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# The role of language in processes of internationalization: Considering linguistic heterogeneity and voices from within and out in two diverse contexts in Ontario

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**The role of language in processes of internationalization in two diverse contexts in Ontario:  
Considering multiple voices *from within and outside***  
**Le rôle de la langue dans les processus d'internationalisation: prendre en considération les  
voix multiples *de l'intérieur et de l'extérieur* de deux contextes éducatifs en Ontario**

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**Abstract:** This multi-authored paper considers the role of language and linguistic heterogeneity in relation to larger discourses and processes of internationalization and globalization in Canadian higher education by examining linguistic practices as well as students' perspectives in two particular educational contexts in Ontario: newly arrived adult students participating in Immigrant language training programs; and Franco-Ontarian students transitioning to post-secondary schools and gaining access to higher education. The authors argue for a multidimensional conceptual approach to theorizing internationalization; one that takes into account the significance of language from the global, transnational and local levels of the social world whereby linguistic heterogeneity is viewed as the "norm". This approach allows for a broader and deeper engagement when considering what international education might mean, particularly for citizenship, integration, and linguistic minorities in Canada.

**Résumé:** Cet article écrit par plusieurs auteurs examine le rôle de la langue et de la diversité linguistique en relation avec les discours et les processus d'internationalisation et de globalisation dans le contexte de l'éducation universitaire canadienne. Cet article analyse plus précisément les pratiques linguistiques et les perspectives des étudiants dans deux contextes éducatifs en Ontario : étudiants adultes récemment arrivés qui apprennent l'anglais dans un programme pour immigrants et étudiants franco-ontariens qui passent au niveau universitaire. Les auteurs plaident pour l'utilisation d'une approche conceptuelle multidimensionnelle dans les théories d'internationalisation, c'est-à-dire une approche qui prendrait en compte l'importance de la langue au niveau global, transnational et local et qui verrait la diversité linguistique comme une norme (et non plus comme une exception). Cette approche multidimensionnelle permettrait d'analyser l'éducation internationale d'une façon bien plus large et précise, surtout en relation avec la citoyenneté, l'intégration et les minorités linguistiques au Canada.

Key words: language, globalization, internationalization, linguistic minorization, newcomers to Canada, immigration, linguistic heterogeneity, ideologies of language

Mots-clefs: langue, globalisation, internationalisation, minorisation linguistique, nouveaux arrivants au Canada, immigration, diversité linguistique, idéologies linguistiques.

**Introduction:** **The role of language and voices from within and outside** by Julie Byrd Clark  
Educational institutions and organizations are continually being influenced by global shifts and more recently by processes associated with internationalization. According to DeWit & Knight (1997), internationalization of higher education is a process or a means to integrate international, intercultural, and peace dimensions into the university, and yet, at the same time, internationalization is a response to globalization (a process that overlaps with but yet is distinct from globalization). At the university level, emanating from a top-down approach,

internationalization has tended to discursively take shape as a neoliberal means of “branding<sup>1</sup>” driven by competing global market forces in this new economy instead of attempting to integrate diverse, international perspectives and understandings in relation to teaching, learning, research, and service functions of universities (see Knight, 2011). To clarify, neoliberal discourse refers to the marketing or free enterprise dimension of internationalization, yet masks this dimension at the same time by trying to use propaganda which focuses on moral aspects of internationalizing in order to manipulate and gain control over symbolic and material resources. While many critical pedagogues and researchers in higher education are currently invested in finding new ways to theorize international education as relates to notions of cosmopolitanism well as the global research imagination (for example, Rizvi, 2009; Kenway & Fahey, 2009) with the aim to shed light on the complexity involved in these processes, the role of language in internationalizing and globalizing is often overlooked, assumed, or not considered at all. This is significant, as noted by Lamoureux (2011), when one considers the role of language in conceptualizing global citizenship (see Clarke, 2008; Stearns, 2009; Strange, 2005), which entails intercultural exchanges and the development of intercultural competencies at home and abroad (e.g. Guoqing, 2003; Ippolito, 2007; Trahar, 2011). Language, whether seen as a discourse, social construction, commodity, or semiotic system, plays a critical role in processes of globalizing and internationalizing education. As Fairclough (2006) states: “it is partly language that is globalizing and globalized” (p.3). This is worth noting when governments, such as the Canadian one, aim to produce effective human capital (Byram, 2008); in other words, well developed, “cosmopolitan” citizens of the world in this new knowledge economy--citizens who are not only deemed culturally and ethically sensitive, but also linguistically sensitive.

