

The paradoxical visions of multilingualism in education: the ideological dimension of discourses on multilingualism in Belgium and Canada

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In this article, we will examine some contrasted discourses on multilingualism that circulate nowadays in the field of education. Focusing on the cases of French-speaking Belgium and of the Franco-Ontarian community in Canada, we will show the existence of two discourses on multilingualism: one that insists on the positive value of multilingualism and that we consider as a consequence of social and economic changes brought by globalisation; and another that is much more a surrender of the purist conception of language rejecting 'mixing' and hybridism and that seems to support resistance towards unwanted consequences of this globalisation movements (especially migration movements). In our view, these discourses on multilingualism are *ideological discourses* aiming at legitimating or contesting the impacts of global capitalism and post-nationalism.

Keywords: discourses on multilingualism; education; language ideologies; linguistic minorities; Belgium; Canada

1. Introduction

In the recent years, several consequences of globalisation movements have modified the value and the forms of multilingualism in many western countries. First, the growing internationalisation of economy has increased the *social value* of individual bilingualism/multilingualism (Heller, 2003, 2007) – understood as someone's ability to communicate in two or more languages. In an internationalised economy that is increasingly based on services, people need to be able to communicate with other people all around the world. International communication can be usually managed in English, but knowing and being able to communicate in the first language of the interlocutor is often a great asset and calls for the mastering of several languages, besides English. Moreover, the necessity to move and cross borders to find a job or to get a promotion is more and more a reality, notably in transnational companies. Mobility and flexibility are part of the current requirements of the labour market and emphasise the idea that multilingualism is needed for one to function in a contemporary economy.

Secondly, since this internationalised economy contributes to the spread of English as a *lingua franca*, there has been a growing appeal for the learning of

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English and at the same time a growing concern to protect linguistic diversity through the promotion of multilingualism (House, 2003). Thirdly, migration movements have increased the variety of circulating linguistic resources in western societies and have also rendered hybrid forms of multilingualism more frequent

AQ2 (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Byrd Clark, 2009).

Traditional ways of *conceiving* multilingualism have been challenged by these movements. This is particularly true in countries like Belgium and Canada where multilingualism is a long-standing issue, subject of many debates and reflections. Now, we argue that the different changes mentioned did not *directly* and '*naturally*' lead to a rethinking of bilingualism/multilingualism. On the contrary, we consider that different actors try to change their discourse on bilingualism/multilingualism or to maintain it, as a function of their will to accept, reinforce or resist the changes evoked previously. For instance, as we will see later, maintaining the traditional vision of bilingualism as a 'double monolingualism' is a way to resist the fact that contemporary linguistic hybridity is interrogating the monolingual vision of western societies and is challenging the sovereignty of national/community languages (especially within linguistic minorities). In other words, we argue that *objective* evolutions in the value or in the forms of multilingualism are sometimes stressed and sometimes hidden in discourses of different actors, depending on their will to enhance or to refrain the social and political changes that these evolutions are reflecting.

We are thus interested in the way public discourses *construct* visions of multilingualism in relation with economic, social and/or political interests (Heller, 2007). In line with several critical approaches of social discourses (e.g. Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Heller, 2002) and linguistic ideologies (Kroskrity, 2000; Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity, 1998), we consider that these discourses, produced by political entities, lobbies or media, do not simply reflect the nature and value of multilingualism but create a certain representation of it: they put forward or backward some aspects of reality, they present dubious statements as obvious, they make overgeneralisations and cover exceptions, etc. In our view, these discourses have a clear *ideological dimension*: they are part of a system of beliefs, values and norms that they contribute to support, as well as they support the actors whose position within the social structure depends heavily on the predominance of this ideological system. In this sense, we will argue that the observed evolutions of public discourses about multilingualism are linked to the strategies developed by dominant groups in society to maintain and legitimate their position of power within changing

AQ4 economic, demographic and political conditions (Bourdieu, 1979). On the other side, we will show that some long-standing (mis)conceptions of multilingualism continue to circulate, even though they were for long criticised by scientific account, because they allow not to recognise the changing nature of western societies. More generally, we will highlight the contradictions between the coexisting visions of multilingualism produced by these discourses: multilingualism is valued when it meets the requirements of today's economy, but it is the subject of rather negative representations when it challenges the traditional visions or ideologies of languages, cultures and communities with clear-cut boundaries.

Education is a key field for studying these discourses for several reasons: language plays obviously a crucial role in teaching and learning processes, but it is also part of the general package of skills schools are supposed to transmit to future citizens (and participants on the contemporary job market). Education is a central

institution of the modern Nation-State and it carries defined language ideologies that are linked to the roles that language and education play in society. Since these roles are somewhat redefined, as we will show, language ideologies in education are naturally expected to follow this trend. Hence, education is a place where the appeal of multilingualism and mobility is in tension with the more ‘protectionist’ role of the school: maintaining the vernacular language of the community and ensuring its reproduction.

In order to show how discourses about multilingualism are constructed in response to economic and political conditions, we compare the way these discourses have evolved in two similar though contrasted communities: the French-speaking community in Belgium, which is for various reasons in a culturally and linguistically dominant position, despite the fact that it represents only 40% of Belgium’s population (Hambye, 2009), and the Franco-Ontarian community in Canada, which is a small linguistic minority in a predominantly Anglophone environment, which is besides a major place of immigration in both Canada and North America. The contrast between these two settings will allow us to highlight that changes and resistances to change in the conceptions of multilingualism result from the way global movements meet specific local conditions.

We start by describing the way the changes in the value and forms of multilingualism aforementioned can be observed in both settings. Then we examine, for each situation, how circulating discourses about multilingualism evolve or not, in a way to go with or resist these changes. Our analysis is based on a variety of sources: websites, media discourse, institutional discourse, policies and also discourses collected through our ethnographic fieldwork in Belgian and Franco-Ontarian secondary schools. We should underline that we do not claim that these sources give us a representative picture of all circulating discourses about multilingualism in the two areas studied: our aim is not to show that these discourses are predominant, but rather to show that the way they are constructed and organised objectively contribute to support dominant ideologies and actors. We conclude in highlighting the ideological dimension of the discourses under scrutiny.

2. The changing value and forms of multilingualism

One could consider as self-evident that multilingualism be of great value in Belgium and Canada, because they are officially multilingual countries. In this section, we try to show that it is not as obvious as it seems, in a way to highlight the increase of multilingualism’s social value that could be observed recently.

2.1. Bilingualism with reluctance

In Belgium, official bilingualism was established in 1898, i.e. almost 70 years after the creation of the State. At this time, bilingualism was a reluctant answer to claims from the Dutch-speaking majority group, whose language and culture was minoritised and despised by the *bourgeoisie*, from both Flanders and Wallonia (the Dutch- and French-speaking regions of Belgium, respectively). On the other hand, in areas where there was effective contact between Dutch- and French-speakers, bilingualism was viewed as an open door for the linguistic assimilation of the former, following the well-known principle that members of low prestige language groups tend to acquire the more prestigious language and to transmit it to their children instead of their own

language, in a way to ensure their social upward mobility (Laponce, 1984). This is why Flemish political parties progressively promoted laws establishing two main monolingual areas, considering that this principle of linguistic territoriality was the best way to protect their community.

