

Language for Native, Ethnic, or Recent Immigrant Groups: What's the Difference?

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This paper compares and contrasts conditions of language in education for Native people, recent immigrants, and other residents of Canada who identify strongly with linguistic roots other than English or French. The relationships among the Native, official, and minority languages and their speakers and learners are explored with respect to: (1) meeting needs for official language learning; (2) accommodating interest in supporting maintenance/revival of minority languages in order to strengthen

the ethnic heritage of Canada; and (3) the need in Canada to exploit its linguistic resources. Conditions of language in education are described in terms of linguistic and ethnic contexts, geographic contexts, literacy contexts, and jurisdictional contexts. Implications are drawn regarding areas of potential collaboration among groups as well as areas in which the needs of a particular group must be given individual attention.

INTRODUCTION

The linguistic totality of Canada includes the languages of Canada's Native (aboriginal) peoples as first and continuing inhabitants of this country, English and French as the languages of the "founding nations" of Canada, enshrined in the *Official Languages Act* of 1968-9, and the many other languages which have been brought to Canada and have been variably preserved by linguistic groups which have immigrated to Canada. The purpose of this paper is to look at relationships among these languages and their speakers and learners with respect to: (1) meeting the educational needs of those Canadians who do not speak an official language; (2) accommodating interest in supporting maintenance/revival of minority languages of ethnic and aboriginal groups in Canada for the purposes of strengthening the ethnic heritage of Canada; and (3) the need for Canada to exploit its linguistic resources in terms of its ability to communicate with the rest of the world for diplomatic, trade, cultural, or other purposes.

Given the complexity of Canada's current ethnic, linguistic, and educational realities, it is evident that only the most general issues and facts can

be considered here. The focus is on the differences and similarities among the linguistic situations of various groups of language learners and users in Canada and on existing or potential approaches to language teaching in light of these situations. The intention is to explore ways in which educators can collaborate and share their resources when situations are similar enough to permit this and to indicate aspects of language education for specific groups or situations which are unique and demand special treatment.

For the purpose of this paper, the Canadian population is grouped primarily as (1) Native, (2) immigrants or Canadian born inhabitants who identify themselves to some relevant degree with a linguistic heritage other than that of English or French, and (3) the rest of the population which presumably is English or French speaking and does not identify itself with other linguistic heritages. This grouping is untidy, since it is based on vague distinctions and leaves a number of possibilities unaddressed, but for the general purposes of this discussion it provides a rough demarcation. Within the first two groups there are subgroups who speak English or French fluently, possibly as their mother tongue, as well as those who do not. In exploring the linguistic situations of these groups and the implications for language education, the one aspect to be excluded is the learning of a second official language by individuals who already speak the other. Thus, the concern is with the interaction between the official languages as a set and all the other languages in Canada.

A final but significant point about the structure of this paper is that the situation of Native people will receive the most prominence in the discussion. The reason for this balance is that the Native group is the smallest of the three, and its characteristics are the least well-known in the field of Canadian education. Thus, if awareness is to be raised in a paper such as this one about commonalities or unique needs in Canadian language education, providing information about the Native situation should be a priority.

In this vein, a point of departure for the discussion below is the position taken by TESL Canada's Interest Group on Language Development in Native Education. At a symposium in March 1982 in Winnipeg, which resulted in the establishment of the Interest Group, the participants unanimously agreed to frame all consideration of issues in the field with the following perspective:

No aspect of language services to Native peoples should be considered separately: issues concerning English as a second language (ESL), standard English as a second dialect (ESD), and Native languages must always be considered in light of one another...

'Bilingual education' was the term used at the symposium to

convey the need to include both English and the Native languages as mediums and subjects of instruction in school programs. It has different definitions, because there are different balances between English and Native languages in Native community life in different parts of the country. There are many educational models for arranging the English and Native language components. For example, bilingual education could mean English-medium education, perhaps with an ESL component, and Native language as a subject of instruction, or it could mean a Native-medium program with English introduced as a second language. (Burnaby and Elson 1982:9-10)

The consideration of language situations and language education in Canada below is divided into four contexts — linguistic and ethnic, geographic, literacy, and jurisdictional. These contexts have been chosen because they are particularly significant for language in Native education, and because they provide the opportunity for useful contrasts between the language situations and educational services of all the groups under consideration.