Through language, the impact of processes such as globalization and internationalization become visible, and we are permitted to see the complex ways in which language is used; one representation would be as a means to benefit and put forward the interests of certain stakeholders over others. For example, while the Nation-state and nationalist discourses (Anderson, 1991) are not as tenable in today’s globalized world (see Byrd Clark, 2009, 2011b), official language policies in Canada continue to reproduce solutions based on the language-nation-state ideology (Hobsbawm, 1990; Heller, 1999) reminiscent of the 1960s and 70s (e.g. one language, one people). The ways in which policies operate as well as how they get lived out by social actors are complex and shifting, yet dominant views about what constitutes language(s), how certain linguistic varieties become valued over others in different social institutions, what counts as legitimate international experience, and who gets to decide all have certain stakes and bring about an unevenness in the distribution of symbolic and material resources as well as contestations/struggles. In this vein, examining language policies and language use allows one to observe the complexity, contradictions, and challenges brought about by discourses of globalization. Such unevenness simultaneously opens up conditions and spaces for critical discussions/investigations where there is potential for transformation to occur.

One such recent formation has been the RICE (Researching International and Contemporary Education) Research Group; a small group of researchers based at the Faculty of Education at Western University, who are in the midst of exploring some of these instabilities and complexities brought about by processes of internationalization and globalization. This paper, comprised of three authors (a multi-voiced paper) came about and is based upon the 2011

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<sup>1</sup> Neoliberal branding, in this sense, refers to the economic and marketing intentions of the university as a means to compete and gain more capital. Neoliberals believe that humans exist for the market, and not the other way around. Branding in this sense is used as a commercial practice (a way to make money) under the larger guise and narrative of globalization.

RICE symposium, entitled *Theorizing International Education: (Shifting) Contexts, Content, and Methods*. While the paper details specific perspectives of two different populations whereby the researchers employ different methods of analysis (critical policy analysis; ethnography) in two particular contexts of higher education in Ontario, Canada, the two studies are linked in that both represent overlooked and underrepresented voices in the literature, especially as regards contemporary discourses related to internationalization and globalization (where the focus of attention has been placed on the outside, on the “global” rather than on the “glo-local” within Canada, as we will see in the upcoming sections). Both studies presented in this paper, address some of the misconceptions or misunderstandings about what constitutes internationalization as many people tend to view or understand internationalization as being legitimated and linked to an external, international site. Processes of internationalization, as will be demonstrated in the upcoming sections, are happening from within Canada as well as outside.

A multi-voiced paper allows us to engage with multimodal ways of making sense of, analyzing and representing such data. Simply put, we use the term multi-voiced to not only include our own voices as authors, but also those reflected and represented in the discourses of participants, stake holders, as well as government documents. Focusing on universities, these global shifts and flows at varied interstices also reflect a transnational dimension when we look at some of the current priorities of internationalization in higher education that focus on: mobility and student experiences abroad, particularly in countries that have adopted English as a medium of instruction<sup>2</sup>; and the competition surrounding the recruitment of international students to Canadian universities. While universities compete to recruit international students, there has been, at the same time, an increase of higher education institutions in non-English speaking countries adopting English as the medium-of-instruction (Lamoureux, 2011). This raises some interesting questions around the aims of internationalization as regards linguistic diversity both for the receiving institutions and those who encourage and often subsidize their students’ international experience. Such promulgation of internationalizing agendas has direct consequences for not only those students who participate in such initiatives, but also, paradoxically, for many Canadians who claim transnational global identities<sup>3</sup> and who are developing/have developed complex linguistic repertoires, living *within* Canada.

Thus, our main goal in this multi-voiced paper is three-fold as we wish: (1) to consider the role of language plays in neoliberal discourse and processes of internationalization; (2) to problematize this neoliberal discourse by examining the impact of such processes at the micro-level, through two specific, local contexts in Ontario, Canada; and lastly (3) to argue for a multidimensional conceptual approach when theorizing internationalization that is inclusive of linguistic heterogeneity and that allows for a deeper engagement when researching international education. We argue that this approach fosters a more heightened awareness of how language is being used by certain stakeholders to reproduce and perpetuate discourses of standardization and homogeneous notions of language (e.g. bilingualism and competence) in relation to the impact of globalization and internationalization. In order to do this, we must first turn to some of the historical dimensions surrounding the ways in which language has been conceptualized in Canada. We then discuss how such conceptualizations of language have had an impact on

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<sup>2</sup> Having said this, when language is considered, it is most often linked to English language requirements (ESL, EAP, or EIP programs) for “foreign” or “international” students involving the development of English language proficiency and competence.

