

THE LANGUAGES WE SPEAK: ABORIGINAL LEARNERS AND ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

A Literature Review of Promising
Approaches and Practices

Full Report

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N.B.: The views expressed in this literature review are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth.

2009
Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth Cataloguing in Publication Data

428.2497 The languages we speak : Aboriginal learners
and English as an additional language : a
literature review of promising approaches
and practices—Full Report.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN-13: 978-0-7711-4265-9

1. English language—Study and teaching as
a second language. 2. Native peoples—Canada—
Education. 3. English language—Study and teaching
as a second language—Manitoba. 4. Native peoples—
Canada—Education—Manitoba. I. Manitoba.
Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth.

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Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth
School Programs Division
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

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*The world is richer
than it is possible to express
in any single language.*

—Ilya Prigogine

CONTENTS

Introduction to the Literature Review	1
Context and Purpose of the Literature Review	3

Part One: Background—Census Information and Issues and Challenges Identified in the Literature	7
Demographics, Language Use, and Educational Attainment and Employment	9
Canadian Demographics	9
Manitoba Demographics and Languages	11
Language Use	12
Canada’s Policies toward Aboriginal Languages and Aboriginal Status	13
Aboriginal Languages and Education Policy	13
Educational Attainment and Employment	13
A Brief Discussion of Socio-linguistic Terminology	15
Challenges to Aboriginal Learners in Education	16
The Distinctiveness of Aboriginal Learners	16
Educational and Social Barriers and Inequities	17
Negative Attitudes toward Aboriginal Language and Dialect Use	18
Issues with Teaching Processes	19
Challenges to Schools and the School System	22
Lack of Directly Relevant Research	22
Lack of Teacher Preparation	23
Important Considerations in Language Education for Aboriginal Learners	24
Decolonizing Education	25
The Case for Linguistic Diversity	26
The Case for Teaching L1 in School	30

Part Two: Recommendations from the Literature Related to Language Education for Aboriginal Learners	33
Introduction	35
Policy	35
Policy, Curriculum, and Programming	37
Diversity and Equity in Education: Manitoba Initiatives	37

Differentiated Instruction	38
Inclusion of Aboriginal Perspectives in Manitoba	39
Programming and Planning	39
Localized Programming	40
Bilingual and Bilingual-Friendly Programming	40
Two-Way Education and Language Awareness Programming	41
Adjunct or Sheltered Support Programming	42
Other Programming and Planning Considerations	42
Testing, Assessment, Learner Placement, and Correction	43
Linguistically and Culturally Fair Assessment	43
Triangulated Assessment	44
Use of Standards or Benchmarks in Assessment	44
The Linguistically Informed Approach to Assessment and Correction	45
Curriculum	45
Curriculum and the Use of Benchmarks, Standards, and Bandscales	45
Aboriginal Contributions to Curricula	46
Materials and Resources	47
Pedagogical Approaches to Teaching “Standard English”	47
Vernacular and First Language Maintenance	
Introduction	47
Contrastive Analysis and Code-Switching	47
Adapted English Instruction	49
The Lexical Approach	50
Communicative Content/Task-Based Language Teaching	50
Literacy Pedagogy	51
Using the First Language or Dialect as the Medium of Instruction	52
Indigenous Pedagogy	53
Critical or Transformative Pedagogy	54
Other Practices Supporting Education for Aboriginal Learners	55
Teacher Education and Support	56

Implications and Conclusions	59
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References	63
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following individuals in the development of *The Languages We Speak: Aboriginal Learners and English as an Additional Language: A Literature Review of Promising Approaches and Practices*.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE
LITERATURE REVIEW

Context and Purpose of the Literature Review

As part of its ESL Action Plan and its efforts to develop an English as an additional language (EAL) strategy for Aboriginal learners, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth initiated the following review of literature related to the teaching of Standard English (SE) dialect to Aboriginal learners. It was written by Ruth Epstein, who is an educational consultant in the areas of English language learning and instructional design/distance and distributed learning. She holds a Masters of Arts in TEAL and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Educational Communications. Her interests, research, and publications include the following:

- the development and delivery of distance-delivered courses and programs for Aboriginal people and for EAL teachers
- instructional development
- selection and adaptation of EAL teaching/learning materials
- language curriculum and program development and evaluation
- English instruction for Aboriginal and additional language learners in schools

Although this review was published by Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, it is a report of Ms. Epstein's findings, and does not necessarily reflect the Department's philosophy or policy.

This literature is reviewed with respect to the theories, research, and perspectives presented on teaching SE to Aboriginal learners, with a particular focus on schools and school systems in which English is the primary medium of instruction medium of instruction. The review is divided into two parts: Part One outlines census information and discusses challenges and issues identified in the literature; Part Two presents recommendations from the literature and implications for educators, administrators, and government.

This review was originally prepared as a background and information piece for *The Ways We Speak*, a provincial symposium on EAL and Aboriginal learners, which was held on February 22-23, 2007. The review and symposium were initiated as a result of the 2005 ESL Action Plan and the ESL Program Review, where there was a broad evaluation of a wide range of learners and their needs. This study showed that further attention to the experiences and needs of Aboriginal EAL learners in Manitoba was required.

The Action Plan comprises 11 specific initiatives intended to improve access to quality EAL programming in Manitoba schools over the next several years. One initiative that has already been undertaken is the adoption of the more inclusive and comprehensive term "English as an additional language," as it suggests learners of English may already speak a number of languages and dialects, which is often the case for many Aboriginal learners. The term "EAL" also reflects an orientation to language learning that values and encourages linguistic diversity and sees the teaching of English as an additive process. The following general initiatives that are relevant to Aboriginal EAL learners came about in response to the Action Plan:

- In the 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 school years, the EAL Support Grant was enhanced to provide additional support for EAL learners
- Actions to address ethnocultural equity were implemented to focus on Manitoba's capacity to respond appropriately to school and community diversity and to enhance anti-racism education
- Development of an EAL curriculum framework was initiated in November 2005 and projected for completion in 2008
- A full-time EAL consultant position was secured
- Accountability measures are being established (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth)

More specifically, Action 2 of the ESL Action Plan focuses on Aboriginal EAL learners. The text of this action follows:

3. The Department work collaboratively with schools, Aboriginal organizations, and communities to address the linguistic diversity of Aboriginal learners by

- establishing a provincial group to undertake research and study the linguistic diversity of Manitoba's Aboriginal student population and English as a Second Dialect (ESD) issues, to develop a school and teacher support document on Aboriginal linguistic diversity and best instructional and programming practices. This would include collecting and analyzing relevant student data, reviewing literature, consulting with schools, and gathering examples of best practices in Manitoba and other jurisdictions.
- developing culturally appropriate and relevant ESL programming resources and supports, especially with regard to the development of an Early Years screening protocol or instrument for assessing the linguistic diversity of Aboriginal learners
- encouraging and supporting school divisions in developing Aboriginal Academic Achievement initiatives to address the ESL, ESD, and Aboriginal languages learning needs of Aboriginal learners

This action illustrates the importance of developing a common understanding of the linguistic diversity of Aboriginal learners and their needs, and developing a common understanding among Manitoba schools of what are considered appropriate EAL programming and supports for Aboriginal learners. Addressing the EAL needs of Aboriginal learners is one of the Department's priorities (Turner).

This literature review explores research and theory related to teaching SE to Aboriginal learners who speak either an Aboriginal language(s) or who speak a variety of English related to Aboriginal languages. The review focuses primarily on K-12 education, but also has some relevance to the teaching of Aboriginal adults. While the review is primarily aimed for the Canadian prairie context, particularly Manitoba and Saskatchewan, it also has relevance to those teaching dialect/vernacular speakers in other parts of Canada and in other countries, particularly regarding marginalized or disempowered groups.

This literature review is an update and expansion of a 2003 literature review on this topic by Ruth Epstein and Lily X. J. Xu. Efforts have been made to provide balanced perspectives and the opinions of the reviewers have not been included, although some of their previous research has been cited. The review is quite extensive; however, in the interests of brevity and to ensure focus on language, certain areas that may have relevance (e.g., learners with special needs, gender/sexual orientation, technology in language learning, speech and language pathology, and several other areas) have not been addressed in this review.

The review is divided into two parts. Part One outlines census information and challenges and issues identified in the literature. Part Two presents recommendations from the literature and implications for educators, administrators, and government. Because of the complex nature of this subject, the reader will find some repetition of statements from the literature, which are included to highlight this complexity.

PART ONE

Background—Census Information
and Issues and Challenges Identified
in the Literature

Demographics, Language Use, and Educational Attainment and Employment

Canadian Demographics

As of the 2001¹ census, 1.3 million Canadians claimed Aboriginal ancestry, which accounts for 3.4 percent of Canada's population. This is the second-highest percentage of reported Indigenous population in the world after New Zealand². This figure is up from 2.8 percent in the 1996 census (Statistics Canada, 2003a)³, and represents a 22 percent increase in Aboriginal people since 1996 (Foot) compared to a 3.4 percent increase in the non-Aboriginal population (CBC National News). The largest gain was in the Métis population, which was counted at 292,310, or 30 percent of the total Aboriginal population—a 43 percent increase. The majority of Canada's Aboriginal people in 2001 self-identified as Indian at 608,850 or 60 percent, and 45,070 or 5 percent identified as Inuit. The remaining identified in more than one group or as band members who did not identify as Aboriginal (Statistics Canada, 2003a)⁴.

The majority of Aboriginal people live in the North and on the Canadian prairies. In Nunavut, 85 percent of the population is Aboriginal, compared to 51 percent in the Northwest Territories and 23 percent in the Yukon. In each of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, Aboriginal people represent 14 percent of the population, while 5 percent of the Alberta population self-identified as Aboriginal in the 2001 census. More significant to this review is that the proportion of Aboriginal children in Saskatchewan was counted at 25 percent and in Manitoba at 23 percent (Statistics Canada, 2003a).

In 2001, 50 percent of the Aboriginal population in the 2001 census was under 24.7 years of age, 13 percent younger than the non-Aboriginal population whose median age⁵ was 37.7. **The lowest median age for Aboriginal people was in Nunavut at 19.1, followed by Saskatchewan at 20.1, and Manitoba at 22.8.** Furthermore, one-third of the Aboriginal population in 2001 was under 14 years of age and 5.6 percent of children in Canada were Aboriginal. In Saskatchewan alone, the Aboriginal population of those

-
1. Results from the 2006 census were not available at the time of this literature review.
 2. This compares to 1.5 percent of the Indigenous population in the United States, 2.2 percent in Australia, and 14 percent in New Zealand.
 3. Statistics Canada reports that undercoverage, or those not reported, in the 2001 census was higher among Aboriginal people than other sectors of the population because enumeration was not permitted or not completed on 30 Aboriginal reserves and settlements. The greatest impact of this undercoverage would be related to persons registered under the *Indian Act*.
 4. There is some discrepancy in numbers, depending upon the definition of "Aboriginal." Counts from the 2001 census using different definitions were as follows: "Aboriginal Origin" 1,319,890; "Aboriginal Identity" 976,305; "Registered Indian" 558,175; "Band Membership" 554,860 (Statistics Canada, 2003a).
 5. "Median age is the point where exactly one-half of the population is older, and the other half is younger" (Statistics Canada, 2003a).

under 14 years of age accounted for 70 percent of children in this age group Canada-wide (Turcotte and Zhao). **While the birthrate among Aboriginal people is declining, it is still 1.5 times higher than the birthrate among non-Aboriginal people, indicating that in 2006 we should see a proportionally high number of Aboriginal school-aged children (Statistics Canada, 2003a).**

As these children move through the education system and into the labour market in coming years, they will account for an increasing part of the growth of the working-age population. This will be the case particularly in provinces with higher concentrations of Aboriginal people.

(Statistics Canada, 2003a, 8)

One-quarter of Canada's Aboriginal population lives in the following 10 urban centres: Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Saskatoon, Regina, Ottawa-Hull/Gatineau, Montreal, and Victoria, although proportional to the size of the non-Aboriginal populations, the percentages are only significant in some metropolitan areas. **In 2001, the highest number was residing in Winnipeg at 55,755 or 8 percent of the population, up 1 percent from 1996.** The two highest concentrations of Aboriginal people in urban areas are in Saskatchewan: Saskatoon's Aboriginal population was 20,275 or 9 percent, and Prince Albert's was 11,640 or 29 percent (Statistics Canada, 2003a). Regarding community involvement in education, a national Indian education study in Alaska (Stancavage, et al.) found that the involvement of community leaders was greater in rural and remote areas with high populations of Aboriginal learners than in urban areas. Access to Aboriginal teaching staff who could speak an Aboriginal language or dialect and who tended to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in education was found to be more likely in rural and remote schools with large populations of Aboriginal learners. These two facts would likely be similar in Canada.

In addition to the rural/remote-urban split, Aboriginal people are relatively mobile, affecting service delivery. According to Statistics Canada (2003a), "the high level of mobility creates challenges for planning and implementing programs in education, social services, housing and health care, especially in urban areas" (11).

Manitoba Demographics and Language

The following table illustrates how the Manitoba population reporting an Aboriginal identity/ethnicity increased in all groups from 1996 to 2001 (Statistics Canada).

	1996 Census Data	2001 Census Data
Total Aboriginal Population	128,680	150,045
First Nations	82,690	100,890
Métis	46,195	57,080
Inuit	360	650

Yet, as shown in the following table, the number of Aboriginal people in Manitoba speaking an Aboriginal language decreased, with the exception of the number who said they spoke Blackfoot, which increased by 25 people, and the number who reported speaking Dakota Sioux, which increased by 15 (Statistics Canada).

