A socio-cognitive analysis of Canadian federal and provincial policies influencing the current state of the high school FI program in Ontario

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Operational definition of bilingualism

References
1. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 3)
2. (Genesee, 1987; Hart & Lapkin, 1984; Hart & Lapkin, 1989; Pawley, 1984; Wesche, Morrison & Ready, 1990)
3. (Lapkin & Hart, 1989, pp. 6-7; Wesche et al., 1990, pp. 442-443)
4. (Hart & Lapkin, 1984, pp. 16-17)
RESEARCH QUESTION

Do the federal Action Plan for official languages policy and the second language learning educational policies within Ontario actively support the development of individuals possessing the level of French proficiency established by the Ministry of Education of Ontario?
Literature Review: Makropolous (1998)

Social Issues
- Evidence of lack of support for immersion education (Makropolous, 1998, p.3)

Social Theories
- Bourdieu (1991); Breton (1984); Labrie (1994)

Conclusions and Generalizations
- FL program not meeting political and pedagogical objectives
- Developments of FL program promoted an imbalance of power between Anglophones from higher SES and minority populations

**Where?**
Cognitive and Social Dimensions

**Who?**
Symbolic elites
Power elites

**How?**
Discourse modes
Discourse strategies

Racism
Discourse modes and strategies

A. Positive-Self Presentation

Nationalist rhetoric, self-glorification and pride (van Dijk, 1993, p.100)

Bourdieu's strategy of condenscension (1999)

2. Negative-Other representation:
   Save face (Brown & Levinson, 1987)
   Will not “count” against speaker (van Dijk, 1999, p.556)

C. Vox Populi:
   Populist claims (van Dijk, 1993, p.100)
   Socially acceptable (van Dijk, 1993, p.100)
Methodology

• Discourse analysis’ main goal (Wood & Rolf, 2000)

• Sources of discourse data
  – Macro level of societal structures

• Public documents to reflect framework
The Action Plan for Official Languages

Linguistic duality is at the heart of our collective identity. The government will implement an Action Plan on official languages that will focus on minority-language and second-language education, including the goal of doubling within ten years the number of high school graduates with a working-knowledge of both English and French. It will support the development of minority English- and French-speaking communities, and expand access to services in their language in areas such as health. It will enhance the use of our two official languages in the federal public service, both in the workplace and when communicating with Canadians (APOL, 2003, Section 1.2, para. 3)
Discourse Analysis of Federal Text: Vox Populi

Action Plan of Official Languages
“Justice does not mean offering one and all exactly the same thing regardless of the needs of each...the social cohesion of the country calls for all to make the interests of each their own, and for the Anglophone majority in particular to take the cause of the Francophone minority to heart” (Privy Council Office, 2002, para. 1)
“I would like to speak with you directly, without any prepared formula, without artifice, like friends who can confide in each other. I do not want to rehash things you already know and repeat all the usual clichés. You all work in French-language education and know very well the challenges that lie ahead.” (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2003c, para. 1)
“It is always a pleasure to speak before an audience that shares the same goals and the same conviction that learning new languages brings all kinds of benefits. As Canadians, as people with two linguistic heritages, we know very well that,...,language is a way to embrace the world” (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2005, para. 1).
Discourse Analysis of Federal Text: Positive Self-Presentation

Action Plan of Official Languages
Negative Inferences

- Goals for Anglophone and Francophone Educational Systems
- Objectives = reproduction of imbalance
- Accountability measure for implementation
“I was aware that our immersion schools were exemplary, and copied by many other countries. But the reality of it really struck home when I visited one such school...and hear young people of Asian origin speak to me in excellent French. Those young people demonstrate better than anyone the complementarity of our multiculturalism and our bilingualism, the two strengths that open us up to the world” (APOL, 2003, Preface, para. 6).
Polarization

“Canada has inherited from its history the opportunity, the privilege and the obligation to promote the French language and French-speaking cultures...we, Canadians, will rise to this challenge if we stay united and resolute and if we draw on the full vitality of our official-language communities" (Privy Council Office, 2002, para. 7)
Polarization Reinforced

Action Plan for Official Languages: asymmetrical funding; revitalization vs. quality programming

Plan 2013: measurable procedures?

One school board: a legitimate programming according to Darnell (1983)
CONCLUSION

A. Vox Populi:
   i) Bolster public support for APOL
   ii) Social acceptance for APOL

B. Negative-Other representation:
   i) APOL subtly limits/minimizes the advancement of the minority Francophones living outside of Québec

C. Positive-Self Comparison:
   i) Mitigate negative inferences arising from APOL
   ii) Counteract the presence of an imbalance of power between Anglo’s and Franco’s

D. Ingroup-Outgroup polarization:
   i) We versus Them (van Dijk, 2003) achieved through FI structural implementation

1. Political discourse (Ai,Ci, Bi)
2. Media discourse(Aii,Ci)
3. Educational discourse(Di)
Implications and Future Directions

- Redefining the legitimacy of the French Immersion Program
- Reconfiguration of the structural implementation of the French Immersion program
- Elite texte + Elite Talk = Group Dominance (Van Dijk)