

# Pasifika Languages Research and Guidelines Project: Literature Review

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Opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily coincide with those of the Ministry of Education.

## Overview of literature review

We have a long way to go. We have not yet learned how to respect each other fully, how to share and work together.... It means an open mind, an open heart, and a readiness to seek fresh definitions, reconcile old opposites, and help draw new mental maps. Ultimately it will be honesty of introspection that will lead to compassion for the Other's experience....

(Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, 1996, *Our creative diversity: Report of the world commission on culture and development: Summary version*. Paris: UNESCO. p.11)

### Introduction

The literature review synthesises existing research as a basis for development of guidelines to support teachers of bilingual Pasifika learners in New Zealand schools. The aim is to raise Pasifika student achievement in mainstream classes, itself a key concern of the *Pasifika Education Plan* (2001).

### Purpose

The purpose of this review is to examine

- factors which relate specifically to bilingual Pasifika students' school learning in Aotearoa New Zealand – that is, to their ongoing development in two languages, and their accompanying learning across the whole curriculum
- the research evidence on these factors
- what schools need to know and do in order to teach bilingual Pasifika children effectively
- how teachers can best be supported to develop their ability to teach bilingual Pasifika children effectively.

The review is organised into six sections. The first section aims to introduce core concepts related to language learning and bilingualism and provides background information about Pasifika children as language learners and as members of communities, and participants in schooling in New Zealand. The second section analyses some of the demands that school learning places on bilingual Pasifika children in New Zealand. Together with the third section on specific issues identified as relevant to the education of bilingual Pasifika children, it provides a context for a general discussion of how educators and schools can respond appropriately to the needs of bilingual Pasifika children (section 4). Section 5 is entirely devoted to an overview of principles and

approaches to supporting the second language learning of bilingual Pasifika children. The concluding section, section 6, focuses on priorities for school and teacher change.

The review is preceded by a summary of key points (listed below) that have arisen from the literature review.

## **Summary of key points**

### **The role of bilingualism**

1. At all levels of the education system – ministry, advisers, teacher educators, boards of trustees, school management, and classroom teachers – there should be a single message of recommending and maximizing bilingual instruction for children who speak a Pasifika language, or who wish to.
2. The use and status of languages affects bilingual learning and the educational outcomes for bilingual people. It is commonly considered that learning majority and elite languages such as English or French will add to a person's skill base. This is viewed as additive bilingualism. On the other hand, it is commonly considered that when a person from a minority ethnic background uses or learns a minority, non-elite language (such as Sāmoan, Tokelauan, or Māori in New Zealand) this skill will not be seen as an advantage. In this case, a subtractive assessment is made of the value of bilingualism.
3. Bilinguals learning in subtractive contexts have often experienced reduced educational success (as Pasifika students have in New Zealand). For this reason, earlier research that took no account of the context seemed to indicate that it was an educational disadvantage to persist with developing a minority language.
4. Research now shows that when the context is additive and benefits are widely considered to result from being bilingual, then bilingualism provides cognitive, social and educational advantages for students. This is true whatever languages are involved.
5. The best way a bilingual student can achieve educational success and a high level of proficiency in a second language (L2) is through developing literacy initially in their first language (L1) and then going on to develop literacy in the L2.

Schools and teachers need to:

6. Create an additive context for the use of the L1: by having negotiated L1 goals with family and students; by helping bilingual Pasifika students develop supportive contacts with other bilingual (or monolingual) users of their L1; by developing ways of assessing students' progress in ways that take account of knowledge of, and skills in the use of L1.

7. Have a classroom climate (including the teachers' attitudes) of open interest and exploration of what language and languages can do.
8. Educate monolingual children and parents in the school not to be afraid of the presence of other languages (familiarity through contacts, plus attested research information on bilingualism).
9. Have L1 materials visible in the school and classroom on the same basis as English materials (e.g. reading materials, posters, labels, games, examples of written and recorded work etc).
10. Help bilingual students to develop metacognitive awareness of the relationship between their two languages and how to use them deliberately for various purposes – e.g. allow students to choose which language for particular tasks.
11. Ensure that resources in both languages are available at a level appropriate to the students' year level.

### **The role of good pedagogical practice**

12. In addition to paying attention to the role of languages in the educational success of bilingual Pasifika students, their learning context should be inclusive and of high quality.
13. Students need good home/school relationships where parents and students are able to be involved in a two-way relationship with the goals, practices and outcomes of education.
14. Students also benefit from caring and valuing attitudes and behaviour from teachers and other students.
15. Other important factors in the teaching context are responsiveness to student learning processes, instruction which scaffolds learning and provides good feedback, promoting students' own understanding of how to learn, and having learners and teachers engage constructively in goal-oriented assessment.

### **The role and nature of good second language instruction**

16. Where bilingual Pasifika children are unable to participate in adequate bilingual education, the best possible practices should be followed in schools to enable and encourage the continued development of their Pasifika languages. The best practices for developing English as a second language for academic learning should also be followed.
17. Although language can be studied by analysing aspects of the language itself (vocabulary, sounds, etc) and the way it is used (reading, speaking, etc), it is important to remember that language is not a 'thing' which is learned, but the form in which human interaction and thinking occur. Whether it be an L1 or L2, language

should be viewed as a *resource* by which students are learning to be, think, and do.

18. The language of education is education. The knowledge that students need to learn at school exists only as it is expressed through language in particular ways. The language of school learning differs from everyday conversational language in many respects.
19. Language, in all its manifestations, is something which can be explicitly taught.
20. Literacy is a term currently used to refer to how language is used at all levels in school learning – e.g. PISA scientific and mathematical literacy etc. Its scope is much wider than just the initial stages of learning to read and write on entry to school, and it includes literacy in Pasifika languages as well as English.
21. Internationally, research into learning second languages identifies the importance of basing learning and teaching on the learners' needs, goals attitudes, beliefs and learning practices.

Schools and teachers need to:

22. Create a context where learning the L2 does not create identity conflicts and students fear they will lose their place in family and friends through success with school English.
23. Use the L1 as a base and resource for L2 learning without attempting to replace the L1.
24. Focus on language use which is meaning based and appropriate for the learners and their context.
25. Support learners to use their new language themselves, and to engage their attention with the forms of the language as well as with communicating their meaning.
26. Support learners to use language interactively to communicate with others, and to take risks and try out new language.

### **School and teacher change**

27. Differences in student achievement are primarily accounted for by differences between classes and their teachers rather than differences between schools.
28. What teachers do in classrooms is based on their usual or habitual practices, and their attitudes and beliefs.
29. When teachers change their practices, they have to alter their usual pattern of behaviour by adding to their repertoire of available practices. If a new practice conflicts with a teacher's attitudes and beliefs it will not be effectively integrated into their pedagogy.

30. Where major changes of this nature are wanted, it works best for teachers to work collaboratively and consistently within the whole school environment, and within a theorised, long term approach to professional development.
31. Teachers will be best supported in their changing practices if the whole school environment is aligned supportively with the new practices.
32. It is important that teachers have the best research evidence available to support their changing beliefs, attitudes and practices.

School and teachers need to:

33. know about research on teaching the diversity of children in their schools, research in bilingual learning, and first and second language learning.
34. develop some knowledge and skills in relation to language development of theories of teaching, teaching skills, communication skills, subject matter knowledge, contextual knowledge, and pedagogical reasoning and decision making.
35. learn how to identify and pay attention to features of language, and how to integrate this attention into all aspects of teaching.
36. work with other teachers to find ways to implement all aspects of effective teaching practices for diverse learners in their schools and to integrate language development into all teaching and learning.

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# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 1. Introduction: Context and core concepts

### 1.1 Pasifika communities in New Zealand

In the 2001 Census, 248,000 people, approximately 6.6% of the total population, identified themselves as Pasifika, the pan-ethnic term used to describe Pacific Island migrants to New Zealand from the principal islands of Sāmoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau and Tuvalu.<sup>1</sup> Of this broad Pasifika ethnic grouping, nearly half (115,017) identified in the Census as being Sāmoan. The next largest grouping, Cook Islands Māori, was considerably smaller at 51,486, with Tongan following at 40,719, and Niuean at 20,148 identified members. All other New Zealand Pasifika communities have less than 10,000 members: Fijian 7,041, Tokelauan, 6,204, Tuvaluan 1,965 (Statistics NZ, 2002; Peddie, 2003).

There are also other significant differences among these Pasifika communities. For example, New Zealand Sāmoan and Tongan communities are smaller in size in relation to their homeland populations, as one might expect. However, the New Zealand Niuean and Cook Islands Pasifika communities are actually considerably larger in relation to their homelands: 2.5 times larger in population than the Cook Islands, and over 10 times the size of the remaining population of Niue, respectively (Statistics NZ, 2002).

The migration of Pasifika communities to New Zealand began immediately after WWII, although the most intensive period of migration occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. Pasifika migrants were treated as a source of cheap and ready manual labour and initially found work primarily “in the expanding manufacturing and service sectors of the post-war New Zealand economy” (MacPherson, Spoonley & Anae, 2001). Subsequent Pasifika migrants have also experienced similarly delimited work and employment patterns. Consequently, along with Māori, Pasifika communities remain disproportionately represented in the lowest socio-economic indices of work and employment within New Zealand. That said, this pattern is changing slowly, with recent improvements, particularly for younger, New Zealand born Pasifika peoples (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 1999, 2002). As the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs summarises it:

Economically, Pacific people have always faced considerable difficulties in New Zealand.... they have been over-represented among the unemployed, lower-skilled workers and low income earners. These difficulties were accentuated by the restructuring of the late 1980s and

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<sup>1</sup> In adopting the overarching term ‘Pasifika’ in this review, we specifically acknowledge its limitations as a pan-ethnic term, and the related tendency to overlook or understate the complex ethnic diversity apparent within this broad grouping. This includes recognising that individuals may well identify with a number of Pasifika (and non-Pasifika) ethnicities, rather than just one (see MacPherson, 1996; Bedford & Didham 2001, pp. 27-28 for further discussion), as well as acknowledging the, at times, considerable differences among the various groups in relation to key issues such as language use and language shift.

early 1990s, which had a disproportionate effect on Pacific people.... Since that time there have been considerable improvements in the economic position of Pacific peoples, particularly for some of the younger, New Zealand-born people.... However, these trends have been occurring not just for Pacific peoples but also among the wider New Zealand population, and consequently there are still economic disparities between Pacific peoples and others. (<http://minpac.govt.nz/publications/reports/progress>)

Pasifika settlement patterns are similarly circumscribed, with the majority to be found in South Auckland. Just over 1 in 4 of the New Zealand Pasifika population – 72,378 – live in the Manukau region (Statistics NZ, 2002), although small Pasifika communities have also settled elsewhere – Tokelauans in Wellington, and Cook Islands Māori in Tokoroa, for example.

As a result of almost 60 years of migration to New Zealand, 6 out of 10 Pasifika peoples in the 2001 Census also identified as being New Zealand-born – that is, they are now second or third generation migrants (Statistics NZ, 2002). Not surprisingly perhaps, the proportion of the New Zealand born population is greatest (at 70 per cent) among those two communities – Cook Islands Māori and Niuean – whose New Zealand population outnumbers that in their homelands. The median age for New Zealand born Pasifika peoples is also much lower, at 11.4 years, compared with those born overseas at 35.6 years (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 1999, p. 6). On this basis, it is projected that the younger age profile of New Zealand born Pasifika peoples will result in Pasifika peoples comprising 12% of the total New Zealand population by 2051 (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 1999, p. 6). This has specific implications for education, since at present, 1 in 10 New Zealand children are Pasifika. However, by 2051, it is predicted that this will rise to 1 in 5 (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 1999, p. 34).

## 1.2 Pasifika languages and education

The 2001 Census indicates that there are now over 100,000 speakers of Pasifika languages, the vast majority of who are Sāmoan speakers (81,033).<sup>2</sup> This means that Sāmoan is officially the third largest language group in New Zealand behind English (3,425,301) and Māori (160,527). It may even be the second largest group of speakers, since those who indicated they could speak Māori may have mis-identified this as an ethnic identification category in the Census (Peddie, 2003). This is further reinforced by the *National Māori Language Survey*, also conducted in 2001 (Te Puni Kokiri, 2002, which suggests that there are only as few as 22,000 *highly fluent* Māori speakers, many of whom (73%) are 45 or older, with a further 22,000 with medium fluency levels. On this basis, it is likely that the number of high and medium fluency Sāmoan speakers will outnumber comparable Māori speakers.

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<sup>2</sup> There is a caveat here: the Census question asked about languages 'in which you can have a conversation about a lot of everyday things'. As Peddie (2003) observes: 'this is clearly not the same as asking about languages normally spoken on a daily basis, nor is it a measure of genuine fluency' (p.14).

In addition, 23,046 identified in the Census as being Tongan speakers, 9,375 as Cook Islands Māori speakers, and 5,478 as Niuean speakers. The remaining Pasifika groups did not reach the threshold of 4,500 speakers (just over 0.1% of the total New Zealand population) used by the Census in their analysis of this question.

These figures indicate that over 60% of the New Zealand Sāmoan and Tongan communities can still hold an everyday conversation in their respective Pasifika languages. Given that this is within the context of 60 years of migration to New Zealand – where English dominates all public domains, and the majority of New Zealanders are monolingual English speakers (see 1.4) – this is a significant percentage. It also suggests the likely ongoing use of these Pasifika languages, alongside English, within these particular communities.

Ongoing bilingualism among New Zealand Pasifika communities is clearly identified when children attend early childhood centres and/or begin school. As part of the SEMO (Strengthening Education in Mangere and Otago) research project in early childhood centres and decile 1 schools in Mangere and Otago, research by Phillips, McNaughton and MacDonald (2001, p. 65) investigated the ethnicities and home languages (as recorded by teachers) among the 72 children from early childhood centres and 108 new entrants in schools. The findings are reported in Table 1. The teachers reported that nearly half of the students spoke either a Pasifika language or were bilingual.

Ethnicity		Home Language	
Early childhood sample (n=72)			
Pacific Islands	65%	Pacific Islands language only	16%
Pacific Islands & Māori	11%	Bilingual – e.g. Pacific Islands & English, Māori & English	30%
Māori	20%		
Other	15%	English only	43%
		Other	11%
Primary school new entrant sample (n=108)			
Pacific Islands or Māori or Pacific Islands & Māori	90%	Pacific Islands language only	25%
		Bilingual – e.g. Pacific Islands & English, Māori & English	22%
Other	10%	English only	45%
		Other	7%

**Table 1: Reported percentages of ethnicities and home languages represented by children in two settings: early childhood and primary new entrant**

Thus, a considerable proportion of the children in these schools were bilingual Pasifika students – either bilingual on entering school, or becoming so as they began learning English in school.

Be that as it may, there are also clear indications of significant language loss among Pasifika communities. While Sāmoan and Tongan remain relatively strong, other Pasifika languages have fared less well; only 28% of the New Zealand Niuean community still speak Niuean, while for the Cook Islands Māori community, the percentage is even lower, with only 18% still able to speak Cook Islands Māori.

This, in turn, highlights different patterns of language shift among the various New Zealand Pasifika communities (see Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 1999, p. 15; Bell, Davis, & Starks, 2000). Reasons for greater language shift and loss in particular communities are likely to be complex. However, there is a correlation between language loss and those communities with the greatest percentage of New Zealand born (Cook Islands Māori and Niuean), as well as those communities where the church – an important bulwark for Pasifika languages – plays a less significant role, as again, for example, in the Cook Islands Māori community.

Pasifika language shift and loss can also be explained by the relative lack of bilingual/immersion education provision in New Zealand beyond that provided for Māori-medium education, since the provision of such education has been shown to be a key dimension in the support of minority languages worldwide, as well as in the educational success of bilingual students (Baker, 2001; May, 2001; May, et al., 2004).<sup>3</sup>

The link between language use and shift and education is made explicit in Davis, Bell and Starks' (2001) sociolinguistic study, which examined language use and shift among Pasifika groups in the Manukau area. They also found that the most robust languages were Sāmoan and Tongan, but that even here high levels of fluency were concentrated in a diminishing number of older speakers. In this light, Davis et al comment on the limited provision for bilingual education, even in the Manukau area, with only seven primary and secondary schools where Pasifika languages were taught. Given the close link between home and school language use in the ongoing retention of a language,<sup>4</sup> the report concludes that while the Sāmoan and Tongan languages are still currently robust, they may well decline over time, as have Cook Islands Māori and Niuean, without further support in schools.

The pattern identified by Davis et al. in Manukau of limited provision for Pasifika languages in schools holds true across the country. In 2001, just over

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<sup>3</sup> New Zealand was, until 2003, one of only a few countries in the world where a second language was not legally, or in practice, compulsory in the school sector (Peddie, 2003). The recent introduction of languages as the eighth essential learning area in the New Zealand, and the related promotion of second language learning, particularly at Years 7-10, has rectified this somewhat. However, the proposed approach amounts more closely to foreign language teaching, which has long been recognised as a relatively ineffective model of language learning. This is because such instruction does not provide sufficient *time* in the language and does not use the language as a language of *instruction*, both crucial dimensions for successfully learning a second language within the school system, and principal features of bilingual/immersion education (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Even when a minority language continues to be spoken in the home and/or the wider community, unless this is coupled with public support for the language, particularly via education, language shift and loss is still likely to occur. This is because the family and community domains remain 'low status', and thus do not provide a sufficient basis to support and promote the language concerned in the wider society (see Fishman, 1991; May, 2001).

2500 early childhood students were in Pasifika language nests, modelled on Kōhanga Reo, although this figure was also the lowest for 10 years and well down on a mid-1990s peak of nearly 4000 (Peddie, 2003). As for the school population, Pasifika students comprise 6% of all school students, about half of whom are Sāmoan. However, as Peddie (2003) observes:

In 2001, and in [only] 20 [primary and secondary] schools, just over 1600 students were in Pacific-medium education, with almost three-quarters of these students learning at least some of the time in Sāmoan. However, this total represents only 2.8% of all Pasifika students. Furthermore, fewer than 5% of Pasifika students in schools were learning a Pasifika language. While the figures are a little better for Sāmoans, the numbers are still well under 10%, with fewer than 1000 students learning Sāmoan in secondary schools. (p. 22)

The provision of such bilingual/immersion education is almost always the result of local initiatives at the school and community level, rather than via the support of national policy.<sup>5</sup> Some of these schools have been extensively researched – most notably, Richmond Road Primary School, Clover Park Middle School and Finlayson Park Primary School, all in Auckland (see, for example, May, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1995; McCaffery & Tuafuti, 1998, 2003; Tuafuti & McCaffery, in press). The consensus of this research, in close alignment with international observations on bilingual/immersion education (see May, Hill & Tiakiwai, 2004), is that the bilingual programmes, and wider educational approach, adopted by these schools are highly effective (see also 1.4).

While a coordinated approach to Pasifika bilingual education is still absent at the national level, there have been other policy initiatives in relation to Pasifika languages in schools in recent times. These do not necessarily promote Pasifika bilingualism in schools as such, but do support Pasifika languages, at least to some degree.

One is the promotion of Pasifika language curriculum documents – that is, the teaching of Pasifika languages as subjects across early childhood, primary and secondary schools. The first of these, *Sāmoan in the New Zealand Curriculum/Ta'iala mo le Gagana Sāmoa i Niu Sila* was gazetted by the Ministry of Education in 1996. A draft version of *Cook Islands Māori in the New Zealand Curriculum* is currently available. In addition, the Ministry of Education provides guidelines for the teaching of Sāmoan, Cook Islands Māori, Tongan, Niuean, and Tokelauan, while *Developing Programmes for Teaching Pacific Islands Languages* (2000) provides a useful overview.

In addition to these curriculum documents, specific resources have been developed to support Pasifika language learning in classrooms. The most notable of these is the *Tupu Handbook* (Long, 1997), a Sāmoan reading resource, developed by Learning Media. In 2000, Learning Media also published *Raising the Achievement of Pacific Students*, as part of Ministry of

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<sup>5</sup> Despite an earlier assurance by the Ministry of Education that 'students whose mother tongue is a Pacific Islands language or a community language will have the opportunity to develop and use their own language as an integral part of their schooling' (1993, p. 10), little by way of consistent national policy on Pasifika bilingual provision has since emerged.

Education Literacy Leadership programme, and associated professional development initiatives.

Specifically at primary school level, the SEMO project has provided significant research and professional development guidance for teachers on how to teach English literacy more effectively to Pasifika students in low decile schools, particularly on transition to school. Findings from this research will be discussed in more detail in later sections of the review, although it should be pointed out that SEMO and associated research publications have not until recently addressed directly the issue of Pasifika bilingualism and its relationship to learning (although see Tagoilelagi-Leota, McNaughton, MacDonald and Farry, in press).

### **1.3 Pasifika languages and educational achievement**

Despite these important and ongoing research and professional development initiatives, it remains the case that there is still a relative absence of research on Pasifika bilingualism and its links with schooling (although see Dickie, 1998; Hunkin-Tuiletufuga 2001; Coxon, Anae, Mara, Wendt-Samu & Finau, 2002; May et al., 2004). Coupled with the limited bilingual education provision available for Pasifika students (see 1.2 above), the use of Pasifika languages within New Zealand schools to enhance the language learning and educational achievement of Pasifika students is consequently still not well understood.

This reluctance to address the more extended use Pasifika languages within schools is not just a feature of existing New Zealand school practices, however. It is also at times reflected in Pasifika parental attitudes. The data here are somewhat contradictory but nonetheless revealing. In 1995, the MRL survey of Māori and Pacific language demands for educational services (Stockwell, cited in Coxon et al., 2002, p. 64) found that over half of the 550 Pasifika respondents wanted their children to be able to speak fluently both their first (Pasifika) language and English by the time they finish primary school. Like other parents, they also wanted their children to succeed academically. However, it has also been documented that migrant Sāmoan parents have not always considered Sāmoan as having any educational value within the context of schooling. Parents often thought that English was the key to academic success and that speaking Sāmoan to their children, even at home, would be a serious disadvantage to them (Fetui and Malakai-Williams, 1996; Hunkin-Tuiletufuga, 2001).

