Greening the information desert: Supporting emergent bilinguals with research-informed workshops

Una Cunningham, Stockholm University
Jeanette King, University of Canterbury

Abstract

Parents and prospective parents who speak a language other than English in New Zealand are in something of an information desert when it comes to how and why they might go about raising their children bilingually. While the official languages, Te Reo Māori and New Zealand Sign Language, have special status among the languages of New Zealand, other languages are viewed very much as the responsibility of ethnolinguistic communities. To support the intergenerational transmission of minority languages in New Zealand, research-informed material has been created for dissemination in a website, an associated Facebook page and a series of lecture-workshops for parents and professionals which have been made available in digital form in this website. Workshops continue to be offered to professionals such as speech-language therapists, early childhood educators, midwives, doctors, and nurses who work with families with young children. Questions asked during these workshops help to select the myths about multilingualism we need to address in this outreach to irrigate and green the information desert. Already, a bilingual French class and a Swedish playgroup have been set up as direct results of the parents' workshop events. Individual parents have reported feeling empowered to persevere in their efforts to raise their children as speakers of their language. Invitations to contribute to education programs for the professionals who work close to young children are beginning to arrive.

Keywords: caregiver information; workshop; multilingualism; emergent bilinguals

Context

For many immigrants to New Zealand, it comes as a surprise to learn that languages other than English are not highly valued there (May, 2005). Firstly, many New Zealanders are monolingual English speakers; in the 2013 census, 81.4% of the population reported speaking just one language and data from previous censuses shows that 98% of all monolinguals are speakers of English (Starks, Harlow & Bell, 2005, p. 18).ⁱ Secondly, New Zealand has traditionally been a settlement country, that is, a country which has systematically sought and welcomed migrants as settlers who plan to live, work and raise their families there, and to stay for the remainder of their lives, in contrast to sojourners, who may move on or return to the country of origin after a few years. This plan to stay in New Zealand lessens the impact of language shift and the motivation to transmit the language of the "old country" to the next generation, and New Zealand has had a traditionally assimilatory view of migration (Castles, 2000). In fact, only half of New Zealand-born children of migrants, whose parents speak a language other than English, report being able to speak their parents' language (stats.govt.nz). This figure is, however, very different across ethnolinguistic groups, as can be seen in Figure 1, which shows the percentages of New Zealand-born teenagers in

Christchurch (where this work was carried out) and New Zealand as a whole, who speak a language other than English which is spoken by at least one adult in their household.

Figure 1. Intergenerational transmission rate (%) for NZ-born 13-18-year-olds in Christchurch and New Zealand

In New Zealand there is very little publicly available information about bilingualism, and learning about bilingualism and bilingual language development is not a substantial part of education programs for pre-service primary or early childhood teachers, nurses, midwives or speech-language therapists. These professionals who meet parents of young children have nothing beyond their own knowledge or beliefs to offer to parents or caregivers they meet in the course of their work. In addition, the official policy about the use of languages other than English is unclear. As recently as 2013, a report was published by the Office of Ethnic Affairs suggesting that, in the interests of ensuring English proficiency, “migrants will need to carefully consider whether they use only English or their heritage language at home, or a combination of both” (2013, p. 21). Not speaking the home language at home would inevitably lead to a corresponding lack of development of the home language for the children with associated subtractive bilingualism, and linguistic assimilation for the entire ethnolinguistic community within a single generation. This trajectory is in line with an assimilatory view of migration (Castles, 2000) which, according to Ghosh (2015), was supposed to have been abandoned in favor of multiculturalism as a goal for migration in New Zealand in the 1980s and 1990s. The Office of Ethnic Affairs report also claims that: “the overriding challenge to the retention of heritage languages is the demand for migrants to acquire proficiency in English” (Office of Ethnic Affairs, 2013, p. 23) and that:

There is a negative correlation between acquiring English language proficiency and heritage language maintenance. Further, New Zealand and international studies consistently show that language shift to English usually occurs within three generations. Consequently, few migrants or their descendants born in New Zealand will achieve true bilingualism. (Office of Ethnic Affairs, 2013, p. 23)

It seems clear that the 2013 report from the Office of Ethnic Affairs prioritized the development of proficiency in English over the intergenerational transmission of community and heritage languages, and that parents receiving this information, in the absence of any other information, would be unlikely to speak their language to their emergent bilingual children (García & Kleifgen, 2010).

Nakhid and Devere (2015) point out that New Zealand's immigrant selection process remains biased in favor of those with English language skills "who might be perceived to integrate more easily into society" (p. 71). Moreover New Zealand still does not have a national language policy, despite pressure from, for example, Waite (1992) and the Royal Society of New Zealand (2013). There are, however, powerful voices speaking in favor of societal multilingualism (e.g. May, 2014; Harvey, 2013; Royal Society of New Zealand, 2013). As the demographic makeup of the New Zealand population shifts there is also increasing recognition that New Zealand has become superdiverse with its now 168 languages and associated cultural heritages offering a powerful economic resource for the country (Chen, 2015).