Linguistic Diversity: Mother Tongue Statistics for Manitoba's Aboriginal Peoples

	1996 Census Data	2001 Census Data
English	83,890	95,530 (English only responses)
French	5,110	10,390 (10,145 English and French and 145 French only)
Total Aboriginal Languages	46,195	33,415 (43,215 individuals reported some knowledge of an Aboriginal language)
Blackfoot		25
Cree	23,560	18,110
Inuktitut	45	70
Ojibway	9,680	8,885
Oji-Cree	N.B.: The 1996 census data did not distinguish between Oji-Cree and Cree	4,605
Dakota Sioux	715	730
Dene	860	840
Other Aboriginal Languages	1430	150

While an increasing number of Aboriginal people are entering the Manitoba school system with English as their mother tongue, a significant number still start school with English being an additional or second language. According to Tavares, their educational success may depend upon their opportunity to receive appropriate EAL instruction and supports. Census data (reported by Tavares) shows that many people reporting Aboriginal identity speak English only as their mother tongue. For example, in 1996 approximately 62 percent of Aboriginal people in Manitoba indicated English was their mother tongue as compared to 27.5 percent reporting an Aboriginal language and 4 percent reporting that their mother tongue was French. This compares to the following 2001 figures: approximately 70.5 percent of Aboriginal respondents reported English only or English and French only as their first learned language; 28.8 percent reported some knowledge of an Aboriginal language; and 24.6 percent of the total Aboriginal population reported that an Aboriginal language was their first learned language and that they still understood it, while 22.8 percent reported that an Aboriginal language was spoken at home.

Language Use

As will be discussed in detail later in this literature review, language acquisition specialists emphasize that proficiency in one's first language (L1) aids proficiency in a second language (L2) because of cognitive transfer (Cummins; Roessingh; Roessingh, Kover and Watt). As of 2001, about one-quarter of Aboriginal people said that they could converse in an Aboriginal language, but this number does not indicate that they use an Aboriginal language on a regular basis. The number of North American people of Aboriginal ancestry speaking their ancestral languages dropped by 29 percent between 1996 and 2001; according to the 2001 census, only 3.5 percent now speak an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue (CBC National News, January 22, 2003). Eight of the 14 Aboriginal languages spoken by at least 2000 people increased (Dene, Montagnais-Naskapi, Attikamekw, Micmac, Dakota/Sioux and Oji-Cree), while six declined in use (Cree, Ojibway, Blackfoot, some Salish languages, Algonquin, Dogrib, and Carrier).

In Canada, roughly 40 percent of the Aboriginal population speaks English solely, 30 percent speaks French solely, and 30 percent speaks other languages (Edwards). For example, Aboriginal learners make up 74 percent of Saskatchewan's total EAL or dialect-speaking learner population, excluding band schools (Saskatchewan Learning). Population demographics would suggest that the numbers in Manitoba are similar. Snow (Franken 600) notes "children learning to read in a language they do not speak are at high risk of poor outcomes" (28).

Canada's Policies Toward Aboriginal Languages and Aboriginal Status

Canada's *Multiculturalism Act* was passed in 1988 to formalize the multiculturalism policy outlined in the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. The policy, calling for maintenance of languages other than English and French, applied primarily to heritage languages (Edwards). Edwards notes that with respect to Canadian policy and law, Aboriginal languages are largely unguarded. Quoting others, he points out how the status of Indian languages is hardly unrelated to the shameful historical treatment of the Aboriginal populations themselves. "Apart from the outright suppression of native cultures and languages...indigenous varieties were latterly ignored" (130). The Meech Lake Accord was defeated partly because Aboriginal issues were not included. Aboriginal groups have since called for official recognition of *all* of their languages as well as "distinct" status in Canada, but this has not yet occurred (Edwards).

Aboriginal Languages and Education Policy

Historically, attitudes toward Aboriginal languages were assimilationist. Learning English was subtractive for Aboriginal and other languages; that is, English was to replace Aboriginal and other languages. This approach informed practices in Canada's residential schools, as well as the education of all "linguistic minorities" in the nation's public school system.

Attitudes and policies have gradually been changing toward L1 maintenance and development. In Manitoba, the *Public Schools Act* of 1979 was amended, allowing for bilingual instruction in other languages. A few years ago, a Cree-English bilingual program was established in Mystery Lake School Division in Thompson, Manitoba. More recently, at both federal and provincial levels, policies have increasingly reflected support for Aboriginal languages, as witnessed by the development of "Provincial Aboriginal" languages curricula in Manitoba and in many Canadian provinces. The trend toward establishing Aboriginal language "immersion" programs in many First Nations communities in Manitoba and throughout Canada, and a bilingual education policy in Nunavut, are additional evidence of shifting policies.

Educational Attainment and Employment

Improvement in education was evident between the 1996 and 2001 census period among Aboriginal people aged 25 to 64. According to the 2001 census, in the 20- to 24-year-old age group, 31 percent of Aboriginal people were attending school; in the 25- to 29-year-old age group, approximately 19 percent were attending (Statistics Canada, 2003b). The percentage with high school diplomas increased from 23 percent to 25 percent; in 1996, 45 percent did not hold high school credentials and this decreased to 39 percent by the 2001 census. The percentage with post-secondary qualifications increased from 33 percent to 38 percent, 8 percent of whom held university credentials (up from 6 percent). Male Aboriginal college graduates were attracted to construction and the trades

(industrial, mechanical, or electronic technologies), while female Aboriginal college graduates tended toward office administration and secretarial programs. University or college credentials for women tended to be in K–12 education or nursing. Other college- or university-level interest was in business, commerce, and financial management (Statistics Canada, 2003b).

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (INAC) reported that “of the 120,400 on-reserve learners enrolled in Kindergarten, elementary, and secondary schools in 2003–2004, six out of every 10 learners [6 percent] were in First Nations (FN)-managed schools, while slightly less than four in 10 [4 percent] were in provincial/private schools” (INAC 36). At the Kindergarten level, 85 percent of INAC-funded learners attended FN-managed schools, but by Grade 12 this number declined to 45 percent, since many FN schools offer only elementary education. In Saskatchewan, Aboriginal youth tend to take a year off to work, participate in apprenticeships, or to pursue other interests before taking further studies (Saskatchewan Education Indicators). It is likely that this is similar in Manitoba.

For off-reserve children, achievement in school is correlated with their parents’ educational levels (Turcotte, et al.). This may account for increases in retention and educational achievement in school because parents of children currently in school are younger and did not suffer directly from the negative affects of residential schools, so are often achieving higher educational levels. We can be optimistic that this trend is likely to continue.

Turcotte et al. note the importance of a sound formal education, for the socialization and health of Aboriginal children. They state that Aboriginal health is affected by educational attainment. “Barely three-quarters (73 percent) of Aboriginal children whose parent had completed elementary school or less had very good or excellent health, compared with 89 percent of those whose parent had completed university studies” (23). They add that dropping out of school depends upon a child’s early childhood education—53 percent of off-reserve Aboriginal children 6 to 14 years of age attended early childhood development programs. This number is increasing and a greater number of programs specifically designed for off-reserve Aboriginal children are now available. Turcotte et al. point to the need for Aboriginal learners to develop both their cognitive abilities and their ability to adapt their behaviour to different cultural expectations. “Ultimately, the child needs to develop fully ‘intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically’ to become an ‘Aboriginal citizen’ capable of assuming community and societal responsibilities” (24).

Furthermore, a well-educated Aboriginal workforce is essential to meet labour market requirements, and to reduce high levels of youth unemployment and dependence on social assistance (Tait 1). Despite the improvements noted above in educational attainment, May notes, “there is now little doubt, after a welter of educational research on the subject, that the specific proscription and diminution of indigenous languages and cultures in the school process has contributed, in no small part, to the subsequent limited success of many indigenous students” (1).

Howe states:

Aboriginal people achieve a high rate of financial return on their educational investment...an Aboriginal male who drops out of school gives up over \$0.5 million. An Aboriginal female can earn over \$1 million by obtaining a high school diploma and then attending university, but will earn less than \$90,000 in her lifetime if she drops out of high school. (1)

Tait points out that in 1996 the unemployment rate for young Aboriginal people who had not completed secondary school was 40 percent compared to 23 percent for those who had completed high school. Those who had completed college had unemployment rates of 20 percent, while those who had completed university had only 9 percent unemployment. She states that Métis people achieve the highest education levels in spite of the fact that they are not eligible for INAC funding, noting that this may be due to Métis peoples' history of formal education, residence closer to educational institutions, and familiarity with mainstream institutions. She describes a general trend for Aboriginal people living in cities to be the most likely to complete post-secondary education and find employment, both of which are scarce in rural and remote communities and on many reserves. She points out that those from remote communities who do attend post-secondary education "are often confronted with unfamiliar surroundings and customs, resulting in feelings of isolation." Others are faced with "thought processes and ways of knowing and learning that are a lot different than their own traditional ways" (9).

Before discussing the challenges to Aboriginal people in education, we briefly address terminology related to "standard" and "non-standard" English.

A Brief Discussion of Socio-linguistic Terminology

Stubbs (qtd. in Delpit, et al.) claims that people, particularly educators, are extremely sensitive to "standard" versus "non-standard" English use in their classrooms. He also asserts that language is not uniform and that, in fact, all of us are "multidialectical," speaking a particular style of language according to a number of social factors. Regardless of how we speak, we can generally understand each other even if we are speaking in a different style.

Thus, the term "standard" is difficult to determine or differentiate from "non-standard" usage. "Standard" language usage is assumed to be the language of the educated as well as the language form that appears in dictionaries and encyclopedias. There is often a judgment of correctness associated with the "standard" form, but there is no agreed-upon description of what that form is and whether it is the prescriptive or descriptive form. In addition, while dialect is not the same as "accent," there is a tendency by many to associate certain accents with standard use (Stubbs, qtd. in Delpit, et al.) and others with non-standard usage.

Because the term “dialect” carries a stigma, most language specialists have replaced it with terms such as “language variety,” “language diversity,” or “vernacular.” The literature points out that, whichever term is used (all terms are used interchangeably in this literature review), language varies regionally and between groups, but “in terms of their linguistic structure, all of the dialects...are equally regular and predictable” (Adger 1). Like all languages, varieties change over time and can be contrasted with another dialect or language. Despite persistent negative attitudes toward some varieties of English, perhaps because some vernaculars are linked to some groups, “no dialect is superior to another on linguistic grounds.” Adger adds, “if people had a better understanding of how language works, they would probably be less inclined to make negative judgments about speakers of different dialects.”

Challenges for Aboriginal Learners

The Distinctiveness of Aboriginal Learners

Aboriginal people have diverse social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds (Goddard; Heit and Blair; Burnaby; Garret; Faries; Toohey). Many attend school in remote rural northern communities and on reserves (recall 6 percent of learners are in First Nations-managed schools) and speak Aboriginal languages or an English dialect for most of their communications. Others attend school in urban and southern regions (Burnaby; Heit, and Blair). It has also been suggested that the grade system imposed by non-Aboriginal school systems may not fit with Aboriginal cultures’ orientation toward developmental stages (Atleo).

For better or worse, the current provincial curriculum employs the SE dialect/vernacular as the medium of instruction. This challenges many Aboriginal learners in schools, especially if there is little emphasis on addressing their English language needs (Burnaby; Faries; Hewitt) and on helping them maintain their L1. In addition, learners are in constant internal conflict about what priority to put on L1 or variety use, overuse of SE, or what Kilgour Dowdy (qtd. in Delpit, et al.) has called “master discourse” (12). Szabo has noted that, whether they are aware of it or not, some adult learners may deliberately retain their vernacular use or accent to “create positive identity, and in some cases to resist social inequities” (21) imposed by the dominant culture. It can be assumed that children within the school environment may do this as well.

The diversity of Aboriginal learners and their needs presents compelling challenges for teachers, as do social and educational barriers. Solutions are posed in the following areas: policy, programming and planning; curriculum reform; appropriate language teaching approaches and pedagogy; and the inclusion of Aboriginal and post-colonialist perspectives in education decision making at all levels. Several studies identified the following as barriers to Aboriginal learners’ academic success: inadequate teacher awareness and training, too few Aboriginal teachers, little locally and culturally relevant curricula and resources, and low funding levels (Adger; Beck; Burnaby; Frasier; Smith; Yurkovich).

Educational and Social Barriers and Inequities

Barriers facing Aboriginal learners are embedded within the larger historical, social, and cultural context of education (Collier). Socio-cultural issues in Aboriginal education include history and issues of self-determination, school policy, Aboriginal control of education, socio-economic conditions of Aboriginal learners, maintenance and revitalization of Aboriginal languages, and opportunities for learners to express themselves in their own languages (Barman, et al.; Szasz; Garrett; Haig-Brown; Halfe; Beck; Smith).

Poverty is cited as a major factor in the success of many Aboriginal learners, suggesting that “...unless the health, social, and economic conditions of Native lives are generally improved, the problems of language development and lower-than-average educational attainment levels will regrettably remain a part of the Native experience at schools” (Sullivan cited in B.C. Human Rights Commission 49). Some learners may live in

troubled home environments—environments sometimes characterized by temporary guardianship, foster care, parents serving prison sentences, and the cycle of poverty, transient life, and violence that often characterize inner-city neighbourhoods. Nestled in neighbourhoods of Bingo halls, saloons, pawn shops, and other commercial enterprises, school is not just a learning community, it is a safe haven and a supportive environment. (Wason-Ellam, et al. 6)

Guerrero states that in higher education some learners identify “a need to overcome an abuse mentality,...an inner struggle to eradicate a poor self-image brought on by years of family violence, substance abuse and deep seeded negative stereotypes about Indian people as a whole” (128).

Yet, Aboriginal people have particular ways of responding to family and community responsibilities, such as taking several days off to be with family for bereavement, and living with relatives, perhaps in a different community, during particular times of the year when parents are unavailable to care for them (e.g., when tending the trapline) or in times of family stress or crisis. When these learners return, they are uncertain of school expectations.

Historical inequities resulting from the education of Aboriginal people during colonization is now recognized as a major cause of Aboriginal language loss, and they still face challenges today to maintain their cultural heritage and identity (Barman, et al.; Szasz; Garrett; Haig-Brown; Collier; B.C. Human Rights Commission). Learners struggle to maintain their confidence and self-esteem within schools where curricula and instruction are Eurocentric (Battiste, et al.), irrelevant to Aboriginal students’ lives, needs, and learning styles (Burnaby), and create “conflicts of identity” (Szabo). Learners are torn between Aboriginal and European worldviews and are faced with a paradox where learning within the current system means relinquishing their Aboriginality (Atleo).

