Early years bilingual language teachers for a diverse Aotearoa New Zealand

Mere Skerrett

> Language diversity is essential to the human heritage. (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2003, p. 1)

Introduction

This chapter adds to research in relation to Indigenous perspectives of responding to and empowering language awareness within initial teacher education and the early years in Aotearoa New Zealand (Bishop, 2003; Skerrett, 2017). My concern is that early years environments are nestled in the colonial fold where scope for inclusionary practice encompassing social justice (Campbell & Gordon-Burns, 2017), equity and anti-racist education (Skerrett & Ritchie, 2019) become enfolded and hidden in the seams of colonisation.

We are currently in a context of radical socioeconomic and educational change, but in what direction? The recent move to a new Labour Government, after nearly a decade of sitting in the back benches, generated a 'world-leading' shift away from a previous neoliberal focus on 'standards' for standardising. Since the 1847 Education Ordinance, when English became compulsorily mandated into the curriculum, this one-size-fits-all approach has been about fitting the youngest citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand into an exclusively English-language system. Despite the shift away from one-size-fits-all, decades of 'right wing' neoliberal focus continue to invisibilise the complexities of our current system.

This chapter unpacks some of these complexities and how they may lead to increasing socioeconomic and education inequities and injustices in our society. It examines the hegemonic system through the lenses of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Māori rights (Webb, Sanders, & Scott, 2010), dominant discourses bound up in the 'doctrine of discovery' (Miller, 2008), United Nations (UN) international conventions, curriculum reform and strategic directions. The inclusionary/exclusionary relationship to and implications for the early years of existing policies and pedagogical practices are troubled, particularly where the absence of meaningful engagement with te reo Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand early years settings signals a lack of quality.

Changing the negative assimilatory system for Indigneous tamariki by underpinning it with positive ‘rangatiratanga’ strands which support and respect the diverse Indigenous knowledge/s, language/s and values of tamariki and their whānau is imperative if inclusion is to be realised. Only then will the culture of education be positively powerful, enabling our young tamariki to feel included, safe and secure in the knowledge that they walk in their ancestral lands and are able to speak their heritage language/s. The chapter therefore argues for the criticality of inclusion of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga going beyond tokenistic gestures and symbolic splashes. An alternative discourse from early childhood ‘teachers’ being just normative ‘teachers’ to being formative ‘bilingual language teachers’ for meaningful inclusion of Māori epistemologies and pedagogies is offered. Without this critical pedagogy of transformation in education in Aotearoa New Zealand the structural inequities and injustices will not only remain but are further enfolded.

Māori rights guaranteed in law

A central thread woven through this chapter is a critique of Aotearoa New Zealand becoming a colony of England and colonisation setting up unequal power relations. It is important to understand colonial politics as the blueprint for our society. England is a common law country which means it derives its laws from customs and precedential or case law in contrast with statute law. The laws of England applied here as at January 1840 (Webb, Sanders & Scott, 2010). The signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, guaranteeing Māori sovereignty and rights, commenced in February 1840. That paved the way for settlement and the establishment of an adversarial legal system. In this type of legal system, two advocates, generally through their lawyers, represent their parties' case or position before a (supposedly) impartial person or group of people, usually a jury or judge, who then determine the truth and pass judgment accordingly. But once settler dominance was accomplished different ‘truths’ buttressed the judgments. However, at international law a settled country must recognise the customary rights of the Indigenous people. Where Māori sovereign rights were asserted, it was tested in the newly established Courts in 1847—and that first case was won under customary rights law (Webb, Sanders & Scott, 2010). Māori customary rights were protected. Yet pressure for land by British settlers took its toll on Māori and Pākehā populations and relationships as the apparatus of the ‘Nation-State’ became heavily weighted on the side of the Crown and British settlers (Salmond, 2017). The adversarial system became one of Crown versus Māori rather than sovereign to sovereign nation partnership negotiations as was the intent of Te Tiriti.

Māori rights systematically undermined in law

Just thirty years after the 1847 case there was a complete turnaround in the Courts. In 1877 Judge Prendergast established the Treaty as a nullity and Māori sovereign rights a nonsense with a ruling along the lines of 'how can savages be sovereign?' (Wi Parata *v.* Bishop of Wellington (1877) 3 NZ Jur (NS) SC 78). Ngāti Toa leader Wi Parata had taken that case against the Bishop of Wellington for misuse of lands gifted for a specific purpose, the establishment of an educational setting for Ngāti Toa. Judge Prendergast's ruling was there had been no gift of land because in his view the Crown owned all the land by virtue of discovery and occupation. Miller (2008) refers to this as the 'Doctrine of Discovery'. In a very real sense the western construct of 'terra nullius' (where land is legally deemed to be unoccupied, vacant or uninhabited) was applied.

