

LE TOFI NE'I VALE TUULIMA

**PERCEPTIONS OF SAMOAN STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND
PARENTS ON THE PLACE OF THE SAMOAN LANGUAGE IN
NEW ZEALAND TODAY**

By

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“Tautuanā le tofi mai le Atua ne’i vale tuulima”

Mama and Papa: who always taught me to treasure my gifts from God.

ABSTRACT

While globally languages are evolving and changing, language shift has been most prevalent in migrant communities, particularly those with larger numbers living outside of the homelands, such as the Samoan community in New Zealand. This research explored the perceptions of a group of Wellington-based Samoan students, their Samoan teachers, and their parents about the place of the Samoan language in New Zealand today. This study of Samoan language maintenance was spurred by the census data which showed language loss was occurring, and that this seemed to be more prevalent amongst the New Zealand-born Samoan population. The aims of this study were to capture the views of these three groups so as to add meaning to the quantitative data, and provide information for future policy making and actions to address this situation – both for Government agencies, and the Samoan community itself. This case study gave priority to the youth voice as the future leaders and carriers of the *gagana Samoa* (Samoan language) and *aganuu* (culture).

Using the *talanoa* methodology and through individual interviews, valuable insights were gained about the valuing of the Samoan language in New Zealand today, factors influencing the learning and teaching of Samoan, and who should be responsible for this. The findings were that all groups valued the Samoan language very highly as inextricably linked to the Samoan culture, identity and sense of belonging, and for communicating and showing respect – to elders especially, but also to all Samoan people. Of particular note, was the distinction between the intrinsic valuing of the language which was high, and its usefulness, for example in employment, which was not so highly rated. These differences may be a ‘tipping’ point for language maintenance. Other findings were that responsibility for the Samoan language was changing as the functional domains for language use and maintenance shifted from the home and the church, to the school. Parents’ long work hours were a factor here. Finally, there was strong agreement that maintaining the Samoan language in New Zealand would require commitment and collaboration between government agencies, Samoan parents and community, teachers, and that youth must be included in these discussions. All three groups saw our *talanoa* as setting the basis for more serious community wide discussions.

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Presented as a collection of fragrant flowers used to make the 'ula which is this thesis, I conclude with a presentation of this 'ula to the Samoan community in New Zealand with a plea that conversations take place locally, regionally and especially in the homes to inform, discuss, and promote the Samoan language as valuable in the new home, New Zealand. *Tautuanā le tofi ne'i vale tuulima.*

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Words

<i>aganuu</i>	culture, conduct according to the customs of one's own country
<i>Ā'oga 'Āmata</i>	Samoa language early childhood centres
<i>Ā'oga aso Sā</i>	Sunday School (in the church)
<i>'autalavou</i>	Samoa youth group (in the church), youth
<i>'afa</i>	sennit
<i>'āiga</i>	a family, a relative
<i>'ava</i>	kava, kava ceremony
<i>'ele'ele</i>	earth, dirt. Blood, to chiefs
<i>faaaloalo</i>	respect, pay respect to
<i>faasamoa</i>	the Samoa way, in the manner of Samoans, according to Samoa customs and traditions
<i>faasinomaga</i>	to point, reference point, identity
<i>fāgogo</i>	traditional Samoa stories, usually legendary tales, fairytale
<i>faiā</i>	relation by kinship (or affinity)
<i>fale</i>	house, building
<i>fanua</i>	land
<i>folafola</i>	to spread out, unfold, declare
<i>folafola 'ava</i>	the part in a kava ceremony when the guest <i>tulāfale</i> receives the collection of kava sticks, acknowledges them in oratorical form and then proceeds to distribute them
<i>folafola sua</i>	is usually done by a <i>taule'ale'a</i> and takes place outside. In a loud voice, he acknowledges the presentation of gifts which have been received. This is done to show gratitude, and to let it be known to the people what was received.
<i>fiafia</i>	joy, delight, dancing
<i>fono</i>	meeting
<i>gagana</i>	language
<i>ka'i (ta'i)</i>	to lead
<i>ka'iga sua (ta'iga sua)</i>	the traditional way of presenting gifts
<i>kaukalaga (tautalaga)</i>	speech, speech of a <i>tulāfale</i>
<i>kaupapa Māori</i>	Māori ideology (Māori)
<i>kilikiti</i>	Samoa cricket
<i>Kohanga Reo</i>	Māori language nests, Māori pre-schools (Māori)
<i>Kura Kaupapa Māori</i>	Māori language medium Primary Schools
<i>lāuga</i>	speech, sermon
<i>laulau siva</i>	"to being in the dancing" – short songs which are sung at the beginning of singing and dancing
<i>lotu</i>	church service, prayer
<i>mafutaga</i>	gathering, association, dwelling together
<i>mafutaga Tinā</i>	Women's fellowship group (in the church)

<i>mālie</i>	a state when reached, the psyche and spirit of both a performer and storyteller, energise and uplift to a positive state of connectedness and enlightenment (Tongan)
<i>mamalu</i>	sacred, to protect, influence
<i>marae</i>	courtyard - the open area in front of the meeting house, where formal greetings and discussions take place. Often also used to include the complex of buildings around the <i>marae</i> (Māori)
<i>matai</i>	chief
<i>ma'umaga</i>	plantation
<i>meaalofa</i>	gift, token of appreciation
<i>mo'oni</i>	pure, real, authentic (Tongan)
<i>noa</i>	common, old, of no value, without thought (Tongan)
<i>nuu</i>	village
<i>pālagi</i>	foreigner, European
<i>pakeha</i>	European (Māori)
<i>palu</i>	to mix, stir together with hands
<i>poutū toa</i>	supporting posts of a <i>fale</i>
<i>sole</i>	slang for 'boy'
<i>talanoa</i>	to talk, chat, converse with one another.
<i>tama'ita'i</i>	a lady, young woman
<i>tangata whenua</i>	people of the land, Māori (Māori)
<i>taualuga</i>	the covering of a ridge of a house, final dance
<i>taui</i>	reward, payment
<i>taule'ale'a</i>	untitled male
<i>tautua</i>	to serve, service
<i>tofī</i>	an inheritance, responsibility, duty
<i>tulāfale</i>	talking chief, orator
<i>upu</i>	word(s)
<i>vā fealoa'i</i>	relationship, relations or connections between persons or things
<i>verstehen</i>	understanding (German)
<i>whakapapa</i>	genealogy (Māori)
<i>Whare Wānanga</i>	Māori traditional institutes of learning (Māori)
<i>yaqona</i>	kava (Fijian)

Phrases

A leai se gagana, ua leai se aganuu. A leai se aganuu, ona pō lea o le nuu

When you lose your language, you lose your culture. When there is no longer a living culture, darkness descends on the village

‘Aua le gagu

Don’t speak English

E faavae i le Atua Samoa

Samoa is founded on God

E lē sili le ta’i i lo le tapua’i

To lead is not as important as to support

E muamua lava ona sii le viiga ma le faafetai i le Atua

First and foremost,[I] give glory and thanks to God

E pala le maa ae lē pala le tala

Stones rot, but words last forever

Faafetai tele lava

Thank you very much

O le tama a le manu e fafaga i fuga o lā’au, a o le tama a le tagata e fafaga i upu ma tala.

The offspring of the bird is fed with the fruits of the trees, but the fruits of the womb are nourished by words and stories.

O Samoa ua ta’oto, a o se i’a mai moana, auā o le i’a ua uma ona ‘āisa

Samoa is like an ocean fish divided into sections

Tautuanā ne’i vale tuulima le tofi

Behold your inheritance, lest it be lost

This glossary contains all non-English words and phrases used in the thesis based Pratt’s *Grammar and Dictionary* (1984), Milner’s *Samoan Dictionary* (1966), and my own knowledge of the formal and colloquial Samoan. Phrases which are direct quotes from the data collection are left in their original form, and the alterative /t/ or /k/ style equivalent has been given where applicable. The translations of the Māori words are based on the Te Aka Māori – English, English – Māori Dictionary and index, and Tongan words were sourced from the original documents where possible, or from native speakers.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AOG	Assembly of God
ACC	Accident Compensation Corporation
AD	Anno Domini
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BSc	Bachelor of Science
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DVD	Digital Versatile Disc
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFKS	<i>Ekalesia Faapopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa</i>
	Congregational Christian Church of Samoa
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
F.A.G.A.S.A.Inc.	<i>Faalāpotopotoga mo le A'oa'oina ole Gagana Samoa i Aotearoa</i> : The Organisation for the teaching of the Samoan language in NZ Incorporated.
FM	Frequency Modulation
FOB	Fresh Off the Boat
HEC	Human Ethics Committee
HRC	Health Research Council
ICCPR	International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
Inc.	Incorporated
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
IT	Information Technology
MESC	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (Samoa)
MPIA	Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (New Zealand)
NCEA	National Certificates of Education Achievement
NUS	National University of Samoa
NZLR	New Zealand Law Reports
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
NZ	New Zealand
PE	Physical Education
PIC	Pacific Islands Congregational Church
PIPC	Pacific Islands Presbyterian Church
PIECCA	Pacific Islands Early Childhood Council of Aotearoa
PIERC	Pacific Islands Educational Resource Centre
PSSC	Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate
SPA	Samoan Parents' Association
SPBEA	South Pacific Board for Education Assessment
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UPY	University Preparation Year
VUW	Victoria University of Wellington
WINZ	Work and Income New Zealand

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CHAPTER 1: FOLASAGA

Introduction

Tautuanā ne'i vale tuulima le tofi.
Behold your inheritance, lest it be lost.

Introduction

*O le Gagana, o le suāu'u e ola ai le aganuu.
O le Gagana, o le tofi mai le Atua.
O le Gagana, o le 'ula o fugālā'au manogi sasala, e teu ai lou talaaga.
O le ā fola atu fugālā'au sa tau mai le faato'aga e su'i ai le 'ula pe mata e aogā i
faalagāmaea a Samoa, ina ia faatumauina le atuafetalai, o le tofi mai le Atua o loo
faavae ai lona Mālō.*

The Samoan language is the oil which keeps the Samoan culture alive.
The Samoan language is a gift from God.
The Samoan language is a garland of fragrant flowers, which embodies our history.
These are the flowers I have picked to make this garland which I hope will have use
for the Samoan people, so that the Samoan language, the inheritance from God, will
live on.

Samoa has often been described as an ocean fish, divided into sections: *o Samoa ua
ta'oto, a o se i'a mai moana, auā o le i'a ua uma ona 'āisa*.¹ In traditional Samoan
society, everyone has a place of belonging, with rights and responsibilities. With
these responsibilities and duties come knowledge and behaviours. This means that
who we are today is defined by where we come from - our familial context or
genealogy defines our 'being' or 'person-hood' (Alefaio, 2009, p. 174).

In the Samoan indigenous reference, every person has an inheritance from God that
comes in the form of individual gifts and talents, nurtured in the family and shared
with the community (Tamasese, 2009). These *tofi* (gifts) include language, culture,
land, religion, arts, performing arts, and *tautua* (service).

When a Samoan person takes their last breath, particularly an older person, they
speak these words: "*tautuanā ne'i vale tuulima le tofi*" – behold your inheritance,
your rights and responsibilities, lest they be lost. The *tofi* is the foundation of the
Samoan person. It has importance because it is witnessed by life and death
(Tamasese, 2005a). To Samoans, the Samoan language is a *tofi* from God, and the

¹ The proverb refers to the custom of dividing certain types of fish into portions each of which is
distributed according to rank or status (Pulotu-Endemann et al., 2007, p. 41).

plea is that this language be maintained and passed on to future generations. A failure to do so will not only result in the loss of the Samoan language, something which God has given to be protected and cherished, but also a loss of the *faasamoa* beliefs (Samoan way) and values that are contained within it. This is the essence of this thesis and my prayer also. The Samoan language is my *tofi* which I must protect, lest it be lost for future generations. In 'our sea of islands' (Hau'ofa, 1993), the Samoan language is the people's lifeboat for survival, the canoe that connects the past, the present and the future.

I am a daughter of Samoa and of Aotearoa New Zealand. My father is a Scottish New Zealander, and my mother, who is Samoan, migrated to New Zealand as a teenager for schooling. I am the second youngest of four sisters, and come from two culturally different families: my *palagi* (European) family is small; my father is one of two children and I have two cousins. By comparison, my Samoan family is large, comprising not only my nuclear family, but also my extended family. My mother is one of thirteen children, and at the time of writing I can count over fifty first cousins. My family are the most important thing in my life. I have been fortunate to have grown up with my Samoan '*āiga* (family), my grandparents, and my Samoan Catholic Church. Annual trips back to Samoa have kept me connected to Samoa and the *faasamoa*; being Samoan is an integral part of me and my Samoan identity. I am a daughter, sister, godmother, aunty, cousin, friend and a *tamaita'i Samoa* (Samoan woman). With these come my rights and responsibilities through *tautua* (service). Although born in Wellington, Samoan was my first language because my parents made a conscious decision not to speak English to me or my sisters until we started school. Apart from a short stint of schooling at St Mary's primary school in Samoa, the majority of my education has been here in New Zealand. I grew to love and appreciate the Samoan language as I got older, and take pride in being able to share this gift with others.

Undergraduate study sparked my interest in the Samoan language at an academic level. I came to University straight from high school, and like many young Samoans with aspirations to be a lawyer, but after taking a Samoan language paper, I became hooked. Despite growing up in a Samoan speaking household, I saw there was a whole world of being Samoan unknown to me. I subsequently completed a Linguistics and Samoan studies degree, carried on as a Samoan language tutor and

developed a new-found love for research. Working as a Samoan language tutor at Victoria University of Wellington, I was saddened and alarmed at the number of Samoan students coming through the programme who had little or no knowledge of the Samoan language. Was this just an isolated case, or was this an indication of something bigger?

Sitting in front of a computer screen one day at university as a new postgraduate student completing an assignment, I had to rub my eyes a few times to check if what I was seeing was right and that tiredness had not taken its toll on me. As I checked Samoan language statistics online, I noticed that the Samoan language was rapidly being lost in New Zealand. I immediately thought this cannot be true. To me, it was unthinkable – Samoans comprise half of the entire Pacific population in New Zealand; we cannot be losing our language. The data showed the percentage of the total Samoan population who could speak Samoan had decreased by four percent since 2001 (see Appendix 2). While this seemed like a small number, the percentage of those who could speak Samoan in New Zealand had previously remained relatively stable. Also concerning was that this overall four percent decline was mirrored in the New Zealand-born Samoan population. As reported, fewer than half (44 percent) of this group reported they could hold an everyday conversation in Samoan.² This in itself is a very worrying statistic for the future of Samoan in New Zealand, given that the majority of the Samoan population in New Zealand is New Zealand-born (60%) and youthful (see Appendix Two).

I had previously thought my life and my parents' commitment to making sure my sisters and I all spoke and understood Samoan was the norm for all Samoan families. Our daily home life was based on the *faasamoa*, surrounded by the Samoan language. I thought this was the case with all families, but the data suggested this was not so. As I pondered what my life would be like without the Samoan language, I thought of the saying "*e pala le maa ae lē pala le tala*" (stones rot, but words last forever) which I had never taken much notice of until now. It was as if our forefathers predicted there might come a time when our language could be endangered. I began to think about the lives of other youth as well. What might the weakening of the Samoan language mean for future Samoan youth, given that the Samoan language is at the heart of the Samoan culture? I then realised that without the Samoan language,

² See Chapter 2, Table 1.

much of what I had witnessed everyday would cease to exist: oratory, cultural ceremonies and my *Mama's fāgogo* (stories).³ Many events in my life had a specific formal ritual which highlighted the importance of the beauty of words in the Samoan language and culture.

On further investigation of the data on languages, I found that languages, particularly minority group languages, could actually be endangered and in some situations die, due to the drastic effects of worldwide pressures on minority language speakers to assimilate. UNESCO has predicted that many of the languages spoken today worldwide (estimated at 6000), are in danger of dying – that 90 percent of these will become extinct by the next century (World Commission on Culture and Development 1996, as cited in UNESCO, 2008, p. 1). Looking more specifically at Pacific languages, I found that the Pacific is perhaps the most linguistically diverse region in the world, with over 1200 languages, but that it was widely believed that a considerable proportion of these languages would not survive the next century (Tryon, 2006). The recent case in Australia (2008) of the formal apology to the 'Stolen Generation' of Aborigine people had also reinforced very clearly that language is at the heart of cultural identity. I then became more aware of what was happening around me in terms of language use, and began to see signs of loss within my own family. For example, my four year old nephew, whose first language was Samoan and had not known a word of English when he started school, was now struggling to put a sentence together in Samoan.

My next question was whether other Samoans were experiencing the same situation. Were the Samoan community aware of this data, or were they like me, living in a state of false consciousness thinking that the Samoan language will never die? I felt sure that Samoans would want to know this information so that they could try to address this situation. Clearly, unless steps were taken now, the Samoan language was in danger of slowly slipping away without people even realizing this. I recalled attending a Pacific parents' meeting at my sister's high school, where there had been a fierce debate whether to teach Samoan at the school. Some Samoan parents had said they wanted to leave language teaching to the homes. But as I shared the census

³ *Mama* is my grandmother. She would often tell us stories about Samoa, her childhood, and myths and legends.

data about Samoan language loss with these parents, they too were shocked. They had no idea the Samoan language was in danger of being lost in New Zealand.

This discovery spurred my research focus. I wanted to find out who was speaking Samoan today, and when and how the language was being valued to get some leads on what remedies could be employed. I also wanted, through this research, to gather qualitative, people-focussed information which would add meaning to the quantitative data. I knew that research of this kind would be particularly important with youth who are the future speakers and teachers of the Samoan language.

Research Focus

Migration from Samoa to New Zealand has escalated since the beginning of the 20th century. Today Samoans comprise almost half (131,100) of the total number of Pacific people (265,974) in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). Samoa's current homeland population is around 250,000, yet a similar number of Samoans live in the diaspora, in places such as Australia, Hawaii, California and here in New Zealand (Tryon, 2006). The majority of Samoans today in New Zealand are New Zealand-born (60 percent), young, and many are like me, the children of intermarriage (Statistics, 2006). Undoubtedly, the New Zealand-born and intermarriage characteristics are influencing factors on language maintenance today. The overwhelming influence of the English language on the much smaller Samoan population was, undoubtedly, another factor here. Not only is English the dominant language in New Zealand schools, it is also the language of television, radio, and in every facet of daily life - unlike Samoa, where the Samoan language is the language of everyday life.

Yet at the same time, there is evidence of the endeavours of the Samoan community (and other Pacific groups) in New Zealand who have advocated strongly over many years for the maintenance of the mother tongue. For example, Government departments and other organisations now print important information for the Samoan community in pamphlets in both Samoan and English; there are *Ā'oga Āmata* (Samoan language pre-schools) and Samoan is taught in some schools up to the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA)⁴ level. Other Samoan

⁴ The National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) are New Zealand's national qualifications for senior secondary students.

community-led initiatives include the Samoan newspapers sold at the local dairies, and programmes on the television and the radio that can be heard in the homes and cars of the Samoan community. Families listen intently to these broadcasts to hear birthday wishes, talkback debates discuss topical issues, as family members send their love over the airwaves. The number of Samoan Churches has also increased in New Zealand. Even *kilikiti* (Samoan cricket) is played at the park down the road. A walk through the flea market in Porirua or Otara is very similar to walking through the markets in Apia – the Samoan language is heard everywhere. I knew that the Samoan community, like other Pacific communities, had been tremendously resilient in its efforts to maintain the Samoan language and culture, but according to the data, language loss was occurring.

If all this was happening, how could such a significantly large Pacific community in New Zealand be losing their language? What were the factors influencing the maintenance and weakening of the Samoan vernacular in this land, which has become the new home for so many Samoan families? Furthermore, if this reported erosion continued, what would the future be like for the Samoan people?

Some of the literature about bilingualism and passive bilingualism seemed to resonate with what I was witnessing around me – Samoan parents speaking Samoan to their children, and their children replying back in English. On thinking more about this, I began to see more and more situations of passive bilingualism around me in my friends' and family's homes. I saw it happening at Church, especially in the '*autalavou* (Church youth group). For example, I recalled then that our president always spoke to the youth in Samoan, but the youth would almost always reply in English. This raised questions of if and when young people were speaking Samoan, and to whom?

A brief survey of the literature showed that there had been little research on the Samoan language in New Zealand. Earlier studies (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1981) with parents and teachers had found that the Samoan language was being maintained well at that time, but that study was carried out almost 30 years ago. That study also confirmed the popular view that 'we came to New Zealand so that our children can have a good education and a good future'. This finding in turn made me question whether parents themselves might be encouraging their children to speak English in their quest to gain 'a good education'.

In addition to the research about Samoan parents, there was some research about Samoan teachers' views. As expected, this group argued strongly in favour of maintaining the language (Fletcher et al., 2009). However, I found that there was little research documenting the views of Samoan youth/students on Samoan language and its use. The youth voice was unheard. Yet to me, the views of the youth as the future speakers of the Samoan language were particularly important. I also read that Samoan youth in New Zealand often felt disillusioned and 'caught between cultures' questioning things 'Samoan' and the Samoan language (Anae, 1998; Fuatagaumu, 2003; Tiatia, 1998). These youth not only felt hopeless and marginalised by the wider society, but in some cases by their own Samoan communities who did not embrace them as their own. As reported, these youth did not ask to be accepted regardless of their differences, but rather to be accepted because of these differences (Fuatagaumu, 2003, p. 220).

I looked back to the rationale behind the Māori strategy of setting up *Kohanga Reo* (Māori language nests) which had in turn influenced the establishment of *Ā'oga 'Āmata* (Samoan Early Childhood centres). This was to build a strong group of young language speakers, who would be the building blocks to the future, so that a language does not die out with the older speakers.

For this study, I decided to focus on capturing the voices of Samoan youth because they are the future carriers of the Samoan language in New Zealand. At the same time, it was important to explore the views of Samoan parents and the teachers as well because these are the groups who know and speak the language now. It was not an intention of this research to compare the views of these three groups, but instead to get a range of views which could provide a basis for the discussion of policy and practices, which will support the maintenance of the Samoan language here in New Zealand.

Research Aims

The research aims are to explore the views of Samoan students, Samoan teachers and Samoan parents about the place of the Samoan language in New Zealand today as well as its valuing and usefulness.

The research questions are:

1. What is the value of the Samoan language in New Zealand today to a selected group of Samoan students, parents, and teachers in the Wellington region?
2. What do a selected group of Samoan students, parents and teachers in the Wellington region believe are the factors that influence Samoan language learning and teaching in New Zealand?
3. Who do a selected group of Samoan students, parents and teachers in the Wellington region believe should be responsible for teaching the Samoan language in New Zealand today?

A further aim of this study is to create spaces for dialogue about the importance of the Samoan language and its place in New Zealand society today, as well as steps which can be taken to maintain the Samoan language and culture for the benefit of future generations.

Significance of the Study

Language maintenance and shift are a global issue. This case study of this Samoan community in New Zealand will add to the global discussion relating to the security of minority and migrant languages, endangered languages and cultural diversity, and raise awareness of the factors influencing the maintenance of minority and immigrant languages today.

This research will increase knowledge about the experiences, perceptions and opinions of a group of Samoan youth, Samoan teachers and Samoan parents in New Zealand today about the Samoan language. This information will set a baseline of knowledge about how the Samoan people value their language. Furthermore, this case study represents a snapshot in time - a critical time for the Samoan language in New Zealand. Although this study is Samoan-focussed, findings may resonate with other Pacific languages, as well as other minority, migrant and diasporic language communities.

This research also has significance for its relevance at a time when not only the Samoan language, but other Pacific languages in New Zealand face decline. This is especially important given that New Zealand is evolving into a unique and vibrant multicultural nation, which is striving to achieve equity and to embrace cultural

diversity (Ministry for Culture & Heritage, 2005). This research will also make a significant contribution to the knowledge about the place of the Pacific people in New Zealand, especially as a case study of what factors influence language maintenance amongst a youthful, minority, and diasporic population. Because the Samoan group is numerically much larger than other Pacific groups in New Zealand, these findings will also raise questions of the language security of other smaller Pacific ethnic groups in New Zealand, as well as the global literature on endangered languages.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation relates to the sample size and the selection of Wellington as the region for this study, given that approximately two thirds of Samoans in New Zealand live in Auckland (Cook, 1999). Clearly, a Wellington study may not reflect a broader national statistical profile. However, this thesis presents a case study of the situation in Wellington at this time.

I am also aware of the dynamics of insider and outsider research, and acknowledge that I will be both an insider and an outsider at different points in my research:

There are a number of ethical, cultural, political and personal issues that can present special difficulties for indigenous researchers who, in their own communities, work partially as insiders, and are often employed for this purpose, and partially as outsiders, because of their western education or because they make work across clan, tribe, linguistic, age and gender boundaries (Smith, 1999, p. 5)

I am an insider, because I am Samoan, speak the language and am also part of the Samoan community in Wellington. However, I may also be seen as an outsider in my community because of my education or because I was born in New Zealand. In addition, being a young female may either be seen as an advantage especially in dialogue with the youth, or a hindrance when consulting with the older research participants. However, because the participation in this research is voluntary and the *talanoa* method is being used, I anticipate that research participants will feel comfortable enough to share their personal experiences with me. I also have confidence that being a fluent Samoan language speaker will be invaluable in carrying out this study.

Organisation of the thesis

This thesis is organised into seven chapters. This first chapter, *Folasaga*, comprises the introductory chapter. Chapter Two, *Samoa*, sets the Samoa context for this research, with specific reference to the use and valuing of the Samoan language in both in Samoa and New Zealand. Chapter Three, *Iloiloga o Tusitusiga*, is the literature review and is presented in two parts. The first part is an analysis of general and global literature on language, language shift and maintenance, and factors influencing this. The second part presents an overview of research which has been carried out about the Samoan language in New Zealand. Chapter Four, *Metotia*, outlines the research methodology, sample groups and the research process. As will be seen, the *talanoa* methodology is presented as the main research strategy. Chapters Five, *Talanoaga ma tamaiti Ā'oga*, and Six, *Talanoaga ma Mātua ma Faiā'oga Samoa*, present the findings from the *talanoa* with the student group (Chapter Five), and the teacher and parent groups (Chapter Six). These are presented thematically in accordance with the research questions. Finally, Chapter Seven, *Faaifoga*, provides an analysis and discussion of the findings from the three participant groups, and concludes with some recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: SAMOA

The Samoan Context

O le tama a le manu e fafaga i fuga 'o lā'au, 'a o le tama a le tagata e fafaga i upu ma tala.

The offspring of the bird is fed with the fruits of the trees, but the fruits of the womb are nourished by words and stories.

Introduction

For many Samoans living in New Zealand, Samoa is seen to be the 'heart' of Samoan language and culture – the pure form. Anecdotal reports are that many Samoans believe that even if their language is lost in New Zealand, they have nothing to fear because the language is alive and thriving in the homelands. As will be seen, this may not be the case, and efforts may need to be taken to ensure the survival of the Samoan language both in Samoa, and New Zealand. This chapter reviews the place of the Samoan language in Samoa (the homeland) and in New Zealand (the new home).

Part 1: Samoa – the homeland

Samoan is the traditional language of the independent state of Samoa (formerly Western Samoa) and American Samoa. It is the official language of both states, alongside English. The language is classified as belonging to the Austronesian family, more specifically to the Samoic branch of the Polynesian subphylum. An estimated 199,200 people living in Samoa, and approximately 369,957 worldwide, speak the language (Lewis, 2009). There is no explicit legislation which defines the official status of languages in Samoa. However, it is embedded in Samoa's Constitution that Samoan and English are given official recognition, with reference to three aspects: right to a fair trial (section 9), languages of the legislative assembly (section 54), and authoritative texts (section 112).

The Samoan language has two distinct registers: first, the formal and respectful registers reserved for talking to *matai* (chiefs), strangers and professionals; the second informal register is usually reserved for 'commoners' (Simanu, 2002).

Pronunciation in both registers can either be spoken in /t/ style or the /k/ style⁵ (Keown, 2007). These different forms of the Samoan language ('high' language and 'colloquial' Samoan) highlight the importance of language as encapsulating elements of respect and culture, as well as meaning.

