

CHAPTER FIVE

TE AO TUHI - A - WHĀNAU -

‘FAMILY LITERACY’

Skicinuwokisuwewane knicanuk.

Let us read to our children in our own language.

(Micmac poster encouraging reading in the home)

INTRODUCTION

As sites of support for language regeneration aims underpinning kaupapa Māori education initiatives, how might whānau literacy practices in home settings be enhanced?

In considering the above question, this chapter focuses on family literacy. It discusses the significance of family literacy practices for literacy and language development and how home-school relationships might influence these. Programmes specifically concerned with family literacy are also examined, in particular where parents involved are not native speakers of the school language.

Home literacy practices have significance for children’s literacy-related development and learning. Reading with children in the home has been identified as a key factor in later literacy achievement (e.g. Laosa, 1982; Sulzby & Teale, 1991). Ways of interacting during shared reading activities have been shown to influence the nature of children’s literacy development (McNaughton, 1995). Where parents are not native speakers of the language in reading texts, how might they interact with children during reading activities? For instance, does the use of bilingual communication strategies such as code-switching aid or impede learning?

Many children in kura kaupapa Māori, kōhanga reo and other Māori medium settings have parents for whom Māori is a second language. This language status may have an important relationship with literacy practices around written Māori texts that take place in

their homes. Two sorts of general relationships are possible. One may be negative, in the sense that parents' levels of fluency may impede literacy practices in te reo Māori. Alternatively parents' literacy practices may have the potential to facilitate their fluency in te reo Māori. That is, the degree to which and the ways parents engage in literacy practices around Māori text can influence the development and use of te reo Māori. This raises the question as to what attitudes, beliefs and ideas are implicated in one or other set of relationships outlined above?

How do reading practices affect parents' learning? For instance in the case of second language learning, potential outcomes may involve increased functional control of vocabulary, syntax and semantics. Although written Māori text is not without its own potential dangers (see Chapter Four), reading practices may also support parents' ongoing development of cultural understandings and self-identity as Māori. Whereas much of the focus in the study of family literacy practices has been on implications for children's learning, a concern of this chapter and indeed this thesis relates to effects on Māori language use within the home and on parents' learning.

Conceptualising family literacy

The shift from a perception of literacy as a unitary phenomenon, constructed out of a set of complex cognitive and linguistic skills, to one of literacy as sets of socially organised practices that are used to achieve socially recognised goals, has been described and documented elsewhere (e.g. Scribner, 1988). As previously stated in Chapter Four, in this thesis two perspectives are primarily drawn on to define literacy. Located in one of these, sociocultural, is the practice account of literacy, that print literacy is learned through participation in socially organised activities involving forms of print language. Literacy practices are seen to reflect and construct social and cultural identities. What part of this research attempts is to draw on the sociocultural nature of family literacy practices to support the realisation of broader language-related goals.

There is growing understanding of the significance of reading practices to the kinds of literacy developed. This in part has effected changes in conceptualisations of literacy and accompanying shifts in the focus of literacy-related research. Rather than concentrating on cognitive and linguistic skills that have been presumed by some to construct literacy in

an individual, many researchers are now focusing on the significance of literacy practices occurring in defined sociocultural contexts. One such sociocultural context that has engendered much research interest is that of the 'family'. Studies of family literacy have been carried out across a wide range of groups, spanning socio-economic, cultural and national boundaries. Many have examined how practices contribute to the literacy and educational development of children. A few have also considered how learning and development of parents may be influenced. The significance of language interactions that take place during literacy practices is a major focus of co-constructivist and sociocultural literacy research.

'Family literacy' can be defined narrowly, for instance in terms of particular school-like forms of literacy practice that occur within a family setting. Or it may be viewed more broadly to include the wide range of activities and practices around print that occur as part of daily family life. Auerbach (1989) provides a preferred definition of family literacy more reflective of the second, which encompasses parent-children interactions around literacy activities, as well as parental opportunities to develop their own literacy and language abilities.

The question guiding the following examination of 'family literacy' relates to how 'family literacy practices' in the home might be developed as a setting that supports the use, learning and development of a regenerating language. Specifically, how might bookreading in the home be used as a setting for parents learning Māori as a second language to operate as Māori language speakers?

FAMILY LITERACY IN AOTEAROA-NEW ZEALAND

Families in Aotearoa-New Zealand are described as "highly print oriented" and reading with young children is seen as a widely valued family activity (McNaughton, in press). A number of studies have observed that reading to pre-school children is a regularly occurring literacy practice for families of diverse economic and cultural identities (Johnstone, 1994; Phillips & McNaughton, 1990; Wolfgramm, 1991). Similarly some

whānau involved in studies described in Part Two reported that their new entrant child experienced book reading with one or more other whānau members at least once a week.

As members of particular groups, families have access to and utilise a range of resources (Nash, 1993). Physical, temporal and psychological resources available to families intersect with members' expertise and their frames of reference. These all influence family practices and the effectiveness of practices to meet the goals and needs of family members. Differences in engagement with print across socio-economic groups and cultural and ethnic communities in Aotearoa-New Zealand have been noted. 'Māori families' are over-represented in low socio-economic and underachieving groups. Nash (1993) reports that, compared to non-Māori families, Māori families own fewer books and are less likely to practise particular kinds of reading activities. Differences in literacy practices also exist between Māori families. McNaughton, Ka'ai, Chun & Taogaga (1990) observed differences in family English bookreading practices across a group of Māori families.

