Language, identity, and integration:
Immigrant youth 'made in Quebec'

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Abstract

This study explores the relationships between the integration experiences of adolescent newcomers in one francophone secondary school in Montreal and the current policies and programs related to educational integration. The research draws on observations and participants' descriptions and insights to address three principal questions: How is integration experienced by adolescent newcomers in a francophone school in Montreal? How do these students' experiences inform our understanding of the relationships among host (second) language learning/teaching, integration, and identity construction? What are the implications of these newcomer students' integration experiences for educational theories, policies and programs/practices that target such newcomers? These questions emerge from a consideration of theories of identity construction current in a variety of disciplines.

The study offers an overview of Quebec's past and present immigration and integration policies and programs. It considers those policies in light of identity theory and, more specifically, focuses on the relationships between language learning, integration, and identity in the experience of adolescent immigrants within a francophone secondary school in Montreal. Based on interviews and participant observation conducted over 15 months, the study describes the ways in which the participants' integration and identity are shaped by school discourses and the standardizing imperative of most North American educational institutions. Findings suggest that the participants resist the school's discourses in order to assert themselves dialogically and relocate their sense of identity in their host society. However, the dialogic relationships that the students are able to establish with and within the school discourses are imbalanced, leaving several students to feel dislocated both physically and psychically throughout the study. The study indicates that a distributed notion of the Self might improve theory, policy, and pedagogy related to newcomer integration. Finally, specific suggestions are made for building on current educational-integration research and practice.

Résumé analytique

Cette étude porte sur les liens qui existent entre les expériences d'intégration vécues par nouveaux arrivants adolescents qui fréquentent une école secondaire francophone de Montréal et les politiques et programmes actuels en matière d'intégration pédagogique. S'inspirant d'observations ainsi que des descriptions et points de vue des participants, cette recherche aborde trois questions fondamentales: comment les nouveaux arrivants vivent-ils cette expérience d'intégration au sein d'une école francophone montréalaise ? En quoi les expériences vécues par ces étudiants influencent-elles notre perception de la relation entre l'apprentissage/l'enseignement d'une langue d'accueil (langue seconde) et la construction de l'identité ? Quelles sont les répercussions de l'intégration de ces nouveaux arrivants sur les théories, politiques, pratiques et programmes pédagogiques ? Ces questions relèvent de la prise en considération des théories de construction de l'identité en vigueur dans diverses disciplines.

L'étude offre une vue d'ensemble des politiques et programmes antérieurs et actuels du Québec en matière d'immigration et d'intégration. Elle se penche sur ces politiques en fonction du concept théorique d'identité et examine de manière plus précise les liens entre l'apprentissage des langues, l'intégration et l'identité, en fonction des expériences vécues par les immigrants adolescents au sein d'une école secondaire montréalaise. Fondée sur les entrevues menées auprès des participants et sur l'observation desdits participants sur une période de 15 mois, l'étude décrit les modalités d'intégration des participants et la façon dont leur identité est influencée par le discours pédagogique et les impératifs d'harmonisation inhérents à la plupart des établissements scolaires nord-américains. Les résultats de cette étude semblent indiquer que les participants renient le discours pédagogique afin de s'affirmer par le dialogue et de réaligner leur identité au sein de la société hôte. Toutefois, la relation de dialogue que les étudiants parviennent à établir avec le discours pédagogique, et dans le cadre de celui-ci, est déséquilibrée. L'étude révèle que plusieurs étudiants se sentent déplacés, aussi bien au niveau physique que psychique. L'étude révèle également qu'un concept mieux réparti du Soi permettrait d'améliorer la théorie, la politique et la pédagogie en matière d'intégration des

nouveaux arrivants. Enfin, des recommandations précises sont émises pour renforcer les recherches et pratiques actuelles en matière d'intégration pédagogique.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Vignette 1
We stepped out of the metro and continued to discuss some grand philosopher whose work you had been reading the night before; sucked along the quay by a zillion bustling Parisians, it took a moment for me to notice your absence. Then I saw the six or seven light blue shirts and the billyclubs. How many times would I witness you surrounded by les gendarmes in the metro? I had lived in France for almost three years then and could pass for a local. But you, transplanted to this new home at the age of four, are Algerian. "Vos papiers?" No one had ever asked to see my papers. I would never be an immigrant here, and you would always be one.

Vignette 2
Learning Spanish was relatively easy after French. After only a month in Mexico, I had moved through several levels of language courses. I loved this place, the heat, the flowers, the smells, the language. But my fair skin and sunbleached hair set me apart. Huera, americana. I took a job teaching English and French to extend my stay and improve my Spanish. The cat calls continued. I would never fit in, never feel safe. I would always be a gringa. My students encouraged me to stay. In the classroom, my skin colour wouldn't matter. But, theirs did.... One day the darkest of my brown students was verbally slammed by her lighter-skinned peer. Something along the lines of "dark is dumb." She would never fit in here and yet knew no other home.

Vignette 3
It's lunch hour and almost all of my ESL students are sitting together with other ESLers in the small quad outside my portable-classroom door. In our inner-city California high school, I am their "integrator," their language teacher: the giver of academic success and a stable future. According to many of my mainstream colleagues, those of my students who fail do so because they don't know enough English. Some students have been studying with me for three years, and it's the same every year. With a 50% drop-out rate academics are a concern, but so is social interaction. I think there's a connection. If only they would join some clubs and make some English-speaking friends. They claim to want the interaction; but year-after-year our school remains a microcosm of our gang-riddled community. Mexican immigrants, Mexican-Americans, and Whites all keep to themselves. What kind of language could I possibly teach that would bridge that divide? How does our own "ESL" label contribute to the segregation we so hate? If I am the integrator, what does it mean to integrate?

Through my various experiences living and teaching in France, Mexico, California, and Quebec, integration has been central yet somehow elusive. What

does it mean to integrate, to be integrated, to fit in? Is it about acceptance? By whom? Under what circumstances? What do we lose, what do we gain, how do we change when we integrate? Why are language learning and teaching so often located at the center of newcomer integration programs? These were the questions for which my TESL training didn't prepare me and to which I (and my students) most needed answers.

Integration, therefore, is central to the study that this dissertation describes and explores. Because my concerns about and experiences with integration arise primarily from high school contexts, I chose to focus my study on the integration of newcomer adolescents in secondary schools. Furthermore, because I now live and work in Montreal, Quebec, and because this community (like so many large urban centers in North America) has become so culturally and linguistically rich with recent and older waves of immigration, Montreal secondary schools were an ideal place to look at the question of integration and its relationship to language. Even before I began this study I believed, based on the experiences represented in the vignettes that began this introduction, that integration was more complex than learning the language and social norms of the host society. I believed that integration was somehow about comfort, inclusion, participation, a sense of belonging. I also believed from my own experiences and those described in immigrant biographies (e.g. Hoffman, 1989; Fong-Torres, 1994; Dorfman, 1998) that integration was not just about adjusting to the host society, it was about adjusting one's sense of self, about being a different person, about knowing oneself differently. For these reasons, I decided to explore newcomer integration through the lens of identity construction. More specifically, I look at how theories of identity construction might inform the process of integration as it is experienced by newcomer adolescents in a secondary school in Montreal. The research, a qualitative study conducted over a period of 15 months, follows the integration experiences of 18 adolescent newcomers in a francophone secondary school.

Broadly, my study explores what I suggest is a theoretical blind spot in the current generation of integration policies wherein the ultimate goal or

destination of integration is assumed to be located in the host society rather than in the integrating newcomers themselves. To understand the nature and practical implications of this blind spot, I focus this study on the integration experiences of adolescent newcomers. I draw on my own observations and my participants' descriptions and insights to address three principal questions: How is integration experienced by adolescent newcomers in a francophone school in Montreal? How do these students' experiences inform our understanding of the relationships among host (second)[1] language learning and teaching, integration, and identity construction? What are the implications of these newcomer students' integration experiences for educational theories, policies and programs and practices that target such newcomers? To answer these questions, I draw on theories of identity construction as I have come to understand them through the work of theorists across a variety of disciplines (e.g. Jerome Bruner, Vivien Burr, Charles Taylor, Mikhail Bakhtin, Jay Lemke, and Morweena Griffiths).

To clearly establish the context in which I conducted my study, I provide, in the next chapter, an overview of the history of immigration to Quebec. I discuss the ways in which that immigration has shaped educational policies and programs, as well as what has been learned from studies of integration programs in schools. At the end of Chapter 2, I suggest that the current generation of integration policies (and resulting programs) might benefit from a view of integration which expands beyond immigrants' adaptation to linguistic and social norms. I propose identity theory as a way of reconceptualizing integration to include the ways in which newcomers respond to the discourses they encounter in the host society. In Chapter 3, then, I explore theories of identity and identity construction across several disciplines and review studies which have focused on the relationship between identity construction, host-language learning, and newcomer integration in schools. Building on those studies, I describe, in Chapter 4, how I came to do my study

[1] "Second" language learning is a problematic term in the case of many immigrants in North America since many of these people have often already learned not only a second but a third official (or prominent) language before arriving in the US or Canada.

in the ways I did. I begin the chapter with a presentation of my guiding questions and then describe my research methodology and methods, providing details about my role as a participant observer and the nature of the audio-taped interviews which comprised the bulk of my data. While Chapter 4 focuses on the specifics of how I conducted my study, Chapter 5 describes the study's context. In that chapter I provide details about the school in which the study was conducted, its demographics, programs and extra-curricular activities. I describe how I came to work with and gain the trust of my principal participants who were all in the same *accueil*[2] class in a francophone secondary school. I then discuss how my relationship to each participant changed according to each student's placement at the end of his/her first academic year in Montreal. I conclude Chapter 5 with an explanation of how I came to focus my data analysis (and subsequent chapters of this dissertation) based on the changes in my participants' educational paths.

In Chapter 6, I describe a group of five of my participants who were re-enrolled in the school's *accueil* program for a second year. I discuss the ways in which their integration and identity is shaped by the school discourses and their sense of agency (or lack of it) in being able to respond to those discourses. In Chapter 7, I describe the five participants who were placed in the mainstream for their second academic year. I discuss the tension between the diverse needs of those newcomers and the homogenizing nature of schools which grow out of educational systems based on the standardizing principles of Fordism[3]. At the end of that chapter, I suggest that by resisting the school's homogenizing discourses the students are attempting to assert themselves dialogically and relocate their sense of identity in their host society. Unfortunately, the dialogic

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[2] The term "*accueil*" is used in Montreal's French-language school system to identify an intensive French language learning program for newcomers. The term literally means "welcome," and the program is similar to welcome programs for ESL students in other parts of North America. The *accueil* program is described in more detail in Chapter 2.

[3] Faigley (1992) describes "Fordism" as "a summary term for the system of mass production consolidated by Henry Ford. . . . Fordism required elaborate central planning to standardize tasks and parts, to analyze discrete tasks, and to arrange tasks in a sequence on an assembly line, and it used a hierarchical management structure to ensure that the plan was followed (p. 10).

relationships the students are able to establish with and within the school discourses are unbalanced, leaving several students to feel dislocated both physically and psychically throughout the study. I return then, in Chapter 8, to an exploration of integration as identity construction. I expand on the notion of identity as the distribution of Self (introduced in Chapter 3) and explore the ways in which my study's participants describe their sense of Self as being located in the languages they use, the activities they engage in, and the people they interact with. I conclude the dissertation in Chapter 9 with a discussion of the implications that a distributed notion of Self might have for newcomer integration in schools in terms of theory, policy, and pedagogy.

Chapter 2

Integration of new-arrival immigrants in francophone secondary schools: What's been done? What's been learned?

> Pour l'heure [selon Statistique Canada], l'intégration linguistique est défini uniquement en fonction de l'usage d'une langue officielle à la maison. Ainsi, un membre d'une communauté italienne, . . . peut avoir apris le français avant l'italien, en avoir une plus grande maîtrise, . . . mais, parce qu'il parle sa langue patrimoniale à la maison, il sera comptabilisé dans la catégorie des locuteurs italiens et non pas francophone (Jedwab, 1999, p. 55).
>
> *[For now, (according to Statistics Canada), linguistic integration is defined only by the use of one of the official languages at home. Thus, a member of the Italian community, . . . could have learned French before Italian, may have better mastered the former, . . . but, because he speaks his heritage language at home, he will be counted in the Italian-speakers category and not that of francophone]*[4]
>
> When I speak of the 'integration' of ethnic groups, then, I mean integration in this very specific sociocultural sense: the extent to which immigrants and their descendants integrate into an existing societal culture and come to view their life-chances as tied up with participation in the range of social institutions, based on a common language, which define that societal culture (Kymlicka, 1998, p. 28).
>
> [L]'intégration est un processus qui va dans les deux sens. Elle exige des efforts d'adaptation et l'adhésion aux valeurs communes de la part des élèves immigrants . . . mais aussi une ouverture à la diversité de la part du milieu social et scolaire qui les *accueille* (MEQ, 1998, p. 2).
>
> *[Integration is a process which works in two directions. It requires immigrant students to adapt and adhere to common values . . . but it also requires an openness to diversity in the social and scholastic milieu of the host society]*

1. Introduction

The integration of immigrants and minorities into the "French fact" in Quebec is a fairly new, unique and delicate phenomenon. New because only in the late 60s did the provincial government begin to assume some of the immigration

[4] All translations of French text are my own and immediately follow the excerpt within the main document.

authority it had previously abdicated to the federal government. Unique because of Quebec's minority status as one of two so-called "founding" peoples in an overwhelmingly English-dominant North America. And delicate because of the fine balance that Quebec, as a national minority, needs to achieve between preservation of "le fait français" *[the French fact]* and the non-francophone diversity of its immigrant-origin population. This delicate balancing act reveals the nature of the Quebec government's struggle to redefine its young and vulnerable "national" identity.

At the heart of Quebec's identity is its language. French language competence and use, therefore, are central and repeated themes in Quebec's immigrant integration policies and programs. Because language is such a pronounced marker of Quebec's distinct society claims as well as the ongoing political and social "conversation" (Weber, cited in Kymlicka, 1998, p. 175), it is difficult to discuss immigrant and minority integration in Quebec without discussing French language education programs. Because French-language education is mandatory for almost all immigrant school-age children, its *accueil* and *francisation*[5] programs can be explored as one of the key manifestations of Quebec's integration policy. Another key manifestation, though less well-developed in French language school curricula, is Quebec's commitment to intercultural education, a part of which identifies immigrants as valuable contributors to Quebec's society. The openness and flexibility demanded of any host culture which claims to embrace cultural pluralism are especially challenging for a "national-minority-gone-majority," as is the case for "les Québécois de souche."[6] Therefore, exploring policies and programs for the

[5] *Francisation* programs are distinct from *accueil* programs only in that they target allophone students who were either born in Quebec or who have been living in Quebec for five years or more and who are, thus, presumed to need only linguistic (and not social) integration. Otherwise the two programs are considered to be identitical in their design and goals.

[6] The phrases "Quebecois de souche" as well as "vieille souche" both roughly translate as "Old stock Quebeckers" and generally refer to French-speaking, Quebec-born members of the Quebec society who trace their ancestry to Quebec's French colonialists (mid 1500s). Dominated politically and economically by British colonialists from the middle of the 18th century, old stock Quebeckers have long been a minority in Canada. However, a shift in political and economic power within Quebec (marked by the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s and sovereignty referenda

integration of school-age immigrants and minorities in Quebec allows one to look more closely at the tensions inherent in Quebec's commitment to the embracing of diversity (inclusiveness) and the promotion of the distinct society (exclusiveness).

2. Holding our tongues: Nationhood, integration and the demolinguistic debate

While there are many models for assessing how well a newcomer "fits into" a given host culture, the model created by John Berry (1997) offers an explanation of integration which fits well with the ways in which integration is presented in Quebec's broad political orientations and specific education policies (see MEQ, 1998; MCCI, 1990). Based on responses to two questions[7], Berry's acculturation framework offers four options: integration, separation, assimilation or marginalization. Within that framework,

> [w]hen there is an interest in . . . maintaining one's original culture, while in daily interactions with other groups, *Integration* is the option; here, there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained, while at the same time seeking to participate as an integral part of the larger social network. (Berry, 1997, p. 9 original emphasis)

While such a definition of integration (especially in contrast to assimilation) is quite clear within Berry's framework, what is less clear is how integration within the specific context of the Quebec society is to be interpreted, defined, and assessed. What for some may be viewed as a healthy balance of immigrant accommodation and promotion of the French fact, may be viewed by others as a threat either to Quebec's solidarity or to its commitment to a pluriethnic society.

Perhaps the most telling tension in Quebec's definition of integration is found in the current debate among demolinguists (demographers studying language use and affiliation in Quebec) about how the state of the French

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in 1980 and 1995) has meant that French-speaking Quebeckers have achieved majority status within Quebec. Hence the phrase "national-minority-gone-majority."

[7] Berry's questions are as follows: "Is it considered to be of value to maintain one's identity and characteristics? Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with the larger society?" (Berry, 1997, p. 10).

language in Quebec can best be assessed. Language is often central to nationalist or nation-building agendas (see Wright, 2000; Crawford, 2000). Therefore, the recent investigation by an Estates General Commission into the current state and future of French in Quebec can be interpreted as being as much (if not more) about assessing the risks of immigration and integration as it is about the relative health of the French language. Very briefly, the demolinguistic debate can be summed up as follows. One side claims that the state of the French language should be assessed as it has always been assessed by Statistics Canada, that is by counting the number of people who claim French as their mother tongue. The other side of the debate claims that such an assessment of French is neither accurate nor in keeping with Quebec's claim to embrace the pluralism of its society. Rather, advocates of this perspective argue for an assessment of French as a common language of public interaction. Those who favour a public-use assessment of French argue that mother-tongue assessments are inaccurate in two ways: First, they ignore multilingualism as a Quebec reality, and second, they fail to assess the extent to which French use predominates in Quebec's social institutions (e.g., Beland, 2001; Piché, 2001). Those who favour a private or mother-tongue assessment of French argue that if French is not the language in most homes, it will soon no longer be the language used in most public interactions (e.g., Termote, 2001; Lachapelle, 2001).

While the debate might appear, on the surface, to be quite narrow and concern only those demographers charged with assessing the condition of Quebec's official language, it is important to remember that the debate is quite literally about defining who is a French speaker and who isn't; who is "linguistically integrated" and who isn't; who's in and who's out. At a more symbolic level, the debate captures the ambiguity with which Quebec approaches its dual agenda to both embrace its pluriethnicity and solidify its identity as a distinct society.

3. Ambiguity: Accommodating pluralism and unity in Quebec's integration policies

I argue in this section that such ambiguity is at the heart of Quebec's integration policies and programs. Like Letourneau and Ruel (1994), I view this discourse of ambiguity as the means by which Quebec expresses both tolerance for pluriethnicity and protection of the "French fact." I begin with an overview of the development of Quebec's involvement in integration policy-making. I then focus on the policy orientations of cultural convergence and interculturalism. Finally, I discuss the ways in which these larger nation-province orientations are manifest in education policy.

3.1 Quebec's immigrant and minority integration policies: Some history

While Quebec has long been a province with a diverse immigrant population (primarily in Montreal), its government has only recently begun to take an interest and active role in the integration of the diverse cultures that make up its population. As Bauer (1994) points out, Article 95 of the British North American Act (the Constitution Act of 1867) allows provinces legislative power in immigration matters as long as that legislation does not contradict Canadian federal law. However, until the 1970s no province took full and consistent advantage of that legislative privilege. Reasons for Quebec's delayed assumption of immigration authority are summarized by Black and Hagen (1993). The authors explain that while Quebec (like other provinces) was initially involved in the selection of immigrants through overseas offices in the 1870s, this involvement was short-lived. Subsequent to the federal government's closure of provincial overseas immigration recruitment offices, Quebec's interest in immigration waned for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was its inability to attract and keep the kind of immigrants it preferred – "Catholic French-speaking immigrants, principally from France and Belgium" (Bauer, 1994 p. 282). With time, Quebec became increasingly suspicious of what it perceived as anglophone dominance through immigration. Somewhat

ironically, Quebec's response to this suspicion was one of self-segregation (protection of the French "nation" through the Catholic church) which further encouraged immigrants to Quebec to integrate into the anglophone community. Only after World War II did Quebec's self-protective stance toward immigration begin to change. Many of the factors that Black and Hagen (1993) mention as having contributed to Quebec's change in perspective on immigration, then, are the same factors that maintain its now much more active role in both immigrant selection and integration: low birth rate of "Québécois de souche," concern about the anglicization of immigrants, increasing politicization over linguistic dominance, and increased awareness of weaknesses in federal immigration policies (lack of a coherent plan and a failure to consider Quebec's specific needs in immigrant selection).

Subsequent to the 1969 Official Languages Act, Prime Minister Trudeau's promotion of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework" was perceived by Quebec as reducing its status as a founding nation to that of merely one minority group among many in the larger, English-dominant Canada. Quebec would respond to that federal policy first in 1974 and then again with the provincial election of the Parti Québécois in 1976. It is not until 1981, with the publication of the Quebec government's policy on ethnic integration, that Quebec's response to multiculturalism is made official through the policy of *cultural convergence*:

> Minority cultures were expected to converge toward this central [francophone Quebec] culture, enriching and strengthening it, while at the same time obtaining guarantees of their own cultural security in exchange for their participation in a [collective cultural project]. (Hagan, 1996 p. 55)

3.2 From cultural convergence to *interculturalisme*: Embracing ambiguity

Tension between reinforcement of the majority francophone culture and a genuine embracing of cultural diversity has more recently led the provincial government to a discourse that both Hagen (1996) and McAndrew (1995) argue resembles something much more like multiculturalism, a discourse which emphasizes the exchange between cultures and the value of diverse cultures'

contributions to the Quebec collectivity. This new *interculturalisme* discourse is most evident in the three principles[8] which make up the "moral contract" in *Au Québec pour bâtir ensemble* (Ministère des Communautés Culturelles et de l'Immigration du Québec, 1990). In this document, "the province's first comprehensive, *government-wide* policy statement on immigration and integration" (Hagen, p. 62), the "moral contract" reveals a subtle shift away from cultural convergence toward cultural pluralism. While continuing to emphasize French as the common public language of the Quebec society, these principles also state as a goal the construction of a *pluralist* Quebec. The commitment to pluralism does, however, seem somewhat ambiguous. In describing the importance of preserving French as a marker of Quebec's distinctiveness, the document states that "l'immigration peut et doit renforcer le fait français au Quebec" [*immigration can and must reinforce the French fact*] (MCCI, 1990 p. 13); and yet the "contrat moral" describes the Quebec society as being "une societé pluraliste ouverte aux multiple apports dans les limites qu'imposent le respect des valeurs démocratiques" [*a pluralist society open to a variety of contributions within the limits imposed by respecting democratic values*] (p. 15). Yet, as Hagen (1996) points out, funding for cultural and linguistic retention (through heritage programs) had been cut by more than half between the years 1985 and 1991. Azzam (1995) also points out that programs for the maintenance of heritage languages (Programmes d'enseignement des langues d'origine--PELO) originally intended to be integrated into the school day, quickly became after-school programs and that, at the time of writing, only received .02% of the education budget. Overall, *Au Québec pour bâtir ensemble* seems to openly *recognize* the pluralistic reality of Quebec but does not entirely embrace pluralism as part of its new identity.