Reports reinforce the importance of language and oratory in the *faasamoa* to the extent that oratory has been described as Samoa's main art form. The art of oratory and its different patterns for different occasions has been well documented (see Duranti, 1992; Holmes, 1969) as has the tradition of the *fāgogo* (night time stories for children), songs and chants, which sit deeply in the Samoan culture. The *fāgogo* are more than just a story telling. During this process, the young are nurtured with stories, knowledge, values, the rituals, beliefs and practices which are shared in the language. Tamasese sees the demise of the *fāgogo* in recent times as a blow to the Samoan culture. He says:

During the height of *fāgogo* the young did not acquire their values from the cinema, television, radio or from a public spectacle. They heard it from the loving tones of their grandparents or parents (Tamasese, 2008b, p. 73).

Samoan writers stress the importance that the Samoan language holds not only for the Samoan culture, but for the whole existence and identity of the Samoan people. It is the language which distinguishes Samoans from others, and is the foundation for Samoa and its governance. The words of the Samoan language express sadness, love, and repentance and they are the means of connecting with the myths and legends of Samoa and its history. As noted by Tamasese, Samoan is the language of the past and the language of the future (Tamasese, 1989, 2000, 2008b). He notes the fundamental importance of the Samoan language in his discussion of '*Le tofi ne'i valetu'ulima*' or 'neglecting your roles, responsibilities or duties' as a Samoan person:

O le amataga ma le tulu'iga o le tofi, o le gagana, o le tu ma le aga, o le tala o le vavau, o le tala faasolopito, ma le fe'au e maua mai ai e faasinoala ma faatonutonu i le mafaufau ma le agaga (Tamasese, 2005a, p. 2)

⁵ /t/ style is sometimes called the formal or 'good' way of speaking Samoan. The /k/ style used in oratory or more informal situations, involves replacing all 't' with 'k' in speech, and 'n' with 'g' (Keown, 2007, p. 171).

The beginning and the end of our responsibility (duty) is the language, the customs and traditions, the myths and legends, the history, and the message we acquire from it to guide and instruct our thoughts and spirit (my translation).

The language and the customs and traditions are what the Samoan person lives and breathes (Tamasese, 2005a, p.5). Tamasese has also likened the *tofi* or Samoan language to a *ma'umaga* (plantation) and the never-ending job tending a plantation requires. For example, if a farmer is not diligent in weeding his plantation, the taro will surely die. If he is not diligent in planting in his plot of land, there will be famine. Like the *ma'umaga*, maintaining and nurturing the Samoan language must be an on-going process. Neglecting this *tofi* will result in its loss (Tamasese, 1989, 2000, p.60).

Fanaafi Le Tagaloa (1997) likens the concept of Samoan identity (one's *faasinomaga*) to the union of three *poutū toa* (supporting posts) of a *fale* (house). The first post represents the *matai* (chiefly titles) from which a Samoan person is descendant from. She sees the second post to represent the '*ele'ele* (earth) and *fanua* (land), which belong to or are associated with the *matai* title. The last post represents the *gagana Samoa*, the Samoan language. Fanaafi Le Tagaloa (1997) believes there is nothing more which distinguishes a Samoan from other people other than language. She emphasises that the mother tongue provides a child with their *faasinomaga* as well as their role and place in society.

Tamasese (2005a) has warned that should Samoa lose its *tofi* - should the Samoan children neglect to be fed with words to nourish their minds and souls - there will be no more Samoan people, and without Samoan people, there is no Samoa. Just as in the well known saying used to open this chapter, Samoan mothers feed their children with words and stories and it is through this nurturing that children come to know who they are, where they come from, and their place in Samoan society. Fanaafi Le Tagaloa notes (1996):

The Samoan philosophy of language believes that the proper diet for the young humans is language. Feed the human with words; sweet words; polite words; fearless and courageous words; harsh and strong words; deep and spiritual words, words of tofamanino; words of atonement; words of reconciliation and forgiveness; words of the tapuaiga; for the words and tones of the mother tongue will enhance and facilitate the realization of each individual being created by God (p.82).

Change Factors

Contact

The first influences on the Samoan language came with the arrival of the English Missionaries in the 1830s. The Missionaries found Samoans eager to learn the ways of the *palagi* (European) and to embrace the English language and what this offered (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1985; Nunes, 2006). The Missionaries were instrumental in documenting the Samoan language, and with the help of local converts, the Bible had been translated into Samoan by 1855 (Lewis, 2009). The Missionaries also set up schools to educate local *faife'au* (ministers), and very quickly daily religion classes were taking place in nearly every village under the tutelage of the local *faife'au*. It is notable that the Missionaries did not promote English at the expense of Samoan. In fact, Fanaafi Le Tagaloa (1996) notes that pastors, teachers and others were encouraged by the Directors of the London Missionary Society (LMS) to teach in the vernacular, learn the vernacular, and to “conduct all affairs and even preach in the language of the people”. She argues this policy made “psychological sense...good educational and communication sense” (Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, 1996, p. 81). McFall-McCaffery and McCaffery (2009) assert that despite this admonition by religious leaders to accord priority to the Samoan language, it was not always afforded its importance in Samoa’s education system. They claim that while the missionaries valued the vernacular, the administrators, educators, and diplomats did not.

Be that as it may, the English language, and the new ideas this implied, penetrated many aspects of Samoan social and educational life very quickly (Nunes, 2006, 2007) and gained national prominence as Samoa opened its doors to international cultural and economic influences (Spolsky 1988).

The Samoan language and education

Under the New Zealand administration (1917-1962), English became more prominent in education, and there was a shift from Samoan as the language of formal education to a more bilingual focus. This period saw the introduction of the New Zealand curriculum in the form of exams such as School Certificate and University Entrance (UE). The practice of sending top scholars to New Zealand for further study under the New Zealand scholarship schemes also promoted proficiency in English. The aim of the initial scholarship schemes was to educate an elite group of

leaders in preparation for independence. Not surprisingly, there was extreme competition for these scholarship places, once again reinforcing the importance of English. Anecdotal reports from many students during this time were that “we got detentions for speaking Samoan in the playground...No Samoan!”

During these years (and today), two parallel systems of schooling operated in Samoa – the village schools where Samoan was the language of instruction, and the Government schools such as Samoa College, where English was the language of instruction apart from the Samoan language classes. The introduction of the Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate (PSSC)⁶ by the South Pacific Board for Education Assessment (SPBEA) in 1989 replaced the New Zealand qualifications. Although the Samoan language was a subject in the PSSC, English remained a priority.

Writing in 1988, Spolsky noted that despite the spread of English in Samoa, the Samoan language continued to be supported through the traditional systems. He reminded that the Samoan language was foremost the language of the home, the *‘āiga* (family), the *nu’u* (village) and the *lotu* (Church). Further, Samoa’s political life (local and national) supported the use and maintenance of the language at the village and district levels, and in parliament where the majority of its business was still carried out in Samoan. For example, the village *fono a matai* (meeting of chiefs), the meetings of the Samoan women’s committee, Church services, and family daily life events were all marked by the use of the Samoan language and/or a mixture of Samoan and English.

Recognition of the mother tongue

Global language-related strategies developed during these years influenced Samoan ideas of language maintenance. The use of the mother tongue as the preferred medium of instruction in schools has become universally accepted since the UNESCO Meeting of Specialists (1951), which noted that the best medium of instruction psychologically, sociologically and educationally for teaching a child is his/her mother tongue (see Taufe’ulungaki, 2005, p. 17-18).

Taufe’ulungaki’s words that ‘education and language are the means that nations use to achieve internal cohesion and modernisation’ resonates well with the 1960s period in Samoa and the intense nationalism which accompanied Samoa’s gaining of

⁶ See SPBEA <http://www.spbea.org.fj/index.html>

Independence. In the late 1960s, Samoan became a school subject in Samoa (Mayer, 2001, cited in Nunes, 2006), and anecdotal reports were that the use of the Samoan language became far more common in the school classrooms and grounds. When the National University of Samoa (NUS) was established in 1984, its mission statement included “to make a difference through training, research and innovation, encompassing diversity; promoting excellence and global recognition as a world leader in Samoan Studies”.⁷ This emphasis on building a strong Department of Samoan Language and Culture was a step in achieving the NUS aims of promoting the Samoan language and culture. By 1993, the Samoan language and culture was recognised as a subject towards the Certificate of Attainment at the University Preparation Year (UPY)⁸ programme, and in 1999, the Institute of Samoan Studies was established (Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, 1996, p.82). Today the Samoan language is offered as a major subject. In addition, it is also offered as a second language course primarily for non-Samoan speakers, as well as Samoan speakers who do not possess the standard competency in the language (Nunes, 2006).

Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa has been and continues to be a key educational leader in this drive to recognise and value the Samoan language, first as the Director of Education, and later as a founder of the Indigenous Samoan University in 1997 named *Le Iunivesite o le Amosa o Savavau*. Here, all courses are taught and dissertations written exclusively in the Samoan language (Nunes, 2006). This school of learning continues today.

Bilingualism

Samoa’s Education Policies of the 1995-2005 period focussed on educating students who were fully competent in both Samoan and English:

A prime objective of the Samoan education system should be bilingualism, the development of bilingual individuals fully literate in Samoan and English (MESC, 2007, p. 94).

The intention of these policies was that literacy in the Samoan language would be the focus from early childhood through to Year 3 in primary school, and that the English language would be introduced orally in Year 2 and as a subject from Year 4 to Year

⁷ See “National University of Samoa Vision and Mission Statements”
http://www.nus.edu.ws/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=50%3Aabout-nus&id=131%3Aanus-vision-a-mission-statements&Itemid=106

⁸ In 1984 by an act of parliament, the NUS was established beginning with one class, the UPY.

6. Once students entered into the intermediate years (Years 7 and 8), the medium of instruction would switch to English, with Samoan being offered as a subject during those two years. At the conclusion, Year 8 students would sit a national examination which was solely in English, and upon entrance into high school, the medium of instruction would switch to English only.

Despite this emphasis on language security in both languages, the findings of the Samoa Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) mid-decade report (2007) were that bilingualism had contributed to the fact that Samoa's overall language learning was of a 'low quality'. It was recommended that these policies change as learners were being put in a position of learning English as a second language before they had acquired proficiency in their mother tongue. In Lameta's view, this practice removed the opportunity for students to develop the vocabulary and mechanisms of the mother tongue for its use in a wide range of contexts (2005, p.53). Furthermore, this policy limited the opportunities for using Samoan to develop cognition, and there were teachers who were dedicating more time to mastering the English language, rather than to developing thinking skills in both languages (MESC, 2007, pp.94-95). In addition, Lameta (2005) stressed that the choice of English as the formal medium of instruction before the end of primary schooling, had contributed to a schooling system whose aim was to "progressively sift students for further opportunity on the basis of their English competency" (p.49). This issue is still being widely discussed.

While there is no data to show a decline in the use of the Samoan language today, anecdotal reports and even a walk through the township of Apia suggest that the use of English is increasing. Not surprisingly, Government level decisions suggest there is a growing concern for the Samoan language. For example, the Samoan Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) is conducting research into the national education policies, with reference to the utility and teaching of the Samoan language in Samoan schools. Samoa's former Minister of Education, Fiamē Naomi Matā'afa, has been quoted as saying "it was always assumed that the Samoan language was strong enough, but it has lost its status" (UNESCO, 2003, p.1).

Samoan in other domains

Today, English appears to be the preferred language of commerce in Samoa with receipts, bills, invoices, accounts and letters all in English. With the development of

tourism, English is also seen to be essential at the interface with visitors. The rapid development of radio, television, movies, Information Technology (IT) and instant downloads are also a huge influence not only on the language, but also on the culture of Samoan youth today. Increasing globalisation has seen English becoming the language of the media with television broadcasting increasingly in English, and news bulletins being read bilingually. With the spread of digital media (television, music, movies) and newspapers, the English language is reaching even the most isolated of villages in Samoa. Reflecting on the Samoan media, particularly television, Tamasese (2009) noted that in their manner and articulation of the Samoan language, the presenters seemed to lack faith and confidence in the Samoan language, using the English language more as a ‘crutch’ rather than a last resort. Tamasese argues that this is not natural linguistic growth.

At the same time, many radio stations still broadcast solely in Samoan and many songs on the radio have both English and Samoan remnants with a strong element of Samoan culture manifesting itself, either through the tune, or the lyrics. There is linguistic hybridization on the television also with some difficulties arising in the translation of news bulletins between English and Samoan. In most cases attempts to translate between the two results in surrendering to code-switching,⁹ despite what the chosen medium of the speaker is (Nunes, 2006). There are a number of Samoan newspapers, but also English and bilingual papers. The Samoan language is also the major language of religious education based on the Samoan Bible and hymn books. However, the Bible may not be the main reading material for Samoans today, as in the past, given the rapid expansion of alternative recreational pursuits.

Migration opportunities also influence language security. For example, English is the language of the countries to which most Samoans migrate (New Zealand, Australia, and United States of America), because migration to the English speaking world is reasonably easy for Samoans. In addition, many migrants go to stay with relatives who may themselves have undergone partial or total Samoan language loss to the English language (Eggington, 2003). Scholarship students returning from study have high levels of English, and today proficiency in English is not only prestigious, but is vital in finding employment. For example, English is a major factor in the selection

⁹ Code-switching is the use of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation or interaction. The change can be a single word, or may go on for several minutes (Scotton & Ury, 1977, p.5)

of Samoan police officers for service in the peace keeping missions in the Solomon Islands and other international situations.

Although the Samoan language is being supported and maintained in Samoa today and used in many domains of daily life, it is increasingly being influenced by globalisation. In the past, the language was supported and strongly maintained in the rural villages of Samoa. With the introduction and spread of technology into even the most rural of villages today, how will Samoan continue to be supported?

Part 2: New Zealand - the new home

In reviewing the place of the Samoan language in New Zealand today, I begin first with a discussion of the Samoan population in New Zealand including factors which might influence language maintenance. This is followed by a brief account of the challenges faced by the *tangata whenua* (people of the land) in maintaining the language in New Zealand – some of which are relevant to the Samoan situation. A major difference is that, unlike the Samoan people, the Māori are the indigenous people of New Zealand and have a right to their language here in New Zealand. Finally, some research about Samoan language maintenance in New Zealand today is discussed. This includes both Government strategies and the activities established by the Samoan community. These community based efforts point to the tremendous resilience of the Samoan community in New Zealand today, and also to the endurance of the *faasamoa*, and the central place of the Samoan language in the *faasamoa*.

Pacific people in New Zealand

Pacific people have been migrating to New Zealand ‘in search of the better life’ for many years. Today, New Zealand is home to the largest Polynesian and Pacific population in the world: the Pacific population accounts for 6 percent of the total New Zealand population, and two thirds (67 percent) of the Pacific population are located in Auckland (Statistics New Zealand, 2006).

The 2006 Census of Populations and Dwellings enumerated 265,974 Pacific peoples and Samoans comprised almost half of this group. Of particular note to this study was that over 60 percent of the Pacific population was New Zealand born, and 54

percent of newborn Pacific children in New Zealand are of multiple ethnicities (Cook, 1999).

Through to the 1950s, Pacific migration to New Zealand was a trickle. This increased in the 1960s and 1970s largely as a response to New Zealand labour needs. However, in the late 1970s when the New Zealand economy was under pressure, immigration became more difficult with quotas being introduced for some groups,¹⁰ including for Samoan migrants. When Samoa became an independent state in 1962, Samoa and New Zealand entered into a Treaty of Friendship that year. In July of 1982, this relationship became even closer with the decision of the judicial committee of the Privy Council on the case of *Lesa v Attorney-General* [1982] 1 NZLR 165. This decision granted all those born in (Western) Samoa between 1928 and 1949, the status of New Zealand citizens. This effectively gave up to 100,000 Samoan citizens the right to enter and stay in New Zealand as full New Zealand citizens (Ministry of Justice & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2000, p.24).

Table 1 *Samoan speakers in New Zealand 1996-2006*

Population Group	Percentage of the Samoan Population who are competent in speaking Samoan		
	1996	2001	2006
Samoan-born Samoans	90%	92%	90%
New Zealand-born Samoans	48%	48%	44%
n=	101,754	115,017	131,103

Sources: Statistics New Zealand (1998, 2001, 2006) Pacific Profiles, Population Characteristics.

Table 1 sets out the status of Samoan language speaking in the ten year period 1996-2006. As seen, while the language competency of the Samoan-born group remained constant during this period, that of the New Zealand-born group registered a 4 percent decrease in the five year period between 2001 and 2006 (Statistics New Zealand, 1998, 2007). This is a significant decline.

Based on this data, it can be predicted that as the New Zealand-born Samoan population continues to grow, the number of Samoan speakers will continue to fall unless steps are taken to reverse this trend. The Māori experience in addressing language shift provides a model here.

¹⁰ Niue, Tokelau and the Cook Islands have free entry into New Zealand because of their status as part of the realm of New Zealand.

Māori – *tangata whenua*

Although Māori are the indigenous people of New Zealand, they have also faced the challenge of drastic language shift. Māori was the language of the first Polynesians who are believed to have migrated to New Zealand in the thirteenth century AD (King, 2003, p. 51, as cited in Smith, 2004, p.4). Although Māori are the indigenous people of New Zealand, the Māori language was not maintained. Instead, the shift away from the use of the Māori language began in the middle of the 19th century after the New Zealand land wars, and went hand in hand with the largely assimilationist policies practised in New Zealand (and worldwide) at this time. This is evident in *The Education Ordinance 1847* which stated that New Zealand schools would teach in English only. Furthermore, as with the Samoan situation discussed above, there are many accounts by Māori elders of being beaten for speaking Māori at school during these years. English was understandably the language of the majority – schooling and school textbooks, newspapers, radio and movies, and sports and recreation.

Rapid urban drift was to add to the decline of Māori language speakers as well as occasions to speak Māori. Spolsky (1995) notes that as early as 1915, only 40 percent of Māori could speak the Māori language, and that even in the 1970s, mothers of pre-school children were urged to speak English only to their children. Benton's 1970s research demonstrated very compellingly that the Māori language was in a desperate state. This research was a major step in the urgent drive which followed to revitalise the language (Smith, 2004, p.6). When language shift became too visible to ignore on the *marae* - the traditional site for Māori language speaking and *kaupapa* (Māori ideology) – this served as a powerful trigger for the Māori language revitalisation movement of the early 1970s.

A first step in the Māori revitalisation process was the introduction of Māori language pre-schools, the *Kohanga Reo*, in 1981. Reports indicate that the *Kohanga Reo* strategy was an outcome of a meeting between the Department of Māori Affairs and Māori leaders, who stressed that the rejuvenation of the Māori language would require the building of a strong group of young Māori language speakers. By 1984 there were over 280 *Kohanga Reo* spread throughout New Zealand, and by 1987, there were almost five hundred (Spolsky, 1995). Māori language teaching also began to focus on the primary school level. In 1985, the first *Kura Kaupapa Māori* (Māori

language medium primary school) was opened at Hoani Waititi Marae in Auckland. Today, there are opportunities for tertiary level Māori study at the *Whare Wānanga* traditional institutions of learning (Smith, 2004) and at all New Zealand universities as well. As a result of these and other actions, Māori was officially recognised as an official language by the *Māori Language Act 1987*, which ensures that the Māori language can be used in Parliament and in the Court systems. The fact that there are a reported 131,613 fluent speakers of Māori today (Statistics New Zealand, 2007b) out of a population of 565,329 (23.7 percent of the total Māori population) indicates that the process of maintaining the Māori language will be an ongoing one.

The Samoan Language in New Zealand

Rights

New Zealand is party to international instruments such as the *International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR). In domestic law, the New Zealand Bill of Rights outlines the rights of minority groups in New Zealand which was based on the ICCPR:

A person who belongs to an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority in New Zealand, shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of that minority, to enjoy the culture, to profess it and practice the religion, or to use the language of that minority (Ministry of Justice & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2000, p.15)

This Act enables Samoan people and other minority groups to practise religion and speak their language with others. In 1992, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities*. This is not binding on states, but can be used to progress the development of international law, and enhance the civil rights of New Zealand citizens.

Article 1 reads:

States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity (Ministry of Justice & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2000, p.48).

Of more importance to this study of language maintenance in New Zealand, article 4 reads:

States shall take measures to create favourable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs except where specific practices are in violation of national law and contrary to international standards (ibid).

While there is no current constitutional relationship as such with Samoa and New Zealand as is the case with Tokelau, the Cook Islands and Niue, however given Samoa's history and past constitutional links with New Zealand, Samoa now has a special relationship with New Zealand (Ministry of Justice & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2000). These articles reinforce that the Samoan people, a minority group in New Zealand, have the right to 'express and develop' their language, and that the state should take measures to facilitate this process (Waite, 1992b).

The practices

As is well documented, Samoan migrants came to New Zealand for 'a better life and education' for their children, and for many, a good education was associated with English. This hegemony was reinforced by the New Zealand education system of earlier years, where English was the language of instruction. As reported also by Long (1996), teachers in New Zealand Teachers' Colleges were told that bilingualism was an educational disadvantage.

However, as Pacific communities became more aware of the importance of maintaining their languages in New Zealand, many were inspired by the example of Māori *Kohanga Reo* to form the Pacific early childhood centres such as the Samoan *Ā'oga 'Āmata* (Samoan early childhood centres). In the early days, these were formed in family homes and churches often under the leadership of the pastors' wives and community groups (Long, 1996). The first *Ā'oga 'Āmata* (based now at Richmond Road School in Auckland) was formed at the PIERC in Herne Bay in 1977/78. The *Ā'oga 'Āmata* have been extremely instrumental in advocating for and working to achieve the maintenance of Samoan as the first language for Samoan pre-schoolers. While many of these schools were initially voluntarily run, over time, the Government began to allocate funding to these programmes. The Pacific Islands Early Childhood Education Council of Aotearoa (PIECCA) was formed and collaborated in partnership with the Auckland College of Education to administer training for early childhood education (ECE) Pacific teachers. With support from the Ministry of Education there are more than 100 Pacific ECE centres today (Tuafuti &

McCaffery, 2009). Changes to funding mean that the Government is now involved in providing accredited certificate, diploma and University level training for Pacific preschool teachers as well.

With regard to formal schooling, the first Samoan bilingual programme in New Zealand was started in 1987 at Clydemore and Richmond Road schools in Auckland (Tuafuti & McCaffery, 2009). Today, there are Samoan bilingual units in approximately 22 primary schools and eight secondary schools which teach Samoan language programmes (McFall-McCaffery & McCaffery, 2009).

National Language Policies

In 1990, the then Labour Government announced its intention to introduce a coherent and comprehensive national languages policy. In 1992, the two part Waite report titled *Aotearoa: Speaking for Ourselves- A discussion on the development of a New Zealand languages policy*, discussed the importance of maintaining community languages in New Zealand (Waite, 1992a; Waite, 1992b).¹¹ This report argued very strongly the value of a language policy, notably that language maintenance would provide a pool of bilingual speakers which the country could draw from for a range of social, cultural and commercial purposes, but also the important issues of literacy and bilingualism:

Bilingualism in Māori and English, in Samoan and English, in English and French or any other combination, confers upon the speaker intellectual benefits in the form of an enhanced ability to manipulate language. These linguistic skills can be transferred from one language to another, whatever the language (Waite, 1992a, pp. 9- 10).

Waite (1992) suggested the need to put structures in place to ensure language security, including the development of syllabi and curriculum materials for use in language maintenance programmes. Subsequently, Pacific language curriculum statements were developed based on the 1992 New Zealand Curriculum Framework. The Samoan language was the first (in 1996); the Cook Islands language curriculum followed in 2004, followed by Niuean in 2006 and Tongan in 2007. In the revised New Zealand Curriculum (2008), the Ministry of Education supported the use of Pacific languages as mediums of instruction in ECE, but primary schools have yet to

¹¹ This was a report commissioned by The Ministry of Education. It grew out of work carried out by the Department of Education in the mid 1980s.

receive support for this purpose. The 2008 Curriculum does however support the teaching of some languages in school as subjects from Year 7 onwards, and encourages the use of the language by families 'out of school' (Tuafuti & McCaffery, 2009).

In 2007, the Labour-led Government, under the auspices of the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA), established the *Mind Your Language* initiative to address Pacific language maintenance and revival. This programme began with the Tokelauan language, Cook Islands Māori and Niuean (Tuafuti & McCaffery, 2009). At present the MPIA, in collaboration with the Ministry for Culture and Heritage are working towards a Pacific Language Strategy to further address the issue of Pacific language maintenance.

Many Government agencies have recognized that Samoan is the language of communication for the Samoan community, and as a matter of policy, provide information - such as immigration materials, health information and messages, and educational information – in the Samoan language.

The Samoan language is also increasingly available in schools. It is a recognized NCEA subject. In Wellington alone, the Samoan language is offered as a subject at ten secondary schools, and as a Bachelor of Arts major at Victoria University of Wellington, the only University in New Zealand to do so. The University of Auckland offers Samoan as a minor subject.

Samoan language in the community

It is very clear that the Samoan language has been strongly supported by the Samoan community for many years.

The F.A.G.A.S.A Inc.¹² is a fine example of community level action aimed at maintaining the Samoan language. Established in 1976 as the Samoan parents and teachers association for maintaining the Samoan language and culture in New Zealand, this non-profit and independent organisation has a long and successful record in advocacy and action for the Samoan language. It also provides bilingual literacy services for education providers and employers. To date, the F.A.G.A.S.A has run 18 annual conferences where issues pertaining to the maintenance of Samoan,

¹² F.A.G.A.S.A stands for *Faalapotopotoga mo le A'o'aoina o le Gagana Samoa i Aotearoa* – which translates to the organisation for the teaching of the Samoan language in New Zealand.

in New Zealand and globally, are discussed. They were instrumental to the establishment of the *Fale'ula o Fatu'ai'upu o le Gagana Samoa*, the International Samoan Language Commission (2002), and for the past two years the Wellington branch has been running a Samoan language speech contest for secondary school students.

The Samoan language has also been well supported in the domain of radio communication. In the 1990s, Pacific Island radio access had two stations in Auckland¹³ and Christchurch¹⁴ (Fairbairn-Dunlop & Makisi, 2003; Hunkin-Tuiletufuga, 2001). Today, Wellington's Samoan radio station, *Le Siufofoga o le Laumua* – Samoan Capital Radio - broadcasts for 38 hours a week in the Samoan language on issues to do with education, health, welfare, law, employment, general information and talk back. The station also has bilingual (English and Samoan) programmes. This broadcast reaches the Samoan and Pacific Island communities from Taupo in the North Island to Christchurch in the South Island, and there is also a simultaneous live broadcast available on the internet. Niu FM, the first national Pacific radio network in New Zealand, is based in Auckland. Its vision is “to be the voice connecting, informing and entertaining the diverse range of Pacific communities throughout Aotearoa”.¹⁵ The Niu FM Samoan language community programme runs twice weekly and broadcasts music and news from around New Zealand, the Pacific and Australia.¹⁶ Generally, the radio plays an influential role in language maintenance. For example, through Samoan talk back shows and topical reports on New Zealand and international news. Radio is particularly valued by workers who are able to listen to the radio when working, particularly those working the evening shift work. While there is no Samoan language television channel,¹⁷ Triangle Television programmes such as the Pacific Viewpoint talk show, and Tagata Pasifika, feature stories on Samoa and the Samoan community (amongst other Pacific communities) in New Zealand and abroad. There is considerable discussion about the need for a Samoan language television channel, but this has yet to come to fruition.

¹³ Auckland offers the Radio Samoa station (1593AM) and 531pi which has a Samoan community language programme.

¹⁴ *Samoa Le Galo* is the Samoan radio programme in Christchurch.

¹⁵ See Niu FM, <http://www.niufm.com/about-us>

¹⁶ The community language programmes are also available for the Cook Islands, Niuean, Tongan, Tuvaluan, Kiribati, Fijian, Solomon Islands and Tokelauan communities in New Zealand.

¹⁷ The Māori have their own Māori television channels: *Māori Television* and *Te Reo*.

Newspapers are another domain where the Samoan language is actively promoted by the Samoan community. Examples of the range of Samoan newspapers which now publish in English, Samoan and/or bilingually include the *Samoa Observer*, *Le Samoa Post*, the *Samoa Nius*, the *Samoa Times* and *Le Manamea*. As noted, these papers are community driven and source news from New Zealand, Samoa and around the world.

The role of the Church in providing spiritual guidance for Pacific families and communities, as a source of identity, and as mediators between the Pacific and the New Zealand ways, has been well documented (Fairbairn-Dunlop and Makisi 2003). When Pacific peoples first migrated to New Zealand, they worshipped together in churches such as the Pacific Island Presbyterian Church (PIPC). Towards the end of the 1970s as Pacific Island communities grew in number, they began to build their own Churches where they could worship in their mother tongues and in their own way (ibid, 34). Anecdotal reports indicate that most Samoan youth are involved in the ‘*autalavou*’ (youth groups) of their respective Churches and participate in combined youth events where their pride in the Samoan language and culture is showcased and shared.