As we shall see, this view is actually fundamentally misplaced (see below; see also 1.4) and therefore of considerable concern – pointing to the need for Pasifika parents to be able to make more *informed* choices for their children in relation to Pasifika language use and education. Indeed, if Pasifika languages are viewed as problematic, while English is seen as the *only* key to educational and social mobility, why then is Pasifika student achievement still causing so much concern, given the clear pressure on Pasifika students from both schools and parents to learn English? For example, we know from international literacy surveys such as IEA, PISA, and PIRLS that New Zealand does well internationally with respect to its best readers, but that it continues to have the greatest gap between its best performing and poorest performing

readers. Māori and Pasifika students, as well as other bilingual students, are disproportionately represented in the latter category. Wilkinson (1998), in his excellent analysis of the IEA evaluations, describes this phenomenon as the 'home language gap' – that is, the gap between the literacy achievements of students whose home or first language (L1; English) corresponds with that of the school, and those students for whom it does not (e.g., Pasifika L1 speakers). As we discuss in 2.1, this does not mean that Pasifika students *cannot* learn to read in English, and succeed at school – many, of course, do. However, the apparent intractability of the home language gap in internationally validated school-based literacy assessments such as IEA, PISA and PIRLS, and the overrepresentation of Pasifika students within it, remains of considerable concern. This is further heightened by comparable patterns of low achievement in English literacy for many Pasifika adults.<sup>6</sup>

The answer to this apparent conundrum – that is, how an emphasis on English at the expense of Pasifika languages can entrench rather than mitigate negative educational outcomes for Pasifika students – returns us to the relationship between Pasifika bilingualism and education. Historically, the poor achievement of Pasifika students in New Zealand has most often been attributed to their home environment and/or their bilingualism (see Dickie, 1998; Hunkin-Tuiletufuga, 2001, for further discussion). Consequently, Pasifika languages have been constructed as *obstacles* to learning and the learning of English, in turn, becomes a zero sum game – an *alternative* to speaking a Pasifika language, rather than *complementary* or additional. The term used to describe this position in the relevant literature is a 'subtractive' view of bilingualism, where the student's bilingualism is viewed as a problematic characteristic to be overcome, rather than a resource to be used to enhance the teaching and learning process (see also 1.4).

Subtractive views of bilingualism are most often held with respect to so-called 'minority' or 'community' languages – languages that are perceived to be low status and lacking prestige, such as Pasifika languages in the New Zealand context. There is an extensive sociolinguistic literature which explores how these negative attitudes to such languages – particularly, their construction as having limited 'instrumental' value – contributes directly to language shift and loss over time among the groups' speakers, and related limited educational and social mobility for its speakers (for further discussion, see May, 2001). The same general pattern clearly applies to Pasifika groups, with language shift continuing to occur within Pasifika groups, particularly across generations, and *even when* Pasifika languages may still be spoken in the home and community. Constructing English as the only useful educational language – as demonstrated, for example, in the responses of the Sāmoan

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<sup>6</sup> A key issue of concern that emerged from the recent adult literacy report *More than Words* (Ministry of Education 2001), for example, was the finding of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), conducted in 1996-1997, that adult literacy levels in English are consistently lower overall for both Māori and Pasifika adults when compared to the New Zealand population as a whole. While adult literacy levels across the population were comparable with other developed countries, 70% of Māori and 75% of Pasifika adults failed to meet minimum levels in English literacy (level 3). The majority of Pasifika adults in this category were also second language (L2) speakers of English.

parents discussed above – only serves to further undermine the ongoing use of Pasifika languages in both the home and school.

This pattern of ongoing language shift among Pasifika communities also holds true even when Pasifika languages are promoted as being important for identity purposes. The majority of the respondents in Davis et al.'s Manukau study “emphasised the importance of their language in relation to their identity as members of [particular] Pasifika communities” (2001, p. 12). Likewise, Fetui and Malakai-Williams’ study on Sāmoan language use concluded that the maintenance of Sāmoan is important for “the self esteem, confidence and identity of Sāmoan youngsters [in New Zealand], as well as making them appreciative and aware of their cultural heritage” (1996, p. 234). But emphasising the importance of language for identity does nothing to subvert the above views about the relative lack of educational merit of Pasifika languages – indeed, ironically, it may even entrench them (cf. footnote 4).

The effects of subtractive views of bilingualism on bilingual students are reflected in their subsequent poor educational performance over time, as seen for example in the disproportionate number of bilingual Pasifika students in the so-called literacy ‘tail’. Indeed, the international research literature consistently finds that subtractive bilingual contexts, particularly English-only classroom environments, are the *least* effective in successfully educating bilingual students. Moreover, the educational success of bilingual students improves in direct relation to the degree that the students’ first language (L1) is used in the teaching and learning process. Consequently, bilingual/immersion education is demonstrably the *most* effective form of education for bilingual students, although mainstream (non-bilingual) contexts which draw on students’ L1, and which adopt an integrated approach to second language learning rather than an ESL withdrawal approach, are certainly more effective than those mainstream contexts which do not (see Gibbons, 2002; May et al., 2004).<sup>7</sup> The reasons why English-only approaches, in particular, are so ineffective is because such programmes not only atrophy students’ bilingualism but also fail to recognise, and draw upon, the extensive linguistic resources of bilingual students – particularly their knowledge of their first language (L1). As we discuss in 1.6, this is a crucial basis for successfully learning academic English, in turn a key factor in long term academic success.

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<sup>7</sup> ESL withdrawal programmes, the default response to bilingual students in New Zealand schools, are considerably less effective than integrated approaches to second language learning because they fail to link content and language learning directly, a key requirement for the successful acquisition of academic English for bilingual students (see 1.7). ESL withdrawal options also fail to utilise the L1 of bilingual students to any great extent. In addition, withdrawal programmes, by definition, remove students from the classroom language environment, thus also removing them from the richest language resource that these students have available to them in learning academic, classroom-based English. As Clegg observes of this: ‘why go to the trouble of artificially recreating the mainstream classroom [in withdrawal classes] when the real thing is available next door?’ (1996, 10). (For further discussion, see Gibbons, 2002).

## 1.4 From subtractive to additive bilingualism

Pasifika L1 students are described in the wider literature on bilingualism as 'circumstantial bilinguals' because the language they speak is not the majority language of the wider society – English, in the New Zealand context. Consequently, they are required, by circumstance, to learn the majority language as an additional language, although often the message directed at such students is to learn English at the specific *expense* of their Pasifika L1 – the process of 'subtractive bilingualism' described above (see May et al, 2004 for further discussion).

Bilingualism is not always viewed negatively, however – even in a country such as New Zealand, where over 80% of its population are monolingual English speakers (Peddie, 2003). For example, bilingualism is often supported, and actively promoted, when it involves the acquisition of supposedly 'elite' or 'majority' languages such as English, French or German. Following from this, bilingual education in those languages, or even foreign language teaching in schools, despite the latter being a relatively ineffective model of language learning (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 2000b),<sup>8</sup> are consistently regarded as providing an advantageous educational opportunity for students.

Students who experience this type of education are described in the research literature as 'elective bilinguals' because they *choose* to learn an additional language. The context of such acquisition is also often described as 'additive bilingualism'. Additive bilingualism sees the addition of a second language at no expense to the first, with the additional language usually being of high prestige. In the process, the bilingualism of the students is viewed as a cognitive, social and educational *advantage* and specifically fostered as such. The first language (L1) of the student is also drawn upon extensively as a key *resource* in the teaching and learning process. Or, to put it another way, the L1 is *recognised, valued and used* in the teaching and learning process. Accordingly, the students themselves are specifically not viewed in deficit terms, as *incompetent* in English, but rather as *multi-competent* language users (Block, 2003).

Additive bilingual contexts are most often associated with elective bilinguals and prestigious languages, but they need not be limited to them since, as Cummins (2000b) pointedly observes, "why should bilingualism be good for the rich, but not for the poor?" Accordingly, additive bilingual contexts can and *should* apply to Pasifika bilingualism as well. Contexts where additive bilingualism might apply include the full range of educational possibilities:

- bilingual/immersion education in Pasifika languages
- second language teaching and learning for Pasifika students in mainstream contexts
- specific micro teaching techniques with individual bilingual Pasifika students in classrooms with few other Pasifika students.

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<sup>8</sup> As Baker (2001) notes, fewer than one in twenty students in the USA become bilingual as a result of foreign language instruction. See also footnote 3.

The focus of these guidelines will be on equipping teachers to work additively with bilingual Pasifika students in mainstream (non-bilingual) contexts, since this is where the majority of Pasifika students are still situated. In order to do so, these guidelines will necessarily draw on the attested teaching and learning principles and practices found to be most effective in bilingual education and integrated second language education, since it is these contexts where the principles and practices of additive bilingualism, and the long term academic success of bilingual students, are most evident. However, additive bilingual contexts do not have to be limited to bilingual education contexts – they can be applied, at least to varying degrees, in mainstream contexts as well. As a result, all teachers can have greater knowledge and resources available to them to teach bilingual Pasifika students more effectively, whatever the context. That said, the greater the opportunity to foster additive bilingualism for teachers, and within schools, the more likely (and the more cumulative) will be the benefits of additive bilingualism for Pasifika students.

## 1.5 The advantages of bilingualism

There are now close to 150 major research studies, carried out since the early 1960s, on the effects of additive bilingualism (see May, et al., 2004 for further discussion). The first, and still most important of these, was the study conducted by Peal and Lambert (1962), which compared the test performances of French-English bilingual and French monolingual students in Montreal. In this study, Peal and Lambert found that bilingual students scored better than monolingual students on both verbal and nonverbal tests of intelligence. In particular, they noted that bilinguals were especially good on the subtests that required mental manipulation and the reorganization of visual patterns, and on concept formation tasks that required mental or symbolic flexibility. As a result, Peal and Lambert suggested that this implied a difference in the structure of the intellect, with bilinguals having a more *diversified* intelligence. They concluded that the bilingual was at an advantage because the bilingual's two language systems seem to ensure:

a mental flexibility, a superiority in concept formation, and a more diversified set of mental abilities, in the sense that the patterns of abilities developed by bilinguals were more heterogeneous. It is not possible to state from the present study whether the more intelligent child became bilingual or whether bilingualism aided his [sic] intellectual development, but there is no question about the fact that he is superior intellectually. In contrast, the monolingual appears to have a more unitary structure of intelligence, which he must use for all types of intellectual tasks. (1962, p. 20)

Since that time, subsequent research has consistently confirmed that bilingual students in additive bilingual contexts exhibit clear and consistent advantages over monolingual speakers in the following four areas:

- cognitive flexibility
- metalinguistic awareness (knowledge about how language works)

- communicative sensitivity
- field independence

Let us look at each of these briefly in turn. One aspect of cognition that has shown a positive relationship with bilingualism is divergent thinking. Measures of divergent thinking provide subjects with a starting point for thought and ask them to generate a whole series of permissible solutions: for example, “think of a paper clip and tell me all the things you could do with it”. It has been suggested by some as an index of creativity, while others simply view it as a distinctive cognitive style, reflecting a rich imagination and an ability to scan rapidly a diverse range of possible solutions. In contrast, convergent thinking is measured by tests that provide a number of pieces of information that the subject must synthesize to arrive at the correct answer; the information is provided to converge on a particular solution.

What the research has found is that bilinguals are consistently superior to monolinguals on divergent thinking tests (see Baker, 1988; Ricciardelli, 1992 for good reviews). Surprisingly perhaps, bilinguals are also consistently better at convergent thinking. They are more able to generate a number of different hypotheses in order to reach a solution (and use more complex language in so doing). They also draw more extensively on the use of metaphors (Kessler & Quinn, 1987).

The reasons for this can be largely explained by the second dimension in which bilinguals consistently outperform monolingual speakers – metalinguistic awareness (MA). MA is the ability to analyse language, particularly language *forms*, how they work, and how they are integrated into the wider language system. MA is, in effect, knowledge *about* language and it can be demonstrated at various different levels: phonological awareness (the understanding of sound units), word awareness, and syntactic awareness.

At the level of word awareness, bilinguals are more able to differentiate between the form and meaning of words – for example, in an experiment conducted on bilingual and monolingual students in South Africa, aged between 4-9 years, the researcher (Ianco-Worrall, 1972) asked the following question:

“I have three words: *cap*, *can* and *hat*. Which is more like *cap*, *can* or *hat*?”

If a child chose *can* it suggested the choice was governed by word sound; if *hat* was chosen the choice was likely to have been based on word meaning. The results showed little difference between the monolingual and bilinguals groups, when aged between 7-9 years of age (both responded by choosing word meaning). Differences were significant, however, with children aged between 4-6 years of age. Bilinguals tended to respond to meaning, monolinguals still to word sound.

As a result, the research concluded that bilinguals “reach a stage of semantic [meaning] development, as measured by our test some 2-3 years earlier than their (monolingual) peers” (Ianco-Worrall, 1972, p. 1398). These conclusions have since been widely replicated in other studies. Similarly, at the level of syntactic [grammatical] awareness, bilinguals are also consistently more able

to judge the grammatical acceptability, or otherwise, of a sentence in a given language.

This enhanced MA in bilinguals should not in fact surprise us, since bilinguals, by definition, are working with more than one language simultaneously, and thus need to have a greater awareness of how they each work, and how they are both similar and, crucially, different. This in turn requires closer monitoring and inspection of the languages concerned, and might well explain the greater awareness and more intensive analytical ability towards language demonstrated by bilingual children, particularly in their attempts to keep the two languages apart. As Ben Zeev has observed, this “forces the child to develop particular coping strategies which in some way accelerate cognitive development” (1977a, p. 1009).

A third key area of difference in which bilinguals outperform monolinguals is in the area of communicative sensitivity. In this respect, bilinguals need to be aware of which language to speak in which situation. They need constantly to monitor the appropriate language in which to respond or in which to initiate a conversation. They also have to pick up clues and cues about when to switch languages. The research literature suggests that this may give a bilingual increased sensitivity to the social nature and communicative functions of language. Bilinguals, for example, are generally more sensitive to feedback cues (Ben Zeev, 1977b). Other research findings imply that bilingual children may also be more aware of the needs of the listener (Genesee, Tucker & Lambert, 1975).

One other well-researched dimension of cognitive style along which people vary is field dependence–independence. Simply stated, some people tend to view in wholes, others in parts, the latter being associated with analytical style. Witkin, Dyk, Faterson, Goodenough, & Karp (1962) found that as children grow to maturity, they become more field independent. While field dependence-independence may appear as a perceptual ability, Witkin and his co-workers regarded it as a general ability to be aware of visual contexts. This, in turn, can be related to problem solving ability and ease of cognitive restructuring.

Balkan (1970) found that bilinguals were more field independent and that those who learnt their second language before the age of four tended to be more field independent than late learners (who had learnt their second language between 4-8 years). However, Genesee and Hamayan (1980) also found that those who were more field independent learnt a second language better. A further confirmatory piece of evidence comes from English/Spanish bilinguals in the USA (Duncan & De Avila, 1979), using the Children’s Embedded Figures Test, which requires children to discern a shape from a background. Duncan and De Avila results saw a descending order of scores on field independence as follows:

1. proficient bilinguals;
2. partial bilinguals, monolinguals and limited bilinguals;
3. late second language learners.

The authors concluded that proficient bilinguals might have advantages in cognitive clarity and in analytical functioning.

The Embedded Figures Test focuses on spatial ability. In contrast, metalinguistic awareness tests focus on linguistic domains. On the surface, they appear to have little in common. Yet bilinguals do well on both tests compared with monolinguals. Are there any features in common between the test that explain bilinguals' cognitive advantages? Bialystok (1992) argues that there is a commonality: selective attention that transfers across the spatial and linguistic domains. Bilingual students can reconstruct a situation (perceptual or linguistic), focus on the key parts of a problem and select the crucial parts of a solution. They can escape from perceptual seduction and overcome cues that are irrelevant. Their "early experience with two languages may lead them to develop more sensitive means for controlling attention to linguistic input. They are used to hearing things referred to in two different ways, and this can alert them earlier to the arbitrariness of referential forms" (Bialystok, 1992, p. 510). Such selective attention may transfer across spatial, cognitive and linguistic domains. For Bialystok (1992), it is selective attention that explains bilinguals' advantages on divergent thinking, creative thinking, metalinguistic awareness, communicative sensitivity, and on the embedded Figures Test. Needless to say, if additive bilingual contexts can be more readily established for Pasifika bilingual students, the same cognitive, social and educational advantages are likely to ensue for them as well.

## 1.6 Interdependence and language learning

A key reason why additive bilingual contexts are so crucial to the success of bilingual students is because they specifically allow for the prior knowledge and expertise that the students have in their L1 to be used as the basis for learning their L2. This has been described by Cummins as the *Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis*. On this view, a student's second language (L2) competence is partly dependent on the level of competence already achieved in the first language (L1). Or to put it another way, the more developed the L1, the easier it will be to develop the L2. The less developed the L1, the more difficult the achievement of bilingualism and biliteracy will be (Baker, 2001). The successful achievement of biliteracy, in particular, is also crucially linked to subsequent school success for bilingual students, while its absence explains their lack of success in subtractive bilingual contexts (McCaffery & Tuafuti, 2003; May et al., 2004). As Cummins (1979b) states:

the level of L2 competence which a bilingual child attains is partially a function of the type of competence the child has developed in L1 at the time when intensive exposure to L2 begins:...[an] initially high level of L1 development makes possible the development of similar levels of competence in L2. However, for children whose L1 skills are less well developed in certain respects, intensive exposure to L2 in the initial grades is likely to impede the continued development of L1. (Cummins, 1979b, p. 233)

Crucially, Cummins found that it normally takes around 2 years for a child's conversational ability or surface fluency in an L2 to develop, yet between 5 to 7 years before the more evolved academic skills required to cope with classroom language and curriculum content are developed fully. This

difference has come to be termed the 'second language learning delay' (see 1.7). Hakuta, Butler and Witt (2000) found a similar pattern in their Californian study. (Oral proficiency = 3-5 years, academic proficiency = 5-8 years). Consequently, as Cummins and others have shown, bilingual students can have highly developed conversational skills in, for example, English, yet may still perform badly in school if their academic language skills remain underdeveloped.

The Interdependence principle also has significant implications for school programmes. Schools which do not draw on a bilingual student's first language at all, as is commonly the case in English-only classrooms, will not be able to harness any development that student already has in their L1. This explains why many bilingual students fail at school – including, as we know, many Pasifika bilingual students. This also explains the conundrum of why, even when English is seen as essential to the success of Pasifika students, a focus on it at the expense of Pasifika L1 languages actually proves to be actively counterproductive. The latter approach – still widely practised in New Zealand schools, as elsewhere – has been described in the literature as the 'time on task' principle (see Cummins, 2000a,b), based as it is on the common sense idea that the earlier and the longer English instruction occurs for non-English speakers, the more likely they are to acquire academic English and succeed at school. However, the time on task principle does not work for three key reasons:

- it fails to use the L1 as a basis for learning English, thus also failing to draw on the extensive (multi-competent) skills of bilingual students discussed in 1.5
- it remains firmly predicated on a subtractive view of the students' bilingualism
- it does not account for the differing demands of learning conversational and academic English, often assuming wrongly that competence in the former will invariably lead to competence in the latter (it may do, but does not necessarily do so)

## **1.7 Conversational and academic language proficiency**

The particular demands of learning academic English also bear brief explanation here (see also Section 2), not least because it helps to throw light on why the gap in literacy achievements in English between first and second language English speakers is both so large and so persistent in New Zealand (see 1.3).

Cummins has explored the reasons for this more fully via his development of the distinction between conversational and academic language proficiency, or as he first termed it, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS).<sup>9</sup>

Conversational and academic proficiency describe two distinct language registers that students have to master in an L2 (or in an L1, for that matter) in

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<sup>9</sup> See also 2.4.1

order to succeed academically. Conversational competence relates to the phonological, syntactic and lexical skills necessary to function in everyday interpersonal contexts. The requirements for conversational competence are usually cognitively undemanding and contextually supported and, as such, children are likely to acquire this kind of competence in an L2 within 1-2 years.

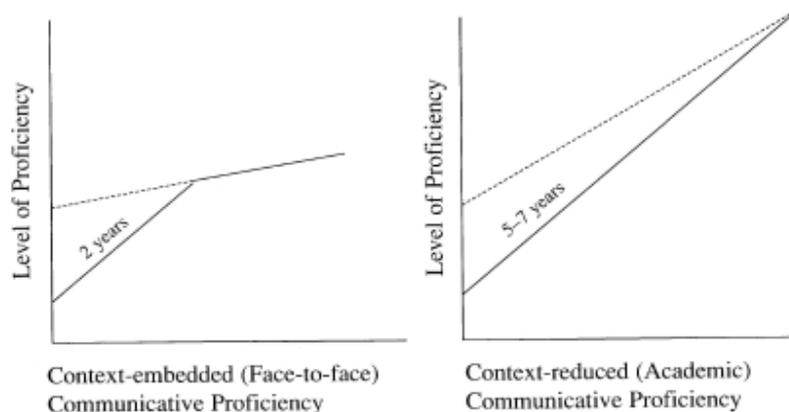
Academic language proficiency, in contrast, requires children to manipulate or reflect on the surface features of language outside immediate interpersonal contexts. These requirements are most apparent in contextually reduced, or disembedded, academic situations where higher order thinking skills are required, such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Moreover, Cummins argues that these skills are a necessary prerequisite for the successful acquisition of literacy skills at school because they involve the ability to use language as an instrument of thought in problem solving (see also Corson, 1995, 2000). This is why it takes longer, 5-8 years, for students to acquire academic language proficiency in an L2. This developmental lag is further compounded by the fact that students have to master the academic language register of the L2 at the same time as having to learn new curricular information in that language.

