

Linguistic Match Between Children and Caregivers

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SPECIAL SECTION ON SECOND LANGUAGE ISSUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD/SECTION SPÉCIALE DES NUMÉROS PORTANT SUR LA LANGUE SECONDE EN PETITE ENFANCE

Linguistic match between children and caregivers

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Abstract

There is evidence that match-mismatch of language and discursive practices between minority students and teachers is an important variable in explaining academic performance. This paper addresses the issue of the presence of staff persons in early childhood education (ECE) settings who speak languages in common with the children. The present study investigated: (a) the linguistic "match" between caregivers and children in 77 randomly selected, licensed, group childcare centres in Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal, and (b) the linguistic diversity of student-educators and faculty in ECE training programs at 78 colleges and universities in Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec. Results of the study indicate that although caregivers spoke a variety of languages, 72% of non-English, non-Francophone children were in linguistically mismatched situations. For children of African, East Asian, and Latino (Hispanic) backgrounds, 87%, 83%, and 59% respectively were in linguistically mismatched situations. Results of the faculty study indicate there is relatively little diversity among student-educators and faculty members. A possible implication is that the Canadian Early Childhood Education (ECE) system, despite the good intentions of individual teachers, continues to operate in an assimilative mode which, in many instances, contributes to children's eventual loss of their home language and culture.

Résumé

Il existe des preuves qu'une association-mauvaise association au niveau du langage et des pratiques discursives entre élèves des minorités et professeurs sont des variables importantes dans l'explication des performances académiques. Cet article traite de la présence de membres du personnel oeuvrant en petite enfance qui parlent avec les enfants des langues communes. Cette étude a exploré : (a) l'association linguistique entre des éducateurs et des enfants dans 77 services de garde, licenciés et choisis au hasard, de Toronto, Vancouver et Montréal, et (b) la diversité linguistique des élèves-éducateurs et des membres des facultés ayant des programmes de formation en éducation en petite enfance dans 78 collèges et universités de l'Ontario, de la Colombie-Britannique et du Québec. Les résultats indiquent que, malgré le fait que les éducateurs parlaient une variété de langues, 72% des enfants non-anglophones, non-francophones étaient dans une situation de mauvaise association linguistique. Pour les enfants provenant de milieux culturels Africain, Asiatique de l'Est et Latin (Hispanique), 87%, 83% et 59% respectivement étaient dans des situations de mauvaise association linguistique. Les résultats de l'étude avec les facultés indiquent qu'il y a relativement peu de diversité parmi les élèves-éducateurs et les membres des facultés. Une implication possible est que le système canadien d'éducation préscolaire, malgré les bonnes intentions des professeurs, continue d'opérer dans un mode d'assimilation qui, dans plusieurs cas, contribue à la perte éventuelle de la langue maternelle et la culture des enfants.

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As the populations of Canada and the United States become increasingly diverse, a number of school-related issues have come to the fore regarding differences between teachers and students in the area of race, ethnicity, and language. Situations where children's home languages cannot be used in interactions with their educators may contribute to children's feeling uncomfortable or marginalized, and may be one contributing factor to the early loss of home language. This paper addresses one factor that may be important for schools in fostering the child's maintenance of the home language: the presence of staff persons who speak languages in common with the child. In the paper, this factor is elaborated in more detail and given the label "linguistic match". Implications for curriculum reform and the early childhood education (ECE) system are briefly discussed.

Demographic Changes

Over the past decades, Canada has witnessed significant changes in the ethnocultural characteristics of immigrants. Especially profound effects have been experienced in large urban centres such as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, whose immigrants compose over a third of the population. According to Statistics Canada (1993), 32% of the total population of 27 million report a home language other than English or French. Partly responsible for these changes is the ongoing immigration rate that now proceeds at about 215,000 immigrants and refugees annually (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 1994). These annual figures, typical of the last decade, include about 28,000 children who are under ten (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 1993). Over half (57%) of all immigrants to Canada will settle in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver (Statistics Canada, 1992).

