

*Language, identity, and the
commodification of official bilingualism
in Canada: Towards a greater inclusion
of the voices and linguistic capital of
multilingual immigrant students*



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Key definitions

- **Discourse:** flows of ideas, knowledge, and power through time which have an impact on how individuals come to perceive their social reality, their place within it, and construct their individual subjectivities (Foucault, 1972, 1980)
 - Ex. **Discourse of Canadian nationalism** (Canadian identity, Canadian values, Canadian symbols, Canada's historic past)
- **French as a second language education:** French language programs designed for students whose mother tongue is not French (ex. Core French, French Immersion). Program offerings vary by province, territory, school board and individual schools (CPF, 2013)
- **Commodification of language:** Refers to the symbolic and economic value placed on languages in the era of globalization (i.e. rise of the English language as a dominant global language of communication and trade) (Grin, 1996, 2000, 2001)

Historical Overview of the evolution of Canada's bilingual framework

1963-1969

- **Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism**
- Official Languages Act
- Canada's multiculturalism policy

2003-2018

- **Action plan on official languages (2003-2008)**
- Roadmap for Canada's official languages (2008-2013)
- Roadmap for Canada's official languages (2013-2018)

Research questions

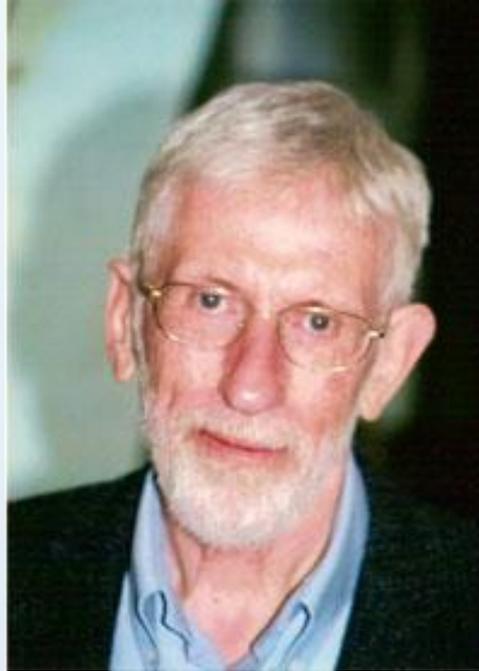


- **1.)** How do the discourses contained in stakeholder promotion efforts seek to maintain and reproduce the market for official bilingualism and FSL education in Canada?
- **2.)** How might a critical analysis of these discourses provide insight into the underlying sources of tension contributing to the apparent disconnect between the ideal vision for official bilingualism and the actual manifestation of it within Canadian society?

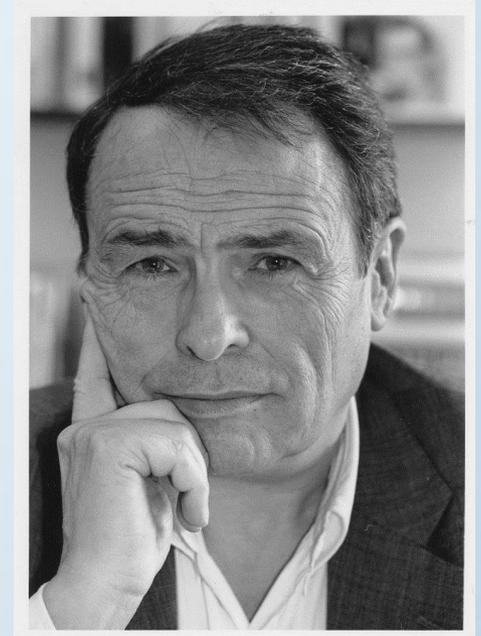
Theoretical framework



**Foucault
(1970, 1972)**



**Fairclough
(2001)**



**Bourdieu (1977,
1986, 1990,
1991)**

Research design



Methodology:

Foucauldian critical discourse analysis:

Analytic approach used to deconstruct discourse to reveal hidden power structures which reproduce social inequalities and social problems over time

Data sources and main units of analysis: discourses contained in 14 written stakeholder promotion efforts for official bilingualism (i.e. promotional posters/brochures, language policy documents, and curriculum documents)

Data collection: thematic coding to sort discourse fragments (i.e. Individual words and phrases) into discourse strands (i.e. flows of ideas/knowledge)

Data analysis:

- 1.) **Detailed analysis** (patterns of images/messages)
- 2.) **Fine detailed analysis** (recurring patterns in the use of language)
- 3.) **Cross-comparison of data sets** (comparison of discourse strands/patterns of language used across the data sets)

Protectionist discourse/language

“In the midst of this change, our linguistic duality has **endured** and **asserted** itself, but it is evolving in a context that has greatly changed” (Government of Canada, 2003, p. 3).

“The **biculturalism fervently supported** by the B and B commission certainly **remains a fertile ground** for contemporary Canadian culture, but the diversity of our influences has given rise to multiculturalism which now also **expresses itself through our linguistic duality**” (OCOL, 2005, p. 33).

