

**DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS**

**Learning (in) Indigenous Languages: Common ground, diverse pathways**

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## *Abstract*

Indigenous peoples have rightful aspirations for their languages and cultures, supported under international conventions, jurisdictional treaties, laws, policies and enquiry recommendations. Additionally, the inclusion of Indigenous languages in education can impact positively on Indigenous students' learning, engagement, identity and well-being, and can increase involvement of their communities in education. This working paper provides an overview of Indigenous languages learning in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada. These three jurisdictions participate in an OECD initiative *Promising Practices in Supporting Success for Indigenous Students*, designed to help education systems to improve the experiences and outcomes of Indigenous students in education. The significance of Indigenous languages constitutes common ground between the diverse Indigenous peoples in these three countries. But learning in Indigenous languages and learning Indigenous languages follow diverse pathways with local language programme designs that fit the different historical and contemporary language contexts within and between the countries.

## *Acknowledgements*

The authors acknowledge the diverse Indigenous peoples and their leaders, past, present and emerging, in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada, and we pay our respects to their continuing cultures, languages and connections to their lands and seas. The working paper is intended to be supportive of the Indigenous languages education they choose for their children, and of all their work on Indigenous languages programmes and initiatives.

The purpose of this working paper is, ultimately, to support Indigenous students to achieve their aspirations. Including Indigenous languages and cultures in education supports Indigenous students' engagement, well-being and success as young Indigenous peoples, as well as their personal development and educational achievement more broadly. It overtly values the Indigenous languages, cultures and knowledges that Indigenous students' family and community members have chosen to share in the education milieu.

This working paper has been written to provide information for education policy makers, administrators and educators who have an interest in improving Indigenous children's success in education and wider well-being. It has also been written for Indigenous language teachers and families to draw attention to their aspirations for Indigenous languages in schools to be a meaningful component of Indigenous students' education.

The working paper has been prepared by a team who together have experience and understanding of Indigenous children and their learning in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada. Denise Angelo prepared the sections with input from Samantha Disbray, Ruth Singer, Carmel O'Shannessy, Jane Simpson and Gillian Wigglesworth. Hilary Smith provided country specific input for Aotearoa New Zealand and Barbra Meek for Canada. Jane Simpson also provided general oversight and direction. We thank the following colleagues for additional support and observations: Henry Fraser, Sarah Glatz, Catherine Hudson, Inge Kral, Susan Poetsch, Ailsa Purdon and the Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language Learning programme.

Delegates from Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada initiated and contributed to this working paper. The paper is part of a project initially sponsored by Alberta, Canada to identify promising practices to support the success of Indigenous students in education. We gratefully acknowledge these contributions.

The authors would also like to thank the Promising Practices team in the OECD, and our contacts there, Rowena Phair and Hanna Varkki, and in the early stages Valentine Bekka. We appreciate the opportunity to make a contribution to this important project.

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## Notes on terminology

The term ‘Indigenous’ in this working paper follows the usage in current international conventions. Here it is used to refer to the Māori people of Aotearoa New Zealand, as well as the Cook Islanders, Niueans and Tokelauans of the Realm of New Zealand; the first and original inhabitants of Australia, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and the First Nations peoples, the Inuit and the Métis Nation of Canada. The bilingual term ‘Aotearoa New Zealand’ is used throughout this working paper.

When this working paper refers inclusively to the languages of all these first and original peoples, the term Indigenous is again employed, in line with contemporary international usage. ‘Inuktut’ is a term that can be inclusive of all Inuit languages, including Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuktun, even though Inuktut is also the dialect primarily used in Nunavut. This working paper employs Inuktut with its inclusive meaning, unless specifically flagged otherwise. The Māori term ‘*te reo*’, the language, is generally used in Aotearoa New Zealand to refer to the Māori language. This working paper employs lower case letters for *te reo* throughout, mirroring common practice.

### Use of the term ‘languages’

Throughout this working paper the term ‘languages’ may be used in the plural, e.g. ‘languages education’, ‘Indigenous languages programmes’ etc. This convention is a reminder of the diversity of Indigenous languages across these jurisdictions.

## *Notes on readership*

We respectfully acknowledge the languages and cultures expertise of the Indigenous peoples who read this working paper. This working paper is written to provide information for people working in education contexts, such as policy makers, administrators and educators, who wish to understand the role that Indigenous languages can and do play in Indigenous students' education outcomes, learning experiences and well-being. It is written for readers who have no specialist training in Indigenous languages or languages teaching, and whose cultural and linguistic backgrounds will vary.



## 1. Introduction

Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada speak many Indigenous languages, but in widely diverse ways. Which languages they speak, to whom, and to what extent, are profoundly affected by the ongoing impact of settler-colonial societies in each country.

Understanding the present-day diversity of Indigenous language use and how various languages figure in Indigenous students' lives is key to understanding the roles Indigenous languages can play in students' learning:

- In some places Indigenous children grow up speaking a traditional (original) Indigenous language as a mother tongue;
- In many places the inter-generational transmission of traditional Indigenous languages has been disrupted, so Indigenous children will learn them as additional languages;
- In some places, Indigenous children speak new (contact) Indigenous languages, such as creoles and mixed languages, as a mother tongue;
- In many places Indigenous children speak a dominant national language as their mother tongue; in other places they are learning it as an additional language;
- Some Indigenous children speak an Indigenous variety of the national language as their mother tongue that is quite different from the standard variety;
- In some places, the balance between these languages is shifting, so Indigenous children's language repertoires and how they use them might differ from adults;
- In some places one language is dominant, while other places have a more obviously heterogeneous language ecology.

The local language ecology – which languages are spoken in a particular place, to which degrees of proficiency and to what extent – shapes Indigenous languages programmes. It provides a way into a holistic appreciation of Indigenous students' languages repertoires and how these can be harnessed for optimising their educational success. The fact that there are diverse contemporary Indigenous language ecologies underpins the Diverse Pathways component of this working paper's title.

Many Indigenous students, as well as their families and communities, want their Indigenous languages to have a central place in their schooling. This supports Indigenous students' identity, and Indigenous “communities” aspirations for cultural maintenance and renewal. The right to exercise this choice is supported by international declarations and national policies. These facts underpin the Common Ground component of this working paper's title.

Indigenous peoples have ownership over their own languages and determine the cultural content of their languages programmes; they are integral in every way to their language programmes. This recognition marks a departure from historical attitudes where Indigenous peoples and their languages and cultures were marginalised in education. Indigenous languages programmes can provide a positive focus for redress and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous languages are strongly connected to the cultures and knowledges of their speakers and they are associated with Indigenous people's well-being and resilience, qualities education seeks to foster in youth. Recognition of Indigenous languages can improve student academic achievement, engagement, attendance and learning outcomes, as well as school-community relations. Indigenous languages programmes offer Indigenous people training, employment and enterprise opportunities in many areas such as language teaching, documentation, research, interpreting and translation, as well as art, music, park/sea ranger work, and information technology amongst other areas.

Supporting Indigenous languages in schools also promotes Indigenous students' multilingual development, which benefits them on many other levels. Multilingual people can participate in more social networks and in more efficacious ways than monolingual people. Language learning has many positive effects for learning more generally.

How Indigenous language programmes can best meet the expectations of an Indigenous community depends on the local language ecology. Two fundamentally different Indigenous language learning contexts require different responses:

- Mother-tongue/first language programmes assume that the students already speak the language fluently;
- Additional/second language programmes are designed to teach the language (i.e. learners have full proficiency in other languages).

The nature of an Indigenous school language programme is greatly influenced by the availability of each Indigenous language in the community:

- If a language is being rebuilt from archival sources and language rememberers, the extent of language rebuilding and opportunities for community re-learning are pivotal;
- If a language is still spoken, then the number of speakers is a significant factor;
- If a language is spoken by the whole community as a mother tongue, then the issue is how schools work with this abundantly available language to promote learning;
- All Indigenous language programmes are impacted by the relative scarcity of Indigenous language teachers and of training for them and for their co-teachers;
- All Indigenous languages programmes are impacted by an acute shortage of teaching and learning resources (in comparison to long running, large foreign language programmes).

Indigenous languages programmes need adequate support to succeed:

- Indigenous community support
- long-term, consistent and sufficient funding
- development of languages curriculum
- teaching and learning materials targeted to the curriculum
- languages teacher staffing and support for training and accreditation
- long-term, consistent and supportive school leadership and policy environments.

Data on which languages Indigenous children and their families affiliate with, which they speak, and to what extent, are generally hard to obtain. These data constitute essential baseline information for developing relevant education and languages policies, ensuring

Indigenous parents and students have quality information about education choices. These data also create an evidence base to differentiate and evaluate effects and outcomes of Indigenous languages programmes, as well as other education programmes.

Languages data in Indigenous contexts often involve small student/speaker numbers and locally significant variables, requiring Indigenous expertise and an understanding of the local language ecology. Relatively easily obtainable big data sets, such as student enrolment and attendance, or programme numbers, do not elucidate small, local situations nor describe local features of classroom-based languages learning. An over-reliance on big and readily accessible system data can subordinate and obscure the important role of individual, community or other small-scale local languages data for Indigenous students learning or speaking specific Indigenous languages.

This working paper outlines the current contexts of Indigenous languages in the wider community and in education programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada. It draws on research and experiences of learning Indigenous languages and learning via the medium of Indigenous languages, drawing wherever possible on information from Indigenous communities.

This working paper is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides an overview of Indigenous languages in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada;
- Section 3 outlines the benefits to Indigenous students and their families and communities from access to their languages in an educational context;
- Section 4 sets out relevant international and national regulatory and policy instruments relating to Indigenous languages;
- Section 5 presents the scientific evidence on how language learning occurs;
- Section 6 explains the diversity and relevance of language ecologies in relation to Indigenous communities;
- Section 7 highlights promising examples of language learning across the three countries;
- Section 8 summarises the key elements for strengthening Indigenous language learning within education systems.

## 2. A Snapshot of Indigenous languages in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada

This section provides a snapshot of Indigenous languages in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada. It sets out information on the range of Indigenous languages in each jurisdiction, along with trends relating to the proportions of Indigenous people who speak an Indigenous language.

Information on language use and proficiency is drawn from multiple sources. The primary source, however, is national census data. Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada all conduct a Census at five yearly intervals. These national surveys aim for comprehensive coverage of the entire population. In each jurisdiction, the Census includes questions about languages, but these differ in terms of how many languages can be reported by a respondent and whether proficiency information or mother-tongue status is collected. The Census is considered a useful tool for understanding large population trends over time.

All of the world's relatively small languages, which includes most Indigenous languages, are under threat (The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2018<sup>[1]</sup>). The Indigenous languages of Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada are no different. Even those that are considered comparatively strong because they are being transmitted from generation to generation and are acquired as a mother tongue/first language, still show some elements of vulnerability (UNESCO, 2003<sup>[2]</sup>).

In addition to the Census, the three jurisdictions conduct one or more social surveys specifically of Indigenous peoples. The particulars targeted by each of these surveys differ (e.g. health, well-being, housing etc.), but language(s) are often included. These surveys are selective as they are only conducted on a proportion of the target population. There is generally some consideration of how to ensure representation of diversity within the Indigenous population, although these criteria are not usually linguistic.

A framework for considering the strength or vulnerability of languages includes the following factors:

- inter-generational language transmission
- absolute number of speakers
- proportion of speakers within the total population
- trends in existing language domains
- response to new domains and media
- materials for language education and literacy
- governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, including official status and use
- community members' attitudes toward their own language
- amount and quality of documentation (UNESCO, 2003<sup>[2]</sup>).

Of the three focus nations in this study, Aotearoa New Zealand is the only country where there is one official Indigenous language, *te reo* Māori. This factor distinguishes the dynamics of its Indigenous language policies and education initiatives from those in Australia and Canada. However, in spite of official recognition and considerable support from policy and education quarters, *te reo* Māori remains on UNESCO's endangered languages list, in danger of falling out of use as children speak it less (Hutchings, 2017<sup>[3]</sup>).

In contrast, both the Australian and Canadian pre-colonial Indigenous language landscapes were characterised by large numbers of distinct traditional languages. Nowadays, in both these countries, fewer languages are being transmitted inter-generationally, as a mother tongue/first language learned from birth by children. These languages are under threat. For many other Indigenous languages, revitalisation efforts are underway to support learning them as a second/additional language from older speakers or to reawaken them if they have been disrupted over a longer period.

In addition to traditional Indigenous languages, new Indigenous languages that have developed out of language contact may also feature in some Indigenous language ecologies. In Australia, some creoles have a comparatively large speakership. The Michif language still has speakers in some communities in the Métis Nation in Canada. It is referred to sometimes as a creole, sometimes a mixed language. In the Australian context, new Indigenous languages are a dynamic language phenomenon (i.e. still developing) although this is not well represented in official language data.

## 2.1. Aotearoa New Zealand

Aotearoa New Zealand is home to *te reo* Māori, the Māori language, sometimes just ‘*te reo*’ in writings. Historically, *te reo* Māori was spoken by Māori throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, although with some recognisable differences associated with different regions and/or iwi (tribes) (Keegan, 2017<sup>[4]</sup>).

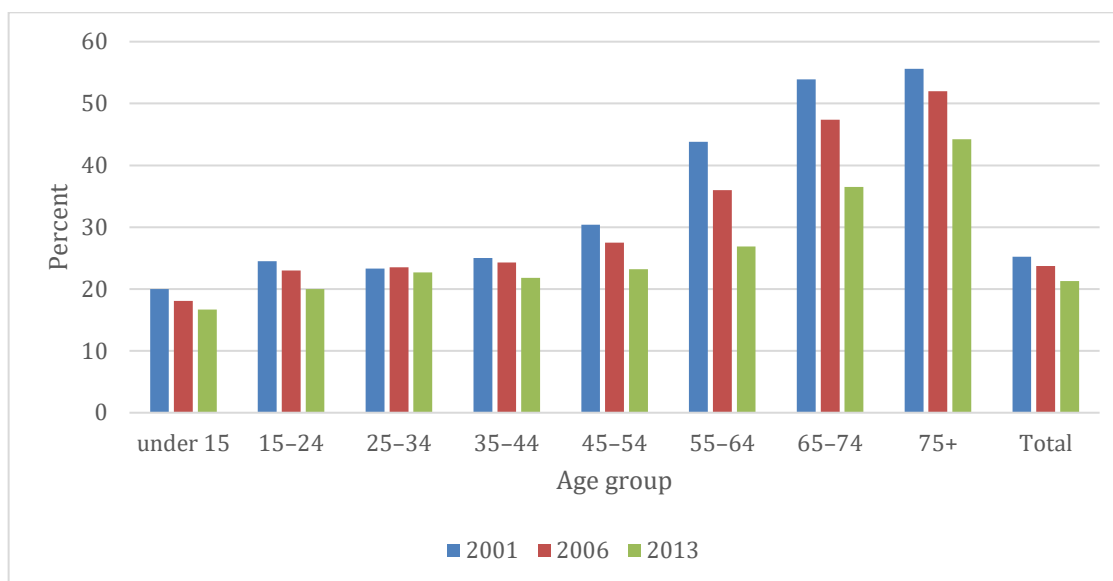
The New Zealand Census provides comparative longitudinal data, from 1996 and at five yearly intervals subsequently, about numbers of people reporting they can have a conversation about everyday topics in *te reo* Māori. The Census is addressed to the whole population.

According to the 2013 Census, 148 400 people (or 3.7% of the total population of Aotearoa New Zealand) reported that they were able to hold a conversation in *te reo* Māori. People who identified as Māori comprised 84.5% of these conversationally proficient speakers of *te reo* Māori.

While the situation for *te reo* Māori has overall been one of an ongoing if slow decline in speaker numbers, it is also a story of stemming what might otherwise have been a rapid language shift. Over the course of the last century the proportion of Māori language speakers declined sharply. As a result, by the turn of the century, only one quarter of all Māori reported that they were able to hold a conversation in *te reo* Māori. This proportion is still on a slow downward trend. In the 2013 Census, 21.3% of all Māori reported that they could hold a conversation in *te reo* Māori about everyday things, which is a continuation of the slow decrease of the past decade, from 23.7% in 2006 and 25.2% in 2001.

An ability to speak *te reo* Māori at the conversational level is more likely amongst Māori people of older age groups compared with children and young adults (see Table 2.1 below).

Proficient speakers of *te reo* Māori are not distributed evenly throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, but are more concentrated in areas of the North Island. Māori living in areas with a greater concentration of other Māori people are most likely to report everyday conversation fluency in Māori. The 2013 Census found that the areas with the highest proportion of people with conversational Māori skills were on the North Island, in Gisborne (30.4 %), Bay of Plenty (28.6 %) and Northland (26.2 %) (Ministry of Social Development, 2016<sup>[5]</sup>).

**Table 2.1. Proportion of Māori speakers amongst Māori, 2001–2013**

Source: (Ministry of Social Development, 2016<sup>[5]</sup>), adapted from Figure CI2.1 - Proportion of Māori speakers in the Māori population, by age group, 2001–2013.

Among Māori people younger than 35, Māori women are slightly more likely than Māori men to report conversational fluency in Māori. Amongst Māori older than 45, however, men are more likely to report to have conversational fluency in Māori.

## 2.2. Australia

At least 250 distinct traditional Indigenous (Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander) languages were originally spoken on the Australian continent and associated islands prior to colonisation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the languages they speak have been profoundly impacted by the history of imposed settler-colonial society and associated draconian policies.

New Indigenous languages, the creoles and mixed languages spoken by some groups of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, provide an extra layer of languages spoken almost exclusively by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, additional to their original traditional languages. The new languages express uniquely Indigenous linguistic identities for their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander speakers.

The Australian Census provides an indication of trends over the past two decades of the numbers of people reporting speakership of the 217 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages named on the list of the Australian Standard Classification of Languages (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016<sup>[6]</sup>).

Census data are only collected on four of the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, as these are the only ones to appear on the Australian Classification of Languages list: Kriol, Yumplatok/Torres Strait Creole, Light Warlpiri and Gurindji Kriol.

The Australian Standard Classification of Languages also lists ‘Aboriginal English’, a term applied to the wide range of Indigenised Englishes spoken by Aboriginal peoples in Australia.

In Australia, according to the 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census figures, nearly 650 000 people identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Almost 65 000

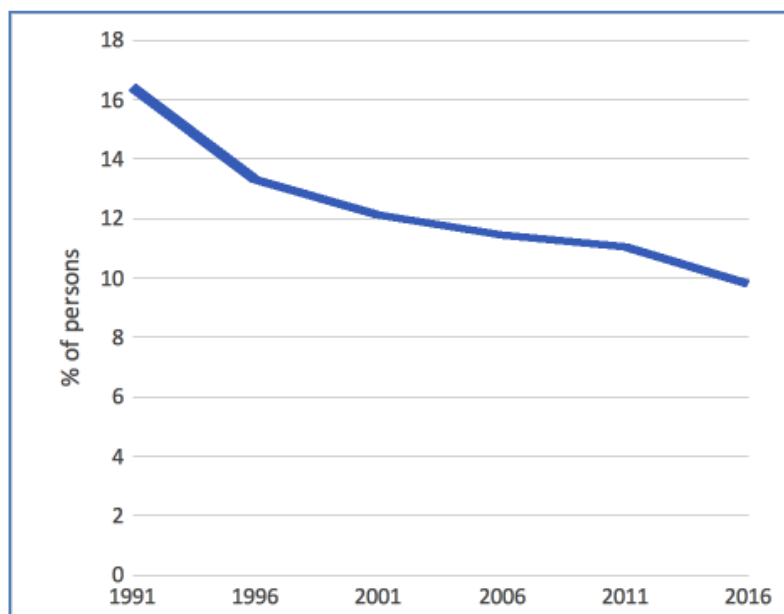
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples report themselves as speaking an Indigenous language at home. Around 12 traditional and two contact languages are considered ‘strong’. They are transmitted inter-generationally and learned by children from birth as their mother tongue/first language in one or more remote communities. More than 130 traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages represent contexts ranging from revitalisation to re-awakening from archival sources (Department of Infrastructure Transport Regional Development and Communications, 2020<sup>[7]</sup>).

The 2016 Census records over 13 000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people responding that they speak a new Indigenous language at home, most commonly Kriol and Yumplatok. Nonetheless, The Census figures may undercount actual numbers, with estimates of the latter being over 20 000 (Marmion, Obata and Troy, 2014<sup>[8]</sup>). Over 600 Aboriginal people report speaking an Indigenised English, Aboriginal English.

Well over 8 000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's responses could not be assigned to a specific language by Census data analysts (Simpson, 2019<sup>[9]</sup>). This occurs when language responses do not match any of those on the Australian Standard Classification of Languages, for example because respondents use a name other than those listed (perhaps a dialect, clan or location name).

The proportion of people who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the Census who report speaking an Indigenous language at home in the last 25 years (1991-2016) has decreased from more than 16% to less than 10%. Over the same period, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who report speaking English only has increased from 79% to 84% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019<sup>[10]</sup>).

**Figure 2.1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Language spoken at home, 1991-2016**

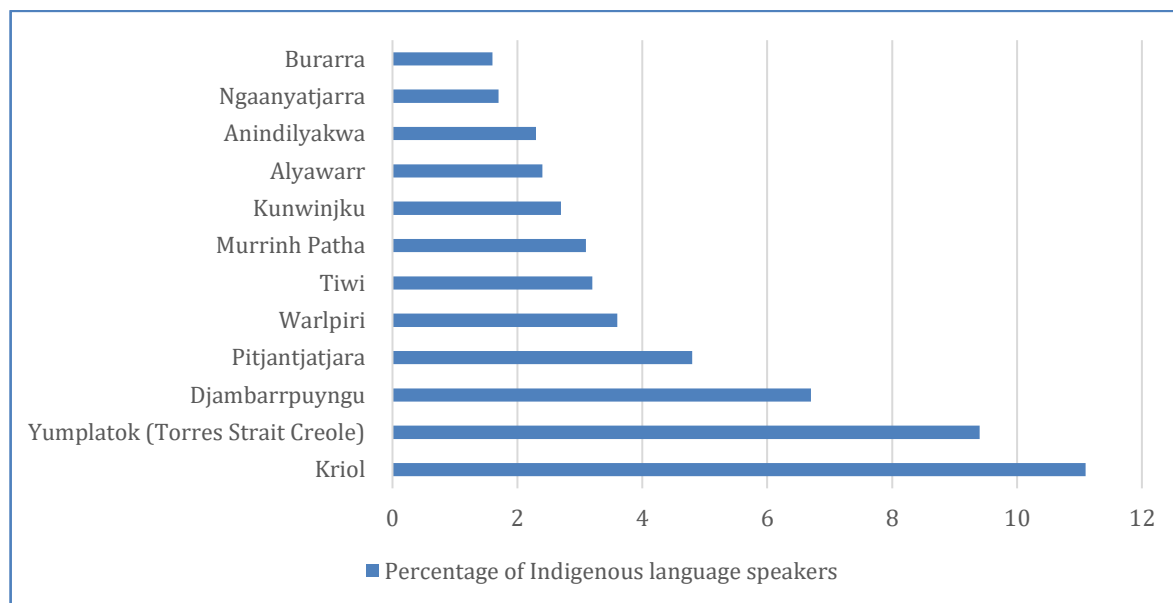


Source: Adapted from (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019<sup>[10]</sup>), *Census of Population and Housing 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016*,  
© Commonwealth of Australia 2019.

The top ten traditional Indigenous languages in the 2016 Census and the two large new Indigenous languages are shown in Figure 2.2 below as percentages of the total number of Indigenous language speakers. These Indigenous languages have speakers across all

age groups according to Census data, potentially confirming they remain strong languages transmitted to young children as mother tongues.

**Figure 2.2. Indigenous languages most spoken at home**



Source: Adapted from (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019<sup>[10]</sup>), *Census of Population and Housing 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016*,  
© Commonwealth of Australia 2019.

The 2014 National Indigenous Languages Survey (Marmion, Obata and Troy, 2014<sup>[8]</sup>), collected data separately from the Census, and found that the most often reported Indigenous languages:

- have first language speakers
- are being transmitted inter-generationally
- constitute a main language of one or more remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

These shared sociolinguistic characteristics suggest that most Indigenous people interpret the Census question as involving mother tongue proficiency, rather than speaking it as a second language learner, such as somebody who is reintroducing a re-awakening language back into family interactions. There are no prompts for Census respondents to clarify who should respond, so this indicates a high degree of self-selection.

The speakers of the most reported traditional Indigenous languages in the 2016 Census are concentrated in very remote locations in the far north or inland. Urbanisation has not been conducive to the maintenance of the local traditional Indigenous language(s) (Schmidt, 1990<sup>[11]</sup>).

### 2.3. Canada

Indigenous languages in Canada have been severely impacted by past colonial practices, with speakership affected profoundly in some cases. The residential school system, the last of which closed in the 1990s, impacted generations of children whose use of their mother tongue was prevented (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,



2015<sub>[12]</sub>). Some languages continue to be acquired as a mother tongue/first language, but many are threatened due to small numbers and an aging population of speakers.

The comprehensive language section of the Canadian Census leads the world with five questions that address knowledge of official and non-official languages, the language spoken as a mother tongue, languages spoken at home and languages used at work.

According to the 2016 Census of Population, over 70 Indigenous languages are spoken throughout Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016<sub>[13]</sub>). These are termed collectively in Census reports as Aboriginal languages.

The numbers of reported Aboriginal languages are not directly comparable across previous iterations of the Census, because of different reporting criteria. The higher number of languages in 2016 than previous years has been influenced by a lowered reporting threshold of 45 speakers and the prompting of respondents for more specific language designations (e.g. Cree languages include: Plains Cree, Woods Cree, Swampy Cree, Northern East Cree, Moose Cree and Southern East Cree as well as Cree not otherwise specified. A response of ‘Cree’ might receive a prompt of ‘Woods Cree’ etc.).

