Rethinking Principles and Practices of Literacy/Biliteracy and Bilingualism in Pacific Education

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About Judy
Judy Taligalu McFall is the Pasifika Services and Information Librarian at the University of Auckland. She is the founder and immediate past chair of the Pacific Library and Information Management Services Network (a sub group of LIANZA NZ) that has many members across Pacific Nations. Judy is Samoan, attended USP and lived in Tonga for over 20 years, working there at the USP Campus. In addition to English she speaks reads and writes Samoan & Tongan and is a learner of te reo Maori. Judy has designed, reviewed and taught Pacific research methods courses at Pasifika post & undergraduate graduate students at VUW Library School, The Open Polytech and at UOA. She has researched published and presented extensively on policies on bilingualism and languages in the Pacific and raising Pacific tertiary student achievement from a language, culture and identity base. She is a joint Coordinator with John of the Bilingual Leo Pacific Coalition and advocate for Pacific languages and Bilingual Education. As part of her work she travels annually to Pacific countries to discuss and develop archives, library and research collections and collaborations between the UoA and Pacific Nations on reciprocal basis for mutual benefit.

With John she is a parent and grandparent of 6 children and 8 grandchildren of Samoan, Tongan, Cook Is, Scottish, Irish & Italian heritages. Mauri Ora

About John
John is of Irish ancestry from the O’Donnell & O’Connor families in Donegal & Kerry in Ireland. Many of his ancestors were deported in chains or exiled to Australia and the USA for being teachers of the Irish language, the Catholic religion or just proud independent Irish. His family came to NZ in the mid 1800s to escape this ethnic, religious and language persecution and said it was important not to just reproduce the inequalities of the old world but to build something new here in Aotearoa/NZ in the Pacific

John speaks two languages, Maori and English and is a learner of Samoan, Tongan and Cook Is Maori and Tahitian. John has worked in Tonga on VSA, in Samoa and Kiribati on Foreign Affairs education projects. He assisted the Cook Is Ministry of Education in 2006-2008 with professional development and research in Dual Medium Bilingual Education. John is the designer and consultant in the current Taumualua Biliteracy American Samoa education project. His research is on Simultaneous Biliteracy for Maori, Samoan and French biliteracy programmes at Richmond Road School in Ponsonby/Grey Lynn Auckland. John is the Director of Waka Aotearoa Education Limited a NZ Biliteracy Consultancy and former HOD of the Reading Studies Dept at the Faculty of Education. John is a founding member of Te Reo Maori Society Aotearoa who started Maori Language Week and was an exec member of the NZ Federation of Maori Students, the Pasifika Ulimasao Bilingual Ed Association and with Judy a Coordinator of Bilingual Leo Pacific Coalition.

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McCaffery, J. (2015). Simultaneous Biliteracy at Richmond Road School. (Draft PhD research material) Auckland: University of Auckland (Please acknowledge. This material cannot be used without acknowledgement & referencing)

Reference this paper:

McFall, J. T., & McCaffery, J. (2015). Rethinking Principles and Practices of Literacy/Biliteracy and Bilingualism in Pacific Education. A paper presented to the OCIS 2015 Conference, Emalus Campus, US, Vanuatu. 3-6 November 2015. (This material cannot be used without acknowledgement & referencing)

DO NOT treat this presentation as a Handbook on how to do Biliteracy Education. It is a plea for help from UNESCO

This research has been formally conducted at Richmond Road School, Ponsonby, Auckland between 2010-2015.

From it has been completed a new theoretical position called Simultaneous Biliteracy that was first theorised by John in 2006, presented at LED in 2007 and published in proceedings (Villers & McCaffery, 2008). It is a biliteracy model to understand and explain the rapidly developing complexity of students and families language & literacy situations in Aotearoa NZ and in the Pacific Island nations.

The associated pedagogies have been piloted at Richmond Road School in French – English, Samoan-English and Maori English Bilingual/ Biliteracy unit programmes. It is currently also being piloted at Newton Central & Ranui Schools Maori Immersion Units which will be reported on at the UoA Language Education and Diversity (LED) Conference, 23-27 November 2015.

Bilingual students are in fact...

‘Blessed with Bilingual Brains’

McCaffery & Tuafuti, 1999

Meanings in this presentation:

HL = Heritage language/s of ones family and ancestors. Children may or may not understand and/or be speakers of their Heritage Languages.

L1/ MT = Mother tongue/s, vernacular, family language or first language/s learned during infancy-0-6yrs of age.