In the U.S. for 1990, approximately 32 million or 40% of residents have English as a foreign or second language (Barringer, 1993). The number of language-minority children in the schools has been variously estimated between 2.3 million (United States Department of Education, 1992) and

6 million (Stanford Working Group, 1993). These data are reviewed in Minami and Ovando (1995).

In a majority of cases, immigrants whose first language is not English or French are of African, Asian or Latino (Hispanic) backgrounds. As such, they face further difficulties because of racial bias and cultural disparities. For a new immigrant group, it is difficult to separate the effects of language, race, and culture. The temporary separation of language-related variables is made within the present paper solely to help focus consideration on linguistic issues.

Staff and Faculty Preparation for Linguistically Diverse Child Population

In Canada, little is known about the collective and individual linguistic competencies of faculty and caregivers. Goddard (1995) in his sample of 450 teachers in western Canada determined that only about one quarter were bilingual and only about one eighth were trilingual. Monolingual English speakers constituted 62% of his sample. He contrasted the teachers' limited linguistic resources with the finding that the students of these teachers, in two fifths of the cases, spoke three or more languages. In addition, Goddard found that multilingual teachers in his sample were more likely to address ethnocultural issues in their classrooms than were monolingual teachers.

Whether a centre has staff who speak the language of the children or who respect those languages may be related to the centre's intentions to provide an assimilative or a diverse educational setting. There has been some empirical research in Canada on the latter issue. LaGrange, Clark and Munroe (1994) investigated sensitivity to cultural and language diversity in 195 Alberta childcare centres and 1500 caregivers. They found that although 84% of centres surveyed had staff who spoke both English and at least one other language, these languages were used with the children in only

34% of these centres. There appeared to be a lack of knowledge of the importance of home-language retention; hence, LaGrange and her colleagues observed,

In many cases, it appears that the underlying belief is the need for children to learn to speak English as quickly as possible and that transition can occur most effectively in an English-only environment. (p. 24)

Because the goal of assimilation is increasingly viewed as problematic, proposals for bilingual and bicultural education have been outlined by investigators such as Cummins (1989), Darder (1991), as well as the Canadian School Trustees Association (1989) and, in the U.S., by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1995).

Differences of Background Between Children and Caregivers

Several investigators have proposed that linguistic match-mismatch between minority students and their teachers is an important factor in academic performance. They have called attention both to the languages themselves as well as "discursive practices" (see for example, Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Heath, 1982). The latter term includes such variables as degree of orality in the culture, and type of literacy. Match is used as a short-hand term to refer to a situation in which the child and a teacher with whom the child could have contact speak the same language according to major-language category. For example, there is a match between a Cuban student and a Chilean teacher when they both speak a variety of the major language, Spanish. But there would be no match if the Spanish-speaking child had a teacher who spoke Portuguese (in addition to English). Basic proficiencies in second or third languages on the part of teachers are considered sufficient for a possible match. The term mismatch is applied to all other cases.

According to a review by Minami and Ovando (1995), there is a good deal of research evidence that linguistic match is a constituent of social-linguistic advantage, along with middle- and upper-class background. Based on the evidence reviewed they proposed that

... children from poor, non-English, and nonstandard English speech communities are more likely to be disadvantaged and even at risk of being marginalized in school environments. (p. 428)

The prevalence of linguistic match in early childhood education settings was addressed in a California study (Chang, 1993). In a random sample of 434 centres, Chang looked at the linguistic match between childcare providers and the children in their care. She found that only 55% of the centres had a staff person who could speak in Spanish, and less than 30% had any staff who could speak the home language of the Tagalog, Chinese, Vietnamese, or Korean-speaking children. She concluded that the capacity for home language support was quite limited.