The ambiguous commitment to pluralism in *Au Québec pour bâtir ensemble* is most evident when its relatively non-committal language and

[8] (a) a society in which French students the common public language; (b) a democratic society in which everyone is expected to participate and to which everyone is encouraged to contribute; (c) a pluralist society open to multiple contributions within the limits imposed by respect for fundamental democratic values and the need for cross-cultural exchanges [translated from *Au Québec pour bâtir ensemble*, 1990, p. 15).

messages are compared to the firm recommendations offered by the Conseil des relations interculturelles (1997) to the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration in *Un Québec pour tous ses citoyens: les défis actuels d'une démocratie pluraliste (version abrégée)*. While acknowledging Quebec's difficulty with embracing diversity, the document argues that a unified citizenry is more likely to occur if integration into a Quebec society (rather than a French one) is encouraged. With Quebec rather than language as the focus, the document recommends that Quebec's common civic culture be one which emphasizes the contributions of anglophones, allophones, aboriginal, and other ethnocultural groups to a collective Quebec heritage. With this highly inclusive integration philosophy, it is not surprising to find that the recommendations for the public sector emphasize inclusive moves to be taken on the part of the host society. Recommendations for improving integration into education include: (a) development of intercultural education through citizenship and history education, antiracism education, (b) PELO programs to be integrated into the school day, (c) improvement of the quality of "*francisation*" programs through a global study of *francisation* program models, (d) precise MEQ-defined limits of diversity accommodation in education, and (e) clear identification of the elements of the curriculum it considers to be non-negotiable.

3.4 Education policy: Diversity development and persistent ambiguity

While cultural and linguistic diversity is a phenomenon which challenges the traditional administrative and curricular boundaries of French-language public schools in Quebec, it is a phenomenon quite intentionally developed by the Quebec government[9]. Within less than a decade (1969-1977) several laws were passed by the Quebec government, laws that dramatically changed the cultural

[9] It is important to note here that until very recently (1998), Quebec's educational system was divided along confessional lines (Protestant and Catholic) with the large majority of English-speaking Quebeckers attending Protestant schools and the large majority of French-speaking Quebeckers attending Catholic schools. A small percentage of schools in the Catholic school board offered English-language education and a small number of schools in the Protestant school board offered French-language education. Because of the isolationist policy promoted by the Catholic church in Quebec, until the 1960s the Catholic school board offered no mechanism for immigrant children to be educated in French.

and linguistic make-up of Quebec's public school populations, especially those of Montreal. What follows is a brief overview of those laws and the language programs that have developed in response.

In the late 1960s, the Catholic School Commission of Montreal attempted to mandate unilingual French education in all schools. Loud opposition from the English-educated (and anglophone-integrated) Italian community of St. Léonard stopped the Commission from achieving its goal; but the conflict led to the passing of Bill 63 in 1969, a law which confirmed free choice in language of education but which required the study of French in all public schools. It is at this time that *classe d'accueil* began. "[S]et up as an incentive to attract students to the French school system, [t]hese [ten-month] classes for new immigrants [were] mainly concerned with helping students acquire a degree of fluency in French while providing an introduction to other subjects useful to their integration into regular classes and with developing positive attitudes toward the host (Quebec) community" (d'Anglejan & De Koninck, 1992, p. 99).

Persisting in its promotion of French as the dominant language of Quebec, the provincial government, in 1974, passed another law which began to constrain allophones[10] in their choice of language-of-education. Bill 22 mandated all allophone students who were not already fluent in English (or close to it) to attend French-language schools, and English fluency tests were administered (Vincent & Proulx, 1993). The passing of Bill 101 (the French Language Charter) in 1977 meant (initially) that English-language schools would be available only to children who had a parent who had attended English-language schools in Quebec. Because part of the law contradicted the Canadian Charter of Rights and Liberties, it was changed in 1984 to include children one of whose parents had attended English-language primary school anywhere in Canada. This problematic attempt at integration was exacerbated, as McAndrew (1993) points out, by the fact that

[10] People who speak neither English nor French as their mother tongue.

> the majority groups of immigrant origin . . . had . . . to accept integration into a group socially less favoured than the anglophone community to which they used to identify and also to redefine . . . their own pan-Canadian identity to a 'Québécois' identity. (p. 7)

To appease and attract the minority communities, in 1978 the Ministry of Education (MEQ) mandated PELO classes as an obligatory offering in all French-language schools. These mother tongue maintenance classes were initially integrated into the regular school day to facilitate immigrant students' subject-matter learning as well as second language learning and to support the students' culturally and linguistically distinct identity as acceptable in the school milieu. For a variety of reasons (to be discussed in the "intercultural education" section to follow), the now 'after-school' PELO classes have been increasingly marginalized despite the fact that they are an obligatory offering in schools with a sufficient number of interested, same-language, immigrant-origin students. In 1985, a version of these classes (Programs de langues ethniques, PLE) began to be offered by various ethnic communities in the form of after-school or weekend programs partially subsidized by the government. Since 1993, the government has ceased to provide any funding for PLE programs (Azzam, 1995).

In keeping with the government's emphasis on "compensatory" rather than "maintenance" language programs (d'Anglejan & De Koninck, 1992), "*les classes de francisation*" were formed, in 1981, to respond to the needs of allophone or anglophone students who had been in Quebec for more than five years and who were considered to be "dans leur grande majorité, assez bien adaptés aux réalités nord américaines et Québécoises" (MEQ, 1986, p. 9) [*on the whole, rather well adapted to North American and Quebecois realities*]. In schools or regions where there is an insufficient number of non-francophone students to form *accueil* or *francisation* classes, allophone students are provided support through "*mesures spéciales d'accueil ou de francisation*" (commonly referred to simply as "mesures"). In the *mesures* program, students are withdrawn from their mainstream classes at designated times during their school day in order to receive intensive French instruction (MEQ, 1996 p. 4). In 1988,

the MEQ began to provide special funding for schools with highly multiethnic populations in an effort to accelerate the learning of French, and the subsequent mainstreaming of allophone students. Part of this effort was manifest in the formation of a new kind of compensatory language program: *soutien linguistique* (language support), a program which offers extra support in French for students who have recently (within two years) joined the mainstream.

Today, non-francophone immigrant and minority students are, *in theory*, provided with essentially two kinds of language support during their school career: (a) an initial, intensive linguistic bath: *accueil, francisation, mesures;* and (b) extra language support after having completed the initial language program: *soutien linguistique.*

4. From policies to programs: Secondary school programs for immigrant integration

Two characteristics of Quebec's scholastic integration program dominate the above summary of its development: the emphasis on French language learning programs and the absence of cultural diversity education for both immigrant-origin students and the Québécois peers with whom they are intended to integrate. In this section, I discuss the nature of *accueil* and *francisation* programs and the most recent MEQ plans for intercultural education. To situate my description of these two integration programs, I begin with a demolinguistic overview of the allophone students at the heart of the integration agenda.

Over the past 30 years, Quebec schools have experienced an important shift in their immigrant populations. Until the end of the 1960s, a large majority of immigrant students came from Europe and North America, whereas today they come predominantly from Asia, the Antilles, Africa, and South America. Until the passing of Bill 101 in 1977, most allophones attended English-

language schools, whereas today, 80% of them attend French-language schools (MEQ, 1998)[11]. While allophone students comprise less than one-tenth of Quebec's public school population, they represent one-third of Montreal's French-language school sector, and one-fourth of its English-language sector. Furthermore, just as immigrants tend to group in urban centres rather than dispersing evenly across the whole of Quebec, so, too, do they tend to be more present in some school commissions than others. Thus, while one Montreal school commission may have only a one-tenth allophone population, another one might have close to half .

Perhaps more important than the size of the allophone public school population is the diversity of allophones enrolled in the *accueil* and *francisation* programs. Since 1989 the number of students enrolled in these programs (throughout Quebec) has been steadily over 13,000 per year, with the enrolment in *accueil* at just over double that of *francisation.* Based on data gathered over a five-year period (1989-1994), of first-time *accueil* and *francisation* students only (to avoid double counting students who stay in the program for more than one year), 200 countries and 155 languages were found to be represented among the total population. Of those, 34 countries and 22 languages had a minimum of 350 students representing them (MEQ, 1996). As one might imagine, such wide cultural and linguistic diversity presents *accueil and francisation* programs with some important challenges.

4.1 French language learning programs: Current guidelines and plans for the future

Because *accueil and francisation* classes at both the primary and secondary levels are intended to be a one-time, ten-month intensive linguistic and socio-cultural preparation for mainstream classes, there is not, as is the case with most mainstream programs, the assumption of cohesion or collaboration in preparing

[11] Allophone students eligible to enrol in English-language schools include those whose mother tongue is neither English nor French, but who have one parent who received primary school education in English in Canada (e.g. child of a linguistically-mixed marriage) or students whose parents are temporary residents in Quebec (e.g. visiting scholars, foreign dignitaries).

students in the first year of the program for the second (slightly more advanced) year and so on. Therefore, teachers of *accueil and francisation* can neither assume a certain accumulation of subject-specific knowledge nor teach toward a clearly specified point in their subject matter, knowing the torch will be carried on by the teacher who follows. Rather, the *accueil and francisation* programs are intended to prepare their students to enter *all* mainstream classes; a rather formidable goal. In secondary schools the reaching of such goals is typically complicated by students' varied levels of education and language (ranging from mother-tongue illiterate to highly educated); varied ages (ranging from 12-18 years old); and an often highly "mobile" enrolment (MEQ, 1996 p. 9). Students may be enrolled in *accueil* at any time during the year (depending on the time of arrival of the family in Quebec) and students in both *accueil* and *francisation* may exit out of those classes into the mainstream when they are considered ready by the *accueil or francisation* teacher and approved by the school administration.

As the predominant link to the native-speaker world, *accueil and francisation* teachers are often looked to as the primary source of allophone students' integration. Explicit in their instructional guides are language as well as sociocultural objectives.

> [D]onner à l'élève non-francophone les moyens de pouvoir "communiquer son expérience" et de pouvoir s'ouvrir sur "le monde, sur les personnes et sur les choses, en vue d'en découvrir la nature et la diversité." (MEQ 1979 cited in MEQ 1986, p. 10)
>
> *[Give the non-francophone student the means to be able to "communicate his experience" and to be able to be open to "the world, people and things with the purpose of discovering their nature and diversity."]*
>
> [D]évelopper chez l'élève non-francophone une attitude positive envers la langue française et la société francophone. . . . [et] "permettre à l'adolescent de poursuivre sa formation générale et de s'orienter dans la vie en se situant comme individu qui fait partie d'une collectivité." (ibid)
>
> *[Develop in non-francophone students a positive attitude toward the French language and the francophone society. . . . and "allow*

adolescent students to pursue their education and to position themselves in life as an individual who is part of a collective."]

> [R]especter l'identité de l'élève et les valeurs qui lui sont propres, afin qu'il puisse s'intégrer graduellement mais harmonieusement dans notre société. . . . tenir compte de son vécu et de ses expériences antérieurs tout en le familiarisant aux réalités socioculturelles du Québec. (p. 16)
>
> *[Respect the student's identity and the values which belong to him, so that he might integrate gradually but harmoniously into our society. . . . take his past experiences into account while familiarizing him with sociocultural realities of Quebec.]*

While the familiar diversity-versus-unity tension is fairly obvious in these directives, in the end these somewhat vague objectives are translated (or not) into practice according to the teacher's biases and interpretations of "self-expression, openness to diversity, and the sociocultural realities of Quebec." Thus, while it is important to make note of the educational orientation promoted by the MEQ, the program philosophy and objectives don't necessarily tell us very much about the real impact of these programs. To the extent that such an impact can be assessed through empirical studies, I discuss (in the section "Measuring our success") how these programs (as well as those of intercultural education) have interpreted the policies from which they developed.

Based on studies conducted and published by the MEQ in 1996, however, a 1998 education policy document (*Une école d'avenir: Politique d'intégration scolaire et d'éducation interculturelle*) makes several recommendations for the improvement of *accueil* and *francisation* programs: (a) *accueil* students should enter the mainstream more quickly – the tendency has been to keep these language learners in *accueil* programs for up to three years; (b) *accueil* students should be provided with more support once they have entered the mainstream; (c) language learners who are at risk should be identified more quickly (MEQ, 1996, pp. 22-25). While the recommendations are somewhat general, they speak to some of the key program weaknesses identified in my data analysis (Chapters 6 and 7).

4.2 Intercultural education: Past efforts and plans for the future

Until the publishing of *Une école d'avenir: Politique d'intégration scolaire et d'éducation interculturelle* (MEQ, 1998), Quebec had not had an official intercultural education policy. However, initiatives for cultural diversity education, taken locally by individual schools and the post-1989 opening up of the PELO program to students of all origins, can be recognized as early attempts at an intercultural approach to education.

4.2.1 Past efforts

The 1989 change in the PELO mandate represents, in principle, a shift away from the linguistic and cultural maintenance of immigrant-origin students toward a form of intercultural education intended as diversity education for the host society. In practice, however, PELO has long been a marginalized program. Shortly after its initiation in the schools, it was removed from the regular day schedule and quickly became an extra-curricular activity on a par and in competition with other after-school sports, clubs, etcetera. While PELO programs have grown from 3 languages and 118 students to 13 languages and over 6,700 students, they are widely considered a failure. Only 13% of immigrant-origin children in elementary schools attended PELO classes in 1993 and PELO classes have never been offered in the secondary schools (Azzam, 1995). The absence of PELO classes in secondary schools has persisted despite numerous studies which indicate a positive relationship between mother tongue maintenance and host-language learning. (See Cummins' discussion of these studies and his Interdependence Hypothesis in Cummins, 2000, 1981.) With the increasing emphasis in political and educational discourse on the promotion of a common civic culture, PELO, despite the 1989 change in its mandate, has been seen as a program that addresses the private matter of language and culture maintenance (Azzam, 1995).

Public requests for recognition of cultural diversity, however, did lead to grassroots and *ad hoc* efforts by various schools to recognize diversity and

embrace pluralism in the mid to late 1980s (McAndrew, 2001). However, it wasn't until the 1998 MEQ policy document that an official stance on intercultural education was established in Quebec. As with the French language program recommendations, the intercultural education recommendations have yet to be implemented in the secondary school system.

4.2.2 Plans for the future

Not surprisingly, the MEQ's 1998 intercultural education policy presents the ongoing mastery and valuing of French as its first two guiding "orientations." It suggests that no one is ever finished learning French, or any language for that matter (MEQ, 1998, p. 27). French, as the common language of public life, is promoted as the tool by which Québécois "de toutes origines" can "établir des liens et bâtir des projets communs" [*of all origins can establish connections and build common projects*] (p. 28). However, the third policy orientation strongly emphasizes a celebration of Quebec's heritage and values as an "axe majeur" [*central element*] of immigrant integration and seems to background the value of cultural diversity.

> Il importe que les établissements d'enseignement fassent partager, à l'ensemble des élèves et particulièrement à ceux et celles qui sont nouvellement arrivés, le patrimoine du Québec, son histoire, ses valeurs et ses coutumes, la fierté de ses acquis dans tous les domaines. La reconnaissance de la spécificité francophone de la société d'*accueil* dans le contexte nord-américain est un axe majeur de l'approche qu'on doit favoriser pour intégrer les élèves immigrants et immigrantes. Par ailleurs, il importe, dans une approche inclusive, de mettre en évidence les apports multiples . . . de tous les membres de la société Québécoise, quelle que soit leur origine. (p. 29)
>
> [*It is important that teaching establishments share with all students, and particularly new-arrival students, Quebec's patrimony, heritage, values, customs and pride in its achievements in all domains. Recognition of the specifically francophone nature of the host society in the North American context is a central element of the approach one must take in order to integrate immigrant students. Furthermore, it is important, in an inclusive approach, to make evident the multiple contributions of all members of the Quebec society, regardless of their origin.*]

The emphasis on the "specifically francophone nature of the host society" as a "central element" is followed by the subsequent suggestion that the contributions of all members should be valued "regardless of their origin." Thus questions arise as to how both inclusion and the Quebecois culture will be simultaneously accommodated.

This policy frequently attempts to balance elements of social cohesion with some form of respect for or recognition of cultural diversity. This effort toward balance is evident also in the core program which includes courses such as citizenship education (emphasis on individual rights and responsibilities), third language learning (which recognizes PELO program languages and aboriginal languages), an introduction to world religion, national history emphasizing "la contribution de la minorité anglophone et des amérindiens, . . . de groupes d'origines variées . . . au développement de notre société . . . mémoire et . . . identité collective" (MEQ, 1998, p. 31). [*the contribution of the anglophone minority . . ., the amerindiens. . ., groups of various origins . . . to the development of our society . . . memory and . . . collective identity.*] The more inclusive attitude suggested in the national history course descriptor is supported by the fourth and fifth intercultural education "orientations": cultural diversity training for school employees, and better ethnocultural representation in the educational workforce.

While this policy certainly presents a fairly balanced approach to intercultural education, it remains to be seen how its ideas are incorporated into educational practice. Since this is a new policy which has not yet been implemented at all levels of public schooling, studies of its manifestation in practice have not yet been completed. However, studies of past efforts of immigrant educational integration shed light on how well this new policy might address the needs of immigrant students.

5. Measuring our success: Studies of linguistic, academic and social integration in schools

This section provides a synopsis of the focus, methodology, and findings of various empirical studies of students' educational integration in Quebec's public schools (primarily secondary and college levels). It should be noted that many studies discussed here were thematically grouped and reviewed in Denise Helly's *Revue des études ethniques au Québec*. In that review, Helly (1997) looks at literature across many social domains (workplace, housing, social services, etc.) over a nineteen-year period (1977-1996). Within the domain of education, she attempts to be as exhaustive as possible but admits that she may have missed a few texts. I will follow her lead and begin this literature review with the same disclaimer. Also, rather than providing a broad overview of the wide variety of issues related to educational integration (e.g., school-community relationships, racial prejudice in textbooks), I describe and discuss those studies which focus most closely on students themselves and schools' responses to the needs of their diverse student populations. I do not, therefore, specifically address other pertinent but more peripheral topics such as school-parent relationships, teacher training, and the effects of poverty on school success (though these issues are touched on in some of the studies presented here). What follows is a description of Quebec- (generally Montreal-) based studies grouped into four themes: (a) school stakeholders' perceptions of and responses to official discourse on integration; (b) allophone students' linguistic integration; (c) ethnic minority students' social integration; and (d) ethnic minority students' overall scholastic integration. I provide a synopsis of key themes at the end of each of those four subsections and conclude my review of this literature with a discussion of what these studies do and do not tell us about new-arrival immigrants' integration into and beyond secondary school.

5.1 School stakeholders' perceptions and responses to official discourse on educational integration

The term 'stakeholders' refers to all those people who are engaged in, directly or indirectly, the integration of immigrant students into Quebec schools. Stakeholders, therefore, include the students, their parents, members of the school boards and ministry of education, school personnel and adult members of the larger communities in which schools are located. Most of the studies addressing this topic, however, emphasize certain stakeholders over others; in the studies described here, adult stakeholders' voices dominate.

In her interview-based study of the education of immigrants in economically disadvantaged areas of Montreal, Anne Laperrière (1984) encountered many contradictory perspectives regarding scholastic integration. Francophone teachers tended to focus their attention strictly on pedagogical issues and reported that, except for students in schools with a high concentration of ethnic minorities, immigrant children have little or no difficulty integrating. Indeed, immigrant children were seen as doing better than the other children. Administrators, however, had a much broader vision of integration and thus remarked on the various struggles (with language, cultural differences, racist attitudes) that immigrant students (and their teachers) had to overcome. For administrators and other non-teaching staff, then, educational integration was *not* unproblematic. Ethnic-community-member teachers agreed with the views held by the administration and reproached English- and French-Québécois teachers for maintaining such a narrow interpretation of integration, one that manifests in a failure to incorporate children's ethnic cultures into classroom instruction, discomfort with the use of languages other than French or English, and prejudice (disguised as a moral standard) against cultural difference. These same teachers as well as other members of the ethnic community also criticized the schools for the humiliation as well as the delay in education that students suffer when they are placed in special classes to compensate for their linguistic and cultural differences.

In keeping with their views of where the problems lie, each of the three respondent groups (Québécois teachers, administrators, and ethnic community members) recommended different solutions to their perception of immigrant children's problems with school integration. The Québécois teachers emphasized a need for more instructional support (make-up classes, speech specialist, new ministry norms) and criticized programs such as PELO which they perceived as hindering the students' progress in French. School administrators tended to emphasize the need for a framework of appropriate school norms whereas ethnic community members emphasized the need for recognition of and respect for ethnic cultures.

In their study of the socio-educational integration of primary school students, Cumming-Potvin, Lessard, and McAndrew (1994) compare official documents produced by the Quebec government about integration in the schools with the views of parents, teachers and administrators interviewed in two of Montreal's francophone schools. All stakeholders in both schools agreed that the learning of French should be the priority for students' integration. "Intercultural education" (an approach promoted by the MEQ), however, was considered by most (especially teachers) to be an unclear and inconsistently used term. As was found in the previously discussed study, the predominantly Québécois francophone teachers were also ambivalent about the value of mother tongue maintenance. The views of "vieille souche" Québécois parents matched those of the teachers in that they, too, were uncomfortable with the notion of intercultural education and what it means specifically for the relative position of the Quebec culture and the French language in the school curriculum.

The authors also found that most of the ministerial money intended for the integration of immigrant and ethnic minority students was, in these two schools, dedicated to *accueil* structures and some curricula; but very little of it was dedicated to teacher training and student assessment. In terms of the comparison of the interviewees' views with those expressed in official government documents, the authors found that the cornerstone of the 1990 government document (*Au Québec pour bâtir ensemble*) – "le contrat moral" –

was not manifest or accommodated in either school. The authors argue that because the "vieille souche" Québécois parents are reticent to allow immigrants to determine the direction and development of French learning in the school, and because immigrant parents (who do not feel accepted by the host society) are reticent to participate in school life, the final goal of the "contrat moral" – to build a pluralist Quebec society – is unlikely to be achieved.

While a comparative analysis of Quebec's approach to educational integration with those of other Canadian provinces might not be especially pertinent for my focus here, it is from just such a comparative perspective that the next two studies to be discussed present stakeholders' views. McAndrew, Jacquet, and Ciceri (1997) provide something of a panoramic view of how schools across Canada accommodate diversity. Messier (1997) offers a more tightly focused comparison between Toronto's and Montreal's welcoming/*accueil* programs. While Messier's comparison may have the effect of encouraging alternative ways of addressing the diverse needs of a very diverse student population, McAndrew et al.'s comparison might be used for more political ends, that is, as a way of perhaps suggesting that Quebec (despite its nationalist agenda) is just as inclusive of its immigrant population as are other provinces. However, such interpretations of the motives of these researchers' comparative orientations are only conjecture and they are not essential for understanding these next two studies' findings.