L2= second language/s English or regional language/s learned after infancy age of 6-7yrs of age.

TLLR=total language & literacy resources –all the above including local languages, & dialects and registers.

Can have more than one MT/L1/HL. Can have English/French and HL/s as L1/s as well- see above.
Bilingual education is the professional field that aims to assist learners to become bilingual or trilingual and biliterate in both languages through using either one language—immersion, or two plus languages or their TLR in various combinations over time at school, as mediums of instruction. Not an end in itself—a method to promote more effective academic achievement, biculturalism, indigenous language rejuvenation, and personal development.

To gain the benefits of Bilingual Education at least 50% of the overall time through out schooling and each year, needs to be spent learning curriculum content, through the minority heritage language.

Evidence is that we are often currently not doing “Literacy” and education very well. World Bank initial early literacy surveys 2010 on found- [http://data.worldbank.org/topic/education](http://data.worldbank.org/topic/education)

- Historical claims of 90-95% literacy in the Pacific are apparently not correct.
- That across the countries reviewed & surveyed* the average level of English literacy achieved at the end of yr 3 around 20% 25% - At Yr 6 was around 35%-40 % (Tonga, Samoa, Cook Is, Solomans (some Is-17%) Fiji, Vanuatu ?…)
- Heritage Mother Tongue literacy achievements were similar. Little serious investment, little time or priority given to MT/ HL Literacy development. No Bilingual Education. Teaching and or Testing done in English at and after times when programmes are meant to be run in MT ??? (2 yrs and 4) Why is this ?

Current interpretations and use of the term Literacy need to change

Literacy does not just mean literacy in English (let's call that English Literacy)

Literacy does not mean just literacy in L1 /HL

In the Pacific-

Literacy needs to mean Biliteracy

i.e. literacy in (at least) two languages

- In Melanesia with small local family, village, island languages, Pidgins and Creoles research is clear -Bilingualism / Trilingualism /Biliteracy too often means only standard colonial English / French and doesn’t include local langs or national langs as mediums of instruction – (Even where all local people speak Pidgin/ Bislama). (Vanuatu has explored local Bislama MTs since independence, usually only ECE – yr1/2 in possible Early Exit prog by yr 2-3) & some possible Sci and SS teaching to yr 6. The Min of Education blocked Parliament's Bislama proposals for medium of instruction after independence.
- Low student achievements are very resistant to change over long periods of time i.e. Current approaches not working!
- NZ & AUS appear to have “panicked” and introduced more English ONLY Literacy contracts and consultancies – Will not work partially because this approach has not worked to date or in Pacific, NZ & AUS. cf NZ's Pasifika ENGLISH ONLY Ed Plan, 2013.
According to UNESCO *—No Pacific country or organisation has asked UNESCO to review or assist in spite of UNESCO having recent extensive research and expertise on the matter* cf. UNESCO 2010; Africa Report; Ball, 2010; Benson 2004; CAL, 2004; Dutcher, 2003, 2004, UNESCO, 2003) … (*Niket Shameen, 2015, UNESCO ED HO, NOPE communication 2015 see ref list)

The current levels of academic and professional knowledge about biliteracy and bilingualism across education systems are currently too low to break out of the current impasse of increasingly English/French ONLY schooling—“People, educators, policy makers and politicians do not know what they don’t know”

There are Better Evidence, Better Practice ways forward. This paper seeks provoke us to invite UNESCO (Niket) to urgently convene and commission conferences; workshops, publications and high level engagement with the Pacific Forum countries.

Most Pacific strategies and research to date have focused on the first (L1/MT) family language, simply as a short term means to an L2 English literacy end and not very well at that.

The concept that full literacy development of the students L1/MT/HL and L2 may also be important in the academic achievement of bilingual students has been very slow to gain traction (May, Hill & Tiakiwai, 2004).

At Judy’s presentation she made the point orally that if education in the Pacific was a company or corporation making cars or fridges and only 25%-40% of them actually worked,—The company would go bankrupt and close down—Only the elites whose parents already speak Eng/ Fr well actually succeed (Burnett, 2008, 2009, UNESCO, WORLD BANK)

Or

It would have to invest in research and development to find the problems with current approach and remedy it.

In the Pacific the research clearly says the ENGLISH/FRENCH MAINLY or ONLY education systems are broke, and do not work well-But we continue to use the approaches that do not work well for our nations. Time for change!
"We know that most children who begin their education in their mother tongue make a better start, demonstrate increased self-confidence and continue to perform better than those who start school in a new language.