Post-colonial discourse contends that the entire educational system has been and continues to be western-based and Eurocentric, perpetuating the notion of learner deficiency, and the marginalization of Aboriginal people, including the validity and status of their knowledge, languages, and cultures (Battiste, et al.). Yoeman (121) cites post-colonial writers who argue against SE as the medium of instruction for Aboriginal learners because of its colonialist nature. Others argue in favour of SE as the medium of instruction so that it can be used to express Aboriginal reality to the world. Marie Battiste, et al. explore possibilities for consciousness-raising and recommend that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people work together to address educational challenges and develop appropriate solutions. Atleo concurs, calling for an interface between both cultures so that they can find and value each other and have more fruitful dialogue about educational concerns.

Some studies conclude that the school learning environment is exclusive and unfriendly for Aboriginal learners and that it has inequities, views Aboriginal learners as deficient, and does not recognize the rich cultural and language experiences they contribute (Delpit, et al.; Barman, et al.; Szasz; Garrett; Haig-Brown; Collier; Toohey). Individual affective factors such as low levels of cultural identity, lack of confidence and self-esteem, and anxiety contribute to Aboriginal learners' educational challenges (Collier; Frasier). While most (97 percent according to 2001 census data) Aboriginal children maintained positive relationships with their teachers and other learners (Turcotte, et al.), some may see school as socially and culturally alien with little connection to their home lives (Frasier). They may also experience racism, and conflict or confusion with mainstream school culture (Smith; Taras; Haig-Brown; Guerrero; Hewitt).

The combination of so many factors may lead Aboriginal learners to feel there is no reason for attending and continuing school and their achievement levels have remained low (Szasz), and high attrition compared with the non-Aboriginal population continues across Canada. These factors, however, have also led to a movement on the part of Aboriginal people to use community-based education to reclaim their languages and cultures and to improve educational success (May). This concept is discussed later in this literature review.

Negative Attitudes toward Aboriginal Language and Dialect Use

Research focuses on the linguistic differences between Aboriginal English and SE, particularly the negative attitudes towards usage other than SE (Adger; Goodwin; Malcolm; Rickford; Stubbs, qtd. in Delpit, et al.) that result in social stereotyping. Negative attitudes assume if the language is "defective" and therefore rejected, then the learner is defective or will be rejected as well, since the learner does not "sound intelligent" (Delpit, et al. 41). Language use can give a powerful first impression, and non-standard dialect use can illogically disadvantage and stigmatize learners in a number of ways, including how teachers and others judge their power, economic stature, social status, knowledge and expertise, intelligence, family life, history, personality, morality, probability of ability, and future success (at school, work, and in society in general) (Delpit, et al.).

When a teacher underestimates a learner’s ability because of a linguistic difference, the learner may fail in school, or be identified as developmentally delayed or deficient in some other way. Speaking a different language or dialect may be seen as a liability rather than an asset, so these learners are less likely to be identified for placement into gifted programs (Fillmore; Flores, et al.; Christian).

Adger emphasizes that learners’ civil rights are violated when schools do not take their dialects into account. Aboriginal parents support this contention regarding inappropriate placement of their children (Part One 2). Adger describes how schools are generally grounded in SE norms, and discusses the problem this poses for Aboriginal learners:

The fairly uniform written standard English of school texts and tests is generally more accessible to students from middle class backgrounds who have been socialized into oral standard English and baptized in literacy than it is to students from other dialect backgrounds. Because written language plays a central role in determining students’ school success or failure, dialect mismatch has important implications. Dialect differences in oral English are also likely to disadvantage students from vernacular backgrounds because talk conveys metameessages about social identity, along with other meanings. A student’s accurate insight contribution to classroom discourse may be devalued when she or he uses vernacular dialect (Tannen 1).

For these reasons, our schools need to help learners succeed in the medium of instruction and, at the same time, respect their languages as “legitimate linguistic system[s]” (2).

Issues with Teaching Processes

Those learners who have difficulty understanding SE (the current medium of instruction in provincial schools) will have difficulties in their school subjects (Burnaby; Faries). Central to this is the impact of the language teaching process. Ignoring dialect differences, for instance, can affect the quality of education if dialect contributions and influences are not addressed and if dialect speakers are stigmatized (Wolfram, et al.). Teachers who have not discussed post-colonialism or learned about socio-linguistics and applied linguistics for Aboriginal learners may develop misconceptions and unjustified attitudes towards the value of Aboriginal languages and dialects in education. They may also uncritically accept a foreign, non-Aboriginal curriculum (Goddard) and the associated pedagogy that goes with it.

Language and other skills learned at home “may conflict with teachers’ expectations” (Adger, 1997, Part One 4), particularly if teachers are non-Aboriginal. “Studies of cross-cultural interaction between native American students and their white teachers show that the interactional expectations of teachers who do not share ethnicity with their students interfere in teaching and learning” (Part One 4).

According to Alphonse, et al. (2001), Dene societies value education in and of itself less than they do the acquisition of strong survival skills and local traditional knowledge, although this may differ among other Aboriginal groups. Instruction from Elders is seen as important. In addition, learners are more comfortable with caring teachers who know their cultures (Alphonse, et al., 2001). Further, Aboriginal learners may experience discomfort with authoritarian teaching methods, which differ from traditional ways of teaching and learning (Ada, qtd. in Alphonse, et al.). Without attention to socio-cultural considerations (e.g., learner wait time in responding to questions or not making eye contact), teachers may think learners do not know the answers to questions in the academic subjects. In addition to coping with language and dialect differences, learners need to deal with adjusting to new teaching styles, teacher expectations in a range of academic subjects, and unfamiliar school conventions.

Leap provides a review of the literature on dialects of English spoken by various American Indian tribes. He explores how Navajo, Hopi, Mojave, Ute, Tsimshian, Kotzebue, Ponca, Pima, Lakota, Cheyenne, Laguna, Isleta, Chilcotin, Seminole, Cherokee, and other tribes use English. His thesis is that ancestral tribal languages influence both the grammar and the use of Indian English dialects, and thus each tribe has its own unique version of Indian English. One of the important aspects of his book is a discussion of the use of American Indian English in the classroom.

Leap found that most Indian students in the United States speak English. One study of 32,000 American Indian/Alaska Native students found only 2 percent who did not, and about 50 percent of the English-speaking students are monolingual English speakers. However, he points out that loss of their Native language has not necessarily brought school success and does not mean that these students speak the "standard" English that teachers expect from their students. He points to estimates that up to 48 percent of Aboriginal students could be considered Limited English Proficient or EAL learners.

An especially relevant aspect of Leap's study is the differences in the cultural expectations that speakers of the various versions of Indian English have in terms of conversational interaction and teachers in schools. He argues that these expectations and practices, including the issues of etiquette involved in how adults talk to children and how questions are asked and answered, can seriously conflict with common classroom practices in the United States and elsewhere.

Leap also points out that some English-speaking Aboriginal adults may experience difficulty in dealing with "officialise" English spoken by government officials. School officials and teachers need to be aware that in order to successfully interact and communicate with Aboriginal parents they should avoid educational jargon and try to personalize what they say.

Leap provides a series of recommendations for teachers working with such learners. This includes:

- The need for educators to recognize that the use of Aboriginal English is not a sign of language deficiency and that being fluent in a variety of Aboriginal English does not prevent students from acquiring “school” English.
- Teachers should realize that a variety of approaches may be successful in teaching SE.
- Teachers need to build awareness and knowledge of local language use by listening to their students and listening and talking to members of the community.
- Teachers should encourage diversity. They should assume that every statement in Aboriginal English is in some sense or at some level a meaningful statement and try to (re)construct the meaning. Classroom-based Aboriginal English discourse is characterized by brevity, imagery, and frequent invitations to active listener engagement. These are features of communication that are often undervalued and may be overlooked entirely in the highly efficient, task-minded SE classroom.

The unfamiliarity of written structures and conventions in SE appear to create additional challenges for learners who speak Aboriginal languages or dialects, especially if they are from an oral tradition (Wolfram, et al.; Bashman and Kwachka). Aboriginal parents maintain that schools fail to teach their children to read because instruction does not address factors of dialect (Christian) such as interference, pronunciation differences, spelling, grammar, and discourse patterns reflected in their writing (Toohey; Clarke). Consequently, teachers may focus on what they see as learner deficiencies and errors rather than on understanding and meaning (Clarke; Bashman and Kwachka; Blackburn and Stern).

Schools in the remote communities where Aboriginal learner numbers are greatest are characterized by high teacher turnover. Without orientation, new teachers feel isolated, are surprised by the high cost of living, and may lack understanding of the communities to which they are moving so they do not stay (Alphonse, et al., 2001; Epstein and Xu).

High teacher turnover alone can affect the students greatly since it takes time to build rapport, strong emotional ties and trust. The relationship between teacher and students is sometimes just blossoming when the teacher decides, for many reasons, that it is time to move on. Year after year, this turnover in teachers affects the students. They do not respond to the discipline administered by a first or second year teacher as well as they respond to someone they know has been in the community for several years. (Alphonse, et al., 2001)

Also, few teachers know about their learners’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds or understand the challenges and political issues inherent in learning and using SE (Fillmore).

Kohl (qtd. in Delpit, et al.) stresses the importance of teacher talk, stating that it “is central to the tone and nature of life and culture in the classroom” (159). He points out that it takes time for learners and new teachers from outside the community to learn an appropriate and effective style for communicating with each other to avoid miscommunication. He notes that teachers need to think carefully before they speak, listen to learners, and be attuned to how they are heard by the students to ensure learners feel respected, cared for, and consequently motivated to learn.

Finally, lack of culturally, linguistically, locally appropriate curricula is a major obstacle in implementing effective language programs, and in using teaching methods that are effective for Aboriginal learners and their contexts (Fredeen, 1990). Burnaby adds that material for immigrant learners is not culturally appropriate for Aboriginal learners who need resources relevant to their lives. Delpit concisely sums up the situation:

The students don't identify with the teachers who question their intelligence or with a curriculum that ignores their existence. They have little opportunity to speak, and become overanxious about being corrected when they do. Subsequently, even when given teacher-sanctioned speaking opportunities, they opt not to. And they are not motivated to learn the new dialect because nothing presented within it connects to their own interests. (41)

Challenges to Schools and School Systems

Lack of Directly Relevant Research

Although English is the mandated medium of instruction in the majority of schools in English-speaking Canada and SE is expected, researchers have focused little on appropriate pedagogy related to English dialectical variation among North American Aboriginal learners. There have been a few exceptions, such as William Leap's work on American Indian English and, more recently, Guilermo Bartlet's work. There is a growing body of work on Australian Aboriginal English dialects, but most of the literature relates to Creole or Ebonics speakers in the USA and some in the UK and Caribbean. Although aspects of this body of international research may be applied in a Canadian setting, subsequent research theory, regardless of its origin, has not yet been translated explicitly into appropriate policy, programming, or instructional practices (Adger).

Canadian research and theory development related to Aboriginal learners and SE needs is challenging. First, in addition to the historical and social issues Aboriginal learners face, they are also often challenged by their linguistic proficiency, particularly their English proficiency. As a result, schools must deal with both their English language variation and their EAL needs.

Atleo identifies the following four possibilities, all of which could conceivably exist within a single classroom (with varying degrees of strengths in linguistic development for each possibility):

- (1) bilingual English-Aboriginal language
- (2) L1 English
- (3) L1 Aboriginal
- (4) Aboriginal-English dialect

This calls for a range of program solutions, which is costly, as well as appropriate procedures for learner testing and assessment and placement in these programs. Next, depending upon their home situations, some will come from enriched backgrounds and others from backgrounds with little stimulation.

Lack of Teacher Preparation

With the exception of a few provinces, teachers working in ESL/EAL in schools are not required to have specific EAL-related professional training or certification. The need to enhance teacher training with respect to EAL was one of the findings of Manitoba's ESL Program Review. Furthermore, teacher education programs in Canadian universities generally do not require a course in teaching EAL students. This has been noted in both Manitoba and Canadian documents, both of which argue for improved teacher training in this area. The Canadian School Board Association surveyed several provinces (BC, AB, SK, ON, PE, NF) about language learning and the settlement needs of immigrant children and youth. Each province surveyed pointed to the need for attention in this area. This shortcoming is significant not only to the education of newcomers to Canada but also to the education of Aboriginal learners.

A Saskatchewan education professor listed 10 of the most common Cree words, and asked his teacher trainees if they knew what any of the words meant. Fewer than 30 percent of the teachers knew any of the words, and of those who did, most knew only one word, such as *tansi* ("hello") (personal communication with Professor Peter Purdue). Teachers generally do not know how to address linguistic diversity in their classes (Delpit, et al.). In general teacher education programs, teachers rarely receive professional development or training in English language teaching pedagogy (Adger; Fillmore; Turcotte, et al.). Because of the many demands in schools, school systems do not necessarily hire teachers with specific EAL education. In addition, it takes time for learners and new teachers from outside the community to learn an appropriate style for communicating with each other (Kohl, qtd. in Delpit, et al.).

Wason-Ellam, et al. point out that teachers often find themselves acting as advocates for learners, as well as change agents, in their efforts to reconcile the dominant mainstream cultures with Aboriginal learners and their needs.

Aboriginal cultures are not monolithic. Within these cultural groups, there is a wide range of Aboriginal perspectives—children linked to their reserve, Saultaux, Woodlands or Swampy Cree, den [Dene], and Sioux—children raised in urban environments away from their network of community and kinship, children who are in interim guardianship, or Metis children who straddle both cultures or sometimes not quite sure where they feel rooted. Other classmates who may be members of the mainstream are often living their lives in anxiety, not immune from the cycle of family breakdowns, poverty and abuse. Daily life is often laced with apprehension and tentativeness, as children cope with social, cultural, emotional and economic stresses. Children are in great need, which requires teachers to institute social action at the classroom level. (6)

The literature points out that with little or no training and often minimal support, teachers are pressed to know what is needed to effect change, let alone meet EAL and dialect needs in their classrooms. Teachers are often without an instructional program, and therefore end up using “correction” or “interruption.” This approach, where teachers correct learners’ vernacular utterances and strive to eradicate and replace them with SE (Simmons-McDonald; Rickford; Wheeler), has been found to be largely ineffective.

