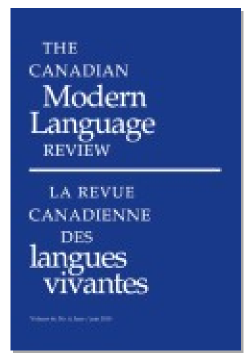
A Tale of Two Montréal Communities: Parents' Perspectives on Their Children's Language and Literacy Development in a Multilingual Context

Caroline Riches, Xiao Lan Curdt-Christiansen



The Canadian Modern Language Review / La revue canadienne des langues vivantes, Volume 66, Number 4, June / juin 2010, pp. 525-555 (Article)

Published by University of Toronto Press

A Tale of Two Montréal Communities: Parents' Perspectives on Their Children's Language and Literacy Development in a Multilingual Context

Caroline Riches
Xiao Lan Curdt-Christiansen

Abstract: This comparative inquiry examines the multi-/bilingual nature and cultural diversity of two distinctly different linguistic and ethnic communities in Montréal – English speakers and Chinese speakers – with a focus on the multi/bilingual and multi/biliterate development of children from these two communities who attend French-language schools, by choice in one case and by law in the other. In both of these communities, children traditionally achieve academic success. The authors approach this investigation from the perspective of the parents' aspirations and expectations for, and their support of and involvement in, their children's education. These two communities share key similarities and differences that, when considered together, help to clarify a number of issues involving multi/biliteracy development, socio-economic and linguistic capital, minority/majority language status, mother-tongue support, home–school continuities, and linguistic identity.

Keywords: multilingualism, multiliteracy, bilingualism, biliteracy, parental involvement, aspirations, expectations, linguistic capital, linguistic identity

Résumé : Dans cette étude comparative, les auteures examinent la nature plurilingue et bilingue et la diversité culturelle de deux communautés montréalaises distinctes sur les plans linguistique et ethnique, les anglophones et les sinophones. Elles ont ciblé le développement plurilingue et bilingue et le développement multiethnique des enfants de ces deux communautés qui fréquentent l'école française, par choix ou par respect de la loi. Traditionnellement, les enfants de ces deux communautés réussissent bien à l'école. Cette étude évalue le point de vue des parents sur le plan de leurs aspirations et de leurs attentes envers l'école, ainsi que leur soutien et leur participation à l'éducation de leurs enfants. Ces deux communautés partagent des similitudes et des différences qui, ensemble, aident à expliquer diverses questions en rapport avec le développement plurilittératie ou de la bilittératie, le capital socio-économique et linguistique, la

© 2010 *The Canadian Modern Language Review/La Revue canadienne des langues vivantes*, 66, 4 (June/juin), 525–555 doi:10.3138/cmlr.66.4.525

position linguistique minoritaire ou majoritaire, le soutien à la langue maternelle, la continuité entre l'école et la famille, et l'identité linguistique.

Mots clés : plurilinguisme, plurilittératie, bilinguisme, bilittéracie, participation de parents, aspirations, attentes, capital linguistique, identité linguistique

As well as being characterized as an French/English bilingual city, Montréal is also home to a large number of immigrant groups representing a wealth of other languages. Montréal, in fact, has the highest rate of multilingualism in Canada; more than 40% of residents speak three languages—the two official languages and one non-official language (Lamarre & Dagenais, 2004). In this study, we examine two pieces of the fabric of Montréal's multilingual nature and cultural diversity by means of a comparative inquiry into two distinct linguistic and ethnic communities: anglophone families who have chosen French immersion (FI) education for their children; and Chinese immigrant families whose children, in accordance with Québec's language laws,[1] attend French-language schools.

Situated in the primarily French-speaking province of Québec, both of these communities constitute minorities both within the province and in the metropolitan Montréal area, albeit in proportionally disparate ways: the anglophone community constitutes approximately 18.5% of the population of metropolitan Montréal, while the Chinese community represents approximately 1.4% of the population of the same area (Statistics Canada, 2007a). Though both are considered 'minority' groups, the two communities are distinct in important ways. Linguistically, they are dissimilar, as their languages belong to two different language families; the two communities also differ with respect to their linguistic history in Québec, where English, until relatively recently, was the language of the elite. In addition, the English language enjoys a high political and economic status as one of Canada's two official languages and the language of economic dominance in North America. By contrast, Chinese is a minority language in Canada, spoken by a much smaller and significantly less powerful minority. However, our comparison of these two Québec 'minority' communities will unveil the underlying forces and literacy practices that define the elements essential to promoting desired language and literacy outcomes.

We examine the children's bilingual and biliterate development (in English and French), in the case of the anglophone community, and their multilingual and multiliterate development (in Chinese, French, and English) in the Chinese community. We consider the perspective of the parents – their perceptions, beliefs, involvement, and investment with respect to their children's multi/bilingual education.[2] Our goal is to identify those factors that transcend these obvious differences and highlight shared positive and culturally specific factors that influence effective and successful learning.

Context and theoretical framework

Research in multilingual settings suggests that mother tongue (L1) support in the larger social context contributes greatly to the successful development of all languages (Cummins, 1993; Genesee, 1987; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1990). Although English is a minority language in the province of Québec, it is the majority language at the national level; furthermore, in some areas of metropolitan Montréal, including the area where the anglophone participants in this study reside, English is the L1 and/or the home language of more than half of the population (Statistics Canada, 2007b). Chinese, on the other hand, represents a minority language in all instances, but is highly supported within the Chinese community.

Active parental participation and support is also an essential characteristic of successful multilingual education (Skutnabb-Kangas & Garcia, 1995) and multiliteracy education (Dagenais, 2003; Dagenais & Day, 1999; Dagenais, Day, & Toohey, 2006; Dagenais & Moore, 2008; Hudelson, 1992, 1994). Children's literacy development benefits when families and communities serve as resources (Moll, 1992; Moll & Greenberg, 1990) and when a strong relationship exists between children's literacy experiences in their home environments and their school literacy practices (Gregory, 1997; Heath, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). Research in minority language contexts has confirmed the benefits of initial literacy instruction in the L1 (Riches & Genesee, 2006; Cummins, 1993; Hudelson, 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1990), whether in the home or in the school setting.

Studies of Asian immigrants to North America suggest that parents' high expectations and aspirations for their children's education can partially account for the children's academic success (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Kao, Tienda, & Schneider, 1996; Louie, 2001; Ogbu, 1995; Stevenson, Lee, & Stigler, 1986). In much of the educational research, the most popular explanation for this ethos has relied on the cultural argument. The Chinese, it has been argued, hold a long-standing set of cultural traditions, rooted in Confucianism, that value family obligations and collectivism and emphasize education and success as derived from effort rather than from innate ability (Curdt-Christiansen, 2008; Louie, 2004). From this perspective, everyone is educable, and educational success is ensured by diligence and perseverance.

Similarly, one of the pervasive explanations for the success of FI is that parents have high aspirations and expectations for their children, which are expressed as a greater-than-typical degree of parental involvement (Genesee, 1978, 1987; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Swain & Lapkin, 1982). Several studies have mentioned the positive influence of the home environment and parental support (Carey, 1991; Cummins, 1976) in supporting literacy development (Cashion & Eagan, 1990; Dagenais, 2003; Dagenais & Day, 1999; Fagan & Eagan, 1990; Geva & Clifton, 1994; Kendall, LaJeunesse, Chmilar, Shapson, & Shapson, 1987).