In Canada, Aboriginal language data are often grouped by ‘language family’, which refers to the historical linguistic relationships and do not imply mutual comprehensibility. For example, German and English are in the same branch of a large language family, Indo-European, but despite being so closely related they are not mutually comprehensible. Algonquian languages, Inuit languages, Athabaskan languages, Siouan languages, Salish languages, Tsimshian languages, Wakashan languages, and Iroquoian languages are reported as a group, while Michif, Tlingit, Kutenai and Haida are reported individually.

In the 2016 Census of Population, 260 550 or 15.6% of the total Indigenous population reported being able to speak an Indigenous language well enough to conduct a conversation. The proportion of speakers reporting conversational proficiency level in an Aboriginal language has decreased compared to a decade ago when the figure was 21.4%.

Table 2.2, below, displays Indigenous language speaker numbers and their regional concentrations from the 2016 Census. The reported Indigenous languages all have traditional, pre-contact roots, apart from Michif which is a newer, post-colonial contact language developed amongst the Métis peoples.

**Table 2.2. Indigenous languages speaker numbers and concentrations in 2016**

Indigenous language families and main languages	Population	Main provincial and territorial concentrations
Algonquian languages	175 825	Manitoba (21.7%), Québec (21.2%), Ontario (17.2%), Alberta (16.7%), Saskatchewan (16.0%)
Cree (multiple languages)	96 575	Saskatchewan (27.8%), Alberta (24.0%), Manitoba (21.6%), Québec (18.0%)
Ojibway	28 130	Ontario (56.6%), Manitoba (34.1%)
Oji Cree	15 585	Manitoba (51.6%), Ontario (48.2%)
Montagnais (Innu)	11 360	Québec (86.0%)
Mi'kmaq	8 870	Nova Scotia (61.9%), New Brunswick (24.6%)
Atikamekw	6 600	Québec (99.9%)
Blackfoot	5 565	Alberta (98.7%)
Inuit languages	42 065	Nunavut (64.1%), Québec (29.4%)
Inuktitut	39 770	Nunavut (65.0%), Québec (30.8%)
Athabaskan languages	23 455	Saskatchewan (38.7%), Northwest Territories (22.9%), British Columbia (18.4%)
Dene	13 005	Saskatchewan (69.7%), Alberta (15.3%)
Salish languages	5 620	British Columbia (98.8%)
Shuswap (Secwepemctsin)	1 290	British Columbia (98.4%)
Siouan languages	5 400	Alberta (74.9%), Manitoba (14.2%)
Stoney	3 665	Alberta (99.3%)
Iroquoian languages	2 715	Ontario (68.9%), Québec (26.9%)
Mohawk	2 350	Ontario (66.6%), Québec (28.9%)
Tsimshian languages	2 695	British Columbia (98.1%)
Gitksan (Gitksan)	1 285	British Columbia (98.1%)
Wakashan languages	1 445	British Columbia (98.6%)
Kwakiutl (Kwak'wala)	585	British Columbia (98.3%)
Michif	1 170	Saskatchewan (41.9%), Manitoba (17.5%)
Haida	445	British Columbia (98.9%)
Tlingit	255	Yukon (76.5%), British Columbia (21.6%)
Kutenai	170	British Columbia (100.0%)
Total Aboriginal language speakers	260 550	Québec (19.3%), Manitoba (15.5%), Saskatchewan (14.5%), Alberta (13.8%), Ontario (12.7%)

Note: Population numbers for languages within a language family do not add up to the total for the family because only the main languages are shown. Main languages are the 10 languages with the most speakers. If a language family did not have a language in the top 10, then the most spoken language in the family is displayed.

Source: Adapted from *Aboriginal identity population who can speak an Aboriginal language, by language family, main languages within these families, and main provincial and territorial concentrations, Canada, 2016* (Statistics Canada, 2016<sup>[13]</sup>), Table 1, p. 2

### 3. Access to Indigenous languages benefits students, families and communities

Providing access to strengthening Indigenous languages leads to many benefits for Indigenous students and their families and communities, as well as non-Indigenous students and communities. These benefits include: progress towards redress and reconciliation; the transmission of Indigenous knowledges to Indigenous children and youth, as well as wider community members; strengthened cultural identity, well-being and resilience; and improved education outcomes, such as increased retention and achievement rates. This section outlines these benefits for Indigenous students and their families and communities.

### 3.1. Redress and reconciliation

The importance of Indigenous languages for Indigenous students, their families and their communities cannot be overestimated. Indigenous languages programmes constitute a recognition of the enduring linguistic and cultural identity of Indigenous peoples. This is common ground between Indigenous peoples and their languages, across the jurisdictions of Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada and from an international perspective.

The inclusion of Indigenous languages in education is a step towards redressing past exclusionary practices in schooling when speaking Indigenous languages was banned or devalued. Education systems in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada have historically all excluded Indigenous languages to some extent.

These same education systems have also, historically, struggled to acknowledge, understand and include Indigenous peoples' self-identified educational aspirations. Until relatively recently, education in these nation states has largely been a vehicle for promulgating settler-colonial knowledges while devaluing the knowledges of Indigenous populations, including their languages.

Supporting Indigenous peoples' wishes for their languages in education promotes reconciliation between Indigenous peoples, government institutions and other social groups. It provides opportunities for building Indigenous peoples' trust in education systems by engaging with their own educational aspirations.

The effects of excluding Indigenous languages from education have been well documented in each jurisdiction, and roundly condemned at an official level. The enquiry conducted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into Canada's residential schools took evidence from more than 6 000 witnesses, mostly survivors of experiences in these schools, and described the education practices and the broader social practices supporting them, as cultural genocide:

*Cultural genocide is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly to the issue at hand, families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next. In its dealing with Aboriginal people, Canada did all these things.*

*(Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 1<sub>[12]</sub>)*

On these grounds, the “calls to action” published by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015<sub>[14]</sub>) include recommendations that specifically target Indigenous languages in education (Recommendations 10, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17).

Likewise, the *Bringing Them Home* report from the 1997 Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families found that suppressing Indigenous children's languages was purposefully and intentionally assimilationist, affecting the individual's sense of identity and impacting inter-generationally:

*The significance of Indigenous languages to the maintenance of family relations and the preservation and transmission of cultures was not lost on missionaries and protectors. The speaking of languages was frequently prohibited [...] The*

*loss of language is intimately connected with the loss of identity for those forcibly removed and their descendants.*

*(Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997, p. 259<sub>[15]</sub>)*

The national Apology delivered by the Australian Prime Minister Rudd (2008<sub>[16]</sub>) to the Stolen Generations – those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who had been removed from their families by the State to institutions or foster care – recognised the need to acknowledge historical injustices in order to move forward together:

*We the Parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation. For the future we take heart; resolving that this new page in the history of our great continent can now be written. We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians. A future where this Parliament resolves that the injustices of the past must never, never happen again.*

*(Rudd, 2008, p. 167<sub>[16]</sub>)*

The Waitangi Tribunal in Aotearoa New Zealand stated in 1986 that *te reo Māori*, the Māori language, was indeed a *taonga* (a treasure) that the Crown had failed to protect. The Waitangi Tribunal drew its conclusion from the Crown's failure on the basis of evidence about the systematic banning of the Māori language and punishment of children for the use of Māori in education settings:

*We have recorded much of what we were told of the effect upon Maori children of our educational policy and it makes dismal reading.*

*(Waitangi Tribunal, 1986, p. 1<sub>[17]</sub>)*

The vision of the Waitangi Tribunal was that legislation would require the government to actively promote and value the use of the Māori language for its benefits to Māori children's sense of identity and pride in their culture as well as its intrinsic aesthetic and cultural worth and as a point of national cohesion and pride:

*It should be an Act that publicly demonstrates that preservation of the Maori language is important to all of us, Maori and pakeha [non-Maori] alike. It should be an Act that restores proper status to the Maori language as something valuable that we acknowledge to be valuable. It should be an Act that puts the language, and therefore the culture, onto a pedestal so that our children will see 'being Maori' as something to be proud of, not something to be treated as worthless.*

*(Waitangi Tribunal, 1986, p. 45<sub>[17]</sub>)*

In all jurisdictions, governments and education institutions have now rejected the outright suppression of Indigenous languages, which was often a feature of their colonial pasts. Section 4 outlines legislation and policy progress in different jurisdictions that actively supports access to and strengthening of Indigenous languages.

### 3.2. Transmission of Indigenous knowledges

Indigenous languages, in addition to being a valuable object of learning of themselves, are a vehicle for transmitting Indigenous knowledges, including knowledge of the physical and spiritual worlds, as well as appropriate ways to communicate and engage with others. This transmission occurs through spoken language as well as in written and various digital forms nowadays, and through culturally significant forms of song, chant,

story, dance and gesture, hand signs, and activities in the traditional country of the speakers (on-country experiences).

### 3.2.1. *Knowledge of lands and waters*

The Indigenous language of a particular area has the resources for representing the specific knowledges and practices that Indigenous people have developed through their close, long-term and enduring interactions with the local environment.

In an address to the General Assembly of the United Nations supporting the Decade of Indigenous Languages, Chief Perry Bellegarde of the Assembly of First Nations in Canada explains his perspective on the range of Indigenous knowledges embodied by Indigenous languages, emphasising deep understandings of the environment:

*Our Indigenous languages represent who we are as part of the human family. They also embody the rich contributions that Indigenous peoples make to the world because our languages express the wisdom, our worldview, the laws and lives of our ancestors. Our Indigenous languages embody traditional knowledge of how to live in balance with Mother Earth, knowledge that will be vital to our common survival as we face the ecological challenges ahead of us.*

*Assembly of First Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde, addressing UN (NetNewsLedger, 2019<sub>[18]</sub>)*

Indigenous languages connect their speakers to their particular tracts of lands and waters and have enabled inter-generational transmission of detailed environmental knowledge. This point was made strongly by Cree and Blackfoot Elders in interviews for a Canadian study in Alberta on the association between the continuity of their culture and traditional language and the health of First Nations people. In the following quote, one of these Elders expresses the importance of Indigenous languages for an Indigenous person's connection to their lands and culture and to the knowledge of the environment:

*Elders always speak of the importance of our language. Who we are is determined through our language. We speak our language and that determines where you come from, what your culture is, and even how we used to go with the different seasons in terms of following those traditional paths. Regardless of where you go, if you have that language our culture is in there... So once you lose that, what do you have left? Because our beliefs come from that in terms of how we govern ourselves. It comes in terms of how we eat, and in terms of how we educate ourselves and conduct ourselves in that full circle.*

*(Oster et al., 2014, pp. 3-4<sub>[19]</sub>)*

Jack Buckskin, an Australian Aboriginal language teacher and activist, describes how reviving his Kurna language connects him to his land:

*Ngaityu warra ngathaitya ngai. Ngaityu warra yainty yarta-ana tarraitpayintheta. Warraitya tampintheta yainty yarta tampi-apintheta.*

*(My language is more than just a way to converse with me. It is my identity and the doorway to understanding my culture as a whole. Understanding my language helps me to understand the place around me and connects me to this country.)*

*Vincent "Jack" Buckskin, Cultural Mentor, Tauondi College and Kurna language leader (Australian Curriculum (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2016<sub>[20]</sub>)*

### 3.2.2. *Spiritual beliefs*

Indigenous belief systems are also learned through Indigenous languages. In contexts where an Indigenous language is spoken strongly by Elders, but not by all young people, absence of language may be seen as a danger to young people's spiritual strength and well-being, as expressed here by Warlpiri Patu Kurlangu Jaru, an association representing Warlpiri language education in remote Australian Warlpiri-speaking communities:

*Knowing that our own language and culture play the biggest role in growing our spirit, our connection to our land and the stories of our grandmother and grandfathers. With our language we know where we belong, we know the names from our country and Jukurrpa (Dreaming stories and designs). Young people can't lead a good, healthy and happy life without this. Language and culture come first. When kids feel lost and their spirit is weak then they can't learn well or be healthy.*

*Warlpiri Patu Kurlangu Jaru, in House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (2012, p. 12<sub>[21]</sub>)*

Māori researcher Cheryl Rau writes:

*A Māori worldview recognises the central importance of te reo (the Māori language) as the source and mechanism for reflecting and transmitting tikanga [right way of doing things]. Valued and gifted from one generation to the next, te reo imprints Te Ao Māori [the Māori World] philosophy, weaving values and beliefs through metaphors, proverbs, and traditional stories (whakatauki, whakatauaāki, pūrākau, pakiwaitara, and kōrero). Te reo is therefore critical to shaping Māori ways of knowing, doing, and being in articulations that are tika (right) [...] Māori, as a metaphoric people, view te reo as he taonga tuku iho nō ngā tūpuna—the language is considered to be a treasure handed down from the elders to the mokopuna (grandchildren).*

*(Rau and Ritchie, 2011, pp. 801-802<sub>[22]</sub>)*

Indigenous conceptualisations of spiritual beliefs and practices are worded in Indigenous languages. The inadequacy of a colonial language for rendering the depth of Michif cultural practices was noted by Russell Fayant (Sterzuk and Fayant, 2016<sub>[23]</sub>). Grieves (2009<sub>[24]</sub>) notes the centrality of concepts for Australian Aboriginal peoples that are sometimes approximated in English as 'dreaming' and 'law', explaining that these English translations are inadequate for conveying the entirety of culturally-based meanings encompassed by the terms in Aboriginal languages:

*...the English word Dreaming is not equivalent to the meanings that exist in Aboriginal languages to refer to the time and events of creation and the laws laid down at the time, nor to the active and powerful ongoing work of these sustaining spirits. Nevertheless, the term Dreaming has become a gloss used within Australian English. As the creation stories contain the blueprint for all life, some Aboriginal Elders prefer to use the word Law. The Dreaming or the Law are so much more than either term can convey in English, and so much more than a philosophy confined to religion in the Western understanding (Grieves, 2009, p. 8<sub>[24]</sub>).*

In Canada, McIvor et al. (2009<sub>[25]</sub>) discuss the relationship between spirituality and Indigenous languages in language and cultural revival contexts. The authors hold that traditional languages are key for understanding culture, worldviews, value systems and spirituality. They take the position that language revitalisation plays a vital part for contemporary Indigenous peoples' spirituality and well-being:

*It is questionable whether the full spectrum of pre-contact belief systems can ever be fully and accurately revived but one factor that would be key in attempting such a process is Aboriginal languages. Languages are the window to the soul of a culture and much can be determined about traditional worldviews and value systems through careful analysis and study of words, concepts, phrases, omissions, and comparisons with Western languages and views. Does an Indigenous word for “sky”, when it's translated literally really mean just the noun sky or does this word reveal something deeper, with more profound cosmological and mythical connections?... Core spirituality can never be fully understood without an understanding of the language (McIvor, Napoleon and Dickie, 2009, p. 15<sub>[25]</sub>).*

### 3.2.3. Social networks

Culturally significant social networks is another focus area of Indigenous culture commonly reflected in Indigenous languages. Indigenous languages express culturally significant aspects of their speakers' social lives such as their kinship terms, or particular ways of addressing people in different relationships. Languages also perform the everyday functions of social interactions which establish social cohesion, as well as special functions, such as ceremonies.

Indigenous peoples often voice the opinion that Indigenous languages have a role in ensuring cultural continuity, connecting Aboriginal people to their past history and their ‘old people’ as well as to future generations. This perspective is expressed by Jaru woman Bonnie Deegan, chairperson of the Kimberley Language Resource Centre in Western Australia, a community-based, Aboriginal-run language organisation:

*Language is a very big part of the culture of Aboriginal people in the Kimberley. We know who we are by the language we speak. It joins us to our past and our old people, right back to the Dreamtime. It ties us to our land, and it makes us proud and strong.*

*Language also gives us a place in the present day. It shows all Australians that we have something to give to society, and that we have a rightful place in today's world. By keeping our language strong, we let everyone know that our lives and feelings and wishes are important, and that we are here to stay.*

*Most importantly, we keep our language for the future. Our children will grow up knowing where they come from, and knowing that their parents are proud to be Aboriginal Australians. And they will be able to follow the path right back to their ancestors. This will help young people to belong.*

*Bonnie Deegan (Kimberley Language Resource Centre, 2011, p. 3<sub>[26]</sub>)*

### 3.2.4. Song and chant

Song and chant is an integral part of Māori culture, both traditional and modern. Within Māori culture, music fulfils many and complex roles, from the vital *tapu* (sacred) ritual to a more everyday, social belonging and group identity function (Clements, 2015<sub>[27]</sub>). Music is considered a major force for social cohesion which has operated within Māori culture for centuries, sustaining and maintaining it:

*According to Māori mythology, as soon as the gods turned night into light, they turned light into music. As life began, it brought with it the complexities of the lived experience that are most easily and adequately expressed through music. All*

*Māori waiata (songs) stem from the emotions that the gods displayed during creation.*

*(Clements, 2015, p. 132<sub>[27]</sub>)*

For Australian Aboriginal peoples too, song has been a constant feature of cultural expression in traditional and contemporary life. Clint Bracknell, an Aboriginal researcher, articulates the powerful role which language-in-song has in his culture:

*Indeed, at a deeper cultural level, ancestral Aboriginal songs can hold significant functional power. They can both heal or inflict injury, and are capable of creation and destruction, affecting changes in the physical world.*

*(Bracknell, 2017, p. 52<sub>[28]</sub>)*

Shayne Williams, another Australian Aboriginal researcher, explains how the language of (traditional) songs connects to spirituality and traditional lands:

*The highly secret, intense and experiential spirit language of song is usually communicated within specific time space such as dream and in a vocabulary specific to the spirit communicator. These songs are sung usually by those persons who are highly ranked as spirit knowledge holders and who transmit ceremonially through the spiritual praxis of country.*

*(Williams, 2011, pp. 34-35<sub>[29]</sub>)*

### 3.2.5. Story

Like song, story has a time-honoured place in Indigenous oral traditions. Story can range across different topics with different levels of accessibility (i.e. from public to restricted).

Canadian *Sahtúgot'ı̨ ne* educator Fbbie Tatti writes:

*My father once told me that stories are retold to continue the flow of information. In this way our people will always know who they are, where they come from and the importance of maintaining the traditions of our people based on traditional knowledge and the importance of the Sahtúgot'ı̨ ne language which encompasses and holds within it the sacred meanings and practices. Without these understandings and practices, the language encompassing these meanings becomes lost. We are losing our elders and with them we are losing all the knowledge that they carry. Most importantly our younger generation will lose that critical opportunity to learn about themselves and their people and become the people they are meant to be. We are the carriers of our people's knowledge and we have the responsibility to ensure that it is carried forward as it was intended.*

*(Tatti, 2015, p. 117<sub>[30]</sub>)*

### 3.2.6. Dance

Dances (typically accompanied by singing in traditional languages) have a variety of purposes. Some are passed down through generations, some are more recently created. Among Torre Strait Island people, dance is a source of pan-Torres Strait identity and pride, but each one also has recognisable attributes of individual Torres Strait Islands, fostering local identity too. They are a valued vehicle for performing in traditional Torres Strait Islander languages and represent deep local knowledges:

*Some of the songs are composed to explain the many faces of the Torres Strait weather and there are songs composed about the movements of the heavenly*



*bodies and the effects of the moon on the tides; this is astrology. There are songs composed about the many difference [sic] faces of clouds and its effect on the weather; this is meteorology. There are songs composed on the many myths and legends of the Torres Strait; this is mythology. There are songs composed to express the purpose of the marine lives in the sea; this is marine biology. There are songs composed on the many totemic gods and their practices; this is [sic]could be theology. And there are songs composed of certain events and important occasions; this is historical literature.*

*(Bani, 1979<sub>[31]</sub>)*

### 3.2.7. Gesture and hand sign

A distinctive communication medium for many Indigenous groups is gesture or hand signs. In some circumstances, these are the main means of communication for people, as Inuit Uukturausingit (Inuit Sign Language) is for deaf Inuit in Nunavut, Canada. More generally, Indigenous groups may have a system of codified gestures, which outsiders would need to learn before being able to interpret them.

April Campbell explains in her language, Central Anmatyerr (Central Australia), how hand signs are used (the English translation follows):

*Iltyem-iltyemel anwern angkem nheng amerneh arlka. And thamptheng apaywenherremel amernarl. Tyerryt nhak apek ntwarr angerr arlkemarl, ntwarrang apekarl arem, kel iltyem-iltyemarl angkem tyerryt nhakeh anwern. Tyerryt ahert mapeh anwern iltyem-iltyem angkem – merneh arlka apek petyetyeh arlka apek nheng mern arlkwetyeh, tea arlka apek arlkwetyeh anetyeh apek war. War anwern iltyem-iltyem angkem.*

*Kwer mapeh arlka anwern iltyem-iltyem angkem. Nheng kereng arlka apek anwern ntertelh-ilem, nheng-lkwer anwern ntertelh-ilem: 'Ntert-irrang kwenh aherrang kwenh!' Iltyem-iltyem anwern angkem. Anwern apek ywerlt-irrem, tyerryt arrpenh map ywerlt-irrem wal iltyem iltyemarl angkem. Thamptheng tey arlka apek mern apek angetyetyeh, wal iltyem-iltyemarl angkem. Nheng tyerryt aywerlt apek or warlekwert apek nheng husband apek lose-em-ilem. Not angkem athew warlekwertan or ywerlt apek, itya.*

*We ask for food and things like that using hand signs. Or if we see a person calling out in the distance then we use hand signs to speak with that person. We use hand signs to talk to people who are deaf – to talk about food, or to ask them to come over to eat or drink tea or sit down with us. We just use hand signs.*

*We also use hand signs with kids, to quieten them down when we are hunting. We sign, “Be quiet, there's a kangaroo there!” We use hand signs for that. And we use hand signs when someone is bereaved. If someone loses a child, then they use hand signs to ask for things such as tea or food. They use hand signs. Somebody who has lost a child, or a woman who has lost her husband. Widows and those whose child has passed away are not allowed to speak.*

*April Campbell, quoted in Green (2010<sub>[32]</sub>)*

## 3.3. Cultural identity

Traditional Indigenous languages are considered by many Indigenous peoples as an important facet of their identity and cultural heritage. They have expressed their view that their languages are significant to them, whether they are acquired from childhood as first

languages or being learned gradually from Elders or through formal lessons, or whether they are being painstakingly reawakened, or even if they were taken away and are still sleeping.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the key role of *te reo Māori* for Māori culture and identity is acknowledged by government institutions. This acknowledgement is across the board, regardless of a Māori individual's present proficiency. Just as with many Indigenous languages, some Māori families and communities include fully proficient Māori speakers, while in others a shift in language use occurred in previous generations, so Māori is being learned as a second/additional language to English. The significance of *te reo Māori* for Aotearoa New Zealand's national identity is also recognised by government:

*Māori language is a central component of Māori culture, and an important aspect of participation and identity. It also forms part of the broader cultural identity and heritage of New Zealand. In 1987, the Māori language was recognised as an official New Zealand language.*

*(Ministry of Social Development, 2016, p. 179<sup>[51]</sup>)*

In Australia, the connection between Indigenous languages and cultural identity is explained for an Australian revival/re-awakening context in this statement by the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages:

*Language is important to Aboriginal people because it is a way for them to express their identity and be proud of where they come from and who they are. If a person knows a word in their language he/she is maintaining a link that has lasted thousands of years, keeping words alive that have been used by their ancestors - language is an ancestral right and it distinguishes something special about Aboriginal people from non-Aboriginal people. Language is a part of culture, and knowledge about culture is a means of empowering people. Language contributes to the well-being of Aboriginal communities, strengthens ties between elders and young people and improves education in general for Indigenous people of all ages.*

*Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, (Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, n.d.<sup>[33]</sup>)*

Multiple connections between Inuit language and culture and identity are emphasised in the preamble to the Inuit Language Protection Act (Government of Nunavut, 2008<sup>[34]</sup>). In Nunavut in Canada, language ecologies vary between those where Inuit language is still acquired as a mother tongue/first language by the majority of children and needs maintaining, to those where Inuit language is suffering a break in inter-generational transmission and is in need of revitalisation:

*Considering the importance of the Inuit Language*

*(a) as a cultural inheritance and ongoing expression of Inuit identity both in Nunavut communities and in the wider circumpolar world,*

*(b) as the fundamental medium of personal and cultural expression through which Inuit knowledge, values, history, tradition and identity are transmitted,*

*(c) to the development of the dynamic and strong individuals, communities and institutions in Nunavut that are required to advance the reconciliation contemplated by the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement,*

*(d) to support the meaningful engagement of Inuit Language speakers in all levels of governance and in socio-economic development in Nunavut, and*

*(e) as a foundation necessary to a sustainable future for the Inuit of Nunavut as a people of distinct cultural and linguistic identity within Canada.*

*Inuit Language Protection Act, SNu 2008, c 17 (Government of Nunavut, 2008<sub>[34]</sub>)*

Canadian member of the Tobique First Nation, Jeremy Dutcher, an award-winning musician, says:

*I think about my mother a lot when I do this work. She grew up and until she was six years old the only language [my mother] spoke was Wolastoqey and then she went into day schools and there's a whole culture of [devaluation], a culture that devalues our language and our culture... She carried a lot of shame around her language, and so this work around linguistic revitalisation for me is because of her. [...] When she was growing up, everybody in our community spoke the language, now there are less than 100 fluent speakers left. [...] We need to start recognising that when we're losing language we're not losing words. We're losing entire worldviews and ways of seeing the world and ones that are so connected to this particular place, wherever this place happens to be. What's in those languages is medicine, and it's what's actually going to help us move forward. And trust and believe we don't have a lot of time.*

*(Dutcher, 2019<sub>[35]</sub>) [transcription: Barbra Meeks]*

In contact language ecologies, there is an additional dimension of relationship between language, culture and identity. For example, the Aboriginal actor, Tom E. Lewis (deceased), acknowledged that Kriol speakers can feel pride in their language, yet they can also feel a sense of loss like other Indigenous peoples whose community language use has shifted away from the traditional Indigenous languages:

*We're proud to speak Kriol. But it kinda backfired, because our [traditional] language is gone.*

*Lewis quoted in Dickson (2016<sub>[36]</sub>)*

Although it is a matter often not considered, new Indigenous contact languages can also serve cultural continuity. Métis people have been revitalising the contact language Michif as part of maintaining Métis culture in western Canada (Fayant and Sterzuk, 2018<sub>[37]</sub>; Sterzuk and Fayant, 2016<sub>[38]</sub>). Saskatchewan educator, Russell Fayant, explains the gulf between the rich worldview of the Métis expressed through Michif oral traditions versus what was lost in colonial language versions:

*Stories, songs, legends and histories, first recorded and understood in Michif become whitewashed by the colonizer's tongue and thus lack depth, humour and context.*

*Russell Fayant quoted in Sterzuk and Fayant (Sterzuk and Fayant, 2016, p. 336<sub>[23]</sub>).*

Recent research with north Australian Kriol speakers indicates that cultural concepts embedded in a local traditional Indigenous language have found their way through to the new Indigenous language:

*[...] regardless of the language they speak, [Indigenous] people still find ways to express old ways of speaking in a new language, so language doesn't fundamentally alter their cultural identity. In other words, their culture can shape their language, not just the other way around.*

*(Ponsonnet, 2020<sub>[39]</sub>)*

### 3.4. Benefits for Indigenous students

Access to Indigenous languages has a number of benefits for Indigenous students, including:

- the recognition and strengthening of Indigenous student identity at school
- success as a young Indigenous person in an Indigenous content subject
- increased sense of belonging and motivation in school.