The persistent myth of singular English has meant that English as a second language (ESL) programs have not had the informational resources nor the institutional power to address testing, placement, and instructional questions concerning variation in the language that they teach. Issues about dialect are not widely understood, and there are few program models to emulate. (Adger, Part One 4)

Important Considerations in Language Education for Aboriginal Learners

Following are three concepts from the literature related to language education for Aboriginal learners, discussed at this point because they provide a foundation for considerations that are discussed later. These are related to policy, programming and planning, curriculum, teacher education, and pedagogy. The first two considerations—decolonizing education and the case for linguistic diversity—are both important in a discussion of teaching a dominant or “master” language to a minority and historically marginalized or disempowered group. The third topic—cognitive academic language proficiency—stresses the importance of L1 in learning an additional language.

Decolonizing Education

Battiste, Bell, and Findlay (2000) articulate particular challenges for Aboriginal people:

The most significant problem facing Indigenous people in the Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, 1995-2004 has been to restore Indigenous ecologies, consciousnesses, and languages after Eurocentric colonization and the destruction it authorized from its viral sources, and to understand how this history continues to imprison thought and constrain the conduct of the colonizer and the colonized alike. (84)

These writers call for decolonizing education through “multilateral processes of understanding and unpacking the central assumptions of domination, patriarchy, racism, and ethnocentrism ...” (84). While their writing focuses on post-secondary education, it is equally relevant for the K-12 sector. They note that “decolonizing requires the institutional and system-wide centering of the Indigenous renaissance and its empowering, intercultural diplomacy.” Goddard calls for critical discourse among school administrators and teachers to ensure appropriate policy, programming and planning, curriculum, methodology, and materials. These ideas challenge each educator to become a change agent by raising his or her consciousness and by becoming sensitized to past injustices and the need for education that is more appropriate for Aboriginal people.

Corson, quoting Apple, discusses the education process in general as a “form of ‘social and cultural reproduction’ that is linked open to other structures in society,” listing schools’ social functions as follows:

They select and certify a workforce; they maintain privilege by taking the form and content of the dominant culture and defining it as legitimate knowledge to be passed on; they are agents in the creation and re-creation of an effectively dominant culture; they legitimate new knowledge...or people and allocate knowledge. As a result, in many of its practices formal education looks after the interests of some social groups better than the interests of other social groups. (5)

With respect to language in this educational climate, Corson argues that subtle messages are sent to learners – albeit with the intention of being “helpful” – about what language usage has been deemed appropriate. In this way, he contends, schools “can routinely repress, dominate, and disempower users whose practices differ from the norms than it establishes” (7). Corson states that by assessing learner needs and categorizing them as “gifted,” “delinquent,” “cognitively challenged,” and so on, teachers may unconsciously shape the destinies of these learners in negative ways. Therefore, it is essential that teachers are aware and sensitive to power issues when working with Aboriginal learners and in teaching language.

Citing Bourdieu⁶, Corson also outlines how culture is transmitted through the language used within families. If learners do not have access to the dominant culture and language at home, they will always be disadvantaged and face failure since they cannot meet school expectations. As a result, many Aboriginal learners in school are either afraid to respond or they withdraw. In addition, learners and their families, may think that social and cultural factors and schooling are objective or neutral, and consequently believe that their inability is “natural” (10). Strong home-school connections can be made by a simple understanding of the values and experiences students bring from home. Franken, et al. suggest that gains can be made “when [the goal of] the home and community ‘matches the school’ and vice versa” (23). Later in this review, May’s call for “community-based education” ensures such issues are appropriately addressed.

The Case for Linguistic Diversity

Language transmits one’s values, culture, identity, history, and literature, affecting self-esteem and understanding of self, as well as concept formation and worldview. Socio- and applied linguists have long known the importance of language in cultural maintenance. “It is not only a means of communication, but a link which connects people with their past and grounds their social, emotional and spiritual vitality” (Norris 8).

The destiny of a people is intricately bound to the way its children are educated. Education is the transmission of cultural DNA from one generation to the next. It shapes the language and pathways of thinking, the contours of character and values, the social skills and creative potential of the individual. It determines the productive skills of a people (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. [RCAP] 433 cited in Battiste, 2000)

Language is also intimately tied to identity and is pivotal “in determining who we are;” it “embraces us long before we are identified by any other medium of identity” (Delpit, et al. xvii). Kilgour Dowdy writes, “I think that I survived my high school years by assuming the best mask ever fabricated: the mask of language” (qtd. in Delpit, et al. 9). She goes on to outline the pain of her identity loss in her efforts to survive the school system – the self-doubt, and the questions of being worthy and valued, and knowing she has been heard. She describes the results when she was able to regain her language. “The chains fell from around my tongue, and my brain began to feel as if it were oiled and moving along with hiccups...my quest for legitimization was answered” (10). Her description is repeated in the writings of others who connect their language to their sense of self (Smith; Delpit, qtd. in Delpit, et al.). Fishman (qtd. in Delpit, et al.) points out the high cost to society when people are not comfortable with themselves.

6. Bourdieu (in Corson), using an economic metaphor, notes that “cultural capital” defines social advantage of a group, while “academic capital” is the combination of cultural capital and the effects of culture transmitted at home. Finally, “linguistic capital,” includes not only language use, but also the ability to use language appropriately within a given context, or what he calls the “linguistic market” (10).

Paulston and McLaughlin identify the following areas of interest with respect to L1 language education in Europe: L1 acquisition in L2 contexts; L1 maintenance, development, and revitalization; and code-switching. Principles of the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages note that people have an inalienable “right to express themselves in their regional or minority language in private and social life.” The Charter calls for a need to promote and preserve regional or minority languages. However, as Paulston and McLaughlin point out, this charter does not guarantee implementation of its principles across Europe.

Because minority issues are more visible on an international scale, language and cultural rights have “moved into the arena of human rights and ha(ve) become part of the debate and negotiation surrounding issues between governments and their minorities [and are] an indicator of the political relationships between majority groupings and minorities” (Robinson 72–73).

Szabo describes the post-structural view where identity and language are “site[s] of struggle” (24) and where people grapple with “whose interests are served” (36) when using the SE dialect versus the vernacular. Vernacular use and accent are “signal[s] to others of their linguistic background, political leanings, or group solidarity” (30). This can contribute to a learner’s emotional well-being when coping with life challenges within a dominant culture.

“Identity is not something people have, but something that people construct through their behavior and, more specifically, through their language...every time individuals speak, their use of particular linguistic variants shapes how others see them and how they see themselves” (Szabo 23).

Szabo notes that this can be particularly the case among male youths who often wish to create distance from the mainstream. She adds that this does not mean that students should not learn SE use, which “is beneficial because of its ‘symbolic capital’ or its ‘ability to provide access to more prestigious forms of education and desired position in the workforce or on the social mobility ladder” (Bourdieu and Pavlenko, qtd. in Szabo 24).

According to the 2001 census, 62 percent of parents of off-reserve children viewed language as part of culture and therefore felt it was important that their children speak an Aboriginal language (Turcotte, et al.)⁷. In South Africa, however, there is some shift in language allegiance as parents move their children to schools where SE is emphasized to ensure that they will obtain a quality education, access to adequate employment, and everything else it means to know the language of power (Epstein, 1999). Paulston and McLaughlin note, however, “resistance to the use of mother tongues is an expression of a colonized consciousness, which serves the interests of global capitalism and South Africa” (57).

7. 89 percent of Inuit parents, 67 percent of North American Indian parents, and 50 percent of Métis parents thought first language maintenance for their children was important (Turcotte & Zhao).

If language maintenance and development is to be a goal, there is an issue in knowing which variety of an Aboriginal language is viable for educational systems to teach. For each Aboriginal language and dialect, a number of local varieties may exist. It may therefore be seen as expensive for school systems to provide such specific programming. "On one hand are the lawmakers, searching for a prestige norm; on the other are the local community members, learning that their mother tongue is incorrect and inappropriate" (Brown, qtd. in Paulston and McLaughlin 55). Therefore, this becomes an issue of delicate debate and negotiation about how to structure multilingual education so that local languages and dialects are appropriately and adequately served. The debate would be among: (1) those funding education, usually politicians and economists; (2) those who view L1 education as preferable to support academic learning, and the affective as well as the cognitive impact justifying local language use, usually educators and linguists; and (3) those who view it as an issue of civil rights and development, usually development planners (Robinson).

Wong Fillmore eloquently defends the causes and the costs of target language development without maintenance of L1 or dialect:

Language-minority children encounter powerful forces for assimilation as soon as they enter the English-speaking world of the classroom...Young children are extremely vulnerable to the social pressures exerted by people in their social worlds. But the social pressures they experience are not entirely external. Internal pressures are at work as well. Language-minority children are aware that they are different the moment they step out of their homes and into the world of school...They can tell by the way people interact with them that the only language that counts for much is English: the language they do not yet speak...so they are motivated to learn English. At the same time, they are motivated to stop using their primary languages: all too often before they have mastered the second language...What is lost is no less than the means by which parents socialize their children: When parents are unable to talk to their children, they cannot easily convey to them their values, beliefs, understandings, or wisdom about how to cope with their experiences. They cannot teach them about the meaning of work, or about personal responsibility, or what it means to be a moral or ethical person...Talk is a crucial link between parents and children: It is how parents impart their cultures to their children and enable them to become the kind of men and women they want them to be. When parents lose the means for socializing and influencing their children, rifts develop and families lose the intimacy that comes from sharing beliefs and understandings. (342–343)

Emily Fairies points out that although Aboriginal language is taught as a school subject, it is rarely taught across the curriculum so Canadian Aboriginal languages do not thrive. However, there is some hope for change in this respect. The emergence of Aboriginal language “immersion” programs in various parts of Canada in the 1980s and 1990s (Fredeen 1988) and Aboriginal bilingual programs in Manitoba, together with renewed interest in immersion Aboriginal language programming in First Nations communities as part of their language revitalization strategies, the teaching of Aboriginal languages in schools can now and in the future be an important factor in guaranteeing the survival of Aboriginal languages in Canada⁸.

Alphonse, et al. (2001) state that, in this century, only 2 percent of Canada’s Aboriginal languages will survive (80). Norris found that only 50 Aboriginal languages as of 1996 had a sufficient number of speakers to be deemed safe from extinction, placing Canada’s Aboriginal languages as among the most endangered in the world” (16). Turcotte, et al. note that as of the 2001 census of off-reserve children old enough to speak and under 14 years of age, 76 percent of Inuit, 25 percent of North American Indian, and 12 percent of Métis children could speak or understand an Aboriginal language.

Many Aboriginal languages are already extinct and many others endangered. Factors contributing to language loss include prohibition of L1 use at residential schools, the oral nature of Aboriginal languages, societal factors such as migration to urban areas and intermarriage with the dominant culture, decreased ability of parents to pass language on to their children (Norris), and access to mass media from the dominant culture (Alphonse, et al., 2001). May notes that the demise of language occurs most often not in wealthy, privileged communities whose language is tied to modernity, but “rather to the dispossessed and disempowered” (2) communities where traditional languages are not seen as necessary to the modern world. Norris notes that it is important that a large number of young people speak a language in order for it to remain healthy. Once lost and replaced, languages and their associated cultures are difficult, if not impossible, to fully regain. By employing SE as the only medium of instruction in northern communities, schools do not meet the learners’ linguistic, educational, and affective needs (Burnaby; Fairies).

8. As this literature review was being completed, there were signs that “immersion” Aboriginal language programs were going to become a prominent aspect of language revitalization initiatives of many First Nations communities. For example, Cree Immersion programs have been launched by the Miyo Wahkohtowin Community Education Authority in Alberta in 2004–2005, the Mispawistik Cree Nation of Manitoba introduced a Cree Immersion class at the Nursery school level at Grand Rapids School in 2007, in Saskatoon in 2006 at Confederation Park School, in 2007 the Nêhiyawak program was launched at St. Frances Catholic School in Saskatoon, and the Opaskwayak Cree Nation, near The Pas, Manitoba in September 2006. Ojibwe Immersion programs have been launched at Sakatchewan Anishinabe School in Saskatchewan by the Grassy Narrows Education Authority, and in 2006 the 42 member communities of the Anishinabek Nation adopted an Ojibwe official language policy that also includes Ojibwe Immersion as the preferred method of instruction in Anishinabek Nation schools. Lastly, a national First Nations Languages Conference on August 12, 13, and 14, 2007, at the University of Victoria, focused on immersion education.

When bilingual students are instructed, explicitly or implicitly, to leave their language and culture at the schoolhouse door, they are also being told that everything they have learned from parents and grandparents up to this point in their lives has no value; the language through which they have expressed themselves up to this point in their lives has no value and must be replaced by a superior model. In such classrooms, human potential is being diminished. (Cummins, 2003, 5)

Aginhotri notes that, worldwide, multilingualism is the norm, adding that children do not have difficulty learning several languages simultaneously. Atleo calls for a paradigm shift from a centralized way of thinking that values homogenization to a diverse way of thinking that values distinctiveness, or what she calls “a variety of nexi.” Gerda De Klerk (1995b) suggests that knowing more than one language is an asset because it develops cognitive flexibility, metalinguistic awareness, and abstract, critical, and creative thinking, and increasing communicative sensitivity with monolingual people. Faries contends that L1 development is essential to maintain Aboriginal cultures, languages, self-esteem, and identity, as well as to improve Aboriginal learners’ academic achievement. Aboriginal language maintenance allows learners to transmit local traditional knowledge and culture more effectively. Aboriginal languages can be promoted by including L1 or dialect use in the school, community, and at home (Burnaby; Faries; Yoeman). Educators are much more able to address learner goals and needs if they are sensitized to post-colonial discourse, aware of the implications of language loss and the power of English to marginalize other languages, and supportive of L1 and dialect maintenance and growth for linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as for expression and use in teaching across the curriculum.