Summary

It is clear that the Samoan language is integral to Samoan identity and culture. Both in Samoa and New Zealand, the importance of the language is highly valued. However, the words of the Samoan language convey more than just communication. They symbolize the respect which is central to the Samoan culture and *faasamoa* by which relationships are maintained between peoples and communities. For example, the *vā fealoa’i* (relationships between people), the institution of the ‘*āiga*’ (family) and the relationships within it, are all nurtured through the use of the Samoan language.

In Samoa, the Samoan language is used in every domain of daily life. However, there are fears that English may be gaining in prominence, due to the influence of schooling, travel, the media, and the increased spread of technology. For example, television, movies and DVDs, and the internet are now available in even the most isolated villages of Samoa, which in the past, have been the ‘bastions’ of Samoan

language use. This is a concern to the ongoing maintenance and enrichment of the Samoan language in Samoa – the homeland.

The fact that Samoans are a minority group in New Zealand makes language maintenance and use a more difficult proposition, especially given the dominance of English in schooling and every day life. However, the extreme commitment and resilience of the Samoan community in their efforts to teach and maintain the language, has been clearly shown for example, in the *Ā'oga 'Āmata* and in the radio and print. Furthermore, these efforts have been supported by Government measures, such as the introduction of the Samoan language (and other Pacific languages) in the school curriculum, and the training of Samoan language teachers.

At the same time and despite these efforts, the data shows that the Samoan language has been declining in New Zealand in the past decade, and that this decline appears to be in the New Zealand-born population. The exploration of factors contributing to this decline is the focus of this thesis.

CHAPTER 3: *ILOILOGA O TUSITUSIGA* *Literature Review*

A leai se gagana, ua leai se aganuu. A leai se aganuu, ona pō lea o le nuu.

When you lose your language, you lose your culture and when there is no longer a living culture, darkness descends on the village (Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, 1996, p.1).

Introduction

It is widely accepted that languages naturally evolve, and that not all those spoken around the world today will endure (UNESCO, 2008). Furthermore, not all languages are spoken – New Zealand Sign Language is recognised as one of three official languages in New Zealand. Language shift is a natural process and all languages go through some sort of shift. Nevertheless, research shows that some languages are being lost at such a rapid pace that intervention is necessary to reduce and reverse these losses (UNESCO, 2008). It is estimated that 80 percent of the world's 6000 or so living languages will die within the next century, and between 20 and 50 percent of these languages are no longer spoken by children (Crystal, 1997; Denham, 2005). For those languages that are still spoken by children, the question most relevant for this thesis is, for how much longer?

This chapter reviews the global literature on language shift and maintenance and more specifically, that related to migrant and minority language communities. This is followed by a review of the literature of the Samoan language and its maintenance in New Zealand which sets the context for the study. In New Zealand, Samoan is both a migrant and minority language. In this chapter the terms 'heritage language' and 'mother tongue' are used and refer to the minority or migrant language.

Part 1: Language

Languages are fundamental to any society as a means of communicating. Words are the principal carriers of knowledge and wisdom, history and culture, and can transcend time to connect the past, the present and the future; "through language we receive the cultural heritage of the past, and by language we shape it anew, reworking, selecting, rejecting, recreating it together with other people" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981, p. 2). It is also through language that a large extent of this cultural heritage is passed onto subsequent generations.

Language as a right

Global frameworks today emphasize language as a right. Although the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* does not provide a right to language (Gallegos, 2007), the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* outlines in Articles 13, 14 and 15 that indigenous people have the right to use their languages. Article 13 stipulates that 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 gives indigenous people the right “to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages”, and Article 16 states that “indigenous peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own languages” (United Nations, 2008, p.7).

Minority groups also have rights to use their languages. The *Convention on the Rights of the Child*¹⁸ (CRC) is one such framework. It confirms language as being an essential element of social justice. Articles 29 and 30 clearly protect children’s rights to their language(s):

Article 29.1.(c)

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own.

Article 30

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.

Article 1(3) of UNESCO’s Constitution calls for the preservation of the “fruitful diversity of the cultures and educational systems of the states members of the

¹⁸ The CRC is a legally binding document which has been ratified by 194 countries including every member of the United Nations except for Somalia and the United States. See United Nations Treaty Collection (UNTC), Convention on the Rights of a Child. See <http://treaties.un.org/Pages/Home.aspx?lang=en>

Organization”, promoting linguistic diversity globally (and hence protection for endangered languages), as well as in education (UNESCO, 2008, p.1).

Although these frameworks provide certain rights to languages, how can language shift be reversed when global factors influence minority languages everyday? With the spread of English globally, speakers of minority language communities run the risk of becoming monolingual in English.

Language shift and language maintenance

The study of language shift is well documented (Fasold, 1984; Fishman, 1972, 1991; Hulsen et al., 2002). Linguists have tried to understand why language shift occurs and ascertain ways to reverse language shift. Reasons influencing shift from the heritage language to the dominant language may be economic, political, demographic, or due to the lack of awareness that the language may be endangered (Siilata & Barkhuizen, 2004).

Two major types of language shift are outlined in the literature: forced, or external, and voluntary, or internal (Otsuka, 2007; Shameem, 2000). Forced, or external, shift refers to the imposing of another language other than the mother tongue on a speech community, but also extends to the effects of globalisation and even political pressure (UNESCO, 2008). Examples of forced language shift include Hawaiian, Māori and Moriori (Otsuka, 2007). By contrast, voluntary, or internal, language shift denotes a personal choice made by the speaker of a language to adopt another or often dominant language over the mother tongue. The reasons for voluntary shift usually surround notions of prestige and socioeconomic success. In most languages, language shift can be completed by the third and fourth generations (Fishman, 2001).

However, widespread research (Baker, 2006; Cummins, 2003; Fishman, 2001) also shows that language shift is further complicated than a binary position – that examples of language shift also include the “killing off” of minority languages through policy practices, and the deliberate neglect and hegemony by world languages and majority cultures in power. For example, ‘English only policies’ have been enacted all around the world, continued punishments and prohibitions for speaking first languages in Schools around the Pacific, and the consequent teasing and derogatory terms like “FOBs” and “Coconuts” to describe first language Samoan speakers in New Zealand; as well as the lack of formal recognition and place of

minority languages in education and the public domain in many countries around the Pacific and western nations like New Zealand.

Research into language shift usually asks three questions: why does shift occur, how does it occur, and what happens to the language skills? (Hulsen et al., 2002). The latter refers to the structural linguistic aspects of language loss.

A language can be described as safe,¹⁹ endangered,²⁰ moribund,²¹ or extinct²² (Crystal, 2000 as cited in Gallegos, 2007; Otsuka, 2007). Language shift can be illustrated using a continuum where one end represents a language that is safe, and the opposite end refers to a language which is completely neglected or lost, an 'extinct' or 'dead language'. The movement in between both ends is language shift (Gal, 1979; Veltman, 1991), and is usually categorized as the shift from using the mother tongue to using the dominant language, which more often than not has been English (Eggington, 2003; UNESCO, 2008). The global status that the English language has acquired will be discussed later on in this chapter.

Based on these ideas, small language communities, including migrant language communities, will always be struggling with trying to maintain their languages amongst their communities (Fishman, 1996). Most literature shows that a constant effort is needed by these speakers to avoid the loss of their languages. Such efforts are usually the results of communities collectively deciding to continually use the language(s) they have traditionally used (Fasold, 1984) on a scale ranging from maintaining the language in everyday practice, to making efforts to formalize the language at a Governmental level (Fishman, 1996a).

Why does language shift occur?

The literature indicates three main reasons for language shift. First, the number of speakers decline. Second, the domains in which the languages are used decline. The third reason is the negative attitudes a community may have towards their language.

The use of the term 'domain' here refers to the areas where a language may be used. Schmidt-Rohr (1933) advanced the term 'domain' when he differentiated nine main

¹⁹ A language which is safe is spoken and conserved by a speaker for the whole duration of their life.

²⁰ This is when a language has few or no children learning the language, and the youngest 'good' speakers are young adults.

²¹ A moribund language is one where there are only a handful of good speakers left.

²² When there are no speakers left at all.

domains for language use namely: the family, the playground and the street, the school, the Church, literature, the press, the military, the courts and the Government bureaucracy (see Fishman, 1972).

The size and composition of the speaking community are without doubt fundamental factors in assessing the vitality of a language (Otsuka & Wong, 2007). Clearly, it is of grave concern when the numbers of a population increase and the percentage of competent speakers in the community language declines. In bilingual or multilingual²³ communities, these declines take place when speakers who have the capacity to choose which language to use, do so to the detriment of the mother tongue (Gal, 1979). As Mühlhäuser (1992) cautions, language shift is most prevalent in migrant communities, especially those who have larger numbers living away from the homeland. Gal (1979) produced evidence that the correlation between language use and age is to be interpreted as an indication of changes over time (see Fasold, 1984, p.221). On the contrary, Lieberman (1980) argues generational differences do not always denote changes through time, but rather may reflect the effects of age grading (see Otsuka & Wong, 2007). For example, speakers may acquire the language while they are young and achieve proficiency as they grow. In research of migrant communities, such as those in Australia, a child's willingness to use their mother tongue may decrease with age, particularly if they are deprived of the chance to learn their languages in other domains such as education (Pauwels, 2005). Therefore, the long term fate of these languages rests on efforts to maintain the language and use it in as many domains as possible.

A most detrimental development for any language is the reduction of the functional domains where a language can be used (Fishman, 1972; Mühlhäuser, 1992). According to Fasold (1984), when a community begins to start using a new language in domains that were previously reserved for the old one, this is an indicator of language shift.

Whilst studies such as Schmidt-Rohr (1933)²⁴ have added additional domains like the workplace (Mak, 1935) or argued that fewer would be sufficient such as Frey (1945) who proposed that the home, school and church were sufficient domains in

²³ Speakers are as proficient in one language as they are in other languages, and have as much knowledge or control over one as the others. This is different from 'bilingualism' which refers to being able to produce grammatical sentences in 'two' languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981).

²⁴ See Fishman (1972).

his analysis of Amish (Fishman, 2001, p.93), much research on multilingual behaviour emphasises the family domain as crucial for studying language use (Parasher, 1980). For Fishman (2001), multilingualism frequently begins within the family and depends upon the family for encouragement not protection. He further states that the importance of the family domain can also be attributed to the relationship between language maintenance and intergenerational transmission of the mother tongue (Fishman, 1991). Garrett (2004) sees the transmission of the mother tongue as a central concern. Here a study by Kulick (1992) of the Taiap language in Gapun has resonance. Kulick found that adult speakers of Taiap had created a situation where their children had no motivation to speak Taiap and were not rewarded for this. Not realising their role in creating this situation, Taiap parents had been quick to blame their children for refusing to learn or use the Taiap language. The importance of the home or family domain for passing on heritage languages is further supported by Fasold (1984), who contends that the two most important domains are the home and the schools, and that institutional support can impact whether a language is maintained or not.

Research shows that in communities that undergo some sort of language shift, the older speakers tend to use the minority language more, whereas the younger revert to the dominant language (Fasold, 1984; Pauwels, 2005). These findings have been reinforced by David et al. (2003) who studied the migrant Punjabi Sikh community resident in Malaysia, aiming to document similarities and differences in language maintenance, with particular reference to age. The age range in this study was 19 to 70 years. They found that the Punjabi language spoken by the Sikh community was experiencing a shift towards English or a mixture of English and Punjabi, not only in their homes, but also outside their homes. The younger respondents registered lesser competency in their mother tongues in comparison to the older generation Sikhs. These findings support Fishman's proposal that the home does encourage the maintenance of the language, but cannot be relied upon to protect the language (Fishman, 2001). According to this study, language maintenance efforts must focus on the home, but what happens outside of the home is also important.

Another stage of language shift relates to the adverse attitudes some communities have towards the minority language, along with a favourable attitude towards the dominant language (Fasold, 1984). In a recent study of Sudanese-Australian Youth,

Hatoss and Sheely (2009) found that although the youth perceived their mother tongue useful for expressing their identity, and as a vehicle to maintaining their social networks in Australia as well as back in Africa, the English language was perceived more positively. The reasons were that English enabled them to connect them with other African tribes, aided their settling into the host country, and because English was seen to be a most prestigious international language. Wardhaugh (2010), amongst others, reported that people tend to give more prestige to the language that is spoken by the majority or those who are identified as being the powerful group in society. The other language, in this case usually the migrant language, will be accorded low prestige and some may even deny knowledge of that language. Mufwene (2002) argues against the view that prestige alone can lead to the favouring of one language over another. He proposes that factors such as particular benefits derived from the use of a language, especially economic benefits, are more influential. If these 'other' benefits do not accrue, Mufwene believes people will keep to the languages they have traditionally spoken. He sees language choice to be an individual matter:

...languages have no lives that are independent of their speakers. Therefore languages do not kill languages; their own speakers do, in giving them up, although they themselves are victims of changes in the socio-economic ecologies in which they evolve (p.175).

Jones and Morris (2009) bring another contemporary perspective in their study of parents' language valuing in the minority language socialisation of young children in Wales. They found that children's language practice and socialisation were highly dependent on the value placed on the Welsh language by their parents. Jones & Morris theorised that parents who valued the Welsh language highly, were more likely to create chances and allow for their children's Welsh language socialisation within the home than those who did not value the Welsh language so highly. They emphasised that a qualitative lens must be used to research and fully understand language shift and maintenance, and that parents' language values must be included in these studies because a child's language values were highly dependent on the value their parent's place on their mother tongue.

What has been lacking in much research to date is a qualitative investigation of the perceptions and views of language shift held by the different groups in the

communities being researched. The views of the younger generations - who will be the future users and promoters of the language - must be sought, but also the views of the older generations, the group which, it is argued, will teach and pass on the languages. Understanding the views and perceptions of these groups is integral to understanding why and how language shift occurs, and in turn how a language can be maintained.

Bilingualism

With the spread of English, many societies in the world are now bilingual or multilingual. While bilingual or multilingual situations vary amongst the different contexts around the world, there are two extremes. At one end, there are communities where multilingualism is valued highly, such as the speakers of Tukano from Amazonia, who speak up to ten languages. At the other end are situations where language shift and sometimes language death occur. Although bilingualism or multilingualism does not always directly contribute to language shift, in the cases where language shift is preceded by wide-spread bilingualism, Garrett (2004) suggests “it may give way abruptly and surprisingly rapidly to monolingualism” (p.53).

The merits of bilingualism have been extensively researched. Peal and Lambert (1962) found certain cognitive benefits in being bilingual: ten year old bilingual children from Montreal French schools were found to have performed better on verbal and non verbal intelligence tests than their monolingual counterparts (Peal & Lambert, 1962, as cited in Smith, 2004). In spite of this, bilingualism is not always viewed favourably. In some of Fishman’s earlier work (1948), he documented parents’ perceptions of bilingualism, but with reference to learning another language other than English. He remarks that some parents at the time still believed that learning another language had detrimental effects. Their concerns were that a new language would ruin their children’s English accent, which would then ruin their chances of employment (Fishman, 1948, as cited in Fishman, 2007, p. 71). Jorgenson (2003) who studied cases of Danish and English bilingualism in Denmark claims that bilingual education is often discarded and cites Lund (1998) as his authority:

...school beginners are unable to cope with the development of associations related to two different languages at a time when their vocabulary increases rapidly, and when they have to perform the great leap forward of reaching literacy (p.30, as cited in Jorgenson, 2003, p.78, his translation).

In multilingual societies particularly, bilingualism may often be replaced by passive bilingualism where older generation speakers of the mother tongue (usually grandparents) may speak to their grandchildren in their indigenous language but the children reply back in the dominant language. Often times also, a 'diglossic' situation arises with a separation of languages within a society. This separation usually entails having a 'high' language which is the language of official communications and a 'low' language which is reserved for certain functions, circumstances or domains (Hamers & Blanc, 1989, as cited in Gallegos, 2007). In this situation the younger generation speakers often become more proficient in the new language, to the detriment of their mother tongues (Gallegos, 2007).

What is lost when a language is lost?

As noted, a language serves many functions. It does not exist for its own sake, nor is it limited to just a tool to communicate information (Nhat, 1994). Languages serve to express facts, ideas, or events and knowledge about the world that people share. In addition, the words we utter also reflect the attitudes, beliefs and opinions not only of ourselves, but of others (Kramsch, 2008, p.3).

Identity

Much of the literature states that language and identity are inextricably linked (Miller, 2000; Zentella, 1997). Language is so fundamental to human life that everything around us is conceptualised by language (Midori, 2001). Norton suggests that poststructuralist theories of language²⁵ build on, but are separate from, structuralist theories such as Saussure (1966) which focus on the meaning of signs and the signifying practices linguistic communities have that give value to the signs in a language (Norton, 1999, p.1). However, according to post-structuralists, these concepts cannot account for the struggles over the social meanings which can be qualified by signs in any given language. In their view, not only is language viewed

²⁵ See for example Bourdieu (1991; 1997); Hall (1997); Weedon (1997), as cited in Norton (1999).

as a neutral means of communication, but “is understood with reference to its social meaning, in a frequently inequitable world” (ibid).

The link between language and identity is so strong, that the “destruction of a language is the destruction of a rooted identity” (Fishman, 1991, p.4). This link is illustrated by Zentella (1997) in her study of the importance of Spanish in constructing the identity of the Puerto Rican people. Zentella claims that although scholars try to broaden the definition of the Puerto Rican identity, language is indispensable. She cites Rosario (1983) who states that “being Puerto Rican entails the live conservation of the common language of our people” (Rosario, 1983, as cited in Zentella, 1997, p.305). The relationship between language and identity is not only evident in indigenous communities, as discussed above, but also in migrant and minority groups. An example here is Hatoss and Sheely’s (2009) study which confirmed the interconnectedness of language and identity. In this study, respondents stated that their mother tongue was integral to their expression of identity and for maintaining their social networks not only in Australia - their new home- but also in Africa (p.142).

Despite the strong arguments claiming the necessary function language plays in the construction of ethnic identity, Edwards (1996) proposes that language is not a necessary component to retain identity. Rather, he sees identity to be a multifaceted concept, and that language is but one of a number of indicators of identity (Edwards, 1996, as cited in Ngaha, 2007, p.31). In other words, identity does not rely on just one indicator, but several overlapping ones. There is a deep connection between language and identity, however complex this connection may be.

Culture

Research also indicates that language is also a vital component of culture, and using a language not only ensures the survival of that language, but also the related culture. Thaman (1998) has defined culture as a:

...shared way of living of a group of people, which includes their accumulated knowledge and understandings, skills and values, as expressed and constructed in their language, which is perceived by them to be unique and meaningful (Thaman, 1998, as cited in Taufe’ulungaki, 2005, p.22).

In Durham's view:

Language is the primary medium through which the members of a given community perceive and understand the world...that a relationship exists between the exterior world as we perceive it and the linguistic form of our thoughts and of our culture - makes of language at one and the same time the mirror of a culture and its instrument of analysis and creation (Durham, 1980, p.221).

Therefore, there is a universally held view that 'culture' acknowledges that language is embedded in culture (Taufe'ulungaki, 2005). Culture cannot exist without the language, and without the language, there is no culture.

So, without the language, there will be no greetings, curses, praises, laws, literature, songs, riddles, proverbs, wisdom, prayers. Fishman (2007) notes:

...the most important relationship between language and culture that gets to the heart of what is lost when you lose a language, is that most of the culture is in the language and is expressed in the language (p.81).

Baker and Jones (1998) sum up this relationship as follows - "the language and the culture of an ethnic group are intertwined as are heart and mind in a flourishing body" (p. 115 as cited in Goldring, 2006, p.15). Fishman (2007) notes that there are various views on what is lost when a language is lost. For example, 'an outsider' looking in on a culture as a non-member, would suggest that there exists an 'indexical relationship' between language and culture: "a language long associated with a culture is best able to express most easily, most exactly, most richly, with more appropriate over-tones, the concerns, artefacts, values and interests of that culture" (p.81). In a similar vein, Kramsch's (1988) comments that language is a system of signs that have a cultural value, goes hand in hand with the view that language encapsulates cultural reality. Samoan writers Manase, Luaao and Fiamalua (2007) describe the fact that the majority of youth in American Samoa now prefer to speak English as both a loss of the Samoan language but also the culture.

Value

In Fishman's view, if members of a culture were asked what their language meant to them, they would use words such as the 'sanctity' of their language:

...when people tell you that there is a cultural view of how that language came about, that it came to be when the earth was created, when the worlds were created, when

heaven and earth was created, when humanity was created, they are giving you what you might think of as a myth, but the importance of it is beyond its truth value (Fishman, 2007, p.82)

Secondly, they would talk about kinship, the language that they first heard, the language their parents spoke to them and the language that their community spoke to them when they were children. Fishman (2007) also proposes that when people talk about their language, they also talk about the moral obligation they have for their language(s) – the need for them to maintain their language(s):

There is a rarer...aspect of what people tell you about their language. 'I should do something. I should do more for it, I haven't done the right thing by it. I'm glad I'm working for it', as if there were a kind of moral commitment here and moral imperative. It is a value (p.83).

Globalisation and English

Given the influences of rapid globalisation, it is not surprising that the English language is encroaching into the everyday lives of people the world over, as seen in the movement of language, ideas and cultural products such as art, music, fashion, and IT communication (Eckert et al., 2004). Crystal (1997) poses two ways for a language to achieve a global status. First, by being made the official language of a country and serving as the means to communicate in high level domains such as Government, the courts, the media, and the educational system. English has special status in almost seventy countries including Ghana, Nigeria and the Pacific nation of Vanuatu. Second, if that language becomes a priority in a country's foreign language teaching. In this case, it is likely that this will be the language children are taught in when they begin school. On this point, Crystal (1997) notes that English is now taught as a second language in over 100 countries and in his view, has now become a global language. Jorgenson (2003) concurs with the notion of English as being a 'world language', and has suggested that English has become the global language in the world that is today, one of monodialectalism, monolingualism, and monoculturalism.

Krauss (1992) sees the status of the English language as having a negative influence on the maintenance of mother tongue vernaculars. This point is evidenced in the Eckert et al. (2004) Papua New Guinea study. Briefly, in the Papua New Guinea

colonisation experience in the late 1800s,²⁶ English became the language of instruction and of the ruling class. During these years, the colonisers developed Tok Pisin, a pidgin language, so as to be able to communicate with the Papua New Guinea people. Not surprisingly, Papua New Guinea's indigenous languages came to be weakened as people began to assign more prestige to the new Tok Pisin (Eckert et al., 2004).

Despite these changes, Eckert et al. (2004) also argue that English may not be the 'killer language' as sometimes claimed. They suggest the 'neutrality' of English, and that English is merely a means for communicating with more people. Eckert et al. use the German language as an example to show that while Germany has its own political system and written language, it borrows English words and incorporates these as 'loan words' into the German language. They argue that even though English is making a visible impact, it has not resulted in the loss of the German language.

This is a problematic assumption. This example of language shift does not correlate with the examples of languages, such as the Celtic languages in Western Europe and many South American languages, which, it is claimed, have died as a result of the impact of colonisation. On this point, Mufwene (2002) also draws attention to the ways the colonial interactions can lead to the birth of new languages such as the Romance languages, pidgins and creoles. Mufwene suggests however, that it is not always the colonised populations that lose their languages, but in fact, sometimes it is the colonists and colonisers that do, as is the case with Norman French in England, or Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi (p.165). While it is accepted that cultures, identities and languages change and adapt to changing times, the role and value of language and what is contained in language when it is lost, is often difficult to accept.

Part 2: Research on Samoan language maintenance in New Zealand

Research on Samoan language maintenance in New Zealand is not a new field of enquiry. In earlier studies, the Samoan language appeared to be maintained relatively well. Fairbairn-Dunlop's (1981) study found high levels of Samoan language maintenance and she attributed this to the fact that the Samoan people had experienced a relatively short contact period compared with Māori for example.

²⁶ Note, by the British and later the Australians.

Moreover, migration was taking place at a time when New Zealand was more accepting of cultural diversity. Third, the *faasamoa* was strongly maintained, due to the steady and high migration levels of Samoan migrants from Samoa. In her sample, 78 percent of the New Zealand-born Samoans (i.e. children of migrants) registered as competent Samoan speakers.

Now, nearly thirty years later, what is the picture? The most recent and comprehensive study on the status of Pacific languages in New Zealand is the Pasifika Languages of Manukau Project, the aims of which were “to investigate the use of and attitudes to the four main Pacific languages in the Manukau region, and to contribute to their maintenance”.²⁷ The study found that the four language groups - Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islands Māori and Niuean - were all undergoing similar patterns of language shift. Further, that monolingualism in English was age-graded, that is, more of the younger speakers spoke English, and fewer of the older speakers. While monolingualism in English was far more advanced for the Cook Island participants, and least for the Samoan group, the Samoan and Tongan participants showed signs of following the same path as the Niuean and Cook Island sample (Taumoefolau et al., 2002).

Researchers propose that the ability of Pacific youth in New Zealand to speak and understand a Pacific language is rapidly declining, and that a greater proportion of older and middle aged Samoan speakers register proficiency in the language compared with younger respondents (see McFall-McCaffery & McCaffery, 2009; Starks, 2005; Taumoefolau et al., 2002). Findings from a study carried out in the Indo-Fijian teenage immigrant community in Wellington were that the age of migration and the length of residence in New Zealand were the factors most closely related to losing proficiency in Fiji Hindi (Shameem, 2000, p.53).

Attitudes to language

The linguistic attitudes of the community members, or how a community feels about their language, are an important parameter in language maintenance. Such attitudes are historical and cultural constructions (Derhemi, 2002) and can ultimately determine the fate of their language here in New Zealand. On this point, Samoan linguist Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001) proposes that “the way we perceive the world,

²⁷ See Bell, Davis, Starks, and Taumoefolau (2001); Taumoefolau et al. (2002, p. 16).

and our place in the sun, is determined very much by the linguistic values placed upon our cultures by our languages” (p.203).

In the Pasifika Languages of Manukau Project, over 64 percent of participants believed that speaking Samoan was essential to being Samoan. At the same time, however, half of this group noted their skills in speaking Samoan were weakening (Starks et al., 2005, p. 2195). The participants in Keddell’s (2006) study of factors influencing Samoan-Pakeha²⁸ people’s feelings of identity in New Zealand, said they felt a pressure to constantly prove their ‘Samoan-ness’ to other Samoans (p.5).

Language and Identity

Anae (1998) and Macpherson (2001) propose there is a difference in the identities constructed by Samoan youth born outside of their homelands. In their view, no longer do the majority of those born in New Zealand regard themselves as ‘Samoan’. This is because the Samoan identity in their view refers to the migrant identities their parents brought with them from Samoa – the Samoan identity which “linked them to nuclear families, extended families, villages, districts and religious faith which defined and organised the social, economic and political realities of daily existence” (Macpherson, 2001, p.70). On this point, Tiatia (1998) writes that young Samoans in New Zealand not only struggle to maintain the Samoan language, some are not even afforded the luxury of having Samoan as their first language. She sees this struggle to reflect an intergenerational conflict wherein young Samoans find themselves ‘caught between cultures’. In Tiatia’s view there is a struggle between the Samoan culture, which prescribes an understanding and speaking of the mother tongue, and the New Zealand dominant culture which requires that English be spoken.

Anae further argues that a ‘sub-culture’ of Samoans is developing in New Zealand which she terms ‘*tautala NZ-born*’. In her view, New Zealand-born participants who are not fluent in the Samoan language still regard the Samoan language as the most important determinant of being Samoan. Yet, even without the language, they still ‘feel Samoan’ (Anae, 1998). This issue of what makes a ‘Samoan’ is of importance to this research on the maintenance of the Samoan language.

²⁸ Samoan-Pakeha refers to those of Samoan and European descent.

Spolsky's warning that a community that acquires English risks losing their culture, identity and traditional values, is a salient reminder given the central place of the Samoan language to the Samoan culture (Spolsky, 1988). For example, Tamasese has described the language as the lifeblood of the Samoan culture (2005b; 2008b) and Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001) writes that "the relationship between language and culture is like oxygen to human survival – without one, the other will not survive" (p. 197). The Samoan language has also been likened to the *'afa* (sennit) which binds one's identity to the Samoan culture, and the vehicle by which relationships with one another, God and nature are established and maintained (Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, 1996).

