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# Official Bilingualism and Immigrants: Perceptions, Experiences and Practices

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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Official Bilingualism and Immigrants: Perceptions, Experiences and Practices

by

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A THESIS

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## **Abstract**

Canada has been known as a country that is bilingual when it comes to language policy and multicultural when it comes to cultural diversity. However, while the immigration numbers have been increasing in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2012), newcomers are often seen to be left out of the scope of discussion on languages (Dasko, 2003; Parkin & Turcotte, 2004). In fact, the discourse and research on official bilingualism have largely been shaped by promoting bilingualism only among Anglophone and Francophone communities (Mady, 2008). In this study, I investigated the perceptions, experiences, and practices of 64 adult immigrant students learning one of Canada's official languages (English or French) with regard to bilingualism in Alberta and Canada. By analyzing survey findings on participants' perceptions of bilingualism and in-depth open-ended individual and focus-group interviews, I attempted to answer how the promoted official bilingualism and the dominant English reality are reconciled and explained and how immigrants' voices are placed in the discourses on bilingualism in the monolingual and multicultural environment. Following a critical sociolinguistic framework (Heller, 2006), I argue it is the interplay between official bilingualism and bilingualism as a social practice that characterizes and guides immigrants' narrations of how they place themselves in discourses of bilingualism. I demonstrate that often a macro-level discourse on official bilingualism maintained and promoted by the government does not correlate with a micro-level discourse produced by new Canadians, and I recommend further consideration of accommodating immigrants' voices in the official bilingualism discourse.

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### Epigraph

“It is critical that future debates on bilingualism include recent immigrants, Mr. Galiev said, especially with the current Statistics Canada projection that by 2031, between 25% and 28% of the population could be foreign-born.”

Get it? Canada will soon be so full of people who couldn't care less about one of the defining characteristics of the nation other than for getting government jobs, that their not caring will be an important force in defining the nation's future character. If you fill your country with people who don't care about your heritage, don't be surprised when what you cherish becomes unimportant and cast aside, and it's not your country anymore. (Anonymous comment, as cited in Boesveld, 2011, to the article in the *National Post*: “If You are Canadian, Why Aren't You Bilingual?” Immigrants Wonder)

## Chapter 1: Setting the Contexts

In the era of globalization and social mobility, issues of nationhood and accommodation of individual and collective rights have become crucial in modern liberal societies (Heller, 2007a). On the one hand, nations and states are struggling to accommodate immigration processes, accelerated by economic and political incentives. On the other hand, there are historically determined, socially established communities within the nation who believe they have legitimate demands over a range of political, economic, cultural, and social issues (Kymlicka, 1998a). The question that is often asked is how to reconcile and administer these very diverse interests for the common good of the state and its members.

Often this question revolves around civic duties and human rights, concerned with languages and cultures of individuals and groups (McRoberts, 1997). Language, besides being a communication tool, is an integral component of identity-collective consciousness; that is why debates over languages are also considerations of matters of recognition and nationhood raised at both micro and macro levels of the society (Patten, 2001). Frequently, such considerations find themselves reflected (or purposefully neglected) in language legislation within a state's historical and contemporary realms. In this sense, any state's language policy represents the history and the modernity of the processes of civic and political engagement with matters of recognition and nationhood. For example, language policies in France focus on uniting a society under the slogan of one nation—one language (Schmid, 2001a). Contrary to France, the USA has established the model of citizenship that incorporates linguistic differences of existing groups by deliberately neglecting linguistic issues (Schmid, 2001a.). Switzerland follows a different path by adopting a model of

language policy based on the principles of linguistic pluralism and by acknowledging and sustaining rights of various linguistic groups. In this study, I looked at the Canadian model of multicultural citizenship where English and French languages<sup>1</sup> get to play a central role.

### **Sociohistorical and Contemporary Contexts of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism in Canada**

In October 2012, Statistics Canada released its latest data on the linguistic and cultural diversity based on Census 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2012). The data suggest that the 145th anniversary of Canada as a nation has been marked by the highest ever number of languages spoken in Canadian households. In fact, more than 200 languages were reported as a home language or a mother tongue. Of the 200 reported languages, Statistics Canada (2012) noted that 20.6 % of Canadians (6.8 million people) identified a mother tongue other than English or French. English was the mother tongue of nearly 58% of the population of Canada (or 19.1 million people), and native speakers of French comprised 22% of the total population (or 7.2 million people). The report also revealed an increase in the use of multiple languages at home—from 14.2% in 2006 to 17.5% in 2011. Fewer Canadians speak English and French only at home but rather use English and French in combination with other languages. Such a trend can be observed across all provinces, including Québec where French continues its decline as the sole language of the household and instead is used in combination with a language other than English at home. Québec's population also contributed to the rise of English-French bilingualism not only within the province, but also within the country from 17.4% in 2006 to 17.5% in 2011. In other provinces, bilingualism declined slightly.

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<sup>1</sup> While recognizing the existence of linguistic varieties of English and French given “the deep connections between forms of language and particular places” (Blommaert, 2004, p. 223), for the purpose of this study, English and French languages are confined to the social and legal contexts of Canada.

The findings of a decrease of English-French bilingualism in the provinces other than Québec and an increase of English or French usage in combination with other languages have attracted a lot of public attention and resulted in significant coverage in the media under such headings as “The New Face of Language in Canada – Less French and English” (*National Post*, 2012), “Is Multiculturalism Stifling Bilingualism?” in the *Toronto Star* (Scofield, 2012), and “Immigration Altering Canada’s Language Landscape” in *The Montreal Gazette* (Kennedy, 2012) among many others. Many of the media stories around the changing linguistic portrait of Canada as well as the Census 2011 data raised questions about the current growth trends of different kinds of bilingualism and multilingualism among the Canadian population at the price of English-French bilingualism and the fact that soon native speakers of languages other than English and French would surpass native French speakers. In light of the Census 2011 findings, the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship, Jason Kenney, made a comment about the need of ensuring the English-French language proficiencies of immigrants (2012b):

A very real challenge to their [immigrants’] integration is often an inability to communicate in one of our two official languages. That’s why we have tripled funding to provide French or English language instruction to newcomers. It’s also why we are making language proficiency a more important factor in the selection of economic immigrants, and in the process for acquiring citizenship. (para. 7)

The subject of language proficiency of immigrants refers to Kenney’s efforts in the role of the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship to implement two significant changes to the process of immigrant selection in Canada: (a) increasing the minimum language

threshold eligibility criteria for Federal Skilled Worker Program<sup>2</sup> applicants, and (b) requiring up-front objective evidence of citizenship applicants' language ability in Canada's official languages starting November 2012 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC], 2012b). The former legislation refers to allocating more weight to language skills in English and French at the time of application, and the latter to requiring proof of language proficiency for citizenship applicants through Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) approved testing or some other objective evidence rather than relying on CIC staff interactions as was the case previously (CIC, 2012a).

The rhetoric around inability of immigrants to successfully integrate due to poor skills in one of Canada's official languages has become especially strong since Kenney took the post of the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship, even though the 2011 Census demonstrated that while 20.6% of the population reported a mother tongue other than English or French, only 6.2% of the population reported speaking a language other than English or French as their only home language (Statistics Canada, 2012). Furthermore, the *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration – 2012* revealed that among 248,278 permanent residents admitted to Canada in 2011, 75.2 % self-identified as having knowledge of English, French, or both official languages (CIC, 2012a). This number is even higher for those admitted through the Federal Skilled Worker Program.

In order to understand better the reasons why there seems to be a discrepancy in public and government perceptions of immigrants' linguistic integration, I bring into discussion Canada's regimes of language and multiculturalism policies as they reflect the

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<sup>2</sup> The Federal Skilled Worker (FSW) Program is the Government of Canada's flagship program for selecting foreign skilled workers. Selection is based on a points system, which assesses education, age, work experience, official language proficiency, pre-arranged employment in Canada, and adaptability (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012a).

contemporary and historical factors that have come to sensitize issues of languages and diversity in Canada.

Canada has been known as a country that is bilingual when it comes to language policy and multicultural when it comes to cultural diversity. The current legislation on bilingualism and multiculturalism reflects the attempts of the government to align these two issues.

On the one hand, as established by the Official Languages Act in 1969 and renewed in 1988 (Government of Canada [GC], 1969/1988b), Canada has two official languages: English and French. As the Official Languages Act states, its purpose is to:

- (a) ensure respect for English and French as the official languages of Canada and ensure equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all federal institutions;
- (b) support the development of English and French linguistic minority communities and generally advance the equality of status and use of the English and French languages within Canadian society; and
- (c) set out the powers, duties and functions of federal institutions with respect to the official languages of Canada. (GC, 1988b, pp. 2–3)<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (GC, 1988a) adopted in 1988<sup>4</sup> acknowledges multiculturalism as a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian society, and through clause 3.(1).c “promotes the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all

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<sup>3</sup> Official languages policy refers to official or institutional bilingualism, which is “the capacity of the government and its institutions to communicate with the public, and within these institutions, in the two official languages” (Hudon, 2011b, p. 1).

<sup>4</sup> Initially, the multicultural policy was adopted through the 1971 framework, which became an act in 1988.

aspects of Canadian society and assist them in elimination of any barriers to such participation” (GC, 1988a, p. 3). However, in addition to the objectives of preserving and enhancing multiculturalism, clause 3.(1).(j) of the act lists the objective to “advance multiculturalism throughout Canada in harmony with national commitment to the official languages of Canada” (GC, 1988a, p. 4). Through this reference, the multiculturalism framework attempts to situate itself within the bilingualism policy. Bilingualism policy also brings reference to the multicultural characteristic of Canada by stating in the preamble that “the Government of Canada recognizes the importance of preserving and enhancing the use of languages other than English and French while strengthening the status and use of the official languages” (GC, 1988a, p. 1).<sup>5</sup>

While this kind of cross-reference allows to formulate legislatively the relationship between official bilingualism and multiculturalism, its practical implications are vaguely understood by the public causing ongoing debates on what is important in Canada, or as in my previous example—what do census numbers tell us and how should they be interpreted?

The dichotomy of official languages and diversity in Canada is observed not only in contemporary public and political contexts, but also sociohistorically. In fact, meanings of language and culture in Canada have served different purposes to different people since

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<sup>5</sup> Cross-reference between bilingualism and multiculturalism frameworks has also found a place in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act adopted in 2001. The objectives with respect to immigration in clause 3.1 are

- (a) to permit Canada to pursue the maximum social, cultural and economic benefits of immigration;
  - (b) to enrich and strengthen the social and cultural fabric of Canadian society, while respecting the federal, bilingual and multicultural character of Canada;
  - (b.1) to support and assist the development of minority official languages communities in Canada.
- (GC, 2001, p. 2)

Canada's emergence as a politically organized body of people under a single government (Conlogue, 1996; Heller, 1999a).

With the establishment of the confederation in 1867, the British North America Act, through Section 133, constitutionalized language rights of Canada's two founding communities—French and English—guaranteeing the use of English and French in legislation and courts applicable to the federal parliament and Québec (Hayday, 2005). However, recognizing the bilingual status for the federal parliament and Québec had little impact on slowing down the processes of Anglicization of the economy and marginalization of the use of the French in the economy that continued until the mid-1960s (Bastarache, 2004). Furthermore, such processes were impacted by immigrants' assimilation into English (Bastarache, 2004). The tensions around social and economic marginalization of the French eventually resulted in the "Quiet Revolution" (Hayday, 2005, pp. 35–62) in Québec, which demanded that the rights of its French-speaking majority be acknowledged.

In order to address rights of the French and avoid growing separatist feelings within Québec, in 1969, following the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, the federal government established a formal framework for the use of French and English in its Official Languages Act (GC, 1969/1988b). However, while for the federal government in Ottawa, the declaration of the official policy of bilingualism in the Official Languages Act in 1969 (GC, 1969/1988) aimed to acknowledge linguistic rights of French people and prevent disintegration of the country, for Québécois French, it was perceived as diminishing their status within Québec, as it was not in accordance with their aspirations of becoming a one nation–one language entity (cf.

Heller, 2007a). Moreover, according to Heller (2007a), the efforts of the federal government (which was predominantly Anglophone then) could be interpreted as a way to legitimize the government's right to speak for all Anglophones and Francophones in Canada and to offer an alternative version of nationhood and identity based on bilingualism in contrast to linguistic purism, promoted in Québec. The establishment of the Official Languages in Education in 1970 by the federal government that was mandated to financially promote second-language training in public schools across Canada was also negatively perceived by Québec, as, in practice, it would mostly mean helping English-speakers learn French, since many French-speakers already spoke English.<sup>6</sup> The question was even more complicated as alongside French in Québec, there were significant numbers of French speakers, scattered all over Canada, who were not necessarily agreeing with Québec trying to position itself as a representative of their interests. For them, official bilingualism would almost certainly mean securing their survival in the midst of all English-speaking areas (Heller, 2007b).

The official bilingualism policy was received negatively not only in Québec, but also by immigrants across Canada who would see it as endangering their languages and cultures (Patten, 2001). Soon after the act was adopted, immigrants began to question the emphasis on French and English (Kymlicka, 1995b). This led the federal government to reconsider official bilingualism laws and announce a multiculturalism policy framework in 1971, which aimed to ensure the pluralist nature of Canadian society and guarantee rights of its citizens to maintain their heritage cultures and languages.

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<sup>6</sup> The Official Languages in Education was one of the first legislative initiatives that in addition to the concept of institutional bilingualism, which refers to the requirement of the federal government to operate in two official languages, formulated the idea of supporting programs aiming to promote personal bilingualism as an ability of an individual to communicate in both of Canada's official languages (Hayday, 2005).

The multiculturalism policy within a bilingualism framework was adopted—as Trudeau (as cited in Kymlicka, 1998b) put it—with the intention of expanding the already existing laws in bilingualism by recognizing the multicultural nature of the Canadian society and thus was seen as an effort to find a compromise between demands of French and other ethnic groups. While such change was welcomed in many of Canada’s ethnic communities (Hayday, 2005), it would reinforce already existing tension among French Canadians, who interpreted multiculturalism laws to be in obvious contradiction with English-French bilingualism and as undermining their quest for language rights (MacMillan, 1998).

The quest for language rights for Québec gained momentum with the election of the Parti Québécois whose platform linked to separatism led to Bill 101 in 1977, entitled the Charter of the French Language (Government of Québec [GQ], 1977), that declared French as the official language of Québec. The bill was seen as an important measure to protect the French language for its speakers against the hegemony of English both nationally and internationally, and as a necessary means for a fairer distribution of wealth, that previously was predominantly in the hands of the English-speaking minority (Dumas, 2007). For Anglophones, it was seen as another proof of the separatist mood of Francophones and an unwillingness to cooperate (McRoberts, 2001), and also as restricting language rights and the status quo of Anglophone minorities in Québec (Moyer, 2007). The bill, in addition to proclaiming French as the sole official language of Québec, also outlined restrictions to the English-language minority-language education by allowing enrollment only for those children, whose parents had previous English-language education in Québec. Naturally,

such provision excluded immigrants who would be required to attend French-language educational systems (Hayday, 2005).

In efforts to continue to strengthen French and English at the national level, in 1982 with the adoption of The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (GC, 1982a), the federal government gave constitutional status to the French and English languages in the areas of institutional bilingualism and education (Cardinal, 2007).<sup>7</sup> The charter was not well received by Québec, as it did not consider the specifics of the language regime there, and conflicted with the French-only policy of Québec (Cardinal, 2007). It is interesting to note that for French outside of Québec, such legislation, especially Section 23 of the charter, titled “Minority Language Educational Rights”<sup>8</sup> that guaranteed protection of their language rights all over Canada, was welcomed very warmly. As was the case with the previous legislation on official languages, Section 23 refers to native French Canadians only; immigrant Francophones need authorization from the Anglophone school sector for student enrolment (Jedwab, 2002).

The most recent initiatives including *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada’s Linguistic Duality* (GC, 2003) and *The Roadmap for Canada’s Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future* (GC, 2008) have expanded the financial support for official-language education programming not only for linguistic minorities but for majority Anglophones<sup>9</sup> aiming at increasing the proportion of secondary school graduates with a functional knowledge of their second official language (Mady & Turnbull 2010). These

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<sup>7</sup> Section 16. (1) of the Constitution Act states “English and French are the official languages of Canada and have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the parliament and government of Canada” (GC, 1982a, p.4).

<sup>8</sup> Section 23 guarantees the right of parents to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the minority language, where numbers warrant (Hudon, 2011a).

<sup>9</sup> The programs specifically talk about Anglophones and Francophones as the target groups. Allophones, defined as “persons who come to live in Canada, as immigrants or refugees, with a first language that is neither of Canada’s official languages” (Mady & Turnbull, 2010, p. 3) are not addressed in those policies.

regulations further enhance the linguistic duality of Canada<sup>10</sup> not only through the support of institutional bilingualism, but also only through personal bilingualism. However, as I have demonstrated, the discourse on linguistic duality pertained, for the most part, to native English and French Canadians while ignoring immigrants' presence in Canada.

### **Immigrants and Official Languages Today**

My analysis of the sociohistorical evolution of official language and multiculturalism policies allowed me to conclude that the issues of language and identity have been at the core of many social, cultural, and political intergroup processes both nationally and regionally. As I have established, the process of bilingualism and multiculturalism policies planning, implementation, and evaluation have largely been determined by relations between English and French Canadians, aboriginal people,<sup>11</sup> and immigrants, making the bilingualism and multiculturalism policies the social phenomena whose meanings have been evolving and negotiated in their own contexts, space, and time (Heller, 2007b). The role of immigrants in determining those meanings has been somehow of less importance. In the following chapter, I examine the place of immigrants in the contemporary official-languages discourses.

Despite acknowledging the increasingly diversified demographic landscape of Canada due to immigration (Research and Evaluation Branch, CIC, 2012), the official discourse on bilingualism has largely been shaped by enhancing and promoting bilingualism among official-language communities; immigrants are often left out of the

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<sup>10</sup> The term linguistic duality refers to the Part VII of the Official Languages Act (GC, 1988b) further specifying linguistic rights and principles laid in Official Languages Act of 1969 and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom (GC, 1982a). It describes the Government of Canada's commitment to enhancing the vitality of official language minority communities and to promoting English and French in Canadian society (GC, 1988b).

<sup>11</sup> As the purpose of the study was to understand roles of bilingualism in the light of immigration, I have excluded discussions on the role of aboriginal people in Canada.

scope of discussion (Churchill, 2003a; Lord, 2008; Mady, 2008). Immigrants are brought into focus only in regard to strengthening official-language minority communities and increasing their numbers by encouraging settlement of French-speaking immigrants to the areas where those communities are present (Adam, 2006; Dubé, 2005; Jedwab, 2002) and by enrolling them into the minority educational institutions. Although the language policies under the slogan of “Language Duality to Everyone” (GC, 2008) claim to make Canada’s official languages’ education accessible to all Canadians, they fail to address the issue of English-speaking immigrants in English-speaking provinces, who may be equally interested in acquiring both French and English (Mady, 2008). As a matter of fact, the discourse on official bilingualism often confuses official bilingualism, that is, the language laws that mandate equal access of official minorities to governmental services in Canada’s official languages, with societal or personal bilingualism that focuses on providing opportunities for acquiring bilingual competency for all Canadians (Kymlicka, 2007). In fact, as Dunbar (2007) argued, the constitution says nothing about the acquisition by the linguistic majorities of the language of the minority (e.g., Anglophones’ French-language acquisition).

Yet, when it comes to assessing the success of bilingualism initiatives, as several surveys on perceptions of official bilingualism suggest, immigrants are more supportive of bilingualism in Canada than Anglophone Canadians and consider it to be an integral part of Canadian identity (Parkin & Turcotte, 2004). Parkin and Turcotte (2004) in their analysis of the Centre for Research and Information on Canada (CRIC) Globe and Mail Survey on New Canada conducted in 2003, concluded that immigrants are more likely than their Canadian-born counterparts to say that they wish they could speak French (73% vs. 61% of

Canadian-borns), “living in the country with two official languages is one of the things that defines what it means to be a Canadian” (68% vs. 63% respectively), and “learning to speak French is an important way in which Canadians can help to keep the country united” (73% vs. 64%).

The recognition of the value of bilingualism in Canada is practically projected into increasing numbers of immigrant parents of various ethnic backgrounds, who decide to enroll their children in French-language programs (Dagenais & Berron, 2001; Dagenais & Day, 1999). This fact is even more surprising because there are no explicit language policies that specifically target immigrants for French immersion, and immigrant students are often discouraged from entering French immersion because of the concerns that learning English and French simultaneously would be too much of a burden (Mady, 2007). Furthermore, the research evidence suggests that Allophone participants are more motivated to learn French than their Canadian-born peers and are willing to explore opportunities to become bilingual (Mady, 2003). Considering the goal of the language programs for official duality is to double the proportion of school graduates with functional knowledge of their second official language and that the two-thirds of Canada’s population growth comes from immigration, it is essential to include Allophone students in the study of second official languages (Mady, 2008).

The necessity of inclusion of immigrants as a separate group in debates on bilingualism was voiced by Floch and Frenette’s (2005) discussion of a survey on perceptions on official languages conducted in 2002. They acknowledged that the attitudinal study primarily focused on Anglophones and Francophones and did not question immigrants’ position in terms of how they negotiate their affiliation and membership into

major linguistic groups. The very same concern is raised by Adsett and Morin (2004) in “Contact and Regional Variation in Attitudes towards Linguistic Duality in Canada,” who admitted that their study did not allow them to generalize relations of groups other than Francophones and Anglophones who share a long history of conflict and accommodation.

In light of the success of second-language programs at the secondary level, especially French immersion, concerns have been raised that emphasis should be equally made on post-secondary education (Fraser, 2006). In the analysis of the implementation of language policies, Graham Fraser, the Commissioner of Official Languages, has strongly advocated for better post-secondary language programs to promote official duality and encouraged more intensive research on official bilingualism in post-secondary education (Churchill, 2003a; Lord, 2008). Universities have received criticism for treating French as a foreign rather than Canadian language and not providing opportunities for student educational exchange between Anglophone and Francophone institutions in Canada (Fraser, 2006). Furthermore, post-secondary language programs have primarily targeted those with previous knowledge of French, such as Francophone minorities or French-immersion graduates in Anglophone provinces (GC, 2003). As Mady (2007) pointed out, little has been offered to those with less than sufficient proficiency in French.

### **Research Questions**

The promotion of official bilingualism and linguistic duality has been one of the top priorities of the Government of Canada since the Official Languages Act in 1969 (GC, 1969/1988b). However, ever since its origin, such promotion has constantly been criticized for being inconsistent with the multicultural framework adopted in 1971.

While the immigration numbers have steadily been increasing in Canada, immigrants are often left out of the scope of discussion on languages, both official and heritage. In fact, the discourse and research on official bilingualism has largely been shaped by promoting bilingualism only among Anglophone and Francophone communities.

In my research, I aimed to fill the gap by focusing on recent immigrants and exploring how through language-education experiences in Canada's official languages, new Canadians perceive and negotiate meanings of official, institutional, and personal bilingualism and relate them to multiculturalism policy.<sup>12</sup> I attempted to explore the place of immigrants in official bilingualism discourse by answering:

1. How are the policy of official bilingualism and the dominant English and multicultural reality perceived, experienced, and reconciled by recent immigrants?
2. Is there a place for immigrants in the official discourse of bilingualism, and where are the voices of immigrants there?

Considering the enormous efforts to promote official duality both nationally and institutionally while portraying Canada as a multicultural country, and also growing numbers of immigrants, it is crucial to start including immigrants in discussions on official bilingualism and multiculturalism. Immigrants could offer a unique perspective on official bilingualism through exploration of their perceptions, experiences, and practices in an English-dominant society and their understandings of notions related to citizenship,

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<sup>12</sup> It is necessary to mention here that I understand the problems of approaching immigrants as a homogenous group. The study targets immigrants within the contexts of Alberta only. I discuss the limitations of the study in the section "Limitations of the Study."

national identity, English-French relations, and their membership, based on the languages they live with and around.

By exploring voices of immigrants on their place in Canada, bilingualism's place in Canada, and, finally, immigrants' place in bilingualism discourses, I propose that it is important to start (a) considering new Canadians as equal and contributing participants in dialogues on bilingualism and multiculturalism; (b) exploring ways immigrants' positive attitudes toward bilingualism could be capitalized upon; (c) where possible, making the discourse on bilingualism less ambiguous and match promoted goals with practices; and (d) promoting cooperation and integration of cultural, ethnic, and language communities from within rather than without.

The study not only could contribute to understanding the role of official bilingualism in Canada through the lenses of immigrants in Alberta but also could inform language policy makers of possible implications for accommodating immigrant voices in the discourses on official bilingualism in the multicultural and monolingual context and provide opportunities for language support in both of Canada's official languages.

### **Definitions**

The terms *Anglophone*, *Francophone*, *Allophone*, and *immigrant* are used extensively throughout the dissertation. While there is a wide usage of these terms in official documentation, there is no consensus on definition of an Anglophone or a Francophone, something that Statistics Canada has recognized in its publications (Hudon, 2012). For the purpose of this study, I defined Francophones and Anglophones as groups

essentially marked and identified by a language spoken as a mother tongue<sup>13</sup> (Lachapelle & Lepage, 2006).

Furthermore, as the term Allophone (i.e., the individual whose first language is neither French nor English) does not specify which official language is more dominant in the language practices outside home, I refer to non-Francophone immigrants in Alberta as English-speaking immigrants, presuming they are required to use English in the public sphere. The term immigrants is used in this study descriptively and refers to an updated version of the definition used by Statistics Canada.<sup>14</sup> However, in addition to the suggested definition, I apply the previous standard for the term by Statistics Canada (n.d.) that

once a person has been accorded immigrant status it becomes a life-long attribute as long as the person lives in Canada and . . . is often further classified by [a] period of immigration in order to distinguish between recent immigrants and earlier immigrants. (Definition section, para. 1)

The term immigrants in this dissertation applies mostly to recent immigrants, i.e., those who were born outside of Canada and who have acquired their right to reside in the country permanently relatively recently (Statistics Canada, n.d.). So, while using the terms descriptively, I also examine those terms critically.

By the same token, I approach official bilingualism not only as merely a normative collection of policies, laws, and legislative regulations of providing federal government

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<sup>13</sup> Mother tongue refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the person (Statistics Canada, 2009).

<sup>14</sup> Immigrant refers to a person who is or has ever been a landed immigrant/permanent resident. A landed immigrant/permanent resident is a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants are either Canadian citizens by naturalization (the citizenship process) or permanent residents (landed immigrants) under Canadian legislation (Statistics Canada, 2011).

services in English and French, but also as an ideological and social phenomenon, exhibited and sustained by individuals and groups (Heller, 2007a).<sup>15</sup>

### **Personalization of the Study**

Having problematized the research questions, I find it is important to describe the evolution of my own thinking pertaining to matters explored in my study. Being a student in second-language pedagogy, I have always been interested in acquiring French. My enthusiasm and willingness to experiment with this language led me to the French Language Centre at the one of the universities in Calgary. My previous attempts to learn French and eventually become fluent failed miserably, so I was holding very high expectations regarding my own language-acquisition progress. Unfortunately, due to a number of commitments and perhaps my own sufficient investment at that time, I was not able to pursue my French studies as regularly as I would wish to and eventually had to drop out of the program. However, my short-lived experience in the program has given me something that I was not looking for initially. In fact, it triggered the intellectual journey that I embarked on for the next 6 years as a part of my graduate studies. I am here now because of these very experiences and questions that I had to ask myself during my French studies.

Perhaps, one, and the most important, observation was the significant presence of new Canadians enrolled in these courses and their interest in learning French in Alberta. Their choice appeared very surprising and nonrational at that time for me. For me, as a graduate student in second-language studies, learning French was an obvious decision, but for them? I wondered why new Canadians would study French in Alberta, especially—as I

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<sup>15</sup> Policy in this study is seen as a text and as a discourse, with the former referring to normative documents and the latter as policy as part of a wider system of social relations (Ball, 1994).

found out later in our discussions—since there was no immediate job expectation related to French or any instrumental value to speaking French in Alberta. It was interesting to note that there was also a significant number of Anglophone students who all seemed to have some valid reasons to learn French, the most important of which was an employer's requirement.

This observation, in its turn, determined my decision to pursue my academic career on issues pertaining to language and immigrants. Soon, the theorization of my empirical observations began. It started with a very strong linear and somewhat essentialist approach with regard to the place that immigrants should take in discourses on language. I thought and was strongly convinced in my highly critical stance on what is happening in Canada. However, looking back from the place I am at now, what I claimed was critical was primordial (May, 2012).<sup>16</sup> I tried to elaborate on the external manifestations of the phenomenon without necessarily questioning the validity of my own claims and underlying assumptions. It was quite straightforward and clear to me—immigrants are indeed marginalized and are not validated in constructing what makes Canada a nation. By taking what I thought a critical stance, I would be able to empower immigrants and give them the voice that I believed at that time they needed. Little did I realize then that, in fact, I was not looking for their voices to be heard, but instead my own.

As I progressed through the theorization of my bits of experiences as a part of my academic studies, I came to realize that matters that I tried to take on are far more complex and intricate than they appear to be. I was lucky enough to have a supervisor who was very gentle yet very consistent in allowing me to observe a different side of the story. So, to one

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<sup>16</sup> Primordial refers to “human beings being viewed, by nature, as belonging to fixed ethnic communities, which are, in turn defined by the constitutive elements of “language, blood and soil” (May, 2012, p. 30).

collective story of immigrants, there is always another collective story of Francophones, which in turn might contrast to the collective story of Anglophones. There is also an individual story of a Francophone living in Alberta to an individual story of a Francophone living in Québec, just as there are stories of new Canadians as individuals within the same province, city, and even same class. However, to me as a researcher, having to tell those stories is only one side to the whole story. I need to understand and provide my own interpretation on why these stories are important collectively and individually, why and how they have become so, and where individual becomes collective and collective becomes individual.

Another very important event in shaping my own philosophy was working in one of the immigrant settlement agencies in Calgary, Alberta. My work experience unveiled new, earlier unexplored areas of my research quest. It led to very strong, often personal relationships with my students, and provided deep insights into their lives and everything that revolved around them—their past stories, their present challenges, and their hopes and aspirations in the new country. Throughout my conversations with them, I slowly but gradually shifted from my initial so-called critical predispositions to a more holistic approach to issues of language, culture, and nation in Canada. This approach, as I see it now, is multidimensionally critical. It looks at the past, witnesses the present, and tries to foresee the future. It is deeply engrained in individual and collective experiences and practices of both the participants and me, as a researcher, where individual and thus subjective perceptions at one point become a part of objectified collective perceptions (Bourdieu, 1977).

Throughout these and other professional and academic experiences, I witnessed three very strong discourses<sup>17</sup> pertaining to issues of languages and immigrants in Canada and especially in Alberta. These discourses vary greatly in terms of their engagement and emotional attachment and belong to three groups, or *communities of practice* where meanings are socially constructed, sustained, and reproduced (Cox, 2005, p.527).

**Why don't you learn English/French?** First, and perhaps the strongest one is the public discourse that immigrants are not willing to integrate linguistically. Such discourse is often found in discussions at a very basic local level. Interestingly, as local as this discourse is, it manages to not only be presented but constantly reinforced in media through television, newspapers, and online forums where immigrant matters (often seen as problems) are the focus of discussion. Furthermore, as I observe empirically, such discourse becomes more apparent in localized discourses of government officials, who publicize various immigration initiatives through public discussions. In fact, many local discourses are triggered and validated by official discourses. The opposite might be quite possible as well, when official discourses are influenced by local discussions.

**How do you keep your own language?** Second is the contemporary discourse in the academic field that is in line with post-modernist preoccupation with ideas of empowerment and liberation. Parties involved in such discourse intentionally and persistently ignore the calls originating from the public discourse regarding immigrants' unwillingness to integrate linguistically. Instead, those who support this way of thinking choose to concentrate on the opposite—exploring language issues and immigrants from the enabler's position, where immigrants are approached as individuals or groups isolated in

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<sup>17</sup> Discourse here refers to language as a form of social practice. Following Fairclough (1989), I approached discursive practices as ideologically shaped and socially constructed phenomena.

and to their cultures requiring and often demanding special attention. So, these discourses are prioritized and created within and in a vacuum where the criticality of critical questions is confined to the limitations of an isolated discourse. Questions here are not “Why don’t you learn English/French?” but “How do you keep your own language?” or “How difficult is it for you to learn English if you have your own language?” Those involved in this discourse are interested in how immigrants could maintain their own language and culture within the constraints of the dominant marginalizing (often intentional according to some researchers) group.

**I am learning English/French.** The third discourse comes from immigrants themselves. Being different from two previous discourses, this is not formulated as a question, but rather as a statement that attempts to provide an answer to both of the previous questions. It vocalizes immigrants’ own stance regarding their willingness to integrate on the one hand and maintain their languages on the other. As I show in my research, immigrants are not afraid of challenging discourses, and they do not wish to be sugar-coated in their own isolated discourse. Immigrants do learn English and French while also trying their best to maintain their native languages. This is the position that I explore as it is placed within the discourses I outlined.

### **Limitations of the Study**

**Subjectivity.** Before going deep into exploration of the questions posed, it is important to note that it is not possible for me to cover all the aspects of the questions within the scope of this study. The questions are complex and multifaceted in nature, and there is a range of extensive work dedicated to addressing them within a variety of philosophical perspectives. My positioning in this dissertation should not be perceived as

definitive, but rather as subjective, compromising, and based on personal beliefs that were and are shaped by internal dialogues and with the external world I am engaged in. I speak in this study not only as a researcher whose ideas are based on extensive study of some relevant works, but also as one for whom issues of language, culture, and identity are as personal as they could be. The discussion here is more of an invitation to question, challenge, and debate on what is important in Canada, to whom it is important, to what extent, and perhaps why.

My study was aimed at providing the platform for voices of those, who I believe, have been somewhat disregarded in deliberations on issues of what essentially made Canada a country, where and on which grounds it stands now, and what the future holds for it. My invitation to my participants was to explore, explain, and, perhaps, question; however, it was not intended to be an assumingly descriptive stance or an outsider's perspective, rather it is an invitation to embrace an emic approach, which is critical, reflective, and, most definitely, subjective. Such subjectivity, however, should not be viewed as a drawback here; in fact, it is the strength of this study that is reflected and validated through what is assumed as objective and taken for granted.

To further add to the complexity of the philosophical dilemma, as a researcher, I bring my own underlying assumptions and my own subjective voice in interpreting voices of my participants. As an interpreter of my participants' voices, I am very well aware of the limitations that my own voice brings for several reasons. First, just as the voices of my participants are contextualized and evolve throughout their experiences, knowledge, and assumptions, my own voice is placed and situated ideologically, historically, and evolutionarily. The task, as I see it here, is to attempt to provide a glimpse into why

something is deemed important personally and collectively in both micro and macro terms. Throughout this intellectual journey, I encouraged myself and my participants to bring this critical element into reflection. Second, by attempting to subjectify the objective (and I approach objectivity critically, i.e., something that is taken for granted, assumed as given, permanent, and nonquestionable), I realize that the voice of my participants might be lost in my translation.

In addition to epistemological and ontological challenges that conversation faces, it is important to keep in mind that language as an instrument can definitely pose an obstacle in interpreting the discourses of my participants. Not everything can be explained through language (here I merely point at the functional value of any language and do not intend to elaborate on what constitutes language), especially if there are certain restrictions that come with having to learn English as an additional language. So, I assume all the responsibility for all the possible misrepresentations and erroneous assumptions that might have been made in interpretation of the voices of the participants. It is important to emphasize here that voices here, per se, do not necessarily represent the truth, but narrate the truth. So when I elaborate on their lived experiences, as the title of the dissertation suggests, in fact, I elaborate on their voices of lived experiences, which might be quite different from each other.

The study by no means was ethnographic, especially in the sense of what is commonly accepted as ethnographic—a longitudinal observational study of a specific group of people. However, I am strongly convinced that it carried a strong ethnographic element in it. My participants were not just selected individuals but were my students with whom I was blessed to share 2 years of my life as an instructor. The conversations we often

found ourselves in were in no way limited to 1 to 2 hours allocated for interviews, but were constantly occurring within those 2 years. Such conversations have become intimate and personal, honest and authentic. They were also no longer limited to the initial 60 to 70 participants that I recruited, but informally included many of the classes that I instructed. So, to reiterate, while the study was not purely and technically ethnographic, in broader terms it certainly was: I attempted to be insightful, where possible, descriptive, and produce a study that was rich in data.

**Generalizability.** As I argue throughout the dissertation, the voices that I try to interpret or deconstruct are placed contextually in time and place. The truth is local and constrained by the specific experiences and practices of my participants as well as my own. In the study, I did not intend to speak the truth of all immigrants in Canada; neither did I assume the generalizability of conceptual frameworks that I construct. It was the study of specific individuals in Calgary, Alberta, who happen to have immigrated to Canada and be enrolled in the English as a Second Language (ESL) and French as a Second Language (FSL) programs at the time that I conducted the research. However, I believe, certain insights can be valuable for understanding issues raised here, not only within the province, but also perhaps within western Canada.

### **Overview of Chapters**

In this chapter, I further explore research frameworks of bilingualism as a micro- and macro-context phenomenon and situate this study within the academic research on immigrants and bilingualism in Canada. I present how the academic inquiry has evolved alongside processes of official bilingualism and multiculturalism policies planning and implementation and has come to approach bilingualism within larger sociocultural and

sociopolitical frameworks (Heller, 2007a). By bringing some examples of contemporary scholarly work on bilingualism (Dagenais & Berron, 2001, Mady 2008), I demonstrate that the research on bilingualism and immigrants in Canada is an emerging area of interest, and I argue for the importance of examining immigrants' roles in discourses of bilingualism in Alberta and Canada.

In Chapter 2, I discuss the theoretical framework of the study that draws extensively from the assumptions in critical sociolinguistics (Heller, 1999, 2007a, 2011b) that approaches language perceptions, experiences, and practices as shaped, negotiated, and normalized in a realm of various social, historical, and economic factors (Kymlicka, 2011; May, 2008). I also posit that by providing space for immigrants to explore various meanings of bilingualism in the contexts of Alberta and Canada, I engage the participants in understanding their own agencies in discourses of bilingualism and multiculturalism (Heller, 2011b)

In Chapter 3, I elaborate on the methodological framework of the study. Aiming at exploring how bilingualism as a policy and a social practice is perceived by the participants, I describe the rationale behind employing qualitative methodology that includes individual and focus-group interviews as well as surveying as a quantitative approach to data collection. I also position myself as a part of the research seen as social reflective process and aiming at eliciting my own assumptions both as participant and as an observer (Charmaz, 2006). I present the research settings and the participant demographics, including gender, region of origin, immigration status in Canada, and educational profile. I include information on the participants based on the data-collection method, language program enrolled, and other variables. I also describe the process of recruitment.

In Chapter 4, I examine the data collected through the survey on immigrants' perceptions on bilingualism. I present findings of the participants' level of support of bilingualism in Alberta and Canada, perceptions of the role of the government in French as an official language and heritage-languages education, as well as the level of engagement with learning French and heritage languages. I correlate and contrast the findings with the data from previously conducted studies on attitudes toward bilingualism (Floch & Frenette, 2005).

In Chapter 5, I present and discuss the qualitative findings as organized within three principal themes: the participants' perceptions of (a) identity and citizenship, (b) role of bilingualism in Alberta and Canada, and (c) their role in the discourses of bilingualism and multiculturalism. By exploring narrations of the participants on bilingualism as a law and as a social practice, I propose a conceptual framework that explains how these meanings for participants are constructed and negotiated in time and space.

In Chapter 6, I further discuss findings and their implications within the developed conceptual framework. Furthermore, I situate the study's conclusions in sociohistorical and contemporary contexts in Canada and link them to the theoretical assumptions that have guided the study (Bourdieu, 1991; Kymlicka, 2011; Tully, 2001). Finally, I offer concluding thoughts and recommendations on the importance of considering new Canadians as equal and contributing participants in discussions on bilingualism and multiculturalism.

### **Exploring Research Frameworks of Bilingualism as a Social Practice**

Bilingualism as a social phenomenon is viewed as a socially and politically embedded practice that is constructed and constrained within social structures and at the

same time regulating those structures (Heller, 2007a). It situates language as interrelated to social experiences and practices and undertakes ideologies as hidden in the linguistic experiences, but nevertheless revealed in them (Blommaert, 1999; Shapson & D'Oyley, 1984; Wright, 1996). In that sense, the language ideologies research “problematizes speakers’ consciousness of their language and discourse as well as their positionality . . . in shaping beliefs, proclamations, and evaluations of linguistic forms and discursive practices” (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 498).

Within this particular framework, it is possible to identify research focuses of bilingualism as a social practice both within micro- and macro-level contexts (Coupland, Sarangi, & Candlin, 2001; Walters, 2004). Micro-level explorations of bilingualism are reflected in studies on language socialization and interaction, language identity, and linguistic attitudes (Gumperz, 1982; Gumperz & Hymes, 1972). Discursive and interactional practices of individuals and groups are seen as the basis for the social order, rather than being viewed as societal structures that predetermine individual interaction (Hoffmann & Ytsma, 2004; Lamas, 2006; White, 2006).

While micro-level bilingualism is mostly concerned with bottom-up contexts and social action in individual agencies (Coupland et al., 2001), macro-level social aspects of bilingualism are analyzed through exploring social structures and stratification. Such research, although to certain extent empirical, targets theorization of social elements of bilingualism of groups, rather than individuals, highlighting such dimensions as (a) economic, i.e., globalization and language as commodity (da Silva, McLaughlin, & Richards, 2007; Heller, 2010); (b) societal, i.e., immigration and integration, nationhood, and citizenship (Berdichevsky, 2004; Huguet & Lasagabaster, 2007; Kymlicka, 1995a

Schmid, 2001a), education (Baker, 2001; De Mejía, 2002), multiculturalism and diversity (Isajiw, 1999; Stein et al., 2007); (c) political, i.e., individual and collective rights, language policies and language rights, and institutionalized bilingualism (Blommaert, 1999; Kymlicka & Patten, 2003a; MacMillan, 1998; Ricento, 2006; Spolsky, 2004), and (g) education and language policies and ideologies (Canagarajah, 2005b; Hayday, 2005; Herriman & Burnaby, 1996; Lambert & Shohamy, 2000; Pennycook, 1998; Phillipson, 2000; Ricento, 2000; Tollefson, 2002; Wodak, & Corson, 1997).<sup>18</sup>

While micro- and macro-level research on bilingualism view the phenomenon as determined by the proximity to agents and structures,<sup>19</sup> an integrative approach aims to view linguistic relations as intersecting at micro and macro levels. It views social actions of individuals and social and organizational structures as interrelated and mutually determined, and located historically and politically (Bourdieu, 1999; Heller, 2007b; Mesthrie, 2000; Singh, 1996). Although researchers using this approach might decide in some cases to start from theory and in others from empirical analysis of individual experiences, researchers applying this approach do not focus solely on individual or collective. Research studies conducted by Heller (2006, 2007b) are examples of contemporary critical sociolinguistics, which aligns with the integrative approach described. Critical sociolinguistics in these studies is understood as focusing on how language creates, enforces, and reproduces fundamental inequalities in societies (Mesthrie, 2000; Singh, 1996). Such conceptualization makes a shift from viewing language issues

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<sup>18</sup> This classification of emerging themes within bilingualism in macro contexts of social structures should not be viewed as the rigid, self-sufficient arrangement. Frequently, the discussion of bilingualism draws on a range of notions. For example, it might explain relationship between bilingualism, integration, and language policies (Schmid, 2001b), or it can explore matters of education and institutionalized bilingualism (Corson, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> While acknowledging that there is an ontological debate about the relationship between agency and structure, for the definition purposes here, I view agency simply as revealed at micro and structure at macro level. I further elaborate on agency and structure in Chapter 2, "Theoretical Framework."

from the top down by linking macro-level contexts in which languages exist to micro-level empirical explorations (Canagarajah, 2005a; Cardinal, 2007; D. C. Johnson, 2007).