The Case for Teaching L1 in School

Good grounding in L1 is the foundation for L2 learning (Atleo). The concept of cognitive academic language proficiency, or CALP, supports the call for L1 maintenance. Studies (Alphonse, Koops, and Mercredi; Cummins; Franken, et al.; Roessingh; Roessingh and Kover; Roessingh, Kover, and Watt) and research cited in Simmons-McDonald show “that literacy development, academic skills, and learning strategies transfer from the L1 to the second and that literacy in the L1 is a crucial base for literacy development in the second language” (187). However, in order for this transfer to occur, learners must have the opportunity to develop their L1 to a sufficient level, or CALP, a term that Cummins coined. Because CALP takes four to seven years to develop, theorists claim that children should be educated in their L1 for at least the first four years of school. A study by Roessingh and Kover (2002) found that older learners (e.g., teenagers) with well developed L1 can more easily transfer their abstract thinking to academic studies in English. In addition, Ashworth notes that English learners who are mainstreamed prematurely will suffer serious setbacks to their academic progress. With no support in the mainstream classroom, English as an additional language learners may see

themselves as failures and leave school. In 1975 in Manitoba, a program review of the Manitoba Native Bilingual Program established by the provincial Department of Education, which saw the development and implementation of Cree and Saulteaux languages as the medium of instruction in a number of Manitoba schools, found that students in the program by Grade 3 were doing better in English than their peers in English-only programs, and were more satisfied with their school experiences (Manitoba Department of Education).

There is no evidence supporting those who believe learning or maintaining L1 interferes with learning an additional language or SE. In fact, knowing more than one language contributes to learning additional languages (Simmons-McDonald). It has been suggested that learners speaking two or more languages have developed elasticity of thought, increased creativity, and an improvement in their ability to deal with complex, abstract concepts. In addition, linguists believe that acquiring two languages or more develops metalinguistic skills (Bialystok; Cantoni, qtd. in Alphonse, et al., 2001). Alphonse, et al. (2001) add that an important benefit of L1 and dialect maintenance along with SE dialect development is that learners grow up learning to be successful in their traditional ways of life as well as life in the dominant society. "Their bond with parents and Elders is not severed by lack of communication or common language" (49). Thus, L1 use alongside SE (Corson, qtd. in Franken and McComish) is recommended.

PART TWO

Recommendations from the Literature
Related to Language Education for
Aboriginal Learners

Introduction

This section of the literature review outlines recommendations related to appropriate language education for Aboriginal learners in the interrelated areas of policy; programming and planning; testing, assessment, learner placement and correction; curriculum; and materials and resources. A number of pedagogical approaches introduced in the literature are also discussed, as well as other practices and teacher education and support. The document ends with implications and conclusions.

Policy

Delpit notes that “it may not be the children’s language that causes educational problems, [for dialect or non-English speakers], but the educational bureaucracy’s response to the language” (xxi). Corson adds, “through their policies, schools can do much to end social injustices” (17) and other education issues related to language. Therefore, policy is seen as a pivotal step in programming and planning, curriculum reform and development, pedagogy, and appropriately serving the goals and needs of Aboriginal language or dialect speakers. As Adger contends,

there can be no question that language variation is tied to issues of social equity and that schools and school districts have a fundamental commitment to promoting equal treatment of students in preparing them for successful participation in society...teachers and teacher educators face vexing questions about language variation in program design decisions that ultimately link to dialect policy. (Part Two 2)

She adds that “educational organizations need to define policy as a guide to professional practice by delineating a linguistically, pedagogically, and morally enlightened position on a matter of such consequence for students” (Part Two 2). She goes on to list a number of activities necessary to encourage policy development related to learners’ language variation including: assessing needs of educators for support in teaching students who speak a vernacular; encouraging professional development in this area; developing a “knowledge base on dialects” that educators can use to make teaching locally relevant; continually emphasizing language variation as a concern; developing collaboration with others who see this as an important issue (Aboriginal parents, teachers, researchers, speech/language pathologists, school counselors, social workers, policy-makers, politicians, etc.).

With respect to policy regarding teaching SE and L1 revival, maintenance, and development, stakeholders should engage in a discussion of purpose or purposes: Are the policies intended to support cultural identity? . . . to address civil rights? . . . to facilitate linguistic maintenance and diversity? . . . to increase learner performance in school? Does success in school mean success in Aboriginally appropriate schools or in a

school system designed for middle class students from the dominant culture? Paulston and McLaughlin note that New Zealand policy related to Maori education has struggled with these questions and it bears watching by other nations grappling with these issues.

Robb contends “education will always be a political issue because it has the potential for empowering traditionally disempowered groups” (18). Alexander argues that policies must recognize that language barriers are related to larger struggles for equality, liberty, and socio-economic conditions. He and others (see next paragraph) advocate state-sponsored language awareness programs. Not all Canadian provinces have educational policies that take language needs into account. A reference committee of stakeholders, including teachers, that was working on developing such a policy for Saskatchewan has been shelved. Heugh and Siegrühn note the importance of teacher input at the school level, where they say the impetus for policy change “is likely to come from teachers within the school simply because they are directly confronted by the education system’s inadequacy in catering for the needs of linguistically diverse students” (91).

Alphonse, et al. (2001) point out the importance of developing visions and goals for their schools and programs. They recommend that schools examine their own level of inclusiveness, and stress the importance of linking all aspects of education, including policy, programming and planning, and curriculum, to the family or what happens at home (Delpit, et al.). Dialect awareness programs for teachers, as well as for the entire student body, are recommended. Alphonse, et al. (2001) also suggest that school administrators who are seeking to maintain language and culture empower Aboriginal teacher associates and support staff. In a later paper, they suggest that schools provide adequate orientation, professional development, and facilitate the establishment of relationships among new and long-term teachers to promote teacher retention. These authors point out the importance of networking with other schools that have high numbers of Aboriginal learners in order to share resources. In South Africa, educators have suggested – and in some provinces implemented – clustering schools, where they twin privileged schools with poorer schools to maximize resource use and sharing. Teaching and learning centres have also been established to involve the community, and to support teachers, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, and researchers working with language minority students (Heugh and Siegrühn).

A stumbling block is that policy-makers may be skeptical of the effectiveness of solutions proposed by socio- and applied linguists, such as the development of the vernacular or use of the vernacular to teach SE (Simmons-McDonald; Wheeler). A further challenge to policy development is incorporating a balanced view of an appropriate range of stakeholders including the Aboriginal community, parents, administrators and those with expertise in applied linguistics and post-colonial discourse. Corson believes that “without community consultation and involvement in planning, schools will always yield to outside pressures to conform to the dominant culture, so that important cultural values weaken and die” (3).

“Even the best policy does not guarantee implementation” (Paulston and McLaughlin, 63). The literature also stresses the importance of policy and program recommendations supported by adequate resources including funding, trained staff, materials and resources, and time for planning, implementation (Adger; Beck; Burnaby; Franken; Frasier; Smith; Yurkovich), and program evaluation.

Policy, Curriculum, and Programming

Policy affects curriculum and programming in a number of important ways. Policies have been implemented in Manitoba and elsewhere to help classrooms integrate new instructional practices, as well as strategies, to make learning more effective for a range of learners, specifically Aboriginal ones. Among these are initiatives toward diversity and equity in education, differentiated instruction, and inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives.

Diversity and Equity in Education: Manitoba Initiatives

In the past 40 years, there has been a shift to inclusive and anti-racist perspectives. This shift has had an impact on Aboriginal education policies and practices, as well as education in general. Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth conducted a major consultative study in 2006 entitled *Belonging, Learning, and Growing: Kindergarten to Grade 12 Action Plan for Ethnocultural Equity*. The study was largely supported by its participants, and made the following general recommendations for 2006–2008:

- to build capacity to respond to the needs of diverse learners and, in particular, to build safe and inclusive schools with the integration of anti-racism/anti-bias elements
- to engage parents, students, and educators through an educational campaign on diversity and equity and through the encouragement of additional language learning
- to provide resources for building inclusive schools and classrooms through the development of curriculum and teaching-learning resources for Aboriginal and international languages in schools and on the Department’s website
- to renew policy and develop new guidelines related to multicultural policy renewal, the promotion and funding of multilingual education, and equitable representation on Department teams and committees
- to enhance workforce diversity by the inclusion of diversity in the Department, as well as professional development/education related to diversity, Aboriginal elements, and anti-racism among Department staff, and educators (e.g., in teacher education programs), and to encourage a diverse teacher body (e.g., through recognizing foreign credentials, offering internships to teachers with diverse backgrounds)

With respect to the curriculum, Manitoba recognizes and celebrates the province's richness of cultural, linguistic, and faith groups by preparing all learners for participation in society, providing them for linguistic and cultural development, and encouraging intercultural understanding. In describing the various elements that need to be integrated into curriculum documents, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth notes the following:

Effective schools strive to create and maintain inclusive school programs and environments that welcome diversity and challenge bias and discrimination. An anti-bias and anti-racism educational approach is a critical element in the development of curriculum documents and school environments so that students can experience learning in a safe environment and can develop the required knowledge and skills. (<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/elements.html>)

Differentiated Instruction

In 1996, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth published a document entitled *Success for All Learners: A Handbook on Differentiating Instruction* (which has subsequently been reprinted) that encourages and provides a number of concrete ideas for differentiating instruction to better address particular learner goals and needs. Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth also has developed a policy on inclusion, emphasizing adaptations to classrooms and instruction to accommodate the needs of learners with diverse needs. More recently, the Province of Manitoba has passed an *Appropriate Education Act* emphasizing the need to provide all learners with appropriate educational programming (Tavares, personal communication).

The Manitoba "differentiated instruction" element of the curriculum states: "Teachers must differentiate instruction to support learning for all students" (Manitoba Education and Training, 1995, 17) and is important in creating a supportive classroom and school environment. Differentiated instruction acknowledges learner differences in learning rates and learning styles. Differentiated instruction allows for personalized instruction achieved through a variety of teaching strategies, approaches, and activities, and ensures that learners are all able to grow in a range of ways and achieve their full potential. Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth points out that, in particular, EAL students "may require adaptations related specifically to their language needs in order to make a gradual transition to the full range of student learning outcomes and standards." (Manitoba Education and Training, 1995, 18)

Other Canadian provinces have taken similar steps. The Saskatchewan Education policy, known as "the adaptive dimension," promotes the decentralized decision making needed to address heterogeneous learner needs, permeating curriculum, materials, and teacher decision making. The intent is to "enrich student learning and develop mutual respect among members of the class." The adaptive dimension encourages language across the curriculum, which is important since learners need to keep up with academic

content (Franken, et al.). To implement the adaptive dimension, it is the “classroom teachers who are being challenged to understand the varied and changing social and cultural landscape and know how to change familiar instructional patterns to make schooling more effective to be inclusive of all learners. To do this, teachers must be willing to create classrooms that build on the webs of meaning, value and community that children bring to school” (Wason-Ellam 5). Delpit (2002a) adds that making teaching relevant to learning does not mean lowering standards, but making the curriculum more relevant to learner interests so they will have a connection to what is being taught.

Inclusion of Aboriginal Perspectives in Manitoba

Manitoba is also ensuring that Aboriginal perspectives and history are integrated across the curriculum in order to promote knowledge and understanding among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners. This curriculum policy helps Aboriginal learners develop understanding of their past and heritage, and builds the self-identity and self-esteem needed for them to fully participate in their communities and beyond. It helps non-Aboriginal learners construct informed opinions on Aboriginal people based on understanding and respect for their history, culture, and contemporary aspects of their lives.

Programming and Planning

Teaching, curriculum, and the school itself should be contextualized in the experiences, skills and values of the community...[and] accept the communities; socio-cultural activities as the contexts for making school work meaningful, and devise school activities to bridge home and school, thus building authentic classroom communities that can produce high academic achievement..., creating socio-cultural activities that allow teachers to understand the students; contexts and to develop ways to use these in the academic world. (CREDE 5)

The literature offers a range of programming and planning recommendations, recognizing that individualized programming (e.g., programming that promotes language maintenance) is costly (James). It is essential that programming builds upon the linguistic characteristics of Aboriginal learners (Atleo) as well as their goals and needs. The literature covers a number of organizational arrangements for EAL organizational programming including freestanding or withdrawal programs, programs where learners are mainstreamed into their academic classes with some pull-out provisions to support language development, bilingual programs, L1 support programs, homework centres, and study skills programs. Programs particularly relevant to Aboriginal learners in need of SE and L1 language support are described below.

Localized Programming

Some communities have developed programs with specific language and cultural materials to help learners develop SE (Adger, Part One 5).

Each community has unique educational needs. For example, Tagalik notes that it is important in Nunavut for learners to be equipped for survival in their communities and much of this is dependent upon linguistic and cultural grounding. May advocates for community-based education as effective in ensuring “retention and specific group-based rights,” providing Aboriginal people with what non-Aboriginal people already have “on their own terms” and affirming rights to self-determination (4). In community-based education “active involvement of community members themselves in setting policy and direction” (3) is constantly renegotiated and seen as more likely to result in a contextual fit that has relevance and success for learners. This is the approach used to a large extent by the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre as well as by Nunavut.

Corson states that, at the very least, schools should be as pluralist and as bicultural as possible in their organization, curriculum, and pedagogy.

Bilingual and Bilingual-Friendly Programming

Craig (qtd. in Simmons-McDonald) ranks bilingual education for vernacular speakers as follows, based on their linguistic, socio-economic, and cultural factors:

(1) school monolingualism in the dominant language, which ignores the home language of the child; (2) transitional bilingualism, which allows use of the child’s home language only to the extent that the child can learn enough of the school language to use it for academic purposes in school; (3) monoliterate bilingualism, which develops literacy in the language that is dominant in the community, but permits development of both languages for oral-aural skills; (4) partial bilingualism, which develops literacy and oral-aural fluency in the child’s home language only for ‘certain types of subject matter that have to do with the immediate society and culture’; (5) full bilingualism, which allows development of all skills in both languages in all domains; and (6) monolingualism in the home language in which the objective is to develop literacy in the home language of the child. (191)

Crandall (qtd. in Franken, et al.) also rates bilingual education from most to least effective as follows: #1. two-way bilingual education (also known as dual-language education) along with sheltered instruction and L2 instruction is most effective; #2. late-exit bilingual education along with sheltered instruction and L2 instruction; #3. early-exit bilingual education along with sheltered instruction and L2 instruction; #4. is L2 instruction along with content-based language instruction and sheltered instruction; #5. L2 instruction along with content-based language instruction; #6: structured immersion or sheltered instruction. There is no place in her list for submersion programs (40).