Like in Belgium, bilingualism was a way to fight against centrifugal forces in Canada. Since the early 1960s, there has been great concern with bilingualism, as a response to the claims from Francophones, especially in Quebec, which was starting its ‘quiet revolution’ with the emergence of separatist nationalist factions. In 1969, official bilingualism was established in Canada with the first Official Languages Act. This Act not only made English and French the official languages of the country, but was also widely promoted as a symbol of social cohesion and unity in Canada. However, for the Francophone minority who was indeed forced to become bilingual, official bilingualism carries the threat of assimilation, while it constituted a useless source of complexity, spending, and troubles from the point of view of the dominant group, who has thus been unwilling to invest in bilingualism.

In both countries, official bilingualism is not to be confused with a synonym for individual bilingualism. The distinction is clearly articulated in the introduction to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism’s report¹: ‘A bilingual country is not one 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 the citizens, the vast majority of whom may well be unilingual’ (Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1967, p. 28). Despite this official bilingualism, areas and institutions – and among them educational ones – are thought to be monolingual, to protect lesser prestige linguistic groups from assimilation.

As a consequence, bilingualism is more a defining *symbolic* feature of the State, than a practical *necessity* or *obligation* for individuals who are supposed to be able to live in their own language – even if they are encouraged to learn the other official language. The fact that bilingualism was not of great interest for individuals of dominant groups in Belgium and Canada (Francophones in the former case, Anglophones in the latter) has for long been evidenced by the low level of bilingualism among them. Despite the widespread popularity of second language promotion in Canada, the number of bilinguals remains relatively low (Allen, 2008). According to the 2006 Census of the Canadian population, only 9.4% of Anglophones reported they were bilingual with French and 42.4% of Francophones declared themselves bilingual with English² (Corbeil & Blaser, 2007). In the Francophone part of Belgium too, bilingualism was not a matter of worry for parents until recently, nor for the government of the Community³ which has never tried to enhance the very low level of bilingualism of French-speaking Belgians (see Section 2.2).

2.2. Some evidence regarding changes in the value and forms of multilingualism

Over the past 10 years, there has been a strong reinforcement of the promotion of bilingualism at the individual level. In both countries, this promotion is of course not new. For instance, the first French immersion programme in Quebec was established in the early 1960s, and since this date, enrolment in immersion programmes in Canadian schools has steadily increased: in 2008, for example, 6.1% of eligible students were enrolled in French immersion programmes in Canada, and over the

six-year period between 2001–2002 and 2007–2008, the number of students enrolled in immersion programmes increased 11.6% in the country as a whole, with some major change in specific provinces (increase of 39% in Newfoundland and Labrador, 31.7% in British Columbia and 19.3% in Nova Scotia; see Brockington, 2010).

In the same line, in order to boost the rate of bilingualism among young Canadians, the federal government began investing in 2003, as part of the Action Plan for Official Languages in a 10-year plan with the goal of increasing the number of bilingual high school graduates to 50% by 2013.⁴ From the mid 1980s until the launch of the Action Plan for Official Languages in 2003, the focus of language policy in Canada had been on the protection, development and promotion of official linguistic minorities; and this was subject to criticism by the majority. In the early 2000s this focus shifted to the ‘bilingualisation’ of the public sector and the population at large through key sites as education, healthcare and language industries. The policy was thus no longer targeting only minorities, but the whole population, supposed to have a shared interest in bilingualism. Within the Canadian context, possessing bilingual skills is considered an asset on the job market, both nationally and internationally, according to widely shared opinions of Canadians. Related to this, we can observe increasing numbers of international language schools opening their doors and there are also public school immersion programmes offering languages in addition to French and English. In some jurisdictions in Alberta, for example, there are school boards that now offer multiple language immersion programmes in the same school, in addition to French immersion. In school markets where there are already a large number of French immersion schools present, Spanish and German immersion programmes, for example, are seen as having an added value, and thus giving the school an edge in marketing its programmes to an increasingly demanding clientele. Immersion and language programmes are not limited to the public education sector. For example, in the metropolitan area of Toronto, several private Francophone daycares have opened their doors in recent years, in addition to the rapidly increasing numbers of publicly funded French-language day cares and preschools across the province.⁵

Several observations show the same trends in Belgium. First, there are now more and more people who master a second language (mainly English and/or Dutch) in the French-speaking part of the country: only 11% of people 40 years and older know English, while they are 25% among the people under 40 years. The difference between these two groups in the knowledge of Dutch is less important but still significant: 16% of the oldest group say they master Dutch while 23% of the youngest group declare their knowledge of the country’s first official language (Ginsburgh & Weber, 2006, p. 5). Even if French-speaking Belgians still lag very far behind their Flemish (Dutch-speaking) counterparts in terms of language knowledge,⁶ these figures show a sensible increase of the interest for and the mastering of ‘foreign’ languages.

Second, like in many European countries, the demand for multiple linguistic skills has driven the rapid growth of immersion or Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) classes in Francophone Belgium. The immersion programmes were officially launched in 1998, and they have since followed an exponential growth: between 2004 and 2010, the number of primary schools offering an immersive section increased threefold (from 51 to 151).⁷ The success of these programmes is such that, in urban areas at least, parents wanting their children to benefit from immersion have

to enrol them in school more than two years before they effectively start kindergarten (usually between 2.5 and 3 years old).

Third, since 2005, the Walloon government itself has now put the promotion of multilingualism as a priority. Within the framework of a large plan of economic recovery called the ‘Marshall Plan for the Future of Wallonia’ for Wallonia, citizens can be offered funding for diverse forms of individual linguistic training. This ‘Plan for languages’ (*‘Plan langues’*) is one of the priority actions of the ‘Marshall Plan’.⁸

The increase in the value of English is of course a global phenomenon (Crystal, 2003). Yet, it is interesting to observe that it can be evidenced in Belgium by the fact that it is closed to become the more widespread language in the country⁹: for the people aged between 15 and 24, the knowledge of English is almost equivalent to the knowledge of French/Dutch as a L2 in Flanders and Wallonia, respectively (Van Parijs, 2007, p. 3). In Belgian French-speaking secondary schools, there are as many students choosing to learn English than those choosing to learn the idiom of the majority of their fellow-citizens (Poulain, 2006, p. 73). However, in more than 75% of CLIL sections in Wallonia, students learn Dutch rather than English: this shows that there is a clear concern for the learning of other languages than English, and especially neighbouring languages.

The third change we have aforementioned concerns the *forms* of multilingualism. Again, it can be evidenced both in Belgium (see Hambye, in press) and Canada (see AQ5 Byrd Clark, 2009), where researchers have described the growth of very hybrid forms of multilingualism: many multilingual people show linguistic repertoire integrating very diverse linguistic resources that can be mixed altogether and that they will creatively call into play,¹⁰ especially in urban context where immigrants come from more and more different places in the world and establish complex links with each other, i.e. a context that some now call ‘super-diversity’ (Vertovec, 2007). While this kind of hybrid multilingualism is in itself not new – Dutch-French or English-French mixed varieties have been used and stigmatised for decades in Belgium and Canada, its more radical forms and its massive presence among many youngsters with immigrant background challenge even more the traditional vision of multilingualism as the ordered deployment of different languages (see Section 3.2.).

