

The IHLA Newsletter

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The COVID-19 Edition

From the coordinator

Trudie Aberdeen, PhD

This issue of the IHLA Newsletter is devoted to how both IHLA and IHLA member schools have coped through the COVID-19 pandemic. Needless to say, this disease has been a huge learning curve for us all. COVID-19 came along and shifted all that we knew. And although we have all been “physically distancing” in some ways we are closer than ever before.

Like K-12 schools and universities, many heritage language schools went online. Some schools made the choice to temporarily close for many reasons, but the majority of us chose to stay open and offer lessons virtually. The general consensus among schools was that teachers and students needed to do what they do best—remain a language community. As members of a language community we shared resources, made certain our elder groups had their needs met, called each other, and kept on learning. Some schools even hosted their end of the year celebrations on Zoom! This is definitely something that we will all remember for a very long time.

IHLA, too, had to make changes. Over this period we have improved our technology skills. We updated our website to include multilingual information about COVID-19 from Alberta Health Services. We had to cancel some of our expected professional development and chose to move our AGM until September. Our monthly board meetings went online, as did our final Principals’ Meeting. We chose to move some of our planned professional development sessions online. We were able to record and edit these sessions. They are available on the IHLA website.

Despite the challenges, IHLA has and will continue serve its member schools. This is much like the heritage schools themselves, who will stop at nothing to make sure that the community’s children get all of the language and community support that they need.

Have a great and well-deserved summer, everyone!



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Professional Development at IHLA

This year our professional development was interrupted by the need to physically distance. This presented as both a challenge and an opportunity. Unfortunately some of our planned PD needed to be postponed. Other sessions moved online. With the exception of the Listening PD which was held at the Edmonton Viets Association, these were recorded, edited, and posted on the IHLA website (ihla.ca).

Listening

Dr. Jun Deng, Mandarin Classes at Terwillegar

Sigrid Sollbach, Light of Christ Catholic School

Due to the recent arrival of her husband from China who was quarantined with her, Dr. Deng made the decision to not deliver the planned PD session herself. Instead, she shared her PPT with Sigrid Sollbach. This topic was rich with instruction and included principles to consider when choosing listening passages, strategies to use when teaching listening, and different activities that could be used in the classroom.

Opening a Heritage Language School

Dr. Nina Paulovicova, The Slovak Heritage Language School of Edmonton

In this talk, Dr. Paulovicova shares with IHLA her experiences with starting a heritage language school. She explains what some of the challenges are and describes how dedicated school leaders can work to overcome these challenges.

Leadership Styles

Dr. Trudie Aberdeen, IHLA Coordinator & Truong Lac Hong School

In this talk about school leadership styles, five different IHLA members describe some of the influences that impact how they lead their respective heritage language schools. Maria Lekkos-Carrozza (transactional leadership) describes how she negotiated with her school board to ensure her school could continue to operate during the province-wide school closures. Hoa Nghiem (educational leadership) described the process of obtaining Alberta Education's approval to offer high school credits. Dr. Nina Paulovicova (servant leadership) describes how she leads her school by being a servant to students, families, and the community at large. Dr. Olenka Bilash (transformational leadership) describes how school leaders work towards creating an environment where students want to belong and to continue language learning. Dr. Josephine Pallard (cultural leadership) describes the origins of IHLA and describes how we embody the true spirit of multiculturalism.

Tips and Tricks for Teaching Online

Maria-Lekkos-Carrozza, St. George's Hellenic School

Maria Lekkos-Carrozza walked us through some of the tools and tricks teachers in public school and in heritage language school are using to teach online. Different schools used different online programs to reach their students: Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams. Other topics discussed include the importance of using Google Classroom, Kahoot!, Flipgrid, Quizizz, and Jamboard.

Teaching for Global Citizenship

Dr. Olenka Bilash, University of Alberta

In this talk, Dr. Bilash takes us through the many definitions of global citizenship. She shares with us the United Nations sustainability goals. Together we brainstormed different ideas about how to promote global consciousness among our student populations.

Research Project: Heritage Language Schools Coping with COVID-19

Drs. Nina Pulovicova and Trudie Aberdeen

Dr. Nina Paulovicova and I have proposed a research project that has a small grant and approval from both Athabasca University and the International and Heritage Languages Association. This project investigates how heritage language schools are coping as a result of COVID-19. While we know that the virus caused an upheaval in the public school sector, it rocked our worlds, too!

Together, we are looking at the following question: How have heritage language schools adapted in response to COVID-19. More specifically, how have heritage language communities stayed connected in the face of school closures? And, how have heritage language schools managed to continue teaching in an on-line platform? What successes and challenges have they faced?

If you are interested in participating in this program, please share your email information with me at coordinator@ihla. Participants will receive a \$100 gift card to purchase materials for their language schools.

