SPANISH IN THE ANTIPODES

Diversity and hybridity of Latino/a Spanish speakers in Australia and Aotearoa-New Zealand

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Introduction/definitions

The Antipodes is a way of referring to Australia and New Zealand mainly from a northern hemisphere perspective. It is commonly used by North Americans and Northern Europeans to refer to Australasia and the South Pacific. As authors we are mindful of the term representing an “outsider” lens, not commonly used by Australians or New Zealanders themselves. Its adoption here aims to reposition the notion of antipodean to de-emphasize the idea of a centre/periphery relationship and, instead, underscore the meaning of a southern “counterpart”, a region with its own voices, identities and practices. Although relatively minor in terms of speaker numbers, antipodean Spanish-speaking communities maintain richly diverse cultural and linguistic practices and, importantly, in geographical isolation from the northern hemisphere and its sociolinguistic landscapes.

In the Antipodes, Spanish-speaking communities operate in contexts of post colonialism, immigration, Indigenous populations and superdiversity. Individuals who claim to speak Spanish at home number more than 140,000: approximately 117,000 in Australia, forming just 0.55 percent of the population (Profile.id.com 2011a), and 27,000 in New Zealand, (Statistics New Zealand [SNZ] 2013a). While these numbers are small on a global scale, given the small populations of both countries, the Spanish-speaking diaspora represents an important presence. The discussion that follows provides an overview of the immigrant and demographic profiles of Spanish speakers in the Australia and New Zealand, highlighting the similarities and differences across the two nation states. The chapter is divided into the following sections: immigration history and demographic profiles; language policy; and summaries of qualitative case studies in each country carried out by the authors.
Indigeneity, immigration and demographic profiles

Australia

Despite the fact that Australia has received migrants from many Spanish-speaking countries of the world, research to date on the migration history of Spanish-speaking migrants to Australia is limited. Spaniards were the first group to arrive in Australia from 1958, following an agreement between the Spanish and Australian governments (Martín 1998). Up until 1972, some Spanish migrants came to Australia under an assisted passage, but this agreement was interrupted by the Franco dictatorship in Spain. Martín (1998) notes that by 1971, there were 15,000 Spaniards in Australia. Today there are 52,912 (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 2011a).

Latin American migration to Australia began in the 1970s (Martín 1998) and since that time, patterns of migration have reflected the economic, political and social tensions within the respective Latin American nations. While it was predominantly Argentinean, Uruguayan and Chilean migrants who entered Australia in the 1970s, the following decade saw Nicaraguans, Guatemalans and Salvadorians arrive under the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program. Prior to 1974, the White Australia Policy had prevented many Latin Americans from migrating to Australia.1 This particularly affected Central Americans and Latin Americans from the Caribbean whose mixed African, Indigenous and European descent may have been seen as a potential threat to the racial cohesion of Australia (Jones Díaz 2007). Interestingly, the Australian census data (2011a, 2011b) indicated that these same countries with the greatest concentration of African hybridized identities have some of the smallest communities living in Australia (French Guyana – 10 people, Trinidad and Tobago – 308 people, Suriname – 120 people, Belize – 70 people, Dominican Republic – 160 people and Panama – 230 people).

In Australia, today, there are at least 82,471 people who claim Latin American ancestry (ABS 2011a). Given that they hail from different Spanish-speaking countries, there is no singular Spanish-speaking culture, but rather a diversity of cultures whose speakers use varieties of Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, French Patois, English Creoles, and a plethora of Indigenous languages including Maya, Mapuche, Quechua, Aymara and Kekchi. As is the case with many Australian families, many Latin American families living in Australia speak more than one home language, with parents using their respective languages with their children on a daily basis.

Australia and New Zealand have shared colonial histories with Britain as the colonizer, although the process played out differently in the two countries, particularly in terms of impact on their Indigenous populations. In Australia, Eurocentric discourses constructed Indigenous Australians as “savages and heathens”, which justified the dispossession of land, slavery, rape, disease and the erosion of languages and cultures including the sporadic massacres of Aboriginal people, which continued well into the 19th century (Hollinsworth 2010, sec 3). Moreover, Australia was declared to be terra nullius (land with no legal ownership) able to be claimed by the Crown (Hollinsworth 2010).

