
Public policy, language practice and language policy beyond compulsory education: Higher education policy and student experience*

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Abstract

Using higher education as a context, this article explores public policy and policy analysis in relation to language policy studies and argues for greater consideration of language issues in public policy and policy analysis. Conversely, language policy studies must also expand to integrate elements of public policy analysis in order to reveal the complexities of language practices and policies in societies where linguistic heterogeneity is the norm. This article is divided in two parts, with the first part drawing on a literature review to explore language issues in public policy for higher education. Using data from various studies on Francophone students' access to and postsecondary experiences in a minority context, the second part will examine higher education in Ontario, Canada, from a public policy and a language policy perspective.

Key words: language policy, access, higher education, public policy, linguistic heterogeneity

Résumé

Cet article explore les liens entre les études en politique, gestion et aménagement linguistique et les études en politique publiques dans le contexte de l'enseignement postsecondaire. Il démontre la nécessité pour les politiques publiques et institutionnelles et pour la recherche en enseignement supérieur de tenir compte d'éléments linguistiques. L'inverse s'applique également : le domaine d'études en politique, gestion et aménagement linguistique doit s'informer de méthodes en sciences politiques et d'évaluations de politiques publiques pour faire ressortir adéquatement

*The author wishes to thank the reviewers for their helpful comments, the participants of the 2010 Language Policy and Planning Invited Symposium for the dialogism of our first meeting, and Professor Emeritus Stacy Churchill for his mentorship, his stewardship to the field of LPP and his inspiring work.

les complexités de réalités linguistiques hétérogènes, qui sont la norme non seulement au Canada mais à l'échelle mondiale. Une analyse de la présence d'éléments linguistiques dans deux domaines de politiques publiques mondiales en enseignement supérieur sera suivie d'une analyse des politiques d'accès et de l'expérience étudiante de jeunes Francophones qui fréquentent des établissements postsecondaires en Ontario.

Mots-clés : politique linguistique, accès, éducation postsecondaire, politique publique, hétérogénéité linguistique

Introduction

Churchill (2008) has convincingly demonstrated how effective language policy research has been in assisting Francophone minorities outside of Québec in obtaining self-governance in education. In Ontario, the French Language Education Policy and Program Branch (FLEPPB) has become increasingly autonomous in a decentralized Ministry of Education, adapting provincial policy implementation to reflect and meet the needs of the French language community in this province. In 2004, they launched an omnibus policy called *La politique d'aménagement linguistique pour les écoles de langue française* ('A language planning policy for French language schools'). This omnibus policy was implemented in three phases in all K–12 French language schools and school boards. In 2007, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) created a unit for French language postsecondary education which integrated into the Ministry of Education's FLEPPB. This unit was still under the jurisdiction of MTCU; however, the integration into FLEPPB ensured French language governance over the continuum of education, from pre-school to graduate studies. This unit of the MTCU, through the FLEPPB, is set to implement a language policy for its French-language and bilingual postsecondary institutions in the fall of 2011.

Ensuring Francophone governance of their educational institutions and programs is a good thing, as the increase in student achievement, including graduate rates and standardized testing since 1998, reveals (EQAO, 2011). However, the FLEPPB, being a parallel autonomous ministerial branch reporting to two different ministries, and a branch with sole purview over French language education in an Anglophone province, does, to a certain extent, remove language policy as a consideration for all public policy developed in other non-Francophone branches of the Ministry of Education, the MTCU and from the government of Ontario, as well as research on these policies. It reflects two parallel unilingual realities: Anglophone and Francophone Ontario. This is very much like the two official language communities of Canada. It does not, however, reflect or create a space for the linguistic heterogeneity and multilingualism that exists within and across both of these language communities,

nor does it reflect linguistic heterogeneity and multilingualism as a provincial, Canadian or global norm.