The IHLA Mentorship Program

St. Philip Italian Language and Culture Program and The Czech School of Edmonton

In the first session (April 27), we focused on how to structure lessons for all students, from beginners to those who are more advanced. We discussed the key role of learning basic phrases and vocabulary and the acquisition of additional grammar and vocabulary. The most important goal was to not overwhelm students with advanced vocabulary when they still need a lot of repetition and to focus on basics. We also discussed the need to introduce routine to our lessons where the students will review and practice previously covered material.

In the second session (May 4), we focused on assessment, common phrases and communication with parents. It is important to know how we want to evaluate students and to stick to this plan. Another important part is also the students' self-assessment, so they observe their progress and shortcomings. The key is to have a plan, which is possible to stick to and to have realistic ideas (e.g. A realistic number of the projects per year, an idea of what the students will be able to complete successfully etc.). Repetition of common phrases and commands that students will need in everyday life will include, "May I go", "May I do", "Please stand" etc. The need for communication with parents, for example, via newsletter, so that they know what the students are dealing with and what the plan is for the next period. Organize showcases for parents and special events for children and parents.

In the third session (May 11), we focused on where to find resources and how to implement technologies in our lessons. For example, using various apps (such a Duolingo), technologies for older students (Makey Makey technology) where they can develop vocabulary about specific industries. The internet is a valuable source of information that children find interesting in the target language. Books can also be very useful as the students may already be familiar with some stories in English and so will have an easier time understanding, exploring new grammar and deducing the meanings of words.

Conclusion: The mentorship program was very beneficial and inspiring. It helped us in understanding what to focus on during preparation for class and we received many concrete ideas that we will implement to the Czech class. Our mentor also offers a continuing support in the future.

Gil Vicente Portuguese School and Maria Crzanowska Polish School

As with a typical Mentorship Program, the idea was to have a Mentor and a Mentee. However, from the moment we started talking, it became clear that there was no one-sidedness. Both schools could benefit from sharing different practices and strategies, as well as the difficulties encountered not only between Principals but also between Teachers.

Meeting 1: February 27, 2020 – conversation between Polska Szkoła im. Marii Chrzanowskiej and Gil Vicente Portuguese School Principals Agata Guzik and Gina Barata, about the administrative functioning of each school, with a special focus on understanding their structures, and sharing tips and contacts for the construction of the new Polish Language Developed Course (LDC) curriculum.

Topics discussed:

- Cooperation between school and home—the role of parents and their involvement and expectations
- Books and materials used in both schools
- Problems in the classroom—split classes, difficulties with different language levels
- Credit courses
- Finances and fundraising ideas
- Keeping up student motivation (idea of making an Alumni Memory Book)

Meeting 2: March 14 – Principal of Maria Chrzanowska Polish School to visit the Gil Vicente Portuguese School, with a focus on accreditation course documentation. A visit to the credit course classes was arranged as an opportunity to learn more about the curriculum and teaching materials.

Meeting 3: April 4 - Some of the classes from GVPS to visit MCPS Focus: The importance of traditions and the role of the community in teaching language. Beginning in the classroom with project-based learning—sharing and comparing Polish and Portuguese Easter traditions, as well as making some traditional Polish Easter symbols (pisanki [*Easter eggs*], palms, etc.) and crafts. A focus on building community for the second part of the day with presentations of Easter / spring songs and poems prepared by the students, plus tasting some traditional Easter food prepared by parents.

Meeting 4: End of April/beginning of May – Some of the classes from MCPS to visit GVPS Focus: Keeping up student motivation to learn a language, especially in older classes. A planned meeting with Teachers after classes to share and discuss hands-on projects for their classrooms.

Meeting 5: June – meeting between Principals to exchange ideas on what was learned from this interaction and the writing of the final report

Mother Language Day 2021

This year the theme of Mother Language Day 2021 will be Legends and The Birth of a Nation stories. Our MLD celebration will focus on this theme even if we are hosting a virtual event. Students will be encouraged to write about origin stories from their country for the Mother Language Day book.

What's going on with IHLA and at IHLA schools?

The Slovak Heritage School in Edmonton

Dr. Nina Paulovicova



Although due to COVID19 our classes for children were closed, Slovak Heritage School children participated in the competition for the best illustrations to short stories authored by Slovak students. The book's name is "Slovenské Rozprávky z Celého Sveta," (Slovak Fairy Tales from Around the World) by Ján Pochanič. We can't wait to hear back from the committee and we keep our fingers crossed and hope that some work of our students will be published in this project created by children for children whose heritage language is Slovak.



Free food program in the Malayalam Community

Varinder Bhullar

We started free meal program for people in need on 10 Apr 2020. In 7 weeks we have distributed 4539 free meals and 960 reusable cloth masks to people in need. In addition to this we felt that because of covid-19 people were not able to celebrate many festivals such as Easter, Vaisakhi, Holi and Eid and were feeling home sick and were in need of mental meal. In order to give people an opportunity to celebrate various festivals together and give them reason to get out safely, we organized a vehicle parade and free meal. In this event we cooked, packaged and distributed 7000 free meals to people that participated in this vehicle parade. In this parade we were able to see thousands of people smile not because they were getting free meal more so because they were able to get out and safely see other people. Any question please feel free to give me a call at (780) 966-3121.

