-speaking environment" (Broome & Kindon, 2008, p. 45) are more widely known. I hope that this study contributes to making this knowledge more accessible to teachers and, therefore, to parents.

Argument of the thesis

This thesis has argued that bilingualism should be the goal for all young children growing up in New Zealand who have home languages other than English. Our education system needs to take an additive approach, where English is learned alongside the continuing development of home languages. Language is a sociocultural tool, and in order for children to become bicultural or multicultural adults, they need to be

bilingual. Bilingualism brings many advantages for children and adults. Their very identity is determined by the languages they speak. Early childhood teachers have a crucial role in ensuring that children become bilingual, as the first significant relationships that children form outside the home are with their teachers. It is at early childhood education that they are first exposed to the dominant language of the community. The attitudes and teaching strategies of their teachers, and the information presented to parents, are significant factors in whether children become bilingual, or become instead monolingual speakers of English.

Significant findings

This study highlighted a number of key areas considered to be essential to an understanding of how early childhood teachers can support young children to become bilingual and biliterate. Eight findings were identified. Six of these were teaching strategies for promoting bilingualism and biliteracy, all of which were consistent with the literature. These have already been discussed.

The remaining findings concerned two areas. The first was the unsupportive attitudes of some management, some teachers outside of this group of participants, and some parents, to the use of home languages in centres. This was consistent with the literature, which indicates that there is still disagreement about the best strategies for educating linguistically diverse children, despite the large body of evidence in favour of promoting bilingualism from a very young age.

The final finding was unexpected. This involved challenges which emerged around the use of home languages in centres. While the participants recognised the benefits of continuing to support the child's home language, and communicating with parents in their own language, they identified some issues which had arisen. These were not able to be located in the literature. One of these was the issue of interpretation. The participants at one of the focus groups believed that all conversations between bilingual teachers and parents in home languages should be interpreted for the benefit of other teachers, and to ensure that information was shared.

Another challenge raised was in the area of social competence or behaviour management. Some participants had experienced children being unkind or unpleasant to each other, using the home language. Teachers who did not speak this language were unaware of this behaviour until it was reported by parents.

Finally, the issue was raised of bilingual student teachers on practicum using their home language with children. It seems that associate teachers have experienced instances where student teachers have focussed inappropriately on the children who spoke their language, rather than dividing their attention among all children. On the other hand, student teachers have sometimes felt that they were discouraged from using their home language at all.

Implications

There are a number of implications that arise from the findings of this research.

The first relates to bilingual teachers. Bilingual teachers are already a significant proportion of all teachers working in early childhood services, particularly in the Auckland area (ERO, 2011; Harvey, 2011). They must be given a mandate to use all their languages in their teaching, and resourced to use home language literacy practices to promote the development of literacy.

The second implication relates to pre-service teacher education. The importance of children's home languages should continue to be emphasised in early childhood teacher training. Bilingual student teachers need to be encouraged and supported to use their home language while on teaching practicum. It appears that there are currently no guidelines for student teachers or their associate teachers around home language use. This lack of policy (Harvey, 2011; Jones Díaz & Harvey, 2007) or guidelines has resulted in confusion and disappointment for bilingual student teachers. Ministry of Education, along with Education Review Office, urgently need to work with teacher training providers and the teaching profession, and especially with bilingual teachers, to develop policy and guidelines on bilingual teaching.

The third implication is related to the second. Associate teachers for bilingual student teachers on practicum need to be current in their knowledge of how to promote bilingualism, and able to help student teachers work within the newly developed guidelines, while encouraging their bilingual teaching. This is a matter that could be addressed at professional development opportunities for associate teachers, such as the annual forum co-ordinated by the seven ECE training providers in Auckland.

The fourth implication relates to in-service professional development opportunities for all early childhood teachers. It seems that there is an urgent need for further professional development in the area of literacy. Education Review Office (2011),

McLachlan (2010) and McLachlan and Arrow (2011) have already identified this need, and it was reinforced by this study. It appeared that there was a widespread lack of understanding of the sociocultural theories of literacy development, emergent literacy and literacy as social practice (Jones Díaz, 2007), which “offer different, complementary lenses through which to view children’s early literacy learning” (McLachlan, 2007, p. 15).

