

OFFICIAL MINORITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS IN CANADA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF QUÉBEC AND ONTARIO

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Research and Conceptual Orientation

- Early research on 1) Francophone youth in Ontario French minority language high schools and their *rapport* to identity; 2) teachers' identity in French minority language schools in Ontario.
- Most recent research on 1) Anglophone youth in Québec English minority language high schools their *rapport* to identity; 2) teachers' identity in English minority language schools in Québec and 3) Comparative analysis of the 2 contexts.
- Theoretical framework drawn from the areas of the critical sociology of race and ethnic relations (where identity is defined as a social construct) and the critical sociology of education.

Studies conducted in Montréal and regions AND in Ontario

First Objective

- To understand how adolescents as members of a linguistic minority relate to and define themselves in terms of their own identity, looking more specifically at the notion of bilingual identity (or multilingual identity)

Second Objective

- To deconstruct the notion of bilingual identity (or multilingual identity) in order to:
 - a) better understand its signification for the adolescents
 - b) to examine if such a form of identity can exist in itself as a stable phenomenon, or if it is a transition phase that will lead to complete assimilation to the linguistic majority of the province of residence

Population under study

- *In Ontario* : teenagers in Grades 10 enrolled at 2 French language high schools in the Toronto and Ottawa areas (14 and 15 years old)
- *In Québec* : teenagers enrolled in Secondary 3 at 4 English minority language high schools in the Montreal area and in regions (14, 15 years old)

The Study on Teachers in Québec and in Ontario

- To examine the identity paths (*parcours identitaires*), both at the personal and professional levels, of teachers working in English minority language schools in Quebec
- To get a better understanding on how these identity paths influence the way that teachers make sense of their role as agents of linguistic and cultural reproduction in English minority language settings, in an educational and political context where the notion of accountability has become the main concern

Population under study

- *In Ontario* : teachers in elementary and high schools in the Toronto and Ottawa areas (10 teachers in total)
- *In Québec* : teachers in elementary and high schools in the Montréal area and in regions (10 teachers in total)

The Official Linguistic Minorities in Canada

- 1,103, 480 Anglophones in Québec - 13.7 % of the total de la population
- 622, 415 Francophones in Ontario - 4.7% of the total population

2016

Statistics drawn from 3 sources of data – 1) mother tongue, 2) language the most frequently spoken at home and 3) knowledge of the official language

Official Linguistic Minorities in Canada: their Educational Rights

- The 1982 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is a bill of rights entrenched in the Constitution of Canada that guarantees certain rights, such as the instruction in the official minority language in the province or territory of residence – Article 23.
- The 1977 *Quebec French Language Charter* (Bill 101) that also guarantees English-language education in this province – Article 72.

French Minority Language Education in Ontario

- 12 French minority language school boards in Ontario (French as first language (elementary, secondary schools) for a total of 430 schools
- The school population is linguistically and culturally diverse
- Schools boards cover large territories
- The school, in addition to transmitting knowledge and values, has a mandate to assist in the linguistic and cultural survival of the *francophonie* in Ontario

Comparative Results

In Ontario, the official documents are very explicit in regards to the role of French minority language schools, about the moral responsibility of the school in the maintenance of the French minority language and French minority culture.

In Québec, the official documents do not specify the responsibility of the English language schools in the maintenance of the English minority language and English minority culture.

Mandate of French Minority Language Schools in Ontario

- The mandate of French-language schools is to ensure that students receive a good education in all subjects and disciplines.
- French-language schools also have a mandate to protect, enhance, and transmit the French language and culture. French is the school's language of instruction and communication, and it animates the social and cultural life of the school community.
- A language planning policy for French minority language schools was implemented in 2004.

(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005)

Objectives of the Aménagement linguistique Policy

- deliver high-quality instruction in French-language schools adapted to the minority setting;
- educate young Francophones to become competent and responsible citizens, empowered by their linguistic and cultural identity;
- increase the capacity of learning communities, including school staff, students, and parents, to support students' linguistic, educational, and cultural development throughout their lives;
- expand and enrich the francophone environment through solid partnerships among the school, the family, and the community as a whole;
- increase the vitality of educational institutions by focusing on student retention and increased enrolment, thus contributing to the sustainable development of the French-language community in Ontario.

The 5 Areas of the Aménagement linguistique Policy

- *L'Axe de l'apprentissage* (Learning)
- ***L'Axe de la construction identitaire*** (Identity Construction)
- *L'Axe du leadership participatif* (Participative Leadership)
- *L'Axe de l'engagement* (Commitment)
- *L'Axe de la vitalité institutionnelle* (Institutional Vitality)

Mandate of English Minority Language Schools in Québec

“We have a mandate from the Ministry of Education which is to socialize, to instruct and to qualify, not to protect the culture.”

(Educational Administrator, Montréal area)

Their Role as Teachers

- *To educate the children of the English-speaking community, I mean to give them broad education that prepares those children to live in Québec, and enables them to live elsewhere in the world if that is what they choose to do. They have to prepare kids to speak French I mean that is so important. Schools are supposed to give kids a sense of morality, and cultural identity? I do not know. Basically schools should teach kids to read, write, know about, do mathematics, to know about the world, to prepare kids to become citizens. (Sally, teacher, Montréal area)*
- *I know that in our school because we are an English school where we have English students whose parents mostly speak English. And we have students who are Francophone whose one parent or grandparent is English. We have a strong desire to give them as much French as possible, so that they can have all of their choices open to them. (Shelley, teacher in a region)*

Comparative Results (cont.)

In Ontario, French minority language schools are perceived as agents of linguistic regulation (emphasis on policing the students in making sure that English is not used in the school).

In Québec, English minority language schools are NOT perceived as agents of linguistic regulation and the use of French is tolerated.

About Linguistic Regulation

“Now we understand that many of our students do come from French backgrounds, that they speak French at home. Their mother tongue would be French, but we feel that because School A is an English school, part of an English school board, that the language of instruction, of course, is English, except for French. And that students would be expected to speak English in the classroom.

Now we don't want to police the hallways. We feel that the students, when they're on break are on break and they are entitled to speak whatever language they choose.”

(Vice-Principal, School A, Montréal area)

Comparative Results (cont.)

Teachers' and administrators' discourses in Ontario focus on the “threat” of the English majority language and culture in the French minority language schools

Teachers and administrators in Québec do not see the French majority language as being threatening in the English minority language schools. However, they emphasize the importance of strong skills in French for students in order they be competitive in the labour force and they contribute to the Québec society

The Threat of the Majority Language

The Anglophone community, for the most part in Québec, I know there are exceptions, but for the most part, don't feel the same threat [as the Francophone minority outside Quebec]. Maybe it's because we live, I think it's because we live in such an international society in the North American context where English has such prominence. There is not the same fear, the same fear of loss. And I think you see it by people in schools, that (if) they are speaking French, there isn't the same fear that if you don't speak English and if you happen to speak French that somehow your culture and your language are threatened.

(Educational Administrator, Montréal area)

My results can be found ...

- Gérin-Lajoie, D. (accepted). *L'identité des jeunes des écoles de langue minoritaire anglaise au Québec*. Québec City: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, Collection sur les Minorités de langue officielle au Canada.
- Gérin-Lajoie, D. 2016. *Negotiating Identities: Anglophones Teaching and Living in Quebec*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 215 pages.
- Gérin-Lajoie, D. 2011. *Youth, Language and Identity: Portraits of Students from English-language High Schools in the Montreal Area*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 215 pages.