LINGUISTIC AND ETHNIC CONTEXT

In Canada, approximately 65 Native (aboriginal) languages are spoken, grouped into eleven language families which are, according to linguistic theory, as different from each other as Slavic languages are from Romance languages (Foster 1982). From the 1981 Census data it appears that the Native *ethnic* population of Canada is about 2.2% (480,820) of the total Canadian population. Of that group only 29% reported that a Native language was their mother tongue with 22% reporting a Native language as the home language. Some Native languages have a substantial number of mother tongue speakers (Cree at 65,865) and others have only a handful (Haida at 65) if the census figures are to be believed. Some groups report high Native language use by mother tongue speakers as language in the home (Inuit 68%) compared with Wakashan languages (20%). Among the Inuit, 34% reported that they spoke neither official language, while only about 4% of the Amerindians said that they spoke neither English nor French. Except in east-central Quebec, Native people are much more likely to speak English rather than French as their official language (Burnaby and Beaujot forthcoming).

In comparison, the 1981 Census indicated approximately 20% of the Canadian population as identifying their ancestry as other than British, French, or Native. The largest group is the Germans with more than a million members. Census figures show 13% of Canadian residents as speaking non-official and non-Native languages as mother tongue languages. The entire world range of language families is represented.

These languages and ethnic groups vary with respect to the numbers and proportions in which their members have their ethnic language as their mother tongue and/or home language. For example, 1,142,365 people reported German as their sole ethnic origin; and 515,510 people gave German as their mother tongue. If we assume that the German mother tongue speakers all reported themselves as ethnically German, the percentage of Germans who have German as their mother tongue is 45. Of the mother tongue speakers of German, 30% reported that they use German as their home language.¹ By contrast, 18% of the Norwegian ethnic group gave Norwegian as their mother tongue, and only 7% of the Norwegian mother tongue speakers reported speaking it as their home language. Of the Vietnamese ethnic group, 91% gave Vietnamese as their mother tongue, and 83% of the mother tongue speakers used it as their home language.

In total only 9% of mother tongue speakers of non-official languages in Canada indicated that they spoke neither English nor French. Many groups have virtually no members who speak neither official language (e.g. Norwegians at .05%), while other groups show a fairly high proportion (e.g. the Vietnamese at 24%). It is evident that many of the non-Native ethnic/linguistic groups in Canada are larger than the individual Native language/ethnic groups and that home language maintenance for some is stronger.

A critical point here is the relationship between the official languages and other languages in the country. Historically, Native peoples have maintained their own languages as mother tongue and home languages more strongly, in the face of the power of the official languages, than any of the other ethnic/linguistic groups (Wardhaugh 1983). However, throughout this century, the percentage of Native people who were mother tongue speakers of a Native language has begun to decline rapidly, for example, from 87% in 1951 to 29% in 1981. Geographic isolation and other factors have favoured Native language maintenance for some Native language groups and in some areas of the country. However, other Native languages have already become extinct and the majority of others are greatly at risk (Burnaby and Beaujot 1987; Foster 1982).

In relation to the struggle for survival of any minority language in Canada, the Native languages have a unique challenge. There is no other source of support for these languages: they have no other homeland outside of Canada. It is true that Canadian Native languages have relatives in the United States and around the Arctic Circle, but these languages are generally under as much pressure as those in Canada. With the exception of the situation in Greenland and in some parts of the Soviet Union, none of these languages is in a position of being an official or

semi-official language. Also, the resources of one language are only of limited help to a related language. If French were lost in the world, the fact that Portuguese and Spanish still existed would not be of much help.

