BELONGING AND BOUNDARIES: LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN CANADA

ABSTRACT

identity, representation, boundaries, and belonging. This paper focuses on language rights of allophones (those whose first language is neither English nor French) from the perspective of Canada's language policies, including the socioeconomic and political values that allophone immigrants place on Canada's official languages. Changes to Canada's language policies since the 1970s have created alternative spaces for allophone groups to challenge the dominant status of English and French and to recreate ethnolinguistic identities and belonging simultaneously from various locations.

Increases in international migration, in conjunction with changes to Canadian language policies over recent years, have generated new discussions and debates about language rights and the socioeconomic and political values that allophone immigrants place on English and French, Canada's official languages. Canada is currently facing new challenges in ensuring that the identities of linguistic groups are recognised and that members of these groups are guaranteed equal participation in all social, economic, and political activities. Accordingly, the Canadian federal government has made important changes to its language policies. This paper will argue that changes to Canada's language policies since the 1970s provide allophone immigrants with new opportunities to challenge the dominant status of English and French, as well as enabling them to reconstruct new identities and belonging simultaneously from multiple locations. Issues around language rights in multicultural and multilingual societies like Canada are significant, because these rights are connected to ideas about ethnic identity, belonging, representation, and boundaries.

LANGUAGE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

I. The significance of language

Within the anthropology discipline, culture is defined as a system of symbols in 'people's heads [that] is accessible to analysis largely through language' (Darnell, 2005: 154). For these reasons, language, perception, and reality are interwoven and subject to analysis by social actors (154–155).

1　Furthermore, all languages change according to specific historical,
2　socioeconomic, and political conditions (Winter, 2007: 483).
3　　Within the context of nation-states, the stratification of languages or the
4　practice of ranking languages is formed through power relations between
5　insiders, or the majority, and outsiders, the minority. Differences between
6　insider and outsider status have various and significant implications for
7　individual and group privileges and access to resources (Winter, 2007: 483).
8　　In order for individuals to construct and confirm their belonging and
9　boundaries in relation to others, there must be a distinction between majority
10　and minority. The establishment of an official language or languages is
11　necessary for the elites to achieve and maintain political legitimacy, and it
12　enables those endowed with the dominant language(s) to differentiate
13　themselves from others within the nation (Bourdieu, 1991: 53). Linguistic
14　differences are also used by members of minority groups to delineate 'clear
15　linguistic boundaries in relation to a surrounding dominant language and
16　culture' (May, 2005: 331). May's view sought to emphasise 'cultural and
17　linguistic autonomy rather than one of retrenchment, isolationism, or stasis'
18　(332).
19　　Pierre Bourdieu's (1991) theory of linguistic capital is useful in analyzing
20　the values allophone immigrants place on Canada's official languages and
21　patterns of second language acquisition among immigrants. Linguistic capital
22　refers to the individual ability to use language 'sufficiently' in specific
23　settings. Interactions between individuals can be seen as forms of linguistic
24　exchange that occur within a linguistic market. When individuals use
25　language in certain ways, they demonstrate their accumulated linguistic
26　resources (35–37). In this sense, participants in the linguistic market are
27　assumed to possess a certain amount of linguistic capital. In the Canadian
28　context, linguistic capital is recognised by the knowledge or the ability to
29　speak either of the state official languages.
30　　Knowledge of the language(s) of the host society seems to be an important
31　strategy for immigrants in acquiring information (e.g., with regard to
32　employment opportunities, health care, social programmes, and legal and
33　civic rights) in the newly adopted society. Research on immigration and
34　linguistic practices in Canada demonstrates that immigrants who possess little
35　or no knowledge of English or French (the latter mainly in the province of
36　Quebec) often experience challenges in accessing the labour market and
37　public services such as health care and housing upon arrival (Boyd, 1999:
38　285–286).
39　　The acquisition of linguistic capital is multifaceted and requires speakers'
40　participation in the society that the language is used in. Knowledge of a
41　majority language, learned in childhood, can be assumed to endow the
42　speaker with greater linguistic capital. In multicultural and multilingual

1 societies like Canada, it is not surprising that many people possess the
2 knowledge of more than one language that and they use different languages in
3 various settings or institutions. Many immigrants use English or French at
4 work and their mother tongue when they are at home or with friends
5 (Harrison, 1999: 311–312); this example reflects strategies used by most
6 allophone immigrants to integrate themselves into the Canadian labour market
7 and simultaneously retain their first language.
8   Before I discuss the relationship between Canada's official languages and
9 allophone immigrants, I need to clarify what I mean by the term immigrants.
10 The term has various meanings and is also used as a legal definition and an
11 analytical category (Li, 2003: 39). Under Canada's legal definition,
12 immigrants are divided into three categories: family class, economic class,
13 and refugee class (Samuel and Schachhuber, 2000: 14). Within the public
14 discourse, the term immigrants is ambiguous and distorted, because it is often
15 used to refer to those who are racially and culturally different from most
16 Canadians (Li, 2003: 44). As an analytical category, the term is used by
17 researchers to explain the process of moving from one country to another
18 permanently (46). This paper makes reference to all three contexts.
19
20 *II. Historical background*
21
22   Beginning in the seventeenth century, large numbers of European
23 immigrants migrated to North America and in the process displaced the many
24 indigenous communities. At the time of European contact, indigenous groups
25 throughout Canada spoke approximately 450 aboriginal languages and
26 dialects in eleven language families (Burnaby, 1996: 162; Hare, 2007: 52).
27 However, by 1991, the number declined significantly to sixty languages in
28 eleven language families (Burnaby, 1996: 208; Hare, 2007: 52). This decline
29 has important implications for the status of indigenous languages in Canada.
30   Throughout the nineteenth century, gold rushes in conjunction with the
31 expansion of land development in western provinces attracted a large number
32 of immigrants from various parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa (Li, 2003: 16).
33 Even though many people immigrated to Canada under forced conditions, a
34 large number of immigrants came voluntarily in search of employment and a
35 better life. A significant number of immigrants from Eastern and Southern
36 Europe (e.g., Ukrainians, Poles, and Doukhobors) who came to Canada in the
37 late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries chose to settle and expand the
38 agricultural industry in the western provinces (Samuel and Schachhuber,
39 2000: 16). Nonwhite immigrants, including people from various parts of Asia
40 (e.g., China, India, and Japan) and African Americans from the United States,
41 arrived in Canada during the same time period (Li, 2003: 17). Although these
42 groups contributed significantly to the social and economic development of