The theory of emergent literacy has not been displaced, but has limitations in that it does not take into account the social and cultural influences on children’s literacy learning. We now know that the child’s family is “a major site of literacy development” (McLachlan, 2007, p. 25). Early childhood teachers need to have a clear understanding of how literacy develops, and specifically how it develops in culturally and linguistically diverse children. If they lack this understanding, CALD children are disadvantaged (McNaughton, 2002). Literacy theory and recommendations for best practice at early childhood level have changed dramatically since we entered the 21st century. Professional development is essential to ensure that teachers’ practice is informed by current theory.

The fifth implication from this research is the importance of recording registered teachers’ languages, and the languages spoken by children enrolled in ECE services. At present the New Zealand Teachers Council is recording only the ethnicities of registered teachers, and not languages in which they are fluent. Similarly, the Ministry of Education is recording only the ethnicity of children enrolled at centres (Harvey, 2011). Language statistics are essential for purposes of teacher recruitment and workforce planning.

The final implication relates to evidence from this research study that parents need to be provided with information that explains the benefits of bilingualism, and gives guidelines on how to raise a bilingual child. New Zealand has fallen behind other Western countries in its provision of this support for parents. Bilingual participants in this study shared their frustration and sadness that despite their best intentions, their own young adult children were no longer fluent in the family’s home language.

Recommendations and further research

The early childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki* was informed by research (Fleer, 2003; Cullen, 2003). Ministry of Education and Education Review Office publications since

1996 have continued to reflect the current research literature, and to make it available to teachers to inform their practice (MOE, 1998, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2010; ERO, 2011). It would be of great support to parents, teachers, and children if the Ministry of Education or Education Review Office were to prepare information brochures on bilingualism, biliteracy and the importance of home language maintenance in young children, in English and in community languages. Alternatively, this information could be made available in many languages online, at more convenience and less expense, and teachers could make parents aware of it (August & Shanahan, 2006; Baker, 2006; National Literacy Trust, n.d.; National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education, 2009). A Families Guide to the Australian early childhood curriculum is available online in twenty languages (Department for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009b).

There are those who believe that there are equity issues when some children's languages are spoken by a bilingual teacher but other children's languages are not heard at the centre. Further consultation with the community and the teaching profession is required. The issue of whether staff conversations in a home language with parents and family members should be interpreted for the benefit of other staff, is an ethical matter and deserves consideration by the early childhood profession.

Meade (TLRI, 2008) saw the area of fostering bilingual development as a very important topic for New Zealand researchers. She acknowledged that the evidence is there that bilingualism is very positive, and that strengthening their first language is extremely important for the cognitive development of young bilingual children. Now the research needed to be done on how to foster bilingualism well. The changing demographics of New Zealand made this need for research urgent, because teachers needed more guidance. It seemed that even when minority language children had coped reasonably well at ECE, many experienced a disruption when they moved to school, and struggled. Meade believed that this area of research was "hugely important for New Zealand education" (TLRI, 2008, p. 2). Nemeth (2009) predicted an explosion of international research in this area in the next few years.

Further research is needed on bilingual teaching, which considers the proportion of time that the home language is being used in comparison with the time that English language is being modelled. Bilingual teachers are looking for guidance in this area.

Research is also needed on the New Zealand educational outcomes at school level for children from homes where English is not the first language. Evidence is needed that bilingualism is an educational advantage here, as it has been found to be in other countries.

Some New Zealand parents who have a home language other than English choose to keep their children at home with them until school age, to give the child a strong foundation in the home language, before entering the English-dominant environment at primary school. These children may have the advantage of speaking fluently in their home language, depending on how much exposure to oral language they are given at home. But they may be disadvantaged by the delay in starting to learn English, and by missing out on the well-established advantages of participating in early childhood education. The early childhood sector needs to show responsiveness to parents, by demonstrating that children can build a strong foundation in the home language, while accessing ECE. Further research is needed in this area.