I embraced the integrative framework for my research. As I am mostly interested in how official bilingualism policies are perceived and experienced in the daily lives of immigrants both locally and nationally, I attempted to link micro- and macro-level social aspects of bilingualism. The deliberation on this approach is included in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

### **Situating Research on Immigrants and Bilingualism in Canada**

Academic research on immigrants and bilingualism in Canada has always been placed within the larger sociopolitical and historical contexts. In many ways, the trajectory of academic inquiry grew alongside processes of official bilingualism and multiculturalism policies planning and implementation, mirroring inquiries and tensions associated with them.

Up to the 1960s, the research on bilingualism and speakers of languages other than English was based largely on the cognitive deficiency model. Such a model operated from the position that bilinguals suffer from a cognitive deficit when measured through verbal tests of intelligence (Darcy, 1953).

The adoption of official bilingualism and multiculturalism policies in Canada shifted the academic interest to examining and deconstructing previously held assumptions about negative affective and cognitive effects of bilingualism or subtractive bilingualism of ethnic groups (Cummins, 1978; Lambert, 1974). Furthermore, understanding of bilingualism as a cognitive process also started to accommodate both individual and sociocultural factors, referring to the positive effects on the first and second language

(Cummins, 1978). In addition to the approach to bilingualism as an the interplay of ethnic languages and English language (Ashworth, 1975; Bhatnagar, 1980), those in Canadian academic discourse began to examine bilingualism as a combination of English and French languages (Cummins & Gulutsan, 1975; Swain & Lapkin, 1982). The question of immigrants and official bilingualism did not arise prior to 1970, especially due to the fact that immigrants would be enrolled in Anglophone education systems, preferring to be educated in English; it was with the need of attracting immigrants to Francophone schools in the 1970s that immigrants were first mentioned with regard to the French-language policy (Lipkin & Lawson, 1978; Richmond, 1969).

The intersections of bilingualism, immigration, and education became a focus of a new wave of research that has emerged since the beginning of the 1990s. Dramatic increases in immigration as well as the shift in demographics of the ethnic groups immigrating to Canada also raised interest in the presence of children of diverse language backgrounds in French immersion. Studies by Swain and Lapkin (1991) and Taylor (1992) examined how maintenance and development of students' heritage language enhanced the learning of French thus questioning the popular belief of that time that immersion works for majority-language children only. This period of research was characterized by immigrant students receiving more positive acknowledgement in the discourses of Canadian bilingualism, although such recognition mostly dealt with language acquisition and assessment processes (Hurd, 1993).

It was in late 1990s that the discussions of immigrants and bilingualism in research shifted from the isolated language acquisition perspective to situating those discourses within larger sociocultural and sociopolitical frameworks (Dagenais & Day, 1999; Heller,

1999b). Among the most prominent works exploring those discourses is a sociolinguistic ethnographic case study by Heller (2006)<sup>20</sup> that aimed to describe and explain the language practices and attitudes of Francophone students in one of the Francophone schools in Ontario. By approaching the school as an institution of social and cultural reproduction for a Francophone linguistic minority, Heller (2006) explored the language ideologies and their implications underlying school philosophies and examined how these philosophies were engraved and implemented in the educational system in a form of methodologies, curriculum organization, school management, and interaction with external domains such as communities and families.

While the primary focus of Heller's (2006) research was Canadian-born Francophone students, she discussed challenges of Francophone students born outside of Canada, i.e., "la francophonie internationale [and their inclusion into] la francophonie de souche" (p. 18), i.e., local communities with roots, which to some would be considered the real Francophones of Canada. Often students of non-French origin were left on the margins as they were not "voyageurs" (Heller, 2006, p. 3), as she addressed them metaphorically, who are considered to be a part of the legend of Canadian origins. This research triggered an array of studies exploring intersections of language, education, racism, and immigrants within critical sociolinguistic frameworks (da Silva, 2011; Dagenais & Berron, 2001; Roy & Galiev, 2011), with some of them expanding beyond Ontario.

Dagenais and Berron (2001), by examining language practices of three immigrant families of South Asian ancestry who chose French-immersion education for their children in British Columbia, explored the discourses of immigrants as related to French and

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<sup>20</sup> "Sociolinguistic ethnography [is] defined as a close look at language practices in a specific setting" (Heller, 2006, pp. 14–15).

English as official languages and important languages internationally. By connecting phenomenological experiences of immigrants to larger social, political, and cultural processes, Dagenais and Berron argued that being proficient in both of Canada's official languages as well as one's own heritage language is perceived by immigrants not only as increasing their linguistic repertoire, but also as impacting their success in the global economy. Acknowledging language as a resource, immigrants attach a symbolic value to French as being the official language of Canada, though its significance as linguistic capital<sup>21</sup> might not be very clear, especially in Vancouver. Viewing language and French for this matter as a commodity (Budach, Roy, & Heller, 2003; Heller, 2010) and "value added [rather than as] right" (Heller, 2011a, p. 13) within immigrant discourses is reiterated in several other studies (Carr, 2009; Dalley, 2003).

The shift in exploring the role of immigrants in official-language discourses continued and was concretized with the works of Mady (2003, 2008, 2012) focusing on immigrant students' perceptions, experiences, and practices with French as a second official language. Further expanding the notions of multilingual and bilingual repertoire as an economic and social investment, Mady (2012) approached them from a critical perspective of macro- and micro-level power relations within contemporary and historical national contexts of Canada. For Mady (2008, 2012), the matter of immigrants and official languages acquisition is not solely the matter of the autonomy of immigrants in making choices with regard to learning languages, but also how those choices are implications of contemporary and historical ideological regulations of official languages and diversity in Canada. Throughout her work, Mady argued that the federal and provincial policies on official bilingualism do not legislatively recognize immigrants in second-language learning

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<sup>21</sup> Linguistic capital refers to mastery of language recognized and legitimized as an asset (Bourdieu, 1999).

or learning languages other than English or French as impacting immigrants' experiences with both official and heritage languages (Mady & Black, 2011; Mady, 2012).<sup>22</sup>

This argument is very strong in Mady's (2012) study of perceptions and experiences of young immigrant university students with French as a second official language in English-dominant regions of Canada. By analyzing, quantitatively, responses of 125 post-secondary students who arrived in Canada as children and had exposure to French as a second language across nine provinces and conducting interviews with four adults with a similar background in Ontario, Mady (2012) posited that students' learning experiences with bilingualism are largely influenced by the official-language discourse, whereas a certain degree of disengagement with heritage languages is indicative of lack of policies regulating multilingualism at the macro level. However, rather than having language education reflect the official discourse, Mady (2012) suggested using education as a means of influencing the discourse itself.

While there is a significant body of research that critically examines the discourses of immigrants in educational contexts of Ontario (Makropoulos, 2010) and British Columbia (Dagenais, 2003), the discourses of immigrants and official languages are rarely explored within the contexts of prairie provinces and, in particular, Alberta (Galiev & Roy, 2009; Roy & Galiev, 2009). The data collected by Roy and Galiev (2009) from a critical ethnographic study of two French-immersion schools in Alberta examined Allophone students and their families as often neglected partners in discussions of bilingualism in Alberta and in Canada. The authors argued that while most language policies and regulations promote bilingualism, they fail to consider the role of immigrants in official

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<sup>22</sup> For Mady and Turnbull (2010), the problem was complicated by the challenges of coordination of policies in Canada as language policy in Canada falls under federal jurisdiction, and educational policy falls under provincial and territorial jurisdiction.

and political discourses, despite an increasing immigrant population in French-immersion schools. The failure to recognize English-speaking immigrants' presence alongside official-language discourse is also reinforced by teachers and administrators who sometimes question the appropriateness of having ESL students in French immersion due to the belief that it would be challenging for ESL students to acquire two languages simultaneously (Roy & Galiev, 2009). Such perception persists despite immigrants' beliefs in symbolic and instrumental values of French in Canada. Situated in a critical sociolinguistic framework, the study approached bilingualism discourses as socially and ideologically constructed. In fact, as the analysis of immigrants' perceptions of bilingualism demonstrated, the concept of bilingualism is first and foremost seen as the ability to speak English and French, even though many of the study participants are already bilingual since they speak their mother tongue and one of Canada's official languages. The participants' notions of bilingualism stem from what they are taught about Canada's history, which presents bilingualism as the knowledge of both official languages (Roy & Galiev, 2009).

The deconstruction of the notion of bilingualism continues with several other studies within the contexts of Alberta (Blais, 2003; Clark, 2008; Lee & Hebert, 2006; Roy & Galiev, 2011; Roy, 2010). For Heller (2006) and Roy and Galiev (2011), bilingualism in Canada is often perceived and approached as two separate monolingual systems, assumed to function independently and in different fields. Such assumption, in Heller's (2006) and Roy and Galiev's (2011) opinions, derives from language ideologies in Canada: what constitutes authentic bilingual practices and who gets to determine it. These ideologies are a part of individuals' own background and socialization and, at the same time, are linked to larger social and historical processes in Canada. For Blais (2003), Skogen (2006), and

Clark (2008), such processes trigger development of very unique individual positionings with regard to bilingualism discourses. Skogen, in exploring the experiences of French-immersion graduates who were studying in the Department of Education at the Campus Saint-Jean, a Francophone post-secondary institution affiliated with the University of Alberta, found that the students create a unique identity that is distinctive from Anglophones and Francophones. Blais's ethnographic study of language practices of graduates of French-immersion schools underlined similar tendencies: language experiences predispose students' identity formations—they perceive themselves as a separate identity group. French continues to be seen by them as very important to being Canadian, but yet not very useful professionally, even though those who came as immigrants are more likely to be motivated to learn French because of its marketability (Blais, 2003). Clark (2008), by investigating multigenerational Italian Canadian students in French teacher education programs, argued that it is not only the commodification of French that influences the participants' motivation to learn French, but also the participants' positioning toward official-language ideologies. A legitimate or ideal Canadian, for them, is being bilingual. Such perception is based on belief that it is “they” who want them to be bilingual, where “they,” according to Clark (2008), could imply official-language ideologies.

The matter of French-speaking immigrants' identity negotiation within Alberta-multicultural and Canadian-bilingual contexts is also brought by Hébert (2010) and Madibbo (2009). Hébert (2010) explored narratives of migrant and minority Francophones in Calgary with regard to what it means to be integrated into a Canadian society that is officially bilingual and multicultural. On a policy level, for many of the interviewees,

integration was challenged by the limited scope of the national linguistic policy and its practices in Calgary, resulting in lack of access to social, educational, and cultural services in French. On a social level, discourses about minority groups' integration to *la francophonie* are positioned within discourses of inclusion and reciprocity in integration processes. For Madibbo (2009), such positioning for Francophone immigrants entails complex, often challenging negotiations of multiple identities and practices within multicultural and bilingual frameworks. By having to negotiate ethnic and language identities in Alberta as immigrants and as linguistic minorities, Francophone immigrants often become subjects for ethnic, racial, and linguistic discrimination (Madibbo, 2009). Both Madibbo (2009) and Hébert (2010) advocated for acknowledging those instances and working toward strengthening the sense of belonging and inclusion of immigrants in Canadian society.

Overall, the academic research on bilingualism and immigrants in Canada is an emerging area of interest. While there is a body of work that explores Allophone immigrants in French-language educational settings (Dagenais & Berron, 2001; Mady, 2007) or Francophone immigrants in English-language contexts (Hébert, 2010; Madibbo, 2009), very few studies examine intersections of official bilingualism and Allophone immigrants in English-dominant settings. With my research, I aimed to fill the gap by focusing on how discourses of official bilingualism are reconciled with predominantly English-language practices. I explored how Allophone immigrants perceive and negotiate meanings of official and personal bilingualism. I approached bilingualism as a social phenomenon, culturally, historically, and politically located and entrenched in experiences of individuals and groups (Heller, 2007a). Considering the enormous efforts to promote

official duality both nationally and provincially, I believe it is important to include immigrants in discussions on official bilingualism. Immigrants could offer their unique perspective on how their perceptions, experiences, and practices in an English-dominant context construct their understanding of Canada as a bilingual and multicultural nation.

## Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

In order to situate immigrants' positioning within macro- and micro-level discourses on official bilingualism, I construe the theoretical paradigm that draws heavily on assumptions in critical sociolinguistics (Heller, 2006, 2007b, 2011b), the notions of critical multiculturalism (May, 1999, 2008; May & Sleeter, 2010) and the theory of multicultural citizenship (Kymlicka, 1995b, 2011), sociolinguistics for change (Auger, Dalley, & Roy, 2007; Dalley & Roy, 2008), and Bourdieu's (1977, 1991) concepts of habitus, capital, and legitimate language. The underlying premise of these assumptions is that language perceptions, practices, and experiences are shaped, negotiated, and normalized in a realm of various social, historical, and economic factors. Hence, understanding of the reality is socially constructed, ideologically determined, and historically situated as a result of how those factors interplay with one another as well as which factors eventually come to dominate. My role as a researcher was an attempt to shed some light upon subjectified realities of the participants and uncover their perceptions of phenomena, as well as their lived experiences. I also recognize myself as a social object and subject, who negotiates and forms his meanings through interaction that is structured and constructed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The research activity is considered to be a part of an ongoing social process, of which I am a participant as well as an observer.

The direction that I took for theorization of this study was interdisciplinary as it essentially borrows from a number of critically leaning approaches that explore notions of language, identity, and citizenship as being located and intersected at micro and macro levels. I position the concept of bilingualism as twofold, both a socially and politically

constructed phenomenon, as it tries to incorporate individually revealed notions of critical bilingualism defined by Walsh (1991) as

the ability to not just speak two languages, but to be conscious of the sociocultural, political, and ideological contexts in which the languages (and therefore the speakers) are positioned and function, and of the multiple meanings that are fostered in each (pp. 126–127)

alongside the concept of bilingualism in language policy that carries a strong critical element within a macro reality of a state. As Ricento (2000) stated, “Language policy and planning must deal with issues of language behavior and identity, and so must be responsive to developments in discourse analysis, ethnography, and critical social theory” (pp. 22–23).

Bilingualism for me is situated within a critical sociolinguistic field that aims at bringing

something important to the ability to describe and explain social change in general, and the movement toward the globalized new economy we are currently experiencing in particular, through its appreciation of the complex role of language in constructing the social organization of production and distribution of the various forms of symbolic and material resources essential to our lives and to our ability to make sense of the world around us. (Heller, 2011b, p. 34)

Following Heller’s (2011b) approach, my question with regard to bilingualism became one of “trying to understand why certain categories are meaningful to people and in what ways, of how people work at reproducing or challenging them, and with what consequences, for whom” (p. 36). In other words, I was interested in exploring the notion

of bilingualism within different meanings that are attached to it by different people at different times and in different contexts. By juxtaposing social and official bilingualisms, I tried to decode how and why certain meanings of bilingualism become more meaningful than others. To do this, I operated from the position of language legitimation and institutionalization, where legitimation of languages stands for “formal recognition accorded to the language by the nation-state - usually, by the constitutional and/or legislative benediction of official status” (May, 2008, p. 6), and language institutionalization refers to the “the process by which the language comes to be accepted, or ‘taken for granted,’ in a wide range of social, cultural and linguistic domains or contexts, both formal and informal” (May, 2008, p. 6).

Also, I placed the processes of language legitimation and institutionalization and bilingualism within the constraints of the contemporary post-nationalism era, which marks the shift from legitimizing “primordial power of ethnicity [as] attachment to blood and soil” (Kymlicka, in press, p. 2) and the perception of the nation as a stable, homogeneous category (Heller, 2011b) to the quest of reimagining ourselves as nations, citizens, and individuals in the light of globalized new economy.<sup>23</sup> Then, the question of bilingualism in this study essentially became understanding positionings of immigrants with regard to exploring the duality of historical and contemporary processes and their navigations between those two in Canada.

In order to explore immigrants’ positionings to bilingualism, I viewed it as informing and being informed by the notion of multiculturalism through its political and

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<sup>23</sup> Globalization refers to the “ways in which local and regional markets are integrated into global ones via regimes of regulation based on economic cooperation rather than colonialism (or, sometimes, on the margins of regimes of regulation altogether), and in ways that, as Harvey and Castells point out, entail intensified and compressed circulation of people, goods, and information” (Heller, 2011b, p. 20).

individual representations. Multiculturalism for me was also critical in a sense that it links theories, policies, and practices together in an attempt to unveil hidden ideologies that govern existing social relations (May & Sleeter, 2010). To understand the link between bilingualism and multiculturalism, I refer to Kymlicka's political theory of multicultural citizenship (Kymlicka, 1995b, 2011; Kymlicka & Patten, 2003) that is based on the assumption that the gap between the historicity and contemporaneity in post-national Canada can be bridged by acknowledging the role of various groups<sup>24</sup> and involving them in what Tully (2001) called "citizenization" (p. 25), i.e., the process of deliberation over recognition and redistribution of those roles. It is a reflexive dialogic activity aiming at identifying tensions and power between subjects, acknowledging historical and contemporary tensions and asymmetries of political and social representation (Tully, 2001). The end result of these micro- and macro-scale dialogues is not about institutionalizing the politics of being but engaging in processes of becoming (Tully, 2001), or as Kymlicka (2011) argued, it is "not about resolving disputes over legitimacy, but about learning to live with their contested character, and building democratic forums for continuing that conversation" (pp. 288–289).

In this sense, providing the platform for immigrants in this study to explore the contested notions of bilingualism and multiculturalism entails eventually legitimizing their roles in discourses on policies in Canada by moving them from being the objects to being the subjects of those discourses and policies. This would mean understanding how much of

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<sup>24</sup> For Kymlicka (1995b, 2012), the Canadian model of multicultural citizenship involves delineating minority groups into polyethnic or immigrant groups, and national minorities. He argued that national minorities (in which he includes Canadian Québécois and First Nations) deserve unique rights from the state by the nature of their unique role and history within the national population. Polyethnic groups (i.e., immigrants), however, are less deserving of such rights, since they come to the state voluntarily and thus have some degree of responsibility to assimilate to the norms of their new nation. The model suggests integration of immigrants both in terms of state-level civic identities and nation-level identities and dialogic engagement of all groups in negotiating roles in a peaceful and democratic way.

this kind of conceptualization is seen as valid and appropriate by immigrants as well as examining whether immigrants view bilingualism and multiculturalism as being legitimized and institutionalized and how these meanings are constructed. Contrary to Kymlicka's (1995b, 2012) adoption of a top-down approach, I attempted to bring bottom-up theorization with regard to some of the issues he explores in this framework. I asked if immigrants see themselves as *polyethnic* and thus deserving fewer rights and if they approached Francophone- and French-language-related issues as being more important. Furthermore, I also questioned to what extent immigrants assume integration into Canadian society as a reasonable expectation and the role of official and heritage languages in those processes.

By providing space for immigrants to explore social processes of bilingualism and multiculturalism across time and space, I also attempted to examine how immigrants perceive the role of agency and structure and their engagement with each other in those exploratory processes (Heller, 2011b). In other words, I tried to understand the extension of immigrants' autonomy and capacity (or agency) in identifying and exploring various forms of bilingualism in the sociohistorical and sociopolitical realm of Canada while interacting with manifestations of bilingualism (or structures). However, the dichotomy of agency and structure should not be viewed as a one-dimensional causal relationship of two independent bodies (neither as an attempt to revoke an ontological debate over what leads what), but rather a heuristic attempt to explore immigrants' perceptions and experiences with bilingualism as situated within specific external factors and social constraints that both influence and are influenced throughout this relationship. In this sense, I agree with Giddens (1984) that rather than representing different phenomena, agency and structure are

mutually dependent and internally related and represent two sides of the same coin. So, the interactions of immigrants with personal and official bilingualism as social and legal practices and their positionings with regard to those practices will be seen as manifestations of the degree of their autonomy in deconstructing their positionings. Furthermore, manifestations of bilingualism within social and legal constraints are also manifestations of agencies within them; for this reason, for the purposes of this study, I approached the bilingualism policies and practices more from the agency perspective than the structure perspective.

Many of my assumptions, especially in terms of drawing connections between various manifestations of bilingualism both micro- and macro-scopically, are influenced by Bourdieu (1991), who argued that language is as constructing as it is being constructed. Language for him not only carries certain functional purposes, but it also is viewed as a resource to exhibit and sustain existing social structures and is restrained and structured by them; as well it gives internalized meanings to those structures (Myles, 1999). This approach attempts to conceptualize the connection and regulation between subjective, i.e., autonomy and action, and objective, i.e., social structures, (Grenfell & James, 1998) in interactions with various language forms and manifestations. This process in turn is regulated by habitus, which is a set of internalized dispositions of how particular people and groups think and act as a result of experiences and practices within the spaces where these structures are exhibited (Bourdieu, 1990, 1991).<sup>25</sup>

Habitus affects and is affected by capital, a concept frequently used by Bourdieu (1989, as cited in Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005), denoting the value of the set of social

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<sup>25</sup> The notion of habitus as being positioned within agencies and structures (May, 2008) is seen here as not only a set of ideologies, attitudes, or perceptions with regard to bilingualism, but also as a tool that places negotiations of perceptions of historicity and contemporaneity in bilingualism.

products and resources through which individuals carry out social interaction and reproduce power. From the perspective of the discussion of how immigrants negotiate meanings of official and personal bilingualism within legal and social dimensions, Bourdieu's (1999) positioning of language as various forms of capital seems extremely relevant. Language is associated with accumulated honour and prestige and is transferrable to economic, social, and cultural capitals within particular fields (Bourdieu, 1999).

In this sense, bilingualism could be approached as a form of symbolic capital, i.e., an accumulation of honour and prestige associated with it, or economic capital, i.e., an accumulation of economic benefits as an outcome of bilingualism, where the habitus (i.e., perceptions) of the first one derives from valuing bilingualism within the discourses of citizenship, nationhood, and duality; and the second one underlines a commodification approach to bilingualism (da Silva, 2011; Heller, 2003; Jedwab, 2003). Such a comparison though should not be viewed as oppositional, as Bourdieu (1977) himself regarded the structural systems as interwoven and mutually dependent with no well observed boundaries.

So the symbolic value of bilingualism can well correspond to its economic capital, and vice versa. Since I am also concerned with official ideologies of languages, I find the concept of legitimate language extremely applicable. According to Bourdieu (1991), a legitimate language is the official language that is designated as a standard or norm and legitimized through institutional exercises of their symbolic domination. For me, different perceptions and experiences of bilingualism experienced by social groups are the consequences of legitimization of certain languages (Blommaert, 1999).

Overall, Bourdieu's notions allowed me to ask quite complex and intricate research questions that are capable of exploring both micro and macro dimensions of language practices and allowed me to interpret the phenomena of language and bilingualism in a set of complex social structures, where they are organized and restrained and at the same time are organizing and restraining.<sup>26</sup>

Quite often Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice is criticized for being too static and unable to account for change (Lane, 2000). Jones (1999) suggested that though Bourdieu (1977) exposed the mechanisms of language hierarchy, he did not address the issue of how its more damaging consequences might be alleviated and did not offer any solutions to the problem. While I would argue that Bourdieu (1977) did not intend to resolve social inequalities, as it might not have been his main goal, my philosophical framework is as descriptive as it is indeed prescriptive, purposeful, and action-oriented. To argue for the purposefulness of my position, I borrow from what Auger et al. (2007) referred to as sociolinguistics for change that explores sociolinguistic concepts not only as being ideologically implicit, but also by making them explicit to the actors who take part in conversations about them.

In other words, sociolinguistics for change allows researchers and participants to start understanding their own roles in constructing those concepts not only internally but also, and perhaps, more importantly, externally. So, examining discourses and ideologies associated with those concepts could and should facilitate bringing changes in their own

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<sup>26</sup> In addition, I should note, that my choice was also dictated by the fact that Bourdieu has been extensively used in works on language practices embedded in greater social processes: language usage and language interaction (Pujolar, 2001), language practices in bi-/multilingual contexts (Blackledge, 2004; Heller, 2006; Lamarre & Paredes, 2003), language ideologies in educational settings (Goldstein, 2003; Heller, 2006), and linguistic integration and citizenship (Jo, 2003).

contexts. Following this very idea, I attempted to bring immigrants as equal partners into the conversations on what bilingualism was meant to be, what it is now, and what it will mean for participants and for the country. My role here is not only to share research findings but rather advocate for change at individual, community, and national levels.

I also realize that there is a strong inclination in my philosophical approach to view the notion of change at a slightly different level than sociolinguistics for change would argue for (Dalley & Roy, 2008). Sociolinguistics for change embeds a strong ethnographic element in it and thus conceptualizes the notion of change more at an individual's level than on a broader scale. My approach to change perhaps employs more theorization for change within larger boundaries that are confined within notions of state, citizenship, policy, etc. So, while I did engage my participants in conversations for change within themselves and myself, ultimately, for me, it is crucial that their discourses on bilingualism facilitate changes externally as well. So, essentially, sociolinguistics for change here becomes *sociolinguistics for policy change* that is driven by a bottom-up approach. It is important to note though that change here (especially in the case of the study) does not necessarily imply changes to policies per se, but rather involves the state and various stakeholders in legitimizing immigrants' roles on discussions on language, identity, and citizenship. It is therefore an incremental, dialogic process that emphasizes the continuum of change processes at all levels and provides opportunities for dialogue that eventually leads to more systematic collaboration among various micro- and macro-level actors and agencies involved in this process.

### Chapter 3: Methodological Framework

#### Data-Collection Methods

Considering bilingualism as a social and ideological phenomenon (Heller, 2007a) that becomes legitimized and institutionalized by specific groups, I chose to target immigrants for my study as they are often left out of the scope of bilingualism discourses. As most of my research questions aimed at exploring how bilingualism as an official policy and a social practice manifests itself to individuals, I was specifically interested in juxtaposing emic (insiders') and etic (outsiders') perspectives and seeing the interaction between those two. Furthermore, viewing bilingualism within the historicity of social and political processes in Canada, I attempted to bring discourses of the groups who are removed from historicity<sup>27</sup> and instead represent the contemporaneity of those processes. For that reason, I intentionally selected recent immigrants who have had little exposure to social and official discourses in Canada but are in the process of constructing their understandings of bilingualism as both outsiders and insiders and show the process of negotiation of meanings as a dynamic and complex experience.

Within the critical sociolinguistic framework, language practices of participants are often situated within specific spaces and fields<sup>28</sup> where those meanings inform and are informed by the participants' perceptions, experiences, and practices (Heller, 2011b). In many cases, those meanings are explored as contested and challenged within educational institutions where those language practices take place (Goldstein, 2003; Heller, 2006; Lamarre & Paredes, 2003; Roy & Galiev, 2011). That is why I chose to target the recent

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<sup>27</sup> I view Anglophone, Francophones, Aboriginal people and to certain extent historically established immigrant groups that represent that historicity.

<sup>28</sup> The notion of field here refers to Bourdieu's understanding of it as a specific social and/or institutional arena in which people express and manifest their predispositions (Lane, 2000).

immigrant population within educational spaces where the discourses on languages are particularly evident: the ESL and FSL programs at the university and ELS programs at immigration and settlement agencies. Such sampling allowed me to maximize not only the representation of the sampling population but also the range of experiences of recent immigrants with official languages in Canada. I elaborate on the participants' profiles and settings in the next chapter.

Following a critical sociolinguistic framework that implies criticality and reflexivity of the research philosophy (Heller, 2011b), I explored criticality in this study predominantly through qualitative methods of data collection and analysis and to a lesser extent quantitative tools for gathering and analyzing data. The methodological part of my study consisted of a combination of three main data-collection methods: survey, individual interviews, and focus-group discussions which are also used for triangulation purposes.<sup>29</sup>

For over 50 years, surveying has been of one most important policy research methodology tools (Johnson, 2011). The application of surveys is recognized as both advantageous for its ability to provide extensive descriptive statistics on various topics of public interest within the acceptable norms of transparency and accountability and disadvantageous for its constraining nature of the inquiry and predetermined variables (Scott & Marshall, 2009). With the understanding of the limitations of survey methodology, I consider it as an etic approach to data that is examined, controlled, and interpreted externally, whereas an interpretive qualitative inquiry attempts to understand the data within or emically by deconstructing participants' roles and their actions (Davis,

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<sup>29</sup> While the combination of the quantitative and qualitative methodological tools could be interpreted here as a mixed methods paradigm (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007), it is the qualitative inquiry that dominates the methodological framework of the study.

1995). In this way, survey for the purposes of my study aims at collecting demographic information (see Lamarre & Dagenais, 2004 as an example how the survey was utilized), complementing the qualitative data as well as triangulating and verifying the previous quantitative findings on a similar topic.

The survey for this study expands previously conducted studies on attitudes of Anglophones and Francophones on official bilingualism, including the GPC International survey on perceptions on official languages conducted in 2002 (Floch & Frenette, 2005; Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2006). As I discussed, most of the past surveys while targeting a range of themes on Canada's official bilingualism, such as national and regional support of bilingualism, the role of the federal and provincial governments in providing services in both of Canada's official languages, and language education for official minorities, have not specifically addressed immigrants' perceptions (Floch & Frenette, 2005). The survey questions allowed me to bridge this gap and quantify immigrants' demographic and linguistic data as well as attitudes toward official bilingualism, official-languages education, and finally, the role of the government with regard to official bilingualism. Furthermore, using the survey I attempted to position those with regard to newcomers' perceptions of the importance of heritage languages, multiculturalism, and the role of the government in promoting diversity. The survey was administered through an online analytical tool QuestionPro<sup>®</sup>.<sup>30</sup>

I agree with Blackmore and Lauder (2005) that while surveys as a quantitative tool may help to identify a problem and make associations between particular factors, they are often inefficient in understanding the phenomenon. The complexity of the phenomenon is

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<sup>30</sup> For more information on the survey, please refer to Appendix A: Survey on Attitudes toward Bilingualism and Languages in Canada.

often best addressed by in-depth qualitative analysis (Blackmore & Lauder, 2005) that explores immediate and local meanings of actions with the phenomenon from the actor's point of view (Ericson, 1986). To achieve this goal, I conducted individual semistructured in-depth interviews and focus-group conversations with immigrants enrolled in English- and French-language educational programs. I view interview here as a directed conversation (Lofland & Lofland, 1995) that permits an in-depth exploration of a particular topic and experience. Interviews ask the participant to describe and reflect upon his or her experiences in ways that seldom occur in life; questions are thought provoking, exploratory, and are open for interpretation (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Semistructured in-depth interviews allowed me to facilitate and guide the process of uncovering layers of the questions raised in the research. They are appropriate because they acknowledge a certain structure and guidance by the initial questions but, at the same time, are flexible enough to accommodate emerging themes in the discussion (Hatch, 2002, p. 94).<sup>31</sup>

In the light of a sociocritical interpretative approach to bilingualism that views bilingualism at the intersection of language practices and ideologies (Heller, 2007b; Martin-Jones, 2007), I attempted to emphasize eliciting the participants' definitions of terms, situations, and events and tried to tap my assumptions, implicit meanings, and tacit rules (Charmaz, 2006). My role as a researcher was an attempt to uncover and explore the participants' perceptions of phenomena as well as subjectified realities in which the phenomena are placed. I also recognize myself as a social object and subject, forming and negotiating my meanings through interaction (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The research activity for me is a part of an ongoing social process, of which I am a participant, as well as an observer.

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<sup>31</sup> Please see Appendix B: Guiding Questions for Interviews.

My choice of semistructured interviews was also determined by their wide application in studies that are built on this paradigm or mention it in some way or another (Giampapa, 2004; Lamarre & Dagenais, 2004; Lamarre & Paredes, 2003). I conducted individual interviews that took approximately 1 hour, and I audio-taped them in the process. I used an electronic recorder in order to have the digital version of the transcripts as I have found that digital files are more convenient to work with, they are less labor-consuming for transcribing, and they are easier to integrate into qualitative software for further analysis. The data were processed and analyzed via the qualitative program called NVivo 8<sup>®</sup>, which is found to provide the adequate tools for classifying, arranging, and sorting texts and also significantly reduces time for data management.

While individual interviewing was my primary source of data collection, focus-group discussions were employed in order to supplement information gathered in individual interviews and to verify them through triangulation and member check (Hatch, 2002). Furthermore, my rationale for using focus-group interviews is that they stimulate the participants to think beyond their own private thoughts and positionings. In having to formulate, respond, and make an argument in a discussion with others with similar background and experiences, the participants move beyond their assumptions thus bringing new insights into the explored phenomenon (Kleiber, 2004). In this sense, focus-group conversations become an extension of individual interviews and an opportunity to debrief, follow up, and question individual perceptions as a group (Barbour & Schostak, 2005). So, focus-group discussion becomes a dialogic reflective process where actors are invited to interpret their agencies with regard to the phenomenon (Barbour & Schostak, 2005).

I conducted the analysis and interpretation of the interviews through “typological analysis [which starts with] dividing the overall data set into categories or groups based on predetermined typologies” (Hatch, 2002, p. 152) and develops based on patterns, relations, and themes within typologies. As I am largely involved with already established categories (e.g., official bilingualism vs. societal bilingualism, institutional practices of bilingualism vs. personal language practices, federal vs. provincial support of bilingualism, etc.), the typological analysis appears to be an adequate analytical tool to integrate those concepts. Here I discuss the typical typological model as it is described by Hatch (2002):

*Steps in Typological Analysis*

1. Identify typologies to be analyzed.
2. Read the data, marking entries related to your typologies.
3. Read entries by typology, recording the main ideas in entries on a summary sheet.
4. Look for patterns, relationships, themes within typologies.
5. Read data, coding entries according to patterns identified and keeping a record of what entries go with which elements of your patterns.
6. Decide if your patterns are supported by the data, and search the data for non-examples of your patterns.
7. Look for relationships among the patterns identified.
8. Write your patterns as one-sentence generalizations.
9. Select data excerpts that support your generalizations. (p. 153)

It is important to note here that the following typological analysis does not suggest looking for the data to support the framework. Although typological analysis starts with a

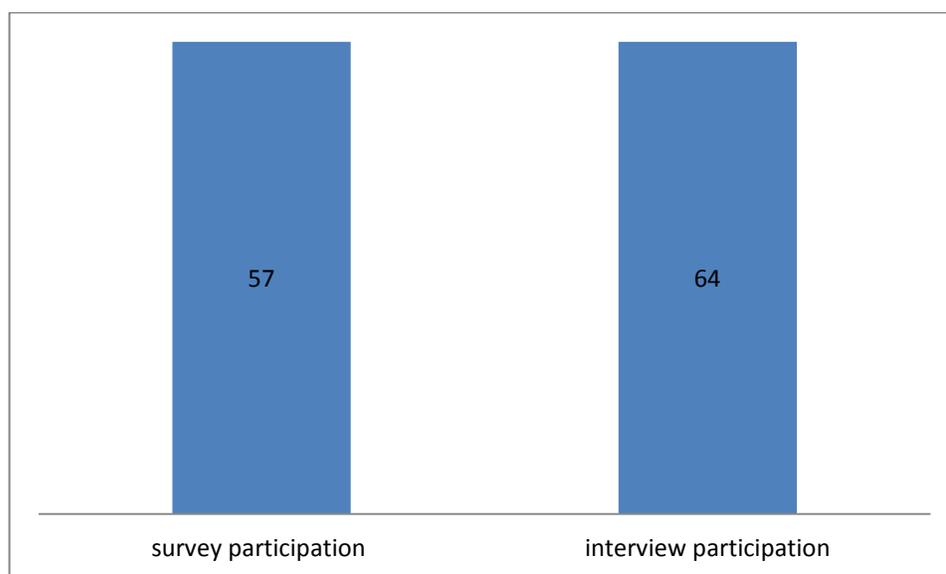
deductive step, it does not prevent new important categories, patterns, and themes to emerge from the data. As Hatch (2002) pointed out, it is the data that should drive the analysis; such data can be quite contradictory to the initial presumptions. Recognizing limitations of typology analysis, I approached typologies as “heuristic devices rather than distinctive and/or exhaustive categories” (May, 2008, p. 83) that might be helpful with data analysis and interpretation and might eventually lead to generating conceptualization of the phenomenon (Davis, 1995).

### **Participant Demographics, Research, and Settings Description**

As I have stated before, much of the research was triggered and informed by my own experiences as a second-language learner and a second-language teacher. I employed the snowball sampling technique in order to recruit immigrant students studying FSL or ESL at one of the universities in Calgary. French as a noncredit course is offered through the Department of Continuing Education and is open both to the public and the registered students in that university. An English-language course is a part of the academic preparation programming that aims at helping academically-qualified students gain English-language proficiency for undergraduate and graduate program admission. I reached out to the ESL student population through professional contacts in two immigrant-serving agencies based in Calgary. Moreover, being employed as an instructor in one of those immigrant-serving agencies, I had access to a vast group of ESL immigrant students in the Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC) program, a governmentally funded initiative that aims at improving newcomers’ English-language proficiency and providing essential social and professional skills to facilitate their integration into Canadian society. At the time of their participation, most of the students were attending advanced-level ESL classes.

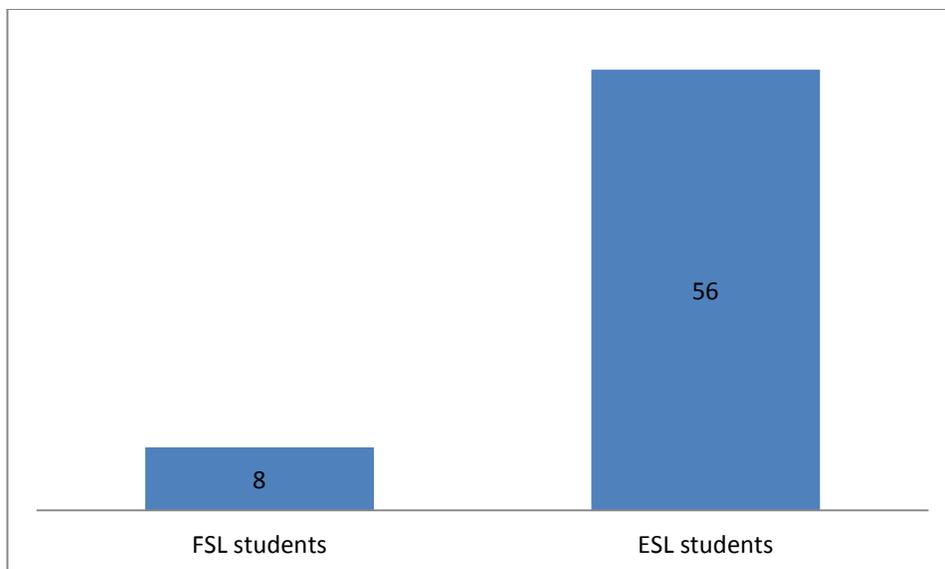
The data collection, which included both qualitative and quantitative methodology, took place between spring 2010 and summer 2011.

As Figure 1 demonstrates, there were 57 individuals who completed the survey on attitudes toward bilingualism and multiculturalism and 64 students who participated in either individual or focus-group interviews. Both groups do not necessarily include the same individuals; however, in many instances it might have been the case. While most of the interviewees did complete the survey, some of the survey responses came from other sources, including relevant university departments who distributed email invitations to participate in the survey to their students.



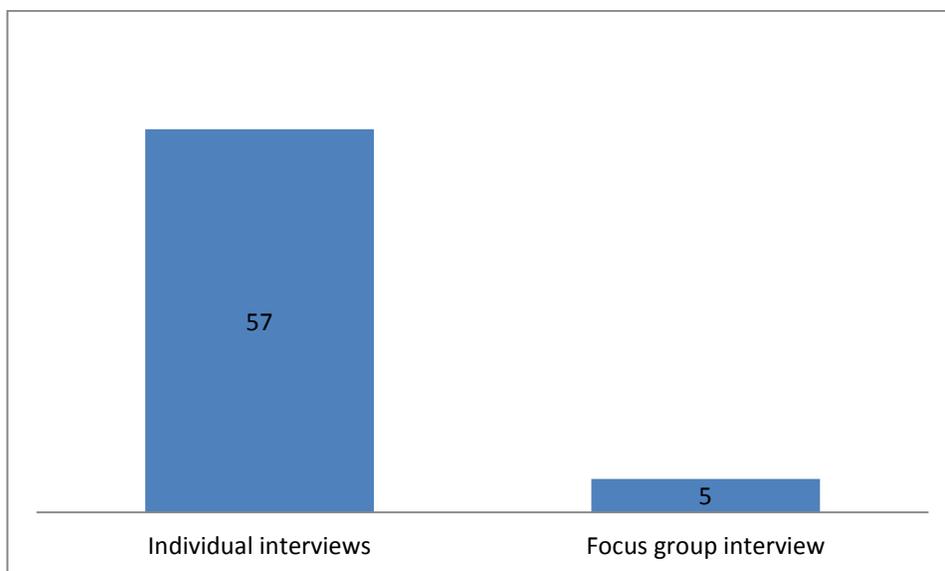
*Figure 1.* Participants based on type of data-collection method.

Figure 2 demonstrates the ratio of participants based on the language program they were taking at the time of the data-collection phase. According to Figure 2, there were 8 immigrant students who were studying French and 56 individuals taking ESL classes who agreed to be interviewed.



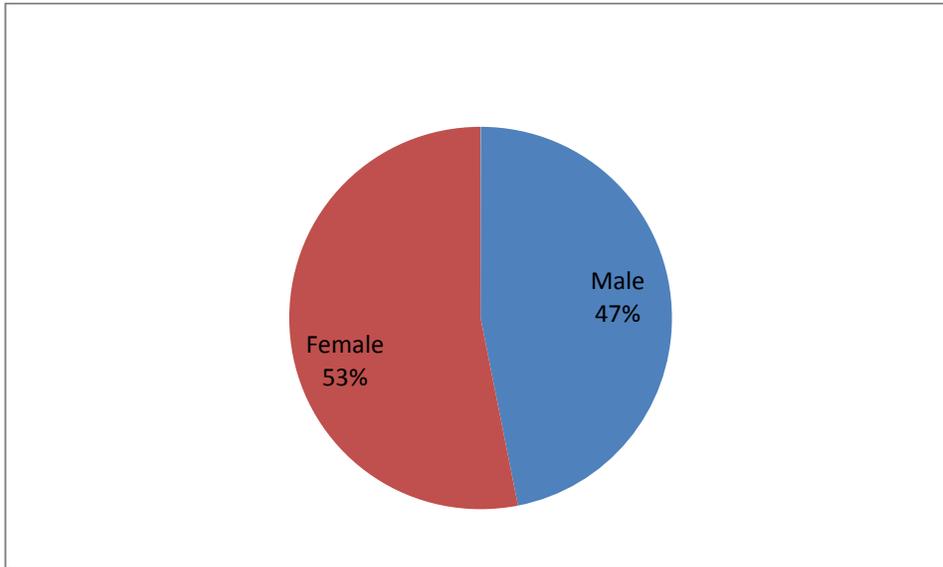
*Figure 2.* Interview participants based on language program.

