The Role of Inuit Languages in Nunavut Schooling: Nunavut Teachers Talk about Bilingual Education

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This article provides a discourse analysis of interview transcripts generated from 10 experienced Nunavut teachers (five Inuit and five non-Inuit) regarding the role of Inuit languages in Nunavut schooling. Discussion and analysis focus on the motif of bilingual education. Teachers' talk identified discourse models of "academic truths" and "revitalization,"demonstrating how Nunavut teachers are making efforts to engage with community to effect lasting educational change.

Key words: Aboriginal languages; Nunavut education, language policy, discourse analysis, educational change

Cet article présente une analyse de discours à partir de transcriptions d'entrevues auprès de dix enseignantes d'expérience du Nunavut (cinq Inuits et cinq non-Inuits) au sujet du rôle des langues inuites dans les écoles du Nunavut. Les discussions et analyses portent sur la raison d'être de l'enseignement bilingue. Dans leurs propos, les enseignantes ont identifié des modèles discursifs des « vérités pédagogiques » et de la « revitalisation », démontrant par là comment le personnel enseignant au Nunavut s'efforcent de travailler de concert avec la communauté pour favoriser des changements à long terme dans l'éducation.

Mots clés : langues autochtones, éducation au Nunavut, politiques linguistiques, analyse de discours, changement en l'éducation.

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Languages of instruction, cultural identity, and bilingual education have been researched and documented within Canadian Inuit community contexts as part of a voluminous academic discourse (Annahatak, 1994; Crago, Annahatak, & Ningiuruvik, 1993; Cummins, 1990; Dorais & Sammons, 2002; Freeman, Stairs, Corbiere, & Lazore, 1995; McAlpine & Herodier, 1994; Tagalik, 1998; Taylor, 1990, 2002; Taylor, Crago, & McAlpine, 1993). Comprehensive research studies have questioned the content and process of bilingual education within Canada (Spada & Lightbown, 2002). Studies of language use within Nunavut territory (Dorais & Sammons, 2002) have discussed how the perceptions of the need for Inuit languages [1] to gain employment and participate in economic opportunities have influenced school achievement and language choice. However, few research studies have considered the role of Inuit languages in curricula, practice, and policies of Nunavut schools.

The past 10 years have been a time of constant change for Nunavut schooling. The Government of Nunavut has made explicit commitments to more culturally relevant curricula and bilingual education (Martin, 2000; Nunavut Department of Education, 2000). However, the development of resources, program planning, and availability of bilingual teachers required to reach these goals have significantly lagged behind these commitments (Berger, 2006). The history of the federal government policy and action with regard to education in northern Canadian territories is a complex mixture of good intentions, political contradictions, racist assumptions, and superficial community consultation (Aylward, 2006; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; Van Meenen, 1994). Taking into account Canada's particular history of colonial dominance in its northern territories as well as Nunavut's educational policy and practices regarding Inuit languages provides the vital backdrop to consider some of the dominant discourses of Nunavut schooling and bilingual education. These discourses are identified and discussed in this article.

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[1] Inuktitut is considered the main Inuit language used within Inuit communities of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. Linguists classify Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuktun as dialects of Inuktitut but many speakers claim they are Inuit languages. In addition there are many regional dialectical differences within the language of Inuktitut. Therefore I have chosen to use the word languages.

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES AND SCHOOLING

For Indigenous and Aboriginal communities worldwide, the protection and promotion of native languages have become a core focus in response to an alarming rate of language loss and extinction (Crystal, 2002; Greymorning, 2000). In 1990, the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs of the Government of Canada reported that the Inuit language (Inuktitut), with 16,000 speakers in Canada at the time, had an excellent chance of survival. According to the 2006 census data, just over 32,200 Inuit reported Inuktitut as their mother tongue, down four per cent from 1996 (Statistics Canada, 2006). [2] The role of institutions of education in maintenance and language planning for Indigenous language has been a consistent point of contention within Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand (Burnaby 1996; McCarty, 1994, 1998; Nakata, 1999; Smith, 1990). Aboriginal language instruction is a historically charged and politically loaded landscape in countries such as Canada. Indeed, staff and programs in schools of some communities are now expected to promote and preserve the very Aboriginal languages that past education systems were responsible for bringing to near death within the church-run residential schools (Kirkness, 1998a, 1998b; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996).

Particularly relevant to Aboriginal language learning issues is Sonia Nieto's (2002) critique of the view that learning English (which often defines "getting an education") is the answer to all problems faced by language minority students. The "obsession with speaking English" within educators' professional development is often immediately, and falsely, linked to automatic positive academic outcomes and the elimination of all other problems (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). In the Canadian Arctic territories, preservation of English language standards has played a dominant role within Aboriginal communities in the formation of language policies and bilingual education programs that were transitional in nature and contributed to further cultural and linguistic marginalization (Aylward, Kuliktana, & Meyok, 1996; Martin, 2000). As Nieto (1996) describes, "early exit," transitional, bilingual education pro-

[2] Mother tongue refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by an individual at the time of the census.

grams (such as those present in some Nunavut community schools) use the native language as a bridge to the dominant language, and once English is learned, the bridge is then burned.