In both the communities in question, then, aspirations and expectations related to language and literacy development and academic success appear to influence parents' choices and practices in relation to their children's education; however, the nature of this parental contribution has not been investigated in depth in either case. The educational choices made by these parents for their children suggest that they have an understanding of literacy and language development as social and cultural practice (Luke, 2004; Street, 2003). Moreover, they illustrate how there are multiple and equitable pathways for accessing languages and literacies (Luke).

We use an interpretive mode of inquiry to address these issues by examining parents' past and present cultural and educational experiences, which shaped how they position themselves and what they believe to be important and necessary for their children. Ultimately, it is these beliefs and aspirations that influence the home practices, educational choices, and support provided. Our specific research questions are the following:

1. What are the contexts and influences that shape these parents' beliefs, expectations and aspirations for their children's multi/bilingual education and multi/biliteracy development
2. How do these beliefs, aspirations, and expectations affect their children's multi/bilingual education and multi/biliteracy development
3. How do these parents invest in their children's multi/bilingual education and multi/biliteracy development, in terms of types and manner of language and literacy practices engaged in, and

opportunities provided, both outside and in connection with the school setting

Methodology

Data collection and organization

In order to provide an authentic 'observation' of the 'live' data (Spindler & Spindler, 1987), we used ethnographic tools of inquiry: semi-structured interviews with each family in their home and participant observations in the school and community contexts. Interviews with participants were conducted in the home language (Mandarin or English) and were audiotaped and subsequently transcribed. Field notes were taken at the time of the interviews to record contextual information. Our focus was on how different values, beliefs, and practices, as well as power issues between minority and majority contexts, shape the parents' perceptions of their literacy practices. Accordingly, we explored issues such as language(s) spoken in the home; language profiles of participants; length of residence in Québec; opinions about Québec's language policies; the importance of maintaining the L1; the value of multi/bilingualism; expectations and aspirations for children; pre-school and current reading and language development practices at home; perceptions and evaluations of the school program and of children's progress; expectations of teachers and of the school; and support and involvement in school contexts.

Participant profiles

The participants in this inquiry were parents representing 10 Chinese immigrant families and 13 anglophone families. All were recruited through the schools their children attended. The families' language and residence profiles are presented in Tables 1 and 2.[3]

Chinese community participants

Five fathers and 10 mothers from the Chinese families participated in the interviews. Language profile information gathered on all parents (with the exception of one father) revealed that eight of the fathers and seven of the mothers were competent English speakers; the others spoke rudimentary English. With the exception of two fathers, none of the Chinese parents was proficient in French, although a few could read a little French. In all cases the home language was Mandarin. All

TABLE 1
Participants from the Chinese community: Parental language background and Canadian residence

Focal child (age)	Mother				Father			
	L1	Years resident in Canada	Abilities in English	Abilities in French	L1	Years resident in Canada	Abilities in English	Abilities in French
Dan Zhang (6)	Chinese	2	Functional	Minimal	Chinese	2	Functional	Functional
Dodo Qi (6)	Chinese	16	Proficient	Minimal	Chinese	15	Functional	None
Feng Dong (11)	Chinese	6	Minimal	None	Chinese	7	Functional	None
Ling Wong (8)	Chinese	16	Proficient	Minimal	Chinese	16	Proficient	Minimal
Mindy Chen (8)	Chinese	14	Functional	None	Chinese	15	Proficient	Minimal
Qiuqiu Xu (13)	Chinese	5	Minimal	None	Chinese	4	Functional	None
Xiaoan Gray (11)	Chinese	16	Proficient	Minimal	English	b. Canada	Native	Functional
Yang Yang (5)	Chinese	2	Minimal	None	Chinese	n/a	n/a	n/a
Yida Pan (11)	Chinese	5	Functional	None	Chinese	5	Proficient	None
Yuzhou Zhou (10)	Chinese	3	Proficient	None	Chinese	2	Minimal	None

n/a = not available; b. = born in

TABLE 2
Participants from the anglophone community: Parental language background and Canadian residence

Focal child (age)	Mother				Father			
	L1	Years resident in Canada	Abilities in English	Abilities in French	L1	Years resident in Canada	Abilities in English	Abilities in French
Jessica Hughes (6/7)	English	10 (b. USA)	Native	Proficient	English	b. Canada	Native	Proficient
Marie Dejemek (6/7)	French	b. Canada	Proficient	Native	Czech	8 (b. Italy)	Native-like	Functional
Amanda Norton (6/7)	English	b. Canada	Native	Minimal	English	b. Canada	Native	Functional
Melissa Benson (6/7)	French	b. Canada	Proficient	Native	English	b. Canada	Native	Functional
Stephen Davis (6/7)	English	b. Canada	Native	Functional	English	b. Canada	Native	Functional
Andrew Thompson (6/7)	English	b. Canada	Native	Functional	English	b. Canada	Native	Functional
Valerie Pezek (6/7)	English	3 (b. England)	Native	Minimal	Persian	3 (b. Iran)	Native-like	Functional
Miranda Pearsall (6/7)	English	b. Canada	Native	Minimal	English	b. Canada	Native	Minimal
Stephanie Weston (6/7)	English	b. Canada	Native	Minimal	English	b. Canada	Native	Minimal
Daniel Heath (6/7)	English	b. Canada	Native	Minimal	English	b. Canada	Native	Minimal
Marc Altman (6/7)	English	2 (b. Ireland)	Native	Minimal	Swiss-German	2 (b. Switzerland)	Proficient	Minimal
James Baker (6/7)	English	b. Canada	Native	Functional	English	b. Canada	Native	Proficient
Jenny Raymond (6/7)	German	20 (b. Egypt)	Native	Proficient	French	b. Canada	Proficient	Native

b. = born in

children but one, who attended a private English/French bilingual school, went to French public schools, as required by Québec law. They also attended a Chinese heritage language (HL) school on Saturdays. The families' length of residence in Canada varied from two to more than 10 years. Four families lived in single-family dwellings in suburban Montréal, while the rest lived in apartments in the downtown area. Most would be considered lower middle class, as many first-generation immigrants are, but with upwardly mobile aspirations for their children.

Anglophone community participants

Language profile information was gathered on the anglophone parents through interviews with the 13 mothers. In eight of the families, both parents were native English speakers; in three families, one parent was a native English speaker while the other parent was fluent in English; in the remaining two homes, one parent was francophone and the other allophone, and all were fluent in English. In five of the homes at least one parent was fluently bilingual in English and French; in four families, the parents considered themselves functionally bilingual; in three homes, both parents were monolingual anglophones with minimal knowledge of French. The remaining family had only recently immigrated to Canada; the mother was Irish and the father Swiss-German, and neither had more than minimal knowledge of French. English was the L1 of all the children in these families; in two cases, French was also used at home. All families lived in single-family dwellings in a middle- to upper-middle-class suburban area of Montréal; the children all attended the same early FI type program from kindergarten on, with English instruction beginning in Grade 4.