While there were 64 individuals who contributed to the qualitative data collection of the study, their contribution was represented through 57 individual interviews and 5 focus-group interviews. In most instances, individuals who participated in personal interviews also were interviewed in groups; in some rare instances, there were individuals who took part only in group or individual interviews, respectively (see Figure 3).



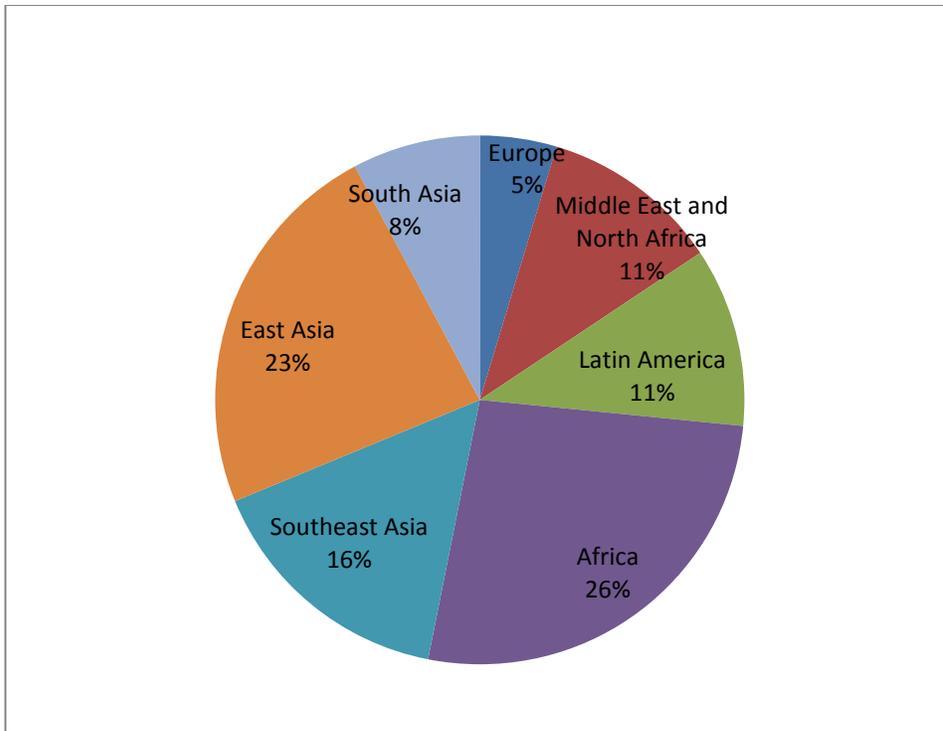
*Figure 3.* Data collection based on types of interview.

Figures 4 and 5 explore the interview participants' demographics in terms of gender and regions of origin, respectively. According to the information illustrated, females and males were almost equally represented in the study (see Figure 4).



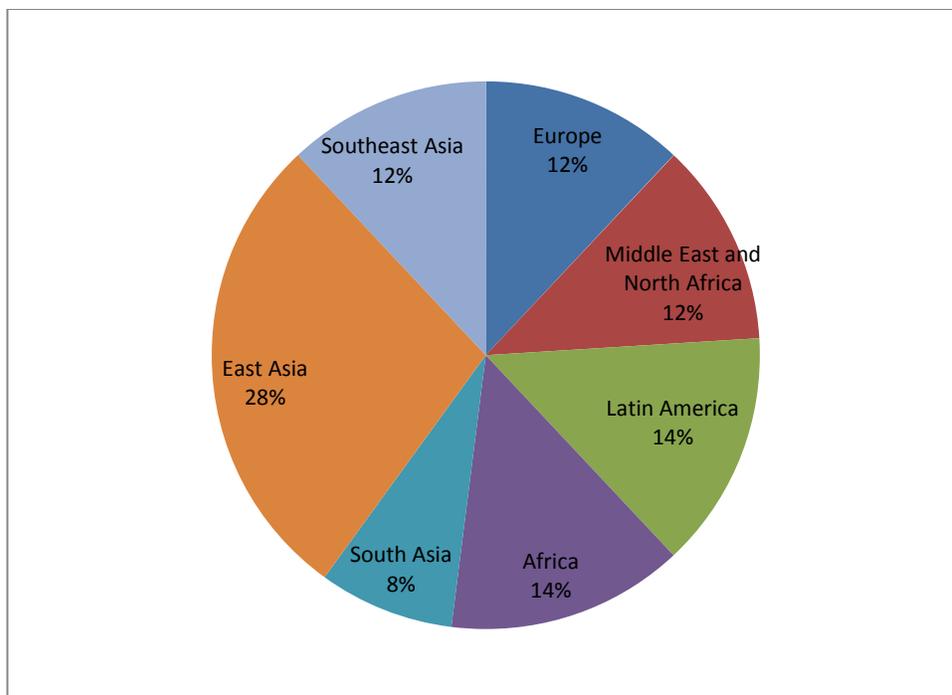
*Figure 4.* Interview participants' demographics by gender.

In terms of regions of origin, out of 64 interview participants, the significant number declared themselves as being originally from Asia and Africa. However, there was also a strong representation across all regions, including Latin America, the Middle East, and, to a lesser extent, Europe. The country with the largest immigrant representation is China (14).



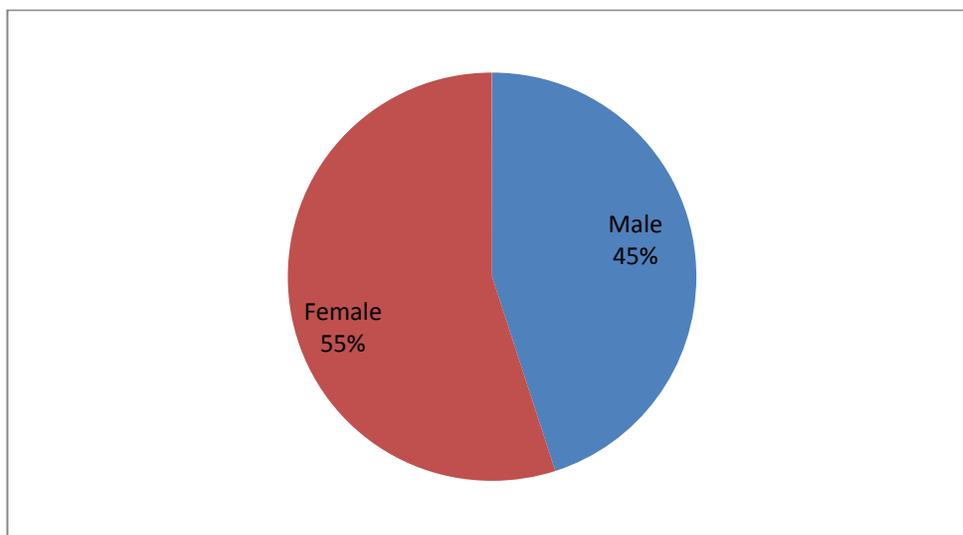
*Figure 5.* Interview participants' demographics by regions of origin.

Figure 6 explores regional representation of the survey participants. While there appears to be a correlation between the regional representation of the interview and survey participants, the latter demonstrates some differences especially in a significantly larger ratio of immigrants from Africa and Europe and a smaller proportion of immigrants from Southeast Asia.



*Figure 6.* Survey participants' demographics by regions of origin.

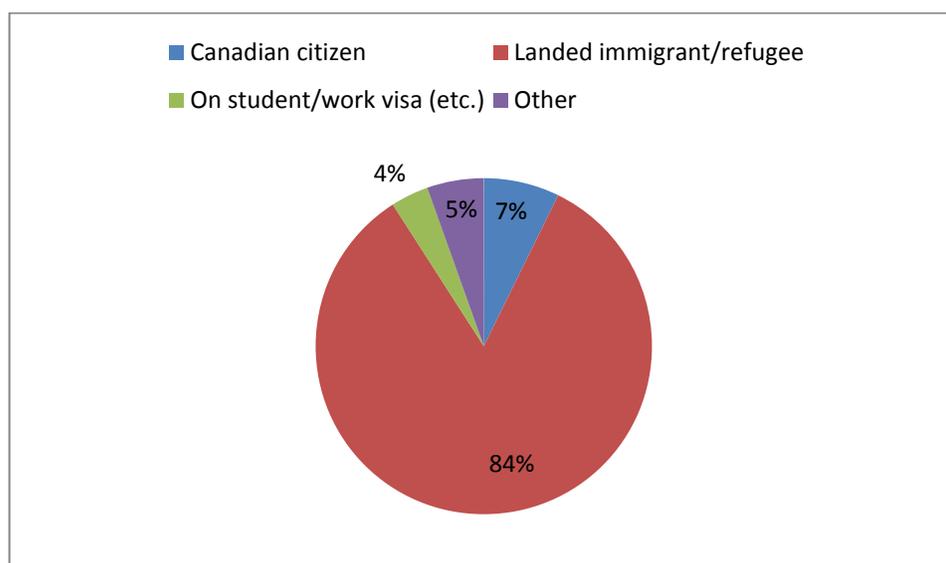
In terms of gender representation, the survey was comprised of 55% of female and 45% male participants (see Figure 7).



*Figure 7.* Survey participants' demographics by gender.

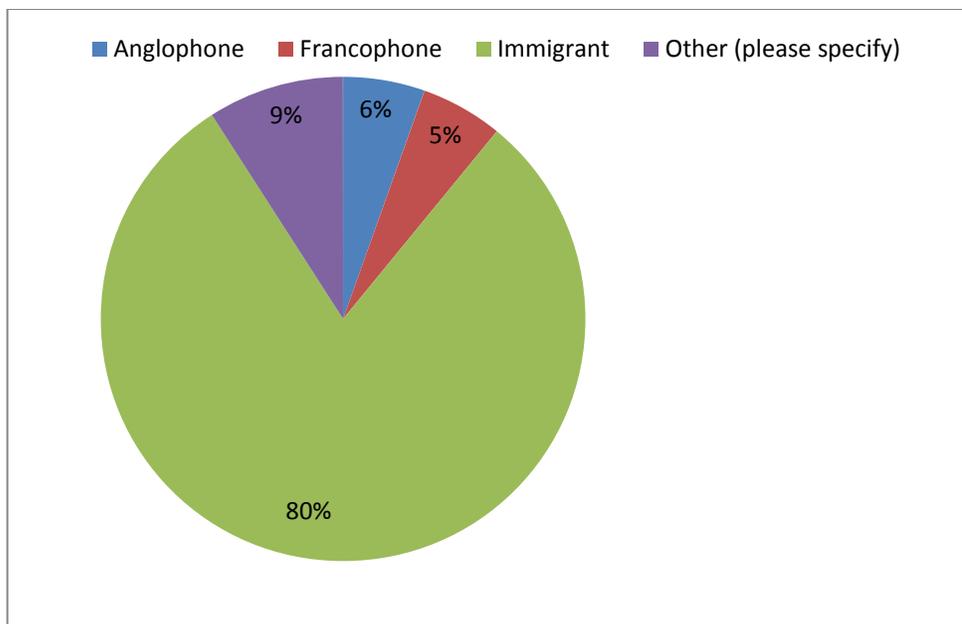
The survey tools also provide better mechanisms for tracking more specific demographic information, such as immigrant status, educational level, etc. According to

Figure 8, the overwhelming majority of the survey respondents declared themselves as landed immigrants or refugees. Considering the targetted audience of the study was limited to recent immigrants who have resided in Canada no more than 10 years, it is understandable to see the second largest group declaring their status as Canadian citizens. There is also a category for those who are either on student or work visas and who have expressed strong interest in obtaining permanent status in Canada.



*Figure 8.* Survey participants' demographics (status in Canada).

Figure 9 taps into exploring the formal definitions of an immigrant within notions affiliated with identity. There does not seem to be a strong correlation between declaring status formally and describing identity through Anglophone, Francophone, and immigrant categories. In some cases, those who have lived in Canada for a longer period of time and have become naturalized Canadians would continue seeing themselves as immigrants, and, in other cases, refugees who have just arrived in Canada would view themselves either as Anglophones or Francophones or identify as a completely different category.



*Figure 9.* Survey respondents' perception of self-identity.<sup>32</sup>

In terms of education, regardless of the indicated status, most of the survey respondents declared a very high level of completed formal education. In fact, 73% of those who completed the survey had some form of university education, with 22% having post-graduate degrees (see Figure 10).

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<sup>32</sup> The corresponding question in the survey is "Do you first see yourself as...?"

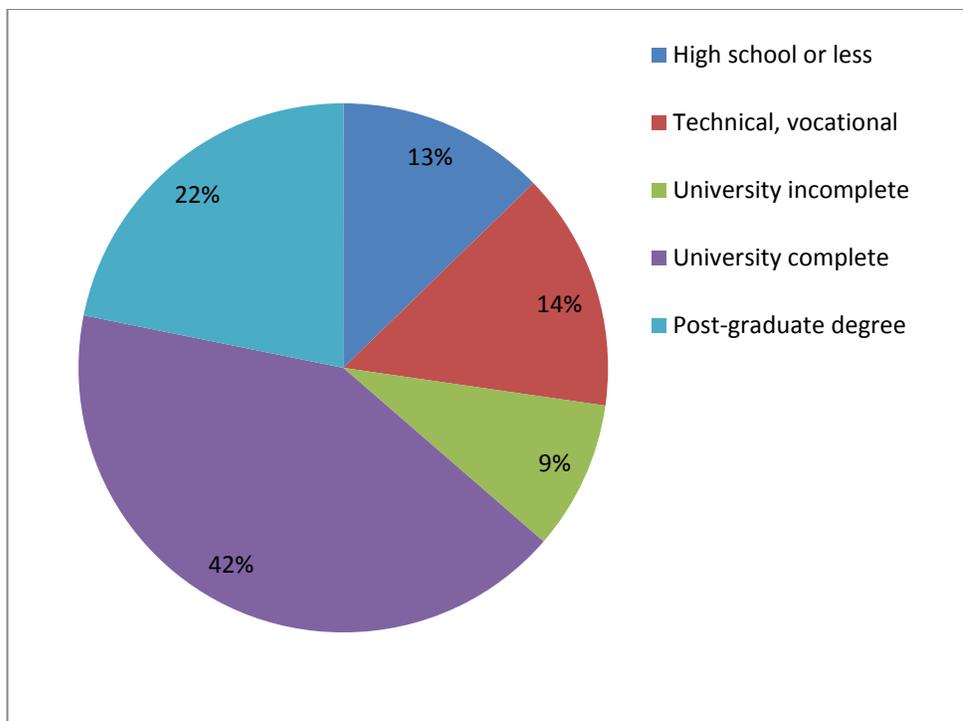


Figure 10. Participants' highest level of formal education.

Among 57 survey respondents of immigrant origin, as Figure 11 demonstrates, 84% were ESL program students, and 16 were university students at the time of the survey completion.

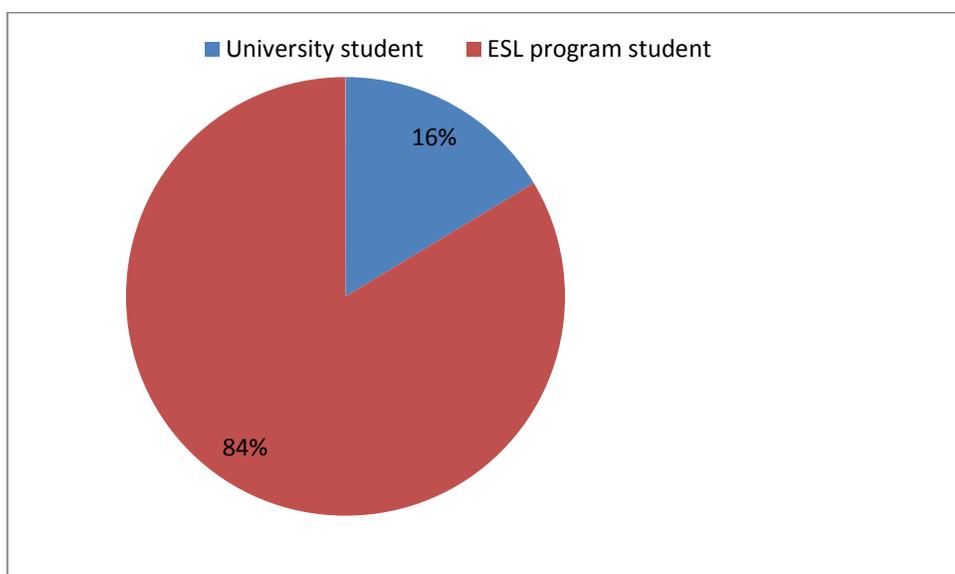


Figure 11. Participants' demographics (language education status).

## Chapter 4: Survey Findings

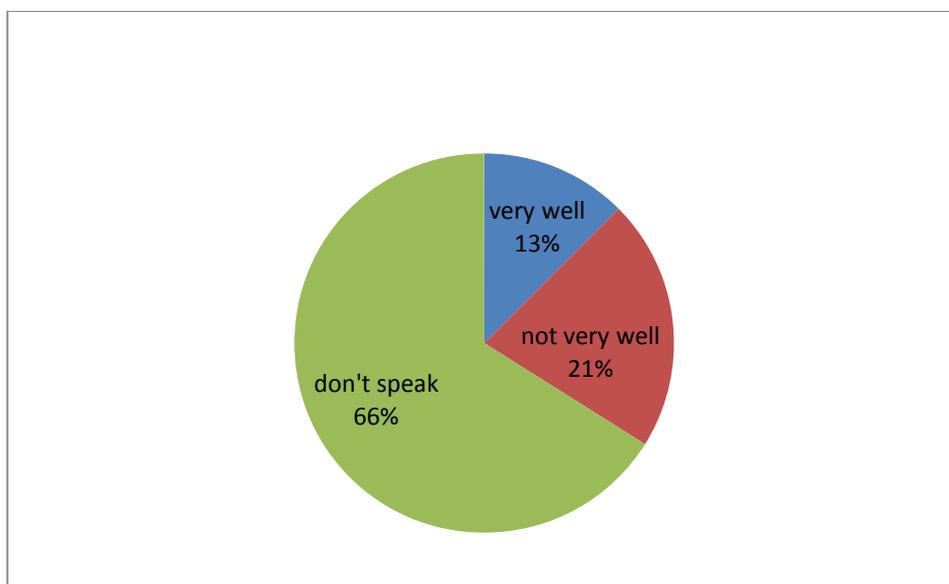
Having provided an overview of the participants' profiles and settings, in this chapter, I present the results of an attitudinal survey on immigrants' perceptions of bilingualism. The purpose of the survey was to complement the qualitative data as well as triangulate and verify the previous quantitative findings on a similar topic. Furthermore, public opinion surveying was approached as an important policy development tool that is often employed by the Government of Canada (Floch & Frenette, 2005). For example, the 2002 GPC survey on public perceptions of official bilingualism conducted by the Department of Canadian Heritage led to the development of *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality* (GC, 2003) and *The Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future* (GC, 2008). While the GPC survey extensively measured attitudes of official-language majority and official-language minority communities and resulted in two government initiatives around minority-language education and promotion of a minority language among official-language minorities, it concentrated on Anglophones and Francophones as two absolute groups (Floch & Frenette, 2005). As a result of exclusion of immigrants in the survey, there is little or no reference to them in these two pieces of legislations (GC, 2003, 2008). Keeping in mind the theoretical frameworks of sociolinguistics for change (Auger et al., 2007) and sociolinguistics for policy change that advocate for informing macro-level policy discourses through micro-level participation, the intention of conducting the survey was to (a) provide the platform for immigrants in Alberta to express their opinions through means that didn't consider them previously (Floch & Frenette, 2005); and (b) quantify findings in order for the research to be validated within the existing model of public opinion surveying and thus

argue for sociolinguistics for policy change. I used and interpreted the findings here as complementary to the qualitative findings I present in Chapter 5.

I highlight the survey findings in several categories: first, I present statistical data on the participants' perception of the government's role in supporting official bilingualism; second, I explore the attitudes of the participants toward government involvement in education with regard to official bilingualism; third, I attempt to measure the participants' level of interest in terms of learning French; finally, I explore the participants' attitudes toward Francophone communities. Throughout the survey analysis, I correlated immigrant perceptions of French as an official language to heritage languages and bilingualism with multiculturalism. It is important to note that due to a low survey participation rate, the margin of error is too great to allow for statistical conclusions.

### **Language Proficiency**

Among the 57 survey respondents, 34% indicated either very strong or some proficiency in French (see Figure 12). Therefore it is reasonable to say that about one-third of the surveyed population had a varying degree of familiarity with French, which by itself seems to be either on par with or exceeds the ratio of those who declared themselves as being proficient in both official languages or having some familiarity with one of them, as Statistics Canada (2012) indicated.



*Figure 12.* Participants' proficiency in French.<sup>33</sup>

### **Support of Bilingualism in Canada and Province-Wide**

My second question examined the general attitude toward bilingualism in Canada. While the question “Are you personally in favour of bilingualism?” might be perceived as ambiguous as it does not specify what kind of bilingualism it refers to (official or social),<sup>34</sup> I kept this question as it has been widely asked through a number of surveys measuring public attitude toward bilingualism, and it was important for me to be able to compare those surveys' results with the results of this study. According to Figures 13 and 14, the majority of the participants favour bilingualism both nationally and provincially. The support for bilingualism nationally (56%) seems to align with the national average and yet is higher than the provincial average in Alberta, which was estimated to be 41% or the national average for Anglophones of 46% (Environics Focus Canada, as cited in Parkin & Turcotte, 2004). The findings of the participants' support of bilingualism also correlate

<sup>33</sup> The corresponding question in the survey is, “How well do you speak French?”

<sup>34</sup> I explore official bilingualism and bilingualism as a practice in “From Conceptualization to Practice: Immigrants' Discourses on the Place of Bilingualism in Canada” in Chapter 5.

with the results of the qualitative exploration of the topic in the section “Immigrant support of bilingualism at a macro level” in Chapter 5.

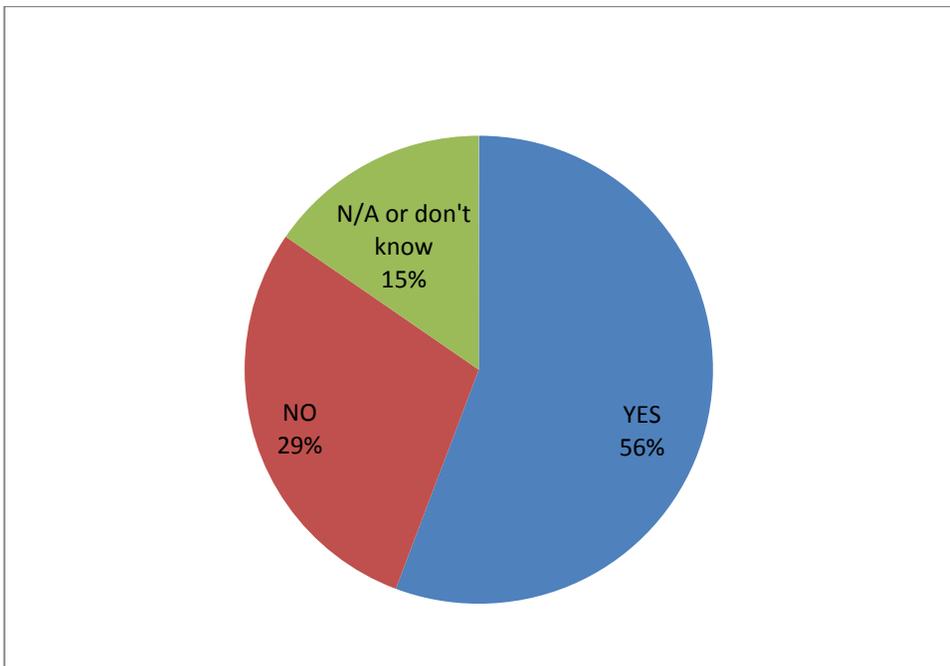


Figure 13. Participants in favour of bilingualism for all of Canada.<sup>35</sup>

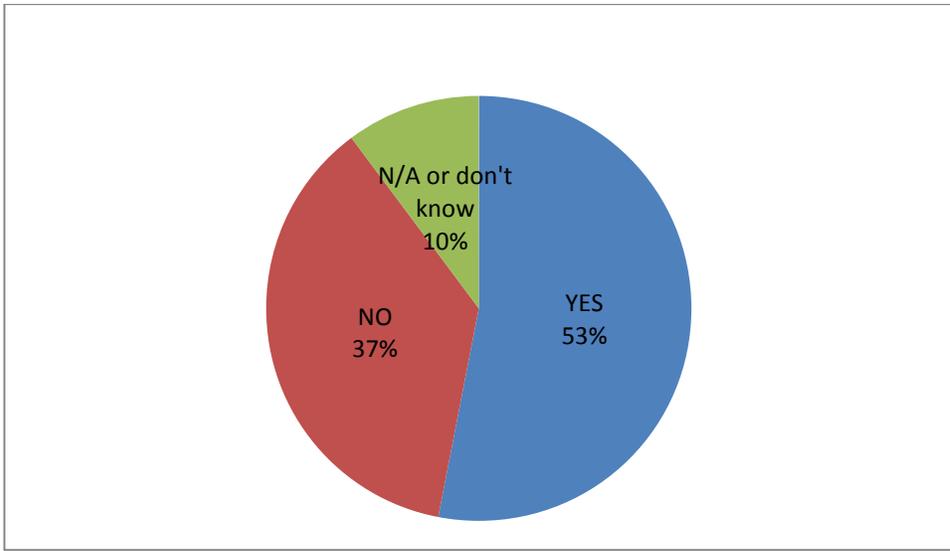


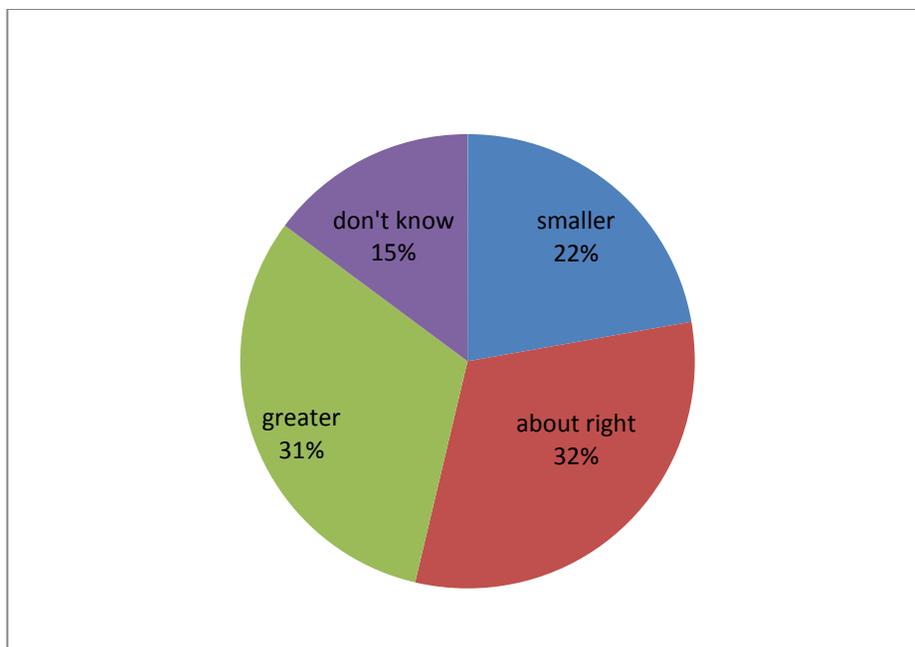
Figure 14. Participants in favour of bilingualism for their province.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> The corresponding question in the survey is, “Are you personally in favor of bilingualism for all of Canada?”

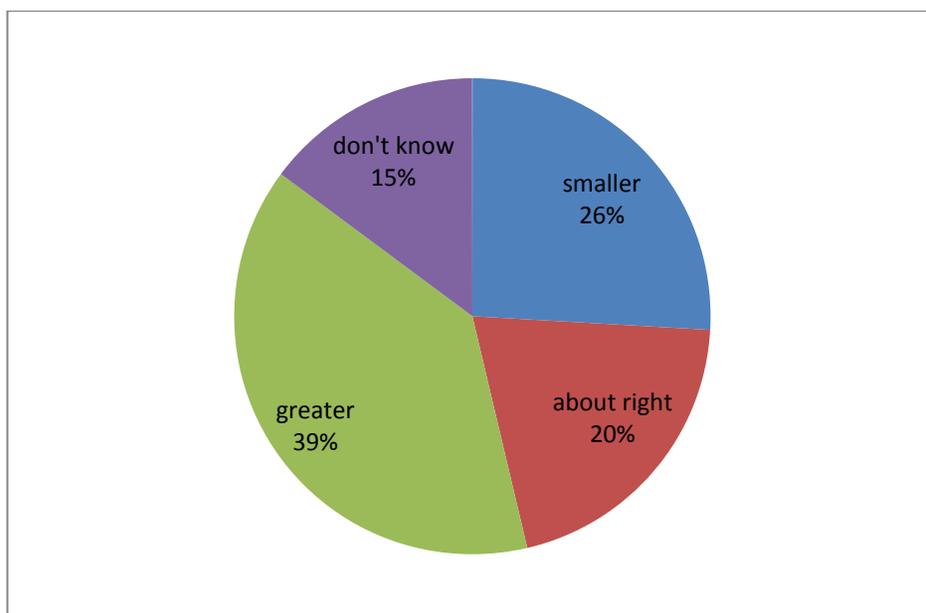
<sup>36</sup> The corresponding question in the survey is, “Are you personally in favor of bilingualism for your province?”

### **Government Support of French and Heritage Languages**

My next set of questions explored the participants' perceptions of the level of the government's involvement in promoting and protecting the status of French and heritage languages. As Figures 15 and 16 display, a substantial number of the participants felt that the federal government should play a smaller role in promoting and protecting heritage languages other than French (26% and 22%, respectively). There was also an understanding that the level of the government's involvement with French promotion and protection is more about the right, rather than a smaller or greater level, whereas for heritage languages there was a bigger discrepancy between wanting to see more involvement versus an adequate or a right level of involvement. Moreover, there seemed to be a contrast between perceptions of all three levels for French language and the ones for heritage languages. While attitudes toward French seemed to be proportionally distributed, attitudes toward heritage languages were not, and demonstrated stronger polarization on how much the government should be involved.



*Figure 15.* Participants' opinion on the Canadian government's role in promoting and protecting the status and use of the French language in Canadian society.<sup>37</sup>



*Figure 16.* Participants' opinion on the Canadian government's role in promoting and protecting the status and use of languages other than French and English in Canadian society.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> The corresponding question in the survey is, "Do you think the Government of Canada should play a smaller, greater role in promoting and protecting the status and use of the French language in Canadian society, or is its current level of involvement about right?"

## Government and Education

My next question measured the participants' attitudes toward the role of the government in educational initiatives (see Figure 17). There appeared to be a tendency of more support of the government providing for French-language education than heritage-languages education. Overall, these results correspond with the qualitative findings discussed in “Intersections of personal and official bilingualisms” and “Intersections of heritage languages and multiculturalism” in Chapter 5. The findings there demonstrate that the participants expressed more support for the government's role in French-language education than heritage-languages instruction, with the latter was perceived as a responsibility of ethnic groups and communities.

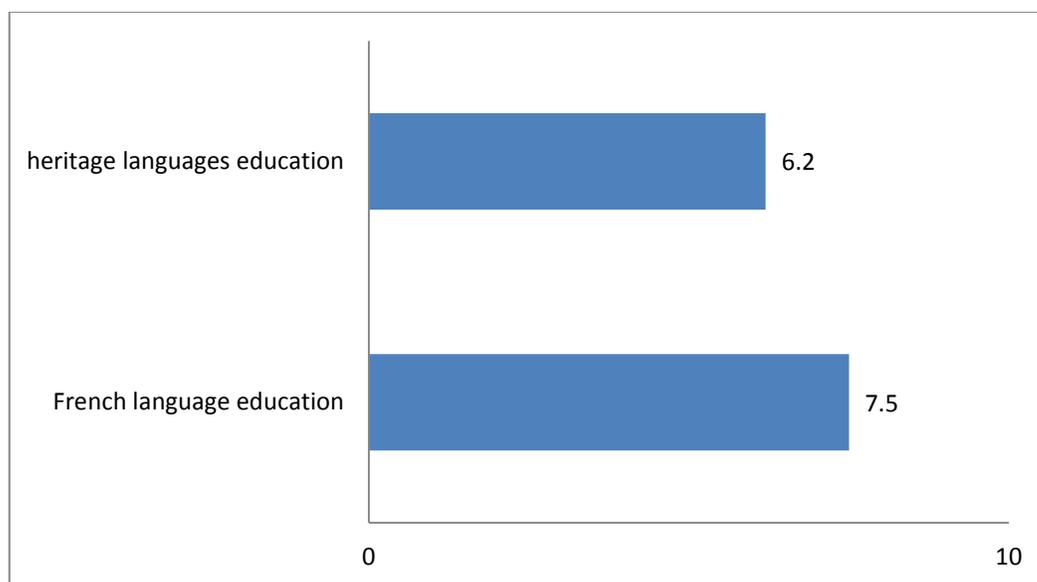


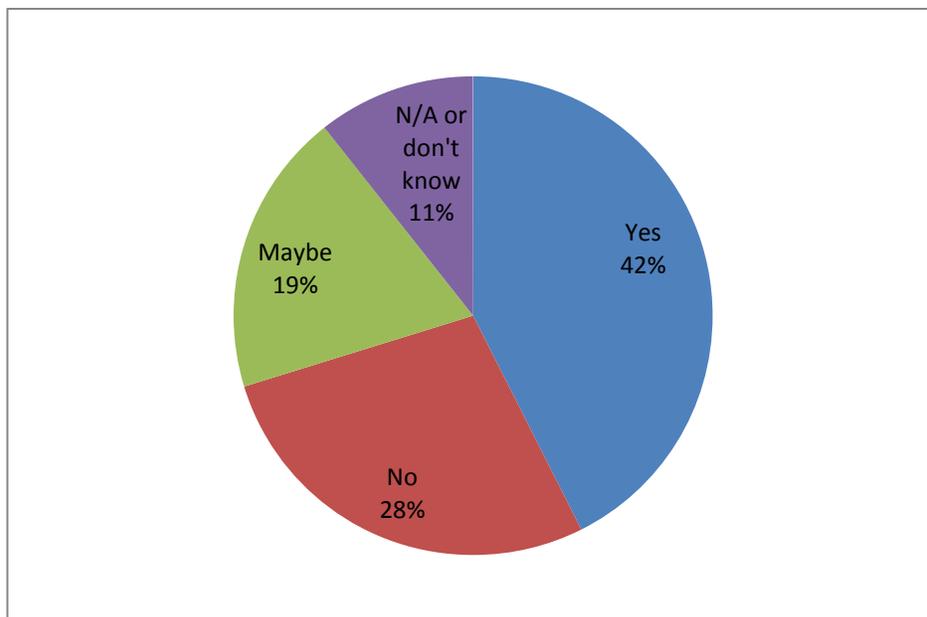
Figure 17. Participants' support of Government of Canada programs to provide for heritage- or French-language education.<sup>39</sup>

## Immigrants and Language Education

<sup>38</sup> The corresponding question in the survey is, “Do you think the Government of Canada should play a smaller, greater role in promoting and protecting the status and use of languages other than French and English in Canadian society, or is its current level of involvement about right?”

<sup>39</sup> The corresponding question in the survey is, “On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means *do not support at all* and 10 means *totally support*, how strongly do you support the use of Government of Canada programs to provide for . . . education?”

My next question measured the participants' level of personal interest with regard to FSL-learning opportunities. According to data provided (see Figure 18), the majority of the participants expressed interest in FSL language programs either by agreeing (42%) or by giving a possibility for exploring such an option (19%). A little less than one-third of the surveyed population answered no (28%).



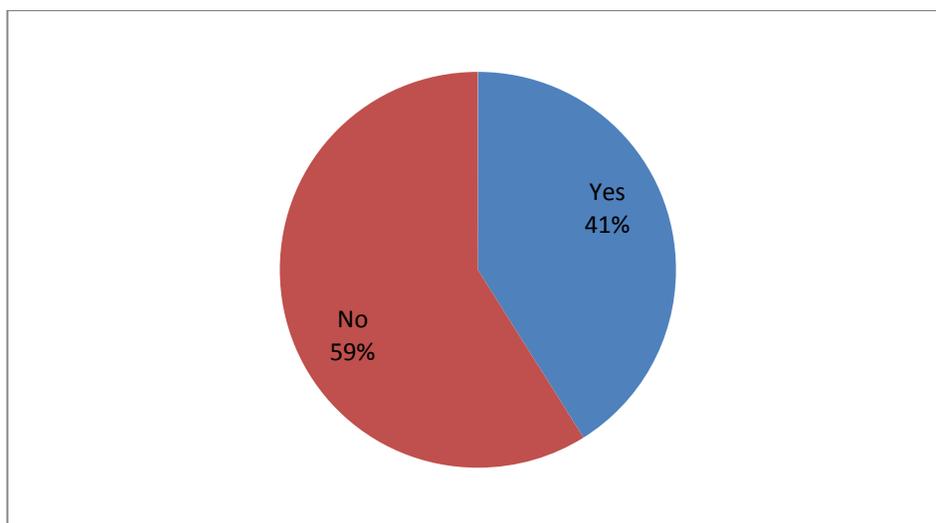
*Figure 18.* Participants interested in French-language courses/programs at the post-secondary level.<sup>40</sup>

### **Immigrant Children and Language Education**

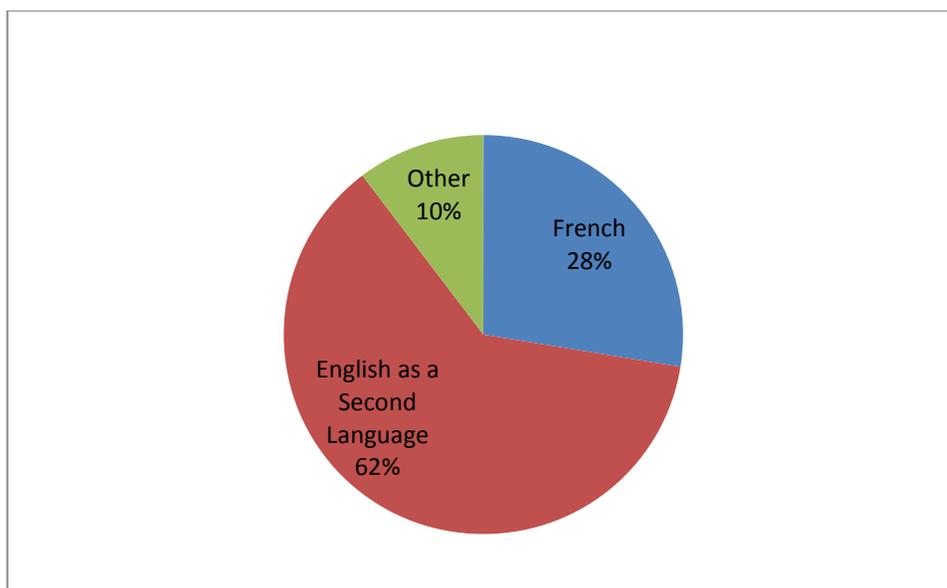
The participants also displayed a similar level of interest in exploring FSL-learning opportunities for their children. Forty-one percent (41%) of survey respondents have children under the age of 18 living at home (see Figure 19); sixty-two percent (62%) and 28% of these children are or will be taking either French and/or English at school respectively (see Figure 20). Twenty-eight percent (28%) appeared to be a significant

<sup>40</sup> The corresponding question in the survey is, “Would you be interested in French language courses /programs if such opportunities were available at the post-secondary level?”

percentage, especially considering the fact that FSL participation rates in Alberta are very low (Canadian Parents for French – Alberta branch, 2008).



*Figure 19.* Participants with children under the age of 18 years living at home.<sup>41</sup>



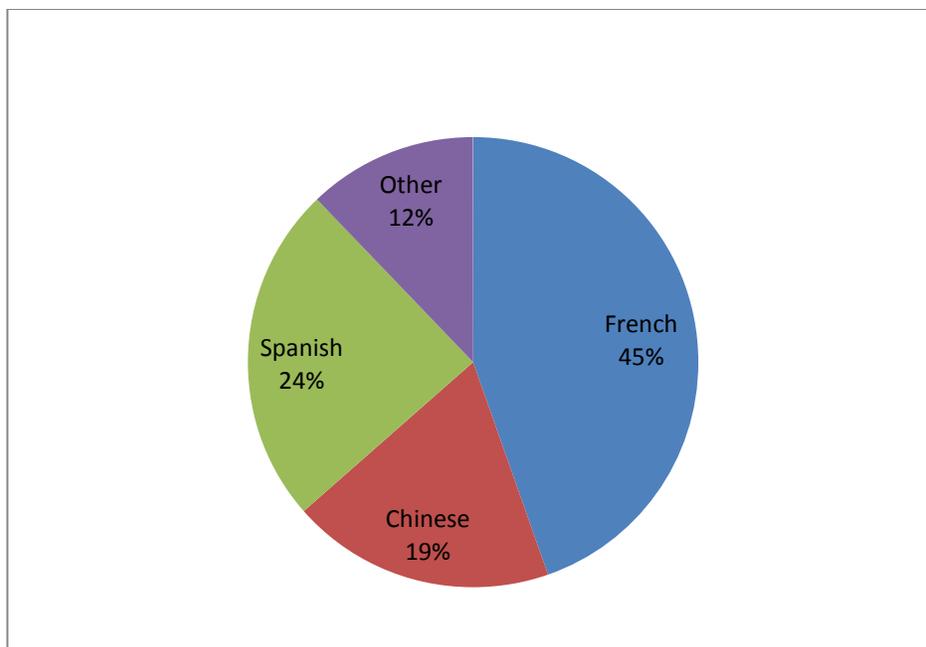
*Figure 20.* Languages that participants' children are or will be learning at school.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> The corresponding question in the survey is, "Do you have any children under the age of 18 years living at home?"

<sup>42</sup> The corresponding question in the survey is, "Which languages are they learning or will be learning at school? (select all that apply)."