Recognizing the hegemony of English language instruction, Aboriginal communities of Canada have been working through the dilemmas that decisions and choices around languages of instruction and bilingual education policies pose (Battiste, 2000; Patrick & Shearwood, 1999; Taylor, Crago, & McAlpine, 1993). For the reasons discussed above, it is valuable to examine the role of Inuit languages in Nunavut schooling, and how teachers construct a place for bilingual education within Nunavut schools as a contribution to the wider ongoing dialogue related to language, culture, and education occurring within Indigenous and Aboriginal communities in Canada and worldwide.

Two Government of Nunavut documents, commissioned language-of-instruction research projects, contribute to the conversation related to Nunavut bilingual education: the *Qulliq Quvvariarlugu* (Corson, 2000) and *Aajjiqatigiingniq* (Martin, 2000). The studies revealed what Inuit community members and Nunavut teachers have known for many years; there were serious problems with the decision-making processes and the implementation of bilingual education and languages of instruction in Nunavut. For example, educators often ignored concerns about Inuit language proficiency and issues related to appropriate Inuktitut curriculum development. The analysis and discussion of teachers' lived experience in negotiating a place for Inuit languages in Nunavut schooling contained in the present study offer a more textured account of these challenges.

METHODOLOGY

The revitalization and maintenance of Aboriginal languages is linked to linguistic human rights and larger issues of social justice, self-determination, and autonomy (May, 2001; McCarty, 2003; Todal, 2003). Theorizations of bilingual education are helpful in taking up these larger social issues, challenging and critiquing the "Us vs. Them" discourse of "othering," often associated with discussions of language diversity in education. The socio-cultural and socio-structural theories advanced by Sonia Nieto (1996, 2002), Jim Cummins (1986, 1990, 1996, 2000, 2003),

Martin Nakata (1999), and Marcia Moraes (1996) do just that, going beyond empirical considerations of language proficiency assessments and the promotion of the "best models" for language acquisition to the political and cultural effects of power. These theories significantly influenced the methodology of the present study.

The discourse analysis that follows examines Inuit languages across many layers of schooling in Nunavut. What are teachers doing, thinking, and believing around the role of Inuit languages in Nunavut schooling? What are their theories related to teaching and learning in the Nunavut context? On a systemic level, how do teachers "read" all the government initiatives and directives?

Locating the Research/er

In 1994, I accepted a job as a teacher education instructor in a community-based program in Coppermine, Northwest Territories (now Kugluktuk, Nunavut), offered by Nunavut Arctic College and accredited through McGill University.[3] I began to conceive of my daily work as research in 1995, when I collaborated with two Inuit language consultants on a study related to Inuit language use in the Kitikmeot region (Aylward, Kuliktana, & Meyok, 1996). What began as a benign survey of language use evolved into an interrogation of assumptions of educators and parents around language loss and renewal. One dominant discourse among educators of the Kitikmeot education region promoted "commonsense" views that the youth did not want the Inuinnaqtun and Inuktitut languages and that they were "too far gone" to revitalize. Our study told a different story, one that strongly linked Inuit languages with cultural identity.

[3] The Eastern Arctic Teacher Education Program (EATEP) began in 1979 in Frobisher Bay, now Iqaluit Nunavut, offering a two-year course of studies leading to teacher certification in the Northwest Territories. This gave Inuit the opportunity to train as teachers without having to leave the Eastern Arctic. A partnership with McGill University in 1981 gave Inuit students access to the Certificate in Native and Northern Education. In 1986, EATEP/McGill began offering the B.Ed. degree, the only fulltime university program in the NWT. In 1999, with the creation of Nunavut, the program was renamed NTEP, the Nunavut Teacher Education Program, and today it is accredited through the University of Regina.

My experience as an NTEP instructor forced me to see that making little or no space for Inuit languages and culture in Nunavut schooling meant making no space for those who lived it and wanted to maintain it. My work within the Nunavut Teacher Education program left me wondering about the role of Inuit languages and culture in Nunavut schooling on many levels. Why was there so much turmoil within school communities related to Inuit language and culture? Why was it so challenging for Nunavut teachers to see a way forward for education that could be distinctly different from the colonial past?

Over time these recurring concerns grew into a focused research question: How has the role of Inuit language and culture been constructed within Nunavut schooling (Aylward, 2006)? In this article, I discuss one aspect of that larger study: a discourse analysis of the talk of 10 participating Nunavut teachers' about the role of Inuit languages in Nunavut schooling contexts.

Participants

My selection of the teacher participants is best described as purposeful strategic sampling (Cresswell, 2003; Huberman & Miles, 2002) with some aspects of snowball or chain sampling occurring as I consulted colleagues. The following criteria were used to select participants. The teacher group had to:

- be elementary teachers in Nunavut (some participants had some administrative duties but all had classroom teaching duties as well);
- have more than five years experience teaching in Nunavut;
- be made up of five Inuit and five non-Inuit participants;
- be from all three regions of Nunavut: Kitikmeot (West), Kivalliq (Central), Qikiqtani (East); and
- be from a variety of communities, both large and small.

I considered many factors in the selection of the teacher participants. First, I was searching out long-term northern non-Inuit teachers and experienced Inuit educators to engage in dialogue around Inuit language and culture, curriculum, and pedagogy. I needed to speak with teachers who had the intellectual and social space to consider their teaching practice at a level beyond the day-to-day survival that characterizes most

teacher induction experiences, let alone the intercultural teacher induction of many Aboriginal education contexts (Duquette, 2000; Harper, 2000). It was vital that I received an inclusive response of both Inuit and non-Inuit teachers as to how they considered the role of Inuit language and culture in Nunavut schooling because teachers from both groups worked together in Nunavut schools. The following table profiles the teacher participants interviewed. All participants were women.