Possible Implications of Linguistic and Cultural Differences

Schooling. Although many children begin their schooling fluent in their home language, they often leave essentially monolingual in the dominant language (Wong Fillmore, 1991). Such assimilative effects may have both positive and negative aspects. A proposed remedy, bilingual education, has been the subject of intensive controversy (for a review see Moran & Hakuta, 1995). The alleged positive effects of language assimilation, include quicker attainment of proficiency in English (Hakuta, 1986; Huddy & Sears, 1990; Rodriguez, 1981).

Regarding the negative aspects of language assimilation, there are two main areas of concern. First, the child may come to assume that his or her home language is of little value. This may occur because of overt or subtle incidents which convey disparagement of the language or culture to the child. Yet the argument has been made by several researchers that even in the absence of bias or ill-will on the part of teachers, simply assuming and thereby imposing a dominant language and culture may be harmful to most, if not all, minority children (Cummins, 1989; Wade Houston, 1993). The children learn that their home language -- and thus culture -- does not "count" in achieving personal and social worth in the mainstream society. Corson (1993) argued that a form of social injustice occurs when teachers' ignore the minority language and

replace it with the dominant language (see also Delpit, 1988):

... if everything that is valued in schooling can be linked to the dominant language, and if this link is legitimated in the discourses of power that operate in the school, then those past unjust policies of eradication continue in a tacit but recognizable form. (p. 72)

The second area of concern includes broader ill effects in areas of psychological functioning: pride, self-esteem, sense of personal identity, sense of connection with family. For example, Wong Fillmore (1991) conducted extensive interviews with over 1000 minority families and concluded that when children learn the mainstream language too soon (before achieving home language competence), a situation develops in which parents cannot speak the language of their children and are unable to communicate with them to convey values, responsibilities, and advice.

Cummins' (1991) investigations have produced evidence that attaining and maintaining proficiency in a home language has cognitive and academic benefits for both the first and second languages and for academic performance overall. A corollary is that the loss of home language may well deprive children of these advantages (see also Au, 1980; Dolson, 1985; Hagman & Lahdenpera, 1988). The argument here is that the lack of a linguistic match at school, is one variable with possible connection to loss of home language. Because home language maintenance is one probable factor in school success, a number of investigators and educators have supported school programs and practices that help maintain the home language (Cummins, 1991; Pease-Alvarez & Hakuta, 1993; Williams & Snipper, 1990). Many such practices would presuppose a significant degree of linguistic match between caregivers and children.

In the United States, the poor performance of certain linguistic groups, such as Latinos, has been well documented (e.g., Rumberger, 1981). Further, a recent Canadian study by the Toronto Board of Education found high drop-out rates among Portuguese, Latino, and African-Canadian students (Brown, 1994). In all these cases, the effects of cultural and racial bias were contributing factors.

In her consideration of U.S. classrooms, Delpit (1988) concluded that coming from middle-class and white backgrounds bring systemic advantages. Such children share in the codes and culture of power; here culture includes language. She concluded that lower-class or Afro-American children suffered a corresponding disadvantage (see also Cummins, 1995; Fine, 1990; Giroux, 1989).

It is to be emphasized that all the above research involved a complex analysis of social disadvantage according to race, culture, language, and class. Language variables constitute only one interlocking piece in a large puzzle. Further, race and class variables may cause systemic disadvantage where there are but minor differences in the language spoken. (These linguistic and non-linguistic variables and their connections with race are the subject of another paper [Bernhard, Lefebvre, Kilbride, Chud, & Lange, submitted].) Because of evidence of the negative effects of home-language loss and the positive effects of home-language maintenance, a number of individual, familial, educational, and social variables merit consideration; all would have to be addressed comprehensively in order to promote home-language maintenance. The present study, however, focuses on a simple, readily ascertainable ingredient in the picture, namely the presence or absence of linguistic match between caregivers and children as well as the context of that phenomenon. The research questions of the study are as follows:

1. What is the frequency of linguistic match between children and their caregivers?
2. What is the extent of linguistic diversity among faculty and students at training institutions?