While with the previous question, I attempted to measure present or prospective enrollment numbers, my next question focused on intention. So to the question “If your children or the children in your community could learn another language, what language other than English do you consider most important for them to learn?”, a little less than half of the respondents chose French as a second most important language (see Figure 21). It was necessary to separate Spanish and Chinese from the rest of the mentioned languages due to a larger number of the survey participants selecting them. However, it is important to note that most of these responses originate from speakers of those languages, while French seems to be picked across all the population.

Both the survey and the qualitative findings (see “Immigrant support of bilingualism at a macro level” in Chapter 5) display that, overall, the support of French is not only confined to French being an official language but also perceived as a valuable language to speak in Canada.



*Figure 21.* Participants' choice of the language other than English considered most important for their children or any children in their community to learn.<sup>43</sup>

### **Importance of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism**

My next set of questions examined the participants' attitudes toward different meanings attached to bilingualism and multiculturalism. In general, there was an overwhelming agreement about the importance of bilingualism and multiculturalism among participants. As Figure 22 displays, among four statements that the participants had to rate in terms of their agreement, statements "Multiculturalism is what defines Canada" and "Government of Canada Official Languages policy contributes to stronger national unity" received a higher level of support by the participants (9.4 and 8.7, respectively). Again, numbers in this survey seemed not only to echo the numbers from similar surveys, but also to demonstrate stronger immigrant support of the statements. For example, in comparison to 64% of Anglophones outside Québec who *somewhat* or *strongly agree* that

<sup>43</sup> The corresponding question in the survey is, "If your children or the children in your community could learn another language, what language other than English do you consider most important for them to learn?"

“Living in a country with two official languages is one of the things that really defines what it means to be Canadian” (CRIC Survey on Official Languages, December 2003, as cited in Parkin & Turcotte, 2004), the participants rated their agreement at 7, which correlates with 70%. The tendency to support bilingualism and multiculturalism equally is consistent with the previous attitudinal surveys’ analysis by Parkin and Turcotte (2004) who argued that an equally strong support of both policies has implications for advocates of bilingualism who should stress the benefits of speaking French to the public in the context of a multicultural Canada and a globalized economy.

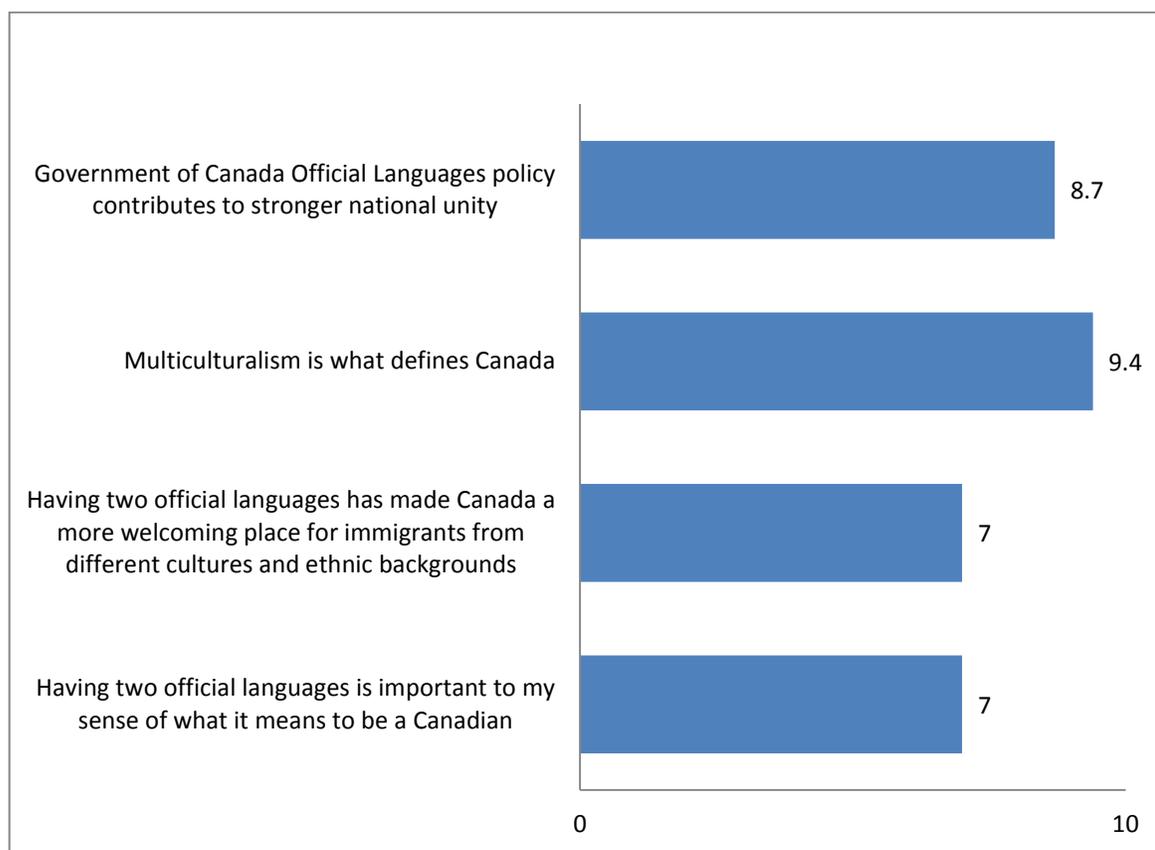


Figure 22. Participants’ agreement with statements on the chart.<sup>44</sup>

### Government and Francophones

<sup>44</sup> The corresponding question in the survey is, “On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means *totally disagree* and 10 means *totally agree*, please tell to what extent you agree or disagree with these statements?”

While the participants surveyed previously demonstrated stronger levels of support of the government's promotion of French language to heritage languages, the support level reversed when I framed questions around Francophones and immigrants as groups. So, to the question "To what extent do you agree that the Government of Canada should support the development of Francophone or immigrant communities?" (see Figure 23) and the question "To what extent you agree that the Government of Canada should provide funding for community-based organizations which serve the interests of Francophone or immigrant communities in your province?" (see Figure 24), the surveyed majority preferred immigrant over Francophone communities.

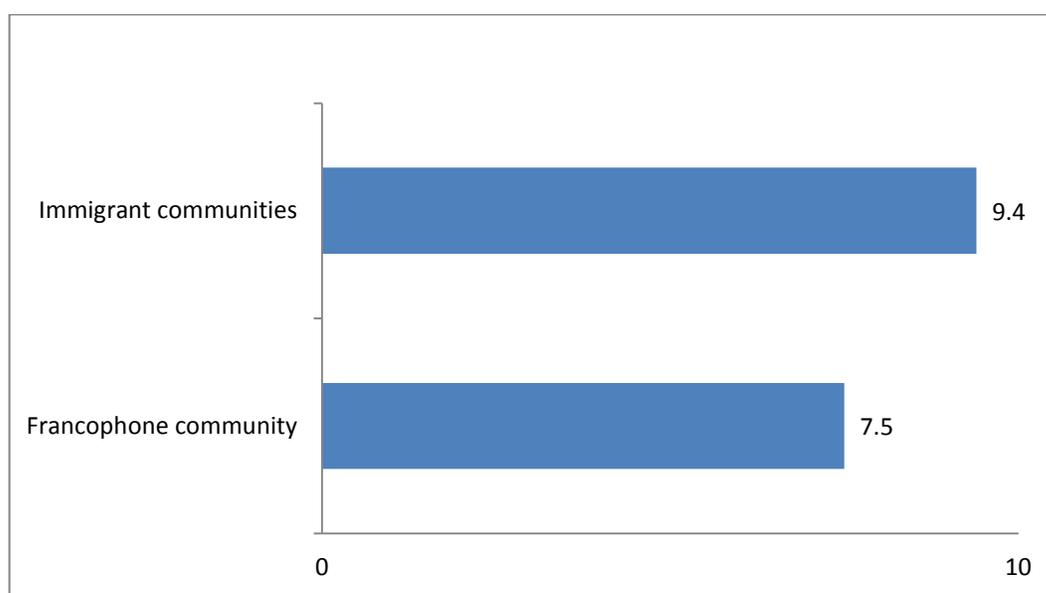


Figure 23. Participants' agreement with Government of Canada departments supporting the development of immigrant or Francophone communities in their province.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> The corresponding question in the survey is, "To what extent do you agree that Government of Canada departments SHOULD support the development of these communities in your province? Please use a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you *totally disagree* and 10 means you *totally agree*."

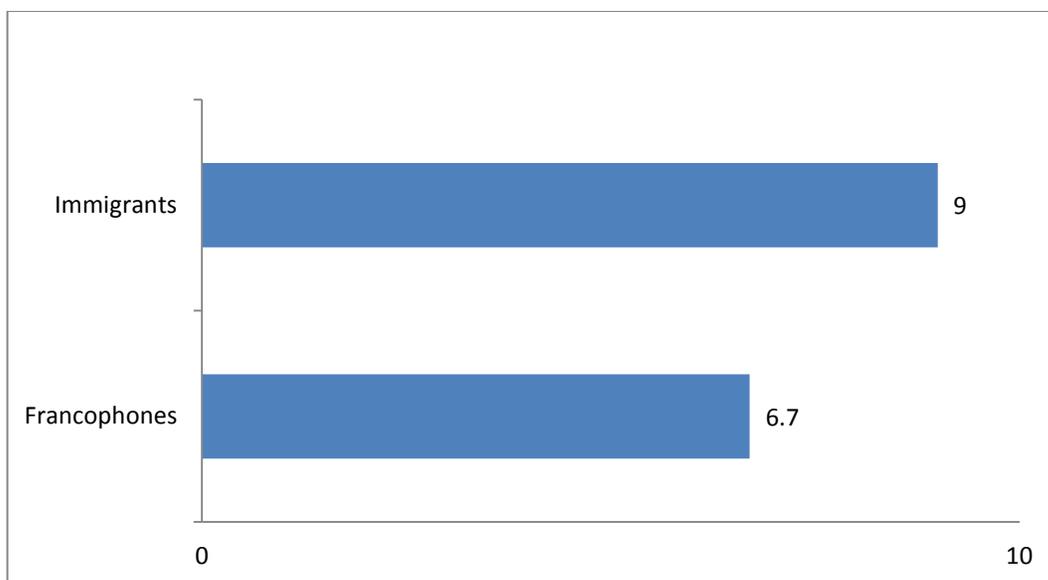


Figure 24. Participants' agreement with the Government of Canada providing funding for community-based organizations which serve the interests of immigrants and Francophones in their province.<sup>46</sup>

As I demonstrated in “Immigrant support of bilingualism at a macro level” in Chapter 5, French associated with linguistic minorities and thus being an ethnic notion is less supported than French associated with being the language of the country and being a civic notion.

### **Government Representation of Francophones and Immigrants**

Finally, I asked participants to rate the quality of representation of Francophone and immigrant groups at provincial and national levels. While participants tended to describe immigrant groups' representation as even at the national level (8.1 and 8.4, respectively), they recognized the difference in representation of Francophones between provincial and national levels, with the former being significantly lower than the latter (see Figure 25).

<sup>46</sup> The corresponding question in the survey is, “To what extent you agree that the Government of Canada should provide funding for community-based organizations which serve the interests of these groups in your province? Please use a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means *totally disagree* and 10 means *totally agree*.”

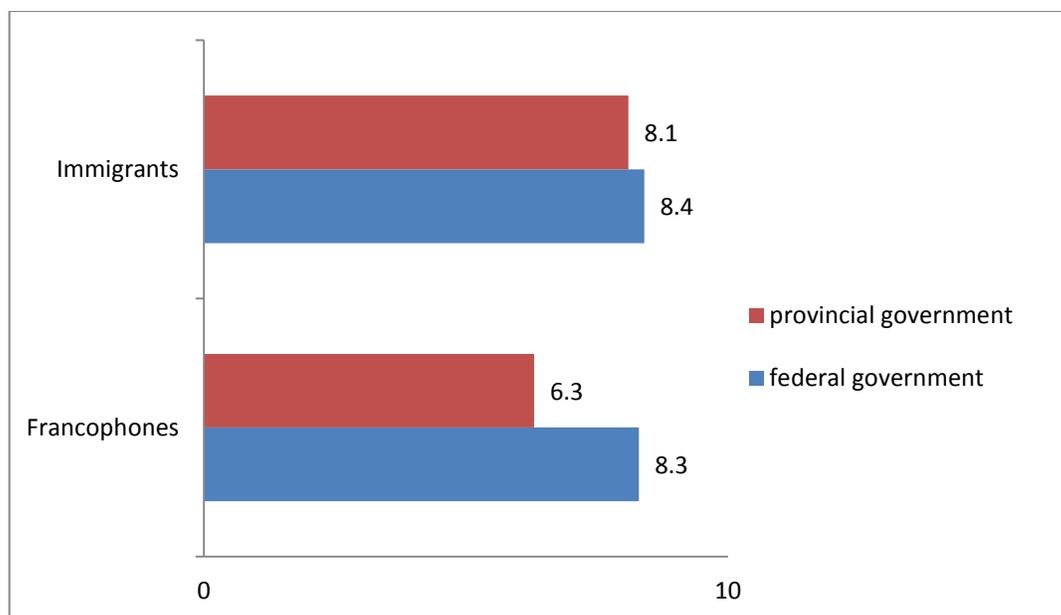


Figure 25. Participants' agreement with provincial and federal governments representing the interests of immigrants and Francophones.<sup>47</sup>

## Conclusion

While the sampling and participation rate did not allow me to draw statistically very accurate conclusions about immigrants' attitudes toward bilingualism and multiculturalism, nonetheless there were several very interesting revelations. First, the level of support of the government's bilingualism initiatives is quite high among immigrants. Second, immigrants tend to recognize the importance of the French language in Canada and in Alberta. In fact, there is a shared understanding of the importance of the government supporting French-language education. Such support can either be at a perceptual level or materialized in immigrant children's efforts to learn French at school. Third, French is deemed either as important as or more important than heritage languages, especially with regard to government involvement and the level of such involvement. However, the support tends to take an opposite direction when questions of languages are tied to Francophone and

<sup>47</sup> The corresponding question in the survey is, "Using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means *poor* and 10 means *excellent*, how well do you think this type of government represents interests of these groups?"

immigrant communities, with the survey respondents being less supportive of the government assisting Francophones.

I viewed these findings as exploratory but yet important in a sense that they help quantify the phenomenon as well as situate it in a perspective of previously conducted attitudinal studies (Floch & Frenette, 2005). However, the findings tell little about the complexity of the phenomenon from the actor's point of view (Blackmore & Lauder, 2005). To address these shortcomings, I approach the phenomenon qualitatively in the next chapter.

## Chapter 5: Qualitative Findings and Discussion

### Findings Overview

As I have elaborated, I approached the issues of bilingualism and multiculturalism from a critical sociolinguistic standpoint, which views them as ideologically and socially constructed and constructing notions (Heller, 2011b; May & Sleeter, 2010). I organize discourses of immigrants within three principal questions:

**1. “Where are you in the Canadian society?” (Immigrants discourses of identity and citizenship)**

This question allowed me to place immigrants as they view themselves in the society and how they perceive themselves as being placed. I explore the issues of identity negotiation, language, and culture socialization as complex interrelated phenomena, often subject to the dynamics of both implicit and explicit power relations between them as individuals, members of their own groups, as well as Francophones and Anglophones (Heller, 2007b). I examine at depth the intricacies and challenges of individual and collective identities in their locality and centrality to the nation–state. Also, I stipulate that immigrants identify themselves within very specific and distinct tendencies, one of which revolves around the social and legal aspects of one’s identity.

**2. “Where is bilingualism in this society?” (Immigrants’ discourses on the role of bilingualism in Canada)**

This question focuses on immigrants’ perceptions of Canada as a bilingual/multicultural country and, ultimately, underlying assumptions behind the discourses, especially those related to understanding of individual and collective rights in language and culture matters within the framework of Canadian nationhood. In this

chapter, I first attempt to outline three possible approaches to defining notions of bilingualism and multiculturalism according to immigrants. Descriptive take will view language as a social practice (Heller, 2007a); prescriptive as a law, and last, as a complex sociopolitical phenomenon (May, 2012). Second, I posit these approaches as dialectical and present an analytical model of evolution of approaches with regard to languages and cultures. I analyze perceptions, experiences, and practices longitudinally, i.e., in pre- and post-arrival terms.

**3. “Where are you in the discourses on bilingualism/multiculturalism?”  
(Immigrants’ perceptions of their role in discourses of bilingualism and multiculturalism)**

This set of questions queries the relationship between perceptions, experiences, and practices of bilingualism and, consequently, multiculturalism on a micro, or individual level, and a macro, or governmental level. By juxtaposing social practices at a micro level and law practices at a macro level, I propose a conceptual framework that I developed of immigrants’ support of bilingualism and multiculturalism individually and nationally. The framework allows me to elaborate further on reasons immigrants support or disapprove bilingualism policies. Last, I examine immigrants’ views on Canada as a country and its fundamental characteristics as they see it.

**Where Do Immigrants See Themselves in a Society? (Perceptions of Identity and Citizenship)**

**Why Canada?** The participant population consists of three major immigrant groups: skilled workers,<sup>48</sup> refugees,<sup>49</sup> and sponsored family members.<sup>50</sup> The question

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<sup>48</sup> The Federal Skilled Worker (FSW) Program is the Government of Canada’s flagship program for selecting foreign skilled workers. Selection is based on a points system, which assesses education, age, work

“Why did you decide to come to Canada?” is interpreted by immigrants on two levels. The first level deals with the legal aspects of their relocation to Canada that correlates with their immigration status. For sponsored family members, it is the possibility to reunite with their family members in Canada, for refugees, to escape life-endangering situations in their countries of origin, and for skilled workers, to find employment-related opportunities.

This is how Estella,<sup>51</sup> who came to Canada as a skilled worker from Mexico, described her reasons for coming to Canada:

It was a decision with my husband because for now the conditions, the economic situation in Mexico are not really good, so that’s why we decided to come here—to get a better life for us. I think here the life is better economically and professionally, and educationally you have a lot of universities better than in Mexico.<sup>52</sup>

As this is the case with the majority of skilled workers with high educational qualifications, Canada is not the only option of relocation. The choices are most often between the USA to a larger extent and, to a lesser extent, Australia. According to some immigrants, the USA poses itself as a less attractive country for immigration primarily for being perceived as less supportive of immigrants legally and socially, as Estella noted:

I think Canada is a better country. I think the immigrant policy here is better than in the United States because Canada supports immigrants, and it is different from the

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experience, official language proficiency, pre-arranged employment in Canada and adaptability. Under the Economic Class in 2011 (CIC, 2012a), 156,121 immigrants were admitted.

<sup>49</sup> Refugees fall under Protected Persons category admitted by Canada based on international obligation and humanitarian tradition. In 2011, 12,946 refugees resettled in Canada. In addition, in 2011, a total of 8,218 people were admitted into Canada based on humanitarian and compassionate grounds or for public policy reasons. This category includes those who do not fall under any of the categories (CIC, 2012a).

<sup>50</sup> Sponsored family members refers to Family Class immigrants, who are sponsored by Canadian citizens to become permanent residents. In 2011, 56,446 permanent residents in the Family Class were admitted to Canada (CIC, 2012a).

<sup>51</sup> For confidentiality reasons, the participants’ names are changed.

<sup>52</sup> Participant quotes have been included here verbatim as much as possible.

US. In the US, you apply and you go to the country; they give you the resident card, and you arrive in the country and do whatever. The government doesn't support like here. For example, when we arrived here, we have these classes [LINC classes]; there are a lot of agencies to help you to find a job; there is a Women's Association [Calgary Immigrant Women's Association]; you can go to many places.

Carlos, an experienced and well-established architect from Philippines, despite having family in the USA, does not even consider the United States for immigration and instead comes to Canada:

I have relatives in the USA, but I didn't want to go there. I don't know why. . . . I was the only one left in the Philippines; others were in US. . . . Some of our friends have jobs here especially in the health system, and we also chose Calgary because my wife did some research on [the] Internet that the tax system here in Calgary is good; we are very interested in the health system here . . . And, of course, the education of our child.

The discourse that Canada is a very immigrant-friendly country whereas the United States is not was very vividly articulated by those who immigrated as skilled workers. Having excellent education credentials and high socioeconomic status, the participants who came as skilled workers were very clear about their resettlement decisions. Even before arriving to a new place, they are very clear about why they would like to move to Canada and not somewhere else. The perception of Canada as an immigrant-friendly country offering high standards of universal health and education as the participant quotes demonstrated, and social security and the government's assistance with integration are crucial in making those decisions. Such perceptions are also indicative of immigrants'

understanding the role of the government and the level of responsibility it should take with regard to individuals and groups and rights associated with them. As I argue later (see section “Establishing Approaches to Bilingualism” in Chapter 5), these perceptions and systems of value regarding societal structure will also affect immigrants’ perceptions on bilingualism and multiculturalism.

If for skilled workers, the characteristics of a modern liberal society and benefits associated with it are the main reasons to immigrate, for refugees, the case is about protecting freedoms and liberties of individuals. Their choice to settle down in Canada is often involuntary and caused by painful life experiences in their previous countries. For example, an Eritrean refugee, Bekele, who is in his twenties and who works currently as a janitor, shares his reasons to come to Canada as a refugee:

I wanted to change my life to a decent life, because here there are many opportunities and back home there is no freedom; the government pushes you to be soldier. I didn’t want to be a soldier, because if I go there, I can’t help my parents. So I decided to come here.

For many refugees in my study, it was the protection of their basic individual freedoms and rights by the government that mattered most. While both skilled workers and refugees do appreciate social and economic benefits of living in Canada, the discourse of the former group is concerned about the quality of social benefits; the discourse of the latter group prioritizes the government’s provision of social benefits alongside equal treatment of everybody. Again, as I maintain in the rest of the dissertation, in many cases, pre-arrival experiences of refugees and their sets of beliefs regarding rights, both collective

and individual, determine their attitudes towards official bilingualism and multiculturalism policies.

Another very distinct group of immigrant participants in this study were sponsored family members. In general, the majority of them were women invited to Canada by their husbands, primarily of the same ethnic background, or by Canadian-born partners. Apart from the reasons of reuniting with their partners, these participants reflected on their reasons to come by discussing the themes of rights and responsibilities within traditionally conservative and liberal societies. For example, Ambika, a teacher from India, emphasized the social pressure women can experience:

My grandfather was a navigator, so he visited all over the world. He was always talking about people in Canada that they are very nice. He always preferred me to go to Canada. . . . In my country[India], the way of thinking is different. Because here I think everything is open; you can do what you want. In my country, there are some pressures from the society. Particularly, I'm thinking about the marriage. In marriage, people pay money to a bride; it's like a dowry system. I didn't like it; that's why I came here, and I prefer for my future generations to stay here.

Ambika's quote is interesting at several levels. First of all, it provides her understanding as an immigrant on what the fundamental characteristics of Canada as a country and society are ("everything is open, you can do what you want"), and second, it vocalizes Ambika's preferences over her country of origin ("I prefer for my future generations to stay here"). I refer to Ambika later, as the insights she is providing might be helpful in understanding what drives perceptions of immigrants with regard to official and

personal bilingualism and how it is situated within the multicultural framework of Canadian society.

To summarize, immigrants in this study chose to come to Canada for various reasons. In many cases, there seemed to be a correlation between the type of immigration class they belong to and what brought them to this country. In this sense, it echoes Bourdieu's (1977) understanding of individuals' habitus, or perceptions in the case of this study, as situated alongside particular groups or classes. This idea is important for understanding how immigrants position themselves alongside discourses of bilingualism and multiculturalism and how their positions become informed by their experiences both as individuals and members of a group.

Next, I examine how immigrants perceive themselves as a part of the Canadian society, how they locate themselves alongside local and national discourses on identity, and how they see themselves as being located within these discourses.

**Becoming Canadian and feeling accepted.** Identity for immigrants appears to pose itself as a socially constructed phenomenon in which various determining factors come into play (Norton & Toohey, 2011). To my questions "Do you feel Canadian?", "Are you Canadian?", and "Do you feel accepted?", the participants brought a range of in-depth complex interpretations on what makes them feel a particular way and how a multitude of micro and macro connections to local and national spaces of belonging are developed. While I analyzed immigrants' perceptions of their local and national identities, several patterns appeared to emerge. In general, immigrants approach questions of identity within Canadian contexts as situated within what gets to define their legitimacy in Canada, or in Giddens's (1986) or Bourdieu's terms (as cited in Fowler, 2000) alongside the issue of

agency and structure. So, principally, the question “Who are you?” is viewed in terms of the level of immigrants’ autonomy in deciding who they are. This way, the question “Who are you?” becomes essentially “Who defines who you are, and to what extent are you free to make your own choices with regard to this?”

***Law and society: Notions of identity and citizenship.*** Immigrants bring a multitude of discourses with regard to the question of identity in the Canadian society. Many of those discourses explore the concept of identity as intersected with the notions of citizenship, where citizenship is defined in relation to the rule of law<sup>53</sup> “as an ‘opportunity’ concept: a status a person or group has in virtue of being recognized as the subject of a normative order and the bearer of rights and duties [and with regard to participation in the society, or] ‘exercise’ concept: a practice or activity that citizens engage in within or over a normative order” (Tully, 2005, p. 2). Thus, for the participants, the matter of identity and citizenship becomes a complex process of negotiation and balancing between what defines them as an individual in Canada.

First, as many immigrants believe, it is the law that authorizes their right for having a Canadian identity. As a result, intentionally ambiguous questions regarding Canadian identity look for answers related to the notion of citizenship and legal definitions of identity. For example, Surindeep, a young immigrant lady from India, reflected on the question “What makes somebody a Canadian?” and whether she considered herself as such: “First, I should have all the officials, like the citizenship. If I have it, I can call myself

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<sup>53</sup> Rule of law: In Canada, “the rule of law” is mentioned in the preamble to the Constitution Act, 1982: “Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law”. The rule of law implies: 1) the government must follow the law it makes; 2) no one is exempt or above the law; 3) rights emerge from particular court cases” (Dicey, 1885, p.175). It is the second meaning that I use in this study. This way, normatization and legislatization of matters as an outcome becomes more important than the processes that lead to it (May, 2012).

Canadian but now I don't have it. . . . In 10 years, I think, I will be Canadian, maybe Punjabi Canadian." As it is the case with many immigrants, it is the legislated and institutionalized definition of being Canadian that matters for identification (Tully, 2005). For Surindeep, it is obtaining a Canadian passport that allows her to legitimize her presence in Canada. Such legitimization often stands above social legitimization. As Surindeep further goes on to explain, "I don't care if I will be accepted or not; I have my officials; I am Canadian and that is all. I don't care what others might be thinking about me."

Hatim, a refugee from Ethiopia, believes in the "rule of law" as well with regard to the notion of being Canadian. When I asked, "Can you keep your culture and at the same time be Canadian?" Hatim answered, "Yes. You can keep your culture and be Canadian. You can live in the Canadian society; you keep your culture. This is the rule."

If for Hatim and Surindeep and, in fact, for quite a few of the participants, identities are constructed through law; for other participants, it is the society that has the power and control over defining and deciding who they are. As much as law is important for them, it is still secondary with regard to the role of the society in legitimizing their identity (Omoniyi & White, 2006). Society, however, is not a homogenous entity for immigrants and is frequently seen as divided between Canada-born and new Canadians (Heller, 2008).

For some, it is the Canadians who control the validation of immigrants' identity in Canada. Their identity as an immigrant is construed by native Canadians, as it is the case for Zhao, a professional immigrant from China. It is impossible to identify herself as a Canadian now or in the future, since the right to determine who she is is concealed in this very simple yet powerful question "Where are you from?", which marginalizes her quest for establishing a sense of belonging: "People ask me if I am Chinese, that is why I am not

Canadian.” This way, Zhao’s answer reflects the beliefs regarding who is legitimized to define her and on what criteria. Further in her interview, Zhao related her inability to find a place in Canada to not having the appropriate language skills, or in Bourdieu’s terms linguistic capital, a set of linguistic skills that are valuable for a specific market (Eick, 1999). Bourdieu (1999) also talked at length about the notion of symbolic violence that is exercised covertly and often unconsciously by dominant groups, whose internal beliefs become a part of ideologies taken for granted. Zhao’s excerpt illustrates the tools or language discourses (the question, “Where are you from?”) that enable this sort of symbolic domination. It also illustrates the role of native speakers in legitimizing the norms of the language (Roy & Galiev, 2011).

In fact, many immigrants in this study said that it is the language that should get them closer to “feeling Canadian.” Bekele, for instance, is strongly convinced that if he speaks English fluently and engages with the English-speaking community, it will help him to become a Canadian. Of course, such a position, should it be approached functionally, on the surface, seems legitimate—language shall and will be viewed as an access to resources and benefits associated with the dominant culture; however, its legitimacy comes under question when trying to determine how much language and which language is enough (Bourdieu, 1991; Heller, 1999a). Such ideological discrepancy can be observed in immigrants’ discourses, especially those who have already obtained intermediate language skills and now are challenged to move beyond that.

For example, Farah, a professional immigrant from Iran who arrived in Canada as an international graduate student, confesses that “we speak different languages. I speak English, but we don’t speak the same language; we have different things in mind and

different concerns.” Farah’s answer is in contrast to Bekele’s statement about the importance of language in integration. While Bekele, being a very recent newcomer who just started learning English, is convinced that it is the language barrier that he needs to overcome in order to be a validated and contributing member of the society, Farah, having spent over 5 years in this country, doubts that language alone will help her. Although she is fluent at the level of conducting PhD research in English, she attempts to unveil the assumptions underlying the notion of language as the key to success (Sharkey & Layzer, 2000). She speaks English, but her English is not legitimate unless it is defined and recognized by those who have the power to define it (Blommaert, 1999).

In fact, the question of “Where are you from?” is a very strong theme that emerges across immigrants’ voices.<sup>54</sup> During one of the focus-group interviews, the participants expressed opinions regarding the legitimacy of this question and the definition of “immigrant,” which can have two meanings for them—legal and social. While they agree with the legal implications of identifying someone as an immigrant, it is usually the social connotations that cause significant controversy. I saw this in one of the focus-group discussions:

I<sup>55</sup>: Do you think that Canada is accepting you and welcoming you as a part of its society?

Abdi: The government of Canada [everybody nods] . . . you don’t want to be called immigrant; immigrant has a negative meaning. . . . In governmental offices it is a good question, but if people use it as insult, I don’t like it [referring to his experience at a night club when he was asked to go home].

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<sup>54</sup> I use voice here as a capacity of a social being to make oneself understood by others in line with one’s intentions, goals, and desires within a range of social arenas (Hymes, 1996).

<sup>55</sup> “I” refers to interviewer.

Rania: When they talk to us saying “You are immigrants,” it is negative.

Surindeep: It means they don’t accept us. . . . If I am in the bus, they ask me, it shouldn’t matter to them. I don’t like it. Why do they want to know? I don’t know you, you don’t know me.

One participant concluded the discussion by emphasizing the importance of unity and cohesion for Canadian society:

Andrew: It is not necessary to know where people are from. For example, if Canadians talk to each other, do they ask which province they are from? We are all part of this culture; we work together, study together, everything is equal and peaceful. Don’t trouble troubles!

Andrew’s statement is also illustrative of immigrants’ aspirations over willingness to embrace inclusiveness in defining what this society is and should be. However, as the previous example demonstrates, inclusiveness is and should be two-way. Otherwise, according to the study participants, communication where the dominant group is entitled to question and immigrants are expected only to respond will often carry negative connotation for immigrants. In this case, issues of discrimination are often brought into discussion.

A refugee from Ethiopia, Hatim, narrated his friend’s story that exemplifies how discourses on identity are dominated and contrasted and, as a result, how discrimination becomes a prominent characteristic of the conflict in the society where identities are often seen to be fixed and predetermined (Heller, 2002).

H: When I was working, I had a friend; he’s from the same country as me. I know one lady, she says that she is native. She’s not native, but her grandfather is native. She asked my friend, “Are you Canadian?” He said, “Yes. When I get my

citizenship I'm Canadian". She said to him, "You're still not Canadian."

[Laughing].

I: Really? Why?

I: I don't know. She said, "You're still African, not the Canadian. So he said to her, "If my son is born here, he's not Canadian?" She said, "He is still African, not Canadian."

Although Hatim believes that it is individuals who would try to determine on individuals' behalf who they are, it is the legal definition of citizenship that matters. He agrees with his friend's right to own the definition of being Canadian and puts law above people's definition. Even though Hatim believes that discrimination does exist as he later says, "They think Canada is for themselves," he also recognizes "the rule of law" saying, "I think government treats everybody the same. But people have problems." Overall, the right of identification for many immigrants is restricted and determined by external forces who can either validate or reject immigrants' efforts for identification. There is also an evidence of conceptualization of identity as being located at the intersection of the normative and legitimate definitions of citizenship (Tully, 2005).

***Immigrants and community groups.*** While for some immigrants, the notions of citizenship and identity are determined through the prism of "others,"<sup>56</sup> for some, however, as I will show, these are restrictions within immigrant communities, which would contest the legitimacy of immigrants' claims of being or becoming a Canadian and contrast with what is accepted and recognized as valid within their own groups. That is why immigrants often find themselves having to adjust and communicate their identities depending on the contexts they are in.

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<sup>56</sup> Others here refers to Canada's two founding nations (Haque, 2012).

For example, Esme who has arrived in Canada as a refugee with her parents from Sudan, and who currently is a LINC 5 student, questioned the identities of her relatives raised in Canada. On the one hand, she wants to believe they are Sudanese, as their parents are from Sudan, so “They have to feel Sudanese.” On the other hand, she confessed that “If you ask them any question about Sudan, they don’t know but you ask them about here, they will answer.” Furthermore, she went on to say that “they like Canada more because they didn’t live in Sudan and they don’t know it.” The essence of this problem for Esme is that her relatives shift their identities depending on contexts they are in. She explained that at local Sudanese parties, her relatives introduce themselves as Sudanese, but when they travel, they are proudly Canadian. Interestingly enough, such duality of identities for Esme, despite her efforts to understand the complexity of her relatives’ identities, is confined to being Sudanese, as she concluded by saying that at the end of the day “they are Sudanese to me.” In other words, the hybridity of identities (Smith, 2008) of Esme’s relatives as a result of being placed between local and global—Canadian and Sudanese contexts—is not considered legitimate by Esme.

In fact, identities for many immigrants are constructed and determined not only within larger contexts but also with micro-level and culturally defined spaces. Often, it is immigrants who believe in their right to ascribe identities to the members of the same group. This is also articulated by Mina, an immigrant from Iran, who expressed her frustration over how immigrants, but not Canadians, feel that they have the right to label and categorize individuals within their own groups. For her, such categorization is determined by the “Where are you from?” question:

The first question they have for me is where you're from. . . . I see that first-generation of immigrants, they are less welcoming to us. Even immigrants that carry a heavier accent than me, they kind of look at me and think that I'm new.

Mina talked about her one uncomfortable encounter with a “nosey” taxi driver, who, seeing her with Canadian friends, started bombarding her with the “Where are you from?” question. Her memories bring back that experience:

He kind of felt why I am with them; I should be driving that cab or should be somewhere else. The question would never stop there, what are you doing, and the worst thing was that I would have to answer to that list of questions if I'm here alone, including how come my culture lets me alone as a woman here.

Mina questioned the very validity of the question. She tried to understand why people ask questions they ask. She suggested that “instead of asking the right question how I can survive with her, you might start asking questions how people live their lives or survive.” People like this taxi driver while appearing to be empowered to question, in fact, according to Mina, are “observers of the society more than living in it.”

***Places and contexts.*** Speaking about the complexity of external and internal factors in shaping immigrants' perceptions regarding their sense of belonging, the participants often emphasized the locality and contextuality of their identity negotiation. Some seemed to have developed strong and meaningful affiliations at a local level of a community, neighbourhood, or a city, yet have troubles in constructing connections with national identities. I believe this happens due to the fact that socialization of immigrants is perceived to be occurring mostly at a local level and rarely at the national level. For some immigrants, it is much easier to identify with Calgary than with Canada as a whole.

For example, Hasan, an oil and gas engineer and a graduate student, despite having lived in Canada for 7 years raised his concerns over his sense of belonging:

After 7 years, I feel I have a homie feeling to Calgary as well, but I don't feel I belong to Canada. For example, in Olympics they say, "we, Canadians, are proud to be this and that." . . . It wouldn't even trigger something. But then, for example, on the radio, there is a show and it says, Calgarians are like that, sometimes you say, "I'm Calgarian in some ways, or I care what is going on in Calgary, or what the policy is in Calgary."

Hasan further explained what triggered him to develop this sense of affiliation on the local level:

The feelings that I told you about Calgary, have become a little bit stronger since I started listening to radio regularly, so there are these CBC shows in the morning or afternoon that I listen to when I go to work. So when they talk about the news, they interview different people on different subjects that happen in the city. I feel more involved without being really involved. For example, before I felt that I don't care if there is a protest in front of the city hall, but now I'm thinking, yes, I think I agree with that or disagree with that. Before I said, "Who cares?" But now I am probably thinking more consciously.

Just as for Hasan, who explores how meaningful social experiences and practices determine identity formation, Yin, an immigrant professional from China, also emphasized the fluidity and contextuality of one's Canadian identity. He posed that his and his son's identities are first Chinese and then Canadian but they might change within time. He questioned himself about why he thinks this:

My son says, he is Chinese, but maybe some years later . . . [Pause] . . . It is very interesting. Why do we always think we are Chinese? Maybe it is because we have many relatives, my parents, brothers. But years later if you don't have close relatives you may say, I am Canadian.

***The autonomy of an individual.*** As I have examined so far, there are three key factors involved in perceptions of identity formation and negotiation. The first accentuates the legal dimensions as to what constitutes a Canadian identity, which in turn is closely associated with the notion of citizenship (Tully, 2005). Such an approach underscores the rule of law over hidden rules of society. In May's (2008) terms, it is an example of when the legitimized (i.e., legislated) takes over the institutionalized (i.e., normalized in society). The second factor to viewing discourses on local and national identity prioritizes the social over legal. While still accepting the power of the legal, it goes deeper and looks at the social dimensions of acceptance and rejection. Such discourse privileges either native Canadians as exercising power in determining what is legitimate and what is not, or the immigrants themselves making this determination (Kymlicka, 1995b).<sup>57</sup> And finally, the local contexts and people determine who immigrants are and will be.

While those involved in these discourses argue and validate the power of external elements in forming discourses on who a person is, there are also some patterns in immigrants' narrations that point at the autonomy and potential of an individual to act and decide contextually. This is how John, a cheerful outspoken church leader, who immigrated from Nigeria, empathetically described his liberation from internal predispositions that restrict his thinking or habitus in Bourdieu's (1977) terms:

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<sup>57</sup> Kymlicka (1995b) referred to them as internal restrictions which are rules or norms that imposed by the group upon intra-group relations.

I: So, do you believe that you are a part of the Canadian society?

J: Oh yes, I do [with emphasis]. And very, very well. Because, you see, some people just believe, although the way they think is quite different, you see, sometimes you think with your time and location. And your location will determine your height. And sometimes your height will determine your destination. What I'm just trying to say, anywhere you find yourself peaceful with your family, with your education, with your home—that's your home!

I: So you feel at home here?

J: Oh, come on!

John's reflections illustrate the complexity of the problem of who decides who a person is. By overarching discourses of an individual's autonomy and his or her dependence on contexts, John makes a powerful statement over what is stronger. First of all, for him people do "just believe" or by following Heller (2007b), possess and practice ideologies that are historically and contextually determined. John believes that historicity, contextuality, and autonomy are often situated as opposite and yet mutually related to one another. Such relationships are characterized by power struggles over who gets to dominate. For some individuals, according to John, it is the location (both present and past, as he talks about predispositions people might maintain), and the environment that will shape and orient their beliefs and ideologies. However, eventually it is the autonomy of an individual—the power of one—that could and should matter the most.

To summarize this chapter, the question of who a person is in this society was perceived by the participants of this study as a complex multilayered phenomenon. I have demonstrated that the discourses of immigrants often revolve around who gets to answer

this question. For some, it is the power of the society that determines the orientation of this question. As I have elaborated, the power of society might reveal itself in internal restrictions where the society of immigrants is perceived and believed to have the last say, or external limitations, where the Canadian society portrays itself as the dominant group in projecting its members' ideologies onto individuals. In both cases, at times, the individual discourses of immigrants on who they are contested through simple, yet very powerful linguistic means—the question “Where are you from?” being one of them.

Another very prominent theme that I found emerging throughout the narrations of the participants is the legal aspects of identity such as citizenship. The participants seemed to attribute various levels of authority to the notion of law in negotiating one's identity. For some, it is the only significant factor; for others it is the least important one, and for some, as I have shown through the example of John, it is not a question of what is important, but the individual being important.

As I show in the next chapter, the answer to the question of “Who are you?” will be important in finding an answer to the next two inquiries described as “Where is bilingualism in this country?” and “Where am I in bilingualism?” I further argue it is exactly the answer to “Who are you?” that will predetermine immigrants' answers on perceptions of bilingualism and multiculturalism in Canada.

### **Establishing Approaches to Bilingualism**

Here I attempt to define approaches immigrants appear to adopt while discussing issues of bilingualism and multiculturalism. First, I further elaborate on the legal and social dimensions of bilingualism and multiculturalism discourses in Canada. I argue that for immigrants the officiality of the phenomenon (i.e., bilingualism being a law) places itself in

a conflictual framework with social dimensions of the phenomenon (i.e., bilingualism being a social practice). In this framework, both law and society as agents<sup>58</sup> will affect how meanings of bilingualism and multiculturalism are negotiated by immigrants. The nature of the law and society relationship will be seen in immigrants' eyes either as harmonious (where laws will be equated with social practices and dominant ideologies will be taken for granted and uncontested), or as antagonistic (where laws will be juxtaposed against social practices and ideologies will be questioned and challenged). And finally, I propose an analytical framework that would bring these concepts together and which could be used heuristically to explore connections between immigrants' perceptions, experiences, and practices of bilingualism as a law, and bilingualism as a social practice.

**Supremacy of law.** It appears that immigrants constantly focus attention on the discourses of law. I have demonstrated it by arguing that for immigrants in this study, their membership in society is often perceived through legal and social dimensions. For many of them, it is the rule of law that is seen as the fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is situated above all, including social practices. The rule of law, or the supremacy of law, presupposes the absence of authority of anyone to establish his or her own rules and instead be governed by the established law that cannot be changed easily (Dicey, 1885). In the centre of this approach is an essentialist thought that views the legal field, including norms, policies, regulations, institutions, and manifestations of law as neutral common goods (Bourdieu, 1987).

The discourse on the Canadian law versus laws in other countries was a common theme among the participants. Abdi, a young refugee from Sudan, on the nature of law in Canada, said:

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<sup>58</sup> For the discussion on agency, please see Chapter 2, "Theoretical Framework."

I like the rule in Canada. The rule is rule. It doesn't say there is a special rule for Canadian people or immigrants, or black or white. The rule is a rule; that's what I really like. I was born in Sudan; sometimes you could see that there was a rule but they don't follow it.