Māori families have been targeted by a range of past locally developed reading programmes (e.g. Pause, Prompt and Praise; Mangere Reading Project; The Otago Reading Programme). They are often still major beneficiaries of much literacy-related missionary-like fervour. For example most promotional features for one of the more recent programmes, "Books in Homes" show smiling Māori children receiving English books to take into their 'literacy impoverished' homes.

Ecological conditions are another potential source of constraint and enhancement of family practices and development (McNaughton 1996b). Whānau with children in kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa Māori and other Māori medium educational settings in effect constitute a particular community in Māori society. Parents consciously choose to become part of this community. Kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori whānau are heterogeneous across nearly all conventional research measures: socio-economic, linguistic, educational; and conventional Māori measures such as whakapapa, hapū, iwi, etc. As a group, we share as many differences as similarities in reasons and goals for choosing specific kinds of education as well as in the kinds of socialisation practices, including literacy practices, carried out in our homes. In addition, whānau differ in terms

of Māori language fluency amongst their members. As noted previously in Chapter Four, there are evident differences in access to and ownership of te reo Māori books across such whānau (Hohepa & Smith, 1996). It is likely that such differences in access and ownership often translate into differences occurring in whānau literacy practices and activities around printed Māori text. One characteristic arguably shared by the majority is that our homes are developmental contexts for Māori-English bilingualism. 'Bilingual families' are often a focal point of interest in the field of 'family literacy'.

FAMILY LITERACY RESEARCH

Two orientations are reflected in much recent theory, research and educational practice focusing on family literacy (Bowles, 1996). One involves interest in and investigation of family literacy practices across ethnic, cultural and socio-economic groups (e.g. Heath, 1983; McNaughton, 1995; Wolfgramm, 1991). Another involves the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes aimed at influencing literacy practices in families (e.g. Arnold, Lonigan, Whitehurst & Epstein, 1994; Edwards, 1994). Family literacy programmes broadly consist of two types: one type aims to modify involvement of parents to help improve their children's literacy development; the other type, grouped under the term intergenerational programmes, aims to improve the literacy of both parents and children. Intergenerational literacy programmes are premised on the belief that where parents derive literacy and more general educational benefits from a programme, their children will also benefit. Many of these programmes involve so-called bilingual and minority language families.

There are overseas literacy programmes specifically aimed at bilingually developing families. These may draw on and actively support families' native minority languages, or seek to inculcate the homes with literacy practices through and in the majority language only. While programmes may reflect different perspectives on the native language of such families, the goal underlying many is for children and often for other family members to develop literacy in the majority, usually a second, language. There is little evidence in research and theoretical literature that family literacy programmes have been developed to support language regeneration.

A site for literacy practices that significantly intersects with family literacy is that of schooling. Goals and expectations schools and families have of each other, in relation to literacy development and learning, have reciprocal impact. An often-inherent property of school literacy practices, at least in Aotearoa-New Zealand schools, relates to home-school practices around literacy.

Schooling is generally defined as a secondary site for learning, development and socialisation. That is, it is perceived to be a site for the socialisation and development of values, beliefs and practices (overlapping and complementary in some cases, oppositional and problematic in others) additional to those already acquired in the primary site of 'family'. In the case of kaupapa Māori education, divisions between 'primary' and 'secondary' sites of socialisation are much more blurred, given that initiatives such as kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori have an explicit socialising and enculturating agenda that extends further than simply to the children attending, but to other members of their whānau.

The nature of home-school literacy connections and the significance of these for children's literacy learning has engendered considerable research interest and literacy programme development. Indeed, some school-initiated literacy programmes have involved the formalising of such connections, based on what has been discovered about the ways in which these influence children's learning. Some of the programmes have considered the implications for families where parents are not native or fluent speakers of the school language (e.g. Auerbach 1989, Quintero & Huerta-Macias, 1992). These implications will be picked up in more depth further on in this chapter.

Families' literacy practices

McNaughton (in press) states that literacy practices are one of the many kinds of activities in which a family can engage to help serve the goals and needs of family members. Goals served through literacy practices may be broad and general, such as socialising children into preferred ways of interacting with and around different kinds of texts, or specific, such as helping a child to recognise elements of orthography.

One of the important outcomes of research into family literacy practices has been the development of knowledge and information about varying ways in which reading can be carried out. An aspect that has been examined is the social interaction occurring during shared bookreading. A number of different patterns of exchanges between book readers and listeners have been identified including the following; performance, narrative and display. Out of these patterns, categories for defining interactions in exchanges have been developed and used in a series of local studies of family literacy across different cultures. Studies carried out as part of research for this thesis have drawn on these patterns and categories to analyse whānau bookreadings involving kura kaupapa Māori new entrants.

Such studies have found that families often show a marked preference for either performance or narrative exchanges, resulting in a general interaction style. One general interaction style has been identified as having negotiation of narrative meanings as a major feature.

