

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SECOND-LANGUAGE LEARNING

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SECOND-LANGUAGE LEARNING

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## ABSTRACT

Given the multicultural, multilingual character of Canadian society, it is no surprise that second-language programs were implemented in our elementary schools. The need and demand for such programs were acknowledged by politicians when French Core Programs were introduced at the elementary level in the late sixties and foreign language programs (Heritage Language Programs) were introduced after school hours in the mid-seventies.

The topic was selected primarily to examine how adequately our elementary schools are fulfilling the need and demand for second-language learning. At present, there is strong evidence to support the claim that these programs are failing to motivate students to pursue further studies in a second language or to produce students who are fairly fluent in a second language.

These claims arouse concern and controversy as to the effectiveness and perhaps the validity of such programs as they exist today in our elementary schools. It is imperative that elementary second-language programmers examine what is happening in this area. They have to deal with the factors influencing the effectiveness of their programs.

It is my view that a number of changes have to be introduced

into second-language programs at the elementary level if they are to survive at this and other levels and if they are to support the multilingual, multicultural identity of Canada.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1963, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was set up "to inquire and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races".<sup>1</sup> The findings of the Commission's inquiry confirmed the need for second-language programs and acknowledged the importance of making them effective.

The need for second-language teaching cannot be seriously questioned. The majority of Canadians are aware of this need and feel that all children should study either French or English as a second language in school. The national interest also underlines the need for Canadian children to study the second official language.<sup>2</sup>

However, as Joti Bhatnagar points out, many of the briefs from ethnic groups to the Commission's inquiry were in support of a multicultural rather than a bilingual Canada.<sup>3</sup> The response to the various briefs submitted to the Commission was the implementation of second-language programs at the elementary level in the schools. It has been nearly two decades since French Core Programs and Heritage Language Programs were introduced at the elementary level in our schools in Hamilton, Ontario. It is clear that second-language teaching is here to stay. The need for it has been established and its existence justified. As the Commission's Report maintains;



The question, therefore, is not so much whether it should be taught but rather how it can be better taught.<sup>4</sup>

The aim of this project is to address the issue of the effectiveness of second-language programs. The discussion will include both French Core Programs and Heritage Language Programs. Both programs will be considered because they experience similar problems, though they function under different circumstances. In this regard, each program serves as a foil to the other and a more complete analysis of the second-language learning process can be provided.

There are many factors that contribute to the effectiveness of second-language programs. In order to address fully this complex issue, the following factors will be discussed. The first chapter of the project will deal with the historical, social and political events that led to the implementation of second-language programs at the elementary level in the Hamilton education system. The review of these events will set the background and provide insight into the problems second-language programs are experiencing at present. The second chapter will focus on the nature of the second-language programs. The discussion will include a description of the programs, their aims and expectations. Such a discussion will shed some light on the problems that arise from the nature of second-language learning. The third chapter will deal with the nature and causes of the problem which second-language programs run into. An analysis of the problems is essential because it will clarify the areas that require improvement. The last chapter will deal with the need for improvement of second-language programs and provide suggestions that may be beneficial in

improving their effectiveness.

It is essential to address the issue of the effectiveness of second-language programs. Their importance and significance to Canadian society are indicated in the objectives and expectations of these programs. According to the Royal Commission's Report, the objective of second-language teaching at the elementary level in our schools was "to increase the number of bilingual Canadians and to reduce the language barrier in our country".<sup>5</sup>

The Report added:

It can play a significant role in increasing the mutual understanding of the two cultural groups.<sup>6</sup>

In 1978, Premier William Davis set up the following expectations for Heritage Language Programs in Ontario:

. . . this programme might help Ontario's many ethnic groups retain a knowledge of their mother tongues and continuing appreciations of their cultural backgrounds.<sup>7</sup>

Both programs were therefore implemented primarily to promote the bilingual and multicultural character of Canada. In addition to an academic function, second-language programs have a political function. What is surprising, given their important role in Canadian society, is the apparent controversy that surrounds these programs. In a country whose very identity promotes and encourages second-language learning, language has become a threatening and divisive issue. It is of extreme importance that second-language programs perform the functions they are expected to perform. If they are unsuccessful in meeting the bilingual and multicultural needs of Canada, the reason for their existence is weakened.

## CHAPTER I

### THE BACKGROUND OF SECOND-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Unlike other curricular subjects, second-language programs in Canada have a complex and unique background. Their subsequent specific problems are rooted in this complex origin. This is not a novel claim, however. Researchers such as Cummins and Bhatnagar have traced the problems of second-language programs in Canada to their controversial background. There is no question that the historical background of these programs has been an influencing factor in their effectiveness, but we need to show how it has been so. The Royal Commission's Report on Bilingualism and Biculturalism acknowledged the influence which the history of Canada had on second-language learning.

Our Preliminary Report saw both the public and commissioners coming to grips with enormous problems arising from French speaking Canadians' historical disenchantment with their place and status and English speaking Canadians' apparent failure to perceive the situation.<sup>8</sup>

The issue of bilingualism is rooted in Canada's early history. Both the English and French established settlements in Canada in the early Seventeenth Century. Although both groups claimed their right to the land by being Canada's first settlers, the English gained the upper hand because of their numerical advantage.<sup>9</sup> The French were weakened further because of their losing the French Indian War, while

the British gained territories in Quebec after their victory in that same war. In 1763, with the Treaty of Paris, the French surrendered their territories to the British.<sup>10</sup> The Quebec Act of 1774 defined the territory of Quebec and guaranteed the Roman Catholic Church its rights, property and privileges.<sup>11</sup> It also established French civil law and English criminal law for the territory. In 1867, the Confederation Act gave internal rule to each province.<sup>12</sup> However, even with the passing of these acts which were in favour of the French, the province of Quebec still remained under British control.<sup>13</sup> As Grosjean points out, the political and economic situations of Quebec were dominated by the English.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, up to the 1960s the French were considered (and were led to consider themselves) second-class citizens. Speaking and writing English was the means of access to government service, higher education and business. Even in Quebec the English Canadians ran the economy: they set up and managed the factories and department stores, and they chose their white-collar workers from among the English-speaking French.<sup>15</sup>

The situation of other minority groups was not unlike that of the French until the 1960s. As immigrants settled in Canada and their children registered in schools, they were taught to assimilate the English culture. Jim Cummins distinctly points out:

Education was naturally regarded as a major means of Canadianizing "foreign" students.<sup>16</sup>

In the process of "Canadianizing" students from immigrant groups, educators advocated what Cummins labels "Anglo-Conformity". Ethnic groups were assimilated within the British culture at the price of losing their own identity. As Cummins points out again,

Harney and Troper in their book Immigrants, quote a speaker at the 1913 Pre-assembly Congress of the Presbyterian Church in Toronto. The problem is simply this: take all the different nationalities German, French, Italian, Russian and all the others that are sending their surplus into Canada, mix them with the Anglo-Saxon stock and produce a uniform race wherein the Anglo-Saxon peculiarities shall prevail.<sup>17</sup>

In fact, if immigrants were to survive and be successful in their new surroundings, they had little alternative but to adopt the manners and customs of the main culture. Bhatnagar writes:

Assimilation into the Canadian version of the British culture was the hope offered to the immigrants. In order to get a fair deal many immigrants not only had to adopt British customs and mannerisms but also had to change their names in order to conceal their ethnic identity. For some, especially the second-generation European immigrants, it was possible; for visible minorities it was not.<sup>18</sup>

Minority ethnic groups therefore shared the same fate as the French. Both were dominated by the British and both were forced to conform to their way of living.