Another way of looking at the difference between conversational and academic language proficiency, according to Cummins (2000b) is:

...to note that native-speakers of any language come to school at age five or so virtually fully competent users of their language. They have acquired the core grammar of their language and many of the sociolinguistic rules for using it appropriately in familiar social contexts. Yet schools spend another 12 years... attempting to extend this basic repertoire into more specialized domains and functions of language. CALP or academic proficiency is what schools focus on in this endeavour. (Cummins, 2000b, p. 59)

The two-dimensional model (Figure 1) below helps to summarize these various research findings:

**Figure 1: Conversational and academic language proficiency: differences in acquisition**



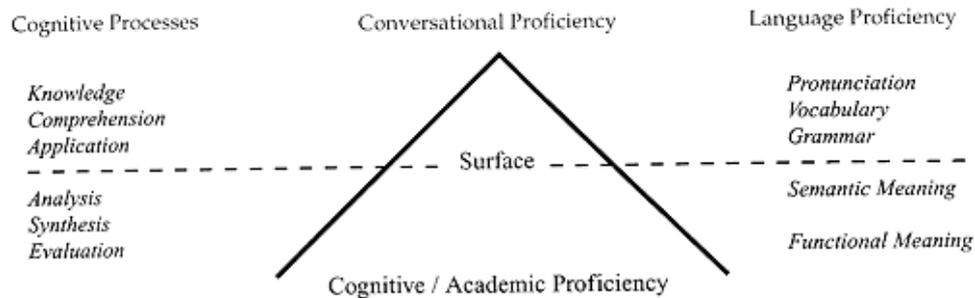
----Native English speakers

\_\_\_ ESL learners

(Baker & Hornberger 2001, p146; see also Figure 3)

What are the implications and consequences of these differences for bilingual students? The iceberg analogy in Figure 2 shows the separation of conversational and academic language. Conversational competence inheres in the skills of pronunciation, vocabulary and comprehension, which lie above the surface and are evident in conversations. Academic language proficiency lies below the surface and consists of the deeper, subtle skills of semantic meaning, analysis and creative composition (Baker, 2001).

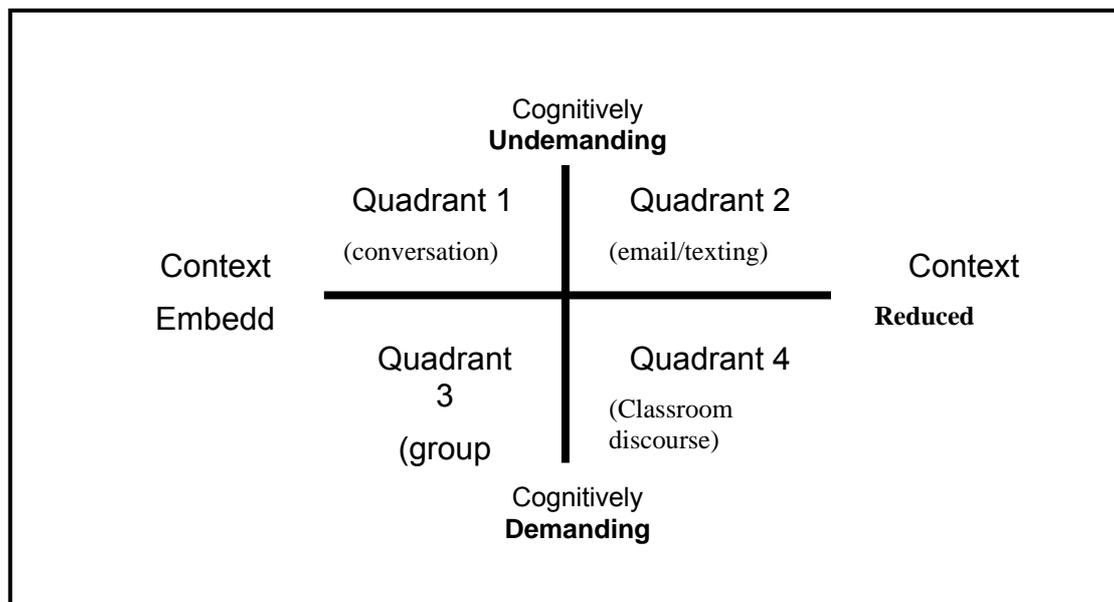
**Figure 2: The Iceberg representation of language proficiency**



(Baker, 2001, p. 170)

The distinction between conversational and academic language proficiency also has specific curricular implications. Thus, Cummins extended his model to include instructional considerations that might assist teachers in constructing programmes that cater better for the linguistic needs of second language students. The development proposes two dimensions of cognitive demand and contextual embeddedness (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 1981), as illustrated in Figure 3 below.

**Figure 3: Cognitive demand and contextual embeddedness**



Based on Cummins (2000b, p. 68)

The first continuum concerns the degree of contextual support available to a child for expressing or receiving meaning. At one extreme of this continuum is informal, face-to-face communication, which is completely context-embedded. In context-embedded communication the participants can actively negotiate meaning (e.g. by providing feedback that the message has not been understood), while the language is supported by a wide range of meaningful paralinguistic and situational clues (eye contact, gestures etc.). At the other end of the continuum is context-reduced communication where participants have to rely primarily, and sometimes exclusively, on purely linguistic cues. Cummins (1987) argues that classroom communication is closer to the context-reduced end of the continuum.

The second continuum concerns the amount of active cognitive involvement required in particular communicative activities. Cummins (1987) suggests that cognitive involvement can be conceptualised in terms of the amount of information that must be processed simultaneously or in close succession by the individual in order to carry out the activity. The upper part of the vertical continuum consists of communicative tasks that require little cognitive involvement because the linguistic tools required have been largely mastered and proceed automatically. At the lower end of the continuum are tasks and activities that involve linguistic resources that have not become automatic and therefore require active cognitive involvement. Many verbal activities in the classroom are cognitively demanding because children are required to do tasks which they have not yet mastered, and they have to both organize their language production more or less consciously, and come to terms with new and often difficult concepts, in so doing. Classroom instruction, then, often requires children to master the complex, purposeful and verbal learning behaviours that are situated in the 4<sup>th</sup> quadrant. Such language activities are demanding enough for L1 speakers, and even more so for L2 speakers.

Cummins' (1981) theory suggests that second language competency in the 1<sup>st</sup> quadrant (surface fluency) develops relatively independently of first language surface fluency. In comparison, context-reduced, cognitively demanding communication develops interdependently and can be promoted by either language, or by both languages, in an interactive way. Thus, the theory suggests that the education of bilingual students will be successful when such students have enough first or second language proficiency in the language of instruction to work in the context-reduced, cognitively demanding situation of the classroom. Conversely, children operating at the context-embedded level in the language of the classroom may fail to understand the content of the curriculum and fail to engage in the higher-order cognitive processes of the classroom, such as synthesis, discussion, analysis, evaluation and interpretation.

As with any theoretical construct, there are criticisms of the conversational/academic language distinction. There has been some criticism, for example, that the distinction underemphasizes the cognitive requirements involved in conversational competence and overstates the significance of cognition in relation to academic language proficiency. The tendency to regard the language registers as quite distinct, when in fact there is overlap between them (see 2.4.1) is also a potential problem. Some critics also point out the potential for a deficit conception of language proficiency to be attached

to those who do not attain academic language proficiency (Frederickson & Cline, 1996).

Despite these criticisms, however, the conversational/academic language distinction is extremely useful in explaining both the relative failure of many bilingual students in subtractive bilingual contexts and the educational success of many of these same students in additive bilingual education contexts. As we proceed to discuss in the ensuing sections, bilingual Pasifika students can also experience these additive bilingual education contexts far more readily than they do now, even in mainstream classrooms, once teachers and schools become aware of what is needed to foster and maintain them. This will also significantly enhance the possibilities of the longer-term educational success of Pasifika students.

## **2: Demands of school learning for bilingual Pasifika children in New Zealand**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Part of the context of this report is a concern with the under achievement of Pasifika students in New Zealand schools as shown by the PISA<sup>10</sup> study, for example. The average performance of 15 year old Pasifika students in New Zealand schools in 2000 in reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy was well below that of the non-Pasifika students, and it is a cause for concern that Pasifika students are not achieving as well as they should be. While much comment focuses on the so-called 'tail' of students, it must be mentioned that the highest achieving Pasifika students are not achieving as well as they should and thus the whole range of students needs to be lifted.

Most Pasifika students in the PISA study (about 80 percent) achieved reading literacy scores that overlapped with the non-Pasifika scores, and about a quarter of the Pasifika students achieved in the top half of scores for non-Pasifika students. Obviously most Pasifika students are able to achieve in the same range as non-Pasifika students, and many are able to achieve better than many non-Pasifika students. The differences between the low scores and the high scores among both Pasifika and non-Pasifika students is very much greater than the differences between the two groups.

The important fact, however, that is obscured in data which compare averages of groups is that any Pasifika student is potentially able to have the same achievements in literacy as any other student. It is a completely incorrect inference from the data to have the idea that each individual student is an 'average' student and that the 'average' Pasifika student will necessarily achieve lower scores in literacy measures than the 'average' non-Pasifika student. Similarly, although there is a gap between girls' and boys' average scores, teachers will approach any individual boy with the expectation that he can achieve highly in literacy, and in all school goals. Where schools and teachers have sought to address Pasifika achievement in particular ways that will be detailed in later sections, results have indicated that there is nothing fixed about the lower levels of achievement in literacy of Pasifika students.

This section has begun with an important orientation to interpreting data about Pasifika student achievement. It continues by examining a range of factors beginning with teacher beliefs and expectations which place demands and constraints on Pasifika bilingual students and may therefore play a role in affecting their achievement.

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<sup>10</sup> See [www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/pisa](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/pisa) - Focus on Pasifika Achievement in Reading Literacy – Results from PISA 2000, p. 5. ; see also <http://www.pisa.oecd.org/knowledge>. PISA - Programme for International Student Assessment – was commissioned by the OECD and covered 32 countries, 28 of them OECD members.

## 2.2 Teacher beliefs and expectations

Over the years a number of reports and studies have addressed the relative under-achievement of Māori children in the education system (e.g. Bishop, Berryman, & Richardson, 2001; Bishop, Berryman, & Tiakiwai, 2003; Glynn et al, 2000; Tuuta, Bradnam, Hynds, Higgins, & Broughton, 2004). Bishop et al. (2003) comment that it has been common to blame various factors in the children and their homes for lack of success in education. They state:

...the majority of teachers suggested that the major influence on Māori students' educational achievement was the children themselves and/or their family/ whānau circumstances, or systemic/structural issues. (Bishop et al., 2003, Executive Summary, p. 2)

Similar findings have been reported on teachers' beliefs about children of non-English speaking background (Kennedy and Dewar, 1997, p. 40 on ESOL teachers' views in New Zealand schools; Leung, 1999, p 238 on ESOL teachers in English schools). Leung (1999, p. 238) comments that the teachers "seemed to attribute a great deal of English language development to home and family circumstances..."

A study of teachers' views in a particular South Auckland primary school by Symes, Jeffries, Timperley and Kuin Lai (cited in Coxon et al., 2002, p. 58) found not only that the teachers attributed 'low levels' of literacy to the students' family background, but that the teachers had seriously underestimated the children's level of literacy attainment. Many of the children in the school were Pasifika and many had been achieving well below national literacy levels.

Nakhid (2003) observes from her interview data with teachers of Pasifika students, that they "tended to regard Pasifika students primarily in terms of low SES and used their assumptions and perceptions surrounding status to adversely determine the educational experiences that these students encountered" (p.223).

Another study conducted by Symes, Jeffries, Timperley and Kuin Lai led to a significant change in teachers' perceptions as "the school realised it needed to turn inward to include the possibility that its own practices might be accountable" (Symes et al., cited in Coxon et al., 2002, p. 58)

With respect to language learning success and achievement, teachers and researchers often also focus on other factors outside the instructional context, namely individual differences, particularly those related to personality. Kennedy and Dewar (1997, p. 40) found that the staff they interviewed also identified student characteristics as factors which influence EAL (English Additional Language) students' ability to learn English. Likewise, Leung (1999, p. 238) similarly found that teachers interviewed in England "seemed to regard personality as an explanatory factor in children's English language development". Although second language learning research does identify some effects of individual characteristics in various circumstances, it has been found that all students who learn an L1 can also learn an L2. Individual factors are generally treated more in the nature of constraints which may require particular learning and teaching strategies, than factors which could be expected to determine whether or not learning takes place.

A number of the factors discussed above were canvassed in Nakhid's (2003) study. Nakhid conducted interviews with teachers about Pasifika students, and also with Pasifika students about their non-Pasifika teachers. Using the methodology, "mediated dialogue", she was able to collect the perceptions about Pasifika students held by the two groups and share those perceptions for further comment. While the numbers of participants was limited to five teachers and twelve students, Nakhid observed considerable disparity in the perceptions of the students and the teachers in a number of different areas including self-esteem, the way in which students preferred to learn and be taught, and the discourse of the classroom. One interesting assumption lay in the area of instruction, with teachers believing that students valued specific attention and one-to-one opportunities with them, when in fact students expressed considerable discomfort from classroom practices that singled them out and "exposed them to the class as 'less capable' students" (p. 218).

Nakhid's study allows for a consideration of both teachers' and students' perceptions, and the way they may or may not be aligned. This is developed further in the following section which includes the perspectives of families and communities.

### **2.3 Home school relationships and practices**

For some students there is less of a distance between the home context and the school context. Bernstein (1973) found that middle class English children's language was closer to the language of school than working class children's language. Lareau (2003) similarly found that middle class American children are encouraged to discuss and negotiate with their parents as equals in a way that is similar to skills required in school, whereas working class black and white children are not generally expected to initiate discussions with adults or challenge them. Therefore for some children there is less of a transition from out of school to the language of schooling.

A recognition of pre-school patterns and practices related to literacy, has led researchers to propose that greatest gains in literacy are to be made when the home and community 'matches the school' and vice versa. An extension of this hypothesis explains why children from some cultural groups are not well served by 'mainstream' schools. McNaughton (1995, p.166) explains the "match hypothesis".

The argument has been that beliefs about schooling, patterns of language use, and forms of learning that have developed outside of school do not match those at school. The psychological processes entailed in this match are both personal (what sense the learner can or chooses to make of the new setting) and interpersonal (how easily shared goals develop within school activities).

Some research has explored the type of language practices that may 'match' well to mainstream schooling. In a longitudinal study of Dutch L1 and L2 learners from ages 4 – 7 years, Leseman and de Jong (2001, pp. 85 & 90) found that the quality of oral interaction in families contributed to school word decoding, reading comprehension and maths more than specifically focussed literacy activities around print. They conclude that it is likely that "enhancing

opportunity for and quality of play and problem-solving interactions, and of conversations, oral storytelling, and so forth, may contribute to preparing young children for acquiring literacy and learning other school subjects...”

Other research has often focused on the ‘mismatch’ rather than the ‘match’. Important representations of this work are Michaels and Collins (1984) and Dyson (1992) examining the ways in which sharing time and story telling respectively are unfamiliar literacy practices for students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The next section seeks to identify what some of the features of language and language uses are that are particular to school contexts and which place demands on bilingual Pasifika learners?

## **2.4 Language**

Corson identifies a list of competencies which he proposes constitute language proficiency:

- Linguistic competence: the competence to use and interpret structural elements of a language
- Sociolinguistic competence: the competence to use and interpret language with situational appropriateness
- Discourse competence: the ability to perceive and to achieve coherence of separate utterances in meaningful communication patterns
- Social competence: empathy and the ability to handle social situations
- Sociocultural competence: familiarity with the sociocultural context
- Strategic competence: the ability to use verbal and nonverbal strategies to compensate for gaps in the language user’s knowledge of the code. (Corson, 1990, p. 213)

These competencies are just as much part of the school-based language learning as they are of language outside the school. However, they differ in manifestation. So for example, there are particular structures prevalent in school texts, not found in more general texts such as newspapers. There may be particular and appropriate non-verbal strategies used in classrooms such as raising one’s hand that are not used in other contexts. Some particularly demanding areas of language competence in school contexts are discussed below.

### **2.4.1 *Conversational and academic language proficiency revisited***

Cummins’ important distinction between BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) – now termed Conversational and Academic Language Proficiency – has been discussed in depth in section 1.7. Cummins’ distinction between

Conversational and Academic Language Proficiency does not imply that Conversational Language is only used outside school and Academic Language Proficiency is only what is required at school. Much of what goes on in school is very similar in its language use to what children are familiar with from outside school if they speak the language of instruction outside school. In fact, Cummins originally made the BICS/CALP distinction in order to point out that children are able to perform at school with moderate success up to a certain level without developing Academic Language Proficiency to any great extent. This is possible because of what is common between school (or academic) language and non-academic language. However, to succeed fully throughout school and tertiary study, certain specialised language needs to be developed.

Therefore, a key implication of Cummins' distinction is that specific account must be taken by teachers of the time taken to acquire academic language proficiency for L2 speakers. In addition, teachers must avoid the mistaken assumption that because a student exhibits conversational competence in their L2, they are therefore also readily able to master the requirements of classroom-based discourse

#### **2.4.2 Genres**

Language realises social purposes for speakers and writers. Those social purposes given particular conditions can be repeated, as can the way in which the language is used to realise the social purpose. This is referred to as genre or "generic patterning" (Foley & Thompson, 2003, p. 66). Both spoken and written language can be seen to follow particular patterns. The study of those patterns in general terms can be called Discourse Analysis. There are many different approaches to Discourse Analysis depending on the theory or focus of interest, the labels used to categorise the discourse, and/or the way in which those patterns are described or analysed. This section will confine itself to a discussion of written genres. Section 2.5 discusses spoken genres and other patterned forms of oral language.

Biber, Conrad, Reppen, Byrd and Helt (2002) as an example, focus on academic discourse, categorise the discourse in terms of registers, and focus on the grammatical level of language analysis in a very detailed and specific way. In contrast, Harris, for example makes only one distinction, between two types of 'texts': time-related and non-time – related. He claims that this distinction

"defines adequately and precisely the fundamental aspect of a major form of organisation of texts in which writers relate the real-time occurrence of events" (p. 36). He goes on to suggest the pedagogical implication by stating: "The eliciting question for a writer in a text organised on a time-related basis is always 'what happened next' or, if a generalised account, 'what happens next' with the additional concerns, 'is it relevant to the account and do I wish to give it prominence?'" (Harris, 1987, p. 37).

One systematic and comprehensive way of describing school-prevalent genres, particularly written ones is the typology described in Derewianka (1991), and derived from systemic-functional linguistics. The typology includes: narratives, recounts, explanations, instructions, information reports

and arguments Derewianka describes the schematic structure of these genres and the language features typically associated with them. What is clear from Derewianka's analysis is that the language demands of writing a short personal recount are considerably different from those required in an information report on a historical or scientific investigation.

(See Oliver, 1999, for a brief and helpful overview of genre theory and some of the ways in which teachers can make genres explicit to students).

Teachers of bilingual students need to be aware that learners may bring a knowledge of discourse from their L1 which is a little different from patterns in English. For example, some Spanish-speaking children in US schools were considered to lack logical text structure in their English writing. However, this reflected differences in Spanish discourse patterns, and the children's Spanish writing was considered well structured. Also errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation were considered more serious errors in English than in Spanish, and the learners did not expect to have to pay such close attention to these features (Escamilla and Coady, 2001).

Another aspect of discourse is the pragmatic effect of the text. Whether, in terms of how the text is to be used, is it especially necessary to be polite, or persuasive, for example. L1 learners may have an intuitive understanding of politeness in texts (although many will not) but most L2 learners will need teacher help in becoming aware of the way English is used in texts to fit the social context of the text use. It has been found that even quite advanced Dutch learners of English do not use words like *would* and *could* in English business letters as often as native speakers use them to reduce any possibly negative impact of what they are saying (Braecke, Geluykens, & Pelsmaekers, 1997).

### **2.4.3 Vocabulary**

Vocabulary (or lexical) learning is probably more important for good progress than anything else in language learning, as has been more widely recognised recently. Language theorists are now more inclined to think of language as primarily lexis (vocabulary) stuck together with grammar, rather than as primarily grammar with words slotted in (Richards and Rodgers 2001 p. 132)<sup>11</sup>.

Even with high language use learners, such as EAL students in New Zealand schools, the vocabulary learning is often not adequately addressed and their vocabulary frequently lags behind what they need to express themselves well.

The basic dimension of lexical competence is size. All other things being equal, learners with big vocabularies are more proficient in a wide range of language skills than learners with smaller vocabularies, and there is some evidence to support the view that vocabulary skills make a significant contribution to almost all aspects of L2 proficiency (Meara, 1996, p. 37). For instance, the holistic quality of learners' writing generally correlates with good vocabulary use in the writing (Nation, 2001, p. 177).

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<sup>11</sup> "language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar" (Lewis, 1993, p.89).

For native speakers of a language the number of words known is also positively correlated with reading comprehension, and with content knowledge, which in turn is correlated with writing performance. In reading, learners primarily need vocabulary, then subject matter knowledge, then grammatical structure (Nation, 2001, p. 145). There is evidence that the same holds true for second language learners.

The growth of vocabulary is therefore perhaps the single most important aspect of second language learning.

There are a number of aspects to learning a word. L1 English speaking children who “know” a word on entry to school “know” at least a basic meaning of the word, but they do not yet know the written form of the word. As they begin to read they learn to match the written form to the spoken form they already know. However, their knowledge of the other aspects is likely to be quite restricted. They may know only one of many meanings of a word such as “skin”. Their own repertoire of grammar and register is limited compared with older children or adults, and they typically know few collocations or associations of words. The process of language development widens and enriches their understanding of “known” words as well as adding new words to their lexicon.