Another has been termed as a performance style of reading, the major feature being an adult or more expert reader reading part of the text, and a less expert child repeating that part of the text. This is the preferred interactional style found in some Pacific Islands and some Māori families (Johnstone, 1994; McNaughton & Ka'ai, 1990; Wolfgramm, 1991). Explanations for such preferences have included the highlighting of cultural values. For example, the possible cultural significance of preferences for a performance style has been related to value placed by Māori and other Pacific cultures on expertise involved in memorisation of long passages of oral texts.

The use of questioning is a feature that might be present in either narrative or performance styles of book reading. Interactions involving questions that do not directly reflect a narrative style and do not ask children to perform parts of the text, but ask for specific information contained in a book either as text or illustrations, have been labelled display exchanges (McNaughton, 1995).

There are dangers in the tendency amongst some researchers concerned with the role of culture in socialisation practices to assume that families belonging to a particular cultural group share common or preferred ways of carrying out a socialisation activity. As noted

earlier, within all cultures there are bands of acceptable variation across most aspects of social life. The dynamic nature of all living cultures is supported by and realised through testing out the parameters of what are acceptable and accommodatable variations (Valsiner, 1988).

Similarly, taking a strong culturally specific, or deterministic view of family socialisation practices raises questions about how attempting to modify literacy practices might interfere with the (re)construction of cultural identities, not to mention the regeneration of a language in families where parents are not first language speakers. To what extent do attempts at modifying literacy practices present a potential danger to cultural dimensions of a family?

Some minority (and majority) researchers argue that imposition of practices and information that are perceived as belonging to another cultural or social group is colonial imperialism in another form, smacks of coercion, and undermines minority cultural practices. Others argue that “attempts to be culturally sensitive may, at times, hinder our efforts to improve the life conditions of minority children and families” (Zepeda, 1997;8). Edwards (1991; 211), in relation to literacy practices, states this view more strongly, writing parents

have the right to know that sharing books with their children may be the most powerful and significant predictor of school achievement. Not only do they have the right to know, they have the right to receive assistance in how to participate in book reading interactions with their young children.

(cited in Edwards 1994; 178)

At issue here is whether ways of interacting with and around written text can be considered literacy-related tools, or literacy related frameworks. Joe (1994; 109) draws a distinction between ‘acculturation’ and ‘assimilation’ that is pertinent to the contrasting views described above and the issues underlying such debate. While Joe observes that Native American families experience significant social pressure to take on non-Indian knowledge and practices, in effect to become assimilated, many in turn “strive instead to become acculturated”. In this sense acculturation involves the acceptance and use of

tools, technology and skills of the non-Indian world and the retention of an Indian worldview and its incumbent values.

The distinction between assimilation and acculturation is important in understanding the forces at work in the development of Indian children. Values may be in conflict between the two worlds, but an acculturated Indian person may accept the means, tools, technology, and skills used in the non-Indian world while still retaining the Indian values. On the other hand, an assimilated native American accepts non-Native values and tools, and therefore becomes the same as a non-Native in act, word, and deed (i.e. he or she has abandoned the vestiges of his or her traditional culture or traditions).

(Joe, 1994; 109-110)

An alternative way of exploring the effects of modifying literacy practices is to consider how literacy practices can be introduced in ways that identify, emphasise, and articulate preferred values, beliefs and practices of the culture to which targeted families belong (Ada, 1988; Baker, 1996; Wolfgramm, McNaughton & Afeaki, 1997). Examination of how literacy practices might be modified to support the learning of culturally preferred values and practices would also be of particular relevance to the agenda of language and cultural regeneration central to this thesis.

While study of literacy practices' effects on the development of cultural knowledge and values is arguably a more recent research endeavour, there is a relatively longer history of research into the significance of family reading practices for language development and use. Teaching language to children is one of the goals adults have when reading with children (Ninio & Bruner, 1978). It is argued that bookreading with young children provides a strong context for teaching and learning language.

Family literacy and language development

Whitehurst and colleagues have conducted a series of studies using bookreading as a setting specifically aimed at accelerating pre-school children's language development (e.g. Arnold, Lonigan, Whitehurst, & Epstein, 1994; Whitehurst, Arnold, Epstein, Angell, Smith, & Fischel, 1994; Whitehurst, Falco, Lonigan, Fischel, Valdez-Menchaca, & Caulfield, 1988). At the base of these studies is the belief that young children's language skills play a pivotal role in reading development and school success. The programme

revolves around the use of Dialogic Reading, teaching mothers specific interactive techniques to use during picture book reading with their children. They found that both one-to-one training and training using a videotape training package were highly effective in increasing children's language skills. The families in the earlier studies were identified as "middle- to upper-SES" while in the later study children were from low-income families. As information was not always given on the linguistic or cultural backgrounds of the families, it is assumed that all parents were fluent in the language of the training packages and picture books.