To address these questions, we conducted two studies that were part of a larger project on diversity in ECE settings (Bernhard, Lefebvre, Chud, & Lange, 1995).

Study I gathered information from randomly selected child care centres in Canadian cities of greatest immigrant influx: Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. Study II included data obtained by telephoning faculty from ECE colleges and universities in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec.

Method

Study I: ECE Centres

In order to obtain a representative sample, 77 childcare centres in Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal were randomly selected from databases held by the local government sources. The sample was drawn from official lists of all ECE centres in the three cities and surrounding municipalities that had 2.5 to 6.0-year-old children in full day, childcare programs, and received some kind of subsidy for parents. The purpose of the subsidy criterion was to ensure that the centres sampled were truly accessible to the population. Centre supervisors participated in a 15-minute telephone interview.

The data were analyzed in two phases. In the first phase, we considered linguistic background and compiled descriptive data according to language use. In the second phase, to quantify linguistic match between caregiver and child, we grouped the languages of the children according to the global geographical areas in which the language is generally spoken. We then inquired as to the presence of centre staff who spoke some variety of the home language of the child. The sub-varieties of a major language were not considered (e.g., Sudanese French as compared to Haitian French). While we recognize the non-linguistic basis for such rough categories, they appeared sufficient for the purpose of the present analysis, as a first step.

Study II: Faculty at educator-training institutes

Within each community college and university offering ECE programs in British Columbia, Quebec and Ontario, contact persons for the topic of diversity were found by word of mouth. We sought those involved in and highly knowledgeable of diversity in ECE programs. This may have represented a biasing factor since those involved in such programs tend to believe in their desirability. Thirty-minute telephone interviews were conducted with the persons selected.

A total of 78 faculty from Quebec, British Columbia, and Ontario consented to participate in the study. It was thought unwise to restrict the study to metro area colleges and universities because of the considerable movement to Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver of those trained elsewhere. Since the

larger study focused on responses to immigration, schools serving primarily aboriginal students were not included in the survey.

Results

Study of ECE Centres

Description of centres. Supervisors at 77 licensed, group childcare centres were interviewed. The majority (64%) were non-profit centres, the rest were private. Table 1 provides information about the characteristics of the participating centres.

The Vancouver centres were all non-profit and were characterized as being smaller, with more part-time staff and children. The Montreal sample comprised only Francophone centres and included 10 private centres. The Toronto centres included non-profit, private, and municipally-operated settings.

Languages. All the centres surveyed served families and children who spoke languages other than English or French. The capacity to meet children's home language needs was investigated by asking a set of questions centered on the language and culture of the children enrolled in the centres. The number of languages spoken at centres by ECE staff varied according to the size of the centre.

Considered as a whole, staff at the centres represented a variety of linguistic backgrounds. Thirty-six percent of smaller centres (5 staff or less; $N = 36$) had staff who spoke more than two languages. In the larger centres (more than 5 staff, $N = 41$), 83% of centres had staff who, as a whole, represented three or more languages. We wanted to know if the languages spoken by teachers corresponded to the major language groups found in large metropolitan areas. This information is summarized in Table 2.

Table 1**Characteristics of Participating Childcare Centres**

Characteristics	Toronto	Vancouver	Montreal	Total
	N = 37	N = 16	N = 24	N = 77
Full time staff				
Five or fewer	14 (38%)	15 (94%)	7 (29%)	36 (47%)
More than five	23 (62%)	1 (6%)	17 (71%)	41 (53%)
Children				
Fewer than 24	9 (24%)	9 (56%)	3 (13%)	21 (27%)
25-50	13 (35%)	7 (44%)	15 (63%)	35 (45%)
> than 50	15 (41%)	0 (0%)	6 (25%)	21 (27%)

