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ABSTRACT
        The extent to which Canadian employers recognize the
informally acquired first languages of immigrants and aboriginal persons as
prior learning qualifications for formal employment in the business,
government, and education sectors was examined through a survey of
organizations across Ontario. Personalized questionnaires were mailed to a
sample of 140 Ontario organizations, as follows: 32 businesses (half randomly
selected and half purposively selected); 71 colleges, universities, and
school boards; and 37 municipal, provincial, and federal government agencies
and psychiatric hospitals. Of the 140 questionnaires mailed out, 79 (56.4%)
were returned. Although 88.6% of the organizations indicated that they would
benefit from employing staff fluent in languages in addition to English or
French, only 30.4% were actually actively recruiting such multilingual
employees. Private organizations were more likely to recruit multilingual
individuals and educational institutions were least likely to do so (52.9%
and 25.7%, respectively). The methods used to evaluate potential bilingual
employees' language proficiency were as follows: interviews (25.8%); employer
references (18.6%); and formal qualifications and personal references
(13.4%). Educational institutions used formal qualifications to assess
language fluency much more often than other types of organizations did (20%,
10%, and 7.6% for academic institutions, private organizations, and public
organizations, respectively). (Contains 22 references.) (MN)

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Immigrant and Aboriginal First Languages as Prior Learning Qualifications for Formal Employment in the Business Govenrment and Education Sectors

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Abstract

This research examines the degree of recognition among Canadian employers for informally acquired first languages that are not official languages of the country. It summarizes the results of a survey sent to 79 organizations across Ontario and reveals that while nearly all organizations (88.6%) stated they would benefit from employing multilingual employees, only 30.4% actually actively recruit these multilingual employees. The secondary aim of the project was to determine if organizations distinguish between language skills that were acquired formally and those acquired informally. The data reveal that educational institutions recognize formal qualifications more. In sum, this paper attempts to promote awareness among employers and higher education agencies of the need to see informally acquired first languages as qualifications in their own right that deserve recognition in some way where they are relevant.

Immigrant and Aboriginal First Languages
as Prior Learning Qualifications for Formal Employment
in the Business, Government and Education Sectors

Many immigrants, refugees, and aboriginal Canadians learn their own languages in the normal, informal way. This corpus of language fluency is a huge but largely untapped resource in a highly multilingual country like Canada. But after learning one of Canada's official languages, immigrants, refugees, and aboriginal Canadians receive little or no formal recognition for their bilingual proficiency, even when that proficiency is highly relevant to the occupations they perform. This recognition could

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come in the form of greater remuneration and employment benefits in occupations where fluency in the first language is a useful qualification for doing formal work (for example, in nursing homes for ethnic communities, or in bank branches and government offices targeting specific cultural fractions); or it could be in some form of formal credit towards a qualification, where fluency in the minority first language is an academically relevant competency (for example, in teaching aboriginal studies at compulsory or higher education levels). It is clear that certain organizations do value this form of bilingualism for use in dealing with their linguistically different clients, ad actively recruit bilingual staff as a result.

This research tries to identify the extent of this practice and the incentives that employers offer to attract and reward fluent bilingual appointees. As a basic research study, using only questionnaires in this opening phase, it examines the degree of recognition among Canadian employers and higher education agencies of the informally acquired first languages used by people whse bilingualism includes fluency in a language that is not an official language of the country. A major motive behind the research is the social justice goal of reducing the marginalization of languages other than English or French in Canada (Corson & Lemay, 1996), by extending greater formal recognition to the users of immigrant and aboriginal languages learned as first languages in an informal way.

The Demographics

Each year Canada receives more than 200,000 immigrants from more than 200 countries (Citizenship & Immigration Canada [CIC], 1998). Of these immigrants, over 50% enter Ontario, while another 20% enter British Columbia and another 10% enter Quebec. Within Ontario, over 60% settle in the Toronto Metropolitan Municipality, with another 10% in the adjacent Peel Regional Municipality, and another 5% in the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Municipality (CIC, 1998). According to the 1996 Statistics Canada Census, 25.6% of Ontario's population is foreign born and 80% of these immigrants arrived between 1991 and 1996. Toronto's population contains 47.1% foreign born individuals of whom 72% arrived between 1991 and 1996 (Statistics Canada, 1996). In addition, at the time of the 1996 Census, 12.75% of Ontario's population (1,323,850) reported a non-official language as the language spoken most often at home. An additional 86,675 individuals reported using an official and non-official language as the home language (Statistics Canada, 1996). While the majority of working age immigrants (18-64 years) arrive in Ontario speaking one of Canada=s official languages, 30% arrive with neither English nor French language ability (CIC, 1998). The top ten first languages spoken by the immigrant population of working age include, in descending order: Cantonese, Tagalog, Punjabi, Tamil, Arabic, Mandarin, Urdu, Chinese, Russian, and Spanish. During 1994-1997, 186,420 people arrived in Ontario with one of these 10 languages as their native language (CIC, 1998).

According to the 1996 Census, the largest percentage of the Aboriginal population of Canada lived in Ontario. Although they represent only 1% of Ontario's total population, 17.7% of individuals who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group (North American Indian, Métis or Inuit) lived in Ontario (Statistics Canada, 1996). British Columbia was a close second at 17.5%. One quarter of the Canadian Aboriginal population (207,000) reported that they had an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue. Cree was the largest Aboriginal mother tongue, reported by 10% of the Aboriginal population (76,475) followed by Inuktitut and Ojibway (Statistics Canada, 1998). On the other hand, 29% of the Aboriginal population, or 234,000 individuals reported an ability to converse in an Aboriginal language. In Ontario, 17% reported an Aboriginal mother tongue. Of these, half reported Ojibway. The majority of Canada's North American Indians live in Ontario accounting for 83% of Ontario's Aboriginal population. Métis comprised 16% and Inuit less than 1%. These numbers may be under-representative due to the fact that enumeration was not permitted, or was interrupted before it could be completed on 77 Indian reserves and settlements. In 1996, an estimated 44,000 people were living on reserves and settlements that were incompletely enumerated. These people were mostly Registered Indians (Statistics

Canada, 1998).