#### 3.4.1. Stronger identity, self-esteem and resilience

As noted in the previous section, language and cultural identity are inextricably linked. A recent evaluation of Māori language programmes (delivered in English-medium schools) in Aotearoa New Zealand reports that educators firmly believe that learning Māori language will improve Māori students' wider academic success and strengthen their identity as Māori:

*The key driver for English-medium schools in the provision of Māori language programmes is the goal to support wider education success. Māori language is seen as a lever for strengthening Māori students' identity and the foundation for achieving the vision of the Ministry's Māori education strategy, Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2013b) i.e., Māori students achieving success as Māori.*

*(Haemata Limited, 2019, p. 7<sub>[40]</sub>).*

Students who participated in the evaluation study expressed their views through questionnaires and in focus groups. The evaluation report notes that identity is a theme raised by Māori students (student quotes a and b below). This was in a different way and in addition to a general sense of national identity and responsibility raised by students more generally (student quotes c and d below):

*a. you have to learn [the Māori language], you can't just be your culture without knowing what that culture is, or what you do, or even how to speak it, there's much more whakapapa [genealogy].*

*b. If I speak te reo, I can access my culture, or other cultural privileges like ta moko [cultural tattoos].*

*c. Everyone who lives in New Zealand should make an effort to learn Māori.*

*d. It's [Māori language] what makes us unique as a country.*

*(Haemata Limited, 2019, pp. 43-44<sub>[40]</sub>).*

A positive future orientation is one of the ways language programmes have been observed to strengthen Indigenous children's identity according to Kurna woman, former school principal and experienced and active member of the Kurna language revival group in Adelaide, South Australia, the late Alitya Rigney. She described her experience of the positive benefits of Kurna language programmes for children to a national Australian parliamentary enquiry:

*Have you ever seen a kid's face when they learn the language of their people and country and see the joy, the pride and the identity that comes from that and the wonder that will take them into the future? It is absolutely magic.*

*Alitja Rigney, quoted in Our Land Our Languages report (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, 2012, p. 14<sub>[21]</sub>).*

In an Australian study (Angelo, Poetsch and Jarrett, 2019<sup>[41]</sup>) Indigenous languages teachers spoke about their language programmes and how they developed them to fit their students' language and cultural needs. Despite their diverse teaching and learning contexts, each teacher saw the language programme as a means of reinforcing students' cultural resilience:

*All of the teachers underline the significance of their languages for the present and future well-being of their learners and their families. The teachers are conscious that some kind of adversity is likely to be in the life experiences of their students. They consider the growing of the learners' language and culture knowledge to be a source of well-being, since it can provide them with confidence and pride in their unique identity, and their place in their own, and in the dominant, society. Knowing who they are, and where they belong, is a source of strength to draw on when facing life challenges, and a foundation for contentment and achievement in their lives. By and large, Aboriginal languages teachers are more or less closely related to the Aboriginal students in their classes. The impact of their work, on individual learners and on the community as a whole, matters to them in personal ways.*

(Angelo, Poetsch and Jarrett, 2019, p. 19<sup>[41]</sup>)

Similarly, in a lecture on 'red dirt curriculum', Katrina Titjayi identifies the advantages of teaching Indigenous children from central Australia in their own mother tongue/first language as a way of building their spirit and confidence:

*Teaching in our own language, teaching Anangu culture and teaching the children to read and write in Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara will also open up their spirits (down deep in their roots) because this will give them the courage to try new things for themselves. It will help their confidence also when they have someone close by and continually supporting them.*

Katrina Titjayi, quoted in the *National Indigenous Languages Report* (Department of Infrastructure Transport Regional Development and Communications, 2020, p. 75<sup>[7]</sup>)

Likewise, but in a language revival setting, a case study on the Gumbaynggirr language of New South Wales, Australia, shows that learning and speaking Gumbaynggirr language is strongly associated with a sense of identity and pride in being Gumbaynggirr (Angelo, Poetsch and Jarrett, 2019<sup>[41]</sup>). The language is an important dimension of Gumbaynggirr identity. It is spoken of as a loss that can be regained, for example: "It was like something that was missing... and it's filled that hole for me" (Webb, 2017<sup>[42]</sup>) and "Reviving the language and getting into the culture helped me a lot", "I sort of found myself and my connection. I have a sense of belonging now." (Marshall Jarrett, 2003<sup>[43]</sup>).

In Canada, language immersion in the Anishinaabemowin language has been shown to have positive effects on self-esteem for kindergarten children. The children are aged 4-6 years old and attend junior kindergarten at a school which is intentionally aiming to revitalise Anishinaabemowin on Manitoulin Island in Ontario. This was part of a larger initiative to increase the use of Anishinaabemowin amongst the Nations of the United Chiefs and Council of Mnidoo Mnising. The children all speak English and have varying degrees of familiarity with Anishinaabemowin on entry. The findings concluded:

*The data presented here suggest that strong immersion holds great promise for the development of high personal self-esteem in kindergarten children....*

*[The results] indicate that by bringing culture and language into the classroom in a meaningful way and reinforcing their value and sophistication, Aboriginal children can blossom in personal and cultural pride and a love of learning.*

(Morcom, 2017, p. 378<sub>[44]</sub>)

A number of empirical studies have shown links between Indigenous languages and emotional health and well-being (Angelo et al., 2019<sub>[45]</sub>), including a Canadian study that found that ‘cultural continuity’, which included Indigenous language, was a protective factor against youth suicide (Chandler and Lalonde, 1998<sub>[46]</sub>). Following this, Canadian census data have been used to investigate the effects of community-level knowledge of Aboriginal language and youth suicide (Hallet, Chandler and Lalonde, 2007<sub>[47]</sub>). Language knowledge had predictive power over and above that of six other cultural continuity factors (self-government, land claims, education, health care, cultural facilities, police and fire services), and youth suicide rates effectively dropped to zero in those few communities in which at least half the band members reported a conversational knowledge of their own Native language.

Racism at school not only affects students' ability to learn but also imperils school-community collaboration (Moodie, Maxwell and Rudolph, 2019<sub>[48]</sub>). Language programmes have been found to reduce racism experienced by Indigenous students in school and thus benefit school-community relations. Geoff Anderson, of the Parkes Wiradjuri Language Group in New South Wales, Australia, discusses how racism has been reduced by the Wiradjuri school language programme:

*The benefits of Aboriginal languages taught in schools can be astronomical. For example there is one school in our town with students from numerous different ethnic backgrounds. By teaching Wiradjuri, the first culture of this country, the whole school community (including students, teachers, parents) also becomes respectful of all cultures, so much that we boast zero racism. Through learning to respect and trust our local Aboriginal culture, they become open to other cultures as well.*

*Geoff Anderson, Parkes Wiradjuri Language Group (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, n.d.<sub>[49]</sub>)*

Mother-tongue programmes offer bountiful opportunities for rich and positive community connections with the school. In settler-colonial societies, national languages have often been allowed to dominate in the education space, with little thought for the effects on the community and their children. Mother-tongue programmes stand as irrefutable evidence that the community's own Indigenous language and culture is valuable, because it is supported through education, not pushed to one side and ignored as somehow immaterial.

A study on two Nunavut high schools implementing bilingual approaches, based on extensive interviews with Inuit students, parents, staff and community members (Tulloch, 2016<sub>[50]</sub>), found that the bilingual approach (in Inuktitut language with *Inuit qaujimaqatuqangit* (IQ) knowledges and values) encouraged positive connections between the students, community and the school. The bilingual approach supported by Inuit in leadership positions in each school corrected the previous imbalance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous language and knowledge in the school, overturning what the community had perceived to be “unjust power relations” (p. 194<sub>[50]</sub>).

One of the major dynamics underpinning improved community engagement is the increased use of Inuktitut language in the school:

*Having an Inuk principal who supervises in Inuktitut language has improved morale amongst the staff, students, and the parents all around. It has even opened the line of communications*

*Parent quoted in (Tulloch, 2016, p. 199<sub>[50]</sub>)*

Many interviewees mention the more welcoming dynamics which Inuktitut conveys, but they are also clear about the practical communication benefits:

*The information we are getting is not all in English anymore. We're now being informed in Inuktitut. Before I became a Board member, we had a Qallunaaq [non-Inuit] principal. I kept being asked to be on the Board but we kept hearing that they [i.e. the Board] couldn't understand the documents they were receiving that were written in English, like the information they used to take home. [...] Also, meeting in your own language and speaking to the Board without having to pause [...] makes it so much easier and faster.*

*Arnaq, a Clyde River District Education Authority Board Member quoted in (Tulloch, 2016, p. 202<sub>[50]</sub>)*

### 3.4.2. Higher rates of retention

In Aotearoa New Zealand, comparisons between Māori students in Māori-medium and in English-medium education for 2016 show that retention until age 17 or over is higher in Māori-medium.

**Table 3.1. Māori-medium school leavers compared to whole Māori cohort**

Secondary Education	2016
Māori school leavers (all mediums)	13 738 total leavers
- staying in school until age 17 or above	70.9%
Māori school leavers from Māori-medium education (MME)	353 students
- staying in school until age 17 or above	77.6%

Source: Education Counts (n.d.<sub>[51]</sub>), *Quick Stats about Māori Education*, Table A5

In a similar vein, including students' mother tongue as a medium of instruction for a portion of curriculum learning impacts positively on student attendance. A study from the Northern Territory, Australia, (Dickson, 2010<sub>[52]</sub>), looks at Indigenous student attendance before and after a policy change imposed English-medium instruction in all schools. The ill-advised First Four Hours English policy commenced in 2009 (now revoked). The research examines attendance rates in four remote schools in Warlpiri speaking communities. Three schools had run bilingual programmes until the end of 2008. The research shows that most attendance reports fell in the former bilingual schools in the period from 2008-2010, following the change in medium of instruction to English.

In Nova Scotia, Canada, a notable increase in the rate of Indigenous student retention in high school has been associated with the language revitalisation programmes run by Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey (MK), the Mi'kmaq education authority. Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey has been recently credited by the Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister with a pivotal role in achieving the highest on-reserve graduation rate in Canada at 90% (the national average is around 36%). The authority supports local band schools in delivering language immersion (content and language integrated learning), second/additional language programmes and culture programmes.

Chief Leroy Denny, leader of the Eskasoni First Nation in Cape Breton and chairman of the MK himself became a teacher when MK was established two decades ago because he was inspired by the hope it gave for future Mi'kmaq achievement. He attributes students' higher retention rates to schools positively valuing Mi'kmaq language and culture.

*We know that our youth will grow into strong, proud Mi'kmaq when they are given the opportunity to learn in an environment that values the strengths of Mi'kmaq language and culture.*

*Chief Leroy Denny quoted in (MacDonald, 2019<sub>[53]</sub>).*

Mi'kmaq students in all types of MK programmes appear to be flourishing equally well in terms of retention, demonstrating that the effect is less specific than immersion versus regular second/additional language programming.

Improved attendance is also one of the many benefits found by a study of two Nunavut high schools, which are implementing bilingual approaches with Inuit language and *Inuit qaujimaqatuqangit* (IQ), which encompasses Inuit values, perspectives, skills and knowledges. A Department of Education Authority (DEA) Board member explained how this had positively impacted on students:

*[...] I feel the students don't feel as lost and that our Inuit traditional knowledge is being preserved and that they have now revived the wanting to learn, as evidenced by today's students' attendance levels [...].*

*Luciusie quoted in (Tulloch, 2016, p. 196<sub>[50]</sub>).*

### **3.4.3. Increased motivation**

The national institution charged with oversight of curriculum, assessment and reporting for all Australian schools, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, has acknowledged that the study of an Indigenous language motivates Indigenous students and that this can have additional positive effects in other areas of their school studies:

*It is well demonstrated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are strongly motivated to study their own and other Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages, and that enthusiasm for their language studies often increases their engagement at school more generally.*

*(Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, n.d.<sub>[49]</sub>).*

### **3.4.4. Stronger cognitive development**

In addition to opening up new social worlds, access to cultural riches and economic opportunities, learning new languages has been found to enhance cognitive skills. Language learning is additive, it does not take away from what the child knows about other languages. The cognitive benefits of children learning a second language are similar to those of learning two languages from birth. Learning an additional language at school has been found to improve students' learning across a range of areas such as literacy, mathematics, science and creativity (Woll and Wei, 2019<sub>[54]</sub>). Learning multiple languages challenges young minds, strengthening capacities such as attention, working memory and task-switching.

Improved literacy in the dominant national language of classroom instruction is another facet of general academic achievement that may be an outcome of second/additional Indigenous language programmes. Learning an Indigenous language and its writing system in a revival setting in New South Wales, Australia, is the context of a small study on young students' English literacy skills (Jones, Chandler and Lowe, 2010<sub>[55]</sub>). The English decoding skills of young students from two different Aboriginal language programmes were compared to students from another school where they were not learning any second language. Findings suggest that the second language and literacy

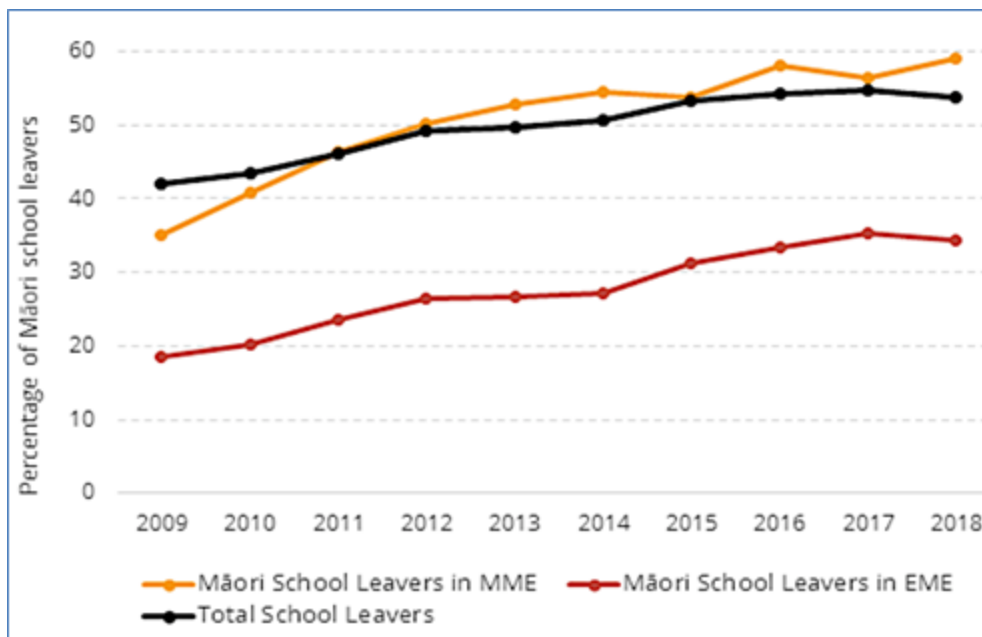


learning involved in the Aboriginal language programme was beneficial to children's acquisition of English decoding (assessed through a reading test that uses nonsense words – also called ‘non-words’ – or letter sequences that follow regular phonetic rules and are pronounceable, but have no meaning, such as ‘bif’ or ‘yom’). They posit that the effect could be due to an increase in phonemic awareness because of the more regular Indigenous language spelling systems. Similar effects for learners of other spelling systems more regular than English have been noted by other researchers.

### 3.4.5. Higher levels of student achievement

The rate of attainment by students in Māori-medium education in the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) has increased over the past decade and has exceeded that of total school leavers (graduates) since 2012. The attainment rate by Māori students in English-medium schooling has also increased over the same period, although not by as much and starting from a lower base (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2019<sup>[56]</sup>; May, Jang-Jones and McGregor, 2019<sup>[57]</sup>).

Figure 3.1. School leavers with National Certificate of Educational Achievement Level 3



Source: (Education Counts, n.d.<sup>[51]</sup>), Figure 3: Percentage of school leavers with NCEA Level 3 or above, by ethnic group (2009 to 2018).

## 4. Laws and policies

This section provides an overview of legislation, policies and institutions that relate to Indigenous languages. The section begins in the international sphere with measures that seek to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples to use and/or revive their languages. We then examine relevant legal, policy and curriculum frameworks for each of the three countries covered in this working paper, beginning with the national context, then proceeding to the provincial, state and territorial levels.

#### 4.1. International context: Indigenous languages in education

Indigenous peoples' rights to use and transmit their languages are established in a number of international covenants, declarations and conventions.

The UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UN General Assembly, 1966) includes rights related to language (Articles 2.2, 24, 26) and, most significantly, Article 27 includes the right for groups to use their own language. The Covenant was ratified in 1976 by Canada, in 1978 by Aotearoa New Zealand and in 1980 by Australia. The language-use right is also asserted in the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UN General Assembly, 1989). The right of Indigenous peoples to revitalise, use and transmit their languages is asserted in the UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN General Assembly, 2007<sup>[58]</sup>) (endorsed by Australia 2009, Aotearoa New Zealand 2010 and Canada 2016). These language rights apply across language contexts regardless of whether Indigenous languages are spoken as first languages or whether Indigenous languages are being relearned or are in need of re-awakening.

More explicit reference to education is made in the Convention against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO, 1960), which reinforces human rights to non-discriminatory education. It establishes that all people have the right to access an equal standard and quality of education, and that language is not a ground on which people can be excluded (Article 1.1-2). Furthermore, it lays out the right for minority populations to use and teach their own languages in schools, in accord with local educational policies and as long as this is not discriminatory with regards to students' learning or participation.

Article 4.3 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (UN General Assembly, 1992<sup>[59]</sup>) covers both mother tongue medium instruction and learning a heritage language (a language associated with a person's family, which they may or may not speak, and which is usually distinct from the national language(s)):

*States should take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities may have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue.*

Article 4.4 adds to this 'language awareness', both in Indigenous communities and in wider society. Language awareness is also addressed in the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2003) noting the importance of "educational, awareness-raising and information programmes" (Article 2.2. and Article 14 a.i-ii):

*States should, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education, in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory. Persons belonging to minorities should have adequate opportunities to gain knowledge of the society as a whole.*

The phrase "adequate opportunities" in both Article 4.3 and 4.4 bring in the importance of resourcing, and in Article 4.4. the phrase implies support for learning about the wider society both through learning the language(s) of wider communication and through mother tongue medium instruction.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages. The purpose of this decision was to:

*... draw attention to the critical loss of Indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve, revitalise and promote them, and take further urgent steps at the national and international levels.*

(UNESCO, 2021<sub>[60]</sub>)

Throughout 2019, over 800 initiatives were implemented worldwide by a range of entities, including UNESCO, national administrations and Indigenous peoples' organisations.

In December 2019, the UN General Assembly declared 2022-2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, as a mechanism to raise awareness of the importance of Indigenous languages for sustainable development, peace-building and reconciliation, as well as to further mobilise stakeholders and resources to support and promote Indigenous languages worldwide (UNESCO, 2021<sub>[60]</sub>).

#### ***4.1.1. Mobilisation of international covenants for New Languages***

New Indigenous languages are implicitly included in all international covenants that seek to ensure language rights for Indigenous and/or minority language communities. This is explicit in some documents for particular regions, e.g. Article 5(1) of the *Charter on language policy and language rights in the creole-speaking Caribbean states*:

*This Charter is based on the principles that the rights of all language communities are equal and independent of the legal or political status of their languages as official, national, regional, minority, immigrant, Indigenous or maroon languages.*

(*International Center for Caribbean Language Research (ICCLR), 2011<sub>[61]</sub>*)

The charter explicitly includes "emerging and/or newly developing languages" (Article 5d).

## **4.2. National contexts**

In looking at particular jurisdictions we note whether the jurisdiction has legislation or policies or curricula which relate to languages in general, or to Indigenous languages in particular.

## **4.3. Aotearoa New Zealand**

Māori are the Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand and hence legislation, policies and language initiatives make reference to Māori rather than a collective term such as Indigenous. There are also three island groups with Indigenous populations in the Realm of New Zealand: Tokelau, which is a non-self-governing dependent territory, and Niue and Cook Islands which are self-governing associated states. We focus here primarily on the jurisdiction of mainland Aotearoa New Zealand.

### ***4.3.1. Official languages***

*Te reo Māori* and New Zealand Sign Language are the official languages of Aotearoa New Zealand, although English is the language that is most commonly used.

The legal status for the Māori language derives from the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi, which was signed (at Waitangi) between representatives of the British Crown and Māori chiefs. Since Aotearoa New Zealand has no constitution, the Treaty (*te Tiriti o Waitangi*) is widely regarded as the founding document of the country. A Māori language claim was put to the Waitangi Tribunal in 1985, asserting that *te reo Māori* (the Māori language) was a *taonga* (treasure) that should be nurtured under the Treaty of Waitangi. The decline of *te reo Māori* was presented as evidence that the Crown had breached this obligation.

The Waitangi Tribunal recommended redress for this breach, leading to far-reaching legislative and policy changes, beginning with the 1987 *Māori Language Act*.

In the Realm of New Zealand, the self-governing state of the Cook Islands (Rarotonga) has Te Reo Kuki Airani (Cook Islands Māori) and English as official languages; and vagahau Niue is the official language of the self-governing state of Niue in 2012, although English is also widely used.

The non-self-governing territory of Tokelau has gagana Tokelau (Tokelauan) as an official language, although again, English is widely used.

The *Māori Language Act 1987* declared *te reo Māori* to be an official language of Aotearoa New Zealand and set up *Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori*, the Māori Language Commission, to promote the Māori language. This Act was repealed on the passing of *Te Ture mō te Reo Māori 2016*, the Māori Language Act 2016 ([Government of New Zealand], 2016). Section 2 of the 2016 Act states its purpose:

- (a) to affirm the status of the Māori language as—
  - (i) the Indigenous language of New Zealand; and
  - (ii) a taonga of iwi and Māori; and
  - (iii) a language valued by the nation; and
  - (iv) an official language of New Zealand; and
- (b) to provide means to support and revitalise the Māori language.

The Act also establishes *Te Mātāwai*, an independent statutory authority representing iwi and Māori who are the *kaitiaki* (guardians, custodians), and how the Crown is partnering with *Te Mātāwai* in order to:

*develop Māori language strategies to support the revitalisation of the Māori language, including by promoting an increase in the number of people speaking the Māori language and improving their fluency in that language (Section 3).*

This partnership is represented as a *whare* (a traditional Māori communal house), and is expressed through the metaphor of Te Whare o te Reo Mauri Ora, each partner providing one side of the structure. The *maihi* (the barge boards at the front of the house that support each side of the roof) represent the different strategies generated by the Crown and *Te Mātāwai*: *Maihi Māori* which is driven by Māori and Māori-run organisations, and *Maihi Karauna* which is driven by the government. The *kōruru* (carved figure) at the apex of the whare is the shared vision, *kia mauriora te reo Māori*.

Gagana Tokelau, the Indigenous language of the non-self-governing territory of Tokelau, is recognised “as a source of strength and identity and as the key element that distinguishes Tokelauans from other groups” in the 2003 Joint Statement of the Principles of Partnership between New Zealand and Tokelau (Government of Tokelau, n.d.<sup>[62]</sup>)

The self-governing state of the Cook Islands (Rarotonga) established Te Reo Kuki Airani and English as official languages, through the Te Reo Māori Act 2003. The self-governing state of Niue recognised vagahau Niue as the official language of Niue in 2012 through the *Vagahau Niue Act 2012*. The non-self-governing territory of Tokelau has gagana Tokelau (Tokelauan) as an official language, although again, English is also widely used.

A challenge for all three Realm of New Zealand communities and for other Pasifica peoples is the maintenance of their languages in Aotearoa New Zealand itself. Given the large number of Realm of New Zealand peoples living in the main islands of Aotearoa

New Zealand, the Government of Aotearoa New Zealand has launched various funds to support and value Pacific languages in Aotearoa. In 2021, the Government launched a Community Languages Fund to support community groups “to deliver grassroots language initiatives to Pacific communities and families”.

*Language is the key to the well-being for Pacific people. It affirms our identity as Pasifika and strengthens our communities.*

*Language is one of the pillars of our identity. The Government believes Pacific languages deserve to thrive in Aotearoa New Zealand.*

*(Minister of Pacific Peoples, 2021<sup>[63]</sup>), Pacific Languages funding re-opens, Press release, Government of New Zealand*

#### 4.3.2. Strategies

In 2016, *Te Ture mō te Reo* (the Māori Language Act) recognised dual roles of Māori and the Government – with *iwi* and Māori the *kaitiaki* (guardians) of *te reo Māori*, and the Crown (through the Government) having complementary roles in the revitalisation of *te reo Māori*.