How are all these changes reflected in discourses on multilingualism? Are these discourses reinforcing or downplaying the undergoing evolutions and why, according to the specificities of the two contexts under scrutiny? These are the questions we try to answer to in the remaining of this article.

3. Multilingualism in a dominant linguistic group: the case of French-speaking Belgium

3.1. Multilingualism as a distinctive resource in a crisis economy

Why has multilingualism become so important in French-speaking Belgium? As we aforementioned, this is partly the result of a pressure from a globalised labour market, which is particularly strong in the context of economic decline Francophone Belgians have to face for more than 50 years. As the idea of a ‘Marshall Plan’ suggests, there is a will to tackle the severe economic difficulties of Belgium’s French-speaking region. Since unemployment rates are high in Wallonia and comparatively very low in Flanders, the Francophones’ public authority tries to prompt people to learn Dutch and to go and look for work in Flanders, and/or to learn English in a way to enter the global economy. On the other hand, the recent stress on the

necessity to learn Dutch may be understood, in the context of the renewed tensions between the country's two main communities, as a symbolic attempt to show that Francophones are now ready to learn the language of the formerly minoritised group and have abandoned a reluctance to learn foreign languages that was perceived as arrogance. In this sense, demonstrating their good-will to learn Dutch is a way for Francophone politicians to invalidate the idea that this supposed arrogance could be responsible for the current political crisis. Since their voters are very worried about the possibility of Flanders to secede, because of the impoverishment that this would mean for them, it is important for politicians to show that they do everything to maintain the country's unity, including efforts to avoid French monolingualism which is often said to be a hurdle for the dialogue between Belgium's two main communities.

We can find echoes of these two realities in the discourses stating the importance of multilingualism. The idea that multilingualism is an economic resource appears most frequently and explicitly. Such an argument is not in itself new: the knowledge of a foreign language has for a long time deemed to be an asset and in middle-class families, the possibility to spend a year abroad after secondary school to learn the local language has always been valued as equivalent to getting a degree. Yet, what is new is that this promotion of multilingualism is no longer a private matter, but has become a political objective: if multilingualism was before a simple *plus*, essentially reserved to an elite, it is now presented as an absolute necessity, like in the following newspaper extract:

The ORBEM creates a 'Languages area': 'Today's monolingual is tomorrow's analphabetic' With risk to confirm evidence, it will never be repeated enough that the mastering of languages is an indispensable asset to get a job in a cosmopolite city like Brussels. The Brussels Region Office for employment (ORBEM) has thus decided to create a 'Languages area'. An initiative that is all the more indispensable that the ORBEM cannot satisfy more than a quarter of job vacancies in firms, mainly because of linguistic weakness [among potential candidates] (Le Soir, May 4th 1999, our translation)¹¹

This short extract reveals several important features of the contemporary discourse on multilingualism in French-speaking Belgium. First, the author talks about the 'mastering of languages' without specifying which languages are indeed so important. It will only be mentioned after that the languages proposed in this new system are Dutch, English, German and French, but it is never explicitly mentioned that only the mastering of *some* languages is valuable. This framing of the discourse allows to relate it to more general discourses underlining the value of multilingualism and of linguistic diversity per se, and to attenuate the purely utilitarian logic of the rationale behind the promotion of multilingualism. It is an initial way to make this discourse more legitimate and to diminish the constraining dimension of the *need* for multilingual skills.

Yet, a second feature of this discourse is precisely to view the mastering of several languages not as simply useful, but as 'indispensable' (the word is repeated twice in the previous passage). Its absence is compared with illiteracy, i.e. with a very important hurdle to live and work in tomorrow's society. In the same vein, the presentation of the 'Marshall Plan' for Wallonia states that multilingualism is 'an incontestable asset on the labour market'¹² (Région wallonne-Communauté française, 2005, p. 27; our translation). So, we see clearly a discourse trying to

construct the necessity of being multilingual as absolutely obvious, as a constraint one has no choice to avoid. It is worth highlighting that this constraint is never said to be imposed by specific actors (for instance employers) but by the market, as a somehow autonomous and naturally-operating entity. Since the need of bilinguals on the labour market is so blatant, the requirement for job-seekers to be multilingual is also unquestionable. The third recurrent feature of this discourse is then to insist on the necessity for people to conform to the supposed reality of the labour market: the difficulty for people to find jobs is not explained by a shortage of available positions, but by the idea that people are just lacking of the necessary skills to fulfil these jobs. The message given is rather clear: if you want to find a job, you should keep learning lifelong and this starts by learning languages. This discourse enters thus the more general discourse underlining the responsibility for job seekers and employees to adapt continuously to changing economic conditions (Gobin, 2007).

All these three features are also very clear in the following discourses, extracted from the interview in a newspaper of a responsible of the FOREM (Walloon public service for employment and training) and from the website of a parents association promoting immersion programmes in schools:

We observe an important lack of linguistic knowledge among all job-seekers, men and women, of all ages. Yet, today, languages are indispensable. Every firm requires at least the knowledge of a second language, and this is true for all kinds of jobs, from cleaning employee to plumber, to secretaries, accountants and electro-technicians. The knowledge of another language also increases the worker's mobility. (La Libre Belgique, August 8th 2007; our translation)¹³

Our society evolves at a high speed and demonstrating a good knowledge of foreign languages has now become a necessity for many of us. (APIMM – Association de parents de l'école d'immersion; <http://apimm.metawiki.com/>, accessed May 30th 2011; our translation)¹⁴

As a consequence, multilingualism is a skill which educational systems are now legitimately called upon to provide to students. They need to do so because it is now part of one of the missions assigned to schools. Following Maroy (2010), educational systems are more and more asked to gear *individuals* with the necessary skills to enter the labour market and to respond to the demand of a rapidly changing economy. Providing students with useful multilingual skills is clearly part of the school's responsibilities within the new definition of its mission.

This definition coexists, and is partly in conflict, with a more traditional view of the school as an *institution*, whose aim is to transmit the culture, values, knowledge and beliefs of a *group*, and which is, in this sense, an agent of reproduction of the community. Within this 'model' (or 'paradigm' as Maroy calls it) the knowledge and skills students have to acquire have a value per se, and they deserve their place in the school curriculum not just because they are useful in the workplace, but because they are part of a collective educational ideal. The maintaining of this view of school explain why it is not fully legitimate to consider that schools simply have to conform to the requirements of the labour market.

In this line, the discourse promoting multilingualism in education does not only, or even not principally, invoke economic arguments. Unsurprisingly, while labour-oriented discourses insist that people *have to* learn foreign languages for economic

reasons, schools and other stakeholders of the education sector prefer to consider that multilingualism is valuable as such, in conformity with the paradigm of the school as an institution. Hence, a second set of discourses links the value of being bilingual rather to a moral principle than to an economic constraint.