Ogbai, an elderly refugee from Ethiopia said:

In Ethiopia they say, "This land belongs to us, you go out". That is the backwardness of that country. Canada is a civilized nation, you know. Their external and internal policies are good for the country, for the people who live here, including immigrants. I observed it here. That's why this country is a peaceful and democratic country as compared with the rest of the world.

For both Abdi and Ogbai, it is ultimately the rule of law that defines this society. The law according to them is neutral and fair and serves to organize the life of otherwise fragmented parts of the society. The rule in Canada is taken for granted here, unchallenged and unquestioned. Furthermore, for them, as well as for many other participants of the study as I will demonstrate, the field of law is equated with the government, which is as perceived as non-partial and non-ideological, whereas society, which is revealed through its social practices, is diverse and potentially conflictual (Terdiman, 1987). As a result, it is the essentialist, normalized forms of law and the government that are perceived as standing above all and aiming at serving the good of the country (Madsen & Hammerslev, 2006).

**Law and society as agencies: Micro and macro dimensions.** So, it is the interplay between social and legal that characterizes and guides immigrants' narrations on how they place themselves in the society and how the society is defined. Such interplay also appears to be time and context specific and evolutionary in its nature. Quite often,

immigrants' notions are initially constructed with the premise of law and later challenged through social practices and their dialectical opposition to a previously unassumed position of law. So, essentially, the question then turns into understanding how immigrants perceive their role, or agency, while interacting with legal and social manifestations of bilingualism and multiculturalism, or official bilingualism and multiculturalism versus bilingualism and multiculturalism as a social practice (Heller, 2011b).

It is important to clarify here that while Bourdieu (as cited in Madsen & Hammerslev, 2006) referred to those manifestations as fields, I view law and society as agencies rather than fields or structures. For me, law that includes norms, policies, regulations, institutions, official discourses, and manifestations is a constitution of agents exercising autonomy and intentionality; I view society, for the purposes of this study, as a set of actors exercising influence and power within the field. Furthermore, such an approach should not be viewed as an attempt to revoke an ontological debate over the agency–structure relation (Giddens, 1986), but rather a heuristic attempt to explore immigrants' perceptions and experiences with bilingualism as situated within specific external factors and social constraints that both influence and are influenced throughout this relationship. The purpose here is to explore the reflexivity of the participants with regard to bilingualism as a law and as a social practice. Reflexivity includes what Bourdieu (as cited in Dezalay & Madsen, 2012) termed as historicisation, which is de-essentializing and contextualizing the phenomenon in sociohistorical contexts, and citizenization (Tully, 2005), which involves connecting and accommodating the sociohistorical contexts of the phenomenon within contemporary contexts.

Next, I continue exploring how the social and legal interact with each other and manifest as oppositional at various times for participants.

***Micro dimensions: Citizenship symbols and feeling Canadian.*** Many participants maintained that first and foremost it is “official documents” (i.e., the passport)<sup>59</sup> that serve as symbolic tools that legitimize and validate immigrants’ membership in the society. Such perceptions can often be attributed to immigrants who have arrived relatively recently and appear not to have much socialization outside of their community. For example, Surindeep believed that in 10 years, she will be Canadian as she will have her “officials”:

S: First I see myself as an Indian. I don’t know if I am Canadian or not now but . . .

First, I should have all the officials, like the citizenship. If I have it, I can call myself Canadian but now I don’t have it . . . In 10 years, I think I will be Canadian

I: Do you care that people are willing to accept you?

S: [giggling] I don’t know but I don’t care if I will be accepted or not; I have my officials, I am Canadian, and that is all. I don’t care what others might be thinking about me.

However, for Adrian, an immigrant from Romania, who has spent almost 20 years of his life in Canada, the issue of belonging does not necessarily correlate with obtaining a passport. It is interesting to note that Adrian seemed to have had similar conviction in the power of “passport” (which I equate to law) in his early experiences as an immigrant; yet, as the time passed, he found himself challenging his previous beliefs about what he thought would legitimize his presence in Canada. As he explained:

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<sup>59</sup> Passport here is viewed as a normative document that is viewed as legitimizing one’s existence in a society. In a way, it is a symbolic manifestation of law (Tully, 2005).

I was thinking that if I get my papers, Canadian citizenship and things like that, I would feel like a Canadian maybe, but . . . In my head, I am never gonna be a 100% Canadian because I am not born here. I have things that I accepted easy, and there are things that [do not] represent me. So, I am half and half, but I change day by day, but I don't realize it.

While Surindeep hailed the agency of law over social agency by rejecting the latter (“I do not care if I will be accepted or not, I have my officials”), Adrian seemed to come to a conclusion that balances legal and social. Adrian felt he is in fact accepted as a member of Canadian society and his identity, previously believed to be reliant on law (having a Canadian passport), shows itself as a complex and a constantly evolving concept, which is autonomous and self-sufficient in its nature. Autonomy here is seen as nonreliance on law or society with regard to providing definitions on who a person is. Adrian demonstrated this autonomy that comes from within, whereas Surindeep seemed to seek refuge in law.

***Micro dimensions: Being successful and becoming Canadian.*** For many immigrants, one of the membership criteria for Canadian society is being and becoming successful, especially in terms of fulfilling career goals. Many immigrants bring government discourses that to be validated as Canadians they need to reach their full career potential. Adel, an oil engineer from Tunisia and a recent immigrant to Canada, believed that it is his work that will determine and define who he is in Canada:

I think I'm on the way to become a Canadian citizen. When I came here, I was looking for becoming a successful citizen, and I think Canadian citizenship is something that would have to work for; it's not granted that everybody has right for it. Everybody has to work for it, and you have to deserve to have it. You have to

prove that you deserve it. It's something that you need to work for. I think the first thing is that you have to be successful.

For Adel, being successful here means being successful professionally as it is what the Canadian citizenship entails and as he later elaborates what the government wants him to do. While he is an oil engineer, he is not eager to jump into any job, but instead he wants to improve his English skills, upgrade his education, and then get a job that would be on par with other jobs here. That is why Adel is very critical of those immigrants who choose to work low paid jobs:

When people find these jobs, they think they are better than back home. Yes, they are better, but they are not better than Canadian people here. And I think it's not good for them, it is not good for the Canada. Because among those immigrants there are many who can do better jobs; they have good skills and everything. But those things are not used; they stay with them and they cannot use them.

Carlos, a professional from Philippines and a LINC student, reiterated Adel's idea about success as a way to integrate into Canadian society. For Carlos, such success is realized through the government and law that enables immigrants to reach their potential:

For myself, I already began integrating myself the Canadian way. That's why I am here right now learning the language. The Canadian government is helping me to be successful in life. And I'm aiming for that goal to be successful in life.

The interplay of language and government in Carlos's excerpt seems to echo with what one of the previously mentioned participants, Bekele, had to say about language and membership in the society. For Bekele, just as it is the case for Carlos, language is the vehicle for reaching his goal as he believes he will be considered Canadian if he becomes

fluent in English. Carlos will consider himself as becoming Canadian when he becomes successful career-wise, which will in turn have to start with and happen through language. In both cases, the common perception is that it is the language that will lead to success and membership into the society.

While Adel, Carlos, and Bekele seem to be placing themselves within the discourses where the legal dimensions are of importance (i.e., “Canadian government wants me to learn English and to be successful”), there are also immigrants such as Hasan or Farah who observe that the discourses of the government do not correlate with practices in the society. Farah’s experience in Canada and exposure to various discourse communities make her believe that language by itself will not lead to integration. As Farah said, “We speak different languages. I speak English, but we don't speak the same language, we have different things in mind and different concerns.” Hasan is another individual whose perceptions on what matters in Canada seemed to be quite different from those of Adel, Carlos, and Bekele, who seem to take for granted discourses that professional success would legitimize their membership into the society. For Hasan, success cannot be determined by the professional success as it is restricted by social factors:

There is no written policy anywhere that an immigrant cannot become a prime minister, but then in practice, that’s what happens and the reason is actually very obvious: the way that you can network, the way you raise around people that you know, the way that you have roots in this society, and the way that you know something better than immigrants. It’s not a fair game to play. They have an

advantage that I don't. So you have to play by their rules, and I don't necessarily fit their rules, maybe in some cases only.

Hasan seemed to be very acutely aware of differentiating law and society, where law seems to have two layers—the surface level, which I call descriptive (law is taken as a neutral and objectified norm), and the beneath-surface level, which I later call inscriptive (law is viewed and approached as a subjectified practice, constructed socially, power-embedded and ideologically inclined). The difference in perceptions among immigrants is how they see the phenomena. For the first group, their perceptions appear to be aligned with “the rule of law,” which denotes the discourses of the government here. In other words, they believe they will succeed as the government has told them so. In many instances, these perceptions seem to be located separately from their experiences and practices. Bekele, Adel, and Carlos are still students in the LINC program and have not had a lot of exposure within workplace settings, so their perceptions are informed by discourses in the LINC program, which, being governmentally funded, ultimately embeds the discourse of the government. Such discourses in the curriculum emphasize language as the most important tool for integration, professional success, and validation of immigrants' membership in Canadian society (Thomson & Derwing, 2004).

Farah and Hasan elaborated on the issues of integration and success from the position of their own experiences and practices. Hasan has been employed in the oil and gas industry for 7 years, and, according to Adel, Bekele, and Carlos would seem to have reached what they call success. However, Hasan's narrations distinguish between the discourses associated with the government (law) and discourses revealed in society and seem to argue for the opposite. For him, the official discourses do not match his

perceptions, whereas for the former group, there is linear correlation between law and perceptions. Figure 26 shows the conceptual map that illustrates such differences.

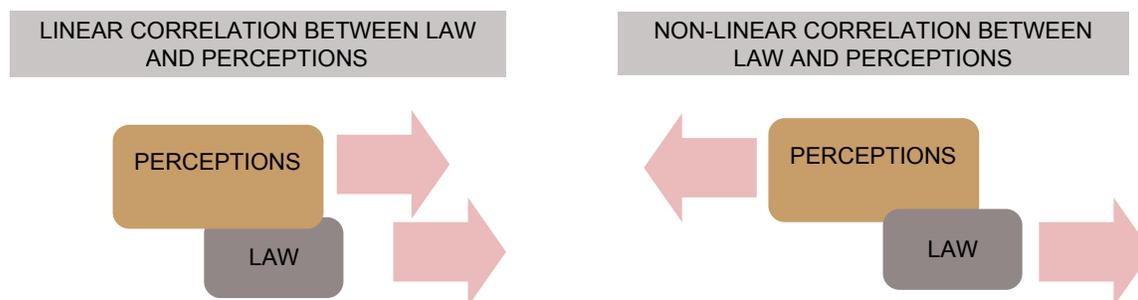


Figure 26. Interaction between law and immigrants' perceptions.

Next, I further demonstrate how law and society act as agents in determining immigrants' perceptions at a macro level. Again, as it was the case for immigrants placing themselves in the society, it is usually the interplay between social and legal and eventually dominance of one of them that will define immigrants' narrations on where the society is placed in the discourses of law. First, law will be taken for granted with perceptions being separated from experiences; second, law will be contested when experiences saturate themselves from initial perceptions. To illustrate this evolution, I discuss the participants' explorations of policies of bilingualism and multiculturalism.

**Macro dimensions: Why bilingualism if the society is not bilingual?** Immigrants' perceptions on policies of bilingualism and multiculturalism seem to be repeatedly placed within discourses of law and social practices. There is also a tendency for those discourses to compete with each other at various times and in various contexts. For example, the discourse of law seems to dominate at pre-arrival and early arrival stages for immigrants, whereas the discourse of society is more evident at the post-arrival stage, marked by immigrants' lengthier exposure to the society.

A substantial number of the participants were initially strongly convinced in the bilingual nature of the Canadian society because of the discourse on official languages they witnessed before arrival. In fact, as I demonstrate in this chapter (see “Pre-arrival perceptions”), many of the participants would explore French-learning possibilities before arrival in hopes and with aspirations that their efforts would be useful.

Adinda, a professional immigrant from Indonesia, who also happened to study French at the time of the interview, voiced her confusion over what she had heard about the bilingual nature of the Canadian society versus what she came to observe in reality.

I: You said it was very unusual for you when you came here and nobody spoke French.

A: Yes, because I was thinking that everybody speaks French and English at the same time.

I: Why would you think so?

A: Because it is bilingual. When I went to Belgium, their people, almost everybody speak[s] both Flemish and French. And then when we went to Netherlands, even though they didn't say they are bilingual or trilingual, almost everybody speaks another language equally strong.

For Adinda, being called a bilingual country appears to be equated with the society being bilingual. I believe that she makes such a conclusion based on her experiences with the external dominant discourse of Canada as being bilingual. As I will argue throughout the dissertation, such perceptions are informed and determined by either the agency of law or society. While her earlier experiences convince Adinda that it is the law that should define the character of the society, her later experiences make her challenge “the rule of

law.” For Adinda, the claims made by the government (or at least what she understands as a claim) should be validated by the social practices; otherwise, such claim is false.

Interestingly, assumptions about “bilingualism as a social practice” because of “bilingualism as a law” are also made by Francophone immigrants. Delmar, a Francophone refugee from Côte d’Ivoire, a highly experienced professional who had held various positions in the local government before coming to Canada, is also caught up with these perceptions.

I: So you thought that everybody speaks French here?

D: I thought that everybody maybe not used to speak, but can communicate in French, because both languages are official languages.

I: What made you think like this?

D: Because if a country says we have two languages, it means anyone living in that country is able to speak or understand both languages.

Just as Adinda, Delmar attempts to question the validity of what is legislated over what is practiced. Both of them arrive at such critical stance after their immersion into the society where their experiences become saturated from their pre-arrival perceptions. In fact, as I examine further in this chapter (see “Post-arrival perceptions: Bilingualism as a law or bilingualism as a practice”), such evolution of perceptions found its place in the stories of many of the participants.

For example, Estella, an immigrant from Mexico who had learned French in hope of using it here, pinpointed the role of the government in producing and instilling the discourses of Canada as a bilingual country. Again, as in two previous examples, Estella’s perceptions of bilingualism can be placed chronologically as pre- and post- arrival ones,

where the former is somehow determined by the law, and the latter, by the social practices. Estella tried to explain the dialectical nature of such a relationship where bilingualism policies do not match bilingualism as a practice:

When you see outside of Canada, that's the image that you give [that you are a bilingual country]. You see the government pages, when you go to promote your country for study; Canadians always say that you have to learn two languages, and then they show different places where you can study French and English.

For Estella, “government pages” represent the manifestation of the discourses on bilingualism. Such discourse is also a representation of law, or in Bourdieu's terms, the force of law, the power of officialisation, and certification of the state (Lenoir, 2006). Estella is able to decipher the force of law as being dialectical to social practices and sees the intentional character of law shaping and promoting a specific kind of discourse. This is what Heller (2011b) and Bourdieu (1987) referred to as reflexivity process that aims at deconstructing the phenomenon.

*Macro dimensions: Multiculturalism – connecting law and society.* Just as bilingualism, multiculturalism is also seen by immigrants as determined either by law or social practices located chronologically and situationally. Initial observations of immigrants appear to reflect the rationalization of what is prescribed (this is where multiculturalism is approached as a law) and what is described (multiculturalism is viewed as practiced socially), whereas later experiences allow immigrants to examine the relationship between law and social practices critically and separate what is described from what is prescribed.

Tom, a medical professional from China and recent newcomer, saw no contradiction between the agencies of law and society. For him, social practices are signs of the law's impartiality and neutrality (Terdiman, 1987). He observed multiculturalism as being practiced socially:

T: I only have been here 3 months. But I think Canadian government supports multiculturalism. In immigrant services or agencies, we can see that lots of employees who come from different countries. So they help different immigrants. We also can see Chinese celebrations in Chinatown.

I: Do you think as an immigrant you are accepted here in Canada?

T: Yes, I think. Because the government sets a lot of policies and organizations to help immigrants to settle down and to make [a] living. Then they help us to learn English. There are also some agencies that help immigrants to find a job.

So, it is initial, surface level observations that help Tom to shape his perceptions on the congruence between law and social practices. In other words, Canada is multicultural as it is how it positions itself, and immigrants are able to observe multiculturalism through the government's symbols, institutions, and the staff that represents such diversity. The interaction at this level appears to be limited to official discourses on multiculturalism, resulting in reflections of descriptive and noncritical nature. The critical element in approaches becomes transparent when it comes to immigrants who go through extensive socialization in the society. Again, as it is the case for bilingualism, questions about the validity of the law and its contradiction with how it is practised socially are raised here.

For example, this is how Farah, a PhD student from Iran, expressed her frustration over the lack of cultural sensitivity of her Canadian-born colleagues and the claims over

Canada being a multicultural country: “If they are saying we are a multicultural country, they shouldn’t be surprised that in Iran we have shopping centers.”

Yi Min, a graduate student from China, questioned the validity of multiculturalism policy in Canada as the social practices are not inclusive enough of immigrants:

What is the point of multiculturalism if multiculturalism is just a place for different people for gathering together in their group as if they are in China, or India?

However, when I see that at the most important occasions, let’s say the Congress, any important governmental meetings or even cultural events, I won’t see very many Asian people who are in the dominant role.

She further maintained that such inclusiveness should originate from both sides—immigrants and native Canadians—and the law should enable and facilitate such social practices: “We have already come here being prepared and willing to include the culture here, so they should also do something to include the immigrants as well. So I would see two ways going instead of one.”

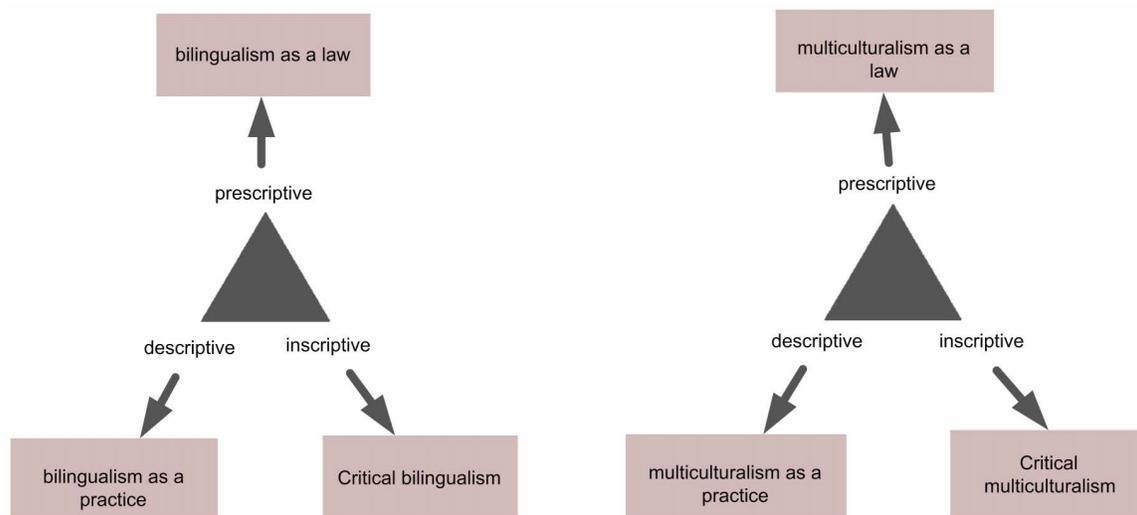
By briefly exploring immigrants’ narratives on macro- and micro-level discourses on identity and bilingualism and multiculturalism, I have attempted to demonstrate the relationship between immigrants’ perceptions as situated alongside the agency of law, which can reveal itself in a myriad of ways (e.g., policies, discourses, programs, actions, representations, symbols) and how these ways map into social practices (Ball, 1994). I also have provided examples of immigrants’ discourses that illustrate perceptions as constructed, situated, and evolving within local, social, and historical contexts and with regard to law and social practices (Heller, 2007b).

### **Conceptualization of approaches.**

*Defining approaches.* Based on the previous analysis, I propose a particular heuristic model of defining immigrants' approaches to bilingualism and multiculturalism. I view critical bilingualism here as a concept that is placed at and within constrains of law and social practices (Walsh, 1991). Borrowing the notion of critical multiculturalism from May and Sleeter (2010),<sup>60</sup> who defined it as ideologically and socially constructed phenomenon, I attempt to conceptualize immigrants' approaches to defining bilingualism and multiculturalism. As I have argued, these two concepts are often perceived from the position of law or social practices, where law and society are viewed acting as agencies in determining and maintaining those perceptions. Here, to the first two perspectives, I add a third perspective—viewing bilingualism and multiculturalism critically (May & Sleeter, 2010; Walsh, 1991). According to this conceptualization, both bilingualism and multiculturalism are viewed by immigrants three-dimensionally: bilingualism/multiculturalism as a law, bilingualism/multiculturalism as a practice, and critical bilingualism/multiculturalism (see Figure 27).

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<sup>60</sup> Critical multiculturalism stays away both from essentializing and depoliticizing culture and ethnicity or prioritizing them in larger sociohistorical and sociopolitical contexts, but rather gives priority to structural analysis of unequal power relationships lived out in daily interactions (May, 1999). In May and Sleeter's (2010) critical multiculturalism, culture and identity are understood as "multilayered, fluid, complex, and encompassing multiple social categories, and at the same time as being continually reconstructed through participation in social situations" (p. 10).



*Figure 27.* Defining approaches to bilingualism and multiculturalism.

1. Defining bilingualism/multiculturalism as a law attempts to view these phenomena in legal terms, or prescriptively, i.e., what law prescribes to the society. Law here is associated with conscious attempts to legitimize languages. So, according to immigrants who view bilingualism prescriptively, bilingualism (and multiculturalism for this matter) is important because it is prescribed by law, which in turn is perceived as impartial, unbiased, and thus fair. The law is viewed as overarching and trespassing times, nations, and their histories. This position where the rule of law determines and defines perceptions assumes a noncritical, descriptive stance of what is prescribed by law.
2. Defining bilingualism/multiculturalism as a practice focuses on social aspects of the phenomenon. The legitimacy of bilingualism/multiculturalism is correlated with to what extent the phenomenon reveals itself in the society. Thus, the characteristics and the nature of bilingualism and multiculturalism are approached descriptively. If the former approach toward bilingualism and multiculturalism as a law presumes prevalence of legal over social, the latter

- shifts its attention to social. In other words, bilingualism and multiculturalism will or will not be deemed important in accordance with “how much” of bilingualism and multiculturalism can be observed in the society. It is important to mention here that although this stance emphasizes social over legal dimensions, as I argue in this chapter (see “Post-arrival perceptions: Bilingualism as a law or bilingualism as a practice?”), it can still be situated as related to law but the degree and the nature of this relationship will be different.
3. The last approach positions bilingualism and multiculturalism in critical terms. Critical bilingualism and multiculturalism will be viewed here as a concept that is placed at and within constraints of law and social practices. In other words, by bringing together the social and legal dimensions, it attempts to explain, interpret, and understand existing ideologies within the society. I call such an approach inscriptive to emphasize the engrained nature of such ideologies.<sup>61</sup>

***Developing approaches.*** As I have conceptualized, the approaches to bilingualism and multiculturalism by immigrants can be viewed and defined statically within legal, social, and legal-social constraints (bilingualism and multiculturalism as a law, bilingualism and multiculturalism as a social practice, and critical bilingualism and multiculturalism). Here, I further build on that conceptualization and create a heuristic framework of how these approaches develop (see Figure 28). This framework situates and explores the evolution of the perceptions of the phenomena dialectically. It demonstrates how the interplay between legal and social dimensions places immigrants’ perceptions contextually, historically, and ideologically.

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<sup>61</sup> These three dimensions can be present at the same time, so in that sense they are interrelated; however, it is the dominance of one that would determine the degree of reflexivity.

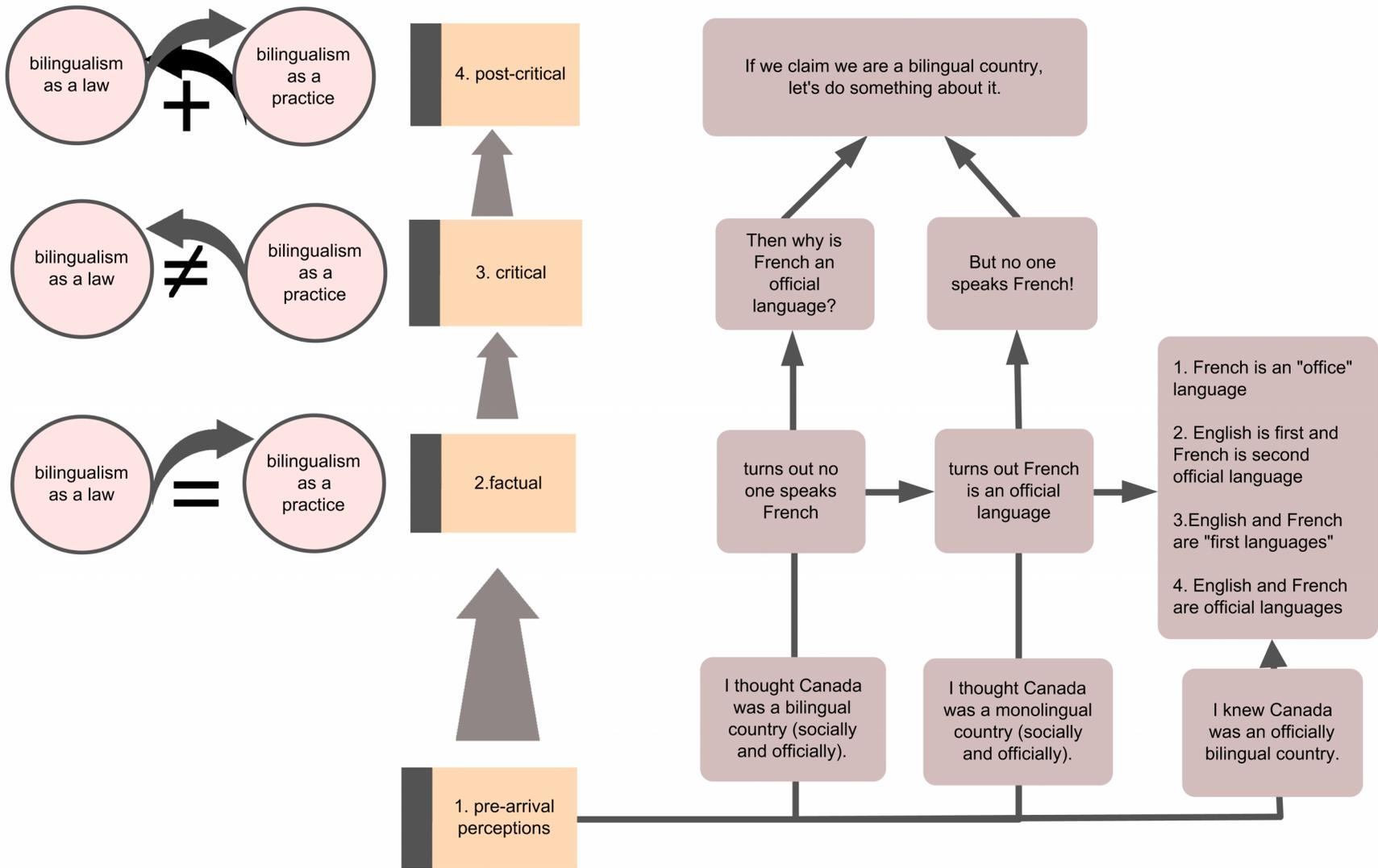


Figure 28. Developing approaches to bilingualism.

According to the proposed conceptual framework, immigrants' views of bilingualism are formed and negotiated as related to the agencies of law and society. Chronologically, immigrants' perceptions can be divided into pre- and post-arrival stages.

Pre-arrival perceptions consist of three major presuppositions about the nature of bilingualism in Canada: the first assumes Canada to be bilingual and places society as a determining agency in validating bilingualism claims ("I thought Canada was a bilingual country"); the second expects to see Canada as a monolingual English-speaking country ("I thought that Canada is a monolingual country"), and the third one approaches bilingualism territorially ("I knew that Canada is an officially bilingual country with English and French spoken in different provinces").

The post-arrival perceptions are formed as newcomers start to interact with the legal and social dimensions of bilingualism.

1. Here, at first, bilingualism is defined through legal terms or prescriptively. As the rule of law prevails at this level, it also determines interpretations of bilingualism. Such interpretations concentrate on legislated bilingualism and include viewing (a) English and French as official languages, (b) English as a first official language and French as a second official language; and (c) French as an *office* language. The agency of law here is seen as uncontested and ideologically neutral in nature. So, immigrants' perceptions are rooted in their experiences with official discourses on bilingualism and multiculturalism policies, regulations, and programs. Often, at this level, immigrants' acquaintance with the Canadian society is limited to interactions within the constraints of government institutions, to which they include everything that

represents government in their eyes, e.g., immigration and settlement agencies, public service institutions, and others. Thus, immigrants' perceptions on bilingualism appear to be interpretations of the legal dimensions of what they see, experience, and practise. For clarity purposes, I will call this approach factual, underlying its non-ideological, law interpretation-oriented nature. It is not factual in the sense that it is ontologically real, i.e., describes something that exists, but it is factual in the sense that it assumes that something exists and explains how it exists. Here, immigrants offer their interpretations of what bilingualism is as the law in Canada.

2. Second, as newcomers immerse into deeper interactions with society, the agency of law starts to be contested and challenged by the social agency. At this level, immigrants begin to notice the discrepancy between the two and question the validity of the agency of law in Alberta. Again, for the purposes of this study, I will call this approach critical, as it assumes the critical or questioning stance toward law. For immigrants in this position, bilingualism that is formerly viewed prescriptively or in legal terms does not seem to correlate descriptively or in social terms. In other words, bilingualism, initially viewed as a law, is juxtaposed to bilingualism as a practice. So, according to the immigrants at this perceptual stage, bilingualism claims cannot be validated, as bilingualism is not seen as practised socially. If bilingualism is seen as present at the prescriptive level (legally) and questioned at the descriptive level (socially), e.g., "Why is it called bilingualism if no one speaks French?", multiculturalism is often approached at the descriptive level (socially) and criticized at the descriptive

level (legally), e.g., “Why is a multiculturalism policy needed if our society is already multicultural?” In both cases, immigrants’ perceptions on bilingualism and multiculturalism appear to be critical interpretation of the social dimensions of what they see, experience, and practice with regard to bilingualism and multiculturalism.

3. Third and finally, the level of immigrants’ perceptions develop as immigrants start to understand the dichotomy between the agencies of law and society. If the former approach, which I have called critical, questions the law, the latter analyzes and eventually recommends the law. I call this level post-critical, emphasizing its reflexive, analytical, and solution-oriented nature. Here, immigrants attempt to explore the notions of bilingualism and multiculturalism by bringing the agencies of law and society together and by contextualizing, localizing, and historicizing their relationship. Immigrants observe bilingualism and multiculturalism as complex phenomena that need to be understood, explained, and, if necessary, developed. They do not define bilingualism through the agency of law or society alone, but explore it by bringing these two agencies together. At this level, interpretations of bilingualism depend on what law and society are meant to be, e.g., “If we claim we are bilingual, let’s do something about it.”

Please note, that this is a heuristic model. It should not be recognized as an all-inclusive interpretative tool for analysis of immigrants’ perceptions, experiences, and practices, which are highly individualistic and time and space specific. The terminology that I choose to operate with should only be viewed as a mere attempt to bring the

discourses of immigrants into one logical conceptualizable framework for the purposes of this specific study, which is essentially understanding of (a) how the participants in this study deconstructed and negotiated meanings of bilingualism and multiculturalism in relationship to manifestations of them within law and social practices (Heller, 2008), and (b) to what extent immigrants engage in reflexivity processes of exploring the historicity and contemporaneity of the meanings within local, national, and global contexts (Bourdieu, 1987; Heller, 2011b; Tully, 2005).

While realizing limitations of using a model, by conceptualizing my findings I try to find a compromise between the need to present data and to explain data as I see data as a researcher (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000).

In the next section, I illustrate extensively how immigrants' discourses are situated within the proposed conceptual framework. I attempt to provide empirical data for how bilingualism and multiculturalism are defined and how these definitions are formed, negotiated, and developed within legal and social constraints.

### **From Conceptualization to Practice: Immigrants' Discourses on the Place of Bilingualism in Canada**

As I have stated, immigrants' perceptions of bilingualism and multiculturalism start to shape as they attempt to negotiate the role of the agencies of law and society (i.e., social practices) and explore their dialectical nature. Often, this process is chronological and time and context specific. Based on the proposed heuristic model of official bilingualism interpretation, immigrants arrive in Canada with specific pre-supposed notions of bilingualism and multiculturalism.

**Pre-arrival perceptions.**

*I thought Canada was a monolingual country.* The first pre-supposition is based on the assumption that Canada is a monolingual country both in legal and social terms. For these participants, monolingualism is equated solely with English.

For example, Yue, a Chinese immigrant professional noted her lack of prior knowledge regarding the status of French in Canada: “Before coming to Canada, I didn't know [that Canada has two official languages]. Once I came to Canada, I learned something about it in the LINC school.” Another participant, Andrey, who emigrated from Russia as a teenager, also concurred on having different ideas about French in Canada:

Well actually, before I came to Canada to be honest, I didn't know French was the official speaking language. I may have had some ideas that other languages might be spoken but to be an official language, I was not aware of it until I came here and it is who you interact with.

For these two participants, as well as a few others, at pre-arrival stage, Canada is seen as a monolingual country, where English is both an official language as well as a sole language of communication in the society. These immigrants often have little or no prior exposure to the information concerning the status of languages in Canada due to the specific character of their immigration. They come to Canada with no previous connections and support network. Their knowledge of Canada, including the role of English and French, is quite limited and inaccurate. Once they settle down and start exploring the society, they start constructing their understanding of bilingualism within the agency of law first which later will be seen as conflicting with the manifestations of bilingualism as a social practice.

*I thought Canada was a bilingual country (officially and socially).* Another very distinct pre-supposition that many immigrants hold before arrival is that Canada is a bilingual country. For these participants, Canadians are expected to be fully bilingual, i.e., equally proficient in French and English. This understanding of bilingualism places society and social practices as a determining agency in validating bilingualism claims which they encounter prior to immigrating to Canada. It is interesting to note that such claims are often interpretations of official discourses on the nature of bilingualism in Canada. These discourses, according to immigrants, are perceived to be presented via what they see as symbolic representations of the government, e.g., Citizenship and Immigration Canada offices in Canada and immigrant orientation programs in their countries of origin. So, the discourse that there are two official languages in Canada is taken by newcomers as that Canadians are fully bilingual. As a result of this misconception, immigrants seem flummoxed by the absence of French speakers in Calgary and Alberta in general.

Dan, an immigrant from China, discussed this point in the interview:

D: Before I came to Canada, I just guessed that maybe here in Canada people will speak two languages at the same time. But when I came here, I saw that is not the truth.

I: Why did you think like this?

D: Because Canada is kind of country that is bilingual. English and French are both official languages.

I: So where did you hear this information?

D: You know, 4 years ago, I tried to apply for immigration. At that time I studied about Canada, culture. . . . I realized then that Canada is bilingual.

For Dan, the claim that there are two official languages in Canada is not accurate as having two official languages should also imply speaking both languages. In other words, he wants to see the correlation between what is prescribed by law and what is described as a social practice in terms of bilingualism. So, his pre-arrival perception of bilingualism is determined by what I call the agency of law and is validated socially. Dan is not alone in his interpretation of official bilingualism as personal bilingualism. In fact, a substantial number of immigrants appear to echo his confusion about Canada claiming to be a bilingual country. Often, trusting their own interpretation of official bilingualism discourse, they engage themselves in learning French before arrival. Such learning endeavours are formed by the belief that the Canadian population is fully bilingual and thus in order to succeed and eventually integrate, knowing French for a newcomer would be a very important skill to have.

For example, Mina, a professional immigrant from Iran working in the oil and gas industry, took French classes in Iran believing that Canada is a bilingual country:

At that time, I thought Canada is a bilingual country. I was kind of thinking that there is a population here in Canada, that their first language is French, so if I want to call Canada home one day, then learning French is a good start.

Robert, a skilled worker from Colombia, is another participant who ascribes importance to French in Canada because it is an official language. He acquired a considerable fluency in French by taking French language courses before arriving in Canada hoping to benefit from his language skills. Just as Mina (and many others for this matter) who was expecting to see evidence of personal bilingualism everywhere, he is flabbergasted by the absence of French speakers in Calgary:

I thought in Canada people are available to speak both languages: French and English. But it's not true. Many people don't know anything about French. For example, here in Calgary. When I read the announcement, I read it in the French and I can understand, but for many people it is not possible.

For Andrew, who also learned French in China before coming to Canada, disconnection between what is prescribed as a law in terms of bilingualism and what is described as a practice starts with his initial impressions of the level of French-language proficiency of the staff at the airport in Vancouver. Hoping to practice his French, he attempts to engage the airport staff in conversation in French and to his great surprise finds out that they are unable to communicate with him in French: "When you go to Vancouver nobody speaks, nobody understands French. . . . I tried to speak to the staff in that airport, to try to say them hello in French but they told me they cannot speak French; I couldn't imagine that."

In general, immigrants who believed that Canada was a bilingual country are the ones who arrive as skilled workers, either independently or as families, without prior ties to Canada. Their belief of Canada as a bilingual country is solely based on their rationalization of French and English being official languages in Canada and thus languages of the society. For this category of immigrants, there should be a correlation between the legal and social dimensions of the society. In other words, if there is an official bilingualism, then there should be personal bilingualism as well.

Such perception, interestingly, is also quite common among Francophone immigrants who often express their frustration with the worthlessness of what Bourdieu (as cited in Myles, 1999) would call linguistic capital as, according to their understanding, the

official language discourse portrays Canada as a bilingual country and clearly calls for the need and importance of French in this country. In fact, frequently immigrants' decisions to settle down in Canada and not in another country are dictated by the belief that their French skills will be essential in succeeding all across Canada. According to them, such belief is reinforced by an external portrayal of Canada as a legally and thus socially bilingual country.

For example, Delmar, an elderly refugee from Côte d'Ivoire who used to be employed as a very high-ranking government official there, is very surprised to find out that most Canadians do not speak French:

D: I thought everyone in Canada would speak French or English. . . . I had some ideas about English as the most spoken language in most of provinces, and in Québec, French. But I didn't know that 99% of people in some provinces speak only English.

I: So you thought that everybody speaks French here?

D: I thought that everybody may not be used to speak, but can communicate in French, because both languages are official languages.

I: What made you think like this?

D: Because if a country says we have two languages, it means anyone living in that country is able to speak or understand both languages.

For Delmar, as well as for a number of Francophone immigrants, absence of French in Calgary is unjustifiable, especially in the light of proclaiming French and English as Canada's official languages. Later in this chapter (see "Critical approach: Questioning bilingualism as a law and as a practice"), I return to exploring the discourses of

Francophone newcomers to demonstrate that following Bourdieu's (1991) notions, their language capital while being portrayed as valuable in the official discourse does not convert to economic and social capital because of its futility in the specific social context.

*I thought Canada was a bilingual country (officially).* While the perceptions of the first two groups regarding the status of French in Canada appear to contradict the discourse of bilingualism being an institutional type of bilingualism (Ménard & Hudon, 2007), the last one sees bilingualism in Canada being an institutional as well as a territorial notion in Canada. According to the significant number of newcomers, although Canada is officially bilingual, the extent of personal bilingualism is determined territorially. Such perception can be formulated in this statement: "I knew French and English are spoken in different provinces."

To illustrate this statement, I bring examples of two newcomers, Tesfay from Ethiopia and Aswa from Sudan, who arrived in Canada through family reunification or protected-persons class program.

In Tesfay's words, the phrase that "Canada is a bilingual country" implies that "one province speaks French and a lot of people speak English." To my question about whether his perceptions on bilingualism changed once he came to Calgary, he replied that he knew that people do not speak French in Calgary as his sister from Calgary used to talk about it before he came here.

Aswa maintained the same perceptions about the degree of French in a primarily English-speaking Alberta and the status of French nationally: "He [Aswa's husband] told me if you want to work in government you have to know both English and French, and he told me everything in paper or advertisement is in English and French."

As these quotes show, the pre-arrival perceptions of Tesfay and Aswa about the nature of Canada are in line with the meanings of institutional bilingualism that are often found in official government discourses on bilingualism (Coulombe, 2000). Both Tesfay and Aswa have relatives who are familiar with the current discourses on bilingualism in Alberta and Canada and were able to pass on those discourses to them before their arrival.

**Post-arrival perceptions: Bilingualism as a law or bilingualism as a practice?**

While in the previous section, I explored immigrants' pre-arrival perceptions of the bilingualism policy, in this section, I further examine how the notions of bilingualism and multiculturalism are explained and negotiated through the prism of immigrants' post-arrival experiences and practices. As I have examined, immigrants arrive in Canada having a range of assumptions with regard to what bilingualism is in Canada and how it relates to them. As I will demonstrate in this section, as immigrants immerse themselves in the Canadian and Alberta society (which at times can be viewed either as one or separate entities), their assumptions will be affected by their interactions with the government and the public both at macro and micro levels. Immigrants' definitions of official and personal bilingualism will either be confirmed or challenged and will evolve throughout their interactions and experiences with the society. However, regardless of a range of possible variations of their initial discourses on bilingualism and multiculturalism, newcomers to Canada will shape and negotiate their understanding of the linguistic and cultural contexts based on their experiences within the legal and social domains.

***Factual approach: Interpreting bilingualism as a law.*** As I have demonstrated, the principal premise that guides immigrants' formulation of the Canadian society and the country is the rule of law. In fact, in many cases it is the supremacy of law that determines

their choices to settle down in Canada. Newcomers arrive in Canada with a belief in the rule of law and all the elements that are associated with law. According to immigrants, if the law is unquestionable, so is the government. In many cases (especially with refugees), such stance is informed by their previous lived experiences in their countries of origin, where law would frequently be used as a political and economic tool of the rich and powerful to control the masses.

According to immigrants, the Canadian concept of law opposes the notion of law used in the interest of specific individuals and groups and builds on the premise of the supremacy of law over the authority of individuals to establish their own laws. That is why many immigrants' discourses on language policy in Canada are characterized by their belief in the prevalence of the legal domain over the social agency. In other words, it is the agency of law that will determine and guide immigrants' perceptions of bilingualism in Alberta and Canada. Furthermore, immigrants will often attempt to seek justification of the elements produced by the agency of law and, for this matter, bilingualism in the social domain. It is important to mention here that such discourse direction is specific mostly to newcomers at their early arrival stage and will be quite different as they continue exploring and interacting with the society.

To summarize, bilingualism for immigrants at an early post-arrival stage will be viewed and approached as a law and thus be uncontested, unchallenged, and taken for granted. Furthermore, as I demonstrate next, the notion of bilingualism will be guided by law and sought to be confirmed and justified by social practices. In other words, immigrants will try to break down the legal version of bilingualism and translate it into society. Thus, at this early post-arrival stage, immigrants' perceptions will explore their

own understandings of the legal dimensions of bilingualism and define it through and within social representations. As I have argued, this approach is non-ideological and focuses merely on interpretation of the language policy. It is based on a premise that Canada is a bilingual country because there is a law on bilingualism that manifests itself in the society.