1 various regions throughout the country, Canada's restrictive immigration
2 policies failed to reflect the contributions of nonwhite immigrants.
3   From the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, the
4 Canadian federal government created a series of immigration legislations
5 aimed at limiting the number of Asian immigrants into Canada. From 1886 to
6 1904, an estimated 45,000 Chinese immigrants were forced to pay a head tax
7 in order to work in Canada. The head tax effectively limited the number of
8 Chinese immigrants (Li, 2003: 17; Burnaby, 1996: 208). Despite the country's
9 economic growth, Canada's immigration policy continued to use race as a
10 basis for restricting the number of nonwhites from entering the country (Li,
11 2003: 17). Immigrants with European backgrounds, such as the Irish, were
12 deemed by the Canadian government to be 'desirable immigrants' and were
13 encouraged to integrate into Canadian society (Burnaby, 1996: 206–207). The
14 Canadian federal government hoped that over time these immigrants would be
15 assimilated into the society (208).
16   The emphasis on assimilation of immigrants lessened over the years.
17 However, English and French continue to dominate Canada's social,
18 economic, and political structures. As Will Kymlicka (1998) suggests, the
19 emphasis on integrating immigrants into Canada's existing structures cannot
20 be
21   seen purely as a matter of cultural imperialism or ethnocentric prejudice.
22 Historically, it is true that policies aimed at integrating citizens into a common
23 societal culture were often justified on the grounds that cultures of ethnic
24 minorities were backward and uncivilised. But there are a number of
25 important and legitimate reasons for promoting a common societal culture that
26 are not based on ethnocentric attitudes, and that remain relevant even as these
27 prejudices fade. A modern economy requires a mobile, educated and literate
28 workforce, and standardized public education in a common language has
29 often been seen as essential for generating solidarity within modern
30 democratic states. (29)
31   Recent public debates on immigration in Canada often focus on the
32 influences immigrants have on shaping Canadian cultural and linguistic
33 diversity (Li, 2003: 54). Because early immigrant groups were mainly of
34 European origin, mostly from France and Britain, descendants from these
35 groups do not perceive or identify themselves as immigrants (46).
36 Alternatively, members of 'visible minorities', whether they were born in
37 Canada or not, are often represented in the dominant languages media as
38 immigrants because of their physical features and cultural practices (47–48).
39 Differences in race and cultural practices thus become social markers that
40 serve to differentiate 'Canadians' from 'immigrants', allowing for some
41 individuals to confirm their belonging and national status while
42 simultaneously dislocating others.

1 The ability to speak an official language is important in accessing
2 government funded training programmes, health services, the labour market,
3 education, citizenship, and governmental employment. Unlike immigrants of
4 the business class, many refugees and family class immigrants who enter
5 Canada on humanitarian grounds have little or no knowledge of English and
6 French (Hou and Beiser, 2006: 136). Lack of knowledge of an official
7 language has limited allophone immigrants' access to public and social
8 services and contributed to income inequality among allophone immigrants.
9
10 **GLOBALISATION, TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION, AND**
11 **THE RECONSTRUCTION OF ETHNIC IDENTITIES**
12
13 Since the 1960s, economic expansion throughout the country has further
14 increased the labor shortage in Canada (Hou and Beiser, 2006: 137). In
15 response to this problem, in the late 1960s the Canadian federal government
16 introduced a point system aimed at increasing the number of skilled
17 immigrants (Burnaby, 1996: 207). The point system operates under the
18 assumption of 'human capital criteria that predict success' (Hou and Beiser,
19 2006: 137). Among the criteria for immigration admission under the point
20 system is knowledge of one of Canada's official languages (Li, 2003: 23).
21 Those who speak either official language are considered by the government to
22 have a better chance of integrating within Canadian society (Burnaby, 1996:
23 207).
24 In 1991, about 16% of Canada's total population consisted of immigrants.
25 By 2006, approximately 20% of the population identified themselves as
26 immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2008). Research in linguistic practices among
27 immigrants in Canada demonstrates that those who speak English and French
28 at home or at work on a daily basis are likely to possess more linguistic
29 capital than individuals who communicate in their first language (de Vries,
30 1999: 262). Studies on immigrant resettlement show that family class
31 immigrants and refugees tend to have low educational qualifications and
32 therefore limited employment options (Hou and Beiser, 2006: 136).
33 The majority of immigrants who arrived in Canada since the 1960s opted
34 for English as a second language. Although Canada is officially bilingual,
35 'beyond the borders of Quebec, and of federal politics and bureaucracy,
36 social, political, and commercial advantage depend almost entirely on mastery
37 of English' (Heller, 2003: 473–474).
38 Factors such as age, gender, and education influence patterns of language
39 acquisition among immigrants (Harrison, 1999: 307–308; Boyd, 1999: 284;
40 Hou and Beiser, 2006: 138). Hou and Beiser's (2006) study on linguistic
41 acquisition patterns among allophone immigrants in Canada indicate that
42 young individuals learn the official languages at a faster rate than the older