End of the Year Virtual Celebration at the We and The World Center

Trudie Aberdeen

Each year, Nepali children finish up the school year with a talent show. Each child steps out on stage to show the world what he or she is made of! This year was no exception. On June 20, 2020 the students of We and the World put their linguistic and cultural skills on full display for parents and the wider community. Each child danced, told a joke, read a poem, shared some artwork, or a new talent. The celebration was shared over Zoom. It was amazing to see how the community showcased all of the new community high school graduates. IHLA was glad to be able to partake in this annual tradition of excellence. I hope that next year we can go back to meeting in person again, but if not, you have shown how resilient and driven your community is. Congratulations to all!

The AGM of the Alberta Association for Multicultural Education

Trudie Aberdeen

IHLA was also delighted to participate in Alberta Association for Multicultural Education's (AAME) AGM this year hosted on June 20, 2020. It was delightful to see our old friends and supporters. IHLA would like to thank AAME for their generous donation. Each year IHLA is able to offer the annual Mother Language Day Book because of the \$5,000 grant that we receive. IHLA wishes to share its gratitude for all that you have done and continue to do for multiculturalism in this province. IHLA member schools are encouraged to learn about AAME and to consider joining. Learn more at www.aamed.org.

Online conference of the Czech schools in North America

Jitka Storoschuk

On the last weekend of May, the Czech School in Edmonton (Czech Heritage Language Society) was part of the online conference of Czech schools in North America. Originally we planned to travel to North Carolina and meet teachers from Czech schools across the United States and Canada in person, the same way as the Czech school representatives meet every year. Due to the coronavirus crisis, the whole world has changed and also this event was transformed into an online conference, co-hosted by Marta McCabe from the Czech School in North Carolina and Yvea Zeals from the Czech School in Calgary.

There were 140 participants from 21 Czech schools in the US and 5 schools in Canada together with representatives from some Czech schools in Europe. Representatives of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, the Czech Senate, ambassador of the Czech Republic in Canada Borek Lizec, people from the embassy of the Czech Republic in the US and teachers from the Czech universities were also invited to speak at the conference.

The conference was divided into 8 main topics. Both Saturday and Sunday started with presentations from people representing the Czech government and universities. They expressed their support to all Czech schools and explained which are the programs supporting teaching Czech as a foreign or second language abroad. On Saturday we talked about the school management, organizing events for the Czech community, fundraising events and pre-school teaching. On Sunday we focused on the actual topic of online teaching, also educating school-age children and the Czech classes for adults.

With each theme we could see very interesting presentations from people from different fields: children book authors, speech therapists, a movie director, people who publish magazines for the Czechs living abroad to name a few. Each topic was finished with discussion among participants. It was interesting to hear what challenges the Czech schools from different cities deal with, what projects they do with their

students, how they continue teaching and stay in touch with children and parents during the coronavirus pandemic.

I left this conference full of new inspiring ideas and whole new fresh energy. I realize that the Czech School in Edmonton is not just a small lonely organization but that we are part of a big community of people that work towards the same goal: to teach a language that we love and to keep and spread the Czech history and culture in a country that is our second home.

IHLA meets MOOC!

Dr. Nina Paulovicova

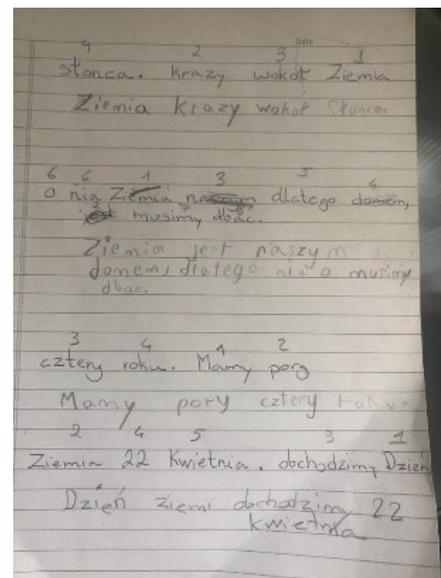
I made a short video contribution about IHLA to MOOC. I was encouraged to record it in the Slovak language to demonstrate linguistic diversity and I attached an English translation for course participants. The title of the MOOC course is "Linguistic Diversity: What for?" The course was produced by Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and Linguapax International and the publishing platform is Coursera. The course will be launched in October, even if the lockdown has been causing several delays. There's no stable link, yet. It will be available only when the course will be launched. However, it will be available here: <https://es.coursera.org/uab>