The other minority languages in Canada generally receive a great deal of support through continuing immigration from countries in which these languages are spoken. Print and other media resources from outside of Canada can be used to strengthen the minority languages in Canada, and international travel can help Canadians develop and renew their language skills. The importance of international resources for the support of minority languages in Canada should be neither overestimated nor underestimated. In comparing the situation of the Native languages with that of the other minority languages, it is clear that an external source of support in terms of immigrants and international communication is critical. On the other hand, those involved in minority language education and development point out that the Canadian context for each of these languages is unique to Canada. New dialects are forming; the cultural climate in Canada is different from that in the original country; many users of these languages are not fluent speakers or are learning the language as a second language; learners in Canada have different purposes and functions for their use of the language than do people in countries in which these languages are official languages (Danesi 1984). In other words, a good proportion of the resources to support the minority languages must be developed here for the specific needs, purposes, and conditions of people in Canada.

The next issue, then, is where are the will and the resources to come from to support any of the minority languages. There is a general sense of moral commitment to the maintenance of the Native languages as the languages of the first nations of Canada, but there appears to be only a minimum of will to provide the support necessary. It is this writer's sense that most of the Canadian population sees Native languages as museum pieces; thus, there are some resources made available to document and study them. However, the conditions necessary to preserve them in real life have not been set up to any significant degree as Native and non-Native people alike struggle with the many demands on their attention and resources in a rapidly changing world of communication and economic patterns. Some Native groups are putting Native language support higher on their priority lists recently because they link the uniqueness of Native languages and cultures with their chances of success in establishing their own political identities (Chambers 1985).

With respect to the other minority or 'heritage' languages, there is less of a sense of moral commitment than for the Native languages and, at the same time, less of a sense of urgency because the very existence of these languages in the world is not threatened if they are not developed in

Canada. With few exceptions among the ethnic groups, Native people are statistically the most economically disadvantaged people in Canada (Lanphier et al. 1980:230-1). This means that other ethnic group members are more likely than the Native people to have their own resources to devote to language maintenance if they have the will. In addition, a number of foreign governments are willing to support activities in Canada which will enhance the learning of their languages and promote the profile of their cultures. Finally, there is always some general interest on the part of the Canadian population at large to learn major world languages such as Chinese or Portuguese for personal, professional, or national interests. Many ethnic groups can take advantage of this interest to develop resources which will benefit their own members as well as the general population. Native groups and groups whose languages have a lower profile internationally, such as Fijian or some of the African languages, do not benefit from this factor.

The linguistic/ethnic groups in Canada vary in their experience with the official languages. Currently, Native people appear to be ambivalent about the official languages; they recognize the importance of learning them as a tool for economic participation in the life of the country, but are uneasy about the power of the official languages to overwhelm and crowd out the Native languages (National Indian Brotherhood 1972). The statistics on Native language maintenance given above show that Native peoples' fears about having their languages lost to the power of English and French are well founded. Since Native people were here before 'founding nations' came, one would think that teaching of official languages to Native people and recognition of their language interests would have been handled sensitively. While a variety of approaches by individuals, institutions, and governments have been taken over the centuries, the majority could not be characterized as sensitive (Tschantz 1980; Howard 1983; Toohey 1982; Burnaby 1980).

Immigrants, who have chosen to come to Canada (more or less freely depending on circumstances), are generally inclined to accept the dominant role of the official languages in Canada and to expect to have to learn one of them. However willing and interested they may be, one should never underestimate the trauma and frustration that is experienced by learners of a language in a context in which that language is the medium of communication in almost all aspects of life around them. Until the 1960s, language teaching services for immigrants were almost entirely on a charitable basis. Even today, it is difficult to foster public opinion towards the view that it is in Canada's interests to provide official language education services to immigrants so that they can participate fully as citizens and away from the view that immigrants came here of their own choice and should not expect Canada to accommodate their needs. Sim-

ilarly, it is difficult to promote the view that immigrants and minority language speaking Canadians contribute to the country's linguistic resources rather than the view that minority languages create harmful social divisions.