In the discussion paper that anchored the invited symposium on the future of language policy studies in Canada, Churchill (2010) called for a “fundamental revision of outlook and approaches” (p. 2) of language policy and public policy studies and research in order to reflect linguistic heterogeneity and multilingualism as the global norm. Using higher education as a context, let us explore how public policy and analysis incorporate — or do not incorporate — elements of language policy and planning. In this article, we will first look at how questions of language and language practice are addressed in two key public policies in higher education.¹ Then, we will look at how institutional and public policies in Ontario’s higher education institutions take into account the linguistic diversity of the province, from the perspective of postsecondary access and experience(s) of French language students.

Public policy, higher education and language

In Canada, as with many jurisdictions around the world, the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century witnessed two large areas of public policy in higher education, both, in part, responses to the global forces leading societal transformations towards a knowledge economy (Labrie and Lamoureux, 2010). The first area of public policy looks at increasing access to and participation in postsecondary education. The second area of public policy is the internationalisation of higher education. Both policy areas have led — and continue to lead — to increased diversity at higher education institutions.

Increased access

Countries and/or other educational jurisdictions have set important targets for increasing their citizens’ access to and participation in postsecondary education (Labrie and Lamoureux, 2010). In India, 12% of citizens access postsecondary education. The government’s current five-year plan, ending in 2012, aimed for a 10–15% increase, whereas the 2012–2017 plan calls for 21% of the population to have access. This means an increase from 14 million to 44 million students pursuing postsecondary education in a 10-year period. In May 2010, the Politburo in China forecasted raising postsecondary participation of its youth from 33% to 66% over ten years. In Ontario, where 60% of the population has participated in postsecondary education, the government set a target

¹In this article the term *higher education* is used as a generic term for post-compulsory education leading to a diploma or a degree. In a Canadian context, this term includes CÉGEPs, colleges, polytechnics and universities. In a British context, this term includes both further and higher education.

of 70% of its citizens to have a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree in its March 2010 Throne Speech (Government of Ontario, 2010). In Europe, as in North America, these policies have led to a second wave of massification of higher education since the 1960s. That first wave was witness to the creation of record numbers of new postsecondary institutions. This second wave brings with it program restructuring and campus diversification to meet the increasing numbers of *new*² and traditional students.

Despite the longstanding and ever-growing diversity of countries such as Canada and the United States, and with increased mobility across the European Union, it comes as no surprise, however, that analysis of literature on access to, persistence and success in postsecondary education reveals that the most studied group is that of the polity's majority—whether national, linguistic or ethnic. However, in France, we see renewed research interest in *new* students (Erlich, 1998; Boyer, Coridian and Erlich, 2001; Fave-Bonnet and Clerc, 2001), those first-generation students from low and lower middle income families as well as from second- and third-generation immigrant families from ethnic groups long under-represented in higher education, who are the first in their families to participate in higher education. In the United States, we see increased research on the postsecondary access of students from different racial and ethnic groups (Latino, Black, Asian) and a call for this new higher education research to adopt theoretical frameworks that are not solely based on majority (meaning Caucasian) students (cf. Attanasi, 1989; Eimers and Pike, 1997; Watson et al., 2002; Hernandez and Lopez, 2004; LeSure-Lester and King, 2005). We also note growing research interest on the international student experience (cf. Montgomery, 2010). However, even when studies explicitly focus on diversity, language is not seen as relevant. Chase (2010) provides an excellent example of the telling omission of linguistic considerations:

I became interested in how college students understand diversity when I began teaching sociology courses on race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. [...] One, which I call City University, or CU, is a private university with fewer than three thousand undergraduates, less than 20 percent of whom are students of color. The other is a large public institution with about the same percent of students of color. (p. ix)

Interestingly, Chase's book is called *Learning to speak, Learning to listen: How diversity works on campus*. However, it does not raise any issues regarding multilingualism or linguistic varieties/registers/repertoires as markers of

²In the sense of Erlich (1998) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1985 [1964]), *new* refers to students who, because of socioeconomic status or social capital, would not previously have been university bound and who now join students from upper and upper middle class families in pursuit of a university diploma.

diversity or as elements to consider in intercultural competency. Yet, Harrison and Peacock (2010) remind us that “language is central to the communication process and the balance of power in any relationship and particularly in a learning environment when ‘language skills and intellectual ability are often conflated in people’s minds’” (p. 133).