As this thesis was nearing completion in May 2012, the recommendations of the Advisory Groups on early childhood education (MOE, 2012) were released by the Minister of Education. There was no mention of bilingualism, biliteracy or the retention of home languages. Again, the only minority language groups mentioned were Māori and Pasifika, so there remains a lack of policy on children from other minority language groups, and the promotion of bilingualism. It was government immigration and refugee policy which led to linguistic diversity in our education system. The governments of the USA and UK have been forced to address lack of educational achievement in children from minority ethnic groups (August & Shanahan, 2006, 2008; Department for Education and Skills, 2003, 2005). The expert advice they received has been discussed in this thesis: maintain children's home languages by supporting their continuing development alongside the acquisition of English. The current New Zealand government has a policy of cutting costs in education, but to ignore the issues of bilingualism and literacy development now will incur huge cost to our nation in the future.

Strengths and challenges of this study

A strength of this study is that it adds to the small body of literature based in Aotearoa New Zealand on the topic of diverse languages and literacies in early childhood education. As we are now one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world

it is time that our teachers' experiences in this area are increasingly researched and recorded, and if necessary, critiqued.

It could be seen as a limitation of this study that all of the participants teach in centres on Auckland's North Shore. I prefer, however, to see this as a strength. The North Shore has not, in the past, been seen as a particularly diverse and multicultural part of Auckland. But the nature of the area's population has undergone rapid change (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a, 2006b). Experienced teachers are aware that the groups of children they teach have become increasingly diverse, both linguistically and culturally. This has necessitated changes in their pedagogy. The two focus groups provided an unusual opportunity for practising teachers from a number of different centres to meet together to discuss these issues, to exchange ideas, to learn from each other, and to challenge each other. I hope they found it a stimulating and worthwhile experience.

This study used a small sample, with eleven early childhood teachers involved as participants. However, the research task needed to be manageable and these findings are only indicative. I hope that further research will take place that will either confirm or challenge its findings. Recruitment via the method of 'snowballing' (Cohen et al, 2000) has been a limitation. Some participants worked at the same centres, and others knew each other. There is a risk with snowballing that participants who know each other will share similar views and practices. But recruitment proved more difficult than expected. Many invitation flyers delivered to centres had a nil response. I am very grateful to all the participants, and especially to those teachers who suggested others who may be interested to be involved. As in many areas of human participation, 'word of mouth' proved to be a powerful tool. The findings, however, may be limited to a group of teachers who share these attitudes.

As always, there is more literature to be discovered. In the final stages of writing, I gained access to Harvey's study (Harvey, 2011), which focussed on bilingual ECE teachers working in the Auckland region. If I had read this earlier, I may have asked different questions of my participants. Harvey's (2011) study drew my attention to the Families Commission report (Broome & Kindon, 2008), which found that parents had a commitment to preserving their children's heritage languages, but felt that early childhood teachers' lack of knowledge and support for the cultural and linguistic

wellbeing of their children was a barrier to achieving this. Again, I could have used this report further if I had been aware of it earlier.

Kung (2011) observes that it can be difficult in qualitative, face-to-face data collection to avoid ‘colouring’ the focus groups and interviews with information that the researcher has encountered in the literature. I agree with her that this was a challenge. After being submerged in the literature on bilingualism and home languages for so long, it was tempting to proselytise. But as the researcher, I had to be disciplined and allow the “authentic voice of practice” (Kung, 2011, p. 77) to be heard, rather than my own voice.

Concluding comments

I believe that this research involved low ethical risk. However, there is some risk with all research, so I am indebted to the teachers who accepted this risk and agreed to participate. This research cannot be generalised to other parts of Aotearoa New Zealand, but the findings “accurately reflect the opinions or actions of the people in the study” (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 34).

The opportunity to carry out this small research project has given me increased confidence in the research process, and a continuing interest in the teaching of young dual language learners. Until 2006, my experience of language learning and teaching had been exclusively with adults. Then my career journey brought me into the field of early childhood education, and I was given the opportunity to undertake further post-graduate study. It has been a privilege to be part of the early childhood sector, and to work and study alongside early childhood professionals. They are a very special group of people, motivated by their desire to make a genuine difference in children’s lives.