<sup>3</sup> Transnational global identities refer to people who claim belonging to multiple nation-states (for example, Italy, China, and Canada) or multiple citizenships, as made visible in the political, cultural, social and economic realms. Transnational identities redefine traditional notions of citizenship as a singular entity and challenge pre-established boundaries of belonging (see Byrd Clark, 2012).

contemporary thinking about language education, policies, and international student experience by specifically examining student perspectives and practices in two particular educational sites and groups of students within Canada (adult students in immigrant language training programs in Toronto, and Franco-Ontarian students from Southwestern Ontario accessing higher education in two different bilingual universities) in Ontario. With neoliberal discourses focusing on language as a highly valued commodity as well as putting emphasis on the mastery of an idealized form of language (in this case, French/English bilingualism), both of the groups presented in the following sections, have experienced and continue to experience degrees of social exclusion. Finally, in illustrating the ideological, historical, socio-affective, and political positionings of language in Canada, we can discuss such implications for theorizing international education.

### **Imagining Language(s) as Rational Systems and as *Ideal* Forms**

In order to make sense of some of the ideologies that have shaped conceptions of language(s) in Canada, and in order to understand how language plays an important role in internationalization, we need to consider two things: first, language has to be understood in its relationship to official French-English bilingualism and the ways in which language(s) has been represented in the Canadian-nation state; second, it is important to take into account the ways in which language has been researched and historically conceptualized. When we look at fields, such as Second Language Acquisition (SLA), one can see that Formalist (cognitive psychometric) approaches to languages have tended to dominate ways of thinking about language teaching and learning. It has been only within the last twenty years that more sociocultural approaches to languages and identities have started to gain serious recognition (Norton Pierce, 1995; Firth & Wagner, 1997; Hall, 1997; Block, 2003; Pennycook, 2011; Byrd Clark, 2009, 2011a, 2012). One of the main points made by Firth and Wagner (1997) was that SLA research was dominated by a tradition of psycholinguistic research that viewed individuals primarily as non-native speakers and learners with the goal of attaining native-like proficiency in an additional language (1997, p. 758). The notion of the “idealized native speaker” intersects with positivist ways of understanding language (and reality, for that matter) as an abstract object that exists outside its use, as something that is rational, universal, cognitive, neutral, and above all, organized. As Hall (2002) noted, in the traditional psycholinguistic approach, language is assumed to be universal abstract systems and individual learners are conceptualized as “stable, internally homogeneous, fixed entities in whose heads these systems reside” (p. 31).

Current conceptualizations of language are still reminiscent of the Chomskyian conception of language (see Noam Chomsky, 1965), which involves the competence or innate knowledge of the monolingual speaker-hearer in a homogeneous speech community, and prescribes an L1 (as complete linguistic competence) and L2 (as incomplete linguistic competence) however, as separate entities with no interferences or overlaps. This monolingual view of languages, that is, “the mystic need for separate, perfect, well-balanced mastery of languages” (Moore & Gajo, 2009) and the ultimate goal of becoming, speaking, and feeling like an idealized native speaker are still being reproduced and promoted in language learning classrooms across the country and worldwide (see Piller, 2001; Davies, 2003; Mahboob, 2005; Castellotti, 2008). To date, languages continue to be viewed as separate systems, not a hybrid, overlapping system nor as complex practices and social activities even though scholars, such as Cook (2002) have produced evidence of a unified linguistic competence in which knowledge of two or more languages exist (a multi-competence). Coste (2002) has equally challenged this bias by putting forth the notion of a plurilingual and pluricultural competence (see also Beacco &

Byram, 2003; Zarate, Kramersch, & Lévy, 2008) taking into account the situated mobilization of the linguistic and cultural components of the repertoire, and its potential evolution and reconfiguration over time; “a wholistic rather than segmented vision of language skills” (Moore and Gajo, 2009, p. 7).

Such representation of an idealized form of language (see Chomsky, 1965) has continued to be perpetuated through discourses of linguistic standardization, homogeneity, and in this case, bilingualism (whereby bi/multilingualism is actually conceived of as the mastery of two (or three) separate monolingual systems: monolingual English and monolingual French). In the Canadian context, this monolingual view of languages (see Gumperz, 1982) pervades into schooling as many studies have focused on two homogeneous, essentialized groupings of learners in education: Anglophones (speakers of English) and Francophones (speakers of French). Heller (1999) states, “what is valued is a mastery of a standard language, shared across boundaries, and a marker of social status” (p. 5). Setting up bilingualism as two separate monolingualisms, where each variety conforms to certain prescriptive norms places some students at an advantage over others in terms of their ease of access of learning to be bilingual that way (Heller, 1999, p. 271). As such, many university and language education programs struggle with the tensions between finding ways to promote diversity and having to operate under an ideological competence-skills based model of language (Chomsky, 1965) which measures and in many ways assists in producing the representation of language as a commodity. This universalist model views language learning as the mastery of “unitary, determinate practices that people can be trained in” (Fairclough, 1992:44), rather than viewing linguistic repertoires as plural and multidimensional, shifting in different social contexts (Byrd Clark, 2011b).