English domination, thus, characterized Canada's history until the sixties. These were years of change, social upheaval and, in Quebec, 'quiet revolution'. During this period, the claims of minority groups were recognized throughout Canada. There are many reasons for the changes that occurred during this decade. Whereas minority groups had previously maintained a lower status because of their numerical disadvantage, in the fifties and sixties massive immigration contributed to a change in their low self-esteem. Furthermore, as Bhatnagar points out, they were influenced by the Black movements in the United States. The French were specifically and

especially motivated by the visit of General DeGaulle to Quebec in 1967.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the Separatist Movement that was formed in the late 1960s was gaining support and popularity in Quebec.<sup>20</sup>

With the growing recognition of their inferior status and their increase in numbers, the French and other ethnic minority groups grew more intolerant of their low position in society.

The province of Quebec underwent what has come to be known as the 'quiet revolution'. French Canadians in that province increasingly began to identify themselves as Quebecois. No longer satisfied with a role subservient to the British, they demanded a bigger role in business, government and industry.<sup>21</sup>

During the 'quiet revolution', Quebec slowly gained control of its own politics and economy. As Dominique Clift states in Quebec Nationalism in Crisis,

. . . politics took a new and unforeseen turn as a result of developments taking place in conjunction with educational reform, the escalation of public spending and a new found prosperity.<sup>22</sup>

But, as stated earlier, the sixties were also a decade of change for other minority groups. Since the submissive position of the French was shared by other ethnic groups, they too voiced their frustrations and called for changes in their status.

A 'third force' emerged on the Canadian social and political scene. Inspired by the black movements in the United States, the fall of the British Empire and the rise of ethnics all over the world, people whose background was neither English nor French were getting tired of the 'founding races' philosophy. No longer willing to play second fiddle, they demanded recognition of their contribution towards the emergence of Canada as a modern industrial state, and their rightful place in the Canadian mosaic.<sup>23</sup>

As immigrants saw the gradual loss of their language, culture and identity as a result of their assimilation, their demands for their cultural preservation became louder and more ardent than before.

The claims of the French and other ethnic minority groups were not in vain; for, as a result, many political decisions were made in their favour. In response to the demands made by the French and the minority groups, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was set up to investigate the bilingual and bicultural needs of Canadian society. Certain changes evolved from the recommendation stated by the Commission.

With the setting up of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963, Canadians began to accustom themselves to a new model of Canadian society.<sup>24</sup>

New government policies were initiated by the Liberal Party under Lester B. Pearson. Joti Bhatnagar outlines these policies in his article "Language and Maintenance Programmes in Canada". In 1969, the Official Languages Act was passed ensuring equal status to the two founding races, the French and the English.<sup>25</sup> In 1970, the Commission also published a volume on The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups.<sup>26</sup> According to Bhatnagar,

This volume is a gold mine of information on topics such as integration, assimilation, discrimination, cultural heritage and language. The role of education in responding to the needs of New Canadians is discussed.<sup>27</sup>

The government responded to the Commission's findings by establishing the policy of multiculturalism in the bilingual framework. Prime Minister Trudeau stated that:

The policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework, commands itself to the Government of Canada as the most suitable means of assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians. National Unity, if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense, must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions. A vigorous policy of multiculturalism will help to create this initial confidence. It can form the base of a society which is based on fair play for all.<sup>28</sup>

To promote the new policy of multiculturalism the post of Minister of State for Multiculturalism was established, as were the advisory bodies - the Canadian Council on Multiculturalism and the Ethnic Advisory Committee.<sup>29</sup>

Initially, the focus was on the promotion of the cultural aspect of the ethnic group. Funds were given to the various ethnic communities to sponsor cultural activities such as music, festivals and folk dances.<sup>30</sup> However, as Bhatnagar states:

Those activities were organized entirely within the various ethnic communities so children generally perceive these as being removed from the mainstream culture. Participation in these activities was often viewed as an esoteric exercise rather than as a manifestation of multicultural Canada.<sup>31</sup>

The reasonable and logical place to assume the responsibility of transmitting multiculturalism was the education system.

The school responded in three ways; by providing opportunities for cross-cultural contact by introducing language classes in the schools and by implementing bilingual and bicultural programmes.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, in 1977, the Government of Ontario created a Heritage Language Program. Funds were made available to school boards which decided to



respond to the demands of parent groups for ethnic language classes in elementary schools.

In Hamilton, Heritage Language Programs were restarted in 1971. Classes in Italian were funded by the Dante Alighieri Society until 1977 when the programs were taken over and given assistance by the Provincial Government.

In 1977, the Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic Separate School Board offered, with the assistance of the Hamilton Multicultural Council and the Dante Alighieri Society, twelve languages for more than twenty-five hundred pupils. Presently, the Hamilton-Wentworth Public Board which initiated offering classes in 1975 with the Hamilton Multicultural Council, offers approximately 15 courses for an estimated 1500 students.

To meet the bilingual needs of Canadian society, French Core Programs were introduced in elementary schools. In Hamilton, these programs were implemented at the intermediate level in Public Elementary Schools in 1965-66 and in Roman Catholic Separate Schools in 1968.

## CHAPTER II

### THE NATURE OF SECOND-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

This chapter will discuss the nature of Core Programs, their aims and their expectations at the elementary level. The first section will deal with French Core Programs. The second section will deal with Heritage Language Programs.

Core Programs, also known as Traditional French as Second Language (TFSL), are one of the three types of programs offered in Ontario elementary schools. The other two types are Extended and Immersion.<sup>33</sup>

As stated in French, Core Programs 1980,

These programs of different degrees of intensity, are designed to achieve varying levels of proficiency, according to the particular interests, abilities, and career plans of individual students.<sup>34</sup>

Core Programs are taught on a daily basis for four or five days for 20 to 40 minutes a day or, as Lawton indicates, approximately 7 to 15 per cent of total weekly instruction time. These programs were initially introduced at the intermediate level. However, in 1978 they were extended down to grades five and six in Roman Catholic Separate Schools and in 1979 to grade six in Public Elementary Schools in Hamilton.

The aims of French Core Programs are outlined in the Ministry

Guidelines issued in the document Teaching and Learning French as a Second Language in 1977. It is important to note that it is not the aim of Core Programs to make students fully bilingual.<sup>35</sup> However, the guidelines do set out specific expectations for three levels of achievement. The three levels of achievement are called "basic," "middle" and "top". The basic level is achieved through 1,200 hours of instruction, the middle level through 3,200 hours and the top level through 5,000 hours.<sup>36</sup>

The expectations set for the three levels of achievement of Core Programs as outlined by the Ministry do not apply to the programs offered in Hamilton Public and Separate elementary schools. The reason for this is that the number of hours offered in these schools is far below the minimum hours required for the least intense level of French Core Programs. The "basic" level requires 1,200 hours and there are 216 hours of French instruction in Public elementary schools and 288 hours in Separate elementary schools.

In 1980, the Ministry of Education issued Core Programs 1980, Curriculum Guidelines for the Primary, Junior, Intermediate and Senior Divisions. This guideline provides specific objectives for Core Programs. It also brings out the valid point that the expectations set for the attainment of these objectives should depend on the length and the time allotted to these programs. The guideline points out that since "each school board determines a common starting point and time allotment of Core French programs for all students in its jurisdiction,"<sup>37</sup> the expectations set will vary from board to board.

The resultant differences among boards in the length of sequence of the program and the total time provided for it will necessarily influence the expectations that can be established for student achievement.<sup>38</sup>

However, precise objectives are described in French, Core Program 1980.

