

Heritage Languages in Canada

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Abstract

This chapter reports on the status of heritage languages (HLs) in Canada in usage, in research and in education. It begins with an overview of HLs in Canada and the current ethnolinguistic vitality (demographics, institutional support and status) of these language varieties. This includes an overview of programs to teach HLs (or to use HLs as the medium of instruction) in primary, secondary and post-secondary contexts. Census information is provided to profile the distribution of HL speakers across major cities and all the provinces and territories of Canada, and the status of the HLs. The next section surveys publications about HLs in Canada including overviews, studies from the domain of sociolinguistics (language variation and change) that rely on spontaneous speech corpora, acquisition studies employing experimental methodology, and research on pedagogical approaches, noting primary findings from each. Specific information is provided about heritage varieties of Cantonese, German, Greek, Icelandic, Italian, Inuktitut, Korean, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Ukrainian.

Keywords

Canada, Heritage language, Language contact, Ethnolinguistic vitality, Language teaching, Variationist sociolinguistics, Acquisition, Linguistics, Pedagogy

1 Introduction to the Canadian linguistic context

“Most readers will know that issues of language and culture are central to current Canadian social and political life,” wrote John Edwards (1998, p. 1) as the opening line of *Language in Canada*, and this still holds true. Much attention is given in daily life and in the media to the languages we speak in Canada. Ricento (2013:533) notes that language issues are still “front and center” in Canadian politics. As just one example, the importance of Chinese was highlighted by a front page spread in *The Globe and Mail* (a Toronto newspaper) with a large headline consisting of 20 Chinese characters with this English accompaniment: “If you can’t read these words, better start brushing up...” (Foreign Affairs Canada, 2005:8).

Why does Canada suggest that its residents need familiarity with multiple languages while its neighbor to the south engages with proposals for English Only legislation? Factors that contribute to supporting multilingualism and language retention are reviewed in this chapter, from the interacting domains of language usage, research and education. It begins by reporting on the ethnolinguistic vitality of heritage languages (HLs) in Canada, examining their demographics (population sizes, transmission rates), institutional support (via schools, community groups, a museum and legislation) and status (as portrayed through the media, through socioeconomic indicators, and through attitudes reported by speakers and researchers).

The chapter surveys Canadian HL research including overviews and surveys, studies from the domain of sociolinguistics (language variation and change, attitudes and linguistic practices) that rely on spontaneous speech corpora and ethnographic observation, acquisition studies employing experimental methodology as well as elicited speech, and research with pedagogical approaches and applications. Specific information is provided about heritage varieties of Cantonese, German, Greek, Icelandic, Italian, Inuktitut, Korean, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Ukrainian, sampling from coast to coast to coast.

A country with 34 million residents, Canada has speakers of nearly 600 varieties of 70+ indigenous languages, spread across twelve language families (Statistics Canada 2017); comprising 260,550 speakers of indigenous languages (O'Donnell & Anderson, 2017). Additionally, more than 140 immigrant languages are reported in the 2016 census (Statistics Canada, 2018). Overall, as of 2016, more than 7 million Canadians speak an immigrant language at home (this number does not include indigenous language-speakers). This is over one-fifth of the population of Canada, representing an increase of almost 15% since the 2011 census (Statistics Canada, 2017b).

In Canada the term *heritage language* (HL) refers to mother tongue languages other than the two *official* languages, English and French.¹ This definition appears in the Canadian Heritage Languages Institute Act of 1991 (Government of Canada, 1991). In this context, HLs include aboriginal/indigenous languages as well as those brought to Canada by immigrants (except immigrants from English- and French-speaking countries). However, Canadian First Nations communities generally do not see their languages as heritage languages and prefer to use terms such as indigenous or aboriginal language (Cummins, 2005:591).

What these Canadian definitions have in common is that they include no reference to fluency or proficiency. Thus, the focus of this chapter may differ from that of other chapters where the term “HL speaker” refers to speakers who are less than fully proficient (as defined in Benmamoun, Montrul and Polinsky, 2013, p. 129) or where reference to abilities in an official language form part of the definition of a heritage language speaker (*cf.* Montrul, 2012, p. 168).

2 The Ethnolinguistic Vitality of Heritage Languages in Canada

Ethnolinguistic vitality has been defined by Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977, p. 308) as “that [which] makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations.” Its three key components are demography, status and institutional support, which are discussed in turn in this section.

2.1 Demography

Provinces and territories in Canada range widely in terms of their number of HL speakers, from Nunavut with 67% of its people reporting a language other than French or English as their mother tongue (primarily Inuktitut) to New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador, reporting 3%. These percentages include both immigrant and indigenous languages, excluding only French and English. Table 1 reports data from Canada’s most recent (2016) census. It compares the number of respondents to the number reporting a mother tongue which is not one of the two federal official languages. Quite a few people report more than one mother tongue, often one official and one non-official. These speakers are primarily in Ontario and Quebec. The number of such speakers is given in the third column of numbers. The final column represents the percentage of speakers who report a non-official language as their mother tongue (with or without an additional mother tongue). Provinces and territories are listed in decreasing order of percentage of people with a heritage language as mother tongue.

¹ In 1994, the Ontario government adapted the term “international language” to replace “heritage language;” in Quebec the French terms *langue d’origine* and *langue patrimoniale* were introduced in 1993 (Cummins 1998b, p. 293).