McAndrew et al. (1997) use Quebec's "contrat moral" and the pluralist reality of many Canadian provinces as a backdrop for their five-province study of public school accommodation of religious and cultural diversity. Through questionnaires sent to education professionals in school boards and ministries of education in Alberta, Ontario, British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Quebec, the authors solicited information about how schools in each province have responded to requests for cultural and religious diversity accommodation made by minority-culture people. The authors found that the large majority of requests were made by individuals, not organizations, and that almost all of these requests were negotiated on site on an individual basis. While most of the

respondents believed accommodation requests had increased over the past ten years, they also believed that the accommodations made (mostly for clothing, religion, or school programs) improved the school climate. Schools were said to be concerned with how well they reflected the diversity of their clientele. The authors conclude that there is more agreement across provinces about how to respond to diversity in the schools than the popular media would lead us to believe.

In a study comparing services offered to new arrival immigrant students (secondary and primary) in Montreal and Toronto, Marielle Messier (1997) discusses important differences in the organization, pedagogical approaches and available resources of Montreal's *accueil* and Toronto's ESL programs. The author finds that Toronto offers a wider variety of ESL programs and services which allow for earlier mainstreaming and a decrease in second language students' isolation from their mainstream peers (p. 103). Furthermore, as the Toronto students are mainstreamed more quickly, the responsibility for teaching this particular clientele does not fall solely on the shoulders of the language specialist teacher (suggesting a cross-disciplinary view of language learning, rather than one of language as a prerequisite to learning). In Montreal, however, Messier finds the *accueil* model to be comparatively constrained, offering essentially the same model to all students (regardless of age) and isolating students in *accueil* classes until they are deemed (by the specialist *accueil* teachers) linguistically ready for the mainstream. For Montreal's *accueil* program, therefore, Messier recommends the following: (a) a more thorough evaluation of the new students' academic knowledge (in the mother tongue), (b) pairing new students with old-timer peers and (c) mother tongue tutorials to ensure that students have integrated important basic concepts.

The tensions between preservation of the "French fact" and recognition of Quebec's cultural diversity described in the first two studies reflect the unity-versus-diversity ambiguity in the policy documents previously described. A dominant theme across all of the studies is the dominant role of host-language learning. While it is evident that many would disagree with its conclusions and

recommendations, the final study suggests that a language-focused understanding of integration creates a relatively inflexible educational system. The study suggests that this inflexibility means that schools fail to recognize attributes (other than host-language proficiency and use) and complexities of their students, and have a limited sense of how to accommodate new arrival students in their social and academic integration.

5.2 Linguistic integration: Studies of language use in schools

As the variety and number of immigrant-origin students have increased in Montreal's public schools, so has concern about the linguistic environment in schools. In their study of the relationship between the concentration of ethnic minorities and language use in Montreal schools, McAndrew, Veltman, Lemire, and Rossell (1999, 2000) surveyed school personnel, interviewed secondary students, and observed both primary and secondary students in school halls and cafeterias. Like Beauchesne and Hensler (1987), the authors found that French predominates in schools both in comparison with English and with other languages. The authors explain that in schools where there is a lot of English being spoken this is often not because it is being used as the *lingua franca* among allophones but because it is the mother tongue of anglophones who have chosen to attend francophone schools (McAndrew et al., 2000). Overall, the authors found young allophones and anglophones to be absolutely convinced of the value of multilingualism. They are described as very attached to their mother tongue as well as very sensitive to the national and international status of languages. While the authors recognize ethnolinguistic composition as a central factor determining the linguistic dynamics of any given school, they also recommend that any intervention on behalf of improving the status of French in the schools should be an intervention of complementarity and not competition, one of personal enrichment not one of obligation.

In her recent presentation of research-in-progress, Lamarre (2001) echoes McAndrew et al. (1999) by drawing attention to young immigrants' valuing of multilingualism. Based on research focusing on trilingualism among

Montreal cégep (*collège d'éducation générale et professionnelle)*[12] students, the author argues that young allophones have long been multilingual. While they express difficulty with maintaining high levels of written ability in all languages, these allophone students unwaveringly value multilingualism as permitting marketability and mobility in both the national and international workforce. Lamarre concludes, therefore, that rather than promoting French alone, the Quebec government needs to strike a balance of promoting both French and other languages. She recommends more emphasis on PELO programs in combination with those programs (*accueil, francisation,* and *mesures,* for example) supported by the French language charter. Taking sides in the demolinguistic debate discussed at the beginning of this chapter, she also recommends changing the current definition of linguistic integration (as it is currently defined by Statistics Canada – see Jedwab citation beneath chapter title) from the language of the home to the language of public exchange.

Perhaps it is because language learning and teaching have been adopted as practically synonymous with integration that there are not more studies which focus specifically on language choice, use and attitude. The two articles reviewed in this section have a strong common message: allophone youth highly value multilingualism and so should Quebec.

5.3 Social integration: Studies of attitudes and intergroup relations in schools

Using the Bogardus Social Distance Scale, Beauchesne, Limoges, and Paul (1983) compare the interethnic attitudes and social distance of adolescent Indochinese immigrants to Quebec with those of "vieille souche" Québécois. Through a series of nine statements (decreasing in social distance from "I would accept that they visit my country" to "I would accept to marry them"), with which students either agree or disagree, the scale is designed to reveal the extent to which one group wishes to associate with another. While the scale isn't designed to reveal the specific sentiments or prejudices of one group toward

[12] Cégep is the acronym used in French for colleges in Quebec that offer pre-university and vocational programs to post-secondary students.

another, it does reveal each group's degree of acceptance of the other group. In this particular study of 67 Québécois and the same number of Indochinese secondary students in Montreal, the authors found that the Indochinese students were much more interested in diminishing the social distance with their Québécois peers than the Québécois were in diminishing that same social distance. Furthermore, this relative openness to the "other" held true in each group's attitude toward another school group identified as "les Espagnols." The Indochinese students expressed the same degree of openness to this group as they expressed toward the Québécois, and the Québécois expressed the same desire to maintain quite a bit of social distance. Drawing on the findings from an earlier study of identity in the same cohort of students, the authors interpret the differing degrees of desired social distance between the two groups as attributable to their sense of national identity in the Quebec context. The authors explain that especially within the context of Quebec nationalism, "vieille souche" Québécois are much more confident in their sense of identity and, therefore, have no need or desire to diminish the distance with their other-ethnicity peers. The Indochinese students, being immigrants to the Quebec society, have a more destabilised sense of identity and thus express the opposite tendency. With regard to the Indochinese students' openness to the "Espagnols," the authors suggest that due to the relative difficulty that Indochinese students encounter in their attempts at relations with their Québécois peers, the former group is equally attracted to the next largest group of students in the school, the Espagnols. Thus, from these findings, the authors conclude that it is possible that the simple fact of being an immigrant can promote an attitude of openness toward other minority groups.

In her comparative study of interethnic relations in demographically contrasting secondary school contexts, Laperrière (1990) finds that the pursuit of friendship and complicity are the most powerful forces behind interethnic relations. Based on interviews with natural friendship groups in two schools (one having a predominantly Québécois population and the other having an ethnically mixed population) the study (see also Laperrière, Compère, D'Khissy,

Doce, Filion, Fleurant, & Vendette, 1992) suggested that identity tensions were much less present for the Québécois population than for their Haitian and Italian peers. The authors also noticed differences in how each ethnicity's perspectives of themselves and others evolved over time. While the Québécois moved from tolerance-by-"indifferentism" (ignoring differences) to an increasing consciousness of cultural differences, the Italians did quite the opposite, moving from a more rigid position of defending their culture against others in secondary 1 toward a much less defensive stance by secondary 5. The Haitians had an entirely different approach; from secondary 1 onward they sought a culturally mixed rapport of racial equality with the "other." Laperrière et al. (1992) view the Haitian students as having the most mature and nuanced definition of identity, but also as most vulnerable to interethnic tensions. Part of this vulnerability is attributed to a lack of support from the Haitian students' adult community, support that the authors feel is much more present for Italian students.

In another analysis of the same database, Laperrière, Compère, D'Khissy, Doce, Filion, Fleurant, and Vendette (1994a) find that those students who take defensive refuge in their own ethnicity (assimilationist Québécois, traditionalist Italians, militant isolationist Blacks) see cultural exchange as costing their own group too much. However, those students who have "blended in to the pluricultural landscape" (Québécois and Italian individualists, Italian Quebefiles, and Italo-Canadians) have achieved a mixed personal identity. To explain the more defensive stance of each group, the authors identify specific elements of both micro- and macro-cultures that they believe may influence interethnic perceptions among these three groups: (the presence or absence of) respect for the ethnic group by the wider society, institutional completeness within the ethnic group, knowledge of English and resulting ties to a larger North American identity, ethnic enclave or entrepreneurship creating jobs for less qualified members of that ethnicity, discrimination, and movement from a traditional to a modern society. In another article focusing specifically on the more ethnically-mixed school, Laperrière, Compère, D'Khissy, Doce, Filion,

Fleurant, and Vendette (1994b) conclude that such an ethnically diverse school context is the best place for interethnic relations because no one group can turn entirely inward without seriously limiting its friendship possibilities. The authors also found that while the highly multicultural nature of the school population initially shocks new students, those students are also able to be interested in that diversity while remaining faithful to their parents' values. The ability to achieve such a balance is partly attributed to the message conveyed by parents of students from all ethnic groups (including the Québécois), an explicit message that their children represent a *new* generation and an implicit message that as members of a new generation, these students can initiate change.

In a very different kind of student-focused study, Pagé, Jodoin, and McAndrew (1998) analysed responses to over 1500 questionnaires in an effort to see to what extent young "neo-Québécois" are acculturated in either the assimilationist or ethnocentrically marginalized sense as opposed to an integrationist one. The authors propose a model of integration based on a sense of membership balanced between one's own ethnic group and that of the host society. The authors found that immigrant-origin students tended to have a high sense of membership both with the host society and with their own ethnic group. While the responses differed according to Canadian-born versus non-Canadian-born and "new" immigrant versus "old" immigrant group categories, the authors also found that openness to other groups is generally more strongly associated with a sense of membership in the host society and less with a sense of membership to one's own ethnic group.

The studies in this section on social integration focus primarily on intergroup relations, that is, an assessment of how people get along based on their attitudes toward people of ethnic categories other than their own. The studies reviewed here emphasize the strength of ethnic boundaries in secondary schools and suggest that while students' attitudes may become more open with time, schools' and parents' support of social integration plays a key role in helping students achieve a more mixed or hybrid identity which allows for greater openness to others.

5.4 Overall scholastic integration: Studies of academic, linguistic and social adaptation

"Scholastic integration" is the broadest kind of integration discussed in this assessment of the literature on school integration. What distinguishes this subsection from the previous two (linguistic integration and social integration) is a focus on overall academic performance or a multifaceted view of school integration involving academic, linguistic and social adaptation.

5.4.1 Academic Performance

In order to compare the academic performances of anglophone, allophone, and francophone students, Sylvain, Laforce, and Trottier (1985) performed a questionnaire-based analysis of the educational paths (*cheminement scolaire*) of approximately 20,000 secondary, college, and university level students in Quebec between 1972 and 1977. The questionnaire solicited information about age, sex, socio-economic status (SES), school performance results, language membership (determined by mother tongue and language of education), as well as schooling aspirations (hopes for future education). The authors found that, overall, both the anglophone and allophone populations (both schooled primarily in pre-Bill 101 anglophone schools) fared much better than did their francophone peers. While SES was strongly associated with many of the educational inequalities observed, so too was linguistic group membership. The authors found that both anglophone and allophone students were 1.5 times more likely to finish high school and enrol in pre-university college programs than were their francophone peers. Furthermore, of those students enrolled in the first year of college, only one third of the francophones attended university whereas university studies were undertaken by almost two-thirds and three-fourths of anglophones and allophones, respectively. In his article drawing on the same data, St. Germain (1984) adds that while there are fewer differences between francophone and non-francophone students in terms of secondary school graduation, fewer francophones take college-prep courses in secondary school

and are, therefore, not eligible to enrol in cégep. Those students who do enrol in cégep, the author notes, are underrepresented in the pre-university track. Overall, then, these two studies draw attention not only to the low level of scholastic performance among francophone students, but also to the relatively high level of performance among allophones. (See also Tchoryk-Pelletier, 1989, for similar findings among cégep students.)

However, a more recent assessment (Conseil Scolaire de l'Île de Montreal, 1991) of ethnic minority students' academic performance expresses concerns about their educational delay. The CSIM report (not an empirical study, *per se*) bases its conclusions on an analysis of various statistical information about Montreal's school populations. The report concurs with other studies suggesting that immigrant-origin students do, overall, perform well academically. However, the report also points out the rather serious problem of scholastic delay (*retard scolaire*) among those immigrant students who arrive in Quebec in their later teen years (especially 17 years and older). Cultural and linguistic distance, according to the authors, explains the challenges of scholastic success and the increased time these students spend in the *accueil* program.

5.4.2 Multi-facetted studies of school integration

In their study of teachers' perceptions of allophone youth who had recently exited an *accueil* program, Crespo and Pelletier (1985) (see also Pelletier & Crespo, 1979) sent out questionnaires to teachers in 70 different schools. Over a three-year period (1974-77), the authors gathered data on a randomly selected cohort of 300 immigrant-origin students (100 per year) in Montreal's then largest francophone school board. Through teachers' assessments of these selected students, the authors drew conclusions about three dimensions of educational performance: social integration, scholastic integration, and scholastic performance. The authors report that the teachers claim that approximately 60% of their *accueil* students are very well accepted, 35% are well accepted and 3% are not well accepted. However, no definition of

"accepted" is offered, making this finding somewhat less meaningful. As for scholastic integration, the authors subdivide this area into two categories: attitude and behaviour. Attitude comprises motivation, constancy and cooperation; and in this category the teachers rated their students as above average. As for behaviour (absenteeism, learning and discipline problems), however, the *accueil* students were described as being below average. In terms of academic performance, teachers ranked their students as average in their mainstream classes. However, the authors point to abundant research occurring between 1979 and 1983 which showed high levels of educational delay (*retard scolaire*) and dropping out among secondary *accueil* students.

In a study of the relationship between immigrant students' development of French and their psychosocial integration, Beauchesne and Hensler (1987) distributed questionnaires and conducted semi-structured interviews with teachers, students and parents in several public (secondary and primary) francophone schools chosen to reflect Montreal's ethnic diversity. With regard to psychosocial integration (a term which is not explicitly defined in this study), the authors found that the schools tended to offer services focusing on improving students' French because French was considered to be the decisive factor in students' adaptation and integration. However, beyond the instruction of French, very few measures were taken by the schools to improve interethnic communication; and the measures that *were* taken were described as not fitting into a larger educational project linked to learning objectives and psychosocial integration. Referring to this language-centred approach to school integration as "functional adaptation" the authors argue that the teachers and other school personnel need to increase their knowledge of how to work in a pluriethnic school. Specifically, the authors describe the data as clearly revealing the teachers to be unaware of students' ethnic diversity as a rich resource for important learning opportunities based on communication and cooperation. Interestingly, while few personnel felt there was any need for improving students' interethnic relations (and instead identified a need for better training, more resources, more ethnic representation among faculty and staff, and better

services for learning French), students felt that the greatest need for improving integration was in the area of students' interethnic relations.

As for the development and use of French in these schools, Beauchesne and Hensler found that while English and other heritage languages were used marginally, French predominated in both the school and the larger community across a wide variety of communication situations. However, the authors argue that French is promoted in school primarily through structural (rather than pedagogical or relational) means. While there are rules enforcing the use of French in classes for example, there are few or no program adaptations or interventions designed to promote *relationships* in French (programs that integrate ethnic minorities' knowledge and experiences into course content and teaching strategies). The implicit message in this failure to design such programs, the authors argue, is that all problems having to do with integration in a pluriethnic school are the fault of the ethnic minority students. As for beliefs about the learning of French and the maintenance of one's mother tongue, this study confirms the tensions revealed in other studies addressing this topic. In general the school personnel was evenly divided in several areas. Approximately half believed French to be the only integration responsibility of schools, while the other half believed schools should also encourage the maintenance of students' mother tongue. Approximately half believed that the maintenance of the mother tongue hindered the learning of French and the integration of ethnic minority students, while the other half believed that mother tongue maintenance facilitated language learning and integration. As for students and parents, a different division existed. While all believed in the value of bilingualism if not multilingualism, the students were more concerned about learning English.

By way of conclusion, the authors underline the tension between the teaching of French and the social integration of ethnic minority students in schools.

> En effet, les mesures adoptées sur les plans institutionnels et pédagogiques sont très peu axées sur l'intégration de la communication sociale entre les élèves, l'exploitation de la diversité de leurs expériences de vie, l'augmentation des échanges et de la coopération, bref sur tout ce

> qui permet à l'élève d'utiliser et de développer ses compétences linguistiques dans un contexte significatif, dans lequel il se sent reconnu et valorisé en tant qu'individu et membre d'une collectivité. (p. 382)
>
> *[In fact, the measures adopted both at the institutional and pedagogical levels rarely focus on integration through social communication among students, or on incorporating the diversity of their life experiences, or on increasing cooperation and interaction, in short all of that which allows the student to use and develop his linguistic abilities in a meaningful context, a context in which he feels valued and recognized both as an individual and as a member of a collectivity]*

While the critique of the state of integration in Montreal's pluriethnic school is somewhat dated (many of these concerns are addressed in the MEQ's new intercultural education policy of 1998, described in an earlier section of this chapter), Beauchesne and Hensler offer a valuable list of factors both helping and hindering the development of French and students' overall integration in schools. Favourable conditions include the following: a harmonious school climate, the positive attitudes of parents toward school, the predominance of French with sporadic use of other mother tongue languages at school, special attention paid to allophones' French language learning, teacher awareness of the inadequacies of the current French language programs, recognition by school personnel of the value of mother tongue maintenance. Unfavourable conditions include the following: interethnic tensions, lack of collaboration among school personnel toward the combined linguistic and social integration of their ethnic minority students, school personnel's restrictive interpretation of language learning and integration, lack of measures promoting intercultural communication, failure by school personnel to recognize "vieille souche" students as well as ethnic families as valuable language learning partners for ethnic minority students.

In a 1996 document, *Le point sur les services d'accueil et de francisation de l'école publique québécoise,* the MEQ offers an update on the status of *accueil and francisation* programs in Quebec. With data from two previously conducted studies (one demographic, the other on students' length of stay in the program), as well as various other data (questionnaires to school boards,

instructor profiles, on-site interviews in 19 schools, and French test results), the document offers the MEQ's official province-wide assessment of the integration efforts of the *accueil and francisation* programs. The document presents findings concerning *accueil* and *francisation* students' scholastic integration and identifies some important weaknesses in the management of the programs as a whole.

In terms of scholastic integration, several substantial problems are documented. The length of time students are staying in the *accueil and francisation* programs has been steadily increasing. This is especially true for students who are in the *mesures* program, the pull-out program used when a given site has an insufficient number of students to justify either *accueil* or *francisation* classes. Of greater concern is the number of students considered to be experiencing severe adaptation and learning difficulties (30% of students in *accueil* and *francisation* classes, and 37% of students in the *mesures* program). Moreover, students entering these programs at the secondary school level are considered to be even more likely to fall behind and drop out. According to the study, the older students are upon entry into *accueil* and *francisation* programs, the greater are their chances of falling behind in their progress through the system. The problem of this "*retard scolaire*" is most evident among students 12 years or older upon arrival, and their struggles are evident in the high percentage (32.4%) who either drop out, fail to graduate, or enrol in adult school to complete their studies.

The study echoes earlier studies in identifying program management problems ranging from students' programmed isolation from the mainstream, to inadequate teacher training, to inappropriate instructional materials. According to the study's findings, two out of three *accueil* and *francisation* students are completely cut off from contact with mainstream students because their program doesn't progressively integrate them into mainstream classes. Further complicating the scholastic success of some of these students is the difficulty of identifying the learning disabilities of a student in the early stages of second language (and culture) learning. Because diagnostic tests for learning disabilities

are made available to *accueil* and *francisation* students only after they have exited the program, some students may struggle with a learning disability for two or three years. Some may drop out before they are tested. As for the *accueil* and *francisation* instructors, the study reports that only 12.2% have training in teaching French as a second language. Only 8.4% have training in teaching French to native speakers. Of the 98 school commissions questioned, fewer than one third offer professional development sessions specifically for their *accueil* and *francisation* instructors. To say the least, professional development is an important weakness in the program as a whole.

In her study of how immigrant students respond to Quebec's pluralist approach to integration, Nancy Perron (1996) offers interview-based insights from 12 immigrant students aged 14 to 17. Unfortunately the article in which the study is described offers no information as to the number or length of interviews, the kinds of questions asked, or the context in which the interviews were conducted. Nonetheless, the author offered some interesting insights into immigrant integration from the students' point of view. In general, the students felt that academic integration was much less problematic than social-education integration in schools (p. 70). This was in part attributed to a sense of powerlessness *vis à vis* societal attitudes, ethnically biased textbooks, and a lack of pluriethnic awareness among teachers. While the students expressed determination to do what was necessary to overcome their own immigration-related challenges (language learning, adaptation to schools' structural and pedagogical differences), they felt less confident about how they might address issues related to the host society's attitudes toward immigrants; and it is this latter concern that they felt was the greatest obstacle to their socio-educational integration in a pluriethnic Quebec.

The studies described in this final section echo some of the concerns expressed in the first section's studies of stakeholders: the narrow focus on language for integration and a failure to adopt and adapt programs which better recognize who students are rather than who they are not. Special attention is paid to ethno-linguistic distinctions in academic performance. While allophones

are generally seen to be academically very successful, certain older students are seen as high risk for dropping out due to educational delays (placement in remedial or low-level courses to compensate for their comparative linguistic or academic lacunae).

5.5 Discussion

As mentioned in the introduction to this review of the literature, I focus this discussion on what these studies do and do not address with regards to new arrival adolescent immigrants. Generally the studies identify problems and offer recommendations for improving the educational experiences of immigrant youth. The problems include a narrow definition of integration as mere language learning, schools' failure to recognize the needs and attributes of the *whole* student, inflexibility of integration programs and services, educational delay among older adolescent new arrival immigrants, students' concerns with interethnic and host society relations, and inadequate teacher training both specifically in terms of language teaching and in terms of understanding the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of their students. The recommendations flow somewhat naturally from the problems: a more student-centred and interactive or relational approach to socio-educational integration; increased use and recognition of students' mother tongues as a resource not a hindrance; a more thorough assessment of students' academic history and abilities; teacher training toward more linguistic and cultural awareness as well as toward teaching strategies which accommodate academic, linguistic, and social integration.