Heath and Branscome (1986) also discuss how books can operate as props for acquiring narrative forms of oral language. They view reading books as furnishing opportunities for a child "to learn to create narratives of various genres" and for channelling the child to develop narrative understandings and skills around books. When reading books in joint activity adults and children are impelled to "focus on saying what things are and what they mean". They found that following the introduction of brief episodes of mother-child interaction around books into a family home, book reading and simplified language routines were developed with the pre-schoolers. The book in essence functioned 'as a narrative prop in language acquisition'. For the child who was the focus of their study, "book reading was the primary occasion in which he had a frame to interact with others, to give recounts, to interject his knowledge in accounts about the real world, to combine factual and fictional elements to create stories, and to ask and answer questions about written texts" (1986; 31).

Research that has involved changing patterns of shared reading has tended to take a child focus. The concern is generally with the implications of families' literacy practices for the socialisation, development and education of children. Where observations are made about the significance of practices for meeting the learning, developmental and socialisation needs of other family members, such as parents, these are often incidental and anecdotal (e.g. Elley, 1997; Goodridge, 1995; Tizard, Schofield & Hewison, 1982).

Heath and Branscome (1986) do look at effects on family members other than the child. They identify changes in the mother's talk and changes in her responses to children's language utterances, during and following book reading. They frame these changes as

learning or development of “language socialisation patterns” on the mother’s part. In other words the significance of this development is considered in relation to her role as a socialiser of her child, rather than as a learner in her own right. In such studies children are effectively positioned as the language learners and parents as language teachers. Heath and Branscome’s study has reflected to some extent that it is highly probable that parents were learning, at the very least, to expand the ways in which they use language with their children, at the same time as their children were expanding their vocabulary, semantic and syntactic knowledge of language. What if the situation was, to some extent reversed? That parents are also primary language learners, at least in terms of the language of the books being shared?

Part of this thesis looks at how books can be used to develop language interaction patterns around Māori text, with the book working as a prop for parents as speakers of Māori. In the relatively short history of te kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori a key feature has been the active nature of parents and whānau in initiation, development and control of these Māori educational initiatives (G. Smith 1997). While it is acknowledged that parents play a pivotal role in their children’s development and learning, they also have critical learning needs that must be recognised and addressed. Failure to do so has the potential to seriously undermine Māori aspirations towards language and cultural regeneration epitomised in Māori medium education.

FAMILY LITERACY AND HOME-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

There is increasing theoretical acceptance across the social sciences that both home and school are important socialising and educating institutions for children. There is also increasing interest and understanding regarding the significance of relationships between these two sites. Current theoretical approaches emphasise the need for effective connections between families and schools (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994). Much of the research emanating out of this theoretical position concerns itself with describing the significance of family literacy practices for children’s school-based literacy learning and intervening in order to make the practices congruent with and supportive of that learning.

Studies have identified various relationships between family literacy practices in the home and children's ability and achievement in reading in school. One emphasis has been on the significance of parents' hearing children read. Hewison and Tizard's (1980) study found that English mothers regularly listening to their children read at home was the home factor most strongly related to school reading achievement.

There is also a range of Aotearoa-New Zealand studies that have looked at how parents and children reading together enhances children's literacy learning. Many have focused on modifying the ways parents listen to their children read to optimise reading development. Programmes and approaches that have emerged in this country have for the most part been concerned with the literacy development of young children in the English language.

One local programme, *Tatari Tauawhi Tautoko* (Atvars, Berryman & Glynn, 1995) based on the earlier 'Pause, Prompt, Praise' (McNaughton, Glynn, & Robinson, 1987) provides teacher and parent courses instructing adults in specific strategies to use when listening to children read in Māori. Programmes such as this operating in Aotearoa-New Zealand are based on the premise that an inherent property of our schooling is books regularly going home from school. This may not in fact be the case. When teachers working in Māori medium educational contexts have been asked about their home-school reading practices, a common response has been that books are not regularly sent home with students (Hohepa & Smith, 1996; Rau, personal communication, in press). That books are sent home regularly from school as a national practice may be more of an assumption than an actuality across a range of New Zealand schools, is also evidenced in teacher comments reported in Goodridge's (1995) thesis.

Gallimore and Goldenberg (1993) argue that if reading and talking about books in the home is involved in the success children have at school, then reading resources of the kind found in children's schools should be available for parents to use in effective ways, regardless of their social, economic and cultural circumstances. This argument also extends to parents' linguistic circumstances, which should not preclude availability of such reading resources. However simply ensuring access to reading resources does not ensure that parents will use them in effective ways.

Gallimore and Goldenberg's study is a striking reflection of this. They explored whether supplying 'literacy tasks' and a 'purpose' would result in increasing interaction between parents and children of the kinds identified as facilitating literacy development. Gallimore and Goldenberg have been involved in attempts to "operationalise cultural activities in ways that can guide empirical research" (1993; 316). Five activity setting variables have been selected and focused on; those present during a particular activity, salient cultural values, the activity's operations and task demands, scripts for conduct governing participants' actions, and participants' purposes or motives.

A group of Spanish speaking Mexican-American kindergarten children (equivalent to new-entrant level) were given "short, simple, but meaningful texts" by their teachers to read with parents or siblings (1993; 325). Parents were encouraged to read with their children, with the goal of enjoying the stories. Parents interacted much more with their children during bookreadings than a contrast group of parents did who carried out reading activities that normally went home, letter and letter-sound recognition and name writing activities. However little of the increased interaction focused on text meanings but rather on recognition of text constituents - letters, words and phrases. There was no corresponding increase in children's language production. Explanations for findings were sought from within the socio-educational contexts of the parents.