Table 1: Density of HL speakers in Canada, by province and territory (Statistics Canada, 2017. *Language Highlight Tables. 2016 Census*)

Region	Total	Non-official language	Non-official + official language	% HL as Mother Tongue
Canada	34,767,255	7,321,060	653,305	23%
Nunavut	35,690	23,345	710	67%
British Columbia	4,598,415	1,267,465	93,360	30%
Ontario	13,312,870	3,553,925	311,860	29%
Manitoba	1,261,620	288,985	27,140	25%
Alberta	4,026,650	870,945	81,845	24%
Northwest Territories	41,380	7,625	675	20%
Saskatchewan	1,083,235	156,960	16,520	16%
Quebec	8,066,560	1,060,830	112,510	15%
Yukon	35,560	4,210	450	13%
Prince Edward Island	141,020	7,160	510	5%
Nova Scotia	912,295	44,550	4,615	5%
New Brunswick	736,280	23,150	2,010	3%
Newfoundland and Labrador	515,680	11,920	1,115	3%

Table 2 reports the same type of information as Table 1, for the “census metropolitan areas” containing Canada’s largest cities, where most recent immigrants settle. Additionally, the rightmost column gives the percentage of people who report using a HL (only or in addition to an official language) at home. In each case, the number for home-language use is lower than the number of people who report that their mother tongue is not an official language, reflecting a degree of language shift in the home.

Table 2: Density of heritage language speakers in Canada's three largest cities (Statistics Canada, 2017. *Language Highlight Tables. 2016 Census*)

City	Total	Non-official language	Non-official + official language	% HL as Mother Tongue	% HL used at home
Toronto	5,883,670	2,518,560	222,810	47%	34%
Vancouver	2,440,145	1,020,250	73,050	45%	33%
Montréal	4,053,360	910,605	98,700	25%	17%

This shift is further reflected by examining retention rates for the 22 largest HLs in Canada (see Figure 1). This graph shows the percentage of people who speak their mother tongue at home, according to the 2016 census. 16 languages have more than 80% of their mother tongue speakers using the language at home. In 2016 (as well as in 2011), each of these 22 immigrant mother tongues had more than 100,000 speakers.

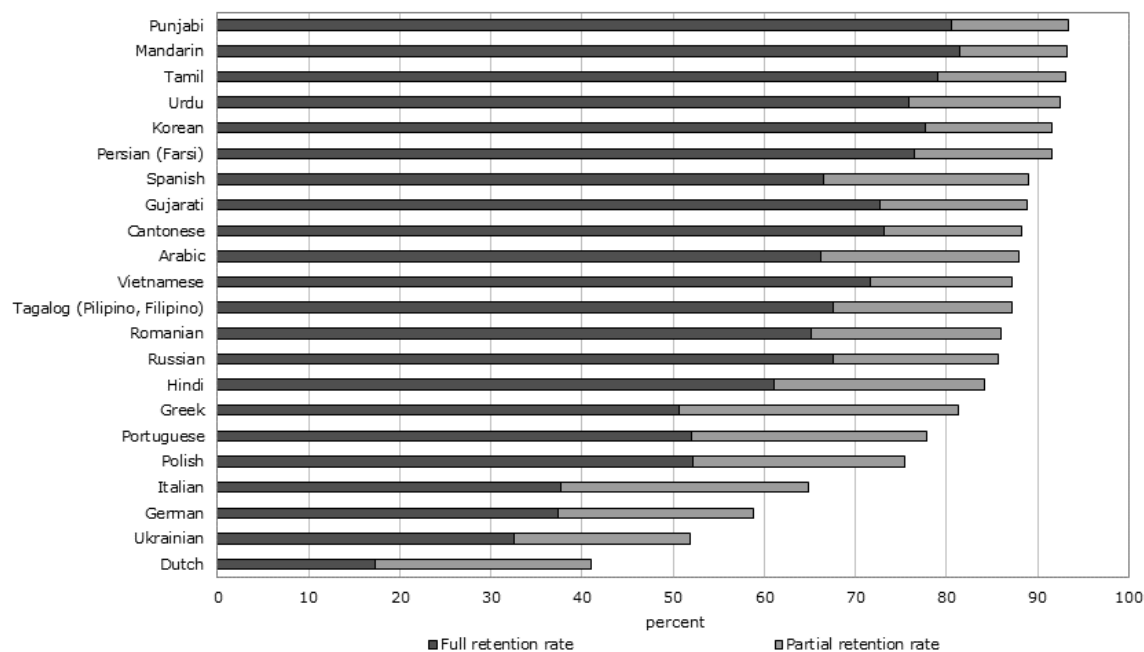


Figure 1: Full or partial retention rate for the 22 most common immigrant mother tongues, Canada (LePage, 2017)

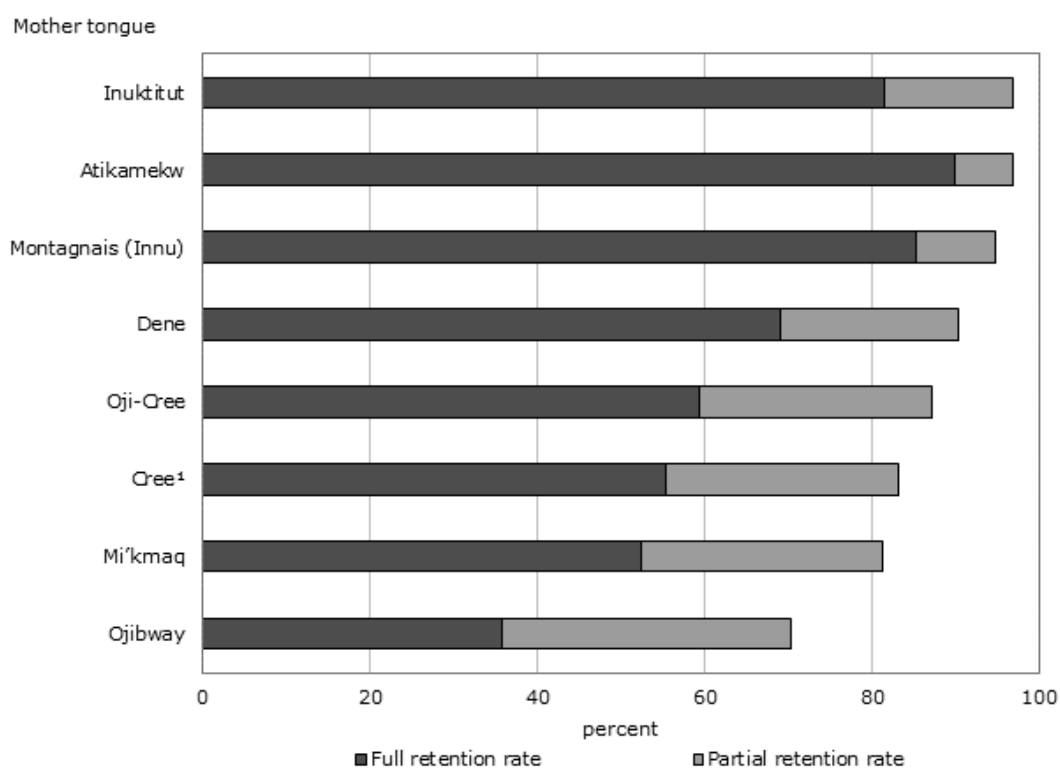
However, we can also apply the “glass half-full” perspective: In 2016, there were 21 heritage languages still being spoken at home by more than half of the people who had acquired them as children. There are several reasons that heritage languages persist in Canada. Immigration continues strong. In fact, Canada has the highest immigration rate among G8 countries, 20.6% (2010 data, Di Salvo, 2017, p. 77).