1 generation (138). Male immigrants tend to attain better linguistic proficiency
2 in the dominant languages than their female counterparts (Hou and Beiser,
3 2006: 139; Boyd, 1999: 284–286). This difference is often explained by
4 premigration aspects such as access to formal education, and postmigration
5 factors that include differences in accessing language training programmes
6 and opportunities in the labor market (Boyd, 1999: 284).

7   Mixed-language couples in Canada often communicate with each other
8 through a medium dominant language, mostly English (Harrison, 1999: 313;
9 Hou and Beiser, 2006: 140). Couples in endogamous marriages are more
10 likely to use their first language at home (Hou and Beiser, 2006: 140). These
11 findings highlight the complex relationships between language, migration, and
12 marital practices.

13   In Canada, knowledge of English or French is an important social
14 indicator for upward mobility. This fact simultaneously places pressures on
15 new allophone immigrants to conform to Canada's dominant linguistic
16 structure.

17
18 **IMMIGRANTS AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

19
20   Knowledge of Canada's official languages is important in the process of
21 acquiring citizenship. In addition to living in Canada for three years or more,
22 applicants for citizenship must demonstrate a 'reasonable' knowledge of the
23 country's official languages, as well as its political and social systems
24 (Burnaby, 1996: 188). Despite the language requirement, limited proficiency
25 does not necessarily pose a barrier to citizenship for immigrants, because
26 immigration judges often show leniency toward those who are not fluent in
27 either of the official languages (188).

28   Research on the changes in immigration patterns in Canada shows that
29 there has been an increase in the number of immigrants from Southern
30 countries since the 1960s (Sullivan, 1992: 122; Hou and Beiser, 2006: 140).
31 The various waves of immigrants correspond to the political and economic
32 changes in these regions. For example, political crises in Southeast Asia from
33 the 1960s onward forced many people to relocate in Canada. One study
34 estimates that between 1979 and 1981, Canada admitted approximately
35 60,000 refugees from this region. As a result of this trend, a large number of
36 residents of Canada speak neither official language. In an attempt to
37 encourage active participation of citizens in resolving this situation, the
38 Canadian government has provided support for private and public
39 programmes to help immigrants learn one of the official languages (Hou and
40 Beiser, 2006: 142). Although education remains under provincial jurisdiction,
41 the federal government agreed to contribute half of the costs of teacher
42 training and learning materials for these language classes. Even though the

1   agreements offer incentives to provinces to expand language training
2   programmes for immigrants, the federal government cannot force the
3   provinces to provide such services (Burnaby, 1996: 188).
4   Over the years, there have been considerable controversies over language
5   training programmes for immigrants across the country. In addition to there
6   being a limited number of qualified instructors, many ESL programmes have
7   suffered in recent years from significant cutbacks to federal government
8   funding (Hou and Beiser, 2006: 143). These conditions ultimately affect the
9   quality of language training services for allophone immigrants—especially
10 women and the elderly, as many classes are now offered only at night.
11 Unequal access to language training programmes has a wider implication of
12 income inequality between 'old settlers' (Boyd, 1999: 284) and newcomers,
13 as well as among newcomers. Increases in income disparity between
14 immigrants and other Canadians undermine newcomers' economic and social
15 contributions to the country and further reflect state failure to provide
16 adequate services to meet the diverse needs of newly arrived immigrants.
17   Since the early 1990s, the Canadian federal government has developed a
18 series of strategies to discourage immigrants who have little or no knowledge
19 of English or French. One means has been to raise the point value for those
20 who possess knowledge of either of the country's official languages. Even
21 though this strategy aids in curbing the number of immigrants who speak
22 neither English nor French, it reflects the increasingly limiting role the state
23 plays in the provision of language training to immigrants. It also does not
24 address the situation of those already in the country and in need of these
25 services (Burnaby, 1996: 192).
26
27 **MULTICULTURALISM AND POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE**
28
29   The term *multiculturalism* was first used by the Royal Commission on
30 Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the early 1960s (Samuel and Schachhuber,
31 2000: 14). Since then, the term has been used in many countries, most notably
32 in Europe. There seems to be a lack of agreement among contemporary
33 Canadians over the meanings of multiculturalism (Wood and Gilbert, 2005:
34 679–680). Accordingly, there are three main ways of understanding
35 multiculturalism in Canada:
36   a society that is characterized by ethnic or cultural heterogeneity, an ideal
37 of equality and mutual respect among a population's ethnic or cultural groups,
38 and a government policy proclaimed by the federal government in 1971 and
39 subsequently by a number of provinces. (Samuel and Schachhuber, 2000: 31)
40   These different meanings acknowledge the racial, ethnic, and cultural
41 diversity in Canadian society, and multiculturalism is often considered one of
42 the nation's prominent features. In essence, multiculturalism means that full