### **Paradoxes and Considerations for Internationalization in Canadian Higher Education**

Canada is one of the most linguistically and culturally diverse countries in the world with immigration accounting for two thirds of the population growth. Renowned for its federal policies, the Official Languages Act (1968, 1988) and Canadian Multicultural Act (1971, 1985), Canada has been represented as a bilingual and multicultural (pluralistic) country. The province of Ontario welcomes the greatest percentage of immigrants to Canada and is home to Canada’s largest Francophone minority community outside the province of Quebec (Government of Ontario, 2011).

Despite immigration, increased mobility, and the emergence of trans-global identities, official educational policies and curriculum have not expanded to include the explicit development of multilingual repertoires or societal multilingualism in classrooms (Byrd Clark, 2008, 2012; Dagenais, 2008). In 2008, through its initiative, *Roadmap for Canada’s Linguistic Duality*, the federal government invested \$1.1 billion in ways to support official French/English bilingualism in both the public and private sectors. The *Roadmap* views bilingualism as a major asset (commodity) for the economy and for the building of better integration and stronger links with international partners (Canada, Dept. of Canadian Heritage, 2008). This initiative, however, has neither accounted for nor capitalized on the resources of the growing number of multilingual immigrant youth (Byrd Clark, 2008; 2010) and adults. It has likewise denied the linguistic rights and practices of Francophone youth growing up in a minority context, living outside of Québec (Labrie & Lamoureux, 2003; Gérin-Lajoie, 2005; Lamoureux, 2011). This is significant when we consider that both of these groups (immigrant youth and minority Francophones) represent significant resources for both Canadian society and the international labour market.

### **Positioning the multi-voiced paper: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations**

In the next two sections of this paper, we will turn our attention to how such conceptualizations of language have had an impact on contemporary thinking about language education policies in relation to current key positions regarding internationalization by specifically examining the historical, social, and political dimensions of two particular educational sites and groups of students within Ontario, Canada. The first study, by Eve Haque, draws upon critical policy analysis and focuses on the impact of policies and texts on adult students participating in adult immigrant language training programs. Haque provides us with a historical background of the evolution of Immigrant language-training programs, shifting from settlement oriented and community integration to increased labour market oriented linguistic training. Here we see that views of linguistic competence in English become an idealized skill to master as well as a profitable, highly valuable commodity in this push for international mobilization within and out under a neoliberal agenda and globalized new economy. Haque signals important considerations about current conceptualizations of language as a commodity in “skilled immigration” and their relationship to social integration as well as social exclusion. Haque analyzes policies and texts as a methodological approach to demonstrate the shifts in Immigrant language training programs over the past forty years. To this end, Haque argues that these current discourses of language and internationalization project an idealization of a particularly narrow understanding of language as commodity, skill and deficit; a conception and mobilization of language that serves to only to hide systemic and structural exclusions, which are central to the lack of labour market integration of increasingly well-educated newcomers.

In a similar vein, the second study by Sylvie A. Lamoureux, also reveals the implications of these neoliberal discourses and the role of language in such discourses by drawing upon concrete samples (quotes) from her research participants, which detail their experiences of access and transition to university. Lamoureux’s (2007) study investigated fifteen students, graduates of a small French first-language secondary school in Southwestern Ontario, as they transitioned to seven different universities in the province. As such, Lamoureux uses a reflexive, sociolinguistic and ethnographic account in order to convey some of the inequities and linguistic discrimination experienced by the youth in her study. Her study equally raises important questions around the role and treatment of language in our postsecondary institutions as they push for increased internationalization from within Canada and outside. Although the contexts and data presented in each section represent different populations and approaches, both authored sections highlight (and recapitulate) the significance of language in processes of internationalization and globalization which allow us to observe the impact of certain discourses (e.g. neoliberal) and representations of language (for example, as a homogenous idealized skill, as a labour-market-driven commodity, as a valuable possession that renders ethnolinguistic belonging and membership, and as a deficit). At the same time, these constructivist studies allow us to think more deeply about how we might engage with multidimensional conceptualizations of language (and identity) in international education that value and support linguistic heterogeneity and diversity from *within and outside*.

