A call from the deep: Reclaiming our Future’
1st International Pasifika ECE Conference 2013
University of Auckland, Faculty of Education,
Aotearoa, New Zealand

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Title: Growing up bilingual in Aotearoa, New Zealand: Belonging to the present and reclaiming the future

Abstract
This keynote address is an overview of the historical, cultural, social, economic and global context of languages, with particular reference to Pasifika languages, cultures and identities in Aotearoa, New Zealand. It highlights issues relating to equity and social justice as they impact on bilingual / multilingual children, families and communities drawing attention to the intellectual, cultural, social, linguistic and economic benefits gained from early childhood bilingualism. Ways in which children learn languages in early childhood will be reviewed in view of the issues that are apparent in children’s learning of English at the expense of the home language. This paper also draws on selected findings from my recent qualitative research that examined young children’s perspectives, voices and experiences using Spanish and English across a range of family, education and community settings in Sydney, Australia. The data presented and the issues raised invite participants to rethink the importance of bilingualism, languages learning and identity construction in children through the examination of contemporary sociocritical concepts of cultural and critical theory (Bourdieu, 1991; Hall, 1996). Conclusions drawn from this paper provide educators and researchers with new ways of thinking about cultural practices, identity and bilingualism in linguistically and culturally diverse communities and families living in urbanised multicultural countries and global economies such as Aotearoa New Zealand.