For instance, the website of another association for the promotion of immersion mentions first the practical and cultural interest of multilingualism, and then its economic importance (while using at the same time the same formula we observed previously):

For every European citizen, the mastering of several languages is an incontestable asset. In Belgium, an active knowledge of Dutch and French plays an important role in daily life and in cultural and economic activities. (TIBEM – Tweetaligheid in beweging/Bilinguisme en Mouvement; http://www.tibem.be/page_view.php?text=tibem1&textItem=21, accessed May 30th 2011; our translation)¹⁵

In the same vein, the parents association's website cited previously considers that a better teaching of foreign languages is needed if we want our children to become 'Belgian and European *citizens* able to communicate and to be open-minded' (we underline).¹⁶ This civic dimension is strengthened in Belgium by the idea that a better rate of bilingualism in the country could solve political conflicts between the two main communities. This echoes the discourse of the European Union about linguistic diversity: in the European Culture Portal of the European Commission's website for instance, the 'learning of languages' is said to be important because it 'opens doors to understanding of different cultures and is a necessary skill for Europeans'.¹⁷ The economic dimension of the learning of foreign languages appears, but is not the first argument: 'Learning a foreign language is a condition of cultural exchange. It is also a necessity for Europeans, who are required to move, work and communicate within an expanding European Union'.¹⁸ This is also in line with the fact that scientific discourse about CLIL methods underlines more the cognitive and cultural benefits of multilingualism than the economic dimension of the ability to speak two languages. As mentioned earlier, following this kind of rationale, what is important is to learn *some* foreign languages to cross boundaries and discover a culturally diverse world, in a way to act as a real European *citizen*.¹⁹

In summary, we can clearly observe that these discourses circulate, are read and repeated here and there, and finally constitute a picture of reality that cannot be ignored nor questioned. This picture constructs multilingualism both as a *necessity* – through the mobilisation of hyperbolic terms and of statements about the labour market that are never confronted with objective empirical data – and as a *moral ideal*, based on shared values (diversity, intercultural dialogue). The discourse on the importance of multilingualism is powerful because it is thus associated with a supposed obviousness and with symbolic legitimacy.

One can wonder however if the objective increase in the social *value* of multilingualism is really linked to a *necessity* on one side, and to a *moral ideal* on the other side. It would be surprising, for instance, that the Belgian labour market, which has for a long time hired monolinguals, would suddenly need so many multilingual people. For many of these jobs which are said to be not fulfilled because of a lack of bilinguals, it is not clear that employees' bilingualism would be really useful. In the context where jobs are rare and where degrees can no longer serve as

distinctive criterion because of mass education, bilingualism may be less an effective necessity than a selection device as is the capacity to write a proper cover letter, which is required in many application, even for jobs that will never rely on the ability to write letters. In fact, the importance of being bilingual on the labour market is so overstated that the FOREM has included it in a list of 20 *idées reçues* regarding the labour market, which was the subject of a recent information campaign towards job-seekers²⁰ (FOREM, 2011).

Moreover, the multilingualism that is presented as a *necessity* for everyone on the labour market, is still a supplementary skill that some people may try to acquire in the education field. Indeed, immersive programmes are only available in a small number of schools, even if it is continuously increasing. As a consequence, only parents who pay great and early attention to the curricular orientation of their children and to the selection of their school have access to immersion – even though, promoters of immersion present it as ‘democratic’ since it allows to learn foreign languages without having to finance expensive stays abroad. Besides, only students with high grades and having a perfect mastering of the school’s official language are encouraged to enter immersive programmes, because these are considered as very demanding (De Longueville, 2010, pp. 25–28, 38–40; see also Makropoulos, 2010 for an account of the social selection in French immersion programmes in Canada).

Thus, on the one hand, we have a discourse affirming that everybody is responsible for being multilingual and getting access to interesting jobs, and on the other hand, education devices offering this linguistic resource are said to be only accessible for an elite. Consequently, one of the main effects of the discourse on the promotion of multilingualism is not to create a massive multilingual cohort of students, but rather to justify the existence of a new type of streaming in schools and the vision of multilingual skills as a new legitimate criterion to select this elite on the labour market.

Parents and students seem to be well aware of this role: some recent surveys in Walloon schools offering CLIL programmes showed that the majority of parents who decided to send their children in immersive sections were first interested by the quality of the school and by the professional benefits immersion could lead to (De Longueville, 2010, pp. 54–58). The moral or civic dimension of bilingualism that is often highlighted in circulating discourses is not part of their principal motivations: only 4% of the parents interviewed chose immersion because they wanted their children to know the language and culture of the Flemish people. One can even wonder if the acquisition of bilingual skills is the real objective of parents and children in the long run. Teenager students in Dutch immersion programmes often declare they still do not like to speak their second language and make no use of it outside the academic context. They do not seem to be really prepared to work in Flanders for instance. They are instead very conscious of being part of a school elite, facing a real academic ‘challenge’ and having a *distinctive* curriculum that could be useful for their career prospects (De le Court, 2009, pp. 89–94, 100–101). As it has been observed among Anglophone Canadians (Makropoulos, 2010), a high rate of students abandon immersion after primary school, to priorities other learning outcomes and disciplines than the mastering of foreign languages, even if they know this will probably lead to a total lack of practice of their second language. This also shows that bilingual skills are still viewed as a plus only some family can offer, and not as an educative priority.

3.2. Preserving the ‘mother tongue’

Even if it has gained clear social value, multilingualism is far from being seen as always beneficial in Belgium. In the circulating discourse about multilingualism, the idea that the learning of a foreign language, especially through immersion, could be detrimental to the knowledge of the mother tongue is often discussed. Among the parents questioned in Belgian schools, a third of those who did not send their children to CLIL classes mentioned this fear as the first reason for their choice (De Longueville, 2010, p. 60). This idea that bilingual education could have negative effect on the abilities in the mother tongue or on the child’s identity is also often discussed in the forum of parents association promoting CLIL programmes.²¹

The importance for students to develop proficiency in their first language through education is related to the institutional role of school: it has to ensure that future citizens share the particular culture of the community, including its defining (national) language. It is perhaps even more the case in a French-speaking context, where the normative ideology is very strong and where speakers have a kind of moral obligation to ‘respect’ their language and to be aware of all its subtleties and complexities.

If multilingualism may be conceptualised as an asset, it has thus to be subordinated to the competence in the language of the group, which needs to be very well established among students so that they would not lost this competence because of the learning of another language, several hours a day, at school. In other words, it is important to secure that bilingualism is additive and not subtractive (see Lambert, 1975; Landry & Allard, 1990).

This will to protect vernacular languages and cultures inside schools seems to be reinforced by the fact that language loss is one of the threats associated with globalisation. In this sense, affirming the predominance of the ‘endogenous’ language of the (national) community in educational systems is not just a way to ensure its social and cultural cohesion, but it is also regarded as a way to avoid linguistic homogenisation through the spread of English, and hence as contribution to the promotion of linguistic diversity. In Europe for instance, the policy promoting the use and learning of national languages, aside English, is notably led in the name of linguistic diversity (see Section 3). Many influential voices in the public debate criticise the dominant position of English, deemed to be a ‘symbol of death’ for the other languages of the world, and claim for a protection of vernacular languages for the sake of ‘the inestimable value of the diversity of cultures and languages for the future of mankind’²² (Hagège, 2008, pp. 168–169; our translation).