Pasifika children who start school speaking only a Pasifika L1 are not able to use their oral knowledge of words in their initial reading, and they often have to learn the word meaning as well as the written and spoken form at the same time. But in other respects the gradual process of widening the understanding of a word is the same in L2 learning as in L1 learning.

Further aspects of vocabulary that make it an essential but demanding area of language learning are explained below.

Academic English vocabulary, in particular, is made up of a very large number of words which have derived from Greek or Latin. These words are typically longer and more complex (e.g. *equivalent*) than everyday words, which are more likely to be derived from Anglo-Saxon (e.g. *head*). The value placed on Graeco-Latin words is historical, beginning at a time when Greek and Latin words flooded Anglo-Saxon at the time of the Roman occupation of Britain, and which lasted until around AD 400.

Corson has contributed much to studying the difficulty associated with Graeco-Latin words (see Corson, 1995; 1997). His claim is that “many learners from some sociocultural backgrounds do not get ready access to this vocabulary outside school” (Corson, 1997, p. 671). He criticises school systems, saying they “take too little account of the fact that many people’s discursive relations, before and outside formal education, are inconsistent with the kinds of lexico-semantic demands that schools and their high-status culture of literacy place upon them” (p. 673).

To provide one concrete example of the potential difficulties here (See Table 2), Corson compares frequent, everyday words in English, derived from Anglo Saxon (A-S), with relatively common academic English words, derived from Graeco-Latin (G-L). Using the Collins frequency rating (where 1 is most frequent and 6 is least frequent), he finds that all of the A-S nouns are in the top (most frequent) category (1). However, the academic English words average 3.25, indicating their lesser frequency and greater difficulty.

## Frequent A-S nouns

time  
people  
years  
work  
something  
world  
children  
life

## Frequent G-L nouns

chapter  
component  
context  
criterion  
data  
design  
focus  
hypothesis

Table 2: Comparing Anglo-Saxon and Graeco-Latin derived words in English (adapted from Corson, 1997, pp. 678-679)

Another important vocabulary fact is that a relatively small number of frequent words make up a very large proportion of most texts. But to read an unsimplified text with fluent comprehension you also need to know most of the infrequent words that occur in the text. Nation (2001) estimates that to do this easily a learner needs to know at least 5000 words. Therefore a learner's vocabulary needs to include a large number of words which are not met very often in reading, and perhaps are rarely used in speech.

In the last twenty years attention has also been paid to the importance, and difficulty, of lexical units longer than the word. Sinclair points out that most text is made up of the occurrence of common words in common patterns, or in slight variants of those common patterns. Most of these common words do not represent independent concepts. They are components of a very large number of multi-word patterns that make up text (1991, p. 108). The most frequent uses of the most frequently used words are not the core meaning. For example *back* meaning *part of the body* is an infrequent use of the word *back*. Most often *back* refers to direction or position – *at the back*, *give it back*.

Sinclair's view is that "...normal text is largely delexicalised, and appears to be formed by exercise of the idiom principle, with occasional switching to the open choice principle" (Sinclair, 1991, p. 113). This means that the learner's task is not to know words in isolation associated with a fixed concept. Rather they need to know many phrases in which the common words occur.

Similarly, Pawley and Syder (1983, p. 208) observe that "[m]emorised clauses and clause-sequences form a high proportion of the fluent stretches of speech heard in everyday conversation" (Examples of these are: *Is everything OK? I knew you wouldn't believe me.*) These, and other 'formulaic sequences', (e.g. *the current economic climate; And another thing...* (Wray, 2000)) pose particular difficulties for teaching. They are very common and make up a large proportion of language – particularly spoken language. But they are neither entirely fixed, nor entirely free to vary, and the learner must come to recognize

these limits, and respond appropriately to the contexts and frequency of these items. Teachers need to be aware of the existence and special status of these word groups in order to guide learners' attention to their characteristics.

## 2.5 Discourse norms

Discourse norms can be thought of as frames or "structures of expectation" (Foley & Thompson, 2003, p. 54), that are associated with particular social activities and purposes, just in the same way as we have described written genres above.

Foley and Thompson elaborate:

Our developing schema or frames of expectation do not only prepare us in what to say, and how to behave but they also influence our assumptions and expectations about a whole variety of things including ... the roles and responsibilities we may be expected to assume, as well as what to say and how to behave appropriately when we get there. (2003, p. 54)

The frames of expectation consolidate over time and through experience. This is a type of socialization process.

School contexts represent what Foley and Thompson (2003, p. 54) describe as "situations that require highly regulated ritualized patterns of behaviour. One of the most frequently referred to ritualized pattern of discourse in classrooms that students need to become socialized in is the IRF pattern of interaction between a teacher and students. This is when a teacher initiates an interaction, a student responds and the teacher provides feedback on the response. (See Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975, for a detailed explanation of this pattern.)

Spoken genres such as the IRF pattern constitute the discourse norms of the classroom. There is an added demand in terms of learning the patterns of interaction for speakers of a first language other than English. Bilingual children have to learn how to take and keep speaking turns in English and this may be in quite a different way from their L1.

The reality of many classrooms for students from backgrounds other than English is that they are not constructive and cohesive learning communities into which students are positively and deliberately socialised. This *can* happen, however, and Vine's (1998) study of the way in which a six year old Sāmoan boy's peers did this, makes for encouraging reading.

However, the unconscious use of classroom discourse norms, understood and competently manipulated by mainstream participants such as teachers and L1 speakers of English, can end up specifically marginalising Pasifika students. The Pasifika students interviewed in Nakhid's (2003) study talked of the way in which non-Pasifika students and teachers seemingly colluded to reinforce beliefs that non-Pasifika students worked harder and were faster learners than Pasifika students. This was done by the way in which requests for further information or clarification about what was being taught were handled by teachers for the different groups of students. In Jones' study

(1991, pp. 76 & 160), the Pasifika students were likewise certain that there was no point in engaging in the talk and discussion with teachers, and also articulated the awareness that there was something about the way the Pākehā girls related to schooling that was different and more successful, in spite of the fact that both Pasifika and Pākehā girls spoke English.

Duff also suggests that other students in particular often construct minority students as “stigmatized deficient students” (2002, p. 218) by the way they dominate classroom teacher- led discussion.

## 2.6 Language distance

Language distance refers to “the relative degree of similarity between two languages” (Elder & Davies, 1998, p. 1). For instance, Sāmoan is not as distant as Japanese from English but is more distant than say Spanish on a number of grammatical and discourse related language variables. For instance a grammatical variable is subject/verb/object order, while subject prominence is considered a discourse variable.

Language distance is a factor that may add a significant learning burden for Pasifika students learning English as a second language. Language distance operates as a type of constraint on transfer. As Corder (cited in Elder and Davies, 1998, p. 2) states, “Part of the task of acquiring a second language is finding how much we already know of it”.

While the effect of language distance has not been empirically tested for L1 speakers of Pasifika languages learning English, it has been for a number of other learners of English as an additional language. For instance studies of language distance have been carried out with L1 learners of Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Russian, Malay and Indonesian Arabic, Spanish, Finnish, Swedish (see Elder & Davies, 1998, for a discussion of some of these studies).

In the study of secondary school students’ language backgrounds and their correlation to scores, both in L1 and L2 writing examinations, Elder and Davies found that the influence of language distance appeared greater at early stages of learning, and at lower levels of proficiency (p. 4).

Elder and Davies surmise that “younger children whose L1 is more distant from English are likely to face greater problems in acquiring literacy in English than comparable children whose L1 is closer to English” (1998, p. 16).

Brown (1995, p. 450) provides further indication of the possible impact of language distance on literacy acquisition of bilingual Sāmoan children when he lists the following features of Sāmoan:

- The phonological system contains 5 vowels and 13 consonant sounds only.
- There are 17 letters in Sāmoan orthography.
- The vast majority of Sāmoan words are single syllable words.
- The number of productive affixes is small but reduplication of root morphemes is highly productive.
- Sāmoan can 2 or 3 print words to what in English is just one word.

Franken (1999, p. 3) states that “ Clearly this has implications for the decoding of text for students who have some proficiency in reading in Sāmoan, or in other similarly structured Pacific languages”.

Language distance effects are worthy of further study in order for teachers and educators to fully appreciate the learning burden for bilingual Pasifika children. However research must consider the effects of language distance in conjunction with other factors such as the use of L1 and L2 in the home. As Davies and Elder (1998, p. 1) caution, “In itself it is not a factor that can be separately accounted for in the performance of second language students”.

## **2.7 The constraint of time on the learning process**

Among the issues students may face are the feeling that they understand nothing, and the belief that they are making no progress. It takes many years to learn a language and there is often a feeling of frustration that progress is so slow, and that the competence in the second language remains so much less than in the first language. This ongoing comparison means that language learning is often experienced more as failure than success. For this reason it is particularly important that learners experience language learning as having purposes and specific goals which are being achieved, and understand the time scale of their learning, and the milestones along the way which they should achieve.

Collier’s (1989) review of all research investigating how long it takes to master a second language for schooling shows the extent of the potential difficulty. The three most pertinent conclusions (Collier, 1989, p. 256-257) are as follows:

1. Immigrants arriving at ages 8 to 12, with at least 2 years of L1 schooling in their home country, take 5 to 7 years to reach the level of average performance by native speakers on L2 standardized tests in reading, social studies, and science when they are schooled exclusively in the second language after arrival in the host country. Their performance may reach national norms in as little as 2 years in mathematics and language arts.
2. Young arrivals with no schooling in their first language in either their home country or the host country may take even longer to reach the level of average performance by native speakers on L2 standardized tests: possibly as long as 7 to 10 years in reading, social studies, and science, or indeed, never.
3. Adolescent arrivals who have had no L2 exposure and who are not able to continue academic work in their first language while they are acquiring their second language do not have enough time left in high school to make up for the lost years of academic instruction.

Similarly, a study of nearly 300 12 year old English language learners in Toronto showed that even after 6 years of residence there were significant

gaps in speaking, listening, reading and writing in comparison with L1 peers. Importantly, the findings revealed that teachers over-estimated the L2 students' language proficiency. Teachers considered L2 students reached the L1 average for their age in speaking, listening and reading after 2 to 3 years, and after 5 to 6 years in writing (Cummins 2001, p. 119).

Wylie, Thompson, & Lythe (2001) in their longitudinal study found that L2 learners who had entered New Zealand schools at age 5, were still, 5 years later at age 10, behind their L1 peers in literacy, mathematics and logical problem-solving. At age 12, there were still gaps.

Recent studies suggest that these findings represent a conservative estimate and that in fact it may be closer to seven to ten years (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000, p. 22).

At secondary level this has important implications for students' ability to cope with academic study at a tertiary level. Wong-Fillmore and Snow (2000, p. 23) cite Scarcella's results of a United States survey that showed that 60% of freshmen who took a competence test of English failed it - "a third of them because of major problems with English language skills". Some 90% of these ESL students were Asian Americans who had attended American schools for more than eight years, nearly always in English-only programmes.

Thomas and Collier's studies show that the time constraint has particular implications for bilingual learners of English

being schooled all in English initially make dramatic gains in the early grades, whatever the type of program students (ESL, English Immersion, Sheltered English, etc) receive, and this misleads teachers and administrators into assuming that the students are going to continue to do extremely well (in later grades)...Since schools don't typically monitor the progress of these students in the mainstream...the schools do not detect the fact that these students typically fall behind the typical achievement levels of native English speakers ...each year, resulting in a very significant cumulative achievement gap...by the end of their school years, (Thomas & Collier, 1997, p. 38)

### **3: Issues for bilingual Pasifika children in New Zealand schools**

Classrooms potentially are places where students can "both reveal and develop aspects of their identities, abilities, and interests, in addition to their linguistic and content area knowledge" (Duff, 2002, p. 291).

#### **3.1 Issues of identity**

The way any person uses a language or languages has a relationship with their personal identity and affects how they relate to their peers. This is true for young children, adolescents, and adults. For both monolingual English speakers and, particularly, bilingual students, there can be difficult issues to negotiate with peers, and even family, in using the language of education. In the latter case for instance, while schools encourage students to read and write at home, families may also consider that such individual activities should be restricted to required homework, and that at other times children should participate in family activities. More subtly, parents may support their

children's reading, but not read themselves, or their reading may be very different from school reading practices (for example, Turoa, Wolfgramm, Tanielu, & McNaughton, 2002; Besnier, 1995; Gregory & Williams, 2000). Jones (1991, pp. 96-98) cites some evidence that Pasifika parents had views about how teachers and students should behave that were quite different from the basis of the New Zealand education system in their emphasis on formality, direct transition of knowledge, and a student role of silence, obedience and following instructions.

Thus for many children, perhaps even most, there are likely to be peer or family pressures operating to some extent against the fullest use of the language use required in schooling. This is particularly to be felt in situations where there is not a great degree of "match" (McNaughton, 1995).

For bilingual Pasifika students, learning the English of education is a double departure from the everyday context - it is a departure from the language of everyday interpersonal communication (as it is for monolingual users of English), but it also represents a choice to use the L2 (for probably increasing amounts of time) instead of the L1, or the home language<sup>12</sup>. The significance of these departures and choices should not be underestimated. If children come from a strong L1 background and begin using the L2 they are no longer speaking the language of their home, family, and L1 based friends. Goldstein (2002, p. 293), in a section entitled 'Benefits associated with Cantonese and costs associated with English', reports the views of some Cantonese L1 immigrant students in Canadian schools. Goldstein reports:

When asked why it was rude to speak in English, Rose told us that some people think that you're trying to be 'special' if you speak English or that you like to 'show off your English abilities'. Max confirmed this when he told us that a Cantonese speaker who uses English with another Cantonese speaker is 'a show-off'.

Young bilingual Pasifika students, or new immigrants, may feel such peer and educational pressure to fit in with the predominantly monolingual English speaking environment that they increasingly stop using their L1, in spite of the educational and personal benefits of maintaining the development of spoken and written literacy in the L1. Biddulph, Biddulph and Biddulph (2003, p. 119) cite research in Fiji which found that "secondary children's immediate social context (mainly the influence of peers) completely overrode parental expectations in most cases".

Pasikale (cited in Coxon et al., 2002, p. 91) speaks of the implications of not considering identity issues:

... suffice to say that 'identity' is a critical issue for many Pacific Islands learners, and understanding the issues can mean the difference to our

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<sup>12</sup> Research conducted by Anae (1998) and Pasikale (1999) (cited in Coxon et al., 2002, p. 91) describes the existence of three different identities for Pasifika youth, namely: 'traditional', 'New Zealand blend' and 'New Zealand made'. These profiles were based on extent to which the individual could relate to the cultural traditions and practices (including language) of their parents and/or grandparents.

positive cultural continuity and the alienation of a generation more comfortable with other forms of sub-culture. It can also mean the difference to continued academic failure and educational success based on the realities of future Pacific Islands generations. I have come to appreciate that 'identity' is not a static product but a process of constant navigation, based on a core of convictions that provide a foundation for self-acceptance.

The section below mentions how language use which is more 'academic' may have implications for a learner's sense of personal identity.

### **3.1.1 Academic language use and identity**

If children whose language use is different from the language of school start to use more academic language, they no longer sound entirely like themselves. They sound more like children from different backgrounds. Alison Jones (1991) describes how differently the Pākehā and Pasifika girls (nearly 20 years ago now) used the school language of answering and asking questions, with the Pasifika girls resisting the use of Pākehā norms. Jones (1991, p. 26) found that among the Pasifika girls she studied "The over-riding ethic amongst the girls was the maintenance of a feeling of shared beliefs and knowledge, any questioning of which constituted a threat to the unity of the group".

If students themselves start to speak or write more formally than their peers or with a wider range of vocabulary or structures, there may be peer pressure against this – a "Don't get technical with me" response (Gilbert, 1990). Gilbert gives examples of teasing and negative peer reactions when students use words such as *chlorophyll* and *photosynthesis* in spoken interaction between students in curriculum tasks.

Goldstein (2003) analyses the reasons for these attitudes in terms of the power that accrues in the school system to students whose English reaches the higher levels of proficiency, and thus higher levels of achievement. She likens 'showing off' their powerful language to showing off material or educational achievements, which are also symbols of power.

## **3.2 The silencing and marginalising of students**

Duff (citing Harklau, 1994) states that in many mainstream classrooms, minority students are "silent, marginal, and apparently disconnected and disengaged from peers, curriculum, activities and discourse in the mainstream. In Nakhid's (2003) study, the Pasifika students interviewed reported that the dominant interactional norms operating in the classroom had the effect of largely silencing them and marginalising them. The students represented themselves as different from the vocal majority students. The value of research such as that by Nakhid and also the now often quoted research involving Māori students by Bishop and Glynn (1999) is that it gives students, who may not otherwise be heard, a voice. As Duff states "some (dominant) voices and not others are valued and heard" (Duff, 2002, p. 290).

### **3.3 Student motivation**

Peer reactions and identity conflicts of the kind discussed above are likely to affect students' motivation to develop the language of education, which in New Zealand is primarily accessible through English, often an L2 for bilingual Pasifika students.

Motivation is always an important factor in second language learning. Spolsky (1989, p. 15) suggests that four general factors influence outcomes in language learning - motivation, present knowledge, opportunity and ability. Cummins' (2000b) developmental interdependence hypothesis argues that the transfer of literacy-related skills from the L1 to the L2 requires both adequate motivation to learn the L2 and, not only but also, adequate exposure to it. Thus things such as a conflict of identity in language use, which may negatively affect Pasifika bilingual students' motivation, are important to address.

Nakhid's (2003) research suggests that some teachers have difficulty in relating to Pasifika students' views of themselves in a way that makes it easy to address and resolve these conflicts.

### **3.4 Orientation to learning**

Closely associated with issues of identity are beliefs about the nature of learning and views of oneself as a learner. Beliefs about learning can be general as in explanations for what accounts for success, but also particular in terms of what makes for success in language learning (Mori, 1999). This is significant for Pasifika students learning English as a second language.

In terms of a general orientation to learning, Jones (1991, p. 148) found that the Pasifika girls in her study attributed their lack of success almost entirely to a lack of 'brains', rather than the more useful notion that effort plays a large role in successful learning outcomes. The former notion has been found to be frequently and unhelpfully reinforced by teachers (Jones, 1991, p. 149; Nakhid, 2003).

#### **3.4.1 *Beliefs about language learning***

Some students may believe that they are 'bad' language learners, even if they are making normal progress. They may believe that only boys, or only girls, or only students from other language backgrounds are 'good' learners, and this may cause them anxiety. They may not like English speakers in general, they may be bullied by the English speakers in their school, or they may fear becoming like them if they learn English successfully. They may believe that the only way to learn English is to copy, or to memorise. They may be unwilling to try to speak or understand unless they are certain they will be completely correct. All of these possibilities are commonly experienced by language learners. Again, the teacher's job is to have strategies for overcoming these barriers to effective learning.

Such barriers are not impossible to remove because beliefs about language learning are not permanently fixed. Dufva (2003) and Alanen (2003) have investigated adult and child learners' beliefs from a socio-cultural perspective, drawing on the work of Vygotsky and Bakhtin to examine how learners' beliefs are expressed and varied through interaction with others. Dufva (2003, p. 139) found in her analysis of language learners' stories about their learning that:

certain figures play a more important role than others in the formulation and development of language learners' beliefs. The role of the teacher is one clear example....The stories also suggest that beliefs concerning one's competence in learning languages can be highly influenced by teachers – either encouraging or discouraging the learners.

Alanen found similar evidence of a range of influences, and of change. Jimi was interviewed (in Finnish) when he was 7 years old about learning languages and was asked whether or not he would like to learn English. He replied 'no it's for sissies to learn', and, although what he went on to say was rather incoherent, he seemed to link this to some children in kindergarten who were his mates, and to a girl there who knew English. Eighteen months later he thinks boys and girls are equally good at learning languages and he now has computer games in English, as does his cousin who has learned a lot of English words from them. It appears that the former association of English with a young girl has been replaced by a more attractive association of English with his cousin and his computer games. Or perhaps the effect of the negative views of his former mates at kindergarten, have been replaced by the influence of his cousin's more positive views.

This research suggests a clear avenue for teachers to discuss bilingual learning, and to influence learners' incorrect and unhelpful beliefs about themselves in encouraging ways.

### **3.5 Learning styles**

Alton-Lee (2003, p. 17) points out that there is no research evidence for the 'learning styles' approach which suggests that particular learners, and sometimes particular ethnic groups, are primarily visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic learners. Indeed, the stereotyping of any ethnic group in this way is likely to lead to a restriction of their opportunities to learn in an appropriately broad range of ways, and an inability on the teacher's part to respond to, and expand, the actual learning practices of individual students. For example, in language learning it is important for learners to work in both auditory and visual ways with language. When learners are working with new words in a written form, their learning is better if they are familiar with the sounds of the words, and if they are able to say the words to themselves. (Feldman & Healy, 1998; McLaughlin, 1998, p. 408). Good reading also involves phonological processing - an aural representation of the text in the learner's mind.

The Pasifika girls in Jones' (1991) study mentioned above had learning practices which were counter-productive e.g. a belief that they had to be as quiet as possible to 'get the information' from the teacher.

There is considerable pedagogical skill in being able to respond to a diversity of learners, find out through interaction, observation, and assessment, what each individual is like and what s/he can do with their language/s, what their beliefs are, and then scaffold ways to take that learner to new achievements. In Jones' study, the teachers made comments about the need for more effort and more active engagement, but they completely failed to engage their learners in these behaviours.

### **3.6 Parental aspirations**

There have been few studies which have focussed on Pacific parents' views and expectations of primary schools. One exception is Utumapu's (1992) study (cited in Coxon et al., 2002, p. 63) on the attitudes of Sāmoan families to the New Zealand education system. She describes the historical context within which expectations and attitudes to education have been shaped, and the degree to which schooling has been seen as a mechanism of social mobility for Sāmoans and a motivating force for migration to New Zealand.