We perceived a need for a campaign to collate, compile, create and actively disseminate research-informed information to support those in a position to raise multilingual children in New Zealand. The basis for our campaign was the well-understood process whereby children can and do grow up to be speakers of more than one language in simultaneous bilingual acquisition if they are regularly spoken to in these languages from birth (Baker & Wright, 2017; Cunningham, 2011; De Houwer, 2009). In the case of indigenous or transnational and linguistically diverse families, this involves one or both parents speaking a language other than the majority language to their child thereby ensuring that the home becomes a 'language sanctuary' (Starks, 2005, p. 244). In situations where this does not happen, intergenerational transmission of the minority language will not occur (Fishman, 2013), although this can, generally with lower ultimate attainment levels in the minority language, be addressed later (Cunningham, 2011; Baker & Wright, 2017).

As implied in Figure 1, the intergenerational transmission experiences amongst the many ethnolinguistic communities in New Zealand varies considerably and there has been a good deal of work detailing aspects which contribute to community language maintenance (see Starks, 2005 for a good overview; and McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010 for a discussion with regard to Pacific languages). Besides the importance of the home environment, ethnolinguistic migrant communities are important to support the efforts of parents and caregivers, although the impact of community language instruction is unclear for families interviewed by King and Cunningham (2016) and in earlier work in New Zealand and elsewhere. Waite (1992) argues that:

To ensure that children from non-English-speaking backgrounds have the opportunity to maintain their first language into adulthood, support is needed for parents who want to maintain the language in the home setting, for linguistic communities who take the initiative to establish their own language programs, as well as for schools who choose to introduce community languages into their curricula. (p. 20)

Holmes (1997) points out differences in the ability of ethnolinguistic communities in New Zealand to command resources to establish language maintenance programs. The current position in New Zealand is that there is little official support or

information available in support of parents speaking their languages to their children, or about the value of bilingualism to the individual, family, community or the nation. This is not the position in other countries with more pluralistic migration policies, such as neighboring Australia, with a developed program for the teaching of languages other than English (LOTE) in schools in the state of Victoria (Willoughby, 2014), and the innovative Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) programme (Australian Government, 2018). Linguistic “integration”, that is, the learning of English no matter the cost to the community language, has been an overt goal with a view to ensuring the work-readiness of migrants (Office of Ethnic Affairs, 2013), and little or no public finance is available to support community language instruction. Fishman (2013) calls this “permissive language defense” where “such a stance does not obligate the authorities to overtly or constructively do anything on behalf of disadvantaged languages, but rather to abstain from oppositional or deleterious actions with respect to these (or any other) languages” (p. 479). In this information desert, parents and professionals in New Zealand are left with nowhere to turn for research-informed support for simultaneous or sequential bilingual language acquisition for young children whose circumstance make this a possibility.

The study of family language policy has revealed great variety in how families in multilingual contexts arrange their languages. Curdt-Christiansen (2016) describes the effect of language ideology, public discourse and governmental language policy on the formation of family language policy, and concludes that initial parental decisions on whether or not to pass their language to their children are influenced by official policy. Even at the grassroots level, there appears to be a hierarchy between the minority languages of New Zealand (de Bres, 2015). Minority language promotion is more readily accepted for Te Reo Māori and New Zealand Sign Language, with their official language status, followed by Pacific languages and finally other community languages. This is true even for “those at lower levels of the hierarchy [who] tend to accept the position of those at top, with particular consensus on the special position of te reo Māori as an indigenous language” (de Bres, 2015, p. 691).

Accordingly, within the increasingly complex New Zealand context, and in the light of typical international patterns, it is unsurprising to note that most community languages undergo substantial shift to English over several generations. It is also apparent that New Zealand as the host country has an important role in constructing the migrant experience and greatly influences language shifts to English (Roberts, 2005).

In our preparation for our work compiling, creating and disseminating research-informed information for parents and caregivers, teachers and healthcare professionals, we studied other similar programmes. Of particular interest were the work of the Research Unit for Multilingualism and Cross-Cultural Communication (RUMACCC) at the University of Melbourne in Australia which conducts annual workshops which target both families raising their children bi- or trilingually and interested professionals (Hajek, 2017), and the pamphlets produced by Gagarina and colleagues at the Centre for General Linguistics Berlin. (Gagarina, Posse, Düsterhöft, Topaj, & Acikgöz, 2014).

Greening the information desert

This paper reports the design, implementation and preliminary effects of a series of activities aiming to create, curate and disseminate research-informed information for professionals and parents or caregivers who speak a language other than English and so might potentially raise children in New Zealand as speakers of more than one language.

Table 1 shows the evolution over time of the different kinds of information that was generated or collated and of the multiple channels used to disseminate this information and support as part of the Intergenerational Transmission of Minority Languages (ITML) project. The ITML project is a response to the increasing emphasis placed on the need for academics to reach out and make positive contributions to society: since 1989, the New Zealand Education Act (1989 Education Act (section 162(4) (a)) has required universities to accept a role as “critic and conscience of society”. When the *A Better Start* project began in 2015 (see below), we saw synergies of the ITML project with the sub-strand *Emergent bilinguals growing up in their digital world* (Cunningham & Davis, 2015) and we brought the project activities together. As can be seen, the dissemination activity took off in 2016 and continues at the time of writing, with some overlap between the generation and dissemination of information as focus shifted from looking at the outcome of growing up “eligible for bilingualism” in the teenage bilingual interviews to trying to support the environments in which young children who have caregivers who speak a language other than English find themselves.