Because of this concentration of immigrants and Aboriginal Canadians, the focus of this article is on Ontario. This paper looks at the extent to which institutions in Ontario, as the most multicultural province in Canada, recognizes non-official language multilingualism and whether businesses, educational institutions and governments are already responding with policies, either implicit or explicit, in their drive to hire a diverse work-force.

Three Orientations to Language Policy Research

The way researchers and policy-makers approach the issue of language policy and planning depends on their "orientation to language and its role in society" (Ruiz, 1984, p. 3). Here Richard Ruiz proposes three orientations: language-as-problem; language-as-right; and language-as-resource. He claims that the bulk of the work of language planners has focused on the language-as-problem orientation (Neustupny, 1970; Rubin & Shuy, 1973; Fishman, 1975, as cited in Ruiz, 1984) which is Athe organized pursuit of solutions to language problems, typically at the national level@ (Fishman, 1975, as cited in Ruiz, 1984, p. 6). The emphasis here sees language as a social problem that needs to be removed. On this approach, non-English speakers, for example, have a language problem that needs to be overcome, and one policy response is to provide them with ESL classes. In general, this 'language-as-problem' orientation supports the idea that minority language speakers are in a deficit position in relation to the dominant language. It also supports the idea that motivation to maintain their first languages is of little concern as a matter of language policy.

The second orientation, language-as-right, views language as a basic human entitlement that needs policy support. Here the claims advanced are that individuals should enjoy "the right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of language" and "the right to use [their] language(s) in [all] the activities of communal life" (Macias, 1979, as cited in Ruiz, 1984, p. 11). Pursuing this orientation, language planners argue, for example, that individuals are entitled to publicly-supported formal education in their first language and that they are entitled to participate in all aspects of social life using that language. A practical problem here is that the public use of one language often seems to threaten the users of other languages, who feel that their own communicative freedom is interfered with. As a result, linguistic groups begin to take up positions against one another. And those who criticize language reforms based only on claims to rights are able to argue that the "rights of the few are affirmed over those of the many" (Ruiz, 1984, p. 13). Eventually, the response to language policies supported only by claims of 'language as a right' can be non-compliance.

While these two orientations have been the focus of much discussion and debate, the third orientation has seen little research as yet, although following Ruiz's clarification of the three orientations, many voices have been raised supporting the language-as-resource view (Lo Bianco, 1995; Norton & Ridge, 1997; McKay & Hornberger, 1996). One important reason for this is that by creating this public perception of non-dominant languages, the policy case for seeing language as a right is also strengthened. In other words, it provides a policy means for convincing recalcitrant constituents of the practicality, if not the justice, of that position.

And there are several other benefits that come from adopting this third orientation to language policy. Society in general is advantaged when language-minority communities are seen as important sources of linguistic expertise. Also their voluntary integration into their chosen society is eased at the same time as their distinct linguistic identities are recognized and valued. Moreover, the unique resource value of different languages is a real and growing one in a world where cultural pluralism across and within borders has become the norm. Indeed Canada is far from alone in its immense cultural diversity, as the example of the multilingual nation state of Australia shows. In recent decades, a new discourse about

diversity has arisen in that country, using the language-as-resource orientation. It has led to the development of an influential National Policy on Languages.

An Applied Policy Example of Language-as-Resource: Australia

Australia is a very multilingual country. In addition to several varieties of English, there are approximately 150 Aboriginal languages (50 of which have more than 100 speakers) and between 75-100 immigrant languages, 11 of which are used in the home by more than 50,000 speakers (Tollefson, 1991). The 1991 Census recorded 14.8% of Australians using a language other than English in the home, with this proportion higher in some parts of Australia: for example, Melbourne, 26%; Sydney, 24.9%; and Northern Territory 25.3%, where most of the Aboriginal languages are spoken (Clyne, 1997). Across the country, numerous government announcements are published multilingually and the federal government conducts telephone interpreter services in over 90 languages. One of the two national government television channels transmits films, series, and documentaries in a wide range of community languages using English sub-titles. It also presents daily half-hour news broadcasts in eight languages and weekly news in three other languages. Australia also has more than 120 community newspapers, publishing in nearly the full range of languages spoken there. A wide range of languages are taught in Australian schools, and this range varies by region. As well, there is a high degree of public support for both full-time ethnic private schools and part-time ethnic schools. Currently, 38 languages are recognized as accredited subjects in examinations for university entrance, and four more are being accredited (Clyne, 1997).

The route to Australia's current, multicultural language policy started with the 1978 Galbally Report which ended Australia's earlier policies of assimilation and promoted policies of multiculturalism and cultural pluralism (Tollefson, 1991). The Report claimed "the government should foster 'the retention of the cultural heritage of different ethnic groups and [promote] intercultural understanding'" (section 1.38, as cited in Tollefson, 1991, p. 174). But this document was written from the language-as-right orientation, claiming that "every individual has the right to access to government programs and services and to 'maintain his or her culture without prejudice or disadvantage'" (Tollefson, 1991, p. 174). Education was seen as the solution to migrants' economic difficulties, with increased funding proposed for maintaining so-called 'community languages'. This was the new title of respect that the Report attached to 'ethnic' or 'migrant' languages, a shift in discourse that confirmed "the greater immediacy of these languages and their learners, in an age when immediacy and relevance were all important in educational rhetoric" (Lo Bianco, 1995, p. 36). While the Report also claimed that all Australians would benefit from multiculturalism, it also defined cultural diversity as something of a problem for the country and it clearly favoured English. As such, it failed to make the language argument strongly enough and did not succeed (Tollefson, 1991).