Pasifika parents and children generally have high aspirations and want good jobs requiring education and qualifications (Fusitu'a & Coxon, 1998). Indeed many Pasifika parents have embarked on the difficult step of migrating to New Zealand, away from family, often working in tiring and unsatisfying jobs, for the sake of their children's education and future prospects. Biddulph et al (2003, pp. 114-119) in their research on the role of academic aspirations and expectations in achievement, report that generally parents have high aspirations for their children's future. However, their expectations of success on a year-to-year basis are sometimes affected by the children's actual achievements. They may limit or lower their expectations if the children seem not to be making very good progress in some area.

MacIntyre's study (cited in Coxon et al., 2002, p. 100) shows that the commitment and support of some Pasifika parents may be not be recognised by schools. MacIntyre explored how a group of Tongan mothers perceive their participation and contribution to their children's education. This is also very insightful, in that the mothers believed that they did contribute in a very significant way to their children's education, but it was in a more generalised way, to 'education' rather than to the school in particular. For example, the mothers in the study believed their roles as mothers were to ensure religious grounding and values, as well as to emotionally orientate their families. Parents' involvement was less direct, less intensive and less intimate with schooling and so they did not have a clear idea of what went on in secondary schools in particular.

A number of studies though have found that parental expectations have a direct influence on children's achievement and commitment to school work. One study suggested that Asian-American parents had higher expectations of their children's performance than other groups – they expect high grades (not just passes) and they regard achievement as the result of effort and hard work rather than innate ability. Articles in Watkins and Biggs (1996) explore the Confucian ideas of the educability of all and the determining effects of effort (and time) on achievement which underlie education in the Chinese tradition.

### **3.6.1 *Pasifika parents' language wishes***

Immigrant parents are often of the view that to succeed in a new culture, their children need to become proficient in the language of the dominant culture. Coxon et al (2002, p. 91) state that it has “been documented that migrant Sāmoan parents have in the past not considered the Sāmoan language to be of educational value within the context of schooling, particularly in terms of its potential economic value for themselves as New Zealand residents (Fetui and Malakai-Williams, 1996; Hunkin-Tuiletufuga, 2001)”.

However, in 1995 the Ministry of Education employed MRL Research Group to survey Māori and Pacific language demands for educational services. It ranged over all sectors of the education system. They found that over half of the Pacific respondents want their children to be able to speak both their first language and English fluently by the time they finished primary school. This clearly has implications for primary school curricula and programmes.

## **4: Responding to the needs of bilingual Pasifika children in New Zealand**

### **4.1 Using the L1 as a base and resource for L2 learning**

#### **4.1.1 L1 and literacy acquisition**

Phillips et al (2001), as part of the study reported above in section 1.2, tested a small number of children from immersion Pacific Islands language centres who were entering Tongan and Sāmoan medium school classes, in their Pasifika language as well as in English, on Concepts about Print, a letter identification test and on retelling a story (p.79). The correlations between scores in English and in the Pasifika language were very low, and for some children their English scores were much better than their scores in their Pasifika language. As the researchers comment, it is not possible to use the fact that a child uses a home language other than English “as a sole indicator of the language in which [literacy-related] knowledge may be more advanced”.

For bilingual children, there is debate about the way in which literacy is best acquired. Although there is strong research support for acquiring literacy first through the L1, this is dependent on quality teachers, quality materials and must be supported by genuine choice and commitment on the part of the families of the children (International Reading Association, 2001; McNaughton, personal communication). The low concentrations of L1 speakers may also militate against this in some contexts<sup>13</sup>.

Cummins (2001, p. 126) reports on a study in Canada that showed that even under unfavourable conditions, grade one and two students taking home books in their first language to read with their parents, showed a significant improvement in a bilingual vocabulary knowledge test over the control group. Cummins also discusses (p. 124) an English study where students who were having difficulties with reading took home books in English (their L2) to read to parents, many of whom spoke little English and were not literate in their L1 or L2. Nevertheless, the students made better progress in reading than comparison groups who had extra small-group instruction with a reading specialist. Cummins surmises that the students taking home books would have had to explain the book to their parents in their L1, and that this cognitively demanding task led to the improvement in their reading. Another way of looking at this is that these students were encouraged to do the same as most students in New Zealand are routinely asked to do – namely read the book to their parents. Whether it is the oral interaction about the reading, or the supportive environment for the reading, that makes the difference is not clear. Studies have shown that different families respond very differently to shared reading, and yet the process seems to be helpful in all cases (e.g.

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<sup>13</sup> In England, concentration of L1 speakers has meant that language maintenance is seen as the responsibility of the language communities as speakers number too few in different schools (IRA, 2001), although in some areas schools do provide bilingual support (Turner & Francombe, 1995).

New Zealand data in Tuafuti, 2000; and an English study, Williams & Gregory, 1999).

The children in the studies Cummins discusses were reading in their L2. Transitional bilingual programmes are another approach, in which the introduction of English is delayed. This is based on the thesis that there is a relationship between L1 reading proficiency, L2 language proficiency and L2 reading performance. Generally this is expressed in terms of a threshold level (see for instance, Cummins, 2000b; Lee and Schallert, 1998). Learners need to acquire a certain level of proficiency in the L2 before there is a transfer from L1 reading proficiency to L2 reading performance<sup>14</sup>. Before that threshold level, it appears that the demands of processing an L2 with very low levels of L2 proficiency make it impossible for reading skills to transfer from the L1. Snow et al (1998, pp. 238-242, 324) recommend that, because of this, children should not learn to read initially in a language in which they lack oral proficiency. Ideally they should begin reading in their first language. If this is impossible, reading instruction should be delayed until some oral proficiency has developed in the second language.

Young Pasifika children who enter school at 5 years speaking primarily or only a Pasifika language have to base their learning of written language on a second language which they are only just beginning to learn instead of developing the ability to read and write from the basis of their oral language proficiency. For them, the process of initial reading and writing lacks the easy connection between oracy and literacy that it ideally has for children learning to read in their L1.

If there is no possibility for the development of L1 reading to take place, arguably schools need to provide first instruction in English literacy but in such a way as to embed focused and systematic instruction in a rich and meaningful language environment. Students in this situation need to develop English language proficiency quickly. Otherwise the result of their reading instruction may be that their ability to decode letters into sounds will run ahead of their ability to comprehend text. The level of material they can read with comprehension will be below what would be intellectually challenging for them. It is difficult to create for them the conditions Hudelson recommends i.e. "learner-centred, language rich environments that are both linguistically stimulating and intellectually challenging" (1994, p. 151).

All bilingual Pasifika children in New Zealand can have a good relationship between oral proficiency and initial reading. If they speak only a Pasifika language at age 5, they belong to families and communities who can read that language and, with appropriate support, can assist in their initial literacy in their L1. If they are already bilingual in English, then, if their oral proficiency is adequate in English, and their parents prefer it, they can begin learning to read in English.

McNaughton (2002) proposes that the challenges for schools in literacy instruction are to:

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<sup>14</sup> The student's L2 reading performance is what is observed on specific occasions and tasks. A level of proficiency in reading in the L1 or L2, is a more generalised notion derived from a variety of performances on different tasks and occasions.

1. Create literacy settings which are harmonious and complementary for different communities
2. Promote multiple developmental pathways and recognise multiple forms of literacy
3. Create joint settings which provide opportunities for children to become expert at 'reading' and 'writing' both at school and in the home.

#### **4.1.2 The transfer of other skills**

It is not just L1 language items – words, phrases, and an understanding of how phrases are constructed – that are potentially available for positive transfer to developing an L2. Skills already developed in the L1 are also available. Pasifika bilingual children who have already developed age-appropriate oral and written literacy skills in their first language through early childhood education or school studies will be able to transfer their L1 knowledge of texts and how to work with the meanings they express to their work with texts in their second language. Cummins' Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis suggests that a high level of competence in the L1 will make it possible to develop an equally high level of competence in the L2. But the process is slow and it normally takes at least 5 to 7 years to reach the levels of the monolingual students in the same school system in all language areas - academic writing taking the longest to reach cohort levels.

Two processes are operating which reduce the effectiveness of the transfer from L1 to L2 of academic language skills. The first is the large size of the initial gap between what the bilingual student can do in the L1 and what is possible for them in the L2. If Pasifika students begin schooling in year 1 in New Zealand with little or no knowledge of English, they are already skilful communicators, tellers of and listeners to narratives, descriptions, and many other types of short and longer texts in their L1. If they are older and have attended school they can also read and write and do mathematics and other school subjects in their L1. To begin again in English is like a regression to an earlier age, as anyone knows who has struggled to communicate in a new L2 and found themselves limited to expressing and understanding only the most basic and childish thoughts and information. The more advanced language skills from the L1 are not relevant to this very basic level of L2 functioning.

The second process which may limit the possibilities of useful transfer is the fact that the L2 skills required are expanding constantly, while the L1 skills may not develop further in the academic domain if there is no bilingual schooling available. The large progress in what students typically do in reading and writing between Year 1 and Year 8 clearly shows that if a Sāmoan bilingual child goes no further with their educational use of Sāmoan than their early experience in an Aoga Amata, the detailed skills of working with Sāmoan text that they learned there as a pre-school child will soon cease to be a useful source of transfer to the skills required in an English medium primary school.

The great danger for bilingual children is that the skills and language they already have in their L1 are not built on, and they suffer a disconcerting cognitive hiatus as they cease to learn anything new except how to express

themselves in ways they long ago surpassed in their L1. The surprising thing is that some children are so flexible and resilient that they are not discouraged by this.

#### **4.1.3 Other advantages**

Substantial learning gains are made when learning transfer is effected from L1 to L2 as explained by Cummins' Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis. The cognitive advantages have been discussed above in section 1.5. It is now considered that all the languages a person knows "interrelate and interact" and that well focussed connections are helpful to language competence (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4). If the L1 is linked into the L2 learning, these connections can be made conscious and feed into metalinguistic awareness. Bilingual people are able to switch easily from one language to another, and bilingualism begins as soon as any learning occurs in a second language.

#### **4.1.4 Types of L1 based practices**

Typical L1 based practices commonly and successfully used for L2 literacy and language learning in a variety of contexts are:

- to introduce the L2 gradually through the medium of the L1, possibly using a combination of communicative activities and traditional practices such as language study, memorisation, or translation to give a base in the L2 on which to build.
- to have bilingual teachers who are able to continue to use both languages in the most helpful way for students. De Courcy (2002, p. 70) describes how one bilingual teacher using the L2 (French as a foreign language in this case) as a medium of instruction in a secondary school was able to use the L1 (English) very well. She kept a constant check on student comprehension and quickly supplied a translation or explanation in English to prevent students wasting too much time through not understanding a word or phrase critical to following the lesson. However, she immediately returned to the L2 and consolidated knowledge of the unknown word/s by using them again in simple defining contexts, and then going on to link them with other co-occurring words, and getting the students to do the same. By contrast, another bilingual teacher studied (who taught in Chinese) did not have the same skill in scaffolding the students' comprehension through brief L1 based interventions<sup>15</sup>. The respective groups of students were aware that the first teacher's practices helped them, and that the second teacher's practices left them floundering unnecessarily. The second group partly attributed their floundering to the cultural distance between them and the concepts in Chinese, but it seemed apparent that a more skilful teacher would have been able to bridge this distance.

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<sup>15</sup> See Gibbons (2002, pp. 9-11) for a discussion of scaffolding.

- to encourage and support students from the same L1 background to work together bilingually on their L2 language learning even if the teacher does not speak their L1. If, in addition, they are helped to analyse what they do together that is helpful, the teacher may be able to increase their skill in using the L1 to support L2 learning without him/herself being bilingual. Lameta-Tufuga (1994) found that secondary school Pasifika students performed better in English in an English medium classroom on curriculum tasks in social studies when they were able to discuss the work in their small group in their L1.

This section has focused specifically on how the L1 can contribute directly to L2 learning. Clearly, effective second language provision is a substantial part of considering the range of responses to bilingual Pasifika learners. This is dealt with in detail in section 5, after the consideration of other responses that relate specially to issues raised in section 3, and the demands of school learning discussed in section 2.

## **4.2 Home school partnerships**

Home school partnerships can have a major influence on children's achievement. Biddulph, Biddulph & Biddulph (2003, p. 146) state that "the evidence has been strong that strong centre-home and school-home links are of particular importance for children whose social class structure, and/or ethnicity and cultural heritages are different from those apparent in the practices of the centre or school". Coxon et al (2002, pp. 64-5) report the results of an evaluation of the Pacific Islands School-Parent-Community Liaison Project by Mara (1998). All the schools involved in the evaluation reported an increased level of involvement by Pacific parents in their children's schooling. Such gains would need to be consolidated and extended, however, before there would be evidence of increased educational outcomes for Pacific primary school students.

Biddulph et al. (2003, p. 176) explain the nature of these programmes in the following way: "Such programmes achieve this by helping parents to access various entitlements, health services, and community resources, and by enabling them to add to their range of strategies for interacting with and encouraging their children" (2003, p 176).

They draw on Epstein's (2001) framework for types of involvement (Figure 4, below) to explain the specific ways in which parents, communities and schools can work in mutually supportive ways to raise student achievement.

Parents in the project evaluated by Mara (above), said they liked hearing from the teachers and the principal about the "success" of their children, and they liked being welcomed by the school as participants in their children's education. This response indicates that the schools in the project developed types 2 and 3 levels of involvement: Communicating and volunteering.

**Figure 4: Epstein’s framework of six types of involvement for comprehensive programmes of partnership**

Type 1 - Parenting	Type 2 – Communicat- ing	Type 3 – Volunteer- ing	Type 4 – Learning at Home	Type 5 – Decision Making	Type 6– Collaboratin g with the Community
Help all families to establish home environment to support children as students.	Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programmes [sic] and their children’s progress.	Recruit and organize parent help and support.	Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning.	Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.	Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs [sic] family practices, and student learning and development

There are a number of different ways in which the other types of involvement can be facilitated. In a Pasifika context, homework centres have been documented as an effective means of sharing information about curriculum-related activities. For example, Fusitu’a and Coxon’s (1998) study by of a homework centre in which all students and tutors were Tongan exemplified a ‘fit’ of a number of factors which created a learning environment which was appreciated by students and parents. Students identified the learning benefits for themselves because of the tutor’s bilingualism (explanations of key concepts in Tongan to develop understandings) and the culturally based styles of their interactions, which seemed to ‘fit’ smoothly. Parents also were pleased with the relationships, and expressed the belief that Tongan teachers are able to bring the home values into the school, especially regarding expectations of behaviour (Fusitu’a and Coxon, 2001).

Coxon et al (2002, p. 100) report another study (by Henderson) describing a collaboration with the Tokelauan community, which involved over 100 people. A series of ten Sunday seminars were held for parents and staff. The choice of a Sunday was appropriate given the religious nature of the school. The families would meet at the school, celebrate mass and have a shared lunch in addition to the seminars.

The language of communication for the seminar was English and Tokelauan. Parents were able to articulate their culturally based expectations of the school and its role. Practical ways that parents could support their daughters learning were outlined - for example having a quiet place for study, the importance of explicit encouragement and support, and so on.

Other activities were developed. Parents were rostered to come into the school at lunchtimes on a regular basis. A study group was set up, which met twice a week. The school paid for a suitable tutor, and parents organised transport, using the school van occasionally to transport students home. Teachers, in the classroom, worked on new approaches to teaching. There was 'heightened monitoring' of student progress.

As a consequence of families more active involvement, the students achieved higher results in external exams than the previous year, and above the national average for Pacific students. Henderson's main conclusions are that continued success is a matter of maintaining school/home channels of communication and interaction; that what occurred was a 'normalising' of two very different worlds; and that the previous control that the students had over the communication between home and school (e.g. newsletters that were not delivered) was reduced with the greater involvement and direct contact that parents developed with the school.) Coxon et al. (2002. p.95)

### **4.3 Building a culture of respect and engagement with students**

For Pasifika and all minority students, schools genuinely needs to understand, work with and value the experiences and literacy practices of their students. School practices and policies should be inclusive of all languages and cultures and build on these as resources for learning. White and Grey (1999) describe their research into the development of a particular culturally infused learning environment within an Auckland school with a significant Pacific population (13%). In this very culturally diverse context, they document how the school created "a culture of respect", one which also maintained high standards of teaching and learning. The discussion of the role of teachers in providing a "climate of respect" in the diverse urban classroom is interesting in that specific examples are cited as to how this can be done and why it should be.

Other larger scale New Zealand projects predominantly aimed towards raising Māori achievement, found that differences in student learning came about as a result of better relationships between schools and teachers on one hand, and their students and/or families on the other, and better teaching practices, with improved classroom relationships and interactions. *Te Toi Huarewa* for instance (Bishop et al, 2001, p. 41), found that effective teachers understood what they were doing and could explain why they were doing it, and had competency and ability in te reo Māori and in cultural practices. Their personal qualities which enabled them to work in effective and culturally appropriate ways included a sense of humour and a way of treating students and whānau with respect, compassion and confidentiality. They were able to reflect on their own teaching and could use children's prior knowledge to assist new learning. Another project, *Te Kauhua* (Tuuta et al, 2004, p. 44) found that the key teacher dispositions towards raising Māori student achievement were caring about Māori students' success, valuing Māori students' culture, and listening to Māori students' views.

Like the Māori education projects discussed above, international and local research increasingly shows the importance of teachers working to engage

with individual learners in attitudes and activities that are known to promote learning. For instance, Flores, Cousin and Díaz (1998, pp. 32-33) support the need for students to be exposed to language that is relevant to their own interests and cultural background. In the case of second language learning teachers need to engage with students' beliefs, the culturally specific strategies they bring with them, their level of knowledge and attitudes to language/s and society, to learning, to particular language items and skills, to links with other learning across the curriculum and outside of school.

Pasikale (considering what role ethnicity plays in teaching Pasifika students) concluded that what is of greater importance for academic success is teacher empathy not ethnicity. Students in her study valued educators with empathy, who 'cared' about the whole person (Coxon et al (2002, p.88).

This engagement with students, with what they bring to their learning, and where they come from, forms the critical environment into which specific teaching practices must be integrated. Some of these specific teaching practices have been identified by Alton-Lee (2003) as responsiveness to student learning processes, effective and sufficient opportunities to learn, cycles of tasks which ensure that material is fully learned, effective alignment of the curriculum and all school activities, teaching which scaffolds learning and provides good feedback, promoting students' own understanding of how to learn, and having learners and teachers engage constructively in goal-oriented assessment. Some of these are further developed as they relate to second language teaching and learning in section 5.

#### **4.4 Negotiating around classroom language practices**

Creating a context where learning the L2 does not create identity conflicts and the concomitant marginalisation and lack of motivation, as discussed in section 3, requires "negotiation around classroom language practices" (Goldstein, 2002, p. 297). The school, and the individual teacher, can address students' motivation and conflicts by paying attention to the following practices.

- teaching the diversity of students actually in classrooms, and their attitudes and beliefs, rather than perpetuating an image of an ideal student
- broadening the teachers' and students' understanding of language from a monolingual view where a particular form of English predominates and has greatest value, to a multilingual view which is equally interested, tolerant, and encouraging towards all language use
- as part of a multilingual approach, relaxing the identification of languages with ethnicity and social groups. In particular, English is available to be used (and changed) by users of any background.
- addressing peer pressures through open discussion and ongoing exploration of issues

- creating home-school links to create a unified context for students, rather than two separate worlds with different language use, values and practices
- creating positive motivation for Pasifika bilingual students to know that they can learn everyday and academic English by demonstrating skill in teaching language relevant to school success, and making goals and pathways to success both clear and negotiable.

With older students it is possible to work through language and cultural issues while students are engaged in learning a new language. Kohonen, Jaatinen, Kaikkonen, & Lehtovaara provide a very thorough and interesting exploration of this approach which has been explored in a number of programmes (Kohonen et al, 2001). In these programmes, students are engaged fully in a personal exploration which leads them to explore and identify both their own values and cultural positioning, and aspects of the target culture. This helps students to understand the relative nature of cultural values and practices. In this approach, students work bilingually, using and developing the new language together with their research and explorations which, at beginning levels, have to make considerable use of the first language.

Starks and Barkhuizen (2003) describe a programme in a New Zealand school where students similarly work through language issues themselves. Although students were working in English in a mainstream class, it would be an excellent context for bilingual New Zealand students to use their L1.

#### **4.5 Shifting the orientation to learning**

A number of studies have found a positive relationship between parental encouragement and achievement in classroom second language learning. It is possible that students' motivation is increased by the parents' encouragement. It is also possible that the feelings of anxiety or negativity that many people have about using another language are reduced by parental support. In any case it appears most likely that parental factors, attitudes, anxiety, and motivation interact as causes and effects of each other (Spolsky, 1989, p. 214). This interaction is well exemplified the study of a homework centre by Fusitu'a and Coxon (2001) discussed above.

The relationship between social factors and second language achievement is an indirect one filtered through attitudes to the language to be learned, its culture, and its speakers. These attitudes determine the amount of contact with the second language, the nature of interpersonal interactions learners engage in and their motivation. In both Canada and Belgium minority learners of the majority language tend to reach higher proficiency levels than majority learners of the minority language<sup>16</sup>. The motivation and need are likely to be greater to learn a majority language, and the practical and attitudinal support for it in the community is greater. In that sense, bilingual Pasifika children are

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<sup>16</sup> See Ellis, 1994, pp. 218-239

fortunate that their learning of English is supported by the values and resources of the wider community.

As discussed above there are likely to be identity conflicts for some bilingual Pasifika children in learning academic English which may reduce their motivation. In addition, they may have attitudes, beliefs and associated learning practices which are unhelpful to language learning. One of the tasks of a language teacher is to help learners explore and resolve attitudes, beliefs, motivation, so that they become helpful to language learning (Kohonen et al., 2001).