Table 1
Teacher Participants [4] Kitikmeot (West); Kivalliq (Central); Qikiqtani (East)

Teachers	**Region of Nunavut**	**Northern Teaching Experience (Yrs)**	**Heritage**
A	Qikiqtani	30	Non-Inuit
B	Kivalliq	18	Non-Inuit
C	Kivalliq	11	Non-Inuit
D	Qikiqtani	16	Non-Inuit
E	Qikiqtani	23	Non-Inuit
F	Kitikmeot	12	Inuit
G	Kivalliq	8	Inuit
H	Qikiqtani	20	Inuit
I	Kitikmeot	13	Inuit
J	Kivalliq	31	Inuit

Interviewing Process

Two modes of interviewing informed the generation of the data: semi-structured interviewing (Freebody, 2003) and active interviewing (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997).

[4] Because the Nunavut teacher community is very small, the information in this chart put together with the content of a corresponding direct quotation might possibly make participants identifiable to Nunavut readers – therefore coding used on direct quotations is a letter "T" for teacher and a number that corresponds to the chronological order of the teachers' interviews (1-10), e.g. [Interview 6T].

The intercultural elements of the interviews were also important for me to consider. As Moreton-Robinson (2000) found in her study of white, middle-class, feminist academics, "the hegemony of whiteness manifests itself in pedagogical practice when feminists seek to re-centre themselves by making 'oppressions' the common denominator between themselves and Indigenous women" (p. 134). Although I certainly fall into Moreton-Robinson's category of research subject, I claim no common denominator with the Inuit participants of this study other than the sharing of our work as Nunavut educators. In my interviews with non-Inuit teachers, that Frankenberg (1993) refers to as "white on white" interviews, I consistently reminded myself of the shared white race privilege present and was alert to my possible collusions. The questions that guided the interviewing can be found in Appendix 1.

Tools of Inquiry: A Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis can be succinctly described as the "study of talk and texts" linking language in use with relevant social contexts such that researchers are able to get a sense of the "human meaning-making" that is occurring (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001, 2002). Discourse analysis examines systems of both knowledge production and representation (Hall, 2001). I engaged in discourse analysis because "discourse provides descriptions, rules, sanctions and prohibitions for social actions" (Kumar, 2000, p. 86). Following Dorothy Smith's (1990) theories, I see discourse as something the participants use in their coordination and explication of social relations. The texts cannot be completely severed from the "subjects," nor the study participants viewed merely as "bearers of systemic processes external to [them]" (p. 161).

Gee's (1999, 2005) analytic tools of *situated meanings* and *Discourse models* [5] provide the structure for the interpretation and discussion of the teacher interview data. According to Gee, situated meanings are the local meanings of text, grounded in actual practices and experiences. Gee emphasizes that situated meanings are not definitions but flexible patterns that both come out of and construct our experiences.

[5] Building upon Foucault (1985) and Bourdieu (1990), Gee's theory distinguishes between "little d" discourse, language-in-use, and "big D" Discourse, the non-language elements necessary for enacting specific identities and activities.

Discourse models, the possible storylines or explanations for the assemblies of situated meanings, do not exist in any one person's head but are socially distributed and shared across a group. To name and discuss the relevant and dominant Discourse model representations, I contemplated the situated meanings and social language of the participants in the present study in answer to Gee's (1999) questions: "What must I assume this person consciously or unconsciously believes in order to make deep sense of what they are saying?" (p. 72).

What follows is a discourse analysis of the interview transcripts of a group of ten experienced Nunavut teachers (five Inuit and five non-Inuit) regarding the role of Inuit languages in Nunavut schooling, specifically focusing on the data generated under the identified motif of Bilingual Education. I have presented these findings, using the core *situated meanings* present in the teachers' dialogue. Following these findings, I have discussed the *Discourse models* implicated by the network of those meanings and some of their possible effects. I have also linked the *Discourse models* to the larger discourses of Indigenous and Aboriginal language and schooling.

FINDINGS: TEACHERS TALK ABOUT BILINGUAL EDUCATION

During the individual interviews, participating teachers consistently referred to languages of instruction, bilingual education models, and teacher training that were intertwined with larger community issues of language quality and language renewal. The motif of bilingual education contained four main situated meanings: (a) survival of Inuit languages, (b) the nature of bilingual education programs in Nunavut, (c) the necessary support for bilingual educators, and (d) the Inuit languages stream as a disadvantage. I have also identified two Discourse models stemming from the network of situated meanings: academic truths and revitalization.

Situated Meanings

Survival of Inuit Languages. A prominent feature of the teachers' [6] talk was the call to action for Nunavut residents to preserve Inuit languages.

[6] Where appropriate, participants are identified as Inuit or non-Inuit; otherwise the use of the term "teachers" is inclusive of all 10 participants.

Many teachers voiced this call, using terms such as "language loss" and "fighting" for Inuit language programs. Words such as "saving" and "supporting" characterized comments related to what might happen in the future with regard to the status of Inuit language and culture. The teachers spoke in subtly affirming ways about ensuring that Inuit languages were consistently present in education.