In 1984, The Senate Committee on Education and the Arts released a report on a National Language Policy. This report continued to reinforce the dominant role of English, but its secondary goal was maintenance and development of 'languages other than English' (LOTES) by providing increased opportunities for learning second languages. This report was based on many 'common sense' explanations for policies: everyone should learn English because it is necessary for jobs; it is not feasible to provide translation and interpretation services for all of the languages in Australia; dominance by English is more practical than organizing the use of other languages in Australian society; and people who do not speak English must inevitably suffer in many ways throughout their lives. By accepting these claims as unchallengeable 'truths', the Committee tried not to significantly alter the language status quo in Australia (Tollefson, 1991).

In 1986, the Minister of Education commissioned Joseph Lo Bianco to prepare a National Policy on Languages. This report met with greater success because "it emphasized language pluralism as a national

resource rather than a problem to be overcome" (Tollefson, 1991, p. 178). The principal objective of the report was "to ensure that Australia derives maximum benefit from its rich linguistic resources" (Department of Employment, Education and Training; 1987, as cited in Crawford, 1992, p. 460). The report outlined the following benefits for Australians:

1. Economic: there would be a competitive advantage in using the host country's language for foreign trade.
2. External: as Australia is situated in the Asian-Pacific region, the fastest growing economic zone in the world, Australians would be able to participate more fully in the region's affairs by learning other languages.
3. Cultural and Intellectual Enrichment: learning other languages provides insights into cultural understandings and it brings established benefits to intellectual and academic functioning.
4. Equality or Social Justice: all Australians must have full access to English but with opportunities to maintain their first languages.

The Policy offered four strategies for reaping the benefits and for recognizing Australia's linguistic diversity: "(a) conservation of Australia's linguistic resources; (b) development and expansion of these resources; (c) integration of Australian language teaching and language use efforts with national economic, social and cultural policies; and (d) provision of information and services in languages understood by clients" (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1987, as cited in Crawford, 1992, p. 463).

Because much of the economic focus on multiculturalism in Australia stems from its location in the Asian-Pacific region, and
the rise in these countries' economies, many of the arguments influencing government are based on Australia's need to trade with these countries and to become an integral part of its world region. This situation has led to a dramatic increase in Asian language learning. As well, the many Australians of Asian background, with all their language and cultural proficiency, are starting to be seen as a positive community resource (Lo Bianco, 1995).

In general, the success of the Policy in shifting the discourse in Australia stems from its definition of linguistic diversity as a positive resource, rather than a problem or a set of rights somehow owed to linguistic minorities. Evidence for this is that the Office of Multicultural Affairs now uses the term 'productive diversity' in preference to the term multiculturalism (Lo Bianco, 1995). In addition, the Australian Centenary Committee in its planning for the year 2001 describes the country's community languages as important national resources (Centenary of Federation Advisory Committee: 2001, as cited in Smolicz, Hudson & Secombe, 1998).

The Language-as-Resource Discourse in Canada

To what extent is Canada like Australia in valuing its multilingual diversity as a resource deserving to be conserved and developed? Most of the research in the economics of language in this country focuses on bilingualism as opposed to multilingualism (Grin & Vaillancourt, 1997). Much of that research was done in Quebec, looking for instance at the influence of French and English on people's earnings. Among other things, these studies show that English monolingual speakers earn the most, followed by bilingual English speakers, bilingual French and finally by monolingual French speakers (Vaillancourt, 1978; Lieberson, 1970, as cited in Carlinger, 1981).

Nevertheless, more relevant rhetoric is beginning to appear in the business literature in Canada. For example, the Conference Board of Canada has recently released a report entitled "Dimensions of Diversity in Canadian Business: Building a Business Case for Valuing Ethnocultural Diversity" (Taylor,

1995). A newsletter is also produced entitled "Valuing Diversity: Employment Equity in Canada's Changing Work-force". Even the Government of Ontario, which has moved against legislated forms of employment equity, has commissioned a guide-book "Diversity at Work: The Business Case for Equity" (Government of Ontario, 1997). The Ontario Government also hosted two internet discussion groups on the issues in 1997: "Leading the Leaders to make Diversity Work" and "Linking Diversity Training to Other Corporate Objectives". On its Web site, the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation also posted case studies outlining business contexts where diversity is valued.

Greater recognition of the Asian-Pacific region and its language is also entering the Canadian discourse. There is great growth in immigration from these regions, and also great ethnolinguistic vitality in the speakers' languages. They are becoming "economic languages which a growing proportion of Canadians see as essential for trade in the Pacific century if Canada is to grow economically" (Carey, 1997, p. 208). Carey goes on to state that Canadians are beginning to question official bilingualism because of its irrelevance in this new situation; he says that many Canadians believe Asian-Pacific languages have greater economic and cultural value for their children than French. This situation is more prevalent in British Columbia where a new Language Education Policy enacted in 1996 requires each student to study a second language between grades 5-8. This language can be French, Mandarin, Spanish, Japanese or Punjabi, but other languages will be considered if the demand grows. As Carey claims, this policy "puts Asian-Pacific languages on an equal footing with French as a mandatory second language" (1997, p. 213).

These developments are predicated on the view that diversity is good for business: it is a source of competitive economic advantage, it assists the growth of market share, and it eases foreign business dealings in international markets. A quote from an IBM operative is typical here:

> Our customers are very diverse - not only in the Canadian but the global environment. When our work-force reflects the marketplace, we're much better prepared to understand customer issues, and offer them the right solutions.... Diverse groups increasingly have significant purchasing power and we want to be the IT vendor of choice for them (Harley, On-line discussion, Nov. 13, 1997).