#### **4.6 Changing teacher beliefs and expectations**

People (including teachers) have varying beliefs about language and other aspects of human learning and behaviour. Some people think of sporting, musical, or language ability as more or less a given fact about individual people, whereas others emphasise the possibility of developing quite high levels of any of these by means of good teaching and learning approaches.

In a school context, the most helpful approach for individual learners is if the second belief underlies the teaching. If all teachers are of the opinion that all the children they teach can learn what is required in the curriculum, then teacher expectations are high for all children. Teacher expectation is known to be an important factor in school learning (Alton-Lee, 2003, pp. 16-21). If teachers believe that all students can, and should, develop the language required for successful school learning at each stage of schooling, they will be able to have high expectations of their own teaching, and of student achievement.

A source of evidence that bilingual Pasifika children can all develop the language and skills required for successful school learning comes from the SEMO studies – Strengthening Education in Mangere and Otara. In the Early Childhood primary Links via Literacy (ECPL) Projects, student achievement was raised in schools where teachers focussed consistently on student achievements (Timperley, Wiseman, & Fung, 2002, p. 11). An important aspect in the projects mentioned above was the change in teachers' ideas and expectations about the students.

The primary intervention also had a powerful effect in changing teachers' attitudes, expectations and understandings about literacy acquisition during the first year of schooling. Teachers indicated that they had learned to teach for early strategies and to observe and respond to children's behaviours in a more specific and focussed way. With increased effectiveness the teachers also became more confident in accepting the responsibility for student achievement. (Phillips et al, 2001, p. 8).

#### **4.7 Needs analysis and setting goals**

Research in learning second languages identifies the importance of basing learning and teaching on the learners' needs, goals, attitudes, beliefs and learning practices. In good second language teaching, the programme and

the teaching approaches are based on learners' identified needs, goals and attitudes and are tailored to meet these. This is achieved through a process of needs analysis – either of the typical population for whom the teaching is planned (e.g. Council of Europe, 2001, p. xii), or of the actual group of learners attending a particular course. In both cases, two types of needs are relevant - *subjective* needs (the learners' personal needs and orientations) and *objective* needs (what is required by their work, study, and other important contexts).

In the case of school learning, as Stern (1992, p. 43) observes

It is important to find out what the individual learner wants but it is also important to determine what society requires. Therefore...curriculum development often demands as a first step an analysis of the entire learning context, including social and individual motivations and needs, as well as a realistic study of the conditions under which language learning is likely to occur.

An appropriate needs analysis for individual bilingual Pasifika children would therefore start by analysing carefully what the children and their parents want. For example, in 1995 just under half Pasifika parents surveyed wanted their children to be fluent in English and a Pasifika language by the end of primary school (see Section 3.6.1 above). These possibly correspond to the children in the *Picking up the Pace* project (Phillips et al, 2001) discussed above who enter school speaking only a Pasifika language or already bilingual. However, the point of needs analysis is not to make assumptions of this kind, but to enquire from individual parents what their goals are for their children. Although children's goals may diverge from their parents' (especially as they get older), generally they are guided to a large extent by their parents' views. Shearn (2003, p.145) found that in their choice of optional language subjects to study at school, students were largely guided by their parents' views and their previous experiences with the subject.

Building up a needs analysis for individual children through discussion with parents requires that there are good home-school partnerships which create contexts (such as parents' meetings, homework centres or bilingual liaison staff) for parents to be comfortably connected with the school and its work. Coxon et al (2002, pp. 93-6) describe a number of different, and apparently successful, partnerships of this kind between Pasifika parents and schools. In these contexts, parents can have access to information about language learning which may reassure them if they are concerned that continued use of the L1 will limit their children's academic progress and English language proficiency.

Studies in the SEMO project (e.g. Phillips et al, 2001, p. 189) have shown that it is possible for teachers to work with parents and children to raise literacy achievement immediately. When teachers are able to do this, their discussions with parents about needs and goals for their children will be able to focus productively on pathways to achieving those goals through a combination of home and school effort.

The second aspect of a needs analysis is the analysis of the objective demands of a student's language needs. In the case of bilingual Pasifika school students, their language needs are: the academic language of the

curriculum, the language of social and classroom interaction with their peers, teachers, and others in the school, and the language of essential everyday activities such as catching buses, buying things, participating in extra curricular activities, and so on.

As discussed above, it is essential that the analysis of academic language needs is carried out, and that those identified needs are translated into a teaching and learning programme. As Phillips et al (2001) discovered, teachers do not always adequately identify what learners can already do, but this is an essential step. The teaching and learning programme only needs to cover what is not yet known. Turoa et al (2002, pp.77ff) provide a case study of one new entrant whose teacher did not realise he could already write his name. Their account of the confusion between the teacher and the student, which prevented the child from getting on with his writing, illustrates the difficulties that can arise in the teaching and learning situation when teachers do not have an adequate picture of the learners' present competencies.

Taking account of needs, goals, attitudes, beliefs and learning practices applies to all school learning. Alton-Lee's (2003) best evidence synthesis identifies these as important factors in school learning for diverse students. In relation to language learning in particular, the cluster of factors centring on attitudes and motivation are particularly important.

While it is important for teachers, parents, and students to have some appreciation of where students stand in English language skills in relation to the national cohort, the main focus should be on an orderly and transparent progression towards age-related competence in the use of English for academic tasks.

Language students generally respond better to specific goals in language tasks such as: This week use 10 new words from the list in writing about...; Each week this term write a summary of something you have read. Make your summary at least one sentence longer each week. However, more precise goals need to derive from an overall plan or syllabus which is designed to lead students from where they are to where they need to be. The plan needs to be available in a form which is comprehensible to students and parents and shows how, over a number of years, the students can achieve the English language skills they require.

Gersten (1999) examined the English language progress of children in grades 4 – 6. It was found that an unfocussed and unstructured language curriculum that provided few meaningful tools or techniques for language development exacerbated the students' poor performance in English language acquisition. Teachers teach better and children learn better when there are clearly specified expectations and progressive goals over short time periods (Phillips et al, 2001, p. 20; Snow, 1998, p. 176; Timperley, 2004).

## 5: Second language teaching for bilingual Pasifika students

To maximise the language learning of bilingual Pasifika children, all curriculum area teachers need a good understanding of language, language acquisition and learning processes, together with an excellent repertoire of teaching techniques and methods.

### 5.1 Language

#### 5.1.1 Selection of language items

Teachers need to begin with a knowledge of what constitutes language and language proficiency, whether that be in L1 or in L2. This allows for language syllabus planning in which language is the focus; and for unit planning in curriculum areas which, while having a content focus, addresses language items which realise curriculum content.

Language identification and planning for any group of learners commonly specifies *what*, *when* and *how*:

- *what* has been chosen as the items or skills to teach these learners (objective needs) ,
- (usually) *when* - some indication about the *sequence* of teaching these items, and
- (often) *how* - some indication about teaching approaches, or methods to be used.

Traditionally, language items are chosen because they are:

- *simpler* (in terms of a particular linguistic analysis of the complexity of the language, or of the order in which learners seem usually to learn them), or
- *more frequent* in the language, or in the learners' perceived area of use, or
- they match *specific needs* the learners are known or thought to have.

They are usually *sequenced* so that items that are simpler, more frequent, or more useful come earlier in the curriculum.

There are a number of different bases for choosing items, none of which is known for certain to be better than the others. Also, there is no completely accepted or easy way of deciding which items are simpler, more frequent or more useful. The *what* and *when* of any particular curriculum still represents a 'best guess' based on experience and some research, rather than something definitively supported by research. However in the area of vocabulary there are published lists which provide information for vocabulary selection. The lists are graded in terms of frequency of particular vocabulary items.

Reference to such lists can guide teachers to select more frequent vocabulary items over less frequent and less useful.

These points are as relevant to focused language planning or planning where language and curriculum content are interrelated.

Teachers involved in teaching a second language need this type of knowledge about aspects or levels of language. Included in the planning process and considered part of 'language' are aspects of language use such as language functions or notions, language learning strategies, etc. See Graves (1996) for a comprehensive representation of the scope of language with respect to planning.

## **5.2 Language acquisition and language learning processes**

Current SLA [second language acquisition] research orientations can be captured by a single word: complexity. Researchers have begun to realise that there are social and interpersonal as well as psychological dimensions to acquisition, that input and output are both important, that form and meaning are ultimately inseparable, and that acquisition is an organic rather than linear process. (Nunan, 2001, p. 91)

The complexities of language learning, and how they may relate to bilingual Pasifika children learning English in schools are explained through a number of key principles that can be derived from current research. These key principles lead us to consider understanding the particular instructional needs of bilingual Pasifika students in mainstream classrooms. The next sections look at methods and approaches that may address these needs.

### ***5.2.1 Focused language teaching helps students to learn faster***

For a substantial period of time in the history of SLA research, learners being exposed to comprehensible input have been seen as the paramount condition for successful language acquisition. However additional conditions have been added as a result of the findings of more recent research: interaction and output. Most recently, there has been consideration of uptake, the psycholinguistic processes by which learners actually retain new language knowledge. While later sections deal with these understandings in detail, this section looks at why we need to move beyond input and exposure.

Students are able to learn languages without being taught. The 'submersion' approach to children acquiring second languages has relied on this fact. Bilingual Pasifika children in New Zealand schools will learn English just through exposure to English in an English speaking environment. This is particularly true with respect to the learning of language for Conversational Language Proficiency (BICS) as discussed in section 1.7, and section 2.4.1.

Findings of research exploring the effects of exposure without explicit language instruction however are critical to understanding why 'whole language' classrooms and programmes may not adequately meet the particular needs of second language learners. Since Long's (1983a) review of

research studies involving exposure to a language and/or instruction, research has shown with increasing certainty that learners who have language teaching as well as language exposure will achieve more (Lightbown, 2000; Norris & Ortega, 2000, 2001). Lightbown's study showed that initially young students, whose ESL classes for three years were a half hour a day of listening and reading without teacher intervention, performed as well as those in a more traditionally "taught" programme. Three years further on, however, the students who had the guidance of a teacher and more opportunities for production of language performed better.

Bardovi-Harlig (2000), in a major study of tutored and untutored acquisition of tense, concluded that there is no doubt that instruction can be a positive influence on the acquisition of a target like tense-aspect system, and very likely increases the rate of acquisition. However, tutored learners still have to go through the same sequence of stages, and instruction seems to be only one variable among many and "may be best understood as a component of input. Where instructional input, motivation and input through L2 contact are combined, the outcome seems to be an advanced level of development and, eventually, corresponding target like form-meaning associations." (p.405).

### ***5.2.2 Learners need explicit and focused instruction on all aspects of language***

In language teaching the fashion has swung between teaching nothing but grammar and linguistic forms, and not teaching them at all. However, in the last 20 years enough firm evidence has gradually built up to show that while learning must focus on communication of meaning and that exposure to language must be extensive, there must also be some explicit focus on developing grammar and linguistic forms. The findings from immersion situations in Canadian schools, have also led Swain to comment:

More than 2 decades of research in French immersion classes suggests that immersion students... are well able to get their meaning across in their second language, even at intermediate and higher grade levels they often do so with non target like morphology and syntax. (Swain, 1998, p. 65)

The current thinking is that teachers need to ensure that learners' attention is explicitly engaged with language forms in the course of their learning (Norris & Ortega, 2001). Students who have no grammatical focus or instruction at all, do not progress so quickly, and often do not reach the same ultimate levels of achievement (Swain, 1995; Lightbown, 2000). A recent important meta-analysis of 49 studies of second learning indicated that "focused L2 instruction results in large ... gains, and that explicit types of instruction are more effective than implicit types..." (Norris & Ortega 2000, p. 417).

Norris and Ortega looked at studies using a somewhat new approach called Focus on Form, or FonF, as well as those using more traditional grammatical approaches, labelled Focus on Forms (or Focus on FormS). Focus on forms refers to the targeting of discrete points of grammar. These discrete points of grammar receive a lot of attention in class time. Students are exposed to

examples and are given opportunities to practice the structure in different grammatical contexts.

Focus on form refers to drawing students' attention to aspects of language form i.e. grammatical structure, morphology etc in the context of a task that is primarily meaning focused.

There are two types of focus on form tasks: incidental and planned. In the former the teacher makes no attempt to plan to cover particular forms in the course of a lesson. Rather s/he covers a whole range of forms and deals with each in passing – and only briefly. In planned focus on form teaching, the teacher makes a decision about the forms that s/he wishes to focus on in the class and selects tasks that will require or elicit the form(s).

### ***5.2.3 Language learning is not a passive process***

Although interaction with a teacher is important in language development, teacher presentations and whole class questioning sessions should not occupy more than a small proportion (perhaps about 10%) of teaching time (Gibbons, 2002, p. 17). There is no guarantee that all learners are cognitively engaged with what is going on in such sessions, and cognitive involvement - including attention and awareness, and probably also some form of processing - is a fundamental requirement for language learning (and also for curriculum learning) (Robinson, 2001). This requires rethinking the idea of the teacher as the locus of the main activity in a class, and transferring that locus to the students. In good second language instruction outside schools, the teacher rarely operates in a whole class mode of teacher presentation, or teacher questioning of the IRF type (see section 2.5).

Both primary and secondary teachers need to develop a style of teaching in all curriculum areas which has all students constantly involved in working with the meanings expressed (by students and other authors) in spoken and written texts. Unfortunately this type of teaching is less common in secondary schools. In one study of 12 mainstream year 12 classes the main activities were, in order of frequency – following spoken explanations, answering oral questions, following spoken instructions, completing worksheets, note taking from teacher talk, correcting work by listening. All other types of activities occurred only once each (Keum & Lewis, 2000, p. 5). This does not represent an ideal language learning context.

Arguably the most effective way of ensuring that learners engage in the process of learning language is through interaction. The most articulated theory is that in Long's Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1983b). Long believed that interaction was crucial because during the process of interaction learners receive feedback on their own errors. This feedback is focused, at an appropriate level for the speaker and timed just after the speaker's error. In the process of negotiating meaning, participants in interactions seek clarification from whom they are speaking with, and check their own comprehension. This is valuable information for speakers.

Interaction is also important to language learning because, while learners are working on a topic or task and using associated language with each other, or with some other speaker of the language, they are going over and over the same language items in many different ways. Probably, this process of

interconnecting (or networking, Meara, 1996, 2004) is what results in language becoming permanently learned.

Wong-Fillmore and Snow (2000, p. 24) specify the nature of the interaction opportunities learners in school settings should have. Examining how children acquire English in a variety of settings, Wong-Fillmore (1982; 1992) found that certain conditions must be met if children are to be successful. They must interact directly and frequently with people who know the language well enough to reveal how it works and how it can be used. During interactions with English learners, expert speakers not only provide access to the language at an appropriate level; they also provide ample clues as to what the units of analysis in the language are and how they can combine to communicate ideas, information, and intentions. Learners receive corrective feedback as they negotiate and clarify communicative intentions (Long, 1985; Pica, 1996).

So in classes where the majority of children are L2 learners, interaction between them is a valuable opportunity for language learning. In classrooms where there are numbers of L1 users of English, there can be even better opportunities for L2 children to be extended in their language use through interaction with L1 users of English, and for this reason Flores, Cousin and Díaz (1998, pp.32-33) favour regular classrooms to provide school children with the best language learning conditions.

#### **5.2.4 Learners must be engaged in output**

Reading and listening-based programmes providing large amounts of 'comprehensible input' do result in language learning. Just listening, reading, or studying about the language will enable students to understand language, and there will be some transfer to productive skills. It is now clear however that language learners need to use language in speaking and writing in order to make the best progress in those areas. For the best achievements in the productive skills of speaking and writing, learners must engage in those activities which mean they produce output (Ellis, 1990, p. 194; Swain, 1995, 1998; Lightbown, 2000).

Swain (1998) has made a special case for the role of output, claiming there are three specific functions of output. The first of these is noticing. Learners may notice a target language feature because of its salience, or learners may notice a gap between what they have said and what the target language form is, and thereby realise they then need to gain control over a particular feature of grammar of a particular vocabulary item for instance.

Swain says:

... the activity of producing the target language may prompt second language learners to recognize consciously some of their linguistic problems: It may bring to their attention something they need to discover about their second language (possibly directing their attention to relevant input). This may trigger cognitive processes that may generate linguistic knowledge that is new for the learner or consolidate the learner's existing knowledge.

(1998, p. 67)

The second function is hypothesis testing. This idea is that the learner uses output as a way of trying out new language forms (hypotheses). The need to use language stretches the learner's resources or pushes "the limits of the interlanguage system to make it handle that output" (Tarone & Liu, cited in Swain, 1998, p. 67). As Swain says they use output just to see what works and what doesn't. Feedback is provided, but not all of that feedback is picked up on. Another study in Swain reports that learners picked up on or responded to on about a third of the modifications suggested by their interactional partners.

The third function of output is to provide a context in which learners can talk about language (metatalk). In interaction students can clarify when, and where to use certain words or forms, and how to use them.

It is the teachers' job to have command of many techniques which help and encourage learners to realise the functions of output, right from beginning levels. Some features of tasks that are known to affect L2 performance are: availability of planning time prior to task performance, specific goals and requirements set for the task, the task directions given to the learner, and the type, amount, and details of the linguistic, as well as non-linguistic (e.g. visual), information to be dealt with (Izumi, 2003, p. 189).

While learners should not be forced to produce new language under conditions which they find uncomfortable or frightening (e.g. in front of a whole class, or from memory), they can be *supported* to use new language productively from the outset under structured conditions. The role of the teacher is to set up contexts where learners are 'forced' to use their existing language resources, plus new input made available by the teacher, to talk, listen, read and write. Training the class to work well in this way, monitoring the pace of the activities and the physical arrangement of the classroom are important in keeping students interactive while they follow through with their learning tasks.

Nystrand (cited in Abt-Perkins and Gomez, 1998, p. 11) suggests that teachers need to engage in the practice of "eliciting, sustaining, and extending student initiated contributions" in both written and spoken form so that students can articulate content through language in an academically appropriate way. More specifically, Corson (1988) developed extensively approaches and techniques for oral language across the curriculum.

### **5.2.5 Language learning and use is repetitive and cyclical**

The same items are used over and over again, and the more you learn, the smaller the proportion of new items to the known ones in the language you are working with. When you learn your first language as a child, you may learn as many as 10 new words a day, but by the time you are an adult, you may only learn one new word every few weeks. All the rest of the time is spent recycling what you already know, and extending the range of use and the richness of interconnections. It is important that second language learning reflects this repetitive pattern and does not focus too much on the introduction of new items.

### **5.2.6 *The activities learners do and the language they use should be meaningful***

Effectively, what a child knows in a language is what s/he can do through listening, reading, speaking and writing. All of these activities normally occur interactively in family life, everyday life, work life, and to a large extent in educational life. Texts are written to be read by someone, who will respond to them in some way by actions, speaking or writing, or often a combination of all three. When someone speaks, someone else listens and responds in some way.

School contexts do not normally make very effective use of the real-life interactive processes of academic language use. It is possible for children in schools to work as a community of practice where, for example, reading is done in order to understand ideas, discuss them with others, and then pass them on in a new written or spoken form.

Two of the general characteristics of successful language learning and teaching identified by Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.173) are: message focus – learners need to focus on real meanings, and real language use; and appropriateness – the language must suit the situation it is used in. These characteristics can be incorporated into any method. These are particularly associated with a communicative approach to language learning<sup>17</sup>, and are quite typical of ideal New Zealand classrooms, especially primary ones. A communicative approach to language teaching can be said to match general New Zealand principles for school teaching in mainstream classes. In both cases, students are active in class, they engage in activities which are as real to life as possible, and they use a lot of language in connection with their activities. The main focus is on working with ideas and meanings, mediated through language. Students talk to each other about what they are doing, they learn new words, and new ways of saying things, they read and write about what they are doing, and it is also typical of communicative language learning and teaching.

For example, one New Zealand primary school study (Hunia, 1995, p. iv) showed that using interactive communicative tasks in Māori over a six week period with Māori students in the mainstream who had previously had some years of bilingual or immersion education, resulted in increased accuracy and use of new language items. Her students were working in pairs to complete a number of tasks together which involved them talking to each other about stories and articles they were reading and their own responses to those. They had plenty of support for their speaking and writing in the form of the texts they were working with and the structure provided by the form of the tasks. In addition they were talking privately to a peer. Similar gains could be expected for bilingual Pasifika children working either in English or in a Pasifika language under such conditions.

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<sup>17</sup> Usually called Communicative Language Teaching - CLT, or CLL – Communicative Language Learning

### **5.3 Language learning needs for bilingual Pasifika students**

We can match what we know about the nature of second language learning and what Pasifika bilingual students need to achieve in mainstream classrooms.

#### ***5.3.1 Learning for bilingual Pasifika students must take place in the curriculum***

One study with Hamilton secondary school teachers found that teachers felt L2 students were inclined to take up too much time (Barnard, Campbell, Campbell, Smithson, & Vickery, 2001). The practice of having withdrawal sessions for L2 learners or special option lines is at least partly a response to this kind of teacher perception. While these sessions may enable teachers to tailor material to the learners' specific needs, if separate sessions are on-going, the students are removed from important curriculum coverage which provides good opportunity for meaning based language learning when new words and concepts are introduced. They are also removed from peer support, which is a powerful source of input for language learning.

#### ***5.3.2 Learning for bilingual Pasifika students must take place across the curriculum***

There are two aspects to this. One is the time factor – language learning depends to a large extent on the amount of time spent on it<sup>18</sup>. L1 users of English are acquiring new language daily through all curriculum work; bilingual Pasifika children need an equivalent opportunity, indeed they need more as they have a gap to close. This means that the communicative and task context in curriculum areas, which is geared primarily to L1 English speakers, must be broadened to match the language learning of bilingual Pasifika students. Language learning through work in the whole curriculum has the advantage that it is meaning based and appropriate to the learners' primary objective in school, which is to achieve curriculum objectives.