The Programs in French as a Second Language support the goals of education in Ontario as described in The Formative Years:

Programs in French as a second language support these goals by assisting students:

- to develop communication skills;
- to begin to understand the structure and functioning of language;
- to pursue the mastery of a complex system of knowledge and skills;
- to acquire a sensitivity and exactness in the use of language;
- to gain an appreciation of the French presence in Canadian life in the world;
- to develop sensitivity to culture and to people.<sup>39</sup>

The aims were described as follows:

The Core French program will provide students with learning opportunities that will enable them, within the limits of their command of French structures and vocabulary:

- to listen to and understand ideas and concepts expressed in French;
- to express orally their experiences, thoughts, and feelings with clarity and confidence;
- to read with the speed and level of comprehension appropriate to their individual stage of development;
- to write with ease and an acceptable degree of correctness;
- to develop learning skills pertinent to language study;
- to perfect their use of language through study, practice, and communication;
- to become familiar with the customs, geography, history, institutions, traditions, and arts of French Canada and the other French-speaking regions of the world;

- to develop a sensitivity to other cultures and peoples, and a critical awareness of their own culture.<sup>40</sup>

### Heritage Language Programs

Of the three existing second-language programs in Ontario, Core, Extended and Immersion, Heritage Language Programs function most often as Core Programs. Similar to French Core Programs, Heritage Language Programs offer approximately 2 1/2 hours of instruction per week and both offer classes in the second language taught in isolation from other subjects. There is no extension or integration of the second language with subjects of the curriculum as is found in Extended and Immersion Programs. However, since Heritage Language Programs are officially considered "continuing education," courses in these programs cannot be part of the curriculum. They have to be offered after school or on Saturdays, and not during the standard five-hour day.

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 7 states:

Such classes may be offered after school, or on non-school days, or where enrolment justifies extending the required 5 hour school day.<sup>41</sup>

*Specifics of program*

Most Heritage Language Programs offer the 2 1/2 hours of instruction in one time slot. Students attending Heritage Language classes are, therefore, for the most part, exposed to the second language taught only once a week. Heritage Language Programs begin instruction from the time the child is of school age and continue until the intermediate grades.

Heritage Language Programs do not have aims or guidelines set

by the Ministry of Education. Members of the Heritage Language Association have recently recognized the need for such guidelines and have voiced their concern for such a need to the Ministry. The responsibility of setting up the aims or guidelines for Heritage Language Programs belongs to the individual boards offering the courses.

Boards wishing to set up heritage language classes must accept full responsibility for the staff, curriculum, and supervision of the classes, and subscribe to the usual conditions of evening and summer school programming.<sup>42</sup>

In Hamilton, both the Public and Roman Catholic Separate School Boards leave the responsibility of setting up aims or curriculum to the individual ethnic community. However, not all the communities have taken on that responsibility. The Hamilton-Wentworth Public School Board does stipulate that the programs do cover the language, history and culture and not cover the religion and politics of the ethnic community involved. The Hamilton-Wentworth Roman Catholic Separate School Board has issued a handbook to assist the communities involved. The Teachers' Handbook outlines the responsibilities of the Supervisor, Language Supervisor, Contact Person, Head Teachers, and Teachers. It also outlines the content to be taught at the various levels and gives suggestions on how to teach. The Handbook gives the objectives for the content of each level, but it does not give the overall objectives of the programs nor does it set down any expectations for the programs. Also, although the Handbook covers the curriculum content that should be taught at each grade level, it does not provide the teacher with specific and detailed materials to teach it. For instance, under the

heading "Units", the Handbook states the units to be covered, but it does not provide a content for the units or the complete units themselves. The responsibility of finding the sources and the content material belongs to the teacher.

            
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### CHAPTER III

#### THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF THE PROBLEMS OF SECOND-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

While second-language programs have been introduced, they have not been easy to implement for various reasons. The controversial background of these programs and the nature of language learning have contributed to the problems they are experiencing.

The problems are reflected in the two main objections to these programs. First, students enrolled in second-language programs do not learn to speak the language taught. Second, the programs are not motivating students to continue their studies in that language. As a result, the effectiveness of these programs has become a controversial issue, and there is reason for concern. If these programs are not meeting the bilingual and multicultural needs of Canadian society, their validity is weakened and their existence is threatened.

This chapter will address the problems that influence the effectiveness of second-language programs. It will focus on attitude, misconception of aims/expectations, age factor, selection of materials, and specialized nature of second-language programs. The discussion of these problems will identify the areas that need improvement and set the background for what needs to be done to correct the situation.



### Attitude

Much research has been done on the importance of attitude in second-language learning in Canada. Attitude is probably the major problem of second-language programs. It is responsible for many of the difficulties these programs are experiencing. Given the background of Canada and of second-language programs, the importance of attitude is not surprising. The problem of attitude is neither novel nor unique to second-language learning, however. A student's attitude toward a subject may affect his/her performance or achievement in any area of learning. Researchers such as Lambert, Clément, Smythe, Wallace and Gardner have set out to show that attitude is a determinant in second-language learning. It is the aim of this section to deal with the research done on attitude and to discuss the ways in which it has been an influencing factor in the effectiveness of second-language learning in Canada.

In his text Bilingualism and Minority Language Children, Jim Cummins claims that the negative attitude toward bilingualism is rooted in Canada's early history and its "Anglo-Conformity".<sup>43</sup> Sociolinguists give support to this claim. They provide social and psychological explanations that give insight into the complexities of language learning in Canada. Grosjean states:

It is a well-accepted notion among sociolinguists that language is not just an instrument of communication. It is also a symbol of social or group identity, an emblem of group membership and solidarity.<sup>44</sup>

This realization gave birth to the importance of attitude in second-

language learning.

Both as an instrument of communication and as a symbol of group identity, language is accompanied by attitudes and values held by its users and also by persons who do not know the language.<sup>45</sup>

Therefore, in a bilingual and multicultural society, where various cultural language groups exist, attitude is a dominant factor in second-language learning.

The attitudes which, as stated previously, were rooted in Canada's early history, were visible in English dominance and superiority. The submissive image of the French Canadian was ingrained. As Michel Brunet states:

The English-speaking populations of Canada have always taught, and have been told, that the French-Canadians were a rural, backward and priest-ridden folk who were doomed to complete assimilation the day they freed themselves from the old fetus which was supposed to have prevented them from gaining access to a more modern and dynamic way of living.<sup>46</sup>

Attitudes towards people from the other cultures stem from the process of socialization.

Socialization is always the acquisition of membership in a group. Belonging to a group may tend to be expressed negatively - by setting off one's group against another. One develops a sense of identity with one's 'in group' as separate from the 'outer-group'.<sup>47</sup>

The submissive status of the French and other minority groups that resulted from English domination had developed an 'in group' and an 'outer-group'. This resulted in the formation of the "Two Solitudes," and this had negative implications for the bilingualism issue in Canada. As Andrew Salwyne states:

Attempts to bridge our two solitudes too often have inspired cries of outrage, whether it's making the federal civil service bilingual, protecting minority French rights outside Quebec, or trying to win Quebec approval of some federal program, or attempting to establish a cultural dialogue throughout the country.<sup>48</sup>

Furthermore, although French was declared an official language in 1969 with the Official Languages Act, it did not gain the same importance as English.<sup>49</sup> Given that English was spoken by the minority, it was considered to be the superior language by the public. Consequently, with the declaration of the Official Languages Act, more French learned English than English learned French.<sup>50</sup> It is obviously less difficult to be motivated to learn a language that holds a high status than to learn one that does not. Christophersen states in

Second Language Learning Myth & Reality:

One difficulty on the North American continent is of course that the overwhelming majority of the population speaks English, and those who speak other languages do not enjoy a very high status. There is neither prestige nor utility to be gained from learning their languages and consequently no great desire to do so.<sup>51</sup>

Recent research has focused on the relationship between second-language proficiency and attitudinal variables. Gardner points out that Lambert was the first to propose theoretical explanations for the roles played by attitude and motivation in second-language learning (1963, 1967, 1975).<sup>52</sup> Studies done by Clément, Gardner and Smythe in 1977, Gardner in 1977, 1979, Gardner and Lambert in 1959, 1972, Gardner, Smythe, Clément and Gliksman in 1976 have provided evidence that motivation was an important determinant of the individual's achievement

of competence in a second language.<sup>53</sup>

In her research on what factors are involved in a student's decision to drop out of or stay into language programs, Bartley provides evidence that attitude and motivation are determinants in second-language learning. Bartley's findings provided the ground work for further studies done by Clément, Smythe and Gardner. Bartley's results demonstrate, "that those students who continued the second-language instruction evidenced a significantly more positive attitude toward languages than did drop-outs".<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, Bartley's results from a Modern Language Aptitude Test indicated "that stay-ins obtained significantly higher scores than did the drop-outs".<sup>55</sup> These findings are not of real significance as they are not unique to second-language programs. Bartley's findings led Clément, Smythe and Gardner to suggest that a "description of the students' characteristics which are related in a significant way to the decision to continue second language studies or to drop out of the program," would perhaps shed some light on the "drop-out" problem and, as a result, solutions may be found.<sup>55</sup> So they developed what has come to be known as the A.M.I. (Attitude Motivation Index).

