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# The vision of a multilingual Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland

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Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau  
NEW ZEALAND

**EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL WORK**

# Diversity - Auckland

- Growth of migrant and ethnic communities most evident in Auckland:
  - 11 percent identify as Māori
  - 15 percent identify as Pasifika
  - 23 percent identify as Asian
- Asian communities projected to constitute almost 30 percent of Auckland's population by 2021
- 39 percent of Aucklanders were born overseas

# Languages in “superdiverse” NZ

- New Zealand has become linguistically “superdiverse” over the last two decades
  - Cf. Te Taura Whiri (1995); RSNZ (2013)
- This is most evident in Auckland, which is now home to **160 languages**, with multiethnic depth projected to deepen even further
- Highest numbers of multilingual speakers live in the **Auckland** region: 377,550 people (**51.2 %** of all multilingual speakers in NZ)
- The development of this increasingly multiethnic / multilingual environment is made more complex because of our existing commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to biculturalism as public policy

# Auckland Languages Strategy: 3 key challenges

An important, *aspirational* document, a crucial starting point, but we need also to:

1. *Frame* the debate
2. Change *attitudes*
3. Change institutional *practices*

# 1. Framing the debate: multilingualism *within* a bicultural context

- We do not accept that the Māori is just another one of a number of ethnic groups in our community. It must be remembered that of all minority groups the Māori alone is party to a solemn treaty made with the Crown. None of the other migrant groups who have come to live in this country in recent years can claim the rights that were given to the Māori people by the Treaty of Waitangi. (The Waitangi Tribunal, 1986: 37)
- The major risk [we currently face] is in the failure to develop a multiculturalism which complements the existing biculturalism and this vacuum continues to represent a failure of the [New Zealand] state and its key political decision-makers to develop explicit rules of engagement and recognition. (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012, 279–280)

- We need to strengthen/solidify support for te reo Māori
  - Cf. Māori-medium education in Auckland
  - Te reo Māori as a core subject in education
  - Recognition / use of te reo Māori in other domains
- Can do so on the basis of the distinction between self government and polyethnic rights (Kymlicka 1995; cf UNDRIP)
- Self government rights (tino rangatiratanga) apply to TRM and can also be extended to NZSL and (potentially) to Pasifika languages in the realm of New Zealand
- Polyethnic rights apply to all other languages on the basis of two further principles in international law
  - Where numbers warrant
  - Reasonableness

## 2. Changing attitudes

- Not as easy as it sounds
  - The difference between *general* and *specific* attitudes
  - Changing majority / public opinion (“tolerability”)
    - Monolingual ideologies
    - The problem with English (speakers)
    - The double standard of language prestige/use
    - The benefits of bilingualism
    - The *public* use of languages
  - Informing / shifting minority opinion
    - Internalizing negative attitudes (subtractive bilingualism)
    - Limited/limiting domains of language use
    - Intergenerational language shift
- = Extensive public engagement/information/profiling about the benefits of bi/multilingualism (individual / collective – instrumental / identity)

### 3. Changing institutional practices

- Multiethnicity vs. multiculturalism (cf. biculturalism)
- multi-sector/agency approach (cf. Australian Language Policy)
- Addressing the hegemony of English in public policy (citizenship; education; provision of services)
- Reconceptualizing economic / business practices (global interconnectedness; the limits of monolingualism; cf. the superdiversity stocktake)
- The key challenge of moving from a *recognition* of multilingualism to its effective *accommodation*/promotion via institutionalized practices

# Longer term implications

- Superdiversity provides both significant challenges *and opportunities*
- NZ (and esp. Auckland) is becoming more like the rest of the world (& not before time)
- It addresses our geographical isolation
- It can remediate our ongoing predilection for English monolingualism (& related public sector service delivery)
- It can provide (bilingual) educational approaches that are far more effective than those currently on offer, addressing issues of differential achievement (and related longer term social/economic costs, esp. as NZ becomes *more* diverse)
- It can provide a model that continues to foreground biculturalism, while acknowledging our increasing multiethnicity and multilingualism

## Selected References

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