Be that as it may, Starks (2005) states that a language shift from Samoan to English in New Zealand is likely to occur given the strong feelings of the younger participants that English is needed if they are to succeed socially and academically in the New Zealand context (p.537).

Bilingualism

Starks (2005) believes that community languages should not be seen to compete with English. However if languages like Samoan can co-exist with English in the form of bilinguals, then English may be less of a threat, and community members may show more of an interest in maintaining Samoan. Otsuka (2007) reinforces the merits of bilingualism, and suggests a more effective and practical approach would be to advocate for the coexistence of English and the mother tongue. The available New Zealand research suggests that mother tongue maintenance is vital to the academic success for Samoan students, and that students studying in bilingual units are becoming successfully bilingual and bi-literate (see Aukuso, 2002; Esera, 2001, as cited in Siilata & Barkhuizen, 2004).

Domains for Samoan language use

The home and the community

The most important element for maintaining a minority language is that the language be valued, supported and maintained by its own community. Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001) suggests that some members of the Samoan community in New Zealand have unfavourable attitudes towards the Samoan language, which he claims, is a hangover from the beliefs commonly held during the 1960-1980 period. He also notes a

concern that these negative attitudes have been perpetuated in schools as an excuse for not teaching the Pacific languages. There are mixed views on this position.

As discussed, the domains in which a language is used directly influence the maintenance of that language. Spolsky (1988)²⁹ has long urged immigrant groups to maintain their mother tongue in their homes while they, and their children, are learning English, and this has been supported by Taumoefolau et al. (2002) and Starks (2005). However, Starks emphasises that linguists, community members and schools must advocate for the consistent use of community languages in the home, not only when children are learning their language, but throughout their whole childhood years.

Whether the Samoan language is being encouraged and used in the home is the question of particular relevance to this research. Taleni (1996) found that migrant Samoan parents did not foster the Samoan language in their home, but were encouraging their children to speak English because they were confident their children's Samoan would never be lost. Almost ten years later, Starks (2005) supports this view. She reported that 17 percent of her study sample said they had 'some sort of' rule in their household about speaking their language at home. However, only half of this group said they implemented this rule (p. 547). Nhat (1994) cautions however with his study findings, that speaking the mother tongue at home may not necessarily produce proficient young speakers of the Samoan language. Nevertheless, he believes this may help to halt language loss, and that language maintenance efforts need to take place outside of the home as well.

Siilata & Barkhuizen's (2004) study with Samoan and Tongan ten year old students found that communication within these families was predominantly in English, except in cases where parent/s did not understand English. In regard to language maintenance, this is an alarming finding not only because of the youth of these groups, but also because they were recent migrants to New Zealand. Yet already, these families appeared to be registering marked language shift to English. Other study findings were that while participants said they valued their language and wanted to speak it and pass it onto their own children, they saw the acquisition of English as being more advantageous to them (p.15).

²⁹ Spolsky's 1988 report on the Samoan language was prepared for the New Zealand Department of Education.

Samoan parents were the largest group in an early study carried out with non-European parents of pre-schoolers in Newtown, Wellington. Jamieson (1980) found that while parents wanted to pass on their mother tongue to their children, the pressure from the dominance of the English language within New Zealand was too much to ignore. These findings were echoed in Roberts' (1990) study with a sample group of New Zealand-born Chinese couples who had children. Roberts found that the younger the children were, the more likely they were to be monolingual in English, even though their parents registered a high regard for the Cantonese language. Again, if younger generations begin to place a high value on the English language, this will influence the language maintenance of future speaking generations.

Schools and Church

Having Samoan taught in New Zealand schools is a tremendous benefit to language maintenance. Research supports the importance of the school not only in teaching the language, but in adding to the parents' home efforts. Nhat (1994) has noted the importance of ensuring Samoan language use through the whole educational sector. While the *Ā'oga Āmata* has been pivotal in the early years of a Samoan child's linguistic development, Nhat emphasises that the teaching of Samoan should extend through the primary school sector and beyond. Starks (2005) also stresses that community languages³⁰ be promoted in schools before the majority of the community become English dominant. She sees a greater chance of success in maintaining community languages if the home language is supplemented during the primary school years, when she proposes, the majority of the community language speakers still have their community language as their stronger or equal language (p.547).

After 'connection with the homeland', Spolsky (1988) saw the Samoan church as the second key agency in the social and cultural life in New Zealand. However, he notes that these forces alone are not enough to prevent language shift and eventually Samoan language loss (p.15). The importance of the Church to the Samoan people is well documented. For example, in 2001, 90 percent of Samoan people in New Zealand reported an affiliation with a Christian religion (Statistics, 2001). Furthermore, in the majority of the Samoan Churches, services are carried out in the

³⁰ Community languages refer to migrant and minority languages in New Zealand.

Samoan language as are other aspects of Church life – *Ā'oga aso Sā* (Sunday school), *'autalavou* (youth group) and *mafutaga Tinā* (Women's fellowship group).

There is little research on the role of the Church in language maintenance today. Jamieson's research carried out in the 1970s with the Pacific Island Congregational Church (PIC) in Newtown Wellington, found that while some services were conducted in Samoan, the Sunday school was held in English, which at that time, was the language that was common to all of the Pacific community that worshipped there (Jamieson, 1980, p. 108). This research took place before the rapid growth of the EFKS³¹ and other Samoan speaking churches through the 1980s. Shameem (2000) found that at the regular religious and social gatherings of the Indo-Fijian community, which purportedly aimed to help Indo-Fijian teenagers to maintain Fiji Hindi, the adults usually spoke Fiji Hindi while the teenagers mainly spoke English.

Institutional support

Research has been carried out with the Samoan community and other migrant communities in New Zealand which have been experiencing similar states of language shift and decline. Holmes' (1997) evaluation of the research on language shift proposed New Zealand had areas of social responsibility to migrant or community languages. She recommended this was especially so for minority communities, whose languages were in peril because of the overwhelming influences of the English language in New Zealand. Holmes emphasised that often these groups were not aware that their languages were in danger. In addition to the responsibility of individual ethnic groups to maintain their languages, Holmes (1997) emphasises that the wider New Zealand society also has a responsibility to develop appropriate policies in areas affecting the languages belonging to the migrant groups.

Summary

While languages go through some sort of shift, some languages experience language shift at a much more rapid pace. Although global frameworks may give rights to languages, minority groups in particular struggle to maintain their languages, both in their own lands as in their new homes. There are various factors

³¹ EFKS – *Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa* is the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, whose origins are traced back to 1830 with the arrival of the London Missionary Society in Samoa.

which influence language shift including the age of speakers and a decline of the numbers of speakers, the reduction of functional domains for language use, and the attitudes groups may develop for their heritage languages in favour of more dominant languages such as English.

While earlier research in New Zealand painted a positive picture of the state of the Samoan language, contemporary research indicates the Samoan language and other Pacific languages in New Zealand are facing a decline. The attitudes Samoan speakers have towards their language, the reduction of domains in which Samoan is used, as well as the dominance of the English language in New Zealand, are all factors influencing Samoan language maintenance in New Zealand. So too is the data which shows that young New Zealand-born Samoans do not feel the need to speak Samoan in order to be Samoan. The English language appears to be creeping into more and more domains, including the home and the Church. According to the research, the Samoan language in New Zealand is a language of elder Samoans. However, it is clear that the Samoan community value the Samoan language highly, and want to maintain it in their new home.

CHAPTER 4: METOTIA

Research Methodology and Process

What matters in the pursuit of indigenous Pacific knowledges is that it survives – and survives because it gives us meaning and belonging. Everything else is clutter
(Tamasese, 2008d, p. 121).

Introduction

To capture the voices of Samoan students, Samoan teachers and Samoan parents – the minority, the voices outside the mainstream – it was decided to use a social phenomenology approach, which is qualitative, pragmatic, interpretative and grounded in the lived experience of people (Marschall & Rossman, 2006). This chapter is in two parts. Part 1 presents the research methodology selected for use in this study and why this was chosen. Part 2 outlines how the research was carried out and some of the questions arising in this process.

Part 1: Methodology

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a research methodology which focuses on people's perceptions, attitudes and beliefs, feelings and emotions, and the meanings people attach to particular objects, events or phenomena. It is concerned with human experience: "a phenomenon is something known to us through our senses (seen, heard, touched, smelled, tasted)" (Denscombe, 1998, p.97). The field of social phenomenology is closely related to the disciplines of sociology, psychology, education, business studies, and health studies, and originates from the social phenomenology of Alfred Schutz (1962).³² It is less concerned with the 'essence of experience' but rather on how humans give meaning to their experiences. The important aspect of social phenomenology is its concern with the ways people interpret social phenomena:

This form of phenomenology retains a concern with things like experience, an interest in everyday life and suspending common sense assumptions in order to provide a description that is true to the way those involved experienced things (Denscombe, 1998, p. 105)

³² See Denscombe (1998) and Patton (2002).

This research falls solidly within the domain of social phenomenology, as the aims are to explore how human beings make sense of experience (their perceptions of the Samoan language) and transform their experience into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning (Patton, 2002, p.104). Social phenomenology is a holistic approach, which explores peoples' values, belief systems, knowledge, and their understandings of the past, the present and the future. This approach is very much in line with the Pacific world view which sees both continuity as well as a relationship between what was, what is now, and what is to come. Patton (2002) has stated that the phenomenon that is the focus of social phenomenological research may be an emotion, a relationship, a program, organisation or even a culture. For this research, the phenomenon in question is the place of the Samoan Language in New Zealand. I chose this research focus because of the reports of language loss in New Zealand today. So the question is then asked, how do Samoan students, Samoan teachers and Samoan parents feel about the place of the Samoan language in New Zealand today?

Key Assumptions

First, according to Phenomenology, everyday reality is a socially constructed system by which people give phenomena a certain order of reality (Levesque-Lopman, 1988). How people interpret their world is due to how they construct their world, and their lived experiences. Our understanding of phenomena is always mediated by our existing knowledge accrued from experience (Eatough & Smith, 2008). In line with this, Samoan and Pacific people are likely to have had different experiences and worldviews to other groups, and to those of the mainstream. As described by Patton (2002):

Initially all our understanding comes from sensory experience of phenomena, but that experience must be described, explicated and interpreted. Yet, descriptions of experiences and interpretations are so intertwined that they often become one. Interpretation is essential to an understanding of experience and the experience includes the interpretation. Thus, phenomenologists focus on how we put together the phenomena we experience in such a way as to make sense of the world and, in doing so, develop a world view (p.106).

Second, within a qualitative and phenomenological research paradigm, the experiences of all individuals involved in the study are taken as significant data in

their own right, “not something to be put to one side in order to identify the universal essence of the phenomenon” (Denscombe, 1998, p.105). Every person has their own realities, their own truths, and these are taken as significant in their own right. What is most important is that all experiences are significant and valid. Denscombe (1998) has noted that these experiences can draw on every facet of routine life and the world around us. The idea of people’s different experiences and values is pertinent to this study. As Tui Atua Tamasese (2008a) writes, Samoans do not see themselves as individual beings, but rather as connected to the cosmos, their ancestors, the seas and the skies:

I am not an individual; I am an integral part of the cosmos. I share divinity with my ancestors, the land, the seas and the skies. I am not an individual, because I share my *tofi* (an inheritance) with my family, my village and my nation. I belong to my family and my family belongs to me. I belong to my village and my village belongs to me. I belong to my nation and my nation belongs to me. This is the essence of my belonging (p.157).

From a phenomenological perspective then, no event or occurrence will be trivial or unimportant. The perceptions of the Samoan students, teachers and parents consulted in this study, will be and are, significant; the intention of this study is for their voices to be heard. The purpose is not to look for universal understandings from these participants, but more to gain an understanding or *verstehen* of a particular situation or context (Willis, 2007). This idea is refined by Schutz (1964) who urges: “...the social sciences should focus on the ways that the life world – that is, the experiential world every person takes for granted – is produced and experienced by members” (Schutz, 1964, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p.138). The research aims are to capture what these three participant groups believe about the Samoan language, as well as their truths and realities, which will influence their future decisions regarding language use.

A third dimension of phenomenology of importance to this study is the assumption that there is an essence or essences to shared experience (Patton, 2002). This means that the phenomenon being experienced is not only experienced on an individual level, but that it is a shared experience. The participants in this study may have different views and experiences, but it is being Samoan and the Samoan language which unites them and is the experience they all share. The different knowledges that

each individual will share in this study, will be bracketed, analysed and compared to identify the essences of the phenomenon – in this case, the essences of the perceptions of the place of the Samoan language in New Zealand today.

Pacific Methodology

The past decade has seen an increase in Pacific scholarship, and considerable advocacy for the use of Pacific research methodologies that are evidence based and culturally appropriate. As Konai Helu-Thaman (2008) notes, Pacific approaches are based on Pacific worldviews, values, knowledge systems and ethical principles. Asiasiga (2007) argues that to fully understand these Pacific world views:

...one has to have an in-depth understanding of Pacific knowledges, which implies an awareness of Pacific cultures. Pacific cultures and therefore Pacific knowledges, have absorbed practices, beliefs, values and ideas from other dominant discourses and ideologies and made them part of their own (p.54).

Smith (1999) has urged the importance of Pacific researchers developing and utilising their Pacific ways of knowing. In her view, this will empower and give political recognition to Pacific people. Smith (1999) also proposes that Māori people have long been researched using western produced theories which have not only dehumanized them, but have privileged western ways of knowing and undervalued the strength and the validity of Māori language, knowledge and culture. Pacific researcher Tui Atua Tamasese (2008c) notes:

Pacific peoples, whether researchers, ethicists or the ordinary person, are searching for and constructing models or theories of their own that can help them as individuals and groups understand their world(s). While some of these models or theories might hold more water than others there is a common drive, whether by rational thought or intuitive learning, to know the Creator/s (or at least His/Her/Their creations), to feel Him/Her, to feel the magic and wonder of His/Her/Their power and love and to do so without arrogance or undue prejudice (p.173).

Sanga (2004) is in agreement and emphasises that all research is based on a set of assumptions. Further, that Pacific people have their own worlds that they influence and control. He also sees Pacific people as diverse and distinct from one another, and different to the mainstream. In acknowledging that Pacific people have different backgrounds, experiences and views, Anae et al. (2001) suggest:

There is no generic 'Pacific community' but rather Pacific peoples who align themselves variously, and at different times, along ethnic, geographic, Church, family, school, age/gender-based, youth/elders, island-born/NZ-born, occupational lines, or a mix of these. Therefore it is important that these various contexts of 'Pacific communities' are clearly defined and demarcated in the research process (p.7).

Sanga proposes that Pacific research is based on specific ideas of time, space, self image and people's attitudes to each another. In the Pacific world view, time is integral in relationships, and one's ancestors are every much part of Pacific worlds and environments. Foliaki (2005) has drawn attention to some commonalities amongst Pacific views including a belief in Christianity, mythology, communal land ownership, genealogical based identity, extended family accountability as well as the importance given to protecting and enhancing Pacific wellbeing. Now that Pacific worldviews and knowledge systems are receiving greater national, regional and global attention, Tupuola (1994) stresses there is a need to move away from the perception that Pacific methodologies are unscholarly. Gegeo (2001) also argues that Pacific people must design and use research strategies grounded in their indigenous methodologies, pedagogies and epistemologies. Although distinct, these processes are intertwined.

Currently, Pacific researchers are exploring and documenting different models of Pacific research. These include: Konai Helu-Thaman's metaphor of Kakala (1992), Teremoana Hodge's Tivaevae Model (2002), Pulotu-Endemann's Fonofale model of Health, Koloto's (2001) Pacific cultural competency framework (HRC, 2005; Koloto, 2003) and Tamasese, Peteru and Waldegrave's documentation of the traditional Fa'afaletui (2005). From another perspective, and as a result of the recognition of the need to use Pacific strategies to address Pacific challenges, a number of guidelines for working with Pacific peoples have been prepared. These include the Pacific Consultation Guidelines of the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA); the Health Research Council (HRC) Guidelines on Pacific Health Research (2005), and the Pasifika Education Research Guidelines of the Ministry of Education (2002).

Anae et al. (2001), who prepared the Education Guidelines note:

The role of Pasifika research is primarily not only to identify and promote a Pacific world view, which should begin by identifying Pacific values, and the way in

which Pacific societies create meaning, structure and construct reality, but complementary to these is the need to also interrogate the assumptions that underpin western structures and institutions that we as Pacific peoples have adopted without much questioning (p.7).

This exercise of researching and recording the way knowledge is produced, shared and used in Pacific communities is necessary because much of the available Pacific research has been underpinned by western values, beliefs, and methodologies (Smith, 1999). Asiasiga (2007) notes :

Pacific research is, at present, framed within a western cultural context, reflecting the position of Pacific peoples/researchers as a minority group on the margins of society (i.e. in a negative context). Decisions about what is considered to be knowledge and what should be researched are made for us not by us. Standpoint theory suggests that the knowledge of those located at the margin rather than the centre is important because they have been 'excluded from ruling relations of power' and the position of exclusion offers quite a different perspective (pp.94-95).

Konai Helu-Thaman (2008) states there are real challenges for Pacific research and contends that there has been a lack of institutional support, and a lack of advocacy by Pacific people of Pacific knowledge and value systems as legitimate systems in the both formal sector and the academy. She also notes that Pacific researchers face the dilemma of advocating for Pacific research, yet they are also a product of western education and research (p.51). This leads to Pacific researchers being in a position of 'straddling two worlds': between the traditional knowledge of the Pacific world, and that of being a migrant and minority in the new world (Asiasiga, 2007, p.175). On this point, Mila-Schaaf and Hudson (2009) propose the idea of a 'negotiated space', a place where mediation between western and Pacific ways of knowing can take place. They describe the 'negotiated space' as a "junction of intersecting interests and negotiations in between different ways of knowing and meaning making...a negotiated space between epistemologies" (p.7). This space they argue, provides a place where Pacific people can "establish connections – as well as 'breaks' – from dominant Western ways of thinking" (p.8).

Because this study aims to dialogue with members of the Samoan community, the Guidelines for Pacific Health Research (2005) are a useful guide as to how to

conduct this dialogue. The focus of these guidelines is health research, however the principles outlined are fundamental to forming/maintaining ethical relationships with Pacific peoples in a wider range of contexts. These principles include the importance of *fāiā* (building relations through kinship or affinity)/*vā fealoalo* 'i (relationships between people) and *faaloalo* (respect).³³ Based on these principles, this study will employ the *talanoa* methodology as a culturally appropriate way to carry out the research.

Talanoa

In the Pacific, to *talanoa* means to talk together. *Talanoa* stems from cultures in which oratory and verbal negotiation have deep traditional roots (Vaioleti, 2003, as cited in Lātū, 2009, p.21). The *talanoa* represents a direct contrast with a question-answer type survey methodology and is a strategy most Pacific people are familiar with, although some may have local variations. Vaioleti (2006) sees the *talanoa* to be part of the phenomenological family, which I support. The *talanoa* method can include conversations between people, family and village deliberations, reconciliation processes, and cultural and ceremonial processes. As a form of face-to-face semi-structured interview, the *talanoa* removes distance between the researcher and participants, and encourages a priority to relationship building so that participants know that what they are sharing in the *talanoa* is significant, important and valued. This is in line with the western notion of rapport – unless rapport is achieved, there will be no *mo'oni* (true) information (ibid).

To *talanoa* with my research participants enabled me to accord them the *faaloalo* (respect) they deserved and which is central to the *aganuu Samoa* (Samoan culture). The flexible pacing of the *talanoa* also ensured there was sufficient time for participants to raise their own issues and concerns and for these to be acknowledged – so respecting the multiple realities which, I knew, the participants would bring to these discussions. The *talanoa* also resonates with the culture and the traditions of the Samoan people, which as noted, are deeply rooted in words and oral communication. Finally the *talanoa* are about nurturing the social bonds, and fostering relationships built on mutual respect. When a person comes to *talanoa*, they bring with them their past, their present, and their future hopes and aspirations.

³³ See Appendix 3 for a full outline of the HRC Ethical Guidelines for Pacific Health Research.

In sum, to *talanoa* was the most appropriate way for me to build a relationship of mutual respect with my sample participants not only as individuals, but as Samoans.

According to Vaioleti (2006), in a good *talanoa* encounter, *tala* (command, tell, relate, inform, announce) “holistically intermingles researchers’ and participants’ emotions, knowing and experiences”, and *noa* creates the space and the conditions to do this. Furthermore, the *noa* creates the opportunity to probe, question, challenge, clarify and realign views (p.24). A *talanoa* session may last up to several hours, and although this may appear to an observer to be meaningless chatter, highly significant information can be shared in this way. When one enters into *talanoa* there is always an agenda – to talk, chat or discuss an important issue. However, the difference is that there is no rigid framework to these conversations. Vaioleti (2006) proposes:

With *Ko ‘eku ha’u keta talanoa ki he...* (I have come so that we can discuss/talk about/converse about...) as the beginning of most Talanoa, its purpose then should be clear, and will guide the encounter between researchers and participants (p.26).

Ethics

Before the field work and *talanoa* took place, approval from the Human Ethics Committee (HEC) at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) was sought in accordance with the HEC policy of VUW (See Appendix 1).

Part 2: Research process

Sample

As mentioned, this thesis is a qualitative, exploratory study rather than a quantitative one which focuses on large sample sizes selected at random. As Patton (2002) describes, small sample sizes are selected purposively for in depth study. The aim of this study is to present a small number of in depth and information-rich cases which would shed light on the questions which underpin this study.

In terms of sample size, the aims were to have a larger student sample (usually the unheard and unasked voice), and a smaller teacher and parent group. For the students group, I anticipated up to eight students. The requirements were that this group identified as Samoan and were studying towards a National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) in Years 11, 12 or 13. I hoped for a balance by male and female, a mix of students born in Samoa and those born in New Zealand,

and by those studying Samoan and those not studying Samoan. I saw these factors to be of importance in Samoan language learning and maintenance.

For the parent interviews, I aimed for up to six Samoan parents, each of whom had children/child attending that school. The teacher sample was to comprise those Samoan teachers at that school (2).

The *talanoa* aims were to capture the views of these three groups – not so much to compare these, but to contrast and identify commonalities and differences in views which could be used for further discussion and planning.

It was initially intended to involve the students' family members for additional perspectives on familial influences on the students' perspectives, however given the nature and size of this study, this would have led to an unmanageable large sample size.

The school

A co-educational secondary school³⁴ located in the Hutt Valley in Wellington was chosen as the sample school because it fit the criteria of having both male and female students and Samoan as a school subject at NCEA level.

The Hutt City, which was chosen as the school area, has a similar ethnic breakdown to New Zealand as a whole. While the majority of the Hutt City population identify as European, Pacific people comprise 12 percent of the total population (Hutt City Council, 2007). The school is a Decile³⁵ 2 school with a total school roll of 727 students. Currently there are 56 teaching staff and 23 ancillary/teacher aide staff. Two of the teaching staff are Samoan – one is the Samoan language teacher, and the other teaches Mathematics.

As seen in Table 2, this school has a very culturally diverse population. At 24.9 percent, the Pacific students are the third largest group behind European (26.7 percent) and Māori students (26.3 percent). Samoan students form 70.2 percent of the Pacific Group. School records show that just over a third of the students who

³⁴ Initial ideas were to carry out research in two schools-the Hutt Valley and Porirua. It was decided that more in-depth information could be gained from focussing on one school for this exploratory study.

³⁵ The decile rating of a school relates to the economic and the social factors of the community surrounding the school. Decile 1 schools have the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds, while decile 10 schools have the highest proportion of students from high socio-economic backgrounds.

identify as Samoan are studying the Samoan language as a subject, and almost a quarter are studying it at NCEA level (Years 11-13).

Table 2 *Secondary school roll by ethnic group*

Ethnic Group	Percentage	Percentage of total students	Number	Total Students
EUROPEAN		26.7%		194
MĀORI		26.3%		191
TOTAL PACIFIC		24.9%		181
<i>Samoan</i>	70.2%		<i>127</i>	
<i>Cook Islands</i>	<i>9.9%</i>		<i>18</i>	
<i>Tongan</i>	<i>9.4%</i>		<i>17</i>	
<i>Tokelauan</i>	<i>6.1%</i>		<i>11</i>	
<i>Fijian</i>	<i>2.8%</i>		<i>5</i>	
<i>Niuean</i>	<i>1.1%</i>		<i>2</i>	
<i>Other</i>	<i>0.5%</i>		<i>1</i>	
TOTAL ASIAN		13.9%		101
<i>South East Asian</i>	<i>38.7%</i>		<i>39</i>	
<i>Indian</i>	<i>29.7%</i>		<i>30</i>	
<i>Chinese</i>	<i>25.7%</i>		<i>26</i>	
<i>Other</i>	<i>5.9%</i>		<i>6</i>	
OTHER		8.2%		60
TOTAL		100%		727

Note: These are the categories used by the school to record ethnicity data.

The school has a Samoan Parents Association (SPA) with as reported, a minimum of six members at any time. This association meets regularly to discuss issues relating to their own children and Samoan students as a whole at the school. These meetings are also attended by the Samoan teachers. The school also has a Polynesian Cultural Group (known as the Poly Group) which is designated one period of school time a week to meet, discuss, and learn about Pacific cultures, as well as learn Samoan, Tongan, Tokelauan and Cook Islands cultural dances and chants. The allocation of school time highlights the school's support and commitment to its Pacific students, as Poly Groups are usually held outside of school hours. The Poly Group participates in regional cultural festivals as well as in many facets of school life. It is managed by one of the Samoan teachers and senior students. Members of the Poly Group can also receive credits towards their NCEA in Performing Arts/Music.

Recruitment

A snowball sampling technique was employed to locate the sample (see Patton, 2002). Initial contact was made with the Principal to discuss the aims of the study and to seek permission to carry this out. The Principal was very enthusiastic, and

spoke about how a study of this nature was important and would benefit the school. He also asked for a summary of the research once it had been completed. Once ethics approval was received, contact was made with the two Samoan teachers at the school as suggested by the Principal.

Teachers

The two Samoan teachers agreed to meet and discuss the proposed study. This meeting provided the chance to outline my research aims, seek feedback and request their participation. This discussion was invaluable and gave the teachers a chance to input into the research design. This was important so that the teachers felt that they were partners in the research and not just being researched. Meeting with the teachers also helped confirm and added to what I had planned, and this mutual exchange of ideas helped frame my research questions. One of the teachers suggested that I approach the recently retired Samoan teacher so as to provide a third teacher view, especially given her experience in Samoan language teaching and knowledge of the school. I followed this suggestion, and she agreed to participate, increasing the teacher sample to three teachers.

Students

We then discussed how the students should be selected. After much discussion, the Samoan language teacher agreed to suggest four students who were learning the Samoan language, and the other Samoan teacher agreed to nominate three students who were not studying Samoan. This formed my group of seven.

Parents

When research is to be carried out with the Samoan and/or Pacific communities, there are processes and protocols which must be followed. It was initially decided that contact should be made with the Samoan Parents Association (SPA) as a courtesy measure to inform and outline the proposed research. It was intended that this meeting would serve, as with the teachers, as a chance to share and test ideas, and also as a way to recruit parent participants. As is well documented, when people share information, knowledge grows and everybody grows. One of the Samoan teachers said there was going to be a SPA meeting that week, and that he would tell them about the proposed study and distribute information sheets. Then, it was agreed, the interested parents would contact me.

It was quite difficult getting the parent sample. At the time, the SPA had four regular members. However, after the SPA meeting, two parents contacted me and expressed interest in participating. Both these parents (P1 and P2) helped run the homework centre for Samoan students held at the school twice a week from 4-6pm. When there was no other interest from the SPA parents, I contacted a third parent I knew (P3) who had a child at this school. He is a mature student at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW). He agreed to participate as the third parent in this study (P3).

The final sample then, comprised seven students (four studying Samoan and three who were not), three parents and three teachers (see Table 3).

Table 3 *Research participant characteristics*

Research Participant		Gender		Birthplace	Total
		M	F		
Students					
Student 1	(S1)		√	Samoa	
Student 2	(S2)		√	Samoa	
Student 3	(S3)	√		New Zealand	
Student 4	(S4)		√	Samoa	
Student 5	(S5)		√	Samoa	
Student 6	(S6)	√		New Zealand	
Student 7	(S7)	√		New Zealand	7
Teachers					
Samoan Language Teacher	(T1)		√	Samoa	
Samoan Teacher	(T2)	√		Samoa	
Retired Samoan Teacher	(T3)		√	Samoa	3
Parents					
Parent 1	(P1)		√	Samoa	
Parent 2	(P2)		√	Samoa	
Parent 3	(P3)	√		Samoa	3
TOTAL		5	8		13

Data Collection: Talanoa

Class discussion

In discussions with the teachers, it was suggested that it would be extremely valuable if other Samoan students at the school knew about the study. I too believed that sharing this information could be a really empowering experience for a wider group of students. So I took the opportunity to talk to a Year 12 and 13 Samoan language class. First, I shared my story as a Samoan girl growing up in New Zealand and then they discussed some of their experiences. To me, this was a very precious discussion, and helped to inform my thinking especially in the design of my research.