The findings of Gardner, Clément, Smythe and Smythe (1979) indicate that there is strong evidence of the importance of attitude and motivation as determinants of students' activity and achievement. They state:

Attitudes toward the second language community, the French course and the French teacher, as well as parental encouragement shown in this context, have their main impact on the motivation to learn

the second language. In turn, motivation should evidence a substantial relationship between attitudes and second-language achievement and behavior.<sup>56</sup>

Their studies support the claim that motivation is the major determinant of the individual's persistence in second-language learning:

The most important determinant of the individual's persistence in second-language study is his motivation to learn the language. This motivation is in turn supported by an array of aspects which include the individual's attitude toward the second-language community and evaluation of the learning situation. Furthermore, they present results that, to the extent that linguistic aptitude is an influence on the individual's decision to re-enroll, this influence is seen through his motivation.<sup>57</sup>

Obviously, there has been great emphasis put upon establishing attitude as an important factor in second-language learning. A negative attitude impedes effective learning in several ways. Its most detrimental impact is evidenced in its influence on political decisions regarding bilingual and multicultural issues. Second-language programs were set up to promote bilingualism and multiculturalism in Canada. When one examines how these programs were implemented, one realizes that these programs had no chance to be effective.

Decisions regarding programs were made in the sixties when there were mounting pressures from the ethnic minority groups. The Liberal Government, at the time headed by Lester B. Pearson, attempted to meet the demands of these minority groups, especially the French, by taking aim at the problem from many directions. The issues at hand were of a sensitive and controversial nature. Because the minority groups did not occupy a dominant status and, to complicate the situation, there was no single dominant majority group in Canada,

the decision to make Canada a bilingual and multicultural country was not to be accepted by all.<sup>58</sup> Changes were inevitable since minority groups as a whole had gained numerical strength and it was politically advantageous to listen to their demands. Efforts were made by the government to have minority groups maintain their heritage, language and culture. In creating a multicultural and bilingual identity for Canada, politicians were astute in not imposing bilingualism and multiculturalism on individual citizens, but proclaimed them for Canada as a country. Canada is a bilingual country but its citizens need not be so.<sup>59</sup> This was specified in the findings of the Royal Commission's Report:

But the bilingual nature of an institution, a province or a country is a totally different matter. A bilingual country is not where all the inhabitants necessarily have to speak two languages; rather it is a country where the principal public and private institutions must provide services in two languages to citizens the vast majority of whom may very well be bilingual.<sup>60</sup>

Bilingualism in Canada therefore does not imply that individual citizens be bilingual.

Consequently, the existing state of bilingualism in Canada is not so much a question of the number of bilingual people as of the position of each of the two languages in everyday life and of the opportunities actually offered to them.<sup>61</sup>

This is the first of many recommendations that were to be put into effect. It is also the first indication of the "lukewarm" attitude toward the issue of bilingualism in Canada. The decision partially pleased both groups. On the one hand, the French language gained status as one of the official languages in Canada. On the other

hand, the English were not compelled to learn to speak the second language. However, this decision did have its negative effects and its consequences are manifested in our second-language classes today.

Many of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism were not adhered to. Certain recommendations were made specifically to enhance the effectiveness of second-language programs. The Royal Commission suggested:

We recommend that all programs for the teaching of the second official language should extend to the terminal year of secondary school.<sup>62</sup>

At the time second-language programs were implemented at the intermediate level (1966, 1968), French was a compulsory subject at the secondary level, but for only a short period. French became optional at the secondary level in 1972. The recommendation proposed by the Commission was logical and valuable for effective second-language learning. As a result of not implementing this recommendation, there were students who only received two years of French after 1972. In Hamilton schools, only forty-five per cent of students enrolled in French after French was made optional at the secondary level.

The cumulative nature of second-language learning necessitates continuous, sequential study of the language. Two years of French would only minimally expose students to the language. Insufficient learning results in feelings of very low achievement. In 1978, French courses were extended down to grades five and six in the Roman Catholic Separate Schools and, in 1979, to grade six in the Public Schools in Hamilton. However, there has been no significant increase in enrolment at the secondary level even with the introduction of

French at these levels. These facts have resulted in a mounting controversy and concern for the situation in second-language programs. Consequently, the Minister of Education, Bette Stevenson, in the OSIS Report issued in 1983, made French compulsory for one year at the secondary level.

Recommendation 35 made by the Royal Commission was also not adhered to:

We recommend that the provincial second language programmes in the elementary schools be extended downwards by stages until the provinces reach the objective of introducing French in Grade I.<sup>63</sup>

French Core Programs have now been in place for approximately two decades. Still, this recommendation has not been implemented.

The recommendation made by the Royal Commission reflected an insight which was essential for the effectiveness of second-language programs. The failure to implement them has led to poor results in second-language learning.

### Misconception of Aims and Expectations

One very strong reason for the controversy that surrounds second-language programs is the overall misconception of their aims and expectations. Many are either misinformed or not familiar with their aims. As Merrill Swain effectively explains in his article, "Linguistic Expectations: Core, Extended and Immersion Programs", expectations are important for several reasons.

In the first place, expectations are the basis for establishing a set of program goals which in turn, provide the motivating force behind



the use of particular pedagogical materials and instructional techniques.<sup>64</sup>

He adds,

These expectations or goals become the criteria against which the outcomes of a program are measured. The extent to which a program is considered to have succeeded or failed. Then it becomes crucially important that expectations be realistic.<sup>65</sup>

Swain brings an important fact into focus. The problem of expectations is responsible for the negative attitude among those involved in such programs. The common complaints cited in Swain's article are voiced by many parents who have children in second-language programs.

In relation to these programs, it is common to hear such statements as "I took five years of French in high school and I still can't speak the language," or "My kids have taken French in school, but none of them can even read a French newspaper and they never watch French T.V."<sup>66</sup>

A close look at the Ministry Guidelines issued in a document entitled "Teaching and Learning French as a Second Language" in 1977 indicates that the expectations of the programs were too high in relation to the time allotted. The document was realistic in its admission, as Swain points out, "that it was not the aim of FSL (French as a Second Language) programs to make pupils fully bilingual."<sup>67</sup> But even so, the remainder of the expectations falls short of the reality: these programs do not promote bilingual students. The Ministry Guidelines set up well defined expectations for three levels of achievement, basic, middle and top. But as Swain justifiably points out;

It was not known at the time if, in fact, 1,200 hours of FSL would lead to the attainment of the basic level, 2,100 hours to the

middle level, and 5,000 hours to the top level.<sup>68</sup>

The program's aims are not fitted to the realities of second-language learning processes in our schools. As Gerald Richards says about the skills involved in the Ministry Guidelines:

The development of these skills is time consuming. Taken singly, the attainment of these aims requires massive amounts of contact with the target language. Taken together the time required is staggering, leading one to wonder whether these goals can be realized in a school setting.<sup>69</sup>

The expectations and aims of the programs proposed by the Ministry do not take into account prevailing factors that would definitely affect the Ministry's figures and calculations. Those setting up the guidelines assumed that the programs would function under the most ideal and positive setting. Swain states:

Furthermore, these expectations were based on the belief that there would be a direct relationship between the number of accumulated hours of second language instruction and proficiency in that language. But as has already been pointed out, this relationship can be affected by the age of the learner, the intensity of second language instruction, and the instructional strategies and materials used by the teachers.<sup>70</sup>

Since language instruction in our elementary schools does not take place under "ideal circumstances", the Ministry's set expectations and aims of language programs "propose to accomplish too much in too little time."