Carrying out a research project and writing a thesis has not been achieved without stress. But stress can be positive and even joyful when it spurs us on to reach our goals, and to complete what we have started. I hope that this thesis will add to a body of research that makes positive difference in the lives of young children of diverse languages and literacies. But more than that, I hope that this research project may in some way help early childhood teachers to better meet the needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse children, families and communities they serve.

He taonga nui ā tātou tamariki.
The greatest treasure is our children.

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Glossary

Aotearoa	te reo Māori name for New Zealand
biculturalism	in Aotearoa New Zealand, acknowledging both Māori and Pākehā cultures
community language	language spoken by minority group in the community
dominant language	the majority language of the country or region
heritage language	home language, mother tongue
home language	first language learned, mother tongue
karakia	a prayer or blessing
kindergarten	in New Zealand, ECE programme for 3 and 4 year olds
koha	a gift
kōhanga reo	literally language nest; te reo Māori immersion ECE service
kura	school
marae	the wharenui (meetinghouse) and the area around it where ceremonies take place in tikanga me ōno te reo Māori
mātauranga	education
mat time	group or circle time, teacher-led learning
minority language	language other than the dominant language
Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent
Pasifika language nest	immersion in a Pacific Island language ECE service
powhiri	a welcome ceremony in te reo Māori
te reo Māori	the indigenous language of Aotearoa New Zealand

te whāriki	the woven mat
Te Whāriki	the New Zealand early childhood curriculum
tikanga Māori	Māori culture, customs and traditions
tikanga me ōno te reo Māori	the customs and the language combined
waiata	songs in te reo Māori
whakataukī	proverb or wise saying in te reo Māori
whānau	extended family
whenua	the land (and also the placenta, which is returned to the land)

Appendices

Appendix A: Focus Group Questions

Research Topic: Diverse Languages and Literacies in Early Childhood Education:
Teachers' stories about their practice.

Researcher: Christine Ball

Supervisor: Chris Jenkin

Theme: Pedagogies used with children whose home language is not English

What are the best ways to support a child who has little or no English language on arrival at the centre?

Tell me what support is offered to children that relates to their age. Why is that?

In what ways do parents respond to the use of the home language at the centre?

Theme: Role of bilingual teacher

Tell me about the role of the bilingual teacher(s)?

Theme: Use of child's home language in centre

What can you tell me about how children talk to each other in their shared home language?

Tell me about the benefits in the child hearing and speaking their home language at the centre?

Are there any challenges?

Theme: Child's written language in centre environment

Tell me about the use of languages other than English seen in your centre environment?

What sort of resources for home languages are available in your centre?

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Research Topic: Diverse Languages and Literacies in Early Childhood Education: Teachers' stories about their practice.

Researcher: Christine Ball

Supervisor: Chris Jenkin

These questions are indicative only, as the final questions will arise out of the analysis of the focus group data.

Theme: Pedagogies used with children whose home language is not English	
Tell me about your views of bilingualism. your experience, what do parents think about the importance of bilingualism?	In
Tell me about what teachers do that makes a difference in a child's bilingual language development?	
Theme: Role of bilingual teacher	
Tell me what you think about the role of bilingual teachers. about your role as a bilingual teacher? What more would you like to be able to do?	Tell me
OR Tell me about the role of bilingual teacher(s) in your centre? How are their bilingual skills used to their full potential? What more do you think they should be able to do?	
Theme: Use of child's home language in centre	
Do all or most bilingual children have another child who they can talk to in their shared home language? response of other children when they hear a language they don't understand being spoken?	What is the
What are the benefits of having a bilingual teacher? there any threats or negatives around children speaking and hearing their home language at the centre?	Are
Theme: Child's written language in centre environment	
Tell me about the resources your centre has in children's home languages. are the difficulties in sourcing resources in some languages?	What
How are children's home languages visible in your centre's environment? do you see is the next step in this?	What
How do you see the emergent literacy process working with bilingual children?	

Appendix C: Recruitment Flyer



Early Childhood Education Research Participants Needed.

AUT early childhood lecturer looking for qualified teachers to participate in a Focus Group.