Table 1. Timeline of events in the generation and dissemination of information about bilingualism. ECE stands for Early Childhood Education; ITML stands for Intergenerational Transmission of Minority Languages

	Date	Item
Generating information	2011	“Growing up with Two Languages” (3.ed)
	2011	Publisher’s webpage
	2011	Facebook page
	July 2014	ITML census project start
	June-October 2015	Teenage bilingual and parent interviews
	September 2016	ECE interviews and linguistic landscapes
Disseminating information	December 2015	ITML symposium 1
	February 2016	Two languages website
	February 2016	Journal of Home Language Research launch
	March 2016	Parent workshop 1, 60 participants
	April 2016	Community language teachers workshop 1
	September 2016	Parent workshop 2, 85 participants
	October 2016	Community language teachers workshop 2
	October 2016	ECE teacher workshop 1
	November 2016	Parent workshop 3, 100 participants
	December 2016	Primary teacher workshop 1
	December 2016	ITML symposium 2
	February 2017	WordPress website with “pop-up” ECE and primary workshops and web versions of parent workshop talks and other presentations
	April 2017	ECE Regional workshop
	June 2017	Samoan parent workshop 1
	July 2017	Specialist teacher workshop
	August 2017	Samoan parent workshop 2
	December 2017	ITML symposium 3

Generating research-informed information

The first part of the information-generation phase of this program has been the creation and dissemination of research-informed information material for parents caregivers and professionals completed several years ago, in the form of a previously existing book (Cunningham, 2011), a Facebook page and a website hosted by the publisher of the book. This book was written for parents and caregivers although it has also been used as course literature for in-service teacher education on occasion. The book is now in its third edition and brings together the author's own experiences raising four children as speakers of Swedish and English in Sweden with excerpts from communications with 150 parents and adult children in many different contexts. While the book has been well received, and even translated into Spanish, its main readership, at least as far as can be seen from letters and mails from readers, has been well-educated middle-class parents, usually where one parent is a speaker of a language other than the majority language which is spoken by the other parent.

The publisher hosts the complementary website created for the book's third edition in 2011, with excerpts from some interviews with adults who have themselves grown up with more than one language or with parents who have raised children with more than one language. In several cases, these are the stories of children raised multilingually who have gone on to raise their own children in the same way, sometimes in different combinations of languages. A Facebook page was started at the same time as the publisher's website, with a view to allowing more interactivity between readers of the book and sharing of new content. This Facebook page was repurposed for the purposes of this New Zealand campaign which began in July 2014 with the establishment of a research group and the commissioning of census data from the 2013 New Zealand census.

This commissioned data from the 2013 census revealed that there were differences between ethnolinguistic groups in how likely teenagers in migrant families were to be able to speak their parents' languages, shown in Figure 1, such that one in ten New Zealand-born Dutch teens with at least one Dutch-speaking parent claimed to speak Dutch, while the corresponding figure for Korean teens was almost eight out of ten. This data is discussed in more detail in King and Cunningham (2016), but it is clear that a cohesive Korean community centered on church-going is a powerful resource promoting intergenerational transmission of Korean.

The commissioned census data also revealed regional differences in the intergenerational transmission of migrant languages. More than half of the New Zealanders who speak more than one language live in Auckland where a third of the population lives, compared to just 8.1% of multilinguals in Canterbury which is fair, given that 7% of the population is in Canterbury. This, together with the sheer size of the population means that there are many more speakers of most migrant languages in Auckland than in Canterbury and a better chance for families to connect with other speakers of their language(s).

Of course, census data is self-reported and often incomplete. For example, there is only one question in the census about languages: "In which language(s) could you have a conversation about a lot of everyday things?" Further follow up surveys conducted after the census look at teasing out proficiency levels among Māori speakers, but not among other language communities. Parents may answer this question for young people, and they may both over report and underreport the children's' language proficiency, so that school languages show a bulge for 11-15 year-olds whose parents

do not report speaking the languages, which is likely to be due to the child or parent putting down that they speak, for example, French because they are learning that language at school, even if their spontaneous proficiency is minimal. At the same time, heritage language proficiency may well not be reported or seen as of interest, leading to false negatives. Fishman (2013) expressed frustration at what he saw as the trivialization of home languages compared to foreign languages “usually learned less well and at much greater cost in competence, time, and money” (p. 476).

Given the limitations of census data, interviews focusing on a range of languages with varying rates of intergenerational transmission were arranged. The research focused on what parents and teenagers who identified as speakers of their home language could tell us about their experience of growing up bilingually in New Zealand. With the aid of research assistants who were speakers of the respective languages, we interviewed teenagers who spoke Chinese, Dutch, German, French, Korean and Spanish as well as their parents, a total of 50 interviews, which were transcribed and translated when not in English. Important characteristics of these families in which children grew up as speakers of their heritage language turned out to be the frequency of travel to the country the parent(s) migrated from, if more than one adult at home spoke the language, and if there was a reasonably large and active local language community. The particular experiences of the Korean community are the topic of a PhD thesis (Kim, in preparation).

One of the main insights of this interview study was that parents are bombarded with opinions and well-meaning advice from many quarters, but little of this reflects what we now know about the benefits and challenges of growing up or raising children with more than one language. Instead parents are affected by the desires and opinions of the children themselves, partners, extended family, community members, professionals and society at large as well as governmental information which serves its own agenda. This work is reported in a forthcoming paper currently under revision (Cunningham & King, 2018).