*Maihi Māori 2017–2040* is the language revitalisation strategy developed by *iwi* and Māori, focusing on revitalising *te reo Māori* within communities and *whānau*. *Maihi Karauna 2018–2023* is the Crown’s strategy for revitalising *te reo Māori*, outlining the Government’s priorities over five years to create the societal conditions for *te reo Māori* to thrive as a living language (Te Puni Kōkiri [Ministry of Māori Development], 2019<sup>[64]</sup>).

*The Māori strategy: Maihi Māori*

*Te Ture mō te Reo* established *Te Mātāwai* as a representative for *iwi*, *hapū* and *whānau* in relation to the revitalisation of *te reo Māori*. The *Te Mātāwai* Board focuses on homes, communities and the nurturing of Māori children as first language speakers of *te reo Māori*. In 2017, *Te Mātāwai* published *Maihi Māori 2017-2040* (Te Mātāwai, 2017<sup>[65]</sup>), with key goals focused on strengthening the language in everyday use, and inter-generational transmission:

- a community-wide target of one million (or more) people using *te reo Māori* in community immersion settings; and
- a child-focused target that *te reo Māori* will be the mother tongue/first language of 25% of all Māori children (aged 0-7).

This strategy recognises that some people are entering as new learners, others have engaged already but need encouragement and extension and others need support to maintain their first language:

*[...] the stages users will encounter as they enter or begin their language journey, culminating in an engaged state that will see them begin to pass on the language to future generations.*

*(Te Mātāwai, 2017, p. 5<sup>[65]</sup>)*

Each of these stages, Awakened, Engaging and Transmitting, has its own set of indicators:

- Awakened *te reo Māori*/revitalisation will mean:
  - increases in the number of *whanau* members commencing *te reo Māori* journey

- increases in the number of *te reo Māori* immersion opportunities targeting *whanau*
- increases in the number of Māori with strengthened cultural identity and affiliations.
- Engaging in *te reo Māori*/revitalisation will mean:
  - increases in the number of *whanau* engaging in immersion opportunities
  - increases in *te reo Māori* usage in the home and community
  - increases in usage of local/*iwi* language
- Transmitting *te reo Māori* will mean:
  - increases in the proportion of Māori-speaking homes
  - increases in *te reo* immersion (community) environments
  - increases in the proportion of Māori children as first language *te reo Māori* speakers (Te Mātāwai, 2017<sub>[65]</sub>).

### *Maihi Karauna (The Crown's Strategy)*

The Crown's Māori language strategy, *Maihi Karauna* (Te Puni Kōkiri [Ministry of Māori Development], 2019<sub>[66]</sub>), was launched in 2019 as a strategy complementary to *Maihi Māori*. It focuses on creating a society where *te reo Māori* is valued, learned and used: expressed as “*Kia māhorahora te reo – Everywhere, Every Way, Everyone, Every Day*. Its role is to develop policies and services that support language revitalisation. It sets out three “audacious goals”, which it defines as “a compelling goal statement that is intended to unite the effort of different organisations and groups over a long-term time period. It paints a vision of the future that will galvanise greater effort, collaboration and innovation, moving government efforts beyond status quo activities.” The three “audacious goals” to achieve by 2040 are that:

- 85% of New Zealanders (or more) will value *te reo Māori* as a key element of national identity;
- One million New Zealanders (or more) will have the ability and confidence to talk about at least basic things in *te reo Māori*;
- 150 000 Māori aged 15 and over will use *te reo Māori* as much as English.

To achieve these goals, it proposes to:

1. *Whakanui*: Create the conditions for *te reo Māori* to be valued;
2. *Whakaako*: Create the conditions for *te reo Māori* to be learned;
3. *Whakaatu*: Create the conditions for *te reo Māori* to be seen, heard, read and used.

The Strategy recognises that the Government's role in delivering formal education is a powerful lever for achieving the desired progress, and notes the intention to integrate *te reo Māori* across early childhood, primary and secondary schools by 2025, as well as increasing the number of *te reo Māori* teachers and their capabilities.

*Te Puni Kōkiri* (Ministry of Māori Development) has also produced a framework for monitoring and evaluating the state of Māori language and the effectiveness of the *Maihi Karauna* strategy in revitalising *te reo Māori* (Te Puni Kōkiri [Ministry of Māori Development], 2019<sub>[64]</sub>). The purpose of this framework is to track the implementation of

*Maihi Karauna* and assess whether and how it is effective in achieving its objectives, as well as identifying where improvements can be made.

Following publication of *Maihi Karauna*, Te Puni Kōkiri (2019<sup>[67]</sup>) then reported on the current state of *te reo Māori*, to serve as a baseline for monitoring progress towards achieving the goals, outcomes and priorities of the *Māihi Karauna* strategy (Te Puni Kōkiri [Ministry of Māori Development], 2019<sup>[67]</sup>).

#### *Māori Curriculum and resources*

The Ministry of Education maintains a separate curriculum for Māori-medium schools called *Te Mātauranga o Aotearoa*. This curriculum includes specific Māori-medium curricula for Pāngarau (Maths), *Te Reo Māori* (Māori language), *Hauora* (Health), *Tikanga-a-Iwi* (Social Studies), *Ngā Toi* (Arts), *Pūtaiao* (Science), *Hangarau* (Technology), *Te Reo Pākeha* (English), and *Ngā Reo* (other Languages).

## 4.4. Australia

### 4.4.1. National context

Nationally, Australia has no legislation creating official languages, but English is the default and primary language of education, administration, media, employment and finance.

Education administration is in the purview of the state jurisdictions, but the Commonwealth government has a role in proposing and funding initiatives and in coordinating meetings of state jurisdictions to work out intergovernmental agreements. For example the *Australian Education Act 2013*, which provides a Commonwealth needs-based funding model for school education, authorised collecting data on student progression and on nationally agreed student background characteristics, including language background.

In 2008, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) was established as an independent statutory authority to carry out education policy directives of the Council of Australian Governments. ACARA developed a national curriculum (The Australian Curriculum) to set "the expectations for what all young Australians should be taught", with the first suite of curricula released initially in 2010 (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, n.d.<sup>[49]</sup>). This was endorsed by Council of Australian Governments in 2015. The curriculum has since been updated with the next suite of subjects including the Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages (Foundation – Year 10 learning sequence) (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, n.d.<sup>[49]</sup>).

The Framework is intended to be flexible enough to allow "language-specific curriculum development for languages that are being revived, still have first language speakers, are regaining fluent speakers, or have substantial resources" (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, n.d.<sup>[49]</sup>). The Framework caters for three learner pathways: on-country mother tongue/first language speakers, on-country language revival where there are no first language speakers and off-country learners of a language – typically a strong language still spoken across generations. How this framework is guiding curriculum design in the states varies considerably (Disbray, 2019<sup>[68]</sup>).

#### 4.4.2. State and territory context

The Australian Capital Territory has no specific legislation relating to Indigenous Australian languages or to education in Indigenous Australian languages. It has a general language services policy (Australian Capital Territory Government, 2018<sup>[69]</sup>) whose focus is primarily on providing accessible services to first language speakers of languages other than English. It aims to "support people who communicate using a language other than English to maintain and develop skills in their first language" (p. 3<sup>[69]</sup>), and also recognises the importance of Indigenous Australian languages.

##### *New South Wales*

New South Wales is the only state to have specific legislation relating to Australian Indigenous languages and education in these languages: the *Aboriginal Languages Act 2017 No 51* (State of New South Wales, n.d.<sup>[70]</sup>). The Act, which commenced in March 2020, established an Aboriginal Languages Trust to "promote effective Aboriginal language activities", including "education and employment opportunities in Aboriginal language activities".

OCHRE, the New South Wales Government's community-focused plan for Aboriginal Affairs (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 2013<sup>[71]</sup>), was released in 2013. Language revitalisation is a key component of the plan. Since 2014, this policy has supported five language and culture nests across the state – an initiative to support Indigenous languages across all levels of education and into vocational training and employment.

New South Wales also has Aboriginal Languages syllabuses for K–10 (Board of Studies, New South Wales, 2015<sup>[72]</sup>) and the final years of high school (Board of Studies, New South Wales, 2015<sup>[72]</sup>). Both syllabuses recognise the importance of guidance from local Australian Aboriginal knowledge holders. This state has the highest numbers of Indigenous residents. Indigenous languages in this state are all in a range of revival contexts.

##### *Northern Territory*

The Northern Territory has a long history of dual language programmes inclusive of mother-tongue medium instruction (bilingual education) in some remote Aboriginal language speaking communities, although more recently mother-tongue enrichment programmes have been on the increase. After consideration of the Australian Curriculum Framework and its own earlier curriculum frameworks, the Northern Territory developed its framework *Keeping Indigenous languages and cultures strong: A plan for the teaching and learning of Indigenous languages and cultures in Northern Territory schools* (Northern Territory Board of Studies, 2016<sup>[73]</sup>). The framework has a first language pathway (with both a general mother tongue medium instruction pathway and a maintenance pathway), a revitalisation, revival and renewal pathway, a second language (off-country) pathway and a language and cultural awareness pathway. As well as comprehensive outlines for each pathway, there is a suite of documents supporting school implementation, stakeholder engagement and programme agreement.

The Northern Territory has the highest proportion of Indigenous peoples per head of population of all Australian states and territories. Most of the strong traditional Indigenous languages are located here, as well as a proportion of Kriol-speaking population and a number of other new Indigenous languages. Over half the Aboriginal population in the Northern Territory state in the Census that they speak an Aboriginal language in the home. Half of the total number of state schools have the status of 'very



remote' adding extra challenges for service provision, including professional development.

### *Queensland*

In Queensland, a P-10 syllabus for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages recognised two broad pathways: language maintenance and language revitalisation (Queensland Studies Authority, 2010<sup>[74]</sup>), but state schools are now implementing the national curriculum. The *2018 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages* statement (Department of Education, Queensland, 2018<sup>[75]</sup>) supports multilingualism as an educational outcome for Indigenous students, and embraces proficiency in traditional languages, new (contact) languages and English. It acknowledges the importance of recognising new contact languages where they are spoken within communities, the need to teach English explicitly to mother tongue/first language speakers of Indigenous languages, and the role of schools to support communities in maintaining, revitalising and reclaiming traditional Indigenous languages. A focus on language awareness counters minoritisation or invisibility of many students' first language/mother tongue. *Foundations for Success*, which is a guideline for extending and enriching learning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in their kindergarten year, encourages educators to support children to use and strengthen their first languages (Department of Education, Training and Employment, Queensland, 2013<sup>[76]</sup>).

Queensland includes the traditional lands and seas belonging to both of Australia's Indigenous cultural groups: Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. A few traditional Indigenous languages are still learned as a first language/mother tongue by children, but most are in a revival context and spoken by an older generation or else being reawakened. There is a growing awareness of the new Indigenous languages in this state, which have arisen through language contact processes. Of these contact languages, only Yumplatok/Torres Strait Creole has relatively consistent recognition in official documents.

### *South Australia*

South Australia has a strong history of support for Indigenous languages in schools, primary to senior, over the last few decades. Beginning in the 1990s, the Department for Education has developed curriculum materials, both as general frameworks and for particular languages, and has supported programmes with direct grants to schools through the Department's Aboriginal Languages Programs Initiatives (ALPI) and the First Language Maintenance and Development (FLMD) programme. The state's senior secondary assessment body initiated the development of the ground-breaking framework *Australia's Indigenous Languages* (Department of Employment Education Training and Youth Affairs, 1996<sup>[77]</sup>) to address the gap in accredited Indigenous languages subjects for the senior secondary years.

Language contexts in South Australia range from strong languages, which are being transmitted inter-generationally, such as the chain of Western Desert languages, to languages being reawakened from historical sources. The Department established the Aboriginal Community Language and Culture Partnerships (ACLCP) programme in 2012 to guide its significant investment in Indigenous languages curriculum and professional learning through collaboration with a growing number of local Indigenous language groups. Most recently this work has focused on the Australian Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages (the Framework), published in 2016, to develop local language versions of the Framework that can be used by teaching teams to plan teaching and learning programmes for the classroom. To date, the

Framework has been populated with language and culture specific content for the following Revival languages: Kurna, Ngarrindjeri, Nharrungga, Adnyamathanha and Bunganditj.

*The Aboriginal Education Strategy 2019 to 2029* (Department of Education, South Australia, 2018<sub>[78]</sub>), recognises that "Aboriginal people have the right to access an education that respects and promotes their own culture and language" (p. 10<sub>[78]</sub>). It recognises the Framework's three language learner pathways, boosts coordination and resourcing for revival languages, proposes moving "toward a bilingual education model that ensures proficiency for Anangu/Aboriginal children in Pitjantjatjara or Yankunytjatjara and Standard Australian English as an additional language" (p. 19<sub>[78]</sub>).

### *Tasmania*

*Our Multicultural Island: Tasmania's Multicultural Policy and Action Plan 2019-2022* (Department of Communities, 2019<sub>[79]</sub>) recognises the rights of all groups in Tasmania to use their languages. The peak Indigenous body in this state, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation, currently does not support widespread teaching *palawa kani*, the re-awakening Aboriginal language of Tasmania, in schools at this stage (a view also held by some groups in other states), in part because they are hesitant to share too much with outsiders because of fears of misappropriation of their culture.

### *Victoria*

In 2006, Victoria passed the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (State of Victoria, 2006<sub>[80]</sub>), which recognises (sect 19) the right of Aboriginal persons "to maintain and use their language".

*The Victorian Curriculum F–10: Victorian Aboriginal Languages* (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2015<sub>[81]</sub>) recognises that there are no communities of first language speakers of Victorian Aboriginal languages and so the focus is on language revival. It is closely aligned with the national Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages (Disbray, 2019<sub>[68]</sub>). Indigenous languages are commonly taught by a community member and classroom teacher together. The number of schools with programmes and students participating in these programmes are on the rise.

### *Western Australia*

Western Australia has largely adopted the national *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages* (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2017<sub>[82]</sub>). Indigenous languages are included in the subject area of Languages (previously called Languages Other Than English (LOTE)). This state has developed and maintained professional development and recognition for Indigenous community members to become officially qualified as Indigenous languages teachers in schools.

## **4.5. Canada**

### **4.5.1. National context**

The *Official Languages Act RSC 1985* (Government of Canada, 1985<sub>[83]</sub>) establishes Canada as a bilingual country with English and French as the two official languages, but jurisdictions may give official status to other languages, and vary the weight of the official languages. It has been argued that this official bilingualism has marginalised speakers of Indigenous Canadian languages (Haque and Patrick, 2015<sub>[84]</sub>; Kim et al., 2019<sub>[85]</sub>).

In 2015 the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada made a number of calls to action, including for the government of Canada to enact an *Aboriginal Languages Act* incorporating principles such as the importance of preservation, revitalisation, and strengthening of Indigenous languages by Indigenous people and of governments properly funding these activities (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015<sup>[12]</sup>).

This resulted in the passing of the *Indigenous Languages Act* S.C. 2019 (Government of Canada, 2019b<sup>[86]</sup>) which recognises the language rights of Indigenous Canadians, and commits to supporting and promoting the use of Indigenous languages, and efforts in language reclamation, revitalisation, maintenance and strengthening including Indigenous sign languages, as well as making materials accessible in Indigenous Canadian languages. It establishes an Office of Commissioner of Indigenous Languages to support this work.

In addition, the *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (S.C. 2019, c. 24) recognises the importance of transmission of language and cultural continuity, and the importance of helping children keep connections with their languages.

Following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, the Government of Canada established an Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) framework that takes as a shared first principle:

*1. Indigenous Knowledges, Languages and Cultures - Realising the crucial importance of Indigenous ELCC that is rooted in distinct Indigenous cultures, languages and knowledges, as the foundation from which children form their individual and collective identity, and as an essential component of well-being.*

*(Government of Canada, 2018, p. 6<sup>[87]</sup>)*

The Government of Canada has a major role in funding Indigenous students to access education programmes on reserves through Indigenous Services Canada, as well as in directly funding schools. In 2019 the Government of Canada reported that it funded approximately 107 000 eligible students aged 4 to 21 years of age, ordinarily living on reserve, to attend eligible elementary or secondary programmes. The majority were First Nations students.

In 2019, the federal government announced a new, co-developed policy and funding approach to support the educational needs of First Nations students living on reserves. The approach replaced proposal-based programmes for elementary and secondary education with formula-based regional funding models in line with the base funding for students enrolled in provincial education systems.

Following consultation that showed “language and culture are critically important for the successful development, education and well-being of First Nations students”, the Government committed to funding First Nations schools with USD 1 500 per student, per year, to support language and culture programming (Indigenous Services Canada, 2019<sup>[88]</sup>). The mechanisms to make this work are in progress, namely “additional Treaty-based, regional and/or local education agreements that respond to the education goals and priorities set by First Nations”.

#### **4.5.2. Province and territory contexts**

On-reserve and off-reserve are key distinctions in the provision of Indigenous education in Canada. Off-reserve education is primarily the responsibility of the provinces and territories. They are English-dominant, with the exception of French-dominant Québec, French-English bilingual New Brunswick, French minority regions and Nunavut.

In 2000, a *Common Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Language and Culture Programmes Kindergarten to Grade 12* (Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education and Oishi, M., 2000<sup>[89]</sup>) was agreed by the Western provinces and territories (Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and Yukon Territory).

### *Alberta*

The *Common Curriculum Framework* continues to inform education for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children in Alberta (primarily Blackfoot and Cree).

### *British Columbia*

The *First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Act*, RSBC 1996, c 147 (Province of British Columbia, 1996<sup>[90]</sup>) relates to 34 languages of British Columbia, and set up the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council to support and advise on First Nations heritage, language, culture or arts.

British Columbia has a Language Education Policy (Government of British Columbia, 1997, revised 2004<sup>[91]</sup>), which mandates teaching English and French as first languages, and all other languages including Canadian Aboriginal languages as second languages. It also proposes that "all students, especially those of Aboriginal ancestry, should have opportunities to learn an Aboriginal language." It appears that their curriculum must be "developed appropriate to second language learners".

### *Manitoba*

Manitoba has the *Kindergarten to Grade 12 Aboriginal languages and cultures: Manitoba curriculum framework of outcomes* (Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, 2007<sup>[92]</sup>). The framework focuses on Ojibwe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dene, Dakota, and Michif. The framework is specifically intended for "use in additional language programming in which an Aboriginal language is taught as a separate subject" (p. 8<sup>[92]</sup>), not for mother tongue medium instruction.

### *Northwest Territories*

The *Official Languages Act*, RSNWT 1988, c O-1 (Northwest Territories, 1988<sup>[93]</sup>) established Chipewyan, Cree, Gwich'in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, South Slavey and Tâchô as official languages alongside English and French. It established a Languages Commissioner, an Official Languages Board and an Aboriginal Languages Revitalisation Board. The Act charged the Minister responsible for Official languages to "promote Official Languages education in schools and post-secondary institutions and in adult education and literacy training programmes".

In the Northwest Territories the *NWT Aboriginal languages framework: A shared responsibility* (Government of Northwest Territories, 2018<sup>[94]</sup>) takes as its goals language revitalisation and language access. The Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat implements the *Northwest Territories Junior Kindergarten – Grade 12 Indigenous Languages and Education Policy* (Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2018<sup>[95]</sup>) to provide Indigenous language instruction and culture-based school programmes to JK-12 students, for the Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit languages.

### *Nova Scotia*

The *Mi'kmaq Education Act* (S.C. 1998, c. 24) established a corporation, Mi'kmaq-Kina'matnewey, to support the delivery of educational programmes. In partnership with the Nova Scotian government, it published a curriculum document *Foundation for Mi'kmaq Language Curriculum*, (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Nova Scotia), 2015<sub>[96]</sub>) "to reclaim, revitalise, and reinstate the traditional language of the Mi'kmaq and to re-establish its use in daily situations". The guiding principles are that Mi'kmaq should "be the primary language of communication in the classroom", that culture is embedded in language, and that classrooms should be safe places, respecting differences in dialects and levels of language acquisition.

### *Nunavut*

The *Inuit Language Protection Act*, SNu 2008, c 17 (Nunavut Territory, 2008<sub>[97]</sub>) has a strong and clear statement affirming the language of the Inuit people as:

- (a) *a language of education, in a system that in both its design and effect strives to equip Inuit children to enter adult life as world citizens having a rich knowledge of the Inuit Language and full ability to participate in the day-to-day life, development and cultural vibrancy of their communities and homeland;*
- (b) *a language of work in territorial institutions, and a necessary element in:*
  - (i) *the development of a representative and appropriate public service environment in Nunavut; and*
  - (ii) *the full and representative participation of the Inuit of Nunavut in the economic opportunities and development of Nunavut; and*
- (c) *a language used daily in services and communication with the public throughout all sectors of Nunavut society.*

The Act also lays out the responsibility of governments to honour the right of children to receive language instruction in Inuktitut, a term for all Inuit languages, including Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuktun, with Inuktitut the dialect primarily used in Nunavut.

Despite some indications of government support for mother tongue medium education in Inuktitut, practical initiatives that would ensure implementation appear to have been lacking (Martin, 2019<sub>[98]</sub>). In 2019, following the passage of the *Indigenous Languages Act*, it was announced (Department of Education, Nunavut, 2019<sub>[99]</sub>) that the Government of Canada would commit up to 42 million dollars over a five-year period as part of a collaboration with the Government of Nunavut, and the legal representative of the Inuit, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, for increasing access to Inuktitut-language instruction in Nunavut, and increasing the number of proficient Inuktitut-speaking Inuit educators and fluent Inuktitut speakers.

### *Saskatchewan*

In Saskatchewan valuing and supporting First Nations and Métis languages and cultures is the first goal of the 2018 *Inspiring Success: First Nations and Métis PreK-12 Education Policy Framework* (Ministry of Education, 2018<sub>[100]</sub>). There is also a generic *Saskatchewan curriculum: Aboriginal Languages K-12* (Saskatchewan Education Training and Employment, 1994<sub>[101]</sub>).

### *The Yukon*

The *Languages Act* RSY 2002, c.133; amended by SY 2016, c.5 (Government of Yukon, 2002<sub>[102]</sub>) recognised English and French as official languages and extended "the recognition of French and the provision of services in French in the Yukon". The Act also recognised "the significance of aboriginal languages in the Yukon and wishes to take appropriate measures to preserve, develop, and enhance those languages in the Yukon". The *Education Act*, RSY 2002, c 61 (Government of Yukon, 2002<sub>[103]</sub>) recognises that the Yukon curriculum must include the cultural and linguistic heritage of Yukon Aboriginal people and the multicultural heritage of Canada; and specifically allows (s50(1)) the language of instructions to be in an Indigenous language of the Yukon, as well as providing for the employment of Indigenous teachers and the creation of resources in Indigenous languages (s52(1-4)). It also set up a Central Indian Education Authority (s54(1)).

In the Yukon in 2008 many Yukon First Nations took responsibility for Aboriginal languages under Self-Government Agreements. The Yukon Department of Education, in collaboration with Yukon First Nations, the Council of Yukon First Nations, and the Yukon Native Language Centre, supports the teaching of seven of these languages in school-based programmes that involve nearly 2 000 Yukon K-12 students every week. The Education website states that they follow the British Columbia curriculum with adaptation to incorporate "Yukon First Nations language, history, culture and ways of knowing, doing and being into all subject areas and Grade levels". This includes "instruction in Gwich'in, Northern Tutchone, Kaska, Tlingit, Southern Tutchone, Upper Tanana, and Hän languages in certain schools".

### *New Brunswick*

In New Brunswick the *Everyone at their best: 10-year education plan* (Anglophone sector) includes an objective to "Meet the Needs of First Nations learners and ensure that the provincial curriculum is reflective of First Nations history and culture" (Objective 6). This objective includes an indicator on the percentage of high schools that have students enrolled in Mi'kmaq or Wolastoqey language courses (Province of New Brunswick, 2016<sub>[104]</sub>) The plan therefore means that "high school students with First Nations backgrounds can take advanced Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqey language courses" (Baker, 2017<sub>[105]</sub>).

### *Newfoundland and Labrador*

In Newfoundland and Labrador The *Education Action Plan: The way forward* (Education and Early Childhood Development, Newfoundland and Labrador, 2018<sub>[106]</sub>) refers to providing "cultural and linguistic support services for K-12 Indigenous students going to school away from home communities". This includes safeguarding first language skills and providing students with adequate skills in English as a second language to help them succeed in school.

### *Ontario*

The Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework (Ministry of Education, 2007<sub>[107]</sub>) describes the history of Indigenous language education in Ontario, e.g. that seven Indigenous languages are included in the Grade 1-12 curriculum (since 1987) and these have been supported with curriculum resource guides and with training for Indigenous language teachers.

A revised First Nation, Métis, and Inuit studies curriculum for secondary students (grades 9-12) was launched in 2019.

### *Québec*

The approved versions of the *Québec Education Program* for elementary and secondary education (Ministry of Education, 2001<sup>[108]</sup>; Ministry of Education, 2004<sup>[109]</sup>) do not refer to Indigenous languages or have significant reference to incorporating Indigenous knowledge or perspectives. In the northern Nunavik region, however, *Kativik Ilisarniliriniq* (Kativik School Board) has implemented a transitional bilingual programme where Inuktitut is the medium of instruction in the early years, transitioning to French or English (Kativik School Board, 2011<sup>[110]</sup>; Taylor, Caouette and Wright, 2008<sup>[111]</sup>).

### *Prince Edward Island*

Department of Education and Lifelong learning (Prince Edward Island) website curricula and other documents do not appear to mention Indigenous languages in schools.

## 5. How language skills develop – the science of language learning

This section provides a synthesis of the international research on languages learning. It specifically addresses the topics of:

- Mother tongue/first language;
- Second/additional language;
- Multilingualism.

The section considers Indigenous language learning in particular, while drawing on research across the world in the areas of first language acquisition, second-language acquisition, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics and educational linguistics.