Māori as the Indigenous people of this land are known as 'tangata whenua', people of the land. Land from a traditional Māori perspective is viewed not as a commodity to be bought and sold in the market place, but as our ancestral core guided by the cosmogony including Papatūānuku, Ranginui, Tangaroa and Tāne Māhuta. Lands viewed in this way are important for Indigenous peoples who speak languages that come from those lands. When their lands are colonised, based on a doctrine of 'terra nullius' (vacant lands), the same doctrine generally transfers into education settings for the children of those Indigenous peoples, as is the case here in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is almost as if the new colonial system sets up an 'epistemo-nullius' scenario.

De Sousa Santos (2007) calls such invisibilising 'abyssal thinking' operating through two radical lines that divide social reality where 'this side of the line' is incorporated into social life (society) and 'the other side of the line' is a vanishing reality, produced as non-existent, or a 'nullity' as Judge Prendergast put it. One side incorporated into municipal law, the other an illegality or falsehood. To put it simply, an adversarial system of inclusion and exclusion is created. They are two sides of the same coin, coexisting in tension between the universality of knowledge on one side (developmental psychology helps to shape the universality of knowledge) and the marginalisation (or invisibilising of knowledge) on the other (Indigenous knowledges and languages the world over). De Sousa Santos argues that the radical lines, or abyssal lines, continue to construct knowledge and laws. They are constitutive of "…Western-based political and cultural relations and interactions in the modern world-system [and importantly] …the struggle for global social justice must, therefore, be a struggle for global

cognitive justice as well" (p. 45). These tensions must be understood to overcome them. Breaching those radical lines requires a new kind of radical thinking. But the way it plays out in Māori children's lives is a feeling of not belonging, of being undervalued. This notion of Māori tamariki and young people feeling invisibilised, excluded or alienated has been identified recently by the Children's Commissioner, Judge Becroft (see Office of the Children's Commissioner and the New Zealand School Trustees Association, 2018).

Inclusion for Māori Wellbeing

In a recent report written in collaboration between the Office of the Children's Commissioner and Oranga Tamariki (2019), supported by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, four key insights were highlighted about what a good life means. The foci are change, whānau wellbeing, being included, accepted, valued and listened to. *Change* is needed if all tamariki and young people are to have a good life. Family and *whānau* are crucial; in order for tamariki to be well, their families must be well. Providing the basics is important, but not enough; children and young people want more than just a minimum standard of living—feeling *acceptance*, being *valued* and *respected* are just as important. And finally, *listening* to children and young people is imperative—they have valuable insights and ought to be listened to.

These insights are particularly poignant for tamariki and rangatahi Māori who spoke about wanting others to embrace Māori culture and wanting to hear te reo Māori used by everyone. They spoke "…about wanting opportunities specifically for people of their own culture. Some recognised their lack of knowledge about their culture; they wanted to be able to learn more and share that with others" (p. 27). Some wanted "…more te reo Māori classes in school. One young person suggested that education should include going to the marae and learning from their elders about how to be a leader" (p. 43). This inclusion needs to start in the early years.

The report highlights just how exclusive the whitestream system is through the lens of children's voices. It follows on from a 2018 report which highlights the racism of the system. That report was a three-way collaboration between tamariki and young people (including children from the early years sector), the Office of the Children's Commissioner, and the New Zealand School Trustees Association (2018). Some of the key findings of that report included children talking about wanting to be seen for who they are, and to be understood within the context of their home life and experiences; the racism that many tamariki and young people face and how they are treated unequally because of their culture; the centrality of relationships

with teachers (which they perceive can either enable them to achieve or prevent them from achieving); and, the importance of teaching children in ways that facilitate their learning (specifically according to their strengths and unique abilities). Key findings also included children's wellbeing being paramount (importance of feeling happy and comfortable before they can learn and the impact that their learning environment has on their wellbeing; and finally, listening to tamariki (children's participation in decision making about their own lives is important). It is clear from these reports that the current system has to change to meet the imperatives of the pursuit of inclusion, social justice and equity.