THE GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

While Native people are increasingly moving from reserves and other isolated communities to larger towns and cities, a considerable majority still live in small communities with almost exclusively Native populations. An analysis of the 1981 census figures indicates that Native people in isolated communities were much more likely than those elsewhere to have a Native mother tongue and home language (Burnaby and Beaujot 1987). Patterns of immigration have distributed other ethnic groups across the country in many types of communities, but recent immigrants come far more frequently to the largest urban centres in Canada.

Teaching Official Languages as Second Languages

These geographic distributions have implications for the teaching of official languages as second languages. Recent immigrant learners of English or French are usually in situations in which there are myriad opportunities for them to hear and use the language in and out of formal learning situations — often more than they can or want to handle for a while. Classes for immigrant learners are often made up of people from many different language backgrounds. Thus, materials and learning activities are usually designed to address a diverse learner population. It is assumed, however, that these learners have one objective — survival in the urban situation — and, to this end, the content focuses closely on the everyday realities of the urban context. It is also assumed that the learners will be motivated by their immediate need for the language being taught to them and that their learning will be reinforced outside of the classroom as they interact with English or French speaking Canadians. ESL/FSL learning opportunities are offered to immigrants of all age groups.

In these respects, the context for the teaching of official languages differs radically for most Native language speaking learners. Most ESL/FSL teaching is provided to Native people through the elementary schools or to adults who are planning to enter some other kind of training. The young Native learners are almost exclusively living in small, rural, all-Native communities in which the medium of communication for almost all activities is in the Native language. The elementary school is often the only English/French medium institution. Materials for ESL/FSL designed for immigrant learners are inappropriate for Native

learners on several grounds. First, the content — urban life situations — is incomprehensible to people whose transportation to other communities is only by plane or boat, whose community does not contain a building taller than one story, who know most of the inhabitants of their community by name, and so on. Second, the pedagogical approach must take into consideration the fact that the learners have little access to experience with English or French outside of the classroom. This condition is beginning to change as radio and television are becoming available in remote areas, but this does not change the fact that there is little opportunity, much less necessity, for face-to-face communication with monolingual speakers of English or French.

The latter point entails a larger issue, that of the motivation of these learners to learn English or French. The social value is unclear. While Native parents are generally united in viewing education as a means by which their children can be better integrated into Canada's economic system and in viewing fluency in an official language as an important part of this process, there are problems in motivating young children to work towards a distant goal, particularly if there is an underlying pessimism in the community about the economic prospects for community residents with or without good educational qualifications. Native learners can be expected to feel that learning an official language is an extra burden that has been thrust upon them. Unlike the recent immigrants, they cannot look back to a choice they or their parents have made to come to Canada, weighing difficulties against benefits. They may want to take advantage of benefits through participation in the majority society, but they do not want to compromise their own linguistic and cultural heritage in doing so. Mallon sees motivation for official language learning in Native communities as more instrumental than integrative, that is, the learning of *foreign* languages to accomplish ends within the community's cultural context rather than learning a language as part of a process of integrating oneself into another culture (Mallon 1982).

Using Minority Languages to Teach School Content

Given these circumstances, why do we not have Native medium schooling for all Native-speaking children? Historically, there have been a number of interesting approaches taken to Native medium education by individuals and institutions. However, particularly in this century, most schooling for Native people has been conducted by non-Native governments and church organizations and has been largely based on assimilationist goals even though the curriculum and programs have been often quite different from those for the rest of the population. Official language

medium of instruction has been almost universal.

During the 1970s, there was a Cree medium of instruction program based mostly in one community in Manitoba. Following the *James Bay Agreement* between the Native peoples of arctic Quebec and the federal and Quebec governments, the Cree and Inuit populations have established their own school boards. The Inuit school board has instituted a program of Inuktitut medium of instruction until the end of grade three with Inuktitut as the first language of literacy. English or French is introduced slowly as the medium of instruction for some subjects after grade three. The Cree school board started off with the intention of establishing a similar type of program but encountered concerns on the part of many parents that their children would not learn English or French well enough if Cree were emphasized too much in the schools (Tanner 1981). The government of the Northwest Territories now has an Inuktitut medium of instruction program in most Inuit communities.