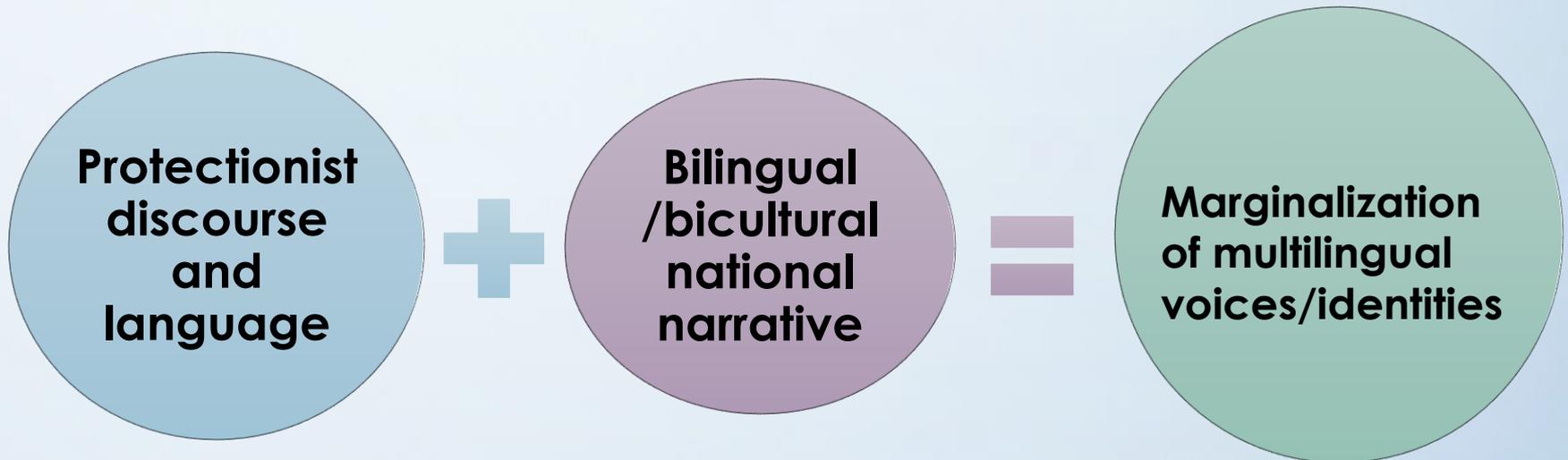


Conditions for belonging

“If you’re going to **count yourself as being Canadian** you should **embrace** everything that Canada is about...it’s a **bilingual, two-culture country with English and French**, so I think you have to **accept** both” (Canadian Parents for French, 2003).

“Our two official languages provide a way for new Canadians to **become part of the social, cultural and economic life of our country**” (Government of Canada, 2009, p. 5).

Identifying the central problem



Why is this a problem?

- **By the year 2031, more than one quarter of the population will be 1st generation Canadians (OCOL, 2015)**
- **Recent census data indicates that both multilingualism and linguistic diversity are on the rise (Statistics Canada, 2017)**
- **In the 2016 census, 19.4% of Canadians reported that they speak more than one language and the number of Canadians claiming a non-official language as their mother tongue rose by 13% (Statistics Canada, 2017)**
- **The discursive construction of Canada's bilingual framework has remained virtually unchanged since the 1960s despite increased multiculturalism and multilingualism**

Registration now open at Toronto's first multi-language elementary school

St. René Goupil Catholic School in Scarborough offers curriculum in French, Mandarin, English and Spanish

CBC News | Posted: May 10, 2017 3:22 PM ET | Last Updated: May 10, 2017 3:22 PM ET

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Bilingualism growing, but not in French and English

The Canadian Press | Posted: Oct 24, 2012 8:50 AM ET | Last Updated: Oct 24, 2012 10:02 PM ET

CANADA

August 2, 2017 8:03 am

Updated: August 2, 2017 7:01 pm

Canadians speaking more languages than ever before, Tagalog fastest-growing mother tongue



By Leslie Young

National Online Journalist, Investigative Global News

thestar.com

News - Canada

Canadians speaking more languages, census reveals

Data from the 2016 census shows that linguistic diversity is on the rise, with 7.6 million Canadians able to speak a language other than French or English.

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Arabic school place 'of hope and healing' for Syrians in Halifax

'This school brings back our dignity and make us feel that we are doing something worthwhile'

By Aya Al-Hakim, CBC News | Posted: Nov 06, 2017 6:00 AM AT | Last Updated: Nov 06, 2017 6:00 AM AT

Addressing Canada's bilingual framework: Working towards innovations in language and education policy

- **Canada's bilingual framework:** Renewed perspective on Canada's bilingual framework which adequately accounts for the possibility of multiple forms of linguistic capital and identities
- **FSL education:** Development of education policies and practices within FSL education that better meet the linguistic and cultural needs of non-official language students and value their unique linguistic repertoires
- **Language policies and education:** Development of language policies and education programs which are more inclusive of and responsive to the rapidly evolving social demographics of Canadian society and offer better protections for the linguistic rights of non-official language groups



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