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Since 2005, the '*English will happen automatically approach*' has been replaced by the '*separate language approach*' due to mounting concern within the *kura* movement at the increasing number of *kura* parents transferring their children to English medium settings to enable them to develop English language proficiency (May and Hill, 2003, p. 23). The *kura* practice of separating English and Māori to focus on developing Māori as the stronger language before adding English as another language, is justified with reference to the international literature. (See for example, Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins, 1988; Cummins, 1993; Bernhardt, 2000). Language separation is a key principle in many international bilingual/immersion programmes and a number of writers (for example, Cloud, Genesse and Hamayan, 2000; Baker, 2001; and Lindholm-Leary, 2001) recommend the strict separation of the two languages by having different teachers assigned to each language or using time, space, and/or subject area to delineate language separation. Creese and Blackledge (2010) used the term '*separate bilingualism*' and Swain (1983) used the phrase '*bilingualism through monolingualism*' to describe the ascribing of boundaries to separate languages which, according to Gravelle, (1996, p. 11) depicts the language learner as "two monolinguals in one body". This is the approach adopted by *Te Aho Matua* (2000) which states that, 'Kura Kaupapa Māori accepts that there is an appropriate time for the introduction of English at which time there shall be a separate English language teacher and a separate language learning facility' (p. 742). Recent research by Tākao et al., (2010) on the key attributes of successful *kura* links the '*separate language approach*' to 'Best Practice' in *kura* by stating that, 'Significantly, for all these *kura*, there are zones, often separate from the main schooling areas, where English is taught or able to be spoken' (p. 33).

The '*separate language approach*' works from the premise that the Māori language developed in the *kura* is the learner's stronger language, both conversationally and cognitively. However, this does not appear to be the case as research by May and Hill (2003, p. 22) identifies English as the first language of most learners enrolled in *kura*, a finding supported by Bauer (2008). This creates the pedagogical dilemma, identified by Rau (2004, p. 63), with the *kura* providing initial literacy instruction in the *kura* learner's weaker, second language. For advocates of the '*language separation approach*', the issue of which language is the stronger language is problematic. If the home language is used as an indicator of stronger language, then English can be considered to be the *kura* child's stronger language. However, if the *kura* language of instruction is used as an indicator of stronger language, then Māori is considered to be the *kura* child's stronger language. Although the goal of *kura* is that Maori be developed as the children's stronger language, this may not be happening. Bauer (2008, p. 41) 'suggests that for the most part, children are developing passive skills in the reo, and if they have active reo skills, they are not taking them out of the educational domain into the home'.

Sceptical of a reported increase in te reo Māori use, Bauer (2008, p. 43) argues that ‘the overall picture is one of decline rather than increase in the younger age groups’.

There is now a growing body of literature rejecting the ‘*separate language approach*’. In a study of effective instructional practices for linguistically and culturally diverse students, Garcia (1991) reported that the use of the stronger language at early stages of immersion was critical to later success in transitioning to the target language. These findings are supported by Irujo (1991) who found that many immersion programmes allowed stronger language use during the initial stages of immersion. Anton and DiCamilla (1998) also reported that stronger language use enabled learners to construct effective collaborative dialogue in the completion of meaning-based target language tasks while Turnbull (2001) highlighted the effectiveness of stronger language use to explain difficult concepts. Creating space in *kura* for instructional strategies that incorporate simultaneous strong language and target language use to accelerate ‘other’ language acquisition will allow both teachers and learners to explore the benefits of what Cummins (2007) calls two-way cross-language transfer and what I call trans-lingualism. To create such a space in *kura* for the use of what I call trans-lingual metacognitive teaching strategies, I have developed as the topic of my doctoral study, the *Trans-acquisitional Approach* (henceforth, referred to as *TA*) for *kura* learners who have a reasonably good grasp of Māori and English.