In addition to high immigration rates, another reason that heritage language use continues strong is high transmission rates. The rate of immigrant-language transmission rose from 41% 1981 to 56% in 2006. However, the intensity of intergenerational language transmission moved in the opposite direction from historic transmission: 41% of mothers surveyed in 1981 passed on their language, but *their* daughters, 25 years later, only passed on the language 23% of the time. Thus only 10% (41% x 23%) of the grandchildren of the 1981 first-generation immigrant mothers have the same mother tongue as their mother and grandmother. That is, it is newer immigrant families that are responsible for the historic increase in transmission rates. Unsurprisingly, there is variation in transmission rates across languages. For some languages (Dutch, Italian, Creole and Tagalog), transmission of the mother's mother tongue to children under 18 years of age was less than 20% while, for others (Armenian, Punjabi, Chinese, Persian, Turkish, Bengali and Urdu) it exceeded 70%. Several European languages (Portuguese, Italian, Greek, Czech) decreased (Houle, 2011:5).

The most recent (2016) census reports more than one-third of Canadian children have at least one foreign-born parent. Nearly half of these children have an Asian country of ancestry, while less than 25% are from a European country of ancestry or the United States. 76% of children who have two foreign-born parents that share the same HL mother tongue speak that language at

home (possibly along with an official language). 34% of parents who share the same heritage mother tongue as their partner speak that language at home. 32% of children with one foreign-born and one Canadian-born parent speak the parent's heritage language at home. 63% of children who live with a single parent that speaks a heritage language speak their parent's language at home (Houle & Maheux, 2017, pp. 5-6). In some cases, families, of course, do not communicate in the heritage language.

Census data reports on almost 70 indigenous languages spoken in Canada. Eight have more than 5,000 mother tongue speakers. More people report speaking an indigenous language at home (228,770 people) than report having an indigenous mother tongue (213,225 people) (LePage, 2017). Retention rates (percent of mother tongue speakers who use the language at home) for these eight most popular indigenous languages are reported in Figure 2, all exceed 70%.



1. The category "Cree" includes Plains Cree, Woods Cree, Swampy Cree, Northeastern Cree, Moose Cree, Southeastern Cree, and the category "Cree n.o.s." The abbreviation "n.o.s." means "not otherwise specified".

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016.

Figure 2: Full or partial retention rate for the eight main Aboriginal mother tongues, Canada, 2016 (LePage, 2017)

Census data is restricted to the larger populations. Smaller varieties, often moribund, are not individually represented. In Canada these include, for example, Germanic languages in Manitoba (cf. Page & Putnam, 2015), Faetar² (Nagy, 2011b; Nagy, Iannozzi & Heap, 2018), and Scandinavian languages (Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2006; Johannessen, 2015). A list of endangered

² Faetar is a Francoprovençal variety spoken in two villages in southern Italy and in a HL diaspora including Canada (Nagy 2017a, 2018). Faetar is also a HL in southern Italy, a result of migration from the French Alps some 800 years ago.

indigenous languages, with endangerment levels, is provided at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_endangered_languages_in_Canada.

2.2 Status

One reason for these high rates of use of non-official languages may be understood by considering acculturation strategies. Berry (1998, p. 88) provides a paradigm of possible acculturation strategies, related to orientation to two issues: the value of maintaining one's identity and the value of relationships with the larger society (see Figure 3). Canadians are quite likely to answer "Yes" to both issues, leading to integration, that is, the maintenance of one's (cultural) identity at the same time as maintenance of relationships with the larger (Canadian) society. We may see this as parallel to additive bilingualism: Canadians are likely to learn English or French without necessarily giving up their heritage mother tongue. Berry (1998, p. 84) notes that the goals of the official multiculturalism policy are to avoid assimilation while encouraging intergroup harmony and acceptance (which requires learning an official language). This study indicates fairly high levels of acceptance of multicultural ideology and of tolerance and no effect of ethnic origins on either.

		Issue 1: It is considered to be of value to maintain one's identity and characteristics.	
		YES	NO
Issue 2: It is considered to be of value to maintain relationships with larger society.	YES	Integration or "mosaic"	Assimilation or "melting pot"
	NO	Separation/Segregation	Marginalization

Figure 3: *Acculturation strategies (adapted from Berry, 1998, p. 88)*

This integration option means that

exposure to one's immigrant language can also occur outside the home, and through contact with other children who are also exposed to those languages and various learning activities organized by language communities, as well as through greater contact with other people with the same mother tongue (Houle, 2011, p. 3).

The perception of HLs in Canada is partially circumscribed by political actions. In 1971, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau established the policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework," defining two official languages but no official culture (Cummins & Danesi, 1990, p. 23). Thus, the value of multiple ethnic groups contributing to Canada was recognized, but not at the expense of supporting only the two official languages. In the 1980s, Canada saw discussion of the term "heritage" as a way of subjugating people who were not mother tongue speakers of one of Canada's official languages, but today people are "more familiar [and comfortable] with the *de facto* use of the term for government departments," for example, "Canadian Heritage/*Patrimoine canadien*" (Dressler, 2010, p. 168).