A significant element for ensuring meaningful change emerged as clarity of 'purpose'. For parents to make effective use of physical resources such as books, perhaps more critical than the supply of those elements is the clear, explicit identification and articulation of purpose. A key conclusion reached was that, at least for these parents;

[n]o intervention is sustained unless it is fitted to the ecocultural conditions of the family and to the activity settings for children that are part of a family's everyday routine... Simply providing books and encouragement to "read together" does not produce conversation about meaning and text beyond the accurate decoding and pronouncing words. A change in the *task operations and demands* has some effect on the *scripts* parents use, but it does not guarantee it will change the *purpose* they see for doing the task.

(Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993; 328, authors' emphases)

Results from studies such as that of Gallimore and his colleagues indicate that providing books for children to take into their homes has potential to act as an intervention in itself, given clarity of purpose. However, realising such potential requires a degree of match between the meanings and purposes given by the school to reading tasks sent home to those given to them in the home setting. This may entail a shift on the part of either home or school, or both.

For instance, in the case of kura kaupapa Māori, mismatch between purposes and meanings kura give to sending books and those given to them in homes can occur at the very least across two significant dimensions. Reading tasks sent home with the key purpose of supporting development of print literacy skills may not match cultural and linguistic reasons whānau have for sending their children to kura. Alternatively, parents and whānau members may view reading tasks sent home as primarily aimed at supporting their children's literacy learning, which may be at odds with more culturally or whānau-inspired goals of a kura. And yet both sets of goals are integral to those of Kura Kaupapa Māori as a movement (G. Smith, 1997). The dreams and aspirations out of which it developed included academic-related ones. Whānau set up, develop and support kura to ensure, amongst other academic-related outcomes, their children learn to read and write. But just as importantly, kura emerged so that students and other members of their whānau would continue to learn, and to learn to use, te reo Māori me ōna tikanga. The challenge is to co-ordinate home practices and school practices in ways that acknowledge and meet these sets of goals. This does not necessarily equate to attempting to make practices the same, it could for instance involve focusing on making them more complementary.

School language and parents' language

Language can be a key factor affecting whether parents understand the purposes of school-related literacy activities, let alone whether they can work to carry out these purposes. A study carried out by Delgado-Gaitin (1990) examined aspects of the school and home literacy processes in a Mexican-American community. Her study describes parents trying to make sense of what school expected them to do to help their children succeed at school. Delgado-Gaitin argues that what parents know about 'text', and their ability to help their children to make links between home and school literacy activities,

have a critical effect. Parents can support their children to the extent that they can interpret classroom text that goes home and guide their children in dealing with it.

Language was also implicated in the strength of parent-child relationships, and their effectiveness for ongoing support of children's school learning. Delgado-Gaitin's study revealed that by the fourth or fifth year of primary schooling in the community with whom she was working,

parents were intimidated by the language barrier presented in homework, which was almost totally in English. This intimidation was a distancing factor in the parent-child relationship that was crucial to maintaining a supportive system for children.

(Delgado-Gaitin, 1994; 147)

Parallels of this can be found in the dangers facing relationships between kura kaupapa Maori children and their parents when whānau Māori language development is unevenly skewed towards children and away from their parents, highlighted in Chapter Three.

A few of the studies and programmes outlined above have also considered the implications for parents who are not fluent or literate in the school language of instruction. Tizard, Schofield, and Hewison (1982) raised the question whether non-English speakers could be involved effectively in English language home reading programmes. However, other than to comment that it was feasible and practicable to involve parents who were largely non-English speaking in English language educational activities, such as listening to their children read, they did not specifically address their question. Nor did they consider whether any parental linguistic benefits might accrue from hearing children read in the parents' second language.

A later study attempting to replicate the study carried out by Tizard and associates did not achieve the positive results expected from parents listening to children read. Hannon (1987) queried whether the lack of significant improvement might have resulted from, among other factors, fewer families in the second study having non-English-speaking parents, compared with the first. He proposed that the "provision of suitable reading materials, advice and support from a home visitor, and improved school practice towards parents may have much more impact on families from ethnic minorities." (p.70). That is,

programmes that include school-based change, as well as contact, provision of information and reading materials for the home have more positive effects when parents are not speakers of the school language, than when they are. The significance of such results for kura kaupapa families is arguably located in the sharing of information and suitable reading materials. Of particular interest to me here is in this instance exactly what counts as “suitable reading materials”? Findings from the United States indicate that reading materials may be a scarcity where the school language is not the predominant language of the wider society (Krashen, 1996). The difficulties of access to Māori reading materials children in Māori medium schooling experience have already been highlighted in Chapter Four.

As well as access, the type of reading materials influence the degree to which reading in a second language may be an effective learning experience. A number of studies have found that shared bookreading in a second language has positive effects on second language development of children (e.g. Elley, 1991; Elley & Mangubhai, 1983). Children made progress in second language learning including vocabulary acquisition through being “immersed in meaningful text, without tight controls over syntax and vocabulary” (Elley, 1991; 375). Elaboration and embedded discussion of word meanings during shared reading of meaningful text, such as that contained in children’s books, have been identified as significant factors influencing incidental acquisition of vocabulary (McNaughton, 1995).