Talanoa

The principal had stipulated that all interviews with students must take place at the school and during school hours, so this was done. Following discussions with the teachers, it was agreed that interviews with the students studying the Samoan language would be carried out during a normal Samoan language period. For the three students not taking the Samoan language, it was arranged for interviews to be carried out during a period before lunchtime, where possible, so as to enable flexibility should the *talanoa* go into the lunch time.

Both the Samoan language teacher (T1) and Samoan teacher (T2) preferred to be interviewed during school hours. The *talanoa* with T1 took place during T1's free period with adjoining lunch time (a two hour slot). T2 opted for an after school *talanoa*, and again this was a two hour discussion. The third teacher (T3) chose to *talanoa* at her home during the day.

For the parents, both P1 and P2 said they would like to be interviewed together at the homework centre because they said that as working parents, there was no other time when they would be free. So a group *talanoa* session was held at the homework centre. The *talanoa* with P3 took place at the VUW Central Library, and as with the other parents, interest was so high that this lasted for over two hours in duration.

The talanoa process

Each *talanoa* was digitally recorded to ensure that the richness of every conversation was captured. These files were transcribed and returned to each participant for checking for changes which should be made. There were no changes. The process of recording was important as I wanted to capture and relay the 'voices' of the participants, which I believe, could only have been achieved through a process of recording and transcription. These recordings are kept confidential, and only I have access to them.

When the researcher and participants come together to *talanoa*, they are sharing their time and their knowledge. The *talanoa* sessions were not restricted to any time limit, but were free to carry on until they lost their *mālie* (in this case 'connection'), or until subjects had been exhausted (Vaioleti, 2006). Most *talanoa* in this study lasted around an hour, but a few lasted for over two hours – the flexibility of the *talanoa* allowed this.

As is well recorded, Samoans begin and end any *mafutaga* (gathering) with a prayer,³⁶ and so each *talanoa* began and ended with a prayer, offered as thanksgiving to God and asking for guidance in the *talanoa*. Prayers are an important part of life for the Samoan as seen in the independence motto that “*e faavae i le Atua Samoa*” (Samoa is founded on God). A prayer is the culturally appropriate way to begin any Samoan meeting, function, talk, *talanoa* or gathering of any kind.

The success of the *talanoa*, and the phenomenological nature of this study, relied on my being able to create a rapport or relationship with participants so that, in the words of Vaioleti (2006), the views shared had more *mo'oni* (truth). This relationship was achieved foremost by giving each participant a choice of language to conduct the *talanoa* in. As a fluent speaker of both Samoan and English, I was able to converse with the participants in Samoan, English or both. All three parents used the English language with occasional bursts of Samoan. Two of the students spoke only Samoan during their *talanoa*, while two others used a mixture of both Samoan and English. The remaining three students spoke almost entirely in English. Two of the teachers used English, while the elder teacher, spoke entirely in Samoan.

Another way of establishing rapport was that at the commencement of each *talanoa*, both the participant and I shared our respective backgrounds. In most cases finding out that there were mutual people we knew, or that we came from the same village, or went to the same school, forged a connection which enabled participants to feel at ease. With the students, the *talanoa* began with questions such as how their classes were going, what classes they were missing out on, and sometimes jokes in Samoan.

In the Samoan way, at the conclusion of each *talanoa*, a small *meaalofa* (gift) was given to each research participant not as a *taui* (reward), but rather as acknowledgment of their time, energy and knowledge they had shared. This was just something small to thank them for what they had sacrificed in order to help and participate in the study. The *meaalofa* ranged from CD vouchers, movie vouchers, VISA ‘pressy cards’, petrol vouchers and gift vouchers. Each *meaalofa* although small, was a token of appreciation accepted by each participant.

³⁶ See also HRC (2005) research guidelines.

Research constraints

One participant from this study withdrew before a *talanoa* could take place. This student was to be the last student to be interviewed, but after being fully informed of the research process, declined to go further. Nevertheless, the participant was thanked for his time and interest in the study, and another participant was sought and interviewed.

Data analysis

Each *talanoa* was transcribed and returned to the research participants to read and make changes or seek clarification as necessary. Once the participants were happy with their transcripts, they were signed and returned. I then proceeded with the analysis of the data.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyse the data. This involved a detailed examination of the participants' lived experience. As Smith and Osborn (2008) suggest, understanding how participants make sense of their world required me to engage in an interpretative relationship with the *talanoa* transcripts. To do this, I read and re-read the transcripts looking for themes, connecting the themes, and applying potential themes to the other cases.

The transcripts were each read numerous times. During the first few readings, I noted down on the side margin the views which seemed to be keenly related to the research questions. Each reading produced new insights. As I gained more familiarity with the accounts, I began highlighting emerging themes in the margin, using different colour highlighters for each research question. Once this was completed, a master list of themes with quotes was created using the research questions as a guide.

The next step was to look for possible connections between the themes. This involved a more theoretical ordering of the data. In this process, some themes stood out as standalone themes, while other clusters of interrelated themes emerged through this process of analysis. I found deciding what the key themes were to be particularly challenging. This process was repeated for each of the three participant groups.

The last part of the process was applying these themes across all three participant groups to see differences and commonalities of experience, and applying these back to the relevant literature. As noted, the ‘voices’ of the three groups were significant and are presented separately in this thesis to ensure these different ‘voices’ are heard. Chapters 5 and 6 will summarise and present the findings of all three groups.

CHAPTER 5: *TALANOAGA MA TAMAITI Ā'OGA* *Students' Talanoa*

“I love our language. I reckon there’s nothing in the world that’s kind of like the same” (S3)

This chapter presents the students’ views about the value and usefulness of the Samoan language, factors influencing Samoan language maintenance, and whether the Samoan language should be taught in New Zealand schools today. Finally, their views on who has the responsibility for teaching Samoan language today are presented. The chapter begins with a brief profile of the sample students.

The students

As seen in Table 4, the student group comprised three males and four females. Six were at NCEA levels 12 and 13, and the seventh was a Year 10 student.³⁷ As discussed, the study focus was NCEA level students because these are the years when students begin to make educational decisions which will influence their future lives. Four of the participants (S1, S2, S3, S7) were enrolled in the Samoan language classes and the other three (S4, S5, S6) were not. All the participants came from large families (4 to 7 siblings). Three (S3, S6, and S7) were New Zealand-born and described themselves as living in a nuclear family, and four were born in Samoa. All four of the Samoan-born students had ‘been sent’ to New Zealand for their education and were living with relatives.³⁸ S1 and S5 had migrated quite recently (2008), whereas S2 and S4 had been in New Zealand for up to 9 years, having migrated in 2000 at a young age. These factors of New Zealand-born/Samoan-born and length of time in New Zealand must be taken into consideration in this discussion.

The Churches these participants attended and whether they had attended a *Ā’oga ‘Āmata*, is also set out in Table 4 given that these two institutions are seen to play major roles in Samoan language maintenance in New Zealand. Six students were members of a Samoan speaking Church, and S1 attended a Hosanna Church which was English speaking due to its multicultural nature. S1 noted that Samoan was spoken when the Samoan Church members got together. Four had attended a pre-

³⁷ The intention had been to interview NCEA level students. However, S7 expressed a keen desire to participate. An information sheet and consent form was discussed with his parents who agreed for him to participate.

³⁸ S1, S2 and S5 have been formally adopted by their New Zealand relatives.

school – three of this group had attended a *Ā'oga 'Āmata* and one had attended an English speaking Kindergarten.

Table 4 ***Student group background information***

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7
Male/Female	Female	Female	Male	Female	Female	Male	Male
Age (yrs)	17	17	17	17	17	17	14
Birthplace	Samoa	Samoa	New Zealand	Samoa	Samoa	New Zealand	New Zealand
Migration to New Zealand	2008	2000	N/A	2000	2008	N/A	N/A
Church	Baptist Hosanna	Samoan Methodist	Full Gospel	EFKS ³⁹	Samoan AOG ⁴⁰	Samoan Methodist	Samoan AOG
Number of children in household	6	3	7	4	7	4	6
Year level in School	12	13	12	12	11	13	10
Pre-school	Ā'oga 'Āmata	No	Ā'oga 'Āmata	No	Ā'oga 'Āmata	No	Kinder-garten
First language	Samoan	Samoan	Samoan	Samoan	Samoan	Samoan	Samoan
Main home language	Samoan	Samoan, English	English, Samoan	English, Samoan	Samoan	English	Samoan, English
Enrolled in Samoan language class	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Proficiency in Samoan, self identified (1 low, 10 high)	10	7-8	5	8	10	6-7	5

Samoan was the first language for all participants and for two, the main language spoken at home. The other five said a combination of Samoan and English was spoken in their homes. The participants' self reported proficiency in the Samoan language was between 5 (semi fluent) and 10 (very fluent). Language proficiency was also evidenced in the language the students chose to conduct the *talanoa* in. S1 and S5 (who registered a high proficiency) preferred that the *talanoa* be carried out entirely in Samoan, as did S2. This was done.

³⁹ EFKS (*Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa*) is the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa. The EFKS can be traced back to the arrival of the London Missionary Society in Samoa in 1830.

⁴⁰ AOG – Assembly of God

The student voices

A number of points preface this discussion. First, these students said our *talanoa* were the first time they had discussed Samoan language issues in this way. The *talanoa* generated some very passionate discussions as the seven students were keen to make sure their voices were heard. Second, the *talanoa* revealed some differences in views between the New Zealand-born and the Samoan-born students as well as the differing perceptions each had of the ‘other’. Third, as seen, this group of students were all Samoan speakers.

The value of the Samoan language

These students valued the Samoan language as part of their identity, for communicating, for its relationship to culture, and for the way language reinforced their group feelings and ‘sense of belonging’. These were the four themes highlighted very clearly in the student responses.

Identity

Each of the seven students saw the Samoan language as being central to their feelings of identity and sense of belonging: language was seen to be a key marker or identifier of what this group perceived to be a ‘real’ or ‘true’ Samoan. Two of the New Zealand-born students (S6 and S7), and S4 who had been in New Zealand for nine years, regarded speaking Samoan as making a statement to other people that ‘you are a Samoan – because you speak Samoan’:

The Samoan language is important so that people know you’re a Samoan and you can speak it to your family. (S7)

Samoan is who I am. This is an example my dad gave me: you can identify a Samoan on how they talk and how they walk and how they do...so it’s how they sit, how they walk, how they talk. So I see myself as a Samoan because I can do all three. I can express my Samoan language to other people through those three things. (S6)

...well to Samoan people it [Samoan language] may not be that important, but for me it is important. So they will know what you are and where you’re from. (S4)

All four of the Samoan-born students and one born in New Zealand (S3) firmly believed that identifying as a Samoan meant being able to speak and understand Samoan. In each case, there was a lengthy discussion about what constituted a 'real' Samoan:

I see people who are Samoans but don't really speak Samoan. It feels like they're empty...I reckon it's really important in New Zealand. For me it just makes you a better Samoan because you know the language and that. We will have to learn the language for it to be our identity, not grow up and you're a Samoan but don't have anything to prove that you are. (S3)

You can't speak English back to someone when they speak to you in Samoan. That's not a Samoan. A Samoan is a person who knows how to speak Samoan, their parents are Samoan. Some are born in Samoa, some are born here...its knowing how to speak, the colour, how you conduct yourself...like your culture. (S1)

If your friends ask you 'what culture are you?' and you say 'I'm Samoan' and they say 'Oh I'm Samoan too' and the person speaks Samoan to you and you say 'Oh I'm Samoan but I don't know how to speak it'...it's kind of embarrassing, because that person will say 'oh you call yourself a Samoan but you can't speak it?' (S2)

Almost inevitably, the *talanoa* discussions returned time and time again to perceived differences between New Zealand-born Samoans and those born in Samoa. Proficiency in Samoan was the defining characteristic here. S1 who had recently migrated from Samoa stated:

They [New Zealand-born] must [speak Samoan]. It's up to them. If they don't want to speak the Samoan language... that's their choice. But when they go to Samoa, no kid or their non-English speaking families would want to speak to them because they think English is more valuable to them...that means they will just sit there by themselves...no one will like them because they don't want to speak Samoan. (S1)

However, four of the group believed it was sufficient for a person to know at least 'some Samoan' in order to be called a Samoan: people did not have to be fluent speakers:

Nah, you don't [have to be fluent in Samoan]. Not unless you're from Samoa or in Samoa. (S4)

Your blood...if you know kind of some of the language then yeah. (S3)

Each felt strongly that if the Samoan language was lost, they would lose their Samoan identity:

If it [Samoan] was lost here in New Zealand that would be sad aye. Because how you are brought up means you're a Samoan. If it was lost, it would mean Samoans would be lost here in New Zealand. (S6)

For two of the Samoan-born students, Samoan held a special place as their first language:

To me, I value the Samoan language so much because it's my first language, but English is something I only just learnt now. (S2)

The Samoan language is valuable because it's my first language that was taught to me by my parents. (S1)

Communication

The value of Samoan for communicating was also highlighted especially for speaking with parents, grandparents and elders. Five students referred to the special bond which existed between grandparents and grandchildren:

Like old people, like my grandparents in Samoa, they are very old... if I go back to Samoa and they are speaking Samoan to me and I don't understand...I can't communicate with my mum or my grandma... (S1)

It's important for communicating with parents, grandparents and other people who don't know how to speak English...so that they understand what I'm saying. (S5)

In some cases too, Samoan was clearly necessary to communicate with parents who might not be fluent in English, as seen in S2's comments:

My Dad he's a straight FOB⁴¹ so every time me and him communicate it's always in Samoan. (S2)

⁴¹ FOB stands for "Fresh off the Boat", a phrase coined to describe new migrants who have not yet assimilated to the host country's language, culture and behaviours (Goleman, 2006).

Speaking Samoan also demonstrated respect – not only to grandparents and elders, but also to peers. For this group of students, respect was encapsulated within the language:

I think I only speak it to x because I just have a respect thing for him because he is from Samoa. It's just me. Talking to my other boys who are from Samoa but were born here, it was easier for me to relate to them in English. So I think it's kind of a respect thing on where you are from...and who you are.
(S6)

Culture

As is well documented, language, identity and culture are inextricably linked. This entire group of students believed that language went hand in hand with culture, although there were differences in views about this relationship. Three responses indicated a strongly held belief that an understanding of the language was essential if people were to fully appreciate and 'carry out' the *faasamoa* in a proper way. Some went so far as to say that the *faasamoa* must be carried out in the Samoan language - that English just could not capture the nuances of meaning nor the elements of respect implied in the language:

It doesn't mean it's the Samoan culture and you speak English. It's very important to speak Samoan when dealing with the Samoan culture, because of respect. There are certain people you must give respectful words to. In English there is only one word to describe everything. But the Samoan [language] there are many words. You cannot carry out the Samoan culture in English. That's not the Samoan culture. (S1)

The better your Samoan is, the better your understanding of the Samoan culture. If you just try and understand [the culture] without knowing the Samoan language, it will be hard because you're going to be asking 'what does that mean?' The first step is to learn the Samoan language and the second step is learning how to do this and that. (S2)

Two responses were that without the Samoan language, the Samoan culture could not exist:

...it starts from the language. If you take out the Samoan language out of the Samoan culture what would you have? (S6)

...if there is no language, there is no culture. Because if you cannot speak [Samoan] then you cannot put into practice [the Samoan culture]. Most of the time it's speaking and 'doing' the Samoan culture, for example Samoan oratory, preparing kava, folafola 'ava. (S5)

Reinforcing group feelings

The Samoan language was also seen to reinforce group feelings and sense of belonging. Six remarked about how they spoke, or tried to speak, Samoan when they were with their peers. This appeared to be their way of reinforcing what they had in common – being Samoan. The females especially felt strongly about this:

Because most of them [friends] are from the islands, we basically communicate in Samoan. It's easier for us to think of the words that we can use. But in English we have to think 'what's the meaning of that word again? But in Samoan we're fluent. (S2)

S1 said she encouraged her New Zealand-born Samoan friends to speak more Samoan with her:

My friends here [in New Zealand], they don't really understand. It's true that we are all Samoans but they don't really understand when I speak Samoan to them. They tend to speak English, but I say 'hey you are all Samoans. If I speak Samoan to you, speak back in Samoan'. (S1)

S6, on the other hand, had mixed feelings about talking Samoan to his team mates who 'understand, but can't talk in Samoan'.⁴² He was at the stage of thinking 'this is no use'. He said:

...to my other boys who are in the volleyball team, I hardly ever talk to them in Samoan. There's only two that I do talk Samoan to them because they are really fluent in it. The others they do understand, but they can't say it. (S6)

The male students joked that Samoan was really useful when they wanted to conceal what they were saying from non-Samoan listeners. This was especially so on the sports field they said, and if they wanted to poke a little fun:

⁴² This is an example of passive bilingualism when someone understands a second language in either its spoken or written form, but cannot (or prefers not to) speak it.

Oh on the field when we're versing a straight palagi team, there's heaps of FOB calls. (S7)

I mainly use it when I'm joking around with my friends...when there's someone there and I will try and talk about them... (S3)

One of the Samoan-born students strongly believed that Samoan should be the first language of all Samoan children in New Zealand:

Samoan should be spoken because their parents are Samoan. The upbringing of a Samoan child, the parents should speak to their kids in Samoan until they go to school...that's where they should learn English. Samoan should be the first language, and English should be second. (S5)

The usefulness of Samoan in New Zealand today

Responses relating to the usefulness of the language are presented separately from the 'value' responses. This is because while it had been thought that discussions about the valuing of the Samoan language might draw responses relating to its usefulness in New Zealand today, this was not so. In the *talanoa*, students saw a clear distinction between how they valued the Samoan language and its usefulness. This separation of 'value' and 'use' no doubt relates back to Samoan concepts of value. At the same time, this appeared to be a very pragmatic way of considering this question.

Some views about the usefulness of the Samoan language defined this in terms of usefulness to New Zealand. Responses were that New Zealand is a multicultural society and that New Zealand is a Polynesian country – and so, Samoans and the Samoan language contributed to these ideals. Most students also saw the significant numbers of Samoans in New Zealand as somehow validating the place of Samoans and the Samoan language in this country:

I would say OK, we were born here, but all of us were migrated from another country like the English and the Māoris. Ok they were here first but we still need to have a chance...it's our blood. It's not their choice. It's really important for us to have it [Samoan language] in New Zealand. (S3)

We have a place aye. As soon as you walk into South Auckland, you know straight away if you say 'sole', people will turn around. If you were in

somewhere like Christchurch, no-one would even look at you. Pacific Islanders now have a place in this society because there are a lot of them and they are all starting to spread around in this country. It's not just Auckland even though that's the capital of the Pacific Islanders now. (S6)

Samoan was also seen as a way of providing a 'voice' for Samoan people and so in turn a means to political empowerment for Samoans:

We Samoans have something to say to the community and people say 'oh nah we have never heard of that culture before'. It would be real sad if it gets to the point where our voices won't be heard. (S2)

These students were not so sure that Samoan would be useful in getting them a job, although they knew about employment options in the social services and teaching for Samoan speakers:

Well if it's in a Samoan based area, then yeah. But if it's not, then not really. (S3)

I reckon it's not that important – like to go to Uni for. People say that there's no point of learning it in school because you're not going to get a job. That's what I hear but I don't know. (S7)

Factors influencing Samoan language maintenance

A couple of students were aware that Samoan (and other Pacific languages) could be lost in New Zealand:

I see other Polynesian languages disappearing and to be honest, I do not want that language to be lost because it's like really important to us. Not because we are Samoans, it's you know our heart and that. It will be a big loss especially to me and our future generations. (S3)

Samoan people must value the Samoan language here [in New Zealand] so that it isn't lost. They need to hold strong to it. (S5)

Most saw the dominance of English in every facet of New Zealand life as a main factor influencing language security today:

Because you know how it's a New Zealand country, so you can't just use Samoan all over the place, it's mostly palagis and you'll see palagis

everywhere talk to you. You can't speak to them in your language because they won't understand, so you got to speak to them in English. (S4)

If I actually talk to a Samoan from here, it's kind of different. They understand English so we may as well speak to them in English...talking to my other boys who are from Samoa but were born here, it was easier for me to relate to them in English. (S6)

In another example, S2 said that while she had lived in New Zealand for only nine years, she felt she was beginning to lose her language:

I would probably say that I am losing it because before I used to speak Samoan fluently...I would only speak English if I had to, but Samoan would be the main language I would speak every day. But now, it's more like kind of mixed...I'll talk in Samoan...I don't know...I'm kind of losing the Samoan language. (S2)

Other responses alluded to the struggle New Zealand-born Samoans especially had in learning and maintaining the language today. On this point, S6 felt more affinity with other minority ethnic groups than New Zealanders. This might also be the case for other Samoan youth:

I think it's because we are not in Samoa. We are in a country where it's always changing. If you go into Samoa right now, you would see all brown faces, all speaking Samoan, all doing Samoan things. If you come here, you will see a palagi, you will see a Asian, you will see a Indian, and then you will see a Samoan. The only ones that would understand the Samoan way would be a Samoan. But because there are a million other people out there in New Zealand, it's hard to do the Samoan things that they do in Samoa. The Samoans here in New Zealand actually adapt how the New Zealand culture is. There are other cultures, there are other ethnicities that are in this country today, that's why we are like going along with them instead of the Samoan culture. (S6)

Should the language suffer loss in New Zealand, two had great faith in the homeland as the place for language security and rejuvenation:

There's always Samoa to go back to. (S4)

I haven't been to Samoa yet. But since my brother came from Samoa and I see how he speaks Samoan, and how he does his stuff, and how he uses his ways of being a Samoan in New Zealand, I think there is the Samoan culture there in Samoa that is really strong. Obviously there must be a strong foundation in Samoa because it is Samoa. (S6)

However other responses showed an awareness that changes in language use had taken place in Samoa today. The homeland aside, these students were keen to discuss what they saw to be the role of their homes and their parents with regard to the Samoan language. They saw the home as the place where the pattern of language use was set:

...my parents say, if we come to New Zealand, we must not forget our language and our culture and where we were born. We must take care of our language. We must not forget where we have grown up and the language we have spoken. (S1)

When I was in intermediate and primary, [mum] would always tell me off for speaking English. She will always say: 'aua le gagu, 'aua le gagu.⁴³ But then coming to high school, she's one of those people that lets go of it. But now and then she does tell me to speak Samoan, especially when she's telling me off. (S3)

Mum always nags about speaking...tells us to speak Samoan at home, everywhere. (S7)

At the same time, responses indicated that these rules were not always followed – that in fact, more English was being spoken in their homes today:

Me and my brother when we talk to each other, we talk straight palagi because it was easier for us to say 'oh guess what happened at school?' [in English] rather than 'guess what happened...?' in Samoan you know? It's more of a mouthful. (S6)

[I live with] my aunty, my uncle, my real sister and some of my cousins... we speak Samoan but most of the time my uncle's kids speak English. (S5)

⁴³ This means 'don't speak English'.

At home we talk more English rather than Samoan. We've already passed the stage of learning Samoan and since he's [adopted brother] come from Samoa and he had to learn the English everyday language, it's kind of hard for him. (S6)

One even suggested that the Samoan language was losing its *mamalu* (sacred value) here in New Zealand because parents were not valuing the Samoan language:

I know Samoan is not in a good place in New Zealand at the moment because there are many kids that can't speak Samoan well. There are parents who speak English to their children...the Samoan way and the Samoan language here in New Zealand is no longer sacred. In Samoa though, the parents are very strong in speaking Samoan to their children, but here...no. (S5)

My mom's not so much strict about the Samoan language. Her kids – my brothers, they hardly speak Samoan so when they communicate with my parents its always in English. (S2)

In similar vein, while Church activities provided a strong base for Samoan language use, comments were that English was also creeping into the Church life as well. On the one hand this was seen to be a dilemma. At the same time, they saw this as providing support for New Zealand-born youth especially those who, they believed, did not understand Samoan well enough to understand what was happening at Church:

At our Church we have a lot of aganuu stuff going on...in our youth we are kinda stressing the importance of your aganuu. Everyone is learning how to palu a 'ava⁴⁴ and what's the meaning of the 'ava and stuff like that. (S2)

Like the kids that were born here and then when the lauga is on, no one listens because they don't understand what the minister is on about. The more Samoan is used and Samoan is spoken the more you can try and understand. But on the other side, it's true you can sit and listen and try and understand but what's the use when you can't understand a word of what's being said? (S2)

⁴⁴ This refers to the ceremonial mixing of kava.

When we go to combined youth gathering, the New Zealand-borns all speak English. Even the leaders speak English. You hardly ever hear them speak Samoan. They understand the Samoan but they can't speak it [even] the Sunday school teachers speak in English for the kids. (S5)

At Church we try and stick with the Samoan language, and always use the old Samoan faaaloalo stuff. So it gets hectic with New Zealand-born Samoans because some of them don't understand, and some of them try to understand and get it wrong. (S6)

This group referred very positively to community efforts to support the language, such as the Samoan language speech competitions for Samoan secondary school students run by F.A.G.A.S.A:

The Samoan speech competition ...puts value on the Samoan language. When people hear it's a competition, they'll want to come and make their speeches because they value the language. They also want recognition...like saying what did you win this award for? And you say a Samoan speech competition. And when they're writing their speeches, you get to the point where you have to write these words that you don't know the meanings of and the more you get those words you also find out the meanings of the words. (S2)

While these events created valuable spaces for students to practise their language these were not sufficient to address language loss.

All told, these *talanoa* responses highlighted a concern that as a result of the dominance of English, some slippage was occurring in significant domains of Samoan language maintenance – the home, parents and the Church.

Samoan as a school subject

As noted in Table 4, four students were studying Samoan. Their views are presented first, followed by the views of the three students who were not studying Samoan. As noted, this sample group were Samoan speakers and had strong home and Church language bases. This group may not be representative of all Samoan youth in New Zealand.

Students enrolled in Samoan language courses

These students gave a mixture of responses as to why they were taking Samoan. First answers were ‘wanting to learn more about themselves’:

Yep it was learning more about myself, I just wanted to stay in there to learn more. But once I joined in, I learnt heaps about the Samoan culture. I underestimated it. (S3)

It's important because some Samoan kids here in New Zealand don't understand about what happened in Samoa in the olden days. If we talk about it they laugh. They think it's made up... (S1)

Yeah it should be taught for like half castes and stuff to learn about their dad or their mum. (S7)

Learning more about the Samoan culture was another reason for taking Samoan. For example, S2 said that while she had a ‘taste’ of the Samoan culture at her Church, the school was the place where she was given the chance to practise these skills:

This is good stuff they're learning like respect terms... and when you're going to use these like upu faaaloalo,⁴⁵ how to ka'i a sua⁴⁶ and, kaukalaga.⁴⁷ Even though I'm fluent in Samoan, half of these things I don't even know our Church gives them to us to try, but sometimes only one person tries it and the rest of us watch. But here [in the Samoan class], everyone gets to try and learns how to do this in front of everyone. (S2)

Other answers revealed a desire to speak Samoan more confidently, this was especially so for those born in New Zealand, and ‘to please our parents’:

⁴⁵ Respect terms

⁴⁶ Also ‘ta’iga sua’, is the traditional way of presenting gifts.

⁴⁷ Also ‘tautalaga’ meaning a speech

It [learning Samoan at school] sometimes encourages me to speak Samoan... (S3)

It's taught me to not give up the Samoan language. (S2)

If you learn the Samoan language [at school] then you go speak to your parents, then your parents will be happy. (S3)

It's good to know our own language....and speaking to your parents. Because my mom always nags [me] about trying to speak. (S7)

One student saw speaking Samoan as a way of showing respect to others, but also believed that if he worked at becoming more fluent, he would also be accorded respect by fluent speakers whom, he felt, 'looked down' on him:

Yeah it should be taught... and, to get more respect from the FOBS that think that you're not a real Samoan. (S7)

Role models had also influenced student choices. Of significance here is that while rugby players and sportsmen (such as David Tua) headed the list of role models, this group aspired to emulate 'ordinary' Samoans who were also considered to be role models:

So if I've got a big name, they'll know I'm Samoan and stuff, and where I come from. Yeah I'll be like David Tua and say 'e muamua lava ona sii le viiga ma le faafetai i le Atua'.⁴⁸ (S7)

I wish I had the accent of the fluent Samoan...the knowledge of the culture...I've been to Samoa once and I've seen them doing all these different things I've never done, that I've never seen before in my life. And I wish that I knew those kind of things. (S3)

Although he was not taking the Samoan classes, S6's comments are included here because they are so empowering. In describing the *folafola sua*⁴⁹ he had witnessed at Church, S6 recounted how the use of the Samoan language and customs had transformed what he termed, 'a quite ordinary Samoan man' into someone of great mana, and beauty. This had been totally inspiring. Although he did not take the

⁴⁸ Usually said at the beginning of a speech - means to give all glory and thanksgiving to God.