While it is recognized that fluency in at least one official language is necessary for socioeconomic success, Harrison (2000, p. 14) describes the importance attributed to HL preservation, noting that Canadians value maintaining and transmitting their mother tongue. He points out that many children attend heritage language classes outside of school hours, indicating

that parents value this transmission. A positive attitude toward HLs and bilingualism is often noted in research publications. For example, Pérez-Leroux, Cuza and Thomas (2011b, p. 168) report that their participants' positive attitude toward their HL and to bilingualism resembles that for Toronto more broadly,

where languages and diverse ethnic backgrounds are accepted as the norm, and there is an abundance of multilingual media, street signs, language services in government, education and commercial establishments and community support for ethnic celebrations.

Although Canada was the first country to adopt an official policy of *multiculturalism*, in 1969 (Brousseau & Dewing, 2009), it maintains a policy of bilingualism, which supports only the two official languages, English and French. Thus, there is considerably less research published about education in minority, heritage and indigenous language settings than for French and English (Duff & Li, 2009). Canada's policy of multiculturalism symbolizes "Canada's commitment to a society that not only tolerates linguistic and cultural diversity, but strives to preserve, develop and institutionalize it (Danesi, McLeod & Morris, 1993). While the purpose of this policy (and its revision in 1988) is to encourage language maintenance, there is no legislation or funding to implement it. Thus, most heritage language education programs are run by local community groups (Cumming, 2014).

In spite of these efforts, income levels, an important marker of status, are uneven among mother tongue groups. The 2016 census shows the Canadian median income to be around \$CA 35,000 for people whose mother tongue is English or French, around \$CA 25,000 for mother tongue speakers of immigrant languages and under \$CA 20,000 for mother tongue speakers of indigenous languages (Statistics Canada, 2018).

Yet Canada, and perhaps Toronto in particular, is viewed from the outside as exemplary in terms of strong attention to heritage culture both at an intellectual and a material level (Turchetta & Vedovelli, 2018). Supporting this perspective with current data, Di Salvo (2017, pp. 80-81) reports an interview study of 20 Italian immigrants to Toronto, representing two migration waves, the first shortly after World War II, which consists of less educated Italians and a second, university-educated wave, who arrived 2000-2015 as part of "the new wave of transnational mobility." While the earlier immigration group reported little connection with Italy today and frequently employed English in conversations with Italian interviewers, the more recent immigration group assigned a negative value to English, reporting using it in limited home contexts, particularly when they want to "give the impression of harshness and strictness" (Di Salvo, 2017, pp. 85-6). The earlier group used English more often with their children to help them integrate, while the second group prioritizes passing on Italian to the next generation (Di Salvo, 2017, pp. 88-9).

Another marker of the status of languages in Canadian culture is the Canadian Language Museum (www.languagemuseum.ca). It was founded in 2011 with the goal of promoting "an appreciation of all of the languages spoken in Canada, and of their role in the development of the country." It has a home base at York University, and traveling and digital exhibits, including exhibits featuring Cree and Inuktitut, and two on HLs more generally: "Read between the Signs" (Toronto's linguistic landscape) and "A Tapestry of Voices."

2.3 Institutional support

HL programs funded provincially or locally have existed in many areas of Canada for over a hundred years. These reflect immigrant settlement patterns and have primarily supported Arabic, Cantonese, German, Hebrew, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, Punjabi, Spanish, Tamil, Ukrainian, and Urdu (Statistics Canada, 2012). The government's policy of "official multiculturalism" supports language programs whose goals are to "encourage cultural retention, particularly identity maintenance, and social integration, involving equitable and respectful interactions among cultural groups" (Noels & Clément, 1998, p. 102). Different methods of HL instruction exist in Canada. Depending on provincial policy and the number of students seeking instruction, transitional, dual track, or heritage language programs might be available in public schools (Babbaee, 2012, p. 7; Cummins, 1998a, 2005). Primary and secondary school transitional and dual language programs exist in provinces where a heritage language may be used as the medium of instruction, that is, in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Universities, colleges, and private language schools also teach international languages. Some university courses have sections designated for HL speakers (Department of Spanish and Portuguese, 2019; Oikonomakou, Aravossitas & Skourtou, 2018). Overall, more than 200 languages are taught in Canada.

Canada has no federal mandate to fund HL education (for immigrant languages) with the exception of transitional programs to help students learn an official language. However, just this year (February 2019), the Canadian government brought forward legislation to protect indigenous languages in Canada by providing sustainable funding for the "reclamation, revitalization, strengthening and maintenance of Indigenous languages in Canada" (Bill C-91). The bill establishes the Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages to protect and promote indigenous languages by developing activities, tools, educational materials and archives, funding immersion programs, interpretation and translation service, and conducting research (Tasker, 2019). There have also been recent changes in funding allocations for First Nations education to ensure that students living on reserves are funded in a manner comparable to those in provincial school systems (Canadian Press, 2019).

The provincial level provides more support. According to the Canadian Education Association (1991), heritage language programs exist in Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. Languages taught include Italian, Greek, Spanish, and Portuguese in Quebec (Canadian Education Association, 1991), and Filipino, German, Hebrew, Japanese, Mandarin, Portuguese, Spanish and Ukrainian in Manitoba (Manitoba Education, 2011, cited in Babbaee, 2012, p. 8). Ontario has provided funding for HL classes since 1977. It supports up to 2.5 hours per week of class when there are at least 25 students in one school requesting a particular language (Canadian Education Association, 1991). Today, more than 100 languages are offered (International Languages Educators' Association, *n.d.*). These include some immersion programs, but most are after-school or weekend programs (Cumming, 2014, p. 1). Recently, the Toronto Catholic District School Board voted to continue its HL program with classes taught during the regular school day (Jones, 2018).