Up to this point, the focus has been on considering family literacy in relation to language and to school and on teasing out the ways ‘parents’ have been generally positioned as important to children’s development and learning. Where parents are perceived as needing to develop particular literacy and language related skills and knowledge, it is from the view of their role as supporters or teachers and socialisers of their children. A local study (Glynn and Glynn, 1986) focused on the effects of reading in a second language on children and their parents. They examined shared reading of English books provided to five Cambodian children and their mothers, all of whom were learning English as a second language.

The purpose of the intervention study was to accelerate the children's reading progress by actively involving their mothers in the process in the home. A secondary aim was to utilise the shared reading activity to assist the mothers in English language and literacy learning. Cambodian women immigrants were found to have relatively restricted access to contexts for English language learning. Their school-aged children were identified as readily available models of English language. Early school reading books brought home by these children were seen as potentially providing;

a framework or scaffolding for identifying regularly occurring words, and their meanings, within the context of simple predictable stories. In this way, the reading task provided by the little books might support better opportunities for Cambodian mothers to practise oral language as well as reading along with their children.

(Glynn & Glynn, 1986; 161, authors' emphasis)

Children's reading occurred across three settings, their regular classroom, an English second language (ESL) programme and their respective homes. In the initial phase of the study, books were sent home with instructions from the teacher for the child to read to parents. It was found that this seldom actually occurred. As noted earlier, simply ensuring access to reading materials may make very little positive difference to home reading practices. In the second intervention phase, the ESL teacher introduced and monitored the shared reading procedure during home visits. The shared reading procedure consisted of the child reading to the parent, then the parent reading the book back to the child. Comments, questions and other insertions were encouraged. Results indicated that mutual gains were made in English reading by children and mothers literate in their native language. Mothers who were not literate made lesser gains, progress mainly being in word recognition. The authors point out that mother-child interaction data was not collected and identify the need to investigate the significance of oral language interactions around books for mutual gains in English reading progress of mothers and children.

These Cambodian mothers and children are together learning English in order to settle into their new country successfully. It is the predominant language that is well established and for which there is no threat of loss. In the context of 'language regeneration', adults and children as language learners are fundamental to the degree to which a language will

continue to exist. However, family literacy projects and programmes that aim at improving the literacy of both children and adults go some way to also acknowledge parents as learners in their own right.

INTERGENERATIONAL LITERACY PROGRAMMES

‘Intergenerational literacy’ is a relatively new approach that over the last decade has gained popularity in the United States. Programmes developing out of this approach aim at addressing situations where literacy levels of adults and children are causing them difficulties for example, in education or employment-related contexts. Parents and children are viewed as learning units and the focus is put on delivering specially designed activities aimed at improving the literacy of both.

Many kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori parents who are not fluent or literate in Māori, may also have had dismal experiences during their schooling years. As described in more depth in Chapter Eight, for some, negative schooling experiences coupled with a lack of positive and effective opportunities to learn te reo Māori serve as key factors motivating parents to ensure their own children do not suffer the same fate. Furthermore, many parents become motivated to resume their own formal education and Māori language learning, as much as to help themselves as their children (M. Hohepa, 1998a). The strong motivation of parents with these kinds of experiences to intervene in the schooling of their children is of course not peculiar to Aotearoa-New Zealand. Intergenerational programmes are viewed as having the potential to acknowledge and draw on such parental motivation.

Many intergenerational programmes in the United States specifically target bilingual and minority language families. Two approaches can be identified, though these are not necessarily mutually exclusive. One approach is to utilise the first language of the family to develop and support specified literacy practices between parents and children, such as the Carpinteria family literacy study (Delgado-Gaitin, 1994). Another approach is to support the development of a family’s second language and literacy practices in that language (most generally the dominant, majority language), which is also the language of

such as commenting about the story plot and encouraging children to relate it to their own experiences.

There is a large body of research and literature on family literacy development that is in the form of such programme development and reporting programme outcomes. The perspective taken in this thesis (discussed in more detail in Chapter Six) emphasises sociocultural, historical and political aspects as interrelated, or more strongly stated, inseparable from aspects of development and learning. From such a perspective, family literacy programmes that are explicitly or (as is more recently the case) implicitly deficit oriented, that are non-intergenerational, (or while 'intergenerational' in that different generations are involved, have agenda that are essentially unidirectional rather than multidirectional), that marginalise key or primary sites and 'minority' cultural and linguistic groups, are problematic (Auerbach, 1989, 1995).

The studies, which show diverse patterns of family literacy practices, are often interpreted to also show that those families whose home literacy practices most resemble school literacy practices have children who are (usually) successful in school. Conversely, homes that do not provide 'appropriate' literacy-fostering environments contain parents lacking the skills, practices, resources, motivation (or any combination of these) to help in their children's literacy development. The focus of many programmes is developing school-related success through school-type activities, teaching parents to teach their children 'properly'. From this perspective, the ideal relationship between school and home is that parents are helpers in ways that support the teachers to do their job, and school personnel or professionals will show parents how to do this.