As with Chase’s work, the majority of American studies on higher education do not address issues of language except for English as a Second Language (ESL) competencies, requirements or challenges of international students, despite the linguistic heterogeneity of American students in the ethnically focused studies and of the general student population in the United States. However, a shift may be coming as some recent studies are exploring the recovery of heritage languages in higher education (Montoya, 2011). Yet, analysis of persistence and the impact of linguistic heterogeneity remain absent.

Since 2000, we have noted an increased interest in Canada for research on the access and student experience of under-represented groups, particularly those identified by Rae (2005), namely first-generation students, students from economically disadvantaged families, students with disabilities, students from some new immigrant communities, as well as First Nations and Inuit students (Lamoureux, 2010a). Most of these Canadian studies do not look at official language minorities (particularly Francophones outside Québec), despite:

1. their being identified as one of the five under-represented groups in Ontario (Rae, 2005);
2. Francophones constituting a sub-population within the other under-represented groups; and
3. the fact that many Francophones attend English medium-of-instruction postsecondary institutions.

A small group of French-language researchers are now exploring questions of access, persistence and success of Francophones from minority settings at postsecondary institutions, namely in Ontario (Lamoureux, 2007, 2010a, 2010b; Desabrais, 2008; Labrie, Lamoureux and Wilson, 2009; Labrie and Lamoureux, 2010; Samson, 2010), building on the pioneer studies of Churchill, Frenette and Quazi (1985) and Frenette and Quazi (1996). The majority of research on Ontario’s English medium of instruction or bilingual universities rarely, if ever, address language questions except with regards to ESL, English Intensive Program (EIP) or English for Academic Purposes (EAP) (Lamoureux, 2007).

Internationalization of/in higher education

Internationalization in higher education is simultaneously linked to developing global citizens (cf. Strange, 2005; Stearns, 2009; Bourn, 2010) and encouraging intercultural exchanges and the development of intercultural competencies at home and abroad (cf. Emanoil, 1999; Pritchard and Skinner, 2002; Guoqing, 2003; Ippolito, 2007; Trahar, 2011).

References to language or language policy in these studies is also very much relegated to English language requirements, ESL and EAP or EIP programs for foreign or international students (read *non-Anglophone*) studying in English-speaking countries. These programs, however, are not framed in terms of language policy or language management, but as part of the academic regulation of admission for these institutions.

I do not mean to imply that there are no references to language as elements of public policy for higher education. Thom (2010) "sees the development of language skills and competence in at least one other language as an essential part of an internationalised curriculum" (p. 159). Tan and Allen (2010) contextualise their study on student voice, internationalization and initial teacher education within the United Kingdom's Language Strategy (Dept. for Education and Skills, 2002) for modern foreign languages in compulsory education. They quote part of the rationale of the strategy which states, "In the knowledge of the 21st century, language competence and intercultural understanding are not optional extras, they are an essential part of being a citizen" (cited in Tan and Allan, 2010, p. 46). Interestingly, the next sentence in the rationale for the strategy, which is not cited by Tan and Allen, reads: "For too long we have lagged behind as a nation in our capability to contribute fully as multilingual and culturally aware citizens" (Dept. for Education and Skills, 2002, p. 5). This last sentence calls for the recognition of multilingualism as a norm, rather than a fictional modern monolingualism of 21st century England, that reflects neither its citizens nor its global (read economic) competitiveness.