Table 2**Percent of Childcare Centres with at Least One Staff Member Speaking Main Languages of Newcomers to Canada during 1993**

Language	Number of immigrants* for 1993 speaking this language	Number of centres surveyed with staff speaking this language (N= 77)
Cantonese	40,912	10 (13%)
Tagalog	17,881	2 (3%)
Punjabi	16,701	5 (7%)
Spanish	13,592	23 (30%)
Arabic	13,995	9 (12%)
Mandarin	12,768	3 (4%)
Tamil	9,018	2 (3%)
Polish	6,980	8 (10%)
Vietnamese	6,952	0 (0%)
Serbo-Croatian	6,449	1 (1%)

*Native language of immigrants to Canada January- December 1993: Preliminary Statistics
Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 1995.

It is noted that in Table 2, the column "Number of immigrants for 1993 speaking this language" gives information on newcomer languages in all of Canada whereas the next column, "Number

of centres surveyed with staff who speak this language" only represents centres surveyed in three Canadian cities. The authors did not assume that these same languages were predominant in those

three Canadian cities. If other cities had been studied, the representation might have been different. As Table 2 shows, some languages were well-represented in centres (e.g., Spanish, Cantonese). Yet many of the languages quite common among new immigrants have little representation in the centres surveyed (e.g., Vietnamese, Serbo-Croatian).

We also compared the linguistic background of children and staff at the centres. The data in Table 3 provide a breakdown of the language matches between child and staff backgrounds and were generated according to the following procedure: We asked the centre supervisor to identify those languages spoken by the children in their homes. We considered only the total number of children identified by the centre supervisor as having a home language other than English or French ($N = 281$). These children, on the basis of their language, were grouped according to the geographic area in which the respective languages are generally spoken. Next, for each child in a particular geographic area, we looked at whether there was at least one person (i.e., staff, caretakers, cook) at the centre who spoke the specific language of the child. The following example will help clarify the process. There were 88 East Asian children in the sample whose home language was not English or French. Column 2 shows that 73 or 83% of these children were in centres that did not have any staff or support person who spoke the particular language of the child. It is stressed that within the geographical areas we looked for language matches; if a Korean child was at a centre with a Cantonese teacher who did not speak Korean, that child was referred to as "mismatched".

Although teachers spoke a variety of languages, seventy two percent of non-English, non-Francophone children in this survey were in situations without linguistic match. To look at the most striking comparison (Table 3), 87% of African children were mismatched whereas only 25% of West European children were in situations of no linguistic match. The lack of match in the two cases has somewhat different meanings. Due to the lack of minority groups represented among the staff, the 73 mismatched children who spoke an East Asian language at home may well have been in situations where there were no staff of their culture or race.

In contrast, the 25 mismatched European children would, in almost all cases, be with a substantial number of staff members of the same (white) race.

Study II: Faculty at Educator-training Institutes

Description of sample. Phone calls were placed to 85 faculty in ECE training programs in the three provinces. After numerous follow-up calls, we were successful in conducting 78 interviews, a response rate of over 90%. Of the 78 respondents, 33 (42%) were presently program coordinators; the remainder worked primarily in a teaching capacity. In most cases, the coordinators also taught a variety of ECE courses in addition to their administrative responsibilities. The faculty members had varying degrees of experience in their current positions. One-third had been at their position prior to 1987, one-third since between 1987 and 1990, and the remaining third since 1990. The majority of the instructors were designers of multicultural and diversity course content in their colleges and universities, but for the most part, were not themselves from minority groups. These respondents were considered by us to be the people most familiar with diversity issues in their institutions, and hence most likely to be interested in the present project.