These ideas regarding the importance of the ‘mother tongue’ are also mobilised in the discourse about the specific multilingualism of people from immigrant background. On the one hand, the same arguments are applied to children from immigrant communities: some voices (mainly inside the academy) underline the importance to valorise their (supposed) knowledge of a minority language and of the official language,²³ invoking the importance to promote the mother tongue or the community language for identity development and to rely on this language for further linguistic learning (see Hambye & Siroux, 2007). In this sense, their multilingualism is not really an asset, but at least something that should be taken into account and that could become an asset for these students if it corresponds to the kind of double monolingualism that is valorised.

On the other hand, other discourses mobilise the idea that immigrants' multilingualism matters because it does not lead to the perfect mastering of the 'common language', i.e. the majority language, and because it is hence supposed to prevent schools to play their integrative mission of transmitting the community's language and culture. Since they mobilise diverse linguistic resources when they speak French, second- or third-generation immigrants are considered not to speak 'proper French' and are primarily viewed as 'allophones', as if French were not their main language. Even if many of young students from immigrant descent are monolingual French speakers, their supposed 'home language' (evidenced by their code-mixing) is viewed as an impediment for their mastering of French: many of the teachers we interviewed in the framework of an ethnographic research (see Hambye, in press) were convinced that the fact that students from immigrant descent spoke another language than French at home was, as such, the source of their lack of appropriation of standard French. In turn, the difficulties to learn standard French are considered as the main source of school failure, and as cause and sign of a lack of social and economic insertion. The fact that people from immigrant communities speak another language than French in public spaces for instance, is indeed often interpreted as a sign that they cannot or do not want to speak French (Lucchini, Hambye, Forlot, & Delcourt, 2008). It is thus considered as rather evident that among immigrant communities, bilingualism is necessarily subtractive.

Many of these students are aware that it is important to resist this categorisation and play with the stereotype about their supposed lack of competence in French. Some of them tend to reinforce the negative stigma by faking to be linguistically deficient: they often answer teachers or adults saying '*moi pas parler français*' ('me not speak French') or '*moi pas comprendre*' ('me not understand'). Others try to confound stereotypes and to baffle their interlocutor by switching from their 'street language' and from very hybridised speech to very formal ways of speaking (using certain very formal formulaic expressions or sing old popular French songs), in a way to demonstrate the ability they are supposed to be void of (see Declercq, 2008; Hambye, in press; Hambye & Siroux, 2007; see also Jaspers, 2006, 2011 for similar observations in Dutch-speaking schools).

Moreover, the supposed multilingualism of people from immigrant background is seldom seen as an opportunity, a cultural enrichment, or as a resource for both the individuals and for the whole community. Despite the fact that the cognitive advantages of multilingualism are always underlined in the promotion discourse of immersion programmes, migrants' multilingualism it is rather viewed as a challenge, a burden. Following the traditional normative and ideological vision of languages and multilingualism considering that there is one and only one legitimate way to speak a language and that languages, like nations and cultures, must have neat boundaries (see Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Heller, 2006), 'good' multilingualism is necessarily what Heller calls a 'double monolingualism' (Heller, 2006, p. 83): it must not lead, for instance, to the transfer of linguistic structures from L2 into L1, to code-switching or to any practice blurring language boundaries and deteriorate language purity. Since many young people from immigrant descent mix languages in a very spontaneous and fluent way, and do not present a well-ordered multilingualism with clear language separation (as do CLIL students who will rarely draw upon their multilingual skills outside the academic context and disregarding its specific norms), their multilingualism is not deemed to be beneficial in any way and has to be kept hidden in classroom context (Hambye, in press, see also Heller, 2006).

The political implications of this ideological discourse are not incidental: if they are not 'real' Francophones, if they cannot claim to be multilingual but are rather 'semi-lingual', people using hybrid linguistic resources can be considered as falling outside the scope of 'normality' and as being 'objectively' deficient. This discourse thus clearly identify the source of the problem: it is something immigrants bring with them, their linguistic and cultural background, which impedes their successful insertion. In other words, these students are responsible for their own exclusion because they are not adapted to the school system; interestingly enough, it is then never consider that it may be the role of the school to adapt to their linguistic and cultural realities. Students not sharing the language and culture of the school are still viewed as exceptions, and as elements which the school system is not supposed to have to cope with.

In Belgium's Dutch-speaking region, this rationale has led to proactive measures aiming at compensating the increasing multilingualism of the population by reinforcing the requirement to learn a common Dutch as a way to ensure national cohesion. The Flemish government has for example decided to establish a compulsory programme of civic integration for newcomers, including Dutch-learning courses, and mastering Dutch or promising to learn it is now a condition for newcomers to access social housing.²⁴

Measures of this kind could of course be seen as necessary to ensure the social and economic integration of migrants. Now, this is quite dubious when we look at the way things work in practice. Indeed, the worry for linguistic insertion seems to be only lip-service paid to the socio-economic situation of persons of immigrant origin, since the main sources of marginalisation – namely segregation in housing, education, access restricted to unqualified jobs – are never tackled. So the principal effect of this measure is not to limit social exclusion of immigrant people but is to recall who the Nation is made for and create a clear categorisation between the real citizens, those who speak the national language, and the others.

4. Multilingualism in a linguistic minority: the case of the Franco-Ontarian community

4.1. A hidden multilingualism

We can observe the same ambivalence in discourses on multilingualism in the Ontarian Francophone community. Since the French-speaking minority in Ontario is rather small, constituting approximately 4.8% of the province's total population in 2006,²⁵ it has always been under the threat of disappearing. As a consequence, for many years, bilingualism has not been praised or promoted in discourses surrounding minority language schooling in Canada: bilingualism in Francophone schools is feared, like are for instance exogamous²⁶ couples, since it is often equated with progressive assimilation to the dominant English language (see Heller, 2006).

In the minority Francophone areas of Canada, we have recently begun to observe changes regarding visions of multilingualism and an evolution of the conception of the school as a monolingual space. The first reason for this is that, in the framework of their 'new' mission, education systems in general are more and more called upon to be responsible for students' individual professional careers and instilling in them the skills they need successfully integrate the contemporary job market. This necessarily implies the knowledge of English, as well as French, and we are no longer only about the transmission of the national language to children. The second reason

is linked to the fact that Ontarian Francophone schools need to welcome and be inclusive new groups of students to ensure the institution and community's vitality and longevity: to justify their very existence and the funding they receive from the government, they need to attract enough new students each year, and they cannot do that nowadays without including French-speaking immigrants on one side, and Anglophones on the other side, many of whom regard Francophone schools as a form of 'super immersion' schooling, and the form of bilingualism that the students would acquire in these schools as more desirable and closer to standard or international forms of French. In addition, minority Francophone schools must also position themselves to include Allophone immigrant students, students who speak neither French nor English (or neither of the official languages) as their mother tongue (see Prasad, 2009 for a detailed analysis of the historical construction of 'allophone').