An unexpected consequence of the internationalization of higher education and the competition to recruit international students has been an increase in the number of higher education institutions in non-English speaking countries adopting English as the medium of instruction (Taylor, 2010). Taylor finds that "in the Netherlands and in the Nordic countries, English is in common usage for teaching, allowing the recruitment of international students with no knowledge of the native language" (p. 89). The result, according to Taylor, is that fewer international students coming to these countries actually interact with the host country citizens and that more local students improve their English by integrating with the international student group. Caudery, Petersen and Shaw (2008) offer this example from a study of international experiences in Denmark, Sweden and Germany:

this means that a majority of exchange students lived in a *lingua franca* bubble where contact with Danes/Swedes was more a matter of the locals entering the international community rather than vice-versa. A telling example here is of a German student who said that his motivation for coming abroad was having been part of the exchange student community at his home university, noticing how much his English improved as a result of just that, and wanting more of this experience. (p. 126)

This raises interesting questions about the aims of foreign exchange policy regarding linguistic diversity both for the receiving institutions and those who encourage and often subsidize their students' international experience. Students studying abroad who stay in an English-language international community bubble and do not interact with the national language as a local practice are both enabling the spread of English and the silencing of languages other than English, majority languages in their own polity. Further questions about the language realities of internationalization experiences in higher education and the impact of the rise of English medium-of-instruction institutions in non-English-speaking countries remain to be investigated.

Increased mobility and the transnational flows of globalization also bring to light a student sub-group with particular linguistic challenges as they pursue access to higher education: refugees. Stevenson and Willot (2010) report that:

along with other non-native speakers of English domiciled in the UK, the assumption is made that refugees are domestic students, so the test of English ability is at a much lower level. Although this makes entry to university easier, it may leave refugees less able to communicate academically. (p. 197)

These students may succeed very well in their day-to-day activities integrated into their host country's life. However, as Stevenson and Willot (2010) note, institutes of higher education value a language variety that is often quite removed from the language acquired in national language learning schemes for immigrants and refugees.

Struggling with less familiar varieties/repertoires of the medium-of-instruction language as well as the scientific language that is the preferred capital of higher education institutions is not limited to foreign-born students. In light of this second massification wave in higher education and increased access to postsecondary institutions of students from culturally, linguistically and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds as well as from a variety of educational pathways (direct entry, adult learners, retraining) that were and may still be socially marginalized, I believe Corson's (1993) work on social justice and power remains extremely relevant and would need to be revisited in order to apply it beyond K-12 educational contexts. Corson explains:

[t]he non-standard language of socially marginalized people is still often used unjustly as 'a mirror' to their potential for achievement and to their worth as

human beings. This occurs in any stratified society where many variations in vocabulary, syntax, accent and discourse style are socially marked, so that even a basic communicative exchange between individuals gives evidence of their place in the social structure. Accordingly, individuals with inappropriate linguistic capital for a given situation are poorly placed to exploit the system of differences that exists in that situation. Indeed, relatively few language users are highly competent across a wide range of circumstances, since in general cultural profit or advantage accrues most from those modes of expression that are the least equally distributed. (p. 101)

After exploring recent literature and policy statements on increasing access to higher education, one is left wondering if policy makers and policy researchers have taken into consideration the linguistic heterogeneity of the *new* student body, be they L1 speakers of English or French, or speakers of other languages. It would appear that in the international arena, public policy around higher education assumes or reflects monolingual social linguistic and academic practices.

Language policy, Francophones and higher education in Ontario

The province of Ontario welcomes the greatest percentage of immigrants to Canada and is home to Canada's largest Francophone minority community outside the province of Quebec (Government of Ontario, 2011). Southeastern and Southwestern Ontario are particularly diverse, thriving communities. This is also true of the Francophone communities in this region.

In 2005, the Rae report (2005), commissioned by the province, confirmed that Francophones remained one of five under-represented groups of Ontarians with regards to access to higher education. Following the publication of the report, the government of Ontario announced several initiatives to increase access of all Ontarians to higher education, requiring institutions to report on their success in increasing access of students from the under-represented groups identified by Rae. A 2008 study of these initiatives revealed that the province's English medium-of-instruction publicly funded institutions had been mandated to focus on increasing access to four of the five identified under-represented groups in the Rae Report, but not to focus activities or reporting on increasing access for Ontario's Francophones (Lamoureux, 2008).