The next phase of this work was carried out in association with *A Better Start National Science Challenge* (Cunningham & Davis, 2015). This is a 10-year national research program with the mission to find better ways to predict, prevent and treat obesity, learning and mental health problems in children and teenagers. A strand in this challenge is focused on literacy development and how to reach and teach children who are at risk of literacy problems in the crucial first year of school. The research reported here is one of a number of sub-projects to this strand, focused on *Emergent bilingual children growing up in a digital world*. This project, involved visiting seven ECE centers located in suburbs of Christchurch populated by a higher than average for the city percentage of families who identify as Māori or Pacific Islander. Interviews were conducted with educators including the service director and parents or caregivers nominated by the director. In addition, the physical environments and digital material (e.g., web page or Facebook page or group) associated with the service were documented with a focus on the visible language, the linguistic landscape (Harris, 2016). Two of the centers were immersion centers for Māori and Samoan respectively. Languages other than Māori and Samoan are not commonly visible in the linguistic landscapes of the participating ECE environments, although in interviews, educators expressed great interest in hearing about ways they might support other children’s multilingual development.

Dissemination of research-informed material

A number of channels were used to try to reach parents and caregivers, as well as the teachers and other professionals close to the families, with our information. We ran workshops of various kinds and created websites with static and dynamic content. These are described below.

Workshops for parents/caregivers

Workshops for parents and caregivers developed reactively as it rapidly became apparent that some of the parents interviewed in the interview study described above would be very keen to attend research-informed information sessions about bilingualism if such were to be offered. The first workshop was planned as an opportunity for parents and caregivers to share experiences, and realize that they were not alone in their situation. This became a series of three workshops on raising children bilingually that were attended not only by the main target group of parents and caregivers, but also by educators keen to learn how they might support the potentially multilingual children in their care. The workshops were organized to engender the sharing of experiences and discussion between participants and to allow the voices of the participants to be heard.

In the first workshop, attended by around 60 parents, caregivers and some professionals, participant engagement was encouraged by setting the room up in nine tables each for six to eight participants. The participants sat where they wanted, sometimes with people they knew who were members of the same ethnolinguistic group, for example, Mandarin speakers, or “Europeans”, that is, speakers of European languages other than English. At each table, a member of the Learning and Teaching Languages research lab was placed as a facilitator. The evening was organized with topics of discussion introduced from the front of the room and then the discussion at each table was documented by the facilitators on a shared document that was projected at the front of the room, for all to see. Participants were asked to share any questions they arrived with, and to discuss the following questions:

1. Beliefs: Is it important to pass on your language to your children?
2. Practices: How does life with more than one language work for you?
3. Sharing strategies: What can parents do to help?
 - a. Reading and writing
 - b. When the child answers in English
 - c. When the child makes mistakes in the heritage language
 - d. Other challenges
4. How to get the school on board with what you are trying to do

After each topic was discussed, interesting points or questions that had been expressed in the shared document could be raised by the convener for plenary discussion.

Feedback from this session was that while exchanging experiences was worthwhile, some participants were keen to hear more from the “experts”. Nonetheless, the expertise of the experienced parents was well worth spreading. As well as this first workshop for parents serving as a channel for dissemination, it was also an opportunity for us to gather problems, questions and misconceptions.

The second workshop was convened with a theme of motivating reluctant children to speak the home language, as this was clearly a matter of concern to many at

the first workshop. The evening was organized with a 30-minute talk in three sections, on input, children's need for the language, and children's agency. The 85 participants were given handouts with the main points of the talk and links to the website and Facebook page as well as three blank sticky notes in different colors. After each section of the talk, participants were asked to anonymously write their thoughts or suggestions about the three themes of the talk (how to increase the amount of input in the minority language, how to increase the opportunity or need for the child to use the minority language, and how to deal with children's agency) on one of the notes and pass it to the front.

The convener selected a few notes to comment on immediately and they were all stuck on a prepared board at the front of the room for later perusal by participants. After the event, all three sets of notes were transcribed and shared through the project blog pages along with a short made-for-web version of the talk.ⁱⁱ Feedback from this session indicated that the next workshop should focus on how to deal with partners who would not speak the minority language with their children.

A third workshop was therefore organized on the theme of motivating adults to speak a minority language with their children. This time too, the workshop was organized around a talk by the convener with contributions elicited from participants on "problems experienced" and "possible solutions". Again, these were discussed at the time, and collected and transcribed for the blog pages where a selection of the problems have been selected for a short video commentary.ⁱⁱⁱ It became apparent in the feedback to this third workshop that a number of the participants were early childhood educators and primary teachers, and were there for their own professional development. Some of these professionals in their feedback requested more information tailored to their particular needs, which was in line with the overall project plan.

Website

The workshops we held for parents and caregivers gave us specific myths and questions to address. Many parents found it difficult to find support for their intuitive decision to speak their language to their children; sometimes they faced opposition from partners who did not speak the heritage language, or the extended family who might believe that two languages at the same time are too much for a young child. We were also able to share (with permission) the experiences of parents and teens in our interview study, who had successfully reached their bilingualism goals as support for our campaign. The findings of this interview study led to a first attempt at spreading information about bilingualism in New Zealand in the form of information and advice to new parents, older children and professionals about bilingualism in the form of a website^{iv}, launched in 2016. This website incorporated explanations and some recommendations from Cunningham (2011) and excerpts from interviews with teens and their parents from the 2015 interview study.