While Indigenous peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada have transmitted their expertises, knowledges, cultures and values over generations, and continue to do so in informal and formal local contexts (Coppens, 2014<sup>[112]</sup>; De Korne and Leonard, 2017<sup>[113]</sup>; Korskrity and Field, 2009<sup>[114]</sup>; Meyer, 2017<sup>[115]</sup>; Rogoff, Goodman Turkianis and Bartlett, 2001<sup>[116]</sup>), research on Indigenous language learning is relatively sparse. One reason may be because Indigenous languages programmes are generally relative newcomers in comparison to most other school subjects. The potential impact on Indigenous students' educational achievements may also be under-estimated and thus, not prioritised for research.

The traditional Indigenous languages of Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada are very different in structure from English and French, while the new Indigenous languages often share vocabulary with the dominant language. It is generally easier to learn a second language that is typologically closer to the mother tongue/first language than one that is very different. This effect may not, however, hold for children with a new Indigenous language, as there may be overlapping elements with the target language that obscure differences between the two languages. Teachers can assist children through understanding the characteristics of the child's first language and how it differs from the second language.

Mother tongue/first language acquisition takes place from birth. Bilingual first language acquisition also occurs – where two (or more) languages are acquired from birth. Second/additional language acquisition refers to the process of a person beginning to learn another language subsequently to their mother tongue/first language after the age of approximately two years.

In first language acquisition, a child learns the concept of what a language is for, interacts in the language frequently and regularly, and learns it with no explicit or structured instruction. In second-language acquisition, the child already knows what a language is for, may hear the target language much less regularly, perhaps only in a few contexts, and learning may be via explicit, structured instruction in language classes, or learning may be untutored and informal, by interacting with other speakers, older siblings or peers.

There are many different contexts for children's language learning. Children learn languages from their primary caregivers at home, and even relatives they spend only a little time with. They also learn languages from their peer group(s) that they play with, such as cousins or neighbours. This kind of social immersion context can also occur at school, as children may learn language(s) from their classmates during play times (recess), in contrast to the language of the classroom.

Children also learn languages in the classroom. This is true of many Indigenous language speaking students in remote areas in countries such as Canada and Australia, where children encounter a national language like English primarily at school:

- When a language is only encountered in the classroom, it is called a foreign language learning context. English in classrooms in Inuktitut-speaking or Kriol-speaking communities is in a context of 'English as a foreign language';
- By definition, students in a foreign language learning context rely on the explicit instruction of the target language, as they have few other opportunities for learning it. Students might learn the curriculum in their mother tongue/first language while English is taught as a separate language subject. Or they might learn through the foreign/additional/second-language medium across the curriculum via carefully staged Content and Language Integrated Learning (often referred to as CLIL). In the former, students learn subject matter (content) through their first language, with an additional target language taught in separate lessons. In the latter, students learn subjects and are taught the target language at the same time in the same lessons;
- If English is used as a medium of instruction as if the child already speaks it, but the child is not taught English explicitly in this foreign language context classroom, it constitutes an unsupported immersion context, also called submersion and results are generally not optimal. If English is not formally taught, the child will learn some English, but it may not support classroom learning very well.

Languages can also be learned informally, from family or extended family or in the community. Traditional languages have always been learned this way and continue to be, to the extent that speakership allows. Language learning might happen more in some kinds of situation than others, e.g. for Māori on the *marae* (tribal meeting grounds) or for Inuktitut on hunting trips, and because of this, these in-community or on-country experiences might be included in Indigenous school language programmes.



## 5.1. Learning mother tongue/first languages from birth

### Box 5.1. Mother tongues/first languages

The terms ‘mother’ and ‘first’ may also have various other meanings when used in connection with Indigenous languages. To express the vital and intimate connections between Indigenous peoples and their languages, the words mother (e.g. language bestowing spiritual belonging and cultural identity) or first (e.g. original Indigenous language) may be employed. These are different meanings than those used in languages education, such as mother tongue/first language education and mother tongue/first language-based literacy.

#### *5.1.1. Mother tongue medium education best supports children’s learning, especially in the early years*

Internationally, the past decade has seen renewed attention to the benefits of a mother tongue medium of instruction, particularly for its role in promoting equitable educational outcomes. UNESCO, for example, has produced a significant body of work on mother tongue-based multilingual education. The mother tongue/first language approach delivers literacy and a range of academic subjects in the student’s first language initially, while a second language, a national or official language, is then taught for its wider communicative reach, including opportunities for ongoing education and broad-based economic participation.

Effective education programmes based on students’ mother tongue/first language from a variety of countries (e.g. United States, Peru, Papua New Guinea and Mali) were reported by UNESCO over a decade ago (Bühmann and Trudell, 2008<sup>[117]</sup>). Studies showed unequivocal benefits of mother tongue-based education for students who otherwise would receive classroom instruction only through a second/additional language they did not yet know proficiently and perhaps without formal instruction of that language (submersion). These mother tongue-based programmes were all essentially bilingual in nature, adding teaching of a dominant national language at some point.

Students in these mother tongue/first language-based education settings exhibit many positive educational advantages compared to student cohorts in monolingual second language-based programmes, such as:

- Their overall academic achievement is superior to that of students in the monolingual second-language system, including in subjects such as mathematics;
- Their achievement in the second language is at least as high as that of students in the monolingual second-language system and, in some cases, higher (Bender, P. et al, 2005<sup>[118]</sup>; UNESCO Office Bangkok and Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific, 2007<sup>[119]</sup>; MacSwan et al., 2017<sup>[120]</sup>);
- They acquire additional linguistic competencies in their first language;
- They participate more actively in the learning process and feel more confident about learning.

A study of a students’ early skills in Inuktitut found these to be indicative of later proficiency in that language as well as to be predictive of success in subsequent second language learning in English or French. Researchers found that Inuktitut language skills

in Grade 3 were strongly predictive of second language skills in English and French across subsequent grades. The findings were collected over a 12-year period and had remained stable. In the community where the research took place Inuktitut instruction only occurred to Grade 3 level, because of insufficient numbers of trained Inuktitut teachers and lack of curriculum development for subsequent years. The researchers point out that strong versions of mother tongue instruction programmes continue beyond the early years, and potentially might have greater protective effects on language maintenance (Usborne et al., 2009<sub>[121]</sub>).

Research by Save the Children found that mother-tongue-based classrooms increased student participation, decreased student attrition and encouraged family and community engagement with education (Pinnock, 2009<sub>[122]</sub>; Pinnock, 2009<sub>[123]</sub>; Pinnock, 2011<sub>[124]</sub>). Benson notes that in addition to manifold academic benefits, using mother tongue/first language in education settings is increasingly understood to have a positive impact for groups that have been socially marginalised (Benson, 2016<sub>[125]</sub>).

Research also shows that children learn best when their mother tongue/first language is the language of instruction in their first years of schooling. Of particular relevance for Indigenous language speaking students is the finding that, amongst minoritised populations, mother tongue/first language programmes can drive family and community engagement with education (Ball, 2011<sub>[126]</sub>; Benson, 2005<sub>[127]</sub>):

*The evidence is clear: mother-tongue-based bilingual education significantly enhances the learning outcomes of students from minority language communities. Moreover, when mother-tongue bilingual education programmes are developed in a manner that involves community members in some significant way and explicitly addresses community concerns, these programmes also promote the identification of the minority community with the formal education process.*

*(Bühmann and Trudell, 2008, p. 41<sub>[117]</sub>)*

The use of both mother tongue/first language and additional/second language in school programmes is generally beneficial to proficiency in the additional/second language (Winsler et al., 1999<sub>[128]</sub>; Garcia and Bartlett, 2007<sub>[129]</sub>; De Jong, 2002<sub>[130]</sub>). Studies also suggest that when a minority-language-speaking child learns in school in their mother tongue/first language before adding in learning in the additional/second language, they may score as well in the additional/second language as students who were in additional/second language-only programmes (Genesee and Lindholm-Leary, 2012<sub>[131]</sub>). An advantage here is that the students also achieve higher language skills in their mother tongue/first language. This is the basis of programmes often labelled bilingual or dual-language education, where content learning is undertaken in both mother tongue/first language and additional/second language.

Translanguaging (García and Wei, 2014<sub>[132]</sub>; Wei, 2011<sub>[133]</sub>) refers to the natural behaviour of multilingual people moving fluidly between the languages in their repertoire to communicate, perhaps using several languages in a conversation with people who have similar repertoires. Translanguaging advocates see the use of both mother tongue/first language and the additional/second language in classrooms as beneficial, because students can process and produce content in their mother tongue/first language and their emerging additional/second-language knowledge, rather than struggling with additional/second language-only.

From the students' perspective, however, having a teacher who delivers the curriculum through a language they understand makes the difference between understanding classroom content and not. Lisi from the Torres Strait Islands, Australia, reflects on how

the use of students' mother tongue, Yumplatok, made classroom content accessible for herself and other students:

*We were taught in “broken English” [Yumplatok] because we had an Islander teacher. Then Year 6 and 7 we had a white [non-Indigenous] teacher but most of the time we couldn't understand her. So we had a teacher aide there . . . translating into our “broken English” and then yeah, we'd understand it then.*

*Lisi quoted in Bobongie (2017, p. 131<sub>[134]</sub>)*

Implementing mother tongue-based bilingual education involves developing language-based curriculum across all or some subject areas along with relevant teaching resources. It also needs a particular pedagogy and benefits from evaluation. Attention to how each language is applied to classroom learning over the course of schooling is required with special consideration for encouraging the transfer of competencies between mother tongue/first language and the second language. To evaluate learning outcomes, assessments/tests are conducted in the mother tongue as well as the (inter-)national language. This tailored approach to evaluation is important for monitoring programme effectiveness and individual student progress (Bühmann and Trudell, 2008<sub>[117]</sub>).

### Box 5.2. Common myths (falsehoods) about mother tongue medium instruction

Jeff Siegel (2010<sub>[135]</sub>) proposes four ideologies (i.e. views prevalent in a society, in this case misapprehensions) about mother tongue speakers of contact languages, dialects spoken by particular ethnic/cultural groups (ethnolects) etc. in standard language classrooms, which all undermine the potential benefits of implementing mother tongue medium instruction:

1. time on task: the mistaken belief that using a second language more or earlier in the classroom always equates to better student language learning, including that starting later is worse and using a mother tongue takes up time better spent on learning the second language
2. standard language: the misapprehension that a standard language is somehow intrinsically better for educational purposes, regardless of whether or not it is spoken by students
3. monoglot: the erroneous view that monolingualism is normal, that people can speak only one language variety well and speaking others is in some way detrimental
4. egalitarian: the inaccurate perspective that everybody already experiences equality, including equal opportunities in education, regardless of language backgrounds, so the same educational pathways are considered equally suitable for everybody, rather than working intentionally with diversity.

Education policies and programmes that fail to acknowledge children's mother tongue/first language in classrooms result in submersion. Poor education outcomes are associated with children from minority groups being taught in the target language without explicit teaching of that language and without strengthening and valuing their first language. Clearly, children's learning is negatively affected if education is delivered in a language they do not understand. Similarly, test scores are worse when home and school languages differ (UNESCO, 2016<sub>[136]</sub>). Despite these facts, in many countries, including the focus countries of this working paper, national languages can still be the favoured

medium of instruction over Indigenous children's own mother tongues/first languages (Kosonen, 2017<sub>[137]</sub>). This can be a default mainstream and historical situation and language ideology, rather than an informed and transparent choice. Bender describes it as "a legacy of non-productive practices that lead to low levels of learning and high levels of dropout and repetition" (Bender, P. et al, 2005<sub>[118]</sub>). Mother tongue/first languages programmes are more cost-effective in the long run because children stay in school longer and with greater benefit.

### Box 5.3. Immersion versus submersion

In Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and English-speaking areas of Canada, English-speaking children speak a language that is constantly reinforced. English is the national language and the everyday language of most people, including their student cohort. Most signs are written in English, as well as being the language in which most media is broadcast, and the language of most institutions and organisations, including the government. A French immersion school in such contexts, would recognise that the children are second-language learners of French, and plan their language experiences accordingly, teaching French explicitly and accommodating their level of second-language proficiency. These immersion programmes include the other language, English, in some curriculum areas and/or from a certain age level, so as to meet higher education expectations for English language skills. The English-speaking parents usually are exercising a choice, to send their children to a French immersion school rather than an English-medium school, and they do so because they value the opportunities that learning French gives their children, and because they believe their children's learning through English will be supported at home, in the community and, eventually, in schooling.

English-speaking Indigenous children going to an Indigenous language immersion school, such as the Māori language immersion schools are in a somewhat similar position. Their schools recognise that they are learners of Māori, and teach accordingly. Their parents too are usually exercising a choice, to send their children to a Māori immersion school rather than an English-medium school. They do so because they value the connections to Māori heritage and community that learning Māori gives their children.

In some communities, Indigenous children speak Indigenous languages that are the everyday languages spoken by almost everybody in their community, and not a national language such as English or French. Often, however, schools in these communities are run in and deliver mainstream curriculum as if students are speakers rather than learners of, for example, English. This failure to recognise children as English language learners submerses the children because it teaches them essentially as though they speak English as their primary language. Parents almost always have no choice but to send their children to the English-submersion school. At the same time, parents may not be able to support their children's learning at home, because they themselves might have received inadequate schooling (through English), and English may not be their first language. None of the school content is available in their home language and if their own first language was excluded from their education, they might not have developed literacy in it. On the surface, English submersion can seem like a good option because English is a national language and medium of further education and economic advancement. English-only submersion tends, however, to result in neither good proficiency in English, nor effective learning in school subjects, nor maintaining students' mother tongue/first language.

## 5.2. Learning second and additional languages

Most studies in second language acquisition among children examine the language development of:

- immigrant children learning a national and socially-dominant language in their new country (e.g. speakers of Punjabi, Cantonese or Somali arriving in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia or Canada and learning English);
- children learning a foreign language which is spoken in another country but is not socially dominant where they live (e.g. English-speaking students in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia or Canada studying Italian or Mandarin);

Thus, much second-language learning research has not involved Indigenous student cohorts and, for this reason, care should be exercised in over-generalising such findings.

### Box 5.4. Contrasting Indigenous and immigrant students' learning the national language (English/French) as their additional/second language

For Indigenous students who live in communities where their own mother tongue is the everyday, socially-dominant language, the national language does not fill the same function that it does in many other parts of the country. These are typically remote communities, but urban settings cannot be discounted (Carter, Angelo and Hudson, 2020<sub>[138]</sub>). These Indigenous language speaking situations resemble foreign language learning in that the national language is a target language to be learned, but it is hardly heard or used outside the classroom. (Many immigrant children encounter situations where they are, outside of their family, surrounded by the national language in both informal and formal settings).

Many Indigenous students do not experience education in their own Indigenous language and nor have their families experienced this. Literacy, numeracy and other school subjects have not been learned formally in the classroom or informally outside the classroom in their own language. (Some immigrant children and their families have experienced mother tongue education and/or have accessible school resources in their language. Where this has been the case for parents, they can support their children's learning in particular subjects).

Many Indigenous students are submersed in a national language curriculum, with neither mother tongue-based learning nor second language pedagogy. Sometimes students have complex new Indigenous (contact) language backgrounds which are less visible, but even in traditional language speaking communities students' language backgrounds and language needs are overlooked. (Some immigrant children receive focused second-language tuition and their second-language development is monitored).

Speaking a second language involves pragmatic or communicative competence (knowledge) as well as linguistic or organisational competence (grammatical knowledge) (Backman, 1990<sub>[139]</sub>; Saville-Troike, 1982<sub>[140]</sub>). Pragmatic or communicative competence includes knowing what to say when, different ways to say things to different people in a variety of contexts, such as what is considered polite and what is formal versus casual, and more. Organisational or linguistic competence is knowing the words, meanings and how to put together different phrases and sentence types in the language.

There are some widely accepted tenets of additional/second-language acquisition, despite different contexts of learning. These include the path of learning by an individual and the role of transfer of mother tongue/first language knowledge, and the idea that an individual's errors in the additional/second language show that person's learning progress.

An individual additional/second-language learner typically transfers some mother tongue/first language properties to their additional/second language, especially in the early stages of learning. Additional/second-language learners devise a system that approximates the target and is not the same as either the mother tongue/first language or the additional/second-language. This is called an interlanguage (Selinker, 1972<sub>[141]</sub>). As their learning progresses their speech takes on more of the target additional/second language features and shows fewer interlanguage and mother tongue/first language features. Learners are actively forming hypotheses about additional/second language patterns and rules as they progress. Learner errors are indications of their language development (Corder, 1975<sub>[142]</sub>), and reflect their current analysis of additional/second-language input.

For classroom assessment purposes, additional/second-language learning can be conceptualised as a journey, and learners can be mapped according to whether they are in earlier or later stages. Assessment tools often consider additional/second-language learning in terms of proficiency, a holistic view of how much additional/second-language learners have amassed, assessed by what they can do with it across the entire classroom curriculum context, as evidenced through samples and observations of classroom work.

This general classroom-based, additional/second-language proficiency assessment differs somewhat from typical school-based language subjects, foreign or Indigenous, which are teaching a target language as the core function of their programme. For instance, assessment of student learning for a discrete language subject is often more tightly focused on the taught target language, such as in a specific unit of work.

Both kinds of second-language learning context (second language across the classroom curriculum versus a target language subject) usually assess student language learning according to their macro skills in productive and receptive modes in oral language (speaking, listening comprehension) and written language (writing, reading comprehension). This range of assessment is used because students' skills do not necessarily progress at the same rate in all macro-skills. Assessment also differs depending on whether the objective of the second language learning is academic purposes or everyday, social purposes (Cummins, 1991<sub>[143]</sub>). While it is fundamentally the same language that is drawn upon for both of these skill areas, the topics, some vocabulary and the kinds of sentence patterns and their relative frequency differ across these contexts.

In many Indigenous settings, the academic/social language binary does not work straightforwardly:

- Where an Indigenous language is spoken as the everyday language of the entire community, the national language (their additional/second language) is not used for everyday social purposes. (This has no bearing on the fact that Indigenous children can learn the language, in the manner of a foreign language, as long as it is taught well, respecting their mother tongue).
- Many Indigenous languages taught in additional/second-language programmes were historically excluded from education and if used to teach across the curriculum may still be developing academic modes to convey all these subject areas. Furthermore, Indigenous language communities need to decide whether their culturally analogous special purpose language (for example ceremonial

language, or university-like environmental knowledges, or advanced kinship referencing) should be targeted in their school language programme.

To use an additional/second language for school learning, particularly in the older years, students need to add specialised vocabulary and grammar patterns that are used in complex spoken and written texts. Learning an additional/second language for academic purposes is therefore quite a lengthy, demanding process, and students' need for academic language skills might be hidden if they have an apparent ease with common, everyday social interactions.

Rather than have their academic language skills assumed, second language learners need explicit instruction in all underlying aspects of the second language, including specific elements of academic language.

Around 5-7 years of second language learning, including focused second language teaching, is generally estimated as the length of time required to achieve high proficiency in the kind of language use needed to learn well and succeed in school (Saunders and O'Brien, 2006<sub>[144]</sub>; Lindhom-Leary and Borsato, 2006<sub>[145]</sub>; Collier and Thomas, 2004<sub>[146]</sub>). This does not mean, however, that students need to learn a language for 5-7 years before they can apply it in the classroom. It might take this long for students to be fully independent in their second language in academic contexts, but students can engage in learning at quite early levels of proficiency when well supported by skilled second language pedagogy and scaffolding.

The ballpark estimate of 5-7 years (above) is mostly derived from immigrant learners of English in urban, social majority English-speaking contexts, where students are recognised as second language learners and receive support accordingly. Interestingly, the best predictor of second-language achievement is the number of years spent learning in school in a child's mother tongue/first language, particularly with first language literacy (MacSwan et al., 2017<sub>[120]</sub>). In addition, international literature on bilingual education suggests that a 50% minimum threshold in the target language is necessary for effective bilingual instruction (May, Hill and Tiakiwai, 2004<sub>[147]</sub>).

### Box 5.5. Learning an Indigenous language as an additional language

Learning small languages (on the world scale) as an additional/second language, perhaps taught nowhere else, means there are fewer speakers and trained teachers, fewer teaching and learning materials and lower overall community saturation (i.e. use and exposure) compared to international languages like English or French. In contrast, immigrant learners of English/French have vast numbers of speakers, teachers, language resources and opportunities for language input.

Most Indigenous languages learned as additional/second languages have been marginalised by the national language of the settler-colonial society, and kept from education and most domains of public life, sometimes to the point where a language is no longer actively spoken and needs re-awakening and rebuilding. These languages are therefore being developed, a little or a lot, for the purposes of classroom language teaching programmes. In contrast, the English and French languages have been a part of their respective education systems for centuries.

Many Indigenous language communities do not have long-term experience in literacy in their languages because their language was excluded from education. This useful skill for documenting language and planning and teaching is not always readily available to Indigenous language learning programmes and may need to be developed.



In contrast, immigrant learners of English/French often have access to an abundance of teachers and community members literate in English/French, as well as language and teaching resources in these languages.

Supporting small Indigenous language programmes means redressing this imbalanced legacy with targeted initiatives for teacher training, curriculum development and language learning programmes and resources.

Students' skills in their mother tongue/first language generally have a positive influence on additional/second-language proficiency (Sparks et al., 2009<sub>[148]</sub>; Reese et al., 2000<sub>[149]</sub>). Individual aptitude, motivation, attitudes and emotions (Krashen, 1982<sub>[150]</sub>) play large roles in additional/second-language achievement, but the relevance of the type of aptitude and motivation differ with different ages and contexts (Dixon et al., 2012<sub>[151]</sub>). Children with developmental disorders can also learn an additional/second language, and there is no evidence to suggest that they should be restricted to learning only one language.

There is not solid evidence for a specific critical age at which additional/second language learning should begin, and different aspects of learning may be affected differently by age. Students do not necessarily need to learn the additional/second language from a very early age to learn it well. Immigrant children who begin learning the additional/second language at an early age often attain higher levels of proficiency, especially in pronunciation and grammar (Abrahamsson and Hyltenstam, 2009<sub>[152]</sub>; Flege, Yeni-Komshian and Liu, 1999<sub>[153]</sub>), but older beginners may learn at a faster rate (Harley and Hart, 1997<sub>[154]</sub>; MacSwan and Pray, 2005<sub>[155]</sub>).

Some studies have shown that students who begin learning later can do just as well as those who began earlier (Harley and Hart, 1997<sub>[154]</sub>; Munoz, 2008<sub>[156]</sub>). Children who learn the additional/second language in a foreign language learning environment often benefit from a later beginning in the additional/second language (Dixon et al., 2012<sub>[151]</sub>; Miralpeix, 2007<sub>[157]</sub>; Celaya, Torras and Vidal, 2001<sub>[158]</sub>). Literacy skills developed in mother tongue/first language can be transferred to additional/second language literacy learning (Genesee et al., 2006<sub>[159]</sub>; Riches and Genesee, 2006<sub>[160]</sub>; Cummins, 1991<sub>[143]</sub>). In addition, older students may be better able to draw on abstract analytic skills than younger students.

A study of two Mi'kmaq programmes taught to young children in Cape Breton, Canada, looked at the different Indigenous language learning outcomes of an immersion programme versus regular second/additional language programmes in a revitalisation context. Students from the same community attended two different schools, which each ran a different programme type. Students entered their respective schools as English speakers with a limited knowledge of Mi'kmaq as they did not experience it spoken extensively around them in their community. The children participated in their respective Mi'kmaq language programmes in kindergarten, primary and Grade 1 (Usborne, D. and Taylor, 2011<sub>[161]</sub>).

Both cohorts learned more Mi'kmaq from engaging with their respective language programmes. The research found, however, that children from the immersion programme had consistently much higher Mi'kmaq language skills, confirming that the additional quality language learning time was beneficial to their language learning. In the immersion programme they learned their early childhood core subjects, mathematics, language, arts and social studies, in Mi'kmaq. In contrast, in the regular second-language programme type, they learned their core subjects through English and learned a minimum of one hour per day of Mi'kmaq.



### 5.3. Multilingualism: individual repertoires and behaviours

Although the stereotype of a multilingual child is one who speaks two languages fluently, multilingualism varies, including that a person's proficiency across their languages changes over their life.

A number of terms are used to describe different patterns of language learning among multilingual children, as follows:

- Simultaneous bilingualism refers to a child learning two or more languages from birth (Ray-Subramanian, 2011<sub>[162]</sub>). So, for example if a child speaks different languages with each parent, or two caregivers, this is a case of simultaneous bilingualism. In simultaneous bilingualism the child has two or more first languages, because one language does not precede the other in terms of when they were learned.
- Sequential bilingualism is when a child learns a second language when they are older, so for example if a Kriol, Inuktitut or Kunwinjku speaking child begins school at age 5 and starts to learn English only then, they will be a sequential bilingual. The outcome of second language learning is much less predictable as additional/second language learning has highly variable outcomes. Each learner of English as an additional/second language has a very different proficiency in English, so he or she may be stronger in one area of language use than in another.
- Balanced bilingualism describes somebody who is equally proficient in each of their languages. This is a kind of idealised benchmark as inevitably multilinguals have different strengths in each of their languages, even if they seem equally fluent in each. For example, children may be better at speaking about their family or about emotions in their mother tongue/first language, and better at writing or talking about current world events in English.
- Language repertoire is used to refer to the range of languages (and dialects) that a person speaks, their proficiencies in each language and their relationship to each of those languages at a particular point in time (Busch, 2012<sub>[163]</sub>; Lüpke, 2013<sub>[164]</sub>; Gumperz, 1964<sub>[165]</sub>; Singer, 2018<sub>[166]</sub>). People may have very different relationships towards each of their languages. One may be their own language, spoken from birth. Another might be a heritage language associated with their family that they identify strongly with, which they may or may not speak. Another language may be one they use at work, for practical reasons. Their repertoire may include not only languages they speak well, but also those they may only understand, or only read, and those they are just beginning to learn. A person's language repertoire includes all languages they have a personal relationship with, including those that they yearn to speak but have not yet begun to learn.