Teachers discussed a need for parents and community members to be language leaders and for all teachers to encourage community members to engage in language renewal and maintenance. Teachers used bilingual educational research literature to legitimate the involvement of elders and community members in schooling. When linking bilingual education specifically to the growth and maintenance of Inuktitut, teachers talked about expertise being widely available within communities, expressing concern about the sustainability of a strong, stable, bilingual program. They spoke of the need for expert knowledge of Inuit languages, suggesting that "strong" and "rich" language was necessary to ensure bilingualism in future generations.

Teachers talked about elevating the status of Inuit languages as a priority, and they discussed "mother-tongue" or relevant "first-language" literacy studies to reinforce the view of bilingual education as a central part of Inuit language survival in the face of proponents of English-only language programs.

I think Inuktitut has become much more recognized as something that has to be taught in our school. Even from the community. The community seems to have learned a lot more about how their language is important and that they have to keep it in order to be recognized for who they are. (Interview 10T)

The teachers' talk regarding survival of Inuit languages recognized the power of language and minority rights legislation that were used in other jurisdictions to protect and promote Indigenous languages. They wondered why the Indigenous language of Inuktitut was not more prominent in Nunavut.

Where is the law that says everything that is written or labeled must be Inuktitut? We are not living in an Inuktitut world. If I went to France, I would have to look for English. If I went to China I would have to look for English. I come to the Inuit world and I have to look for Inuktitut. (Interview 3T)

They questioned the strength and effectiveness of Nunavut's efforts for the preservation and protection of language in comparison to other settings.

The teachers' dialogue also contained the language of standards and accountability within school systems. They communicated concern about lack of reporting on the cultural relevance of curriculum. In the present study, they considered that the imported Eurocentric school system and curriculum did not "make the grade."

I mean it is almost like you need the Quebec tongue troopers, you need people to come and say look, your school is not the least bit relevant and you are not respectful of the language and culture. What are you doing in this area? And you should have to account for it. It is not different from anywhere else where you have to account for what goes on in your school, except here it seems not to be necessary. (Interview 9T)

They compared the struggles for the recognition of the Inuktitut language in Nunavut to the situation in the province of Quebec, where French language laws control the level of English that appears in all public arenas.

The Nature of Bilingual Programs in Nunavut. Discussing specific bilingual models being implemented in Nunavut schools, teachers expressed their opinions about how many of the difficulties experienced by Inuktitut first-language students could be attributed to a "flawed model." Using terms such as "transitional bilingual program," "mother tongue," "balanced," and "expert confidence" to describe the bilingual approaches, they analyzed currently used language-of-instruction models, and provided an academic, literature-informed review of their effectiveness.

Teachers spoke about explicitly communicating the purposes of bilingual education to their students, wanting students to be involved in the choices and discussion of languages of instruction as compared to the no-choice English-only experiences of the past. One Inuit teacher described how she shared her residential school struggles with her elemen-

tary students to let them see the urgency of re-claiming their Inuit language.

Like when I went to school, I said, I wasn't even allowed to speak my mother tongue. I said not one word. I said you got a strapping when you said something they didn't understand. And so I will just share those kind of stories with them . . . to make it easier for them to try to understand why we are trying to teach them [Inuktitut] in school. (Interview 2T)

Teachers described their classroom activities as "trying" to get students to understand their histories such that they would value the opportunity to learn their Inuit language: "trying to teach them" and "trying each day."As one teacher explained, "I mean, all year long I keep on chanting with the kids — we have better brains because we are bilingual. Bilingual brains are stronger" (Interview 9T). Within the dialogue, they connected Inuit languages and Inuit cultural activities and identities: one strengthening the other.

Teachers who were residential school survivors and who were expected during their own education to be *qallunaat* [non-Inuit northerners] in both their actions and words explained why promoting Inuit languages was so important. Hints of ambivalence also lingered in their discussion of the purposes and processes of bilingual education. Initially unsettled with the change in direction of government policy around languages of instruction (from English-only and transitional programs to bilingual education), one teacher's comments illustrate some of the confusion that experienced Inuit educators expressed.

But I guess it is a surprise to everybody, not only me, because people all the time question why now? You know, when most of us are so used to speaking the English. Even for me. I am so used to English as being my first language now. Even to my own kids. Because I have a little adopted son and I mostly speak to him in English, because I am so used to it. (Interview 2T)

Some of the sentiment expressed with respect to bilingual education was that of "going along" to get along. There was wholehearted agreement among the teachers for supporting Inuit languages and bilingual educa-

tion programs, but there was also some resignation that if the government were to change, so be it.

The Necessary Supports for Bilingual Educators. Teachers considered bilingual education to be impossible without bilingual educators or noted the need to introduce professional development for bilingual education.

So how can you have a balanced program if all the staffing you are given are two teachers qualified for seven classes? Like at the most they can have an hour a day, and then the quality is . . . how can you manage unskilled, unsupported, how can they manage in a class? (Interview 7T)

They referred to the need for schools to "get on board" and "get experts," and stated that bilingual education success was not about the language but how it was taught.

Well we would need some programming. Second language teaching is a very specialized skill and expecting people just because you speak the language to be able to [teach it] . . . like I go into [name] class to supposedly teach ESL twice a week. (Interview 1T)

To emphasize the need for teachers to be knowledgeable about language and have proper credentials, they remarked about individual research projects and researchers.