The geographic locations of the 78 colleges and universities surveyed are Quebec (30), Ontario (26), and British Columbia (22). Of the total, 17 or 22% were within the metropolitan areas of Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver, and 61 or 78% were outside these metropolitan areas. Because the location of the college/university inside or outside metropolitan areas affected the emphasis of the program, where appropriate, analyses were conducted separately for the two categories (metropolitan/outside) of colleges/universities. The size of student enrollment in the ECE programs for the three provinces together was broken down as follows: Under 50 students, 18 institutions or 23%; 51-200 students, 40 or 52%; and more than 200 students, 20 or 25%. Lengths of programs varied to some extent: in Ontario and Quebec, the vast majority (72%) were for 1-4 years.

Table 3**Percent of Centers with Children who spoke Given Languages that also Employed Staff Speaking the Same Languages**

Child language	Total children	Mismatched	Matched
African Languages	23	20 (87%)	3 (13%)
East Asian Languages	88	73 (83%)	15 (17%)
South Asian Languages	27	19 (70%)	8 (30%)
East European Languages	38	31 (82%)	7 (18%)
Caribbean, Central and South American Languages	44	26 (59%)	18 (41%)
Middle Eastern Languages	37	26 (70%)	11 (30%)
West European Languages	24	6 (25%)	18 (75%)
TOTAL	281	201 (72%)	80 (28%)

Note:

East Asian (Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese)

South Asian (Punjabi, Hindi, Tamil)

African (Somali)

East European (Armenian, Croatian, Greek, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Russian)

Caribbean, Central and South American (Spanish)

West European (Portuguese, Italian)

Middle East (Persian, Arabic, Hebrew)

Linguistic, racial, and cultural background of population. There was very little diversity among faculty in the ECE departments surveyed. When given a yes-no choice, 77% of the respondents said that their departments consisted mainly of white, Anglophone or Francophone persons teaching ECE courses. A minority of respondent faculty (23%) reported having at least one faculty member from Asian, African, or Latino backgrounds or who were non-Anglo and non-Francophone.

Since the total numbers of all faculty in the ECE departments surveyed was not known, we cannot determine the exact percentage breakdowns of linguistic, cultural, and racial groups within faculties. As a follow-up, respondents were asked about the type of diversity represented in the faculty and the responses obtained are shown in Table 4.

Table 4**Reported Numbers of Faculty of Non-European Background**

Background	Ontario	B.C.	Quebec	Total
African	3	1	3	7
Arabic	0	0	5	5
Latino	1	0	4	5
Turkish	0	0	1	1
Asian	2	3	1	6
Number of schools surveyed	26	22	30	78

Whether the institution was located in a Metropolitan area or outside was a significant factor. Within the Metropolitan areas, 41% of schools had some diversity in faculty as opposed to only 18% of schools outside of metropolitan areas. In sum, it appears that the majority of ECE faculty members were white, Anglophone or Francophone persons. As Table 5 shows, based on faculty report, ECE student diversity was also limited.

Anecdotal accounts from faculty members indicate that ECE training schools in the Vancouver Lower Mainland had few native or East Asian students. Yet, the Chinese population is one of the major groups in the area of the college: In 1991 there were 187,421 people of Chinese ethnic origin residing in the Lower Mainland, and 8.5% of the population spoke Chinese as their mother tongue (Census of Canada, 1991).

Table 5**Number of Schools with ECE Students of Non-European Background**

Percentage of Non-European students *	Ontario N = 26	B.C. N = 22	Quebec N = 30	Total N = 78
0-25%	19	17	27	62 (80%)
26-50%	4	4	2	10 (13%)
Over 51%	3	1	1	5 (6%)

* based on respondents' impressions and estimates.

Table 6**Diversity in Student Population by Location of College**

College location	Within Metro N=17	Outside Metro N=61
0-25%	10 (59%)	53 (87%)
26-50%	5 (30%)	5 (8%)
Over 51%	2 (11%)	3 (5%)

Further, Hong Kong is the largest single source of immigrants to British Columbia (B.C. Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations, 1993). Therefore we may conclude that in the majority of B.C. ECE teacher training programs, the student population does not reflect the diversity within its community. Table 6 categorizes this information by vicinity of metropolitan areas.