What is less clear in the studies reviewed is the highly complex nature of integration itself and how it is experienced over time by individual youth who come together from very diverse cultural and linguistic origins. My study (presented in Chapters 4 through 9) attempts to highlight the complexities of integration according to the experiences of adolescent newcomers in one Montreal secondary school. By focusing on the self-descriptors of newcomers integrating into secondary school, the study confirms and expands on the

findings of studies discussed in this section. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5, the interview (and other) data amassed over a 15-month period and across two academic years, were gathered in a linguistically and culturally highly diverse francophone school setting. The study, therefore, specifically targets the tensions between Montreal's pluralist reality and Quebec's "French-fact" policies.

6. Conclusion

As is clear through laws such as the French Language Charter and public debates such as the Estates General Commission on the State of French in Quebec, much of Quebec's sense of identity is tied to its language. Thus, it's not surprising that in seeking to integrate newcomers into its society, Quebec has created educational policies and programs which focus primarily on language learning. While educational integration programs tend to focus almost solely on language learning, studies of immigrant and minority integration in Quebec's schools indicate that educational integration is much more complex than mere host-language learning. These studies of the social, linguistic, and academic integration of Quebec's allophone student population, suggest that schools' language-centred approach to integration fails to recognize and accommodate the whole student and may contribute to the academic delays of older newcomer students. While more recent integration policies emphasize the importance of and openness to Quebec's cultural and linguistic diversity, the studies reviewed here suggest that adequate recognition, openness, and flexibility are what's missing in the integration practices of Quebec's schools.

At this point, I would like to take a step back from these studies and their findings. I would like to suggest here that the problems identified in the integration practices of Quebec's schools are perhaps not first problems with how we practice integration but rather with how we theorize or conceptualize it. If we reconceptualize integration to be more than adapting or adopting the host society's language and norms and view integration as a process of understanding oneself differently in a new language and a new context, then we can begin to

better understand how current integration practices in schools may be in conflict with the goals they are intended to achieve. The purpose of the next chapter, then, is to explore the nature of immigrant integration and language learning through theories of identity construction. Because adolescent integration in schools occurs primarily through host-language learning programs (as has been discussed in this chapter), most of the studies of identity construction among integrating newcomers occur within the context of host-language learning. The next chapter, therefore, focuses on theories of identity and identity construction and how those theories have been used to frame the experiences of host-language learners in schools. Identity construction in the context of host-language learning, then, is presented in the next chapter as the theoretical framework for all subsequent discussions of integration in this dissertation.

Chapter 3

Identity construction:
A theoretical frame for the integration of host-language learners

1. Introduction

Host (second) language learning, within the fields of second language acquisition (SLA) and second language education (SLE), has been broadly characterized and studied as both cognitive and social. According to Ellis (1994), SLA research has been widening in scope since the late 1960s.

> Whereas much of the earlier work focused on the linguistic – and, in particular, the grammatical – properties of learner language and was psycholinguistic in orientation, later work has . . . adopted a sociolinguistic perspective. . . . [W]hereas many researchers continue the long-standing attempt to explain the psycholinguistic processes that underlie L2 acquisition and use, others have given attention to the social factors that influence development. (p. 1)

The more psycholinguistically-oriented research has contributed to our understanding of host language learning as a cognitive process by studying phenomena such as interlanguage development, first language transfer and interference, linguistic retention, and learning styles and strategies. (See for example Corder, 1981; Dulay & Burt, 1974; Pienemann, 1989; Long, 1990; Tarone, 1988.) Social-factors-oriented research has contributed to our understanding of language as a tool of communication and has provided theoretical constructs for communicative competence, social distance and learner attitudes, and additive and subtractive bilingualism. (See for example Canale & Swain, 1980; Stern, 1983; Schumann, 1976; Kramsch, 1993; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Hymes, 1971; Wong-Filmore, 1991.)

Expanding on (and, in some ways, diverging from) this social-factors orientation are studies of what I refer to as a "socio-political" dimension of host language learning and teaching – a dimension of language learning which has more to do with power relations and identity construction than with the nature or measurement of linguistic and cultural proficiency. Pennycook (1990) notes that while much measurement-oriented research has contributed to our understanding

of language as a system of communication, it has "reduced [language] to a system for transmitting messages rather than an ideational, signifying system that plays a central role in how we understand ourselves and the world" (p. 304). "Socio-political" studies of host language learning have increased substantially over the past decade. (See for example Norton, 1995; Rampton, 1995; Cummins, 1996; Thesen, 1997; Heller, 1999; Olsen, 1997; Ryan, 1999.)

From this very brief and broad overview of SLA and SLE research, one can see the location of language learning research as having gradually expanded outward from the mind and into the society. It is at the outer edge of this expansion that I locate my research; and it is through a socio-political (or critical pedagogy) view that I explore, in this chapter, the interplay of newcomer integration, host-language learning, and identity construction. I begin with an overview of how identity has been theorized across a variety of disciplines (philosophy, psychology, sociology, political science, linguistics, and education). I then discuss how, in the SLA /SLE literature, these theories support a socio-political understanding of the relationship between integration, host-language learning and identity construction; that is, how they reveal that the identity constructions of integrating newcomers are a site of struggle between discursive power and individual agency. I then analyze the ways in which the politics of identity manifest in educational institutions and in the lives of adolescent immigrant language learners. I discuss practices that I refer to as *institutional naming, name calling, name claiming,* and *name resisting*. In the final section of this chapter, I look at autobiography as an act of *renaming* through self-translation. I review my own and others' analyses of various immigrant language learner autobiographies and discuss how these identity theories and naming practices figure in my data gathering and analysis.

2. Identity construction theorized

Theories of identity necessarily force us to deal with the problematic of Self, what it is, how it is bounded and defined. At the beginning of my exploration of the literature on identity, I crafted a simple, clear and working definition of

identity which assumed an easily delineable Self: *Identity is both the internal (reflexive and selected) conceptions of the Self by an individual and the public manifestation of those Self concepts in the world.* This definition, however, houses identity mostly if not entirely in the individual; it is perhaps what Jay Lemke (1995) would call "mapping of the social-biographical individual onto the physical-biological organism" (p.81). It is a definition that ignores or dodges the constructed nature of identity and what Jerome Bruner (1990) (drawing on the work of social psychologist Gergen and others) refers to as the "distributed" self (p.116). This definition also fails to recognize Charles Taylor's (1998) (drawing on Bakhtin) notion of a "dialogical self," a Self constructed within interactions with others. It is a definition which places choice and power entirely in this biologically-defined, yet social individual; and in so doing, it fails to recognize how discourse and discourses (Gee 1990/1996) shape not only the ways we think but what we do. Perhaps most importantly for my discussion here, my simple and clear definition failed to recognize identity as the result of the struggle between the powerful (and dominant) discourses of a given society and the agency of the individual actor within that society. Therefore, it is with some regret but with strong conviction that I abandon my original definition of identity (housed in what many would call an essentialist version of Self) for a more complex and socially constructed one.

In the last chapter of his book *Acts of Meaning*, Jerome Bruner (1990) describes how and why there has been a general move away from an essentialist understanding of the Self toward a social-constructionist one. He explains that the problem with past theories of the Self was that they assumed the Self to be "a substance that pre-existed our effort to describe it" (p. 99). An alternative to the observable, essentialist Self was the "conceptual self" created through reflection. Gradually the essentialist notion of the Self gave way to an understanding of the self as transactional or dialogue dependent (as evolving out of interactions or relationships with others) and thus integrally part of the social world. Mind, too, began to be understood as not just inside the physical body (the head) but distributed in the social world.

> As Roy Pea, David Perkins, and others now put it, a "person's" knowledge is not *just* in one's own head, in "person solo," but in the notes that one has put into accessible notebooks, in the books with underlined passages on one's shelves, in the handbooks one has learned how to consult, in the information sources one has hitched up to the computer, in the friends one can call up to get a reference or a "steer," and so on almost endlessly. (Bruner, 1990, p. 106 – original emphasis)

As one might predict, and as Bruner explains, the notion of distributed knowledge and distributed mind lead to the notion of distributed and situated Selves. Citing Gergen as among the first to adopt an interpretive and distributed view of the Self, Bruner notes that Gergen's work helps us understand that the Self "in the distributive sense . . . can be seen as the product of the situations in which it operates" (p. 109).

Yet, to say that identity and the Self are socially constructed, distributed and situated is to say so much as to say almost nothing at all. How do humans construct their own concept of Self and what kinds of selves do they construct? These are the more challenging and interesting questions for my purposes. In what follows, I draw on various cross-disciplinary discussions in an attempt to bring some sense of order to what is indeed a complex and dynamic phenomenon. I begin by identifying various kinds or aspects of identity to be considered and then suggest three dominant ways of considering how identity is constructed. It is important to note here that precisely because of the cross-disciplinary borrowings we see in most discussions of identity and identity construction, the terms (or what Etienne Wenger, 1998, refers to as "boundary objects," p. 105) used in my discussion are necessarily fluid; that is, they flow across disciplinary boundaries and blur at their own edges. (For a more extensive discussion of the affordances and constraints of cross-disciplinary terminology appropriations, see Wenger, 1998, p. 115.)

2.1 Identity Types

2.1.1 Ethical Identity

In a chapter entitled "The dialogical self," philosopher Charles Taylor (1998) defines the self as a "modern phenomenon" which differs from the almost age-

old notion of "soul." The modern self, Taylor argues, is more than merely reflexive (self aware), it is "radically reflexive" in its attention to its subjective experience (a scrutinizing of one's thinking, not just one's health or wealth) (p. 304). Identity, as Taylor describes it, can refer to three different aspects of this modern self: the functional (e.g., profession), the relational (e.g., family, friend), and the ethical ("to know 'where you're coming from' when it comes to questions of value, or issues of importance" (p. 305)). Identity in this ethical sense, then, is "the background against which you know where you stand" (pp. 305-06). It is this later type of identity that Taylor argues is essential for a "coherent sense of self" (a notion to be discussed further in the section on narrative construction).

Social psychologist Vivien Burr (1995) draws on the work of Wetherell and Potter as well as of Gergen to describe this ethical identity type as "the person as moral actor":

> [I]t sees people as primarily located within a local moral order within which they have to negotiate a viable position for themselves. The functions which their constructed accounts serve for them are primarily those of offering explanations and excuses, making justifications, apportioning blame and making accusations. People are therefore actors in a moral universe, concerned with negotiating for themselves a credible (and creditable) moral position. (p. 120)

2.1.2 Agential Identity

Feminist philosopher Morwenna Griffiths (1995) cites Seyla Benhabib to emphasize agency (as well as choice and coherence) as characteristic of identity:

> Identity does not refer to my potential for choice alone, but to the actuality of my choices, namely to how I, as a finite, concrete, embodied individual, shape and fashion the circumstances of my birth and family, linguistic, cultural and gender identity into a coherent narrative that stands as my life's story. (p. 81)

Burr (1995) echoes this emphasis on agency in her discussion of the person as moral actor:

> [I]t imbues the person with agency, since the construction of accounts is achieved by people choosing and implementing forms of representation appropriate to their immediate goals. The person is therefore actively

> engaged in the process of construction, building up an account of an event from the linguistic materials available in interpretative repertoires. . . . In many ways, this view is similar to that of Gergen (1989), . . . who sees people as motivated by a desire for 'speaking rights' or 'voice' and to have their interpretation of events accepted as the truthful one. (p. 120)

From these two perspectives, I understand agency to contain three assumptions: (a) the physical and socio-political *ability* to act; (b) the *awareness* of the ability to act; and (c) a sense of one's *right* to act. Agential identity, then, suggests a kind of identity in which the individual views herself in three important ways: (a) as an *actor* in the world; (b) as having the *right to choose* how she engages with the world (job, education, participation in social organizations, ways of speaking, dressing, interacting, worshipping); and (c) as having the *right to interpret* or make sense of her gender, ethnicity, family history, cultures, languages as elements of a legitimate (acceptable beyond herself) and coherent life story. This particular kind of identity, perhaps more than the others presented here, is central to a view of the self as evolving through interaction with the world, central to a transactional view of a self which is capable of *choosing* (to various degrees) how to respond to the changing conditions or circumstances of life. I discuss this transactional self in more detail in the upcoming section on identity construction types.

2.1.3 Cultural / Racial / Ethnic / Relational Identities

In his exploration of race, ethnicity and culture in education, Carl James (1999) describes several different dimensions of identity, including ethnicity, race, and relationships. Ethnic identity is described as being carried through "a common historical and ancestral origin" (p. 21). Similar to ethnic identity, racial identity exists through group identification based on shared characteristics; but an important difference for racial identity is that the defining characteristics are *particular physical* features (skin colour, eye shape, etc.) "which come to represent socially constructed meanings and expectations that correspond to their ascribed status within the social hierarchy" (ibid.). Related to Lemke's

notion of physical characteristics as carriers for particular social meanings is James' argument that identity is also relational, that is, our identity is who we are in comparison (or in relation) to others in a given setting. Because certain behaviours, beliefs, and looks are considered to be "normal" and others are not in these relational comparisons, the resulting disequilibria reveal identity to be embedded not just in relationships, but in relationships of unequal power-distribution. (See also McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993; Ogbu, 1982; Cummins, 2000; Giroux & McLaren, 1994.)

2.1.4 Civic Identity

In his exploration of nationalism and nationhood in a multicultural Quebec, political philosopher Will Kymlicka (1998) argues that social unity and solidarity in a pluralist society cannot be achieved through shared values, but can only be achieved through a shared civic identity. This civic identity finds its common ground (membership markers) in the shared recognition of certain historical events as important (though not necessarily 'good').

> History is important, I would argue, because it defines the shared context and framework within which we debate our *differing* values and priorities. We grow up with this framework and learn to situate issues within it. It becomes the implicit background for our thinking, providing the symbols, precedents, and reference points by which we make sense of issues. (p. 174 – original emphasis)

Kymlicka cites Jeremy Webber in comparing this shared history to that of a national conversation.

> As he puts it, 'we may find that what we most value is the health, vitality, and flexibility of our national conversation.' What would define Canadian patriotism, then, is 'its commitment to the distinctively Canadian conversation and that conversation's distinctive vernaculars.' (p. 176)

Taylor (1994), wearing the political side of his philosopher hat, speaks of the importance of recognition in our understanding of the political nature of identity.

> The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the *mis*recognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society

> around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being. (p. 25)

2.1.5 Semiotic, social and biographical identities: From identity to identity construction

To consolidate these various perspectives on identity and to facilitate a transition in focus from identity to identity construction, I have found the work of Jay Lemke (1995) to be useful. Drawing on the work of a number of other linguists, Lemke explores aspects of identity by unpacking the concept of the individual as physical-biological, semiotic, social, and biographical. The physical-biological individual includes DNA and all its ramifications (which are increasing and changing according to the understandings achieved through the Genome Project). The semiotic individual is the physical individual interpreted, the body as a carrier of social meaning (meanings attached to skin colour, size, hair). The social individual is the "person-of-the-moment" in social interactions, the individual as enactor, doer or practitioner (p. 88). The biographical individual is one of social continuity, an "individual-with-a-history, a transtemporal social construction" (p. 86). Lemke's notion of the semiotic body captures James' notion of race as socially constructed. His social individual (doer, practitioner) captures the ethical, political, ethnic and relational dimensions of identity explored by James, Kymlicka, and Taylor; and the biographical individual implies some degree of individual agency (as described by Griffiths and Burr). These three identity types (which do not include all those described by Lemke) begin to hint at some of the tension between the identity constructor and its construct. Lemke's notion of semiotic body as well as James' notion of race speak of socially-significant meanings attached to the physical body. Whose meanings? How are those meanings created? Likewise, Lemke's social individual seems, at one level, to be constructed by the ethical-relational-political milieu in which it finds itself. The biographical individual is recognized as having at least some agency, some control, some choice in how to respond to

the various and changing social and material circumstances in which she finds herself. It is often around such questions of agency (How? and How much?) that debates about identity construction centre.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I limit my discussion of identity construction theories to three types: discursive, dialogical and narrative. I begin with a "strong" version of discursive identity construction, one in which social discourses have the agential "upper hand" in the construction of individuals' identities. I next discuss dialogical identity construction which, while by no means dismissing discursive construction, suggests that these constructions are negotiated and, therefore, not entirely determined or dictated by the discourses in which we live. Finally, narrative identity construction (with its emphasis on personal story-telling as a way of making sense of one's self and one's life) is the theory which recognizes the most individual agency in the social construction of identity.

2.2 Identity Construction Types

2.2.1 Discursive construction

James Paul Gee (1990/1996) distinguishes between discourse ("connected stretches of language which hang together so as to make sense to some community of people" (p. 90)) and Discourses ("ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking . . . that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles (or 'types of people') by specific *groups of people* (p. viii – emphasis in original)). Discourses, then, are larger than linguistic forms; indeed they are "forms of life" and as such are "always and everywhere *social* and products of social histories" (ibid). Gee explains the nature of discursive construction in the following way:

> Each of us is a member of many Discourses, and each Discourse represents one of our ever-multiple identities. These Discourses need not, and often do not, represent consistent and compatible values. There are conflicts among them and each of us lives and breathes these conflicts as we act out our various Discourses. . . . Each Discourse incorporates a usually taken for granted and tacit 'theory' of what counts as a 'normal' person and the 'right' ways to think, feel, and behave.

> These theories crucially involve viewpoints on the distribution of social goods like status, worth, and material goods in society (who should and who should not have them). (p. ix)

Vivien Burr (1995) draws on such theorists as Foucault, Parker, Holloway, Walkerdine and Weedon to describe discourse as both a way of understanding identity and as a form of action, that is, discourse as language (broadly conceived) which is used to promote particular actions and reactions. In describing discourse as a way of understanding identity, Burr suggests that it is "a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images . . . that in some way together produce a particular version of events" (p. 48). As a form of action, discourses are, she explains further, the "raw materials and *manufacturing processes*" by which people and their identities are constructed (p.141, my emphasis).

> The person can be described by the sum total of the subject positions in discourse they currently occupy. The fact that some of these positions are fleeting or in a state of flux means that our identity is never fixed but always in process, always open to change. The subject positions that we occupy bring with them a structure of rights and obligations, they legislate for what 'that kind of person' may or may not reasonably do or say. . . . Not only do our subject positions constrain and shape what we do, they are taken on as part of our psychology, so that they provide us also with our sense of self, the ideas and metaphors with which we think and the self-narratives we use to talk and think about ourselves. (pp. 152-53)

2.2.2 Dialogical construction

> [A]n utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication, and it cannot be broken off from the preceding links that determine it both from within and from without, giving rise within it to unmediated responsive reactions and dialogic reverberations. (Bakhtin 1986, p. 94)

Drawing on the work of Bakhtin, Taylor (1998) explains that an important aspect of identity construction is its "dialogical" nature – that is, a negotiated construction of shared agency. Shared agency occurs within "dialogical acts" (actions which "require and sustain an integrated agent" p. 310). He offers the relationship between students in TienAnMen Square and their colleagues on

various campuses as an example of shared agency between individuals who "may be widely scattered but who are animated together by a sense of common purpose" (p. 311). The phenomenon of acting as a member of larger whole with "common sense of purpose" (that is, 'dialogically'), Taylor argues, can only be understood outside of the old epistemologies which view all acts as 'monological' (that is, occurring via a single agent).

> We cannot understand human life merely in terms of individual subjects, who frame representations about and respond to others, because a great deal of human action happens only insofar as the agent understands and constitutes himself or herself as integrally part of a 'we.' (p. 311)

Furthermore, Taylor argues, most of our actions in the world are dialogical, and thus dialogical action shapes our understanding of ourselves and our society. He likens this shaping (as does Kymlicka) to participation in a conversation:

> Human beings are constituted in conversation; and hence what gets internalized in the mature subject is not the reaction of the other, but the whole conversation, with the interanimation of its voices (p. 314).

Important to the notion of dialogical construction, for Taylor, is the *internalization* of the conversations in which we participate. Attributing this notion of 'inner dialogicality' to Bakhtin, Taylor (1994) explains that

> [w]e define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us. Even after we outgrow some of these others – our parents, for instance – and they disappear from our lives, the conversation with them continues within us as long as we live. (pp. 32-33)

As a result, dialogical identity construction necessarily involves both an overt (public) and internal (private) negotiation between an individual and others. Taylor's emphasis on dialogical identity construction as occurring both within and without helps us understand his previously cited emphasis on *recognition* as fundamental to the ways in which individuals negotiate their identities. It is in this place (of recognition or misrecognition) where the public and private meet that I situate my own research with a view to understanding how that meeting is internalized or interpreted by adolescent immigrants in the course of host-language learning.

2.2.3 Narrative construction

> In an almost forgotten volume, Sigmund Freud proposes that a person might be conceived as a "cast of characters," much as in a novel or play. Just as a playwright or novelist . . . decomposes him- or her-self into a constituent cast of characters from which he or she then constructs a novel or play that brings them all together, so we decompose our lives into constituent sub-Selves, with a "story" that more or less succeeds or fails in bringing them all together. (Bruner 1998, pp. 320-21)

Bruner's work serves as a nice transition between a view of identity construction as negotiated and dialogical and a view of it as narrative. Self is not, as he states, simply the result of "contemplative reflection"; it is, rather, negotiated in social practices which give it particular meanings. The variation in these social practices is what encourages us to understand the Self as "distributed" (as was previously discussed in reference to the work of both Gee and Gergen). Bruner argues that it is narrative which provides or allows for understanding that distributed Self in some sort of unified coherent whole. Furthermore, citing Donald Polkinghorne, Bruner (1990) emphasizes that this narrative construction of the self is ongoing, revisionist and forward-looking.

> We are in the middle of our stories and cannot be sure how they will end; we are constantly having to revise the plot as new events are added to our lives. Self, then, is not a static thing . . . but a configuring of personal events into an historical unity which includes not only what one has been but also anticipations of what one will be. (p. 116)

Burr (1995) concurs with Bruner's view of Self as narrative, that is, an ongoing revision of the present Self in light of the past *and* vice versa. She explains that the stories that we tell ourselves and others are necessarily selective, since we cannot possibly remember every detail of every experience. Our selection, she suggests, focuses on creating consistency, a consistency which "demands that we engage in much 'smoothing', choosing and moulding events to fit the theme of our life story. . . . This process should not be thought of as necessarily a conscious activity (though it sometimes is). . . . It is useful to

think of these narratives as the ways we live out our lives as well as the way we privately or publicly tell of them" (p. 135).

Citing sociologist Stuart Hall, James (1999) echoes this ubiquitous nature of cultural narratives, describing them as "'producing in the future, an account of the past. . . [Identity] is always about narrative, the stories which cultures tell themselves about who they are and where they came from (p. 5)'" (p. 23). While not denying the cultural dimension of narratives, Lemke's (1995) notion of the 'biographical individual' also suggests a personal historian, an internal story-teller and an interpreter of who the semiotic and social self has been, is, and can be in the future. This life-long narrator is in some ways private because it is internal and not necessarily voiced; but it is also in many ways public because it is powerfully shaped by a multitude of discourses and social interactions.