### ***Adult Immigrant Language Training: Immigrant Integration or Exclusion? by Eve Haque***

In Canada, increasing global migration and neoliberal transformations of the economy have affected immigration policy and consequently the focus of adult immigrant language training policies. As a critical analysis of recent policy trends in adult immigrant language training will show, immigrant language training programs have shifted from a settlement oriented and

community integration focus to more explicit labour market oriented linguistic training; one which replaces language as a social and cultural human capacity for meaning making and creating community with an idealized and narrow conception of language as a commodity, skill and deficit in the newcomer. This shift emerges out of the pressure to integrate newcomers into the labour market as soon as possible due to the pressures of a neoliberalizing economy and the evolution of modern Canadian immigration policy.

In Canada, immigrant integration is a dominant national story as the country has been settled throughout its history – most often through the displacement and elimination of the original indigenous inhabitants – by different waves of immigrants from various parts of the world. In the present, Canada has a per capita immigration rate of 7.5%, which is one of the highest in the world and second only to Australia (Milan, 2011, 2-3). Currently, almost 20% of the Canadian population was born outside of the country, a percentage that is forecasted to grow as Canada becomes increasingly dependent on immigration for labour market growth (ibid).

An analysis of contemporary changes to immigrant language training needs to be placed into the historical context of immigration policy in Canada. The opening up of Canada to immigrants beyond Europe to all parts of the world can be traced back to the 1960's, which was an era that ushered in the modernization and global expansion of Canada's national identity. It is also in this era that the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1963-1970) declared French and English to be Canada's two official languages and in the wake of the commission, that Canada would have an official policy of Multiculturalism. The opening of immigration to all parts of the world in the 1960's was a direct result of Canada finally abandoning race and nationality based immigration policies and the introduction of a points based system for immigration. These policies were formalized in the Immigration Act of 1976, which highlighted family reunification, humanitarian concerns and the promotion of Canada's economic, social and demographic and cultural goals as the priorities for immigration (Bouchard, 2007).

However, by the 1980's, concerns about declining domestic fertility rates and Canada's future labour market needs meant a shift from an immigration policy based on absorptive capacity to one of an increase in immigrant inflow to 250,000 per year by 1993 (ibid). The push for increasing immigration rates for skilled workers continued through the 1990's, even as family class immigration rates were scaled back. In 2002, the passage of the new immigration act, the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)*, entrenched this trend towards skilled immigration and away from humanitarian and family class immigration. One of the strategies, which concretized these trends was the dramatic increase in points awarded for education, which increased from a low of 12 points in 1986 to 20 points in the IRPA. An even more significant increase was the number of points awarded for official language competence which increased from an initial 10 points in the 1970's to an all time high of 24 points. With the total required points for immigration set at 67, this meant that educational level and official language competency of applicants were now the focus for immigrant selection. This shift has meant a clear increase in the percentage of immigrants admitted under the skilled worker class, rising from 31% in 1985 to approximately 64% in 2009 (CIC, 2010b) alongside an attendant decrease in family class admissions and the introduction of a new Canadian Experience immigrant applicant category for international students with Canadian degrees or highly skilled foreign workers.

These changes in immigration policy and the consequent shifts in the demographic make-up of present day newcomers has had clear effects on immigrant language training programs. With the changes to immigration policy in the 1960s, Canada saw a marked shift in source



countries for immigration away from Europe and oriented more towards the Global South. In the present, the top source countries for immigration to Canada are China at 155,000 between 2001 and 2006, as well as India with 129,000 immigrants between 2001 and 2006. This demographic shift meant the introduction of the federal government's first language training program in 1978 through Employment and Immigration Canada for workers who lacked official language proficiency (Fleming, 2007). However, it wasn't until the early 1990s that the federal government ushered in a detailed and comprehensive national strategy for immigrant settlement services and language training as part of the 1991-1995 Immigration Plan in order to "help immigrants and refugees adapt to the new country and participate fully" (Canada, Employment and Immigration, 1990). In this plan, the policy emphasis was on newcomer *integration into Canadian life*, with integration defined as 'basic language competency' and an introduction to 'shared Canadian values, rights and responsibilities' (ibid). Out of this plan, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) emerged as the paradigmatic national adult language training program available to permanent residents for 900 hours of basic language training. LINC includes comprehensive assessment and placement procedures, child care services and transportation allowances. LINC is provided through school boards, colleges, community agencies and, in some provinces, for-profit businesses, and providers of LINC programs apply annually for funding, hire their own instructors, organize classroom space and determine curricula and materials (Fleming, 2007).