The Domination Code – Discovery, Displacement, Replacement

Recently I wrote about the planting of Cook's flag in Aotearoa New Zealand (Pence & Skerrett, 2019), flagging his murderous intentions towards Indigenous peoples throughout the Pacific (Salmond, 2003). Flag-planting ceremonies were by no means insignificant in the eyes of the British explorers (or other Christian-European travellers). The action symbolised claiming sovereign, property and commercial rights over Indigenous peoples—the 'Doctrine of Discovery' (Miller, 2008) as previously mentioned. The doctrine becomes socio-political through its embodiment into social life via these five key elements: first the gaining of property rights over lands through occupation and possession within a certain time of planting the flag (or sword, or hanging a plate in a tree or baptising a river mouth); a pre-emption right over lands (claiming title whilst simultaneously avoiding war with other Christian European nations with competing interests—the French in our case); subjugating Indigenous peoples (seizing Māori sovereign human rights); imposing the Christian religion (part of a 'civilising' hegemonic mission, the advance guard of which was the Missionary schools); and instituting a new system of justice (the Westminster rule of law) or adversarial common law system (Miller, Ruru, Behrendt & Lindberg, 2010). The colonial tree was planted, the roots of which grounded a socially unjust racist system, and an inequitable linguicist (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2015) education system which established divergent pathways for Māori children.

Children of colonialism

Children of colonialism, based in a Christian ethic, are meant to be seen and not heard. That notion, along with terra nullius, has also left its residue. That Māori tamariki have been given the idea that they are being invisibilised in education, that their language is very rarely heard, that their culture is not reflected in the curriculum, that they are not valued and that they are

simply not being listened to, speaks to the structural anomalies that exist in an assimilatory model. But those notions do not fit with the positive identity-shaping praxis that is foundational in education settings inclusive of the Māori language. In the early days of missionary schooling the medium of teaching and learning was te reo Māori and the issue of 'control' of children not an issue as they (the Missionaries) followed the children into the bush. Kendall, the Missionary who set up the first Missionary school in the north, stated:

> My wild little pupils were all noise and play during the first four months. We could scarcely hear them read for their incessant shouting, singing and dancing. The first month they attempted to repeat their lessons in the school-house very well, but we soon had to follow them to a short distance in the bushes. I had no command over them… (as cited in Salmond, 2017, p. 393)

In Māori society, tamariki were ceremoniously welcomed into 'te ao mārama' (the world of light) as the seeds of the gods, and so respected. One of the very first missionaries, the Reverend Samuel Marsden from the Church Missionary Society, commented on the role of children in the early 1800s. He said:

> The Chiefs are in general very sensible men, and wish for information upon all subjects. They are accustomed to public discussions from their infancy. The Chiefs take their Children from their Mothers breast, to all their public Assemblies. They hear all that is said upon Politics, Religion, War &c by the oldest men. Children will frequently ask questions in public Conversation, and are answered by the Chiefs. I have often been surprised, to see the Sons of the Chiefs at the age of 4 or 5 years sitting amongst the Chiefs, and paying such close attention to what was said… There can be no finer children than [those of] the New Zealanders in any part of the world. Their parents are very indulgent, and they appear always happy and playful, and very active. (as cited in Salmond, 2017, p. 114)

Salmond (2017) argues that Marsden "failed to connect their [Māori children's] happiness, however, with the absence of contemporary British child-rearing practices which included harsh physical punishment" (p. 114). The following search for answers takes us to the international political arena in terms of children's rights in various UN conventions and

declarations as they signal the need for intervention in the exclusionary practices Indigenous peoples experience in education.

United Nations International Conventions and Declarations

When establishing curriculum imperatives, it is argued here that it is important to acknowledge international conventions and statutes, in jurisprudence, in policy and in practice. After all, our respective governments have signed up to them, yet the extent to which they are incorporated into municipal law is questionable. Aotearoa New Zealand is a UN member nation, yet we are far from adhering to UN conventions. The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRoC) (United Nations, 1989) has been instrumental in bringing attention to the importance of addressing the inequities experienced by Indigenous children who live in their ancestral homelands that are colonised. Articles 2, 29 and 30 of the UNCRoC call for respect for an Indigenous child's cultural identity, languages and values, including in the curriculum and practices of education settings. Article 30 deals specifically with Indigenous children stating:

> In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (United Nations, 2007) further reinforces these messages. Article 13 states:

> Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

Article 14 outlines the right of Indigenous people to establish and control their own education systems appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. In order to pursue such a pathway or establish our own education systems many of us stepped outside of

'the system' which meant no access to resource or funding. It is no easy feat for parents and grandparents (the 'teachers' who built up the network of Kōhanga Reo) to set up new early years 'language nests' or 'kura' without any fiscal support. Many of us who chose those alternative pathways in the 1980s and 1990s have continued to lobby for systemic change both at the policy and curriculum levels to bring about a socio-politically just system and to enable options to include Māori language in education for our tamariki mokopuna (see Pence & Skerrett, 2019). The apparatus of the state however has been woefully slow to adjust to the needs and aspirations of Māori communities (Waitangi Tribunal, 2012) and the most recent Māori Education Strategy asserts that it is the education system that needs to step up to ensure Māori students enjoy and achieve educational success, as Māori (Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 5).

National Māori Education Strategies: Ka Hikitia

The most recent iteration of the education strategy reflecting Te Tiriti o Waitangi relationships is *Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013-2017* (Ministry of Education, 2013a). This was a five-year strategy covering the whole education sector. There it asserted the need for system change and put the onus on the education system needing to step up to ensure Māori students enjoy and achieve educational success, as Māori (p. 5). That change was to be immediate, rapid and sustained. It acknowledged the need for the system to reflect children's "identity, language and culture" (p. 6) stating "Māori language in education is critical for the Crown to meet its Treaty obligations to strengthen and protect the Māori language" (p. 28) and that "Effective Māori language educators have a high level of Māori language proficiency and are experts in second language acquisition" (p. 29).

Tau Mai Te Reo

Tau Mai Te Reo: The Māori Language in Education Strategy 2013-2017 Summary (Ministry of Education, 2013b) gives expression to how a Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership is applied in education with regard to identity, language and culture. It states the Ministry of Education and its agencies, have obligations, as Crown agencies, to:

> "…actively protect Māori language as a taonga guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi" (p. 1); and that "Māori language in education is a defining feature of Aotearoa New Zealand's education. The education system needs to create Māori

language opportunities for all learners. For Māori language to flourish the language needs to be supported both within the education system and in communities." (p. 3)

Clearly, it has been long established that tamariki and young people achieve and thrive in education when their identities, languages and cultures are valued and included in teaching and learning in ways that support them. Yet there is a silence around this in *He taonga te tamaiti: Every child a taonga; Strategic plan for early learning 2019-29* (Ministry of Education, 2019). Eighty-three percent of Māori children are in monolingual English early childhood care and education centres; the subtle positioning of te reo Māori language learning as a 'Māori' responsibility in Kōhanga Reo is both evident in the plan and questionable: "Early learning settings such as kōhanga reo are integral to Māori medium education journeys that support te reo Māori development and positive learning outcomes for children and their whānau" (p. 18) Furthermore, there is no reference in the plan to the UN imperatives that our country has signed up to. The following analysis illustrates how curriculum review misses the mark in terms of providing the much needed ideological and pedagogical clarification for inclusionary practices.

Curriculum reform: A curriculum for all children

In a recent article I wrote of some of the 'big' ideas around the curriculum refresh that is designed as a *rich bicultural* curriculum for every child, including Māori views of the child, notions of protection and promotion of children's health and wellbeing, equitable access to learning opportunities, recognition of language, culture and identity, inclusivity, responsivity and diversity, being framed in a rights-based discourse (see Skerrett, 2018). *Te Whāriki* notes that "These rights align closely the concept of mana" (p. 12). One of the concerns, it seems to me, is that there is an absence of articulation of the 'why' they are framed as rights and 'how' these learning opportunities will make a difference. Without the ideological clarification for meaningful change they run the risk of becoming clichéd platitudes. Another concern is the co-option of the concept 'mana' in a neo-colonial manner. Such political messaging employs the appropriate coded language that appears to mean one thing implying change, but with no real strategic direction, research and development policies or even professional learning and development opportunities to commit to such change. Maybe that is because the cart was put before the horse; the curriculum was refreshed in the absence of any strategic plan. Certainly, the reform was progressed in the absence of any Māori Strategic direction or plan. Under the