Literacy learning difficulties and challenges are defined as 'lacks' or as largely caused by lacks on the part of the family and home, and particularly of the parents. The solution is to train parents to be good tutors in activities that support school activities. The goals of programmes developed to address these problems are seen as strengthening the home-school (literacy) links by transmitting the school's 'cultural' practices of literacy to the family and through the family. The starting point is the set of 'problems' identified by the 'educators' who solve the problem by enskilling the family, particularly the adult members, in school literacy practices.

Auerbach provides a comprehensive critique of intergenerational literacy programmes that concentrate on adult family members learning to do school-like activities, including assisting their children with homework in the home, variously labelling such approaches as 'Transmission of School Practices' and 'Intervention Prevention' models.

She argues that the way family literacy is defined has serious implications for parents who are second language speakers of the language of instruction, as well as for those who are not literate in that language. Narrow definitions that focus on (western) school interpretations of literacy, and of what signifies literacy activities, can result in emphasis placed on the performance of school-like activities in the home setting. In these instances, "family life can become obstacles that must be overcome so that learning can take place"(1989; 166). For Kermani and Janes (1997; 2), that such efforts to intervene are often based on "constructivist approaches, which may initially be as new to prospective learners from other cultures as the content matter of the program" is another impediment to the achievement of successful outcomes.

The ways that programmes operate can also minimise or disregard the impact that other processes may be having on homes. Such social and economic processes may mean that learning activities become less significant. This is illustrated in local programmes that have developed out of overseas initiatives, such as 'Parents as First Teachers' (PAFT) and 'Home Intervention Programme for Pre-school Youngsters' (HIPPY). These programmes aim at intervening across a range of socialisation practices, including family literacy and language practices. For example evaluations for the HIPPY programme, a family-focused intervention targeting families identified as having high levels of need, acknowledge that without broader efforts to attack causal factors of problems located at community and society levels, it may not work.

In communities where there is a high level of social and family stress, HIPPY is a programme that may be more appropriate after other more immediate needs are met.

(Ministry of Education, 1997a; 81)

-For PAFT, such factors may have contributed to significant difficulties experienced in simply getting families onto the programme (Livingstone, 1998).

PAFT and HIPPY are family early intervention programmes that work in the homes of individual families. A feature shared across many family literacy programmes taking a similar intervention and prevention approach is that delivery, at least of information on how to do 'it', occurs outside of the primary family context, that is outside the home. A main reason for this probably relates to cost-effectiveness, by having a common site outside individual homes, a number of families can be 'trained' simultaneously. Working outside of the primary site of the system and context that is the focus of intervention seems somewhat paradoxical to me. Further, school-centricity can cause the rich processes of learning and teaching occurring in activity settings other than school, that may be organised for different though overlapping purposes, to be overlooked (Cole, 1995a).

Other programmes have addressed such challenges by having as a foundation a strong understanding of the family home context and family literacy practices. By defining family literacy more broadly, family and home life has the potential to be seen as a rich resource for learning.

A family literacy training project undertaken with ten families, which followed on from Delgado-Gaitin's (1990) project referred to earlier, reflects such definitions. The project was based on the belief that family literacy programmes need to understand the families home literacy contexts and acknowledge and develop from the contributions families make to literacy development (Alleksaht-Snider, 1995; Delgado-Gaitin, 1994). While parent workshops were conducted in school settings, the homes as literacy environments and family literacy practices were taken as the project's starting point. That is, families' strengths and social realities were initially understood and acknowledged (Auerbach, 1989). Information about families' access to resourcing (e.g. to Māori language children's books) and access to knowledge (e.g. to understandings of how different ways of reading with children influence literacy and language development) are also necessary considerations when designing a programme.

Following data collection on literacy and bookreading practices in the participants' homes, information was provided on strategies parents could use when reading to their children. "The training was built on parents' knowledge and experience by encouraging them to discuss with their children how to apply their own life experiences to find meaning in the text" (Alleksaht-Snider, 1995; 73-4).

Alleksaht-Snider looked at whether the programme resulted in any change in perceptions of literacy. What was found was a shift from viewing joint reading literacy practices as predominantly aimed at improving children's fluency and decoding skills when reading aloud, to include aims about making the shared reading experience enjoyable and meaningful.

Alleksaht-Snider (1995; 80) suggests some guiding questions to ask when planning family literacy programmes;

1. What are the meanings that parents and children attach to literacy activities, and what are their goals for these activities?
2. What is the context for literacy learning in the family, community and school setting?
3. How does the organisational and social structure of a family literacy programme support or constrain the families' participation in reading and literacy learning activities?
4. In what ways does the programme support or constrain parents in shaping their and their children's social contexts?

Aleksaht-Snider's and Delgado-Gaitin's work illustrate alternative approaches to those that are deficit-oriented and/or interventionist. Auerbach (1995) describes these as the multiple literacies approach, and the social change approach.

The multiple literacies approach "defines the problem as a mis-match between culturally variable home literacy practices and school literacies: it sees the solution as investigating and validating students' multiple literacies in order to inform schooling." (Auerbach, 1995; 651). Key features of this approach are identified as being an emphasis on cultural maintenance and negotiation rather than cultural assimilation, and on culturally familiar

contexts for learning. The use and instruction of the first language is seen as a way to create such a context.