Where the majority of the school population speaks an Aboriginal language or a dialect, bilingual programs usually take an additive approach to L2 learning (Heit and Blair; Faries). Subject-area instruction is almost entirely in the students' L1 or dialect in early grades, while English is taught as an academic subject. Instruction gradually switches to English in later grades in some subjects (Faries; Goodwin). However, Simmons-McDonald has noted that total bidialectism is rarely achieved in communities where 90 percent or more of the community speak a vernacular, which may be the case in some western Canadian areas. These programs are usually experimental or occur in Band-managed schools.

Franken, et al. support "bilingual-friendly" policies and programming to the extent possible, suggesting that assessing the needs of the target learners is necessary for such initiatives. They also suggest that bilingual-friendly programs be enhanced by encouraging family and the community to be involved. They add that bilingual-friendly strategies should be broadly conceptualized, and consider such things as credit for bilingual learning, coherent development of language learning with flexible approaches to the timing of learning both L1 and L2, language across the curriculum, and support for schools to develop bilingual learning strategies (20–21).

Two-Way Education and Language Awareness Programs

Over the years, there have been a number of projects addressing socio-cultural barriers and adjustment processes, and promoting sharing among non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal K–12 learners. These include the Sacred Circle project (1983–1985), which was implemented first in the Edmonton Public School District and later in Ontario and Saskatchewan (Fredeen, 1990), and Australia's "Language and Communication Enhancement for Two-Way Education" (Malcolm, et al.) and "Towards More User-Friendly Education for Speakers of Aboriginal English" (Malcolm, et al.). Marie Battiste (2002) lists a number of other programs and materials suitable for language development.

Recently, language awareness programs for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners have been piloted in the UK and USA and enthusiastically received as effective in overcoming misinformation and promoting motivation among learners (Adger). In such programs the language variety is "an object of study [in classrooms] in the context of discussions of language diversity or of literature" (Siegel, qtd. in Simmons-McDonald 191). Language awareness programs include the following essential elements: they are scientific, engaging learners in a scientific study of language variation and rules governing language; socio-historical, addressing language dominance as well as the viability of all languages and dialects; and humanistic. "Language awareness instruction can play an important role in exposing dialect prejudice when all students – not only vernacular speakers – have the benefit of this knowledge" (6). Corson adds that "critical language awareness," promoting "social awareness of discourse, critical awareness of variety, and consciousness of and practice for change" (19) should be part of the curriculum. The most successful programs incorporate parental involvement. Alphonse, et al. (2001) note that cultural awareness programs are also important and can be

incorporated with language awareness programs. In addition, these programs can be closely tied to the contrastive analysis and code-switching pedagogy, both of which are described later in this paper.

Adjunct or Sheltered Support Programming

Adjunct or sheltered support programming for EAL learners introduces them to subject-related academic literacy and academic concepts in sheltered situations before or at the time they learn these concepts in their content courses. Concepts can also be reviewed after learning has occurred (Becker and Hamayan; Roessingh). The goal is to make academic content comprehensible to learners through “modeling, demonstrations, graphic organizers, adapted texts and visual aides among other techniques” (Genesee, qtd. in Franken 47). Genesee also notes that this approach to programming can be offered regionally, but requires appropriate materials and resources. In adjunct programs, language and content teachers must work together to identify key concepts from academic coursework (Franken; Epstein). Franken says that in addition to making input comprehensible, sheltered instruction is characterized by a learner-centred approach that demands high levels of experiential learning through hands-on tasks and high levels of learner interaction. Research has demonstrated learner gains through this approach (Carrasquillo and Rodriguez, qtd. in Franken). This type of programming may be suitable for Aboriginal EAL students or those who speak a variety of English. In this way, language is offered across the curriculum, which is particularly important for high school learners (Franken, et al.). This program type requires awareness of language challenges on the part of content teachers and necessitates teamwork with language teachers (Epstein).

Other Programming and Planning Considerations

Adger writes, “Kids need a school experience that includes opportunities to speak in both languages in settings that are cognitively demanding. Explicit instruction in SE should be tailored to their demonstrated needs and should respect their command of vernacular English and their home language” (personal communication). Alphonse, et al. propose ways that schools program to make teaching and learning more relevant, including the following: encouraging Elder involvement and integration of traditional skills; empowering teacher associates, particularly those from Aboriginal cultures; and exploring the use of community as a resource. They add that such programs “advocate respect...plan for fun...encourage good health...nurture happiness...validate family...encourage independence in students...foster cooperation...nurture staff unity...examine power issues...honour the community’s code of ethics” (89-91).

Finally, it is essential that program evaluation is integrated into the development and implementation of policy and programming (Paulston and McLaughlin).

Testing, Assessment⁹, Learner Placement, and Correction

Because testing and assessment involve so many interrelated factors and can have such dire implications for learners' and their futures, the literature recommends a careful, systematic assessment policy and process for learner placement and to inform programming (Adger; Franken; Paulston and McLaughlin; Love). Shosomy (qtd. in Paulston and McLaughlin 69) notes, "Tests can provide valuable information about teaching and learning, but testing may also be used as a response to public demand to implement policy, justify previous policy or establish blame for perceived language problems."

Adger notes that learners or their families identifying themselves as English speakers may actually be speaking a variety of English (i.e., English influenced in varying degrees by an Aboriginal language, or an Aboriginal language influenced to varying degrees by English). She suggests that schools and school systems conduct inventories of actual home languages and linguistic varieties that learners speak (e.g., Cree influenced by English, or Michif influenced by both French and English, English influenced by Dene, etc.). She also recommends that knowledgeable interviewers conduct oral interviews to determine learners' linguistic backgrounds. In fact, she states, some speakers may think they are speaking English when they are actually speaking an Aboriginal language, complete with Aboriginal linguistic structures that are strongly influenced by English.

Linguistically and Culturally Fair Assessment

Hilliard (qtd. in Delpit, et al.) argues that "much of the language and many constructs in testing and assessment must be redefined or eliminated" because they are "incompatible with and contradictory to valid cultural-linguistic principles" (97). Kohl (qtd. in Delpit, et al.) notes that it is more important for learners to have the opportunity to display their "knowledge and intelligence" than to conform to testing norms that do not account for a complexity of factors (149). Hilliard notes the vocabulary used in tests and assessments is just one example where SE speakers are at an advantage. She contends "we are faced with unbridled ethnocentrism among the designers of standardized tests and assessment procedures for use with populations of diverse cultural groups" (100), and so calls for a total re-examination of language use in such tests and assessments.

9. For the purpose of this literature review, the term "assessment" includes systematic information-gathering about learners' goals and needs when they enter a program of study, as well as their performance as they work. Evaluation is used to measure program effectiveness.

Triangulated Assessment

Because assessments, and particularly tests, provide only a snapshot of a learner's ability and progress at a given point in time, Franken, et al. suggest triangulated assessments using "a range of diagnostic tools and techniques to identify learners' strengths and areas of developing control in their current state of language development. Without these tools and the ability to use them well, it is difficult to make realistic goals" (30). Some suggested tools include interviews, tests, checklists, portfolios, rating scales and inventories, language samples (writing, homework, etc.), and anecdotal records. Franken also suggests that ongoing assessment be integrated naturally into instruction and that it be based "in mainstream classrooms, with curriculum texts and contexts" (55). In this way, learners are tracked over time. This will aid in addressing changes in learner needs more effectively and also in ascertaining program efficaciousness.

Bernhardt suggests "dynamic testing" to measure whether or not instructional interventions have resulted in changes in learner performance.

Use of Standards or Benchmarks in Assessment

Along with assessment, Epstein cites several studies that call for the appropriate use of benchmarks, standards, or specific learning outcomes to inform curriculum (as discussed further in the Curriculum section of this document) and to help educators assess learner progress. In addition, their use can guide the following:

...instruction, communication with mainstream teachers and with ELLs [EAL learners] and their families about learner progress, and assessment. Benchmarks are divided into language proficiency level milestones and in some cases also grade-level outcomes. Some benchmarks may focus exclusively on language, while others are related to academic skills, academic content, and social skills development and help determine expectations of learners." (4)

Standards from other jurisdictions¹⁰ may be adapted to at least partially meet the linguistic and academic needs of Aboriginal learners. The Canadian School Boards Association suggests that benchmarks for monitoring the achievement of non-English speaking children and youth are one area in which Canadian provinces can collaborate, as has been done for adults with the Canadian Language Benchmarks system. The Pre-K-12 Standards in the USA are closely tied to that country's "No Child Left Behind" policy. Teachers caution, however, that misuse of standards to show accountability has resulted in too much energy being spent "teaching to the test," taking away from valuable time away from addressing learner needs.

10. The following benchmarks or standards are currently in existence: the recently revised TESOL Pre-K-12 Standards used across the USA, Canadian Language Benchmarks (for adults), Ontario and BC Standards, and newly developed Manitoba K-12 EAL Framework of Outcomes.

The Linguistically Informed Approach to Assessment and Correction

A suitable approach to ongoing (and perhaps also initial) assessment is what Rickford (1998) has called “the linguistically informed approach.” This approach ensures, as suggested earlier, that learners are not negatively graded for language or vernacular use when they actually understand academic content. He encourages teachers to differentiate between language variation and errors in their reading and other academic skills. It is important to note when a learner has decoded or received academic input correctly, but may not yet be able to produce expected SE responses and is instead using dialect to respond or display that understanding.

Szabo adds that teachers should be “open to the possibility of resistance to the standard” (34). Rather than constantly correcting what they see as mistakes, teachers should be aware that the students’ language or dialect use may be a deliberate expression of identity, perhaps as part of an oppressed group. Adger adds that learners may actually use their vernacular more often to show group solidarity when teachers constantly correct it as slang. Instead, it is suggested that teachers ask learners to keep diaries of their language experiences, record their language use for analysis, or use instances of dialect use in class as teachable moments to engage them in discussion of language variance and the benefits of code-switching, depending upon the context (Adger; Szabo). Success at school will likely depend on SE use, while success on the streets (Ernie Smith, qtd. in Delpit, et al.) depends on use of the home vernacular. Szabo suggests discussing options with learners—“to examine with them their choices and the potential consequences of these choices” (36).

Curriculum

Curriculum and the Use of Benchmarks, Standards, and Bandscales

As noted in the section on assessment, there is a trend to formalize EAL instruction and programming through the development of ESL/EAL benchmarks, standards, frameworks, scales, or specific learning outcomes. In Australia, some states have developed curricula/benchmarks for Aboriginal learners. For example, Education Queensland has undertaken the ESL bandscales in its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students Project, which developed monitoring devices for the literacy development of Indigenous ESL students in years 1–3. These bandscales provide a broad description of ESL learners’ progress in English language development, and provide assessment measures for the purpose of national reporting and accountability (National Report on Schooling in Australia). In some regions of Australia, the bandscales include implementation documents to facilitate the process (e.g., English as a Second Language Companion to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards [Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority]). In the United States, the TESOL pre-K–12 Standards and implementation documents are now accepted across that country. Similarly, in other Canadian provinces, most notably Ontario and British Columbia, standards have been in place for some time. Manitoba has also developed an EAL curriculum framework that

describes students' additional language learning in a series of stages within three age-related bands. The framework of outcomes presents learning English or SE as an additive, developmental process, and is intended to guide assessment, curriculum development, program and instructional planning, and monitoring of achievement.

Aboriginal Contributions to Curricula

The school system often ignores Aboriginal contributions to society and history, and fails to include their legacy in the curriculum (Delpit, et al.; Haig-Brown; Frasier). Consequently, learners do not always relate well to or are not motivated by what is being taught. Celia Haig-Brown identifies a culturally relevant curriculum as “a program which will maintain balance and relevancy between academic/skill subjects and Indian cultural subjects” (150), and holds as central in the curriculum Aboriginal culture, heritage, languages, and contributions. This approach takes advantage of what both cultures have to offer and helps learners move confidently between the two cultures (Leavitt). Atleo suggests that curriculum reform will be challenging because of the high investment in the current western-based curriculum. The importance of Aboriginal community and individuals' input into curriculum is emphasized throughout the literature.

The “English for All” section of New Zealand's English in the National Curriculum (Franken and McComish) recommends the following: understanding and respect by all learners for all languages; valuing language resource contributions by EAL learners; incorporating learners' cultures and languages into instruction; using L1 initially and moving toward eventual bilingualism; requiring EAL students to have the same objectives as native English speakers, but allowing them to meet learning objectives in alternate ways; provision for EAL learners to work at different levels from native English speakers as required; provision of appropriate time and range of learning opportunities¹¹; providing explicit instruction in use of English for different purposes; and informing content-area teachers about the role of language in learning (18–19).

Some writers have noted that, at the very least, individual teachers currently working with a western-based curriculum can include Aboriginal content in theme-based units to ensure recognition and respect of the culture, knowledge, and experiences that Aboriginal learners bring to school. In addition, teachers can engage Aboriginal learners in meaningful ways to learn the history and geography of their communities – for example, “through hikes and canoe trips, map study, readings, oral history, road-building, religious and legal history, archaeological, mythology, hunting and fishing activities, agriculture” (Leavitt 274). The adaptive dimension, discussed earlier, also recommends teachers adapt the curriculum to suit learner needs.

11. An example of this provision is intensive language classes or transition time best provided by “planned immersion in mainstream English classrooms” (Franken and McComish 18–19).

Haig-Brown calls for joint funding efforts at the federal and provincial government levels to allow professional curriculum developers and Aboriginal people to collaborate on the development of culturally inclusive curricula.

Materials and Resources

Several studies note the importance of culturally relevant or community-based materials and resources for Aboriginal learners (Alphonse, et al., 2002; Craig; Turcotte, et al.). Several of the pedagogical approaches discussed later in this literature review describe the importance of culturally appropriate materials.

Learner-generated materials, produced when using the language experience approach and in other teaching approaches, motivate learners because they are relevant to their lives.

An issue in finding and developing relevant materials and resources is the teacher's cultural background, as well as requirements on the teacher's time, creativity, and expertise. For these reasons, teachers have noted difficulty in implementing a resource-based approach (Epstein, et al.).