New Zealand

The Māori people of New Zealand endured similar injustices, resulting in the loss of land, culture and language. However, in a major difference to Australia, the 1840 signing of the Treaty of Waitangi afforded the Indigenous Māori population citizenship as British subjects and some level of recognition and self-determination (Armitage 1995). In spite of this, the outcomes of colonial rule were similar, with armed conflict in the mid-19th century, significant population
decline due to disease (Pool 2012) and assimilation policies such as the 1867 Native Schools Act aimed to suppress the Māori language.

European settlement of New Zealand also occurred in the 18th and 19th centuries, relatively later than elsewhere. As in Australia, colonization by predominantly white settlers of British, Irish and Scots origins resulted in relatively homogeneous settler communities (Pool 2010). By the mid-20th century, 85 percent of the New Zealand population originated from either Great Britain or Australia (Phillips 2013: 13). Latin American migrants have had a notable presence in New Zealand only since the 1980s, predominantly due to political upheaval in countries such as Chile and Argentina. The 2013 census counted 933 people with Iberian origin and 13,182 Latin Americans, a number that has doubled in size since 2006 (SNZ 2014a) but accounts for only a tiny proportion of the country’s 4.5 million people.

Having become a demographically diverse multicultural society through immigration, New Zealand is a country with bicultural foundations, which are reflected in many of its social, institutional and educational policies and practices. Despite contested interpretations of the Treaty of Waitangi’s English and Māori versions, the document has come to frame the country’s formal bicultural relationship and government responsibilities to protect Indigenous rights, including the Māori language. Yet, despite ongoing revitalization efforts, the language continues to remain in a fragile state. In 2013, 4.8 percent fewer Māori were able to hold a conversation in te reo Māori compared to 2006 (SNZ 2013b), and the use of the language outside the home domain decreased in the same period (SNZ 2014b). In the absence of a national policy to foster all languages, including community languages, Treaty rights have nevertheless helped raise awareness of the rights of other minorities, although these tend to be positioned at the interface of bicultural and multicultural perspectives (Pearson 1990). Official support for the country’s immigrant communities comes from the Internal Affairs’ Office of Ethnic Communities, who promotes “advantages of diversity” (Office of Ethnic Communities n.d.) by providing advice to government, ethnic communities and businesses on issues and opportunities of New Zealand’s ethnically diverse population. Tangible language support for speakers of community languages such as Spanish is limited to Language Line, a telephone interpreting service designed to facilitate access to government services.

Language policy and research

Spanish is a global language and one of the six languages represented in the United Nations (Crystal 2010). Yet in Australia and New Zealand, this global status holds limited currency due to immigrant and language policies of both countries. While there are similarities across the two countries in terms of the impact social and languages policies have on Spanish, there are also differences. The discussion below examines the influence of such policies on language policies in general, with specific references to how these have shaped the use and support of Spanish in each country.

In keeping with terminology in the Australian and New Zealand context, the term community language is used to refer to the minority languages spoken by recent immigrant communities. In the North American or British context, they would be described as heritage languages that is “any languages spoken by one’s parents or other ancestors regardless of how many generations have passed” (Grenoble and Whaley 2006: 14). In New Zealand, community languages are usually distinct from languages with official status, as in the case the country’s Indigenous language, te reo Māori and New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL). Other Pacific languages are also referenced as heritage languages (Human Rights Commission 2008). In Australia, Aboriginal languages are referred to as Indigenous languages, whereas community languages are commonly known as immigrant languages (apart from English). Auslan (Australian sign language) is also recognized
as a community language. In both countries then, Spanish is a community language, but is also taught as foreign language.

**Australia**

Despite Australia’s poor record of support for the retention of Indigenous languages, it is one of the most multilingual nation states in the world, with 19 percent of the population over the age of five years speaking a language other than English at home (ABS 2012a). Moreover, there are more than 260 languages and dialects spoken in Australian homes, and almost 400 languages spoken in the community (ABS 2010). In 2011, Australians identified with more than 300 ancestries observing diverse religious, language and cultural practices (ABS 2012a). This is particularly evident in Australia’s highly urbanized and superdiverse cities inhabited by multilingual and multicultural communities.

The key principles of Australian multiculturalism link the importance of social, linguistic and cultural practices to the expression of cultural identity. However, Hollinsworth (2006) argues that Australian multiculturalism is overwhelmingly private, whereby language, religious and cultural practices are largely confined to the private space of the home or within local ethnic communities. He claims that, as a result, monoculturalism (including monolingualism) remains unchallenged in the public arena where the presence of linguistic and cultural difference is viewed as a problem rather than an asset. As a result, the maintenance of linguistic and cultural diversity in the public domain is limited.