HL programs tend to be favored by the cultural groups whose languages are taught, but many others oppose the use of public funds to teach heritage languages (Cummins, 1998b, pp. 294-5). Thus, there are provinces where heritage language medium instruction has been outlawed. Examples are Prince Edward Island (Canadian Education Association, 1991) and Newfoundland

and Labrador (Department of Education Newfoundland and Labrador, 2011).

Outside the government, community groups have organized and funded non-official languages classes since the 19th century. This included publicly-supported bilingual schools until the early 20th century, when provincial education acts forbade them. However, immigrant groups continue to fund HL education.

As heritage language programs offer only a few hours of programming per week, heritage language learners, especially those whose home language is English or French, might receive insufficient language input to develop communicative skills in their heritage languages (Babbae, 2012, p. 10). Due to often limited success of foreign and heritage language programs, and high rates of language shift in immigrant families, some Canadian educators have proposed combining HL and foreign language programs, with multiple goals:

to promote students developing plurilingual abilities in multiple languages, identities that value cultural diversity and differences, and preparedness for global mobility—through the creation and uses of dual-language books, projects involving sister classes internationally through electronic media, planning and monitoring long-term personal goals for language learning, and facilitating cross-language transfer and intercultural awareness” (Cumming, 2014, p. 1).

For additional recent reviews of language policies and trends in Canada, see Burnaby (2008), Cumming (2014) and references therein, Duff, Brighton, Kagan, and Bauckus (2008), Duff & Li (2009). Drapeau (1998) surveys educational policy related to the teaching of indigenous languages in the late 20th century, noting little financial investment and the existence of classes primarily for primary school through grade three.

2.4 Examples of innovative HL programs

Moving from the above broad-strokes overview, this section summarizes two innovative programs that support indigenous languages, and another that supports immigrant heritage languages.

The *Miqqut* (‘needle’) program is “community-based, non-formal, intergenerational, safe, healthy, culturally relevant, learner-driven” and embeds language and literacy skill development in the practice of traditional crafts (Ilitaqsiniq, *n.d.*, p. 3) to support Inuktitut in the territory of Nunavut. Research on the efficacy of the program compared students who participated in two versions of the program: one in which “language and literacy skills were not intentionally embedded into [the] program” and one where they were (*ibid.* p. 9). 66 participants were interviewed and completed questionnaires. Participants improved their abilities in traditional skills and crafts as well as increasing their language skills in both English and Inuktitut; gained comfort with reading, expanding their use of writing skills, and gained confidence in speaking to groups, as well as a number of other positive outcomes. They found that using both Inuktitut and English for learning activities was a productive approach. The report (<http://ilitaqsiniq.ca/projects/miqqut-project/>) offers a series of recommendations to the Canadian and Nunavut governments and literacy programs on the basis of their research.

Sarkar and Metallic (2009) describe an adult Mi’gmaq education program and

participatory action research project. Mi'gmaq is an Algonquian language that is considered “a ‘viable small’ language (Norris, 2007) and is far from moribund,” though it has disappeared from many communities where it used to be spoken (Sarkar and Metallic, 2009, p. 50). In the first two years of the program, the community experienced a shift in attitude toward the language, giving hope for the language’s future. Success is attributed to the facts that the program was developed by local speakers and is based on a syllabus that “expands on the basic categories found in Mi'gmaq grammar” rather than borrowing methods for other languages.

The University of Toronto’s Linguistics Department offers “heritage language” modules in several sociolinguistics courses (Nagy, 2017b). These give students the opportunity to study their own and their peers’ experiences as heritage language speakers, supported by academic resources as a means of establishing the academic value of such languages and speakers. Students from first-year undergraduates through PhD participate.

As sample assignment from a first-year course is “Learning about the structure of a HL.” Students work in small groups that include at least one student who speaks a HL for which there is transcribed speech in the project’s database, one student who is good with computers and learning to use new tools, and one student with strong management skills. The assignment has three purposes: to build and share knowledge about a HL; to learn to transcribe, translate and annotate linguistic data; and to learn to describe linguistic variation based on empirical evidence. Students are tasked with learning to translate and gloss (a short segment of) a time-aligned transcription, and to find, label and quantify the distribution of some phonetic and syntactic features of the HL. In a further assignment, students generate hypotheses about types of inter-generational variation they expect to see and then find examples to test their hypothesis. To provide concrete models, previous student-authored research papers are reviewed. This engagement with a language that is normally limited to the home environment is appreciated on many levels by students. For assignment descriptions and student responses, see Nagy (2017b).

3 Research on heritage languages in Canada

Linguistic studies of heritage languages have increased in Canada over the past decade. This chapter concentrates on sociolinguistic studies of structural properties of heritage languages, a relatively new approach to HL study in Canada, but also includes a sample of studies of attitude and orientation, experimental studies of structural properties, and studies of pedagogical approaches.

3.1 Sociolinguistic study of spontaneous speech

Variationist sociolinguists primarily examine corpora of spontaneously-produced speech or sign language, recorded in “ecologically valid” contexts, that is, in contexts where speakers regularly use the language under study. The goal is to understand the constraints determining the distribution of competing forms (e.g., different pronunciations, different morphological or grammatical structures, or different lexical items) in terms of their linguistic and social context.