It seems apparent that several factors are critical in decisions about Native medium of instruction. It is unlikely that such programs will be set up in school systems in which there is little or no Native power to direct policies. In the Manitoba Cree medium situation, Native leadership and initiative played a crucial role; the two Quebec school boards are Native run; and Native people form a majority of the population and legislative representatives of the Northwest Territories. There also has to be the will and the conviction on the part of Native leaders *and the community in general* that it is important to support the Native language and that such support is not going to compromise the learning of the official languages or school success in general. Finally, the difficulty of developing the resources to teach school programs comparable to those in all other schools in Canada *and* through the medium of a Native language has been daunting to those who have considered the possibility and a major challenge to those who have attempted it.

The use of other minority languages as medium of instruction for learners in Canada who do not speak English or French has, as in the Native situation, had a chequered history. While the teaching of English/French as a second language has developed rapidly since the 1960s as a means of easing the entry of immigrants into Canadian society in general and into schooling in particular, the approach of using non-official (and non-Native) languages as medium of instruction for content teaching has not been much used (Shapson and Purbhoo 1974). One common argument against it is that immigrants are often served by school systems and other institutions which have to deal with many different ethnic/linguistic groups. The problem of being fair to all potential clients, to say nothing of the expense of creating programs in many different languages, always exists in the mixed ethnic urban

situations where most recent immigrants live. Another point is that immigrants often have integrative goals and are not particularly motivated to focus on their first language when they could be developing proficiency in the official language.

There is always the option of mother tongue medium private schooling supported by the ethnic community. This course of action is not often taken for recent immigrants, presumably because of the motivational factor and the cost, although people who enter Canada for a short period of time for diplomatic or business purposes sometimes follow this route. In some provinces, legislation has made it difficult for private and/or public schools to offer credit programs through the medium of any language other than the official one(s). If the political will on the part of the Canadian population to support the teaching of English and French as second languages to immigrants has been low, on the grounds that Canadians should not have to pay for the integration of those people who have chosen to come here, it is predictably negative to any suggestion that minority language content teaching should be provided.

It should be noted that, in the past few years, the combination of official second language teaching and the teaching of Canadian survival skills in the learners' first language has been used for the purpose of introducing some immigrant adults to life in Canada. These publically supported programs are often taught through the auspices of community agencies which have strong ties with ethnic communities. Presumably it was just such agencies which were already offering mother tongue support on an informal basis for those immigrants who were having difficulties adjusting to life in Canada.

Minority Language Maintenance

Setting aside the needs for Native or other minority language speakers to learn an official language and to cope with getting a Canadian education or even generally getting along in Canadian society, what is being done to develop the mother tongue linguistic skills of these speakers for their own benefit and to enhance the linguistic resources of the country? Ironically, it appears to this writer, very little. Focus seems to be placed on teaching them the official languages and integrating them into Canadian life. With this focus, the mother tongue appears as part of the problem, or at least irrelevant, rather than as part of the solution to getting a full education. Any support that is available to them is often confounded in schools' attempts to meet simultaneously the needs of mother tongue speakers, those of learners from that linguistic/ethnic group who no longer speak the language, and those of other Canadians who have chosen to learn the language for their own reasons.

The most common approach is to offer non-official languages as sub-

jects of instruction, usually starting from the middle or higher elementary school grades. In all-Native-speaking communities, it is likely that the students' needs will be relatively uniform. Elsewhere, it is often the case that Native speaking learners and speakers of other minority languages will take part in programs in which the student body will consist of speakers, passive bilinguals, and complete beginners. The distribution of the linguistic/ethnic populations in Canada and the economy of the education systems makes it difficult to find more effective solutions, but the result is frequently frustrating for the learners, teachers, administrators, and the ethnic communities alike.