#### Age Factor

Given the fact that the greater the exposure to a second

language the greater is the effectiveness of learning, one has to wonder why French was introduced at the intermediate level. In addition, given the fact that French was made optional at the secondary level in 1972, would it not have made for better planning and learning to introduce French in the primary grades as the Royal Commission suggested? Why were these programs implemented at the intermediate level when students have already formulated opinions and attitudes on cultures and subjects? There has been a great deal of research done in this area and it reveals conflicting opinions as to the best age for learning a second language. Early researchers advocated that early second-language learning benefits the second-language learner. However, this claim has been strongly opposed by most recent studies. These imply that older individuals are more successful second-language learners.

Early researchers such as Christophersen advocate that, at school age, the child can learn to speak a second language with ease.

By this time the child is not only able to put together sentences of a fairly wide range of patterns in his first language; he is also able in a remarkably short time to do the same in a second language if he is exposed to it.<sup>71</sup>

Neurologist Penfield supports his claim for early age language learning with biological and physiological reasons. He states:

When new languages are taken up for the first time in the second decade of life, it is difficult, though not impossible, to achieve a good result. It is difficult because it is unphysiological.<sup>72</sup>

Penfield adds:

Before the age of nine to twelve, a child is a specialist in learning to speak. At that age he can learn two or three languages as easily as one... Remember that for the purposes of learning languages the human brain becomes progressively stiff after the age of nine.<sup>73</sup>

However, this theory has been disputed. Bordie, for instance, disagrees with Penfield's interpretations.

Since the compounds which are associated with language ability develop over time and reach the adult plateau at age ten at which they remain for the greater part of the individual's life time, one must infer that language learning ability becomes greater as one progresses to age ten.<sup>74</sup>

Recently, physiological explanations have been replaced by psychological ones. Erwin Tripp states:

. . . for children under eleven language is sound, for adults, 'sense,' children are more interested in the surface and the immediate situation.<sup>75</sup>

Thus, the age factor is a controversial issue. There are advantages and disadvantages to both early and older age learning. Educators find themselves in a dilemma. Smythe, Stennit and Gardner state:

The weight of the evidence that does exist, however, supports the position that in many respects the child is neither sufficient nor as successful in learning a second language as the older individual. On the other hand, however, there is strong support for the position that the more time spent studying a second language, the greater the probability that the individual will achieve a high level of sophistication in the language provided that instruction is presented in an integrated fashion.<sup>76</sup>

How then is the age factor a problem in our elementary schools? The fact that Second-Language Core Programs were introduced at the

intermediate level is detrimental to effective learning for several reasons. The most logical and obvious reason is the minimal exposure students receive to the language taught. If second-language instruction began at an earlier age, students would achieve greater skills. They would also be more motivated to learn, given that they would have a clearer sense of achievement.

Emotional and social factors affect students learning a second language, especially at the adolescent age. Adolescents at the intermediate level are more inhibited, more self-conscious and much more aware of peer pressure than younger children. They find it uncomfortable to pronounce foreign sounds and words for the first time. If they had been exposed to these words at an earlier age they would be less hesitant in participating orally during lessons. Rather than risking embarrassment for pronouncing words wrongly, they start misbehaving. The discipline problems that arise take up time and, since time is limited, effective learning does not always take place.

In order to find solutions for the discipline problems, emphasis was put on making the students enjoy the subject, making the lessons appealing and changing the attitude toward the program. However, this attempt proved to be even more detrimental, for it not only reinforced the "non-important/less serious" attitude, but also augmented discipline problems and ineffective learning. Although discipline problems are less severe at the junior level, students become less motivated and they are more challenging for the teacher when they reach the intermediate grades.

Given the fact that the more exposure there is to the language the better the learning results, it makes sense that Core Programs be implemented at an earlier rather than at a later age.

### Selection of Materials

An essential part of any program is the selection of materials. According to the Royal Commission, language should be taught as a living language.

The objective of all departments is to teach French as a living language, with an emphasis on oral skills rather than grammar and translation to transform second language teaching in schools.<sup>77</sup>

One of the most significant ways of meeting both that objective and the pupils' needs is the selection of materials. If the program's content is above or below the level of the students, they will lose interest and become less motivated; consequently, less learning will take place. Appropriate selection of materials is, therefore, crucial for effective learning. The content of the course must provide students with suitable materials for engaging in purposeful conversation. It must provide students with the incentive to learn to speak the language. The most effective way for programs to meet that objective is to provide materials that interest students. The new program recently implemented in the separate schools in Hamilton employs materials that give students such an incentive. Dialogues include typical conversations that students at the intermediate level engage in. In a section called "Les Jeunes Discutent", various teenagers

discuss issues appealing to students of their level.

Nous travaillons beaucoup à l'école, c'est vrai,  
mais nous avons assez de temps libre. Il y a  
beaucoup d'activités intéressantes pour les  
jeunes de notre âge!<sup>78</sup>

Typical of the "Vive le Français" program is its Canadian content. It mentions familiar places such as major cities and famous landmarks such as the C.N. Tower.

Tom: Salut, Jean-Paul! Bienvenue à Toronto!

Jean-Paul: Merci, Tom. C'est ma première  
visite à Toronto. Quelle grande ville!

Tom: Voilà la tour C.N., Jean-Paul!

Jean-Paul: Elle est très haute!

Tom: Oui, et les ascenseurs sont très rapides!

Jean-Paul: C'est fantastique!<sup>79</sup>

This type of material maintains the interest level of the students; as a result, they are motivated and they get a strong sense of accomplishment.

Unfortunately, the program that was first in place at the intermediate level did not meet these requirements. Both the Hamilton Public and Separate School Boards implemented the "Ici On Parle Français" Program. This program was written by local authors. This, of course, should be an advantage as the authors of the program would be aware of the needs of the students in our local schools. It was not successful. It is fair to point out, however, that the program was the first to be implemented at the elementary level and some needs could not be identified until after the program was put into effect.

The "Ici On Parle Français" Program's major weakness was its failure to provide suitable material for the age level of the students.

According to the Ministry Guidelines, students at the basic level should be able to engage "in simple conversation and should have a fundamental knowledge of the language grammar and idioms and an active vocabulary of 3,000-5,000 words."<sup>80</sup> The key words in these guidelines, "simple conversation", should not necessarily imply "elementary" or "primary" conversation. "Active vocabulary" should imply vocabulary that is appropriate for the age level and interest of the student.

The content of the "Ici on Parle Francais" Program focused on the Famille Leduc and their dog Pitou. The characters and situations presented were similar to those in the traditional "Dick and Jane" reader. As a result, the Leduc family and their dog Pitou became ridiculous characters. Adolescents could not relate to this type of family portrayal. Worse still, the program did not provide dialogues that would stimulate conversation among students:

Mamman: Voilà quatre couteaux, Paul. Mets  
un couteau à chaque place.

Paul: Un, deux, trois, quatre. Je mets un  
couteau à chaque place.