For community languages, there is tension in a dichotomy between the public and private split between the uses of minority languages and English in Australia. For example, it was not until 1987 that the first National Policy of Languages (NLP; Lo Bianco, 1987) was legislated – at least fourteen years after Parliamentary legislation of official multiculturalism. Hence, the discourses of multiculturalism did not automatically transfer to the institutional and structural legitimization of community languages in Australia. May (2012) argues that while Australia’s language policy has effectively promoted the use of minority languages in the private domain, it has not extended the use of these languages to the public domain, since in Australia all major events and activities are monolingual.

Furthermore, Scarino (2014) asserts that linguistic diversity has been undermined by a politicized multicultural agenda in which national goals of education construct highly abstract expressions of goodwill towards linguistic and cultural diversity at the expense of recognizing the significance of languages and cultural practices in learning. She notes that such ambivalence in the learning of languages in educational settings is apparent in the absence of coherent national and state languages policy. These concerns, primarily directed at primary and secondary levels of languages education, are of significance more broadly, considering the total lack of policy at national and state levels directed at the provision of community languages for children from birth to five years of age attending early childhood education (Jones Díaz 2013). The absence of a coherent national languages policy that promotes bi/multilingualism and plurilingualism as communicative and social practices at all educational levels has resulted in Australia continuing to shamefully lag behind the rest of world in the teaching of languages. As few as 12 percent of high school students in Australia study a second language in their final year of school, compared to 50 percent in the US and UK (Cruickshank 2012).

**New Zealand**

New Zealand has become a culturally and linguistically superdiverse country since the late 1990s (Spoonley 2015) and is now home to over 160 languages. Yet little progress has been
made in terms of national language policy and planning, despite a promising start in the early 1990s with *Aotearo: Speaking for Ourselves* (Waite 1992). The report’s recommendation for a coherent policy approach to languages in New Zealand gained no traction in the devolutionary policy environment of the time. In contrast, national strategies such as *Our Future Together: New Zealand Settlement Strategy* (Department of Labour 2007) and the *Strategy for Adult ESOL* (Ministry of Education 2003) recognize diversity goals, but foreground English language outcomes for migrants.

Aspirations for a national languages policy have been sustained as a subject of academic inquiry (East 2013; Harvey 2013), and renewed attempts exist to progress this agenda. For example, in its Statement on Language Policy, The Human Rights Commission (2008: 1) aims to provide an “elementary framework to prioritize, implement and monitor language policy development in New Zealand” and promote wider recognition of all languages. The Royal Society of New Zealand made the case for a unified languages policy within a national framework in *Languages in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Behrens 2013) to recognize the country’s biculturalism and respond to the unprecedented growth of cultural, social and ethnolinguistic diversity. The resulting prominence of languages such as Spanish “make a national approach to languages more urgent” (The Royal Society of New Zealand 2015: para 1), especially with population projections predicting increasing growth rates for Māori, Asian and Pacific population groups (SNZ 2015).

In contrast, a policy document on the role of language skills for integration (Internal Affairs 2014) has quashed aspirations for a national languages policy. While recognizing the role of language maintenance in migrant integration, the document emphasizes the “negative correlation” between the conditions promoting either English or another language (Internal Affairs 2014: 17). The report warns that “migrants wishing to actively participate in New Zealand society while maintaining their cultural heritage will need to carefully consider their approach to both languages” (2014: 24) Such unashamed perpetuation of an English-dominant monolingual ideology negates additive bilingual outcomes and further reinforces the asymmetry of power between English and other languages. Interestingly, research by de Bres (2015) found a hierarchical order of ideologies used to legitimize the position of minority languages in New Zealand, with support for migrants’ languages ranking lowest. An ideological context which ascribes lesser value to some minority languages presents a considerable barrier to the role and use of community language groups in New Zealand, even in the case of a global language such as Spanish.