Because of the dynamic demographic and socio-economic changes taking place, the vision the Francophones have of their own schools is forced to evolve. So, we have seen strategies to be more inclusive of non-Francophones, to affirm the culturally diverse nature of the Franco-Ontarian community, and expanding the notion of rights-holders²⁷ in terms of access to Francophone schools. For example, in 2009, the Ontario Ministry of Education published a Policy/Programs Memorandum²⁸ encouraging French-language school boards to review their admissions protocols with the goal of being more transparent in their practices and more inclusive of non rights-holders, and especially of immigrant Francophones and Allophones (Ontario Ministry of Education [EDU], 2009). The June of the same year, the Office of Francophone Affairs launched a new 'more inclusive' definition of Francophone population of Ontario, in order to 'better reflect the evolution and diversity of Ontario's Francophone communities'. This new definition is articulated as follows: 'Those persons whose mother tongue is French, plus those whose mother tongue is neither French nor English but have a particular knowledge of French as an Official Language and use French at home'.²⁹ This would be considered a step forward in terms of establishing more equitable practices in terms of access to minority schooling in the province.

Yet, at the same time, we can observe a somewhat conservative reaction to these initiatives maintaining the idea that any 'non-Francophone' element represents an element of threat to the vitality of the minority institution. It is evident that in linguistic minority contexts, the movement that views language as a resource or form of capital is confronted with the vision of language as also, and perhaps firstly, a vector of cultural identification, and that the two conceptions of the school's missions aforementioned are also in tension.

The confrontation between these two views of language can be observed for instance in the most recent Language Planning Policy for Ontario's French-Language Schools (or the PAL, as it is often referred to) (Ontario Ministry of Education [EDU], 2004). The policy insists, on the one hand, on personnel success of students (which one would assume to be measured through academic success) and on the other hand, on the school as a site for cultural identity construction in favour of the development of a 'sense of belonging' to the Franco-Ontarian community.

It is without question that in Ontario, personal success happens through contact with English and through a mastery of this language, and that French is considered as an important asset that opens new opportunities. English-French bilingualism is

highly valued and sought after and French monolingualism is not even an option, since English is supposed to be learned almost automatically, through immersion in a English-dominant environment: ‘English is not learned, it just caught’³⁰ (our translation), as formulated by a high ranking school official at the supervisory level. For many parents, the issue at stake is to create a monolingual space where students will have access to French so they do not lose it, as this student’s discourse on the choice of a Francophone school in regards to her future career aspirations clearly states:

Because they say that it’s important to be bilingual to work. (...) [my father] also told me it’s good to study in French because after you’ll be bilingual. If you’re in an English school, you’ll lose your French. You’ll practice English with your friends. (...) If you’re bilingual you can find a job and earn a good salary...that helps, even outside of Canada. It helps people to be bilingual. (...) It’s really too important because the two most important languages in the world today are English and French; if you know both languages you can work in 90% of the world.’³¹ (Eugénie, 12th Grade; our translation)

Eugenie’s parents immigrated to Canada from the Ivory Coast when she was young and the family speaks French at home. For Eugénie and her parents, attending a Francophone school is a means of maintaining a high level of French while at the same time acquiring necessary skills in English. In line with what we observed for Belgium, we see here that the incentive for bilingualism is primarily (if not only) economic. Eugénie, like many other students, do not cultivate their French only because of their ‘sense of belonging’ to the Franco-Ontarian community. She invests in the development of the Francophone community only if it does not prevent her from acquiring English.

Yet, the Francophone identity-building mission of the school seems to be only successful through the suppression of English. One of the major revisions in the 2004 PAL document over its predecessor first published in 1994 (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training [EDU], 1994) is the suppression of the term *bilingualism* in the articulation of the mandate of French-language schools in Ontario. In 1994, the document included the objective ‘permit students to acquire good communication skills in English, under conditions that favor additive bilingualism’ (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training [EDU], 1994, p. 9). In 2004, this objective disappeared from the mandate for French-language schools. Even if we still find a reference to high-level bilingualism in the ‘challenges’ (*défis à relever*) section of the document, this change is not insignificant. The question of bilingualism is treated exclusively through the concepts of additive and subtractive bilingualism and the discourse assumes bilingualism to be almost always subtractive and detrimental to the common language of the community. Adhering to this discourse, we still observe teaching personnel taking on the role of ‘linguistic police’ in schools. We observed a teacher, when overhearing students speaking in English among themselves in the school hallway, approach the group and interrupt: ‘Where are we here, *English School* (pronounced in English) or the *École francophone*?’³² (our translation).

Even though English is everywhere in many urban Franco-Ontarian schools, especially in Toronto (see Heller, 2006), in discourses in support of the Franco-Ontarian community, the importance of English is masked, the presence of English being mainly treated as a threat, and French is the only language appearing in the symbolic landscape. This allows for the fictional creation of the school as a totally monolingual space, a space that is needed to protect French, the other official

language, and that calls for, and hence justifies, the existence of an independent *public* network of Francophone schools. It also institutes a view of the Francophone school as being *à priori* made for monolingual Francophones who will participate in its ideal of community reproduction. It helps to maintain the historical Franco-Ontarian group at the core of the community and thus at the control of it, in a way to maintain its privileges.

A tension seems to be developing between the interests of students (and their families) in making the school a place of acquisition of multiple linguistic skills required for the job market of today and the discourse that values the development of individual skills at school on the one hand, and on the other hand the discourse that constructs French language schools as sites for the reproduction of the Franco-Ontarian community as a monolingual space by Francophones for Francophones. Drawing upon our fieldwork data, this tension seems to be all the more present for Francophone families from immigrant backgrounds who may have less access to opportunities to learn and practice English than other Franco-Ontarian families who have nothing to loose in pretending that only French matters. By registering their child in a Francophone school, Francophone newcomers are not necessarily interested or invested in the reproduction of the minority community, or contributing to its development, but rather to maintain and to acquire linguistic and other skills that are required by today's workplaces. After all, one of the first questions that parents ask when inquiring about enrolment at a French-language school is: 'Will my child be bilingual?' (A question to which school officials will most likely not respond 'no'). However, the complete obliteration of the issue of English learning has problematic consequences for them: we know, through qualitative and statistical data,³³ that many students leave the French sector for Anglophone or private institutions in order to master more academic forms of English which will be necessary for their future postsecondary goals. However, for most students who do not have an intermediate or at the least a basic level of English, this is not an option. By leaving the Francophone sector they would most likely have to go back several years in their academic paths to first learn English in order to then integrate regular academic stream.

Bilingualism, in Francophone schools, so it seems, is not accessible for everyone. This is the case, for example, of an immigrant student from Morocco in 12th grade who is still in beginner English classes after 7 years in Canada (of which 6 years in the French-language school system). It's a similar situation for a Burundese student who arrived in Canada in 11th grade who can understand and speak English well enough with her friends but who has enough difficulty filling out university applications in English that she has to ask her friend (who evidently has better English skills) to do it for her. What is not often recognized at school is that many of these students already speak multiple languages, and that French may not even be their first language. In addition, many immigrant students are dissuaded from enrolling in other language classes at school, such as Spanish for example, a language that is increasingly offered in many Ontarian public schools. Further, according to data generated through our fieldwork, many Francophone immigrant students choose to pursue their postsecondary education in Francophone institutions. From the point of view of the Francophone community, this could be viewed as positive. But from the point of view of many immigrant Francophone students we interviewed, this is very frustrating; most would rather have the choice of continuing

their studies in English (where they would have more choice in programmes) or at least have the choice of language of instruction at the institution of their choice.