Mamman: Voilà quatre fourchettes. Mets une  
fourchette à chaque place.

Paul: Un, deux, trois, quatre.<sup>81</sup> Je mets une  
fourchette à chaque place.

In addition, it did not provide students with "a basic knowledge and appreciation of the culture and aspirations of French-speaking Canadians"<sup>82</sup> as the Ministry Guidelines required. The program made no reference to any cultural aspect of the French. In fact, if the names of the people had been different and the words had been put in another language, the program could have been used for any language.



There was no reference to any distinguishing characteristics of the people, places or customs.

Since students could not relate to the material taught, they did not have an incentive to learn. They lacked the interest and motivation to learn what was taught because they had no need or use for it.

### The Nature of Core Programs

The nature of Core Programs is another problem of second-language teaching. Core Programs have been proven to be the least effective forms of language instruction in existence. Their very nature impedes effective learning for several reasons. As we have seen, there are three categories of second language programs: Core, extended and immersion.<sup>83</sup> In the elementary schools in Hamilton, there are only Core and Immersion.

Core Programs, also known as Traditional French as a Second Language (TFSL), are taught on a daily basis for four or five days per week in 20 to 40 minute modules. Overall instruction time is 120 minutes a week or, as Lawton indicates, approximately 7 to 15 per cent of total weekly instruction time.<sup>84</sup>

"Extended programs," according to Swain, "are those in which, in addition to a core component, one or two subjects such as math or social studies are taught using French as the medium of instruction."<sup>85</sup>

There are four types of immersion programs; early partial

immersion, early total immersion, late partial immersion, late total immersion. Early partial immersion begins at Kindergarten or Grade One. French is used in at least one subject other than the French program up to a total of seventy per cent of the time. Early total immersion starts at the same level and French is used in all subjects with the exception of English language arts.<sup>86</sup> As Lawton states:

To be considered total French immersion, over seventy per cent of all instruction must be in French. In later grades the percentage of instruction in French may drop below 70 per cent, but the program is still defined as a total immersion program.<sup>87</sup>

Late partial immersion usually begins at the junior level, grades four to six. Again, French is employed as language of instruction in percentages ranging between 15 and 70 per cent of instructional time. Lawton states:

It may be preceded or followed in later grades by partial immersion or regular French as a second language, and still be considered a late total immersion program.<sup>88</sup>

Not surprising, immersion programs are by far the most effective language programs. The reasons are logical and obvious. Immersion programs have elements of psychological advantage and more time is dedicated to them; these factors are essential for effective second-language learning. Studies done by C.E. McInnis confirm that the greater time element is an advantage in immersion programs. The studies done were on 20-Minute Programs versus 40-Minute Programs. McInnis states the following findings:

Where significant differences were found on variables that purported to measure performance in English or French, the results

favoured the 40 Minute group... For example at four out of five grade levels, the 40 Minute group was found to be superior to the 20 Minute group on either intelligence or language aptitude, or on both of these variables.<sup>89</sup>

The greater time element of immersion programs gives the students more exposure to the language. This inevitably renders the immersion programs more effective; the fact that students perform better with more exposure, gives the immersion program learners a psychological advantage. Studies done outside Canada reach the same conclusions. In order to give students a feeling of accomplishment, the Bulgarians begin second-language learning with immersion programs and then implement Core Programs in later grades. Dr. Burstall states:

The Bulgarians do this because, having tried Core Programs, they found it very hard to stimulate positive motivation in a 'drop-feed' type of language program where the students do not perceive much progress and become disheartened.<sup>90</sup>

In 1981, researchers Swain and Lapkin issued a research report on Bilingual Education in Ontario. Their research included studies on the various bilingual programs existing in Ontario. Their findings provided evidence that Immersion Programs were more effective than French Core Programs. They state:

Since the development of listening skills is stressed in the early years, listening comprehension tests were administered from Kindergarten to the end of grade 3. It was soon apparent that the tests were too difficult for Core French students, whereas immersion students were obtaining near-perfect scores by grade 3.<sup>91</sup>

Immersion student scores were also considered in relation to the French language skills of native French-speaking students of the same

age and grade level. Results of standardized tests designed for francophone students in Quebec reflected the fact that "even by grade 1 or 2, the immersion students were scoring as well as about one-third of native French-speaking students in Montreal, and by grade 6, as well as one-half of the Montreal comparison group."<sup>92</sup>

Furthermore, results from the Test de compréhension auditive done in Elgin County and Toronto indicate that "as would be expected, the partial immersion students outperform Core French students at any grade level."<sup>93</sup>

The nature of Core Programs influences the effectiveness of second-language learning. Since they make the second language process slow and gradual, students do not get any sense of achievement. Consequently, students are not motivated to learn.

#### Specialized Nature of Second-Language Teaching

Given the specialized nature of second-language teaching, only certified, qualified teachers should teach the language. This has presented problems in the area of effectiveness in second-language learning.

The problem of insufficiently qualified second-language teachers has existed since the introduction of these programs at the elementary level. A university degree was not required for teaching until 1973 and, furthermore, French was made optional at the secondary level in 1972. These factors made the number of unqualified French teachers quite high. The Public and Separate School Boards in Hamilton had

few alternatives. They had to employ Francophone teachers, whether they were certified or not, and they had to make them itinerant teachers. These teachers would assume all the responsibilities for the teaching of French. They would go to two or three schools per day and teach all the classes. Undoubtedly, this solved one problem; however, it was also the cause of many others.

First, these teachers had a very heavy teaching load. They could face eight to ten half-hour classes of intermediate students per day. Given the exhausting pace set by these teachers, it is not surprising that discipline problems evolved. With the change of requirements for teaching in 1973, there were more teachers available to fulfill these positions. However, given that French was extended down to lower grades, the demand for teachers inevitably grew. The exhausting pace, the inadequacies of the materials, the discipline problems that resulted were all factors in French teachers' "burn out".

The problem of itinerant teaching has become an obvious cause for concern. Consequently, the focus has been on eliminating the problem. Where possible, the Hamilton-Wentworth Separate School Board places more than one French teacher at each school. This eliminates the problem of teacher "burn out" as French teachers are not exposed to as many classes as before during the day.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Public School Board still goes by the itinerant teaching system. Of the 36 Core Programs in existence, there are 17 full-time, non-itinerant, 14 full-time, itinerant, 4 half-time, non-itinerant, and 2 half-time, itinerant teachers. The

itinerant teacher sees ten classes a day for twenty-minute periods.

In eliminating the problems related to itinerant teaching, the Hamilton-Wentworth Separate School Board has not necessarily improved the quality of teaching. Other problems have developed as a result. One is the fact that the French teacher has to take on other subjects and other classroom responsibilities. In this case, French ceases to be the main subject and is treated like any other, even though this should not be the case, given its unique nature and complex problems.

The French teacher also has the added pressure of coping with the individual problems of the students involved. In most other subjects, the individual learning disabilities are taken under consideration and provided for. Given the limited time factor, the French teacher cannot provide for individual differences in the classroom.

#### HERITAGE LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Heritage Language Programs will now be considered briefly in order that a more complete analysis of second-language learning can be made. This section will address the same factors which were recognized as influencing the effectiveness of French Core Programs.