⁴⁹ The *folafola sua* is usually done by a *taule'ale'a* (untitled male) and announces the presentation of gifts. This is done to show gratitude, and to let it be known to the people what was received (Simanu, 2002).

Samoan classes, S6 said he made sure that his parents tutored him in the language and *faasamoa*:

One of these days I want to be just like that guy who stands up and (shouts his head off) and everyone looks at him...I mean it looks cool...when that guy actually stood up that day I was like 'oh man I wanna be just like him' ...Kind of like an idol. It's kind of sad because I see him every day...but when he gets into that mode, I get all tingly and you have that shaking feeling and you're like 'I'll get there one day'. It's actually that kind of stuff that is actually driving me to learn Samoan and learn that kind of stuff. (S6)

'Samoan as an easy NCEA option' was another reason for enrolling in the Samoan classes, and some had been pleasantly surprised by the rigour of the courses:

It's easier for me because it's the students who were born here that are trying to learn the language. (S1)

To be honest like...It was just the thought of it being an easy subject. But I've passed heaps of my assessments through that so I kept going. (S3)

As noted, whether Samoan would be of help in getting a job did not seem to be a major consideration here for these students.

Finally, for one student, the Samoan classes meant much more than the language. This student's relationship with his Samoan teachers was very important. He was raised in a solo parent household. As related, he saw more of the Samoan teachers than his mother:

...they [students] often see their teachers at school more than their parents...there's heaps of kids out there who have their parents working nights or something, so they often see their teachers more at school. Yeah that was like me when I was little. (S3)

Students not taking Samoan at school

While Samoan was highly valued by these students, taking Samoan classes did not fit well with their priority educational concerns at this time, nor their career hopes. This group also felt quite confident about their own Samoan language competency. The views included:

I'd rather take another subject that I'm actually passionate about...I actually want to do Samoan...but the reality is if I take Samoan, what would I miss out on? Back in Level 1, we had three compulsory subjects...English, Maths and Science and we only had three other options and I wanted Accounting, ICT and PE. The other one would have been Economics and then it would have been Samoan. I felt that I could learn more Samoan at Church, than coming to school. (S6)

Because you know they're here to get a education, there's other subjects that can interest you...and doing what you want to do. (S4)

I grew up in Samoa, I am good at speaking, I know what being a Samoan means, about the Samoan culture and way of life. I should be trying to better my English, but not forgetting the importance of Samoan. (S5)

S5 said she needed to learn English, but she firmly believed that Samoan should be taught. She said she helped her classmates by teaching them what she knew:

Even though you can already speak it [Samoan], take it as a subject anyway to promote the language and to help those kids who don't know how to speak Samoan. If the teacher is not doing a good job, then I have to help those kids by saying this is what you're supposed to do here and here, because I know these things, and to urge the kids to keep trying to speak Samoan. (S5)

S6 also emphasised the importance of having the option of Samoan language courses available:

I see the Samoan language being taught at New Zealand as a really good way to express and teach the other kids on like what is needed...or what is necessary for a Samoan to be a Samoan. (S6)

Others recommended that the course be broadened to include what they called the practicality of the Samoan language in every day or real situations:

There's a difference between learning by reading, learning by hearing or learning by doing. I guess they understand the reading kind of thing, but I don't know if they can do it. I think that [practical element] will actually help out to improve the teaching of the Samoan language here. (S6)

All told, the sample students strongly believed Samoan should be taught at school although this was not a priority for all seven at this time.

Responsibility for teaching the Samoan language in New Zealand

The harmony in responses to this question was impressive: this was the only question all students agreed on. Generally, these students saw responsibility for the Samoan language teaching to lie with the family, the schools and the Churches:

Home, and then Church. If you go to a Samoan Church. School yeah maybe because that's where you're learning how to speak. Home then Church and then school. (S3)

Parents

Immediate responses were that parents must teach their children. The students were firm in the belief that 'parents are the first teachers':

...parents are the first teachers in someone's life. If they value the language, then they must value the language enough to speak to their children in Samoan and make them reply back in Samoan and try and give them sentences... It's the choice of the parents of what their child will be. Let's say there is a family who is Samoan, but they bring their family up...the palagi side, they'll end up saying 'what are you?', oh 'I'm a New Zealander'. But if the parents choose for their children to become Samoan then they will learn how to speak Samoan...learn how to do all things faasamoa. (S2)

I think it's the parents. No matter what. Because when you're a kid, the first two people you talk to are your parents. You don't go straight up to the teachers...the best teachers of the Samoan language are your parents. (S6)

The school

However, as the *talanoa* progressed, it became clear that while parents were the ideal first teachers, in practice, Samoan teachers now had more responsibility for this. In S3's view, teachers had a responsibility not only to teach the language but to 'advance' it. The students based their views on the time students spent at school today and the fact that many Samoan parents worked extremely long hours:

Coming to school and being taught by teachers is just like a gift... something lucky that we have in New Zealand, because I know there are other languages out there that want to be taught but aren't being taught. (S6)

The teacher's role is really important. They have heaps of responsibility, equal with parents. I think now parents are there to help you...to talk it, but teachers are there to expand your Samoan language. I reckon if you learn at school the Samoan language, then you go speak to your parents, then your parents will be happy and then they can work with the teachers to expand more. (S3)

I reckon our teachers have got to me a bit more [responsibility] because sometimes in families, parents are not home...they [students] often see their teachers at school more than their parents. I know there's heaps of kids out there who have their parents at home working nights or something, so they would often see their teachers more at school. I reckon there's a bit more responsibility for the teachers now than parents. (S3)

Comments on what made a good Samoan teacher included:

Someone who grew up in Samoa and then came and studied Samoan more and then came and taught Samoan and has a big understanding of the faasamoa. I reckon if it's a New Zealand-born, it should be someone who is good at speaking Samoan (S5)

Someone who is good at speaking English as well as Samoan. It's no good only being able to speak Samoan because the New Zealand-born students won't be able to understand so the teacher has to explain it in English, then the teacher can use Samoan again...so that the child understands what the meaning of the words are. (S1)

As discussed earlier, this school had a Polynesian group (Poly group). The four students, who were members, described the Poly group as the place where learning the Samoan performing arts helped them understand the *faasamoa* more fully:

The Poly Group...reminds us about who we are. It's in Samoan. Everything else nowadays is in English...these Poly Groups are important for teaching dances, slap dances, and the Samoan culture... (S1)

It's good to teach the culture, songs, language, and [show] the talents of the Samoan... It's good to show other people so that they know and like Samoan things and watch it too...it promotes our Samoan culture. (S5)

Church

While these students believed the Church had a part to play, the Church did not have as much responsibility as the parents or the schools:

I felt that I could learn more Samoan at Church, than coming to school. I think...that's how I saw it. But it's not actually how it is. (S6)

Church will be [responsible] because there are Samoan services to understand [Samoan]... the responsibility that the Church or school has wouldn't be as much as the parents. (S2)

A combined effort

Even though these students thought parents had the 'most' responsibility for teaching Samoan to their children, they believed that a combined effort between the home, the school and the Church was needed today. Furthermore, agencies would need to work together to ensure the survival of the Samoan language in New Zealand:

The teaching of the Samoan language in New Zealand is good because there are heaps of Samoan students now who know how to speak Samoan. Poly Groups and stuff like that are good also...remember there are the people in the church and the workplaces... it's good for them to get together to use the Samoan language and to show the value and importance of the language. (S1)

I think that the language might be lost because people speak too much English. The Samoan language should be used in the Church, school and other gatherings on the whole...There should be more Samoan things done like the Samoan speech competitions. (S5)

I reckon if we start acting now, it can go up to 100% I believe. I reckon it's going to go up in the future. (S3)

Views were also expressed that once a person was old enough, the onus was on the individual to learn the language:

It's the choice of the person really, that's how I see it. If you want to learn it, you can learn it. If you don't want to, you don't have to. I would say that

Samoan in the future would be as good as it is now as long as everyone is willing to make it as good as it is now, because in a few years time the parents will be gone and they're like the Samoans from Samoa... (S6)

Three of this group felt so strongly about this issue that they pushed onto recommendations of their own. These are not prioritized.

S3 said parents needed to know what was happening to the Samoan language in New Zealand, and that this would encourage them to teach and speak Samoan to their children. He said:

I reckon we should start having Samoan in more schools and like little booklets to send out to parents to maintain the language in our households. [The books should set out] little things to help us maintain our language in the households to put our Samoan parents on the line to work together for our language to be like up there in the 80s maybe in the 100s [percent]. (S3)

S6 wanted to see New Zealand celebrate more Samoan events, such as the Samoan Independence day, so that Samoan peoples would feel proud to be Samoan in New Zealand.

S7 said there should be more acknowledgement of the Samoan language in the public arena:

...like shop signs in Samoan underneath everything and like...FOB dictionary...do the same thing with schools make everyone do Samoan. (S7)

He added the importance of role models and suggested that the media should encourage Samoan celebrities to promote the Samoan language:

I think we need more motivation....from like sport stars... videos...music videos. (S7)

Summary

Of the four female and three male students, four were Samoan-born and three New Zealand-born. Samoan was the main language spoken in the homes of all the seven students, six of whom attended Churches where services were in the Samoan language and 'followed the Samoan model'. The Samoan-born group self-defined their Samoan language fluency as high (range 7-10), and the New Zealand-born

group in the lower range of 5-7. These students were very keen to talk about how they valued the Samoan language, noting that they had not really thought about this before. To them, the Samoan language held a central place in their feelings of Samoan identity (without Samoan, they said they would feel “empty”); as essential for communication especially with their grandparents, parents and the older generation, and as vital to the Samoan culture. They also said speaking Samoan reinforced their feelings and sense of belonging with other Samoans, especially with other youth.

While there were no apparent distinctions between males and females regarding the place of the Samoan language in Samoan identity, there were differences in the responses between New Zealand-born and Samoan-born students. The views of Samoan-born students were that fluency in Samoan was integral to identity. However, the New Zealand-born students believed that a person was ‘Samoan’, even if they were not fluent in the language. These differences could have implications for the maintenance of the Samoan language in New Zealand.

This group also saw a clear separation between the value of the Samoan language and its utility in New Zealand. The students felt that Samoan people had a significant place in New Zealand today, not only because Samoans were the largest Pacific ethnic group, but because New Zealand was a multicultural society, and in their words ‘a Polynesian country’. At the same time, they saw the Samoan language as beginning to lose its status in New Zealand, because of the dominance of English. English was starting to be used more in the homes, as parents seemed to be opting to speak English to their children. Over half of these students also gave examples showing how the Samoan Churches were ‘not getting through’ to Samoan youth today generally, but particularly to New Zealand-born youth, who they said often did not understand what was going on at Church. This group were unsure whether Samoan would be useful in helping them get a job or not. While Samoan was highly valued by these students for its intrinsic value, its utility in New Zealand was not so highly rated. This may have bearing on what the future of the Samoan language in New Zealand will look like.

Each student thought it was very important to speak Samoan with their peers, especially those, who in their view were less confident speakers. One student tried to be a role model to other Samoan students and to help with their Samoan language

speaking. This finding about the significance of informal mentoring and speaking Samoan between peers warrants further research. For this group, this was an important factor in language maintenance.

Four students were studying Samoan as a school subject so that they could learn about the Samoan culture and about themselves, and communicate 'fluently' with elder members of their families and communities. Two said they had taken Samoan because they thought this would be an easy subject. Others discussed the influence of role models, including Samoan sports stars speaking Samoan on the television, and family and church members just going about their daily life.

The three students not taking Samoan said their Samoan was quite strong. They believed it was more important for them to focus on 'other' subjects at school. This group also commented on the low status of the Samoan language as a NCEA subject, and did not see the Samoan language course as 'enticing' enough to offer them the language enrichment they would have liked.

All seven students believed parents had a prime responsibility to teach Samoan. However, they saw that teachers were beginning to assume more responsibility to teach and 'enhance' the Samoan language, and add to what was being learnt in the home. While the literature suggests that the Church is playing a significant role in teaching and maintaining the Samoan language and culture in New Zealand, this was not the case for this group. In their view, English was not only creeping into their homes, but into the Churches also. In fact, this group believed the Polynesian Group at school taught them more about the Samoan language and culture than the Church, and that while Samoan was spoken at Church, the school was where they actually got to practise it. Finally, these students believed that maintaining the Samoan language in New Zealand would require all agencies working together and making a conscious decision to do this. They saw students and youth as playing a lead role here.

CHAPTER 6: *TALANOAGA MA FAIĀ'OGA MA MĀTUA SAMOA* *Teachers' and parents' talanoa*

“Without Samoan, I’m just a brown palagi” (P2)

This chapter is presented in two parts. The first part presents the findings from the *talanoa* with the teachers, and the second, the *talanoa* with the Samoan parents on how they valued the Samoan language, factors influencing the maintenance of the Samoan language in New Zealand, and who they thought should be responsible for teaching the Samoan language today. For the teachers, an additional focus was on how they saw their role as teachers of the Samoan language, and for parents, the question of why (or why not) they had encouraged their children to take Samoan as a school subject was asked. The teachers’ *talanoa* were carried out individually. Two of the three Samoan parents preferred to be interviewed together. The third was interviewed by himself.

Part 1: Teachers’ *talanoa* findings

Table 5 sets the background of the three teachers which undoubtedly influenced their views about the Samoan language and Samoan language teaching. As seen, the group comprised two female teachers and one male. All were born in Samoa and each considered Samoan to be their first language. T1 had migrated to New Zealand as a four year old, T2 as a teenager, and T3 as a young adult.

While each said Samoan was their first language, all three said that both English and Samoan were spoken in their homes. Only T3 carried out the whole *talanoa* in the Samoan language.

Table 5 also shows the very varied teaching experience of this group of teachers – ranging from T1 who was relatively new to the teaching profession, to T2 who had been teaching for over 10 years, and T3 who had over 46 years teaching experience. T3 had trained as a teacher in Samoa and re-trained in New Zealand. Of the three, she was the only teacher with primary school teaching experience.

Table 5 *Teacher group background information*

	T1	T2	T3
Home Background			
Male/Female	Female	Male	Female
Migration to New Zealand	1987	1991	1965
Number of children	2	2	6
First language	Samoan	Samoan	Samoan
Main language spoken in home	Samoan English	Samoan English	Samoan English
Church	EFKS	Catholic	Methodist
Teaching			
First year of teaching	2008	1998	1962
Qualifications	B.Teaching (NZ) BA ⁵⁰ (NZ)	Dip. Teaching (NZ) BSc ⁵¹ (NZ)	Dip. Teaching (Samoa) Cert. Teaching (NZ)
Teaching level	Secondary	Secondary	Primary/ Secondary
Teaching subjects	English Samoan	Mathematics Samoan	Samoan ESOL ⁵²
Years teaching Samoan	1	1	15
Total years teaching	2	10	46

When asked what had made them decide to teach Samoan, T2 and T1 referred to the requirement for teachers to have two teaching subjects. T1, who is now the school's designated Samoan language teacher (since the recent retirement of T3), said she had felt somewhat daunted by this task but had been greatly encouraged by her tertiary studies in Samoan. She saw herself as very much on a similar learning journey as some of the students in her classes. She wanted to become more confident in speaking Samoan:

The person that was here before was like the ultimate, the best ever, and I was wondering whether I could ever do as good job. But I think if I had said no to it, then I wouldn't be improving myself...I mean every day the kids teach me stuff too. I'm learning from them all the time. And they're good kids, they're very respectful. You don't get kids who are like 'you're no good anymore as a teacher'. It's like give and take. (T1)

In her view, Samoan youths' feelings of insecurity about speaking the Samoan language could be a factor leading to the eventual loss of the language.

⁵⁰ Bachelor of Arts.

⁵¹ Bachelor of Science.

⁵² English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

T2 described himself as primarily a Mathematics teacher, but he had had a one year stint of Samoan language teaching. He said:

I just picked that up when I was at Teachers College, because I was fluent in Samoan and have a bit of understanding of the Samoan culture. So I was trained with the Samoan curriculum in New Zealand at Teachers College. Now, I can pick up a Samoan class if need to as my second subject. (T1)

T2 believed that being a Samoan and also a Mathematics teacher had the added value that he could work to raise the Mathematics achievements of Pacific pupils at the school.

Collectively these three teachers were an interesting group and are possibly representative of the Samoan teaching situation in New Zealand today with a younger graduate generation coming through to teach Samoan.

The value of the Samoan language

In discussing the value of the Samoan language, these teachers used words such as identity, culture, and communication. They also raised issues about the usefulness of the Samoan language and its status in New Zealand today. The immediate views of both T1 and T3 were that there was a direct relationship between the Samoan language and one's *faasinomaga* or identity:

Firstly the value of the Samoan language is because I am a Samoan right? I cannot value the Samoan language if I am a Samoan and I do not know how to speak Samoan. The Samoan language is my identity and my heritage. If I can't understand it, and I am a Samoan, that is not good. (T3)

Whether a Samoan should be able to speak Samoan fluently in order to 'be Samoan' or a 'real Samoan' was fiercely debated. T3 felt very strongly about this:

If you do not understand the Samoan language, if someone says something to you [in Samoan] and you do not understand, you have really lost that blessing [from God]. (T3)

T2 had a somewhat softer view:

I mean a typical Samoan would say something like that, but it won't help people if they say things like that. There are other people that really want to

know Samoan, and I've met some of them and they mean what they say...and they really want to know their connections...Some people end up going back to Samoa to live and to experience and they came back and they liked it. They found what they want. It's that identity thing that always comes up connects with this 'real' Samoan [notion]. (T2)

T2 also noted the importance of 'feeling Samoan' and 'connecting to Samoa':

I would just take the word 'real' off...I think someone is a Samoan as long as they have a connection to Samoa and they know their family tree and they know their connections. But to be a 'real' Samoan? It's up to a person to think whether they are a real Samoan or not. (T2)

Like T1, he believed that one need not be fluent in Samoan to be 'Samoan', but that a Samoan person should want to learn Samoan or learn more about the Samoan language.

All three teachers saw the Samoan language as being fundamental to the Samoan culture. T2 and T3 spoke of their childhood days in Samoa where the *faasamoa* had been 'everywhere'. They used words like respect:

Firstly, it's part of the culture. There's no culture without the language. The Samoan language is part of the Samoan culture we grew up with...it was one of the things that we value, our culture and being Samoan. (T2)

The Samoan language is so important in terms of respect. Respect is part of the Samoan culture and is so important to me. (T3)

T2 recalled the role of his parents in teaching the Samoan values:

All the cultural stuff and the respect values were implanted in us by our parents. There was a lot of influence from other people from around the extended family but [in our own family] we actually maintained all the values in Samoan. (T2)

Samoan was also seen to be necessary if one was to understand and carry out the deeper cultural meanings of the *faasamoa*, and described Samoan as a living, growing knowledge:

"It's quite rich...when you go deep deep into the language. It's quite fascinating. It's moving for our people as well. Samoans are still learning

their language in terms of stories passed down from their ancestors and in terms of oratory, proverbial stuff, history. I mean that's still a lot of learning, even when we grow up, we still need to learn and through culture and language, that's why it is very important that you maintain an understanding of the culture because there is still a lot to learn in the Samoan language and Samoan culture. So by having the language you get to understand more of the culture in a deeper way. (T2)

Along with identity, the teachers emphasised the Samoan language as being essential for communication, especially with elders and the older generation. As T2 fondly looked back to the family meetings in Samoa, it became very clear that his grandparents had played a significant role in his life. Furthermore, that if he had not had the language, T2 would not have been able to participate in the important family meetings:

There were eleven of us kids...our parents' way of communicating, guiding, advising us was having formal family meetings. I always remembered these meetings. There is one before every school term starts, and one at the end of each term. My grandmother would speak first, then my father and lastly my mother...all in Samoan language of course. (T2)

T2 further described the Samoan language as a way of nurturing the relationships between family members. He saw this as part and parcel of the way Samoan youth learnt their future roles and became equipped with the tools they needed for their life journey:

It is an important part of growing up, to maintain family relationships and values, helping each other, and basically preparing ourselves for the changes later on in life. Most families I believe still do that today and by doing this, with all hope that us kids would hold on to these values and pass them on to generations to come and to be successful and have a happy life. (T2)

While the teachers had strong feelings about Samoan, they were at the same time very conscious of the overwhelming influence of English:

For my work I am using English most of the time. At home I prefer to use the Samoan language most of the time and English. Yeah it basically depends on

where I am, where you go and people you see. But I try to speak Samoan most of the time when I can. (T2)

T1 said she had to feel comfortable before she would speak Samoan:

I have a thing like, if I know that people are really super fluent, I won't speak it. It's that not knowing factor – I'll happily speak it with people that I'm comfortable with. But if I'm out in an environment where it hasn't been built up to be a safe sort of thing – where you can just do it, and if you make a mistake, it's kind of like oh yeah it doesn't matter. (T1)

All three said they reminded their children to speak Samoan as much as possible:

Definitely at home. I have two boys and they need to be heard speaking Samoan all the time. That's the important part about speaking Samoan all the time. (T2)

T1 said she had really struggled to maintain the Samoan language in her hometown where there were very few Samoans. Her experience had made her more adamant that her children must have a good grasp of the language:

We try very hard to make Samoan the first spoken language. I think it's a decision that we've made from the experiences I have been through. You know like finding it very hard to like keep it [Samoan language] going in a community where there's nothing going. So, I don't want my girls to have the same sort of trouble I went through too. I would say I'm trying to reclaim it [Samoan language]. (T1)

The valuing of the Samoan language in New Zealand

Noting that different situations can lead to varying value being placed on the language, these teachers presented a number of views of how they thought the Samoan language was being valued in New Zealand today. In the first place, they were ardent advocates of the relationship between Samoan and getting a job. Their remarks touched on the importance of bilingualism today, especially given the rapid increase in New Zealand's Pacific population:

As our people grow, other departments will need people who know both languages to help our people. If we encourage our people to learn [both] languages that's one of the things that's marketable about someone who is

looking for a job and having qualifications and working in this country. New Zealand has the highest number of Samoans living in it, so we have got the advantage compared to other countries of getting more employment. The Samoan language is more important than ever before. We must maintain the language here in New Zealand as well as back in Samoa. (T2)

For T3, the Samoan language was useful no matter what job one aimed for:

If they [Samoan youth] want to be lawyers, it's useful. If they want to be doctors, it's also useful. The Samoan people that go to the doctors will be able to really understand if they are going to a Samoan doctor. If they want to be teachers, it's the same thing. Whatever job, you can never come across someone who does not know how to speak Samoan take over the Samoan language. (T3)

T1 thought more promotion of the usefulness of Samoan to employment would be valuable:

I don't know if it's been advertised well enough that Samoan is worthwhile like in the future. Like, [people say] what are you going to do with Samoan? It's this sort of attitude that comes with it. (T1)

Each of the teachers was impressed (and appreciated) the support the Samoan language had been receiving in New Zealand:

Last month, the Human Rights commission acknowledged the work of the F.A.G.A.S.A by presenting them with an award at Te Papa. This means that the government is really valuing the importance of our language. The Human Rights Commissioner thanked the [Samoan] people for how well the Samoan language was doing and, last month the Human Rights recognised the Samoan language as being the third biggest language. See how good that is. (T3)

T3 also believed that having Samoan as a school subject had been instrumental in raising the status of the language:

Because [Samoan] is available in the schools, the Samoan language is on the rise. Parents can't teach everything in the families...the children who come

from Samoa and the ones from here are better now because the Samoan language is encouraged. (T3)

T3 referred to the F.A.G.A.S.A Inc. which now ran the Samoan language speech competitions for secondary school students. Mention was also made that Samoan is now part of the New Zealand curriculum:

The government is encouraging language learning at schools... that's a key area in the school curriculum...our language is one of the subjects for NCEA. (T2)

The new curriculum now strongly recommends the languages, not just the Samoan language, but learning any language. So there will always be a position for the Samoan language in this country...and in schools as well. (T2)

T2 was highly elated that Samoan speakers could now get a qualification in the Samoan language. To him, this meant that the Samoan language was definitely valued in New Zealand. He said:

This country is looking after our people, and migrants in New Zealand...now we have it [Samoan language] in the assessments and as qualifications so it's also good to have that second language and also get credits and pass NCEA levels 1, 2, 3. (T2)

However, T2 was of the view that the state should do even more to ensure the survival of the language because, in his view, Samoans could no longer rely on the homelands for language renewal:

[Look at the budget] a lot of funding has been cut for education, and a lot of people are not happy with that...all the community education stuff is gone. But in terms of our language, the past governments have done heaps to help out. The Samoan language is more important than it's ever been because we're in New Zealand now, so it's important for us to maintain the language here in New Zealand as well as back in Samoa. (T2)

On this point, T3 stated that if she had not come to New Zealand she would never have learnt much about her Samoan culture:

I have many brothers. When people come around my brothers would sit down and folafola the food and things like that. When I go to Church things the same is done. But I don't do it – though, I listen. When I came [here], I didn't know how to do these things. I didn't even know the respect terms for breadfruit and banana. The only respect term I knew from Samoa was [the term for] taro...my father told me to be obedient, but he never talked to me about the Samoan language and to go and try to folafola the food. It was like there were heaps of boys and that was their responsibility, but as for the girls, it seems that they just sit and eat. And still not know anything. (T3)

Factors influencing the maintenance of the Samoan language today

These teachers had a lot to say about factors influencing the maintenance of Samoan today. They saw that the very visible importance of English in New Zealand influenced attitudes to the teaching and learning of Samoan. They also saw the dominance of English in New Zealand as both a positive but also a negative influence. T1 referred to the danger of English creeping into many facets of Samoan life today:

It doesn't matter how hard you try they [Samoan children] just tend to go to English. I mean from TV programmes, and everything...if you speak to them in Samoan, they might speak back to you in Samoan, but...most of the time they'll speak English to you... (T1)

At the same time, she argued that knowing English had helped her teach Samoan:

Having an English background also helps me, because the students that are fluent in Samoan, they need the help in the English. You know the literacy sort of side of it, it kind of goes hand in hand... Like if they can speak good Samoan, it's easier for me to try and teach them good English. And the same with the other way around...you know kids who speak good English, you use the same of structures to teach them Samoan. (T1)

There were mixed views as to whether English was a help or a hindrance to learning the Samoan language. For example:

There is also an advantage with English...the English words can help understand the Samoan words or the Samoan philosophies. English was much easier for me because I understood a lot of Samoan words. When you have bilingual learning, you learn English faster because you can translate back and forth. (T2)

T1 believed English and Samoan could work side by side. She said she taught her Samoan classes '50/50' or bilingually in both Samoan and English.