The Conference Board of Canada report (Taylor, 1995) also offers the business case for being able to compete in the new global marketplace and in the increasing ethnocultural diversity of Canadian markets: "Competing to win in the global economy will require an ability to attract, retain, motivate and develop high-potential employees from a variety of ethnocultural backgrounds" (p. iv). The value these individuals bring is their "language skills and knowledge of foreign cultures and business practices, as well as natural trade links [they have] with overseas markets" (Taylor, 1995, p. 1). To assess the extent of relevant developments, Taylor sent a survey to 466 organizations across Canada. Results revealed that over half (58%) the respondents reported taking advantage of Canada's ethnocultural diversity in developing international markets. Three quarters use the country's ethnocultural expertise informally or on an ad hoc basis. On the other hand, only 11 organizations systematically tapped the cultural skills resident in their work-force and fewer than 6% explicitly value diversity in their mission statements. At the same time, almost 50% said they needed to tailor their customer service practices to meet the needs of their diverse base by providing multilingual customer service and by offering multilingual customer support. Indeed 63 companies had already undertaken outreach programs to attract a more diverse pool of job applicants.

While Taylor (1995) noted the many barriers organizations have in managing diversity, she said that "a few Canadian organizations have recognized the competitive advantage to be gained by embracing diversity within their business strategy.... These firms may well display a significant competitive advantage in the future" (p. 51). At the same time, while many of the executives contacted view

diversity of their work-force as a competitive opportunity (25%), at this stage very few seem to be following through with concrete practices and policies.

Accordingly, it seems that in Canada "multilingualism and multiculturalism are often touted as forms of wealth or as 'resources', but such claims usually fail to move beyond the metaphor, which is of limited help in dealing with the policy issues raised by multilingualism" (Grin & Vaillancourt, 1997, p. 48). In this paper, we ask if multilingualism is viewed as an institutional resource in the province Ontario. We ask if organizations are deliberately hiring and valuing multilingual employees, and if they are offering incentives to attract and reward these bilingual employees.

Method

Data for this study were gathered using mail-out questionnaires, which were personalized to the type of institution. Three questionnaires were developed: one for private and public organizations, the second for academic institutions, and the third for school boards. The questionnaires were pilot tested and revised prior to use. Before the questionnaires were mailed, each organization was contacted about the project. A contact person was identified to ensure the questionnaire would go to an appropriate individual within the organization. All those identified, or their immediate assistants, were personally contacted and told that a questionnaire was coming. Follow-up phone calls were also made to increase the response rate.

A total of 140 personalized questionnaires were mailed between March 1998 - June 1998. All colleges, universities, school boards and provincial psychiatric hospitals across Ontario were included in the sample. The government and private organizations were selected by two means: half were selected randomly from the telephone book; and half were purposively selected based on their experience with diversity issues. The latter were chosen from two sources: the list of respondents named in the Conference Board of Canada's Report (Taylor, 1995); and the Government of Ontario's Equal Opportunity Web site, which includes business case studies that reveal each organization's experiences with diversity.

Seventy-nine questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 56.4%. Table 1 outlines the breakdown of organizations and their response rates by category. The highest response rate was received from government organizations, although the lowest was from school boards. This low rate can be explained by the fact that the school board questionnaires were mailed out in May and June which is a busy time for school board administrators finalizing one school year and preparing for the next. It was difficult to contact key people, so the questionnaires usually went through their assistants. At that time too, there was unusual pressure on Ontario boards, brought about by massive mandated changes in the governance of provincial education. The data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods (Hughes, 1990; Jick, 1979).

Results

Findings: Sample Characteristics

Types of Organizations. Academic institutions make up the largest portion of the sample, (49%) with 18 colleges, 13 universities, and 8 school boards. Most colleges and universities identified themselves as offering general studies programs (10 colleges and 11 universities). The second most common function was business (10 colleges and 4 universities) and the third was professional (5 colleges and 6 universities). The majority of private organizations identified themselves as service providers (42.3%). Most organizations are located in Toronto (42.5%). The remainder are divided between Northern Ontario (18.8%), Central Ontario (12.5%) and Southwestern Ontario (8.8%). Figure 1 displays the geographic

distribution of the organizations.

Size. Most academic institutions had 100-500 administrators and 100-500 teachers. The rest of the institutions were almost equally split among the other size categories. Most institutions had a large student body, 19 with more than 10,000 students. Most of the school boards had 26-100 schools (50%). The student distribution in all of the academic institutions appears in Table 2. The size of the public and private organizations was almost equally distributed, although the majority had 1001-5000 employees. Table 3 provides employee distribution by type of organization. Using the number of employees, staff and students the organizations were reclassified as large, medium and small. Table 4 outlines that distribution.

Clients Served. The majority of organizations serve clients in Ontario (27.2%). Some organizations also indicated that they serve the Greater Toronto Area specifically (16.5%) or Northern Ontario (17%). While many organizations saw their role as serving the Canadian community as a whole (16.5%), less than 5% served regional communities outside Canada, with South East Asia being indicated the most often (4.2%). Seven organizations stated they serve many geographic regions: the Greater Toronto Area, Northern Ontario, Ontario, Canada, United States, Europe, Middle East, South East Asia, East Asia, and South America, Central America, Australasia, the Pacific, and Africa.

Very few organizations serve only the English or only the French language communities (3 and 1 respectively). A few more serve only English and French communities (15 or 20%). The majority (22 or 27.8%) serve more than 6 language communities (other than English or French), but the second largest group serves a single other language community (20.3%). These language communities include the users of Aboriginal languages, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Polish, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Arabic. The largest of the language communities served (besides English or French) was the Aboriginal language community (15%), followed by Chinese (14.3%) and then Spanish (11%). See Table 5, for an outline of language communities served by organizations in the study.