As immigrants arrive in Canada with various assumptions about the linguistic situation in Canada (“Canada as a bilingual country,” “Canada as a monolingual country,” and “Canada as an officially bilingual country”), upon their acquaintance with the language policy narrative in Alberta and Canada, they will attempt to interpret those legal narratives through social agency and public symbols that represent official bilingualism and align their pre-arrival perceptions with those narratives. At this stage, Canadian bilingualism and the official status of French are acknowledged. It is possible to identify three broad themes that emerge at this law-interpretation level: (a) French as an “office” language, (b) French as a second official language, and (c) French and English as first languages in Canada.

*French as an office language.* Immigrants offer various interpretations of French as an official language. Such interpretations are often based on their initial interactions and experiences with what they perceive as being public symbols of French as an official language. Regardless of their pre-arrival perceptions on the role of French in Canada, they align their understanding of the language policy with what they start to observe in local contexts of Calgary and Alberta. Such interaction starts with public places (schools, buses, airports), government institutions, and agencies that provide settlement and integration services. So, it is not the public that confirms or challenges their ideas on bilingualism in Canada but the public space in which this public is situated (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009). So,

French as an official language, is often interpreted as French as an office language, where the space and context are prioritized over the public, and the content it is supposed to deliver.

According to this approach, French is indeed an official language because it is seen in offices. Again, as I have stated, such positioning is factual in a sense that it attempts to demonstrate and justify the fact of French as an official language. French is not an official language because Canadians speak French, but because of evidence of French in particular spaces. Furthermore, according to many immigrants, Canadians are perceived as being able to speak French because of the evidence of French in specific domains. In other words, it is public space that proves that the public is bilingual as well.

To illustrate the notion of French as an office language, I bring an example of Ogbai, an elderly teacher of Amharic from Ethiopia, who arrived in Canada as a refugee. As it is the case for many resettlers to Canada, especially those who are granted an international refugee status, one of their pre-arrival experiences involves a pre-settlement orientation/information session about their future destination country. As Ogbai described it,

I took an orientation when I was in Kenya about the Canadian culture in order to be familiar with the society. [I learned] that English and French are spoken in Canada.

English is spoken in America, [and] here in Canada there are two languages spoken.

I asked him to clarify the extent of French spoken in Canada. To my question, Ogbai responded that “they [orientation facilitators] say that,” implying that French is spoken all over Canada. He went on to explain why he believed that French is spoken everywhere:

“Wherever you go, for instance, in the identification there is English and French, both languages are there. Even in the parliament, the readings are in two languages.”

In fact, many immigrants illustrate the existence of official-language policy by bringing similar examples of French as an office language. For some, Canada is a bilingual country because “everywhere, even in Calgary, all the signs and important signals are written in two languages.” Others associate bilingualism with what is often called “cereal bilingualism,” that is, bilingual labels on food packages: “You can see that every writing is in French and English. In law, in food and drinks—everything is French and English.”

There are some other examples of evidence of bilingualism for immigrants, such as seeing Prime Minister Stephen Harper on television speaking in French or hearing those who work in the government speaking French and English. In all these instances, the force of law, or bilingualism as law, manifests itself through agents associated with the legal field, institutions that represent law, labels, Prime Minister, etc. (Terdiman, 1987).

*French as a second official language.* Media, and especially television, also play a crucial role in forming immigrants’ perceptions on official bilingualism in Canada. Again, regardless of their pre-arrival assumptions, once having heard that Canada is a bilingual country, newcomers will seek the proof of this statement in various contexts, including media. For example, this is how Tom, a professional immigrant from China, tries to interpret the existence of bilingualism in Canada:

I was watching a TV program when I came here. There are some English and there are some French programs, so I thought that it is because French is an official language. The languages that they talk in TV programs are English and French, and that is why I decided that French is the second language.

Tom at the time of the interview had been in Canada for only 1 month, and once he encountered the discourse on official bilingualism, he referred to television to confirm his pre-arrival understanding of the meaning of bilingualism in Canada. It is interesting to note that while confirming the official status of French in Canada, Tom offers his own explanation about the status of French with regard to official bilingualism. According to him, French is an official language; however, it is a second official language: “If I am right, the first language of Canada is English, and the second language is French.” To my request to clarify his answer about the status of French, Tom responded with some slight hesitation that French is a second official language. This answer was not very uncommon among interviewees who believed that although both French and English are official languages, they are somehow different in terms of their degree of official status. English is the first official language, whereas French is a second official language. So, essentially it is the discourse on what kind of bilingualism is considered legitimate in Canada (Heller, 1999a), and what comes first: is it English- French bilingualism or French-English bilingualism that characterizes Canada?

For example, Esme, a young LINC student from Sudan, who came as a sponsored family member, believed English is an official language in Canada, whereas French is a second language. To my question about her understanding of bilingualism in Canada she stated, “I think the official thing is English in Canada,” and French is “the second language.” I asked, “Is French an official language in Canada?” and Esme responded, “Somewhere. I think Québec. Here in Calgary, it is English.”

At one point I asked Esme if she would be interested in learning French. She responded by bringing the notion of French as not being an official language:

I am interested to study French, even in my country I studied little bit . . . But it is difficult to make it an official language for immigrants who come here. If they say official languages are both French and English, then it is difficult.

So, Esme in fact had studied French before, and she expressed her interest about it. However, according to her, if French is declared as an official language alongside English, immigrants will have difficulties learning both languages. Not only does she perceive French as a second language that has an official status “somewhere” but also she emphasizes the importance of immigrants learning a language if the language has an official status. In other words, for immigrants, especially those who find themselves at a noncritical descriptive level of interpretation of bilingualism, if bilingualism is a law, then the social practices should align with it, and, as I will demonstrate later, immigrants are willing to commit themselves to learning French if they become aware of the official status of French.

Another example of French as being perceived as a second official language is given by Claudia, a LINC student who immigrated with her family to Canada from Columbia as a skilled worker. She has three children and is very interested in enrolling her two youngest ones in a French-immersion schooling system<sup>62</sup> in Calgary. She believes in the value of learning many languages and talks about Spanish as a heritage language; however, it is French that she believed should be the one that comes alongside her mother tongue:

I: You said that you speak Spanish at home with your children.

C: Yes, my little girl speaks mixed Spanish and English. It is really hard [laughing].

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<sup>62</sup> French immersion is a “content-based approach to learning French that integrates language-teaching into the rest of the curriculum” (Roy, 2008, p. 396). In Alberta, the program is regulated by the provincial Ministry of Education and offered as optional.

I: How do you feel about that?

C: I want her [to] speak English and Spanish well but I wish my children speak English, Spanish and French [French emphasized]. My oldest son goes to the school in English and Spanish immersion; he is 8 years old, but my other children go to daycare now, because they are 4 years and 3 years old. For kindergarten, I want them go to French immersion.

I: Why French?

C: French is the second official language here; some countries speak French too. I already know Spanish.

Throughout my conversation with Claudia, she reiterated several times the phrase about French being a second language in Canada and the importance of learning and speaking it. She also offered her interpretation on the government's involvement with bilingualism:

I think that the principal promotion from the government is the official languages because you live in Canada you need to speak English definitely and if you can speak French it is good, because it is an official language. However, if you speak other languages, it is your problem.

This statement is interesting for several reasons. First, it underlies Claudia's assumptions on the role of the government; second, it highlights her approach to bilingualism from the position of law (which, as I have described, focuses on law interpretation of the phenomenon); and finally, it draws a very distinct line between understanding the role of English and French as official languages and the role of heritage languages. In fact, as I explore later in the chapter (see "Connecting Macro and Micro:

Immigrants on Their Place on Bilingualism and Multiculturalism in Canada” of this chapter), juxtaposing official and heritage language discourses is a very common theme that immigrants bring into discussion. As I further argue, languages are often placed comparatively to each other in the discourses of immigrants, and, as the analysis of those discourses indicate, heritage languages are seen as being of secondary to French and English and thus not needing any attention from the government.

*English and French as first languages in Canada.* While the previous examples illustrate immigrants’ perceptions of French as relative and somewhat subordinate to English in terms of its legal status, a substantial number of immigrants brings a discourse that highlights the importance of French and English to Canada and their equal positioning in terms of law and consequently the society (cf. Heller, 1999a).

An interesting illustration on the differences of viewing French as a second language, as was the case previously, and viewing French on par with English was given by Paresh, a young LINC student of Indian origin. This is how Paresh expressed the evolution of his ideas in terms of understanding French and English bilingualism:

French and English are two official languages in Canada. Honestly, before I come here, I heard that French is the second language but I didn’t know, even up to this point, what the matter is behind that. I was only thinking that people in Canada would be speaking English. I was hearing that French is the second language; I was thinking, it is the second language.... [But] it is not the second language. Second language is one that comes after first, first English and then French. But it [French] is not the second language; they are both first, [even though] I was thinking [before] that French is the second language and has nothing to do with English.

Paresh articulated very passionately about the equal status of French and English as according to him they are both “first” languages. French is not a “second” language, which is confined to social domains as some other participants described, but instead French is seen through legal dimensions. As I continued my conversation with Paresh, he discussed the notions of French and English as first languages several times and appeared to connect them indirectly to the notions of law and government. In fact, the discourses of law and the government often seem to define and determine Paresh’s perceptions not only with regard to bilingualism but also his experience of adjusting to life in Canada. Throughout the interview, he often referred to law as being the most important characteristic of Canada as a country.

Bob, a software developer from China, who immigrated to Canada 1 year before the interview was conducted, also considers French as being equal in status to English. His perceptions of bilingualism in Canada seem to be in line with Paresh’s approach of calling English and French “first.” To my question about bilingualism, Bob stated that “French is the first class language, just like English.” He continued, explaining that because of his relatives in Canada, he already knew that French and English are official languages. However, it is the understanding of why French and English are official languages that was one of Bob’s biggest revelations:

B: I see [now] two official languages as fundamentals of Canada. I thought [before] why Canada has two official languages. It made me feel really strange.

I: Why?

B: Because a lot of countries have only one official language, or don't define languages as official. For example, Chinese is not an official language in China.

The Chinese government doesn't define official language in order to keep the balance between different nations. I was very surprised that Canada has two official languages at that time. But since I started living here, I got to know that this is fundamental for the country. If we announce that French is not official language in Canada, you don't know what will happen.

I: What will happen?

B: Most of the people in the Québec part would want to quit Canada. I think, two official languages French and English are fundamentals of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. . . . Just as I said before, if we announce that French is not the official language, the modern Canada won't exist. . . . So, we must keep two official languages.

Bob's explanation of bilingualism in Canada is framed around his experiences with official languages in his country of origin. Just as he sees the language as a tool for the Chinese government to keep the balance between different ethnic groups in China, he projects this understanding of languages into Canadian contexts. French and English are not only official languages, but also the pillars of the society that the government is assigned to protect. He presents his understanding of the issues around languages in Canada formulated around the Charter. Bob's approach to official bilingualism has a critical element to it; even though it is within the law interpretation perspective, which aims at explaining and validating the law, it still attempts to contextualize law within social practices. Bob expressed his confusion over why the society is not bilingual if both French and English are official languages. In fact, he sees only immigrants as being able to speak French:

B: Not many people can speak French around me, just classmates in the LINC program. They are native speakers of French. Some of the new immigrants come from Africa, they speak French.

I: Do you know any Canadian people who speak French, maybe born here and speaking French?

B: Some teachers told me they learn French in school, but after 15 years they forget. [Laughing]

As Bob continued to elaborate on his stance on official languages, he raised another point about language practices with regard to official bilingualism: “I know people who speak French, they always know English. But people who speak English don't speak French very well.”

As his example demonstrates, Bob is perceptive of the differences in language practices with regard to English and French speakers. As he continues, he points at English speakers who are not willing to learn French, even if it is an official language. For him, it is telling a lot about the existing tensions between groups (or as Heller, 2007b, put it, as competing ideologies). Bob did not elaborate too extensively on the reasons for such tension, instead he preferred to describe the evidence of these tensions occurring within society. One of the examples of this tension manifested for him is the perceived lack of a French population in Calgary and Alberta in general. Overall, Bob's discourse on bilingualism positions itself very differently from previous discourses, as he focused on not only describing the lack of bilingualism as a social practice in Calgary but also on critically examining the role of the Canadian government and the society in western Canada in these processes:

The government is getting skilled workers; they need a lot of time to become real Canadians, three generations. They need to learn a lot of things about Canada. They don't have a lot of Canadian experience. [Then] why are we not hiring Québécois to British Columbia and Alberta? Why those people don't want to come here? Maybe it is because people think that Québécois are not real Canadians? That is very confusing for me. They hire workers from foreign countries and not from Québec. And I don't know why this is happening. We are having an economy crisis for more than 2 years. If we have a worker shortage, we can advertise in Québec and bring people who speak French. Why don't we do that? I don't understand. I want to know the reason why the Québécois don't immigrate to other provinces.

Bob's examination of issues of language and nation, as his example demonstrates, is a thought-provoking one. He views issues of official bilingualism as connected to and often conflicting with broader-scale social, political, and historical processes in Canada. Even though he doesn't provide his interpretation of the causes and reasons of those conflictual processes, he is very vocal in describing as well as offering his own recommendations on eliminating conflicts. Official bilingualism will only work if it is translated into social practices. Such translation should and could be based on collaborative communication models especially within the educational sphere. Bob said:

This is a new era; we shouldn't only think by studying in schools, but also by social [networking]. For example, you live in Québec, you always speak French, but I am in Calgary, and I always speak English. Maybe the government should build the language exchange platform. We can talk to each other; I can understand you, and

you can know what I said. This is 2010; we should start using new platform[s] so that people get to know each other and learn official languages.

Bob's discourse on bilingualism can be viewed as bridging the gap between approaching bilingualism from a position of law and recognizing the social contexts in which the law has been placed. It is factual in a sense that people in this discourse attempt to interpret or state the law on bilingualism, yet somehow attempt to be critical as they try to explain why it is important from the law perspective. People supporting this discourse acknowledge the official status of French within bilingualism policy and view society and social practices as secondary to the government. Such positioning is not reflexive yet as it is not able to delve in the historicity and particularity of the phenomenon within contemporary sociopolitical and economic contexts (Bourdieu, 1990).

It is important to note that the factual interpretation of bilingualism in Canada was common among study participants who have arrived in Canada recently and who have limited exposure to various language groups as well as limited mobility within Canada. As immigrants continue expanding their social capital (Bourdieu, 1977) and expose themselves to various social and geographical contexts, they also shift from explaining bilingualism from the position of law to actually examining and later questioning the official bilingualism policy. This is the stage that I call critical.

***Critical approach: Questioning bilingualism as a law and as a practice.***

Immigrants' approach to official bilingualism is critical when the notion of bilingualism as law is challenged in their discourses. In many cases, critical positioning is placed in the perceptual framework continuum as being opposed to factual or descriptive interpretation of language policies. It is an analytical process that operates from the assumption that

French as an official language seems to pose a problem since there is no evidence of social practices at the grassroots level. Immigrants tend to question the validity of French as an official language as their integration into society continues. They no longer see themselves as strangers or observers in Canada, but as active participants as they start acquiring various forms of economic and social capital (Bourdieu, 1977). This period is characterized by immigrants' broader exposure to Anglophones and Francophones and various linguistic practices through fields of work, education, and other domains.

As a result of expanding experiences from local contexts to regional and national contexts, immigrants also start witnessing various discourses on bilingualism prevalent among Canadian-born English and French speakers. They witness the discourse that there is no need for French in Calgary. Yet, they also observe the discourse that emphasizes the importance of French for Canada and Alberta in particular. Immigrants who are at the critical stage of their perceptual continuum of bilingualism explore these two discourses in relation to each other and attempt to negotiate their own positioning with regard to them. This positioning does not approach law as neutral and determining bilingualism discourse as might be the case with the first two approaches to bilingualism, but rather questions bilingualism both as a law and as a social practice. It is possible to identify two prevailing themes within this critical stance:

1. Why are we not bilingual, if there is a law?
2. Why is there a law if we are not bilingual?

In both cases, immigrants' perceptions of bilingualism revolve around social aspects of bilingualism. The conversations at this stage do not explore the notion of bilingualism in Canada but rather look at Canada as a bilingual country. In other words,

immigrants here are more interested in understanding and analyzing bilingual characteristics of the Canadian society and how they relate to bilingualism policy. Depending on their initial pre-arrival and early arrival assumptions about language policies and practices in Canada, they will question either the law with regard to language practices or language practices with regard to the law.

*Why are we not bilingual if there is a law?* Robert is a LINC student who immigrated to Canada a couple of months before the interview took place. Being a professionally trained engineer in Columbia and having studied French in hopes of benefiting from it in Canada, he is very disappointed to find out that Canada is not a bilingual country. For him, the discourse on official bilingualism implies discourse on personal and societal bilingualisms. When I asked Robert to talk about changes in his perceptions about Canada before and after arrival, he raised the topic of languages:

I thought in Canada people are available to speak both languages, French and English. But it's not true. Many people don't know anything about French. For example, here in Calgary. When I read the announcement, I read it in the French and I can understand, but for many people, no.

For Robert, the inability to practice his French with Canadians is one of the disappointing moments of his settlement experiences in Canada, especially because he invested a significant amount of time and effort into learning French before coming to Canada. While he was aware of the official bilingualism policy and language practices in Canada based on the principle of territoriality,<sup>63</sup> he argues that for the country to be defined as bilingual, the law on bilingualism has to apply all across Canada and manifest as a social

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<sup>63</sup> According to a principle of territoriality, language policy choices should, as far as possible, be made by political institutions that operate at the regional level (Patten, 2003).

practice. As it was case with many participants at this stage of perceptual framework, Robert's approach was non-apologetic about whether the bilingualism works in Calgary:

Okay, I know that Canada is a bilingual country [officially], but in my opinion, it is false because for me there are divisions between Québec, New Brunswick, and other provinces. In Québec they speak French, in Brunswick they speak both. But I think, and many people told me, that in Québec they speak English and French, but people don't talk in English, they prefer to speak in French. Even if you know Spanish, they prefer that you speak Spanish than English. I know from the news that New Brunswick is the only province in Canada that is bilingual. But for me it is very sad, because in Columbia, for example, all you have is the opportunity to practice Spanish. My point here is that people can practice both languages easily. It's very easy. But there is a division about languages. So for me Canada is not bilingual. For example if you go to the train and you have some people in French, they will be "I'm sorry, I can't speak French."

Robert's perception of official bilingualism is intrinsically connected to societal bilingualism. The starting point of his interpretation of bilingualism, as this excerpt, as well as other parts of the interview demonstrate, is that bilingualism policy implies and determines the notion of bilingual country. In other words, Robert questions societal bilingualism and the social agency that are supposed to confirm and validate official bilingualism and the agency of law. It is important to note here that whereas Robert's interpretation of bilingualism in Calgary is based on his own local experiences, his examination of bilingualism on a national scale is based on someone else's anecdotal experiences:

When my friends came to Canada, the first place that they arrived was Drummondville, a place close to Montréal. They told me that when they arrived, they didn't speak French. They felt it was easier to integrate into the community if you speak Spanish but not English. . . . They also said that the English and French neighborhoods are separated.

In his narration, Robert attempted to collect all those examples together in order to illustrate that not only is Canada not a bilingual country but also there seems to be a conflict at the societal level about languages in Canada. According to him, the conflict is associated with the society, where Anglophones and Francophones are divided about each other's languages. By questioning social agency, Robert indirectly questions the law on bilingualism.

*Why is there a law if we are not bilingual?* If the previous example displays indirect questioning of law and its association with language practices at the societal level, the second approach that embeds a strong critical element in it questions the law directly. In other words, it asks, "Why is there a law on bilingualism, if society doesn't practise it?"

Paul is a young Francophone immigrant from Chad, who is taking an ESL class in one of Calgary's immigrant serving agencies. Being a Francophone, he actually considers Russian to be his mother tongue, which he acquired in his childhood years in Russia. As a Francophone, he originally lands in Montreal with a hope of a better life. Although he did not elaborate on his experiences in Québec extensively, it is possible to feel the level of Paul's dissatisfaction with what he encountered there: "I was very shocked when I came there. They told me you have to go back to school, because it is difficult to recognize your skills. . . . They always said I have to speak in a Québec accent."

Being frustrated by the lack of recognition of his professional credentials and, most importantly, his validation as a Francophone speaker, Paul moved to Calgary:

Before I came here to Calgary, I felt angry against Québec. When I came here I realized I have more opportunities than in Québec. . . . Now I feel like a Canadian, but when I was in Québec, people in Québec always told me that I was an immigrant, even if you spend 5 to 10 years. But here they talk about Canadians.

As Paul put it in this excerpt, he felt frustrated about the government and society in Québec that discriminated against his language and professional experiences. As we continued our conversation, the negativity that Paul expressed toward Québec seemed to guide and determine his stance on language issues in Canada:

I: Do you think as a country we should have two official languages?

P: I support if Canadians have only for one language.

I: Even though you speak French?

P: Yes. . . . Because when you go to the official government, the only say hi in French but when you start asking, “How are you?”, they are “Oh, we don’t speak French.”

Paul does not believe in bilingualism as an official policy since it does not translate into social practices. His approach is different from Robert’s perspective of looking at bilingualism as a social practice needing to match the law. Paul takes one step further and advocates for eliminating the law if it does not match the social practices. He questions the legitimacy of French in Canada, as his type of French is not seen as validated by Québécois French (cf. Blommaert, 2004; Heller, 2003). Furthermore, Paul observes that his French is not considered as an economic capital (Bourdieu, 1977). In Bourdieu’s (1977) terms, what

Paul sees as discrimination against his accent can be interpreted as an act of symbolic violence, that is the imposition of the legitimized categories of thought and perception.

Ting is another participant who does not agree with the policy of bilingualism and questions it directly. Just as many participants at a critical stage of a perceptual continuum, she equates official bilingualism with Canada being a bilingual country. For a language to be called official, it has to be practised and taught widely:

Why do we keep French as our main language? It is difficult. It is a problem. Why do we come to school and study English, not French? I'm thinking about this. So if we say that French is our language, it's an official language, everyone is supposed to speak French; why don't we speak French or learn French together with English here?

Ting recognizes languages as official if she sees them as being taught everywhere, including the LINC program. According to her, the claim of French as an official language cannot be validated if it is not taught and practiced alongside English. Despite her critical approach to bilingualism at the policy level, Ting acknowledged the instrumental value of learning French as an official language:

For me, maybe I cannot speak my French for my entire life, maybe, but for my children, if I have children, I will try to set them to speak French. The more you get, more fluent you are. If you speak French, and other people don't speak French, and in this case you apply for job in the office, people will hire you because you can speak more languages. It's easy to communicate with other people. And then they don't need an interpreter anymore. For my kids, I dream that they learn French and speak English fluently.

For Ting, bilingualism as a policy might not work; however, there are benefits that the policy has created. In Bourdieu's (1991) terms, French language for Ting is both an economic capital that increases her value in the job market, as well a social capital that brings accessibility to other people or social markets.

As I demonstrate in this chapter (see "Intersections of Personal and Official Bilingualisms"), regardless of immigrants' levels of criticism of bilingualism as a policy, many are very articulate about benefiting from French-learning opportunities that the school boards in Calgary offer to their children in particular.

There is another very interesting tendency that can be observed among immigrants who question bilingualism as a law because of the absence of bilingualism as a social practice. According to them, bilingualism as a law should be eliminated in order to maintain the unity of the country. French in this case is seen as of lower status than English and on par with other ethnic languages in Canada. French language is approached within geographical and demographical contexts, and the historical reasons of why French is important are dismissed. For example, Dawit, who is a LINC student in one of Calgary's immigrant serving agencies, repeatedly voiced his concern about preserving the unity of the country if two languages are official in Canada:

I don't like that that [there are two languages]. Now they are two, but when the number of Chinese or Africans increases, they will tell you, because French have their language, let's make it 3 or 4 or 5. . . . [Having more than one language] separates you. So if you have only one common language [it's better].

Dawit went on to describe his stance by giving an example of Ethiopia and Amharic being the only official language there, despite the fact that many other languages are

spoken by the population. He is quite aware that the Ethiopian experience with official languages cannot be projected into Canada; however, Dawit was very keen on emphasizing the importance of a one language-one country policy, thus demonstrating what May (2012) called an essentialist approach. Dawit said,

[While] the Ethiopian experience might not apply here because we have a different background, in the long run to unite this country, there should be something common. But if you are thinking that French speakers are 10%, after 5 or 10 years, some immigrants might be 20% and they will ask you that their language becomes a federal language. They will claim that and it will make these things more difficult for the future.

As the following example demonstrates, French language in Canada is seen as associated with French speakers rather than with Canada as a state, which is the case for English. French belongs to a specific group, while English belongs to Canada. French is a culture and ethnicity oriented, whereas English is a culture-free notion. Consequently, French does not deserve to be elevated above other languages that are also equated with minority cultures. In many instances, people supporting this approach are dismissive of historicity in forming bilingualism discourses and instead choose to focus on exploring the value of languages other than English from the commodification angle<sup>64</sup> (see “Intersections of personal and official bilingualisms” of this chapter for further elaboration). For example, Yao, a professional oil engineer from China, while familiar with the historical aspects of bilingualism in Canada, believes that French should not be an official language:

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<sup>64</sup> Commodification is the process where a language is legitimized as an economic capital within local and global markets (Heller, 2003).

I think English only is okay. I know that there were some problems in Québec. Why this happened? Because of French. They speak French and they get together, so they want to be independent. So if we don't want them to be independent, we don't want to support them to speak French. And if French is very important, how about German, how about Spanish, how about Portuguese? Japan is a very advanced country, if you want to learn some advanced technology, you have to learn Japanese.

Just as the previous interviewee, Dawit, Yao approached French as one of many languages in Canada. As this excerpt demonstrates, for some immigrants, having two languages in the country is considered as potentially leading to segregation and later to separation. In order to stop these processes, English should be the only official language in Canada (for more discussion on French as an ethnic notion, see “Measuring the level of government's support: French as an ethnic notion” in Chapter 5).

***Post-critical approach: Understanding bilingualism as a law and as a practice.*** If the previous approach questions the validity of law on bilingualism and sees it as being juxtaposed to social practices, post-critical approach is reconciliatory in nature since it attempts to understand the dichotomy between the agencies of law and society. Instead of asking why there is bilingualism in Canada, it attempts to focus on making both official and personal bilingualisms work together. In other words, bilingualism is not seen as a conflictual process but rather a collaborative means.

Based on this philosophy, it is a complex phenomenon that is ideological, historical, and sociopolitical in nature and is contextualized differently across Canada. At this level, interpretations of bilingualism depend on what law and society are meant to be, i.e., “If we

claim we are bilingual, let's do something about it." Immigrants who tend to subscribe to this way of thinking have an extensive exposure to various discourses on bilingualism in various contexts. Their definitions of bilingualism comprise multiple definitions that they come into close contact with. Such definitions are acquired through interactions with Francophones and Anglophones not only within Alberta but also French speaking regions including Québec (in fact, many of newcomers who bring multiple perspectives on bilingualism lived or stayed in Québec for extensive periods of time).

A post-critical approach is different from a factual approach in a sense that here, instead of disregarding historical and social contexts of bilingualism and concentrating on describing the law, participants attempt to interpret official bilingualism from the position of both law and society. Furthermore, it is also quite different from a critical approach, as instead of offering a single perspective on why bilingualism should or should not exist, as is the case with a critical approach, people supporting a post-critical approach bring multiple perspectives and experiences into exploring official and social dimensions of bilingualism as mutually related. It is important to mention here that although the formation of perceptions of bilingualism does seem to be somewhat progressive in nature and includes the stages I have mentioned, immigrants move alongside multiple discourses and might find themselves as being in between or at two spectrums simultaneously. Furthermore, they might and will demonstrate the fluidity and hybridity of their own discourses depending on the times and contexts they are in (Smith, 2008). Nonetheless, at times, there is a tendency to align with one of these approaches to bilingualism.

To illustrate post-critical perceptions of bilingualism, I offer for the second time an example of a LINC student, Estella, from Mexico. Estella immigrated to Canada together

with her husband in a skilled-worker category. In addition to her high-level educational credentials, she has basic proficiency in French, the result of her efforts in a French class in Mexico. She has also been to Québec as a tourist.

Estella's discourse on bilingualism echoed multiple perspectives on what bilingualism is supposed to be and how it is perceived internationally, nationally, and locally. First of all, Estella portrayed the difference between an external image of Canada as a bilingual country and internal practices of bilingualism saying, "In Mexico when somebody talks about Canada, we think that they speak French and English, but when we arrived here, French is more of a community."

Second, Estella explained that an external image of Canada as a bilingual country is portrayed through multiple sources. For her such portrayal is intentional:

When you see outside of Canada, that's the image that you give. You see the government pages, when you go to promote your country for study, you always say, the Canadians always say, that you have to learn two languages, and then they show different places where you can study French and English. . . . You always say, we can speak French and English.

Third, Estella understands the role of the government in promoting French externally as being different from people speaking French saying, "I think the government wishes people speak both, give the same rights to the people who speak French and to the people who speak English. They wish but the fact is not true."

And finally, even though Estella observes the discrepancy between legal and social aspects of bilingualism, rather than rejecting the policy and social practices altogether, she advocated for revisiting the notion and brought issues of national identity into discussion:

I don't know if it is nature or something but people always want to belong somewhere. So if we want to belong to Canada, we should develop a kind of identity. I don't know, if you don't want to be confused with the United States, you should have something different. And the language [French] will be the difference.

According to Estella, external promotion is necessary; however, for a country to develop a bilingual identity, French has to be promoted within the country, both among Anglophones and immigrants:

I think it is the right promotion, but maybe you should promote to take the French too in your country. For example, these classes. I know they offer LINC classes but in French, I don't remember the name. They offer same classes but in Québec. So it would be a good idea if you offer also for immigrants [here].

As her quotes demonstrate, Estella offers multiple perspectives on what bilingualism is for Anglophones, Francophones, and immigrants. She talked about language rights in the context of Canada and Québec and approached French from the perspective of a minority group in Canada as well as a majority group in Québec and viewed the language within historical and contemporary contexts. Rather than juxtaposing these perspectives (as would be the case with those immigrants who decide to concentrate on one perspective), she attempts to bridge gaps between them. However, even though her approach is collaborative, she is very well aware of the complexity and even the impracticality of her recommendations.

Estella might be keen on shifting from perceiving French as enacted by the government to French practiced by the society, but she admits that such a shift might not be feasible to achieve for many different reasons. Estella's example is also important from the

position of critical theories that I bring here. Heller (2011b), Bourdieu (as cited in Dezalay & Madsen, 2012), May and Sleeter (2010), as well as Tully (2005) were essentially concerned with one question: understanding the relation between agency and structure and exploring the dynamics of an agent being an object (or influenced) and a subject (influencing) the structures. For them, the process of exploration is a reflexive process that involves agents being able to situate themselves within historicity and contemporaneity of the phenomenon.

Estella demonstrates that she is able to acquire that level of consciousness and reflexivity on issues of bilingualism in Canada. For her, neither bilingualism as a law nor bilingualism as a social practice are essentialist concepts, but rather are viewed as being placed alongside historical and contemporary processes. Estella's reflexivity does not necessarily lead to solutions; instead, it engages all the elements in a dialogue with each other, thus making the dialogue a purpose of her reflexivity. Such a multilayered approach is quite common among those who think in post-critical terms.

Mina also was able to bring multiple discourses into the discussion on what bilingualism means for her and for Canada. Being an avid reader, news follower, and traveller, she is very well aware of ideologies behind bilingualism policy and the agencies that are involved with instilling those ideologies. Mina also approaches bilingualism post-critically. In many ways, her understanding is informed by her experiences in Canada as an immigrant, student, professional, and a citizen. Throughout my conversation with Mina, she described herself as well as the notion of bilingualism through the lenses of multiple meanings.

First of all, bilingualism for Mina is a historic phenomenon that the government attempts to sustain within contemporary sociopolitical contexts. Such efforts are often superficial and ideologically inclined and do not address the needs of the Canadian society in a globalized world, and they are not historically justified:

Historically, we're so far from the day we build it [Canada]. I think there is a tendency to believe that it belongs to one of those that you called [English and French], but we are hoping and aiming for the future that our children will think that this land belongs to them too. And I know that especially aboriginals have the hardest time to even call it Canada, because they think, "You guys came to my country and now you're calling my country Canada, and now you're asking me to call it Canada, and if I don't than I'm not civilized enough, I'm not modern enough, I'm not multicultural enough for you".

Mina also understands that the role of the government in a democratic society as contradictory. On the one hand, she is willing to equate government with society; on the other hand, she believes that they have an ideology to pursue (cf. Blommaert, 1999). Mina said:

I personally believe, when you talk about governments, everything changes. I cannot separate government from the people of the society, especially in developed countries so easily. There are underdeveloped countries that still are living under the dictatorship. I have easier time to separate people from the governments in those countries, but in countries where they live in democracy for over 100 years, it's hard for me to say, "Okay, you know, people of France or Canada are different

from the government.” But at the same time, governments are about politics. Even if they might follow what people say, they always say what is good for politics.

That is why, bilingualism in Canada, according to Mina, is an ideological concept that is perceived and enacted by the government for reasons that are different from the societal aspirations:

When you travel around Canada and you see that signs are the only bilingual thing. So you are not necessarily putting the sign for leading or helping people to understand the signs better, you do need it because you call your country bilingual.

For Mina, ideally, government should be enabling communication between groups and individuals at the micro level rather than macro level communication between political entities that represent those groups and individuals. In other words, while the government might need to address bilingualism issues within sociohistorical and political realms, it should also, and perhaps even more importantly, start creating communication pathways between Anglophones, Francophones, immigrants, and aboriginals at the societal level. For example, Mina suggests that television and media could play a more significant role in educating people about French culture as, unfortunately, local media tends to focus mostly on negativity around French political issues in Canada instead of promoting and bringing positive elements of the French culture to the mainstream Albertan population. She is not against bilingualism as a policy per se; however, she believes that the government instead of concentrating on social engineering of bilingualism should facilitate more opportunities for collaboration between cultures and groups at the individual level. Yet, as the previous interviewee Estella, Mina believes that that might not be a tangible effort in the long run. In fact, according to her, such efforts would not be necessary in an ideal world where the role

of the government would be minimized. Mina said, “Because when you and me have our own voices, then you will hear me completely; you’re not hearing me through the government for its own survival needs.”

Perspective that brings discourses on government and society both as conflictual and collaborative in discussion of personal, social, and official bilingualisms is very common at the post-critical level of bilingualism perception. To further validate this point, I bring Andrey as an example. Andrey arrived in Canada from Russia as a teenager with his family and graduated from a high school in Calgary, and at the time of the interview was enrolled as an undergraduate and continuing-education student studying French. The conversation with him revealed his complex analytical understanding of issues. Andrey was able to demonstrate the synthesis of micro and macro perspectives on what bilingualism was and is for Canada within historical and socioeconomic realms and how bilingualism relates to the increasing diversity in Canada.

Andrey started taking French as an optional subject in senior high school. The opportunity to study French in high school was very exciting as it was not provided previously in junior high. He explained his motivation behind taking French as guided by his interest in communicating with two of his closest Francophone students as well as realizing that “in the bilingual country it really helps to know two languages.”

One of his biggest revelations during Andrey’s high-school years was how limited the numbers of Canadian-born students in French-language class were: “When I took French in high school as an option, there were very few actual Canadians that were born and raised here. I had people from Romania, Croatia, India, other parts of Europe—there were very

few Anglophones.” In fact, he was only able to encounter Canadian-born students in French-immersion programs, and their reason to learn French was very different from his:

The majority of Canadians I spoke to were in immersion and the reason they were in immersion is because they actually have roots in the past, perhaps they are Anglophones but their parents or grandparents immigrated here from Québec or France.

Furthermore, Andrey saw the level of interest toward French decreasing substantially at a university level, even among those who took it in high school.

Among all of my friends that I went to high school with, probably 1-2 students only continued with French, one I know dropped out of the class. [Maybe it is because] people put more value toward course subjects, they wanna come up with GPA and they believe that French would hold them back. But the long term potential is not realized if you do not consider it now rather than when it is too late.

Andrey talked at length about why he believes immigrants are more interested in learning French. He defines immigrants as “explorers” and that “part of the immigrant way is that the mind wants to explore.” This is reminiscent of Heller’s (2006) metaphor of voyageurs that refers to those French speakers who were and are willing to take chances to explore, move beyond, and take risks. Such exploration comes with an understanding of value of connections and networks and desire to expand markets (Bourdieu, 1977).

I think if you speak more than one language – you have a bigger access to people of different origins, like for example, if you come from Romania and you are here in Canada you have learned English, you can speak to Romanians, and English. . . . So what immigrants might understand that if you have bigger access to people, there

could be a base to wanting to learn another language. And what other language is promoted more than the others? It is French, right? So for them it is no brainer, it is great to be able to communicate to more people of different origins, finding, exploring, seeing how different cultures are composed.

For Andrey, learning French has a strong instrumental value; however, it is not the most important aspect of French. Throughout his discussion, Andrey distinguished between instrumental and symbolic approaches to learning French, and emphasized the importance of the latter for immigrants:

The people that I know, for them it [learning French] is more symbolic. Because it also unites us, students having the history together coming to Canada at an early age and sticking by each other, I think it is another link to keep us together. Because we have similar aspirations we came to Canada to find something. . . . I think that is a big factor in French being a symbolic representation more so than instrumental, because if you see it as symbolic, I do not think that you really need to have an instrumental factor, because you just have it. If you are the person who sees it symbolic, instrumental becomes irrelevant because you already have it. And it is because you have interest and not so much you know.

To further argue for his point, Andrey used a metaphor of solving a mathematical problem:

So it is like an equation that you can't solve. If you see an instrumental value, you will be solving this equation and once you write down the answer, you might forget how you got there. When you see as symbolic, you see the parts of the equation and you know the equal sign is just the gateway. As soon as you understand the

components, the answers come on their own. This is how I believe the symbolic part works.

Andrey does see French in terms of economic capital; however, it is cultural and eventually symbolic capital that defines French (Bourdieu, 1991). As I will further demonstrate, Andrey also engages in processes of understanding of why we construct relations of social difference and social inequality the way we do. Similar to Estela, Andrey does not believe in essentializing and defining matters, but instead focuses on exploration and the process itself. This way, French is no longer confined to be needed in terms of its instrumental value but rather symbolically.

Andrey also believes and hopes that immigrants, more than anyone else, are willing to understand the components of the so-called “bilingualism equation.” Understanding the components to him implies exploring the history of bilingualism as told by both sides as well as relating it to the realities of the modernity within global, national, and regional contexts. Andrey recognizes that his high-school experiences in English-speaking Calgary introduced him to the Anglophones’ side of the history of Anglophone-Francophone relations. He is quick to point out that even though the learning English part was mandatory to him through high-school curriculum in an English-dominant city, he is keen on exploring both parts and is not willing to take for granted what he was taught in high school.

For Andrey, French-language promotion by the Canadian government is doomed to fail unless it is combined with the passion that comes both from the government and the society. He continues to argue that while the government should take an active role in promoting French, it has to start understanding the realities of the current Canada and build

on policies that consider them. First, while Canada is and should indeed pose itself as a bilingual country, it is important to accommodate such vision with Canada being and becoming a multicultural society. Second, the decision to promote French within the contexts of western Canada and the level of such promotion should take into account the regional socioeconomic realities (see commodification of language in Heller, 2011a). According to Andrey, the economic boom in western Canada triggers large immigration and migration processes and leads to strengthening the English-language position both in Alberta and Canada. As a result, policies and actions on bilingualism, should they be carried within Alberta contexts, need to provide more space for public discussion and consideration of bilingualism. For a government to efficiently implement its bilingualism policy, it has to make it economically viable for the public to learn French by facilitating collaboration among local Alberta businesses and businesses located in French-speaking regions. Economic projects in turn facilitate using French in workplace settings by all Albertans

In brief, while Andrey believes that it is the responsibility of the government to promote French as far as Alberta and western Canada are concerned, socioeconomic factors should be taken into consideration. Furthermore, as he puts it, “With that responsibility you should have enough people to support this initiative; the government should see that there is enough interest from the public.”

However, regardless of Andrey’s point of seeing instrumental value in French for the government, eventually, it is the symbolic value of French that should matter. However, the symbolic value of French cannot be solely promoted through legislative means but could and should be established at a level of an individual’s consciousness and

understanding of what bilingualism is for Canada and for an individual personally. Andrey sees that immigrants more than anyone else have the potential to reach that level of consciousness:

I don't think it is necessary that French is an official language so that we have to learn it. It's more that Canada is composed of two parts; so far, we came here and acquainted with one of them. So it is not so much about the legal aspects [of being an official language]. I don't speak for all the immigrants but I do hope this is the case, this is the way I see it. I see it is like an exploration, the way of enlightening yourself, seeing the potential in it, seeing that there is a horizon there and you can get there if you want and not because somebody is telling you to go there, like "Oh, if you wanna have a good job, the society pressures in, oh, you know French is undervalued and you should learn it because it is an official language."

Andrey's quote, as well as all previous quotes in this section, demonstrate very vividly how complex, deep, and multifaceted discussions are on matters of bilingualism. People supporting this approach, which I have called post-critical, attempt to bring various sociohistorical, sociopolitical, and economic factors into determining definitions of bilingualism. Immigrants who exhibit post-critical approach toward bilingualism view it as a constructed phenomenon that needs to be negotiated individually as well as at the level of the government. For many of them, this does not simply imply rejecting or advocating for bilingualism but also understanding it by bringing together both macro- and micro-level discourses.

The agencies of law and society are not seen as diametrically opposed to each other but rather through their capacities to work together for a common good. The common good

as far as bilingualism and its goals are concerned could and should take into account both agencies and focus on how they collaborate with each other. Often, as immigrants point out at the post-critical level, if the common good for French is agreed to be defined as promoting and ultimately creating a bilingual society, government should concentrate on creating conditions for the public to explore the symbolic value of French alongside its instrumental value. This approach also recognizes the process of engaging all actors in exploring and re-negotiating meanings of bilingualism within historicity and modernity and by making those meanings explicit to all actors who take part in conversations about them (Auger et al., 2007). Essentially it is about bringing a change in perceptions and understanding and acknowledging the role of various groups through identifying historical and contemporary tensions, as well as asymmetries of political and social representations (Tully, 2005). This also means understanding that “disagreements inhere in a multi-nation state and cannot be foreclosed but should be continually negotiated in a peaceful and democratic way” (Kymlicka, 2011, p. 299). Eventually, such process, which I would like to refer to as sociolinguistics for policy change<sup>65</sup> might lead to recognition and redistribution of those roles at the policy level as I will demonstrate in the next section where I expand on the issues of bilingualism at a micro level.