It should be noted that, before public schooling began to institute minority language education programs, there existed a range of minority language programs offered by community agencies such as religious organizations. For Native people, Native language courses are often offered through Native cultural and friendship centres. This area of support for all minority languages continues to be important. Indeed, most of the public programs depend heavily on these foci of community interest, commitment, and resources. Programs offered by such institutions generally have the same problems with mixed levels of fluency as the public school programs have. However, they are less likely to attract a clientele of learners who are of ethnic backgrounds other than those related to the language being taught.

Minority Languages Learned as Second Languages

Following from the section above, the obvious point here is that minority languages in Canada are generally taught to people who do not speak them, rather than to speakers. For those who would like to see minority languages taught as a means for developing ethnic pride and the existing linguistic resources of Canada, such programs are often viewed as tokenism rather than a concerted effort to produce effective results (Clarke and MacKenzie 1980). Community members sometimes express concern that their languages, when they are taught for credit at all, are given low priority in the overall academic program.

An important development in this area is the establishment of minority language immersion programs following the model of French immersion programs for English-speaking children. These programs are intended to provide intensive second language learning opportunities for children who do not speak the language by giving them schooling through the medium of the second language. A number of these have been started both for some Native languages and for some other minority languages. The role of community leadership in either situation is critical since the success of the program depends not only on getting the cooperation of the

local educational authorities but also on getting and maintaining the support of the parents of the children. As noted above with respect to minority language medium of instruction programs for children who already speak the language, the problems of staff and materials development are onerous. The problem is specially great for Native languages and for other minority languages which are not the medium of instruction for schooling anywhere else in the world. For these languages, there are no pre-existing textbooks, however pedagogically unsuitable. Also, it is unlikely that there will be available in Canada any teachers who have been trained as teachers of these languages as first much less second languages. Some of the other minority language problems take advantage of the fact that teachers trained and experienced in teaching in other countries can be hired to work in Canadian programs.

THE LITERACY CONTEXT

Native languages and some of the other minority languages need to be considered specially with respect to the fact that the background of literacy in those languages is not the same as that of the official languages. There are writing systems developed for almost all of the Native languages in Canada. Some of these have had more than a century of popular use; others are recent and not used much in community life. The history of literacy for some of the immigrant groups to Canada, for example, the Hmong people from southeast Asia who have had a written system for their language for only a few years, also needs to be taken into careful consideration in language education.

A number of factors need to be accounted for when the role of minority language literacy in any sort of language education is developed. In Native education, for example, programs for Native students must reflect the fact that writing systems for most Native languages are not standardized in the sense that speakers of one language do not necessarily agree on one writing system, the spelling of individual words, or even the dialect which should be represented in any given piece of text (Burnaby ed. 1985). It is not necessarily the case that Native people expect everyone in the community to be equally literate in the Native language; in other words, some people may act as scribes or readers for others in the normal course of events. Native people may use literacy in the Native language for some purposes, such as religious observance, that many other Canadians do not use as much and they may not use it at all for some purposes, such as entertainment reading, which are very popular in other segments of Canadian society. The role of literacy in Native life as a part of Christian religious practice or as a way of indicating the distinctiveness of Native people from the rest of the Canadian population needs to be reflected in

educational programs. Printed or even ephemeral materials in Native language literacy are likely to be very different from those common in the official languages in urban areas of Canada (Burnaby and MacKenzie 1985). Literacy conditions such as functions and available materials are an important part of the research that should go into any minority language program (Burnaby 1979).

Literacy background has implications not only for minority language development but for the learning of the official languages. People from a background in which literacy has/had few functions in their everyday lives often have difficulty understanding the role literacy plays in English/French Canada. School children from these groups have not grown up observing models of adults performing a wide range of functions of literacy in their surroundings. Yet the teaching they receive often takes for granted that these children will understand the functions and purposes of most aspects of English/French literacy. Adults who come to Canada with little experience in literacy very often leave ESL/FSL classes because the teaching program is based on the assumption that all the learners have advanced literacy skills and understand the functions of literacy in a western, industrialized context (Bell and Burnaby 1985). Thus, the learner with limited literacy experience is not likely to receive even oral language learning benefits of ESL/FSL programs unless special provisions for them are made.