**Spanish as community and foreign language**

As an academic language subject, Spanish has been in the New Zealand secondary school curriculum since 1995, reflecting its status as “a particularly significant language for New Zealand because of the important economic and cultural ties with Spain, Latin America, and the rest of the Spanish-speaking world” (Ministry of Education 2003: 5). Between 2000 and 2014, Spanish has seen significant growth as a foreign language subject, with enrolments in Years 1 to 8 doubling (from 12,463 to 24,548) and almost quadrupling in Years 9 and above (from 3,208 to 11,573) (Education Counts 2015). Although the growing popularity of Spanish may increase its cultural capital and social power (Norton 2013: 6), it is unclear as to what extent Latinas/os participate in or benefit from the formal study of the standard variety of Spanish taught as a school subject.

As a community language, Spanish is typically relegated to the family domain. The 2013 and 2006 censuses5 indicate varying patterns of Spanish proficiency of groups with Latin American/Iberian backgrounds. In the smallest communities, i.e. Peruvians (348) and Uruguays (144),
reported Spanish ability decreased from 79.4 percent to 70.4 percent and 87.5 percent to 83 percent respectively. The situation was the reverse for the Columbian and Iberian Spanish groups, where fluency figures increased from 75.4 percent to 82.5 percent and from 29.9 percent to 40.4 percent respectively during the same period. However, of the New Zealand-born respondents, only 25 percent in the Columbian group and 9.9 percent in the Spanish group reported to be speakers of Spanish, compared to 37.8 percent of New Zealand-born people with Peruvian backgrounds and 60 percent of those with Uruguayan heritage. While these data say little about actual patterns of use, they suggest high levels of language shift typical for second-generation community language speakers.

Sociolinguistic research of Spanish in New Zealand is only gradually emerging (Lee 2013; Revis 2015) and suggests patterns of use and proficiency similar to those found for other community languages (e.g. Roberts 1999; Walker 2004). Revis’ (2015) study of the Columbian refugee community in Wellington demonstrates the impact of parents’ beliefs on language socialization practices and strategies for managing home language use and, significantly, how their children’s agency may support or resist these. Children’s agency is also evident in Vaccarino and Walker (2012) who report that interactions in Spanish (and other community languages) in both family and community depend on the children’s willingness to collaborate with their parents’ efforts.

Efforts to validate and normalize the use of Spanish in a sociolinguistic environment where 77 percent of the population are monolingual in English (SNZ 2013a) are crucially supported by community language schools such as Arcoiris in Wellington and Chiquimundo in Auckland. Forty-four percent of Latin Americans reside in Auckland (SNZ 2014a), where the Auckland Latin American Community (ALAC) provides broader social and cultural support, including children’s language classes. However, in smaller provincial or rural settings the use of Spanish may be altogether restricted to the family domain and relies on parental strategies to ensure intergenerational transmission.

**Limited structural support for Spanish in Australia and New Zealand**

As seen in the prior two subsections, languages’ policies in both Australia and New Zealand have impacted significantly on the support available for community languages. While Spanish may be considered a global language in many parts of the world where it is an immigrant language, there is less enthusiasm for teaching it due to status differentials between majority and minority communities (Romaine 2013). This is indeed the case in Australia and New Zealand. In Australia, Spanish, like many other community languages, receives limited support in schools and early childhood settings. For example, in New South Wales, where the majority of Australian Spanish speakers reside – 55,623 (ABS 2011c) – in 2017 there were as few as five primary programs (NSW Department of Education and Communities [DEC] 2017a), and seven Spanish language schools (NSW DEC 2017b). These programs and schools offer Spanish for a maximum of two hours per week, while in early childhood settings Spanish receives no government funding. In NSW, of the 16 Community Language Centers that offer programs in 24 community languages on Saturdays (funded by the NSW Department of Education), only 6 centers offer Spanish to secondary school students (NSW DET 2016). Given that both nationally (ABS 2012b) and in NSW (Profile.id.com 2011b), Spanish was in the top ten of languages spoken at home, one would assume that in Australia there would be greater support for the learning of Spanish at state and national levels.

In the case of New Zealand, strategic language priorities continue to be distributed across different policy areas, notably the New Zealand school curriculum which supports bilingual and immersion approaches in Māori-medium education and the use of Pacific languages in
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mainstream education (Te kete ipurangi, n.d.) but not community languages. There is no dedicated provision for Spanish language support other than Spanish as a foreign language subject. While schools have been able to offer foreign languages from Years 7 and 8 since 2010, the choice of language is up to each school. Despite increasing recognition of the importance of cultural and linguistic maintenance, governmental support continues to focus on English language needs, while community language support is typically left to social agencies, clubs, and migrant organizations; with little or no funding from government agencies, these organizations are often entirely reliant on volunteers or support from embassies or other sponsors.