The outlook for successful education is brighter when the school builds on the foundation of the mother tongue in teaching a second and third language. Such is the promise of mother tongue education" (2003, p.1)

There are limited risks and cautions of course. Pilot programmes help overcome these risks.

All recent World Bank, UNESCO and academic research has confirmed that while Bilingual Education initially may require approximately 1/3 more investment, and may take some time to demonstrate local benefits; it is substantially cheaper in the long run due to the greater success in education it brings for students-

- greater participation and engagement in education
- fewer drops out wasted talent/s
- higher educated population for both boys and girls
- successful participation in secondary and tertiary education – the professions and technical skills
- better economic performance
- creative biculturalism to resolve culture, custom, language maintenance and modern world conflicts

The argument that UNESCO Pacific does not currently have the money to sponsor a comprehensive review should not put us off. The Pacific Forum and the Donors, esp NZ, AUS,CA, the EU do have the money. So also does UNESCO Head Office through Paris and the group to lead such a review is the African UNESCO Office under Niket Shameen.

The following slides show examples of the UNESCO developing countries African case studies and some of the research reports now available. Exactly the same pilot work could be done in the Pacific.
Successful countries with pilot & developing programmes include; Guinea-Bissau, Tanzania, Zambia, Niger, Nigeria...

“This advocacy brief seeks to show the pivotal role of languages[ and their literacies] in achieving such learning. It aims in particular to dispel prejudice and confusion about African languages, and exposes the often hidden attempt to discredit them as being an obstacle to learning. It draws on research and practice to argue what kind of language policy in education would be most appropriate for Africa” (UNESCO 2010, p.1).

UNESCO research on direct to ENGLISH or FRENCH without MT / L1 HL at all (Also Te Ao Maohi & New Caledonia and Vanuatu)

And ultimately this system gives very poor results, with less than 5% of students arriving at the minimal level of achievement. In sub-Saharan Africa high failure rates can be associated with the fact that education is being passed through a language (English, French, or Portuguese) which the majority of students don’t understand or speak when they enter school (p.12)

UNESCO – Sonja Fagrberg-Diallo, 2007, p.9

This [colonial] model was exported in an early phase of globalization to colonized societies, destroying in full or in part their indigenous learning systems; and on achieving independence, many countries adopted this as the key to the apparent success of the West. (Rogers, 2005, p. 241)
Three Arguments for the Pacific are Being Advanced-

1. Seriously reinstating Pacific vernaculars (MT) into formal education at least until the end of primary is essential (Taufe'ulungaki, 2002, 2003; Helu-Thaman, 2003; Puamau, 2002;)

2. Most Pacific peoples have already decided that teaching/ learning quality School varieties of English is essential and is the only priority (Burnett, 2008).

An increased emphasis on Pacific vernaculars in formal schooling, may only lead to further marginalisation of Pacific nations in a global economic and cultural marketplace… and a greater concentration of privilege among English competent and bilingual elites in Pacific societies. (Burnett, 2008, p.190)

3) However it is not helpful to argue for just one or the other..

Students can have both and all languages and be biliterate.

We now have the theory, principles, practices and pedagogy to do so- if we have the will to do so? But we need help from UNESCO & World Bank.

Burnett (2009) is therefore quite mistaken though, when he says it is not necessary to decolonise ourselves from monolingual monocultural ideologies and replace them with bilingual/trilingual, biliterate and bicultural world views, aspirations, futures, goals and programmes. Decolonise does not mean a return to pre-European times- See NZ Maori examples of success (May & Hill 2014).

However becoming biliterate in a largely mono-literate English dominant education system provides many challenges because the whole philosophy, leadership, most approaches, processes, tools, resources & assessments have been based on an assumption of mono-literacy, as has the pedagogy itself. This is neo colonialism-hegemony. It is now being controlled by our own governments.

Research is very clear - It is biliteracy that drives academic success (Baker, 2011; Garcia, 2009; May, 2004; McCaffery, 2010).

Literacy in English without an MT/L1/HL literacy is not adequate on its own.

Literacy in a strong MT/HL/L1 literacy is not enough on its own with an English literacy programme.

Long sequential models of literacy where MT/L1/HL come first, followed by L2 English that drops MT/ L1 /HL later, is an inefficient outdated model, that lacks a current strong theoretical base and is very problematic for Pacific learners and their families.
Two Forms of Literacy/ Biliteracy Development

1) Sequential Literacy – Heritage Literacy/ MT taught first, even if not the first family language of the child. World/ regional literacy delayed until HL is well under way or nearly completed Yrs 4-6. The predominant NZ Māori model. Outdated now for indigenous education even where the HL /MT continues through out ed.