The teachers cited bilingual education research and child development literature to make a case for higher standards and accountability practices within Nunavut education. Teachers explained that the lack of programs and curriculum resources, as well as the lack of "trained" bilingual Inuit educators, contributed to staffs "winging it"; they described some bilingual programming as "hit and miss." The lack of material resources and bilingual educators raised significant questions regarding teacher capabilities and program quality. The teachers feared that negative judgments of community members would compromise the level of support required to maintain bilingual programming in some smaller communities. They were also concerned about the possibility that the Inuktitut first-language stream could be cut back or discontinued.

Referencing the need for immersion Inuktitut, as well as English as a second language programs for students whose home language was Inuktitut, teachers compared Nunavut teacher competence to southern Cana-

dian post-secondary education experiences, qualifications, and standards. One non-Inuit teacher offered the following criticism of the standards for the Nunavut teacher education program:

I said you are pushing these poor kids [Inuit teacher education students] through this program, half of them can't read or write, and then you are telling them to go out and teach, like give me a break, like . . . I am well educated . . . like I have done the six, seven years of university. (Interview 4T)

Teachers questioned the quality of the Nunavut teacher education program and worried that it was not up to the standard of southern Canadian university bachelor of education programs. They were worried about the effect of this difference in standards on the quality of bilingual education programs and instruction.

Teachers considered parents as necessary "partners" for bilingual programming to be effective, expressing the need for more parent engagement with the academic purposes of language for the success of the "balanced model" of bilingual education. In some cases the teachers felt parental expectations of bilingual education programs were too high. The proposed partnership between parents and teachers necessitated that parents do what the "experts" advised.

We are trying to convince parents there to speak as solid Inuktitut as you can to your children. Converse with them on deep topics. Don't just talk about, are you hungry, or there is the door, or whatever . . . pick up your coat. Talk about . . . how you are feeling about things. What is your idea about that? You want them to be thinking as deeply as they can in their mother tongue. (Interview 7T)

Usually the teachers used the term "experts" in reference to educators and consultants who were comprehensively informed by research.

In some cases the expectations of the all-English, non-Inuit world of education extended well into the years when some Inuit participants attended teacher education programs.

Because when I was being taught to become a teacher, I was taught in English and we went to do a practicum in an English classroom, and all the materials that we made at Teacher's College were in English, which when I came into the school, the first school I went to was in [place], and I had to start thinking about translating all of the materials that I worked on [into Inuktitut]. (Interview 6T)

Both Inuit and non-Inuit participants voiced as problematic these kinds of mandatory English language experiences that exemplified the exclusion of Inuit languages in education. Many teachers stressed that all students needed to have access to learning materials in Inuit languages in today's schools. Teachers often mentioned the immense workload of translating materials from English to Inuktitut. For many, their beginning understanding of bilingual education was limited to the belief that bilingual programming meant Inuktitut translation of English resources.

The Inuit Language Stream as a Disadvantage. The teachers in Nunavut viewed bilingual education as both a challenge and a problem, considering the instructional difficulties that bilingual education caused in their teaching practice as well as its effects on students' academic progress, often attributing the problems of bilingual education to the language proficiency levels of individual students, families, and communities – also known as the "home/school language gap." They construed students as language "needy" and in language "limbo" in terms of their competency in both English and Inuktitut. Teachers found it difficult to assess students' overall language skills.

I guess being aware of, you are not really too sure of … like in this class I am not always so sure of how much … how strong they are in either language. (Interview 1T)

Teachers voiced their apprehension around trying to bridge the perceived language gap in situations where Inuit languages were neither spoken in the home nor prevalent in the community. They explained how the difficulties associated with bilingual education spawned further challenges in relationships with parents and community members, believing that parental expectations were sometimes too high in terms of bilingual education and second language learning models. Teachers judged some students as "not ready" for the programs being offered, which put the students in jeopardy of not attaining either language at the

expected grade level. Although teachers voiced references to the desire for a strong Inuktitut language, the dominance of English in all aspects of Nunavut life produced language learning interference for teachers. One Inuit teacher described her troubles implementing a cohesive Inuktitut, first-language program.

I have an example where the parent comes to me, and the child is mostly hearing English language in the home, but the kid is an Inuk and the parent is asking me how far the child is, like academic level, where the child is, and the child is having difficulty with whatever I am teaching. Difficulty reading or doing math and since like the child's first language might be English and where I am trying to teach the kid Inuktitut … that is a challenge for me … it is. (Interview 6T)

Teachers described how the lack of Inuktitut language that students and the families used in their homes often placed them in uncomfortable positions with parents and community members when reporting on student progress at school. Parental expectations were incompatible with the reality of students' language proficiencies.

Teachers referred to deficits and delays in students' learning, linking these academic difficulties to the structure and methodology of bilingual education programs. They also described inequitable schooling practices, based on faulty perceptions of bilingual education, believing that these perceptions contributed to students' academic exclusion. For example, teachers explained how parents' choice of the language-of-instruction stream (English or Inuktitut) for younger children was often made out of fear of their children failing in the future, in secondary school. One teacher offered this explanation for how parents justified their choice of the English stream over the Inuktitut stream when both were available in larger communities.