1 participation in all aspects of Canadian society is officially recognised
2 regardless of cultural, ethnic, racial, religion, and language backgrounds.
3 In 1971, the government under Pierre Trudeau introduced
4 multiculturalism as Canada's official policy. Initially, it was designed
5 within a bilingual framework where the federal government would assist
6 immigrants in acquiring at least one of Canada's official languages in order to
7 become full participants in Canadian society. (Hobbs, Lee and Haines, 1986:
8 667)
9 The government also committed to provide funding to ethnic groups
10 'whose members express a desire to maintain their ethno-cultural heritage and
11 who can demonstrate a need for such support' (Hobbs *et al.*, 1986: 667).
12 Emphasis on promoting and preserving cultures and languages shaped
13 Canada's image as a 'mosaic' society in which the contributions made by
14 different linguistic groups are officially recognised and valued (Dusenbery,
15 1997: 741).
16 Within the two years following the announcement of the multiculturalism
17 policy, the Ministry of State for Multiculturalism and the Canadian
18 Consultative Council were created. Soon after its establishment, the Council
19 began to lobby the government to increase support for heritage language
20 training programmes (Dusenbery, 1997: 667). In 1976, Canada signed the
21 International Covenant of Political and Civil Rights, which aimed at
22 protecting minorities' language rights. This agreement requires that in
23 states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons
24 belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with
25 other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and
26 practice their own religion, or to use their own language. (Elijah, 2002: 2)
27 The government offers financial funding to provinces willing to expand
28 heritage language programmes that are designed to encourage allophone
29 immigrant children to retain their first language (Dusenbery, 1997: 667).
30 Questions and criticisms about the effectiveness of these programmes in
31 helping allophone immigrant children retain their first languages have been
32 raised over the years. Specifically, critics argue that the majority of the
33 heritage language programmes are
34 largely aimed at the beginning level of learning the languages, do not
35 captitalise on the non-official language skills that children bring with them
36 from their homes, and are not coordinated with the goals and methods of ESL
37 or FSL programs focused on getting children to learn an official language.
38 (Burnaby, 1996: 207)
39 Additionally, a decline in financial support from the federal government
40 for heritage language programmes, beginning in the early 1990s, further
41 devalued the contributions of nonofficial languages (Burnaby, 1996: 207).

1   In 1988, Canada became the first liberal democratic country to introduce
2 legislation regarding multiculturalism. Under the Multiculturalism Act, the
3 federal government has a responsibility to 'preserve and enhance the use of
4 languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and
5 use of the official languages of Canada' (MacMillan, 1998: 85). The Act was
6 welcomed by many Canadians and critics as an attempt by the federal
7 government 'to accommodate the ongoing presence of minority languages'
8 (May, 2005: 336). Accordingly, the emphasis on accommodation reinforced
9 Canada's image as a mosaic society that encourages ethnic and cultural
10 pluralism.
11   Despite the focus on diversity, multiculturalism has been contested and
12 remains controversial in Canada. Supporters of multiculturalism often
13 perceive it as a distinctly national model of 'toleration and accommodation' to
14 ethnolinguistic diversity (Banting, 2005: 103). Alternatively, critics of
15 multiculturalism argue that it encourages further ethnic fragmentation,
16 endangers national unity, and prevents individuals from acting collectively as
17 citizens (Banting, 2005: 102; Kymlicka, 1998: 16).
18
19 **CHALLENGING LINGUISTIC DOMINANCE AND**
20 **REDEFINING ETHNOLINGUISTIC AND NATIONAL**
21 **IDENTITIES**
22
23 *I. Canada's official languages*
24
25   The history of French Canadians has often been portrayed as an ongoing
26 struggle to gain equality with the dominant English group (Pak, 2007: 45).
27 The 1867 British North America Act (BNA) declared French and English to
28 be Canada's official languages, and everyone in the country has the right to
29 use either language in public places such as courts of law (MacMillan, 1998:
30 64). The tendency to privilege English and French reflected the government's
31 failure to accommodate the diverse needs of allophone immigrants. Early
32 demands from various ethnic and religious groups for political recognition of
33 allophone languages were largely rejected by the federal government.
34 Nevertheless, allophone immigrant groups sought to establish their own
35 schools that would provide education to children in their first language. For
36 example, since the nineteenth century, members of certain ethnic and religious
37 communities (e.g., Ukrainians, Doukhobors, and Mennonites) organised and
38 funded nonofficial language classes for their children across Canada, and
39 nonofficial language programmes continue to play important roles in many
40 ethnic and religious communities (Burnaby, 1996: 203–204). Since the 1970s,
41 changes in Canada's languages policies have offered new incentives for