Fifty-nine percent of the academic institutions indicated that they offer courses in other languages (see Table 6 for a breakdown of courses offered in languages other than English or French by educational institution). Of all the academic institutions, the universities were most likely to offer these courses (43.5%), followed by the colleges (34.8%) and the school boards (21.7%). As well, comparisons within organizations reveals that 76.9% of all the universities indicated that they do offer courses in other languages compared to 62.5% of the school boards and 44.4% of the colleges.

Of the academic institutions teaching courses in languages other than English or French, the majority offer three other languages (7 or 30.4%). Twenty-one percent teach courses in 4-6 other languages; 17.4% teach courses in more than 6 other languages and two other languages; and 13% teach courses in one other language. While the numbers are small, the majority of the institutions do teach courses in more than four other languages (39%). Sixty percent of school boards teach courses in more than four other languages, followed by the universities at 50%, and by one college. Most colleges teach only in English or French (53%) and those that do teach courses in other languages (62.5%) offer only one or two other languages.

Spanish was indicated most often as the language in which institutions teach courses (indicated 17 times, or 20.7%), Aboriginal languages were next (15 times, or 18.3%), German was third (9 times or 14.6%) followed by Italian (11 times or 13.4%). Arabic was indicated only four times (4.9%). Spanish was indicated most often by universities (24.4%), but only 21% of the time by colleges, and 13.6% by school boards. Aboriginal languages were indicated most often by colleges (26.3%) and German was indicated most often by school boards (18.2%).

Most organizations surveyed do have some kind of a unit dedicated to managing diversity issues or employment equity (61%). Of these, just over half have this unit as a separate unit and just under half have the unit as part of their human resources department (56.5% and 43.5% respectively). While organizations who have an employment equity unit are more likely to report that they feel their organization benefits from employing multilingual staff (57.1% of all organizations), it is not a significant effect $x2(1, N = 77) = .655, p = .415$. Having an employment equity unit also does not have an significant effect on whether the organizations recruit staff who are bilingual in languages other than English or French $x2(1, N = 77) = .582 p = .446$.

Analysis of Employees and Students. Most organizations have not done a study to determine whether employees who are bilingual in a language other than English or French are needed in their work-forces (84.8%). For example, none of the 13 universities have conducted such a study. The Federal government organizations were evenly split between conducting a study and not. Most organizations had not analyzed current staff to profile the language skills they hold (60.8%). The Federal government is the only category where all the organizations surveyed indicated that they did analyze the language skills held by their work-force. Within the selected private organizations, the majority do analyze their employees' language skills (70%). In all the other groups, most organizations do not do such analyses. The school boards were asked one additional question: "Has your board conducted an analysis of current students to profile their language skills?" Of the 7 that answered that question, the majority do not (71.4%).

Recruitment and Employment of Staff

Benefits. Most organizations indicated they felt they would benefit from employing staff fluent in languages in addition to English or French. In fact, 88.6% of the organizations indicated they would benefit, and only eight said they would not benefit. The private organizations were the most likely to say that they would benefit from employing bilingual employees; all but one organization said they would benefit. All the universities, selected private organizations and municipal governments also said that they would benefit from employing these types of bilingual employees.

For the private and public organizations, the overwhelming benefit suggested was to communicate with clients or customers (58.6%). The second most frequent benefits named were to expand into new markets and to do international business (both indicated 15.5% of the time). For the academic institutions, the top three reasons were to attract new students (26.7%), to communicate with students (24%), and to work/research internationally (19.8%). One bank mentioned in their response that the benefit would only be for transferring business to another country. Organizations could indicate more than one response.

Active Recruitment. Even though nearly every organization said their organizations would benefit from employing staff fluent in languages other than English or French, only 24 or 34.8% of the organizations indicated that they actively recruit these bilingual employees. The private organizations were most likely to recruit (52.9%). The educational institutions were least likely to recruit (25.7%). Within the educational institutions, the school boards were most likely to recruit (65.5% or 5/8). The colleges and universities were not likely to recruit (88.9% and 84.6% respectively). Of all the organizations, the randomly chosen private organizations were most likely to recruit (75%). The federal government organizations were least likely, all four indicating that they do not recruit these employees. Surprisingly, 70% of the private organizations selected on the basis of their positive experience with diversity issues indicated that they did not recruit (7/10). Table 7 displays the breakdown of recruitment by type of organization.

The comments on the questionnaires reveal that those who believe their organization benefits from

employing multilingual employees, but do not actively recruit, state that recruitment happens naturally. For example, one respondent commented:

> Twenty percent of our employees are fluent in at least one other language beside English or French. Our experience is that we recruit from such a diverse work-force from the talent pool available, they bring with them the multilinguistic skills that can be used in marketing situations. However, they are not recruited specifically for their language skills.

Recruitment Methods. The methods organizations do use to recruit their bilingual employees are indicated in the following list. Organizations could indicate as many methods as they chose. The private organizations were the most varied in the means used to recruit bilingual employees.

- indicate language requirement on job advertisement (20 times or 31.2%)
- place ads in community papers (13 or 20.3%)
- informal networking (11 or 17.2%)
- place advertisements in alternative media (9 or 14.1%).

Formal or Informal Policies. Six organizations indicated that they have a formal policy in place about employing staff that are bilingual in a language other than English or French (out of the 52 organizations that answered the question). Note, the formal policy might not mention language diversity specifically, but hiring a diverse work-force in general. At the same time, all organizations were heavily weighted towards having informal policies, especially the academic institutions and the private and public organizations. Only 6.1% of the academic institutions had formal policies (2/33) and 8.3% of the public and private organizations (1/12). The government organizations were more likely to have formal policies (42.9%).