Facebook page

In connection with the launch of the *Growing Up with Two Languages* website, the Facebook page originally associated with the book with the same name (Cunningham, 2011) was appropriated and repurposed. This Facebook page was then used as a means of sharing content produced in the website and of reaching those who might be interested in participating in events organized by the research lab. Many of our posts in these page reach over 3000 Facebook users through being shared by our

followers.

Workshops with professionals

The documentation of the linguistic landscape of Early Childhood Education services in East Christchurch, which was part of *A better start: Emergent bilingual children growing up in their digital world*, resulted in some wonderful examples of good practice in enhancing the linguistic landscape of a learning environment, particularly regarding Māori and Samoan. These included, for example, welcome signs in multiple languages, a map showing the tribal affiliations of the Māori children, and wall displays featuring classroom expressions in Māori. Educators who came to our parent workshops as well as those recruited as participants within the *A Better Start* project, had expressed interest in working with these and other languages represented among the children attending their services.

A series of workshops was, therefore, planned with early childhood educators at the centers whose linguistic landscapes were documented, including any parents or caregivers they chose to invite. These workshops allowed the team to present the description of the linguistic landscape to those who had created it, and to share examples of good practice seen elsewhere. One element of the workshops involved showing the participants their own linguistic landscape, in the form of a short film set to music, showing the artefacts in that particular early childhood center and featuring quotes from interviews with the educators or parents at that center. Seeing the landscape they had created through the eyes of the research team was an emotional experience for some educators who felt empowered by this acknowledgement and confirmation that work they had intuitively felt to be valuable was seen as such by researchers.

Another part of the workshop was sharing with those present some of the best practice that had been found at other centers (with the permission of the other center directors). This was received with great interest by the educators, and they were keen to discuss whether and how a version of the idea could be used with their children and families.

A third section of the workshop was presenting the research team's ideas about how the languages spoken in the families of the center might be more visibly valued. These suggestions typically involved the use of technology and were mostly intended to bridge the gap between the center and the children's homes. An example of this is the use of a photo of a child at the center with the superimposed text of a song, rhyme or prayer. The idea is that the text will be displayed at home rather than discarded, as it has the image of the child on it. If QR-code is added, the song of the children and the teachers at the center can be heard (if it is recorded and uploaded to the cloud). This is very helpful to parents who would like to help children sing the songs being learned, but may be in need of help to identify the song and find the lyrics.

An unexpected positive consequence of the workshops was that the centers found that our documentation of their linguistic landscapes would be useful for their self-review process as required by the Ministry of Education, and that the strategies we were introducing in the workshops would be suitable objects for their own professional development responsibilities. The workshops were, however, affected by a series of challenges. Firstly, the time available was usually during a weekly staff meeting which was only an hour long, though most teachers were willing to stay longer. This left little time to help educators to plan what they would like to move on with or to actually learn how to use some of the technology. Secondly, it was not always possible to plan workshops at a time when all the key people at a center were available. This was

ameliorated by a research assistant organizing individual sessions with those interested in learning a particular technique. A further, more severe, challenge was that the centers were not available for workshops after October, as they have a very busy run up to Christmas and need to focus on their end-of-year reporting and consolidation in preparation for the next year. This led to a move online to rollout our outreach to be available to more educators and families.

Web-based resources

As strategies and techniques for enhancing the linguistic landscape were developed and presented to participating early childhood education centers, it became clear that the one-off presentation of an enhancement idea was not going to be enough to allow centers to adopt suggested activities or displays for their center. Educators were interested in adopting an idea from another center, but there was not enough time in the workshops to be able to show them exactly how they could do that. For example, the idea of a QR-code linked to an uploaded sound file was received enthusiastically, and some staff were already recording songs and other activities at their center, but there was no provision for actually showing educators how to upload the sound file to the net, create a QR-code linking to it, downloading a QR-code scanner and scanning the code.

There was a desire for more instruction, and this would need to be available at the point of need, when educators were ready to implement the new strategy. This led to a shift to web-based resources in the form of a WordPress website for groups of educators and/or parents or caregivers. This had been intended as a rollout to a wider group of potential users as well as a repository of material to introduce to educators and caregivers who take part in future workshops. These web-based resources are intended as “pop-up” workshops that could be used independently by a group of educators or parents who are ready to work together to create some displays or activities to enhance the linguistic landscapes close to their children. These are materials designed to introduce ways to enhance the linguistic landscape of the educational or home environment, with all the information needed to get started without the need for an external facilitator. The materials are also accompanied by a commentary which explains the thinking behind the tool or resource and associates it to the strands and goals of the Early Childhood or primary curriculum.^v

An example of the materials included in the web material is an introduction to digital storytelling, beginning with an account of how this can be a useful way to enrich the dialogue between home and the educational context in general with examples of how others have used it in a situation where a language other than English is spoken at home to include that language in the educational context for the benefit of all the children. The material then goes on to introduce a particular piece of free software in a short upbeat video and a printable sheet of instructions to show how that particular software can be used to create a simple resource. These can be individual stories featuring the activities of a single child with pictures of that child. With the support and input of the child’s family and/or multilingual staff, parts of the story can be in the home language (in written or spoken form). This web resource is then rounded off with a text associating the use of digital storytelling to enhance the linguistic landscape of emergent bilingual children with the curriculum goals of Te Whāriki, the New Zealand curriculum for early childhood education.