Considering the large immigrant population of these three provinces, there was little student diversity although in metropolitan areas the students are somewhat more diverse.

Discussion

Linguistic Match Between Children and Teachers at Childcare Centres

The high frequency of mismatch between the languages of children and caregivers suggests that the Canadian ECE system is, despite the good intentions of individual teachers, operating in an assimilative mode; we argue, as did Chang (1993), that such circumstances may, in many instances, contribute to the children's eventual loss of the home language and culture. At 77 centres in three cities, we found that children of African (87%), East Asian (83%), East European (82%), Middle Eastern (70%), and Latino (59%) languages were most likely to be in situations without linguistic match [percentages of mismatch in parentheses].

Let us further consider the likely consequences, based on the earlier literature

reviewed. First, school performance for many of these linguistic and racial minority groups will continue to be an issue in Canada. The present figures for African and Latino children arguably foreshadow their later difficulties in the school system; we have already mentioned to the current difficulties of these two groups in the Toronto school system (Brown, 1994). We suggest that the poor academic performance of Latino and African students will likely continue in the absence of specific measures designed to recruit Latino and African-Canadians among teachers and caregivers. Further, mismatched teachers are likely to misdiagnose children and misjudge their abilities (for a review of assessment issues related to linguistic and cultural match see Cummins, 1984).

Second, we may expect that many families of linguistic minority children will be affected in the following areas: difficulty of parents in communicating with their children, ambivalent self-esteem of children, and poor communication between caregivers and families, as in the situations reported by Wong Fillmore (1991). Chang (1993) concluded from her California data that lack of linguistic match was probably a negative factor in school outcomes for minority children. We argue, accordingly, that regardless of the presence of compensatory factors, absence of linguistic match is likely an adverse condition for students, commonly giving rise to feelings of loneliness, alienation, and anxiety. In any case, the school successes of some cultural groups containing many mismatched individuals may provide further evidence of the positive effects of home-language retention within the home.

There are some groups of students who will generally do well despite the lack of match, between home and school language. For example, we found that most East Asian children were in mismatched situations; yet their futures, in many cases, may be unaffected. Students of similar (Chinese and Vietnamese) background showed superior performance in the Toronto Board survey (Brown, 1994). There are a number of social and familial variables behind group disparities of school performance; it is beyond the scope of the present paper to review them. Familial variables, for some groups, largely outweigh the probable negative influence of linguistic mismatch (Portes & Bernhard, 1996).

Our data indicate that 30% of the centres surveyed had three or more languages represented among the (entire) staff. Yet overall, 72% of the children in our study attended centres where no one spoke their home language. We have reason to believe that this finding may be accounted for as follows: The centre staff in many cases included those who spoke two -- sometimes more -- European languages. But if the children of that centre were mainly from Asian and African countries, there would be no linguistic match with the staff unless the child had reasonable proficiency in English. In sum, differences between caregivers' and children with respect to geographical language area help account for the high numbers of mismatched children. The present data appear to be consistent with Goddard's (1995) and Chang's (1993) findings.

Linguistic Diversity in Faculty and Students in ECE Training Programs

Seventy seven percent of ECE faculty whom we interviewed reported that their peers consisted mainly of white, persons of English or French backgrounds. This situation was even more pronounced in settings outside of the Metropolitan areas. We did not determine the exact extent of the white, English- or French-speaking majority among the faculty. Student diversity, according to faculty report, was also limited, but the faculty often lacked knowledge of student backgrounds.