Positioning of researchers

Angrosino and May de Pérez (2000) contend that effective researchers take an active part in their research. In this case, we are intimately involved in the research, since each of us is part of one of the communities examined in this inquiry; in addition, we both have an insider's perspective on the cultural positionings and political complexities inherent in Québec society. These shared cultural experiences and similar belief systems allow for a more nuanced understanding of the families' educational expectations and of their language and literacy practices within the two communities. Curdt-Christiansen shares similar childhood experiences with the Chinese community participants, since all grew up in China during the infamous Cultural Revolution; her similar experiences of immigration to the West give her an understanding of the Chinese parents' views about languages and literacy, their persistence in promoting Chinese culture, and their insistence on maintaining their children's Chinese language. Riches shares the background of the anglophone community participants, having grown up in Québec during the period known as the 'Quiet Revolution.' In this community, French/English bilingualism outcomes are a prime consideration in the selection of school programs.

Analysis

The interview transcripts were reviewed, coded, and analyzed thematically according to the common issues and patterns that emerged. Field notes were carefully studied and examined to support and elaborate upon the interview data. Contextual influences were identified, and two main categories emerged: (1) parents' perceptions of and beliefs about their children's multi/bilingual development; and (2) parental involvement and investment in their children's literacy development in home and school settings.

Discussion

Contextual influences

The early schooling of the Chinese parents who participated in this inquiry took place in China during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), a time when most literature was viewed as counter-revolutionary, knowledge was condemned by Mao Zedong, and literacy was acquired primarily through political dogma. They enjoyed little parental teaching and had limited access to written materials. Only two parents remembered seeing books in their homes. The rest, although in some cases their parents were university professors, had only Mao's 'little red book' on their bookshelves. Nevertheless, all participants confirmed that they had been taught by their parents to work diligently starting on the first day of school; the traditional Confucian values of literacy and the ideals of learning were never entirely abandoned and maintained a profound influence on their thinking. The notion of 万般皆下品，唯有读书高 – *wanban jie xiapin, weiyou dushu gao* ('the worth of other pursuits is small; the study of books excels them all'), a core tenet in Confucianism, permeated their upbringing. These educational values, formed in their homeland and transplanted to their new home, have interacted with parents' immigrant experiences of 'blocked opportunities' (Kao & Tienda, 1998, p. 443) to develop their beliefs about and expectations for their children's future education.

The majority of the anglophone parents grew up during Québec's Quiet Revolution in the early 1960s and witnessed a major ideological shift that profoundly changed Canada's language profile: the formal recognition of English and French as Canada's official languages and the institution of French as Québec's sole official language. As a result of these political changes, beliefs and values about the importance and necessity of being bilingual in Canada in general, and in Québec in particular, were fundamentally changed. This shift, in turn, affected educational programming, primarily in the creation and increased popularity of FI education in Québec and nationwide. The parents' bilingual abilities, or lack thereof, were a determining factor in the educational choices they made for their children: the monolingual parents chose the FI program in order to offer their children the bilingual opportunities they themselves could not provide, while the bilingual parents chose it because they personally knew the benefits of bilingualism and were endeavouring to provide an environment in which their children could develop the same abilities.

Perceptions and beliefs

In both communities, parents held clear beliefs about how multi/bilingualism and cultural knowledge could benefit their children in terms of identity construction and self-confidence, as well as in terms of access to opportunities and multiple pathways in life.

High expectations and aspirations

The Chinese parents appear to have consciously applied their homeland values to their lives and activities in Canada. Their recognition of education as the path to upward social mobility reflects their cultural disposition and the Confucian influence. These parents expect their children to pursue university studies and acquire academic degrees. Parents with such aspirations endorse academic achievement by stressing the importance of attaining good marks:

> We make it very clear for her [their daughter] that she is not allowed to have marks lower than 90 in French, Math and English. (Interview, Mrs Pan)[4]

Mrs Pan's views on academic performance were shared by most of the Chinese parents we interviewed. Their comments reveal a strong belief in academic excellence as the most important, if not the only, avenue for their children to achieve upward social mobility in their new country:

> We have to face the competitive and selective process nowadays. The competition for good positions among qualified personnel is very fierce. First of all, [one] has to take it [competition] very seriously; otherwise, [one] can be eliminated. Moreover, the fact is that in our society, in the current situation, a person's salary is basically in proportion to his educational credentials. (Interview, Mrs Lin)

Mrs Lin's perspective on competition was shared by most of the Chinese parents and reflects their strong culturally defined belief in the high value of education. Recent immigrants have come from mainland China, where economic opportunities and growing social mobility are reserved for those with advanced degrees from the very best universities. However, the educational benefits provided by these universities are not open to everyone; access is limited through a highly competitive selection process. Having come to Canada for permanent settlement and to seek better economic and educational opportunities for their children, these parents hold a strong belief in 'immigrant optimism' (Kao & Tienda, 1995, p. 5) and characterize themselves as 'model minorities' (Kao, 1995, p. 121). The economic rewards associated with higher education both in North America and in China have contributed to this immigrant optimism (Zhou & Kim, 2006). Their optimistic view and their experiences as a 'model minority,' however, are not the only explanation underlying their perception of language and education. The accounts of immigrant experiences constructed by these parents also reveal a hint of pessimism. Although most of them hold university degrees from China, their career advancement in Canada has been stymied both by lack of recognition of these degrees and by language barriers. For example, Mrs Chen acknowledged that she frequently admonishes her daughter, 'Your grades have to be higher than those of your classmates, because you are Chinese. If you are only at the same level as the others, you will not be selected [for good jobs and positions]. So you have to be better.' Although her account can be interpreted as her aspirations for her daughter, it also points to the realities of immigration and labour-market conditions, as Mrs Chen's Chinese educational background was not readily transferable to a career in Canada. The Chinese parents' perceptions of inequality in the job market seem to have engendered higher expectations for their children's educational success.

Participants from the anglophone community had similar aspirations for their children from a different, perhaps more secure, position as members of the province's largest minority language community. Be that as it may, these parents' hopes and aspirations for their children have been influenced by the ideologies and language rhetoric of Québec society, whereby proficiency in French is necessary for social inclusion and advancement.

As Mrs Thompson's comment illustrates, these parents made a deliberate choice to provide the opportunity for their children to attain high levels of proficiency in both French and English:

> [I]f we stay here in Québec . . . they have to at least be bilingual, and the only way to get that is . . . to be totally immersed in French.

For these parents, being bilingual appears to mean attaining a native-like standard in French, as exemplified by comments such as 'but he'll say it really badly [referring to the father]' and 'I'm not 100%, but I speak French.' The parents in this community consciously chose the school and the early FI program in order to provide the exposure to French that they deem necessary and sufficient to achieve this goal. They all expressed the belief that bilingualism provides greater career and employment opportunities.