Making this material available on the web is a sustainable strategy for increasing the impact of this research. It is available to both those educators who are directed to the pages through early childhood and primary teacher workshops and other outreach

activities (e.g. the website and Facebook group or the public workshops for caregivers and professionals) and to those in New Zealand and beyond who happen upon the resources through other channels.

Conclusion

While this work is ongoing, we are pleased to be able to report uptake and impact of our work.

Outcomes

The impact of the kind of outreach work described here is difficult to measure, especially as it was not designed as a formal study of the uptake of information by stakeholders. There have, however, been several indications that this work is making a difference at three partly overlapping levels. Firstly, we have reason to believe we are influencing the choices made by individual families; secondly, ethnolinguistic communities have reported new initiatives sparked by the workshops for parents and caregivers and the networking that occurred there; and thirdly, organizations and policy makers have asked us to work with them to further disseminate information.

On the family and individual level, we have systematically collected formal and informal feedback on our workshops from participants, and permission to share this feedback. As well as requests for topics to be covered in future workshops (e.g., “*non-native speakers supporting the other language*”, “*let’s hear from adult children themselves: how was it growing up in a bilingual environment?*”, “*a workshop to encourage government to support the expansion of additional languages at school*”), participants appreciated that the workshops were cross cultural ; “*I liked the fact it was not language specific, so an increased ability to share*”; “*It was good to meet other parents from other countries and parents with kids of different ages*”, but also welcomed “*networking opportunities to meet other parents who speak the same minority language*”. Parents also requested “*access to a database of resources*” and that we “*share [...] research and papers about bilingually raised children*”; and “*more in-depth knowledge about what the research says/recommends for teaching your child two or three languages*”). All of these requests are addressed in our WordPress site with summaries of research articles, the pop-up workshop materials, and advice from the book and interviews with parents and adult children.

Not all of the feedback came at the event itself. After the first parent workshop, we received a mail from a grandmother asking how she could support her daughter to raise her child as a speaker of two languages. While the situation might be too specific for a workshop, our response to it made a good item for the WordPress site^{vi} and the Facebook page.

The first parent workshop attracted migrant parents who were raising their children as speakers of European and Asian languages. Māori or Samoan-speaking families did not attend, despite the efforts of Māori and Samoan community leaders associated with our group to ensure that many families received invitations to attend.

However, by the second workshop, several Māori and Pacific language-speaking parents were in attendance. One mother wrote that she had decided on the basis of the workshop to put her children into Māori-immersion schooling; another commented that she felt empowered to persist in her efforts to get her children using the minority language. The *Growing up with two languages* Facebook page seems to have been useful in spreading the word about project activities and other posts to the communities. The third parent/caregiver workshop invitation reached over 8000 unique people in this way thanks to the sharing function of Facebook. This also brought the Facebook page and other resources to the attention of many more interested people, and posts from the page are regularly shared to groups for speakers of other languages, including Māori in New Zealand and beyond.

On the level of ethnolinguistic communities, a very satisfying outcome of project activity was that a few of the local French speakers found each other at the first parent/caregiver workshop and realized that there were enough of them to make a case for starting a bilingual French-English primary school class within a local primary school.

After the second workshop, a Swedish mother used a local Swedish community Facebook group to recruit families to join her in setting up a Swedish-language playgroup where she could let her children meet other Swedish speakers. There are not many Swedish speakers living permanently in Christchurch, and previous community gatherings have mainly attracted young adults. Most families with children seem to have one Swedish-speaking parent, and as the other parent is typically not a Swedish-speaker, this means that the Swedish-speaking parent is short of environments to take the children to meet other Swedish speaking children.

As regards impact on policy, the most recent public workshop received a request from a participant to organize a workshop:

For professionals (teachers etc.) to learn the importance of being able to speak another language & how to support this. Monolingual speakers tend to have no idea about our expectations for our children (what level we expect our children to be able to use another language). Could you provide them with an opportunity to learn about this so they won't be so harsh on our children using their home language outside of their home?

Although there is not much information about raising children as speakers of more than one language available to parents, many educators are supportive of bilingualism and tolerant of translanguaging in their centres and classrooms. Education about the nature of bilingualism and bilingual language acquisition is, of course, part of the content of our workshops with educators, and in the postgraduate courses and programs we have been offering for a few years. While the above request came from a parent, teachers have attended all of the workshops alongside the parents and caregivers who were the main target. One early childhood educator requested professional development opportunities about bilingualism in early childhood education, while a primary teacher asked for support for “*particularly learning/teaching minority languages in early childhood and assisting us teachers learning and using the minority languages of children from other demographics*”. Two weeks after the first dedicated Samoan workshop in June 2017, an ECE center surveyed their parents’ Samoan language practices, encouraging greater use of Samoan at home. Another direct result of the caregiver workshops has been a series of invitations to hold workshops for particular groups:

- a. A workshop for a conference in April 2017 held by a large chain of Early Childhood Education Services about *Working with emergent bilingual children*, looking at some practical ways Early Childhood educators can visibly value the languages and cultures that children and their families bring with them. The focus of this workshop was linguistic landscape and language policy.
- b. A workshop in July 2017 to contribute to a program of education for Specialist Resource Teachers for Language and Behavior (RTLB) teachers, talking about multiculturalism and multicultural education with a broad perspective on the diversity of children in NZ schools. This program has not previously had this content.
- c. Two workshops in Christchurch for groups of teachers of a wide variety of community languages through the auspices of the Community Languages Association of New Zealand (CLANZ) on the topics “Supporting children growing up with two languages in Christchurch” (April 2016) and “Keeping it real: Authenticity, task and meaning-focused language teaching” (October 2016).