1   allophone immigrants to defend their language rights, especially following the
2   introduction of the multiculturalism policy.
3   Previously, allophone immigrant children were either coerced or forced to
4   replace their first language with English or French (Burnaby, 1996: 203).
5   Although French was officially declared one of Canada's official languages
6   under the BNA in 1867, the decline in the number of French speakers and the
7   increased popularity of English among allophone immigrants since the 1960s
8   pose serious threats to the prominent status of French in Canada. In response
9   to these perceived threats, a political movement was organised by a group of
10 Francophone nationalists who demanded political sovereignty for Quebec.
11 This movement, which later came to be known as the Quiet Revolution (162),
12 ultimately transformed Quebec's economic, linguistic, social, and political
13 landscapes. At the time, many Canadians perceived the Quiet Revolution as a
14 threat to national unity. The movement led to the formation of a new political
15 party in Quebec, the Parti Quebecois (PQ), under the leadership of Rene
16 Levesque (Forbes, 1993: 73). In response to the threat of Quebec separation,
17 the federal government under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau introduced the
18 Official Languages Act in 1969, declaring the equal status of English and
19 French under federal jurisdiction (Samuel and Schachhuber, 2000: 17). The
20 federal government also committed to providing services in both official
21 languages, increasing opportunities for federal government employees to use
22 French at work, and promoting the use of French in Parliament in order to
23 ensure equal participation (Forbes, 1993: 74). In 1978, the PQ developed
24 legislation that prioritised French in Quebec (MacMillan, 1998: 103). By
25 prioritizing the French language, these legislations contradicted the federal
26 government's policy of equality between English and French.
27   In 1982, the federal government reinforced the equal status of English and
28 French through the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Although the Charter
29 received significant support from anglophones, reactions from French
30 Canadians were mixed. Many francophones in Quebec perceived the Charter
31 as an attempt by the federal government to exert more power on the province.
32 It should be mentioned here that issues concerning aboriginal language rights
33 and allophone immigrants' language rights were not covered in detail under
34 the Charter. The issue over Quebec sovereignty was raised throughout the
35 1980s and the mid-1990s under the leadership of Prime Minister Brian
36 Mulroney, who, like Trudeau, set out to solve the issue of Quebec
37 sovereignty. Mulroney's proposed solution to the issue was the Meech Lake
38 Accord, a package of constitutional amendments that would restore Quebec's
39 veto power. The Accord received overwhelming support in the Quebec
40 legislature, but opposition in Newfoundland and Manitoba resulted in the
41 amendments not being passed (Forbes, 1993: 75). The failure of the Meech

1 Lake Accord regenerated the separatist movement, and the issue of Quebec
2 sovereignty continued to be a subject of debate among Canadians.
3
4 *II. Aboriginal languages*
5
6   So far, much of my discussion about Canada's language policies and
7 accommodation has been about the two dominant groups, English and French.
8 In the following sections, I will explore issues concerning allophone language
9 rights of aboriginals and immigrants in Canada. In the 2001 census, 3.3% of
10 people in Canada identified themselves as aboriginal, and approximately 4.4%
11 claimed aboriginal ancestry. By 2006, more than 1 million people in Canada
12 identified themselves as aboriginal (Statistics Canada, 2008). The majority of
13 aboriginal people live in cities (Agocs, 2007: 168).
14   The background of indigenous language rights in Canada differs from that
15 of French Canadians and allophone immigrants, in that the history of
16 indigenous language rights in Canada is fraught with the histories of European
17 colonisation, imperialism, and decolonisation. Discussions and debates about
18 aboriginal language rights are often framed within the context of social
19 inequalities and suppression. Under the Indian Act of 1876, indigenous
20 education was proclaimed under federal jurisdiction. From 1876 to the 1960s,
21 the federal government entrusted the provision of education to various
22 Christian groups that maintained residential schools for Native children. With
23 few exceptions, provisions in indigenous education mainly followed the
24 assimilation approach (Burnaby, 1996: 210; Hare, 2007: 52). For many
25 indigenous children, the acquisition of Western education took place at
26 residential schools, requiring them to be away from their homes from an early
27 age (Burnaby, 1996: 211; MacMillan, 1998: 189–190). Aboriginal children
28 were discouraged from using their first language while living at the schools,
29 and as a result, many experienced a loss or decline in their ability to use their
30 languages. Because language plays a central role in social activities on a daily
31 basis, the loss of aboriginal languages came to have significant implications
32 for the cultural identities and socioeconomic status of First Nations peoples
33 (Hare, 2007: 57). Despite the education they attained through the residential
34 school system, many aboriginal people experienced discrimination in the
35 labour market, where they often earned low wages and worked under poor
36 conditions.
37   MacMillan (1998) suggests that the loss of aboriginal languages 'has
38 partly induced an erosion of traditional values and norms that offered
39 continuity and self-respect to Aboriginal people' (184). The residential school
40 experience has other profound effects on individual identity and belonging
41 within the nation. Recent accounts of sexual abuses of aboriginal children in
42 residential schools generated new discussions and debates about the

1 influences that the federal government had on aboriginal education and
2 cultures. Although many former residential school students found the
3 experiences too traumatic to talk about, some have come forth to discuss their
4 experiences. In addition to requiring that indigenous children go to residential
5 schools, where they were not allowed to speak their languages, the federal
6 government did not offer any services in aboriginal languages (185). These
7 policies further reflect the government's desire to assimilate aboriginal
8 cultures and languages. In recent years, the Canadian federal government has
9 made serious attempts, including apologies and offers of financial
10 compensation to victims, to redress the effects of the residential school
11 system.
12 A White Paper put forward by the Minister of Indian Affairs in 1969
13 brought an end to residential schools. Shortly after the White Paper, various
14 groups such as nonstatus Indians, the Metis, and the Inuit began to form
15 political organisations and demand political recognition of their rights and
16 status (Hare, 2007: 57; Burnaby, 1996: 207). Many groups criticised previous
17 residential school policies and current education funding agreements between
18 the federal government and provincial school boards and demanded a revision
19 of indigenous education that would put aboriginal people in control at the
20 local level (Burnaby, 1996: 207). The National Indian Brotherhood, a political
21 organisation representing aboriginal issues at the time, published *Indian*
22 *Control of Indian Education* in 1972. This document contends that indigenous
23 parents and local bands should have control and responsibility over the
24 education of their children. It also emphasises the need for aboriginal children
25 to acquire a good grounding in their ancestral languages (Elijah, 2002: 1).
26 Since the publication of *Indian Control of Indian Education*, important
27 changes have been made to indigenous language policies in Canada. For
28 example, federal, provincial, and band-controlled schools began to offer
29 classes in indigenous languages (Hare, 2007: 54; Burnaby, 1996: 208).
30 Despite these changes, it should be noted here that these language immersion
31 programmes are available only to elementary school children who live on
32 reserves (MacMillan, 1998: 107). Other aboriginal children attend provincial
33 schools, because 'they are Metis or non-status or because their status Indian
34 families are living away from their home reserves' (Burnaby, 1996: 212).
35 These developments pave the way for many aboriginal communities to take
36 control over the education of their children. Despite the progress,
37 administration of aboriginal education varies across provinces.
38 During the 1990s, negotiations were made between the federal
39 government and various indigenous groups in the Yukon and Northwest
40 Territories to recognise French, English, and aboriginal languages as official
41 languages (Burnaby, 1996: 214). In the Northwest Territories, six aboriginal
42 languages (Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib, Gwich'in, Inuktitut, and Slavey) were