An interesting cultural difference between the two groups, perhaps a vestige of the immigrant pessimism inherent in the Chinese case, is that the Chinese parents place the responsibility for success squarely on their own and their children's shoulders, whereas the anglophone parents place the initial responsibility on the school and the FI program. As a way of making sure children excel in schools, for example, Chinese parents tend to make economic sacrifices and provide additional educational resources for their children (Zhou & Kim, 2006). Mrs Yang remarked, 'a little bit of our time and money can benefit them lifelong. We (parents) have to make conditions, create possibilities, and provide resources for (children's) success.' While viewing such 'sacrifice' as their duty and obligation, they also impose strict rules on their children's working days in order to ensure endurance in their educational endeavours. The ever-present demands for perseverance and hard work were seen as character building:

> [we have to train] them to strengthen their willpower if they are to excel in education . . . How can we foster in them the ability to bear hardships and

> stand hard work? I think the only way to achieve this is to make him [son] practise and practise [doing supplementary homework, practising a musical instrument] every day. In this way, he will understand that almost regardless of what you do, you need to have indefatigable perseverance. (Interview, Mrs Zhou)

In the Chinese parents' view, hard work as an individual quality is the key to achievement; it is effort – not natural affinity, but a cultivated ability embedded in the family socialization – that leads to success. This cultural and social practice, derived from the Confucian notion that everyone is educable, has made them subscribe to the conviction that education is a parental duty and an individual responsibility.

It is interesting to note that the very existence of FI programs is the direct result of parental input. In the initial constitution of FI, the parent-driven thinking was not only that young children would benefit from early and intensive exposure to French because of their ease in language acquisition but also that learning through the medium of a second language would make the early elementary program more challenging (Melikoff, 1972) and that learning a second language enhances cognitive flexibility (Ricciardelli, 1992). The evolution of the school that our anglophone participants' children attended was influenced by these beliefs, and the school had developed a reputation for being academically challenging and for providing opportunities for entrance into more prestigious high school programs or schools:

> I always thought maybe the standards were just a little bit higher at that school, or the expectations were a little more, even from the families ... if they're going to put their kid into a second language school, maybe the families are a little more demanding which, you know, sets the standards a little higher. (Interview, Mrs Norton)

The educational success of FI is often attributed to the children's being part of the majority language and cultural community (Carey, 1991; Genesee, 1978, 1987); in our study, however, the common or overlapping elements that appear to support children's success in both anglophone and Chinese communities are not language status but, rather, parental expectations, aspirations, and involvement.

Multi/bilingual opportunities and linguistic identity

With respect to the parents' perceptions of multi/bilingual education, our analysis indicates that both groups of parents have aspirations for their children's language and literacy proficiency in more than one language. These aspirations relate not only to school success but also, beyond institutional demands, to the development of individual identity and of interpersonal and intergroup relationships (Noels & Clément, 1998). Furthermore, both groups of parents perceive multi/bilingualism as valuable linguistic capital and social technology, and therefore have provided multiple strategies and paths for their children to achieve this goal.

Language and literacy are salient markers of in-group social and cultural identity (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Schecter & Bayley, 1997) and provide the most basic capital for membership in communities. Our identities are constructed, defined, and framed by the languages we use (Norton, 2000; Norton-Peirce, 1995). Moreover, as literacy is defined, in part, by group boundaries and status, and by literacy activities and literacy practices within the group, identity is intertwined with the meaning and process of becoming and being literate (Bell, 1997; Ferdman, 1990; Heath, 1983). In this study, we identified in both communities a strong sense of the importance of the L1 in terms of giving children a sense of belonging and identity. Furthermore, both groups of parents considered L1 proficiency a high priority and a prerequisite for L2 and L3 development.

A major premise underlying the philosophy of FI education is that the children's L1 remains recognized and supported (Swain & Johnson, 1997). Within this context, the anglophone parents' beliefs about the importance of L1 support are implied in their recognition of the underlying presence of English in their children's school context:

> [Number one,] I wanted my daughter to learn French, and number two, I felt comfortable because it was predominantly English families attending the school. (Interview, Mrs Hughes)

> One of the kindergarten teachers was in [the library] and all of a sudden one of her students was crying ... and she couldn't describe to the teacher in French yet, why she was upset, so the teacher immediately said, '*en anglais* ... you can tell me in English, we just want to solve the problem.' (Interview, Mrs Weston)

Thus, according to the anglophone parents, because they are members of Québec's largest and most influential minority language community, validation of the L1 is a given, and general support in the larger milieu contributed to their children's sense of L1 identity. For the majority of these parents, their long-term plans include the expectation that their children will pursue later studies in English:

> We're going to let her make the decision but she'll probably do all of her later education in English. (Interview, Mrs Weston)

In the Chinese community, similar validation of identity and worth is achieved through a more conscious effort. Because of the minority status of their L1, the Chinese parents overtly expressed the belief that L1 education is necessary in forming their children's sociocultural identity. They therefore consider it necessary to provide formal education in Chinese:

> Why the kids have to learn Chinese? . . . I think when they grow up to a certain age, they must ask 'who am I?' For instance, they live in a society with black, white, and many other different races; it is very obvious here [in Canada]. In China, such a question does not exist. You are who you are. . . . So when this question is asked, if you know Chinese, you have a tool, then, you can immediately get to the answer, which can deepen your understanding of yourself. (Interview, Mrs Lin)

> When [children] grow up, they will find that their identities, values, and self-esteem cannot be cut off from their yellow skin, from the fact of being Chinese. Only when you find your roots will you be able to settle down, to identify yourself with your own [Chinese] culture. (Interview, Mrs Zhou)

These comments reflect the value the parents ascribe to the Chinese language. Confronted with the difficulties of maintaining the Chinese language and competing with mainstream languages, these parents counteract these influences by actively promoting their L1. In their eyes, ethnic identity is established and maintained through language use (Dagenais & Moore, 2008; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982).

Both groups of parents consider language a cultural tool necessary to gain access to culturally significant aspects of knowledge and information. In the Chinese parents' view, knowing Chinese will give the children continuity and a connection to the rituals and cultural norms of their heritage:

> As a Chinese, if you can't get in touch with our rich culture and its literature, such as the great poetry and prose in T'ang-Song period, [it is] a big shame. (Interview, Mrs Lin)

> I think Chinese culture is rich and broad. It [learning Chinese] is not just for the sake of maintaining your own culture . . . I think Chinese culture, as part of a civilization, has tremendous values. If he [the child] lost the language

> because of French or English, he would lose an opportunity to communicate with an ancient civilization ... (Interview, Mrs Zhou)

These comments reflect a view of language as a tool for transmitting cultural values from one generation to the next (Vygotsky, 1962, 1987). Similar comments are missing from interviews with the anglophone parents, which perhaps reflects the power and comfort afforded to 'majority' language members. Issues of cultural transmission are a given in the context of this community; the school choice is clearly one leading to additive bilingualism (Cummins, 1987), as exemplified in the comments made by these parents:

> The neighbourhood's all English. Her activities – most of her activities are bilingual but predominantly English. They do often give the instructions in English and then sort of repeat them in French, so she's hearing both languages. (Interview, Mrs Hughes)