The social change approach is described as incorporating multiple-literacies principles, but places emphasis on issues of power as well as culture. It is largely informed by the work of Paulo Freire and other critical literacy theorists (Auerbach, 1995; 654). Changing institutions and addressing conditions that marginalise particular families rather than changing families is the goal. However that does not mean to say that 'family' and other immediate contexts are not actively implicated in change,

the struggles in the more immediate domains (family, classroom) are both a part of and a rehearsal for struggles in the broader domains; the broader changes come about not just through individual effort but through collective action.

(Auerbach, 1995; 655)

The social change approach entails the examination of issues of control. Many late model programmes reflect parents as active in initiating and controlling programmes. These programmes are designed essentially to meet the expressed needs of the families. They also view parents and families as having resources that, in some instances, may be used more effectively.

The studies reported by Alleksaht-Snyder and Delgado-Gaitin focus on literacy activity and development in a minority language. More and more intergenerational literacy programmes aimed at 'language minority families' are using families' native languages as a base for development of the majority language (Mulhern, Rodriguez-Brown, & Shanahan, 1994). The circumstances in which they develop differ from the situation under consideration in this thesis, in that the minority language is spoken fluently by the parents, it is their native language.

What does one need to understand and know about programmes where parents are 'native speakers' of the 'majority language', rather than of the 'minority language' being used in reading activities? Perhaps the key lesson to be learned from intergenerational programmes of their like and others that reflect a social change approach, is that it is possible to maintain social and cultural integrity, whilst attempting to realise the language

generating potential of literacy practices within Māori whānau. Ensuring shared control, informed and knowledgeable choices, clearly articulated theories and beliefs, and the development of understandings from which programmers and families alike may begin to build a 'clarity of purpose', provide the avenues.

SUMMARY

There are a range of approaches to family literacy, from developing descriptions of literacy practices across a range of communities, through to experimental interventions in families' literacy practices. An often-underlying concern relates to links between family literacy practices and school literacy outcomes. Because of the consistently significant correlation identified between particular kinds of family literacy practices and success in school literacy, it is strongly argued in some quarters that families should be supported to develop specific ways of reading to, reading with, and listening to the reading attempts of, their children. These arguments are often couched in justifications related to breaking 'cycles of underachievement', intervening in the 'ubiquitous problem of low literacy', in 'empowering parents to deal in the marketplace of schools'. Within the theoretical framework guiding this thesis, discussed in more depth in the following chapter, highly circumscribed approaches to family literacy present challenges.

In many instances, the significance of 'language' is often implicit in such approaches. Even when there is a benevolent attitude towards languages that differ from that of the dominating group, 'literacy' often means literacy in the dominant language. Subsequently, there is relatively little information available on 'breaking cycles of linguistic loss'. Rather absent from descriptions of family literacy programmes are those aimed at literacy in an indigenous language undergoing regeneration within families whose adult members for the most part are first language speakers of the dominant language of colonisation.

However even given such challenges, there are identifiable language/literacy/family intersections that may inform language regeneration agendas, although these require careful teasing out. In particular, these include findings related to how literacy activities

around printed text facilitate language interaction. Added to this, is information related to programmes aimed at optimising literacy development of minority language children and their families, in ways that maintain their cultural integrity.

As already argued in Chapters Two and Three, literacy has had a pivotal role in the decline of Māori language, not only in educational settings, but also in homes. In this chapter literacy practices have been further implicated in not only literacy and language development, not only school achievement, but also in social relationships of parents and children played out in home settings. For instance, lack of knowledge and familiarity with the school language, coupled with similar lacks in relation to literacy knowledge about school practices around 'text', worked to undermine parent-relationships in the community involved in the project reported in Delgado-Gaitin's (1990). While the overriding aim of this thesis is to look at family or whānau literacy practices from the perspective of their potential to facilitate language learning, their significance for children's school-based learning and achievement is not dismissed or considered a secondary concern, rather it is seen as an inseparable facet.

As part of this thesis, I have been considering bookreading practices of home as significant sites of Māori language learning for new entrant kura kaupapa Māori children and their families. This has also included an acknowledgement of the reciprocal importance of school influences in family literacy, as discussed in the second section of this chapter. Modelled on questions Delgado-Gaitin (1990) posed in relation to these processes, part of the focus of the two studies on whānau reading relates to the following questions:

1. What kinds of literacy practices occur in the homes? Do they include shared bookreading?
2. How do or would parent/caregivers interact with their new-entrant children during shared bookreading?
3. What are the classroom literacy practices for these new entrant children?
4. What literacy activities are sent home, what are the parental roles in these and how do parents/caregivers interact with their children around these?
5. What links are there between school's and parents' perspectives regarding literacy practices?

In Chapter Eight, I examine the theories, goals and aims the parents who participated in the studies hold for reading and contrast them with those of the teachers. Given the significance of shared understandings in sociocultural approaches to describing, explaining and optimising development and learning, tracing knowledge and understandings across individuals, activities and contexts is a critical research enterprise. However preceding this examination is a description and discussion of the theoretical framework in which the two studies and indeed the thesis rest.