### **The transformative potential of the *Trans-acquisitional Approach***

In an attempt to break the impasse created by the current *kura* approaches to English language instruction, I recommend an extension of Williams’ translanguaging model (2002) into the *Trans-acquisitional Approach* (from this point referred to as the *TA* approach). ‘*Trans-acquisition*’ is the term I use to acknowledge the reciprocal transfer of knowledge between languages that is intrinsic to the process of language learning. The *TA* approach integrates the principles of Task-Based Learning and Teaching (Ellis, 2003) to systematise simultaneous input in one language while output is occurring in another language through three conditioning phases covering six sequential stages that focus on a trans-acquisitional task as the core component of the learning experience. The *TA* approach rejects the three monolingual assumptions that underpin the pedagogical practices of *kura* that keep te reo Māori and English separate, and that allow for no recourse to the use of English as the *kura* learner’s ‘other’ language and give no place for translation between the two languages.

Cummins (2007) highlights the paradox of the monolingual assumptions which are inconsistent with current theory in cognitive psychology and applied linguistics and for which research provides minimal support. In the past, the monolingual assumptions were so widely accepted that research was deemed unnecessary to substantiate them as ‘absolute truths’ (Jacobson and Faltis, 1990, p. 4). These monolingual assumptions underpin the ‘direct method’ which has influenced second language acquisition pedagogical practices for more than 100 years (Cook, 2001; Howatt, 1984; Yu, 2000). The ‘direct method’ underpins the *kura* immersion model which replicates the way that children learn their first language (Yu, 2000, p. 176) by emphasising the instructional use of te reo Māori as the *target language* at the exclusion of English, the *kura* child’s



*stronger language* (May and Hill, 2003, p. 22; Bauer, 2008, p. 41) to promote thinking in te reo Māori and minimise English language interference.

It is common place in Māori-medium education for learners to want to translate an English expression into Māori and vice versa. For Lewis (1997, 2000) this question is a signal that when a second language learner can't find expression in his/her target language, reverting to his/her stronger language in search of a translation is a legitimate language learning strategy. Translation is thus an instinctive part of the way the mind approaches learning another language. This shows that the second language learner has an instinctive understanding that languages have 'meaning equivalents' as opposed to meaningless 'word-for-word translations' (Lewis, 1997, 2000). The *TA* approach maximises the *kura* learner's innate tendency to revert to the stronger language for meaning and message equivalents. Developing the ability to be able to link lexis and structures of Māori to their equivalents in English is the goal of the *TA* approach which enhances the development of *trans-literacy* skills.

The *TA* approach can be described as language fluidity and movement, synonymous with a pedagogy that emphasises the overlapping of languages rather than the separation of languages (Williams, 2002; Garcia, 2009). As an extension of Williams' (2002) idea of translanguaging, the *TA* approach engages the learner's meta-linguistic skills to maximise reciprocal language transfer by systemising simultaneous input in one language and output in another language through three conditioning phases covering six sequential stages that focus on a trans-acquisitional task as the core component of the approach. The *TA* approach represents a flexible bilingual pedagogical approach to language learning and teaching that supports the findings of Creese & Blackledge (2010) who suggest that as learners engage in flexible bilingualism, the boundaries between languages become permeable. In rejecting the notion of language separation, trans-acquisition supports Hornberger's (1989, p. 287) theory that biliteracy and bilingualism do not develop along a single directional continuum. There is mounting evidence that confirms how transfer between languages and literacies accelerates both strong language and target language development (Odlin, 1989; Dworin, 2003; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders and Christian, 2006; Riches & Genesee, 2006; Lowman et al, 2007). Teaching for transfer where literacy in both languages is taught simultaneously (Cummins, 2007, 2008 (a), (b), (c), McCaffery, Villers & Lowman, 2008) is the major pedagogical strategy in the *TA* approach.

Throughout the six stages of the *TA* approach, the *kura* learner's metalinguistic processes are activated to receive information in te reo Māori (or English) using the passive language skills of listening and/or reading, to be then expressed in English (or Māori) using the active language skills of talking and writing. Garcia (2009) and Williams (2002) describe this process as a natural way of simultaneously developing and reinforcing two languages, while at the same time, extending the learner's understanding of subject matter. Not to be confused with translation, the reciprocal transfer of semantic knowledge between the two languages promotes greater understanding of the message in both languages. The *TA* approach reinforces the interrelationship between te reo Māori and English by maximising what Cummins (1984, 1991) calls the language learner's *Common Underlying Proficiency* (CUP) which acts as a central, unified processing

system where both languages are stored to access on demand ( see also Bernhardt and Kamil, 1995). *Trans-acquisition* maximises the benefits of reciprocal language transfer by using trans-lingual strategies to teach the *kura* learner how to compare and contrast the Māori and English concepts, understandings, attitudes, knowledge and skills stored in his/her CUP metalinguistic processing system (Cummins, 1984).