2) Simultaneous Biliteracy – A new approach in NZ. Both HL literacy and world / regional literacy taught at or around the same time. Can follow a period of HL/MT/L1 immersion for 12-18mths then begin. Has strong growing research base building out of simultaneous bilingualism work(cf. Garcia, 2009, 2011, 2014; Hornberger, 2012 ).

Simultaneous Biliteracy is a term we use to describe the theories, beliefs, pedagogies & process of acquiring literacy in two or more languages, within a timeframe that allows and encourages the simultaneous transfer of conscious and unconscious cognitive knowledge, understandings and strategies, both ways, between both languages and literacies being acquired by the learner (McCaffery, 2010). Earlier types are called Dual Medium bilingual education.

Even where learner no longer speak their MT/ HL any more, literacy in both languages can be introduced in both learners L1 and L2 either of which may be their HL. For English speakers & learners, simultaneous biliteracy is almost a necessity to be able to also bring L1( English) derived knowledge to the HL/L2 biliteracy learning.
• First, there are multiple paths to biliteracy development. There is no one simple solution for all situations.

• Second, biliteracy development is a bidirectional process: L1-L2 & L2-L1 - Knowledge transfers both ways between literacies regardless of which literacy it is originally taught in.

• Third, the terms ‘first language’ and ‘second language’ (and other terms) often lose relevance in such bilingual/trilingual contexts. Many have three or more languages. The TLR.

The Total Language Literacy Resource (TLLR) approach to biliteracy (McCaffery, 2010) in this biliteracy model caters for such multilingual/plurilingual situations.

Old Outdated View

Saw the brain as comprised of two separate cognitive & language compartments or balloons and systems. No links between compartments. Tried to reduce L1/MT balloon/ space to provide space for L2.

Saw bilingualism as a problem, a deficit.

Modern research view.

The brain has only one central cognitive and language processing system.

All languages/lit enrich concept development. L1 builds a rich conceptual system.

Ideas learnt in one language/lit can be transferred to the other language/literacy.

Bilingualism seen as a significant advantage especially in academic development.

This makes Simultaneous Biliteracy and Bilingualism possible

The shared Think Tank Network of neurons allows this to happen by connecting, networking & sharing major concepts, skills, strategies, understandings without confusing the brain of the bilingual biliterate child (http://cecerdll.fpg.unc.edu)

The Goals, Dispositions, Concepts, Understandings, Skills, and Strategies remain the same. They are not language dependent. The language they are taught in by the teacher or practised in, changes. Children may solve problems, learn strategies in any or all language/s using their TLLR.
• Biliteracy in two languages cannot simply be a haphazard mix of two separate literacies developed in two quite separate ways, times and places.

• Literacy in two languages needs to be systematically planned and taught as a biliteracy transfer programme.

• Biliteracy is a fully integrated skill that uses knowledge skills and strategies from both languages in ways that literacy knowledge in one language cannot. Different research and prof field.

Once they exist within the individual's cognitive system, as CALP they are potentially available for transfer across languages/literacies if the sociolinguistic and educational context is supportive and if transfer is taught.

Types of transfer possible are expanding rapidly:

• Cummins, 2008 proposed only L1/MT to - L2 English transfer

• McCaffery 2006-2010 proposed two way transfer. That is -

• Transfer of concepts (e.g., understanding the concept of photosynthesis); structure of text types and writing skills;

• Transfer of literacy metacognitive and metalinguistic skills strategies (e.g., strategies of visualizing, use of graphic organizers);

• Use of culturally appropriate gestures and linguistic features

• A better understanding of how language & literacy works (knowledge of the meaning of photo in photosynthesis);

• Transfer of phonological awareness;

• Transfer of attributes, dispositions, understandings, skills & strategies, which can all be transferred both ways.

In simultaneous teaching for transfer the skills and strategies taught in one language are also specifically taught to be transferred to the other language.

Consequently the same lessons do not have to be taught twice, only once in each language and then key ideas, strategies taught for transfer & transferred.

We need to teach the child -This is how we do it in MT / L1 / HL-This is how we do it in English

• Teaching for transfer does Not mean we have to give an equal amount of time to teaching each Disposition, Concept/s, Understandings skill and strategy in each language. Teach in one then transfer to the other – at least six sessions appear to be needed involving transfer strategies across both literacies to learn simple skills and strategies.