Teaching at the Henryk Sienkiewicz School

Bozena Gaciag, Grade 2 Teacher

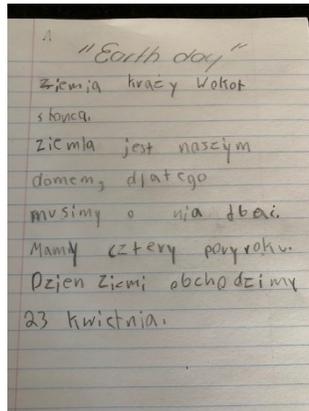


The closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic created unforeseen challenges for all teachers across Canada. Distant learning became a new reality. I had to adapt a wider variety of teaching tools to reach out to my students and keep them engaged in learning. I rely on the internet to send assignments to the students and receive their homework back. We share photographs of our activities, copies of handouts and written work, and even short videos. I plan a lot of activities based on hands-on experiences and movement. To provide an example, the children were



asked to go for a walk around their neighborhood and use as many senses as possible to explore nature. They felt the warmth of the sun and the breeze of the wind, smelled the air, touched

tiny flower buds and listened to different sounds. The students had to work on expanding their vocabulary by trying to use a variety of descriptive words. They were also looking for signs of nature in less expected places such as plants growing in concrete cracks. The children recorded their observations in written form, practicing sentence formations and expressing their ideas. The children also went on a scavenger hunt to collect natural materials and then re-created their names from found objects. They also explored measurements by following directions during a baking experience. In addition, the children started to experiment with different sprouting and planting techniques by growing beans in a ziplock bag or garden cress on a paper towel. The possibilities of creating educational activities keep expanding and changing according to student's interests and needs. The joy of teaching and learning along with my students continues despite challenging times.



IHLA's 3rd Principals' Meeting

Trudie Aberdeen

IHLA held its third principals' meeting online on June 15, 2020. At this meeting we discussed issues that were important to IHLA Principals. These issues included the decision to continue online professional development, the state of the IHLA mentorship program, the MOOC presented by Dr. Nina Paulovicova, and the ongoing research project about how heritage schools are coping with COVID-19. In order to keep the meeting short, we postponed the scheduled discussion about organizing and running an Annual General Meeting. IHLA board members also informed the principals that IHLA's very own AGM will be moved to August or September 2020 when we are more likely permitted to have groups gather in-person.

Critical Approaches to Heritage Language Education

Trudie Aberdeen

This summer, I am taking a course hosted by J. Eik Diggs (University of Arizona) and Jenna Cushing-Leubner (University of Wisconsin-Whitewater) and a cohort of heritage language school principals and academics across that United States. While so much of the work we do in heritage languages differs because of the legislation and culture that determines our context, so much of what we do (and our challenges) across the continent remains the same. Together we are digesting articles, writing a scope and sequence for our respective heritage language schools, and enjoying our time among kindred

spirits. It has been an excellent opportunity to learn about new colleagues and new developments in the field of heritage language learning. The learning never stops when you are part of the IHLA board!

Fundraising with the Filipino Language and Culture School

Grace Alarcon-Isla

The Filipino School is fundraising for next year. They are hosting a raffle draw to help support their programming. Please consider purchasing a ticket.



Filipino Canadian Saranay Association of Alberta
50/50 Raffle
Live Draw on September 27, 2020
McCauley School
 Purchase tickets online
www.charity5050raffle.com
 or at participating stores

Funds to support:

- Language school operational expenses (facility rental, student resources, books)
- Opportunities to expand participation in the Rondalla string program.
- Resources to continue with Seniors programs (digital/media programs and outreach).

1 ticket \$5 **3 tickets \$10** **8 tickets \$25**

AGLC Lottery License #560105

Other Professional Development

Community Education Service



Alberta Children’s Hospital in Calgary operates the Community Education Service. They offer many different free online professional development webinars. While these sessions are not directed at language learning specifically, they may be of interest to parents. Topics for July include:

Thursday July 16 @ 10am Keeping Children and Youth Engaged over the Summer

Wednesday July 29 @ 10 am Understanding and Supporting Mental Health in Gifted Children

Thursday July 30 @ 10am Building Social Connections

Previous webinars that you can listen to:

[Supporting a Smooth Transition into the 2020-2021 School Year](#)

[Taming Anxiety Gremlins: Avoiding anxiety traps while promoting resilience](#)

[Emotional Regulation Using Mindfulness](#)

[COVID-19 and family law](#)

[From Finsta to FOMO: Understanding Social Media Use in Teens](#)

[Crisis Survival Skills: Supporting your Child and Teen during Stressful Times](#)

[Supporting Your Children to have Healthy Relationships during Physical Distancing](#)

More details can be found here:

https://ces.hmhc.ca/?mailpoet_router&endpoint=view_in_browser&action=view&data=Wzk1LCJhOGI5MWZjODExN2MiLDU2ODgwLCI1ZTIINTMiLDc4LDBd

Feature Article

[Minorities' Language Use in Edmonton: Towards an inclusive Language Policy](#)

Jenny Osorio, Rahmawaty Kadir, Feng Li, Jack Strouk (Graduate students, University of Alberta)

Introduction

Canada is a country well-known for its cultural and linguistic diversity. After the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as well as because of the increased immigration in the past few decades, there is a need for a more inclusive language and culture education in Alberta - one that includes primarily indigenous perspectives, as the founding peoples of this country, as well as francophone and other settler-allies' perspectives, as members of the society. Additionally, parents are concerned about the cultural and linguistic education their children receive, the social and cultural capital of their mother tongue, and how it affects their identities as members of a language community within Canadian society.