In communities where most people are multilingual, an individual will often draw on more than one language when they are communicating. When people move back and forth between more than one language when speaking, this is called code-switching (Meyerhoff, 2006<sub>[167]</sub>). The practice of code-switching is widespread in multilingual communities (Backus, 2015<sub>[168]</sub>). People may move between their languages, depending on who they are speaking to or what they are speaking about. People may ordinarily switch back and forth between two languages after every sentence or two when they talk to one another. They may even use words from several different languages in one sentence. For many conversational partners whose language repertoires and practices

match this is a totally normal communication pattern and speakers are not really aware of doing it in the moment.

Trans-languaging is a more recent term that has entered research on bilingualism. It was coined for (adult) bilingual behaviour and the natural facility in interactions between bilinguals with shared language repertoires to move fluidly between languages (García and Wei, 2014<sub>[132]</sub>; Wei, 2011<sub>[133]</sub>). The usage of the term is not settled in classroom contexts yet, but it has been applied to approaches that:

- value students' languages
- allow/encourage students to use all their languages
- are comfortable with students moving between their languages and mixing them.

While ‘code-switching’ as described above covers these behaviours, in some classroom language pedagogy, code-switching is also applied to purposeful and controlled changes between languages.

A particular strength that trans-languaging research offers for the classroom is that it seeks to overcome the stigmatisation that code-switching/trans-languaging is speaking poorly in each language. Linguistic analyses of code-switching generally point to the bilingual competence of the speakers.

## 6. Understanding language ecologies

Indigenous peoples have common ground when it comes to wishing to include Indigenous languages in schools. Moreover, the Promising Practices project, to which this working paper contributes, has found that Indigenous students want access to their languages in school settings (OECD, 2017<sub>[169]</sub>).

Supporting this common goal of including Indigenous languages in schooling, however, involves diverse pathways with different starting points and different contextual requirements. These range across contexts where Indigenous groups:

- are proudly re-awakening, rebuilding and learning their languages
- have older generations who are working to reintroduce their language to youth
- are striving to maintain transmission for new generations of mother tongue speakers.

It is intended as a mark of respect for Indigenous people's aspirations and efforts for their languages that this diversity is outlined here.

This section outlines basic differences in Indigenous language ecologies – first language speakers of traditional languages and new languages, second language learners of traditional languages, and second language learners of national languages.

### 6.1. Terms for languages, their speakers and learners

A language that is spoken as the main everyday language of communication can be called a vernacular. The vernacular spoken in a particular place by a group of people is usually the most effective way of disseminating information, including classroom instruction.

Owing to the effects of settler-colonial societies in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada, the vernacular of contemporary Indigenous peoples in these countries could be any one of these different kinds of languages:

- a traditional Indigenous language, with a history of uninterrupted transmission reaching back before colonisation and into the present, while incorporating change over time
- a new Indigenous language, like a creole or mixed language, that developed in post-colonisation times from a fusion of colonial and Indigenous language sources
- a national language, English or French, associated with mainstream institutions and services
- an Indigenised variety, such as an English that indexes speakers' Indigenous identities, sometimes very different from the standard variety norms.

The constellation of languages used in each community differs from place to place, as does the extent to which each language is spoken. This is what is termed a language ecology: which languages are generally spoken in a given place, to whom and to what extent. The make-up of the local language ecology suggests how youngsters will have differential experiences of the languages around them. They will learn the languages they interact in most, and will need support learning those that they are less exposed to.

Languages acquired from birth are called first languages, or mother tongues. Babies and very young children typically acquire their first languages fully and automatically through interactions with their immediate family and other caregivers. Through their first language(s), young children experience and learn their culture and engage with their world.

Languages learned subsequently to these first languages are called second languages, or additional languages. In education contexts, these are often called target languages, because they are the target of language teaching and learning. Second language learners of their heritage Indigenous language can in addition experience connection with cultural knowledges and practices.

Second language learning has widely different individual learning outcomes, from beginner proficiency (maybe with some words and rote-learned phrases) through to full proficiency, depending on available learning opportunities. In contrast, first language learners become fully proficient users of their language, unless a specific learning difficulty prevents this. Proficiency refers to a generalisable amount known of a particular language, in spoken and/or written modes.

A person who speaks just one language is monolingual. Many people acquire more than one language from babyhood and add other languages throughout their lives. On a world scale, most people are bilingual or multilingual (Romaine, 2013<sub>[170]</sub>). A person's language repertoire consists of the languages they speak, or understand, read or write with varying degrees of proficiency. Numerous social and historical factors impact on people's language repertoires.

## 6.2. What languages do Indigenous peoples speak today?

Contemporary Indigenous people may speak various types of languages. One way to categorise some of the typical languages in their repertoires is according to their social or historical roots. As mentioned above, these would generally include one or more of:

- A traditional Indigenous language, with a history of uninterrupted transmission reaching back before colonisation
- A new Indigenous language, like a creole or mixed language, that developed in post-colonial times
- A national language, English or French, associated with settler-colonial society and mainstream institutions and services
- An Indigenised variety, such as a form of English that expresses speakers' Indigenous identities.

Features of these different language types are unpacked below.

### *6.2.1. Traditional Indigenous languages*

Traditional Indigenous languages pre-date settler-colonial society in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada. They belong to their Indigenous language communities. Traditionally, these languages are associated with specific tracts of lands and seas of particular groups of Australian Aboriginal, Canadian First Nations, Inuit, Māori, Métis and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. They are closely connected with the knowledges, cultures and identities of their Indigenous custodians. These constitute some of the many reasons for Indigenous peoples' advocacy for traditional languages programmes in schools. The strong connections most Indigenous peoples feel for their traditional language(s) are not dependent on the degree of proficiency with which it is spoken. This represents the 'common ground' between the diverse Indigenous peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada.

The settler-colonial societies in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada minoritised Indigenous peoples and their traditional languages by excluding them from many social, economic and educational domains. Such actions have led to a range of contemporary Indigenous language situations, where some are being reawakened, rebuilt and learned by adults, some still have older mother tongue speakers but inter-generational transmission has faltered and others are still learned as a mother tongue and spoken as the community vernacular.

In all their linguistic structures, traditional Indigenous languages differ completely from the national languages of European origin in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and Canada. Aotearoa New Zealand mainland has a single Indigenous language, while the greater Realm includes three more. Canada is home to around one hundred languages, and Australia to around a few hundred (see Section 2 for discussion of numbers of languages and speakers). These traditional Indigenous languages are all highly complex languages, in many ways much more so than English for instance.

Where traditional Indigenous languages are spoken as a vernacular their speakers communicate about all facets of contemporary life, like getting a driver's licence, playing football or doing homework, just like speakers of any other language. Even language communities with uninterrupted transmission of a traditional language might experience considerable change in the use of this language, such as different registers or social varieties falling from common use, the levelling of one time social or regional differences in new speech varieties and/or the development of new language practices. Often traditional Indigenous language speakers experience their language being excluded from some domains of life such as from official uses like emergency health warnings, or school uses like the mathematics curriculum. In contrast to language communities speaking their traditional language every day, in many Indigenous families, traditional languages have been excluded from peoples' lives for generations, so the languages have been sleeping

and not (much) used for some time. Language engineering/rebuilding initiatives with the language community generate and disseminate ways of talking about any such new areas.

### ***6.2.2. New Indigenous languages: contact languages***

New Indigenous (contact) languages have developed in the times of settler-colonial society. Under particular circumstances, language contact processes have led to a contact language, like a creole or a mixed language. Collectively, these types of languages can be called ‘new Indigenous languages’, emphasising their Indigenous speakership plus their relatively more recent historical roots.

Such new Indigenous languages arise in contact situations, with elements that have their origins in two or more source languages, both Indigenous and colonial. Despite these historical influences, or ‘traces’, these contact languages are different from their source languages. For example, although the Canadian language Michif has French influences, it is not French, nor a kind of French. French speakers do not automatically understand Michif, they would have to learn it.

Some groups of Indigenous peoples in Australia and Canada may speak a new Indigenous contact language as their mother tongue and use it as their vernacular, their main everyday way for talking to each other. For instance, the Indigenous languages with the most speakers in Australia are these new Indigenous contact languages. In some places, the language shift to a contact language is a dynamic change currently in progress.

These new Indigenous languages are considered ‘Indigenous’ because they are spoken almost exclusively by Indigenous peoples and are used predominantly for inter-Indigenous interactions. That said, their place can be somewhat contested. They have perhaps been considered ‘lesser languages’ caught between the culturally valued original traditional languages and the socio-economically and educationally advantageous national standard languages of English or French. They can, due to their complex origins, be misrecognised as one or the other of their source languages, thereby obscuring the whole language ecology and a suite of necessary language responses in education (Oliver et al., 2021<sup>[171]</sup>). They are also closely associated with community language shift and can (erroneously) be seen as the cause for the shift rather than the outcome of all the forces that pushed traditional Indigenous languages out of the role of everyday use in a speech community.

Like any Indigenous language, contact languages express speakers' Indigenous identity and culture, and they are equally communicatively expressive. ‘Contact language’ is a very broad term, including creoles, mixed languages and pidgins.

‘Language awareness’ (learning about the language and its situation) is often useful for speakers of contact languages because of these problematic attitudes and positioning. Mother tongue medium schooling benefits all children, including children who speak new Indigenous languages, but its implementation tends to require much awareness building groundwork to ensure acceptance. Generally, new Indigenous contact languages have not been taught as second languages in schools, although programmes for incoming professionals have been developed, such as the Kriol Awareness Course offered in Australia (Ngukurr Language Centre, 2020<sup>[172]</sup>). There has, however, been a resurgence in pride in the Michif (mixed language) heritage for some Métis people in Canada, which has included second/additional language learning initiatives (Louis Riel Institute, 2020<sup>[173]</sup>).

### 6.2.3. *National languages*

National languages are languages of wider communication. National languages, like English or French, have been used as default languages in many Aotearoa New Zealand, Australian and Canadian classrooms over the decades, sometimes even when they are a second/additional language for Indigenous students. However, many Indigenous peoples in these jurisdictions speak the national language(s) as their mother tongue or with high levels of proficiency. In some remote areas in Australia and Canada, however, the national language(s) are akin to a foreign language as they are not used by Indigenous people there as a vernacular in their everyday life, but perhaps only in some work places.

While a national language may not project an Indigenous person's Indigenous identity or represent an Indigenous language community, Indigenous people may relate to a national language as it projects their national identity (and not another), so Māori people may identify with Aotearoa New Zealand English in this way, as may Indigenous peoples in Australia with Australian Englishes, and Indigenous peoples in Canada with Canadian Englishes. Proficiency in a national language is useful for engaging with the institutions and services available primarily in these languages, including internationally. Some Indigenous students are second language learners of national languages but this is not always recognised or respectfully addressed in their schooling, in which case students may experience language submersion.

Indigenous languages which are spoken as vernaculars are not threatened by multilingualism in the national language(s) *per se*, as multilingualism is a natural state in most societies and for many people worldwide. The threat comes from the constrictions imposed by dominant languages on minoritised Indigenous languages, for example by policies not purposefully implementing them in schools, in the media, in the workplace etc., which leads to them being used less and less. Similarly revitalisation/revival/re-awakening Indigenous languages involves both learning and sometimes rebuilding languages, but also finding ways of using them in everyday life again and so pushing back on the unconsidered dominance of national languages.

### 6.2.4. *Indigenised varieties*

An Indigenised variety is an Indigenous way of using a non-Indigenous language, sometimes terms an ethnolect, a dialect spoken by a particular ethnic/cultural group. In some areas, or within some Indigenous networks or groups, the form of the national language spoken by Indigenous students might be a distinctive identity marker. This might differ somewhat from the standard form of the national language. This could take the form of some special 'insider' vocabulary and/or speakers might have an accent and/or they might use slightly different word and sentence patterns. In Australia, these have been called collectively Aboriginal English(es) (Eades, 2014<sub>[174]</sub>), in Canada sometimes First Nations English, Rez English etc. (Newmark, Stanford and Walker, 2016<sub>[175]</sub>), and in New Zealand Māori English (Maclagan, 2010<sub>[176]</sub>).

The proximity to, or distance from, the standard language variety cannot be assumed for any Indigenised variety spoken by an Indigenous student cohort on the basis of generic terminology like Indigenised English(es), Aboriginal English(es), First Nations English(es) etc. Teachers would need to observe the extent to which students who speak an Indigenised variety are understanding the language of the classroom curriculum.

For Indigenous students, schools should appreciate Indigenised varieties for their cultural belonging and identity values and should ensure that these varieties are never considered in deficit terms. Indigenised varieties may incorporate features of traditional Indigenous languages (e.g. intonation, vocabulary, speech styles etc.) and this linguistic and cultural

continuity can be harnessed to benefit student language learning. Language awareness approaches are useful for generating understandings about the importance of non-standard language varieties for individuals and their speech community. In terms of Indigenous language programme delivery, adult language teachers might use Indigenised varieties in the classroom, as an authentic way of communicating with Indigenous students.

### 6.2.5. *Language ecologies: a tool for language diversity in education*

Within a given location, such as a community or suburb, Indigenous people's current language repertoires, taken altogether, comprise their local language ecology. A language ecology is thus a holistic view of which languages are spoken in a place and to what extent.

An understanding of language ecologies raises awareness about the various languages in Indigenous students' lives and whether educational programmes are taking account of these.

This place-based view of languages known and used provides essential information on:

- The languages relevant for the local particular context;
- The design and language learning goals of the Indigenous language programme;
- The different kinds of benefits an Indigenous language programme will have on students' well-being, such as increasing access to the curriculum and/or enhancing identity;
- Other language measures required to address social equity issues, such as access to services in the national language, recognition of new Indigenous languages or Indigenised varieties of the national standard language/s.

Thus, language ecology frameworks provide broad and helpful guidance for education policy makers and service delivery. In addition, concepts associated with language ecologies permeate expected and desired outcomes from Indigenous languages programmes.

**Table 6.1. Children's languages and school taught additional languages**

Children's mother tongue/first language:	Languages potentially added at school as second/additional languages
A traditional Indigenous language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• national language of wider communication e.g. for higher education, like English and/or French</li> <li>• other languages of interest</li> </ul>
A new Indigenous language, such as a creole or a mixed language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• national language of wider communication e.g. for higher education, like English and/or French</li> <li>• own/local traditional Indigenous language</li> <li>• other languages of interest</li> </ul>
A national language (English and/or French)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• own/local traditional Indigenous language</li> <li>• other languages of interest</li> </ul>
An Indigenised variety of national language, such as an Indigenised English (ethnolect)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (if sufficiently different) elements of national language of wider communication e.g. for higher education, like English and/or French</li> <li>• own/local traditional Indigenous language</li> <li>• other languages of interest</li> </ul>

As Table 6.1 above illustrates, a language ecology perspective supports a holistic approach to students' languages so schools can better examine how these connect with educational services and purposes. For example, schools can build relationships with Indigenous communities and work together to learn more about students' and families'

languages and ways of talking. Thus, a language ecology approach assists schools to understand which language(s) students speak as a first language(s) and which would be learned as additional language(s).

### Box 6.1. Early Language Inventory (ERLI), Australia

The Early Language Inventory (ERLI) is a recent innovative response to the need to better understand children's early literacy, in diverse language contexts. It is an authorised adaptation of the MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventory (CDI Words and Gestures, short form) developed for a contact language ecology, in a largely Kriol-speaking area. CDI checklists such as the one developed for the ERLI have been adapted in many languages and they provide valid and reliable measures of young children's speech and language development.

The ERLI comprises a list of 120 items (112 words and 8 hand signs) which is representative of these Aboriginal children's first words and hand signs in their first three years of life. Data are collected via strengths-based conversations with mothers and fathers about what their children can understand and/or say. When there are no concerns about their development children produce all items by about the age of three.

The ERLI checklist is in both English and Kriol. A child's comprehension and/or production of an item can, however, be in any language. This is a particularly important and innovative design feature suited to multilingual families and situations of language contact and shift. Interestingly, the ERLI has been harnessed by families to record their children's multilingual development, noting when they understand/say/sign items in the other languages represented in their environment.

The ERLI tool was developed through a collaborative, co-design process involving a local Indigenous health service, an on-the-ground family welfare service, university researchers and local families around the town of Katherine in the Northern Territory. It is available in app and paper form and support is provided via a user manual and an ERLI Facebook page. There is ongoing research into the sociocultural applicability of the ERLI items for Aboriginal contexts beyond the Kriol-speaking area, and broader health contexts, for example in the area of flagging possible hearing impairment.

Sources: (Western Sydney University, n.d.<sup>[177]</sup>; Early Language Inventory, n.d.<sup>[178]</sup>; MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventories, n.d.<sup>[179]</sup>)

### *Language awareness*

Language awareness initiatives provide a pathway towards local and official recognition wherever an Indigenous community has come to speak a variety that has hitherto lacked recognition and acceptance. Such initiatives increase understanding that new Indigenous (contact) languages and Indigenised varieties of English/French are spoken because of a range of complex issues, including:

- History
  - Origins of new Indigenous (contact) languages: Traces of an original source language can cause a new Indigenous language to be misrecognised as just being a version of that language (e.g. Kriol, an English-lexified creole spoken in northern Australia, has been mistaken as a (lesser) kind of English);



- Recency of some contact languages: Community-wide shifts in language use may be ongoing so not all stakeholders may realise the extent of the shift in language use, and in some places, the new language of the community is difficult to pin down.
- Nomenclature
  - New Indigenous languages often lack names which makes their presence difficult to show through standard data collection methods. Services are equipped to cater for languages with a name and a more easily recognised language community.

The goal is language awareness and additive multilingualism. By acknowledging and valuing students who speak a new Indigenous language, schools can respectfully teach an additional, traditional Indigenous language as well as the national standard language.

When a new language is created through language contact processes, its appearance in the local linguistic milieu is neither immediately nor easily recognised as an independent, standalone language, although speakers generally will recognise it as their way of talking.

Contact languages in settler-colonial societies are typically sandwiched between traditional Indigenous languages and standard (inter-)national languages, like English, with high education and economic status. Attention typically focuses on these important languages, not on the newer linguistic arrival that is only used for everyday communication.

A contact language will have elements from other languages in the local language ecology, which can cause misrecognition. Educators may mistakenly think, for example, that it is just a kind of English (but not standard/proper) and fail to teach students as second-language learners.

Such complex sociolinguistic factors often render the new languages invisible to usual data collection methods. Thus, school enrolment data, student achievement and Census responses do not give an accurate picture of the real language ecology.

Acknowledging, then accepting and naming, and then valuing a way of talking as a proper language addresses this language invisibility. The process generates increasing levels of language awareness on the part of speakers and educators. School systems are typically linguistically conservative, preferring established languages over newly arising ways of talking. However research shows that mother tongue/first language medium of instruction is highly effective for students. Schools can provide a significant pathway for recognising new languages. Over time, with good support from speakers and the community, locally relevant resources and enabling practices can be developed for harnessing students' language prowess in the classroom.

### Box 6.2. Recognising new Indigenous languages arising from language contact – Community language awareness posters, Queensland, Australia

The Community Vernacular Language Poster initiative was undertaken by the Indigenous Education arm of the Queensland Education Department to explore and present 'how people talk around here' on a poster. In each location, there has been a shift away from speaking traditional Indigenous languages and Indigenous residents acknowledge they can tell which Indigenous people are locals by how they speak, but there has been little or no history of recognising or naming of any local Indigenous way(s) of talking.

To carry out the project, key core members of the local speech community (e.g. Indigenous educators) work with a linguist over an extended period of time to draft and re-draft an engaging poster depicting local speech using stick figures with speech bubbles in recognisably local contexts. The group works consultatively with other community members garnering feedback and collecting new ideas.

This process generates many social, linguistic and educational questions, which the group attempt to answer. The drafting process draws extra community members into these conversations, thus raising community levels of language awareness. Often, a name for the local contact language has resulted from a poster project.

Project outcomes include a poster with examples of local language use and various materials for local language awareness (e.g. showing inter-generational change and traditional languages represented in the community). They have proven useful for incoming educators, and other professionals, and as a classroom resource to foster discussions of differences between a local contact (first) language and a standard target (second) language. As a tangible language document, a poster provides school administration and policy makers with evidence of the language shift and contact languages, and enhances understandings of contemporary Indigenous language ecologies and students' repertoires (otherwise usually invisible), and the need for policy, curriculum and pedagogy differentiation.

Source: (Carter, Angelo and Hudson, 2020<sup>[138]</sup>; Angelo, Fraser and Yeatman, 2019<sup>[180]</sup>)

## 7. Promising models of Indigenous language provision

Indigenous languages can improve schooling experiences and outcomes for Indigenous students in multiple ways.

To summarise points from previous sections:

- Indigenous peoples are typically positive about their languages and their role in education (and negative when this has been denied them). Most Indigenous people want their languages used and spoken;
- Indigenous peoples connect their languages with their Indigenous identity, culture and knowledge. Their languages are personally significant and culturally valuable. Languages programmes and curricula can offer (locally determined) opportunities which respect and teach Indigenous culture and knowledges;

- Indigenous peoples live in diverse language ecologies. This diversity necessitates diverse approaches to creating and supporting Indigenous language programmes.

### 7.1. Mother tongue/first language learning programmes

There are diverse programme types and strategies for supporting Indigenous students' learning through their mother tongue/first language. At one end are relatively informal arrangements with purposeful employment of classroom assistants and tutors with similar language repertoires as the students. At the other are formal dual language or mother tongue medium programmes in which a designated proportion of classroom instruction takes place in the students' first languages.

Mother tongue programmes or dual-language programmes in Indigenous languages and a national language require a range of skills from teachers:

- strong oral language skills and usually also literacy in the Indigenous language
- Indigenous cultural knowledge and authority
- oral and literate language skills in the dominant non-Indigenous language
- classroom teacher training and qualifications
- language teaching skills
- lesson planning and delivery, using curriculum, assessment and reporting frameworks for both languages
- school administrative requirements
- expertise in curriculum development and renewal
- language and teaching resource development.

In small Indigenous language contexts, even where the language is spoken as the community mother tongue, it is often difficult to engage individuals who have all of these skills. Elders are often the best speakers and cultural authorities, but may not have formal teaching qualifications, younger community members may be able to enter teacher training or have undertaken teacher training, but may not feel confident as teachers or in teaching through their language (especially if they did not experience this in their own school education). Non-Indigenous colleagues may have limited target language knowledge and no authority to teach it, but may have relevant skills to support planning and teaching. Departmental support documents need to be adapted, meaning departmental support personnel also need to be brought into the picture.

Other partners have skills to support language programmes, in and outside of schools: community steering committees; language centres and linguists; music, art, technology teachers and practitioners.

To cover this variety of expertise, a language teaching team is required. The team approach respects the skills and contributions of all. The team approach is necessary to create successful and sustainable mother tongue and dual language (also called bilingual) programmes in Indigenous language contexts.

### Box 7.1. Teaching teams and team teaching, Northern Territory Australia

When the Northern Territory Bilingual Programme commenced in traditional-language speaking, very remote schools in Australia in 1974, non-Aboriginal teachers were generally not experienced or trained in teaching English as a Second-Language, bilingual education delivery, or familiar with the local language of their students and only a handful of Aboriginal people were teacher trained. A model of team-teaching was developed to support the programme. Three elements made up the model – Learning Together, Planning Together and Teaching Together (Graham, 2017<sup>[181]</sup>; Graham, B., & Northern Territory Department of Education, 1999<sup>[182]</sup>). To support the programmes and teaching team, a Teacher-Linguist was engaged in each school.

Learning Together is formalised in regular, whole of school professional learning sessions, designed to equip all school staff with knowledge and skills to deliver programmes as a team, provided by members of the team. Such sessions include local language and cultural learning for non-local staff, traditional language literacy learning, unpacking and developing ways to deliver curriculum and approaches to pedagogy for specific learning areas, such as maths or science concepts.

Planning Together involves all educators, fully qualified, assistant and, where relevant, community members coming together to plan the class programme. This way each educator take part in establishing and planning the learning outcomes for students, the strategies for achieving them and their role in classes (Bowman, Pascoe and Joy, 1999<sup>[183]</sup>; Murray, 2017<sup>[184]</sup>) It also builds the group knowledge on planning and reviewing lessons, assessment and programme monitoring.

Teaching Together from purposeful planning means that the skills of each member, consolidated through learning together, is appropriately deployed in classes.

Team-teaching as set out for Northern Territory Bilingual Programmes may not exactly fit all teaching contexts, however, the principles of building and sharing knowledge in collaborative teams is a frequent theme in Indigenous language and culture learning programmes (Department of Education, Northern Territory, 2017<sup>[185]</sup>).

## 7.2. Second/additional Indigenous language learning programmes

### 7.2.1. Learning in an Indigenous language revival context

Language re-awakening/revival programmes involve Indigenous language learning on multiple levels. In language ecologies where an Indigenous language is being reawakened/revived, the Indigenous language is learned by adults who will then teach it to children. The Kurna language of Adelaide in South Australia, for example, has been undergoing a process of re-awakening. It is being reconstructed from archival records through the collective efforts of the group Kurna Warra Pintyanthi, consisting of Kurna people, linguists, teachers and language enthusiasts (Kurna Warra Pintyanthi, n.d.<sup>[186]</sup>).

Kurna people involved in learning their language have taken on teaching and co-teaching roles. They have now been teaching Kurna in schools for almost three decades, in a language ecology where children are mother tongue/first language speakers of English varieties. Kurna is also taught and learned in formal courses in post-school settings, including vocational education and within a university course on language revival (Amery, 2016<sup>[187]</sup>; First Languages Australia, 2018<sup>[188]</sup>).