#### Attitude

As shown previously, attitude was a major problem in French Core Programs. Sociolinguists attributed the problem of attitude to the individual's perception of the ethnic group involved. As Haugen states in Bilingualism in the Americas:

Wherever languages are in contact, one is likely to find certain prevalent attitudes of favor towards the languages involved. These can have profound effects on the psychology of the individuals and on their use of the languages. In the final analysis these attitudes are directed at the people who use the languages and are therefore inter-group judgements and stereotypes.<sup>94</sup>

Since Heritage Language Programs are meant for students with a background in the culture of the language taught, that theory does not apply. However, this does not imply that students attending these classes are adequately motivated. At least thirty per cent of the students that register in Heritage Language Programs do not complete the programs Unfortunately, not all students perceive the necessity of preserving the culture and language of their ancestry. The lack of interest and incentive among students is due to the lack of an immediate, practical application of their studies. Most parents no longer communicate with their children in their native language and, consequently, the latter do not perceive the need to learn it. Furthermore, the strong demand that existed in the past three decades for hiring employees that spoke a second language no longer exists. The growing assimilation of ethnic groups to the dominant culture has therefore limited the need for second-language learning in Canada. The task of motivating students to attend these programs becomes more challenging.

Given the fact that these programs are offered after school hours, the students see them as an extension of the school day. Some would rather attend to sports or other recreational activities. Since these programs are not compulsory, they have to provide also the

incentive for students to attend. However, when efforts have been made to make classes more interesting by providing cultural activities, such as cooking, some parents have complained. They feel that these activities are a waste of time. They want more focus placed on developing the oral and written parts of learning the language.

The responsibility for making these programs effective belongs to the boards which offer them. There are no major social or political factors that influence the effectiveness of the programs. The only exception is the fact that they are not part of the curriculum. Funds are made available by the government and, therefore, cost is not a major problem. Yet, as time goes on, these programs are losing their popularity. The main reason is the fact that they are ineffective and fail to meet the linguistic, multicultural needs of Canadian society. Educators' attitudes toward second-language learning have to change. The offering of programs alone will not meet the demands and needs of the public. Quality and effective programs are what will change the status of Heritage Language Programs and the attitude towards them.

#### Misconception of Aims and Expectations

There are no guidelines set by the Ministry for Heritage Language Programs. But the expectations of these programs are high among parents of children attending these classes. There are two reasons for these expectations. First, since the majority of these children come from the cultural background of the language taught,

*indirect  
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they are expected to be motivated and to have the incentive to learn. Also, since many of these students come from homes where the language is spoken, they are assumed to know the language even though many speak a dialect which in many instances complicates the learning of the standard language.

incorrect  
assumption

Secondly, the expectations of the parents are unrealistically high. Because they come from the culture of the language taught, there is an additional element: they feel pride in their children's learning their mother tongue, and carrying on part of their ancestral tradition. As a result, the students can never learn to speak fluently soon enough.

### Selection of Materials

The problem of selection of materials is also evident in the Heritage Language Programs. It stems from the fact that there is no set curriculum available. While this may have some advantages, it does have many disadvantages. Not being restricted to follow a set program, the teacher has more freedom to meet the needs and interests of particular students. However, in order to meet their needs, the teacher needs to know the students well. This, of course, is a time-consuming procedure. Furthermore, given the fact that students of this program are at different learning levels, the teacher's task becomes more complex. Another disadvantage is that when teachers feel free to formulate their own programs there may not be sequential progress in the curriculum. There may be gaps and repetition in

learning.

### Specialized Nature of Second-Language Programs

The problem of specialization also manifests itself in Heritage Language Programs. These programs have difficulty finding fluent, qualified teachers willing to teach. Many qualified certified teachers already have positions in the teaching profession. Consequently, many are not willing to extend their teaching time. Some attempt to do so for a short period, but given the added pressures and frustrations (lack of materials, no set program), many do not continue. This, then, leads to the question: who does teach the program? In Hamilton, several teachers come from the community itself. They speak and write the language fluently; however, some are not certified teachers. A few are university graduates who have not attended Teachers' College. However, as Policy/Program Memorandum No. 7, issued in 1982 by the Ministry of Education, indicates, "the instructors hired by the boards for these classes need not have Ontario certification but should have qualifications acceptable to the boards, the principals, and the parents' groups."<sup>95</sup> Those who are not certified teachers may lack teaching skills, methodology and knowledge of classroom management. Some in the latter category, along with other qualified or certified teachers do not have a command of the language being taught.

These factors have resulted in much criticism of the programs. One particular criticism is that students are not always being taught

properly. Since most parents of the students involved speak the language, they evaluate the programs rather harshly.

### Heritage Language Programs as Second-Language Programs

Heritage Language Programs are considered "continuing education" programs. Most of these programs are offered once a week for two-and-a-half hours, after school hours, on week days or on Saturday mornings. This type of program undoubtedly has its drawbacks as students are not exposed to the language on a daily basis. Furthermore, since these programs are offered after school hours, students tire and get restless very easily. Also, since these programs are offered on students' free time, they are compelled to compete with other recreational activities offered at the same time.

Recently, attempts have been made to integrate these programs within the curriculum and teach them during school hours. Advocates of these programs in Toronto propose to do so by extending the school day. But this proposal has aroused much controversy, especially among teachers and parents who do not have children attending these courses.

As Louise Brown states in a recent article in the Toronto Star:

Some teachers say they fear the longer school day makes both students and teachers too tired for after-school programs, can shrink children's attention span for official curriculum subjects and can be dangerous, if young children end up going home too late after extracurricular sports... Many parents believe a non-official language has no place being taught at taxpayers' expense.<sup>96</sup>

in school  
vs  
extra curriculum

However, advocates of the program argue:

By making it part of the regular day, the Toronto Board of Education and the Metropolitan Board of Education hope to spare heritage students from being left behind after school studying a language while other kids tear off to softball practice or computer club.<sup>97</sup>

Since any language taught, other than the two official languages, is considered "continuing education", heritage language courses cannot be offered within the curriculum. The only alternative left, therefore, is that of extending the school day. It is necessary to point out that those in favour of extending the school day are exercising the right given to them by the Ministry in 1982. Policy/Program Memorandum No. 7 states in fact that:

Such classes may be offered after school, or non-school days, or where enrolment justifies extending the required 5-hour school day.<sup>98</sup>

## CHAPTER IV

### THE NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT OF SECOND-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

The growing recognition of the inadequacies of second-language programs leads to concern for their validity and effectiveness. The improvement of such programs has become necessary. The recognition of their problems has revived interest in them. Initially, the focus was on establishing the programs. However, the programs have been in existence for nearly two decades and they have not made any progress beyond the introductory stage. In order for them to succeed, they must take a step forward and focus on improving their quality and establishing themselves as effective programs.

French Core Programs have not been able to go beyond the introductory stage because of the slow pace in introducing them at lower levels. This has had a detrimental effect on the total impact of the programs. Furthermore, since the threat of French Canada's separation has slowly diminished, the issue of bilingualism is not being given the attention it had previously received. The incentive to promote bilingual programs has been weakened because the urgency to preserve bilingualism no longer exists.

The negative aspects of the Core Programme have revived interest and have succeeded in promoting some recognition of the need for improvement. Recently, initiatives have been taken by the Ministry

of Education in Ontario to improve the situation of second-language learning. These initiatives are positive signs in that they cast aside doubts about the validity of these programs and reaffirm their importance. The emphasis now can be put on their improvement.

The Heritage Language Programs are in a less favourable situation. With the rigid laws on immigration and the growing assimilation of ethnics into the dominant culture, the practical need to preserve the linguistic aspect of the ethnic groups' heritage becomes less necessary and less important. Most parents now speak the dominant language and no longer communicate with the children exclusively in their native tongue. Since the practical need of second-language learning is no longer as prominent as during the sixties and seventies, the need for second-language programs can be argued. However, if ethnic groups want to preserve the linguistic aspect of their ancestry, Heritage Language Programs are perhaps the only vehicle available.