Despite LINC's success since its inception as the largest national adult immigrant language training program, in 2001, the Integration Branch of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) expanded the original terms of integration beyond basic language training and introduction to Canadian values to include the need for newcomers to become 'financially self-sufficient' as soon as possible (CIC, 2001, 7-8). This expansion of the policy mandate to include swift economic self-sufficiency heralded the government's growing emphasis on the economic element of integration and increasing focus on labour market incorporation as a key element of immigrant language training. As result, LINC levels of instruction which had been offered mainly up to LINC levels 3 or 4, were expanded in 2007 through the CIC funded production of LINC 5-7 levels of curriculum guidelines; guidelines which were focused primarily on topics related to labour market integration. This meant these curriculum guidelines emphasized business skills and work related topics such as searching for jobs, resume and business writing, job interview skills, workplace interaction and communication among other work related topics. This shift in focus from basic language for settlement purposes to language for labour market integration was accompanied by an increase in LINC funding from \$94 million in 2004/5 to \$173 million in 2008/9 (CIC, 2010c).

This expansion and refocusing of LINC towards labour market oriented language training can be traced to the transformation of Canadian immigration policy away from family reunification and humanitarian priorities towards highly skilled labour market oriented immigrants; however, even more federal resources have been directed to this priority through the introduction of the Enhanced Language Training (ELT) program. Described as offering higher levels of language training to help newcomers find jobs quickly and easily (LINC 5 levels and up) *and* including workplace experience components such as job placements, job shadowing and mentoring (CIC, 2008), CIC piloted this new 'job specific' and 'labour market' language training program in 2004 and by 2008/9 had funded approximately 70 community organizations, colleges, school boards, etc. to deliver ELT programs in Ontario (Integration-Net, 2009). This shift in focus to labour market oriented language training within the neoliberal pressures of

global capital and migration is entrenched within a logic, which idealizes official language competence as commodity, skill and deficit in the newcomer.

Even before newcomers arrive in Canada, applicants are awarded a certain number of points for English and French language competency. Over the years, since in the inception of a points system, the number of points awarded for official language proficiency has steadily increased from 10 (in 1967) to 24 points (current number of points). This notable increase in the number of points awarded for language even before applicants arrive in Canada reflects the increasing commodification of official language competence. However, it is the post-arrival emphasis on acquiring labour market oriented language that narrows the conception of linguistic knowledge from a complex human capacity for communication, meaning making and creating community to something that is to be acquired for the purposes of labour market participation. In this way, the workplace is used to define what is to be considered legitimate official language competencies (Heller, 1996; Bourdieu, 1991), which serves only to naturalize idealized notions of linguistic standardization, thereby hiding exclusions such as accent discrimination, native speaker bias and judgments about fluency and accuracy (Milroy, 2001; Lippi Green, 1999). This commodification (Heller, 2010; Rubdy & Tan, 2008) of official languages is related to a singular focus on a particular understanding of competence in official languages; thereby, transforming language into a limited skill which reflects a neoliberal logic of substituting knowledge and social practice for skills and measurable proficiencies. Therefore, only higher levels of language competence and certain conceptions about 'employment oriented' language, often narrowly defined, are valued as linguistic capacity through its definition and valuation in relation to labour market utility instead of its social and cultural value (Heller, 2003).

The conception of language as commodity and skill easily produces any perception of lack in these narrowed linguistic capabilities as a deficit in the newcomer. Thus, these changes in policy which promote employment oriented language idealize a limited notion of official language competence, thereby discounting other aspects of newcomer identity and linguistic capabilities. As a result, these types of adult language training program policies undervalue other non-official languages and the multilingual capabilities of newcomers. As well, language learning become defined through policy as an acquisitive and individualized activity instead of a constructive and social process. In this way, newcomers are charged with their own linguistic skill development, which is presumed to increase their labour market integration. However, this policy framing ignores issues of social and cultural capital in organizing labour market outcomes, and locating the linguistic deficit in the newcomer means that structural and systemic exclusions due to discrimination which impacts labour market integration and mobility are erased from view.