Because when their child goes to high school they want their son or daughter to work with ease in English. That is why. But I look at it this way, if a child is strong in Inuktitut reading and writing, speaking, they will also be strong when they are introduced to English. (Interview 5T)

Teachers also connected inadequate Inuit language resources, lack of support for bilingual educators, and the overall systemic inability to sus-

tain consistent bilingual education programming as factors that caused Inuit language stream students to face potentially insurmountable prejudice in their transition to secondary school. One teacher related a story about her community, where the middle school used bilingualism and previous Inuktitut language study as categories to track incoming students.

I have kids who are about to go to the high school who would give anything not to, because there they are going to be put into streams, so that those who are English speaking they will be in the academic stream. And no matter how damn smart you are — if you are Inuit pretty much, not even by your ability in English — if you are Inuit … you will be put in the not – so - smart stream or the non-academic stream. And it is called General. And the kids know they are there. So I think they are already facing a brutal, brutal world. Anything we have done to try to make them feel powerful is gone. (Interview 9T)

Throughout the teachers' dialogues, they vehemently voiced the significant obstacle posed for all bilingual education students by an English-only secondary system in Nunavut, acknowledging that the goal of high school graduation was strongly associated with English language ability.

DISCUSSION: DISCOURSE MODELS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Academic Truths

Arising from the teachers' situated meanings related to bilingual education is a Discourse model I have named *academic truths*. The teachers expressed an unquestioned commitment to the "truths" found within academic research on bilingual education and language learning. They viewed successful bilingual education as substantially associated with languages-of-instruction models, language acquisition, and language proficiency. The teachers positioned language acquisition research and child development theories as essential official knowledge to guide bilingual programming, believing in the importance of these theories as predictive powers to link academic achievement to bilingual education practice. The elements of accountability, standards, teacher competence, parental roles, and support for Inuit languages all contributed to the articulation of their academic truths Discourse model. The teachers theorized that students' academic problems related to bilingual education had

specific academic solutions that could be found through reading and researching related to school contexts.

A final situated meaning contributing to the academic truths Discourse model, based upon teachers voiced beliefs, suggests that poor quality or ineffective bilingual programming lead to a lack of credibility with parents and community members in relation to the English and Inuktitut streams. Teachers felt that parents might choose the English stream, believing it to be a stronger academic program although they desired bilingualism for their children. The language of standards related to the viability of quality bilingual education in Nunavut conveyed uneasiness among the teachers, given the lack of competent, qualified, bilingual educators. Raising issues of professionalism, teachers believed that access to some of the specialized qualifications and professional support vital to effective bilingual education was absent in the Nunavut context.

To give status to academic research, the teachers promoted the idea that it was possible to pursue one ideal in doing bilingual education. They constructed successful bilingual education as a strong model of language acquisition, implemented within an improved model of instruction that ensured students' academic success. Teachers appeared to take a narrow view of bilingual education that Stairs (1990) has shown to be problematic in decision-making around languages-of-instruction policies. Based on this viewpoint, teachers believed it was possible to measure and control all the factors related to bilingual education in Nunavut. Defining success in this way takes up positivist and universal orientations to bilingual education and learning.

Such universal orientations are not uncommon among teachers because their experiences with formal education and their institutional role often limit more critical explorations of success and achievement. The perspectives of many Aboriginal scholars relate language learning more holistically to the spirit and soul of a people (Kirkness, 1998b). Universal approaches to learning can de-emphasize the importance of what Cummins (2000) and Nieto (2002) would consider as the vital socio-cultural elements of the language learning environment.

Revitalization

Co-mingling, resisting, and resonating with the academic truths Discourse model was evidence in the teachers' dialogue of a Discourse model of what I have called *revitalization*. My naming of this Discourse model makes intentional links between the teachers' talk and Indigenous language revitalization efforts occurring worldwide. The content of language and cultural revitalization present in the teachers' transcripts featured elements of language leadership, parent and elder involvement, minority rights, standards, and accountability.

Although the academic truths that teachers took up voiced the need for recognition and credibility of bilingual education from the outside world through provincial, national, or even global institutional standards, the Discourse model of revitalization stems from a more local, community-based standpoint. The revitalization Discourse model of bilingual education is the program stream that has secured a space for the ways and means to develop a strong Inuit identity at school. The tension that has developed between internal, community-based efforts and external, institutional forces of accountability in Nunavut schooling has been documented extensively in the full study on which the present study is based (Aylward, 2006) as well as in other recent studies on Nunavut education (Berger, 2008; Tompkins, 2006).

Situated meanings around the nature of bilingual education and the necessary support required were more questioning and critique than criticism. Working from a framework of supporting bilingual education, teachers detailed the need for improvements such as the potential language leadership that increased parental and elder involvement might provide. Teachers named through their discussions of the home, school, and community language gap the barriers to bilingual education that needed to be solved. Teachers were also troubled by the deficits and delays in students' academic progress within the bilingual education programs as well as the potential prejudice for those students participating in the Inuit language stream. In making comparisons between Nunavut language policies and the minority language rights legislated in the province of Quebec, the teachers theorized that the southern educational policies and practices operating within Nunavut education did not meet the majority Inuit population's desired language standards for schooling.

Inuit languages need to be dominant, not subjugated by English language use. Teachers believed that a quality, supportive bilingual education program could revitalize Inuit languages and address many of the existing academic problems of Nunavut education.