The Jurisdictional Context

The intent in this section is to take into account the ways in which language education is handled by a variety of educational jurisdictions. As far as the non-Native minority groups' interests are concerned, the federal and provincial governments, community agencies, and local school boards take some responsibility for English/French as a second language for immigrant adults. Bilingual programs for survival skills and official language learning are offered to adults by community agencies and school boards through federal and provincial funding. Immigrant children normally receive English/French as a second language instruction in schools and whatever heritage language programming as is available (with federal, and in some cases provincial, funding). Other children who are identified as being from a minority linguistic/ethnic group may participate in a school board or community group program of minority second language education.

The intention here is not to provide a catalogue of services or an accurate map of the flow of funding but to point out the complexity of the number of players and their relationships in this type of programming. It is difficult to determine lines of responsibility for funding,

teacher training and certification, administration, materials development, evaluation, and so on. When the jurisdictional situation is this complicated it is inevitable that there will be duplication of services, needs that are not met, programs whose aims are too broad to be practical, programs whose aims are too narrow to be cost effective, a shortage of appropriately trained teachers, piece-work employment for some teachers, constant demands for the development of materials, evaluation which is inadequate or applied criteria from one body which is not appropriate for another, and so on.

Given that education for Native people is the responsibility of the federal government through the *Indian Act*, this situation ought to be simpler for the Native population than it is for the other minority groups. In fact, all that was described above for the other groups holds true to some extent for the Native population, and we must add to it a federal elementary school system operated by the federal government exclusively for Native children and locally operated band (reserve) controlled schools. The difficulties in coordinating and cooperating on the development of language programming for Native learners is exacerbated by the fact that the Native population is distributed quite evenly across the country so that almost all provinces and school boards have only a minority of Native learners to deal with. Thus, issues such as teacher training, materials development, and program support are even more difficult to coordinate than they are for the other minority language/ethnic groups.

Implications

Despite the obvious differences between the various minority languages in Canada and other differences among the conditions which affect the ways in which they are used in the range of language education programs, it is clear that there are areas of commonality which might be developed in support of language education in Canada in general and programs for specific languages in particular. The following discussion looks at implications starting with the most concrete area of materials development and working toward more abstract possibilities for cooperation.

Materials Development

In the teaching of minority languages as first or second languages, each language group has little option but to go it alone because of the uniqueness of each language. However, there are ways in which cooperation might be of benefit. In some cases, given cultural and pedagogical

appropriateness, some groups might share their artwork and ideas for effective materials preparation. Cooperation in this line can be sought from developers of materials for English or French language education for Canadians, immigrants, or as foreign languages as long as, again, cultural and pedagogical constraints are kept in mind. One of the problems of language education in a linguistically diverse country such as Canada is that very few minority languages represent the numbers of clients or have the political support to attract publication of materials. It is possible that groups might collaborate on means of publication/printing of their materials for use in minority language education. The ethnic presses might be interested in some sort of cooperation of this kind if it were to increase the volume and/or cost effectiveness of their output.

In terms of ESL/FSL, it is clear that the context of isolated Native communities makes official language teaching in those settings very different from those in other parts of Canada where English/French are the main media of communication and where minority language speakers come from diverse language backgrounds. The teaching of ESL/FSL to Native learners in other contexts can be expected to be much like that for other minority language speakers, provided that cultural and literacy considerations are taken into account. Materials developed for the teaching of English/French as a *foreign* language might provide a model for pedagogical approaches to materials for isolated communities.

Program and Curriculum Development

Looking first at minority languages as subject of instruction, all language minorities including the Native groups have a great deal in common (except that the Native group is likely to have more homogeneous classes in remote communities). It would seem to be to their advantage to share pedagogical approaches and techniques, to share ways of dealing with mixed level classes, and to develop ideas collectively for maximizing the appeal of their classes to student interest in developing links with their ethnic ancestry through language learning. An example of the last point would be to exchange ways in which classroom activities could be closely linked with life in the community.