#### ***5.3.3 Bilingual Pasifika students must continue cognitive development and subject knowledge***

Bilingual Pasifika students must succeed in content areas. Although their English language performance may not reach age norms for a number of years, it is important that their cognitive development, and subject knowledge proceeds normally. Although language mediates all curriculum areas, it is possible for students under good teaching conditions to make normal

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<sup>18</sup> This does not mean that children should abandon their L1 to spend as much time as possible on English learning. There is plenty of time in a child's waking hours to become bilingual, as evidenced by the large numbers of bilingual people in the world. The point is that the time in school should be spent efficiently addressing areas of language use which are important for school learning.

progress in curriculum area knowledge and skills in spite of gaps in their language proficiency.

#### **5.3.4 Students' learning must be facilitated through scaffolding**

Language scaffolding in all areas allows for a 'balanced development towards the three goals of restructuring, accuracy and fluency' (Richards, 2002, p. 49). Scaffolding is a familiar process to most teachers. The learners are firmly based on the scaffold of what they know, and the teacher adds another level of new learning to the scaffold, which the learners are able to step up to from their present position, with help and encouragement from the teacher<sup>19</sup>. A typical lesson, or sequence of lessons, of this kind might begin with students listening for specific words and information in a recorded text, checking and ordering them in some way through pair or group interaction, jointly constructing a spoken or written text, reading / listening to others groups' texts, and responding in some specified way, etc. Franken (1997) examined L2 school student language use in cycles of discussion, reading, information transfer, further discussion, and writing.

Exactly the same process should take place in language teaching. The known language is the firm base. In initial stages, the students' first language may be used quite a lot as a base. But very soon there is a basis in the second language to build on. For example, it is soon possible to explain the meaning of some new words, using the language the students have already learned. This helps to consolidate the old learning as well as connecting the new learning with the old.

Teachers are constantly working to help students move towards restructuring what they say or write in more complex ways, as well as helping them to use language which they know more fluently and more correctly. Van Lier (1996, p. 194) sees the scaffolding process as highly interactive, with communication flowing back and forth between the teacher and student/s, and progressively handed over to the students on the basis of careful observation and responsiveness to what they are able to do.

While teachers may participate in scaffolded instruction with students, peers are the other source of scaffolding as interactional partners. As long as an individual student is not cast permanently in the role of tutor to others, the benefits of peer teaching, learning from each other, and working in groups with a range of skills are well established. The scaffolding strategies that learners engage in during this kind of interaction include waiting, prompting, co-constructing, explaining, initiating repair (i.e. correction), providing repair, and asking an expert (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, pp. 214-8).

It is up to the teacher to establish a classroom climate, and, even more importantly, good procedures for students to make the best use of peer interaction in class. Gibbons (2002, pp. 26-28) provides examples of how a teacher managed this by rehearsing with students how to work well in groups. Points she went over with the students included how to share ideas, how to

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<sup>19</sup> See Alton-Lee, 2003, pp.73-78 for a discussion of scaffolding, most of which relates to language development.

resolve intractable differences of views, and how to maintain a physical environment quiet enough to enable everyone to work. As she points out, the noise level is particularly an issue for L2 students, who need to hear as many words and sounds as possible to enable them to understand what is said. Franken & McComish (2003) found that teachers were aware of the difficulty that noise causes for L2 students in group work, but did not have strategies to control it.

Franken (1997) found that the students in the ESOL writing programme with planned interaction activities did not all benefit from interaction and not in all areas of the texts they wrote subsequent to the peer interaction. This suggests that teachers need some caution in assuming that peer interaction per se is good and that all students will equally benefit.

### ***5.3.5 Bilingual Pasifika students would benefit from an ongoing oral language programme***

In an interactive social setting, oral language enables communication and interaction to take place. Verhoeven cited in Koller, Wegerif, & Voi (2001, p. 406) states that the single most influential factor in progress in learning to read for second language learners in schools was the amount of contact and oral interaction with native speaking peers. The functions of oral language that pertain to second language acquisition are as follows: the talk operates as exploratory discourse, as a catalyst to change thinking, and as a means of promoting literate thinking (including a metalinguistic function) (Franken, 1997, p. 73). In a school context, talk also provides invaluable language practice, a context for the use of Graeco-Latin academic vocabulary (see Corson, 1990), and a way in which learners come to see gaps in their knowledge through interaction with others, and consequently to trigger new linguistic knowledge.

Blair and Bourne in their review (1998) noted the careful attention given to oral language development in exemplary schools in England. In those New Zealand classrooms where there is a focus on an oral language programme, teachers focus on vocabulary building, and tasks focus on scaffolding the retelling of experiences. Both experience-based methods and oral language methods are associated just as much with first language literacy development as with second language learning. For this reason, they are common in the first years of schooling where L1 and L2 learners' needs are less divergent and can be more easily included in the same activities.

The theory underlying oral language programmes in years 1 & 2 is that young learners' existing skills in listening and talking about the events and concepts they encounter can be extended into curriculum contexts, with a concomitant development of the oral use of associated vocabulary and discourse. This enhanced oral language can be used as a base for reading and writing in those areas.

As described above, the benefits of oral language for second language learning are broadly similar, and in fact the benefits continue for L1 learning beyond the early years of school. However, although oral interaction is a major focus of research in second language learning, it is not widely used in a

systematic way for language development beyond the junior primary school in New Zealand.

A good second language learning context for Pasifika bilingual learners in New Zealand schools would continue a planned programme of oral interaction across the curriculum (see Corson, 1988). An interesting study related to curriculum learning by Rzoska and Ward (1991; cited in Coxon et al., 2002, p. 60) explored the effects of co-operative and competitive learning methods in relation to mathematics achievement, attitudes towards school, self-concept and friendship choices of 319 Māori, Sāmoan (47 out of the total sample) and Pākehā children. The sample was taken from four ethnically mixed urban primary schools during a three-week intervention programme. The students were assigned to different conditions of study: co-operative or competitive; although they had individual mathematics tasks the co-operative group could help each other to complete them. The Sāmoan children had the most favourable attitude towards the co-operative condition. Although there were no differences in academic achievement between the conditions, the overall results did improve as a result of the intervention.

## **5.4 Approaches**

What approaches work to address the principles and the specific language learning needs of bilingual Pasifika learners?

### 5.4.1 Sheltered instruction

One approach to ensuring that language and curriculum learning takes place in this way for L2 learners is *sheltered* subject matter teaching, an approach that has recently become favoured in the United States. Sheltered Instruction is a student centred approach which meets many of the conditions for successful language learning, namely comprehensible input high levels of student interaction.

As Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (1996, p. 73) say students in sheltered instruction classes “acquire an impressive amount of second language and learn subject matter as well”. It is most usually taught by mainstream teachers, who also have expertise in second language teaching.

Genesee (1999, p. 10) gives the following ‘salient’ features of SI that relate to language development specifically.

SI teachers’ lesson plans incorporate objectives that reflect high level content and ESL standards....In this way, teachers consciously integrate English language development into content instruction....It is important that the language objectives reflect a sequential pattern for language learning that builds on ... students’ emerging knowledge of English....SI teachers adapt texts and assignments through a variety of means to make the information accessible to their students....Scaffolding is characterized by the teacher’s careful attention to the students’ capacity for working in English....SI classes provide frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion....

Genesee also explains that “SI recognizes that language processes (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing) develop interdependently; thus SI lessons are organized around activities that integrate those skills” (1999, p. 5).

Echeverria and Graves (1998) suggest that Sheltered instruction is particularly appropriate for secondary level EAL students and their curriculum focus. They compare “Effective Instruction” and “Sheltered Instruction” (p.58). Effective instruction they define as the practices or features that are described as “good teaching” in research which correlates teacher behaviour and classroom processes with student achievement. The practices include: well planned lessons with explicitly stated objectives, time-on-task, use of student background knowledge and experience, variety of delivery modes, more hands-on tasks, and checks for understanding. Curriculum related features are time on task, grade-level content, the selection of key concepts from the curriculum, and use of higher-order thinking skills. Genesee also states that “the content is made comprehensible through the use of modelling, demonstrations, graphic organizers, adapted texts and visual aides...” (1999, p. 5).

Genesee describes the necessary resources in terms of highly skilled teachers who have both a good knowledge of curriculum area content and methodologies, and of ESL methodology, second language acquisition processes, and cross-cultural awareness. He advocates that sheltered curricula for each curriculum area should be developed. He also says that schools must have an abundance of resources for SI in order to provide

hands-on materials, visuals, models, audiovisual resources, and supplementary reading materials.

While the characteristics of Sheltered Instruction described above would generally be beneficial for Pasifika learners in New Zealand schools, there are a number of issues with SI. First, although it can be useful for language learners to have more contextualised support for language in the form of 'hands-on materials, visuals, models, audiovisual resources, and supplementary reading materials', they do need to progress towards the ability to work with decontextualised language which is typical of more advanced academic work (Cummins 2000b). Second, it would be unacceptable for bilingual Pasifika children to work with a 'selection of key concepts from the curriculum' if this were to mean that they did not cover the entire curriculum. Indeed the 'Matthews effect' has already identified that this is a frequent danger for low achieving learners, that they get progressively confined to more restricted learning (Stanovich, 1986). Third, if Pasifika or other bilingual children become segregated in Sheltered Instruction classes, they may become socially and academically divorced from participation and progress in the mainstream, with no easy route into it. Fourth, the name has unfortunate connotations of deficit, and, overall, bilingual Pasifika children are likely to need intensified or accelerated learning opportunities, rather than sheltered ones, in order to progress towards achieving at the norms for their age.

However, some New Zealand secondary schools have developed special curriculum area classes for EAL students, with bilingual staff, or staff who have expertise in second language teaching as well as in the curriculum area. These teachers tend to use a number of the features associated with Sheltered Instruction. Classes such as these need careful consideration in the school so that they do not suffer from any of the disadvantages discussed above.

The characteristics of quality teaching for diversity in the mainstream that Alton-Lee (2003) sets out would cover the positive features of sheltered instruction, and would improve mainstream teaching for all students. This is a better option than segregated classes, or withdrawal classes, which do not in the long run lead to good progress in English (May, 2004, p. 99).

#### **5.4.2 Approaches to grammar**

It is now accepted in second language learning research that it is not possible for learners to learn to *use* certain grammatical features until they already have control of certain developmentally earlier ones, as there are strong, though not entirely fixed, developmental sequences for the acquisition of grammar (Pienemann, 1999; Ellis, 2002). This means that although teachers should choose particular grammatical features to target, only some of the learners may be ready to develop full control of using this feature. Richards (2002, p. 49) examines some of the evidence which has emerged to show that communicative tasks, even with ad hoc intervention by the teacher to correct errors, may not result in acceptable levels of grammatical accuracy.

Following Skehan (1996), Richards suggests a "constant cycle of analysis and synthesis...achieved by manipulating the focus of attention of the

learners...and there should be a balanced development towards the three goals of restructuring, accuracy and fluency". Attention to the same feature will have to be recycled more than once, and grammatical accuracy in language *use* of particular features at particular points in time for everyone in the class is not a realistic goal. They may all be able to show that they know about a form (such as a particular type of negative sentence) in form focussed exercises, but when some learners come to use language in writing and speaking, that declarative knowledge is not available to them.

Ellis (2002) also concludes that grammar instruction should be a part of second language teaching. An important theme in his proposals for how to teach grammar is that the main goal is not performance or correct use, but awareness. Learners need to notice language forms, and develop an understanding of how they operate in the language. Then they are in a position to gradually bring them into use after further experience with the language. For example, negative sentences are difficult for beginning learners of English. Ellis's suggestion is to make learners *aware* of the forms used, and continually focus their *attention* on them in various contexts, without necessarily expecting that learners will be able to use them correctly yet.

Some useful guiding principles for dealing with grammar (adapted from Ellis, 2002, p. 31) are as follows:

- We include a grammar component in the language curriculum
- We focus on areas of grammar known to cause problems to learners
- We aim to teach grammar as awareness, focusing on helping learners to develop explicit knowledge.
- We teach grammar only to learners who have already developed a substantial lexical<sup>20</sup> base and are able to engage in message-focussed tasks, albeit with language that is grammatically inaccurate

#### **5.4.3 Approaches to feedback and responses to error**

Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 173) identify opportunities to take risks as an important feature of a successful language learning and teaching context. Learners need to make guesses, try things out, and learn from their errors, It is important that learners feel free to use language and focus on expressing meaning even if their language is incorrect and halting. But they should understand and be confident that the teacher will subsequently be making sure that they move on to the next step of expressing those meanings more correctly and fluently.

The different ways in which a teacher can productively respond to students' errors has been documented in the literature form focused instruction. One such method of responding is by means of recasts. Recasts are a commonly studied method of providing feedback in an implicit way. A recast is a kind of reformulation of either the whole or part of the learner's utterance which contains an error. One problem with recasts though is that learners may not always notice them and therefore fail to learn from them.

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<sup>20</sup> Lexis and lexical refer to words or vocabulary.

Teachers can alternatively give learners explicit feedback by: simply signalling the error quite directly, providing a correction and let the learner practise the use of the correct form, or by explaining the error – by using metalinguistic information.

It may be necessary for a teacher to exercise judgement about the directness of feedback. If learners already know what the correct form is then it may be that they respond to implicit feedback adequately. However if learners do not know the correct form then it may be necessary to use more explicit feedback.

#### **5.4.4 Approaches to vocabulary**

Vocabulary is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language. Ellis (2002, p. 31) in his discussion of the place of grammar instruction in second language learning maintains that the early stages of language acquisition are lexical rather than grammatical. His view is that early learning should be focused on vocabulary, and that grammatical instruction comes after learners are able to engage in message-focussed tasks using whatever language they have regardless of grammatical correctness. It makes sense for learners to focus on words because lexical errors cause more communication difficulties than grammatical errors, and they are more harshly judged by native speaking listeners (Ellis, 1994). Despite this fact, vocabulary is often dealt with only incidentally in the preparation of language teachers (Richards, 2000, p. xi).

Nation (2001) states that learners need to know almost all the words (98%) in a text to have adequate comprehension and read for pleasure and they need to know at least 3000 word families to read un simplified English texts (p.146). Most vocabulary is picked up incidentally through natural language acquisition processes. McNaughton (2002, p. 132) reports some estimates that L1 speakers may pick up 6 new words per school day – at least half of which are independent of any effort by the school. He also cites (p.171) a study which suggests that under natural reading conditions children will learn for themselves the meaning of about 15 out of every 100 unknown words they encounter. Elley (1989) has shown that it is possible to increase this rate markedly to around 40 out of every 100 by teacher definitions and explanations in stories read out aloud.

Given that L1 speakers come to school able to use orally 1000 or more different words as a basis for learning to read and write, and that they are adding to them daily at the above rates, L2 learners in schools face a huge vocabulary learning task when they start to learn English. They ideally need to learn new words at the same rate as L1 speakers, as well as learning all the words that the L1 cohort already knows. Depending on the time they begin to learn English, this backlog will be between at least 1000 and 5000+ words.

Some words are easier to learn than others. A certain number of words will be learned from the first exposure (5-14%) (Schmitt 2000, p. 137). Others will take from five to 16+ repetitions before they are permanently learned, and continued meetings with words over a period of time are necessary to ensure that they do achieve this status.

There are many aspects to learning a word – the meaning, the spelling and pronunciation, the grammar of the word, and the other words it is used with,

and so on. In order for learners to be able to make use of words (either as input or output) they need to know both the form of the word (how it is written and said) and its meaning. This requires attention to the form and meaning, and awareness of the meaning and how this relates to other concepts and words (Hulstijn, 2001, p. 274).

In addition, a person's vocabulary is a network of words that operate as a interconnected net rather than as individual items (Meara, 2004, p. 154). Learners have to gradually build up their richness and interconnectedness of word knowledge, and its relationship with cultural meanings. It is essential for learners to have interaction in negotiated contexts because knowledge and experience of the stretches of multi-word patterns in text formed on the idiom principle, plus the ability to switch to occasional insertion on the open choice principle comes from this type of contextual interaction.

Summarising the issues for understanding vocabulary learning Laufer and Hulstijn (2001, p. 22) say:

A crucial question in understanding vocabulary learning is whether retention depends on what one does with the word rather than how often one meets it. In pedagogy, the question is whether task type is just as important, more so, or less so than the number of tasks in which a new word appears. Put differently, we would like to find out whether the quality of exposure to new vocabulary during 'incidental' encounters can compensate for the relatively limited amount of exposure which is characteristic of learning a second language.

Their research suggests that the degree of mental processing or involvement with the word during the language learning tasks is the most important factor in whether a word is learned. Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) re-analysed a number of studies of vocabulary acquisition through incidental learning and concluded that what made an effective task from the point of view of vocabulary learning was the involvement load of the student with the word in the course of the task.

If successful completion of the task required the understanding or use of the word (*need*), and if students had to search out the meaning of the word (rather than have it provided for them) (*search*), and if they had to consider and evaluate whether or how the meaning they had found was appropriate (*evaluate*), then they were more likely to retain the meaning of the word. The results suggested that *need* and *evaluation* may be more important factors in word learning than *search*.

The more effective tasks involved selecting a meaning from several options, looking meaning(s) up in dictionaries, doing vocabulary exercises, using words in original sentences and composition writing, negotiating meaning, and input or output, through interaction. In the less effective tasks, the meanings were given, students read without looking up or investigating words, there was no negotiation, or no need for output.

Working with university students, Boers (2000) found that if teaching develops an understanding of the metaphors underlying certain expressions, this facilitates the learners' retention of the items. The types of metaphor he refers to are very common in English and an important aspect of lexical/content knowledge as students move towards and into secondary school. One example he gives is the cluster of "up" words used to describe economic

change – increase, rise, grow/growth, raise, put up, push up, soar, surge, peak, mount, creep up.

The effective L2 tasks discussed above are similar in their type and level of involvement with words and meaning in context, to those activities described by McNaughton (2002, p. 83) as being effective with at-risk Māori and Pacific Islands students in the early years of schooling in low decile New Zealand schools. “One feature of the programme was the deliberate enhancement of children’s knowledge through ‘word work’.”

Large numbers of words can be learned through memorization and repetition – at least 100 or more in a week by older students. Although this type of learning needs to be extended so that students “know” the words more fully, it gives a basis for that expansion of knowledge. L2 learners respond to high teacher expectations as do other students. Teachers should be conscious of the need to encourage students to achieve the maximum of which they are capable, and also conscious of the wide range of possible learning strategies (Schmitt, 2000, p. 34; McLaughlin, 1990, p. 173; Lewis et al, 1998).

The principles of best practice in vocabulary learning are:

- pay a great deal of attention to word learning, and specify vocabulary objectives clearly
- focus on meaning and use in context – both receptive and productive use
- do this through activities which increase involvement of the students with word meaning and use.
- target particular words – based on researched word lists for educational contexts
- use whatever strategies for learning are effective for the learners, including repetition, memorization of lists, and words shown by pictures, and translation.
- make sure that learners have many opportunities to work with the same words over and over again

In conclusion, teachers need expertise in vocabulary teaching, and in helping learners to develop good strategies for their independent vocabulary learning, by for instance providing learners with suitable texts and motivation for independent reading, as well as having a systematic approach to what words and phrases are to be learned, How to do this, and how to ensure that words, once met, become permanently available for use is one of the major issues for bilingual Pasifika children’s school achievement.

#### **5.4.5 Approaches to reading and writing**

Cycles of interactive use of language through productive, receptive, oral and written activities help to situate reading and writing as ways to use language for meaningful purposes within a particular social and learning context, and to integrate the language items such as words and phrases with the way they are processed and accessed through reading and other skills. By contrast, the skills approach to reading tends to reify it as a ‘thing’ which can be learned. This obscures the fact that ‘reading’ is language itself in use in a particular

way – visually rather than aurally. To read is to comprehend language visually, and in the context of education it has to become fully integrated for the student with other ways of using language. It has its own strategies, processes and outcomes – as well as those it shares with other ways of using language.

In a school setting where facility with the written language is closely associated with educational outcomes, it is very important for L2 students to have appropriate reading experiences. Task-based approaches allow students to use and learn language and content from texts which are too difficult for their individual reading. With approaches such as this, students are able to use curriculum texts meaningfully at an age-appropriate level.

Van den Branden (2000) investigated reading comprehension in different text conditions in a recent study of 10 –12 year old second language learners of Dutch in Belgian schools. Students worked in one of four ways – individually on simplified texts, individually on unmodified texts, with oral negotiation with a peer on unmodified texts, and with oral negotiation with the rest of the class on unmodified texts. Negotiating the meaning of unmodified texts led to higher comprehension than working individually with a simplified text.

Comprehension was higher if the negotiation was with the teacher or a peer of a different level of language proficiency, rather than a peer of the same level. This is one of many studies that show the benefits of carefully planned negotiation and interaction for second language learners in their language learning. This is particularly interesting in showing that students' comprehension was better while working under planned conditions on the same material as the rest of the class, rather than on material "at their own level".

Oh (2001) investigated the effect of simplified texts and elaborated texts (versus baseline texts) on the reading comprehension of Korean high school EFL students. Both simplification and elaboration of texts enhanced their reading comprehension (even though the elaborated texts were longer and more complex than the simplified and baseline ones). Those students with the lowest proficiency did particularly well on the elaborated passages. However, only elaborated texts improved the performance on the inference items among the comprehension test items. Oh suggests that if learners are found to need adapted reading materials, it is better to use elaboration to increase redundancy and signal text structure more clearly, than to simplify. It is possible that the written elaboration in the texts serves something of the same linguistic function as the negotiation and discussion in van den Branden's study.