To complete my M.Ed, I am researching strategies used by teachers with children who have a home language other than English.

I need teachers who teach in linguistically diverse centres. I would like to include both bilingual teachers, and teachers who speak only English. Ideally, I would have one of each of these from each of six centres.

Confidentiality: Your participation in this research would be confidential. No names of individual teachers or centres will appear in my final thesis.

Focus Group will be held at AUT North Shore campus in the early evening in April or May 2011. The time taken will be about two hours. Light refreshments and a petrol voucher to cover mileage will be provided.

If interested and/or have any questions, please contact Christine Ball
christine.ball@aut.ac.nz or 921.9999 x 7342

I can send you further information. If you decide to participate I will arrange for you to sign a Consent Form.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.



christine.ball@aut.ac.nz
921 9999 extn xxxx
or text 027 xxx xxxx

christine.ball@aut.ac.nz
921 9999 extn xxxx
or text 027 xxx xxxx

Appendix D: Participant information sheet

Participant Information Sheet



Date Information Sheet Produced: 29 November 2010

Project Title: Diverse languages and literacies in early childhood education:

Teachers' stories about their practice.

An Invitation

My name is Christine Ball. I am an early childhood education lecturer at AUT University (and a mother and grandmother). I am also an Evaluative Lecturer for student teachers when they are on practicum, and have enjoyed meeting you during these visits.

I am currently completing my Master of Education by researching and writing a thesis on the above topic. I invite you to be a teacher participant in this research.

Your participation would be voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw at any time prior to the completion of data collection without any adverse consequences. Whether you choose to participate in this research or not, will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. I will not be evaluating you during this research, or in the future. I know that you are a busy person, and will respect your decision if you choose not to participate.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research will be presented as a thesis to be submitted as the final requirement to complete the Master of Education degree at AUT University.

I presented on my intended research at the Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood conference, "Honouring the Child, Honouring Equity 10" at the University of Melbourne, Australia, in November 2010. The findings and recommendations will be presented at a future conference. I will be writing an article which I hope will be published in a journal for New Zealand early childhood teachers.

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

I am inviting you to be a participant because you have responded to an advertisement.

What will happen in this research?

There will be two focus groups held several weeks apart on Thursday evenings from 6 to 8pm at the AUT University North Shore campus. You will be invited to attend one of these focus groups, which will take place in April 2011.

There will be six teachers from six different centres present at each focus group. I will be asking you to share your experiences of working with children who do not have English as their home language. I am interested in your opinion on the best ways of

meeting the needs of these children. I hope that you will share and discuss your strategies and pedagogies (teaching methods), your successes and your challenges.

You may be asked to participate also in an individual one hour interview. This will happen at a convenient time and place for you.

What are the discomforts and risks?

You will be attending a focus group with five other teachers whom you may or may not know. I will be taking notes and also audio recording the discussion, to make sure that I don't miss anything, and that I can quote you in your own words. There may be different opinions expressed. You may be asked to make further time available for an individual interview with me, which again, would be audio recorded.

Although I guarantee that you will not be able to be identified in the final thesis, conference presentations or article, and all of you will sign a consent form agreeing to keep everything about the focus groups confidential, I cannot be responsible for the behaviour of the other participants.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

There will be time to get to know each other a little before the focus group begins and the audio recorder is turned on. The venue will be a comfortable class room. You will be given a petrol voucher to cover your mileage costs.

Your manager/centre owner will not know that you have been a participant in this research. All of you will sign consent forms, agreeing to keep the identity of the participants and what is said at the focus groups confidential. A member of my family, who will be assisting me with transcription, will also have signed a confidentiality agreement. No teachers, centres, children or families will be able to be identified in the final thesis.

What are the benefits?

You will have the opportunity to discuss this important and relevant topic with professional colleagues from other centres. Cultural and linguistic diversity is one of the most written about and discussed areas internationally in the early childhood sector. I anticipate that children whose home language is not English will benefit from teachers discussing their needs and sharing experiences and points of view. Conference presentations and articles will encourage further discussion, and further research.

How will my privacy be protected?