Community language teachers in New Zealand are often volunteers and may not have any background in language education. Obviously, such workshops are no substitute for language teacher education, but the aim was to raise the teachers’ awareness of the expectations of children growing up in New Zealand for interactive lessons which enabled them to use their community languages rather than to learn about the languages, giving them tools to work in meaning-focused teaching even with learners with very low proficiency in the minority language. In project interviews, teens and their parents have suggested that community language teaching can be very traditional and quite different to the kind of classes the New Zealand-educated children are used to, and this is one reason why many choose not to enroll their children in community schools. These workshops will continue, along with work towards the introduction of university-based language education for community language teachers of the same kind as is currently available for teacher-aides.

Next steps

Given the difficulty of reaching educators at a time that is convenient to them, the move to making most of the talks and workshops and the teaching materials collected and produced in the team activities available as online material is of the utmost importance. This means that when there is an opportunity for meeting educators in person, showing them the online resources that have been prepared may be the most effective part of the event. We have been asked by educators attending our workshops for materials that they can print off and hand to parents and caregivers, so we will prepare a PDF factsheet for our webpages to be translated into Māori and Samoan and possibly other languages with some being printed up for future workshops. These factsheets will address common myths and misconceptions about child bilingualism and encourage the intergenerational transmission of home languages.

A future phase of the *Emergent bilinguals growing up in their digital world* project, will be to revisit the early childhood education centers that participated in the documentation of their linguistic landscapes to ascertain what, if anything, has changed

in the linguistic policies and practices as expressed in the linguistic landscape and in interviews with educators. Considering the enthusiasm with which information and strategies have been received, there is reason to expect to find some implementation of enhanced linguistic landscapes. Although early childhood education centers are very busy, and educators have limited time to deal with long term projects, the documentation of the linguistic landscape of each environment has been presented to the staff of the center, the web-based pop-up workshop materials are being introduced to them and this work fits well into the required self-review activities, so there is reason to be optimistic.

Our annual December international symposium on Intergenerational Transmission of Minority Languages for academics and education professionals to network and discuss research related to home language transmission will continue. Since 2017 this has become entirely asynchronous and web-based.^{vii} The presentations are licensed under a Creative Commons attribution license and given handles and made available to view indefinitely. It is possible for viewers to participate in discussion for some time after the symposium is opened. Occasional workshops for parents and caregivers will still be arranged, but the main focus will be on the professionals who come into contact with the parents and caregivers in whose hands lies the potential bilingual development of the children. More material for professionals as well as parents and caregivers is in preparation in the form of flyers and factsheets for the website. Educating these early childhood education, primary, secondary and specialist teachers, speech-language therapists, nurses, midwives and doctors about bilingual language development and its benefits on the personal, community and national level is a powerful and effective way to influence policy and practice.

ⁱ <http://archive.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-culture-identity/languages.aspx>

ⁱⁱ <http://latllab.canterbury.ac.nz/bilingualism/motivating-reluctant-children-to-speak-a-home-language/> or <http://ikt.edu.uu.se/jhlm/?p=221>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://latllab.canterbury.ac.nz/problems-experienced-parents-carers-raising-children-bilingually/> or <http://ikt.edu.uu.se/jhlm/?p=224>

^{iv} <http://twolanguages.canterbury.ac.nz/>

^v <http://latllab.canterbury.ac.nz/>

^{vi} <http://latllab.canterbury.ac.nz/bilingualism/can-grandmother-support-grandchilds-bilingualism/>

^{vii} <http://latllab.canterbury.ac.nz/motivating-reluctant-children-to-speak-a-home-language/> or http://ikt.edu.uu.se/jhlm/?page_id=88