Case studies

The discussion that follows highlights research findings from two key studies (Jones Díaz 2007; Walker 2011) to provide some insights into the significance of Spanish in the Spanish-speaking Latin American communities in Australia and New Zealand.

**Spanish in Australia: parents’ views of Latina/o identity**

In the Jones Díaz (2007) study, participants were children and families from Spanish-speaking Latin American Australian backgrounds. The families came from various nation states from Latin America and the Caribbean including Chile, Peru, Columbia, Ecuador, Uruguay, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic. However, there were also Anglo Australians and one woman from mainland China who participated in the study. Chileans outnumbered all groups, and Anglo Australians represented the second largest group. These were men and women partnered with Latin American Australian men and women. The participants in this study reflected the heterolinguistic diversity evident in the Spanish-speaking community in Australia. The children attended educational/community settings living in the inner-west, southwest and eastern suburbs of Sydney. Twenty-five children and 39 family members from different family structures, including extended, blended and inter-ethnic/interracial families participated in this study. The families were from various income levels with most parents working in skilled and non-skilled occupations. Additional participants included 34 practitioners working in prior-to-school and school settings in the same regions of Sydney.

For the purposes of this chapter, the data examined represent a smaller sample of six parents: Oriella, Carol, Maggie, Clarissa, Miryam and Julio. Analysis of this data drew on quasi-ethnographic and interpretative approaches using thematic discourse analysis techniques using questionnaires, informal interviews and field notes (Denzin and Lincoln 2013). The data presented in this chapter examines the macro influences on the relationship between language and identity in terms of how the parents viewed their Latina/o identity. This was particularly relevant to how they viewed themselves living in Australia from Latin American backgrounds in the negotiation of languages as bilingual Latin American Australians. This study is grounded in the accounts of the participants, and the analysis was evidence driven and theoretically informed (Davis 1995; Patton 2002).

**Findings and discussion**

A key demographic finding from the Jones Díaz (2007) study was that the majority of participants were in inter-ethnic, interracial and intergenerational families. Of the 29 parents and grandparents who participated in this study, 7 reported to have strong Indigenous and Afro-Latino influences in their families’ biographies (Jones Díaz 2007: 153). Within these stories,
the daily experiences of negotiating hybridized identities and Indigenous languages in Latin America were intermingled with powerful testaments of struggle, racism and perseverance, as evidenced in the extract below where Carol recalled her grandmother’s prohibition of speaking Quechua (Jones Díaz 2007: 144):

**Carol:** Entendía todo.

**Criss:** ¿Entendía?

**Carol:** Porque nunca ha practicado tampoco. Pero ella como hablaba con la, creció con gente mayor en la familia entonces entendía todo. Pero nunca le dejaba.

**Carol:** Entendía.

**Criss:** ¿Por qué?

**Carol:** Porque eran ‘cholos’.

**Carol:** Porque nunca ha practicado tampoco.

**Criss:** Your mother spoke Quechua?

**Carol:** She understood everything.

**Criss:** Understood?

**Carol:** Because she didn’t speak it

{Quechua} enough. But she could speak with the, with the elders of the family so she understood everything. But she never spoke it because her mother would not let her.

**Carol:** Because they were ‘cholos’.

Carol describes her grandmother as a ‘cholo’. This is a racialized term used in Peru to describe people of hybridized Indigenous descent who speak and identify culturally and economically with urban Spanish speakers (Lipski 1994). It appears that Carol’s grandmother prohibited her mother from speaking Quechua as a way of denying their Indigenous background and assimilating to dominant Peruvian Spanish-speaking culture.