The *TA* approach promotes metalinguistic awareness which Tunmer and Herriman (1984) describe as the ability to reflect upon and manipulate the structural features of language to mediate meaning and form while receiving input in one language and expressing output in another language. The approach also systemises what Hagenson (1998) labels as reflective learning, so that consideration, analysis, appraisal and synthesis become habitual behaviours within the simultaneous processing of two languages to develop trans-literacy skills as input is processed in one language to produce out-put in another language. As an approach, *Trans-acquisition* emphasises authentic communication by requiring *kura* learners to interpret, express and negotiate meaning in both Māori and English. By this means, the *TA* approach supports the linguistic outcomes of Māori-medium education where it is accepted that strength in both Māori and English, will inevitably equip learners adequately for both worlds (Nepe, 1991).

## Conclusion

My purpose has been to address the pedagogical issues surrounding English language instruction in *kura* so as to create space for change and growth. From the outset, the vision of those who founded *Kura Kaupapa Māori* was inclusive of English alongside te reo Māori to produce balanced bilingual graduates, capable and confident in both worlds. Despite the tensions around English language instruction in *kura*, the English language remains pivotal to achieving the vision of the *kura* founders to revitalise te reo Māori and raise Māori academic achievement. While the vision in respect to English language instruction remains the same, it is obvious that the current approach of language separation to embed te reo Māori as the stronger language first must be changed to achieve the vision. This article has argued for the re-thinking of current *kura* pedagogical practices for English language instruction to herald in a new paradigm of relational trans-lingualism such as represented by the *Trans-acquisitional (TA)* approach. The transformative potential of the *TA* approach to develop English literacy while maintaining Māori language fluency is the key to breaking the silence on English language instruction in *kura* and marks the beginning of new possibilities for all *kura* stakeholders including the Ministry of Education.

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## **The Pacific Circle Consortium for Education**

The Pacific Circle Consortium is an organization dedicated to the improvement of teaching about peoples and nations within and around the Pacific Ocean, and in Asia. From 1997 to 2004, the Consortium was an official program of the Centre for educational Research and Innovation of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/CERI). Currently, the Consortium is an independent organization.

The purposes of the Pacific Circle Consortium are to:

- Share ideas, resources, information, material and personnel among Pacific and Asian countries and educational institutions;
- Promote internationally co-operative research and development in education; and
- Undertake co-operative development of curriculum materials and educational support services.

## **Members of the Consortium**

The membership of the Consortium is made up of individuals from many institutions. Recent membership is drawn from countries as diverse as New Zealand, Australia, Samoa, Fiji, Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam, South Korea, China, Hong Kong SAR, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States, Canada, Mexico, Ecuador, Latvia, and the United Kingdom.

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*Pacific-Asian Education* is an international refereed journal for curriculum and general education studies within the Pacific Rim and Asian educational communities. Since 2008, *Pacific-Asian Education* is a free online journal available at <http://pacificcircleconsortium.org/PAEJournal.html>

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## Notes for contributors

*Pacific-Asian Education* is an international, refereed journal that addresses issues of curriculum and education within the Pacific Circle region and throughout Asia. The journal is interdisciplinary in approach and publishes recent research, reports of curriculum and education initiatives within the region, analyses of seminal literature, historical surveys, and discussions of conceptual issues and problems relevant to countries and communities within the Pacific Circle and Asia. Papers with a comparative or cross-cultural perspective are particularly welcome.

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Intending contributors should submit **one hard copy and/or an electronic copy** of the manuscript to the Editor, and ensure that they retain an electronic and hard copy. Manuscripts should be typed in a standard 12 pt font, left aligned, double-spaced and on one side of the page only. Please do not submit as a pdf file.

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