1   declared to have equal status with Canada's official languages (MacMillan,
2   1998: 174). The federal government agreed to cover the cost of French-
3   language public services and the development of indigenous language
4   programmes (Burnaby, 1996: 215). Since the 1960s, the Quebec government
5   has signed a series of agreements whereby the Cree and Inuit would develop
6   schools and hire staff for the teaching of aboriginal languages, with the
7   provincial government sharing the cost of teaching materials. Quebec also
8   revised its language law under Bill 101, which offered official recognition to
9   Cree, Inuktitut, and Naskapi languages in the territories covered by the James
10 Bay Agreement (Shabani, 2004: 212; MacMillan, 1998: 175). With regard to
11 education, Bill 101 declared that Cree and Inuktitut were to be the languages
12 of instruction and that aboriginal peoples had control over school boards. At
13 the same time, the Quebec provincial government stipulated that the French
14 language was to be taught in these schools to provide opportunities for those
15 who chose to pursue higher education in Quebec (MacMillan, 1998: 175).
16 These initiatives represent a significant shift from previous government
17 policies concerning aboriginal education and the preservation of aboriginal
18 languages.
19   These changes were welcome in many First Nations communities, as
20 many recognised these initiatives as important resources for the preservation
21 of their languages. However, research indicates that many indigenous
22 language programmes 'give only lip service to pluralist approaches and that
23 they are actually assimilationist in intent' (Shabani, 2004: 216). Specifically,
24 critics point out that the demand for government services in aboriginal
25 languages continued to be denied by the federal government. The
26 government's rationale is that these languages have too few speakers and that
27 there would not be enough qualified staff if the government were to offer such
28 services. The status of indigenous languages remains controversial in Canada.
29   The creation of the new Canadian province, Nunavut, in 1999, resulted
30 from twenty years of negotiation between the Canadian federal government
31 and the Inuit in the region. The Nunavut government declared Inuktitut (the
32 local Inuit language), English, and French to be the official languages of the
33 province (May, 2005: 326). The Nunavut government also chose to
34 decentralise government programmes and services to the local level to ensure
35 that aboriginal people would have control over these services (MacMillan,
36 1998: 202).
37   Attempts have been made by the federal and provincial governments to
38 hire aboriginal interpreters in courts. This change reflected the idea that
39 individuals have the right to fully understand the state legal procedure. The
40 governments also support the expansion of aboriginal media such as radio
41 broadcasts and television programmes. TV North Canada, the Northern
42 Natives Broadcasting Access Program, and Watawau are examples of some of

1   the broadcast programmes controlled by aboriginal people (Nancoo and
2   Nancoo, 2000: 38). Additionally, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network
3   (APTN), which was created in Manitoba in 1999, features event, culture, and
4   news programming that caters to both aboriginal and nonaboriginal audiences
5   (40). These programmes serve as an alternative to mainstream English and
6   French mass media. The rise in aboriginal media and education has aided the
7   growth of aboriginal languages in Canada. In 1996, approximately 186,000
8   people in Canada reported that they speak aboriginal languages at home. By
9   2006, the number had increased to 210,000 (Statistics Canada, 2008).

11   *III. Other languages*

13   With regard to allophone language rights for speakers of other languages,
14   the federal government has been subject to questions and criticisms from
15   activists, government officials, and scholars over the years. Public discussions
16   and debates about language rights for allophone speakers are often framed
17   within the contexts of national unity, toleration rights, or accommodation
18   rights (Forbes, 1993: 76). Allophone language rights claims are generally
19   assessed according to certain criteria, including group size, the visibility of the
20   language within the community, and the persistence of the language
21   (MacMillan, 1998: 197). Currently, no allophone language groups can gain
22   official recognition, 'either because of insufficient numbers or insufficient
23   elapsed time for the languages to have visibly taken root in Canadian society'
24   (200). However, a stronger commitment from the provincial governments to
25   the provision of allophone languages education in schools would encourage
26   the growth of these languages.
27   In the 1991 census, 8% of Canadians reported a nonofficial language as
28   their home language (Samuel and Schachhuber, 2000: 15). In 1986, Italian
29   and Chinese were each spoken by 1% of Canadians in their homes
30   (MacMillan, 1998: 200). According to one study, the number of Chinese
31   speakers rose from 94,900 in 1971 to more than half a million in 1991 (201).
32   By 2006, there are more than 1 million Chinese speakers throughout Canada
33   (Statistics Canada, 2008), many of whom are raised and educated in their first
34   language.
35   After the influx of Italian immigrants during the late nineteenth and early
36   twentieth centuries, the Italian language was sustained in Canada for many
37   decades (Ballarini, 1993: 23–24). However, the Italian language has
38   undergone a significant decline since the 1980s. In 1996, about 484,000
39   people in Canada reported their first language as Italian. By 2006, the number
40   of Italian speakers had declined to 455,040 (Statistics Canada, 2008).
41   Research indicated assimilation as the main cause for the decline (MacMillan,
42   1998: 200).