In terms of the Discourse models at play within Indigenous and Aboriginal contexts in Canada, a double think exists with respect to the desire that communities have voiced to maintain their language while at the same time the education system has offered no direct support for bilingual language programs in schools (Freeman, Stairs, Corbiere, & Lazore, 1995). What are parents and students within Canadian Aboriginal communities really saying "Yes" to and what are they really saying "No" to about languages of instruction and education? As Arlene Stairs (1994) noted, "[B]ilingual education is the term used officially and informally to describe programs involving Indigenous negotiation with mainstream schooling" (p. 161).

Working the Inuktitut-English Hyphen

One is immediately drawn to "what is not said" in the teachers' dialogue about bilingual education. In discussions of the best models, methods, and ways to implement a bilingual education program in Nunavut, participants in some way made Inuit culture and Indigenous knowledge irrelevant or sidelined, making no deep connection between language acquisition and the language-learning context. Although most teachers defined the successful elements of a bilingual education program by referencing academic literature and theories, they gave little recognition to how an intercultural orientation to bilingualism would affirm Nunavut students' cultural background and encourage their contributions to curriculum development (as proposed by Cummins, 1996). There was little privileging of local community-based knowledge in relation to language acquisition, the importance of which is attested by studies of Aboriginal language maintenance (Battiste, 2002; Burnaby, 1996; Corson, 1992).

In addition, the discussion of the obstacle presented by an all-English secondary school experience in Nunavut was important within considerations of bilingual education only in terms of its influence on the sustainability of bilingual programs at the elementary school level. Articulated in much of the teachers' dialogue was only a beginning under-

standing of some of the potentially long-lasting effects related to the power and dominance of English-only learning in secondary education. Nunavut students could not hope to maintain mature, academic Inuit language proficiency when bilingual education ended in grade six. Krashen (2004) demonstrated how an alarming anti-bilingual education trend in the United States began with a voting public largely ignorant of the effectiveness of bilingual education.

Some teachers partially believed that high school graduation was synonymous with English language proficiency; similarly, Nakata (2001) claims that the cultural agenda produced by researchers persuades Aboriginal people that their language is synonymous with their cultural identity. Nakata (1999) has strongly made links between learning English and political power and control through his argument against cultural restoration approaches in Aboriginal education that restrict access to English. However, proponents of quality bilingual education programs feel that English-language proficiency and maintenance of Aboriginal languages and culture are mutually supportive, not exclusive (Cummins & Schecter, 2003; McAlpine & Herodier, 1994; McCarty, 1994). Through Nunavut teachers' fusing of English-language proficiency with high school graduation, all efforts towards bilingualism are made insignificant to the goal of a high school diploma. The danger is that English-only education has been established as the "gold standard" in Nunavut, with its origins found in an introduction to formal schooling characterized by Inuit language extermination leading to early exit, subtractive, bilingual education models that, when possible, transitioned Inuktitut speaking children into an all-English stream by grade three (Martin, 2000). Based on teachers' discussions of bilingual education in the present study, it appears that colonizing influences linger in Nunavut.

Some teachers' talk about bilingual education positioned Nunavut community members as "in the know" and others as uninformed. Some of the non-Inuit teachers, parents, and most community members were considered to be in the latter group, whereas properly "trained" teachers, consultants, and researchers were viewed as leaders in the decision-making process around bilingual education planning. The teachers presented several definitions of an expert in the field of bilingual education. One definition, held mostly by non-Inuit teachers, recognized the power

and status of post-secondary academic institutions as well as Canadian national education credentials and standards. Other Inuit and non-Inuit teachers viewed elders as expert in Indigenous knowledge and Inuit ways of knowing, situating these as essential for quality bilingual education. The goals attached to both definitions appeared to be similar on the surface: academic success and progress for all students. However, the meanings of the proposed success and achievement stemmed from a variety of assumptions and beliefs.

Many non-Inuit teachers demanded that teachers, students, and all education leaders meet the Eurocentric set standards established by southern Canada. These beliefs, related to discourses of assimilation, were similar to the findings of Goddard's (2002) study, where Eurocentric curriculum was considered appropriate for use in northern Aboriginal communities. In addition, the specific expectations of some non-Inuit teachers, articulated around teacher competencies, connected with the concepts of professionalism and credentialing that ensured exclusion of Indigenous knowledge or community-based learning.

Teachers' constructions of the importance of working to promote and maintain Inuit languages as an equal partner on the hyphen of English-Inuktitut bilingualism were in collision with discourses of assimilation. This worldview, also present in the teachers' talk, actively engaged with discourses of equity and Ladson-Billings' (1995, 2001) notion of cultural relevance. As proposed by Cummins and Schecter (2003), as well as May and Janks (2004), most teachers considered language diversity a resource, not a deficit. They referred to high standards and high quality bilingual school programs that were inclusive of Inuit languages and culture, assisting bilingual Inuit students to become self- reliant, contributing community members.

Some of the teachers created a tension within the discursive strategies undertaken because they constructed bilingual education, in general, as a "problem." They situated Inuit languages as the source of academic achievement difficulties, while at the same time they recognized structural obstacles to accessing Inuit language learning so that it could be considered a step forward towards improved bilingual education. However, some teachers' blamed students' failure on poor bilingual

education programs, positioning Inuit language as a significant disadvantage.