At the same time, the Francophone identity of immigrant students and their families is somehow questioned: the fact that their registration in a Francophone school must go before an admissions committee sends the message that they are not necessarily considered full fledged Francophones (Farmer, 2008). Despite recent initiatives by the Ontario Ministry of Education to be more inclusive of immigrants and non-Francophones (Ontario Ministry of Education [EDU], 2009), the fact remains that there is still an administrative process for registration in French language schools for non rights-holders as outlined in Article 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982). Besides, even if they are not as threatening as English, the languages of immigration may be considered as encroaching upon the territory of French, like in the Belgian context. These languages are, at best, forgotten and hidden in the way the Ontarian Francophone community is presented in dominant discourses. For instance, a comic strip describing life in a Francophone school was recently created to serve as a 'new educational tool to introduce students to the Francophone heritage and culture in French language schools in Ontario'³⁴ (Ngoy, 2008; our translation). It is interesting to note the image of the Franco-Ontarian community that the comic reflects: the image that is portrayed is that of a community that, on the cultural side, has in common 'the French-Canadian heritage (...) along with the cultural added value of immigrant communities'³⁵ (Ngoy, 2008; our translation). What is portrayed is a school where students of multiple ethnic origins cross paths, each having the possibility to express their talents, their tastes, their unique traits and through the mixing and meeting of cultures. The vision that is proposed in the comic is that of a collectivity that draws upon the students' multiple cultural resources that complement each other rather than being in competition. We see thus a discourse of openness, oriented toward French-speaking newcomers to attract them to Franco-Ontarian institutions.

On the other hand, the comic describes the Franco-Ontarian school as a space that is absolutely monolingual where neither English nor other languages of immigration exist or are necessarily valued. It is as if languages, unlike cultures, are not cumulative and as if the protection of French works only through the symbolic negation of the existence of English and other languages in the school milieu.

4.2. Bilingualism: good for others

The Franco-Ontarian community is in a rather unstable position: it wants to protect its students from bilingualism, and at the same time it needs to attract new students to Francophone schools (and retain the students already enrolled) and therefore integrate non-Francophones into the school space. One way for the community to resolve this tension is to develop another line of discourse, principally oriented outside the Francophone community, a discourse that precisely highlights the value of English-French bilingualism.

An advertising campaign for Francophone schools in Ontario was launched in early 2011 in Anglophone media (newspapers, both paper and online version, and in public spaces such as the public transportation system). The aim of this campaign is explicitly to argue that French-language schools offer a different and better experience for learning French than immersion programmes. It clearly insists on

the fact that French-language schools have something more, a difference, that distinguishes them from other programmes and hence that provides *distinction* to those enrolled in these schools. The fact that is campaign is in English, gives the idea that it is intended for a purely Anglophone audience, and the product that is being sold is language, in a pure and highly valued form. Regardless of the intentions, this advertisement gives the public the idea that French language schools are open for business, the language business that is, and that they are accepting Anglophone clientele and will provide direct access to French.

In contrast with what we observed regarding the discourse on migration, we have here a discourse of openness that concerns directly languages, but that seem to be voiced by other actors for other people. As a consequence, this advertising campaign met much criticism from both Anglophones and Francophones across the province. In some areas of the province, and in particular in urban zones, many Anglophone school boards were outraged by this recent promotional campaign for French-language schools. These boards see the Francophone system as luring away present and potential clientele from French immersion programmes, which would be detrimental to the future success of French immersion programmes in these schools. These debates played out largely in the public sphere, and especially in English-language media.³⁶ There are also critiques of recent strategies and policies from within the French-language community. In light of recent amendments to admissions policies and procedures to Francophone schools, some people, within the Francophone community, have asked questions about who exactly Francophone schools are intended for and what are the boundaries of inclusion. These debates tend to play out largely within private networks within the Francophone community, and less so in public arenas.

5. Conclusion

We have seen that, in Belgium and Canada, new discourses on multilingualism have emerged in the recent years: now, bilingualism is not only considered by centripetal political forces as the fortunate union between two main communities, it has also become an important economic resource. On the other hand, conceptions of multilingualism are still very ambivalent in both countries: multilingualism is still viewed as a potential peril, which is no longer only represented by the other official language, but is also associated with the constant pressure of an international languages (mainly English and Spanish) and with the presence of many immigration languages, which have not the dominant status of English or of other major languages, but which are nonetheless threatening.

These discourses are clearly related to economic and demographic changes fostered by globalisation, and which have quashed the mythic representation of a monolingual Nation-State populated by a homogenous population who would stay within the comfortable boundaries of this entity from cradle to grave. Hence, they have also interrogated the nature and the mission of educative institutions, as agents of reproduction of the Nation.

Yet, there is a considerable gap between what seems to be the impact of these changes on the real multilingual nature of the two environments studied, and the way multilingualism is constructed in the discourses we have analysed. This gap can result as much from the overemphasis as from the minimisation in discourse of the multilingual character of social spaces. In French-speaking Belgium, the necessity to

be bilingual on the labour market and to acquire this skill as a priority in education is discursively overrated. This consolidates and renders unquestionable the idea that the contemporary economy requires per se (and not as an effect of a certain economical policy) mobility and flexibility, and also the redefinition of schools' mission as being to equip students with the necessary skills to enter the labour market and to respond to the demand of a rapidly changing economy. At the same time, the actual multilingualism of a growing number of students in schools is seldom taken into account in pedagogical activities, and it is only invoked, as a source of problems, to explain difficulties in social and academic insertion. In Ontario, the multilingual reality of French-language schools is masked in order to maintain the myth of schools as monolingual spaces made for Francophones, which need to stand apart from the main school network, and the preservation and promotion of French is the only concern of language policies. On the other side, it is bilingualism that is put to the forefront when what matters is to attract a new clientele to minority language institutions.

The discrepancy between the two 'faces' of discourses on multilingualism reveals its ideological role: it is not the reflection of a neutral description of reality, as it pretends to be, but rather a construction aiming at legitimating political orientations that sometimes praise and sometimes reject multilingualism and multilingual people. These paradoxical discourses about multilingualism can coexist, their contradictory nature being never highlighted, partly because they rely on two different conceptions of language: one that views language as a resource or as a commodity, and another one, inherited from the romantic period of the emergence of Nation-States, that views it as a symbol and vehicle of culture and identity.

There is a clear contrast between the two communities under scrutiny in the way they mobilise these two visions of language. Franco-Ontarians, as a linguistic minority, have invested a lot in the romantic ideology of language (Heller, 2006). Even though they are now forced to take up a more utilitarian conception of language, in order to take advantage of the capital their linguistic skills represent today, they are still partly binded to the former ideology, and this creates obvious tensions. On the contrary, French-speaking Belgians have never been in need to protect their language and to strongly associate language, culture and identity. They have for a long time adopted a more pragmatic view on languages, as communication tools, allowing them to neglect the symbolic violence imposed on their Flemish fellow citizens when they were considering French as the obvious default language. This pragmatism leads them now to consider that it is time to invest in 'useful' foreign languages, and it is also with mainly pragmatic arguments that they try to legitimate the rejection of immigrant languages from the school space. Furthermore, it is not surprising to observe that in Ontarian French-language schools, the exclusiveness of French is counterweighted by a discourse on the value of cultural diversity: inclusion of immigrant students is a vital necessity for Franco-Ontarian schools. In both cases, we see that dominant discourses on multilingualism select and put forward aspects of reality that may sustain a particular representation of society, whose predominance contributes to the maintaining of structures of power and of unequal distribution of resources. Discourses evolve and overlap within actual economic, demographic and political conditions, but they still de facto serve the same interests.