This article reviews the historical and current situation of official and non-official languages in Canada, the diverse policies that govern these languages and what they mean in the public education setting in Alberta. By comparing our language policies to inclusive language policies adopted abroad (in India, Switzerland and Catalonia), we seek to show the need for a more inclusive linguistic policy in our schools, one that:

- shows the multicultural wealth of the province, and
- takes into consideration and gives equal status to all cultures and heritages.

This will bridge the gap between language policy and language practice in Alberta's education system, thus creating cultural acceptance in schools and increasing the social and cultural capital of all linguistic communities. Furthermore, a revised language policy will help speakers of a linguistic community see themselves as both members of their community and as members of Canadian society.

We begin with a review of our current language policies.

Language Policy in Canada

According to the Official Languages Act of 1969 and section 16 from the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, "English and French are the official languages of Canada and have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and government of Canada" (Commissioner of Official Languages). The Official Languages Act established that all government institutions must provide services in either English or French, according to the citizen's preference. However, this policy of bilingualism applies only to federal affairs; provincial governments not being obliged to implement it (Edwards, 1998, p. 443).

Within the education setting, the Official Language Act sets that any Canadian citizen having received elementary or secondary education in either English or French, has the right to enroll their children in a school in that language. The Official Languages in Education (OLE) program, launched by the federal government in the 1970s, offered funding to provide English education for Anglophones in Quebec and French education for Francophones in the other provinces, to ensure that the population speaking a minority official language receives education in their language (Burnaby, 1997, p. 151).

English

According to Statistics Canada, in 2011, 24.8 million people declared English as their first language and as the language spoken at home across the country. Except for Quebec, where English is spoken at home by 600.000 people, it is the most spoken language in the rest of the country, by 75% of its population. In Alberta, English is spoken as a mother tongue by 2.7 million people (Statistics Canada, 2011).

French

French is spoken at home by about 7.7 million people, which corresponds to 23% of the Canadian population, according to Statistics Canada (2012, p. 3). However, its use has declined in the province of Quebec, where it enjoys the status of the only official language of the province.

Aboriginal Languages

In Canada, over 60 Aboriginal languages are spoken, grouped into 12 language families, with approximately 213.500 speakers claiming one as their mother tongue, according to Statistics Canada (2011). The Algonquian language family is the most spoken Aboriginal language, with 144.015 speakers living across Canada. With a population of 1.4 million, Aboriginal groups represent 4.3% of the total Canadian population.

Language policies for Aboriginal people have been discussed but not been included in the Official Languages Act. They have also been excluded from the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, arguing that because of their specific needs, they require a separate treatment. Aboriginal groups asked not to be included in the language policy of cultural minorities; however, instead of serving as an advantage to their rights, some feel that this has become a reason for discrimination and assimilation (Burnaby, 1997, p. 155). Happily, one of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) 94 calls to action was for an Aboriginal Languages Act which is currently undergoing its first reading by the Senate.

Minority Languages in Canada

The federal government refers to speakers of non-official languages as "other *cultural groups*" despite the strong presence of immigrants in the country (Burnaby, 1997, p. 152). In 2016 the Canadian Census of Population recorded that more than 20% of Canadian's native language is neither English nor French. This reveals an increase of 14.7% of the population who speaks an immigrant language at home from 2011 to 2016. It is predicted that by the end of 2036, more than a quarter of the Canadian population will speak an immigrant language as its mother tongue (Statistics Canada, 2016).

The Multiculturalism Policy (1971) recognized ethnic groups as an indispensable part of the Canadian culture. However, despite the official approbation of multiculturalism, the government did not support multilingualism (Haque, 2012). Following the policy of 1971, provincial governments started to offer many of the minority (heritage) languages as subjects in schools. In 1974 Alberta passed a law allowing for instruction in languages other than English, thus opening the beginning of eight bilingual programs in heritage languages in Alberta. In 1977, Ontario initiated its Heritage Languages Program and similar programs started in several other provinces. The 1982 amendments to the Constitution of Canada included the right of minority-language education, which forced language policy and planning changes in all provinces (The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982). One further step after the policy announcement was the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988), which has also provided some support for

ethnolinguistic groups to promote their languages. After the act, more language planning took place in the Canadian territories.