Incentives and Rewards. Only two organizations indicated that they offer incentives to potential employees who are bilingual in languages other than English or French, in order to hire them (out of 40 who answered this question). Both these organizations were universities. Only 11 organizations (15.2%) reward the language skills of these bilingual employees in any way (84.8% do not reward these bilingual employees). Table 8 shows the breakdown of organizations that reward bilingual employees for their bilingual proficiency. The academic institutions were the most likely to offer rewards (20.5%, or 8/39). Within these institutions, the colleges were the most likely (27.8%, or 5/18 indicated they offer rewards) followed by the universities (23.1%, or 3/13), while none of the school boards indicated that they did. Private organizations were the second most likely to offer rewards (16.7% or 3/18). None of the government organizations indicated that they offer rewards to employees bilingual in languages other than English or French. Travel was the reward indicated most often (45.4%); higher pay was indicated 36.4% of the time; and promotion as a reward was indicated once (9%). One other reward indicated was professional development and career opportunities. In the colleges, the reward mentioned most often was travel (80%) and in the universities higher pay was indicated most often (66.7%). The single randomly chosen private organization responding positively to this question indicated promotion, and both the selected private organizations indicated higher pay.

Language Training. Most organizations do not offer language training or subsidize language training in languages other than English or French for current staff to fill skill shortages. Sixty-nine percent said they did not. The academic institutions were least likely to offer/subsidize language training; 77.8% of the colleges, 75% of the school boards and 69.2% of the universities said they did not offer/subsidize language training. The selected private organizations and the municipal government organizations were most likely to offer/subsidize language training (60% and 66.7% respectively). The random private organizations were equally likely to offer/subsidize language training as not to offer language training. To determine if language training was offered instead of recruiting bilingual employees, as a way of

employing bilingual employees, a cross tabulation was done. The results revealed that this was not the case. Organizations that did recruit were just as likely to offer/subsidize language training as not, and the organizations that did not recruit were more likely not to offer language training. Seventy six percent of the organizations that did not recruit do not offer language training.

Future Value of Hiring Bilingual Employees. Organizations that do not believe their organization benefits from employing employees bilingual in languages other than English or French, were asked if they saw future value in doing so. Of the eight organizations that stated that they do not believe their organization currently benefits, only two stated that they saw value in doing so in future. One of these was a college and the other was a provincial government organization. The college stated the benefits they foresaw were communicating with students and attracting new students. Thus, organizations that stated they did not value hiring bilingual employees currently, see little value in doing so in the future.

Evaluating Language Proficiency

The methods these organizations use to evaluate the language proficiency of these bilingual employees are: interviews (25.8%); employer references (18.6%); formal qualifications and personal references (13.4%). Organizations could indicate more than one response. While the interview method was most preferred, using formal qualifications to assess fluency was a close second in the educational institutions, along with employer references (10 indicated interview and 9 indicated formal qualifications and employer references). Using formal qualifications to assess fluency was the method used much more often in the educational institutions than in the other types of organizations. Only one public organization and three private organizations indicated that they used formal qualifications to evaluate language fluency. Thus in the academic institutions, using formal qualifications was used more than twice as often as a means to assess fluency. It was indicated 20% of the time in the academic institutions, while it was only indicated 10% of the time in the private organizations and 7.6% of the time in the public organizations.

· Five organizations actually stated that they evaluate language proficiency differently if it was acquired formally in an academic institution, or informally as a first language at home. Twenty organizations said they did not evaluate language differently, and four did not know if their organization did or did not. The percentages are 17.2% said they did, 69% said they did not and 13.8% did not know. The academic institutions were most likely to indicate they evaluated language differently if it was acquired formally or informally. Four of the five organizations that said they did evaluate language proficiency differently were academic institutions, three of these universities and one college. All the school boards indicated they did not evaluate language proficiency differently. For the organizations that explained their responses further, two educational institutions responded that it mattered for teachers but not for other staff. Another educational institution said "given the educational focus of the University, it is essential that the employee have proper grammar, fluency, etc."

Discussion

Hiring

Most organizations feel they would benefit from employing staff who are bilingual in languages other than English or French. They see the benefit mostly as enhancing communication with clients or students. The academic institutions especially see benefits in recruiting overseas students and teaching courses in other languages. Attracting new students was the top reason they thought their organizations would benefit. These purposes are tied to economic reasons for colleges and universities. The overseas recruitment of students brings international students who pay larger fees than Ontario students; and the courses taught in other languages appear most often to be continuing education courses, which also cost

more than mainstream courses. Further evidence lies in the recruitment section of the questionnaire. If organizations stand to make money, they are more likely to recruit, and again teaching continuing education courses is a way to make money. While the number of academic institutions that recruit is small, all the colleges and universities that teach courses in other languages recruit bilingual employees.

In the school boards, there are some that do recruit bilingual employees even if they do not offer courses in other languages. The school boards mentioned that the benefits of hiring bilingual employees lie equally in communicating with English-as-a-second language (ESL) students and their families, and in teaching courses in other languages. The private organizations also mentioned the benefits of employing bilingual employees as facilitating communication with clients or customers. This benefit is also a way of attracting and keeping business, especially in the service-oriented organizations that make up the majority of the sample. Thus, the benefits these organizations see in employing staff bilingual in languages other than English or French are largely economic, except for certain school boards and the government departments.