### **Connecting Macro and Micro: Immigrants on Their Place in Bilingualism and Multiculturalism in Canada**

So far, I have explored immigrants’ perceptions within two major inquiries. First, I have attempted to provide an overview of how immigrants define their roles within the society and explore contributing factors to their definitions. I have identified the roles of agencies of law and society and their interaction with each other in this process. Second, I

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<sup>65</sup> For more information on sociolinguistics for policy change, see Chapter 2, “Theoretical Framework.”

have described how immigrants view the role of bilingualism in the society within the conceptual framework that approaches bilingualism at different critical angles. I have argued that immigrants expand meanings of bilingualism they subscribe to initially as they diversify their points of interaction with the society. In this section, first, I try to link the two inquiries together and explore how immigrants see themselves individually and as a group in discourses on bilingualism. In particular, I will examine the aspects and the level of engagement of immigrants as far as bilingualism is concerned. In the former section, I explored the social and legal representations of bilingualism at a broad or macro-scale level; in this section, I emphasize the individualized nature of approaches to bilingualism, especially in learning French. I target questions as to whether immigrants are interested in learning French, and to what extent they at a more individual level support the government's initiatives to promote French with the realities of Calgary, Alberta, and western Canada in general. Finally, I demonstrate how this will lead me to explore the notion of multiculturalism and multilingualism through the eyes of immigrants.

### **Intersections of personal and official bilingualisms**

*Immigrants' support of bilingualism at a micro level.* The first question that allows me to examine how immigrants situate themselves individually in the discourses on bilingualism is whether immigrants are engaged or willing to participate in French-learning activities. As I have demonstrated, immigrants approach bilingualism from a variety of critical angles that either prioritize social or legal agencies or see these agencies as mutually interconnected. However, despite the multiple perspectives that immigrants bring into their narratives, the overwhelming number of them express their support for bilingualism at an individual level. Bilingualism for them is seen as a resource and a tool

that is worth investing time and effort into. While they might not agree with bilingualism policy or question the legal foundations of it due to the lack of its social manifestation in Alberta, ultimately, French does hold a very strong instrumental value to them. Many immigrants attach this importance to French and learning French for this because of the many possibilities that the French language opens to them in terms of employment, networking, economic and professional mobility, as well as cultural integration (Mady, 2010, 2012). There is a very strong consensus among immigrants that French is important for them personally and that learning French is definitely worthy of consideration.

With this realization of importance of learning French also comes an understanding that it might not be a realistic expectation, especially considering circumstances that immigrants often find themselves in upon their arrival to Canada. Such a narrative is prevalent especially among participants from the LINC program, who often find themselves struggling to learn English during the daytime and then needing to work in the evenings. So, even though there is a belief that French would be a very important asset for them, many do recognize that learning French might not be realistic at that moment. There is also a realization of the importance of French for their children. In fact, learning French is one of the most frequently considered options for the children of immigrants. Learning French here is not seen only as a possibility but also as a tangible expectation.

So, in the case of immigrant children's education, for immigrants, the discourse on bilingualism is no longer confined to the discourses of society and law, but expanded to the discourses of viewing French as economic capital or a commodity (Bourdieu, 1991; Martin-Jones, 2007). In other words, it does not matter any longer whether the society speaks French or not and whether it should translate into bilingualism as a law. What

matters at this point is the accessibility of French-learning resources and the extent to which such resources could be utilized. French should be learned not if but because there are educational opportunities for that. So, the question of learning French becomes the question of opportunity.

For example, Ting, a young refugee woman from Burma, was very passionate about providing opportunities for her children to learn French:

For me, maybe I cannot speak my French for my entire life, maybe, but for my children, if I have children, I will try to set them to speak French. The more you get, the more fluent you are. If you speak French, and other people don't speak French, and in this case if you apply for job in the office, people will hire you because you can speak more languages. It's easy to communicate with other people. And then they don't need an interpreter anymore. For my kids, I dream that they learn French and speak English fluently.

Claudia, who was mentioned earlier, is a mom of three children. The elder one was going to a Spanish bilingual school, and the younger ones were still in kindergarten at the time of the interview. She wanted all three of her children to be able to speak English, Spanish, and French, and she was keen about enrolling the two younger ones in French immersion. When I asked Claudia about the reason, she indicated that it is an obvious decision for her because of available French learning resources: "Here it is easy because Calgary has a school with French immersion. It is good to know four or five languages. . . . Also French is the second language here."

Leticia is another parent in the study. She came with her three children from the Philippines 2 years ago. She expressed her confusion about her daughter who is taking

French in school despite the teacher telling her to have more English instead of French. She seems to agree with her daughter's teacher's opinion about gaining proficiency in English first and is not quite sure that her daughter is doing the right thing. In fact, having a different opinion than many participants in this study, Leticia does not necessarily believe in the value of bilingualism in the contexts of Alberta. Such belief is determined by her thinking that "in Alberta, the government wants that everybody speaks English so that we can communicate easily and understand each other." To Leticia, the teacher's insistence on ESL classes is a confirmation of such statement. Such perception when looked at within a critical sociolinguistic framework points at contestations of one's language legitimacy and presence in a specific linguistic market (Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001).

Leticia's daughter is not considered to be qualified to access the French-immersion program because she is labeled as an ESL student. Her legitimacy as a participant in French immersion is questioned because of the dominant ideology that normalizes the assumption that

1. French immersion is for Anglophones only (Mady, 2008), and
2. Language acquisition as a process is confined to one language at a time (Genesee, 2011).

These are the discourses that Leticia adopts because of—in Bourdieu's terms (as cited in Eick, 1999)—acts of symbolic violence, yet, she expressed her fascination and pride when she witnesses how her daughter, who is at the top of her French class, demonstrates her French-speaking skills at home:

She [the daughter] is good in French; she can count from one to 10 in French.

Sometimes she speaks in French a little bit. . . . I'm proud; sometimes she teaches me to speak but I'm not interested because I want to concentrate on English.

It is important to note that alongside these positive discourses on educational opportunities to acquire French for children, immigrant parents are often uninformed or misinformed about those opportunities. One of the most common misconceptions about French education in Calgary among immigrant parents is that it is only offered through private institutions. For example, Adel, who is a French-speaking immigrant from Algeria, is very keen on providing educational opportunities for his children. However, his desire is limited, as he perceived, by the lack of financial resources to do so. When I asked him as to whether he would consider French for his children, he replied empathetically, "Yes, I wish, but considering my financial situation, I cannot afford sending them to French-immersion schools." Fenet, a LINC student from Ethiopia, also believes French education is expensive and is offered in private institutions only. As Fenet put it, "I would love to, but I can't afford it because there is no specific French school here. It's private; you have to pay for that."

Dan also was very vocal about encouraging his future children to learn French. For him, just as it is the case for other interviewees I have mentioned, learning French is about having and benefiting from resources at place. He concurred that "Canadians are lucky because they have two official languages" and that it would be very unwise not to utilize available educational resources.

So, to summarize, there is a very strong inclination among immigrants to support bilingualism individually. Such support is often translated into exploring French-learning

opportunities for their children. However, in many cases these efforts are restricted by the lack of proper information on French resources as well as contestation of their legitimacy of learning French as immigrants (Mady, 2012).

*Immigrants' support of bilingualism at a macro level.* My next question explored immigrants' support of bilingualism at a macro level. In other words, I am interested to know whether and to what extent immigrants justify the role of the government in official bilingualism and agree with the level of involvement with French both nationally and provincially. As I demonstrated in the previous section, there is overwhelming support of individual bilingualism among immigrants, especially in terms of taking advantage of provided educational resources in Calgary. In this part of the discussion, I attempt to unveil their attitudes toward government in official bilingualism.

First and foremost, the majority of immigrant participants were supportive of the government taking the leading role in matters dealing with official bilingualism. In fact, according to new Canadians, the notion of official bilingualism implies a very concrete role of the government in implementing the policies at a micro level. So, official bilingualism is not only a law, but a law that should be enacted and practiced. However, while there was a strong agreement among immigrants to recognize the role of the government in official bilingualism; there are differences in interpretations of such role. In many instances, the role is perceived by immigrants as being characterized by the degree of the government's involvement with official bilingualism. Essentially, there were four principal thoughts among participants with regard to identifying the degree of government's involvement:

1. Government should provide access to bilingualism (to those who need it).

2. Government should support/promote bilingualism (to those who are interested).
3. Government should enforce bilingualism.
4. Government should eradicate bilingualism.

Second, depending on their stances with regard to the level of government's involvement with bilingualism, participants offered their recommendations as to how this involvement should take place. This includes efforts through educational institutions, media, and community organizations among others.

Finally, there was a strong correlation between participants' perception of the role of the government and its actions toward official bilingualism and the conceptual framework of attitudes toward official bilingualism. Immigrants' approaches to the role of social and legal agencies in defining what bilingualism is meant to be for Canada are crucial in determining and negotiating their understandings of the level of bilingualism support on the government's part.

*Measuring the level of government's support: French as an ethnic notion.* The majority of participants in the study believed that the government should continue providing access to French education within local contexts. The difference is determining who the target group is of official bilingualism policy. On the one hand, there was a small number of participants for whom French is an ethnic and regional concept that is exclusive to French only. As a result, for them, access to French education is a matter of preserving language rights of Francophones as linguistics minorities in Alberta. On the other hand, there was a majority of participants in the study who approach official bilingualism, and

French for this matter, as a civic notion that is inclusive of all Canadians. For them, access to French education should target all Canadians in Alberta.

The first approach to French as a minority language is essentially a question of providing access to French for Francophones in Alberta. Those participants who approach French in ethnic terms advocated for protecting language rights of Francophone minorities in Alberta. For example, for Ogbai, an Ethiopian refugee and an ESL student at the time of the interview, support for official bilingualism implies support of Francophone populations to have access to French language services in Alberta: “The French are the minority; in that sense being a minority doesn’t mean that they have to promote their language, they have the right [to protect]. This is a democratic institution. I believe in that they have the right.”

Throughout the conversation, Ogbai repeatedly emphasized the importance of democratic values in Canada that are based on individual rights and freedoms. French for him is one of many languages that is associated with a specific ethnicity and culture; however, because of historical factors, French has earned the right to be protected within the policy framework of the country. He also occasionally referred to French as a second official language. Ogbai approaches French speakers as an official minority in Canada and believes that their language rights and their sense of minority nationhood should be legitimized in Canada as an example of the modern multinational state (Kymlicka, 2011). As for English, for Ogbai, it is a language that encompasses all Canadians and goes beyond geographical boundaries and cultural affiliations. It is a civic notion that is perceived neutrally by him because of what May (2008) would call legitimation and institutionalization of English, where legitimation stands for “formal recognition accorded to the language by the nation-state—usually, by the constitutional and/or legislative

benediction of official status” (p. 6), and language institutionalization refers to the “the process by which the language comes to be accepted, or ‘taken for granted,’ in a wide range of social, cultural and linguistic domains or contexts, both formal and informal” (May, 2008, p. 6).

While Ogbai’s positioning with regard to government’s role in official bilingualism policy falls within the “providing access to Francophones” category, there is another thought that builds on the same understanding of French as an ethnic notion. However, rather than advocating for providing access for Francophones those supporting this position argue for eradicating all government efforts in official bilingualism.

For example, Yao views French as a minority language and compares it to the rest of the languages in Canada and around the globe:

I think English only is okay. I know that there were some problems in Québec. Why this happened? Because of French. They speak French and they get together so they want to be independent. So if we don’t want them to be independent, we don’t want to support them to speak French. And if French is very important, how about German, how about Spanish, how but Portuguese? Japan is a very advanced country, if you want to learn some advanced technology, you have to learn Japanese.

Abdi continued with the same idea of dismissing historical justification of French as an official language in Canada:

Actually it is supposed to be one language. I think having one is going to be easier. If we say French people have come a long time ago, I don’t know when Chinese came here. Maybe if they have a big community, they can say that they want to use

their language too. [Then] it is going to be Chinese language too [laughing]. . . .

Let's say Indian people, they can say they have a lot of people, a big community, maybe they are 45% of Canadian population, so they have to use the language, they would ask [for the official status of their language] . . . It will be confusing. . . .

Anyway in my opinion, it is better to have one language.

In all three cases, French is perceived as affiliated with French people. It is a language of a minority and thus it is valid to compare it with the rest of the languages in Canada. However, while Ogbai recognizes historical justification of French becoming an official language, the last two interviewees dismiss this claim. They are acutely aware of separation and disunity that could be caused by many languages legislated in one country. So the idea of one nation–one language (May, 2008) resonates very strongly among those who believe that the government should not provide any additional support to French. Such approach could be observed in discourses of those who approach bilingualism issues critically and see the dichotomy between the agencies of law and agencies of society with regard to bilingualism.

*Measuring the level of government's support: Civic dimensions of French.* French as a civic notion takes a much more central position in discourses of immigrants regarding the support of French as an official language. French here is not viewed as exclusive to Francophones from Québec but inclusive of all Canadians. Civic French is also closely linked here with the perception of the Canadian citizenship model in post-national terms, which aims at socializing immigrants into a state-level identity that is above the inherited national divisions (Kymlicka, 2011). The legitimacy of French as an official language here is considered as given and thus the recognition of the government's actions targeting

official bilingualism is situated along the continuum that identifies the level of such involvement.<sup>66</sup> This continuum includes (a) providing access to French language, (b) supporting and promoting bilingualism, and (c) enforcing bilingualism. Note while access is advocated at all three positions on the role of the government in official bilingualism, it is the nature of such intervention that distinguishes these positions.

In the position of providing access to French language, government's role is seen as neutral and service-upon-request oriented. The task of the government is simply to respond to the needs of the population. Here, initiatives of the government emerge from and within the public. So, unless the public requests, the government is not supposed to take leadership in matters concerning official bilingualism. The position of supporting and promoting bilingualism implies a more active role of the government that builds on already existing or potential interest among the public. It can also operate from an understanding that bilingualism is good for the public and thus needs to be promoted. The position of enforcing bilingualism disregards public interest at a local level and prioritizes government interest at a macro level. Here, initiatives of the government emerge from its understanding of the importance of bilingualism for nation- and citizenship-building processes.

*Access to French as an official language* is determined first and foremost by the need of those who already speak French and who are required to be provided services in French.<sup>67</sup> Immigrants who perceive the role of the government as providing access to French as an official language often refer to Francophone immigrants who need French

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<sup>66</sup> If French is viewed ethnically, as I argued in the previous section, then the question of the role of the government becomes to support or not to support, whereas here, the question focuses on to what extent to support.

<sup>67</sup> Please note that if French is viewed as a civic notion, it is inclusive both of Canadian-born French and French-speaking immigrants. If French is viewed ethnically, then it is inclusive of Canadian-born French as a linguistic minority only.

language services in Alberta. In fact, one commonly raised point among participants, especially among those who are enrolled in ESL classes, was their surprise at the significant number of Francophone immigrants who would move from Québec to Alberta and enroll in those classes. The question that they often ask is why they would not be able to utilize their language skills in Québec and would need to relocate to an English-dominant region.

As I have demonstrated, many French-speaking participants in this study moved to Alberta for employment and, in some cases, for language reasons. In some cases, French-speaking immigrants felt that their French is not viewed as legitimate or appropriate (Heller, 2006; Roy, 2010), and their English wouldn't match the bilingual job requirements. The Francophone participants complained often about the inability of the government to provide them with services in the requested language. So they see the task of the government with regard to official bilingualism as providing access to services in French as French is the official language.

Adinda, a university French-language student, shared her experiences volunteering at one of the immigrant serving agencies in Calgary:

I'm working as a volunteer there. There was one lady, she could only speak French; she came there, and then nobody could serve her. At the time I was just starting my French course, I could not even help her. So she stopped coming. It was a pity, because she is new in the city, she needs somebody, some friends as well as English conversation classes. As a landed immigrant you can have LINC classes free, but the LINC is only in English.

Delmar is a francophone immigrant who expressed similar frustration over the lack of services in French in Calgary, even though he constantly heard about French being an official language all over Canada. He described a situation when he struggled translating his documents from French into English as he could not find those services offered by the government. Furthermore, he said he was could not get the job he was introduced to by his friend because the employer wanted someone who speaks fluent English and not French.

Overall, similar challenges were frequently raised by Francophone participants to the point that some of them started rejecting French as a linguistic capital and, as it was the case with one of the participants, opposed French being an official language. There is also a tendency among some Francophone immigrants to shift from seeing themselves as a part of *la Francophonie* because their French would not be considered legitimate (Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001). Also this would mean a shift from seeing French as a civic notion to French as an ethnic notion that is confined to Canadian-born French speakers and rejecting altogether the value of it as a linguistic capital.

*Support and promotion of French as an official language* was one of the leading themes in participants' interviews. The majority of interviewed new Canadians do believe that the role of the government is to support existing interest in French among the public as well as to take a more proactive role in cultivating this interest. Such support could and should be achieved through strengthening French-language presence through media in Alberta; creating educational opportunities at secondary and post-secondary levels; educating the public, including immigrants, of benefits of learning French; and ensuring collaboration between provinces through cultural and educational exchanges. The degree of the government's role in leading these initiatives would be determined by how bilingualism

is viewed within the conceptual framework of bilingualism perceptions (see “Conceptualization of approaches” in Chapter 5).

For example, media and research is often brought into attention by those who situate themselves at a further end of the perceptual framework. Their interpretation of bilingualism is characterized by understanding it as a complex ideological phenomenon that should be viewed from multiple perspectives. Mina believes that if the Canadian government does believe in official bilingualism translating into personal and social bilingualisms, the government should promote research that would inform the public on the benefits of being bilingual saying, “Experts like you guys can do that and be like, ‘You know what? We think bilingual kids or people, populations are smarter socially or have more flexibility towards new cultures.’” Pershad also recognizes the power of media in promoting French saying, “More TV channels, more subtitles in French, options to watch in French [are needed]. . . .That is the real bilingualism, media does a lot.”

Education is another very powerful means of supporting and promoting French among Canadians and especially new Canadians. The majority of the participants believe in the importance of providing educational opportunities for learning French as well as educating about those opportunities. As I have examined, many immigrants are either uninformed or misinformed about existing French-language opportunities in Alberta. According to those who believe in support and promotion of French as an official language, it is crucial for the government to move simply beyond providing access to French for the French-speaking population but also for non-French-speaking groups. In fact, as the analysis of immigrants’ discourses demonstrates, they do view French as an asset and are keen on taking on educational opportunities available to them. According to

the participants, educational opportunities should be provided at all levels of education in Alberta, thus including not only secondary and post-secondary instruction but also public-sector and settlement-service organizations.

One of the most common suggestions as to how the government should support and promote French is to create FSL classes analogous to the LINC program in which many of the study participants were enrolled at the time of the interviews. For example, one of the FSL students expressed her surprise at the fact that it is impossible to find French classes for free in Calgary, whereas Spanish is readily available in the library:

They have English conversation classes in the library, and they started with Spanish. I asked them, “How about French?” They said, “They haven’t started” [implying that there are no French classes there]. But they started with Spanish, isn’t it interesting? I don’t know what the policy is behind [that]. But yes, in the central library, they have conversation classes in Spanish [and no French].

She went on suggesting that it is important for the government to provide free educational courses in French:

For new immigrants, it would be good if the government could provide something like LINC classes for French, so that new immigrants who are already fluent in English can learn French. So after several years, you will have a population that can speak both languages.

Another participant echoed similar sentiments about the necessity of creating FSL classes for immigrants:

French is the official language; for example, we have LINC for English, and French has equal rights because it is the official language. How come we have program[s]

for English but not for French? But it is official language? We are claiming that they are equal but we don't see them equal.

Creating French-learning opportunities and allowing parents and their children to make informed choices especially at earlier stages of schooling is another point that participants raised. For example, Andrey talked about his French-learning efforts in high school and recognized the lack of accurate information about available resources:

When I was in Junior High and I don't know maybe it is different now, I didn't even have anything near that kind of information of what was available to me [referring to French immersion]. It was all segregated. If I knew about it, I would have probably started earlier, and I would have been speaking fluently by now, who knows? So I mean, I was picking up English just fine at that time, maybe I would have picked French just along.

However, creating educational opportunities is not enough by itself, and the quality of French-language programs should increase. Farah, a graduate student at the university, discussed her encounters with adult Canadian-born students in her French class who are unable to demonstrate any proficiency despite having studied French in schools:

[Having French] is very special, but I don't know why it is so ignored as an official language, at least I don't know about the rest of Canada, but here in the first level [of French], most of the students were Canadians, and I was kind of shocked that the Canadian people [were there]. . . . I thought as a Canadian you shouldn't take French at age of 20, 30, 40 in level one. I was thinking that there is more focus on French in school because it is an official language. I know it is Alberta, but I think even in Alberta there should be more effort on educating people in French. I don't

know why in schools they take French [when it is so ineffective] . . . I asked many people at the university if they studied French in schools. They said, “Yeah, but we forgot, we can’t speak.”

Immigrants who believe in the value of official bilingualism understand the role of the government as translating it into social bilingualism as well. As I have examined here, this includes informing the public and especially immigrants about the importance of French in Canada and Alberta. This effort, however, according to some participants, should go beyond providing information but also educating immigrants about official bilingualism the benefits of speaking French in Canada. Also, while it is important to reach out to immigrants in Canada about the importance of French, according to Hawa, an immigrant from Iraq, it is also important for the Canadian government to educate potential immigrants on bilingualism before coming to Canada:

For immigrants who haven’t arrived yet, they have to know that French is very important, and that the government will support the language. They have to know from the beginning before coming here that there are two official languages here.

Overall, there is a shared understanding by immigrants at this level that the orientation of the government with regard to French is based to a larger extent on “promotion-oriented policies” that aim at allocating resources to support the use of French (Kloss, 1998; Willey, 2007). Furthermore, many immigrants who feel that the government should support French believe that not only should the government educate immigrants about French-learning opportunities in Alberta but should also create new programs in which immigrants would be included. In general, there is a perception that the current French educational programs do not consider immigrants. This concurs with Mady’s

findings that immigrants are not regarded as equal participants in FSL programs (Mady, 2010, Mady & Black, 2011; Mady & Turnbull, 2012).

*Enforcement of French as an official language* is significantly less prevalent in how immigrants perceive the government's role in official bilingualism matters. Commonly, such position stems from an understanding that bilingualism is essential for the country's national identity as a bilingual country. Participants who believed in the government's role as enforcing French as an official language often placed themselves alongside the critical-perceptual stage of the conceptual framework, and emphasized the leading role of the government in nation- and citizenship-building processes. Enforcement of French as an official language implies making French-language education mandatory for everybody. For example, Yi Min opposed the idea of French immersion being optional; according to her, education in French should be mandatory for everybody:

It is about developing educational and bilingual institutions. That's all. People in Singapore speak two languages, I, for example, speak two languages; there is no problem for me, so why not for Canadian to learn another language? So there is definitely no problem. It is just about funding, facilities and more teachers in schools - so teach two languages at the same time. . . . I want the program [to] be mandatory.

Alejandra also concurred:

I think if they really want to have a bilingual country, they need to put some kind [of effort so that] they teach French [in] all the schools in all provinces. Then it will be a bilingual country. Not only in one province, okay? They should do that if they call Canada bilingual.

It is interesting to note that those who believed French should be enforced as an official language through education, also strongly defended the position of English within Francophone-dominant regions. In other words, both languages should be mandated equally throughout provinces. As Robert noted:

I think if Canada wants to maintain the status of a bilingual country, the French part's government must implement English classes not as an option, but mandatory. For children it's easier to learn languages. In the other side of the country, English side, the same but with French. For example, in my case, the home that I live, children speak three languages: English and French at school, because they have French option, and Spanish at home.

In general, the enforcement approach to bilingualism policy that some of the participants in this study mentioned is based on the assumption that there are inherited structures of multinational citizenship that do not have to adapt to the changes that the processes of modernity and globalization trigger (Kymlicka, 2011). In other words, French and English as official languages are seen as the inherited structures that should continue to be sustained through the government's efforts.

To summarize my findings in this section, depending on the angle of how French is perceived (i.e., an ethnic or civic notion), new Canadians will situate themselves at various levels of understanding the role of the government's engagement. For some, it could mean rejecting the policy altogether as bringing another language into the equation would threaten stability of the national unity of the country. For others, it could mean enforcing French that comes with the understanding that the national unity of the country is based on two languages that have established their legitimacy over the course of time. However, for

the majority of new Canadians, French poses an importance not only or necessarily because of its official status, but also due to its value as an additional language as well as availability of resources to acquire it in the local contexts. As my findings demonstrate, immigrants for the most part feel strongly about the importance of having access to French, especially in terms of the provision of educational resources.

**Intersections of heritage languages and multiculturalism.** The next and final question that I posed in the research study is how French contrasts with other languages that immigrants bring into the discussion on bilingualism. This question is important for several reasons. First, as I have stated, there is an anecdotal presumption evident in media and public discourses that somehow there is a problem with immigrants not willing to learn Canada's official languages and choosing to focus on their own languages (Kenney, 2009, 2012a). Furthermore, immigrants appear to demand more government involvement and funding for teaching languages other than French and English (Kenney, 2012b).

This leads to the stereotype that immigrants deliberately choose to support multiculturalism (which is equated here with seeking government funding of heritage-language programs) at the expense of bilingualism (which is correlated with learning English or French). As I have argued throughout the dissertation, the majority of immigrants, in fact, are supportive of bilingualism and would like to see a stronger linkage between official and personal bilingualisms (see "Post-arrival perceptions: Bilingualism as a law or bilingualism as a practice?" in Chapter 5). Moreover, their support is not only stronger than that of Anglophones but also translates into their willingness to support French as an official language through their own or their children's learning.

In order to invalidate the assumption that immigrants choose to prioritize their own languages at the expense of English and especially French, I explore the notions of multilingualism and multiculturalism in this section. Following the rationale of the previous section, where I examine immigrants' support of personal and official bilingualism, I attempt to decode immigrants' approaches to maintaining and promoting heritage languages and understanding the role and the level of the government's involvement. Finally, I analyze how bilingualism and multiculturalism compared and contrasted according to new Canadians.

***Immigrants' support of heritage languages at a micro-level.*** The first question that will allow comparing and contrasting immigrants' understandings of bilingualism and multiculturalism is to explore the notion of heritage languages in immigrant discourses. So, do immigrants attribute value to maintaining heritage languages for their children, and, if yes, how do they understand their roles in this task?

First, there is no question that participants in the study saw the value of supporting heritage languages<sup>68</sup> at a micro level. Immigrants in general (Dagenais & Berron, 2001; Lamarre & Dagenais, 2004) and immigrants in this study believed in the importance of maintaining heritage languages for children in home settings. Such practices are rationalized as being an important part of economic capital and to less extent being the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991). In other words, heritage languages are viewed more from a functional or practical perspective rather than a symbolic one.

Second, while there is a certain degree of support of heritage languages, there is no evidence of enforcing them among immigrant families. In fact, participants of this study

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<sup>68</sup> In Canada, the term heritage languages refers to languages other than official, i.e., English and French, and aboriginal, i.e., indigenous or "First Nations" (Cummins, 1992).

demonstrated a broad understanding of the social and linguistic contexts in which children and youth of immigrant families are situated. There are some interesting discourse patterns that highlight immigrant parents' attitudes toward language practices at home. A substantial number of the participants who are parents posited that maintaining ethnic languages is not necessarily defining for their children. Furthermore, there is also a realization of a lack of a motivational factor to speak an ethnic language in Canadian contexts. Participants saw the difference between speaking a language and the willingness to speak that language, and they understand that although their children might try to maintain their own languages (or some refer to them as parents' languages), eventually, it is language practices outside the home that will determine their children's motivation to continue with English or French.

For example, Yao, a professional immigrant from China, believed in the importance of supporting his native language:

In my opinion we should keep [native languages]. For me Chinese as my native language helps me to learn English. And there is a lot of culture inside our languages. There are a lot of advantages inside that from history. So this is the second reason why we should keep them. And for our kids, I think, Chinese language skills are important. China and Canada belong to the world, so maybe in the future there will be more communication between countries. So language skills are important to make money, to find a job.

This excerpt is a part of a larger focus-group conversation on official and heritage languages in Canada that took place in one ESL class. Among seven participants, Yao was perhaps one of the most vocal proponents of "enforcing" his own language in family

settings, and the previous excerpt is an attempt on Yao's part to describe the benefits of such practices at home to the rest of the focus group. First, he believes that, in Bourdieu's terms (1977) there is a cultural or symbolic value attached to it. The second and perhaps most important value is viewing a heritage language as a skill to "make money, to find a job." Proficiency in Chinese does not only help Yao transfer his language skills into English learning, but also allows him to expand his socioeconomic capital.

Adel is another student who took part in the same conversation and who questioned Yao about the lack of rationale behind maintaining heritage languages in families:

I don't think it is very important to teach kids their own native languages, because for them, they are born here, or came here at a young age. At home, I don't oblige them to speak my native language. I just give them the freedom at home to speak. I think if you force them to speak your own language, you cannot make it happen.

After 5 or 10 years in the school, they will not speak your own language at home, I'm sure. When I came here first day, we were speaking only our language, but after 1 year, they are speaking 50% English and 50% Arabic. And now after 2-3 years they will speak only English and you cannot stop there because the influence of the school, the influence of the street, they influence of the community are stronger than the influence of parents at home. And that they will come for you to speak only English with them.

Yao does seem to agree with Aziz about the challenges of heritage-language maintenance. In his own words, he seems to be "very confused" as to why his efforts with regard to a Mandarin-only rule in his family does not yield any tangible results. According to him, his children are unable and, most importantly, unwilling not only to progress in

Chinese writing but also demonstrate resistance in speaking Chinese with him. Adel concurred with Yao and gave an example of his children:

I have 2 kids. The boy is going to school; the girl was going to school with her mom. Now they are speaking English together. They speak Arabic with me and their mother. But if you go behind the door and just listen to them, they are speaking English. . . . You know what they say? They speak English and they end by Arabic. They change the word, they start by English and at the end they make it Arabic. They make some words English and Arabic. They're mixing words now. And I know after 1 year they will speak only English. Arabic is becoming less, and English more.

For me, Yao and Adel represent two competing discourses: the first discourse legitimizes heritage-language-only practices confined within the home, and the second one places heritage languages in larger socialization contexts (Bayley & Schecter, 2003). So then the question essentially becomes who gets to define what the language practices at home should be: individuals or contexts.

Many participants in this study engage in processes of deconstructing or explicitifying concepts that are otherwise implicit and ideological (Auger et al., 2007). For example, when it comes to heritage-language practices, many participants were well aware of the social pressure that imposing languages could bring. Ambika, an ESL student of Indian origin, gave an interesting example that illustrates this pressure:

You know, Indians don't like to spread themselves to others. I don't know why. They pressure their children to learn Punjabi language all the time. I don't think it is a bad idea but in this situation children are pressured in both languages. In house

they prefer just Punjabi. And at school -just English. I have an example. I visited my husband's relatives. And the mom was talking about her girl, she said, "I prefer my daughter to speak Punjabi at home always, but at school she speaks English all the time." She said that she [her daughter] doesn't talk to anyone; she just keeps herself in a room. I told her that that she is under pressure [because of that expectation].

Overall, immigrant parents' perceptions of their own languages extend beyond valuing it strictly in cultural terms but also considering it as an extension of linguistic capital that further translates into social capital, or what Hoerder, Hebert, and Schmitt (2006) described as the extensiveness of connections, networks, and affiliations with actors in various social contexts. For many immigrants, heritage languages are important for ensuring communication between generations that are situated geographically. Ethnic languages are maintained and valued because there is an assumption that if and when immigrant families decide to visit their countries of origin, children and youth of immigrant families would need to communicate with relatives in their own languages. Here are examples from three different individuals who spoke about the importance of having their own language for communication between generations. One said, "Maybe one day he [my son] wants to go to Ethiopia; there are so many relatives in Ethiopia, they have to communicate in Amharic, otherwise it might be difficult." Another participant said, "When I would go to Punjab region, I want him to know my language. I want him to know his culture, so that he can have a conversation with my friends, my relatives, because they don't speak English." A third participant said, "If our country [Burma] becomes democracy

and we have a chance to go back, they would need to speak Burmese, they will not be able to communicate with the majority of people if they don't speak Burmese.”

To summarize, immigrants do support heritage languages to various degrees and see them functioning in relation to groups or communities. In other words, heritage languages will be deemed important if they are lived in so called communities of practice that revolve around families, extended relative circles, neighbourhoods, and ethnic groups (Li, 2006). Such perception in many ways is similar to attributing importance to official bilingualism if it is seen as a social practice and questioning it if no communities of practice are present. Finally, there is a shared understanding that heritage languages cannot be imposed on younger generations. As Bob, an immigrant of Chinese descent, put it:

If I want my children to live here, I want them to become members of here. This is their life not my life. I cannot tell them which language you can speak, or cannot speak at home. This is their choice.

***Immigrants' support of heritage languages at a macro level.*** With immigrants attaching various meanings to heritage language practices at the individual level a question of perceptions of the government's role in supporting heritage languages at a macro level emerges. In other words, should the government be responsible for providing for heritage-language instruction? And if yes, how does it compare to government's allocation of resources toward French as an official language in Alberta contexts?

While Canada's national focus has mostly been on English and French, in Alberta, heritage-language instruction has long been a part of the public school curriculum (Duff, 2008). In this study, participants perceived heritage-language rights as individual rights that do not need to be protected or supported by the government and to be taught in public

schools. The policies here are seen as either “tolerance-oriented [that are] characterized by the noticeable absence of state intervention in the linguistic life of minority community [or] “expediency-oriented” (Willey, 2007, p. 96) that aim at providing short-term accommodations for minority-language individuals. In general, interviewed immigrants feel that the government should not support heritage language especially at the expense of official languages. They believe that the support role should be given to communities, ethnic groups and individuals rather than to the government.

This is how Yao, a Chinese immigrant, described his understanding of the role of the government with regard to heritage languages:

If you want to learn your own language, you learn by yourself. The government pays money, the money belongs to everyone. The money cannot be used for our own languages. . . . It’s your own choice. There is only one stream; we don’t need to support learning other languages, in my opinion. It is like a river. We have our own culture. We came from our own world. We should follow the mainstream. We should correct ourselves. We cannot change the society. So we should change ourselves to follow the mainstream.

Yao used the metaphor of “river” to describe responsibilities of immigrants with regard to the society. I see the Yao’s metaphor of river as associated with the rules, norms, and ideologies of a Canadian society. The role of a newcomer is not to form his or her own stream but to follow the “mainstream,” which, if translated into linguistic terms, implies following and accommodating oneself within already established linguistic values and characteristics of the society. In many ways, the metaphor of river here exemplifies the immigrant integration model that for some researchers is seen as the ideology of

assimilation of others into the hierarchical structure of the Canadian society (cf. Haque, 2005, Ricento, 2013).

Often, the reason behind immigrants' rejection of government taking a more active role with regard to heritage languages is an understanding of a shared effort to keep the country united. Government cannot and should not allocate resources for any languages other than English and often French, as it could potentially lead to disunity of the country due to the risk of demands of other ethnic groups for language rights.

Ting elaborating on the role of the government in terms of its support of official and heritage languages made a clear distinction between the two:

[Government should be involved] with French only, because everybody needs it, that's fair. But for the Chinese, if you do Chinese, then they have to deal with many languages. If you give funding to the school to learn Chinese, how about me? How about Spanish? How about other languages?

In fact, immigrants tend to disapprove government's involvement with heritage languages as heritage languages are associated with specific groups. Having a government allocate resources for Mandarin in public institutions implies giving preferential treatment to Chinese as an ethnic group over others. Heritage languages, first and foremost, are associated with individual-language rights and thus do not require the government's support at a macro level. Hawa, similar to the overwhelming majority of participants, subscribed to this opinion:

I think [my language] should be my responsibility, because it's an individual decision. Maybe it's only me who likes that. So I have to teach them at home; this is my idea and my opinion. Maybe other people want their children [to] speak other

languages, so it's not necessary that the government supports me to teach them. It is my responsibility.

It is interesting to note that while significant numbers of immigrants reject the role of the government in supporting heritage languages (which are viewed as ethnic concepts affiliated with ethnic cultures), there are some who are positive about the government's role if heritage languages are approached in global contexts or seen as a commodity (Heller, 2010). So, for example, the government can allocate resources for Spanish because it is not seen as an ethnic language but rather as a language of international communication. Consequently, in some occasions, if French is viewed by immigrants as a language of Québec rather than a language of Canada, it is also denied the support of the government. For example, John, a refugee from Nigeria, who lived in Québec before coming to Alberta, believes that teaching languages, French included, is a waste of time and effort on government's side:

At home you are free to speak your own language, if you want it, that's fine. But outside the home, it's English. Because if the government spends more money to teach people how to speak French, Indian, then it's just a waste of money. Because the language that you are spending this money for is worthless. We are here now [points to the LINC classroom]. It is written everywhere—speak English only. Then why the government is spending money to teach us how to speak Chinese? When we come to school, it says speak English only.

John expressed his confusion with the mixed messages that he receives in terms of the government's support of Chinese versus English. On the one hand, he is aware of the existence of Chinese bilingual schools funded by the government in Calgary; on the other

hand, he sees himself in an ESL classroom with the sign “Speak English only.” I asked him to elaborate on his position with regard to multiculturalism. John replied:

[Multiculturalism] is one of the aspects that makes people stay here, because they will be able to practice their culture. It makes them feel at home. . . . So it’s a good idea to have multiculturalism. But the only idea that I don’t really buy is funding the multiculturalism. Because it feels to me that the government has enough money and they don’t know what to do with that. . . . [Supporting our culture is] not government’s business. In fact, the government wants [people] to abide by Canadian law and Canadian culture. Even as the minister said at one place here, we want people to be Canadian first and foremost, to be proud of maintaining their heritage but not at the price of developing their Canadian identity. I hundred and five percent agree with this.

As this excerpt suggests, John portrays himself as supporting multiculturalism; however, the notion of multiculturalism is perceived by him in descriptive terms. Government is seen as allowing multiculturalism to be practiced but it should also take a neutral position in terms of its involvement with it. John brought an example from a speech by the Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, Jason Kenney (referring to one of the articles in the media on Jason Kenney discussed previously as a part of the LINC lesson) to argue for the importance of constructing and developing Canadian identity that, according to John, trespasses regional and provincial boundaries and is based on English. If to analyze his position in critical terms, English is viewed as legitimized to be in this role through the manifestations of such legitimation (i.e., how language is given an official status by the state), and institutionalization (i.e., how language comes to be taken for

granted through practices in various fields in the State) (May, 2000). The construction of what in fact is an ideology (Blommaert, 2004) for John occurs through interacting with the agency of law. For him, the English-only signs, the speech by Jason Kenney are taken unassumingly and are associated with the “Canadian law and Canadian culture.”

Andrey, an FSL student at the University of Calgary, brought a post-critical perspective in describing the role of the government in supporting heritage languages. While he agrees that the right to be taught in one’s own language is reasonable, he believes that the arguments for or against teaching heritage languages will depend on an individual’s understanding of what is more important for the country:

The right to be taught in your languages is definitely fair, but I think it is the question of how you perceive the ones who have found the country. So it is a controversial subject, because if they allow one culture to nest itself in a way that is taught in schools there would be kind of a cultural chaos and there would be so many resources that we would require and this would be the biggest deterrent.

Teaching other languages is resource-based according to Andrey, who said, “So my answer essentially is that this question is resource based, that it is not possible to support every culture. As soon as they see it is happening somewhere, you open the door and everyone wants to get in.”

While most of the participants appear to reject the role of the government in explicitly supporting heritage languages, there is also an understanding that such support is crucial for service accessibility and integration purposes. So, the government is required to allocate services for health, education, and other services access at initial stages of the settlement process. Such support should have a clear focus on understanding that providing

language support will facilitate integration of newcomers. Robert, an ESL student who immigrated to Canada in a skilled-worker category, elaborated on this very point:

For me, it is necessary to have help from the government. For example, I saw that when people in Columbia or Salvador come here, they need help from the government. They don't know the language; they don't know some steps or procedures. They need to take the initiative, but they don't know the language. So what happens? How can they ask for help? So for me it's very important that the government tries to reach out in their own languages.

The support of heritage languages for the purposes of short-term accommodations that some of the study participants refer to aligns with what Willey (2010) described as accommodation policies (also known as expediency-oriented laws; cf. Kloss, 1998) that are not intended to advance the use of a minority language but rather to allow the government to communicate with those who do not speak the state's languages to promote compliance with the law.

To summarize this section, in general, participants in this study do not see the necessity of promotion-oriented policies and allocation of resources with regard to heritage languages. The role of the government is mostly seen within tolerance- or expediency-oriented laws at a macro level. The role of support for heritage languages should be confined within ethnic groups and individuals only, as any attention to ethnic languages could potentially lead to jeopardization of the national unity and civic identity described within the boundaries of civic languages (May, 2008). In some cases, such identity is based on English, in some others, on French and English equally.

**Correlating and contrasting bilingualism and multiculturalism.** Thus far, I have expanded on immigrants' support of official bilingualism and multilingualism at individual (or micro) and government (or macro) levels. The notions of French and heritage language have often been viewed separately in immigrants' discourses. In the last and final part of this chapter, I attempt to identify how immigrants bring these two notions together. The question here is what makes Canada a country according to immigrants? How do immigrants perceive as a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework as suggested by Pierre Trudeau (as cited in Day, 2000)? In other words, how do immigrants correlate bilingualism and multiculturalism, and to what extent is the model viable in eyes of immigrants? This is the principal question that I ask not only in this section but also throughout this study. Following the analysis of immigrants' approaches to this question, in the final part of this study, I attempt to align immigrants' discourses within the theorization of the topic in academic and political discourses in Canada.

Multiculturalism and bilingualism are often discussed by immigrants in relation to each other. However, such relation in many cases is viewed as dialectically oppositional. For the most part, the notions of multiculturalism and bilingualism are juxtaposed and contrasted and are rarely perceived as situated within one continuum. So then, the discussions around issues of French in bilingualism and heritage languages in multiculturalism aim at identifying the significance of bilingualism and multiculturalism in that continuum (i.e., whether it is bilingualism or multiculturalism that defines this framework). As I will argue, that while at a perceptual level, immigrants do seem to approach bilingualism and multiculturalism as two isolated concepts, when it comes to a philosophical level, their discourses point at a strong synergetic relation between the two.

***Civic in bilingualism versus ethnic in multiculturalism.*** In summary, the majority of research participants tend to believe that bilingualism is a more important notion than multiculturalism for Canada<sup>69</sup>. Such understanding places the notion of multiculturalism to the level of local communities and ethnic cultures, whereas bilingualism is valued within the national contexts. Furthermore, the supremacy of bilingualism is determined by its association with the government and the law that this government enacts in local contexts. As for multiculturalism, it is merely viewed as descriptive characteristic of a society as a whole as well as a group of cultures that compose the society. In addition, multiculturalism as opposed to bilingualism is not viewed as a legislated notion. As a result, following the principle of the supremacy of law, immigrants tend to diminish multiculturalism's significance substantially, especially in comparison with bilingualism.