1   The experiences of Ukrainian immigrants with regard to language rights
2 differ from those of Chinese and Italian speakers. In the past, Ukrainian
3 language rights claims had their focus at the regional or provincial level rather
4 than at the national level. In some provinces, most notably the Prairie
5 provinces, Ukrainian language communities succeeded in claiming their
6 language rights (McLeod, 1993: 35). The 1971 census reported that more than
7 half a million people declared their first language to be Ukrainian. However,
8 by the 1990s, there was a significant decline in the number of Ukrainian
9 speakers (Chumak-Horbatsch, 1993: 94). In 1996, approximately 162,695
10 people reported their first language as Ukrainian. By 2006, the number had
11 declined to 134,000 (Statistics Canada, 2008). Together, the Chinese, Italian,
12 and Ukranian cases reflect the shift in values that allophone immigrants
13 placed on their first languages and Canada's official languages.
14   Canada's 1971 multiculturalism policy, with its emphasis on linguistic
15 diversity and the accommodation of allophone languages, contributed to the
16 expansion of heritage programmes throughout the country (Derwing and
17 Munro, 2007: 94). This growth reflects the values and contributions of
18 allophone immigrants in Canada. In 1971, Alberta became the first province
19 in Canada to legalise allophone languages in the public school system. In
20 other western provinces, public schools are permitted to provide instruction in
21 bilingual classes (e.g., Chinese–English, Ukrainian–English, and German–
22 English; MacMillan, 1998: 20). By 1989, approximately 129,000 students
23 reportedly studied 60 allophone languages in schools throughout Canada
24 (200). In 1988, the Ontario provincial government introduced a policy that
25 allows public schools to provide instruction in allophone languages if more
26 than 25 students' parents in a given school board make the request (Derwing
27 and Munro, 2007: 97). In contrast, the provincial governments in the Atlantic
28 provinces do not support heritage education in public schools (98). The
29 discrepancies in the level of commitment by provincial governments reflect
30 the diverse perceptions and influences of some allophone languages in various
31 regions and communities throughout Canada.
32   Ethnic media and media catering to specific language groups have
33 increased in some major urban cities (e.g., Toronto and Vancouver) in recent
34 years, in response to the needs of those who do not possess the knowledge of
35 either official language. Ethnic newspapers in Canada enjoy a significant
36 degree of independence from government regulation. Increasingly, allophone
37 immigrants find the mass media (e.g., newspapers and television) to be
38 important sources of information about Canada. In 1989, an estimated 131
39 newspapers were published in allophone languages. Recognising the linguistic
40 barriers experience by many allophone immigrants, *Maclean's* and *Toronto*
41 *Life* magazines began to publish Chinese-language editions in 1995. Aside
42 from these magazines, the *Vancouver Sun* also agreed to reprint its newspaper

in Chinese through the Vancouver-based Chinese newspaper, *Ming Pao Daily News* (Nancoo and Nancoo, 2000: 40–41). The goal of publishing these alternative editions was to 'help integrate Chinese readers into Canadian mainstream society' (MacMillan, 1998: 201).

Radio stations such as CHIN and CHUM in Toronto air programmes sponsored by various ethnic groups (Nancoo and Nancoo, 2000: 42). Many ethnic groups in urban centres buy television time on weekends to broadcast news and entertainment to diverse groups of audiences. Additionally, AT&T and the American telecommunication networks expanded their Language Line Services into Canada, offering a wide range of allophone language services, and some hospitals in Toronto reportedly use these services for clients who do not speak English or French (201). The rise in ethnic media, in conjunction with the popularity of allophone languages education, provides important avenues for immigrants to redefine their belonging and identities in their newly adopted society.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, issues concerning language rights in multicultural societies like Canada remain highly controversial and contested. Prior to the 1960s, Canada's language policies followed the assimilationist approach and prioritised the nation's dominant languages, English and French. Changes to the economy, immigration patterns, and language policies since the 1960s have provided major impetus for researchers and scholars for rethinking and problematising language issues within existing socioeconomic and political contexts. The closing gap between local, regional, national, and global markets brought newcomers into competition with old settlers and created advantages for those who know English or French. At the same time, the values attached to these languages produce constraints for some residents of Canada, mainly allophone immigrants who do not possess linguistic skills in the dominant languages.

The shift in language policies, in conjunction with the rise in ethnic media over the recent years, encouraged many to retain their first language. With regard to second language acquisition among allophone immigrants, factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, generation, education level, and marital status can be barriers to acquiring a second language. These factors also influence the complex relationships between language, identity, boundary and belonging. The establishment of multiculturalism policies since the 1970s created opportunities for various ethnic groups to assert their claims to language rights. The establishment of allophone language schools in various ethnic and religious communities in the nineteenth century and the aboriginal language rights movement in the early 1970s redefined the roles of allophone

1 languages and effectively challenged the dominant status of English and
2 French. In addition, the expansion of ethnic media and heritage education
3 programmes in recent years have provided allophone groups with
4 opportunities to gain public visibility and thereby promote the growth of
5 allophone languages. Despite these changes, the reluctance of the federal
6 government to establish clear and comprehensive allophone language rights
7 policies, in conjunction with the discrepancies among provincial language
8 policies, indicates a need for more changes.
9

REFERENCES

Agocs, C. (2007) Canada's Employment Equity Act: Perspectives on policy and implementation. In R. Joshee and L. Johnson (eds) *Multicultural Education Policies in Canada and the United States* (pp. 168–203). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Ballarini, L. (1993) The influence of bilingualism and identity in Italo-Canadian adolescents. In M. Danesi, K. McLeod and S. Morris (eds) *Heritage Languages and Education: The Canadian Experience* (pp. 23–32). New York: Mosaic Press.