The government organizations rarely hire or see benefits in hiring staff who are bilingual in languages other than English or French. One exception is the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. This provincial ministry, serving remote communities, sees a benefit in employing multilingual staff to "promote economic development in Aboriginal sectors". This ministry has a need for aboriginal languages in at least two positions and actively recruits for these positions, asking for knowledge of Aboriginal languages or culture. At the same time, all the government organizations that do not target these prospective employees outweigh those that do. Even the need they have to serve language communities other than in English or French, does not impact on their recruitment policies. It appears that meeting mandatory policies about hiring for French fluency, outweighs the need to hire outside this language. One federal government respondent was categorical on this point: "Our obligations to provide services within the federal government are limited to the two official languages". And a provincial government respondent similarly outlined where the limit of his organization's responsibility lay: "The ministry has provided literature in other languages but formally only requires that French service be available".

Many organizations cite the practice of hiring multilingual employees on contract, or on an ad hoc basis. Even Citizenship and Immigration Canada said that "we contract with interpreters to provide the necessary services in languages other than English or French. Contracting has proved to be cost effective on an as-needed basis". This practice is also popular in the school boards. While the boards were the most likely to actively recruit these employees, they are not hired as permanent teachers within organizations. They are mainly part-time or contractual heritage language teachers or ESL teachers. In addition, the Toronto school board mentioned they hire multicultural consultants on contract, or on an ad hoc basis to deal with ESL students or parents. And it is interesting to note that these employees are not paid full salary or given the usual benefits for sickness, health, vacation, or other leaves. The board's minority language teachers are also paid less than permanent staff. For example, ESL teachers are only able to work part-time hours and their salaries reach a ceiling quickly with no room for increases or advancement. This finding is consistent with the findings of the Conference Board of Canada report (Taylor, 1995). Taylor, also found that many organizations do not tap cultural skills in their work-forces systematically.

Very few organizations provide incentives to bilingual employees in the hiring process, or benefits to them once they are hired. Only two organizations provided incentives and only 13 organizations offer rewards, and none of these were school boards or government organizations. This finding suggests that only those organizations that profit in some way from hiring bilingual employees return some of that profit to their employees and offer rewards. However, whenever organizations do reward these bilingual employees, the benefit offered most often is travel. And even this benefit provides further economic

returns to the organization, depending on the purpose of the travel, which can be to attract new clients from other geographic locations, or to expand into different markets.

Moreover, only a few organizations have a formal policy in place about hiring for diversity. This finding confirms that the practice is not a priority, nor is it much valued within organizations. Organizations feel staffing their offices with multilingual employees happens naturally; or the need is filled by current employees. This finding is also consistent with Taylor's (1985) evidence where fewer than 6% of organizations surveyed mention valuing diversity explicitly in their mission statement. So, while multilingual staff may be seen as a benefit to organizations and are even actively recruited for their multilingual skills, they are rarely 'valued' overtly within the organization. Minority languages, even if they are relevant or essential to a given occupation, do not yield higher returns, either financial or otherwise.

Furthermore, there is evidence about the importance of organizational discourse in the present study. The language organizations use to talk about the issue definitely affects the direction of the solution they offer. On the one hand, most organizations omit the discourse of valuing diversity from their formal policies and mission statements; and on the other hand, the majority do not recruit bilingual staff, offer incentives to hire them, or give them any rewards once they are hired. Indeed, the evidence from private organizations reveals that they are very good at using the jargon. One organization mentioned that the value they saw in hiring bilingual employees is in being "proactive and a best practice for a national employer". This same organization, however, has no diversity/employment equity unit, has not studied whether or not bilingual staff are needed in their organization, does not actively recruit or offer language training, and does not reward language skills. Yet another respondent advocated that "a work-force with diverse cultural backgrounds is almost by definition multilingual. Such a work-force can contribute significantly to organizational effectiveness, creativity and decision making". This organization also does not recruit or reward multilingual employees, but might "possibly" see benefit in doing so in the future if it were doing business outside Canada.

Evaluation of Language Skills

A secondary aim of this study was to see if organizations value language skills differently, if the languages were acquired formally or informally. Only one question concentrated on this point and only the responses from academic institutions allowed a conclusive response. Most academic institutions use formal qualifications as the method of evaluating language fluency. They also said that they evaluated language proficiency differently if it was acquired formally or informally. Four of the five organizations who said that they evaluated language proficiency differently were academic institutions. And the comments provided on the surveys were quite revealing. One university stated that they evaluate language proficiency differently if it was acquired formally or informally but it depends on the type of job: "At the faculty level, formal proficiency must be demonstrated; [for] support staff, a language test as part of the recruitment/hiring process [is used]'. Another university stated they evaluate language fluency differently because "given the educational focus of the university, it is essential that the employee have proper grammar, fluency, etc.". The bias towards some standard version of languages is plain here. The perception seems to be that if a language is learned informally, the "standard" grammar and structures are less likely to be mastered. This is an issue that could be further explored (see Corson and Lemay, 1996 for non-standard varieties and their treatments in education). As well, the responses reveal that it is more important for professors to have a formal qualification but support staff and others who speak their languages as native speakers, do not need the formal qualifications.

Conclusion

The majority of respondents say their organizations would benefit from employing individuals who

are fluent in languages other than English or French. The benefits to the organizations were mainly seen in communicating with their clients/customers, to expand into new markets and to do international business. For academic institutions the benefits lie in attracting new students, communicating with students, and doing work internationally. Nevertheless, many fewer organizations actually recruit, offer incentives in hiring, or reward these bilingual employees. Thus, while 88.6% of the organizations said they felt their organizations would benefit, only 34.8% (24) of the organizations actively recruit bilingual employees, with the private businesses most likely to say they recruit. Only 15.2% reward bilingual employees by providing travel or higher pay to these bilingual employees and only two organizations said they offer incentives in the hiring process. It appears that the majority of these organizations advocate multilingualism as a resource for their organizations, but are reluctant to move beyond the metaphor. Those that do actively recruit bilingual employees, do so because of the economic benefits for their organization. So to that extent at least, these non-dominant languages are viewed as resources worth maintaining and putting to use. At the same time, there is a low level of interest generally in rewarding the users of these minority languages as owners of worthwhile resources for organizations, and indirectly for Canada as a whole. So on the evidence of this preliminary study, the 'language-as-resource' position in Canada would still seem to have a long way to go. But while these minority languages are not viewed as a form of human capital that yields higher returns in the same way the official languages do, there is some hope in the data returned that if we continue to articulate the view that minority languages are valuable resources to be conserved, maintained and enhanced for the general good, then we might continue to improve the current inequitable situation that affects the users of these languages.