This targeted policy to increase access of Francophones to French medium-of-instruction higher education in Ontario did not, however, take into account:

1. the access patterns of this language community to higher education (Labrie, Lamoureux and Wilson, 2009);
2. recent research on the impact of geographic proximity to higher education participation (Frenette, 2002, 2003); or

3. the fact that only 30% of the province's publicly funded higher education programs are, in fact, available in French.³

Frenette's (2003) study for Statistics Canada presented the importance of geographic decay on higher education participation, particularly for women, where 80 km between an individual's place of residence and the higher education institution was seen as the barrier to accessing higher education. Individuals residing in a community where there was only a college were more likely to attend college, whereas communities with both a university and a college saw increased participation at university.

Given the distribution of Francophones across the province of Ontario and the localized French medium-of-instruction higher education institutions, it is not surprising then to learn that 45% of Francophone students register in English medium-of-instruction institutions (Labrie, Lamoureux and Wilson, 2009). Furthermore, it is even less surprising to learn that Francophones have a higher participation rate in colleges than their English-language counterparts whereas they continue to be under-represented in universities (Labrie, Lamoureux and Wilson, 2009; Norrie and Zhao, 2011). A public policy that focuses solely on increasing access of Francophones to French medium-of-instruction programs, even with a new focus on increasing the availability of the number of programs offered in French (Norrie and Zhao, 2011), will not, in itself, increase Francophone participation to higher education or close the gap in their participation rates at university, particularly if these programs continue to be offered in the traditionally served communities of Sudbury and Ottawa and do not take into account the impact of geography on access.

Language and access

In a study commissioned by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (Jones and Skolnick, 2009), to explore the broadening of student access, there is only one reference to language. It reads:

One other variable related to predominant characteristics of clientele that is relevant to the discussion of institutional types is that of language. How to ensure that there is sufficient opportunity for study in both official languages has been a major issue in designing the postsecondary education system. As

³These programs are mostly at the Cité Collégiale and the Université d'Ottawa in Ottawa, and at the Collège Boréal and l'Université Laurentienne in Sudbury, with some programs at York University's Glendon College in Toronto, the Collège Dominicain and the Université St-Paul in Ottawa, Guelph's Collège Alfred in eastern Ontario and the Collège Universitaire de Hearst in northeastern Ontario. It must be noted that the Collège Boréal does have numerous satellite campuses in Northern Ontario as well as in Toronto, London and Windsor, but these offer very limited programs.

with Aboriginal education, assessing the postsecondary needs of different language communities is a highly specialized endeavour for which there are other provincial mechanisms for developing policy advice. For our purposes it is important to note that language of study is an important dimension of any inquiry into possible gaps in regard to types of postsecondary education offered in Ontario. (p. 7)

Although the authors claim, above, that “language of study is an important dimension of any inquiry into possible gaps”, they do not address language in their report beyond this statement. It demonstrates how, in practice, as well as in theory, issues of language are removed from public policy on higher education. It also ignores the impact that public policy (government or institutional) can have on language communities, on non-native speakers of the majority language or on individuals with linguistic capital other than the official language variety/register/repertoire legitimized in higher education.

Franco-Ontarian access to higher education

In an 18-month ethnography of the transition by Franco-Ontarian youth to university (Lamoureux, 2007), several instances of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1977) or what Corson (1993) calls “gagged children in their own classrooms” (p. 103), were documented. Students from southwestern Ontario, who purposefully chose to study at one of Ontario’s two largest bilingual universities, were confronted with an ideology of correctness (Corson, 1993, p. 103), where their linguistic capital, their linguistic repertoire, accent and pronunciation were deemed by their peers and their professors to be non-legitimate markers of Francophone identity. However, all students in this study graduated with honours from an Ontario French first-language secondary school; all self-identified as Francophone bilinguals; and all students were confident in their French-language skills. They were unprepared for the linguistic realities, social more than academic, of their new milieu. As Guillaume⁴ tellingly reveals:

[dots] but it depends [...] with the French from France I speak French even if they always speak to me in English [...] oh yeah and there’s this girl from Quebec, but she always addresses me in English only /I’ve been told I have this **horrible** Franco-ontarian accent and I intend to lose it. (Interview 2, November 2, 2003)

It is important to contextualise that just two months earlier, Guillaume had been extremely proud of his Franco-Ontarian accent and heritage. He could not wait