Banting, K.G. (2005) The multicultural welfare state: International experience and North American narratives. *Social Policy and Administration* 39 (2): 98–115.

Bourdieu, P. (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Boyd, M. (1999) Integrating gender, language, and race. In S.S. Halli and L. Driedger (eds) *Immigrant Canada: Demographic, Economic, and Social Challenges* (pp. 282–306). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Burnaby, B. (1996) Language policies in Canada. In M. Herriman and B. Burnaby (eds) *Language Policies in English-Dominant Countries* (pp. 122–158). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Chumak-Horbatsch, R. (1993) The Ukrainian language in Canada. In M. Danesi, K. McLeod and S. Morris (eds) *Heritage Languages and Education: The Canadian Experience* (pp. 93–105). New York: Mosaic Press.

Darnell, R. (2005) Linguistic anthropology in Canada: Some personal reflections. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* 50: 151-172.

Derwing, T.M. and Munro, M.J. (2007) Canadian policies on immigrant language education. In R. Joshee and L. Johnson (eds) *Multicultural Education Policies in Canada and the United States* (pp. 93–106). Vancouver: UBC Press.

de Vries, J. (1999) Foreign born language acquisition and shift. In S.S. Halli and L. Driedger (eds) *Immigrant Canada: Demographic, Economic, and Social Challenges* (pp. 261-281). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Dusenbery, V.A. (1997) The poetics and politics of recognition: Diasporan Sikhs in pluralist polities. *American Ethnologist* 24 (4): 738–762.

Elijah, M.J. (2002) First Nations jurisdiction over education: Literature review: Language and culture [Draft]. Prepared for the Minister's National Working Group on Education, Canada.

Forbes, H.D. (1993) Canada: From bilingualism to multiculturalism. *Journal Of Democracy* 4 (4): 69–84.

Hare, J. (2007) First Nations education policy in Canada: Building capacity for change and control. In R. Joshee and L. Johnson (eds)

Multicultural Education Policies in Canada and the United States (pp. 51–68). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Harrison, B.R. (1999) Intergenerational language learning. In S.S. Halli and L. Driedger (eds) *Immigrant Canada: Demographic, Economic, and Social Challenges* (pp. 307–319). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Heller, M. (2003) Globalization, the new economy, and the commodification of language and identity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 7 (4): 473–492.

Hobbs, C., Lee, I. and Haines, G. (1986) Implementing multicultural policy: An analysis of the Heritage Language Program, 1971-1981. *Canadian Public Administration* 34 (4): 664–675.

Hou, F. and Beiser, M. (2006) Learning the language of a new country: A ten-year study of English acquisition by South-East Asian refugees in Canada. *International Migration* 44 (1): 135–165.

Kymlicka, W. (1998) *Finding our way: Rethinking ethnocultural relations in Canada*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Li, P.S. (2003) *Destination Canada: Immigration Debates and Issues*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

MacMillan, C.M. (1998) *The Practice of Language Rights in Canada.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

McLeod, K. (1993) Bilingualism, multilingualism and multiculturalism: A retrospective of Western Canada since the 1870s. In M. Danesi, K. McLeod and S. Morris (eds) *Heritage Languages and Education: The Canadian Experience* (pp. 33–52). New York: Mosaic Press.

May, S. (2005) Language rights: Moving the debate forward. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 9 (3): 319–347.

Nancoo, R.S. and Nancoo, S.E. (2000) The mass media and Canadian diversity. In S.E. Nancoo (ed) *21st Century Canadian Diversity* (pp. 36–67). Mississauga: Canadian Educator's Press.

Pak, Y.K. (2007) We are already multicultural: Why policy and leadership matter. In R. Joshee and L. Johnson (eds) *Multicultural Education Policies in Canada and the United States* (pp. 42–50). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Samuel, J. and Schachhuber, D. (2000) Perspectives on Canadian diversity. In S.E. Nancoo (ed) *21st Century Canadian Diversity* (pp. 14–35). Mississauga: Canadian Educator's Press.

Shabani, O.A.P. (2004) Language policy and diverse societies: Constitutional patriotism and minority language rights. *Constellations* 11 (2): 193–216.

Statistics Canada. (2008) *Canada at a Glance* (http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/12-581-XIE/12-581-XIE2007001.pdf)

Sullivan, T.A. (1992) The changing demographic characteristics and impact of immigrants in Canada. In B.R. Chiswick (ed) *Immigration,*

Language and Ethnicity: Canada and the United States (pp. 119–144).
Washington: AEI Press.

Winter, E. (2007) Neither 'America' nor 'Quebec': Constructing the
Canadian multicultural nation. *Nations and Nationalism* 13 (3): 481–503.

Wood, P.K. and Gilbert, L. (2005) Multiculturalism in Canada: Accidental
discourse, alternative vision, urban practice. *International Journal of Urban
and Regional Research* 29 (3): 679–691.