Many immigrants equate multiculturalism with local cultures that should not concern the government. For example, For Abdi, a refugee from Sudan, multiculturalism is "more like a local community, but if you go to an office like immigration office, it is about English and French." Amelie, an immigrant from China, also subscribed to the same idea by saying that "We don't need a law for multiculturalism. We respect cultural backgrounds, but the government through education should tell immigrants more Canadian culture." Mezmur, a refugee from Eritrea, similar to the previous speaker, viewed multiculturalism as a simple representation of various cultures that should not be supported by the government but instead replaced by Canadian law:

This multiculturalism is a small thing - your behaviour, your beliefs, in which ways you understand - that is different from person to person. Other than that, your

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<sup>69</sup> I also explore French as an civic notion (see "Measuring the level of government's support: Civic dimensions of French" in Chapter 5).

culture doesn't work here. Your country's rules are not working here in Canada.

You have to follow the rules of Canada.

With equating multiculturalism with ethnic cultures comes an expectation that there should be a language or languages that would hold all those cultures together. As Yao put it, "Language is important for the country to integrate all cultures together." Paresh also attempted to elaborate on the differences between bilingualism and multiculturalism. For him, bilingualism is more important as it acts as a unifying element, whereas multiculturalism does not carry such a role. To validate his opinion, Paresh explored the differences between the notions of culture and language:

Multiculturalism doesn't have anything to do with the language; culture is not the language, culture is what people have brought with them about how they are grown up, about the traditions and everything, it is not about language. . . .

Multiculturalism is that people from different parts of the world live on one land as brothers and sisters.

Adel also aligns his thinking with the participants noted. For him, multiculturalism is secondary to bilingualism and "there is already multiculturalism inside bilingualism." Multiculturalism for Adel is associated with cultures and reveals itself as an ethnic notion, whereas bilingualism is civic and thus more important:

The culture does not mean the language and official things; there is multiculturalism but there is no multilingualism in Canada. . . . The traditions are brought from everywhere from the world but bilingualism is something official, that is recognized everywhere [all across Canada].

Bob, an immigrant from China, identifies official languages as fundamentals of the Canadian multicultural society as the following quote from his interview demonstrates:

When we talk about multiculturalism, one thing is very important - two official languages. This is my opinion; it might be different from others. Some people say that in multiculturalism we have native cultures like Chinese or Vietnamese, or the culture from England and so on. . . . But I think the most important thing is French and English. . . . This is the basis of fundamentals of multiculturalism. . . . I think if they [the government] wants to support multiculturalism they must support the fundamentals of the multiculturalism—two official languages.

Further in his discussion Bob reiterates the policy of official bilingualism as being more important than the policy of multiculturalism. While not sure whether multiculturalism should be legislated, he still recognizes that the efforts should be continued on the government's side. However, it is crucial to ensure that such efforts consider official languages as the guiding principles in this task.

Overall, participant discourses in this section concentrate on exploring the concepts of bilingualism and multiculturalism in relation to the concepts of culture, ethnicity, and language in nation building. Here, English and French as official languages are de-ethnicized, and thus considered important in the processes of nation building by the participants. Multiculturalism, on the other hand, being associated with specific cultures and ethnic groups, is viewed as undesirable and detrimental to those processes. In other words, there is an understanding that official languages (and, for this matter, official bilingualism) are important for integration and social cohesion, and multiculturalism is associated with segregation and social disunity. In May's terms (2011), this is an example

how anything ethnic in a modern state could be perceived as illegitimate and regressive on the grounds that it is often seen as mobilized by particular groups to achieve certain self-interested political goals. As a result, “the ‘cultural stuff’ of ethnicity – that is, the ancestry, culture, religion and/or language to which such groups regularly lay claim – is regarded fictive or fabricated” (May, 2011, p 20). For the participants in this section, there is an assumption that the State is neutral and de-ethnicized (or, as Heller, 2010, puts it, legitimated) as well as any elements (e.g. official languages) associated with it.

*Civic in multiculturalism versus ethnic in bilingualism.* If French is approached in ethnic terms and affiliated with the French in Québec, the perceptions of immigrants lean toward emphasizing multiculturalism over bilingualism.<sup>70</sup> Multiculturalism in this case rather than implying support for ethnic cultures establishes the framework for providing equal non-differential rights to all members of ethnic groups. So, instead of viewing multiculturalism in ethnic terms and thus de-integrationist and bilingualism as a civic notion and thus integrationist for the processes of state and citizenship building as in the previous case, for immigrants here, civic is confined to multiculturalism and deemed an important integration tool, and ethnic belongs to bilingualism and thus approached as not desirable. Furthermore, in opposition to the former view, multiculturalism at this time becomes an issue on a national scale, while bilingualism is confined geographically. For example, Alejandra, a professional from Columbia, attaches more weight to multiculturalism than bilingualism because of this very reason saying, “I think multiculturalism is more important because it is all around the country. But the French speakers are one part of the country only. That’s why multiculturalism is more important.”

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<sup>70</sup> I also explore French as an ethnic notion is (see “Measuring the level of government’s support: French as an ethnic notion” in Chapter 5).

Alejandra views French as confined geographically perhaps also because of observing the presence of French only within specific areas in Canada. In fact, in her interview she mentioned that before coming to Alberta, she lived in Ontario and saw French being spoken there.

In many instances, participants who believe that multiculturalism is more important than bilingualism emphasized the importance of seeing multiculturalism not through a prism of celebrations and cultures' recognition but rather through providing non-differential equal rights to individuals in terms of education access, employment, health care services, etc. Thus, the right kind of multiculturalism is individual human rights oriented rather than group culture rights oriented.

Yi Min, a FSL student at the University of Calgary, identifies equal rights provision as the fundamental characteristic of multiculturalism. According to her, multiculturalism as a policy is not successful as it chooses to concentrate on artificial cultural celebrations instead of eliminating barriers that immigrants face. Yi Min said,

I could see why the government is doing something very basic like celebrating different religious or cultural festivals, because it is really easy and people love fun....But in terms of a more serious topic, it is about how you want to include people to stay here and to utilize their knowledge so they could be happy living in this environment. . . . People care about their study and work more. Because if you have been laid off and you do not have a job and are not happy with it, how would you celebrate your festival? I think the best, the ideal policy is that to eliminate the barriers for the immigrants as much as possible. . . . I think because the barriers for immigrants are the important issue they are facing every day.

Yi Min posited that multiculturalism, rather than being associated with culture, should focus on eliminating educational and workplace barriers for immigrants.

Mina is another participant who attached importance to multiculturalism. She also positioned multiculturalism above bilingualism if it is the right kind of multiculturalism:

Multiculturalism is much bigger than language, that's what I'm saying. Because when you talk about multiculturalism, if you are talking about the right one, not just politically, whatever is needed, it's about, I understand your culture and even if I cannot have time to understand every culture I respect that they might be different cultures.

It is also important to add that in instances when multiculturalism is viewed as being more important than bilingualism, it also implies providing ESL support but not FSL- or heritage-languages instruction. So, in many instances for the participants the essence of multiculturalism is built on English language that is neutral and inclusive of all groups in Canada.

To recapitulate the findings of this section, the participants often approached official bilingualism and multiculturalism as two separate notions. Their perceptions are formed through comparing and contrasting various meanings of bilingualism and multiculturalism both at micro and macro levels. For official bilingualism, at a micro level, the support is measured by the level of individual involvement in official languages education, and, at a macro level, the support is determined by the role of the government's involvement in official languages in social and educational contexts; for multiculturalism, micro- and macro-level support are about heritage languages and the individual's and government's roles, respectively. In both cases, immigrants locate themselves at various

levels of understanding and deconstructing ideologies associated with discourses of bilingualism and multiculturalism (Blommaert, 2004). Many participants place themselves in discourses through civic or ethnic terms, where civic is associated with the neutrality of the state and represents the rule of law, and ethnic represents particularity and contestation and thus is not desirable (Kymlicka, 2011; May, 2012). In the next chapter, I conclude my discussion by theorizing about the dichotomy of multiculturalism and bilingualism.

## **Chapter 6: Further Discussion and Implication of Findings about Immigrants’ Perceptions of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism**

### **Theorization of Findings: Multiculturalism Within a Bilingual Framework or Bilingualism Within a Multiculturalism Framework?**

Having analyzed and provided examples of immigrants’ discourses on multiculturalism and bilingualism, I conclude this dissertation by arguing that although the policies of multiculturalism and bilingualism were often seen by the study participants as isolated from each other, immigrants’ approach to them in fact does place them onto one continuum. Moreover, by bringing some of the theoretical assumptions outlined previously, I posit that immigrants’ perceptions of bilingualism and multiculturalism in many ways do echo what bilingualism and multiculturalism were intended to be. In other words, I try to draw some parallels between the integrative model of bilingualism and multiculturalism or so-called multiculturalism within a bilingual framework and immigrants’ approaches to these two policies. Finally, I attempt to align immigrants’ discourses within the theorization of the topic in political and academic discourses and argue that it is not multiculturalism within a bilingualism framework but rather bilingualism within a multiculturalism framework that defines Canada for immigrants.

Before delving into linking multiculturalism to bilingualism and exploring those links from a theoretical perspective, I summarize some of previously discussed philosophical assumptions that guide immigrants’ perceptions on official and heritage languages in Alberta and Canada.

The first and most important principle that navigates immigrants’ thinking is the supremacy of law (see “Establishing Approaches to Bilingualism” in Chapter 5). As I have

maintained throughout the dissertation, the majority of immigrants construct and negotiate meanings of concepts based on understanding that law should and in fact does treat everybody equally in Canada. Furthermore, law is perceived as a neutral and non-ideological concept that is above languages, cultures, and geographies (Dicey, 1885). Law does not merely refer to norms, policies, and regulations, but also encompasses institutions and symbols as manifestations of law and as neutral common goods (Bourdieu, 1987). The very existence of law on something (and bilingualism for this matter) is a confirmation that it exists for a good reason, and there is no need to either justify or invalidate its existence. Of course, it is important to keep in mind that these concepts hold true for those immigrants who operate mostly from a factual, noncritical perspective. For those who approach bilingualism and multiculturalism from a critical angle, the supremacy of law positions itself as conflictual with social practices. In both cases, the agency of law will be a starting point of processes on negotiation of meanings of bilingualism and multiculturalism.

The second principle that determines immigrants' construction of meanings emerges from the previously mentioned recognition of the supremacy of law. Supremacy of law aims at providing social cohesion among various ethnic and cultural groups and languages that are present in Canada; so, the law here is to ensure that the country has its national identity. As a result, any attempt to disintegrate by putting an emphasis on ethnic rather than civic characteristics of a notion is unwelcomed and disapproved by immigrants. For this reason, depending on how ethnic and civic are seen with regard to multiculturalism and bilingualism, they will either be supported or opposed.

Now, bearing in mind the principles I alluded to, I attempt to examine the theoretical assumptions behind immigrants' perceptions of bilingualism and multiculturalism. I view the participants' discourses as acts of reflexivity or what Bourdieu (1987) termed as historicisation, which is de-essentializing and contextualizing the phenomenon contexts (Dezalay & Madsen, 2012) and citizenization (Tully, 2005), which involves connecting and accommodating the sociohistorical contexts of the phenomenon within contemporary contexts. To explore reflexivity of the participants, I refer to the conceptual framework that I have outlined in "Conceptualization of approaches" of Chapter 5. According to it, the nature of immigrants' attitudes toward these notions is characterized within three different dimensions (a) legal, where bilingualism and multiculturalism are viewed as a law; (b) social, where bilingualism and multiculturalism are approached as a practice; and (c) critical, in which bilingualism and multiculturalism are seen as critical constructs. Based on this conceptualization, there are fundamental differences in how immigrants see bilingualism and multiculturalism (see "From Conceptualization to Practice: Immigrants' Discourses on the Place of Bilingualism in Canada" in Chapter 5).

First of all, as I have explored in this dissertation, the notion of bilingualism for immigrants initially and primarily is a legal construct, whereas multiculturalism in its current form is a social one. Bilingualism almost always goes parallel to concepts of law, government, national identity, citizenship, and responsibilities. Consequently, the legitimacy of bilingualism is taken for granted, especially at early stages of settlement processes for immigrants. It is also a prescriptive legal term, i.e., what law prescribes to the society. Multiculturalism on the other hand, is a descriptive non-legal term that merely

aims at characterizing the diverse nature of the Canadian society and is associated with concepts of culture, groups and communities, local identities, and rights.

So, for immigrants, multiculturalism is open to significantly more criticism than bilingualism as there is an assumption that it is not a law as bilingualism but rather a practice. This difference in understanding the nature of these two notions also leads to determining the levels of appropriateness of them for immigrants. Hence, I confine my discussions on bilingualism in most of cases to exploring how much of bilingualism should be supported on individual and governmental levels, whereas in discussions on multiculturalism, I instead concentrate on validating the very existence of multiculturalism from giving it right to exist to rejecting the very same right. Also, the boundaries of bilingualism policy for immigrants are potentially expandable (i.e., the government's role in bilingualism initiative could range from providing access to enforcing it) while the boundaries of multiculturalism are very limited (i.e., the role of the government is described as recognizing and tolerating diversity within its efforts to promote Canadian identity and values).

Second, as immigrants continue integrating into the Canadian society, they also start shifting perceptions of what bilingualism is rather than the way it is described in law. Initially, these perceptions will be situated as related to law (as it is the case with post-arrival perceptions of bilingualism); however, the understanding of the degree and the nature of this relationship will change throughout time. First seen as a prescriptive legal term, later bilingualism will be explored and explained in social terms. Following Heller (2008), bilingualism will be viewed as constructed, situated, and evolving within local, social, and historical contexts and with regard to law and social practices. The legitimacy

of bilingualism will be correlated with to what extent the phenomenon reveals itself in the society. For multiculturalism, the evolution of perceptions takes an opposite direction: initially viewed in descriptive terms, at this stage, multiculturalism starts revealing itself prescriptively. So, alongside social dimensions that immigrants would tend to affiliate with multiculturalism, it is legal dimensions that become more prominent at the phase when immigrants become more informed about multiculturalism as a law.

The third and final stage of perceptual evolution within the suggested conceptual framework explores notions of bilingualism and multiculturalism in critical and so-called post-critical terms, where critical implies questioning the rationale and appropriateness of these concepts, and post-critical denotes attempts to approach them as being placed at and within constrains of law and social practices. Criticality here is defined as deconstructing the phenomena and exploring the role of agency is negotiating meaning through participation in social categories (May & Sleeter, 2010). This way, by bringing together the social and legal dimensions, immigrants in this stage attempt to explain, interpret, and understand existing ideologies within the society. They no longer focus on measuring the level of phenomena present in society and in law but rather on making an effort to explore what bilingualism and multiculturalism are supposed to be. For bilingualism and multiculturalism, this means bringing together legal and social definitions of the construct. However, while the processes are reconciliatory in their nature, bilingualism's trajectory implies moving from legal to social; whereas, for multiculturalism, it is a shift from social to legal. In other words, immigrants do not want to see bilingualism in purely legal terms but also are interested in translating the law into social practices. At this stage, bilingualism (i.e. proficiency in Canada's both official languages) is often perceived by the participants

as economic and social capital (Bourdieu, 1991). Language then becomes a part of the commodification, the process where a language is legitimized as a resource with local, national, and global contexts (Heller, 2001 1a). For multiculturalism, immigrants, while seeing it as a social notion initially, now are willing to see multiculturalism translated into law, which is providing equal access, ensuring equal rights, and protecting individual freedoms of citizens.

In both cases, there is a desire to see the correlation between legal and social descriptions of these constructs. So, despite participants' viewing them as opposites, fundamentally and inherently, there appears to be a very strong linkage between these two concepts. Essentially, "real" bilingualism for them should reflect itself socially in a way that multiculturalism reflects itself when it becomes an unconscious characteristic of a society. Consequently, "real" multiculturalism for immigrants should project itself legally resembling the way that bilingualism as a law is projected into social practices. Moreover, the existence of each of these concepts separately is not possible. Following May (2011), particularity and ethnicity are often considered regressive in the processes of nation building. This way, bilingualism if viewed in civic terms is seen as a linking element of all otherwise disjointed parts of the society. In this case, it will have a nation-building purpose. If, as I demonstrated in some cases, it is viewed in ethnic terms (where ethnic is associated with French primarily), it will be revisited and rejected alongside multiculturalism, which most often is viewed ethnically. In other words, these two concepts will either co-exist or be rejected altogether for the reasons that deal with ideas of national unity, citizenship, and social cohesion.

In the last part of the dissertation, I attempt to align immigrants' discourses within theorization of the topic and argue that it is not multiculturalism within a bilingualism framework but rather bilingualism within a multiculturalism framework that defines Canada for immigrants. Furthermore, I position such understanding in line with sociohistorical development of bilingualism and multiculturalism policies, where the latter, since its official adoption, has been portrayed as secondary to bilingualism.

### **Situating Findings in Sociohistorical and Contemporary Contexts in Canada**

Historically, official bilingualism policies were adopted earlier than multiculturalism laws<sup>71</sup>. At the same time, both policies emerged as a reaction to dissatisfied voices, i.e., of French Québécois for bilingualism and immigrants, primarily of Ukrainian descent, for multiculturalism respectively (Coulombe, 2000). In both cases, it was the federal government that tried to accommodate concerns about language and culture rights of these groups. However, the significant difference between those accommodations was the perception of the government of what constituted those specific rights and why those rights should be acknowledged. Furthermore, it was eventually about who had more rights to claim those rights (Heller, 2011b).

On the one side, there was understanding on government's part that Francophones and Anglophones are two solitudes and founding nations of Canada; in fact, this kind of characterization prevails in most of the discourses on official-languages policies (Adam, 2006; Lord, 2008). On the opposite side, there was a concern that the model of recognition of French and English cultures and languages would be perceived as discriminatory against non-Anglophone and non-Francophone groups. In both cases, the debate was aimed at

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<sup>71</sup> I explore the contexts of bilingualism and multiculturalism in Canada in Chapter 1 (see "Sociohistorical and Contemporary Contexts of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism in Canada").

nation building and at finding a model that would be a compromise for both sides. For Trudeau, this would mean also distinguishing between civic and ethnic and enacting a framework that would integrate bilingualism into multiculturalism (Hayday, 2005). By moving from bilingualism and biculturalism to multiculturalism with a bilingual framework, Trudeau (as cited in Day, 2000) tried to disassociate official languages and their respective cultures, as associating them together would enable the ethnic to prevail over the civic, thus threatening the engineering of the nation with a common identity. By explicitly giving languages, and not the cultures, an official status, the hierarchy of language over culture would be established. The motivation behind this move was also guided by the fact that in addition to promoting an identity, free of ethnic connotations and grounded in civic principles of equity and equality, in terms of nation building, language is easier to legislate and institutionalize than culture (May, 2008). Language is a quite straightforward notion, whereas culture, on the contrary, is an extremely ambiguous and often controversial term.

The findings of the study indicate immigrants' perceptions do align with the philosophical assumptions and the intended purpose behind bilingualism and multiculturalism policies. First, they demonstrated acuteness toward separating the ethnic and the civic in two parts; second, they agreed on the importance of both for nation-building purposes. However, while the government attempts to portray the multiculturalism within a bilingualism framework in which multiculturalism and bilingualism are posed as equal to each other, immigrants who participated in the study, maintained that it is not always the case, and it seems that it is the language and thus bilingualism that are the driving forces of the politics in Canada, rather than culture and multiculturalism. So,

instead of modeling the framework as multiculturalism within bilingualism, immigrants perceive it as bilingualism within multiculturalism, where the former implies a more dominant and significant role than the latter.

Such understanding is based my several interpretations on how these two policies reveal themselves in Canadian political and public life:

- 1. According to immigrants in this study, bilingualism in Canada is both legitimated and institutionalized, whereas multiculturalism lacks institutionalization, and it is not entrenched in public institutions.**

The usage of legitimation and institutionalization terms derives from May's (2008) definition of legitimation of languages, as the "formal recognition accorded to the language by the nation-state - usually, by the constitutional and/or legislative benediction of official status" (p. 6). In this dissertation, I have extended further the description of May's (2008) language institutionalization as "the process by which the language comes to be accepted, or 'taken for granted,' in a wide range of social, cultural and linguistic domains or contexts, both formal and informal" (p. 6) by applying it to multiculturalism and alongside all the contexts mentioned, emphasizing the governmental contexts, i.e., how the government enforces the legitimation of bilingualism and multiculturalism policies via its own social and political institutions and spheres of functioning.

Bilingualism in Canada is constitutionally recognized through the numerous legislative documents and practised in federal institutions. In fact, it is institutional bilingualism, which refers to the capacity of the government and its institutions to communicate with the public, and within these institutions, in the two official languages; that constitutes the very core of the official languages policy in Canada. According to this

model, the responsibility assumed by the federal government to communicate with its citizens is coupled with a commitment to serve its citizens in their own official language (Ménard & Hudon, 2007). However, the federal approach to official languages that is based on the principle of institutional bilingualism does not seem to correspond well with the tone of the official languages discourse and initiatives, which tend to focus on promotion of personal bilingualism.

This is also evident in discourses of immigrants in this study, who often seemed to confuse institutional and personal bilingualisms. Furthermore, the findings seem to confirm what many researchers in Canadian-language policy and multiculturalism studies see as discordance between legitimation and practice of bilingualism policies (Dunbar, 2007; Kymlicka, 2007). As Dunbar (2007) argued, the achievement of societal bilingualism - the creation of a society in which everyone is able to speak both French and English - has generally not been the goal, and the legislative and constitutional framework in Canada is not directed toward the accomplishment of such a goal. In fact, even the official discourses themselves acknowledge the problem with the perception of official bilingualism (Ménard & Hudon, 2007):

A significant majority of Canadians continue to base their attitudes toward Canada's linguistic duality on false perceptions of federal official languages policy. This means that opposition to so-called official bilingualism has crystallized into a perception that bilingualism is imposed on all Canadians; however, since the obligations under the Official Languages Act apply first and foremost to federal institutions, the federal approach to official languages is based on the principle of institutional bilingualism. (p. 1)

While acknowledging such inconsistencies between perceptions of goals and practices, the federal government falls short in recognizing its own role in creating and sustaining this confusion through the official-languages discourse.

As the findings demonstrate, study participants also seemed to concur with criticism of multiculturalism policy, especially in terms of its intended goals and definitions (Churchill, 2003b). While it is agreed that multiculturalism as a policy ensures that the multicultural nature of Canada is acknowledged and preserved (Kunz & Sykes, 2007), immigrants want to see it as a more legally binding and rights-ensuring policy. This concurs with findings of Haque (2012) and Mooers (2005) who admitted that present multiculturalism is not able to move beyond simplistic, cultural celebrations and take a more proactive role in ensuring equal, nondiscriminatory participation of less privileged groups, especially First Nations and visible minorities (Haque: 2005; 2012), even though the government actually shifted its initial focus on celebrating differences (often referred to as cultural mosaic) and providing funding to ethnic festivals and displays of cultures in 1970s to inclusive citizenship models from 1980s, when the Canadian Multiculturalism Act reaffirmed that Canada is a multicultural nation (Fleras & Kunz, 2001). Immigrants however, do not seem to agree with those scholars who believe that that the metaphor of cultural mosaic that is often used to describe the multicultural nature of Canada is in fact nothing less but a vertical mosaic, privileging French and English and discriminating against First Nations and immigrants (Gundara, 2001; Isajiw, 1999; Sears, 2003). In general, immigrants in this study did not seem to observe the hierarchy of ethnicities in multiculturalism nor did they believe that the Canadian identity is based on English and French cultures only as Day (2000) suggested.

There seems to be a consensus between findings of the study and argumentation in research about prevalence of bilingualism over multiculturalism. As bilingualism positions itself as legitimized and institutionalized, immigrants perceive the language on bilingualism as authoritative and commanding and notice stronger presence of bilingualism. This correlates with governmental expenditures on both policies. According to the report “Official Language Policies at the Federal Level in Canada” (Vaillancourt & Coche, 2009), Canada’s federal government and other bodies subject to the Official Languages Act (GC, 1988b) spend up to \$1.8 billion annually providing French-language services, while spending on multiculturalism programs in 2004–2005 did not exceed \$13 million (Canadian Heritage, 2005).

**2. The public debates on bilingualism and multiculturalism also seem to be of interest and concern to immigrants.**

While the previous research suggests that bilingualism is seen as solely an English-French issue and multiculturalism belonging to immigrants’ only (Lee & Hebert, 2006), immigrants who took part in this study expressed willingness to participate in both policy discourses equally. There are some shared conclusions of this study and the critique of these two policies in broader public and academic discourses, especially in terms of arguing for the importance of bilingualism over multiculturalism.

According to the study findings, the criticism of bilingualism is much more multilayered and subtle than that of multiculturalism. The main arguments about bilingualism lay within the question how and where to implement it. It is primarily the question of territoriality versus a personality issue (Coulombe, 2000), i.e., whether the official bilingualism policies should be territorially executed (de jure French in Québec and

English in the rest of Canada), or should the government assume the responsibility of providing services in both languages all over the country. For immigrants in this study, there is a leaning toward the latter with an emphasis on both language provisions equally in Québec and the rest of Canada. Second, for immigrants, it is not a question of recognizing or rejecting bilingualism but describing which kind of bilingualism. When it comes to multiculturalism, the question targets the very existence of the policy.

The study results also allude to the arguments that are used in criticism of multiculturalism in literature. Some participants tended to agree with those critics who believe that multiculturalism creates cultural ghettos and comes at the expense of carving true Canadian national identity (Bissoondath, 1994). However, they opposed the argument laid out by the same author who claims that children of immigrants continue to see Canada with the eyes of foreigners (Bissoondath, 1994). In fact, according to the participants, their children develop a hybridity within a third space (Lee & Hebert, 2006), and parents are willing to accommodate it within the contexts they are placed in.

Another question on bilingualism and multiculturalism that is prominent in public and academic discourse (Kymlicka & Patten, 2003) that also was frequently brought up by participants in this study is exploring the role of the government in legislating and administering basic democratic rights of language, culture, and civic participation. In work on Canadian politics, on the one hand, there are those who advocate for a non-interventionist model of government's involvement (Day, 2000), and there are those who believe in an active, participatory role of the government in engineering the nation's identity and in language planning (Kymlicka, 1995b). I argue throughout the dissertation that immigrants in this study perceive the role of the government with regard to

multiculturalism as noninterventionist, whereas bilingualism assumes a more participatory role on the government's end. Furthermore, there is also a common understanding of needing to approach multiculturalism and bilingualism in Canada within their own historical, social, and cultural contexts. By exploring the policies at different critical angles, immigrants form their perceptions based on understandings of what constitutes a language right, and how cultural diversity could be managed. This leads to a conclusion that immigrants are able to reconcile contrasting views of multiculturalism and bilingualism under the umbrella of citizenship and a common national identity as represented by the current regime of language laws and language policies. In fact, as the study demonstrates, it is exactly the combination of bilingualism and multiculturalism that has made Canada a unique example of how regulations of language and culture could accommodate both historical and contemporary aspects of diversity.

The participants in this study demonstrated how they are involved in exploring their agencies in discourses of bilingualism and multilingualism (Heller, 2011b) through the processes of citizenization or reflection on historicity and contemporaneity of the phenomena aiming at exploring tensions and power between subjects, acknowledging historical and contemporary tensions, as well as asymmetries of political and social representation (Tully, 2001). As a result of these micro- and macro-scale conversations within and without, participants engaged in the processes of becoming rather than seen as being or of objects of political discourses (Tully, 2001). By demonstrating the various degree of engagement with deconstruction of the phenomena, immigrants learn how to “live with their contested character, and build democratic forums for continuing that conversation” (Kymlicka, 2011, pp. 288–289). In this sense, providing the platform for

immigrants in this study to explore the contested notions of bilingualism and multiculturalism entails eventually legitimizing their roles in discourses on policies in Canada by moving them from being the objects to the subjects of those discourses and policies.

One of my questions was to theorize about bridging the gap between the historicity and contemporaneity of bilingualism and multiculturalism notions in Canada. I was interested to see whether Kymlicka's political theory of multicultural citizenship (Kymlicka, 1995b, 2011; Kymlicka & Patten, 2003) that is based on recognition of the role of various groups in nation building <sup>72</sup> actually fits within the bottom-up theorization of this research with regard to some of the issues he brings in this framework. I was specifically interested if immigrants see themselves as polyethnic and thus deserving less rights and if they approach Francophone- and French-language-related issues as being more important. Furthermore, I also questioned to what extent immigrants assume integration into Canadian society and what the role of official and heritage languages is in those processes.

Many elements of Kymlicka's theory of multicultural citizenship and language rights (1995b) seem to align with the findings of the study. Immigrants share many of the ideas behind the theory of multicultural citizenship and language rights. First, there is an understanding that there is a sociohistorical reality that has affected and is influencing the language situation in Canada. French and English (especially linguistically) are indeed seen

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<sup>72</sup> For Kymlicka (1995b, 2012), the Canadian model of multicultural citizenship involves delineating minority groups into polyethnic or immigrant groups and national minorities. He argued that national minorities (in which he includes Canadian Québécois and First Nations) deserve unique rights from the state by the nature of their unique role and history within the national population. Polyethnic groups (i.e., immigrants), however, are less deserving of such rights, since they come to the state voluntarily and thus have some degree of responsibility to assimilate to the norms of their new nation. The model suggests integration of immigrants both in terms of state-level civic identities and nation-level identities and dialogic engagement of all groups in negotiating roles in a peaceful and democratic way.

as two solitudes by immigrants. The sociohistorical reality though does not necessarily need to be translated into allocating more rights to Anglophones and Francophones as ethnic and cultural groups but as linguistic groups. In fact, linguistic rights are often viewed by immigrants as needing to extend and move beyond groups defined by ethnicity but rather by language in order to build a common Canadian identity. Diversity then should be based on English and, in many instances, French languages. To add, there is no need to approach immigrants as polyethnic groups as there is a strong desire on their end to become a part of French and English as linguistic groups, as both languages are viewed in terms of the economic, social, and symbolic capitals (Bourdieu, 1991).

There is also a common understanding of immigrants' responsibilities to integrate into the society, as often their discourse prioritizes responsibilities over rights. The research findings also strongly support Kymlicka's (1998b) theoretical evidence that immigrants do successfully integrate into the Canadian model of multicultural citizenship. Kymlicka (1998b) outlined that the highest levels of naturalization, political participation, official language competence, and interethnic marriages among immigrants provide empirical support for the success of multiculturalism policy and immigrants' sense of inclusiveness. Both the qualitative and quantitative findings of this study do demonstrate immigrants' overwhelming support of official languages at micro and macro levels. Immigrants and their children believe in the importance of bilingualism in Canada and, in many cases, are keen on learning Canada's both official languages and are willing to benefit from available educational resources and services.

Finally and most importantly, while the study extensively explores immigrants' perceptions toward bilingualism in Alberta and Canada, the principal goal of the study is to

legitimize immigrants' voices in the discourses of bilingualism and multiculturalism by providing them the space to explore and negotiate meanings of bilingualism within the contexts of historicity and modernity (Auger et al., 2007). With sociolinguistics for policy change framework in mind, it is hoped that immigrants' discourses that aim at contextualizing manifestations of bilingualism as a law and as a social practice at a micro level could inform discourses at a policy, or macro-level. Policy change in this framework becomes a dialogic process that involves the state and various stakeholders in legitimizing immigrants' roles on discussions of language, citizenship, and identity in Alberta and Canada. Moreover, sociolinguistics for policy change argues for including immigrants in discussions of policies, norms, and regulations and validating their discourses. This in turn, might lead to recognition and redistribution of roles of all actors involved in constructing discourses of languages, citizenship, and diversity in Alberta and Canada.

### **Final Thoughts and Recommendations**

On the government's side it is important to understand that many newcomers arrive in Canada with a strong conviction that bilingualism is a practice all across Canada. Some arrive in Canada having already learned French. A few land in Québec hoping to take advantage of their French-language skills. Almost all of them eventually start questioning the validity of a bilingualism policy as they do not see the evidence of its being practiced in the society. Further, they notice the lack of public support in the contexts of western Canada.

While realizing that negotiating and presenting meanings of official bilingualism that are group, context, and geography specific is a challenging task for the government, it is essential to ensure the inclusion of new Canadians in policy discourses and regard them

as equal and contributing participants in dialogues on bilingualism and multiculturalism. Considering the importance immigrants attach to bilingualism by viewing it as a linguistic, social, economic capital, it would be crucial for the government to explore the ways of how their positive attitudes could be capitalized on. This could include reaching out to immigrants and promoting bilingualism if the linguistic duality is the objective of the policy. This could in turn mean educating, informing and providing opportunities to learn French in Alberta (e.g., free government-funded FSL classes, educational opportunities for children and youth of immigrant families, etc.). Consequently, this would where possible make the discourse on bilingualism less ambiguous and match policy's goals and practices. Finally and perhaps most importantly, this would mean promoting dialogue and collaboration of all of the cultural, ethnic, and language communities among each other rather than engaging groups separately, bearing in mind that identities are multiple, fluid, and constantly negotiated.

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## Appendix A: Survey on Attitudes toward Bilingualism and Languages in Canada

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. Your survey responses will be strictly anonymous and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. Please start with the survey now by clicking on the Continue button below if you agree to participate. Thank you very much for your time and support.

Your status in Canada

1. Canadian citizen
2. Landed immigrant/refugee
3. On student/work visa (etc)
4. Other (please specify)

Do you first see yourself as ...?

1. Anglophone
2. Francophone
3. Immigrant
4. Other (please specify)

What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

1. Grade 8 or less
2. Some high school
3. Completed high school
4. Technical, vocational post-secondary, college, CEGEP
5. Some university
6. Complete university degree
7. Post-graduate degree (Masters, Ph.D.)

Most of my elementary and secondary schooling was in ... (select all that apply)

1. English
2. French
3. Other (please specify)

Most of my post-secondary schooling is/was in ... (select all that apply)

1. English
2. French
3. Other (please specify)

Are you a student at the University of Calgary?

1. Yes
2. No

I have taken or plan to take ... in the university



Would you be interested in ... courses/programs if such opportunities were available at the post-secondary level (University of Calgary, etc.)

	Yes	No	Maybe	N/A or don't know
French language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English language assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
other language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any children under the age of 18 years living at home?

1. Yes
2. No

Are they attending primary or secondary school in...

1. English
2. French
3. Other (Please specify)

Which languages are they learning or will be learning at school? (select all that apply)

1. French
2. English as a Second Language
3. Other (please specify)

We are all Canadians, but our ancestors come from all over the world. What would you consider your ethnic origins to be? (press CTRL and choose multiple if apply)

1. British (English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh)
2. French
3. French Canadian (ex. Quebecois, Franco-Ontarian, Franco-Manitoban, Acadian)
4. German
5. Italian
6. Ukrainian
7. Dutch
8. Jewish
9. Polish
10. Portuguese
11. Spanish
12. Other European (ex. Russian, Scandinavian, Greek)
13. Chinese
14. Other East Asian (ex. Japanese, Korean)
15. Southeast Asian (ex. Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Malaysian, Filipino)
16. South Asian (ex. East Indian, Sri Lankan, Pakistani)
17. Central Asia/ Middle Eastern (ex. Palestinian, Iraqi, Iranian, Afghani, Kurdish)
18. North African (ex. Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian, Libyan, Egyptian)
19. Sub-Saharan African or Black (ex. Somali, Sudanese, Ethiopian, Ghanaian)
20. South or Latin American (ex. Mexican, Salvadoran, Brazilian, Chilean)

21. Caribbean or West Indian (ex Haitian, Cuban, Dominican)
22. Aboriginal (ex. North American Indian, Métis, Inuit, Mohawk, Cree, etc.)
23. Canadian
24. American/ U.S.A.
25. Other (please specify)

What is your MOTHER TONGUE, that is, the first language that you learned and can still speak?

1. English
2. French
3. Other

Which languages do you speak at home?

1. Only French
2. Only English
3. Only other language(s)
4. Most often French
5. Most often English
6. Most often other language(s)
7. French and English equally
8. French and other language(s) equally
9. English and other language(s) equally

Regardless of the other languages you speak, which of the two languages English or French, do you consider your first official language or your main official language?

1. English
2. French

Which languages do you speak well enough to take part in a conversation? (select all that apply)

1. English
2. French
3. Other (please specify)

How well do you speak English?

1. It is my mother tongue
2. Very well
3. Somewhat well
4. Not very well
5. Not well at all
6. Don't speak

How well do you speak French?

1. It is my mother tongue
2. Very well
3. Somewhat well



Having two official languages is important to my sense of what it means to be a Canadian.	<input type="checkbox"/>											
Having two official languages has made Canada a more welcoming place for immigrants from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>											
Multiculturalism is what defines Canada	<input type="checkbox"/>											
Government of Canada Official Languages policy contributes to stronger national unity	<input type="checkbox"/>											
Having French as well as English spoken in Canada enhances employment and business opportunities for all Canadians.	<input type="checkbox"/>											

Do you think the Government of Canada should play a much smaller, somewhat smaller, somewhat greater or much greater role in promoting and protecting the status and use of the ... in Canadian society, or is its current level of involvement about right?

	Much smaller	Somewhat smaller	About right	Somewhat greater	Much greater	Don't know
French language	<input type="checkbox"/>					
heritage languages (languages other than French and English)	<input type="checkbox"/>					

How familiar are you with Government of Canada programs supporting..... education?

	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Somewhat unfamiliar	Totally unfamiliar
French language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English as a Second Language (ESL)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
heritage languages (Chinese, Spanish, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Spanish, etc.)												
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On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means ‘absolutely no access’ and 10 means ‘full access’, how would you rate the access to ... learning opportunities for your children or children in your region?

	0 / absolu tely no access	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 / full access	N/A or don't know
French	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English as a Second Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
heritage languages (Chinese, Spanish, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Have you or someone in your immediate family participated in a language exchange program?

1. Yes
2. No

Using a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means you ‘totally disagree’ and 10 means you ‘totally agree’; to what extent do you agree that French Canadian culture is sufficiently represented in media (TV, radio, newspapers, etc.)?

	0 / totally disagr ee	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 / totally agree	N/A or don't know
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In your opinion, which heritage/immigrant cultures are represented in the media (TV, newspapers, internet)?

1. Chinese
2. Hispanic
3. Indian
4. Don't know
5. Other (please specify)

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means ‘totally disagree’ and 10 means ‘totally agree’, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:



Francophone	<input type="checkbox"/>											
your own heritage (other than French and English)	<input type="checkbox"/>											

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means 'not important at all' and 10 means 'extremely important', how important is it for you to feel that you are a part of ... community in your region? (Choose all that apply)

	0 / not important at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 / extrem- ely import- ant	N/A or don't know
Anglophone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Francophone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
your own heritage (other than French and English)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

To what extent is it important for you to retain a sense of connection to your community of your birthplace?

	0 / Not important at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 / Extre- mely import- ant	N/A or don't know
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

With which of the following do you identify most closely? (Please select up to 3)

1. Your birthplace
2. Your current city
3. Your province
4. Your ethnic group
5. Your language group
6. Canada as a whole
7. The entire world
8. Other (please specify)

To what extent you agree that the Government of Canada should provide funding for community-based organizations which serve the interests of ... in your province? Please use a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means 'totally disagree; and 10 means 'totally agree

	0 / totally disagr ee	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 / totally disagr ee	N/A or don't know
Francophones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
immigrants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Various ethnic groups (Chinese, Ukrainian, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is the current level of support provided by the Government of Canada to community-based groups serving the interests of ... in your province...

	Less than it should be?	At about the right level?	More than it should be?	N/A or don't know
Francophones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
immigrants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
various ethnic groups (Chinese, Ukrainian, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Governments of Canada and your province should work together to improve services.... in your province? Please use a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means 'totally disagree; and 10 means 'totally agree.

	0 / totally disagr ee	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 / totally agree	Don't know
in French	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
for immigrants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thinking about your personal contact with ... like friends, neighbours, relatives or co-workers, would you say you have regular contact with them?

	None	Few	Some	Many	N/A or don't know
Francophones	<input type="checkbox"/>				
immigrants	<input type="checkbox"/>				

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means 'not important at all' and 10 means 'extremely







Using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means 'poor'; and 10 means 'excellent', how well do you think your provincial government represents interests of ...?

	0 / poor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 / excell ent	N/A or don't know
Francophones	<input type="checkbox"/>											
immigrants	<input type="checkbox"/>											
various ethnic groups (Chinese, Ukrainian,etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>											

To what extent do you agree that Government of Canada departments SHOULD support the development of the ... in your province? Please use a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you 'totally disagree'; and 10 means you 'totally agree'.

	0 / totally disagr ee	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 / totally agree	N/A or don't know
Francophone community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
immigrant community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
various ethnic communities (Chinese, Ukrainian,etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What is your date of birth? (optional)

• \_\_\_\_\_

Gender (optional)

1. Male
2. Female

Were you born in Canada?

1. Yes
2. No

Where were you born?

In which province or territory were you born?

1. Newfoundland

2. Prince Edward Island
3. Nova Scotia
4. New Brunswick
5. Quebec
6. Ontario
7. Manitoba
8. Saskatchewan
9. Alberta
10. British Columbia
11. Yukon
12. Northwest Territories
13. Nunavut

How long have you lived in your current province?

1. Less than a year
2. 1 year to 5 years
3. 5 years to 10 years
4. 10 years to 20 years
5. 20 years to 30 years
6. 30 years to 40 years
7. More than 40 years

Have you lived in other provinces in Canada?

1. Yes
2. No

How long have you lived in other provinces?

1. Less than a year
2. 1 year to 5 years
3. 5 years to 10 years
4. 10 years to 20 years
5. 20 years to 30 years
6. 30 years to 40 years
7. More than 40 years

What is your marital status? Are you.... (Optional)

1. Married/Common law
2. Separated (still legally married)
3. Divorced
4. Widowed
5. Single (never married)

What is your current employment status? (optional)

1. Working full-time (35 hours or more per week)
2. Working part-time ( less than 35 hours per week)
3. Self-employed

4. Not employed at the present time
5. Not able to work
6. A student
7. A homemaker
8. Retired
9. Other (specify)

Which of the following categories best describes your total household income? (optional)

1. Under \$10,000
2. \$10,000 to \$19,999
3. \$20,000 to \$29,999
4. \$30,000 to \$39,999
5. \$40,000 to \$49,999
6. \$50,000 to \$59,999
7. \$60,000 to \$69,999
8. \$70,000 to \$79,999
9. \$80,000 to \$99,999
10. \$100,000 or more
11. Don't know

What is your home postal code? (optional)

Would you be interested in participating in follow-up research related to this topic?

1. Yes
2. No

## Appendix B: Guiding Questions for Interviews

### Guiding questions (interviews and focus groups):

1. Please tell me about yourself (e.g. country of origin, education, family, languages spoken, occupation, reasons to come to Canada, etc.) for interviews
2. Experiences in Canada:
  - a. Tell me about your experiences as a newcomer. How does it feel to be a newcomer?
3. Bilingualism:
  - a. How do you define bilingualism in Canada?
  - b. What were your ideas about French and English in Canada before coming here?
  - c. Tell me about your experience with bilingualism in Alberta?
  - d. How important do you see speaking and maintaining your heritage language(s)?
  - e. What do you think about learning French?
  - f. How do you see the role of the government in promoting:
    - i. multiculturalism and heritage languages;
    - ii. bilingualism and French;
    - iii. ESL language programs?