Although increased points for education and official language competence for immigration means a growing number of highly educated immigrants – particularly in comparison to previous waves of immigrants – are currently arriving in Canada, research shows that recent immigrants are falling behind (economically) in comparison to previous generations of immigrants and, in particular, experiencing a persistent earnings disadvantage and higher levels of unemployment (Nakhaie, 2006). Analysis of the 2001 census reveals that newcomers are facing unemployment rates, which are double the national average and at least half are underemployed in low skill jobs (Mirchandani, 2004). The deficit model can only explain these inequities in terms of lack of skills in the newcomer thereby concealing the heavily segmented and racially hierarchical/hierarchized character of the Canadian labour market (Galabuzi, 2006). Therefore, the escalating focus on labour market integration in immigrant language training

programs means an idealization of a particularly narrow understanding of language as commodity, skill and deficit; a conception and mobilization of language that serves to only to hide systemic and structural exclusions which are central to the lack of labour market integration of increasingly well-educated newcomers. Ultimately, this means that immigrant language training programs, which should facilitate comprehensive integration of newcomers into Canadian life inevitably, can serve only to re-entrench the exclusions of Canadian society from “within and outside.”<sup>4</sup>

### ***Francophone student experience of higher education Ontario by Sylvie Lamoureux***

In light of Cooper’s (2007) call that internationalization of universities be interpreted in such a way “that at both a theoretical, philosophical level and a concrete one, higher education institutions should ensure that their educational programmes and research are genuinely multicultural” [and that] “it is essential to raise linguistic awareness among students” [as] “it is very much through language that understanding is achieved”(pp. 523, 529), the results of Lamoureux’s (2007) small scale critical reflexive ethnography<sup>5</sup> casts light on important questions around the role and treatment of language in our postsecondary institutions as they push for increased internationalization from within and out. This study explored the experience of transition to university of fifteen students, graduates of a small French first-language secondary school in Southwestern Ontario, as they transitioned from secondary school to seven different universities in the province.

Although the focus of the study was on access to postsecondary education and the student experience, using language practices as an analytical lens allowed hegemonic ideologies regarding the language-nation-state and bilingualism (Heller, 1999) to be identified as barriers in the access to and perseverance in postsecondary education for these Francophone youth (Lamoureux, 2007) at a several institutions. Analysis also raised important questions regarding perceptions of legitimate speakers of French (Heller, 1996), legitimate Francophone identity (Gérin-Lajoie, 2003; Heller, 1999) and conceptions of bilingualism prevalent in Ontario universities.

Data was collected through an ethnographic approach over eighteen months, employing interviews, focus groups and electronic journaling. Ethnography serves to capture in-depth data that census and large survey studies often miss. The participants’ were first interviewed at the end of their last year of secondary school, a few weeks prior to the beginning of their first-year at university. At the time, they were asked to self-identify their linguistic identity. Fourteen participants identified as bilinguals, French-English, and one identified first as a Franco-Ontarian, then as a bilingual. This self-identification was not directly linked to their parents’ linguistic heritage or to the language of use at home, as more than half the participants identified having at least one Anglophone parent. Over the course of the study, data analysis revealed that all participants had difficulty being accepted as legitimate Francophones, whether they attended an English medium university or one of the two bilingual universities in Ontario. This is particular salient in Regine’s first electronic journal entry, sent during her first week at university, in which she said: “The Anglophones in my program are great. I spend most of my time with them. It’s difficult integrating the Francophones. Everyone is really nice though.”

The email was puzzling at first, as Regine had registered in a program offered only in

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<sup>4</sup> The “within” and “outside” signifies this understanding of language as a commodity, skill and deficit, which impacts the positioning of newcomers in Canadian society (within), as well as how they are represented internationally (outside).

<sup>5</sup> This ethnography is representative of Lamoureux’s 2007 doctoral dissertation.

French. In response to an email seeking clarification as to who were the Anglophone students, Regine replied: “The Anglophones are the kids like me, who are from Northern Ontario or Southern Ontario, and a few from French immersion. The Francophones are mostly from Quebec and around here [Eastern Ontario].”

Excerpts 1 and 2 reveal just how quickly Regine redefined her linguistic identity in the first few days at university, more than a thousand kilometers from her home. The week prior to this email, during her first interview, Regine had self-identified as bilingual French-English. But, less than three days after meeting her new peers in Eastern Ontario, she had changed her linguistic identity to Anglophone.

Further interviews and emails with Bobby and Guillaume, Regine’s former classmates also registered at the same bilingual university, reveal how they were continually ridiculed by their peers and their professors for their accents as well as their lack of knowledge of regional Francophone expressions, and continually made to feel excluded. For example, Bobby stated: “They laugh like I’ll say *quelle heure est-il* and they say it like *il est quelle heure* and they laugh... Like I don’t know... I speak French, I try in class and all that (4 sec) but the **HARDCORE** francophones...” Guillaume likewise noted: “But it depends... with the French from France I always speak French even if they speak to me in English... oh yeah and there’s this girl from Quebec, but she always addresses me in English only... I’ve been told I have this **horrible** Franco-Ontarian accent and I intend to lose it” (Guillaume).