Minority groups' linguistic rights in Canada tend to depend on the province of residence (Cummins, 1983). It is clear, according to Table 1, that bilingual programs at public schools exist only in a limited number of provinces, namely British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and in a limited number of minority languages. In order to protect the linguistic rights of more minority language speakers, a wider range of heritage languages should be involved in current bilingual and heritage language programs.

The time allotment for heritage language instruction also varies in different programs (The Common Curriculum Framework for Bilingual Programming in International Languages, 1999). The proportion of heritage language instruction in the bilingual program (Winnipeg School Division) ranges from 50% to less than 20% within which the heritage language is delivered only through Language Arts (Vancouver School Board, 2010), rather than being a medium of instruction for all subjects. We all know that time available for learning and practicing a language is essential for its mastery. For some of these programs, the limited exposure to the minority language, through only one subject area, is insufficient for developing communicative competence, resulting in the negative outcome of attaining neither the objectives of the programs nor those of the learners' expectations.

Province	Bilingual Programs	Heritage Language Courses Offered
Newfoundland and Labrador	None	None (Department of Education Newfoundland and Labrador, 2011)
Nova Scotia	None	Gaelic, German, Latin, and Spanish (Public school Programs, 2003-2004)
Prince Edward Island	None	None (Prince Edward Island Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2011)
New Brunswick	None	None (New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2011)
Quebec	None	Portuguese, Greek, Italian, and Spanish (Cummins, 1983)
Ontario	None	73 heritage languages (Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum Documents, 2010)
Manitoba	Ukrainian/English, German/English, Hebrew/English (Canadian Education Association, 1991)	Ukrainian, Portuguese, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Filipino, German, Japanese, and Hebrew (Manitoba Education, 2011)
Saskatchewan	Ukrainian/English (Government of Saskatchewan Education, 2007; Cummins, 1983)	Ukrainian, Mandarin Chinese, German, and Russian (Government of Saskatchewan Education, 2007)
Alberta	Arabic, American Sign Language (ASL), Chinese (Mandarin), German, Hebrew, Spanish, Polish and Ukrainian (Edmonton Public Schools, 2011)	German, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, Punjabi and Latin (Government of Alberta Education, 1995)
British Columbia	Mandarin/English (Vancouver School Board, 2010); Russian/English (School District No. 20 Kootenay-Columbia, n.d.)	Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, American Sign Language, Punjabi, Japanese, German, Italian, Korean, Russian, and Arabic (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2011)
Nunavut	None	None (Nunavut Approved Curriculum and Teaching Resources, 2010)
Northwest Territories	None	None (Elementary and Junior Secondary School Handbook, 2006-2007)
Yukon	None	None (Yukon Education, 2011)

Table 1. Bilingual and Heritage Language programs by province (Babaee, 2014, p. 10)

Public Bilingual Education in Edmonton

Language policy in Canada is reflected through the language programs in the education system. Generally, there is an inclusive policy for second language learning in many of the provinces in Canada. In Edmonton's multicultural educational community, there are several bilingual programs represented with their own second language curricula (Alberta Education, 2017).

Public bilingual education in Edmonton allows students and parents to learn through their own cultures. Bilingual programs strongly promote language and cultural capital. Edmonton Public Schools (EPS) has the options of learning in Sign language, Arabic, Mandarin, French Immersion, German, Hebrew, and Spanish (Edmonton Public Schools, 2017). Moreover, the city counts with an Institute for Innovation in Second Language Education (IISLE) connected through EPS. IISLE supports a range of languages, including International, Heritage, Sign and Aboriginal languages.

The Edmonton Catholic School District (ECSD) offers education in Polish, Spanish, Ukrainian, and French Bilingual which further extends linguistic options for students (Edmonton Catholic School District, 2017). Thanks to these initiatives, the EPS and the ECSD create an educational system that supports second language learning and bilingualism for the various languages in the city. Both districts are modernizing and applying inclusive efforts in linguistic communities.

With respect to French, there exists both a French immersion program - a bilingual education-based program - and a French as a second language program, taught as a French language course. All students in Alberta have access to the French as a second language course, without necessarily being in an immersion program. There is an emphasis on the successes of students in the French-immersion program over those in the French as a second language programs, which is reflected through student enrollment records shown in Table 2. Bilingual education is on the rise in Alberta and in Canada across the provinces, shown in Chart 2, with the English-French Bilingualism Rate increasing overall (Lepage, 2016).