Notes

1. The findings of this report informed Canada's 1969 Official Languages Act.
2. These percentages on bilingualism are based on self-reporting, and therefore subject to personal interpretation.
3. In Belgium, 'Communities' are federated entities which are defined on a linguistic criteria (Belgium counts three Communities, Dutch-, German- and French-speaking, respectively). The Communities' governments are responsible for 'cultural and linguistic' affairs (such as culture, education, scientific research, etc.).
4. Canada, Privy Council Office (2003, p. 27).
5. Data on Francophone preschool programmes from Ontario ministry of Education, 2011. See also elfontario.ca.
6. Around 70% of Flemish under 40 years old say they know French and/or English (Ginsburgh & Weber, 2006, p. 5).
- AQ6 7. Source: www.enseignement.be
- AQ7 8. <http://www.leforem.be/endirect/actions/planm/plan-langues.html>
9. In Canada, the situation is of course different, since English dominant position is first due to domestic realities and not to its status of *lingua franca*.
10. See the concept of 'flexible bilingualism' in Blackledge and Creese (2010), or the concept of 'crossing' in Rampton (2005).
11. 'L'Orbem crée un 'Espace langues'. 'L'unilingue d'aujourd'hui est l'analphabète de demain' Au risque d'enfoncer des portes ouvertes, on ne répètera jamais assez que la maîtrise des langues est un atout indispensable pour décrocher un emploi dans une ville cosmopolite comme Bruxelles. L'Office régional bruxellois pour l'emploi (Orbem) a donc décidé de créer un 'Espace langues'. Une initiative d'autant plus indispensable que l'Orbem ne parvient pas à satisfaire plus d'un quart des offres d'emploi des entreprises, essentiellement pour cause de faiblesses linguistiques'.
12. 'La maîtrise d'une ou plusieurs langues étrangères est un atout incontestable sur la marché de l'emploi'.
13. 'Nous constatons un important manque de connaissances en langue chez tous les demandeurs d'emploi, hommes et femmes, tous âges confondus. Or, actuellement, les langues sont indispensables. Toutes les entreprises exigent la connaissance minimum d'une deuxième langue, et ce dans tous les métiers, de l'aide ménagère au plombier, en passant par la secrétaire, le comptable et l'électromécanicien. La connaissance d'une autre langue augmente également la mobilité du travailleur'.
14. 'Notre société évolue à grande vitesse et faire preuve d'une bonne connaissance des langues étrangères est désormais devenu une nécessité pour bon nombre d'entre nous'.
15. 'Pour tout citoyen européen la maîtrise de plusieurs langues est un atout *incontestable*. En Belgique une connaissance active du néerlandais et du français joue un rôle important dans la *vie quotidienne, culturelle et économique*'.
16. 'Il existe ainsi une attente pour un meilleur enseignement des langues dans nos écoles, pour que nos enfants puissent devenir des citoyens belges et européens capables de communication et d'*ouverture*' (APIMM – Association de parents de l'école d'immersion; <http://apimm.metawiki.com/>, accessed May 30th 2011; our translation).
- AQ8 17. http://ec.europa.eu/culture/portal/action/linguistic/lingui_en.htm; May 30th 2011.
- AQ9 18. http://ec.europa.eu/culture/portal/action/linguistic/lingui_1_en.htm; May 30th 2011.
19. We observe similar phenomena in Canada, where on the website for a national parents' group in support of bilingualism, and in particular of the learning of French as a second language, the discourses around language and bilingualism first stress the national harmony and understanding between linguistic groups and then subscribe to the discourses around language as indispensable on the job market of today. The vision of Canada for the association is as follows: 'A Canada where French- and English-speakers live together in mutual respect with an understanding and appreciation of each other's language and culture and where linguistic duality forms an integral part of society' (Canadian Parents for French website; <http://www.cpf.ca/eng/governance-mission.html>, accessed May 27, 2011).
20. The main objective of this campaign was to show that positions were indeed available in several working sectors and to qualify for instance the idea that multilingualism, though an obvious asset, was an absolute necessity.

- AQ10** 21. See for instance http://www.tibem.be/page_view.php?text=tibem1&textItem=39#Q10
22. 'L'anglais est aujourd'hui pour toutes les langues du monde, bien qu'à des degrés variables selon les situations, le symbole de la mort sous les trompeuses et flatteuses apparences de l'aisance à communiquer. Ces apparences séduisent celles et ceux qui oublient la valeur inestimable de la diversité des cultures et des langues pour l'avenir même de l'espèce humaine'.
23. We should always talk here of a supposed bilingualism since many children of immigrant descent do not speak another language than French in Wallonia and Brussels.
24. This condition is, given European regulations, not applicable for other citizens of the European Union.
25. Francophone population in Ontario, according to data from the 2006 Census of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada). Published by the Ontario Office of Francophone Affairs, <http://www.ofa.gov.on.ca/en/franco-map.html> (Accessed May 6th, 2011).
26. An exogamous couple is one where each person has a different maternal language.
27. According to article 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) a person is considered a rights-holder (in French, 'ayant-droit') to minority language education in Canada if their first language learned and still understood is French, or if they received their primary school instruction in Canada in French. Canadian citizens who have any child in a French-language school also have the right to have all of their children educated in French.
28. Policy/Programs Memorandum 148 (2009).
29. Ontario Office of Francophone Affairs (2009).
30. 'L'anglais ça ne s'apprend pas, ça s'attrape'.
31. 'Parce qu'ils disent que c'est important d'être bilingue pour travailler. (...) [mon père] m'a aussi conseillé que c'était bien d'étudier en français parce qu'après tu peux être bilingue. Si tu es dans une école anglaise, tu perds ton français. L'anglais tu vas le pratiquer avec tes amis. (...) Si tu es bilingue tu peux trouver du travail et surtout bien gagner... ça t'aide même en dehors du Canada. Ça aide beaucoup de gens d'être bilingue. (...) C'est vraiment trop important parce que les deux langues qui sont à la tête du monde aujourd'hui c'est l'anglais et le français; si tu connais les deux langues t'es capable à 90% de travailler partout dans le monde'.
32. 'On est où ici, *English School* ou bien l'*école francophone*?'
33. Data on enrolment from the Ontario Ministry of Education in 2010.
34. 'nouvel outil éducatif visant à sensibiliser la jeunesse au fait francophone dans les écoles de l'Ontario'.
35. 'patrimoine historique canadien-français (...) allié à la valeur ajoutée culturelle des communautés immigrantes'.
36. The Ottawa Citizen newspaper (www.ottawacitizen.com) provided a forum for public debates between Anglophone and Francophone school boards on recruitment of potential clientele. See, for example, the article 'French boards pursue English pupils: \$1M ad campaign uses federal money' by M. Pearson, published in the Ottawa Citizen on January 26th, 2011. Many letters to the editor of the newspaper in reaction to this article were published in the following days.

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