What is particularly noteworthy in these examples is that both Bobby and Guillaume each have two francophone parents, with ties to Quebec. Guillaume, in fact, was nicknamed *Frenchie* in high school as he always only spoke French. However, in their new environments, other Francophones from Franco-dominant areas in Ontario, Québec or from France either ridicule their linguistic variety of French or do not acknowledge them as native speakers of French.

As Emma demonstrates below, students attending English medium universities also had their linguistic identity questioned.<sup>6</sup> He told me ‘you learned this in OAC Emma’ and I told him ‘yes sir, we wrote “et” at the end of the proof’. He said ‘come now, you aren’t French’ and I said ‘yes I am’ but he said ‘your name is Emma Brown and you don’t sound French’ and I said ‘My parents may not be French sir but I am’.

During Emma’s account of her encounter with her professor, we note his refusal to consider her as Francophone based first on her name, then on the lack of trace accent in her English. For this professor, bilingualism is not considered as an identity. Linguistic identity is tied only to heritage, demonstrated through one’s name. In fact, Emma’s parents are both Anglophones who chose to have their daughter educated in a French first-language school. Emma’s identity is far more complex than the French English dichotomy her professor uses to categorize her – she considers herself Francophone, Anglophone, Irish and Ukrainian. Because Emma has no discernable French accent in her English and she has an Anglophone name, her professor rejects the possibility that language interference may be impacting her understanding of the subject matter. However, Emma has only studied in French prior to attending an English medium university and, as Cooper (2007) notes, “it is very much through language that understanding is achieved” (p. 529).

The five quotes presented were collected on linguistically and culturally diverse university campuses in Ontario. Yet, the data reveal very narrow conceptualizations of language, linguistic identity and bilingualism. Within an Official languages framework, these samples identify additional barriers that may impact Francophone’s access to and persistence in

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<sup>6</sup> All names are pseudonyms to ensure participant anonymity.

postsecondary education. However, the linguistic ideologies revealed through the participants' experiences at Ontario's postsecondary institutions also raise serious questions about the institutions' policies and practices in place "to cope with the global academic environment" (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 290) of internationalization in higher education.

As Lamoureux's participants entered new academic and social contexts during their transition to university, they were confronted with being outsiders in their own society, despite not having crossed geopolitical borders; despite more than 300 years of continuous French first language presence in Southwestern Ontario. Their experiences of being excluded from the new Francophone communities, of not being recognized as legitimate speakers of French or bilinguals, shed important light on the institutional practices and policies that immigrant, refugee and foreign students may experience when they choose to study at these institutions. Cooper (2007) argues that

the challenges and opportunities in the internationalization of higher institutions lie in institutions increasing their flexibility and restructuring their study programmes not just to meet the "needs" of the students but also create attitudes and insights among them that will lead them to see the world from a multitude of perspectives (p. 525).

We would argue that institutions must also increase their understanding of the importance of language (official or not) in academic success and internationalization, and dispel monolithic, idealized conceptualizations of language, legitimate speakers and linguistic identity.

## **Conclusion**

In this multi-voiced paper, we have sought to articulate a critical perspective on the role of language when conceptualizing and/or theorizing internationalization as relates to international education. As elucidated through the two particular studies and educational contexts in this paper, we argue for a multidimensional approach: (1) one that takes into account the historical, ideological, social, political, economic, affective, socio-psychological, and symbolic significance of language from the trans-global and local levels of the social world whereby linguistic heterogeneity is viewed as the "norm"; (2) one that allows for a broader and deeper engagement when considering what internationalization might mean for citizenship, integration, and linguistic minorities in Canada; and (3) one that draws from interdisciplinary accounts, both theoretically and methodologically (e.g. multimodal discursive analyses). As demonstrated and underscored throughout this multi-voiced paper, the implications of perpetuating a particularly narrow understanding of language as commodity, skill and deficit fosters the continuation of a neoliberal conception and mobilization of language that serves only to hide systemic and structural exclusions for all those from *within and outside*. At this particular moment in time, there is an excitement and anticipation for opportunities to engage in discussions and different venues (for example, such as being able to share this paper), and to imagine new ways of thinking about and engaging with the intricately complex role of language in international education.

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