### ***7.2.2. Learning in an Indigenous second/additional language programme***

At another end of the second/additional language teaching and learning spectrum is an Aboriginal language programme taught in an urban high school in the Northern Territory, Australia. In this school, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students are typically English speakers. They have the opportunity to study an Indigenous language. The course teaches a strong Indigenous language which is spoken in Aboriginal communities from another area, with permission from Aboriginal peoples in the school area, as well as from the traditional country of the target language in the programme. In this school, the Languages curriculum area otherwise teaches overseas languages. The programme targets middle school students (years 7-9) of this urban high school. All students engage in the course for a semester, after which students can choose whether to further pursue this language study.

*The program was introduced as a way of increasing the number of Aboriginal students who achieve in the Languages learning area of the middle school curriculum and to provide a foundation for the study of Aboriginal languages in senior secondary school. It was intended to enhance the understanding of Aboriginal cultures and to develop empathy among non-Aboriginal students enrolled in the program.*

*(Department of Education, 2017, p. 43<sub>[189]</sub>)*

The programme has been successfully running for some years. The school administration considers the increased presence of Indigenous adults in language teacher roles at the school to have been a positive influence on the school culture.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, most students – Māori and non-Māori – experience Māori language programmes taught as a second language, within a curriculum otherwise delivered in English medium. At 1 July 2019, 22.0% of the total school population were involved in Māori language in English-medium schooling, compared to 21.1% in 2018. Of these 179 810 students, 36% identified as Māori.

A recent evaluation of English-medium programmes in primary schools (years 1-8) found the majority of participating Māori students to be positive about their language learning experiences (Haemata Limited, 2019<sub>[40]</sub>). A majority (73%) of participating students stated they intended to continue learning Māori (2019, p. 43<sub>[40]</sub>). Some of the reasons they gave for learning Māori included responsibility to family and as a New Zealander, as well as future employment (2019, p. 45<sub>[40]</sub>). The evaluators noted that Māori language programmes involved students with motivated teachers and strong community connections, which contributed to positive learning outcomes.

### ***7.2.3. Immersion/Content and Language Integrated Learning and Indigenous language revitalisation***

In Aotearoa New Zealand and Canada, there is also a focus on immersion/content and integrated learning as a programme type particularly suitable and effective for contexts with proficient Indigenous language speakers who deliver lessons across a variety of curriculum areas. This applies to some revitalisation contexts where an older generation of speakers is available but transmission to younger generations has been disrupted.

From a basic classroom language teaching point of view, more teaching and learning time spent on richly contextualised and purposeful language lessons should result in more learning of a target language. From a language community point of view, the growth of an Indigenous language into new domains of core curriculum areas pushes back at the shrinking domains for Indigenous languages in settler-colonial societies. The language

planning between language speakers and language teachers, the teaching and learning interactions, and use outside the lesson all contribute to increasing the use and knowledge of the language.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, efforts to revitalise *te reo Māori* have been on the increase over the last three decades. A sociolinguistic survey in the 1970s showed that an overwhelming majority of Māori children were not raised as Māori speakers, apart from a few isolated rural communities (Benton, 1991<sub>[190]</sub>). In response, two types of Māori-medium education developed in the 1980s, *kōhanga reo* (language nest) and *kura kaupapa Māori* (Māori-language immersion school), and are known internationally as pathways for revitalising threatened languages. Māori has also been taught in universities and other tertiary settings, by *iwi* 'Māori tribes' and other community organisations such as Te Aataarangi, which have also engaged in effective advocacy for Māori (Keegan, 2017<sub>[4]</sub>).

*Kōhanga Reo* (language nests) began in 1982 as a grassroots movement, to provide a total Māori language immersion programme for young children and their families. Now over 460 *Kōhanga Reo* operate with more than 9 000 Māori pre-school children enrolled (Disbray, 2008<sub>[191]</sub>).

### Box 7.2. *Te Kōhanga Reo: Language Nests, Aotearoa New Zealand*

The *Te Kōhanga Reo* movement began in the early 1980s in Aotearoa New Zealand. At this time, Māori people were aware of, and seeking to address the break in inter-generational language and cultural knowledge and level of language shift that had occurred since colonisation. *Whānau* (family, extended kin) governance groups formed to establish language and culture immersion programmes in their kindergartens, play-centres and other early childhood settings across Aotearoa New Zealand. The staff were *whānau*, who were both Māori speaking adults and child care workers. In 1983 an overarching governance body *Te Kōhanga Reo* was formalised as a national charitable trust (<https://www.kohanga.ac.nz/>). This body administers government funding and remains committed to further developing language learning and the advancement of Māori cultural transmission through the individual programmes.

Programme numbers increased rapidly, with over 500 programmes operating in the late 1980s, peaking at 767 in 1996 (King, 2001<sub>[192]</sub>). During these expansion and consolidation phases, *Te Kōhanga Reo* was a driver for the extension of Māori medium and Māori *kaupapa* (philosophy) schooling, building the broader movement for Māori education at all levels. Over the last fifteen years the number of programmes has steadily dropped, to 470 programmes today (Piraud, 2021<sub>[193]</sub>).

Individual programmes, which cater for mixed aged groups from birth to 6 years, share the goal of affirming and passing on the Māori language, culture and customs. Māori customs include such aspects as:

- *whakapapa*: genealogy, which forms an important part of *mihi* (formalised greetings), in which the child learns the importance of their tribal connections;
- *whanaungatanga*: group relationships and support, which manifests itself in group responsibility for learning and working together;
- *tuakana teina*: the role of older to younger, which is expressed through leadership roles being given to older children with concurrent responsibilities toward the needs of those who are younger (King, 2001<sub>[192]</sub>).

These learnings are incorporated into a National Early Childhood Curriculum Te Whāriki Aotearoa in 1996, updated in 2017 (Gunn and Nuttall, 2019<sub>[194]</sub>).

A challenge faced in the initial stages of the programme was the need for stronger language skills among younger, qualified childcare workers, rather than reliance on language speaking elders as language models. In response, Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust established training centres and the 'Blue Book' language and cultural training syllabus.

Māori Te Kōhanga Reo or language nests have become the blueprint for language and cultural revitalisation (McIvor, Napoleon and Dickie, 2009<sub>[195]</sub>). They informed and inspired strategies for language revitalisation and community-based culturally responsive early childhood education worldwide. Language nests have now been adopted and adapted by many others: Samoans in the Pacific Islands, Mohawk peoples in Kahnawà:ke in Canada, the Seneca in the United States, the Sámi in Norway and Finland, by Irish Gaelic, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic communities (Chambers, 2015<sub>[196]</sub>), and recently in several communities in Australia.

As at 1 July 2019, there were 21 489 students enrolled in Māori-medium education, representing 2.6% of the total school population, a 0.1 percentage point increase on 2018. Of these students, 96.7% identified as Māori.

In the senior school system of Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori language subjects provide a pathway into tertiary education.

Two Māori language subjects are part of the suite of subjects assessed for Scholarship awards, *te reo Māori* (Māori language) and *te reo Rangatira* (Māori language history).

*Scholarship is aimed at high-performing students, and requires them to demonstrate high-level critical thinking. In general, Scholarship is tested by examination, and is offered in 35 subjects. Successful students receive a monetary award that reduces their tuition costs at any New Zealand tertiary institutions*

*(New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2019<sub>[56]</sub>)*

### Box 7.3. Teaching a small Indigenous language: Immersion at Chief Atahm School in Secwepemc territory, British Columbia Canada

Secwepemctsin (also known as Shuswap) is the traditional language of Adams Lake territory and part of the Interior Salish language family. Very few speakers speak Secwepemctsin as their first language, but second-language speaker numbers are growing. In 1987, when there were around 22 fluent speakers, a group of parents started a language nest which evolved first into a kindergarten programme and then in 1991 as the Chief Atahm School. Disbray et al. (2008<sub>[191]</sub>) provide their story as a case study. They write:

"The language nest provides a three-day-a-week language immersion environment enabling infants and toddlers to learn the language. It also helps parents to bring the language back to their homes and daily lives. The immersion continues through to Grade 3, in all learning areas – arithmetic, science, arts and social studies courses. From Grade 4 to Grade 9, a dual-language programme divides time between Secwepemctsin and English. By 2010, around 100 children had benefited from this programme, a reasonable proportion of the community. The school also offers evening and weekend classes for adults. The programme offered spans the generations –



infants to adults. The staff offers annual summer retreats for language teachers and others interested in starting immersion programmes. Thompson Rivers University also strives to sustain and revive Secwepemctsin by offering students certification (Teacher Regulation Branch, a three-year programme) that enables them to learn and teach First Nations Language and Culture in public, private and First Nations schools."

Most of the school staff are adult second-language learners who have gained teaching degrees and high levels of proficiency sufficient to develop curriculum and teach all subjects in the Secwepemc language.

Source: Chief Atahm School (2020<sub>[197]</sub>), <http://www.chiefatahm.com/index.html> (accessed on 4 October 2021)

### **Indigenous knowledge and cultures within Indigenous languages programmes**

Across Indigenous language ecologies, Indigenous languages programmes all have in common a valued place for Indigenous knowledges and culture:

- Topics informed by local Indigenous knowledge and culture in the language curriculum are just as important and consistent a component of Indigenous language programmes for mother tongue/first language speakers as for additional/target language learners
- A focus on Indigenous knowledges and culture furthers Indigenous peoples' aspirations for cultural maintenance and/or revival across their diverse contexts

This prominence of Indigenous knowledges and culture sets Indigenous languages programmes apart, somewhat, from typical foreign language programmes in schools where these elements are often not quite so central. Indigenous knowledge and cultural elements accompany the language focus in Indigenous languages programme design, usually via a focusing mechanism like strands or outcomes:

- the language focus consists of the organised, staged language components to be taught
- an Indigenous knowledges and culture focus provides the subject matter to be taught (perhaps organised as valued topics or as separate Indigenous knowledge strands in the programme).

A critical part of implementing any Indigenous language programme is the direction from the local Indigenous language community as to which elements of Indigenous knowledges and culture they wish to be addressed.

Bracknell's and Williams' (Bracknell, 2017<sub>[28]</sub>; Williams, 2011<sub>[29]</sub>) description of the elevated place of song in their cultures raises the matter of what is appropriate for inclusion in Indigenous languages programmes: Local Indigenous knowledge holders are the rightful decision makers. People from the local Indigenous language community entitled to speak on cultural matters are best placed to decide what is in and out of scope for the local Indigenous language programmes. They are able to judge on the basis of their law and family and community aspirations for children's cultural education.

With permission and participation of Indigenous knowledge holders, Indigenous knowledges enrich language programmes. This builds pride in and respect for Indigenous peoples and their cultures, and can play a part in transmitting this knowledge to young people.



An example of how Indigenous people might choose to share their knowledge is the cooperative research about weather and climate undertaken in Aotearoa New Zealand by the Māori iwi Ngāti Pare (Coromandel) and Te Whānau a Apanui (Eastern Bay of Plenty), and the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA). They shared their extensive knowledge of weather, climate and seasons regarding:

- naming and classifying detailed local weather and climate phenomena
- oral records of weather-based events and trends contained in traditional songs and stories
- knowledge of how to use a variety of environmental indicators to predict weather and climate.

This work led, amongst other outputs (National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), n.d.<sub>[198]</sub>), to the production of resources suited for incorporation in school language programmes of different kinds, such as:

- posters in Māori only for Māori-medium education (immersion) contexts (National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), 2007<sub>[199]</sub>);
- Māori-English bilingual posters for English-medium education settings (National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), 2006<sub>[200]</sub>).

In a school setting in the central Australian community of Ltyentye Apurte, Aboriginal children acquire the local traditional Indigenous language Arrernte as their mother tongue. Carmel Ryan, an Arrernte speaker and an Aboriginal teacher with long-term experience teaching through her language, has found that “bush trips” are highly productive for teaching traditional knowledge to students. This not only expands students' grasp of traditional knowledge, it also extends their use of their mother tongue for some of these specialised topics:

*Bush trips are best in the middle of the year. It's the best time for me to show them the country, and everything that is growing out in the bush. I teach about which kere [meat food] and merne [plant food] and bush medicine is in season. We talk a lot about [different parts of the country], the traditional owners, the stories for that country. ... I am the main teacher, but if it's a long trip with camping, I do have supporters. Arrernte staff and non-Aboriginal staff all help organise everything, and they come along as well. At night, we teach about the universe, planets, stars, they all have names. We tell stories about the night sky, like the Seven Sisters story, that come from the Dreamtime.*

*Carmel Ryan, in Angelo and Poetsch (2019, p. 15<sub>[41]</sub>)*

The acclaimed Dene Kede K-6 Curriculum from the Canadian Northwest Territories provides an example of the core role that Indigenous knowledges and culture play in Indigenous language curricula. This curriculum has been developed for both mother tongue/first language speakers of Dene and learners of Dene as an additional/target language and includes an extensive “land skills” component. The rationale for this approach is explained here by Fibbie Tatti of the Sahtuotine First Nation, the coordinator for this curriculum project, who is an interpreter, media presenter and researcher in Indigenous language and education:

*In times past, culture was understood to be simply the traditional knowledge and skills of the Dene people. It encompassed such skills as hunting caribou, tanning hides, and sewing slippers. In this curriculum such land skills are considered important to learn because they enable the student to become capable on the land*

*while learning to enjoy, understand, respect and appreciate the land. Having such a relationship with the land ensures that the student will understand that it is life-giving and must therefore be protected and preserved. This is why we teach land skills, and this is the place of “culture” in the Dene Kede Curriculum.*

*Fibbie Tatti, in Northwest Territories Education Culture and Employment (1993, p. xiv<sub>[201]</sub>).*

Tagai State College, the school of the Torres Strait (the islands and sea between Australia and Papua New Guinea), incorporates dance in its *Yumi* philosophy of education. The Torres Strait Art and Torres Strait Language and Culture curriculum (Tagai State College, 2020<sub>[202]</sub>) embeds *Yumi* philosophy (meaning “we inclusive” in Yumplatok, i.e. “our way”) in all aspects. The Torres Strait Islander linguist and cultural activist, the late Ephraim Bani, likened the role of singing and dancing for the peoples of the Torres Strait to that of literature for European societies in order to convey its cultural significance:

*The importance of dancing and songs in the Torres Strait Islands...[is not] mere entertainment...[but] is the most important aspect of Torres Strait lifestyle. The Torres Strait Islanders preserve and present their oral history through songs and dances; in other words, the songs and dances are Torres Strait literature material. Just like any written materials, which are usually illustrations, the dances act as illustrative material and, of course, the dancer himself is the storyteller.*

*Bani (1979<sub>[31]</sub>)*

On a more everyday level, there are language-based, socially valued cultural practices, like how to tell stories or the use of gestures (and hand signs), which Indigenous people recognise and value as theirs. Indigenous language programmes can teach, reinforce and/or extend these Indigenous ways of doing things with Indigenous languages. Indigenous languages programmes that are co-designed with Indigenous community members weave these culturally valued ways of using Indigenous languages into the curriculum, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly/automatically.

The study of the Māori language incorporates cultural ways of using language, and so could incorporate gesture and body language. Some gestures (hand, head, eyebrow, etc.) are like scripts and they may be choreographed for performances such as the *haka*. Owing to this performance base, they are often objects of study and practice in Māori language and culture curriculum or interdisciplinary units of work (e.g. the arts). Other gestures may accompany everyday speech styles, and may replace speech or reinforce it (Metge, 2005<sub>[203]</sub>; Gruber, J. et al, 2016<sub>[204]</sub>). Māori curriculum writers or local Māori language teams may consider them to be target features they wish Māori students to reproduce in their speaking. Differences in sociocultural uses of gesture between Māori and non-Māori has been noted as a cause of miscommunication between these cultural groups, so this could be a productive topic in a language awareness course.

Crafting and telling a story is a cultural art form, which may be gradually absorbed through exposure or it may be more overtly instructed. Indigenous language programmes across different language ecologies can harness story for teaching and augmenting Indigenous languages. Story is also a vehicle for imparting Indigenous knowledges, culture and social values. What constitutes 'a good yarn' (a good story) is culturally determined.

### Box 7.4. *Kapa Haka*: Māori performing arts, Aotearoa New Zealand

*Kapa Haka* are incorporated into education as part of the national education system through Mātauranga Māori ‘Māori education’ designed for Māori students, or as an extra-curricular activity similar to sports or music competitions. The national *Kapa Haka* competition is held for both primary and secondary schools every two years. This is completely Māori-led, and based on traditional customs, some of which are still in use on the *marae* (tribal meeting grounds) as well as in the wider community, e.g. for greetings, meetings, or funerals.

The competitions include a range of performing arts with different skills in dance, singing, and specific activities such as *poi* (swinging balls) or *rākau* (stick work). The competitions are divided into sections, which have specific judging criteria, but there are also generic requirements, which include proficiency in *te reo Māori*, the Māori language. Each of these activities has its specific set of terminology, proverbs, and custom, and requires cultural knowledge such as protocols and genealogy. They are music-based, and therefore allow and require repetition, which supports language learning and use at different levels of proficiency.

Learning and rehearsals are group based, following a fundamental cultural value of *whānaungatanga* (based on family). They may include weekends where everyone sleeps, eats and practices the performance together, for example in the school hall. There is a range of experts, in language as well as traditional and modern music, voice training, choreography, costume, tattoo art, etc. These experts may be parents or other community members as well as teachers, which encourages home-school linkages and provides a specific domain to support Māori language use.

The skills involved in *Kapa Haka* can also extend and link to other curriculum areas through the Mātaruanga Māori (Māori curriculum). Innovations over recent years have included a competition for pre-school children in *Kōhanga Reo* (language nests), student broadcasting through social and traditional media, the participation by groups of disabled students, and the inclusion of a modern translation of the famous popular song Bohemian Rhapsody. *Kapa Haka* supports the transmission of traditional culture and a traditional cultural way of using language, but is also a dynamic, contemporary performative practice. It offers a purpose-focused event, allowing Māori students to excel as Māori and encouraging their engagement in education.

#### Further reading

(Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2008<sup>[205]</sup>), "The Impact of Language Loss on the Māori Performing Arts", Te Kaharoa: eJournal on Indigenous Pacific Issues, <https://www.tekaharoa.com/index.php/tekaharoa/article/view/139> (accessed on 4 October 2021)

(Kerehoma, 2017<sup>[206]</sup>), *He hua rānei tō te kapa haka : kapa haka as a retention tool for Māori students in mainstream secondary schools (Thesis)*, <http://hdl.handle.net/10179/12808> (accessed on 4 October 2021)

(Paranihi, 2018<sup>[207]</sup>), "Kapa haka on the rise - 2018 highlights", in Te Ao Māori News, 14 Dec 2018, <https://www.teaoMāori.news/kapa-haka-on-rise-2018-highlights> (accessed on 4 October 2021)

(Pihama, Tipene and Skipper, 2014<sup>[208]</sup>), *Ngā hua a Tāne Rore: The benefits of Kapa Haka*, Manatū Taonga - Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Wellington, <https://hdl.handle.net/10289/12603> (accessed on 4 October 2021)

(Whitinui, 2008<sup>[209]</sup>), "Kapa Haka counts: Improving participation levels of Māori students in mainstream secondary schools", MAI Review, Vol. 2008/3, article 8, <http://www.review.mai.ac.nz/mrindex/MR/article/view/187/194.html> (accessed on 4 October 2021)

(New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.<sup>[210]</sup>) Qualifications guidelines: Māori performance, <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/Māori-and-pasifika/field-Māori-assessment-support-materials/Māori-performance/> (accessed on 4 October 2021)

### 7.3. Collaborative school-community relationships

A strong school-community relationship lies at the heart of successful Indigenous language programmes. Effective collaboration between a school and local Indigenous community is necessary to establish a school-based Indigenous language programme and in turn, a successful language programme can strengthen school-community relationships. Relationships between Indigenous communities and schools are imbued with inter-generational trauma from past practices. Parents and grandparents live with experiences of racism in the education system and in many cases violence in the classroom. In most of the jurisdictions schooling was given as a rationale for the removal of children from families, a damaging foundation on which to build relations between schools and community members. Although many of these overtly racist policies and practices have ended, the experiences of parents, grandparents and other carers remain with them as their children engage in schooling. School language programmes have the potential to help with countering experiences of racism and reducing the mistrust that results from inter-generational trauma.

Indigenous language community control, support and involvement is key to running an Indigenous language programme. Community-school collaboration is essential to establishing and maintaining a successful language programme. Until recently Indigenous communities, parents and elders were rarely consulted by schools about their children's education, or invited to collaborate with the school in a respectful way.

For Australia, Lowe et al. (2019, p. 254<sub>[211]</sub>) observe that:

*Aboriginal communities have argued that their experiences of schooling, their knowledge, languages and cultures have been ignored or tokenised by schools, and their children's educational needs largely ignored.*

Thus the school, in particular school staff, need to be receptive to community views in order for collaboration to be successful. This is echoed by statements from Canadian teachers in Nunavut that parents are 'necessary partners' for bilingual education to work (Aylward, 2010<sub>[212]</sub>).

Lowe et al. (2019<sub>[211]</sub>) find that where teachers develop relationships with families in the community, the teachers' professional knowledge develops. In a number of case studies, they find that close relationships with communities make it possible to embed local Indigenous knowledge into the school curriculum. A language programme provides a focus for teachers to build and develop school-community relationships. When teachers and school leaders learn from community members, this helps to counteract the exclusion of Indigenous knowledges in other educational settings and builds trust between the school and the community.

In setting up and running a language programme, there are many matters about which communities and the school will need to consult and some jurisdictions have developed lists of consultation points. The Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Victoria guide distinguishes separate consultation pathways for school-initiated and community-initiated Aboriginal languages programmes (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2015<sub>[81]</sub>). The State of Queensland (2011<sub>[213]</sub>) guide to implementing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages syllabus gives much detail on aspects schools should consult on with the language community when initiating an Indigenous language programme. It proposes creating agreements in the form of documents called Community Models of Knowing. These help schools to learn that not all aspects of Indigenous knowledges are available to everyone, as some knowledge is secret, or only for certain

families or groups. This helps schools to maintain a respectful approach to Indigenous knowledges, which is essential for a strong school-community collaboration.

Co-ordinated Partnerships are identified as a key strategy for the teaching of Indigenous languages and cultures in schools in another regional policy in Australia (Northern Territory Board of Studies, 2016<sup>[73]</sup>). Overall, they emphasise the importance of Indigenous ownership of Indigenous languages. Co-ordinated Partnerships propose that each school develops protocols to "ensure equity of voice for Indigenous Elders, community members and teachers".

Four Indigenous languages are taught through the first language curriculum pathway at the school in Maningrida, a remote northern Australian Indigenous community. The programme has strong input from each language group. Their decision making and leadership has supported the programme: "The community and students have a very strong voice in shaping the Indigenous languages and culture program" (Scholes quoted in (Northern Territory Government, 2020<sup>[214]</sup>)). Student surveys and planning workshops with Elders and community members are a key part of developing their programme.

Many Indigenous educators, languages teachers and community members highlight how Indigenous language programmes can provide a focus that facilitates respectful cooperative school-community partnerships.

## **7.4. Wide engagement of Indigenous peoples**

Indigenous language programmes engage Indigenous speakers (mother tongue, second-language learners, revivers and reawakeners) from many areas of work in the arts, digital media, care of land/seas (Indigenous rangers), tourism, interpreting and translating.

### ***7.4.1. School settings***

Schools that officially teach an Indigenous language or use an Indigenous language as a medium of instruction, overtly value and employ Indigenous language speakers. These contexts require an ongoing supply of language speakers as teachers.

Language programmes also need language speakers who develop classroom teaching and learning resources, such as individuals or teams who are interested in literature production, media, IT, etc. This can involve a range of skill areas, from language literacy, editing, layout and design, illustrating, photography, music, computer and IT skills etc.

In addition to employing Indigenous language speakers, schools provide staff with professional development, training and accreditation opportunities on many topics, potentially increasing Indigenous participation in many areas. For mother tongue speakers of Indigenous languages, this may serve to increase the level of their second language (the (inter-)national language), perhaps in specialised areas of administration or academia, or in their bilingual skills like interpreting or translating.

### ***7.4.2. Indigenous language teacher training***

Indigenous language teachers are integral to delivering Indigenous language programmes. Training and qualification pathways enable Indigenous people to take on all roles in language programmes.

Generalist teacher training is a common accreditation pathway for teachers of Indigenous languages. In some courses, a language specialisation is included (see Case Studies in this section itemised below). Many teachers of Indigenous languages have gained qualifications as general teachers and woven their own language interests into optional

course components, into aspects of their pre-service practicals, or trained on-the-job subsequently, with varying levels of support.

Some training and accreditation pathways have been developed to cater specifically for an Indigenous language teacher pathway:

- Case Study 7-5 from Western Australia describes an undergraduate traineeship programme leading to limited teacher registration
- Case Study 7-6 of the University of Victoria, Canada, is an example of a suite of Indigenous language credentials at different levels that can build into degrees, including language teaching qualifications
- Case Study 7-7 describes a post-graduate pathway from the University of Sydney, Australia, for qualified Indigenous teachers who have an interest in studying and teaching their language.