heading ‘Identity, Language and Culture’ *Te Whāriki* states “For Māori this means kaiako need understanding of a world view that emphasises the child’s whakapapa connection to Māori creation, across Te Kore, te pō, te ao mārama, atua Māori and tīpuna” (p. 12). This statement recognises the enduring nature of ancestral relationships with Māori cosmologies and how they shape identity, language and culture. It speaks to the need for all Kaiako to have knowledge of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge/s) which, by implication, signals the need to be knowledgeable of te reo Māori and Māori cultural mores. In short, in order to teach meaningfully in an identity-shaping-praxis, all teachers must be ‘bilingual language’ teachers, able to speak te reo Māori as well as English. Further, it states “All children should be able to access te reo Māori in their ECE setting, as kaiako weave te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into the everyday curriculum (p. 12). Then it separates out a curriculum for a Māori medium pathway in Kōhanga Reo stating:

> Kōhanga reo kaiako and whānau will find the refreshed document exemplifies the authenticity of the kaupapa, te reo Māori me ōna tikanga, and provides guidance for kaiako to support implementation that strengthens Māori-medium pathways for learning. (p. 69)

This is a problematic positioning of a Māori language sector (Kōhanga Reo) as being somehow separate (but equal to?) without the much-needed research and development, funding and policies to make a difference across the whole of the sector.

> Those in ECE services [Kōhanga Reo] will find a greater emphasis on language, culture and identity and increased guidance on what it means to weave a bicultural curriculum. (p. 69)

I am not sure that claim is defensible. The Kōhanga Reo sector has become increasingly impoverished over the last 30 years through inequitable funding formulas and the impact of the regulatory environment but one thing for sure, the growth in the numbers of children speakers of te reo Māori can be credited to the Māori-medium (Te Kōhanga Reo) part of the sector alone.

Future Directions of the Draft Strategic Plan (2019)

He taonga te tamaiti: Every child a taonga; Strategic plan for early learning 2019-29 (Ministry of Education, 2019) aims to develop and strengthen the early learning sector, to meet the needs of all tamariki and their families and whānau. Key proposals for change include:

- moving towards a 100% qualified teacher workforce in early childhood education centres
- improving the adult/child ratios for babies and toddlers
- increasing the consistency and levels of teacher salaries and conditions across the sector, and
- a more planned approach to establishing new services, greater support and increased monitoring.

Those key proposals for change have absolutely nothing to do with the transformations signalled in the Teaching Council (2019) programme approval documents or recent report by Judge Becroft of the Office of the Children's Commissioner and Oranga Tamariki (2019). That is not to downplay their importance, but this education system is meant to be about inclusion for all tamariki. One of Judge Becroft's key insights is about the change needed if all children and young people are to have a good life and wellbeing, but the above proposals for change have nothing to do with the ways in which we need to work to eliminate the racism and linguicism of the system and work towards all children having a good life and wellbeing. Even the five goals: Improving quality by improving *regulated standards*; *child empowerment* through resources; investment in our *workforce*; *monitoring* provision and *innovation* for improvement will do very little, if anything, to address the rights of Indigenous children.

Implications for Initial Teacher Education

Kaupapa Māori theory is a theory of change. It is situated within the land, culture, history, practices and language that comes out of this land. Our Tiriti o Waitangi partnership is outlined in the current standards for the teaching profession:

> Understand and recognise the unique status of tangata whenua in Aotearoa New Zealand. Understand and acknowledge the histories, heritages, languages and cultures of partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Practise and develop the use of te reo and tikanga Māori. (Education Council, 2017, p. 18)

The implications for initial teacher education and professional development are critical, especially in our rapidly changing society.

Increasing Diversity and the Policy Gaps in Aotearoa New Zealand

The impact of globalisation and neoliberalism in Aotearoa New Zealand has led to increasing diversity, which seems to be happening at a much higher rate here than many other nations. Along with increasing diversity comes increasing *linguistic* diversity. According to the Royal Society of New Zealand (2013) there is little unification of languages policies, making the practice in Aotearoa New Zealand challenging. At the 2018 *Kindergarten Education and Care Whānau Manaaki* Annual Conference Minister of Education Chris Hipkins also referred to the challenges in education and the need for a language/s strategy being a government priority stating:

> Whilst English and Māori are still going to be prominent languages within our education system there is an appetite and a public expectation that in fact more languages will be available throughout the education system. That's a huge challenge for us because we have got to be able to build the capability and the capacity to be able to deliver that so the government will develop a languages strategy in the education system – it is not going to happen this year because as I mentioned earlier we cannot deliver everything all at once but a languages strategy is a priority for us so you will probably see us doing more work around that next year and the year after, once we have got this first set of conversations that we have had and the priorities bolted down (Minister Hipkins, 2018).