T2 added another perspective to this discussion. He said that having Pacific teachers in mainstream classes helped raise Pacific students' achievement:

Research [shows] we are on the lower side of the scale in terms of achievement in Secondary school...with Māori Students. But having our PI teachers there [at school] is good...we have a Tongan and two Samoans. The Tongan lady is helping out those PI students in History, and the History [programme] has picked up in the passing since that Tongan lady came. If every school can have at least two or three PI teachers our kids will feel happy and confident if they see us around. (T2)

He discussed also some of the successes he had had with teaching Mathematics bilingually:

There's some kids that have just arrived from Samoa who are taking bridging courses and Mathematics. I was going on and on with my English and they just arrived from Samoa yesterday. So I started speaking slowly and speaking in Samoan and doing little things to help these students...When I translate back and forth they understood and developed more quickly and they're picking up new Mathematical words – when I say the Samoan word for it. That's one of the reasons why I didn't want to leave Mathematics and just go full time with Samoan, because I can help the Samoan students with Mathematics as well. (T2)

A second group of factors influencing the maintenance of Samoan raised by this group related to the fact that many Samoan parents worked long hours, worked the night shifts or had multiple jobs 'just to make a living'. This meant that parents were

often absent when children came from school. The teachers associated parental absence with a loss of language, and they also saw this as a reason why Samoan should be taught in schools:

One of the main issues we face in our communities is the time the parents have with their kids...most of our people have factory jobs, shift work, so parents come in tired. The whole family routine is upside down, the mother works during the night and the father works during the day. Then you have problems with the kids...And that's the whole reason we want to improve our PI people so they don't have to go to those jobs. When they have a decent education and have a decent job, they won't have to work those hours, and they can spend more time with their kids. That's basically problem solved.
(T2)

The shortage of qualified teachers of Samoan was a third factor and here there were questions of how Samoan teaching qualifications might be recognised in New Zealand to address this need:

Our numbers are growing in most secondary state schools and some Church schools, but the shortage of teachers is the major problem...There are people from Samoa here who can teach the Samoan language but these people are working in factories, as bus drivers...other type of jobs apart from teaching. They can't teach, because they have to go back and get the diploma. The diploma is the hurdle...two years will be a bit too long. (T2)

T3, who had retrained in New Zealand, had this to say:

They want [New Zealand] registered teachers. They don't want teachers who even though are good Samoan language teachers and are good themselves, but are not registered. It's like the principals are looking down [on the teachers] and don't even give them an interview...Many schools want Samoan but there are no teachers. They don't want the standard of their school to decrease by hiring [these] teachers but some of them have degrees, they're just not [New Zealand] registered. (T3)

Fourth, all teachers referred to what they called 'the gap' in New Zealand today in teaching Samoan. They said the Samoan language had a solid foundation in the Early

Childhood (ECE) sector and was being taught at secondary school and at tertiary level, but not so much at primary school:

Early childhood is growing, the Ā'oga 'Āmata are growing. The gap comes from primary school, intermediate level. I think if we can bridge that gap in primary and intermediate levels... (T2)

It needs to flow right through. It's that gap in there [primary school]. There's no use sending them [children] to Ā'oga 'Āmata and then nothing in primary. It kind of seems like a bit of a waste. (T1)

T1 found this gap particularly frustrating because she said students spent so much time at primary school:

Even if you're getting it at Church which is at the weekends or after school...but most of the time your kids go to school forty weeks of the year and that's a huge chunk of time where you don't see them and there's no contact with it [Samoan language]. (T1)

Responsibility for teaching Samoan

When this question came up in the *talanoa*, the teachers saw the main agencies responsible for teaching the Samoan language to be the home, the Church and the school. These teachers could see both the benefits and the constraints of each of these agencies.

Home

T2 and T3 talked about the fundamental role their parents had had as their first teachers. T3 said that parents as the first teachers for a child, was supported by the Bible:

Samoan parents are the first teachers for their children, because that is what is said in the Bible... especially in the nuclear family. The children hear their parents say first 'come my child and eat' right? Remember, listening skills are another part of teaching the language. As for speaking skills, that's another thing a child picks up. Parents can also teach their child how to read a book, and [they usually] begin with reading the Bible. The Bible is the most important book because everyone has one. (T3)

She added that parents who neglected teaching their children the language were depriving them of one of God's blessings. She said:

Remember parents are the first teachers to their children. It all begins in the family. If parents are careless in teaching their children the Samoan language, the children are losing the blessing from God. (T3)

In T2's view, no matter how much good work was done outside the home, this would all be fruitless if the home did not support the language:

That's where it all needs to start from, within the families...They're the first teachers of the language anyway. If the families maintain the language, the language will still grow and the people will grow. (T2)

This group also saw the home as playing a major role in bridging the 'gap' in Samoan language teaching they had identified – between the primary and intermediate levels. In T2's view, that was where parents needed to be strong '*in bridging that gap*'.

While arguing strongly the role of the home, these teachers were also concerned about what they saw to be the negative attitudes of many parents to Samoan – that Samoan was of little 'value' to their children's' futures. In T3's view, these parents were in effect 'killing' or destroying their children:

I don't think parents know they are killing their children by saying that Samoan is not useful for getting a job. Every language will get you a job. What the parents say about Samoan not getting a job is wrong. The reason is that the parents don't understand. Once they do understand, then things will be better. Parents who say that Samoan is not useful are killing their children, they are devaluing the language and do not want it to get better. (T3)

These teachers said parents who did not speak Samoan more in their homes, were also devaluing the language:

There are families that speak English because there are others [in the family] that are good at understanding [Samoan] but speaking is difficult. They are good at understanding when they hear [Samoan]...when they speak they start off in Samoan, but end up speaking English... (T3)

Church

As discussed (Chapter 2) the Church in New Zealand has played an important role in the use and preservation of the Samoan language. As pointed out by T2, the Church will always be there:

The Church is always there. We also have little groups like village groups you know...within the Church we've also got villages here they're starting to do things together. Those are other things that the [Samoan] language is spoken a lot. (T2)

The three teachers were quite brief when they spoke about the role of the Church. In fact, this seemed to be a sensitive domain. Only one of the three saw the Church as a major domain for Samoan language and culture. As discussed, T1 had grown up in a largely European area. Currently she attends her husband's EFKS Church:

I think the cultural base for a lot of it [Samoan language] happens in Churches nowadays – it's where most of this sort of stuff is happening. But it's also dependent on the religious group you belong to...whether it's a big focus or not at all. (T1)

As we talked however, it became clear that she saw the Church role as more one of exposing Samoans to the language rather than as teaching this:

Religion is such a huge thing and that should be where people are targeting it as well. If you're doing the service in Samoan, people might not understand it and there are kids who are bored out of their brains or don't understand it but just listening helps. It's not just Church on Sundays, it's like the youth groups and stuff like that. It's giving them a taste, letting them hear it, being surrounded by it, all the time. (T1)

At the same time, both T2 and T1 also pointed out that they thought the Samoan Churches were beginning to use more and more English today particularly when dealing with the younger generation of Samoans.

School

All three teachers were in firm agreement that the school must play a major role in teaching and maintaining the Samoan language because: “the young people are our hope for the future” (T3); children spend the majority of their day at school, and

parents are not strongly teaching or advocating for Samoan. T1 and T2 were strong on these points:

If a student is enrolled in a Samoan language course, it is certain that this student will be exposed and learn Samoan forty weeks of the year. Whereas leaving Samoan language learning exclusively to the home leaves room for uncertainty. (T1)

It needs to be taught in schools anyway to survive. It's already a qualification anyway. Even though that we're doing it in the home, the Church and other places, you can't get a qualification from home and from the Church. They will always be there to reinforce what we are trying to do in the school. (T2)

Teaching Samoan at school was seen to have other benefits apart from the language. T1 said her students did not want or like to learn the grammar of the Samoan language so much, but rather the culture. In her view also, having the Samoan language at school was providing an avenue for Samoan students to connect with other Samoan families and in turn, their own Samoan identity and heritage. T2 supported this view. He suggested that reconnecting to Samoa and *faasamoa*, as well as *faasinomaga*, might well be one of the most important factors influencing the teaching of the Samoan language in New Zealand today:

There are some Samoan students who have no idea of what being Samoan is because of their other connections [such as marriage] or through their family background. You might have intermarriages and then separated and it [this link] is gone....some of those kids are here at school. For example we have a Māori mother, the Samoan father is long gone. And [here at school] that's about the only place they will find some identity. If I know a student like that, I say 'OK' and we start talking about their culture and stuff. You have to be careful if the father is not around anymore...but if the student is willing to be Samoan anyway, they will ask you a lot of questions about Samoa...Having the Samoan language here and other Samoan teachers here, they like to talk about it that's the funny thing about those kids... (T2)

T2 said this had not been an isolated case and he gave another example:

Once Samoan families know about their kids [from a Māori woman and the man has gone somewhere else] then the Samoan aunties and uncles will pick them up. Because it's in their blood... they will go to that Māori lady and talk. Then that kid will have a family then with all these aunties and uncles. Then they start speaking Samoan... I've seen a few students here like that. (T2)

While two of the teachers (T2, T3) believed that parents should be responsible for teaching Samoan to their children, they also proposed that the school teachers had equal if not more responsibility in some circumstances. T2 saw Samoan parents as very important in the early years but that teachers became very important when children started school. In fact, T2 and T3 felt so strongly about this that they suggested that language teaching must be with the teachers who must extend their students' knowledge, especially in the *faasamoa*:

I think...to maintain the language, we need the teachers to do the language. The family is always there and it needs to be stronger as well to maintain the language. The Church is always there. (T2)

The kids go to school and the language is extended at school. Parents can't teach their children everything at home. The parents are first teachers but the school takes the language further. (T3)

They saw this responsibility on teachers to be overwhelming and to create pressure on Samoan teachers who, in many cases, had become the sole teachers of the Samoan language for many children today:

There is a lot of pressure on you to deliver the curriculum and teach our kids. That's why it makes it so hard to be teachers...one of the main issues that we face in our communities is the time the parents have with their kids. But I think the main part are the school teachers. (T2)

T2 had clearly given this matter a lot of thought. He felt so strongly about the importance of teachers that he had considered ways to address the teacher shortage in New Zealand. One idea was for there to be itinerant teachers of Samoan:

You know they have itinerant teachers for music...where it runs like a business, you go to one school teach that instrument, then you go to the next

school. I think we should start thinking of that, if we want to maintain our language – but the other languages as well. That is a very good business plan. Other languages are doing it. (T2)

T2 proposed that itinerant teachers would be useful at all levels but particularly at the primary school ‘gap’:

That could be a way to bridge the gap in primary schools. I don’t know how its run...I’ve seen people doing it. I think our language will have a chance especially in a community like this. I think it’s the way to go. (T2)

Recruiting Samoan teachers from Samoa and providing refresher courses for these teachers was another idea he had:

So you would have old teachers that have got qualifications from Samoa who would deliver the curriculum here. All they need is some training days on the curriculum and how lessons are done, and some observation... they would still need to pick up on their English as well especially dealing with New Zealand-born Students... and they’re only allowed to teach Samoan. (T2)

Polynesian Group

T2 was one of the leaders in the school’s Polynesian Club. He said the club played a major role in fostering the Samoan language and culture:

Poly group is important because of their [students] culture, it’s part of their growing up and part of their families. It’s one of those things that was passed down from the ancestors to the students...The Board [of trustees] approved to have one period [a week] for kapa haka⁵³ and the poly group. That was a big call from the Board...and I was quite happy when that happened, because it was giving us some time to prepare and understand the culture. (T2)

He said the Samoan language teaching was being done through the translation and explanation of Samoan songs to the students, but also through the performance:

The students do most of the work in terms of translating some of the songs. It was important...because every Samoan song and any song they learn [they must] understand what the words mean and what the story is about and what

⁵³ *Kapa haka* is commonly known in New Zealand as ‘Māori performing Arts’. Most Schools have a *kapa haka* group which is either led by members of the Māori community or the students themselves. Here, the students are able to express their culture and identity through song and dance.

it's for. We do that before we learn the songs and stuff. And that's the whole idea for having the Poly group for...to maintain the culture by just having more understanding in terms of performing arts, in terms of dancing and performing... (T2)

Students could also gain NCEA credits by participating in the Polynesian Group:

Because the school has seen the performances in past years and...they see how important this part of the culture is to our students and they see the growing number of our students in the school, so the board came to a decision...that this must be put in the school curriculum...I was quite happy with that. That's one of the things the parents were asking because they're taking the kids out of another academic period and [the parents] were wanting to know if they get credits for it. As soon as they said 'yes', the parents were OK with it. (T2)

A combined effort

It became clear that while the teachers held the ideal that Samoan parents should be teaching their children Samoan, they also saw the role of teachers to be increasing and that a combined effort would be most beneficial. While parents 'should' and are responsible for teaching Samoan, these teachers acknowledged that was not enough: the schools and the Church and other groups must work together to ensure Samoan was maintained in New Zealand:

It's in the family, in the Church, in the school and in the jobs. To me, those are all the places where Samoan should be used and taught unless there is a special meeting which has to be in English. But if it should be in Samoan, speak Samoan. (T3)

So as long as the parents are strong, and the Churches are strong outside of the school for the students who don't have the Samoan language in their own schools...so they'll be growing. So, in the family and the Church, they will help the student to pass the Samoan language in high school, so it's very important. (T2)

Part 2: Parents' *talanoa* findings

As noted, the parents' *talanoa* followed the same questions of the valuing of the Samoan language and factors influencing the learning of Samoan in New Zealand today. The parents were also asked about their views of Samoan as a school subject. P2 and P3s' children were taking Samoan and so these two discussed why they encouraged this. By way of contrast, P1 discussed why her sons had not taken Samoan. Finally, the parents' views on who should be responsible for teaching Samoan in New Zealand are presented.

As seen in Table 6, the parent group comprised two females and one male all of whom were born in Samoa. P1 and P2 had migrated to New Zealand as young teenagers, whereas P3 had migrated as an adult with a young family. With respect to education, this was a well educated group of parents. All three had completed their primary and intermediate schooling in Samoa; P1 and P2 had completed their secondary schooling in New Zealand, while P3 had completed secondary schooling and tertiary study in Hawaii. P3 was currently studying towards a second university degree. All three parents were of the Methodist faith and all three parents had children attending the sample school. Each of this group of parents said Samoan was their preferred language. However, they spoke a combination of Samoan and English in their homes.

Table 6 *Parent group background information*

	P1	P2	P3
Male/Female	Female	Female	Male
Migration to New Zealand	15 years old	10 years old	Adult
Church	Methodist (NZ)	Methodist (NZ)	Samoan Methodist
Education	Samoa, New Zealand	Samoa, New Zealand	Samoa, Hawaii, New Zealand
Children (biological and adopted)	3	3	3
Language Related			
First Language	Samoan	Samoan	Samoan
Main language in home	English Samoan	English Samoan	English Samoan
Proficiency in Samoan	Fluent	Fluent	Fluent

The valuing of the Samoan language

In these *talanoa*, the parents spent much of their time speaking about what the Samoan language meant to them. Although other issues were touched on, they kept coming back to this point as will be reflected in their responses. The main themes emerging were that Samoan was part of identity, culture, necessary to communication (especially with elders) and the sense of belonging which knowing the language engendered.

The message was strong that “Samoan is my first language” (P3) and these parents said they worked hard to ensure Samoan was the first language for their children as well:

Samoan was the first language for my boys. To me I think up to 15 [years]. Now they know and understand and respond and are able to translate everything to me. (P1)

Yes Samoan was their first language before they went to school...there is nothing worse than you going to Samoa and your grandmother or your grandfather speaks to you or says ‘go and do this’...and you say ‘what?’...I mean what are you? Why bother going to Samoa? When my kids were younger I used to make them speak Samoan and I said to them it’s really important especially with the grandparents coming over and they don’t understand. (P2)

P2 added that Samoan was especially important in her home because her husband had limited English. P1 said this was the case in her family as well. She said she was very thankful to her husband because had it not been for him, her children might not have been so fluent in Samoan:

It’s not that I am putting down our own husbands, but that [Samoan] was the main language for them now we appreciate if it wasn’t for them...I would regret it now and I would never forgive myself for not teaching them [children] at an early age. So I think we’ve got to be thankful to them [husbands] for forcing us to do it. (P1)

P3 said that sometimes there were some interesting dynamics in talking Samoan. But he still stressed the importance of communicating in Samoan:

Sometimes it's like you feel like you're being rude when you're talking Samoan to a New Zealand-born Samoan...at the same time they're trying to speak Samoan to you because they're feeling the same way. But, we're able to communicate and relay messages...using your Samoan language. (P3)

Not only did the parents think Samoan was necessary to communicate within their families and with other Samoans, this group also believed being Samoan meant speaking Samoan. Their comments included:

I was always taught, if you know your language you know who you are, your identity. I wouldn't know who I am if I didn't have the culture and the language. Without Samoan, I'm just a brown palagi. (P2)

That's my identity. If I don't speak Samoan and I don't participate and understand the culture, then I'm just a lost sheep. (P1)

You can never change the fact that you are Samoan. And if you lose that language, you know you've lost part of you. What would you fit in if you can't speak Samoan and you don't want your children to speak Samoan? If everyone is grouped into their races, and you're a Samoan but you can't even speak Samoan, then you would feel out of place. You would just be there for the sake of it you know? (P3)

There was considerable discussion on what constituted a real Samoan. Again, language was seen by this group to be a critical component here:

A real Samoan you know your culture, you value your language and your culture... That [being born in New Zealand] does not give you an excuse. That shouldn't be a barrier to be a real Samoan. If your language is lost, you're lost, you're no one, you have no identity. (P2)

But I think a full Samoan needs to know the language, a full blooded Samoan. (P3)

P3 believed that those who chose not to speak Samoan were not valuing being 'Samoan':

I just came to realise that it is really important not only to... take these things as your treasures...you know like your land back home, your language you know, your family and stuff like that. (P3)

Part of feeling ‘Samoan’ included the sense of belonging gained in connecting to a culture, of relationships and people:

Because if you understand it [Samoan], you get the feeling...you feel part of it...you feel more connected. (P2)

If it’s explained in Samoan, you can almost feel it. (P1)

P1 said that that was why she and her family had chosen to go to a Samoan Church:

He’s [husband] more confident going to Church when it’s in Samoan and not in English...you get different feelings when you go to a Samoan Church [service], you feel more connected. (P1)

In P3’s view, not being able to speak Samoan was enough to make people feel out of place or disconnected:

How would they feel like if they went into a Samoan community and people are going on in Samoan language and they can’t understand and can’t speak, they would feel so out of place. (P3)

P1 argued that one needed to understand the Samoan language in order to truly understand the *faasamoa* or *aganuu Samoa*:

In any Samoan function you start with a prayer, and a kava ceremony. For example if I sit through a kava ceremony that takes one hour and I don’t understand any of it, what’s the point? But that’s just me. At least have some basic understanding, but it’s something. (P1)

These parents thought that being able to get a job because one spoke Samoan was part of the valuing of the language but, not a substantial part. But P2 and P3 said the Samoan language was extremely important in their jobs:

I translate...I’m on the line for [company] if anyone that doesn’t understand...[they send them to me]. It’s one of the important factors in employment for you to know more than two languages. Especially now they have language lines for WINZ, ACC you name it. Soon it will be in the health department. (P1)

P3 believed that it was his fluency in Samoan language which had ultimately got him his job and subsequently his New Zealand permanent residency:

I got my permanent residence because of my Samoan language. That's what I argued when I went for my [job] interview. I speak Samoan better than English, so what I can bring to this job is I can relate to these people and speak to them in Samoan. So Samoan got me my permanent resident too – it got me my job and the car that I used and the phone and the fridge. (P3)

The valuing of the Samoan language in New Zealand today

P1 and P2 both believed that the Samoan language was becoming much more highly valued in New Zealand than in Samoa:

You know what, we are doing better here than in Samoa. Samoa now is more bilingual in Samoa. Take my step-son now when he came from Samoa, he didn't know anything [Samoan]. (P1)

When you go back to Samoa around Apia you hear English everywhere. And at college in Samoa, you're not allowed to speak Samoan. That's why I think New Zealand is better than Samoa language wise. (P2)

When P3 was doing his tertiary studies in Hawaii he had seen firsthand the loss of the Hawaiian language there. This had made him realise more the importance of the Samoan language:

When I was in Hawaii they were making a big fuss of teaching the Hawaiian language. Now I am starting to tell my boys hold onto your Samoan language. [Especially] when they grow older and have families ... P3)

He shared his future hopes for his family:

I'll feel sorry for hoping I would [not] get grandchildren and great grandchildren that would not speak Samoan. It would just be a big loss to them. It's something that they need to know, speak and understand...they need to understand. (P3)

Samoan as a school subject

Whether their children were taking Samoan as a school subject or not, all three parents firmly believed that Samoan should be taught as a school subject. The two parents whose children were enrolled in the Samoan classes said they had encouraged this because this would 'guarantee gaining NCEA credits'. However, P3 laughingly pointed out that while his son had initially taken Samoan because he thought it would be an easy subject, his son had found himself struggling to cope. He had encouraged his son to stick with Samoan:

I saw his last report. Unfortunately I couldn't meet the teacher but my wife went there and the feedback from the teacher was that he was slowly moving out from where he was. Once you learn your language and you can communicate to people you know fluently and stuff, and it will get you closer to them. (P3)

P3 hoped that if his children did well in Samoan, that would have a ripple effect on other school subjects and they would do well 'across the board'. His hopes were that a good Samoan mark would set the benchmark for the rest of his child's school subjects:

Well for me Samoan could have been the benchmark for all his other subjects. If he gets an A+ from the Samoan, the B and C from the other subjects will look really bad and so it will make him try and push him to get A+s for other subjects. (P3)

P2 referred to some research she had read about children who had attended a Samoan *Ā'oga* *Āmata* who had done very well in school because of their ability to translate backwards and forwards between Samoan and English. This was one of the reasons she supported her daughter learning Samoan at school. P2, whose daughter migrated from Samoa in 2000 is a fluent speaker of Samoan, but said her daughter took Samoan at school to help her understand English:

To help her understand the English language a bit more because she was born in Samoa...she's fluent in Samoan. I've always gone back to if you know your own language, then it's easy to know another language. (P2)

P3 believed that many New Zealand-born Samoan youth were ill disciplined compared with their Samoan counterparts. In his view, this stemmed from their not

knowing the Samoan language. He said he had encouraged his son to take Samoan at School so as to ensure that he was in touch with his roots and stayed 'disciplined':

The kids from Samoa are better disciplined than the ones from here. X is slowly kind of moving out of this because of the people he is mixing with. It's mainly from the New Zealand-born Samoan boys. If you really want to take these kids back to their roots, they need to start from their language. Once they value the Samoan language, psychologically, it can help them to bring back that real Samoan behaviour that they should have. That's why I would recommend it to be taught around the colleges and that level. I'll push him to take Samoan all the way through. (P3)

He hoped also that learning Samoan in school would make his son more interested in things *faasamoa*:

He will want to find out who the matai of my family are, and do we have lands and stuff like that. That's where you'll begin. You can never get your message across as far as teaching discipline. I think learning the language will do it and you will know the importance of it. (P3)

The one parent whose children had not enrolled in Samoan classes at school gave two reasons for this. First, she said, Samoan did not fit in their timetable. Second, Samoan was not a necessary subject to take for what her sons wanted to do for a career or for the jobs they wanted to do when they left school. At the same time, she indicated that her husband was committed to 'keeping up' their Samoan at home:

If my boys had room to take Samoan they would. Because their father is so strict, he's doing his part by teaching the culture at home. With x, he took his necessary subjects for his music. He wanted to take Samoan, but because there was no room. That's the same with y. He wanted to take Samoan to boost up his credits... their own father at home is doing the best he can to give them what he knows to the best of his own knowledge. (P1)

Each of these parents knew English was important at school because of the exams and because English was a global language:

Your kids have to know English because if their English is not good, they won't understand those subjects...for their own future. To me personally, they're both the same to me... Knowing your mother tongue language is just

as important as English, because English takes you anywhere in the world but having to know your own language as well is just important. But [English is getting more important now] because of NZQA criteria that they have to pass 8 credits of literacy. (P1)

Responsibility for teaching Samoan

Again the parents welcomed the opportunity to debate this issue. All three noted parents should be responsible or ‘more responsible’ for teaching Samoan. They said “*it’s the home. Everything starts at home*” (P2):

The best people to teach it are the parents... because the teacher can only do as much in the amount of time they have with the students. (P3)

However, P2 reminded that Samoan teenagers today spent considerably more time outside of their homes. They filled up their time with school, sports and Church and ‘only come home to sleep’. She thought also that parents might not be able to devote much time to teaching and speaking Samoan to their children today.

This was supported by P1. While she had argued that she and her husband had been strict in teaching their sons Samoan, she also acknowledged that they were starting to use more English in their homes. P3 recounted a similar experience. He said that when they had migrated to New Zealand, he had thought it would be best to speak English at home because his children were older and they ‘knew their Samoan’. However, he was starting to see small signs of language loss in his youngest son:

For the first couple of years we tried to speak English because I knew they won’t lose their language...I looked at it as a strategy to get into English for their school you know...purposely so they could understand English when they go to school and plus I didn’t want kids making fun of them...But my younger one, the way he talks Samoan even to us.. its changed from how he used to just rap on in Samoan...now he just goes on in English and I think now maybe it was because of what I did when I told my wife to try and speak English. (P3)

Given this, and other experiences, these parents proposed that while the home had a major responsibility to teach Samoan, so did the school. This was an unexpected finding.

Church

P1 proposed that because the majority of Samoans belong to some sort of Church, the Church should be responsible for teaching and using the Samoan language, ‘after the home’:

It's Church. Even the programmes they all go to Church, that's where you find them. That's where everybody mingles. That's our village. Home first and because the Church is our home too, that's our village, that's our community, that's where we meet, I would say home, Church, school. (P1)

P1 and P2 both spoke highly about the way the Sunday school had been instrumental in Samoan language learning. They explained how the scripture exams had really tested their children's Samoan reading and writing skills:

The Sunday school was the force behind the language as well...the program of the Sunday school [is] delivered in Samoan because of the Samoan exams. We still make sure they go to Church because that's another help for them outside school hours. (P1)

School

P3 believed the onus lay with the parents to teach Samoan but the job of the schools was to have the Samoan language available so as to maintain the language. P1 and P2 thought the home and school should work together:

If the parents do a good job, then the teachers won't have to struggle with them. But if the parents are doing one thing and the teachers are trying to teach Samoan and then you know? I think they're just fighting a losing battle. (P3)

Along with other members of the Samoa Parents Association, P3 had put through a petition to get Samoan available by correspondence:

Well I have a petition now. I want our Samoan language to be available by correspondence. (P1)

All told, the parents saw themselves as having the major responsibility to teach their children, but acknowledged the roles the schools and the Church in maintaining and reinforcing of the Samoan language outside of the homes.

Summary

The teacher and parent groups both valued the Samoan language highly for its place in their 'being Samoan'. Two teachers said that speaking Samoan made them 'Samoan', while two of the parents said they would feel like 'lost sheep' or 'brown *palagi*' if they did not speak the language. The language was also seen by both groups to be important to understanding the *faasamoa* in a 'deeper way' and being connected to it. One of the teachers emphasised the place of respect in the language itself, and how this went hand in hand with the 'respect' which was central to the *faasamoa*. He believed that discipline was a main difference between New Zealand and Samoa-born Samoans, and that the ill-discipline he had seen in New Zealand Samoan youth stemmed from them not knowing the Samoan language and culture.

Both groups also reinforced the importance of knowing the Samoan language, especially to be able to communicate with the elderly. In two cases, parents said it was particularly important that their children spoke Samoan, as their husbands' English was quite limited. Both groups also thought the Samoan language was helpful with regard to employment. The teachers commented that bilingual individuals were sought after in the job market, and the Samoan language would be a valuable asset whatever career their students aimed for. This notion was also reinforced by the parents, each of whom shared that they used Samoan in one form or another in their own jobs.

All were aware of the almost overwhelming dominance of English in New Zealand. At the same time, views were that the Samoan language was more valued in New Zealand than in Samoa, given the changes taking place in Samoa today. For this reason, one teacher believed that Samoans in New Zealand can no longer rely on the homeland for the revitalisation of the Samoan language.

The teachers supported the teaching of Samoan language in the schools very strongly from the point of view of their fears for the influence of English in New Zealand, but also because this would give students the chance to gain a qualification in the Samoan language. The teacher, who was not currently teaching Samoan, said he used the Samoan language to help raise the academic achievement of his Samoan Mathematics students by teaching bilingually. All three teachers referred to the growing importance of the school as an avenue for teaching Samoan because they

knew that in many Samoan homes today, parents were often absent for long periods working. This role was enhanced in secondary schooling given the gap in Samoan language teaching at primary school level – a situation which in turn was aggravated by the shortage of qualified Samoan language teachers in New Zealand.

All three parents had had children learning or who had learnt Samoan at school, and they had encouraged their children to do so. They spoke of the value of the NCEA credits gained in these classes, and one parent hoped that doing well in the Samoan class would set the benchmark for his son's performance in other subjects. In addition, this father hoped that doing Samoan at school would make his son more interested in the *faasamoa*.

Both the parents and teachers stressed the role (and responsibilities) of the home and parents as first teachers of the Samoan language for their children. One teacher felt very strongly; she said that parents who did not teach their children Samoan, were not only devaluing the Samoan language, but were in effect “killing” their children by denying them of their “blessing from God”. A parent acknowledged that by speaking English at home to teach his newly migrated family the English language, he may have contributed to the fact that his youngest son was now demonstrating signs of Samoan language loss.