Clearly, the faculty, in view of their limited number, cannot represent all languages and cultures. It might be argued that if the faculty, largely of Anglo or French background, simply demonstrate

respect and goodwill toward ethnoracial and linguistic minorities that will be adequate to (a) encourage the enrollment of linguistically diverse teacher trainees, and (b) promote respect for minorities in majority students. Arguments about the effects of diversity of faculty are well beyond the scope of this paper. We simply state our agreement with researchers who support faculty representation of a variety of cultural, racial, and linguistic groups (Orlikow & Young, 1993). One reason is that trainees of all backgrounds are likely to benefit from contact with faculty from diverse backgrounds. We thus take seriously proposals for active recruitment of qualified faculty and students of diverse backgrounds (Masseman & Mock, 1986; Orlikow & Young, 1993).

Some Suggestions for Addressing the Issues

Childcare centres. In the current situation, centres certainly can benefit from the presence of bilingual and bicultural teachers. More specifically, however, we are proposing that the children's family languages is more likely to be safeguarded in centres where, for as many children as possible, there is at least one teacher or staff person who matches the child's linguistic background. Centres would do well to recruit qualified staff accordingly.

Although we advocate active measures to maintain home language, data presented elsewhere (Bernhard, Lefebvre, Chud, & Lange, 1995) indicate that newcomer parents themselves are divided on the issue. Some, seeing optimal outcomes for their children through assimilation into the mainstream, simply want their children to learn French or English as quickly as possible. Others recognize that the home language may be better for their children's "deeper thoughts". According to the bilingual/bicultural position adopted here, this is a chicken-and-egg situation. It is argued that, if parents from minority languages believe the children can succeed being bilingual and bicultural, they would be less likely to seek to disencumber the children of the home language.

We suggest that teachers, besides informing themselves about the benefits of home-language retention, take steps to convey to parents that their languages and cultures are valuable constituents of the social mosaic. Where minority cultures are devalued or ignored by the Canadian mainstream,

many people of these cultures will seek to eliminate all marks of difference. On the other hand, as the society becomes more tolerant of diversity, the formation of bicultural citizens will be appreciated. Our position here is consistent with the additive bilingualism endorsed by the Canadian School Trustees Association (1989) and the recent recommendations of NAEYC (1995):

... the development of children's home language does not interfere with their ability to learn English. Because knowing more than one language is a cognitive asset..., early education programs should encourage the development of children's home language while fostering the acquisition of English. (p. 5)

Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this study. First, the home language of some children may have been unknown to the supervisor, especially where she was not directly involved with the particular children. Second, in order to get a true picture of the faculty population in ECE training institutions, we would need to know the total number of faculty at each college broken down by language and ethnocultural heritage. In some cases, better information might have been obtained from the coordinators rather than the respondents we surveyed.

Third, it would be useful to gather information on the ethnoracial background and language competencies of ECE student populations. It would also be helpful to obtain quantitative data supporting the impression of many professionals that there is a large discrepancy in linguistic and cultural background between current immigrants and student-educators in ECE programs. Fourth, the present data cannot, by themselves, support any conclusion that there will be poor outcomes for these children or that any negative outcomes would necessarily be caused by lack of linguistic match in schools. On the contrary, based on others' investigations, we have assumed that linguistic mismatch is but one factor that may contribute to lowered outcomes for a good many, linguistic groups. The present data therefore merely indicate a possible source of detriment to the educational outcomes for the immigrant children in the three cities surveyed. Fifth, we have not

investigated the role of protective factors in the performance of the linguistic-minority groups who continue to do well even in the face of mismatch, or even bias. The present data do not allow assessment of the relative weight of the linguistic match-mismatch variable among others that may be involved in educational or social disadvantage. Hence the possibility is left open that strengths of individual students or of specific cultures may have greater -- even determinative -- impact on educational outcome. In conclusion, linguistic, cultural, and racial diversity present challenges to the Canadian educational system at all levels. Teaching and collaborating with students is facilitated in situations where there is some degree of linguistic and cultural match between teachers and students. The present data on linguistic match constitute one piece of the complex puzzle; future research will help supply the other pieces necessary to understand the difficulties of children and educators in a diverse society and, thereby, to improve professional training and delivery of services to newcomer children.

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