**The homogenization of Latin Americans living in Australia**

Latin Americans living in Australia as cultural minorities, like their counterparts in the United States and New Zealand, have not escaped the marginalizing constructs of homogenization. For example, the participants in the Jones Díaz study (2007) resisted homogeneous labels such as “Spanish”, “South American” and “Latino”. There was evidence to suggest that they preferred to identify themselves with their national identity, for example, as “Peruvians” or “Chileans”. There was less reference to themselves as “Latinas/os”, “Latin Americans” or “South Americans”. Only ten participants used the term “Latinas/os”, mostly referring to a group rather than defining their own identity (Jones Díaz 2007: 160). Only two identified as “Latinas/os”: “y, y, mis hijos ellos son más Latinos en todo lo que sea” [and, my children, they are more Latino in everything] (Oriella), and “Si [para] mi es un[a] cosa que mis origenes son [sean] Latinos y pienso que es un idioma importante porque no hay tanto[s] paises que hablen español más que los ingleses” [Yes [for me] it’s about my origins which are Latino and I think that the language is important because there are not that many countries that speak Spanish, more so than the English] (Carol) (Jones Díaz 2007: 160). Even fewer (three) participants used the term ‘South American’. Interestingly, two of the Anglo-Australian women, Maggie and Clarissa, and one Latin American Australian woman, Miryam, were the only participants to use the term “Latin American” (Jones Díaz 2007: 160).

**Latina/o political position in the Australian context**

In discourses of multiculturalism, Latin American Australians are viewed as one of many “ethnic communities” producing dubious assumptions, such as viewing their differing experiences of migration as irrelevant (Cohen 2004). This assumption constructs the Latin American...
community in Australia as a homogenized and cohesive community, which in turn denies the diversity of history and cultural practices within the community. Such assumptions also presume that within the community, there are points of solidarity, cohesion and homogeneity, which ignore the impact of post-colonialism in terms of the relationship between Spain and its former colonies and the national, political and regional differences between Central, Caribbean and South America (Langer 1998).

Even though Oriella was not involved directly with any political group, the comment below illustrated her preference for friendships that are based on a political allegiance and affiliation:

Tengo una conexión con la cosa política de allá pero yo no vivo en Chile vivo aquí. . . .
Realmente mantengo. . . . las amistades políticas. . . . es una una posición política latino dentro de la cultura Australiana . . .

I have a political connection to Chile but I don’t live there. . . . In reality, I maintain. . . . political friendships . . . it’s a Latino political position in the Australian culture . . .

While Oriella is conscious of taking up a “Latino political position”, Julio’s articulated clear differences in the socio-political histories between Spanish-speaking Latin American Australians and Spaniards is expressed below:

. . . sea nosotros no somos españoles aunque hablamos el mismo idioma . . . Entonces decir españoles es . . . una palabra, generalizaciones antiguas, . . . es lo mismo ellos sienten lo mismo y nos tratan a nosotros ¿Como los indios. ¿No? Los Aborígenes.
Se siente de {que} no quieren saber de los Aborígenes. ¿No? Es un como es una cuestión de superioridad.

. . . we are not Spaniards although we speak Spanish the same language . . . So to say Spaniards is . . . an old generalization . . . they treat us the same as Indians. Don’t they? The Aborigines. It feels like they do not want to know about Aborigines, you know? It’s like a question of superiority.

Julio’s analysis of the relationship between these two groups is an illustration of this articulated difference, a politicized consciousness set within an Australian context of multiculturalism in which questions of Australian Indigeneity are often subsumed and silenced in discourses of multiculturalism (Curthoys 1999).

Spanish in New Zealand: Latino/a parents’ perspectives

The small-scale study by Walker (2011) highlighted the role and importance of Spanish for identity construction and cultural continuity through the perspectives of Latin American parents. The parents were participants in a larger study of notions of proficiency and self-concept involving 370 multilingual immigrants to New Zealand from a wide range of ethnolinguistic backgrounds (Walker 2004). This study was informed by sociocultural perspectives to examine the role of Spanish vis-à-vis the experience of social, cultural and linguistic discontinuities in an English-dominant society. In the context of migration, such discontinuities affect the ability of individuals or groups to construct or reconstruct a sense of identity. In English-dominant societies such as New Zealand, monolingual practices and mindsets constrain the retention of Spanish (Guardado 2002) and limit opportunities for the discursive construction of identity through language in interaction (Norton 2001; Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000). Yet, parents can be strongly motivated to employ strategies in support of Spanish. The notion of investment
(Norton 2013) can help explain the extent to which they are invested in Spanish language practices in a sociolinguistic environment where community languages are not greatly valued by society, but where Latina/o families and communities consider their children’s fluency in Spanish as a form of cultural capital (Berardi-Wiltshire 2014). This, in turn, may empower their sense of themselves as speakers of Spanish.