With the importance of foundational support for the L1 assumed, both groups of parents also expressed belief systems that value multi/bilingualism as a resource within the reach of their children – but a resource that could be a missed opportunity. Mrs Qi emphasized that language can open one's horizons, describing language as 'a window to the world' – a metaphor that captures the essence of the additive function of multilingualism. She views French, for example, as not simply a language but a condition for new possibilities to occur. If such possibilities are not realized, she maintained, 'great resources are wasted.' Indeed, Montréal offers a unique context for immigrant children to become multilingual, and these parents are striving to give their children the means to acquire this linguistic capital:

> I still think it is [important] that she master the French language. It is equal to having an extra window to the world. Whatever she wants to do, that's her own business. But if you have already established a basis for her, then she has the possibility to explore; either she wants to study French literature or wants to know the French-speaking part of the world. You know, I always feel language is ... I don't know, maybe it is because I am a linguist, I just love languages. French is ... is a kind of art, so beautiful, a thing I can't express with words ... (Interview, Mrs Qi)

Similar sentiments are also held in Canadian contexts outside Québec (Dagenais & Moore, 2008), further highlighting the perception of available bilingual potential and the associated capital in Canada. The idea of providing a world of possibilities through bilingualism was also expressed by the anglophone parents:

> It's such a privilege to be able to send your children to a French school. (Interview, Mrs Pezek)

> One of the attractions of moving here was the opportunity to improve our French ... and I think to come here and live here and send your children to school in English ... I think it would be really missing an opportunity. (Interview, Mrs Davis)

> To have our children grow up learning two languages ... I think being bilingual or trilingual is the best thing, and it's a real gift. (Interview, Mrs Davis)

Both groups of parents also expressed practical motivations for providing multi/bilingual opportunities for their children, perceiving language as a means to resources (Luke & Kale, 1997) and an invaluable mediational tool. In Québec, French language proficiency can facilitate access to better career opportunities and educational advantages, and lack of such proficiency can be an obstacle to further advancement. In addition, the Chinese parents recognize the increasing importance of Chinese on the international scene. Finally, all parents share a belief in the power of English as an international language, and all acknowledged that English is a vital language for survival in the modern world. These convictions are consistent with the findings of other Canadian studies with respect to parental perceptions of their children's multiliteracy practices (Dagenais, 2003; Dagenais & Moore, 2008). In this regard, it is worth noting that the Chinese participant children also acquired proficiency in English and developed literacy abilities in English without formal English instruction:

> How can you not understand English? English is an international language. Wherever you go, you have to know English. The commercial language is English, the computer language is English, if you want to publish an article in a scientific journal, it has to be in English. We live in Canada – not learning English, impossible! (Interview, Mr Wang)

Mr Wang's perception of the power of English worldwide is shared by all the Chinese parents. As Mr Wang pointed out, English is used in international trade, at conferences around the world, for travelling, and for scientific communication. English has become a basic necessity to obtain a job or to pursue an academic career.

The usefulness and value of languages are clearly reflected by their perception of the market values of these languages, i.e. the advantages and opportunities these languages offer in different sociolinguistic contexts

The usefulness and value of languages are clearly reflected in parents' perceptions of the market values of these languages (i.e., the advantages and opportunities they offer in different sociolinguistic contexts). Most of the Chinese parents considered French a necessary tool for anyone wishing to work in Québec, given the bilingual nature of Québec society:

> We have to face the reality. In Québec, what are you going to do without French? Everyone is bilingual [English/French], even if you work at McDonald's you have to be bilingual. What can you do? Knowing two languages is a bonus, right? (Interview, Mr Qi)

This reality is echoed by the anglophone parents, whose dual purpose in their school selection is revealed in the comment below:

> [I]t's a choice you have to make if you want your children to succeed in a French environment. (Interview, Mrs Heath)

The value placed on multi/bilingual abilities by both groups is related to their own linguistic experiences. In the Chinese case, more than half the mothers arrived in Canada with little English and no French; they reported that the first and most difficult problem they experienced was the language barrier. Limited English made it difficult for them even to contact neighbours or communicate with other people in their immediate environments. Mrs Dong commented, 'I feel like a handicapped person; I can't do anything, not even fill in a registration form for my child's school.' Some of them have taken courses in English and French for quite an extended period, hoping that the languages they have acquired will enable them to pursue studies or find a job, but very few have succeeded. These bitter experiences and 'blocked opportunities' have become an incentive for them to push their children's English acquisition.

Being a non-immigrant or a native speaker of one of Canada's official languages, however, does not prevent exclusion or missed opportunities. Perhaps because of Canada's status as a bilingual nation in which the two languages represent two solitudes, some of the anglophone parents also commented on exclusions experienced due to lack of language:

> I have been in situations where I didn't always have a language, and I knew what it felt like, and I thought, If I can give them another language, well, then, why not. (Interview, Mrs Altman)

> Because I don't speak fluently, I thought, I've got to get him into French school, I don't want him to have the same barriers that I have. (Interview, Mrs Baker)

These parents' perceived inadequacies in French proficiency may have created more urgency to provide opportunities for their children to succeed. Some of these parents did not have sufficient L2 exposure in school themselves and, in the Québec context, consider it necessary for their children to be totally immersed in French in order to really develop ease and facility in that language.

Involvement and investment

The high expectations and aspirations of these parents and their positive perceptions of multi/bilingual education have profoundly influenced their investment and involvement in their children's multi/bilingual and literacy development. This is reflected through a range of activities, including providing rich literacy resources, making frequent library visits, reading books, helping with homework, hiring tutors, and supplementing the children's learning with extracurricular activities.

Through our study, issues of unequal access to the means and tools that parents need to support and be involved in their children's development emerged. Although in both communities the investment at home in multi/bilingual practices is similar, levels of involvement and presence in the respective schools differ.

Home support

The anglophone community is characterized by classic emergent literacy support in the home. Books and reading are valued and shared with the children as part of the fabric of daily life:

> We've read to those little rats [*laugh*] since they were three months old. (Interview, Mrs Heath)

> From the time they were in a big bed, stories every night. (Interview, Mrs Norton)

These parents understand and have acted on the importance of allowing children access to books and ownership of their own literate experiences by providing books that appeal to children's interests. Most of these parents mentioned that they frequent the community library, and a few also make story-time sessions a regular practice:

> Every week we go to the library ... we had done that with James up until he went to school, he was always in the story-time program. (Interview, Mrs Baker)

Research supports the fact that these practices develop children's sense of story and their ability to respond to and relate book reading experiences to other contexts (Sulzby & Teale, 1991).

> He knows the joy of a story, stories that he's understood and enjoyed ... it used to be 'there's no picture there, that's boring I don't want to read it' ... and I was saying to him I even preferred books without the pictures because then you get to build up in your own mind what these people look like and what's happened, so he realizes that after giving him a few pages, he'll start to get interested. (Interview, Mrs Altman)

A dominant theme running through the interviews with the anglophone parents was that their children will acquire a general ability to read, applicable to both French and English:

> I'm a teacher ... so the English reading ... would probably have to be not taught by me but just enhanced by me. ... In the past three or four months we've started reading English books; it's almost always English she's able to read. (Interview, Mrs Hughes)

> He's starting to be able to read phrases in French as such, so I think eventually it's going to click with the English too. (Interview, Mrs Altman)

Overall, the interviews with these parents revealed an informed, thoughtful, and rich involvement in their children's biliteracy development.