⁴The names used in this article are pseudonyms chosen by the participants in Lamoureux’s (2007) doctoral research to protect their anonymity. Excerpts have been translated to English in keeping with the verbatim uncorrected transcripts that reflected the spontaneous exchange between the students and the interviewer. The codes at the end of the excerpts are used to locate them in transcripts and fieldnotes.

to attend Ontario's largest bilingual university to integrate into a Francophone social group and live in a more franco-dominant environment than southwestern Ontario. In secondary school, Guillaume always spoke French and often corrected not only his peers but also his teachers' written French. However, once in Ottawa, Guillaume was not perceived as a legitimate speaker of French and experienced language-based academic challenges for the first time, as he was confronted with a new linguistic standard based on monolingual linguistic practices.

Like Guillaume, participants at both large bilingual universities came to believe that not having the privileged language variety, the idealized standard, was "no excuse for not knowing it" (Corson, 1993, p. 103). They bought into the deficit view cast upon them by mostly unilingual Francophones from eastern Ontario and Quebec, that their French language linguistic abilities and repertoires — their mother tongue — were less than those of *true* Francophones and thus, identified them as second-language speakers of French rather than Francophones.

Sadly, Francophone students who pursued their studies at English medium-of-instruction universities did not fare much better. Bilinguals with little or no trace of French in their spoken English, were not recognized as Francophone by their professors. Linguistic challenges related to using English as an academic language for the first time were not seen as legitimate. Emma's experience is quite telling regarding these challenges:

[...] so he says to me 'you learned this in OAC⁵ Emma' and I said 'yes sir' we always wrote 'et' at the end of the proof before the answer. He says 'come now, you aren't French' and I said 'yes I am' but he says 'but your name is Emma Brown and you don't sound French' and I said 'My parents may not be French sir but I am. I graduated from a French language high school, have done all my schooling in French in Ontario. I AM French' and you won't believe what he said 'if you were an international student I might allow this once or from Quebec, but, you are obviously not French' can you believe that? (Notes from telephone conversation, Emma, October 2003)

Emma had to produce her official transcript as proof of her Francophone status to legitimize her experience of linguistic interference to her professors, at a meeting she had convened. She was finally able to receive insights and tips to help ease the linguistic transition to an English medium-of-instruction university. Interestingly, her former secondary school is less than 200km from the university she attended and there are four French first-language secondary

⁵OAC is the acronym for Ontario Academic Credit, courses offered in Ontario secondary schools as pre-university courses. In this excerpt, the professor is referring to the required pre-university mathematics requirement for entry to the Honours B.Sc. in Mathematics at the university Emma was attending.

schools less than 100km from this university. Yet, her professors did not know of southwestern Ontario's French language community.

The participants studying French as a major or minor at English medium-of-instruction universities encountered different challenges from Emma's. The first challenge was that, at certain institutions, their French first-language secondary *Français* classes were not recognized for dual credit or as being the equivalent to the university introductory French classes for Anglophone students. Francophone students majoring or minoring in French, who had been registered at these English medium-of-instruction institutions, located in southwestern Ontario communities with at least one French first-language secondary school, were required to take the introduction to French class in order to major or minor in that subject area. As Gisèle sums it up, "my two French classes are a bore; we're learning everything I did in elementary school" (email, week 4, October 2003). This non-recognition of the Francophone students' academic abilities in their first language created a second challenge.

In these introductory French classes, often taught by Anglophone professors trained in France or by professors from Quebec or France, Francophone students' local French language repertoire was neither acknowledged nor seen as legitimate. Mikhail, a first-year criminology student with a French minor, comes from a small Francophone village about 80km from the university he attends. His parents are both Francophones from French-speaking families who have lived in this area for several generations. French is the language most spoken at home and in his community. However, in mid-October, Mikhail was asked to leave his introductory French class and not return.