With regard to the future, all three teachers believed the school must play a major role in ensuring the survival of the Samoan language given the length of time students spend at school, and the fact that the school was the place where students had to chance to connect with other Samoan students. The school's Polynesian group was also seen to be a key agency in fostering the Samoan language and culture. Two teachers believed that the school and parents had almost an equal responsibility to teach the language. However, as described by one teacher, this responsibility had the potential to place overwhelming pressure on teachers, especially in cases where Samoan was not spoken or fostered in the homes.

One parent believed the Church should have more responsibility to teach Samoan. However the main group of parents and teachers saw the role of the Church to be one of exposing students to and fostering Samoan, rather than teaching the language. As with the students, both teachers and parents saw the importance of all agencies working together to promote, use and teach the Samoan language.

CHAPTER 7: *FAAIFOGA* *Conclusion*

“O outou nei, o le faamoemoega o matou mo le lumanai”
You [the youth] are our hope for the future. (T3)

The study aims were to explore and document the views of Samoan students, parents and teachers on the place of the Samoan language in New Zealand today, how they valued the language, factors influencing the teaching and learning of Samoan in the school curriculum, and who they believed should be responsible for teaching and maintaining the Samoan language today.

For this study, I deliberately privileged the voices of the youth as the group who will set the platform for passing Samoan on to future generations. However, because the voices of youth must be understood within their wider family and school context, interviews were also carried out with three Samoan teachers and a small group of Samoan parents from the school these students attended. The seven students, who comprised the student group, encompassed a mix of male and female students from Years 10-13, four of whom were taking Samoan as a school subject. As a group, just over half of the student sample rated themselves as fluent Samoan speakers, and three of the seven as average to fluent. All seven said Samoan was spoken in their homes, and five out of seven also mentioned that English was spoken in their homes. Three students had attended *Ā’oga ‘Āmata*, and all but one attended a Church where services were in Samoan and followed Samoan worship styles. These factors must be taken into account in the findings.

While it had not been a main aim to have a mixture of Samoan-born and New Zealand-born participants, the majority of the sample was Samoan-born. Further research exploring any differences by Samoan-born and New Zealand-born students, and students from schools where Samoan is not taught, would be beneficial.

The Wellington school from which the three groups were drawn had a high population of Pacific students (24.9 percent) and Samoan students formed 70.2 percent of this Pacific group. Samoan has been taught as a subject at the school for over 15 years. The school had a Polynesian Group which was allocated a one hour teaching slot per week. The school also had a Samoan Parents Association and

Homework Centre. Therefore it can be argued that this school had a commitment to its Pacific students and the community.

The value of Samoan

The first finding was that all three groups valued the Samoan language very highly. The youth said the Samoan language was central to their identity and culture, and fostered their sense of ‘belonging’. To this group of youth, language was central to what it meant to be Samoan. The students also emphasised the importance of language for communicating, especially with elders. To them, using the Samoan language was a demonstration of respect. This idea of respect as being embedded in the language was also reinforced by the parents and teachers. A significant finding here was that the students regarded Samoan as just as important when communicating with each other. To them, using Samoan with their friends and other students was showing respect because other students were Samoan, and reinforced their ‘shared’ identity as Samoans. Two parents highlighted the necessity of Samoan as the language of communication in their homes, because their husbands did not have a good understanding of English.

The Samoan-born students believed that fluency in Samoan was integral to being a ‘Samoan’, and this view was supported by the majority of the parent and teacher groups. Conversely, the New Zealand-born students believed that a person was ‘Samoan’ even if they were not fluent in the language.

For the boys in particular, role modelling played a part in the valuing of the Samoan language. However, despite their admiration for famous sport stars as role models, this group also referred to the influential role of ‘everyday’ Samoans – in the homes, Churches, and in Samoa – whom they saw were so proud to use Samoan as they carried out their various duties and responsibilities. The importance of role models did not seem to be so powerful for the girls in this study.

The usefulness of Samoan

There were differences between the students and the teacher/parent groups about the usefulness of the Samoan language in getting a job. Although some students did mention employment possibilities (for example, Samoan language interpretation and Samoan language teaching), they had some reservations about the usefulness of

Samoan in getting a job, even though they knew New Zealand was a multicultural country. By way of contrast, the teachers stressed the marketability of bilingual individuals in the job market, and that being bilingual in Samoan and English would be useful in whatever career students might choose in the future. The parents were also ardent advocates of the importance of Samoan to employment prospects. This illustrates the clear distinction, made by these groups, between the intrinsic value of the Samoan language, and its usefulness in New Zealand. This particular finding may influence Samoan language maintenance in New Zealand.

The students had quite pragmatic views of the factors which influenced Samoan language learning and speaking. Their answers showed an awareness of the dominance of the English language in everyday life today. They also spoke about the ‘creeping’ of English into their home life. This is concerning given that the students also saw the home and the family as major agencies for Samoan language use and maintenance. In addition, and an unexpected finding, was the student view that the English language was also increasingly used in the Samoan Churches they attended. As is well documented, the Church has always been perceived to be strong advocates and agencies for Samoan language maintenance. This too, warrants further research given the view that the Church is one of New Zealand’s main domains for the utilisation and maintenance of Samoan.

Like the students, the parents and teachers were also highly aware of the overwhelming influence of English. One teacher even felt that Samoa (the homeland) can no longer be relied upon for language revitalisation, given the changes taking place there today. Another teacher pointed to the effects the media play on furthering the ‘creeping’ of English into the homes in particular. This view highlighted the powerful role the media can play in language maintenance, and in turn, the importance of strong advocacy for Samoan programmes in the media where people can hear and see Samoan spoken.

Samoan as a school subject

The four students taking the Samoan language as a school subject gave various reasons for this. Some said to ‘make their parents happy’ while others said they wanted to learn more about themselves and the Samoan culture. Some students also stressed that learning Samoan at school gave them ‘more confidence’.

While generally happy with the courses, some students thought these could be taught in a more ‘enticing’ way, in order to further the development and enrichment in the language that they needed. Generally, they thought that the Samoan classes relied heavily on teaching for communication, with less focus on the developing and enrichment of the language or linguistics. Suggestions were also made about incorporating more discussion about Samoan epistemologies.

For those not taking Samoan as a subject, reasons included timetable clashes, the need to take subjects which would be more important for their future career hopes, and one student said “I am good at speaking; I should be trying to better my English”. It can be said that there were mixed views about the status of the Samoan language as a subject of study at school. That aside, the school’s Polynesian group was viewed by all students as an important agency for the teaching and maintenance of the language. The commitment of the wider school community to the Poly Group was also seen to be reassuring.

At the same time, the students saw the schools as coming to play a larger role in language and culture learning due to the time students spent at school, but also because many Samoan parents worked long hours and did not have the time to teach and discuss the intricacies of the Samoan language and culture with their children. This view was supported by the teachers.

Samoan teaching in the school

These teachers saw themselves as having a duty or a responsibility to teach Samoan. To them, it was more than just a job, it was their *tofi*. One teacher who had grown up in a predominantly European town felt so strongly about her ‘duty’ or responsibility, that she had taken this job of teaching Samoan, even though she had been offered another post. She felt a keen responsibility to ensure that other young Samoans did not have to face the situation she had faced. For the older teacher, Samoan language teaching had always been her love, and she referred numerous times to the Samoan language as being her *tofi*, and that young Samoans must not be deprived of this ‘blessing’ from God.

In the teachers' views, the schools were providing a valuable site for students to '(re)connect with their ' Samoan-ness', and to reinforce what the home and Church were already doing. They referred to the strength of the Samoan ECE language nests (*Ā'oga 'Āmata*) and the secondary schooling, but were worried about the 'gap' in Samoan language teaching at the primary school level. Further, they saw the shortage of qualified Samoan language teachers as seriously undermining the strength and growth of Samoan language teaching generally. This is an area which requires urgent attention.

Another issue raised was the expectation that because a teacher was Samoan, they had the responsibility for every school-based issue relating to Samoan and/or Pacific students. Discussions showed very clearly that these Samoan teachers provided a hub of safety and mentoring for students: they nurtured them almost as their own children, they explained academic processes and clarified academic concepts, and dealt with poor behaviours. While these teachers felt honoured in fulfilling these multiple roles, there was also a danger of these becoming a burden. One teacher even suggested, that it was this extra 'pressure' that deterred many young Pacific people he knew, from joining the teaching profession.

The future

All three groups believed very strongly that the major responsibility for teaching Samoan lay with the parents. One teacher felt so strongly about this, that she stated that parents, who neglect to teach their children the Samoan language, are "killing their children" and denying them of their "blessing from God".

Generally all three groups saw the promotion of the value of the Samoan language and the teaching and maintenance of the Samoan language and culture to be the job of parents, schools and the community. At the same time, both the teachers and the students stressed that much of the responsibility for Samoan language teaching now lay with the schools, because of the working situation of many Samoan parents. Parents still had a strong faith in the Church as a language training agency. The growing role of the school as the place for Samoan language teaching is a clear research finding which should inform policy and programme planning in this field. For example, the teachers strongly pushed for more action by Government in this matter, especially with regard to the shortage of Samoan teachers. The idea of

itinerant teaching, as suggested by one of the teachers (T2), is a worthwhile suggestion, and could be an area which could be looked at and implemented in schools. Additional research into how the lack of Samoan curriculum at primary school (the gap) is influencing the language competency of students who have had a solid *Ā'oga 'Āmata* background training, is also vital.

The role of youth in language maintenance (peer group), which was a finding of this study, has been unexplored and undervalued. As noted, these students saw themselves as having an important role in this as well. An example here is one of the Samoan-born students, who said she used her Samoan language knowledge to teach fellow New Zealand-born peers. While anecdotal reports suggest that there had often been a separation between Samoan-born and New Zealand-born youth, this was not evident in this sample group. Instead, for this group of young Samoans, there seemed to be a real spirit of understanding and desire to 'help' one another. Again, the nature of the relationship between Samoan-born and New Zealand-born Samoan youth warrants more in-depth study, especially in these rapidly changing times.

The importance of peer mentoring in the Samoan language and culture among Samoan youth has not been well explored in the literature, including role modelling. The informal teaching and support of the Samoan language in the playground, as well as the ways young people are their own agents of Samoan language maintenance, would benefit from more research. Research into Samoan youth's use of the language in for example, the sporting arena, cultural activities, and social networks will inform future policies and programmes to support Samoan language maintenance.

Each of the students, parents and teachers in this study indicated that our *talanoa* were the first time they had thought, let alone talked, about the Samoan language and issues of language valuing and loss. It was evident from the conversations that a significant proportion of the Samoan community were unaware that the Samoan language might be in jeopardy in New Zealand. These groups were also appreciative of the fact that they felt that their 'voices' had been heard.

It is time for the Samoan community here in New Zealand and its leaders to begin raising these points for discussion nationally, and within their own respective communities. It is also vital that these conversations take place in the homes, as it

was overwhelmingly obvious, that the home is where ‘it all begins’. Community and family based actions now will help to strengthen the case for more support, and ensure the survival of the language into the next generation. While the state should support the language maintenance efforts, these important discussions must also take place in the homes, Churches, schools, and wider community, so that policy may be more effective.

Finally, the *talanoa* method proved to be a culturally appropriate method for this study. The flexibility of the *talanoa* allowed time for participants to share what they felt was important and in doing so, new understandings as well as new areas for further discussion arose. The use of both Samoan and English in the *talanoa* further enabled me, the researcher to accord the participants their due *faaaloalo* (respect) which is essential to the research process. The final step in this process will be the sharing of these findings with the parents, the teachers and the students.

Samoa, o le ‘ula lenā na ou su’iina ma le agāga maulalo, ‘auā e lē galo oe i a’u moe. Ou te sālā’afi’afi pea mo oe, le atunuu e pele i lo’u agāga, le parataiso ua faasinoina mo i tā’ua. O lo ta tofi mai le Atua, e tuuina atu ma le fiafia tele i lo’u faamāoni ātoa. Tautuanā ma oe, lo ta tofi ne’i vale tuulima.

Samoa, I present to you this garland of flowers I have made, with a humble heart. I will not forget you, even in my sleep. I will always sing your praises; the country dear to my heart, the paradise which God has given for you and I. With a sincere heart, I present to you our gift from God. Behold our Samoan language, lest it be lost.

Soifua, o Salainaolua.

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Ethics Application

The application to the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee (HEC) was submitted on the 18 May 2009 and was granted on 12 June 2009. The application was based on the following:

- (a) that full consent would be sought and obtained via a signed consent form.
- (b) that data collection would be carried out in one way: a tape and/or digitally recorded *talanoa* (semi-structured in depth interviews with all research participants). These would be carried out as a one-on-one *talanoa* as was the case for the student and teacher participant groups, or in a group *talanoa* session in the case of the Samoan parents.
- (c) that the research is not anonymous but confidential. Participants would be given the option of using their real names or a pseudonym (see figure 1.5). If the participant was to choose the latter, it would be assured that that participant would not be identified in the thesis.
- (d) that each participant would be aware and informed that all/any information or opinions shared may be incorporated into the thesis.
- (e) that each research participant would be able to withdraw from the study at any time without reason, and would not be questioned about it.
- (f) that access to interview transcripts will be limited to the researcher and supervisor(s), and that all information obtained during data collection would be destroyed 3 years after submission of the final report.

APPENDIX TWO

New Zealand Pasifika Community Language Competencies 1996-2006

Language	Population 2006	Median age	Percentage of the Population speaking the language		
			1996	2001	2006
Cook Island Māori	58,011	19yrs	20%	18%	16%
Fijian	9861	24yrs	26%	28%	29%
Niuean	22,473	20 yrs	34%	28%	25%
Samoan	131,100	21yrs	68%	67%	63%
Tokelauan	6819	19yrs	56%	44%	40%
Tongan	50,478	19yrs	63%	60%	61%
Tuvaluan	2625	20yrs	Not available	72%	71%
n=	265,974				

Sources: Statistics New Zealand (2006, 2001, 1996) Pacific Profiles, Population Characteristics.

There are approximately 265,974 Pasifika people in New Zealand of which the Samoan population is approximately 49 percent (131,100) of the total Pasifika population. The Samoans are the fastest growing population in New Zealand, registering a 14 percent increase since 2001. The Samoan population is also a very youthful population with a median age of 21, and 60 percent are New Zealand-born (Statistics New Zealand, 2007a).

In the statistical data available from the 1996 – 2006 censuses, these 7 largest Pasifika ethnic groups in New Zealand (with the exception of Fijian and Tongan which remains stable) are facing a similar state of decline. The Cook Islands Māori, Niuean, and Tokelauan languages have all been given attention recently, with language maintenance efforts boosted given the fact that they register very low language competency levels, but also because the populations of these groups now living in New Zealand is significantly higher than back in their homelands.

HRC Ethical Principles of Pacific Health Research

Health Research Council Guidelines on Pacific Health Research – Ethical principles	
1.	<i>Faiā/Vā fealoaloa’i</i> (relationships) - it is important to build and maintain ethical relationships
2.	<i>Faaaloalo</i> (respect) – demonstrate respect
3.	<i>Tōfā Manino i le aganuu</i> (cultural competency) – Seek ethnic specific and context specific advice on cultural competent practice and understand the importance of communicating appropriately translated information to Pacific people
4.	<i>Tāua o le pululimatagau faatasi</i> (meaningful engagement) - Effective ‘face-to-face’ consultation is critical to establishing meaningful relationships with Pacific people. Understand the consultation process
5.	<i>Toe tau i ‘auala aloa’ia</i> (reciprocity) - Reimburse the costs of participation in research, disseminate research findings so that they are accessible to Pacific communities
6.	<i>Aogā o le soālaupule</i> (utility) – describe how the research will inform policy; develop Pacific methodologies, frameworks, models, analyses and approaches
7.	<i>Amana’ia o aiā a tagata lautele po o ē o ‘auai</i> (rights) - recognise that participants must be properly informed in order to consent, researchers must uphold the right of participants to withdraw
8.	<i>Tāfesilafa’i</i> (balance) – aim for balance in research relationships and who benefits from research
9.	<i>Malupuipua o ē faasoa ma ‘auai</i> (protection) - Researchers should always acknowledge that the ownership of primary knowledge and data lies with the people who contribute that knowledge
10.	Capacity building - build research capacity and capability to extend reciprocity
11.	<i>Tapulima faatasi</i> (participation)

Source: Health Research Council (2005).



Participant Information Sheet

Researcher: Salainaolua Lisa-Maree Wilson: Vaaomanū Pasifika Pacific and Samoan Studies, Victoria University of Wellington.

Research Title: Le Tofi ne'i vale tuulima: Perceptions of Samoan Students, Parents and Teachers on the place of the Samoan Language in New Zealand today.

Talofa lava. My name is Salainaolua Wilson and I am a Masters Student in Pacific Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. The Masters in Pacific Studies is thesis based and the research study I am undertaking involves exploring in dialogue with Samoan students, parents, and teachers what their perceptions are of the place of the Samoan language in New Zealand society today. Not much has been written about what Samoans believe as the value and place of the Samoan language here in New Zealand, yet it may be one of the most important discussions the Samoan people will have regarding the future of their language in New Zealand.

Research Aims:

The research aims to ask three main questions;

1. What is the value of the Samoan language is in New Zealand today?
2. What are the factors influencing Samoan language learning in New Zealand?
3. Who should be responsible for teaching the Samoan language in New Zealand today?

Your participation in this study will involve a face-to-face *talanoa* (informal conversation or interview) which will be conducted at a time which is convenient for you. Should there need to be a follow up interview, you will be contacted and you may chose to agree or decline the invitation.

You are in no way obliged to agree to an interview or group talanoa session or participant observation. Should you feel the need to withdraw from the project at any time, you may do so without question at any time.

The interviews and discussions will be taped or digitally recorded so that I can capture the richness of the conversation. These conversations can be carried out in either English, Samoan or both. I will transcribe each conversation and return to you for your approval. This is to ensure that I do not misinterpret any words or meanings.

The responses I collect will form the basis of my research project and will be incorporated into the thesis. All personal details, information and opinions will be kept confidential. No other person besides myself and my two supervisors, will see the transcripts. All interview transcripts, tapes and observation notes will be destroyed three years after submission and approval of the final research report. Furthermore, while the report will remain in the form of an unpublished thesis, a copy of the final report will be made available to you/your school

and research findings may be published in academic journals and or disseminated at academic/professional conferences.

Below are the contact details for myself and my supervisor should you require any further information about the project. Faafetai lava and thank you very much for agreeing to participate. Your responses will be a valuable contribution to the research.

Soifua,

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Faamaumauga mo lou silafia

Tama'ita'i su'esu'e: Salainaoloa Lisa-Maree Wilson: Vaaomanū Pasifika – Su'esu'ega i Mataupu tau i le Pasefika ma Samoa, Iunivesite Aoao o Vitoria, Ueligitone, Niu Sila.

Ulutala o le su'esu'ega: Le Tofi ne'i vale tuulima: Manatu faaalua o Tamaiti ā'oga Samoa, Faiā'oga Samoa ma Mātua Samoa i le tulaga o le Gagana Samoa o loo i totonu o Niu Sila i le taimi nei.

Talofa lava. O lo'u igoa o Salainaoloa Wilson. O a'u o loo ou su'eina nei le faailoga o le Masters, o se faailoga i Mataupu tau i le Pasefika, i le Iunivesite aoao o Vitoria i Ueligitone. O lenei faailoga o loo ou su'esu'eina ai ni manatu mai i Tamaiti ā'oga Samoa, Faiā'oga Samoa ma Mātua Samoa i le tulaga o loo i ai le Gagana Samoa i totonu o Niu Sila i le taimi nei. I le taimi nei, e le tele ni su'esu'ega faapea fo'i ni faamaumauga pe o a ni manatu faaalua o tamaiti, faiā'oga ma mātua Samoa i totonu o Niu Sila i le taimi nei e faatatau tonu i le Gagana Samoa. E ia te a'u se lagona vaivai, o le tatou Gagana o se mataupu e pito i sili ona tāua pe tatou tepa i le lumanai o le tatou nonofo ai i Niu Sila nei.

Sini Autu o le Suesuega:

O lenei suesuega e faaautu lea i fesili taua e tolu:

1. Pe o le a le faatāuaina ole Gagana Samoa i totonu o Niu Sila i le taimi nei?
2. Pe o a ni mataupu o loo faamalosiā ai le a'oa'oina ole Gagana Samoa i Niu Sila?
3. O ai e ona le matāfaioi o le a'oa'oina ole Gagana Samoa i totonu o Niu Sila i le taimi nei?

O le faatinoina o lenei suesuega e aafia ai se talanoaga faasamasamanoa i soo se taimi lava ma soo se nofoaga e finagalo I ai lē o loo finagalo e auai i lenei suesuega. E iai foi se isi talanoaga e toe fai e na o le toe au'ili'ili ai le talanoaga na fai muamua. A faapea e te lē avanoa pe e te lē mana'o I ai, ia e taliaina lava.

A e finagalo e te faamaamulu mai i lenei talanoaga pe o se talanoaga fai to'atele, e tuuina atu lava ia te oe le loto faitalia e te filifili ai pe e te malie iai pe e leai.

O nei talanoaga o le 'ā pu'eina lea i se laau pu'e leo, ina ia mafai ai ona ou pu'eina mai mataupu eseese ole talanoaga. O nei foi talanoaga e mafai ona faaperetania, pe faasamoa foi pe faaaogaina uma foi gagana uma nei e lua. Ou te tusitusiina uma le talanoaga ona tuuina atu lea o faamaumauga o le tusitusiga e te faitau i ai ia ma lou foi silafia. E tāua le tuuina atu le kopi o lau tusitusiga auā e lelei lou silasila ma toe faitau ou manatu ina ia aua ne'i iai se nunumi, pe o se sesē foi.

O talanoaga ma faamaumauga uma o le a ou faaaogaina e fai ai lau su'esu'ega. O soo se faamaumauga e patino tonu i lou suafa, lou alalafaga, o ou tausaga faapea foi ou manatu faaalua o le a faaaogaina i lenei suesuega, o le a natia. O talanoaga, mea pueleo ma faamaumauga uma e taofi uma se'ia mae'a le tolu tausaga talu ona uma le suesuega. E mae'a loa le tolu tausaga ona faalēaogaina (susunu) uma lea o nei tusitusiga ma

faamaumauga. A mǎe'a foi le su'esu'ega, o le a maua se kopi o le su'esu'ega ae le'i lolomiina auā au faamaumauga ma lou silafia. I lea lava taimi e mafai ona faaaogaina lenei lava kopi ole su'esu'ega e lolomiina i totonu o tusi a le Iunivesite ia ma faaaogaina e alii ma tama'ita'i polofesa.

E mafai ona faafesootai mai a'u poo la'u faiā'oga foi pe a manaomia se fesoasoani poo ni fesili ma ni faamalamalamaga atili o lenei su'esu'ega. Faafetai lava mo lou 'auai i lau suesuega. O lau tali mai ou te faatāua teleina i lau su'esu'ega.

Soifua,

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Participant Consent Form

Researcher: Salainaoloa Lisa-Maree Wilson: Vaaomanū Pasifika Pacific and Samoan Studies, Victoria University of Wellington.

Research Title: Le Tofi ne'i vale tuulima: Perceptions of Samoan Students, Parents and Teachers on the place of the Samoan Language in New Zealand today.

I have been given and have understood clearly an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I may withdraw myself (and any information I have provide) for this project (before data collection and analysis is complete) without having to give reasons or without penalty of any sort.

- ☐ I only consent to undertaking this interview under the condition that the published results will not use my name but rather a pseudonym, and that no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me

OR

- ☐ I consent to information or opinions which I have given being attributed to me in any reports on this research
- ☐ I understand that I will have the opportunity to check the transcripts of the interviews before publication
- ☐ I understand that the data I provide will not be used for any other purposes or be released to others without my consent
- ☐ I would like to receive a summary of the research when it is completed
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research

[or for the student group under 16: I agree that..... who is under my guardianship, may take part in this research]

Signed:
Name of participant:
Date:

Pepa Faatumu – Maliliega mo ē o loo ‘auai i lenei su’esu’ega

Tama’ita’i su’esu’e: Salainaolua Lisa-Maree Wilson: Vaaomanū Pasifika – Su’esu’ega i Mataupu tau i le Pasefika ma Samoa, Iunivesite Aoao o Vitoria, Ueligitone, Niu Sila.

Ulutala o le su’esu’ega: Le Tofi ne’i vale tuulima: Manatu faaalua o Tamaiti ā’oga Samoa, Faiā’oga Samoa ma Mātua Samoa i le tulaga o le Gagana Samoa o loo i totonu o Niu Sila i le taimi nei.

Ua mǎe’a ona tuuina mai ia te a’u le faamalamalamaga au’ili’ili o lenei su’esu’ega. Ua mǎe’a foi ona tuuina mai ia te a’u le avanoa e mafai ai ona ou fesiligia lenei su’esu’ega, faapea fo’i ona taliaina fesili ma lo’u malie atoa i ai. Ua ou malamalama foi, e ia te a’u le loto faitalia e mafai ai ona ou faamaamulu mai i lenei su’esu’ega i soo se taimi ou te mana’o i ai.

- ☐ Ua ou malie, o talanoaga uma o lenei su’esu’ega, a oo ina lolomi, e lē tusia ai lo’u igoa moni. O le a faaaogaina se igoa e ese atu ma lo’u igoa. O itū eseese uma o lenei su’esu’ega e lē faaaogaina ai lo’u igoa moni, pe faailoaina atu ai a’u

PE O

- ☐ Ua ou malie o faamaumauga ma talanoaga uma ua ou tuuina atu i le tama’ita’i su’esu’e e mafai ona ia faaaogaina mo lana sutesuga
- ☐ Ua ia te a’u le malamalamaaga, e tuuina mai ia te a’u se avanoa ou te siakiina ai le su’esu’ega ae lei tuuina atu e lolomi
- ☐ Ou te malamalama foi o faamaumauga uma o lenei su’esu’ega e le mafai ona faaaogaina i se isi lava mataupu sei vaganā ua ave atu lau faatanaga
- ☐ Ou te mana’o ina ia tuuina mai ia te au se kopi o le tauaofa’iga o lenei su’esu’ega pe a mǎe’a
- ☐ Ou te manao ma malie atoa e ‘auai i lenei su’esu’ega

[**pe** mo tamaiti e 16 tausaga ma lalo ane: Ua ou faatagaina atu la’u tama/tama tausi e auai i lenei su’esu’ega]

Sainia lou suafa.....

Tusi lolomi lou suafa.....

Aso:

Talanoa Question Schedule (Student, Teacher and Parent Groups)

Participant Background Information

- Age, ethnicity, year level in School (students), Place of birth, parents' ethnic backgrounds, hometown etc.

Language Use

- Languages spoken and competency, first language, preferred language, competency of English (reading, writing, speaking and understanding), language spoken at home, language spoken with peers with siblings, with the rest of the family/elders.
- Where is Samoan spoken? Competency in Samoan (reading, writing, speaking and understanding)
- Why choose to speak Samoan or not speak Samoan? Discuss.
- Where should Samoan language be used?
- Membership in Samoan cultural group (students), other 'Samoan' groups
- Do you listen/watch any Samoan radio or television programmes? Samoan newspapers etc
- How did you learn Samoan?
- Do you speak Samoan at Church? Sports teams? Explain.
- Male/Female differences?

Value of Samoan Language

- How important is the Samoan language to you? Discuss.
- How important in New Zealand?
- How important in employment?
- Which is most important – English or Samoan? Discuss.
- How important is Samoan in everyday life for you? (teachers, students and parents)
- Is understanding the Samoan language enough? Elaborate.

Samoan Language Learning and Teaching

- Should the Samoan language be taught in New Zealand? Discuss.
- Who do you think should be responsible for teaching the Samoan language? Discuss.
- Reasons for learning/not learning or teaching/not teaching the Samoan language.
- Did you always want/intend to learn or teach Samoan? Discuss.

Identity and 'Samoanness'

- What do you believe constitutes being a 'Samoan' or true Samoan? Discuss.
- What is/are the difference(s) between Samoans born in Samoa and Samoans born in NZ or other countries? Elaborate.
- Is being able to speak Samoan part of being a Samoan or 'true Samoan'?
- Is the Samoan language necessary for identity formation in NZ?
- Male/Female differences?

Future of the Samoan language in New Zealand

- What do you want for the future of the Samoan language in NZ?
- Do you think learning the Samoan language should be compulsory in New Zealand? Explain.
- Should the Samoan language be taught in NZ Schools?