Attention to and involvement in their children's literacy practices also characterizes the Chinese community. The lack of literacy resources that marked these parents' upbringing in China appear to have fuelled a desire to provide their children with rich, meaningful, and encouraging literacy environments in their new country and to provide for literacy development in all three languages. As mentioned above, all the Chinese parents we interviewed send their children to a Chinese HL school, a common practice among this immigrant group (also see Dagenais & Moore, 2008). They try to avoid the traditional Chinese methods of text memorization while making Chinese books and other literacy resources available to their children, understanding that 'we have to make the conditions available when they are young' (Interview, Mrs Yang).

Apart from Chinese reading materials and entertainment videos, English books were the most visible reading materials in the homes of these families; thus, the children were exposed to the English alphabet at an early age. Nine of the 10 families have many English literacy resources such as magazines, fairy tales and popular children's book series, and Disney films. The Chen family has a set of English curriculum books that their daughter Mindy works with every day as an 'extracurricular' home activity. Most of the parents also read to their children in English.

Although the Chinese parents lack proficiency in French and, if given the choice, might have preferred to enrol their children in English schools, most of them are actively involved in their children's French literacy practices. They give their time to support their children, even though they could not necessarily help with specific homework tasks. Three families (Pan, Zhou, and Xu) hired tutors for their children to help them cope with their initial encounters with French. Mindy's father works for hours with two dictionaries to figure out what his daughter's homework is about; a few mothers have taken French courses in order to follow what is happening at school. These actions, involvements, and investments demonstrate the parents' concern for their children's education and multilingual development.

Involvement in schooling

Our study found that parents' perceptions of and attitudes toward education and multi/bilingualism, as well as their own school experiences, led to different types of involvement in their children's schooling. On the one hand, Chinese parents generally perceive Québec schools as loosely structured and the academic demands as unchallenging. They specifically pointed to the differences in educational philosophy between West and East and augmented their children's regular schooling by assigning additional homework, arranging tutorials, and investing in private lessons. A sociocultural practice developed in the homeland, providing supplementary educational experiences to their children is considered normal by Chinese immigrant parents and is found in their adopted new homes across countries (Dagenais & Moore, 2008; Zhou & Li, 2003; Zhou & Kim, 2006; Curdt-Christiansen, 2006). The anglophone parents, on the other hand, see the school and the FI program as offering a challenging environment, which they deem beneficial for their children. Thus, both groups of parents provide the desired challenges and opportunities for their children, even though their assessments of the school's ability to do this differ.

Despite the similarities in parents' investment in children's literacy practices in these two communities, we found major differences in the ways parents involve themselves in their children's activities at school. Chinese parents told us that they seldom participate in activities at school, believing education to be the territory of teachers and the school to be the authoritative source of knowledge; their absence from school could also be attributed to their lack of language competence in French. In contrast, the majority of anglophone parents have at least a functional knowledge of French. Furthermore, the anglophone parents reported volunteering actively and regularly in school activities; as mainstream parents, they could carry out their volunteer activities in English, if necessary, either in the classrooms or on parent committees:

> The home and school involvement, which is all parents, is phenomenal. (Interview, Mrs Hughes)

> There's also a lot of parent involvement at École Bord-du-Lac, parents are willing to fight for what they want. (Interview, Mrs Baker)

Recognition of the anglophone community in the school setting is evident in the fact that written communication with the parents is bilingual and that parent–teacher interviews may be conducted in either English or French; furthermore, parent meetings and volunteer activities are often conducted in English:

> Volunteers ... If we're having trouble getting a point across in French ... I can speak English ... I know the teachers don't mind switching to English if I don't understand what they've said to me. (Interview, Mrs Weston)

> École Bord-du-Lac made most sense because everything comes home bilingual. (Interview, Mrs Raymond)

> The meetings that they have are bilingual. (Interview, Mrs Thompson)

Thus, since the anglophone children in our study are enrolled in an FI program, parents' ability to communicate and interact with staff and other parents in the school community is not an issue: they can revert to English when the need arises. The concessions made to the English-speaking parents in FI, who make up 80% of the parent population at this school, clearly indicate that the program holds to the tenets of FI with respect to continued support for the L1 and inclusion of the English-speaking community.

In stark contrast, none of the Chinese parents in this study reported participating in school activities or having much contact with the mainstream schools, except in the case of parent–teacher conferences. In China, parents are seldom asked to involve themselves directly in school-arranged activities; the parents in our study brought this view of parents' relationship to school with them when they immigrated to Canada. Some of them attributed their lack of involvement to their lack of language competence, but others claimed that they did not see any point in contacting their children's schools:

> If Yangyang [her son] doesn't make trouble and the teacher does not ask me to go to school, I don't think it is necessary for me to go, right? (Interview, Mrs Yang)

> Go there to do what? I can't understand anything. I can barely understand English, plus the teacher speaks only French. I seldom participate in P-T conferences. (Interview, Mrs Dong)

Although the Chinese parents' involvement in their children's schooling may not seem very active or enthusiastic by Western standards, these parents do involve themselves in their children's education outside school. For example, nine families reported that they have their children study extra mathematics, either at home or at the Chinese HL school. This type of involvement was applauded by several parents, as illustrated by Mrs Wang's comments about extra math:

> We push her [daughter] a little, make her memorize some multiplication [problems]. When she goes to school, she finds math easy and relaxing. She gets good marks in math, which in turn also motivates her to be good at other subjects. So a little help and basic training at home will make it much easier for her at school. (Interview, Mrs Wang)

Mrs Wang emphasized the importance of high self-esteem in a child as a means of motivating further learning. The parents' narratives reveal that

Chinese parents not only hold high educational expectations and aspirations for their children but also have the social capital to translate these aspirations into reality. Providing 'basic training at home' both signals their commitment to and indicates their intensive involvement in their children's education. The high level of parental involvement is pervasive in terms of insistence on extra curriculum and provision of assistance with homework. Furthermore, these parents become involved in checking and correcting the numerous school assignments and in providing their children with further intellectual explanations and strategies if they run into difficulty in understanding school subjects. The philosophy behind this attitude is derived from the ancient Confucian notion of educability – the idea that 'all can learn.' According to this perspective, thorough preparation at home can also help children avoid 'asking stupid questions' in the classroom, a situation often dreaded by Chinese students. These extracurricular activities and supplementary homework reflect parents' wish to improve the quality of their children's education and reinforce their belief that academic excellence is the best way to ensure social success. This belief is consistent with the research showing that parental involvement acts as a powerful mediating variable in promoting educational attainment. For example, Louie (2001, 2004), in her investigation of the relationship between family background and educational attainment among Chinese-American immigrant youth, found that extensive involvement by parents and devotion of financial resources, energy, and time gave children a head start in what was perceived to be an unequal society. In a study of educational achievement of Asian-American immigrants, Zhou and Kim (2006) also found that the provision of supplementary education contributed greatly to Chinese immigrant children's academic achievement.