Wilkinson's (1998) analysis of the New Zealand data from the 1990 IEA Reading Literacy Study similarly showed that in classrooms at year 5 where there was more teacher-led interaction (in the form of the teacher reading aloud, rather than silent reading), and more written questions and exercises the L2 students' results were better. Out of a large number of instructional variables, only reading aloud, and frequency of formal methods of comprehension assessment (such as written questions and exercises) were associated with a smaller home language gap. Other factors which Wilkinson tentatively identifies as lessening the gap are: non-composite classes, where the range of student differences is smaller and teachers are probably more able to give precise, direct support to scaffold individual students'

performance; and exposure to higher order literacy skills such as knowledge of genre, topic knowledge, and inferencing.

Sometimes teachers may want to focus on lower order skills (such as decoding, scanning or inserting missing words) but it is a mistake to think that the phenomenon of reading is made up of such components which can be practised separately and then put together again at will.

This conception of literacy has at its centre the idea that reading is a complex mechanical process consisting of separable skills (e.g. decoding, word attack, comprehending) internal to the reader and that teaching, testing or researching even one of these separable skills is part or sometimes the equivalent of teaching, testing or researching reading. Closely related is a belief in transfer - that practising separable skills of reading transfers to (because it is already a subset of) reading.

(Edelsky, 1996, p. 89)

McNaughton (2002, p. 42) explains the effects that such an approach can have on children. One effect is that,

a narrowly defined set of tasks reduces children's ability to transfer their learning. Generally speaking, the more closely specified and constrained (for example, in component steps) the task is, the harder it is for learners to apply their learning to similar tasks....When students are presented with tasks as isolated bits to be learned, they have little understanding of the overall goals or outcomes when the bits are added together.... Another problem lies in what a narrow curriculum reduces access to, particularly for culturally and linguistically diverse children. In literacy, in Luis Moll's view ... such a curriculum further reduces the opportunities to learn the very things that such students need, including cognitively complex skills and a rapidly expanding vocabulary.

Barton (1994, p. 162) says that for those teaching reading, this emphasis, "leads to the notion of there being clear and discrete stages in learning with the separate skills learned in linear order, Underlying this, deep down, is the organizing idea of there being only one way of learning to read".

The prevalence of reading in groups for EAL students foregrounds 'reading' as a subject. Reading is done for its own sake so that children learn reading skills. This explains the prevalence of basal readers used in junior school ESOL programmes. The basal readers themselves determine the programme for the children. The children are "on Rainbow Reading".

If reading is mainly taught through instructional or evaluative activities focussed on reading itself, L2 learners do not experience how reading plays a meaningful role in the communication of ideas in general and specifically in curriculum areas.

Similarly writing is best developed in the context of meaningful curriculum use focussed on particular areas of knowledge. In such contexts, the full range of writing uses can be covered, from single word texts (such as labels) to lengthy texts (such as narratives or research reports). The purposes of student writing are then located in a network of language use. However, Grabe (2003, p. 243)

points out that reading-writing relationships in second language research have mostly been studied from the point of view of the way students are able to use reading in order to write, rather than from the perspective of student writing being written to be read by someone. Typically, students are considered to learn something from text which they may possibly be required to demonstrate in writing. The idea that they can learn from the writing itself is a less usual notion, although it has been shown that the result of writing (i.e. output) is further development of both cognitive and linguistic performance.

Generally better L1 readers are better writers, but the correlation is not perfect – between about .5 and .7 on various reading and writing tasks, suggesting that there are differences between the two. However, the relationship is much less strong for L2 reading and writing tasks. Current L2 research has, however, reached a consensus that reading-writing relations are mutually supportive for literacy development and content learning (Grabe, 2003, p. 245 & p. 250).

McCarthy and Garcia (2005) report a number of studies where bilingual primary school developed their writing skills in both languages when they were able to use both languages, interweave school and home language practices, write about a range of social and academic issues in a range of ways, and have high quality student-teacher dialogue about their writing. In their own study, the ESL students were in ESL classes at the time their mainstream class worked on writing in a wide range of ways. Their ESL teachers did not encourage writing in the L1 or respond to it effectively, and it was seen as a transition to writing in English. The teachers also failed to establish helpful dialogue with the students about their writing.

#### **5.4.6 Approaches to discourse structure**

Learners' attention also needs to be engaged with discourse – that is, the structure of longer texts and patterns of grammar and vocabulary use in them.

Teachers are familiar with the structure of typical English stories and help children to work with the structure, but factual texts also have information structures that children need become aware of. One of the simplest ways of doing this is to use 'information transfer' activities. The information in a text is transferred to a table or diagram (either provided by the teacher, or generated by students) and the information structure can be linked with the chains of connected words. The activity helps students to work both with the structure of the text, the ideas, and the information.

It is important that learners encounter an appropriate range of texts, and are not limited to narratives. In international literacy surveys, New Zealand students have generally performed better on reading for literary experience than on reading to acquire and use information (e.g. the 2001 PIRLS study, Ministry of Education, 2003). Narratives are more culturally situated than informative texts, and boys often prefer informative texts. Pasifika parents in a 1991 study were less likely to discuss reading with their children, and Māori and Pasifika boys were particularly dependent on school for their reading. These two groups were also the lowest scorers in reading literacy in the IEA third international survey (Alton-Lee & Praat, 2001, p. 10 & 27). Therefore

there are good reasons for teachers to ensure that narrative reading does not dominate the reading programme.

#### **5.4.7 *Helping students to develop metacognitive strategies***

Helpful teacher-student interaction over writing helps learners to develop an awareness of what texts should or could be like, and how to manage the process of writing. Strategies like this that help learners to understand and direct their own learning are important in all schooling. Alton-Lee (2003, p. 79-85) discusses the importance of helping students take conscious control of their own learning. Over many different curriculum areas, sustained higher achievement has been found when teachers use approaches that help students to engage in metacognitive learning and become aware of their own thinking and learning processes.

In language learning this has a dual focus. As discussed above, it is important in teaching grammar and vocabulary that students become aware of how language items are used and their relationship with other items. Having strategies to explore and maximise that kind of language awareness is one kind of metacognitive skill particularly related to language development. The other kind is the use of more general learning strategies, such as having goals, being willing to try things out, reflecting on learning, and planning for learning.

Ellis (1994, p. 555) lists what research to that date suggested about second language learning strategies and how they are used by learners.

- Learners use different strategies at different levels of learning – initially they focus on functional uses and chunks of language, then later they pay close attention to forms and single words, and develop metacognitive strategies.
- Successful learners use strategies more often and differently than less successful learners.
- Good learners can focus on both form and meaning.
- Different strategies may contribute to different aspects of L2 proficiency – e.g. formal practice to linguistic competence, functional strategies to communicative competence.
- Learners need to use strategies flexibly – choosing ones suitable for the task, and the goals.
- Because of this, metacognitive strategies involving goal identification and evaluation are important (especially for adults) but learners appear to underutilize these.
- More successful adult learners can talk about their strategies better.
- Learning strategies used by children and adults differ. Social and interactional strategies may be more important for younger learners.

#### **5.4.8 *Setting goals and assessing them***

It is particularly important to focus on high standards of outcomes for EAL students and not create climates which tend to limit their achievement. United States third graders in one study (Miller & Meece, 1999) who were frequently

exposed to high challenge tasks said they preferred them because they felt creative and worked hard, whereas the low challenge tasks were boring. Students who were not used to the high challenge tasks doubted whether they would have the ability to complete them. A New Zealand EAL student reported that s/he stopped going to ESOL classes (Lewis & anon, 1998, p. 4):

I think it's a waste of time to go to ESOL because everytime I turn up to class I get to do something below my potential which was from the teacher's plan...[we] require reliable and flexible teaching plan for different student and with different level of potential....

Most language tests are not standardised or normed, and often reflect a unitary or linear conception of language development, which is not in accordance with research on developmental pathways in an L2 (Shohamy (1997, p. 146). It is important to keep these critiques in mind, to avoid embarking on simplistic approaches to assessing second language proficiency, especially if the results are to be used for summative or selection purposes.

In assessment of second language learners in schools, most attention has been paid to formative assessment. As Shohamy (1998, p. 109) states:

Recently there has been a growing use of additional procedures including devices such as portfolios, observations, peer-assessment, interviews, projects, simulations and self-assessment. Thus, multiple assessment procedures refer to the use of varied ways of assessing language and less reliance on tests, each procedure is aimed at capturing different aspects and domains of language knowledge, as it is assumed that language knowledge is exemplified differently in different contexts and situations.

Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (1996, p. 33) set out six types of assessment procedures or techniques. The assessment procedures and instruments include: tests, interviews, protocols, checklists (such as rating scales and inventories), anecdotal records, and language samples (including homework, logs, journals).

These assessment types, together with five language domains, provide a framework to guide assessment practice. The five language domains are as follows: oral language proficiency, reading comprehension, content area mastery, written language ability and overall ability.

Rea-Dickens and Gardner (2000) report their case study research of nine schools in Britain involved in an Early Years Intervention Project to address low levels of achievement in English. The research focused on assessment of learners for whom English is an additional language.

We can infer the following from their study:

- High levels of support are needed in classrooms from trained teacher aides and others in order to free teachers to carry out detailed assessment of targeted learners
- Purposes for assessment should be varied (formative, summative, evaluative) and assessment procedures should suit the purposes

- While much assessment of L2 students is formative and carried out in the context of the class programme and with reference to class programme objectives, L2 students in school contexts are often also assessed by standardized tests designed on the basis of L1 student performance. Great care has to be used in forming any conclusions about L2 students on the basis of these tests, and if their language proficiency is very different from their L1 peers it may not even be appropriate for them to take such tests.

Cummins (2001) discusses the difficulties of assessing EAL children's literacy skills, when only the L2 is taken into account. He recommends the development and use of bilingual testing so that true measures of students' abilities can be gained. He also discusses the problem of over- or under-identifying EAL children who have developmental delays, rather than just being in the process of acquiring English. As a result, some may not get special help they need, and valuable learning time may be lost while teachers wait to see how the second language learning progresses. On the other hand, if assessed only in the L2, children may be considered to have some language or learning delay, and be treated accordingly and inappropriately, when L1 assessments may show no delay.

Similarly with writing, bilingual assessment may show a quite different picture from assessment in one language only. Escamilla and Coady (2001) discuss the pitfalls in assessing the writing of young Spanish speaking children in the United States. Students they studied often performed quite differently in their two languages, and many differences were not related to the sentence level differences between the languages. Some children were seen to lack logical text structure in their English writing, as discussed in section 2.4.2.

It is important to have adequate language assessments in order to track L2 students' progress in language development. But data is also needed on which programmes offer the best outcomes, and student assessments are often used as indicators of this. Lynch (2001) discusses the linked issues of language assessment and programme evaluation. He points out that both language ability and programme effectiveness are complex constructs, and difficult to operationalise and measure. Some aspects of language, and some programmes, may be more appropriately assessed or evaluated qualitatively, and quantitative measures may miss important information. He also refers to the type and degree of support that teachers may need to carry out innovations in broadening the approaches to assessment and evaluation.

He proposes (p.604) the following list of questions that need to be addressed:

- What is the range of non measurement assessment techniques that can be used for language assessment and programme evaluation?
- What political and ethical issues arise for non measurement assessment that differ from those for language testing?
- To what extent is it possible to report qualitative, alternative assessment data as aggregated test scores without losing important assessment information?

- How can non measurement approaches to evaluation be used to address the issue of different stakeholders having different criteria for judging proficiency, achievement, and program effectiveness?
- What procedures can be developed to resolve potentially conflicting interpretations of qualitative, alternative assessment data by different stakeholders or judges?

In concluding this section on second language teaching for bilingual Pasifika students, it must be remembered that children who are not educated in their first or home language are at great risk of low achievements in school, and L1 education for as long as possible is the best route to achievement in English and other curriculum areas. It is likely that no amount of excellence in catering for diversity in the mainstream will make the mainstream as good an option for bilingual Pasifika children as having at least 50% instruction in their L1 for most of their schooling.

## 6 School and teacher change

School and teacher change to improve learning outcomes depends on teachers' attitudes, beliefs and practices. Good teaching and learning for bilingual Pasifika students depends on the following aspects of teaching and school practice:

1. good literacy teaching across the whole school, in all curriculum areas, and for the full diversity of children who may attend the school at any time
2. good opportunities for Pasifika students to develop their English language use, and good focused teaching of the forms of the language
3. good opportunities and *support* for students to use and develop Pasifika languages.

To support the development of students' Pasifika languages, schools and teachers should, at the minimum, encourage their use, and help to provide contexts and support for the ongoing use of Pasifika languages for curriculum work for students alone, or in groups. At the maximum, some schools will be able to provide instruction through the medium of Pasifika languages for 50% or more of school time for a number of years.

### 6.1 English Literacy

In their literature review for the Secondary Literacy Initiative Evaluation Project, Wright, Smyth, May, & Whitehead (2003, p. 4) identify the need to attend to school *structure*, school *culture*, and *pedagogy* in order to make the changes that would establish good literacy practices in a secondary school.

School *structure* covers issues in addressing literacy such as:

Language across the curriculum, language policy, school structures such as timetables, the role of change agents and literacy leaders, and students' transition to secondary school.

School *culture* covers:

School leadership and professional development, communities of practice, and the role of data about student achievement.

Issues related to *pedagogy* include:

Academic literacy, diversity and gender, and the impact of information communication technologies (ICT).

Timperley et al (2002) in their report on the sustainability of professional development in literacy instruction in seven primary schools in Mangere and Otara focus on two key beliefs and attitudes: teachers' expectations of students' achievements, and teachers' beliefs about their own self efficacy in raising student achievement. Once the children's achievement was seen to improve as the result of new teaching practices, there was a complex interplay between teachers' new professional knowledge about how to teach,

and their expectations of themselves, and of their students (Timperley, 2003, p. 84).

Essential to this process was the fact that teachers regularly examined actual data showing their students' learning and were able to see the changes taking place. The way they examined it was also important. Schools with a strong professional learning community were the most successful in continuing to maintain the gains in student achievement for several years after their professional development.

These schools had five features in common:

1. Shared values and expectations about children and their learning, and the teachers' roles in making this happen. They expected their students to reach national norms and regularly measured their progress towards this.
2. Collective focus on student learning through detailed analysis of the progress of individual children, and clear identification of any difficulties they encountered.
3. Collaboration among the teachers and a sharing of expertise, including a sense of responsibility beyond their own classroom.
4. Deprivatized practice through the joint examination of student data, and the senior literacy teachers' assistance in classrooms to solve problems with teaching particular children effectively.
5. Reflective dialogue of a detailed and factual nature about the progress of individual children, and how teaching strategies used had related to their achievements. (Timperley, 2004, pp.23-26)

The key messages for professional development (Timperley et al, 2002, p. 4) are:

- It must focus on raising teachers expectations of their students.
- Teachers need ongoing support.
- Professional development is more successful when it is integrated into the teachers' everyday working responsibilities rather than being an isolated one-off programme held off-site.
- Professional collaboration is more helpful for student achievement than professional autonomy.
- Schools that are most successful in raising student achievement are those that create strong professional learning communities, with hands-on expert and peer involvement in learning and teaching.

## **6.2 English as a second language**

In the primary schools discussed above, classroom teachers had initial professional development in literacy teaching, and then were supported by other teachers and the literacy leaders in their schools.

The same model, with a senior ESL/ EAL leader in the school, would enable schools to ensure that L2 learners make good progress with English. As with the literacy model, mainstream teachers would take responsibility for their bilingual students language development through their collaboration in a professional ESL focussed learning community. Bilingual children make better progress with L2 learning through integration with curriculum learning than from separate ESL classes. Although there is a specialized knowledge base required for good ESL teaching, which is discussed briefly below, teachers will, in any case, need to become expert in most of it to achieve good literacy teaching for the diversity of students they teach. The ESL leader in a school should be fully qualified and experienced and able to support the development of teacher ESL skills and knowledge.

The initial professional development in literacy instruction in the SEMO project had to focus on changing teacher beliefs about their role in student progress. The same is true about English language progress for L2 students.

The facts that teachers would need to base their professional development on are:

- Students receiving instruction in an L2 can make normal progress in learning curriculum concepts if the teaching takes account of their bilingual abilities.
- On average, they will take seven or more years to reach the national norms in all aspects of L2 use, with writing taking the longest to reach age norms.
- Conceptual learning therefore needs to be assessed independently of L2 proficiency.
- L2 learning may reach a plateau in a particular area for a short time, but overall there should be steady learning taking place, particularly in vocabulary development, and the ability to work with meaning focused activities.
- Teachers make a difference to how well students learn an L2, especially how they progress with academic language proficiency.
- Careful examination of student progress and difficulties allows teachers to adjust their teaching.

Richards (1998, pp. 1-14) identifies six domains of knowledge for teachers involved in second language teaching. These are: theories of teaching, teaching skills, communication skills, subject matter knowledge, contextual knowledge, and pedagogical reasoning and decision making. A professional learning community in a school would work with all these areas of knowledge, with the support of the ESL leader.

**Theories** provide a basis on which a programme is organised, and instructional practices used within it. “While general teaching theories ... have informed approaches to mainstream teaching since the 1960s, theories specific to the nature of second language teaching have been developed and have often formed the basis for specific methodologies of language teaching, ...such as the communicative approach” (Richards, 1998, p. 2).

The **teaching skills** that are important to second language teaching are: preparation and organisation of activities to encourage communicative interaction, judgement of proper balance between fluency and accuracy, and an awareness of learners' errors and how to respond to them through feedback and feed forward.

**Communication skills** are particularly important in language teaching. There needs to be input from teachers that provides a good model for students, that is understandable, and that prompts responses from students. The kind of language typically used by experienced language teachers is well documented and is referred to as "teacher talk" (see Ellis, 1994, pp 581-583, for a detailed description).

**Subject matter knowledge** refers to what teachers need to know about the subject they teach. For second language teachers this includes the following areas: phonetics and phonology (i.e. the sounds of the language), grammar, vocabulary, and discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, second language acquisition, language curriculum and syllabus design, SLT methods, testing and evaluation (Wong-Fillmore and Snow, 2000).

**Contextual knowledge** encompasses a number of socio-cultural and individual factors relating to the society, its communities, schools, classrooms and individual students' personal backgrounds, and how these may affect language learning and teaching.

The area of **pedagogical reasoning skills** and decision making represents the synthesis of teaching skills and content. This is the capacity of the teacher "to transform the content knowledge he or she possesses into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by the students" (see Richards 1998, p. 10). This is the way in which teacher competencies are integrated and reflected in practice.

Factual data about what is taking place in the classroom is just as important for ESL teaching as it is for literacy teaching. Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis (2004) examined both language teachers' stated beliefs about how they focused on language form in their teaching and their actual teaching practices. They found that there was not a strong relationship overall between the stated beliefs and actual practices. This demonstrates the importance of deprivatised practice – with opportunities for feedback for teachers on what they do in their teaching, and how they use language and work with it.

### **6.3 Pasifika languages**

Schools can take the lead in their communities by successfully communicating information about the benefits of bilingualism. This gives parents and children a better basis for their decisions and practices about language use. Likewise, schools can take the lead in modeling bilingual learning in academic contexts, working collaboratively with the community and parents. Once again, a systematic commitment to address important areas in the school culture, structure, and pedagogy is required. The school also needs to become a professional learning community which is able to

regenerate itself in an ongoing way, and is not dependent on particular individuals.

The facts that would support teachers and schools in taking these steps are as follows:

- Bilingualism has cognitive and social advantages.
- In education, submersion of bilingual children in English is a lose-lose situation where neither language develops as well as it might, with consequent effects.
- By contrast, bilingual education is a win-win situation, where both languages ultimately develop further, and better school achievement occurs.
- Although full bilingual education is best, there are various other ways of supporting bilingual development to some extent.
- Models already exist for schools to base bilingual practices on.

Richmond Road School is one school that has long experience in providing a bilingual learning community for students, through a professional learning community skilled in multicultural and multilingual teaching. Their experience is described by May (1995). Although the school practices began more than 20 years ago, the key points in relation to professional development are remarkably similar to Timperley's recent findings discussed above:

- Teachers learn to *monitor student progress* closely. They learn to observe students at the point of learning - working in familiar contexts using familiar processes but focused on unfamiliar content at an increasing level of difficulty. The purpose of this is to be able to find out how the student operates, what she knows, and the priorities in what she needs to know.
- The school has in-built and *on-going staff development* programme through in-depth discussion about theories of teaching and how they work out in practice. The process is one of questioning, and reflective practice.
- 'Whoever has the knowledge, teaches'. This notion gives *provisional* authority to different people at different times, rather than investing it all in particular positions of authority. The result of this is to include everyone as authorities, thus including everyone in full participation. Teachers, parents, children, are all sources of knowledge for each other. The importance of peer tutoring and peer interaction in the school enabled teachers to learn from the process, from the children themselves, and from opportunities to focus more directly on individual children.
- Teachers understand student learning processes as being *child-centred, developmental and appropriately resourced*. In order for children to have control over their own learning, teachers must be aware of what the child can do now, and support their next learning steps with access to flexible, culturally appropriate, interactive and extending materials.
- The goal is for the school and teachers to provide children with *academic skills and cultural recognition*.

- The importance of teachers learning to work in ways that give full cultural *recognition* to all plus an emphasis on cultural *interaction*. Vertical family groupings integrate diverse elements without diminishing their status or distinctiveness.
- *School and community relationships* are strong and parents have a high degree of involvement in the school as equals.
- The school acknowledges respects and *supports first language* competence, and ensures that parents and children have a real informed choice about language use, and identity.
- Language use in classes is *meaningful, active, interactive*, and real. It is fully integrated into curriculum learning.

Over time, professional development for mainstream teachers will need to integrate the features discussed above in order to address the three areas of English literacy, English development as a second language, *alongside* Pasifika languages development.

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