Narrative construction, then, is both private and public, ubiquitously cultural and yet intimate; we can understand it as a practice of social continuity as well as an individual act of sense-making, a coherence system involving the choices we make in how we live our lives.

> Perhaps it is this combination of properties that makes self such an appropriate, if sometimes uncomfortable, instrument in the dynamism of human culture. For without the malleability (or "rewritability") of Self, the human cultural adaptation that makes our species unique would probably not be possible. (Bruner 1998, p. 326)

In the section that follows, I discuss the ways in which these theories of social and public, yet also individual and private, identity constructions are explored in relationship to language learning in the SLA/SLE literature.

3. Identity Construction and Host-Language Learning

Discursive, dialogical and narrative theories of identity construction, to a large extent, describe the ways in which SLE researchers theorize the relationship between language learning and identity construction. In ways similar to identity construction in one's mother tongue, the identity constructions of newcomer language learners in the context of their host language can be described (and

are, by SLE researchers) through similar discursive, dialogical and narrative dynamics. However, what is different for newcomer language learners, as opposed to their native-born counterparts of the host country, is that they bring with them an identity construction already shaped by different discourses, different social interactions, different private and public narratives. The ways in which their new identity construction (and hence integration) proceeds within their host country, therefore, is likely to be more constrained, or at the very least more complicated (than that of their host-country counterparts). The complications arise in the task of making sense of themselves (publicly and privately) in a culture and language whose discourses, social interactions, and narratives are not only unfamiliar but are often contradictory (or threatening) to those of the culture and language of origin. Given these conditions, it is not surprising that immigrant students are frequently referred to as "disadvantaged." It is this disadvantage that makes individual agency both more important and more vulnerable for immigrant language learners.

Norton and Toohey (2002) flesh out the nature of and the reasons for the vulnerability of immigrant language learners' agency. They explain that language learning is a social practice and all language is (in the words of Bakhtin) "overpopulated with the intentions of others" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 294). That is, language is not neutral; it is full of the meanings and values ascribed to it throughout its use within a community of its speakers. Furthermore, the authors explain (referring to Bourdieu) that the value of any given person's utterances depends on how that speaker is valued in the speech community and the extent to which he/she has the "'power to impose reception'" (p. 4). The sociocultural practice of host-language learning, therefore, occurs within the larger context of power relations established through the dominance of some language and discourse-embedded values and meanings over others. To the extent, then, that host-language learning occurs within a sociocultural context shaped by power relations, host-language learning engages newcomer language learners not only in identity construction, but in the politics of identity, a unique kind of struggle for agency in their identity constructions. Norton and Toohey

argue that SLE research into identity construction and language learning has shifted away from a psychological view of identity to an anthropological and sociocultural one, a move away "from what Kubota (1999) calls 'fixed, apolitical, and essentialized cultural representations'(p. 9) . . . [to a conception of identity as] multiple, changing and a site of struggle" (Norton & Toohey, 2002, p. 116). In this section, therefore, I focus my analysis of recent SLE-identity-construction research on 'agency' in the discursive, dialogical and narrative constructions of language learners' identities.

While discussions of discourse permeate the SLE literature on identity, the nature of discourse varies across research contexts and questions. In her study of immigrant high school students transitioning into junior college, Linda Harklau (2000) describes identity, in part, as relational categories embedded in discourses. Her study's findings emphasize the danger of institutional discourses which "attempt to homogenize and preserve identities that are always multiple and always changing"(p. 40). Because these homogenizing labels are embedded in discourses which portray them as common sense, normal and appropriate, they undercut the labelled students' agency to view themselves as multiple and hybridized, as both American and "other," as both newcomer and old timer. Similarly, John Ogbu's (1999) study of Black American adolescents in California describes two conflicting discourses which shape the Black community's view of their "proper English" as both necessary for educational and financial success (and, thus, to be "mastered") as well as offensive ("acting superior" and "puttin' on") when used within the Black community. Partly due to the incompatibility of the beliefs about "proper English" as well as the fact that students and parents seemed unaware of this contradiction, Ogbu suggests that these students and their community are caught in a contradiction; in other words, their agency has been compromised by the discourses that have shaped their beliefs about what it means to be Black and have access to higher education and good jobs.

As in Ogbu's study, participants in Tara Goldstein's (2003a) critical ethnography of Hong Kong immigrants in a Toronto secondary school also

found themselves caught in contradictory discourses. Within the institution were discourses which, in response to and concern about the abundant use of languages other than English, promoted English as the only language of the school (academic and social). Contradicting these English-only discourses were other discourses which promoted the importance of recognizing and legitimizing students' primary languages for both social and academic purposes. Among the school's 60% minority language users, Cantonese speakers from Hong Kong formed the largest linguistic group. Drawing on Bourdieu's notions of capital and markets, Goldstein explains that her Hong Kong Canadian participants felt caught between the need to use English in order to obtain academic and linguistic capital, and social pressures to use Cantonese with their Hong Kong peers. However, unlike the participants in Ogbu's (1999) study, Goldstein's participants learned to engage in multiple discourses which allowed them "to capitalize on ethnic forms of solidarity to negotiate and manage the development of their competence in this academic culture" (2003a, p. 247).(See also Hunter, 1997, and Goldstein, 1997, 2003b for further discussions of discursive constraints on immigrant language learners in schools.)

McKay and Wong (1996) identify five discourse types at work in the lives of their Chinese-immigrant case-study participants in California. Drawing on the work of Foucault, they define these discourses as "a set of historically grounded statements that exhibit regularities in presuppositions, thematic choices, values, that delimit what can be said about something, by whom, when, where, and how; and that are underwritten by some form of institutional authority" (p. 579). What the authors observe in their participants' responses to these discourse types are varying degrees of resistance which manifest through counter-discourse: mouthing off to the teacher (to counter the "model-minority" discourse of obedience and compliance); refusing to "hang out" exclusively with other Chinese students (to counter the Chinese cultural nationalist discourse). McKay and Wong view such resistance as a form of identity negotiation and "agency enhancement," a form (facet) of identity construction which, the authors argue, goes beyond Norton's (1995) notion of "investment" by

emphasizing individual agency as central to their adolescent-participants' motivation to learn and use the host language. (For further discussion of identity negotiation and empowerment in schools see Cummins, 1996.)

I see something of a cumulative pattern to SLE researchers' representations of host language learners' identity construction and its relationship to host-language learning and identity construction. At the broadest level, most everyone who investigates this relationship agrees that discourses (in the way that they have been defined by Gee and Foucault and Bakhtin) shape the ways language learners understand and represent themselves both publicly and privately, inwardly and outwardly. Most of these researchers also suggest that this discursive power does not eliminate individual agency; and, thus, identity construction within the process of language learning is viewed by most as "negotiated" or "dialogical" in its softer version or as a "site of struggle" in its more assertive, stronger version (see Cummins, 1996; Peirce, 1989; Norton Peirce, 1995; McKay & Wong, 1996; Thesen, 1997). What I have not encountered much in my readings is a discussion of host language learners' identity constructions as being narrative (re)constructions. Of the SLE authors mentioned so far, only Thesen has suggested that it is her participants' biographical accounts that allowed both them and her to notice and articulate the wide discrepancies between their sense of identity and the institutional labels (and associated false assumptions) with which they are saddled.

My own interest in narrative constructions of immigrant identity arose out of my encounters with several immigrant autobiographies over the past five years. To my surprise and pleasure, I discovered two recent publications (from within the field of SLE) which recognize the value of biographical accounts in understanding immigrant integration, identity construction, and language learning. The first of these publications is an edited collection of autobiographical accounts of language learning by successful, multilingual academics (see Belcher & Connor, 2001). The second publication is that of Anna Pavlenko and James Lantolf (2000), who present their findings of an analysis of ten eastern European immigrant autobiographies. While Belcher and

Connor (2001) focus primarily on narrative as a valuable research and pedagogical tool for increasing both the reader's and writer's awareness of the processes of language learning and acquisition, the book focuses neither on immigrant language learners (though some are included) nor on the ways in which such learners construct their identities across more than one language. Rather the book seeks to "[help] others to understand better how advanced second language literacy can be achieved" (p. 2). Therefore, while I find the insights these authors provide to be of great value for SLA/SLE in general, I will not focus on those insights in the present discussion.

In their analysis of immigrant autobiographies, Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) focused not only on immigrant language learners but on their identity constructions across time and through linguistic and cultural transitions. The authors begin by providing an overview of narrative in theory and in practice. They cite Mead, Bruner, and Bakhtin as key scholars in the development of narrative theory and identify Bruner, in particular, as having made the distinction between categorical or scientific knowing and narrative knowing; the latter recognizes time and situatedness as central to human existence, while the former claims an "imperviousness to the effects of time and space" (p. 159).

Drawing on the work of Shore, Polkinghorne, and Linde, Pavlenko and Lantolf describe narrative as an individual act of making sense of one's life and one's world. Quoting Shore, they offer the following "definition" of narrative: "[narratives are] verbal formulas that are either conventional or personal in nature and which people use to 'continually make sense of their worlds on the fly' (ibid.: 58). Furthermore, through narrative 'experience is literally talked into meaningfulness' and 'the strange and the familiar achieve a working relationship'" (p. 160).

The authors also cite Linde's work with life stories as revealing 'coherence systems' at the foundation of people's narratives, "'social systems of assumptions about the world that speakers use to make events and evaluations coherent'" (ibid.). Furthermore, the authors suggest, "[f]ailure to integrate new events into these systems of coherence or to alter the plot of a life story

appropriately, frequently results in confusion, strangeness, and conflict, and can, on occasion, lead to deep cognitive and emotional instabilities" (ibid). Finally, citing Polkinghorne, they argue that narrative explanation "is retroactive in that it clarifies events with respect to the outcome that follows from the events; hence, it is about reconstruction" (p. 161). (For a more extensive discussion of narrative as a coherence system constructed across time and space, see Paul Ricoeur, 1984, 1992.)

So far I have taken the position that a strong version of discursive determinism is found at the extreme end of the identity construction continuum, and that narrative theory offers a much more agential option toward the other end of the continuum. Indeed, as is obvious in the SLE literature on this topic, most theorists and researchers see identity construction as neither entirely discursively determined nor as entirely a question of individual narrative constructs. Rather, the narratives one constructs must be understood as occurring within certain discursive communities and material and circumstantial constraints. I understand this tension between the power of discourse and the agency of the individual or collective to be central to what is commonly referred to as the politics of identity. As the feminist philosopher Griffiths (1995) argues:

> [Self identity theory] is highly communalistic and political. It states that the individual can only exist through the various communities of which she is a member and, indeed, is continually in a process of construction by those communities. It emphasises that the concept 'community' must be understood to include both those it is possible to know personally and also the wider society and its political categories. Indeed, politics are inseparable from the construction and maintenance of the self. The experience of acceptance and rejection, and the reaction to them cannot be understood without reference to the structures of power in the society in which the self finds itself. (p. 93)

Furthermore, I believe the politics of identity to be more pronounced and potentially damaging for immigrant language learners who are often unfamiliar with "the structures of power in the [host] society" (Griffiths, above) and are constrained not only by the discourses of their new society but those of their culture and language of origin. (For a more detailed discussion of the politics of

identity and immigrant education, see Cummins, 1996, 2000; Giroux, 1993; Giroux & McLaren, 1994; Davidson, 1996; Heller, 1999; Ryan, 1999; Pao, Wong & Teuben-Rowe, 1997.)

4. The politics of identity in SLE (Practice): Immigrant Language Learners and Identity Constructions

Having explored the theoretical dimensions of identity construction in the context of host-language learning, I now take up a discussion of how this theory is manifest in the identity construction of immigrant adolescent language learners. My discussion of language learners' identity construction *in practice* centres on several key ethnographic studies which focus on adolescents or young adults learning a host language in multicultural and multilingual school (as well as community) contexts. These studies took place in four different countries and involved participants from a wide variety of linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. Laurie Olsen (1997) and Sandra Lee McKay and Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong (1996) all conducted their research in California high schools. Olsen worked with both mainstream students and "ESLers" over a period of two years. McKay and Wong worked with four Asian-origin case-study participants, also over a two-year period. More recently, Linda Harklau (2000) conducted a study in the United States which focused on the transition between high school and junior college of three second-language-learner participants. Ontario, Canada, was the home of two other research projects: one by Monica Heller (1999), who studied, over three-year period, a francophone high school; and one by James Ryan (1999), who focused on student, parent and school staff responses to the racially and ethnically diverse population at a suburban Ontario high school. In England, Ben Rampton's (1995 – see also Leung, Harris, & Rampton, 1997) work describes the language use practices of multilingual, multicultural immigrant adolescents in British secondary schools near London. Finally, Lucia Thesen (1997) describes the political, institutional and linguistic transitions demanded of Black students entering White universities in post-apartheid South Africa. Together, these longitudinal studies serve as the

foundation (both in terms of methodology and theoretical framework) for my own research. While the studies do not necessarily all draw on the same theorists (nor do they emphasize the same practical concerns), they do share quite a lot simply in their descriptions of what identity looks like through the eyes of immigrant adolescents in multicultural settings. Most striking to me in my analysis of these studies is the practice of *naming*. In this next section of this chapter, I describe the pervasiveness of institutional naming (of language learners) and the "baggage" those institutional names carry with them. I then look at the ways in which the students in these studies engage in *name calling*, *name claiming* and *name resisting*.

4.1 Naming language learners: an institutional phenomenon

In Laurie Olsen's (1997) account of Madison High, "newcomers" are sent to the Newcomer School in a separate building on the periphery of the Madison High campus. This physical marginalization, Olsen argues, is indicative of the kind of marginalization that Newcomer School students and teachers alike feel about their place in the larger educational institution. Names such as "Limited English Proficient" (LEP) and "English Second Language Learner" (ESLL) institutionally identify the students who participate in the Newcomer program. The deficiency emphasis of these labels is perhaps more evident when compared (as identity markers always are) with their institutional-label opposites: "mainstream" and "regular." To be a bi- or multi-lingual/cultural newcomer at Madison High is to be not regular, not mainstream, limited. Similarly, the students in Harklau's (2000) case-study found themselves trapped by their institutional names which defined English language learners as *language deficient, academically disadvantaged* and *culturally "other."* These institutional labels both served and hindered Harklau's participants, sometimes encouraging careful placement with mainstream teachers sensitive to their linguistic differences, and sometimes causing them to be streamed into "low-level, behaviour-problem" classes. In Thesen's (1997) study of South African Blacks entering a White university in Cape Town, Black students who had been

educated in under-funded Black schools during apartheid were given such labels as *disadvantaged, under prepared* and *second language learners*, labels which determine students' placement in special *language development* courses "that simultaneously enable and stigmatize learners" (p. 490).

While common, the institutional phenomenon of negatively identifying those students whose linguistic and educational backgrounds differ from those promoted and valued in the school is not necessarily explicit. McKay and Wong (1996) identify five different *implicit* discourses used by both students and school staff alike to label certain students in the school. One of the more damaging of these discourses created within the institution was what McKay and Wong refer to as *colonialist/racialized discourse*, a discourse which maps stereotyped beliefs onto individuals with certain phenotypic and linguistic features. For example, one of the teachers in McKay and Wong's study believed all "Latinos" were "lazy, go nowheres" and believed Chinese students were dedicated and hard-working. The latter belief was sustained through what McKay and Wong refer to as the *model minority discourse* which rewarded and praised students who were quiet and compliant. Whether these names or labels are formally recognized in institutional programs or insidiously adopted through the discursive practices of day-to-day communication among school staff, there are always names, an abundance of names, each evoking a particular set of images, beliefs, feelings – a stereotyped history of the person behind the identity tag.

4.2 Naming and its baggage

> The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language . . . but rather it exists in other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. And not all words for just anyone submit equally easily to this appropriation, to this seizure and transformation into private property: many words stubbornly resist . . . it is as if they put

> themselves in quotation marks against the will of the speaker. (Bakhtin, 1981 p. 293-94)

All words have a history of uses and associations, so that when we utter a word we are necessarily uttering the many meanings and uses previously associated with it. We make assumptions (about common understandings and values) when we use words, just as we do when we meet people. So it is with names given to language learners; they hide or hold many assumptions, and so they come with a lot of "baggage." Leung, Harris, and Rampton (1997), Harklau (2000) and Thesen (1997) all address the baggage of names in their studies. Leung et al. argue that the label of ESLL often assumes a simple one-to-one relationship between ethnicity and language, thus ignoring multilingual immigrant language learners as well as language learners with mixed ethnic heritage, as well as those who have been educated in a country and language other than that typically associated with their ethnicity. Furthermore, these authors argue, the common label of ESLL (and all of its associated labels) promotes -- through its implicit emphasis on an idealized "native speaker"-- a permanent sense of otherness. Thesen argues that the identity categories available to students in a White South African university assume that Black students aspire to being part of the White mainstream; and these assumptions, Thesen explains, are in conflict with the ways in which students describe themselves in their biographical interviews. Likewise, perhaps the most salient finding in Harklau's study was that the ESLL label used to categorize her three case-study participants in junior college when they transitioned from high school, assumed an academic, cultural, and linguistic deficit (in keeping with perceived deficits among the newcomer adults who made up the majority of the students in these community college classes). This assumption was maintained for all students in ESL courses despite the instructors' awareness of the former-high-school students' relatively extensive academic, cultural, and linguistic experience in the United States. A frustrating set of assumptions for those three participants to face. I explain a bit later how those students responded to those frustrations.

4.3 Name calling and name claiming among students

Of course, it is not just the institution which engages in *naming*; students themselves often develop very complex naming systems both for identifying their peers (*name calling*) and for identifying themselves (*name claiming*). Common category labels for most studies of social groupings among youth include clothing, music and popularity, as well as the more physically bound categories of gender and race and nationality (ethnicity). All of these categories and more were used for name calling and name claiming in the studies on which I focus in this section. What is perhaps more interesting in these studies is the conflict in the students' naming practices, that is, there is a marked difference between the names they claim for themselves and the names they are called by others.

Early in her study (and in conjunction with the social sciences teacher of both "sheltered" and "mainstream" history), Olsen (1997) engages her student participants (both "mainstream" and "newcomer") in mapping the social groupings of students at Madison High (particularly during the lunch hour): how students group, where they group, what defines them as distinct from other groups. Interestingly (to the researcher, the teacher, and the students), maps designed by the mainstream students looked nothing like those designed by the newcomers. Indeed the maps were so different that one student wondered if they were all attending the same school. The newcomer maps emphasized groupings based on languages, nationalities, and gender ("Fijian girls, Mexican-Mexican Girls and Boys who speak Spanish, Mexicans who speak English, Afghans, Vietnamese boys") and thus described quite distinct groupings among newcomers themselves along these lines, whereas mainstream students were primarily lumped into the category of "Americans"(p. 42). The mainstream students' maps, on the other hand, drew group lines based almost entirely on race ("Whites, Blacks, Asians, Latins") and recognized few nationality differences and no linguistic differences among newcomer students who were referred to as "ESLers" if they were referred to at all (p. 61). In keeping with the practice of providing more subtlety in naming oneself, the mainstream students

perceived quite distinct groupings ("housers, normal, skaters, band kids, mixed-groups that don't stand for anything") where the newcomers only saw "Americans" (ibid.).

For both mainstream and newcomer students, clothing and attitude toward "others" were key ways for describing the characteristics of any given group. For example, many newcomer students (especially the girls) viewed "American" clothing as a metaphor for sexual freedom, choice, religious relaxation, and wealth. Clothing was understood as being at the fore of Americans' judgments of others. Similarly, the mainstream students described Latinos as dressing alike and being exclusive, Mixed-Asians as wearing baggy pants and having a relaxed and inclusive attitude. While inclusiveness was viewed positively, all students expressed concern about the dangers of crossing group boundaries and being perceived as a "wannabee" that is, as "rejecting their people by choosing to be with others" (pp. 64-65). (See also Goldstein, 1997, for similar phenomenon among Chinese secondary students in Ontario.)

Another interesting finding in Olsen's study was that the newcomer students often defined "American" in ways that permanently excluded them from that grouping. For example, many of the newcomer students believed that being American meant being either Black or White and that, therefore, immigrants could never be American; they could only be American-like. Olsen notes that while the newcomer students criticize the "Americans" for failing to recognize them as multicultural, many of the newcomer students were unable to embrace multiplicity in identifying themselves.

> Said one Vietnamese boy: "People ask me, why can't you be both Vietnamese and American? It just doesn't work, because you run into too many contradictions. After a while you realize you can't be both, because you start crossing yourself and contradicting yourself and then it's like math, when two things contradict each other they cancel each other out and then you are nothing." (p. 54)

> [T]here is surprising clarity and agreement that to be American is to be English speaking, white skinned, and Christian. And there is little tenable ground for holding on to multiple identities or multicultures. (p. 55)

In fairly sharp contrast, Thesen (1997), Leung et al. (1997) and Rampton (1995) all document their participants' unwillingness to define themselves as *other than multiple*. In the work of Rampton (1995) and Leung et al. (1997), the authors note that second generation immigrant students born to parents of two different nationalities and ethnicities have difficulty categorizing themselves with one national or ethnic or linguistic label. While many of these students expressed feelings of "outsiderness" in the context of their much-less-often used "mother" tongue and culture, they also expressed interest and value in knowing many languages and cultures. In more detail, Rampton (1995) documents the extent to which his participants proudly and delicately cross linguistic boundaries according to varying linguistic ability and contextual appropriateness. Thesen (1997) notes similar "boundary crossings" among her participants, whom she describes as "strategically aware of what identity boundaries could be crossed, when, and with what consequences" (p. 506). However, like the participants in Olsen's study, one of Thesen's students tended to describe others through stereotypical categories of singular nationality, ethnicity and language, while claiming different categories which ignored ethnicity and allowed for multiplicity (for example, the use of "urban" or "multilingual") to describe herself (p. 501).

Ryan (1999) observes both boundary crossing and strong resistance to such crossings among the students in his study. While some of his student participants engaged in the construction of multiple, "mixed" and complex identities (by crossing "heritage" boundaries in other membership categories of gender, class, music and fashion), other students claimed the maintenance of "heritage" boundaries as essential for sustaining friendships and not being perceived as a "wannabee" (pp. 144-45). What is of particular interest to me in my own work in general and in the particular direction of this chapter henceforth, is that while group identity boundaries seem to be clearly marked, easily seen, and well-known, *individual* boundary crossings still occur and multiple identities are persistently claimed. It is within these crossings that I see

individual agency challenging the power of the dominant social discourse. It is to this *name resisting* that I would now like to turn.