Drawing on Walker’s (2011) post-survey interviews with ten Latin American participants, two small cases are presented in this chapter to illustrate the parents’ investment in their children’s Spanish language use.

The aspirations of two selected families contrasted with a reality perceived to be hostile to other languages, where efforts to create spaces for Spanish became “a matter of how much you try to bash your head against a wall” (Walker 2011: 344). The participants made multiple references to the status of Spanish as an international language and its global importance. While this created a counter-discourse to the imperative of English, participants were equally aware of the power differential between Spanish and English and the affordances for access and participation associated with the latter. One of the parents commented: “[the children] better know English first, [rather than] know their own language. Without command of English they will certainly be on the fringes of New Zealand society” (Walker 2011: 343). It is interesting to note that with the exception of one individual the parents preferred self-identification by their national origin, similar to Jones Díaz’s (2007) findings. They viewed the Spanish language as key to their cultural identity, suggesting a sense of self that “is not so much labeled or described as it is enacted” (Koven 1998: 437). The potential loss of Spanish equalled a denial of their sense of selves as bi/multilingual speakers of Spanish in New Zealand, as expressed by one parent: “It is part of me. It is part of my cultural identity. It is my link with the other Latin Americans in New Zealand” (Walker 2011: 344).

The parents underlined the importance of Spanish both for them and their children and were strongly invested in Spanish. In the face of limited or non-existing structural support, they drew on their communities to share and legitimize cultural and linguistic practices. They pro-actively constructed communities of practice and adopted non-linguistic means such as food, music and dance through which to enact and maintain their cultural identities as Latin Americans in New Zealand. Among their strategic approaches was the enactment of family language policies (Spolsky 2012) which determined the ways they use the language in the home domain. Spanish was valued by these parents as a means for cultural maintenance and identity construction. Two key aspects were evident in the families’ strategies to resist monolingual English discourses and practices and to hold on to Spanish. These were (a) a sense of connection with Latin American family, places and personal histories, and (b) a path to becoming multilingual global citizens in a linguistically diverse world.

The families

In the case of Juan and Susanna, a Venezuelan-born couple, the aspiration for their 3-year-old son Leon to develop Spanish proficiency was mitigated by the needs of their older daughter Shona who had spent her formative years in Switzerland and became bilingual in English and German. While navigating the trilingual complexity within this family, Shona was beginning to develop basic oral skills in Spanish to support her younger brother. The parents’ interactional strategy to speak only Spanish with Leon and to join a local Spanish biliteracy group was motivated by the goal to give their children a sense of connection with their cultural background and identity and with their Venezuelan grandparents who have limited English proficiency.
Susanna and Juan also fostered their own links to their Latina/o heritage by mixing with a group of Latin American locals with whom they felt at ease. In the United States the couple had distanced themselves from the Latin American communities due to what they perceived as stereotyped portrayal in the media of Latin American people as “trouble”, who they felt “wasn’t us” (Walker 2011: 348). In stark contrast, the Latin American community in New Zealand became a source of support for them and their children and afforded them a sense of self-esteem as Latin American parents for whom Spanish played a central role in maintaining connections with the family’s Venezuelan roots.

Gina and her then husband left Peru for New Zealand in 1993. Regular use of Spanish in the family domain gave her New Zealand-born son Tino the opportunity to grow up with Spanish, despite living in a predominantly English-speaking community. Both mother and son rely heavily on code-switching to interact when non-Spanish speakers are in the house, including Gina’s new partner who is a monolingual speaker of English. Gina’s sustained focus on helping Tino develop Spanish literacy minimized the tendency to shift to English at the critical time of reaching school age. Despite some initial reluctance, Tino has built close links with his Peruvian relatives during regular visits and has become a bilingual individual who can function in two distinctly different social and cultural settings. He identifies as a “Kiwi” but is able to enact a Latin American identity through his remarkable competence in Spanish.

Gina’s use of Spanish can be seen as an investment in both her own and Tino’s identity. Through successful adoption of the one-parent-one-language strategy (Döpke 1992), Gina claimed her right to speak and interact in Spanish, both as a mother and a teacher. Not only did she draw on the affordances of the family and Latin community, but she actively created opportunities herself, injecting the cultural capital of Spanish into the home. She nurtured her community networks which validated and normalized the use of Spanish and afforded Tino rich opportunities for cultural and linguistic practices, especially those associated with Latin American music. Gina’s case illustrates how identity and belonging are constructed through language and cultural practice, regardless of geographical distance to and cultural isolation from the family’s Peruvian origins.