After receiving this Information Sheet you will have the opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered. All participants in the focus groups will have agreed that the identity of their fellow participants and the discussions in the focus group are to remain confidential. If you are a member of a large ethnic/language group, your ethnicity/language may be mentioned. However, if mention of your ethnicity or language may enable you to be identified, this information will not be used.

Notes will be taken, and the focus groups will also be audio recorded. You will be invited to choose a pseudonym (alternative personal name) to be used at the focus group and in the transcript of it, to protect your privacy. The transcript will be available in hard copy only, to all six participants, to give you the opportunity to check that your words have been correctly recorded. You will be asked to return this copy, with any changes indicated, within a week to me. Transcripts of any individual interviews will be

sent to your preferred email address only and need to be returned by email, with corrections made, within a week of you receiving them, unless you have informed me that you will be out of email contact.

You may choose to withdraw yourself or any information that you have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way. While it may not be possible to destroy all the records of the focus group discussion that you were part of, the relevant information about you including audio recording and transcripts, or parts of them, will not be used.

You will be asked to sign a Consent Form, which will be confidential to the researcher, and you will be sent a copy of the report from the research once it is completed.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The only cost to you will be two or three hours of your time.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

I would be very grateful if you could respond within a week of receiving this invitation. The dates of the focus groups will need to be negotiated with the participants. If Thursday evening is not possible for you, please tell me which evening you would prefer. If you are unable to attend the first group, you may be able to attend the second one.

I believe it is preferable that two teachers from the same centre attend different focus groups. Then each discussion will involve teachers from six different centres, and there will be more confidentiality for you. Individual interviews with some of you are planned for April or May 2011.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you agree and are available, please complete and sign the two consent forms enclosed. Keep one for your own records, and return the other to me in the enclosed prepaid envelope. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at the address below, or phone me at AUT University. If you get my voicemail, please leave a message, and I will call you back.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

A summary report of the findings and recommendations will be sent to you at your preferred contact. Once my thesis has been marked and has passed, a copy will be available online and in the AUT University library. This is likely to be in late 2011.

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

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Ms Chris Jenkin, chris.jenkin@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 7911.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 8044.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research? PTO

Researcher Contact Details:

Mrs Christine Ball, School of Education, AUT University. christine.ball@aut.ac.nz

921 9999 ext xxxx

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Ms Chris Jenkin, School of Education, AUT University. chris.jenkin@aut.ac.nz

921 9999 ext xxxx

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on:

23 December 2010

AUTEC Reference number: Ethics Approval Number 10/278

Appendix E: Consent Forms

Consent for Focus Group



Project title: *Diverse languages and literacies in early childhood education: Teachers' stories about their practice*

Project Supervisor: *Chris Jenkin MA*

Researcher: *Christine Ball*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 29 November 2010.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that identity of my fellow participants and our discussions in the focus group is confidential to the group and I agree to keep this information confidential.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the focus group and that it will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that while it may not be possible to destroy all records of the focus group discussion of which I was part, the relevant information about myself including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will not be used.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details:

.....
.....
.....

Preferred email address :

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on: 23 December 2010

AUTEC Reference number: Ethics Approval Number 10/278

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

Consent for Interviews



Project title: ***Diverse languages and literacies in early childhood education:
Teachers' stories about their practice***

Project Supervisor: ***Chris Jenkin MA***

Researcher: ***Christine Ball***

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 29 November 2010
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details:

.....
.....
.....

Preferred email address :

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on: 23 December 2010

AUTEC Reference number: Ethics Approval Number 10/278

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

Appendix F: Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality Agreement



For someone transcribing data, e.g. audio-tapes of interviews.

Project title: Diverse languages and literacies in early childhood education:
Teachers' stories about their practice

Project Supervisor: Chris Jenkin MA

Researcher: Christine Ball

- ☐ I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.
- ☐ I understand that the contents of the tapes or recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.
- ☐ I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.

Transcriber's signature:

Transcriber's name:

Transcriber's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....

Date:

Project Supervisor's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 23 December 2010.
AUTEK Reference number 10/278**

Note: The Transcriber should retain a copy of this form.