All jurisdictions and all programme types have experienced difficulties with providing qualified staff for Indigenous languages programmes:

- Skutnabb-Kangas has drawn attention to the consequences in Nunavut of the lack of trained Inuit teachers who speak Inuktitut (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson and Dunbar, 2019<sub>[215]</sub>). A shortage of truly bilingual teachers to meet bilingual schooling aspirations in Nunavut is exacerbated by the standards of entry to teacher education relying on higher school exit qualifications and not on fluency in Inuktitut.
- Teacher training for remote Indigenous communities needs targeted funding for local tutors, in-community study areas, travel to a central location for blocks of lectures etc., and specialist curriculum or accommodations for adult learners of the national language. Support for Indigenous people to train and become qualified as teachers has been consistent in Queensland (RATEP – Remote Area Teacher Education Program), with formal agreements of support between Queensland's Education Department and providers of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and James Cook University for the academic pathway (First Languages Australia, 2018<sub>[188]</sub>).
- Indigenous language teacher accreditation, registration and remuneration need to be facilitated as training courses may not dovetail with state, territory or national teacher standards (see Case Study 7-5 for an example pathway).
- Limited pools of more confident Indigenous language speakers who might then consider a role as an Indigenous language teacher. Thus, there is a need for in-community, adult language learning programmes (see Case Study 7-6 for an example pathway).
- Collaborative partnerships can support Indigenous language teaching. Schools, relevant Indigenous organisations and tertiary institutions can potentially share costs, resources and expertise for developing and delivering training, in-service professional learning and development of curriculum and teaching and learning resources/curriculum (see Case Study 7- 6 for example collaborations).
- Retention of specialist Indigenous languages teachers in demanding roles can be challenging. More than half the newly graduated Māori teachers entering Māori medium school settings encountered difficulties (Māori Medium Workforce Reference Group, 2012<sub>[216]</sub>; Ogilvy, 2012<sub>[217]</sub>; Wehipeihana, Paipa and Smith, 2018<sub>[218]</sub>).

### Box 7.5. Traineeship model for Indigenous language teachers, Western Australia

For over 20 years, the state Western Australian Education Department has run a three-year traineeship programme for Aboriginal people wishing to become language teachers. The Education Department has dedicated two staff to develop and deliver the training component and covers all costs for the participants. The Aboriginal participants must have the support of a school and a teacher/mentor who they will co-teach with throughout their training, as well as a community language mentor with whom they will co-develop language content and teaching resources.

The programme focuses on practical language teaching skills for the classroom. The training runs over two years and includes four one-week block-release, intensive training sessions to which all participants travel. After the block intensive, trainees return to their school and co-deliver lessons based on the resources and skills they have developed during the block. This post block teaching experience forms the basis of the assignments which participants are required to complete.

After their training, participants complete one year of teaching probation, after which they are eligible to apply to the teacher registration Board for Limited Registration. This classification allows them to work as qualified teachers, but only as language teachers. They are paid as graduate teachers and have the same conditions. To gain full teacher registration or to embark on professional promotional pathways, however, Aboriginal languages teachers (with Limited Registration) would need to complete further studies, such as an undergraduate teaching degree (First Languages Australia, 2018, p. 47<sub>[188]</sub>).

### Box 7.6. Laddered qualification pathway, University of Victoria, Canada

The University of Victoria in British Columbia has a laddered pathway for learning and qualification in Aboriginal Languages Revitalisation. The programmes target candidates working with Indigenous communities in the revitalisation and teaching of Indigenous languages, or with organisations involved in developing and delivering language and cultural revitalisation policies and programmes (Czaykowska-Higgins et al., 2017<sub>[219]</sub>; de France, 2013<sub>[220]</sub>)(see UVic websites below).

The ladder begins with two Certificate level programmes. The Certificate in Indigenous Language Revitalization, through the Department of Linguistics and the Division of Continuing Studies, in partnership with the En'owkin Centre (governed by the Okanagan Indian Educational Resources Society) is a one-year, flexible delivery programme offered in partnership between the University and Indigenous nations, communities and organisations. The focus at this level is on understanding the dynamics of language loss, maintenance, and recovery. The Certificate is an exit point, or a basis for further study in linguistics, education, and/or cultural resource management. The Indigenous Education Department also offers a Certificate in Indigenous Language Proficiency. Designed to build proficiency in a specific Indigenous language, it is delivered when there is a cohort of students and a community partnership.

The Certificate level programmes can lead to the Diploma in Indigenous Language

Revitalization. In this one-year programme, participants build on their Indigenous language proficiency, consider factors promoting successful teaching of Indigenous languages, and gain some language teaching skills. The Diploma is another exit point, or the basis for pursuing a Bachelor of Education, with eligibility for Professional Teaching Certification.

Bachelor of Education in Indigenous Language Revitalization builds on the Diploma programme, with courses over two years from education, linguistics together with own language learning. The Bachelors programme includes community-based courses in the Summer Institute on Indigenous Education. The experiential nature of these courses allows the learners to ‘live and breathe’ the local Aboriginal cultures by participating in community events, learning from master carvers or language leaders, from Elders, from community members, and from direct exposure to some traditional practices such as carving, singing, and the preparation of traditional foods (de France, 2013<sub>[220]</sub>). Graduate Certificate and Masters levels programmes are also offered, made up of courses in the Summer Institute and other pathways in the Indigenous Language Revitalisation Programme (see UVic link below).

A recent innovation at the University of Victoria is the development of an Indigenous Language Teachers' Package (Czaykowska-Higgins et al., 2017<sub>[219]</sub>).

Comprised of four components, the Package is for teachers of languages to adult learners in post-secondary level teaching contexts, such as community programmes, adult learning institutions and the university. The four components are:

- **Teachers' Guide:** This contains practical advice for teachers instructing for the first time at the post-secondary level, with sections on how to create learning outcomes and lesson plans, work with Elder speakers, and understand students' learning styles. It also provides support around technical elements of working with an institution.
- **Class Activities:** These are a collection of sample classroom activities related to the materials in the Scope and Sequence covered by the Course Shells (below).
- **Feedback and Assessment:** Introduces assessment, a collection of sample grading rubrics, grading guidelines, and ideas for providing feedback to students. These include example self-assessment tools as well as teacher-led assessment.
- **Course Shells:** Scope and Sequence documents for the four levels of language courses, leading a potential instructor from themed unit to themed unit week-by-week, and suggesting outcomes, general communicative tasks associated with each outcome, and appropriate forms of feedback. They suggest sample sets of phrases to use week-by-week (in English, for preparation in target language by the instructor). The themed units link to examples in the Class Activities and Feedback sections (Czaykowska-Higgins et al., 2017<sub>[219]</sub>).



### Box 7.7. Post-graduate training for Indigenous teachers, University of Sydney, Australia

Candidates for the Masters of Indigenous Languages Education (MILE) are qualified Indigenous teachers who are interested in teaching their language and/or supporting the teaching of Indigenous languages in schools and other education settings.

The MILE programme is offered nationally through the University of Sydney, and run as an intensive block-release programme over 2 semesters, with 3 x 1 week-long blocks each semester. Currently, travel and accommodation costs are supported by the university and a proportion of tuition fees are subsidised through Australian Government funding.

The course aims to improve participants' general knowledge about Indigenous languages, assist students with exploring their language of choice, and enhance their employability in the field of teaching Indigenous languages.

In their first semester, participants complete core units of study in sounds and writing, words and meanings, sentences and texts and theories and methods in Indigenous language learning. These units build teachers' knowledge of language teaching and linguistics which they apply to the study and teaching of their languages. In semester 2, participants study research methods, curriculum development and technology and undertake a capstone (compulsory) research project based on their own language teaching.

Source: (University of Sydney, n.d.<sup>[221]</sup>)

#### 7.4.3. Indigenous resources

Literacy programmes in Indigenous children's mother tongue build rich stores of traditional and contemporary materials in many different genres. The Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages (LAAL) (2012) is an initiative in the Northern Territory of Australia that aims to preserve the literature produced through decades of Indigenous language programmes in traditional Indigenous languages and the new Indigenous language Kriol. LAAL makes these accessible to community and educators on-line and via a mobile phone app, produces outreach with teaching hints and updates, and provides research on uptake and archive design (Bow, 2016<sup>[222]</sup>; Bow, Christie and Devlin, 2014<sup>[223]</sup>; Bow, Christie and Devlin, 2017<sup>[224]</sup>; Devlin et al., 2015<sup>[225]</sup>).

Other types of story-based language resources include projects which document older people talking about history and their experiences in and knowledge of the natural world. For example, the Inuit Siku (sea ice) Atlas contains personal oral histories, rich descriptions of sea ice, along with sea ice terminology by senior Inuit men illustrated with maps and photographs (Inuit Sea Ice Use and Occupancy Project, n.d.<sup>[226]</sup>). This material is now incorporated into Tariuq (Oceans) in Grade 11 for Nunavut schools.

Publishing stories, contemporary or traditional, in Indigenous languages is increasingly available thanks to desk-top publishing and the internet. Both print and on-line material provides potential resources for Indigenous language programmes. New media, such as image, video, sound and music editing can engage Indigenous youth and can provide direct pathways for them to make and publish (on-line) language and culture-based materials valued by their community, including their elders. These outputs can augment resources available for Indigenous language programmes, and offer a high yield teaching focus and model for student tasks.

There are extra steps between having such resources and using them to maximal effectiveness as a language teaching device. A story is maximally useful for Indigenous languages teachers in classroom-based programmes, if accompanied by teaching resources such as a unit plan, a sequence of activities and sample lesson plans, which are aligned to the language curriculum and its outcomes. Many Indigenous languages programmes rely on dedicated languages teachers who have little training and ongoing professional development support, so those extra steps become more significant. Bolstering a resource with recordings and practice material for the language teachers themselves is another usability bonus for revival settings (cf. Poetsch, Jarrett and Angelo (2019<sub>[227]</sub>)) for their workshop materials. Support for the full package of teaching resources that can be based on the language of a story is sometimes overlooked.

## 8. In conclusion

This section draws on the good practices across the three countries, which has been described in the body of this report. This material indicates the extent of the ongoing work and the diversity of the contexts in which learning in Indigenous languages is occurring.

On this basis, this report offers six general guiding principles for informing newer initiatives or evaluating ongoing Indigenous language programmes.

### 8.1. Designing with and by Indigenous language communities

Indigenous languages belong to their Indigenous language community. Indigenous language programmes in schools (and in other education and training settings) need to be negotiated in a manner respecting Indigenous ownership, knowledges and ways of working.

In partnership with Indigenous language communities, education institutions can commit to providing support for traditional Indigenous language programmes and, where applicable, recognising new Indigenous languages and Indigenised Englishes.

Recognition of Indigenous language ownership must underpin Indigenous language programmes for successful engagement. Investing in Indigenous control and leadership over this Indigenous curriculum area clears the way for greater and more equitable Indigenous participation.

Local Indigenous language communities can partner with schools and formalise agreements about their Indigenous language programme and their provision so they have ongoing input into their content and conduct. Together with education institutions they can co-design policies and processes to support Indigenous language programmes.

Initiatives that support Indigenous control over their language programmes could include:

#### ***8.1.1. Local, regional and peak Indigenous language programme reference groups***

Such authorities acknowledge Indigenous custodianship and give education institutions a consultative mechanism for seeking guidance. They serve to build capacity and leadership for Indigenous people working in Indigenous languages programmes and enable sharing of ideas and resources. These groups comprise Indigenous people who are actively teaching their languages in school programmes, and so know at first hand the benefits and challenges of language teaching in schools.

### ***8.1.2. Clear expectations about school-community consultations***

Policies and protocols designed by Indigenous organisations and education departments can lay out clear expectations for school-community consultations. These could be negotiated through a peak Indigenous language programme reference group. They could usefully give advice for establishing a local Indigenous language reference group and guide consultation expectations for initiating or maintaining Indigenous language programmes.

### ***8.1.3. Designing language programme goals with and by the Indigenous language community***

The local Indigenous language reference group in conjunction with the broader Indigenous language community co-designs the goals of their language programme together with the school. Goals could include matters such as employing and training local Indigenous staff, as well as a classroom language teaching and learning focus. The goals should be clearly articulated and accessible for Indigenous community members and revisited at regular intervals with the local Indigenous language reference group.

### ***8.1.4. Community-friendly documents and processes***

Indigenous agency in language programmes can be facilitated by documents and processes that are community-friendly, that is, expressed in a way which community members find easy to understand. They could:

- guide Indigenous language community-school-department consultations
- inform Indigenous language communities about possible programme pathways
- formalise Indigenous language community-school-department agreements about Indigenous languages programmes.

## **8.2. Recognising and operationalising Indigenous language ecologies**

The local language ecologies in which Indigenous peoples live, learn and work are diverse. Fine-grained descriptions of these must be actively sought from local Indigenous community members, because it is rarely obtainable from large demographic survey data.

Recognising Indigenous language ecologies is fundamental to meeting overall schooling needs of Indigenous students, including if they are fluent speakers of the national language(s). The local language ecology impacts on school-community communications, and on adult education pathways too.

Successful Indigenous language programmes respond to the local Indigenous language ecology, taking into account whether students are mother tongue/first language speakers or second/additional language learners of their Indigenous language. These languages may be

- a re-awakening language, on a journey of being researched, rebuilt and learned
- a language spoken fluently by an older generation, but less so by younger people
- the vernacular of the community and mother tongue/first language of students

Initiatives that support recognition of local language ecologies could include:

### 8.2.1. School-community consultations

In order to learn about which language(s) are spoken and to what extent (as in Table 8.1 below) in the local Indigenous community, schools can consult with:

- local Indigenous staff, students and family members;
- local Indigenous community members, more generally;
- Indigenous language and culture organisations.

**Table 8.1. Talking about local language ecology/individual repertoires**

Language name (or a description of where it is spoken)	Spoken as a mother tongue Yes/No?	Learned as		Used how often?
		an additional language say almost anything	know a few words	
Traditional Indigenous Languages Name?		↔		
New Indigenous contact Languages Name?		↔		
Indigenised varieties of national languages Name?		↔		
Standard national languages Name?		↔		

Source: Adapted from Table A: Framework for considering an individual’s language repertoire or a community-wide language ecology (Angelo, Hudson and Macqueen, 2019<sup>[228]</sup>)

### 8.2.2. Co-design and implement language data collection and feedback

The process for gathering information about local language use should be co-designed and implemented with Indigenous staff and Indigenous community members regarding:

- purpose: e.g. understanding local families' language situations informs schools programmes, builds better school-community relationships;
- process: e.g. respectful conversations with Indigenous families by Indigenous staff;
- community feedback: e.g. do Indigenous staff and community feel that staff awareness about local language use has increased? Has teaching and learning improved? Why/not?

### 8.2.3. School responses to Indigenous students' language data

The quality of educational experiences for Indigenous students, including Indigenous languages programmes, is linked to whether local educational responses take account of the local language ecology. Schools can match school programmes with quality language data obtained with community input, as in Table 8.2 below.

**Table 8.2. How student languages are supported by the school**

Student's languages	How is each language acknowledged and supported in this student's schooling?
Which Indigenous language group(s)/tribes does the Indigenous student belong to? Name(s)?	
Which language(s) does the student speak as a mother tongue/first language? Name(s)?	
Which language(s) is student learning as additional/second languages? Name(s)?	

Source: Adapted from Angelo, Hudson and Macqueen (2019<sup>[228]</sup>)

### 8.3. Reflective practices: language programme goals and evaluations

Indigenous language programmes need to make the most of their local variables: local language speakership, local language ecologies, individual knowledges and skills in language teams and currently available language materials. Their success derives from their internal consistency, through realistic goal-setting, reflective practices, ongoing evaluations, all from an agile can-do and make-do perspective.

Indigenous language programmes are small, and even the biggest ones like the Māori programmes are heavily dependent on local factors. Localised programme information collected about the local context in order to achieve local goals and inform local evaluations— is therefore what counts in Indigenous language programmes. Each programme has different constellations of local factors, which influence programme decisions, delivery and outcomes. Responding to the local context is the mainstay of successful local Indigenous language programmes.

Reflective practices serve to 'join the dots' between a local context, delivering a language programme and meeting school system accountabilities. Reflective practices assist the stakeholders in language programmes to focus on local strengths and articulate goals that are meaningful in this context. Education systems can support small Indigenous language programmes by encouraging this focus on the local language community, the language team and stakeholders.

Example measures that could be put in place to support Indigenous language programmes to foster local goal setting and reflective practices could include:

#### 8.3.1. *User-centred guidelines for Indigenous language programmes*

These would usefully consist of clear statements of broad designated priority areas within which local Indigenous language programmes are encouraged to set and monitor their own goals. Straightforward accountability expectations would state that local monitoring processes be implemented and reported. Guidelines can foster reflective practices with:

- example goals with a short explanatory rationale about each
- illustrations of how developing language programmes change their goals over time
- descriptions of how reflective practices are used to monitor progress towards goals.

### 8.3.2. *Goal setting*

Realistic, strengths-based goals can helpfully guide the activities of a language programme, perhaps a tightly focused set achievable within one year, and a set of forward planning goals for a 5-year timeline. Their purpose is to encourage progress, over time, in a number of designated priority areas as a manageable accountability measure. These goals would be negotiated with and by the local Indigenous language reference group and the school, in the designated areas such as:

- Students: e.g. language gains, academic achievement, school engagement;
- Indigenous community: e.g. employment, training, qualifications, leadership roles;
- School: e.g. more Indigenous staff, connections with community, staff awareness;
- Indigenous language: e.g. increased use at school, more learning resources;
- System outcomes: e.g. numbers of students, hours taught, Indigenous staff numbers.

### 8.3.3. *Regularly monitor and communicate about goals*

The local Indigenous reference group and school together can list a broader key group of stakeholders and their roles, devise a simple communication plan, and an agreed cycle of reflection and evaluation. The local Indigenous reference group and school (and stakeholders where relevant) could regularly undertake a basic reflection cycle as a way to stay on track

- considering experiences, observations and feedback from the language programme
- reviewing for better understanding of small successful steps and challenges
- reconsidering how present practices might be modified
- adjusting planning and goals accordingly.

### 8.3.4. *Cycles of evaluation*

Evaluations of the language programme can be conducted on an agreed cycle (e.g. 3 years) with a positive orientation. This can be an opportunity to consider the overall language programme performance in the light of local circumstances with a view to celebrating successes and finding out what else can be realistically put in place to assist the programme going forwards.

## 8.4. **Peopling language programmes: training and resourcing language teams**

Delivering Indigenous language programmes in schools requires people with a complex set of knowledges, skills and cultural and professional networks. It is unusual for a single individual to cover the entire set. Many languages have few speakers and those speakers have often been marginalised by education, while support for speakers who are language learners has also often been scant. Requisite knowledge and skills and networks can be developed over time by a group of committed individuals. Language teams provide the way forward in these circumstances, and can work well with leadership from the Indigenous language community and the school.

Indigenous community members should be forefront in peopling Indigenous language programmes in schools. Education institutions and schools want to partner with Indigenous language communities, as an act of reconciliation, to support Indigenous peoples' aspirations for their languages. Schools often hope this will be a step towards increased student engagement and achievement, better school-community relationships, greater community involvement in the school and more Indigenous staff.

To this end, Indigenous community employment and capacity building opportunities are core functions of Indigenous language programmes.

Education systems must recognise that school leadership may require extra skills and assistance to support these goals of community employment and building community capacity. School-community negotiations over funding for language programmes may be required. There may be system expectations as to the training and qualifications of staff in school programmes that conflict with the employment of Indigenous people. Funding for language teams and capacity building may necessitate seeking funding outside the school system.

Proposals for developing these functions are:

#### ***8.4.1. Staffing language programmes***

The school and local Indigenous language reference group in consultation with the community can cooperatively work out how to staff the core tasks associated with the language teaching. Language programme goals can be used to set targets for:

- immediate staffing and programme delivery, but also future needs
- language learning, teacher training and specialised skills that participants wish to pursue or that the programme requires (e.g. development of learning materials, historical archival research etc.).

#### ***8.4.2. Recognition for language teams in policy and funding***

Education policy can provide funding for staffing that recognises the importance of language teams, and can provide models of how language teams work in different settings.

#### ***8.4.3. School leadership***

There is a need for positive school leaders who advocate for Indigenous staff in school language programmes, to build in/maximise sustainability and guard against the common problem of non-local staff and leadership turnover that can be detrimental to fragile Indigenous languages programmes. They can ensure that Indigenous staff have good opportunities to develop their professional knowledge, both informally and formally through accreditation paths, including micro-credentialing, and through individualised career pathways. This is important as formal training and accreditation pathways may not be available in the target language, or at the appropriate level of entry, or in a mode that is suitable.

#### ***8.4.4. Partners for increased, locally attuned training opportunities***

School-based Indigenous language programmes can partner with Indigenous organisations, adult education and tertiary institutions to increase training and employment pathways for Indigenous language community members. With a local Indigenous language reference group, a solid language team is well-placed to map out the

kinds of skills, training and accreditation that will be most efficacious for the local setting.

## 8.5. Teaching and learning resources for language programmes

Most Indigenous language programmes have more than one element that fits the metaphor of flying a plane while building it: teaching the language while learning the language, learning the language while rebuilding the language, teaching while training to teach.

A stark difference between small Indigenous language programmes and long running language programmes in large national languages is the volume of teaching and learning materials that are available. Even the largest, longest running and best resourced Indigenous language programmes, like the Māori language programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand, are vastly under-resourced in terms of teaching and learning resources compared to large international languages.

Good accessible teaching and learning resources can accomplish a great deal for Indigenous language programmes.

- Second/additional language learning situations

Teaching and learning resources can scaffold teachers of Indigenous languages in revival and revitalisation contexts who are developing their language proficiency (this occurs in the teaching of other languages too). Language teachers can perform well and confidently above what their independent, individual proficiency levels might otherwise predict, with the support of targeted language materials - including audio-visual and print resources, lesson and unit plans, explanations of particular language features etc.

- Mother-tongue/first language situations

Language and teaching materials are vital for sustaining delivery of lessons across the curriculum. Teachers and children who are mother-tongue speakers are proficient in their language, but they might not have experienced their language in all curriculum areas before, perhaps because it was excluded from their own schooling. Good resources model the language for subject specific concepts. Some areas may require considerable language engineering and language planning time to translate into the Indigenous language, such as multiplication in maths, energy and forces in science, persuasion in language arts. Such materials also support more informal bilingual situations where Indigenous language speakers are expected to translate and/or explain classroom content for students, delivered by teachers who only speak the national language. Having accessible language teaching materials shares the Indigenous language wording of curriculum concepts between Indigenous language teachers/teaching assistants etc., rather than each individual doing their best at coming up with different - and potentially confusing - translations of curriculum terminology.

A strategy for supporting the ongoing development of language teaching and learning material can include:

### 8.5.1. Systematic funding for resource production

The development of language teaching and learning resources can be prioritised, with a view to keeping a focus on:

- local language curriculum with a scope and sequence (of topics and associated language)



- curriculum support materials: unit plans and lesson material
- access for Indigenous language teachers and learners
- age-appropriate content (considering language levels) including print, digital, audio-visual.

### ***8.5.2. Co-design language resources***

Language resources should be co-designed with the local Indigenous language reference group and involve the Indigenous language community more generally:

- seeking advice and permission
- ensuring their accessibility and usability for community members
- providing employment and training opportunities for language community members in language resource production, for example audio-visual recording and editing, illustrating, language study and research.

### ***8.5.3. Partnerships for extra language resource production support***

Partnerships can be facilitated for Indigenous language programmes overseen by the Indigenous language reference group, for example between Indigenous organisations, universities, linguists etc. to assist with language resource production. In particular these partnerships can be useful for supporting the development of larger bodies of work that can provide useful reference material for Indigenous language programmes, including:

- language description: learner guides, learner dictionaries
- archival work: collecting historical and more recent language including school programmes
- accessibility of language resources for the language community: collections, school work (e.g. website development, published collections of stories etc.).

The usual large-scale, standard curriculum, national language approach to education is a constant threat to the smaller Indigenous mother tongue programmes. Such large-scale resourcing sits in stark contrast with small-scale, local programmes and the sheer size and quantity may give a false impression of better quality. Nevertheless, mother tongue/first language programmes are typically under-resourced, as all their systems from teaching and learning materials, curriculum documents, assessment and reporting, teacher training and accreditation have to be designed from scratch, maintained and updated by a small language team in response to every turn of the policy wheel.

## **8.6. Stable but responsive language programme policy**

Policies that foster Indigenous language programmes in schools need to be stable and ongoing. Stability is key. Language learning occurs over time. Language teacher training which impacts on programme delivery and student language learning takes time. Putting in place the partnerships that assist with resource development for language teaching and learning takes time. Stable policies respect the time factor involved in developing small language programmes, which may have to grow every element on their own. Long-term language learning, teacher training and capacity building cannot occur if policy goal posts are moved too often.

Stable policies that give broad guidance in priority areas but encourage local initiative in goal setting within these areas have more positive impact (and less negative) on Indigenous language programmes. Indigenous language reference groups, language teams

and schools can be accountable because they are familiar with the policy environment and their own locally generated goals. They can 'get on with the job' of supporting their language programme, rather than accommodating new requirements just because of another high-level policy churn.

### ***8.6.1. Low-definition policies***

Language programme policies can be stable but responsive if they are 'low definition'. 'Low definition' policies provide broad guidelines of language programme types and clear statements of priority areas. These areas constitute the accountable elements (non-negotiables) but they are broadly defined and require local decision making to provide the specific goals within their broad parameters. For example, language programme policies could state:

- broad brush definitions of Indigenous language programme types
- indicative hours of classroom teaching and learning
- the broad priority areas (non-negotiable) programme expectations that have to be designed locally, such as:
  - Indigenous language reference groups
  - Indigenous community capacity building and employment
  - student language gains and other benefits
  - local monitoring processes for Indigenous language programmes
  - language teaching and learning resource development.

This path is most practicable because programmes may vary hugely depending on local and individual factors.

### ***8.6.2. Transparent, ongoing funding commitment***

Policy for Indigenous language programmes should indicate, transparently, how schools are to fund their language programme with Indigenous language communities. For example, this could be a commitment of a certain amount, perhaps on a per school basis, for an approved Indigenous language programme, which meets the curriculum and hourly teaching requirements of the programme type.

### ***8.6.3. Commitment to Indigenous staffing in language programmes***

An area which particularly affects Indigenous language programmes is staffing. Policy co-designed with Indigenous language authorities can enhance Indigenous language programmes by supporting:

- Indigenous language learning initiatives for adults, in informal and formal settings;
- Indigenous teacher training pathways, with flexible entry and exit points;
- Teaching accreditation mechanisms for speakers of Indigenous languages;
- In-service professional development opportunities and sharing workshops.

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