4.4 Name Resisting

Harklau (2000) describes the many acts of resistance demonstrated by her participants in response to the inaccuracy of the institutional labels used to identify them (and accompanying assumptions held by their junior college ESL instructor). While in high school, the students took pride in (and were praised for) overcoming the hardships associated with their immigrant status and consistently displayed diligence and attentiveness in the classroom as well as appreciation for their teachers. Once in junior college, however, these same students (who after four years of high school in the United States were still noticeably host language learners) felt insulted by the treatment they received in their ESL classes, treatment which wrongly assumed that these students were ignorant of American culture and had recent and close ties to their country and culture of origin. As acts of resistance to the inaccurate identities that the junior college ESL program forced on these students (conveyed through "foreigner talk" and writing assignments on " your home town" -- generally failing to engage students in assignments appropriate to their cultural and linguistic experience in the US), these previously very attentive students became bored, inattentive and frustrated. They turned in rushed and poorly completed assignments or stopped attending class altogether. Not surprisingly, teachers of these courses held low opinions of these students, saying they were lazy, inattentive, not serious, not prepared. (The chicken and egg syndrome.)

While Heller's (1999) study focuses more closely on school dynamics as a micro-level manifestation of macro-level political and economic forces (and not on individual identity construction *per se*), she and her research team witnessed acts of resistance among language minority students in a French school whose culture was dominated by an elite group of white, bilingual, and predominantly Franco-Ontarian students. In Heller's study, student groups were mostly defined according to skin colour, language use practices, sports, music

preferences, gender, and academic goals. For example, "the bilinguals" were the "popular" male and female students who controlled the student government, were academically successful, university track, speakers of both English and French. "Les Québécois" students, on the other hand, were monolingual French students from Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick who expected French to be the common language of social and academic interactions at the school. They were often criticized by "the bilinguals" as well as by some teachers for their "vernacular" French and were, therefore, socially and academically marginalized. The "Blacks" were mostly Haitian and Somali students whose language of education had long been French but whose first language was neither French nor English. These students struggled with the communicative approach to language and instruction generally (placing more emphasis on content and meaning than on form and structure) and, therefore, struggled with the teaching style found at Champlain Secondary School. Also, because many of these students did not bring records of previous schooling with them from their country of origin, they tended to be placed in low-level classes. While the school administration believed that this approach to placement was best for these students, the students themselves felt discriminated against, and they attempted to resist "white authority" through the adoption of Afro-American hip-hop culture. Another group, "the Phat Boys," was a multicultural group of boys who found commonality in their exclusion from the dominant group despite the fact that they shared that group's goals of educational success and bilingualism for socioeconomic gains. Skin colour, immigrant ancestry, and lack of affiliation with Champlain's principal feeder school marginalized the Phat boys and they adopted hip hop as a challenge to what they perceived as the hegemony of rock. Beyond these more local kinds of group definition, some of the students at Champlain (specifically led by the Phat Boys) engaged in a large-scale act of resistance, challenging (and beating) the "bilinguals'" dominance of school government (and hence school activities) by mounting a new student body government slate called "les Anges," which won on a platform of inclusiveness supported by what the students believed were the anti-conflict and tolerance

messages of hip-hop. While this act of resistance might more readily be qualified as a political coup rather than resistance to a socially constructed and institutionally supported identity category, it is nonetheless demonstrative of agency.

As mentioned earlier, Thesen's (1997) study also documents individual acts of resistance to institutional identity labels. Some of the researcher's participants recounted their use of key cultural terms from their mother tongue (such as the use of "Modimo" for "God" and "Badima" for spiritual intermediary) in academic essays. Some rejected their English name and returned to the use of their African name. Most said that despite the apparent assumptions of the university to the contrary, Black students were *not* interested in being accepted by mainstream whites; rather they were interested in creating or finding a niche within the Black community. Finally, while one of Thesen's student participants claimed "disadvantaged" as useful for designating his true position in the university, another student rejected the same label as politically and racially motivated. For Thesen, these acts of resistance are at the very heart of identity construction, which she views as the dynamic interaction between socially constructed identity categories and the way people think of themselves, "the tension between the labellers and the labelled" [rather than the] "deterministic categorization of domination and resistance that critical theory often results in" (p. 488).

While more subtle, the acts of resistance described in McKay and Wong's (1996) study are no less agential than those described previously. As mentioned in an earlier part of this chapter, McKay and Wong begin their article by describing five different types of discourses which constrain the identity constructions of their four case-study participants: racialized discourse, model-minority discourse, Chinese cultural nationalist discourse, social and academic school discourses, and gender discourses. While constrained by these discourses (as social constructionist theory suggests one always is), these case-study students negotiated individual identities by challenging some discourses (through what the authors refer to as "counter-discourses") while embracing

others. For example, Michael Lee's (one of the participants) carelessness with written English is balanced by his gregarious use of oral English. He also balances the "nerdiness" associated with being a model minority by excelling in sports. He resisted the Chinese cultural nationalist discourse by not always "hanging out" with Chinese students, but balanced that resistance by also maintaining some ties with that specific peer group. Finally, he resisted his label of ESL student by talking back to the teacher and by lobbying one of his mainstream course teachers to advocate his promotion out of ESL entirely. While Michael Lee's lack of investment in written English was, according to the authors, self-destructive, overall his resistance to various constraining discourses proved effective in helping him to construct an identity more to his liking (that of athlete, not nerd, and friend of both Chinese and non-Chinese). The finely tuned, multiple, balanced identities that Michael Lee constructs are similar to what Leung et al. (1997) (in drawing on the work of Stuart Hall) refer to as cultures of hybridity, that is, identities which result from "several interlocking cultures and histories" (pp. 551). Also referred to as "translations" defined as "identity formations which cut across natural frontiers" (ibid.), these diasporas are the topic of analysis provided in the next and final section, an analysis which focuses on how immigrants translate themselves (their identities) from one (or several) language(s) and culture(s) to another.

5. Renaming: Self-translation through autobiography

In their analysis of ten eastern European adult immigrant autobiographies, Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) recommend "self-translation" as a new metaphor for language learning. Drawing on the work of Sfard, they explain self-translation as representative of what Sfard refers to as a *participation metaphor* which complements the *acquisition metaphor*. While the latter "allows us to see language as a set of rules and facts to be acquired and permits us to discuss learner language in all its complexity," the former "obliges us to think of learning 'as a process of becoming a member of a certain community'" (p.155). Emphasizing time and agency as central to the narratively constituted self, the

authors offer a two-phase, nine-stage model of self-translation. In the first phase, the "phase of loss," the authors observe five stages of loss related to language and identity: loss of linguistic identity, loss of subjectivities, loss of frames of reference, loss of the inner voice, and attrition of the mother tongue. In the second phase, "the phase of recovery," the authors observe four phases: appropriation of others' voices, emergence of one's own new voice, reconstruction of the past, and continuous growth into new positions and subjectivities (pp. 162-63).

While I didn't use Pavlenko and Lantolf's model in my analysis of three immigrant autobiographies (Allen, 2000) (their chapter was not yet published at the time), I found their model to be quite compatible with my analytic framework. In studying the works of both first and second generation immigrants (those of Ben Fong Torres, 1994; Richard Rodriguez, 1982; and Eva Hoffman, 1989), I focused on each author's transitions from his/her home language and home culture to the language and culture of a North American society during the '50s, '60s, and '70s. While each story is unique, they are also surprisingly similar, revealing the intricate web of connections among the languages, the people, and the societal culture that constitute the context of each author's life. Each story describes linguistic and cultural transitions which change family dynamics, determine friendships, and alter the author's self perceptions. Each story moves naturally and fairly sequentially from the context of home to that of school then on to career, and finishes with a return to the home. At the centre of the web of evolving relational dynamics is the author, the Self, a self who accepts some names while claiming, rejecting or recasting others, over time and in response to changing circumstances as well as to an ever-evolving self definition.

Each of the autobiographies represents both an *account* and an *act* of identity construction. The account is in the contents of the complete story, whereas the act is in the process of its writing. In order to tell their stories, each of these immigrant authors had to remember, reflect on, and sometimes even physically revisit their past. This process of remembering and reconstructing in

order to retell is what I, too, came to understand as "translating the self" (Eva Hoffman's phrase). By adopting Hoffman's term "translation," I situate the notion of identity construction within the perspective of the individual immigrant. As the interpreter of and actor in his/her life events, the individual minority is the author of his/her life story; but it is only by engaging in the act of remembering, reflecting and retelling that "translation" occurs. It is, perhaps, only in this reconstructive act that the individual immigrant becomes fully conscious of the contours of his/her identity. Translation, then, is a particular kind of identity construction: it is a *conscious* act of reconciling the cultural and linguistic differences that reside within individuals whose home language and culture differs from the language and culture of the society in which they live. In my analysis, I proposed that through the oral or written reconstructing and recounting of their adaptation, these individuals achieve a distance from and understanding of that process, allowing them greater freedom and control in their movement among the languages and cultures of their everyday lives.

> [T]o get a *general* notion of a particular "Self" in practice, we must sample its uses in a variety of contexts, culturally specifiable contexts.... [But] we obviously cannot track people through life and observe or interrogate them each step of the way. Even if we could, doing so would transform the meaning of what they were up to. And, in any case, we would not know how to put the pieces together at the end of the inquiry. One viable alternative is obvious – to do the inquiry retrospectively, through *autobiography*. . . . an account of what one thinks one did in what settings in what ways for what felt reasons. (Bruner, 1990, p. 119)

For the reasons succinctly expressed by Bruner, above, autobiography has important theoretical and methodological implications for my research. I hoped my study would focus on students' stories of their emigration and immigration and integration as they witnessed and shaped its unfolding in a new place and a new language. I wanted the study to both facilitate and document Hoffman's concept of self-translation among my adolescent participants. While I came to understand such translations as likely requiring years of distance from and reflection on the initial stages of integration, the concept of self-translation shaped the questions I asked my research participants as well as my analysis of

their integration experiences. I describe the nature of those questions and my methods of analysis in the next chapter.

6. Conclusion

I began this chapter by situating identity construction and language learning within a socio-political research orientation, an orientation which focuses on power relations rather than on linguistic proficiency. I explored identity as a construct within a variety of disciplines and, based on that cross-disciplinary analysis, presented several different types of identities as well as several different ways in which identity is constructed. I then analysed various language education literature in order to describe ways in which the politics of identity are practiced in educational institutions, practices that I referred to as institutional naming, name calling, name claiming and name resisting. Finally I presented autobiography as an act of renaming or self-translation and the implications of this act of renaming for my own research.

Throughout this chapter, I have described the tension between individual agency and large socio-cultural discourses (primarily those of schools, but others are implied) as being at the heart of what it means to integrate. In the chapters that follow, I tease apart the characteristics of this tension in the integration experiences of my research participants.

Chapter 4

Making Sense: Research Questions and Methodology

> Before you was a child, you see things in a different kind but you didn't understand them. But then you wake up; and then probably when you are 30 it's like waking up again, in another life. Now I feel like I wake up from before and start to live another life and start to dream another dream. (Miglena, 8b)

1. Introduction

In the above quote, Miglena[13] (one of my study's principal participants) captures the essence of where I tried to locate my study, that is, in the transitions of newcomer adolescents as they "wake up" to who they are in their host country and who they understand themselves to have been, by comparison, in their country of origin. Having spent many years as the teacher of newcomers, I wanted this study to focus on what it felt like to be a newcomer who is starting to "live another life" and "dream another dream." I wanted to know how that transition shaped how students felt about themselves, their language learning, their friendships, their families, their past, their future. This study, then, necessarily focused on the students, their perspectives, their stories. My assumption has always been that my students are the experts on what it means to be uprooted and how that uprooting can affect all other dimensions of sense-of-self in the world. However, as with all qualitative research, this study focuses on particular students in a particular context. In this study, then, I draw on the expertise of these students to understand their experiences of being uprooted and how that uprooting shapes their sense of self (identity) and their educational integration (social, academic, and linguistic).

The chapter begins with some of the key questions that guided me through the study. I then turn my attention, briefly, to my methodological framework, that is, the philosophical underpinnings of how I conducted this

[13] The names of all participants and the school are pseudonyms. Most student participants chose their own pseudonyms.

study. I then dedicate most of the rest of the chapter to providing details about my data gathering and data analysis methods.

2. Questions

Drawing on my personal and professional experiences with immigration and integration (see Chapter 1), my review of the literature on integration policies and practices in Quebec (Chapter 2), and my exploration of identity construction theories (Chapter 3), I developed the following questions as the general focus for the study.

- How is integration experienced by adolescent newcomers in a francophone school in Montreal?
- How do these students' experiences inform our understanding of the relationships among host (second) language learning and teaching, integration, and identity construction?
- What are the implications of these newcomer students' integration experiences for educational theories, policies and programs and practices that target such newcomers?

Answers to these questions (and others) are woven throughout the data and analysis presented in Chapters 6, 7, and 8. A more explicit response to each of these questions is provided in the concluding chapter.

3. Methodological Framework

> Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. (Geertz, 1973, p. 5)

While my research is not a study of culture *per se*, it is inextricably located in and bound up with culture. Thus, for the macro-contextualizing of my study, I view culture as "webs of significance" which human beings have spun. As has been suggested in previous chapters, I believe that those webs are spun through what Gee (1996) calls Discourses (discussed in the previous chapter), that is, "ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking . . . that

are accepted as instantiations of particular roles . . . by specific groups of people" (p. viii). In many ways my study is of competing Discourses, those of young newcomers to Quebec and those of the educational (and socializing) institution that has newcomer integration as one of its goals. My approach to the study of these potentially competing discourses arises out of my beliefs (and assumptions) about culture (as discussed by Geertz), language, host-language learning, and identity construction, all of which have been explored in Chapter 3.

While qualitative research no longer needs to be explained and justified against the positivist perspectives of quantitative paradigms, it is helpful here to explain how and why I situate my study within what Maykut and Morehouse (1994) refer to as the "phenomenological approach," that is, "understanding the meaning [that] events have for persons being studied. . . . [and seeing] the individual and his or her world as co-constituted" (p. 3). In other words, I believe that the social world makes people and people make the social world. This belief in co-construction (of knowledge, of values, of identity) is at the heart of my study. In deciding to investigate the nature of integration for adolescent newcomers, I assumed that this investigation would focus not just on the newcomers and not just on the integrating school system, but on how each shaped the other as in conversational exchanges.

To understand this co-construction, this conversation, I engaged with my participants in an interpretation of newcomer integration into a francophone secondary school in Montreal. My study, therefore, is highly "subjective," that is it pays attention to the "subject." As Maykut and Morehouse (1994) explain, "[t]he purpose of qualitative research is to get at the world of the agent or subject" (p. 20). Of course, my own perspective and assumptions (many of which have already been touched on in previous chapters) are as much a part of that subjective or "perspectival" (ibid) aspect of this study as are the perspectives and subjectivities of my participants. In this study, I was necessarily an "indweller," that is, I attempted to empathize with all of my participants in order to understand how (together and in their particular context)

they constructed a particular kind of newcomer integration. What follows in the rest of this chapter, then, is an explanation of how I, as a participant observer and teacher's aide, was an indweller in this study.

4. Gaining Access

It would be in the third school and the second school board contacted that I would finally conduct my research. I had heard rumours about the difficulties of gaining access and I wasn't naïve about the value of networking. Therefore, I was more than a little pleased when, in the second year of the Ph.D. program, I met an ESL teacher who was keen to help me network by introducing me to his school's principal. With revisions to the proposal, the project was accepted and promises were made for a start in the following school year. Then the administration changed, the principal left; the new principal knew nothing about my proposal. I pitched the project again. No interest. They already had several university-based research projects going on and one more was just too much.

A different school board, a different world. Two phone calls took me to the woman in charge of *accueil* programs and she had two schools to recommend: École de l'Île and École Secondaire de Montréal. A comparison of the two might be nice, she thought aloud, since the second is almost entirely immigrant origin and the first has more of a mix. Both schools' administrators agreed to have me meet with any interested teachers. In the first school, École de l'Île, the administrator decided that all of the *accueil* teachers should be interested. The after-school meeting occurred in a classroom with about ten of us organized in a circle. Very few smiles greeted me, no heads nodded as I discussed the project (the description of which they had already read), lots of watch-checking and palpable tension created the ambiance at this obviously unwanted meeting. Schools are busy places, teachers are busy people. How do you convince busy teachers that what you want to study could be of value, of interest, won't get in their way, won't take up their time, won't be one more burden? "Could you do your study on gangs? Could you work with a group of Indian boys who are dropping out? Do you have any suggestions for students

who come from war-torn countries and haven't been in schools for a long time? Do you have any solutions?" Fair questions. Not my questions. This would be a hard sell.

I was paired up with Marie, the woman in charge of welcoming, orienting, assessing, placing and disciplining the newcomers. It was March and students were still arriving for the first time in Quebec, registering for the first time in a North American school. The school was like so many others I had been in throughout my youth and my career: darkish, cold, long hallways; windowless offices the size of closets; classrooms like hospital rooms. No aesthetic. How did we come to design so many schools to be so unappealing, so confining, so unwelcoming? I would spend several weeks with Marie, observing her as she oriented newcomers and disciplined old-timers. By the end of any day, I was exhausted from listening, noticing, and from forcing myself to spend hours in such a depressing environment. So institutional, so cold, so bleak. While Marie was an interesting person with many interesting insights, she was not a teacher and didn't have regular contact with students. Occasionally I was invited to observe in beginner-level *accueil* classrooms with pre- and early-adolescent newcomers. I appreciated those teachers' willingness to have me in their classroom, but my observations were scattered and my contact with students felt random. I remained on the outside.

École Secondaire Montréal was not less foreboding on the outside, but on the inside there were student murals on the walls and student art everywhere. Bright colors warmed dark spaces. There was a serious lack of natural light and windows, but there was some warmth in the décor. While I was not welcomed by the whole group of *accueil* teachers, I was very warmly and keenly greeted by the three who were new (and temporary) hires that year: Charlotte, Marianne and Sylvie. All of them had read my proposal and were interested. They too felt like outsiders in the school, having begun the year with very little support. With time, they had learned the ropes and they shared what they had learned with me. My notes read:

> Eight groups [of *accueil* students]. . . . Classes are supposed to be held at a maximum of 19 students. Mainstream classes are thought to be around 32. Insufficient support for students entering mainstream. Need for more *soutien linguistique*, but there is no money to hire someone in that position. There is also a mindset against changing students after the month of December in order that both students and teachers might have some stability in their groupings. However, Charlotte feels this should be flexible because some students are very keen to move into the mainstream. Sylvie emphasizes that many students see *accueil* as a waste of time because it doesn't count toward their graduation requirements. (Field notes, Book 2, p. 2)

Despite their own needs and busy schedules, all three seemed interested to know what I needed for my project; they viewed the project with genuine interest and saw it as something that might help them through the last part of what had been a very demanding year. Somehow they saw helping me as a way of helping themselves, as a way of getting energy by bringing in another point of view to what they do. I was thrilled, and very lucky.

For a short time (approximately 2 weeks) I attempted to remain involved in both École de l'Île and École Secondaire de Montréal (ESM); but juggling two locations soon proved to be too much, especially because I was being asked by Charlotte, Marianne, and Sylvie to spend more and more time with them and their students. It was more than a little awkward to explain to the administration and Marie (who had been so generous with her time) at École de l'Île that I had decided to pull out and focus my research on one school only. However, when I found myself able to spend all day every day with some of the teachers and students at ESM, I knew I had made the right choice. For the purposes of the study, I consider that my data collection started at the end of March 2001 and ended in early July 2002. The timeline provided in the Appendix (Appendix 1) shows the different stages of my data gathering over the course of those 15 months.

5. Data Gathering

5.1 Participant Observation

Because Charlotte had what was considered to be an advanced group of *accueil* students who were almost all expected to integrate into the mainstream the following year, it was clear early on that that group of students would be ideal for my study. Because Charlotte was eager to have me, I spent as much time as possible with the class. This meant that Charlotte included me in all of her field trip budget proposals (of which there were many for these last three months of school).

5.1.1 Classroom Participation and Observation

While I did spend some of my time simply sitting at the back of the class observing, the bulk of my time with Charlotte and her students was spent working in small groups. While Charlotte reviewed an exam or grammar point with some students, I would take a small group into another room for conversation practice, or to work on revising some written work in the computer lab. I would also, on occasion, help Charlotte with some of her correcting; and we would brainstorm lessons and class projects together. Two projects on which I spent the most time with the students were "*Théâtre réaliste*" and "*Le débat linguistique*." For the first project, students were allowed to form their own groups and were asked to create a 10-15 minute realistic theatrical sketch which would be video-taped and possibly performed in front of other classes. The production of the sketch would be the basis for the bulk of the students' oral production grade for the term. For about six weeks I worked with the students in small groups to help them develop their sketch, memorize their lines, improve their pronunciation, find appropriate props, and walk through their scenes.

The second project was the language debate project. Early on in my work with Charlotte, a province-wide assessment of the state of the French language (discussed in Chapter 2) was coming to an end and the media were running stories about language laws, language in the workplace and language in schools. Because language and identity were key to the focus of my study,

Charlotte thought it would be interesting to introduce the students to the genre of debating by having them first learn about the history and current state of French in Quebec and then mount a formal debate about whether or not Quebec should have language laws which require newcomers to attend school in French. Charlotte and I spent hours poring over newspaper clippings to select those we thought would provide the most varied and accessible arguments for and against Quebec's language laws. Charlotte began the project by giving a couple of lectures on the history of French in Quebec; and then she and I both circulated while students read, discussed and wrote summaries of various newspaper articles in small groups. In the end, however, time constraints prohibited us from asking the students to mount a formal debate. Instead the various texts were studied, the arguments for and against delineated, and Quebec's language laws became the topic for the students' final oral exam.

5.1.2 Field Trips

As I mentioned, Charlotte applied for and received funding for four field trips that all took place in the month of May. I was lucky enough to be invited to accompany the class on all four trips. The first two trips were guided visits of two of Montreal's well-known museums: Museum of Contemporary Art; and the archeology museum Pointe à Callière. The third trip, attendance at a professional theatrical production, was something of a reward for the students' hard work on their theatrical sketches. Our final field trip was an all-day trip to Quebec City's National Assembly and Maison de la Découverte (a federally funded natural and political history museum). On all of the field trips I was able to chat informally with students over lunch, on the bus, in the metro, or while we wandered. Sometimes, if the student felt comfortable, I would tape record our conversations. Otherwise, I considered much of my time with them as simply a period of integration, a time to know each other outside of the classroom, a time to become comfortable with each other and to build the foundation for a relationship that I hoped would extend into the next academic year.

5.2 Field Notes

My participant observation field notes were initially written up in a notebook while at the school, on field trips or during phone conversations. I would then type up those notes the same day or evening if possible and, if not, one to two days later. I would at that time also add other reflections, things I remembered from that day but hadn't had time to write down. Field notes from throughout the rest of the study, that is, during the second academic period in which the study took place, were kept in a notebook (leaving a wide left margin for later analysis) and not typed up due to time constraints and the simple fact that interviews rather than field notes had become my primary data gathering focus.