I can't minor in French anymore 'cause I got kicked out. The prof said a clothes closet was an "armoire" or a "placard". I told her that here in Southwestern Ontario, we call it a "garde-robe". She asked me my name, where I came from, told me I was wrong and kicked me out of the class. I can't take any other French class without this intro class, and they won't even recognize the fact that I graduated from a French high school and give me an equivalency. So no more minor. (Field notes, interview 2, November 2003)

The student experiences described above demonstrate how, within higher education institutions, linguistic practices are grounded in monolingual social linguistic practices and ideologies, where plurilingualism is perceived as a set of parallel monolingualisms (Heller, 2002). My 2007 study focused on Francophone students who had graduated from a French first-language secondary school in an extremely minorized and isolated Francophone area of southwestern Ontario (Lamoureux, 2007). This identification of the participants as "Francophones" does not, in fact, reveal their linguistic competencies in other languages or their ethnic origins. In fact, it reproduces Canada's multiculturalism discourse within an official bilingual context, where language is reduced

to two competing monolingualisms, French and English, although these languages in Canada are not limited to specific ethnic or geographical realities. It is this monolingual ideology that informs much of public and institutional policy in Ontario, from course offerings, admission requirements, language proficiency testing for many Ontario French-language professional second-degree and restricted programs, as well as for FSL, ESL and EAP programs.

Preliminary institutional research at the University of Ottawa seems to indicate that French first-language students from Ontario who are admitted to programs with an average of less than 80% in the French language prerequisite course, FRA4U, are more likely to be at risk in the foundations first-year university language courses (FRA1710 and FRA1720) for students in French medium-of-instruction Arts and Social Sciences programs; that is, they will earn a final grade of C+ or lower. However, it is important to stress that the provincial benchmark for the FRA4U course is a B (70–79%). That means that students who meet the provincial standard in the pre-university French language prerequisite course may not meet the minimum requirements for success in the first-year foundations course. Research is currently underway to examine the possible explanations or causes for this discrepancy between grade 12 and first-year university *Français* course student achievement.

In Ontario, the ideology of monolingualism for Francophones permeates institutional policy and practice on student access and success. There may be significant consequences beyond closing the access gap for university participation of Francophones as well as consequences to the vitality of French as an academic language for Ontario Francophones within extreme minoritized regions. There may also be serious concerns for the vitality of these minoritized communities, through heightening linguistic insecurity of Francophone students based on a deficit view of their linguistic repertoire and lack of institutional support to close that repertoire gap (Lamoureux, 2007, 2008; Desabrais, 2008) by enriching the repertoires.

Conclusion

Using the context of higher education as an area of public policy and field of research, I have demonstrated how public policy (including institutional policy) and policy research do not take into account linguistic practices or the linguistic impact of policy implementation. In a province such as Ontario, in a country such as Canada, where plurilingualism and pluriculturalism are the norm for a majority of its citizens, it is imperative that language policy no longer be viewed only as a separate area reserved for official language minorities. It is also imperative that language policy in Canada, federally, provincially and in the Territories, as well as policies at institutions of higher learning move beyond conceptualisations of bilingualism as two separate monolingualisms

exclusively tied to French and English, and take into account the plurilingual norm of Canadian society and Canadian language practices.

The experiences of the Francophone students presented in this article raise serious questions regarding the treatment of official language minorities, and even more serious questions around the lack of understanding of the social realities and language practices of speakers of languages other than the official languages. It also raises important questions around Ontario and Canada's practices and policies around the internationalization of higher education.

The literature review presented in the first part of the article demonstrates, however, that the lack of consideration of linguistic heterogeneity in higher education policy and research is not limited to Canada. Language policy and planning and research in this field are not only limited to compulsory education (K–12) or to bilingual or minority-language institutions. Nor are they limited to areas of law, health and education.

They should and must be explored in all areas where there is the practice or use of language, even in seemingly unilingual institutions, such as English medium-of-instruction higher education institutions in officially unilingual polities. As such, it should be a consideration of public policy development, evaluation, analysis and research across all domains of human activity, and must, to meet Churchill's call for a "fundamental revision of outlook and approaches" (2010, p. 2), reflect linguistic heterogeneity and multiculturalism as the global norm.

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