Further research might determine how these bilingual individuals are valued in workplaces. It might ask where these multilingual employees actually work in organizations. Research might also gauge the extent to which bilingual contract or temporary employees are exploited in organizations by being paid less, being ineligible for benefits, or for job security. And cross-comparisons might be drawn with the incidence of women, immigrants, and aboriginals that fill these spaces of employee disadvantage. This study only uses questionnaires to gather information on whether individuals bilingual in languages other than English or French are valued within organizations. The responses are self-reported and from this study we cannot determine the real extent of the practice, even in Ontario. Further research might explore the situation in a more finely tuned way, using case studies or other "real" examples to show how these employees are valued within organizations.

Tables

Table 1 - Summary of Organizations and Response Rates

Organization	Sent	Received	Response Rate
Businesses	32	18	56.2%
Chosen	18	10	55.6%
Random	14	8	57.1%
Academic Institutions	71	39	55%
Colleges	25	18	72%
Universities	21	13	62%
School Boards	25	8	32%
Governments	37	22	59.5%
Municipal	4	3	75%
Provincial	18	10	55.6%
Federal	6	4	66.7%
Psychiatric Hospitals	9	5	55.6%
Total	140	79	56.4%

Table 2 - Student Distribution in Academic Institutions

Institution				
Number of Students	College University	University	School Board	Total
0-100	3	0	0	3
101-500	0	1	0	1
501-1,000	7	3	0	10
5,001-10,000	1	3	1	5
10,001-20,000	3	4	3	10
20,001 +	4	1	4	9
Don't Know	0	1	0	1
Total	18	13	8	39

Table 3 - Number of Employees by Type of Organization.

Organization							
Number Of Employees	Random Private	Selected Private	Municipal Government	Provincial Government	Federal Government	Hospital	Total
11-50	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
51-100	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
101-500	2	1	0	3	1	1	8
501-1,000	0	1	0	1	1	3	6
1,001-5,000	2	5	2	2	1	1	13
5,001-10,000	1	1	0	3	0	0	5
10,001-15,000	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
15,001 +	2	1	1	0	0	0	4
Total	8	10	3	10	4	5	40

Table 4 - Size Distribution of Organizations

Organization	Small	Medium	Large	Total
Businesses	4	10	4	18
Chosen	2	6	2	10
Random	2	4	2	8
Academic Institutions	11	17	11	39
Colleges	5	11	2	18
Universities	3	4	6	13
School Boards	3	2	3	8
Governments	8	9	5	22
Municipal	0	2	1	3
Provincial	4	4	2	10
Federal	3	0	1	4
Psychiatric Hospitals	1	3	1	5
Total	23	36	20	79

Table 5 - Language Communities Served

Language	Numbera	Percentb	Percentc (Not Including French and English)
English	75	18.6%	N/A
French	63	15.6%	N/A
Aboriginal	40	10%	15.1%
Chinese	38	9..4%	14.3%
Spanish	29	7.2%	11%
Italian	28	6.9%	10.5%
Polish	25	6.2%	9.4%
German	25	6.2%	9.4%
Portuguese	25	6.2%	9.4%
Arabic	21	5.2%	7.9%
Russian	19	4.7%	7.1%
Other	16	4%	6%
Total	404	100%	100%

Note. Organizations could indicate as many language communities as they served.
a = number of times the language community was indicated as being served by an organization in the sample. bn = 76. cn = 57.

Table 6 - Breakdown of the Educational Institutions' Course Offerings in Languages Other than English or French

	Course Offerings in Other Languages		
Institution	Yes	No	Total
University	10	3	13
row %	76.9%	23.1%	
column %	43.5%	20%	34.2%
College	8	9	17
row %	47.1%	52.9%	
column %	34.8%	60%	44.7%
School Board	5	3	8
row %	62.5%	37.5%	
column %	21.7%	20%	21.1%
Total	23	15	38
	60.5%	39.5%	100%

Table 7 Organizations that Actively Recruit Bilingual Employees

	Recruit		
Insitution	Yes	No	Total
Educaitonal	9	26	35
row %	25.7%	74.3%	
column %	37.5%	57.8%	50.7
Business	9	8	17
row %	52.9%	47.1%	
column %	37.5%	11.6%	24.6%
Governmnet	6	11	17
row %	35.3%	64.7%	
column %	25.0%	24.4%	24.6%
Total	24	45	69
	34.8%	65.2%	100%

Table 8 - Organizations that Reward Bilingual Employees for their Bilingual Proficiency

Organization	Reward		
	Yes	No	Total
Academic	8	31	39
row %	20.5%	79.5%	
column %	72.7%	46.3%	50%
Business	3	15	18
row %	16.7%	83.3%	
column %	27.3%	22.4%	23.1%
Government	0	21	21
row %		100%	
column %		31.3%	26.9%
Total	11	67	78
	15.2%	84.8%	100%

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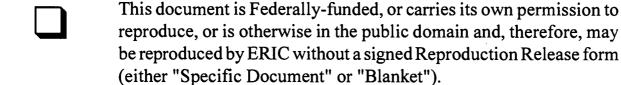Tollefson, J.W. (1991). Planning language, planning inequality. USA: Longman Group UK Ltd.

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