Systematically-structured patterns of variation at these different levels “may be indicative of socially salient differences among the participants, and how they understand the speech event they are part of” (Nagy & Meyerhoff, 2008, p. 1). While the field focused primarily on speakers presented as monolingual in its first 50 years, work on the sociolinguistics of language contact is increasing (*cf.* Hildebrandt, Jany, & Silva, 2017; Meyerhoff & Nagy, 2008; Stanford & Preston,

2009). Heritage language speakers, by definition, live in language contact situations, presenting relatively accessible populations for study. However, there is little overlap in languages spoken natively by professional sociolinguistic researchers and heritage languages. Thus, a key aspect of HL sociolinguistics is the training and involvement of student heritage-language speakers at every level of investigation. One example of such an approach is the Heritage Language Variation and Change Project (HLVC, Nagy 2009, 2011a), a large-scale project investigating variation and change in ten of Toronto's heritage languages. The goals of the project are to:

- Create a corpus of recorded and transcribed speech, accompanied by language use and attitude information for each speaker, available for research of the following heritage languages: Cantonese, Faetar, Hungarian, Italian, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Tagalog and Ukrainian. People interested in conducting academic research with this corpus may find access information at http://projects.chass.utoronto.ca/ngn/HLVC/5_1_opportunities.php.
- Document and describe heritage languages spoken by immigrants and two generations of their descendants
 - Determine whether (and, if so, what) cross-linguistic generalizations are possible about the types of features, structures, rules or constraints that are malleable in heritage languages, either through language contact, isolation from standard varieties and standardizing institutions, or internal changes
 - Determine which social factors are correlated to the variation and how, particularly questioning whether the same factors which play important roles in majority languages also do so in minority languages³
- Push variationist sociolinguistic research beyond its monolingually-oriented core (and its majority language focus) (Nagy & Meyerhoff, 2008)
- Promote HL vitality through research, training, and “knowledge mobilization” in and out of the classroom, particularly by engaging heritage language speakers as researchers (*cf.* Nagy, 2017b)

Linguistic analysis is based on samples extracted from recordings of conversations among HL speakers in relaxed environments. Evidence for participants' linguistic attitudes and practices is collected through a questionnaire

(http://projects.chass.utoronto.ca/ngn/pdf/HLVC/short_questionnaire_English.pdf). A key finding from these studies of spontaneously-produced speech is a lack of connection between linguistic and cultural attitudes (the status element of ethnolinguistic vitality) and structural variation in the language. More specifically,

1. There is no relationship between the strength of out-group ties and linguistic patterns that are, at least conceivably, contact-influenced. In other words, ethnolinguistic vitality is not a predictor of speaker-specific linguistic contact effects in heritage languages. This is a sociolinguistically important finding in so far as many features (e.g., education, neighbourhood) that may correlate to social class are included in the Ethnic Orientation Questionnaire (discussed in Nagy, 2017, p. 434).
2. The status of a heritage variety, in terms of its recognition as a variety that is independent of

³ To this end, efforts have been made to recruit participants broadly, outside the school/university environment.

the homeland variety (by virtue of having its own label⁴ and/or institutional supports), does not reliably relate to the degree of difference observed between the heritage and the corresponding homeland or source variety, nor between generations of speakers.

3. For four sociolinguistic variables (null subject, classifiers, case-marking and voice onset time of voiceless stops), studied in several languages, there is no correlation between individuals' rate of use of more English-like forms and their ethnic orientation.
4. For the three morphosyntactic variables (null subjects, classifiers and case-marking), there is no consistent difference between heritage and homeland speaker rates, nor between first- and second-generation heritage speakers' rates. In contrast, for voice onset time, there is a heritage–homeland difference in two of the four the languages studied and concomitant cross-generational differences (Nagy 2018, p. 441).

Studies that have contributed to this understanding of Toronto's heritage languages include Kang & Nagy (2016) on Korean aspiration and tonogenesis, Łyskawa (2015) on case-marking in Polish; Łyskawa, Maddeaux, Melara and Nagy (2016) on word-final devoicing in Polish; Łyskawa and Nagy (2019) on case-marking in Polish, Russian and Ukrainian; Nagy (2015, 2017a, 2018) and Nagy, Iannozzi and Heap (2018) on several aspects of voice onset time and null subject variability in Cantonese, Faetar, Italian, Russian and Ukrainian; Nagy and Kochetov (2013) on voice onset time in Italian, Russian and Ukrainian; Nodari, Celata and Nagy (2019) on voice onset time in multiple phonological contexts in Italian; Tse (2016, 2017, 2019) on Cantonese vowel phonology, and Nagy and Lo (2019) on Cantonese classifiers.

The majority of other HL sociolinguistic studies examining the Toronto context focus on Italian and come from a multi-institutional collaboration in Italy, reported in Turchetta and Vedovelli (2018). From this project, Casini (2018) explores the linguistic landscape of Italian in Toronto; and Turchetta and Di Salvo (2018) report on attitudes to the transmission of Italian and shift to English in data collected from interviews and surveys. They report on language preference rates, mother tongue transmission (very low in their sample of students), self-reported ability to understand, speak and read, and frequency of interaction with Italian-language media (50% report watching Italian TV).

Other sociolinguistic studies of Ontario HLCs include an examination of mother-child language usage practices in heritage Ukrainian families (Chumak-Horbatch, 1987) and code-switching in heritage German speakers (McKinnie, 2000).

Chumak-Horbatch (1987) selected families that report a positive orientation to the Ukrainian language (self-reported "Ukrainian-only" households) and, through participant observation, interviews and questionnaires, investigated linguistic behavior. She found that English was used in many ways in every household, although the mothers were often not aware of their own, or their preschool children's, use of English. Given these findings, the author was pessimistic about the future of Ukrainian in Toronto, but, 30 years later, the HLCV project has recorded fourth-

⁴ For example, the term "Canadian-Ukrainian dialect" has existed at least since it was used by Sekirin and Courtois (1994) in an article describing features of Ukrainian as used in Canada that differ from the homeland variety.

and fifth-generation heritage Ukrainian speakers. Statistics Canada (2017) reports 26,550 mother tongue speakers of Ukrainian in Toronto.

McKinnie (2000) reports on code-switching strategies of two heritage German speakers, noting that their degree of cultural integration affects how often (and in what structures) English appears in a German conversation. She notes that “the ability to facilitate both inter- and intra-sentential code-switching is indicative of excellent knowledge of the grammatical systems of both languages and not necessarily a sign of attrition of the mother tongue” (McKinnie, 2000, p. 173), reiterating Poplack’s (1980) claim.