The need for Second-Language Programs is therefore clear. If the bilingual and multicultural aspects of Canada are to be maintained, these programs must be offered. However, it is my opinion that their inadequacies have not made them successful in meeting the needs and demands of the public. In fact, they cannot continue to function as they do presently. These programs have been controversial since their introduction, and their existence will continue to be challenged unless attention is given to their weaknesses. The public will no longer tolerate their insufficiencies. Those opposed

to them are more ardent than ever in their claims and those in favour are becoming critical of their effectiveness and do not accept the programs as they exist at present. The task that is at hand has become abundantly clear. The programs now have to focus on the quality of second-language teaching and not be concerned with the controversy about the legitimacy of their existence.

## CHAPTER V

### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The discussion of the problems involving second-language programs reflected their complex nature. The problems are varied and unique, but the programs are not without promise. Unlike other subjects in the curriculum which are mostly evaluated by educators, second-language programs have the involvement and interest of the public at large. The recognition of the weaknesses of these programs by the public has called for their reassessment and for the amelioration of these programs by educators, administrators and politicians.

It is the aim of this section of the project to deal with some fundamental suggestions that would, in my opinion, improve the effectiveness of second-language programs. The main criticism of the second-language programs is the fact that students do not learn to speak the language taught. An essential objective should be, therefore, to make the public more aware of the aims and expectations of these programs. At present, there appears to be a misconception as to the realistic expectations of these programs. Many parents expect to have their children speak the language soon after they have been exposed to the program. The public should, therefore,



be informed of the nature of second-language learning. Given the limiting factors, limited exposure and the cumulative nature of second-language learning, the process of learning is very slow. It is especially important to make this clear to parents who speak the second language taught because they are very critical of the slow pace of learning. Heritage Language Programs are particularly prone to this criticism.

Furthermore, the aims of the programs should be re-evaluated. Since the programs have been in place for several years, realistic and practical expectations can now be set. All the factors that can influence the effectiveness of the programs are visible and can therefore provide the information necessary to set appropriate and realistic aims.

In addition, given the cumulative nature of second-language learning, the most effective learning will result from extending the Core Programs down to the primary level and up to the end of high school. All students should be obliged to take French throughout their educational years. It makes little sense to make French compulsory only at the elementary level, for forty-five per cent of the students do not continue to pursue further studies in that subject. Given the limited exposure to the language, students do not therefore acquire sufficient skills to communicate in that language. In this regard, those challenging the effectiveness and validity of such programs are justified in their claims.

Already since French was made compulsory for at least one

year at the secondary level, attitude towards the seriousness of the subject has shown signs of positive change among grade eight students and their parents. This positive finding confirms the fact that making French compulsory is a step in the right direction.

Another obvious advantage that will result from making French compulsory will be the acquisition of more effective communication skills and this will give the students a feeling of accomplishment and, in turn, provide them with more incentive to learn.

The implementation of French as a compulsory subject will require that more teachers speak French. I would therefore propose that all elementary teachers be required to teach French. They are responsible for teaching all other subjects in the curriculum - why not French? This would eliminate most discipline problems as teachers would have the opportunity to establish themselves in the classroom and they would not have to deal with the exhaustive pace and burn out that inevitably result from seeing many classes during the day. They would also provide students with a role model and an incentive to learn a second language. The fact that some teachers can speak an official language while others cannot, detracts from the importance and significance of learning an official language. Considering the role of teacher as a generalist, it makes sense that French should be taught by all teachers. This should not present problems since all graduates of public and separate elementary and secondary schools would have had French instruction for a minimum of four years. It should be the responsibility of Faculties of Education, however, to make French

compulsory so that all teachers would be certified in the teaching of French at the elementary level.

The problems of attitude and motivation require attention, for a positive attitude and a highly-motivated student make for a successful and happy learner. The focus of second-language programs should, therefore, be to foster such attitudes which in turn promote the importance and significance of second-language learning. As recent research has reflected, language learning is not simply learning a language but also culture and people. A prominent part of second-language learning should therefore be a study of the people and their way of living. To promote the cultural aspect of second-language programs, the school would require the assistance and support of the outside community. At present, this is one area which needs development. There are very few facilities available in Hamilton to assist in the promotion of culture, especially within the French community. It should be a primary objective of the existing agencies to inform the schools that can benefit from their services. These agencies can help meet the cultural needs of the program in a way that content material cannot, given the limits of textbook teaching.

In addition, given the increase of interest and enrollment in immersion programs and French schools locally, there should be more suitable audio-visual material available. What little material exists now is for the most part outdated and is of very little use to any teacher. The new French immersion schools can have a role

in the promotion of the cultural aspect of Core Programs. Many activities can take place such as student exchanges, meal exchanges, choirs, plays and folk dance groups. Given the opportunity to share in such activities, students would appreciate the cultural aspect of the program and perhaps grow in respect for the cultural group and be more motivated to learn the second language taught.

As stated previously, Heritage Language Programs function under different circumstances. However, they are subject to similar criticisms as Core Programs though for different reasons. First, students who take these courses do not learn to communicate effectively in the language taught. In addition, since most of these parents speak the language taught as a first language, they do not always perceive the difficulties of learning that language as a second language and their expectations are unrealistic. In order to eliminate this problem, parents need to be informed of the realities of second-language learning. An effective way to do this is to present the parents with the program in its entirety, including long-term objectives and curriculum for each grade level. This would clearly outline the developmental stages in the second-language learning process.

Inevitably, this will also involve the setting up of precise aims, guidelines and a specific program. These latter recommendations would also eliminate the problem that is associated with imprecise aims and no specified program, that of gaps or repetition in learning.

Furthermore, I would propose that each ethnic community operate and offer courses from one central location. Although this proposal has its disadvantages in that transportation may be a problem for some, it does have many advantages. Firstly, since all teachers would be working in one location, the program would be run and function as a school. It becomes easier to have uniform guidelines, precise aims and a sequential program. Records on long-term plans would be kept in one location as would records on students' progress. This would undoubtedly facilitate student placement and avoid gaps or repetition in the program. In addition, if all students were located in one school, there would be greater numbers in the same age levels and levels of ability, thus eliminating the problems of multi-age and multi-level classrooms. Equally important is the fact that teachers would be encouraged to work together and more teacher sharing sessions would become possible. This would benefit the inexperienced teachers and lead to more effective teaching.

The second major criticism of Heritage Language Programs was their failure to motivate the students. Many students who enroll in these courses do not complete the course nor do they all attend frequently. Many of them join these programs at the request or insistence of the parents. In fact, many of the students prefer to be involved in other extra-curricular activities. In order to maintain the interest of the students and to eliminate the competition with other interests, these programs should offer

activities that maintain the interest of the students, but within the cultural content of the program. The school would require the support of the outside community, parents in particular. They could offer sports, folk dances, drama, music, or any other aspects that are unique to the culture of the language taught. These activities could be offered as an Integrated Arts Program and should take up to at least one-third of the program. The geography, history and contemporary life of the culture studies should be allotted equal importance.

In order for these activities to be offered, a new position of co-ordinator should be created. At present, there are the positions of Heritage Language Supervisor, Language Supervisor and Contact Person in the Roman Catholic Separate School Board. These positions basically address the administrative and evaluative aspects of the program. The position of co-ordinator would primarily deal with the development of the programs. It would be the responsibility of the co-ordinator to address the issue of quality and curriculum. The co-ordinator would deal with the representatives of the various ethnic groups involved in the teaching of Heritage Language Programs and collectively draw up uniform guidelines and precise aims. The co-ordinator would also set up various committees to deal with the development of the curriculum by investigating commercial programs available and setting up various units that could be part of the program or supplementary material. At present, there is little material available to assist the teacher

in meeting the individual needs of the students. It is up to the teacher to provide material for both weaker and stronger students. This is in addition to the teacher's responsibility of setting up the curriculum for the class. Furthermore, the co-ordinator could set up committees of interested parents or members of the community to assist in the development of the cultural aspects of the programs. The committees could set up support activities, cooking, embroidery, drama, dance, choirs, guest speakers and artists.

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