5.3 Student Interviews

While the field notes were the focal point of my data gathering in the first three months of the study (March 15- June 20, 2001), interviews with each of the students as well as their teachers became the focus of my attention during the second part of the study (August 2001- June 2002). This is not to suggest that no interviews were conducted during the first three months of the study. Indeed I conducted at least one audio-taped interview with each student either during the lunch hour or after school (some spontaneous, informal interviews took place with certain students during field trip outings). Almost all interviews with the students throughout the study were conducted either at lunch time or after school and in one of three places: Charlotte's classroom, the hallway outside of Charlotte's classroom, and the picnic benches on the grassy area of the school grounds.

Two of the 18 student participants were only available for one interview. One student was available for only two interviews. All of the other students, that is 15 participants, did a minimum of three interviews with me over the course of the study. On average each interview lasted about 45 minutes. For many interviews I provided either lunch or snacks (depending on the time of day) as a way of thanking the participants for their time. As a result, however, some of the data gathered while the participants were eating was not as clear as one might

hope for because the crackling of chip bags, the tapping of pop cans and the complications of pronunciation with a mouthful of food compromised some of the data. While I encouraged students to eat before we began the interview, time constraints often made us blend the two activities. While we often think of teachers and administrators as very busy, I don't know that we always think of how tightly scheduled students' lives are as well. With a full day of classes, followed by make-up sessions with teachers after school and homework at night, these students felt the constraints of school life. Fitting my interviews into their tight schedules meant impressive generosity on their part, especially since I had pledged to the school and the teachers that my work would not involve removing students from classes.

Of the 18 students in the study, 12 had some or quite a lot of fluency in English when they arrived in Quebec. Thus, with Charlotte's permission, I conducted interviews in the student's language of choice. For five of the participants, English was almost always the preferred language. For four other participants French was our only common language and for the remaining nine students, the preferred mode of communication was various degrees of code-switching between French, English and sometimes Spanish.[14]

5.3.1 First Student Interviews

In the first round of student interviews, done mostly in the months of May and June 2001 when most of the participants were completing their first academic year in *accueil*, I focused my interview questions on getting to know about the students' transition from their country of origin to Montreal. I asked questions about their academic, social and family activities in the country of origin and then asked them how those activities compared with their academic, social and family life in Montreal. I also asked students to discuss any memories they had of leaving their country of origin (C1) and their subsequent arrival in Montreal. Finally, in that interview I asked students what plans they had for the summer and the next academic year, and if they would be interested in remaining in

[14] While teaching in Mexico and California, I developed some proficiency in Spanish.

contact with me during the next academic year (regardless of where they ended up going to school).

5.3.2 Second Student Interviews

The second round of student interviews took place in November and December of the following academic year. I had intended to interview students prior to this date, but problems with student scheduling that year made for a chaotic and tense environment for students and staff at the school. Therefore, I waited until students' schedules stabilized before I returned to the school site for more interviews. In this second round of interviews I focused on how the students felt they were doing in their various school programs. Five of the student participants had been placed into the mainstream program at the same school, and five had been replaced in *accueil* for a second year. These ten students became the focus of this dissertation simply because they were accessible (in the same school) and provided an interesting comparison of the *accueil* and the mainstream programs. Two other students were placed in what is referred to as *adaptation scolaire*, a program with fewer core courses, fewer teachers, and small class sizes. While the *adaptation scolaire* program is designed primarily for students with behavioral and/or learning difficulties, it also attracted certain *accueil* students whom the *accueil* teacher felt would benefit from a class size smaller than that found in the mainstream. Of those two students placed in *adaptation scolaire*, only one met with me regularly for interviews. The other, who did not formally withdraw from the study, indicated by his failure to show up for scheduled meetings that he was no longer interested in being a participant in the study. The remaining six students from the original *accueil* class of the previous year went to several different places. One attended cégep; three attended adult school programs, and two attended different secondary schools. While all of those students returned to the school whenever I requested an interview throughout the second academic year, my lack of familiarity with their academic contexts meant that I couldn't follow their integration in the same

ways as I was able to with the ten students who remained at the school and became the central participants in the study.

The differences in school programs and environments also demanded that I adjust my interview protocol appropriately. As a result, for those "off-campus" participants, much of the second round of interviews focused on what their new learning context was like and how they felt about their academic, social and linguistic integration outside of ESM and outside of the *accueil* context.

5.3.3 Third / Final Student Interviews

The final round of student interviews occurred in May and June of 2002. To prepare for these interviews I reviewed all previous interviews so that I might pick up on some of the issues students raised over the course of the study. Besides the specific questions designed for each student, the interview protocol focused on several themes: academic performance, language use and comfort, friendship formation and social life, after-school jobs, home life (rapport with parents and siblings), plans for both the near and distant future, advice for newcomers and for the schools which receive them. Most of these interviews occurred after school and frequently extended beyond the 45 minute average interview length.

5.4 Teacher and Administrator Interviews

In some ways I was always informally interviewing Charlotte because she and I worked so closely together for the three months that I was a participant-observer in her classroom; and we continued our phone, school, and email contact over the course of the second academic year. However, I also managed to tape some of my informal discussions as well as more formal interviews with Charlotte. In all I taped four interview sessions, one of which was a conversation with two other colleagues: Marianne and Mélanie. The first and second tapings occurred in May and June 2001 (at the end of the first part of the study) and focused broadly on the nature of the *accueil* program and its role in the integration of

newcomers. The third interview, which focused on a special program called *intégration partielle* (described under "programs" in the next chapter), took place midway through the second academic year in January 2002, and the final interview, in which Charlotte reflected on each student in the study, took place over the phone at the study's end in July 2002.

In February 2002 (the beginning of the second term for newly mainstreamed students), I interviewed some of the mainstream teachers of the five participants who had been mainstreamed during the second academic year. While part of the interview focused on the performance of each of the students in their courses, the rest of the interview focused on the teachers' experience with and preparation for teaching in a multilingual and multicultural context. More specifically I asked what the teachers thought of the *accueil* program as a means of integrating newcomers into the mainstream, what problems (if any) they noticed newly-mainstreamed students were having, and how they responded to the needs of those students. For this part of the data gathering, I conducted interviews with four French language arts teachers, two math teachers, one history teacher, and one physics teacher. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and was conducted either in the teachers' classroom or the more public spaces of teacher work rooms or the staff dining room.

In November and January, I also interviewed three school administrators: the principal, the director of school life, and one of two vice-principals. The interviews with the principal and vice principal both focused on the *intégration partielle* program and lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. The interview with the director of student life lasted an hour and focused on the various extra-curricular activities made available to the student body and the communication of those activities to *accueil* students.

5.5 Other forms of data

Besides interviews with students, teachers and administrators, I had frequent contact with Charlotte and occasional contact with some students via e-mail. With Charlotte the nature of the e-mail exchanges was generally for planning

purposes (lessons, meetings). With the students, my e-mail exchanges were much less frequent and less substantive. While more than half of the students had relatively easy access to their e-mail none of those students chose the internet as a principal form of communication with me. Nonetheless, some of the exchanges provided some valuable insights into the students' linguistic preferences, abilities, and overall adjustment to changes in their social and academic life. I also collected a selection of the student participants' exams and essays from their first academic year in the study. Finally, for those students who were interested, I engaged them in an image-based interview activity in which the students met with me in small groups (3-5) and cut out magazine images they felt reflected some dimension of themselves currently, in the past and/or in the future. They then organized their selected images in whatever way they felt was appropriate and explained how the images fit together and what they represented. The image collage was photographed and the explanations were audio taped and transcribed for analysis.

6. Data Analysis

6.1 Analysis of transcribed interviews

As with the interviews themselves, my approach to my transcription analysis changed as I spent more and more time with my data. Because I analysed my transcripts as each one was completed (rather than completing all transcription before conducting the analysis), the ways in which I engaged with and interrogated my interview transcripts changed over time, as I became more familiar with the data. Initial readings of data tended to simply look for themes within the categories of the interview protocol: academic performance, use of and comfort in language, family adaptation, summer plans, etc. In later analyses, I wanted to be able to notice themes that might not fit into my protocol; I wanted to hear the students' voices outside the constraints of the questions I had posed (as much as possible). Therefore, I began doing a double read of each interview. The first read was quick, allowing myself time only to write down key words or phrases either used by the participant or which captured an idea that the

participant had emphasized. The identification of key terms and phrases was intentionally intuitive and quick. I was interested in allowing myself to interpret the data outside of the boundaries of the interview protocol. I then took those key words and phrases and reread the document more slowly and carefully, looking for specific data which supported my intuited themes. For each theme of the synopsis I identified specific utterances which supported the theme and pasted those quotes into the synopsis for easy reference. In this way, I created a thematic synopsis which acknowledged but also reached beyond the interview protocol, and which was grounded in the specific utterances of my participants. This was not a linear process. Indeed each new piece of data that I read shaped subsequent readings of both new and old data. For this reason, my analysis of any given interview (or other form of data) necessarily shaped all subsequent readings of other data. A potentially unending recursive process.

6.2 Analysis of field notes

I analysed my field notes only after having spent a substantial amount of time with my interview transcripts. I wanted the students' perspectives to shape what I would attend to or notice in my field notes later. As it turned out, the field notes proved most useful in the writing of both this and the next chapter. In this chapter, I used the field notes to verify the nature and order of the various research activities I describe; and in the next chapter, I used the field notes to help me reconstruct the context in which the study took place.

6.3 Analysis of student essays and exams

The student essays and exams were informative primarily in two ways: they provided information about students' plans for the future and reflections on their past; and they documented how students' knowledge of the French language was being assessed.

7. Conclusion

This chapter served primarily three functions: (a) to present the questions that guided my research; (b) to explain the philosophical underpinnings of how and why I conducted my study the way I did; (c) to describe, in detail, exactly how I gathered and analyzed the data I used to explore the relationships among host-language learning, integration, and identity. The next chapter focuses more specifically on the context in which that data were gathered and the participants who were shaped by and shapers of that context.

Chapter 5

From place to placed: Contextualizing newcomers

1. Introduction

While this chapter speaks primarily to the school context which shaped my principal participants ("newcomers"), it also speaks (if only briefly) to the ways in which I, too, was contextualized as a researcher in the school. However, my reflections (in the section "Gaining trust") on how I interacted with the students and what I inferred about how they might have viewed me are only a small representation of the ways in which I was also a participant in this study. While the study is clearly not about me, it is undeniably filtered, shaped, colored by my professional and personal experiences and interests and understandings. I was never merely an objective observer in this study. However, I view my subjectivity (based in my experiences as a teacher and language learner) as an asset to and indeed the necessary qualification for doing this particular interpretive study. In this chapter, then, I contextualize what follows in the remaining chapters by broadly describing the school (ambiance, activities, programs), the principal participants (Charlotte and her class of *accueil* students), and how the students' academic transitions from June 2001 to September 2001 shaped the second part of my study and the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

2. The school

Ambiance and activities

> École Secondaire de Montréal
> 900 élèves, provenant de 85 pays,
> avec plus de 50 langues,
> n'ayant qu'un objectif:
> Réussir par le travail et le dépassement de soi
>
> *[ESM, 900 students, from 85 countries, with more than 50 languages, having but one objective: Success by working and surpassing oneself.]*

So reads a school-published brochure explaining EMS's upcoming merger with its sister school (the former has secondary levels 3-5 and the latter, 1-2) and promoting the school's cultural and linguistic diversity as well as its academic excellence. A student-conducted survey of the school two years prior to my study found that the members of ESM student body spoke a total of 64 different languages in their homes and 30% of those students spoke more than one language at home. While this diversity is promoted (primarily by the school staff) as a source of pride and identity for ESM, this positive spin on difference is not necessarily what outsiders first associate with this 30-year old school. According to Mr. L, the director of Student Life (student government and all extracurricular activities), ESM continues to struggle with an old reputation as a rough school, a reputation he feels the school no longer deserves. While the structure, like that of so many schools, is somewhat foreboding and coldly institutional both inside and out, it is clear from the student-painted murals in the interior quad, the lack of graffiti, the abundance of student art, and the numerous extracurricular activities advertised that ESM aspires to being a pluralistic and student-centered environment. Mr. L listed a long series of activities that were happening on a given day after school, activities that included a fashion show practice, student council meeting, hip-hop dance practice, a soccer match, basketball practice, Latin dance class, and a competitive lifesaving class. He explained that the value of these activities was evident in the number of students who participate in them.

> Moi je dirais qu'il y a environ 300 à l'école qui participent à une ou plusieurs activités à l'école présentement sur 875 élèves. Donc c'est exceptionnel; j'ai jamais vu ça. Cette année plus que toutes les autres années depuis que je suis ici; ça participe comme j'ai jamais vu (T07/30)[15]
>
> *[I would say that about 300 students of our 875 students participate in one or several current activities. It's exceptional; I've never seen that.*

[15] The parenthetical information which follows participant quotes indicates the cassette from which the interview was transcribed, and either the page number or conversational turn number from which the quote was taken. For example, the above quote from Mr. L was taken from teacher cassette #7 (T07) and from the 30th exchange or turn in our conversation. Information in brackets [ ] within participant quotes has been inserted by the author for clarification purposes.

This year more than any other since I've been here, they are participating like I've never seen.]

However, student participation in after-school activities is not, as it turns out, enough for ESM to compete with its neighboring schools. Mr. L explains that all of the schools surrounding ESM offer special programs to attract and keep a particular clientele. One school offers an international program, another offers a theatre-studies option, and another offers specializations in dance and music. ESM has nothing of the kind.

> À ESM, disons, on a absoluement rien et c'est la raison pour laquelle il faut travailler, il faut offrir des choses qui sont intéressantes parce qu'on a déjà du retard la-dessus. . . . [M]oi j'ai des enfants et l'année prochaine il va être dans ce choix-là, il va être en sixième année, il va falloir commencer à penser à une école secondaire pour lui et puis quand je regarde dans mon milieu à part des écoles privées, ben je regarde [École X] avec les programmes encore une fois [École Y], [École Z] et ÉSM, pour l'instant, ils ont rien à offrir pour aller chercher pour accrocher les jeunes, pour les intéresser à quelque chose de plus spécial.
>
> *[At ESM we have absolutely nothing and that's why we have to work, we have to offer interesting things because we've already fallen behind. . . . I have kids and next year [my son] is going to be in a position to make this choice, he is going into sixth grade and we're going to have to start thinking about secondary schools for him. And when I look in my area, apart from private schools, I look at [School X] with its programs or [School Y], [School Z]; and right now ESM has nothing to offer that attracts youth, that interests them in something special.]*

In sharp contrast with the warmth I sensed in the décor and the passion and dedication I observed among many of the staff, was the isolation and lack of participation among my 18 student participants. None of them joined any clubs or participated in any after-school sports throughout the study. On the contrary, most of them, as will be evident in the chapters that follow, describe a sense of themselves as socially isolated and much less active than they were in their country of origin. An obvious question arises: With so many available activities, why is there so little involvement on the part of the *accueil* students? While reasons for the participants' lack of participation in extra-curricular

activities may become clearer in chapters 6, 7 and 8, I will discuss this phenomenon in more detail in the concluding chapter.

2.1 The programs

Like many secondary schools in the Montreal area, ESM offers its programs on a 9-day cycle with each day of that cycle having a distinct course schedule (thus ensuring that students don't always have the same course at the same time). The school day is divided into five 75-minute time blocks (4 classes and 1 lunch hour) which begin at 8:30 and end at 3:15 in the afternoon. As can be seen in the Programs Flow Chart (Appendix 2) ESM provides essentially three different kinds of academic programs for its linguistically and culturally diverse clientele: (a) mainstream, (b) temporary alternative, (c) *accueil*. The mainstream program at ESM, referred to in French as *"régulier,"* is offered only to those students in secondary 3-5 (levels 1 and 2 are offered in ESM's sister school) with class sizes generally between 32 and 37 students.

For students who have either learning difficulties or behaviour problems, ESM offers a temporary alternative program referred to as CPT (*Cheminement particulier temporaire*) which offers smaller class sizes (usually capped at 20) in secondary 2 and 3 only. Teachers in the CPT program specialize in more than one subject so that students are followed more closely by a smaller number of teachers. As is indicated in its name, the CPT program is intended to be a temporary support for students struggling in the *régulier* stream. The CPT program goal then is similar to that of *accueil*: Integration into the mainstream.

The third program, the *accueil* program, is the one in which I conducted the three-month participant-observer portion of my study and which is described in some detail in Chapter 2. Designed as an intensive 10-month immersion in the host language, *accueil* often functions as a 2 or even 3-year long host-language learning program in isolation from the mainstream and as a prerequisite for mainstream courses. While students are exposed to three other subjects (math, physical education, and art) all courses are taken as a same-class cohort. *Accueil* students, therefore, do not have courses in which they mix with other *accueil*

students, CPT students, or *régulier* students. While *accueil* students do have some instruction in math, physical education, and art, two-thirds of their class time is spent studying the French language and preparing to enter *régulier* French courses. While the *accueil* program directives suggest that students should be prepared to enter all subjects via their French second language learning, the reality is that *accueil* teachers at ESM are language specialists who focus their instruction on the development of grammatical knowledge of French and skills in analysis of text types, thus mirroring (to varying degrees, depending on the class level and teacher) the curriculum for French courses in the mainstream program.

For those *accueil* students who are considered likely to be placed in secondary 5 (the final year of secondary school) in the following year, a partial mainstreaming option (referred to as *intégration partielle*) is available beginning in the second half of the academic year. In *intégration partielle* students are placed in one or both of two mainstream secondary 4 courses required for graduation from secondary school: history and physics. Because the students enter these courses during the second half of the second year, they are required to complete a full year's worth of coursework in half (or less than half) the time allotted to their mainstream peers. To do this, students attend not only the mainstream course but also special after-school sessions in which they study material covered in the first half of the year and review material being taught in the second-term courses that they attend.

3. The principal participants: Getting to know you

In this section I provide a general description of my principal student participants and their teacher, Charlotte.

3.1 Charlotte

Charlotte was one of nine *accueil* teachers at ESM and her class was one of eight *accueil* groups in the school (two of the nine teachers shared one class). While she was a newcomer to ESM and the teaching of *accueil*, Charlotte came

to ESM with ten years' experience as a community-liason, researcher, and coordinator working with at-risk youth. As well, six years prior to her arrival at ESM, she worked as a literacy research assistant and curriculum designer while obtaining teaching certificates in both literacy and French-as-a-second-language instruction. She was well-liked and respected by her colleagues. To both her students and the school generally, she brought tremendous energy and enthusiasm. She was elected to the school's building management committee; she collaborated regularly with teachers in the *régulier* program in an effort to prepare her students for integration into mainstream French and history courses; she organized and obtained funding for four field trips for her students at the end of her first academic year at ESM. She arrived as early as 6:30 at the school and worked nights and weekends designing new and adapting old curricula to accommodate her multilevel students (ranging in grade level from secondary 1-5). In the second academic year of the study, I observed Charlotte working with her students from the previous year (my principal participants) during many lunch and after-school hours, helping them with their work in courses ranging from moral and religious education to history to French. In a word, Charlotte was a very dedicated and very hard-working teacher.

It was somewhat ironic, then, to do this study at a time when the Quebec government, in its review of salary equity, was arguing that because of holiday time and summer vacation, teachers could not be considered full-time employees. While Charlotte supported a union-promoted work slow-down, she seemed incapable of slowing down, of giving less to her students. With her students, Charlotte never raised her voice and never publicly commented on her students' behaviour. She treated her students with utmost respect. All comments about their performance and/or behaviour were made discreetly, usually in a one-on-one meeting. Because of her respectful demeanor and her highly organized class sessions, she was also always treated with respect by her students.

With regard to the teaching of French and students' integration into the mainstream, Charlotte felt that the tendency to keep newcomers in *accueil* for

sometimes two or even three years was counterproductive. In response to a question I asked her about how the *intégration partielle* program might play a more important role in the inclusion of newcomers in the mainstream, she responded as follows:

> Mais X [le prof d'accueil avec le plus d'ancienneté] était pas vraiment d'accord avec l'intégration. Lui essayait toujours de dire "faites attention, vous vous tirez dans le pied. Vous allez détruire les classes d'accueil. Comment justifier par la suite que les élèves ont besoin de classe d'accueil?" J'ai dit "C'est pas ça, X. Les élèves ont besoin d'être exposés à différents modèles pour le besoin d'expérimenter." Pour moi, déjà moi dans ma conception, le séjour devrait être 10 à 15 mois tout au plus. Trois ans de classe d'accueil c'est pas bon (T15-16/p13).
>
> *[But, X (the accueil teacher with the most seniority) really disagreed with integration. He was always trying to say, "Be careful; you're shooting yourself in the foot. You're going to destroy the accueil program. How will you later justify students' need for the accueil program?" I said, "It's not that, X; students need to be exposed to different approaches in order to try new things." For me, in my conception [of accueil], the time spent in the program should be 10 to 15 months at the most. Three years in accueil isn't good.]*

While Charlotte did keep five of the study's participants in her *accueil* class for a second year, she did so with the belief that it would improve those students' chances of success in the mainstream the next year. She felt that sending them into the mainstream, where newcomers are expected to compete with their mainstream peers without any extra support, was unfair and meant almost certain failure. Concern for her students' overall well-being (academic, social, emotional and linguistic) was Charlotte's unwavering priority. As was especially evident during the placement process (described later in this chapter), Charlotte took her decisions about each of her students very seriously, taking into consideration the students' long-term goals and their parents' concerns. Furthermore, though she was passionate about French and its place in the Quebec society, she agreed that, for certain students, continuing their education in English was best for their immediate needs and long-term goals.

Charlotte also felt strongly about the need for newcomer integration to be understood by her mainstream colleagues as an ongoing process, not a short-

term phenomenon that ends before students enter the mainstream. She felt that too often mainstream teachers had unrealistic expectations of *accueil* students, not just academically but in terms of their overall personal development.

> Les profs au régulier ont beaucoup d'attentes et pédagogique et sur le plan personnel de ces élèves là. . . . Pour les profs de régulier, ça devrait toujours être des Gil, . . . ou des Victor [deux élèves très forts en accueil]. Mais ils ne sont pas tous comme ça les élèves. Alors ces élèves là aussi ont droits à leurs difficultés au même titre qu'un autre élève. (T15/p8).
>
> *[The mainstream teachers have high expectations both pedagogically and personally for these [accueil] students. . . . For the mainstream teachers, they should all be like Gil or Victor [two strong accueil students]. But they aren't all like that, these students. So these students have the same right to their own difficulties as any other student.]*

Charlotte's solution to these potentially damaging expectations was, she said, to develop better communication with the mainstream teachers into whose classes her students integrated so that she could better advocate more realistic expectations for her students in the mainstream.