References

- Australian Government (2018). *Early Learning Languages Australia*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.au/early-learning-languages-australia>
- Baker, C. & Wright, W. E. (2017). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism* (6. ed.). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Castles, S. (2000). *Ethnicity and globalization: From migrant worker to transnational citizen*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Chen, M. (2015). *Superdiversity stocktake: Implications for business, government & New Zealand*. Wellington: Superdiversity Stocktake.
- Curdt-Christiansen, X. L. (2016). Conflicting language ideologies and contradictory language practices in Singaporean multilingual families, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 37(7), 694-709. doi:10.1080/01434632.2015.1127926
- Cunningham, U. (2011). *Growing up with two languages* (3rd ed.). London; New York: Routledge.
- Cunningham, U. & Davis, N.E. (2015). Eke pānui, ake tamaiti: Braiding health and education to ensure early literacy success and healthy well-being for vulnerable children: Emergent bilinguals in a digital world. In G. Gillon & A. Macfarlane (Eds.) *A better start, national science challenge – e tipu e rea: eke pānui, ake tamaiti: Braiding health and education to ensure early literacy success and healthy well-being for vulnerable children*. Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).
- Cunningham, U., & King, J. (2018). Language, ethnicity, and belonging for the children of migrants in New Zealand. *SAGE Open*, 8(2), 2158244018782571.
- de Bres, J. (2015). The hierarchy of minority languages in New Zealand. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 36(7):677-693.
- De Houwer, A. (2009). *Bilingual first language acquisition*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Fishman, J. A. (2013). Language maintenance, language shift, and reversing language shift. In T. K. Bhatia & W. C. Ritchie (Eds.), *The handbook of bilingualism and multilingualism* (2nd ed.) (pp. 466–494). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Gagarina, N., Posse, D., Düsterhöft, S., Topaj, N., & Acikgöz, D. (2014). Sprachförderung bei Mehrsprachigkeit: Erste Ergebnisse der BIVEM-Studie zur Wirksamkeit von Sprachförderung bei jüngeren mehrsprachigen Kindern: Eine Studie des Berliner Interdisziplinären Verbundes für Mehrsprachigkeit (BIVEM). *Spektrum Patholinguistik*/ 7, 139-148.
- García, O. & Kleifgen, J.-A. (2010). *Educating emergent bilinguals: Policies, programs, and practices for English language learners*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Ghosh, G. (2015). Introduction. In G. Ghosh & J. Leckie (Eds.), *Asians and the new multiculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand* (pp. 7-36). Dunedin, New Zealand: Otago University Press.
- Hajek, J. (2017, April). Paper presented at the Language Practices and Language Policies in Multilingual Contexts Workshop, University of Melbourne, Australia.
- Harris, L. (2016). *An ethnographic case study of the linguistic landscape of an award-winning Māori immersion early childhood education centre* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10092/13142>

- Harvey, S. (2013). Revisiting the idea of a national languages policy for New Zealand: How relevant are the issues today? *The TESOLANZ Journal*, 21, 1-13.
- Holmes, J. (1997). Keeping tabs on language shift in New Zealand: Some methodological considerations. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 18(1): 17-39.
- King, J., & Cunningham, U. (2016). Intergenerational transmission of minority languages in New Zealand: Methodological issues. In S. Grucza, M. Olpińska-Szkielko, & P. Romanowski (Eds.) *Advances in understanding multilingualism: A global perspective* (pp. 61-77). Frankfurt, Germany: Peter Lang Verlag.
- May, S. (2005). Deconstructing the instrumental/identity divide in language policy debates. In S. May, M. Franken & R. Barnard (Eds.). LED 2003: 1st International Conference on Language, Education and Diversity, Refereed Conference Proceedings and Keynotes, The University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand, 26-29 November 2003 [CD-ROM]. Hamilton, New Zealand: Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research, The University of Waikato. Retrieved from <https://waikato.researchgateway.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10289/3234/May,%20S.pdf>
- May, S. (2014). Disciplinary divides, knowledge construction, and the multilingual turn. In S. May (Ed.), *The multilingual turn: Implications for SLA, TESOL and bilingual education* (pp. 7-31). New York: Routledge.
- McCaffery, J. & J. T. McFall-McCaffery. (2010). O tatou ō aga'i i i fea?/’Oku tau ō ki fea?/Where are we heading? Pacific languages in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 6(2), 86-121.
- Nakhid, C. & Devere, H. (2015). Negotiating multiculturalism and the Treaty of Waitangi. In G. Ghosh & J. Leckie (Eds.) *Asians and the new multiculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand*, (pp. 61-89). Dunedin, New Zealand: Otago University Press.
- New Zealand Government. (1989). *1989 Education Act*. Retrieved from <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0080/latest/DLM183668.html>
- Office of Ethnic Affairs. (2013). *Language and integration in New Zealand*. Retrieved from <http://ethniccommunities.govt.nz/sites/default/files/files/LanguageandIntegrationinNZ.pdf>
- Roberts, M. (2005). Immigrants' attitudes to language maintenance in New Zealand. In A. Bell, R. Harlow, & D. Starks (Eds.), *Languages of New Zealand* (pp. 248-270). Wellington: Victoria University Press.
- Royal Society of New Zealand, (2013). *Languages in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Retrieved from: <http://royalsociety.org.nz/media/Languages-in-Aotearoa-New-Zealand.pdf>
- Starks, D. (2005). Other languages of New Zealand: Introduction. In A. Bell, R. Harlow, & D. Starks (Eds.), *Languages of New Zealand* (pp. 241-247). Wellington: Victoria University Press.
- Starks, D., Harlow, R., & Bell, A. (2005). Who speaks what language in New Zealand? In A. Bell, R. Harlow, & D. Starks (Eds.) *Languages of New Zealand*, (pp. 13-29). Wellington: Victoria University Press.
- Waite, J. (1992). *Aotearoa: Speaking for ourselves*. Wellington: Learning Media, Ministry of Education.
- Willoughby, L. (2014). Meeting the challenges of heritage language education: Lessons from one school community. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 15(3), 265-281. doi:10.1080/14664208.2014.915457

Corresponding author:
Una Cunningham
Department of Language Education
Stockholm University
106 91 Stockholm
Sweden
Una.cunningham@isd.su.se