Still no policy, one year later. This statement is full of assumption and, in my view, duplicitous. Seemingly te reo Māori is put on a par with English when it is not even part of the core curriculum. Our monolingual mainstream education system positions te reo Māori in a 'foreign languages' category. If there is to be a useful demarcation line, then bilingual education being the first step into multilingual teaching and learning, may be said to start when more than one language is used to teach content in a language-in-culture education context rather than just being taught as a subject by itself (May, 2011). The Royal Society report also makes a clear argument for state support of language learning, language use and the need for language-based *public policy*. The paradoxical nature of the Minister's statement that I alluded to above is also pointed out by the Royal Society report that the state already does involve itself in the public

policy of languages (p. 4) through the mandating of an English-only curriculum across the compulsory sector. The Report points out:

> Whilst the New Zealand Curriculum requires access to language learning for all students, the non-mandatory nature of entitlement means that significant numbers of students are still able to complete their compulsory education without encountering language study, and for many who do, time spent on language study is limited. (p. 6)

This is also challenging for the early years sector when there is such a lack of cohesion. Education Review Office (ERO) findings show that Māori language was not used meaningfully, connections with whānau Māori, hapū or wider iwi Māori were limited, and where Māori children and whānau were generally subsumed into the service's 'generic' language, culture and identity (ERO, 2012). However, one ray of light, the Teaching Council (2019) has 'upped the ante' for initial teacher education.

Teaching Council programme approvals

Recent Teaching Council (2019) programme approval and review requirements are set to make a difference in terms of providing quality bilingual language teachers. At 6.2 *Competency in English language, te reo Māori, literacy and numeracy (English medium programmes)*, under the heading *Te Reo Māori competency and progression* the requirements state:

> Candidates selected for entry into an English medium programme must be assessed on their te reo Māori competency as close as reasonably practicable after entry. English medium programmes must progressively monitor and support competency in te reo Māori during the programme, using sound practices in second language acquisition. (p. 44)

And further, under the heading *Te reo Māori competency* (for English medium programmes):

> A formative assessment of a student teacher's competency in te reo Māori soon after entry to an English medium programme will enable providers to establish a starting point for te reo Māori competency so that they can measure growth over a student teacher's time in the programme. This will

> help providers know that their programme is making a difference. Such an assessment will also ensure all student teachers are afforded the opportunity to develop their te reo Māori skills during the programme. This is important given that to graduate from an ITE programme, a student teacher must demonstrate that they are able to practise and develop the use of te reo and tikanga Māori. (p. 45)

The review document then goes on to give some guidance in terms of levels of language. This seems to be a major breakthrough, but some people/teachers/teacher educators *heed* the call for transformation, others *cede* it. It is argued here that the criticality of inclusion of te reo Māori (and cultural mores) as part of the repertoire of all early years teachers, and the shift in discourse from early childhood teachers being 'teachers' to early years teachers being 'bilingual language teachers', is central to any idea of the early years providing inclusive environments and quality teaching practices. Māori sovereign rights under Te Tiriti o Waitangi will then finally be upheld.

Concluding Remarks

Colonial education for Māori has always been a double-edged sword—how do we maintain our sovereignty without our sovereign language? That is the critical question. The forces that shaped the last 200 years of 'schooling' and 'education' in this country may well continue to shape our destinies into the future, in the absence of new, radical, social and educational policy directions in Aotearoa New Zealand. Indeed, a key theme of this chapter has been the positioning of Western-based political and cultural relations and Indigenous ones, arguing the struggle for justice is equally a struggle for cognitive justice. Policy development (and the practice) is glacially slow, inhibiting the much-needed structural change to mediate the transgressions of ingrained linguicism and racism. This chapter is a call for anti-colonial approaches for change, real change, structural change, policy change, and pedagogical change which is not only inclusive of Māori children and young people, their identities, languages and cultures, but which transforms lives. How we can co-construct our tomorrows, our shared visions, hopes and dreams through education is the stuff of societal transformation. Just like our ancestor Māui who was able to create land, transformed ways of being, slowed down the sun, and even bravely challenged the cycles of life and death, we too must continue to be brave, risky and revolutionary to collaboratively shape and reshape thinking, futures and the 'good' life for all members of our societies.

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