Pedagogical Approaches to Teaching "Standard English" Vernacular and First Language Maintenance

Introduction

Language teaching approaches are defined both by philosophies about what should be taught (e.g., communicative language, grammar, literature, etc.) as well as how it should be taught. This includes "what the objectives of the method are; how language content is selected and organized within the method; the roles of learners, the roles of teachers, the roles of instructional materials" (Franken, et al. 38). Accordingly, the literature identifies the following approaches to support English language development where English is the medium of instruction: contrastive analysis (bidialectism) and code-switching; adapted English instruction; the lexical approach; communicative content/task-based teaching; literacy development; teaching using the learners' L1 or dialect as the medium of instruction; Indigenous pedagogy; and critical pedagogy. These approaches are discussed in more detail below. The linguistically informed approach was discussed earlier under Testing, Assessment, Learner Placement, and Correction.

Contrastive Analysis and Code-Switching

Borrowing from socio-linguistics, contrastive analysis combined with code-switching has been suggested to simultaneously develop SE and value the learners' dialect and L1 usage. In contrastive analysis, the learners' languages and vernaculars become teaching resources. Learners contribute their language expertise and they engage in research

regarding the two language varieties. The goal is to build on learners' L1 or dialect knowledge and explore with them patterns of language variation to explicitly identify the differences between the speech they use in their communities and the English required for academics (Adger; Baker qtd. in Delpit, et al.; Corder; Goodwin; Rickford; Wheeler). This is similar to openly discussing interlanguage¹² (Franken, et al.) and can lead to metalinguistic awareness, allowing code-switching for the effective use of both SE and dialect or L1 use in appropriate contexts (Adger; Rickford; Goodwin; Wheeler).

Delpit (qtd. in Delpit, et al.) notes that code-switching is an appropriate means of achieving Krashen's theory of unconscious language acquisition. Language acquisition requires a low affective filter or a relaxed environment (as opposed to more stressful language learning). "Acquiring an additional code comes from identifying with the people who speak it, from connecting the language form with all that is self-affirming and esteem-building, inviting and fun" (39). Franken, et al. also note that L2 acquisition suggests that drawing learners' attention to language in meaningful ways is more effective than constant correction (Franken, et al.).

Wheeler cites several studies where contrastive analysis and code-switching improved the academic performance of dialect speakers. She notes that the approach changes learners' attitudes to learning and using SE; the results are that learners feel less manipulated and more autonomous and empowered. Instead of being constantly corrected, when properly taught with this approach the students integrate what they learn. They become the teachers, telling each other which context is appropriate to use one form (dialect) or another (SE), understanding that each variety is rule-governed and grammatical, and valuing both forms. Baker (qtd. in Delpit, et al.) adds that it is the learners themselves, rather than the teacher, who choose when to code-switch, providing them with options regarding their language use.

Use of cultural literature has been suggested as one way to stimulate contrastive analysis (Simmons-McDonald; Wheeler), although it has been pointed out that it can be difficult to translate vocabulary and concepts that do not exist either in English or in the Aboriginal language (Alphonse, et al.). While Wheeler emphasizes SE mastery and keeps this approach quite separate from language awareness programs, others (Adger; Craig; Wolfram, et al.) would combine it with language awareness programs. Toohey suggests the instruction must go beyond teaching discrete structural features to instruction on functional linguistic differences. While James agrees with contrastive analysis and code-switching for teaching SE dialect to Aboriginal dialect speakers, he agrees with Swain's "principle of bilingualism through monolingualism" (255) for teaching English to speakers of languages that are very different (e.g., Aboriginal and foreign languages).

12. Interlanguage is language that language learners use when learning an L2. It has predictable sequences, and often has a number of errors as learners test for correctness. It is "characterized by the same systematic errors as those produced by a child learning the same language as a first language" (Franken, et al. 33).

Adapted English Instruction

Adapted English instruction can be viewed as a program adaptation as well as a pedagogical approach. It is strongly related to the Saskatchewan Education Adaptive Dimension Policy discussed earlier in this literature review. Adapted instruction adds modifications to regular academic courses, particularly language arts, to accommodate diversity and be culturally responsive. Adaptations occur in curriculum, content, instructional practices, assessment, and the learning environment (Smith).

Characteristics of the approach include using Aboriginal teaching staff as role models, building on learners' prior knowledge and experiences, making traditional Aboriginal rituals and cultural activities central, implementing appropriate traditional pedagogy, and using culturally appropriate materials and resources. Holistic, student-centred methods such as a whole language, language experience approach (LEA), and literature-based approaches to teaching have proven successful in schools in northern communities (Fredeen). Techniques such as sharing circles, experiential learning, demonstration (Smith), and extensive reading and writing practice based on learners' personal and cultural experiences (Taras) are primary in adapted instruction. Encouraging learners to take some of the responsibility for their own learning based on their background experiences is one way of ensuring that the adaptive dimension is being addressed (Taras; Wason-Ellam).

Similarly, Manitoba curricula support the inclusion of EAL outcomes in content areas for all students who are acquiring English as an additional language or SE. The Manitoba EAL outcomes include linguistic competency, competency in contextual applications, intercultural competency and global citizenship, and strategic competency. The framework of outcomes, which describes students' EAL development across a series of stages, is intended as a guide for specialized English instruction and a companion to subject-area curricula. Planning for learning language and content and choosing appropriate differentiations can be aided by an understanding of the stages. When a student is in the earlier stages of English language learning, Senior Years courses can be EAL-designated, which according to the forthcoming K-12 EAL/LAL Framework of Outcomes means the following:

...the learning outcomes (as outlined in the curriculum documents or frameworks for a course) have been significantly rewritten to include language and culture learning outcomes drawn from the EAL Curriculum Framework for EAL students at a specific stage of EAL development . . . EAL-designated courses provide students with the opportunity to continue the development of their general English language skills in a specific subject-area classroom or context. As well, they serve to assist the student in developing language skills directly related to that subject, and provide the student with the opportunity to develop foundational knowledge and skills for that subject/course. Therefore, the EAL-designated courses weave together EAL and subject-area outcomes. (MECY 2009)

The Lexical Approach

Several theorists see explicit vocabulary development as a crucial but often neglected aspect of academic success (Love; Paulston and McLaughlin; Roessingh). Researchers (Roessingh personal communication) report that learners who do not speak English or who have not had sufficient vocabulary development from a young age will constantly be playing catch-up. Franken states,

L1 speakers come to school able to use orally 1000 or more different words as a basis for learning to read and write, and that they are adding to them daily at the above rates...NESB [EAL learners] face a huge vocabulary learning task when they start to learn English...students ideally need to learn new words at the same rate as L1 speakers, as well as learning all the words that the L1 cohort already know. Depending on the time they begin to learn English, this backlog will be between at least 1000 and 5000+ words. (51)

Vocabulary shortfall is true not only of EAL learners, but also of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds with little language enrichment (Beimiller and Slonim). Roessingh also notes that academic text at the post-secondary level includes a great deal of metaphor that must be explicitly taught. This is especially the case if learners did not develop their L1 sufficiently (to a CALP level) before adding another language (Roessingh and Kover). Corson adds that metaphor is linked to culture learned at home as well as at school. Thus, home language or dialect is important in assessing learners' vocabulary development needs.

The lexical approach assumes that vocabulary is the basis of language. In this approach, the explicit study of words and word combinations helps learners catch up to SE speakers (Franken). Others agree that this is particularly important for school learners who need to succeed in their academic subjects (Ellis, qtd. in Franken; Roessingh). Franken notes that learners need to develop strategies to increase their vocabularies independently. He states they integrate vocabulary most effectively through investment in learning new words, recommending the following process to involve learners: (1) learners have a need for the word; (2) learners are required to search for the word; and (3) learners are involved in evaluating whether the word was appropriate for their needs. McNaughton (qtd. in Franken) has found this approach efficacious for Maori learners.

Communicative Content/Task-Based Language Teaching

Communicative content/task-based language teaching is used to promote academic and communicative language development by involving learners in real-life, meaningful tasks and projects (Leavitt). The focus shifts from traditional teaching methods to engaging activities using authentic subject-related resources and materials. Learners study experientially in small groups with teacher support to develop critical thinking

and learning strategies, and academic independence (Taras). In many ways, this approach supports constructivism where learners construct new knowledge through working with content, be it linguistic or academic content. Other strategies include having high academic expectations of learners, using scaffolding and modelling, encouraging student self-assessment, allowing learners choice in learning materials, and using cognitive coaching and tutorial support rather than intensive correction (Smith; Taras; Heit and Blair).

With respect to promoting oral language, Adger (personal email communication) notes that while listening to the teacher is important for learners, their extensive participation in oral communication is a better way for them to learn content and develop oral skills. In cases where learners have a range of language or dialect backgrounds and abilities, she proposes group learning that encourages development of both oral and written skills. Because English is the medium of instruction, those who have more developed SE knowledge can support those with less, promoting peer instruction.

Literacy Pedagogy

The research identifies literacy development as being particularly relevant for Aboriginal learners who speak English or an Aboriginal language and need SE development for school. Turcotte, et al. emphasize that reading and being read to outside of school as well as in school positively affects the development of reading skills and general educational outcomes. They point out that over one-quarter of Aboriginal children repeated a grade if they were not read to or did not read, noting that girls are more involved in reading than boys. It is noted that being able to read and write in their L1 develops self-esteem and cultural pride (Simmons-McDonald) and conceptual growth (Cummins, qtd. in Simmons-McDonald).

Literacy pedagogy ranges from focus on comprehension, to skills development, to vocabulary learning, to grammatical analysis, to extensive reading (Franken, et al.). Use of literature is a natural way to provide language input and promote language use and can incorporate a variety of techniques including silent reading, being read to by teachers or Elders, group reading, response journals, class discussions incorporating multiple perspectives on what has been read, and relating text to personal experiences (Wason-Ellam, et al.). In academic settings, educational outcomes are closely linked to literacy. It is therefore essential that learners have well programmed and explicit literacy instruction (Franken, et al.).

Wason-Ellam, et al. have noted the use of a writers' workshop encourages learners to use their personal voice to freely express their "ideas, feelings, fantasies, sensations, memories, and reflections" (9). They note that "if free writing opens personal wounds" (9), then the teacher may need to suggest topics for writing, balancing learner choice and teacher guidance. Other writing techniques cited are patterned writing (also known as sentence transformation activities), teacher modelling, theme writings, letters or emails to pen pals, notes to each other, big books, journals, poems, news reports, stories, and research.

Teachers and researchers (Garret; Wolfram, et al.; Malcolm, et al.) find the Language Experience Approach (LEA) useful at beginning levels. The Whole Language Approach is cited as a way to contextualize learners' experiences by providing relevant and authentic materials and rich opportunities for them to learn language of relevance to their lives (Wolfram, et al.). Writing process activities are also effective for linguistically diverse Aboriginal learners (Anderson; Edwards) and activates their prior knowledge and experience (Wolfram, et al.). Wolfram, et al. also recommend the "consensus model," which incorporates reading strategies such as teacher modeling, use of authentic texts, and scaffolding.

Research supports the role of learners' oral language, such as metaphorical use of language, to build literacy skills (Malcolm; Scott) and, as previously mentioned, the use of cultural literature to stimulate instruction. It has also been suggested that teachers specifically address speech-writing differences (Coleman; Wolfram, et al.; Edwards).

Theorists have reported improved learner grades, development of self-confidence, and engagement in learning using a literature-based approach (Simmons-McDonald). In this approach, culturally based literature is used to promote literacy, to point out contrasts between SE and specific Aboriginal vernacular, and to raise issues of language variety and demonstrate where dialect use allows for self-expression and character development¹³. Teaching becomes more learner-centred and learners are motivated when they identify with the characters (Rickford, qtd. in Simmons-McDonald). Linguistic variances from SE that are evident in published writing as well as learners' writing should not be seen as errors, but be used to support contrastive analysis (Anderson; Wolfram, et al.) and help students learn to select SE forms when appropriate (Anderson). This, however, may appear to contradict Halfe's advice to "let them speak in their own voice" (see below).

Using the First Language or Dialect as the medium of instruction

Writer Louise Halfe says, "Let them speak in their own voice. They'll learn English when they have to."

In fact, in teaching writing, L1 or vernacular use has been permitted for creative writing in some schools (Simmons-McDonald 192). Also, teachers who do know students' first languages or vernaculars do use those languages to facilitate explanation to help learners understand academic content (192). Atleo notes that language is a way of evolving one's cultural self, viewing narrative as a way that Aboriginal learners may preserve themselves in what might be for them an alien educational system.

13. Using text such as cultural tales and stories, the poetry and novels of Louise Halfe, Maria Campbell, W.P. Kinsella (*Field of Dreams*), and even Mark Twain (*Huckleberry Finn*) are suggested.

Swain (qtd. in James) has called the importance of mother tongue use as the “first things first principle” (248) because it values learners and their home environments, and aids in early comprehension in school. Another result is that learners are more involved in their learning because they comprehend more. For example, teaching academic curriculum using Dene as the medium of instruction for at least the first four years of school (up to Grade 3) has been practiced successfully in some Band-managed schools (e.g., in Black Lake, Saskatchewan). Once English is introduced, Dene teaching assistants remain available to ensure L1 and cultural maintenance (Alphonse, Koop, and Mercredi). Rickford has also proposed “introducing reading in the vernacular [where text in the vernacular exists], then switching to the standard” (10), noting that learners quickly catch up and even surpass SE speakers when they switch to SE. James suggests that using their language helps students learn an additional language, increases their cognitive development, and supports mastery of content (aspects discussed earlier in this paper).

Teaching learners in their language or dialect is also advocated to ensure cultural viability, since culture and cultural knowledge is best expressed through the language(s) with which that culture is associated. In addition, using the students’ L1 ensures the vitality of that language and the linguistic diversity that benefits all humanity (Daes, qtd. in Battiste). Instruction of academic subjects in the students’ L1 must be created by Aboriginal people to serve their own interests (Battiste). This approach recognizes that a western-based curriculum is not neutral and should not be viewed as more valid than locally developed curricula and knowledge (Goddard). This approach is empowering and will vary according to the goals and needs of each Aboriginal group and local contexts.