Conclusion

This comparative inquiry sheds light on some contextual factors that explain parents' support for their children's education and multi/bilingual development in two distinctly different language communities. Although the two communities present a stark contrast in terms of language status and national origins, they share values and philosophies with respect to both language and education. Canada's linguistic and cultural policies enacted over the past four decades have sought to promote multiculturalism within a bilingual framework (Noels & Clément, 1998). In our research contexts, Québec's monolingual and protectionist language policies overlaid these federalist policies, with a focus on French and English; nevertheless, the immigrant population of

Québec has created a vibrant multilingual and multicultural environment, a fact that is not overtly recognized in the public discourse. Our discussion of the findings underscores the need to provide a more nuanced description of how minority groups differ and also to attend to the similar ways in which they engage successfully with the educational programs available to them (Luke, 2004).

Our study confirms that parents' high educational expectations and aspirations can contribute positively to their children's academic success and multi/bilingual development. Our findings from research in the Chinese community suggest that Chinese parents endeavour to impart values of hard work and perseverance to their children; the findings also suggest that these Chinese parents' immigrant experiences and their optimistic views on education have strongly influenced their expectations and aspirations for their children's multilingual development and high academic achievement. The anglophone parents hold similar aspirations for their children, as revealed by their deliberate choice of a school program deemed to best promote bilingual proficiency and provide academic challenge. Interestingly, we found – perhaps simply because the anglophone parents are in the position of being able to chose among different programs for their children, whereas the Chinese parents are restricted by Québec law to French schools only – that the anglophone parents place more of the responsibility for their children's academic challenge on the school, while the Chinese parents assume this responsibility themselves.

In the two communities described in this study, multi/bilingualism is considered a valuable form of socio-economic and linguistic capital for advancement. The participating parents contribute to their children's attainment of multi/bilingualism by providing the requisite multi/bilingual contexts, actively maintaining the L1 in the home and outside the school context while actively supporting the school language to the best of their abilities and resources. The Chinese community's commitment to multilingualism is further extended through their active provision and support of English as a third language. Their perceptions of the value of multilingual proficiencies are clearly related to the market values of different languages. In both communities, the perspective articulated echoes an instrumental motivation for the attainment of French/English bilingualism, which they deem necessary for advancement. However, it remains for the children to forge their own multi/bilingual identities within the ever-evolving multilingual nature of Québec.

These parents expressed their beliefs that language use frames and defines sociocultural identity, that language is a cultural tool enabling their children to gain access to culturally significant aspects of knowledge and information. Underlying this belief for both Chinese and anglophone parents is an understanding of the importance of fostering a sense of identity in the L1. How this plays out in their different contexts exemplifies one of the contrasts in this study. The Chinese parents emphasized the children's sense of belonging within their L1 and culture; they believe that identity can be validated through the development of the L1 and that the Chinese language serves as a mediator for Chinese culture and values. In the anglophone case, similar beliefs are evident in the absence of comments, exemplifying the power and comfort afforded to official language communities.

Our study also sheds light on the value of cooperation between parents and schools and on the need to understand cultural positioning and blocked opportunities caused by limited language abilities. Mainstream educators and teachers should be aware of cultural differences and linguistic barriers and of the particular challenges that parents must overcome when immigrating to Canada. They should take the initiative to collaborate with parents of minority backgrounds. Such collaboration can be of great importance in engendering parental involvement in their children's school activities.

Collaboration between teachers and parents entails shared responsibilities in decision making and shared accountability for outcomes. As Friend and Cook (1996, p. 6) suggest, collaboration is 'a style for direct interaction between at least two coequal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal.' Such collaboration can empower parents as equal partners in their children's education. This comparative study also emphasizes that including parents in school activities requires accepting the linguistic and cultural identities of students, thus creating a positive learning environment of mutual respect and trust among students, parents, and teachers.

Finally, the study suggests that parents can provide valuable resources for their children to develop multi/bilingual skills and pursue other literacy and academic activities both in and outside school. Teachers, being advocates for students, should continually seek ways to build a shared repertoire of successful strategies for multi/bilingual children. Recognizing, embracing, and celebrating parents' involvement in school activities means bringing their knowledge into the classroom, thereby empowering parents and adding multiple resources for pedagogical uses and practices.

Correspondence should be addressed to **Xiao Lan Curdt-Christiansen,** National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, 1 Nanyang Walk, Singapore 637616. E-mail: xiaolan.christiansen@nie.edu.sg. Or, **Caroline**

© 2010 *The Canadian Modern Language Review/La Revue canadienne des langues vivantes*, 66, 4 (June/juin), 525–555

Riches, Faculty of Education, McGill University, 3700 McTavish Street, Montréal, Québec, H3A 1Y2, Canada. E-mail:caroline.riches@mcgill.ca.

Notes

1 Legislation commonly referred to as 'Bill 101' requires that all children attend French-medium schools except those with a parent who received the majority of his or her elementary education in English in Canada.
2 The terms *multi/bilingual*, *multi/biliterate*, and so on are employed when referring to both communities; *bilingual, biliterate*, and so on when referring to the anglophone community exclusively; and *multilingual, multiliterate*, and so on when referring to the Chinese community exclusively.
3 All participant and school names are pseudonyms.
4 Excerpts from transcripts of interviews conducted in Mandarin are given here in English translation. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are by the corresponding author.

References

Angrosino, M.V., & May de Pérez, A. (2000). Rethinking observation: From method to context. In N. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 673–702). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bell, J.S. (1997). *Literacy, culture and identity.* New York: Peter Lang.

Carey, S. (1991). The culture of literacy in majority and minority language schools. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 47, 950–976.

Cashion, M., & Eagan, R. (1990). Spontaneous reading and writing in English by students in total French immersion. *English Quarterly*, *22*, 30–44.

Cummins, J. (1976). Delaying native language reading instruction in immersion programs: A cautionary note. *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 34*, 46–49.

Cummins, J. (1987). Bilingualism, language proficiency, and metalinguistic development. In P. Homel & M. Palij (Eds.), *Childhood bilingualism: Aspects of linguistic, cognitive, and social development* (pp. 57–73). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Cummins, J. (1993). Bilingualism and second language learning. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *13*, 51–70. doi:10.1017/S0267190500002397

Curdt-Christiansen, X.-L. (2006). Teaching and learning Chinese: Heritage language classroom discourse in Montreal. *Journal of Language, Culture and Curriculum*, *19*(2), 189–207. doi:10.1080/07908310608668762

Curdt-Christiansen, X.-L. (2008). Reading the world through words: Cultural themes in heritage Chinese language textbooks. *Language and Education*, *22*(2), 95–113. doi:10.2167/le721.0

Dagenais, D. (2003). Accessing imagined communities through multilingualism and immersion education. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education*, *2*, 269–283. doi:10.1207/S15327701JLIE0204_3

Dagenais, D., & Day, E. (1999). Trilingual children in French immersion. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, *56*, 99–123.

Dagenais, D., Day, E., & Toohey, K. (2006). A multilingual child's literacy practices and contrasting identities in the figured worlds of French immersion classrooms. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *9*, 205–218.

Dagenais, D., & Moore, D. (2008). Représentations des littératies plurilingues, de l'immersion en français et des dynamiques identitaires chez des parents chinois. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, *65*, 11–31. doi:10.3138/cmlr.65.1.11

Duff, P., & Uchida, Y. (1997). The negotiation of teachers' sociocultural identities and practices in post secondary EFL classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly*, *31*, 451–487.