English-French Bilingualism Rate

Province/Territory	1971	1981	1991	1996	2001
British Columbia	4.6%	5.7%	6.4%	6.7%	7.0 %
Alberta	5.0%	6.4%	6.6%	6.7%	6.9 %
Saskatchewan	5.0%	4.6%	5.2%	5.2%	5.1 %
Manitoba	8.2%	7.9%	9.2%	9.4%	9.3 %
Ontario	9.3%	10.8%	11.4%	11.6%	11.7 %
Quebec	27.6%	32.4%	35.4%	37.8%	40.8 %
New Brunswick	21.5%	26.5%	29.5%	32.6%	34.2 %
Prince Edward Island	8.2%	8.1%	10.1%	11.0%	12.0 %
Nova Scotia	6.7%	7.4%	8.6%	9.3%	10.1 %
Newfoundland	1.8%	2.3%	3.3%	3.9%	3.7 %
Yukon	6.6%	7.9%	9.3%	10.5%	10.1 %
Northwest Territories	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	6.3%	8.3 %
Nunavut	-	-	-	4.1 %	3.8 %
Canada	13.5%	15.3%	16.3%	17.0%	17.7 %

Source: Statistics Canada, The Daily, December 2, 1997/2001 census.

Table 2. English-French Bilingualism Rate.

At least 40 heritage languages are also taught for three hours per week through community schools in Edmonton as well. Many of these programs are offered professional development opportunities through the International and Heritage Languages Association (IHLA).

Current Issues in Edmonton

The aims of Canada's Multicultural Policy are to recognize and to accommodate cultural diversity, to remove barriers for the new settlers' full participation in social life, to promote interchange between different ethnic groups and to promote the acquisition of official languages (Wayland, 1997, p.47). Although multiculturalism is stressed, and cultural heritage of ethnic groups was also regarded as an "essential element of Canada" by former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, it was only promoted in terms of integrating people into the Canadian bilingual society (Haque, 2012, 238).

The Multicultural policy is trying to carry out multiculturalism within the framework of bilingualism with the assumption that diversified ethnic cultures can continue to flourish without their languages. This fallacy can also be reflected in current language planning in Alberta. The current heritage language programs in Alberta are carried out without enough contact with the habitus of their mother tongue and with insufficient practice outside school. The heritage languages tend to be taught as subjects, rather than being mediums of instruction (Edwards, 1994, p. 128).

Current language policy in Canada directs few resources towards the implementation of multiculturalism.. The ideals of multiculturalism have been criticized for lacking substance and emphasizing the folkloric aspects of ethnic diversity without addressing the more immediate concerns of minority groups (Wayland, 1997, p. 48). In this sense, the promotion of multiculturalism is largely a symbolic recognition of cultural diversity since no substantive change was made on providing assistance or encouragement of minority language learning and use in real life. Again, this loophole also heavily influences the language planning in Alberta. Although Alberta schools have long taught minority languages, they have intended this neither to take advantage of existing linguistic resources of the country nor to ease immigrants' transition to the English or French community.

A language learning process involves more factors than purely receiving linguistic instruction at school. Without promoting the use of minority languages in more aspects of life, the language will only be learned in an academic way and will lose its vitality after one or more generation. Teaching language in this way will be like uprooting a plant and nourishing it with only pure water. How can we expect it to further grow and flourish if the soil for its rootage was not guaranteed?

Inclusive Language Policies Abroad

We've gathered some examples of inclusive language policies abroad to illustrate that similar policies can be possible in the Canadian multilingual and multicultural context.

India

India is a country well-known for its multilingualism, multiculturalism, and multi-ethnicities. According to the 2001 census, about 122 languages have a sizable speaking population within 28 states and seven union territories (Wasey, 2016). From these languages, 22 are listed in the Constitution. There are two official languages in India: Hindi and English, Hindi being the most widely and prominently used. In British India, English was the only language used for administrative purposes as well as for higher Education purposes (Goff, 2017).



Figure 1: Languages spoken in India.

To accommodate the variety of languages, the Central Advisory Board of Education first presented the Three-Language Formula in 1959: the mother tongue or regional language to be taught for 10 years, the official language (either Hindi or English) to be taught for 6 years, and another modern Indian or foreign language, to be taught for 3 years (Goff, 2017, p.151).

Switzerland

Switzerland is divided into 22 cantons. Four languages are spoken across the territories: German, French, Italian and Rhaeto-Romanic. Switzerland's multilingualism extends much further: nearly 20 percent of Switzerland's population is foreign and speak other language than the four officially designated by the government.

According to Levitt (2004, p. 123) each language has defined boundaries and each official language has its own role. The country places strong efforts in delivering school's instruction in its citizens' native languages. This gradual immersion makes it easier for them to process information in the language to which they are accustomed and provides a strong foundation for learning other languages.

To promote multilingualism, Switzerland has one not-for-profit national broadcaster - The SRG SSR. It offers television and radio programming in all four languages. It ensures that all residents view or listen to the news and to a wide variety of other programs in their language and therefore remain engaged with the Swiss society.