Indigenous Pedagogy

Incorporating traditional Indigenous pedagogy and local and global Indigenous knowledge into the educational experience of learners is essential. Robert Leavitt contends “the most significant differences between English and Indian, and Inuit languages are found in their ways of conceptualizing, preserving and transmitting knowledge” (269). For Aboriginal people, traditional teaching is important in transmitting academic content, understanding one’s life experience, developing identity, and maintaining cultural heritage and languages. This includes strategies that cultivate the Aboriginal oral tradition (Atleo), such as storytelling and story/talking/sharing circles (Garret; Hart; Orr; Saskatchewan Education). Teachers can engage learners in activities that promote pride in Aboriginal heritage and traditions through the involvement of Elders, and organizing and participating in Aboriginal events (Orr; Haig-Brown).

Some contend that Indigenous pedagogy tends to encourage cooperative and experiential teaching and learning, a child-centred environment, learning through modelling and observation, tutoring, artistic creation, a holistic approach to education, and including traditional spirituality (Heit and Blair; Malcolm, et al.; Orr). In fact, many of these strategies are also useful for many non-Aboriginal learners. Particularly relevant

is linking academic content to learners' prior knowledge and experience (Anderson; Taras; Blake and Sickle; Wolfram, et al.; Malcolm, et al.) and the use of culturally appropriate materials and resources. De Klerk emphasizes (as was noted previously) a "resource-based" approach in which teachers find, develop, or adapt culturally relevant materials. This must be accompanied by professional development for teachers.

May argues that an important way to ensure appropriate education for Aboriginal learners is through community-based education. (See the Policy section of this literature review.)

Critical or Transformative Pedagogy

Critical theorists see schools as sites of both "domination and liberation" (Wason-Ellam, et al. 7). The school is a "mainstream economic and political enterprise that positions teachers to continue the status quo" (6), regardless of whether educators are teaching dominant or marginalized learners who may feel disempowered by the chasm between school expectations and their home or traditional cultural practices. There have been "empowerment, critical, or transformative pedagogical" approaches implemented with disempowered populations and in developing countries that have aimed to counteract the dominance of English and its power to oppress peoples and their cultures. These approaches advocate techniques that facilitate change, such as problematization, problem-posing, biliteracy, critical literacy, discovering one's voice, and discussing language maintenance as part of the struggle for justice and equality (Ada; Alexander; Auerbach; Brouse; Cummins; Freire; Pennycook; Wallerstein). Training is usually required to implement these teaching approaches effectively.

Related to critical pedagogy are notions of learner identity and teaching in multimodalities. Teaching through storytelling, drama, music, art, nonverbal cues, etc., allows hybridization of Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of communicating and meaning making, which is what learners are most interested in. Norton adds that learners are not binary (i.e., motivated-unmotivated, gifted-challenged, introverted-extroverted, etc.), but much more complex. Citing Bourdieu and Weedon, she notes that learners have multiple identities and choose which groups to identify with, or to not be involved with (e.g., as Aboriginal children, as speakers of an Aboriginal language/dialect, as members of a community, as part of a spiritual group, etc.). According to their identities, speakers self-identify whom they are worthy of speaking to and whom they are willing to listen to (e.g., peers versus teacher versus priest, etc.). Norton notes that instructors need to be aware of the complexities of learner identities and support them in recognizing their gifts, developing positive identities and possibilities for actualizing their "imagined self," or "imagined identity," which transcends time and space (i.e., imagining themselves as community leaders, college graduates, successful in business, etc.). She further notes that language is where a learner's sense of self is constructed and where the learner can feel empowered. She adds that most diverse people want to be able to excel in and utilize both languages and cultures.

Other Practices Supporting Education for Aboriginal Learners

A number of other practices are cited in the literature to support Aboriginal learners' language development, including professional training for teachers, early childhood education (Turcotte, et al.), EAL administrative policy, and culturally and relevant curriculum and resources that are based on Aboriginal knowledge and traditions.

Paulston and McLaughlin suggest teachers need skills to teach their students not only linguistic mastery, but also to develop social-cognitive process – that is, the cognitive-academic language development and learning strategies development (academic development) called for in the CALLA and Foresee Approaches to language instruction.

With respect to early childhood education, *Kohanga Reo* (language nests) were established in New Zealand in 1982 for preschoolers to regain their language (Paulston and McLaughlin) and have led positively to learner success in school in later years.

Hewitt points out that because so many factors contribute to learning, blaming learners by putting them in remedial classes and having low academic expectations only prolongs educational inequality and labelling learners as deficient. Also important is an appropriate school environment that promotes academic success by being a supportive, safe place for Aboriginal students to learn and have a sense of belonging (Haig-Brown).

Alphonse, et al. list the following advice for teachers of Aboriginal learners, particularly related to maintenance of language and culture, but also in terms of general teaching success: teach in the learners' language (or dialect) whenever possible and extend immersion programs in L1 for as long as possible; incorporate relevance into lessons and develop locally relevant resources; avoid busy work; challenge learners at one step beyond their abilities (also cited as important in Franken), but present material in bite-sized chunks; directly teach SE structures; be yourself, utilize personal expertise, and reflect upon your teaching; seek effective classroom management and discipline techniques and administer discipline on an individual basis outside of the classroom; teach specific learning strategies (academic development) and knowledge integration; vary teaching strategies, learner groupings, and testing and testing methods; nurture self-esteem; to build self-confidence in learning abilities, discuss how multilingualism develops smart learners (81–86).

Wason-Ellam, et al. add to this advice, describing techniques used by Aboriginal teachers. They note that teachers they interviewed see themselves as a "trusted friend, significant other, and mentor" (7). They recommended: resolving conflict through discussion and mediation; caring and valuing learners; meeting learners' emotional and educational needs; listening to students and encouraging them to listen to others; respecting learners and their ways of learning regardless of culture; helping learners develop respect (self-respect, respect for Elders and others, respect for property and the environment); tapping learners' needs and interests; learning from each other; practicing purposeful oral language; modelling, demonstrating, and coaching; cultivating active learning with learner-centred activities that engage learners with relevant activities that will help them construct meaning. They also call on teachers to develop learning

communities within classrooms and the school, especially where learner populations are diverse. Perhaps the most compelling advice comes from Delpit, et al., who stress the importance of helping “students recognize their potential brilliance” (46) in terms of their history, multilingualism, and the creativity, abilities, and expertise that they bring to learning. Turcotte, et al. also state that participation in extracurricular activities contribute to success in school among Aboriginal children. This is because these activities support appropriate social interaction, and contribute to retention in school and increased self-confidence and motivation.

Elders are described as an integral part of community life (and the individual lives of many Aboriginal people) and, as such, are valuable assets that should be involved in advising on educational policy and pedagogy. Atleo identifies a framework for working with Elders that includes the following features: reverence, recognition, respect, responsibility, wholism, interconnectedness, synergy, relations, and storywork or narrative. McGroarty notes that school-parent-community partnerships, particularly when they involve L1 and cultural understanding, can be transformative, often leading to positive reform in policy and curricula. Strategies include having Aboriginal parents/caregivers and Elders as regular participants in schools to maintain students’ cultural and linguistic knowledge, or working in classrooms as volunteer tutors and translators (Taras; McGroarty; Robb).

Also discussed is the importance of joint efforts among the school, home, and community (Faries; McGroarty; Smith). Aboriginal parents are interested in their children’s education (Smith) and, along with other caregivers and community agencies, have significant roles to play in helping Aboriginal learners succeed by ensuring locally relevant curricula, materials, and resources, and participating in the development of policy, programming, and planning. As noted earlier, it appears that there may need to be a sufficient number of learners for Aboriginal community leaders for this involvement to occur.

Teacher Education and Support

“ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) instruction is becoming more complex and demanding as schools admit learners who are more linguistically and culturally diverse” (Freeman, qtd. in Franken). Competent, experienced, and qualified teachers supported by senior staff and management are required to address the challenges of teaching learners’ with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Fillmore; Franken). Franken states that school systems need to articulate the competencies and knowledge required of teachers.

Paulston and McLaughlin contend that language policy affects the development of teacher training programs, adding that “teacher attitudes toward the implementation of language policy are often directly related to adequate training for accomplishing the policy or directions or the lack thereof, and may influence the extent to which those objectives are met” (71).

Paulston and McLaughlin suggest that teacher reflection as they learn to teach language minority students may be more important than the specific features of that training. The literature points out the importance of having teachers who are committed to honouring Aboriginal dialects or languages and cultures and a commitment to L2 acquisition as an additive process. Richards (qtd. in Franken) suggests the following domains of required knowledge: “theories of teaching, teaching skills, communication skills, subject matter knowledge [related to language and applied linguistics], contextual knowledge [which includes socio-cultural and socio-linguistic factors], and pedagogical reasoning and decision making” (64). Paulston and McLaughlin add that teachers need to know how to create “an appropriate learning environment for language minority students” and participate in empowerment training (72).

Citing Willis and Abt-Perkins, Franken, et al. list the following areas that should be covered for teachers of EAL learners: “self-knowledge, cultural knowledge, linguistic knowledge [including difficulties for particular linguistic groups of learners], culturally informed teaching knowledge, and knowledge of materials and methods for multicultural literacy education” (29). Atleo calls for cross-cultural competency that raises educators’ awareness of the ethnocentric stages (denial, defense, minimization) of cultural difference and moves them to ethno-relative awareness (acceptance, adaptation, integration).

Educators can also learn much from speech and language pathologists, not only about phonology, morphology, grammar, questioning, and semantics, but also about language use in extended discourse (stories or narrative) as well as attitudes toward the value of linguistic transfer and language diversity (Bernhardt).

Craig suggests an eclectic approach to teacher education that incorporates whichever policies and procedures are appropriate in a given context, including the following: consciousness raising and motivational strategies; language awareness programming; contrastive analysis as a bridge to new language or taught directly; communicative language teaching; immersion; and exploiting individual learning styles. He proposes the key in doing this is teacher education related to language variation and the range of pedagogies to develop language. He notes that it is necessary for school administration to provide adequate resources and the support that teachers need to implement the programming and pedagogy and, if necessary, adapt existing curricula.

Many institutions have developed effective training to help teachers support their learners in functioning biculturally and bilingually (Barman; Burnaby; Malcolm; Szasz). In addition, teachers need to feel adequate and empowered themselves in order to instill learner confidence (Ada, qtd. in Heugh and Siegrühn). Since the majority of educators, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, are products of a Eurocentric curriculum, all should participate in learning about post-colonial discourse to heighten sensitivity to historical and prevailing inequities and facilitate appropriate approaches to policy, curriculum, and pedagogical reform.

Schools and school systems can demonstrate teacher support by having explicit policies relating to Aboriginal learners and their language goals and needs. Systems must recognize specific teacher knowledge and competencies to staff the programs set up to support these policies. This can be accomplished by including discussion of EAL programming and planning in staff meetings and by the presence of school structures that ensure program implementation (Franken).

In addition to training and professional development for language and classroom teachers, there are a number of other roles that are necessary to ensure quality programming. Elementary and high schools may treat these roles differently, but in both cases those taking on these roles may require professional development. EAL program coordinators organize, administer, and evaluate the program and may also administer and monitor learner assessment. Coordinators may or may not be teachers with expertise in applied linguistics. In addition, senior management has a role, and in some schools managers are closely involved with the instructional program (Franken).

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Implications and Conclusions

There are implications to be derived from the literature for government, administrators, those teaching linguistically diverse Aboriginal learners, teacher educators, and researchers. First is the need for sound and explicit policy solidly grounded in knowledge of the special challenges, barriers, goals, and needs facing teachers and Aboriginal learners in both academic and linguistic development. Incorporation of post-colonial perspectives is also required for policy reform. Serious attention to theory and practice from socio- and applied linguistics is necessary, and input from teachers, students, and their parents or caregivers and the Aboriginal community are essential to inform policy.

Second, there is a need for appropriate programming and planning for Aboriginal learners who speak an Aboriginal language or dialect so that they can succeed in an academic milieu that expects SE usage. It is quite likely that a range of programming solutions developed by a variety of stakeholders will be required to suit particular needs across the provincial educational system.

Also required is a feasible curriculum that is appropriate for learners. The curriculum must be based on a practicable reformed policy, socio-linguistic needs assessment, input from Aboriginal people, appropriate practices in language instruction particularly for disempowered groups, and partnerships with researchers in socio-linguistics and applied linguistics. The curriculum must be workable or adaptable for rural and remote as well as urban schools. Acceptance or adaptation of existing language benchmarks or standards may be a suitable starting point in terms of linguistic targets. The input of teachers from a variety of teaching contexts is also essential to curriculum reform for Aboriginal learners. The curriculum must be supported by culturally and linguistically relevant resources and materials that ensure local traditional knowledge is primary. Curricula should be living documents that are revised regularly to address teacher and learner goals and needs. It is advised that a sufficient number of administrative support and instructional staff who have received adequate education and training in a variety of areas related to both socio- and applied linguistics is essential to ensure quality delivery and assure learners' rights.

Initial and ongoing assessment should be conducted using a variety of instruments that have been examined for cultural and linguistic fairness. Assessors should be familiar, if possible, with learners' language use and cultures, particularly for high-stakes standardized tests.

Next is the need to support both language teachers and classroom teachers in academic content areas (Franken), with professional development opportunities to learn about language and language varieties and to provide ongoing instruction in appropriate methods and pedagogy. Teachers need opportunities to learn about developing language awareness among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners. They need opportunities to meet and share their experiences and to voice their frustrations and solutions, for example, at conferences and special regional meetings. Because teachers are the best people to suggest changes, the results of these meetings should be recorded and made available to those developing curricula and programming. Because of geographical distance, the suggestion of clustering or twinning schools and establishing teaching and learning centres may enhance the use of financial resources.

Finally, involvement of the Aboriginal community and parents/caregivers will require ongoing organizational efforts as well as dedicated funding. These efforts should lead to a sharing, trusting, and caring community that views the appropriate education of their children as contributing to linguistic and cultural maintenance as well as an investment in their children's futures.

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Journal of American Indian Education 20.1

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Printed in Canada
Imprimé au Canada