Fagan, W., & Eagan, R. (1990). The writing behaviour in French and English of Grade Three French immersion children. *English Quarterly*, *22*, 157–168.

Ferdman, B. (1990). Literacy and cultural identity. *Harvard Educational Review*, *60*, 181–204.

Friend, M., & Cook, L. (1996). *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals*. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Genesee, F. (1978). A longitudinal evaluation of an early immersion school program. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *4*, 31–50. doi:10.2307/1494684

Genesee, F. (1987). *Learning through two languages.* Cambridge, MA: Newbury House.

Geva, E., & Clifton, S. (1994). The development of first and second language reading skills in early French immersion. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, *50*, 646–667.

Gregory, E. (Ed.). (1997). *One child, many worlds: Early learning in multicultural communities.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Gumperz, J.J., & Cook-Gumperz, J. (1982). Introduction: Language and the communication of social identity. In J.J. Gumperz (Ed.), *Language and social identity* (pp. 1–12). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heath, S. (1983). *Ways with words.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hudelson, S. (1992). Reading in a bilingual program. *Canadian Children*, *17*, 13–25.

Hudelson, S. (1994). Literacy development of second language children. In F. Genesee (Ed.), *Educating second language children: The whole child, the whole curriculum, the whole community* (pp. 129–158). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kao, G. (1995). Asian Americans as model minorities? A look at their academic performance of immigrant youth. *American Journal of Education*, *103*, 121–159.

Kao, G. (1998). Educational aspirations of minority youth. *American Journal of Education*, *106*, 349–384. doi:10.1086/444188

Kao, G., & Tienda, M. (1995). Optimism and achievement: The educational performance of immigrant youth. *Social Science Quarterly*, *76*(1), 1–19.

Kao, G., & Tienda, M. (1998). Educational aspirations of minority youth. *American Journal of Education*, *106*, 349–384. doi:10.1086/444188

Kao, G., Tienda, M., & Schneider, B. (1996). Racial and ethnic variation in academic performance. *Research in Sociology of Education and Socialization*, *11*, 263–297.

Kendall, J., LaJeunesse, G., Chmilar, P., Shapson, L., & Shapson, S. (1987). English reading skills of French immersion students in kindergarten and Grades 1 and 2. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *22*, 135–159. doi:10.2307/747662

Lamarre, P., & Dagenais, D. (2004). Language practices of trilingual youth in two Canadian cities. In C. Hoffmann & J. Ytsma (Eds.), *Trilingualism in family, school and community* (pp. 53–74). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Lambert, W., & Tucker, G. (1972). *Bilingual education of children.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Louie, V. (2001). Parents' aspirations and investment: The role of social class in the educational experiences of 1.5 and second-generation Chinese Americans. *Harvard Educational Review*, *71*, 438–473.

Louie, V. (2004). *Compelled to excel: Immigration, education, and opportunity among Chinese Americans*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Luke, A. (2004). On the material consequences of literacy. *Language and Education*, *18*, 331–334. doi:10.1080/09500780408666886

Luke, A., & Kale, J. (1997). Learning through difference: Cultural practices in early childhood language socialisation. In E. Gregory (Ed.), *One child, many worlds* (pp. 11–29). New York: Teachers College Press.

Melikoff, O. (1972). Parents as change agents in education: The St. Lambert experiment. In W. Lambert & G. Tucker (Eds.), *Bilingual education of children* (pp. 221–236). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Moll, L.C. (1992). Bilingual classroom studies and community analysis: Some recent trends. *Educational Researcher*, *21*(3), 20–24. doi:10.2307/1176576

Moll, L., & Greenberg, J. (1990). Creating zones of possibilities. In L. Moll (Ed.), *Vygotsky and education: Instructional implications and applications of*

sociohistorical psychology (pp. 319–348). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Noels, K., & Clément, R. (1998). Language in education: Bridging educational policy and social psychological research. In J. Edwards (Ed.), *Language in Canada* (pp. 102–124). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and social change*. Harlow, UK: Longman.
Norton-Peirce, B. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly, 29*, 9–13. doi:10.2307/3587803
Ogbu, J.U. (1995). Cultural problems in minority education: Their interpretations and consequences, Part 2: Case studies. *Urban Review*, *27*, 189–205.
Ricciardelli, L. (1992). Bilingualism and cognitive development in relation to threshold theory. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, *21*, 301–316. doi:10.1007/BF01067515
Riches, C., & Genesee, F. (2006). Literacy: Crosslinguistic and crossmodal issues. In F. Genesee, K. Lindholm-Leary, W. Saunders & D. Christian (Eds.), *Educating English Language Learners* (pp. 64–108). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Schecter, S., & Bayley, R. (1997). Language socialization practices and cultural identity: case studies of Mexican-descent families in California and Texas. *TESOL Quarterly, 31*, 513–541. doi:10.2307/3587836
Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (1990). *Language literacy and minorities.* London: Minority Rights Group.
Skutnabb-Kangas, T., & Garcia, O. (1995). Multilingualism for all – General principles? In T. Skutnabb-Kangas (Ed.), *Multilingualism for all* (pp. 221–256). Lisse, The Netherlands: Swets & Zeitlinger.
Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (Eds.). (1987). *Interpretive ethnography of education: At home and abroad.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Statistics Canada. (2007a). Language spoken most often at home by immigrant status and broad age groups, 2006 counts, for Canada and census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations – 20% sample data (table). *Immigration and citizenship highlight tables: 2006 census.* Ottawa: Author. (Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 97-557-XWE2006002)
Statistics Canada. (2007b). 2006 *Community profiles: 2006 census*. Ottawa: Author. (Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 92-591-XWE.)
Stevenson, H., Lee, S., & Stigler, J. (1986). Mathematics achievement of Chinese, Japanese, and American children. *Science*, *231*, 693–699. doi:10.1126/science.3945803
Street, B. (2003). What's 'new' in New Literacy Studies? Critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, *5*, 77–91.

Sulzby, E., & Teale, W. (1991). Emergent literacy. In R. Barr, M. Kamil, P. Mosenthal & P. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 2, pp. 727–758). New York: Longman.

Swain, M., & Johnson, R. (1997). Immersion education, a category within bilingual education. In R. Johnson & M. Swain (Eds.), *Immersion education: International perspectives* (pp. 1–16). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (1982). *Evaluating bilingual education.* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Taylor, D., & Dorsey-Gaines, C. (1988). *Growing up literate: Learning from inner-city families.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Vygotsky, L. (1962). *Thought and language.* HanfmannE., & VakarG. (Trans. & Eds.). Cambridge, MA: MIT. Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner & , & Kim, S.S. (2006). Community forces, social capital, and educational achievement: The case of supplementary education in the Chinese and Korean immigrant communities. *Harvard Educational Review*, 76, 1–31.

Zhou, M., & Li, X. (2003). Ethnic language schools and the development of supplementary education in the immigrant Chinese community in the United States. In C. Suarez-Orozco & L.G. Li. Todorova (Eds.), *New directions for youth development: Understanding the social worlds of immigrant youth* (pp. 57–73). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.