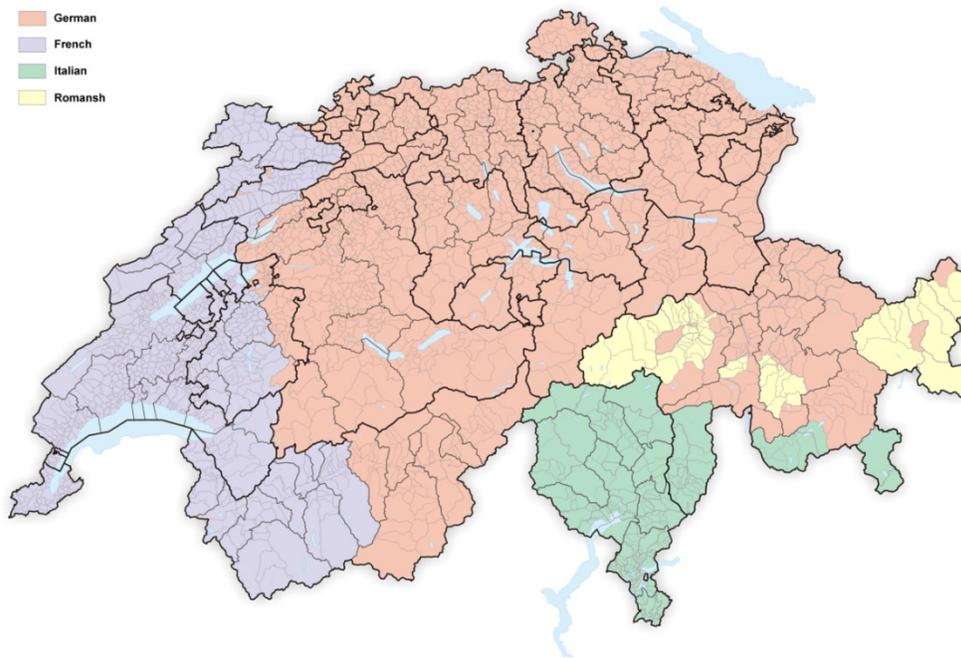


Figure 2: Languages spoken in Switzerland.

Catalonia, Spain



Figure 3: Languages spoken in Spain.

Catalonia is a region of Spain designated as a Statute of Autonomy. Two official languages, Spanish and Catalan are spoken and written in offices and schools. The Catalonia’s Language Policy Secretariat has legalized several policies for the Catalan Language to support the language learning process and the transition towards its use.

The Consortium for Language Normalization (CPNL) has 22 Language normalization centers across Catalonia. The centers offer language lessons for adults and organize different language activities and programs, such as The Language Volunteers program. In this program, a Catalan speaker is paired up with someone who does not speak the language. Informal meetings are held to converse in Catalan and to support the learner in their process. The program was recognized by the European Commission as one of the most successful initiatives for teaching languages to new immigrants (Mari, n.d., p. 3).

The increasing immigration in Catalonia also involves language policy in education. The government created welcome classrooms that provide language support for newcomer students needing to achieve proficiency in academic language before accessing regular school classes. The welcome classroom, accompanied by the promotion of intercultural education and professional guidance, provides students with access to post-compulsory studies and to their total integration in school and society (Education Department of Catalonia, 2015, p.70).

Recommendations

After an analysis of the current language policy in Canada, as well as some examples of inclusive language policies around the world, we make the following recommendations for a more inclusive education system with regards to the current linguistic and cultural situation in Alberta:

Programming

- To establish “Welcome classrooms” to help students gain competency in their heritage language or mother tongue, and to ease their transition into regular classes, so that more students can get into the immersion or bilingual program anytime through their schooling.
- To increase numbers, diversities and time allotment for heritage language programs.
- To strengthen connections with schools abroad to provide students with opportunities to work with peers in the heritage language – through task-based activities such as studying Math or doing homework together.
- To incorporate social practice (such as interaction with newcomers who speak the heritage language, or community-based work) and to transfer these hours into recognized credits.

Stakeholder Groups

- To mobilize available social resources to support community-based heritage language cultural events and activities.
- To extend the invitation to community-based groups such as Seniors, community League Boards and others, to get involved in schools’ activities by helping as tutors (in the welcome classrooms), or as teaching assistants in the regular classes, among others.
- To provide children with opportunities to use the social capital of their heritage language by getting involved in community-based activities in the language.

Conclusion

Appropriate language planning can help integrate cultural possessions of other languages into the Canadian culture and offer more people a sense of belonging. Educational systems across Canada should provide increased opportunities for ethnic groups to maintain their mother tongues, to prevent the loss of their unique identity, to ensure cultural freedom and to recognize the contributions of their culture into the Canadian cultural diversity. Multilingualism not only tends to the basic needs of ethnic groups but is also a plus for Canadian cultural and economic development. It is essential that the provincial

government and other jurisdictions start working on a relevant language policy and plan so that school boards make further and effective innovations concerning minority language learning. With this, more people will come to the realization of the significance of the issue and endeavor to participate in the maintenance of their heritage languages.

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