• Where teachers are not good speakers of English/ French-as in many parts of the Pacific it is better to teach literacy & concepts well in L1/MT, eg. China, Japan, Korea, Finland, Norway…) and then teach how to transfer them to L2 English/ French after that.

• You can’t transfer what you haven’t learned.
Because it is Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP literacy skills and strategies) that transfers—both literacies have to be taught. This means some form of planned systematic balance/or rotation programme is also needed in stage two of programme development.

Planning for this requires expertise most schools/educators DO NOT CURRENTLY HAVE. What is academically then best has to be balanced with what is possible in each particular circumstance—eg: not strong speakers of Fr or Eng.

The design of balance and rotation in (Bi) Literacy & Maths programmes is complex. It works best when the rotation of literacy teaching is closest together ie: daily or week about and when the afternoon programme in Theme/Inquiry study still uses the heritage language so there are NO long periods without using and supporting the family heritage languages/literacies for learning. There are many ways of doing this rotation. Three eg follow—AMS and a pilot Tongan prog NZ.

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3 etc.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage Lang runs the classroom always</td>
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<th>AM</th>
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<tr>
<td>Maths teaching runs in Heritage Language Skills &amp; strategies taught for transfer</td>
<td>Maths teaching runs in English Skills &amp; strategies taught for transfer</td>
<td>Maths teaching runs in Heritage Language Skills &amp; strategies taught for transfer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biltracy skills strategies taught in Heritage Language—also how to transfer</td>
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<td>Topic/Inquiry runs in Heritage Lang skills &amp; strategies taught for transfer</td>
<td>Topic/Inquiry work runs in English Lang skills &amp; strategies taught for transfer</td>
<td>Topic/Inquiry runs in Heritage Lang skills &amp; strategies taught for transfer</td>
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The new American Samoan (AMS) model designed by John is just one way to balance the literacies. See AMS Ed website.

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<tr>
<th>MT /HL/L1</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yr 1 90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Yr 2 80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Yr 3 70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Yr 4 50%</td>
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<td>Yr 5 50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yr 6 50%</td>
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PM Topic/Inquiry work runs in English Lang skills & strategies taught for transfer

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<th>AM Maths teaching runs in Heritage Language Skills &amp; strategies taught for transfer</th>
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Week 1
Heritage Lang runs the classroom always

Week 2
Heritage Lang runs the classroom always

Week 3 etc.
Heritage Lang runs the classroom always

Conclusion

- The value of Biliteracy world wide is clearly evident in the research presented on the cognitive and academic outcomes for bilingual learners.
- Biliteracy is required for indigenous & minority language learners to achieve academic success.
- Development of Biliteracy proficiency is important for positive academic outcomes.
- It is far less complex or expensive than opponents claim.
- Its time to get UNESCO involved again.
- DO NOT treat this presentation as a Handbook on how to do Biliteracy Education. It is a plea for help from UNESCO.
A simultaneous, interactive, compensatory, bidirectional model of biliteracy (McCaffery, 2014).

McCaffery, J. (2015). Simultaneous Biliteracy at Richmond Road School. (Draft PhD research material) Auckland: University of Auckland. (Please acknowledge. This material cannot be used without acknowledgement & referencing)

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Meitaki, Fakafetai, Malo aupito, Fakaauhe lahi atu, Vinaka, Fa'afetai – `Ofa atu
Thank you for being here.

Your questions and discussion...
Selected References

UNESCO : World Bank References


Nikat Shameen, (2015), Former UNESCO Pacific Director Asia Office, now Director UNESCO Education developing countries . NOPE LISTSERV public communication 2015.0( available).


UNESCO 1953 Its now famous statement claiming it is “axiomatic” that the mother tongue is the best language for literacy and learning (UNESCO , 1993).

Currently, the World Bank, in partnership with AusAID, assists Pacific island countries administer, analyze and disseminate early grade reading and mathematics assessments under the scope of the Pacific Early Education Advisory Services Program (PEEAS). The purpose of PEEAS is to provide countries with evidence on the state of policies and programs promoting school readiness and instructional gaps and deficits on foundational reading and mathematics. The evidence collected is aimed to help governments and development organizations design and implement the most appropriate and effective policies in ECE/ECO and basic reading and mathematics. For more information: Kris McDonal (kmcdonal@worldbank.org) or Sarah Harrison, (sharrison@worldbank.org).

Other Pacific material