In both families’ cases, the parents were strongly invested in intergenerational transmission of Spanish. They demonstrated agency by strategically drawing on the affordances available to them, creating discursive spaces, and developing networks which facilitated and normalized interacting in Spanish. The parents also attempted to balance the imperative for English as means for socio-economic success and resist monolingual English practices by instilling in their children a sense of difference as normal. Their investment in being a speaker of Spanish was supported by communities and validated by a growing popularity of Latin American culture and positive projection of Latin Americans in the New Zealand media (Lee 2013). This strengthened their determination to maintain Spanish as a marker of Latin American identity across generations and a sense of continuity of “being” (Fishman 2001: 3) for themselves and their children.

**Summary and reflections**

Jones Díaz (2007) raises issues associated with the macro constructions of identity in terms of ways in which discourses of Australian multiculturalism homogenize ethnic groups, silencing the diverse cultural, social and political realities that shape ways of identifying and belonging to a cultural and linguistic minority group in Australia. The participants clearly articulated their identity locations, while simultaneously straddling various tensions of homogeneity and pan Latina/o identity. In contrast, Walker (2011) highlights the role of Spanish in identity
construction and cultural maintenance, which was primarily relegated to the micro spaces of the home domain where families’ language policies helped secure the retention of Spanish. Together, the findings of these studies position the use of Spanish in the Antipodes as central to the everyday lived experiences of families and negotiation of Latino/a cultural identity in both macro and micro contexts.

**Recommendations and future directions**

This chapter reported on the findings of two studies that highlight the significance of Spanish as a minority language in Australia and New Zealand. Despite being immigrant-receiving, superdiverse nations, both countries lack coherent language policies, which has a direct impact on the retention, use and learning of Spanish in family, educational and community settings. The lack of policy direction has resulted in inadequate provision of Spanish language programs in educational settings, requiring agentive, strategic and politicized efforts by families in the intergenerational transmission of Spanish and identity construction.

The privileging of English in both countries has meant that Spanish, along with the many other heritage/minority languages, struggles for legitimacy despite its currency as a global language. A concerted effort by governments and policy makers is needed to develop coherent national and state/local language policies that recognize and promote linguistic diversity and acknowledge the complexity of identity negotiation for communities such as the Spanish-speaking diaspora. Simplistic and homogenizing assumptions of belonging to one ethnolinguistic group and the perpetuation of monolingualism as the norm need to be challenged in order to recognize the significance of identity location for Spanish speakers. Finally, validating Spanish in policy, practice and research will foster recognition of families’ contributions to developing home-grown linguistic and cultural resources embedded in the Spanish language and Iberian and Latin American cultures of Australia and New Zealand.

**Notes**

1 The ‘White Australia’ policy officially known as the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 aimed to restrict non-European immigration to Australia and consequently deported immigrants already residing in Australia. Many Pacific Islanders, Chinese, Indians and ‘Afghans’ were denied citizenship, voting rights and suffered employment restrictions. Pacific Islanders were deported back to their countries of origin despite having spent many years in Australia working as labourers in the sugar cane, goldmines, railways and other industries (Hollinsworth 2006). Apart from the fact that this act banned all ‘coloured’ immigration to Australia, it also excluded Indigenous Australians from citizenship. The White Australia policy constructed discourses of nationalism and racism in which Indigenous Australian were categorized as ‘different’ from other Australians and as a result, not destined to contribute to the emerging nation (Hollinsworth 2010).

2 The Māori language is protected by statute under the Māori Language Act 1987.

3 Primarily since 1975 with the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal which handles breaches or claims under the Treaty.

4 Of the 700 languages and dialects spoken in Australia prior to British colonization (Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) 2008), today approximately 120 languages are spoken and of these as few as 13 are considered healthy; the remaining languages are described as critically endangered (Marmion, Obata and Troy 2014).

5 A language question has been included in the Census since 1996 and is limited to asking about the ability to use a language in everyday situations.

6 See www.arcoiris.org.nz/ for more information about this program.
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7 See www.chiquimundo.co.nz/stay-and-play-spanish-immersion-pre-school-sessions.html for additional information.
8 See www.alacinc.org.nz/ for additional information on Spanish programs offered to children.

Further reading


References