I would argue that a potential effect of this blame perspective is the risk that no substantive efforts towards the development of community support for bilingual education would be undertaken. The teachers' linking of Inuit language to school failure might contribute to practices that place Inuit language learning as consistently subservient to English language learning. Therefore, Inuktitut second language programs that are perceived to not "interfere" with English language learning might be the only kind of programs considered acceptable in Nunavut education. If this thinking about English language dominance persists, according to observations in other countries by Janks (2001), Pennycook (1998), and May and Aikman (2003), doubts might be raised about the relative merits and compatibility of English and Inuktitut languages and the overall validity of bilingual education by Nunavut teachers, parents, and administrators.

Through consideration of streaming by the language-of-instruction, student assessment and achievement levels, and resource allocation, teachers communicated their awareness that all was not quite right, recognizing that some of the structural inequities present in bilingual education permeated the Nunavut education system as a whole, indicating how the role of bilingual education in Nunavut had to do with social power as well as language acquisition. For example, discussions of preparing for high school illuminated the reach of discrimination based on language. Questions regarding teacher qualifications and curriculum brought forward the clash between southern Canadian standards and accountability structures and community relevant programs. According to Sonia Nieto (2002), Skutnabb-Kangas's (1988) term "linguicism" applies to many North American school situations at present, where certain ideologies and structural arrangements about language teaching are used to "legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and non-material) between groups that are defined on the basis of language" (p. 13).

In writing about educational reform such as compensatory education and bilingual education, Cummins (1986) hypothesized that power relations among students, teachers, schools, and communities, as well as the

overall structural inequities of education remained unquestioned and unexamined. In 2001 revisiting his previous postulations regarding the empowerment of minority students, he determined that current school interventions and reform initiatives continued to ignore the vital socio-cultural elements of learning (Cummins, 2001). In addition Cummins reinforced his commitment to the view that there appears to be little interest or effort expressed by education leadership in government to interrogate the systemic regimes of power within which bilingual education is embedded.

Addressing systemic issues is vital to successful bilingual education practice. Nunavut teachers' explanations and theorizations around bilingual education demonstrate an emergent consciousness of the foundational education changes that are necessary to maintain Inuit languages and to consider education truly equitable for all students.

CONCLUSION

Nunavut teachers expressed serious and substantial concerns about bilingual education that included the following issues: levels of teacher competency and support, home and school language gaps due to language loss, lack of leadership, ambiguous standards and systems of accountability, discrimination against Inuit language stream students, and denial of minority language rights.

The discourse analysis of the talk of teachers participating in the present study indicates that developing appropriate and relevant language policy and practices in Nunavut means addressing the prominent issues presently facing educators related to bilingual programs. The teachers' concerns about the survival of Inuit languages as well as the means with which bilingual programming is achieved can be linked to Discourse models of academic truths and revitalization. Teachers were creating and recognizing the effects of viewing the choice of the Inuit language stream by Nunavut students as an academic disadvantage. Their discussions continuously worked the intercultural and potentially assimilative discourses of the English-Inuktitut hyphen.

Recognition by the Government of Nunavut of the problems with bilingual education and the realization that maintenance of Inuit languages involved deliberate language planning provoked a Bilingual Edu-

cation Strategy recommending that Inuit languages are taught K-12 (George, 2004). Distinctive to the plan are the explicit goals of maintaining and promoting the use of Inuit languages rather than viewing Inuktitut as a "transition" language, utilized only until students achieve English competency. This institutional change in approach to bilingual education is an important development in the Nunavut socio-political context, giving Inuit languages an official place in education. The passing of the Inuit Language Protection Act in Nunavut in 2008, which aims to protect Inuit languages by guaranteeing that both public and private-business services are provided in an Inuit language, will greatly assist any and all educational efforts to preserve Inuit languages.

However, any good teaching must engage deeply with the complexities of the community and relationship rather than merely articulate or regurgitate dominant institutional discourses (hooks, 2003; Palmer, 1998). Based on the discourse analysis provided by the present study, Nunavut teachers appeared to be making efforts to engage with community to enact educational policy but historical assimilationist discourses of schooling were also strongly present in the Nunavut context. The resilience of these dominant discourses could potentially disrupt teachers' efforts and desires for lasting change in Nunavut schooling's policies and practice with respect to role of Inuit languages. The lived schooling experiences of Nunavut teachers and students must be taken into account to implement any new bilingual education policy successfully.

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Appendix 1: Interview Guide for Teachers
Provided in English and Inuktitut

Interview Guidelines for Teachers

Introduction: Nunavut's Department of Education has made a commitment to Inuit language and culture as the foundation for learning in Nunavut Schools. What are your thoughts on this subject?

- Stories of success and joy - about how you have infused Inuit language and culture into your community school. What strategies have you tried? What worked? Why?

- Stories about your use of the *Inuuqatigiit* curriculum. How do you use it in your planning as a classroom teacher? How helpful has it been for your planning?

- Stories of your own teaching experience in Nunavut schools related to the role of Inuit language and culture.

- What challenges and successes have you experienced with respect to language and cultural issues? (with curriculum? with parents? with colleagues? with administration) .

- In your experience what role does Inuit language and culture play in the daily classroom learning of a community school? What do you think of that role? How might the role be supported and made stronger?

- Tell me a story that would help someone outside Nunavut (perhaps a new teacher) understand how Inuit language and culture influence the Nunavut school system