Indigenous language studies with a sociolinguistic orientation include the *Algonquian Linguistic Atlas* (Junker and Stewart, 2011), an online resource illustrating variation in 16 varieties; and Carrier’s ongoing work on morphosyntactic variation in Inuktitut. Through an examination of the conditioning of ergative and antipassive constructions, Carrier (2017) argues for the formation of a new dialect, with different grammatical constraints, following relocation of speakers from several dialects to the High Arctic (in Nunavut).

In western Canada, there are recent HL studies of Greek (Pappas, 2019) and Icelandic (Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2006) phonology, and studies of attitudes of German (Dressler, 2010) and Spanish (Guardado, 2002, 2014) speakers.

Pappas (2019) studied two features in Greek as part of the *Immigration and Language in Canada: Greeks and Greek-Canadians* project (Anastassiadis et al., 2017). 50 sociolinguistic interviews provided over 2,000 tokens of unstressed high vowels (with variable deletion) and over 3,000 tokens of variable /l/ and /n/ palatalization, supporting an investigation of stigmatized features and of dialect-leveling in the immigration context. The rate of /i/-deletion in HL speakers was much lower than in Homeland speakers, likely due to the majority of HL speakers not being from the region of Greece where the stigmatized variant is prevalent. In contrast, palatalization, which is found in the predominant homeland source variety of Heritage Greek speakers, is widespread among Canadian speakers of heritage Greek (Pappas, 2019, pp. 273-4).

Arnbjörnsdóttir (2006) reports on data collected in 1986 in New Iceland, Manitoba (and Mountain, North Dakota). 21 Canadian heritage Icelandic speakers were recorded in sociolinguistic interviews, picture description tasks and reading lists. Chapter 5 of that book briefly describes the grammar of the language and notes that there is little morphological or syntactic difference between the heritage and homeland varieties, explicitly noting that case-marking variation resembles that in homeland Icelandic. It describes a few phonological features that distinguish the heritage variety, while noting that it does not sound like a learner variety but rather exhibits some evidence of dialect leveling (p. 106). A quantitative analysis of two vowel mergers (I/E; Y/ö, primarily for long vowels) is presented. These raising and lowering processes are collectively known as *Flámæli*, a process that existed in Iceland but was systematically eradicated from the language after migration to Manitoba and North Dakota (p. 85). An analysis of 1,000+ tokens shows that younger speakers, women, and North Dakotan speakers exhibit this merger more than older speakers, men, and Manitoban speakers (p. 135-140).

Through case studies of six heritage language learners of German at the post-secondary level, Dressler (2010) explored self-identification (as HL learners or not) and attitudes related to being

German HLLs. For most of these university students living in Alberta, their self-identification as heritage German learners rests on their parents' or their grandparents' mother tongue, not being childhood German speakers themselves (Dressler, 2010, p. 166). One participant points out that Germans felt that "they shouldn't speak German to us because that caused greater ostracism or social penalties at the time" (*ibid.*). She notes that researchers and teachers should be aware "that not all HL learners will self-identify as such," and decide whether that is essential for research participation or course enrollment (*ibid.*, p.173).

Guardado (2002), in contrast, explored the claim that heritage cultural identity is critical to the maintenance of HLs, and showed that, even in the context of a small community of a particular HL and input from only one parent, HL maintenance is possible. Guardado urges parents to "promote a positive attitude in their children" as key to HL maintenance (Guardado, 2002, p. 341). Guardado (2014) describes ideologies related to maintenance and transmission, as understood through observation of daily interactions in fifteen Spanish-speaking families in Vancouver. Critical discourse analysis was applied to their conversations to understand motivations for HL development. The article concludes by arguing that "making these discourses explicit and public may contribute to the spread of an ideology that ultimately contributes to the promotion of heritage language development and maintenance" (Guardado, 2014, p. 22). This is representative of a popular (if not governmental) Canadian perspective: that heritage languages are worthy of development and maintenance.

I note also the existence of an online searchable corpus of North American Norwegian spontaneous speech which includes data from 24 speakers recorded in 2013 in Saskatchewan (Johannessen, 2015). They range in age from 43 to 97.

3.2 Acquisition / experimental research

HLs have also been examined from a developmental perspective. A selection of representative articles that focus on acquisition from an experimental perspective is provided here. These studies examining Inuktitut, Greek, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish or Tagalog all show differences between monolingual and heritage speakers.

Sherkina-Lieber (and colleagues) conducted studies of many aspects of Inuktitut using comprehension, grammaticality judgment, elicited imitation and picture-matching tasks. Sherkina-Lieber and Murasugi (2015) investigated noun incorporation among adult speakers of the Baffin dialect and Sherkina-Lieber (2015, also examining tense, aspect, case and agreement) did the same for receptive bilinguals of a Labrador dialect. Both studies found less fluent HL speakers to be more selective than fluent speakers in their choice between two types of sentences (with and without noun incorporation). They report that speakers do not, overall, prefer non-synthetic over synthetic structures, surprising given other reports of HL preference for analytic forms. Sherkina-Lieber's (2010) study reported that higher-proficiency receptive bilinguals in Nain, Labrador, comprehend time and remoteness features in Inuktitut tense morphemes, while less proficient speakers do not access the remoteness feature. Sherkina-Lieber, Pérez-Leroux and Johns (2011) used grammaticality judgment tasks to show that receptive bilinguals demonstrate knowledge of the structure and ordering of agreement and case morphemes, although a significant difference from the fluent-speaker group emerged.

Pérez-Leroux, Cuza, & Thomas (2011a) investigate language transfer through an experiment targeting clitic-placement in two groups of second-generation Heritage Spanish speakers in Toronto. They compared simultaneous and sequential bilinguals, aged three to eight. These tests were conducted in the speakers' homes, a Spanish-speaking setting, by a Spanish-speaking tester. A sentence-imitation task revealed that sequential bilinguals (who learned Spanish before English) accurately reproduced the clitic sequence in the stimulus more frequently than simultaneous bilinguals and, specifically, that sequential bilinguals were more likely than simultaneous bilinguals to reproduce proclisis stimuli (the less English-like form that monolingual Spanish-speaking children favor). To further account for these differences, Pérez-Leroux et al. (2011b) contrast the family environments for simultaneous vs. sequential bilingual children. They report differences in two dimensions: "the proportion of parental conversation initiated in Spanish, and the degree of exposure [to Spanish] outside the home," and find that these differences, though small, have an effect on children's language dominance, particularly for simultaneous bilinguals.