The minority languages used as a medium of instruction for mother tongue speakers appear mainly to be certain Native languages. One would caution program and curriculum developers against heavy reliance on models set by English/French curriculum for first language speakers on the grounds of linguistic and literacy differences, cultural differences which affect both content and pedagogy, and the physical environments

known to the learners (Stairs 1985). On the other hand, such models are ubiquitous and hard to resist, and some reflect the best pedagogical thinking about first language education that we have available to us. It would seem best to foster cooperation and collaboration between respected developers of English/French first language programs and those of Native language medium programs rather than to encourage emulation by Native language program developers of the materials developed for use with English and French speaking children.

As for minority and Native language immersion programs for learners who do not speak the language, it appears that they have a lot in common but not much that can be directly shared except at the most abstract levels. They can certainly collaborate with respect to the development of pedagogical and programming approaches and strategies for fostering relationships between the program and the community. Since the relationship between the program and the political/social context is important, program leaders could profitably share their experiences regarding the development and maintenance of program support. French immersion programs can serve as a model for such minority language programs, but particular cautions should be taken to allow for the fact that French immersion students are likely to come from the groups of students in Canada who are most likely to succeed in school. Also, unlike French immersion students, minority language immersion students are likely to be taking part in the program for reasons of their motivation, or that of their parents, to enhance their own minority groups' maintenance and development in Canadian society.

With regard to program and curriculum development in official language education aimed specifically at minority groups, the comments made above on materials development can be extrapolated as well to this area. Program development is an important area since it is the balance between the official languages and the minority languages in the total program (as in the quote for Burnaby and Elson 1982 above) that has been seen to make local differences between minority language maintenance/revival on the one hand and loss of minority language use on the other.

Teacher Preparation and Administrative Support

For the preparation and support of teachers for Native language medium programs, it must be kept in mind that these teachers are certain to be called upon to develop materials and curriculum, and to conduct research on the characteristics and needs of their students. The situations in which they are placed are unique, must be acknowledged as such, and should be provided with support from whatever relevant pedagogical and

academic resources as can be applied. There will be cultural, linguistic, and environmental aspects of the situation which will need research before appropriate teacher training can be fully implemented. The uniqueness of their backgrounds and tasks means that the preparation provided for them cannot come directly from models of other types of teacher training or support.

Training for teachers of any minority language as subject of instruction has the potential for sharing of a great deal of pedagogical focus, program design strategies, teaching techniques, means for preparing materials for teaching, and strategies for liaison with the ethnic community. Beyond these general commonalities however, the training of minority language teachers must be approached separately for each language group because of linguistic, cultural, literacy, and ethnic identity constraints.

ESL/FSL teachers for all linguistic groups in Canada are usually trained from the same sources. It is clear from the discussion above that teachers of Native learners at least need a special component in their training to prepare them for the particular conditions they will meet in Native communities. Given the comments made above about the fragmentation of jurisdiction responsible for language education of minority language groups, it is critical that neighbouring authorities cooperate to give their ESL/FSL teachers maximum support and opportunity for collective professional development.

As a last word in this paper, it is hoped that all professionals involved in the field of all types of language education for minority group learners will work toward breaking down jurisdictional boundaries so that those involved in the many aspects of language education can maximize their achievement to the benefit of all language teaching in the country.

FOOTNOTE

1. Particularly because Statistics Canada recorded more than one response in the 1981 Census on the question of ethnicity, it is important to treat with caution any numerical relationships between responses to the ethnicity questions and those of apparently related mother tongue responses. The ethnic groups discussed in the text were described only in terms of those who gave that ethnicity as their only ethnicity. There were others who gave dual ethnicities. Also, it is never clear that those who respond in one way on the ethnicity question give a related response on the language questions. In other words, it is not certain that all those who gave their mother tongue as German also gave their (sole) ethnicity as German.

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