Tagalog voice onset time was examined in Kang, George & Soo (2016), comparing nine heritage Tagalog speakers to ten native Tagalog speakers and 12 native English speakers in a word-list reading task. Acoustic analysis revealed that heritage speakers "successfully establish separate phonetic categories" for their two languages' voiceless stops, but that voiced stops "exhibit considerable cross-language influence" (Kang et al., 2016, p. 184).

The speech of heritage Greek children in NYC and Western Canada shows some homeland vs. heritage differences in subject realization patterns (Daskalaki, Chondrogianni, Blom, Argyri, & Paradis, 2019) and contradicts expectations of the Interface Hypothesis (Sorace, 2011) in that only one of two syntax-discourse structures was found to trigger errors (compared to a monolingual sample) and one narrowly-syntactic context also triggered errors. This study also revealed a gradient effect of language use – more monolingual-like accuracy rates are increasingly prevalent with higher Greek Language Use scores.

Using a story-retelling task, Lin & Nicoladis (2018) compared Heritage Mandarin children in Edmonton, Alberta, to homeland monolingual Mandarin speakers. For 4-6-year-olds, no important differences were noted in the means of expressing motion (deictics, simple and complex verb constructions). 8-10-year-olds, however, showed significant differences from Homeland speakers, suggesting that it is the influence of English rather than differences in early HL input that account for these syntactic differences.

Jia and Paradis (2015) examined narratives in heritage and monolingual Mandarin children and report that "HL children used less adequate referring expressions for first mentions than the monolinguals, mainly due to overgeneralization of classifiers and lack of vocabulary knowledge." In contrast, no significant inter-group differences were found for relative clauses or post-verbal NP placement to mark first mentions. They also showed effects for age of arrival, education level and "diversity" of the Mandarin home environment.

Jia and Paradis (2018) focused on relative clauses, reporting longitudinal and cross-sectional studies. Here differences between the groups were reported at an early timepoint, but became more similar over time. This led them to conclude that "the reduced L1 input HL children receive in the host country does not necessarily lead to deficient acquisition of the L1."

3.3 Research on HL education in Canada

Readers in search of more in-depth coverage of Canadian heritage language studies of education policy are referred to two special issues of the *Canadian Modern Language Review* on heritage language education in Canada: Cummins (1991) and, two decades later, Duff & Li (2009) and references therein, as well as Burnaby (2008). Studies of the HL pedagogical context in Canada include Comanaru & Noels (2009), Goldstein (1997) and Cummins (1998b, 2014, inter alia). Trifonas and Aravossitas's (2018) book on heritage language teaching includes a number of chapters about Canadian programs.

Comanaru & Noels (2009) examined university students' motivations to learn Mandarin in Alberta, highlighting differences among types of HL learners who enrolled in university courses. They report:

few differences between heritage learners who spoke Chinese as a mother tongue and those who spoke English, which suggests that from the standpoint of social psychology, regardless of Chinese proficiency, subgroups of heritage language learners may be more alike than different (Comanaru & Noels, 2009, p. 131).

Goldstein (1997) reports on benefits of a teacher's use of the students' HL in (limited contexts within) the classroom. She reports that heritage Cantonese-speaking students "achieve academic and social success" through the deployment of multiple languages in the math classroom, but also notes the existence of inter-ethnic tensions around this practice.

Foreshadowing this finding, Cummins (1998b, p. 302) reported that 'many people of diverse backgrounds fear balkanization of school communities, loss of time for core curriculum subjects, undue pressure on children, disruption in school programming and staffing, inadequate preparation for eventual employment, and indeed, a dramatic shift of direction in Canadian society' (Toronto Board of Education, cited in Cummins 1998b, p. 302). Such attitudes persist despite the research summarized in Cummins (1983, 1998a,b, 2014) establishing the benefits of teaching HLs as "support[ing]the educational merits of teaching international languages... No adverse effects on academic attainment in English (or French) have been noted."

4 Summary and Conclusion

The benefits of learning, speaking and understanding HLs have been illustrated through the studies reported here and elsewhere, highlighting how important it is that HL research continue, deepening and broadening our understanding of the features, structures, and malleability of HLs, of the attitudes and practices of HL users, how these interact, and how our understanding of the HL context may best be applied to education at every level. The studies surveyed here suggest a number of research questions that remain open. We have seen differing effects (including no effect) reported for factors that relate to language use and linguistic attitudes. Do these depend on the linguistic variable examined? On the speaker sample or the population? On the methodology applied? To answer these questions, it is critical that additional languages and communities be investigated, particularly indigenous communities, which remain under-studied. So far, we know something about less than 10% of the HLs spoken in Canada, and a far smaller percentage of the communities. And we need to continue to apply a range of methodologies to understand the structural properties and sociolinguistic ecologies of HLs, and the relationship between these.

Examples of many methodologies have been reviewed here: surveys (*cf.* Statistics Canada, 2017a, 2017b, 2018), ethnographic observation (*cf.* Di Salvo, 2017; Turchetta & Vedovelli, 2018), sociolinguistic corpus approaches (§3.1), experimental approaches (§3.2) and pedagogical projects (§3.3).

Canada, with its rich variety of indigenous languages and its history of many layers of immigration, is an excellent site for such research. The high rate of multilingualism and HL retention and use may be attributed to the attitudes of its residents, the political actions of its government, including the welcoming of immigrants, community and provincial support for HL maintenance, and its policy of official multiculturalism which leads to high rates of acculturation and, as a frequent result, multilingualism rather than HL loss.

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