3.2 The students

With their multilingualism and diverse countries of origin, my 18 student-participants reflected the linguistic and cultural diversity of ESM described earlier. Among them, they spoke a total of 23 languages[16]; and half of the students spoke three or more languages other than French upon arrival in Quebec. Together they came from 15 different countries[17] and practiced a total of at least five different religions.[18] While three of them had been in Quebec for just over a year when the study began, on average the 18 participants had lived in Montreal for about 10 months when I met them. Most of them were coming to the end of their first year in a Montreal school and what was supposed to be

[16] Spanish, Tamil, Sinhala, Punjabi, Hindi, Korean, Farsi, Russian, Hebrew, Cantonese, Mandarin, Hungarian, Bulgarian, German, Arabic, Lingala, Luba-Kasaï, Swahili, English Creole, Portuguese, Romanian, English, French.
[17] Mexico, Sri Lanka, South Korea, India, Russia, China, Hungary, Bulgaria, Lebanon, Peru, the Congo, St. Lucia, Angola, Romania, Cuba.
[18] Christian (including Jehovah's Witness), Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist

(according to the students' expectations and the program design) the end of their stint in *accueil.*

As a group, they ranged in age from 13 to 18 with almost half being 17 years or older and more than two-thirds of them being 16 years old or older. While age did not seem to dictate how this group of students interacted with each other either in or outside of the classroom, it was a very important category for the students when they discussed their educational path and progress on that path. The topic of age will be more fully discussed in the next section, "Placement and Transitions." A snapshot of all 18 students (age, country of origin, languages, etc.) is provided in Appendix 3.

While their *accueil* year got off to a bit of a rough start with three different substitute teachers employed in the month prior to Charlotte being hired, these students formed an impressively cohesive and mature group of students. Indeed some of them as well as Charlotte referred to their group as "the family" so that when we went on field trips, there was always the obligatory "family photo" to be captured on every student's camera. They looked out for each other (signaling someone's absence on a field trip), celebrated birthdays together; many of them lunched together, played basketball together, and some played music together. They spent every hour of class time together for an entire academic year. While such togetherness does not always make for a happy family, this group of students noticed and expressed appreciation for this cohesion, their camaraderie in that first year together. There were of course a few who tended to isolate themselves during out-of-class activities, but when they were ready to return to the fold, they were always welcomed without question and with respect. With the end of that academic year came many changes for the class as a whole. Placement (to be discussed in section 5) in various programs both in and outside of ESM necessarily meant much less contact would occur; and many of the friendships established within the group would dwindle or dissolve in the second academic year.

4. Gaining trust

To my student-participants, I was first and foremost a teacher and researcher. Although I had no official authority in the school, my age and my affiliation with Charlotte situated me in a position of relative power in relationship to them. That power differential was reinforced by the fact that I had keys to the classroom and the teachers' office area. I helped Charlotte plan lessons, supervised group work and even corrected the odd quiz. However, I was not a gatekeeper or a grade-giver and I tried (and I think mostly succeeded at) portraying myself as a listener and a learner. I wanted to hear their stories; I wanted to tell their stories. While some of the students felt their stories were a private matter, most of the students told me that our conversations made them feel better, helped them sort things out in their heads, helped them unburden some of their anxieties and frustrations. All but three of the students showed up for every interview I requested, and of those 15 students, six thanked me more than once for being interested in what they had to say and for taking time to listen to them.

To Charlotte, my principal teacher-participant, I was a helper, a planner, a professional, a confidant. I don't know that I reduced her work-load (indeed I may very well have increased it with my requests for interviews, etc.); but I may have eased the weight of that load by being a sounding board, someone with whom to share ideas and concerns.

Linguistically I was something of a mixed bag for my principal participants. While I am comfortable in French, it is not my primary language and I make noticeable grammatical and lexical errors. In Spanish, my third language, I am substantially less fluent, though my comprehension is quite high. My English, on the other hand, is perfectly fluent. It is my first language and as such gave me a particular kind of linguistic clout with some of my participant students and a degree of comfort for others during formal and informal interviews. While in class I always spoke French; but during interviews, I tried to accommodate students' linguistic preferences. For example, John (whose mother tongue is Spanish) chose to do most of our first interview in Spanish and

part of each of the remaining interviews in English because he wanted "the practice." Miglena, whose mother tongue is Bulgarian, simply felt much more comfortable in English, and as a result we interacted only in English when outside the classroom. Interestingly, though, two students who were quite fluent in English chose to interact with me almost entirely in French and explained that speaking French all the time was how they hoped to learn it. I am thankful that Charlotte, who so very much wanted her students to love and practice French as much as possible, understood my insistence on conducting interviews in the students' language of comfort or preference. She understood that in giving students this choice, I was creating less of a professorial relationship with them and was focused on gaining their trust.

5. Placement and Transitions: Moving on from year one

Toward the end of May 2001, Charlotte began planning the *classement* of her *accueil* students. Officially this placement process was simple: Based on each student's age, prior education, performance in math, and ability in French, Charlotte filled in a *classement* grid indicating to the ESM administration into which program and level each student should be registered the following year. While the decision was negotiated with the math teacher, it was understood that Charlotte (as the language teacher and the person with whom the students spent the large majority of their time) had the final word. If students were to be 19 years old prior to June 30 of the next academic year, then they were automatically recommended to adult school, the only option for completion of one's secondary diploma outside of secondary school. If students were 18 years old or younger by June 30 of the next academic year, Charlotte had several options in terms of her placement: (a) return the student to *accueil* for a second year, (b) integrate the student into 1 of 5 levels of the secondary *régulier,* or (c) integrate the student into 1 of 2 levels of CPT (which offers smaller class sizes, fewer courses and closer attention by a smaller number of teachers than is offered in the mainstream). Her recommendations were, as suggested, to be based on the student's age, prior education and abilities in French. Age and prior

education were found in the student's dossier. Because prior education is not always easy to translate from one country's educational system to another's, this criterion was generally assessed simply by the number of years the student had attended school. As for assessing her students' abilities in French, Charlotte was expected to base her evaluation both on her observation of the student throughout the academic year, and the student's performance on a written, provincial exam -- the same exam given to assess *régulier* students' French knowledge. Unofficially, several other criteria were taken into consideration: the student's academic motivation or ambition; the student's maturity level; the student's own self-assessment and placement desires; the desire to keep the student interested in completing his/her education in French (rather than opting for a program in an English-language adult school). Because of the many criteria considered and because of other circumstances that arose for particular students in the class, the *classement* was a delicate, sometimes emotionally loaded, complex process of negotiation that wasn't really over until the end of June when provincial exam results were in.

Of the 18 students, only one had no choice but to leave because of his age. His story is an interesting one. Li came from China and was one of the students who had studied French in *accueil* for more than one year. While he was one of the participants whose spoken French was most difficult to understand, he had made quite a lot of progress in French (his third language), according to Charlotte. Li was also one of the few students who spoke almost no English at all because he had studied it very little when living in China; therefore, he did not really have a choice when it came to the language of education for the completion of his secondary school coursework. French was his only option. Somewhat ironically, it was Li's lack of English and not his ability in French that constrained his educational options when he left ESM. Like most of the students in the study, Li regarded adult school with some suspicion. Adult school was not believed to offer a real education largely because the adult school programs are designed as independent study programs in which students simply work through subject-matter materials on their own

(with access to a teacher should they need help) and test their way through to a secondary diploma. Li wasn't interested in such an educational approach and so chose to attend a particular adult school in which teacher-fronted courses (much like those offered in secondary school) were offered. However, the adult school that offered such a program only accepted students who were able to enter at the secondary 3 level. Because Li had next to no English, he was not eligible for this program. As a result, Li enrolled in ESL classes in an English-language adult school further delaying the completion of his secondary degree which would allow him access to the pre-university and vocational education programs offered at the college level. Only at Charlotte's and my urging did Li also enroll in French courses in order to maintain the proficiency he had worked so hard to develop in that language.

Another interesting story had something of a ripple-effect in the *classement* process. In May, Victor (by far the strongest speaker and writer of French in the *accueil* class) received official recognition of his education in Romania as equivalent to that of a secondary diploma in Quebec. He was, therefore, eligible to attend cégep in either English or French. When he chose to attend an English cégep, Charlotte feared the worst in terms of responses from the rest of the students. If Victor, who was considered the smartest in the class, is choosing against doing his college studies in French, wouldn't the other students question their own ability to succeed academically in French? I had many conversations with Charlotte on this topic, and the implications of such linguistic attitudes for the long-term vitality of French in Quebec. In the end, though, Victor's decision did not seem to have an immediate impact on his classmates' academic choices. While one student did choose to attend English adult school, he was the exception. Of the remaining 15 students, Charlotte's *classement* took the following shape:

- 3 students: CPT
- 1 student: secondary 2 at ESM's sister school
- 4 students: secondary 4
- 2 students: secondary 5

- 5 students: advanced *accueil*

Of the students placed in CPT, one moved to another school and one dropped out of school and the study. Of the two students placed in secondary 5, one chose to complete his secondary diploma more quickly by attending a French-language adult school. While this student as well as all but two others remained in contact with me throughout the second part of the study (the second academic year), my inability to access and gain deep knowledge of the various academic environments for those students who were no longer at ESM meant that I had lost an important contextual element in my study of those students' integration. I chose, therefore, to focus the bulk of my data analysis on those students who remained at ESM. More specifically, I chose to focus on ten students only: those five who had been placed in the *régulier* stream (4 in secondary 4, and 1 in secondary 5), and those five who had been replaced in *accueil* for a second year.

The remainder of this dissertation, therefore, focuses on those ten participants. In Chapter 6, I focus on those students who remained in *accueil*; in Chapter 7, I focus on those students who were placed in the mainstream; and in Chapter 8, I draw on data from all ten participants to discuss a new theoretical lens for newcomer integration.

Chapter 6

Who am I when you hold me back?
Second year accueil students' discursive constructions and acts of resistance

> It is very difficult for you to understand me . . . because I am not enough in English either in French (Chrissy 33/1)

1. Introduction

While the above statement from Chrissy was likely intended as only a commentary about her linguistic abilities, it hints at a more general sense of inadequacy that seemed to haunt several of the five participants who returned to *accueil* (with Charlotte as their teacher) for their second year at ESM. This chapter focuses on those five students: Elena, Chrissy, Miglena, Ashel, and Dani. I begin with a brief biographical sketch of each participant and then focus on how each of them described him/herself academically, linguistically and socially. I conclude the chapter by discussing how these descriptors reveal both discursive identity constructions as well as acts of resistance toward more authorship over one's life and one's sense of self in the world.

2. Five Participants' Biographical Sketches

2.1 Elena

With varying degrees of fluency in five languages (Punjabi, Hindi, English, Arabic, French), Elena was one of the classic multilinguals in the study. Punjabi and Hindi were the languages of her home and her religion; English was her first language of education, French was her second language of education and Arabic was a language she had studied in school. Like Victor (briefly discussed at the end of Chapter 5), Elena had finished her secondary education in her home country; but when she left India, she did not yet have her graduation papers and so was not eligible for cégep. While Elena (17 years old upon arrival) had at first thought that she would complete a secondary education in French before moving into the cégep system, she felt so discouraged during the first few months of her

second year in *accueil* that she requested her papers from India and enrolled in an English-language cégep for the second term of that year.

When Elena's family left India, they left behind a large home, an extensive social network, and her father's successful truck mechanic business. They moved, as did so many of the families of the participants in this study, in order that the children (Elena and her two sisters) receive a good education, specifically a degree from a North American university. Elena's older sister took to her new context like a fish to water, rapidly achieving a level of French that caught the attention of Quebec officials and for which the entire family attended an award ceremony held at the National Assembly in Quebec City. She then went on to excel in her university studies which she also followed in French. According to Elena, her younger sister, still in secondary school, also seemed to adapt to her new environment quickly and smoothly, learning French and making new friends with ease. Elena's parents, however, were more of a concern to Elena. She worried often about their health problems and their social isolation. Thus, while Elena recognized her parents' decision to move to Canada as one of self-sacrifice for the good of their children, she frequently wondered about the wisdom of their decision. Because this chapter focuses primarily on students' life in the school, I discuss the rapport that Elena (as well as other participants) had with her parents in more detail in Chapter 8.

2.2 Chrissy

Like Elena, Chrissy was 17 years old when she arrived in Quebec. She had not, however, completed her secondary education in Korea (her country of origin) and so was obliged to either complete her education in French at the secondary school or in the language of her choice in the Adult school system. As was the case for many of the students, Chrissy didn't view the adult school system as legitimate and so refused this option even though it meant her studies would be done in French, the weaker of her two additional languages. An important feature of Chrissy's life outside of school was her work in her parents' convenience store. Working four to five hours after school and large portions of

the weekends, Chrissy tried to do her school work in the wee hours and often slept during class. When Charlotte intervened with suggestions to Chrissy's parents that Chrissy's work schedule could be jeopardizing their daughter's education, the work load would lessen, but only briefly. When pushed on the issue, Chrissy insisted that she needed and wanted to help her parents; therefore, throughout most of the study, she juggled a 30-hour work-week with full time school. A social life outside of school was out of the question.

When Chrissy and her younger brother moved to Quebec with their parents, Chrissy believed they were doing it primarily for her education. After considering a career in music (Chrissy was recognized as being a talented pianist in Korea), Chrissy decided instead to focus on becoming a translator (she was considered quite proficient in English when living in Korea). Because she had two cousins who had learned French relatively quickly several years before her arrival, Chrissy felt that moving to Montreal, where she would have access to both French and English, would be ideal for her career goals. Living in Montreal, therefore, seemed to Chrissy like a sacrifice her whole family had made in order that she pursue her education in Montreal. For this reason, and because her younger brother (age 12 on arrival) excelled in acquiring French, Chrissy felt devastated by her placement in *accueil* for a second year. She was in her eyes a failure, less capable than the cousins before her and her own younger brother. This sense of failure persisted for Chrissy throughout the study.

2.3 Ashel

A year younger than the other four *accueil* returnees, Ashel moved permanently to Montreal when she was 16. Prior to that final move, she had moved back and forth for three years between her home in St. Lucia (where she was raised by her grandmother until the age of 13) and her mother's home in Montreal. Initially reluctant to accept her life in Quebec with her estranged mother, Ashel (fluent in St. Lucia Creole and English) struggled with learning French. With time, though, she turned her resistance into focused determination. Outside of school, much of Ashel's time was taken with babysitting her infant brother. Because her

mother was working irregular hours as a nurse and taking night classes toward a degree in nursing, Ashel spent most evenings and weekends squeezing homework in between her baby brother's naps and feedings. This responsibility for her baby brother extended into her vacation time as well; when describing, in her final interview, a trip she had planned to visit her father and grandmother that summer, Ashel said that she might have to take her baby brother with her so that her mother could continue her work and studies. While it was clear from the expression on Ashel's face that this was not her idea of a vacation, she didn't complain. Instead she assumed this responsibility, like all others, with grace and without a word of complaint.

Not complaining was Ashel's first principle in life; indeed she refused repeatedly to talk to me about anything negative in her life. For Ashel, school was her haven; it was a place for interacting with peers, for learning new ideas, for learning French, and for forgetting about the problems in her home life and the painful distance from her grandmother and friends in St. Lucia. Focusing on the negative, she said, only took away her energy. Nonetheless, I was able to understand from our conversations that Ashel was quite upset that her peers in St. Lucia were graduating from secondary school when she was only completing her second year of *accueil*. Such concern for academic delay haunted many of the students in the study as a whole.

2.4 Miglena

Born and raised in Bulgaria, Miglena lived in Germany for the first five years of her education. While Bulgarian was her mother tongue, German was Miglena's first language of education. With English as a strong additional language, Miglena was a solid multilingual upon arrival in Quebec. Having left a boyfriend and a very tight-knit group of girlfriends ("the tribe") in Bulgaria, Miglena struggled throughout the study with French specifically and life in Quebec generally. While Miglena almost desperately longed to be with her Bulgarian friends (she made two trips "home" during the study), she said that she would never want to be away from her sister and parents, particularly her

mother. For three years prior to Miglena's arrival (at the age of 17) in Montreal, her mother worked to save money for the family and process the necessary papers (while fighting breast cancer) in order to move her husband and two daughters to Montreal. Her mother's strength, determination and wisdom were a constant source of learning and inspiration for Miglena. Nevertheless, Miglena, like the other three women in this part of the study, fought depression throughout much of the study.

Financial stability and a brighter future seemed to be the reason for Miglena's family's move to Quebec. Education was considered by Miglena's parents to be at the heart of that future for their daughters. While Miglena's parents did not endeavor to learn French during the study (both worked in English), they strongly encouraged Miglena to stay with her studies at ESM in order that she become proficient in a fourth language. Miglena respected their opinion but knew that ultimately the decision to continue in French or complete her education in English-language adult school was hers to make. In our many interviews, Miglena always chose to speak to me in English; but in her final interview she did say that she would likely try her wings in *régulier* to see how she liked it before opting into English adult school.

2.5 Dani

Born and raised in Lebanon, Dani moved (at the age of 17) to Quebec with his parents and two siblings (a younger brother also at ESM and an older sister in cégep). Having studied French as a subject in school only, Dani considered himself to be a monolingual Arabic speaker upon arrival in Quebec. He was, however, perhaps less socially and linguistically isolated from the mainstream than were his *accueil* peers because he shared the common mother tongue of Arabic with over 20% of the school population. Furthermore, since Dani's father preceded his family's arrival in Montreal by five years and knew the parents of some of Dani's Arabic-speaking mainstream peers, Dani had some help in developing a social network in the school. Access to Arabic-speaking peers in his second year of *accueil* was perhaps a central reason for Dani's dramatically

different demeanor in the second part of the study. In his first year of *accueil* when no one in the class shared Dani's primary language, Dani tended to keep to himself, doing his work quietly at the back of the class. Unlike most of his peers in that first *accueil* class, Dani did not speak any English and was therefore excluded from any interactions in the *de facto lingua franca* for that year. During his second year of *accueil*, however, many of the students in the class spoke Arabic as their first language and the change in Dani's classroom behaviour seemed related. He became what Charlotte referred to as the class clown; with a quick quip at the ready, he frequently had his classmates laughing. This new position as the class entertainer gave Dani a sense of status, confidence, and identity which was evident when Dani, who had previously shown little interest in my study, would seek me out for a brief exchange, keen to know when we might have our next interview.

While Dani admitted that he didn't study much, he also emphasized that the only reason his family had come to Montreal was so that he and his siblings might have a good education. He felt strongly that the family's immigration had not been good for him or his mother in the present, and believed that the time he spent getting his education in Montreal was strictly an investment in the future, assurance of a good job when the family would eventually return to Lebanon where North American university degrees are a highly valued form of capital.

3. Academic, linguistic and social self-descriptors

This next section focuses on how these academically, linguistically and socially unique individuals described themselves during their second year in the *accueil* program. Despite their many cultural and linguistic differences, the students share a rather negative view of themselves and how they have been positioned in the school. Students' negative self descriptors and how they have been labeled (explicitly and implicitly) in the school are, I believe, related. I will discuss this relationship further in the penultimate section of this chapter. First, I will turn to what the students had to say about themselves. While this section is neatly divided into three sections (academic, linguistic and social descriptions), it is

important to note that these categories are somewhat arbitrary since each influences the other: language is central to both academics and social interaction, academic performance is related to self-esteem, and social factors play a role in language comfort, use, and academic performance. Having acknowledged, then, the blurred or interwoven nature of these categories, I turn now to the patterns that emerged in the data.

3.1 Who am I academically?

Academic delay was a common concern across all of the study's participants. All of the students were concerned about being behind schedule as compared with their same-age peers both in their country of origin and in Montreal. In the case of the five students who were held back in *accueil* for a second year, all but Ashel turned 18 in their second academic year. As for academic equivalencies, Elena had already graduated from secondary school in India; and Dani, Elena, Ashel, and Chrissy all had expectations of graduating from a Montreal secondary school after two years in Quebec. They were in their second year of *accueil* at the time of most of our interviews and were well aware of the fact that while *accueil* might serve their linguistic needs, it didn't move them any closer to completing their academic requirements. Thus, Ashel's comment about being academically delayed here is just one example of many:

> [M]y friends are finishing school back home . . . and I'm not. . . . And I don't wanna do secondary 4. I wanna go to secondary 5, finish high school like my friends (Ashel 21/3)

The delay in accessing the mainstream affected not just how quickly students were able to graduate, but also their contact with content courses. As Dani expresses below, he is unmotivated by a French-only program of study. He feels as though he's not really in secondary school somehow, because he has only one subject: French. He suggest that as a result of not having what he feels is a legitimate course load, he's not motivated to study at all.

> [E]n secondaire, je vais étudier plus que en accueil ici, parce qu'en accueil on a pas beaucoup de choses, je dis oh je m'en fous c'est pas grave . . . mais si j'ai beaucoup de choses, comme au secondaire:

> sciences physiques, mathématiques, français, en même temps histoire, tout en même temps. Là maintenant je vais dire, ok je vais étudier. Pas comme maintenant j'ai pas beaucoup de choses. . . . Je fais demain ou quelque chose comme ça. C'est ça le problème. . . . Il faut avoir beaucoup de choses pour réfléchir bien (Dani 44/205, 213).
>
> [*In secondary I would study more than in accueil because in accueil we don't have as many things, like in secondary: physics, math, French, at the same time as history, all at the same time. Then I would say okay I'm going to study. Not like now, I don't have a lot of things (subjects). . . . I'll do it tomorrow or something like that. That's the problem. . . . You need to have a lot of things to reflect well.*]

Elena echoes Dani's criticism of the French-language focus of *accueil* which she feels makes her out of touch with other academic subjects. It is interesting to note that in both Elena's and Dani's comments, French is viewed as simply a subject (one of many) and not as the language of education or the tool by which all other subjects will be communicated. While both of them understand that all of their academic courses will be taught in French, they don't see how the French they are learning in *accueil* will prepare them for the mainstream.

> It's just basic French, I feel. . . . I haven't got my subject, for instance, of history or science or, have to study a lot. It's just the grammar or the French text or something (Elena 21/2).

Although Charlotte worked hard to integrate mainstream material into her *accueil* curriculum, the reality was that she could only cover so many domains (some history, some geography, and quite a bit of French language arts). Furthermore her area of expertise was the French language (as a subject) and not science or social science; therefore, it is no surprise that many of the students experienced French as a subject and French as a language of communication as two distinct phenomena.

Feeling excluded from what these students feel is a real or legitimate secondary education, contributes to an overall sense of failure particularly when (as was the case for Elena, Ashel and Miglena) the students' viewed their younger classmates as "kiddish" or immature. While this attitude was absent during the first year of *accueil*, it dominated several interviews during the second year and was particularly salient in discussions with Miglena, whose

experience of a more independent adolescent culture in Bulgaria highlighted her sense of being older than many of her peers.

Finally, students described themselves academically as stuck, without options. In fact, all of them except Dani had the option of attending adult school in English, which all of the young women had learned prior to French and felt more comfortable using. However, none of them felt that adult school was a legitimate form of education either. As Miglena states, this opinion was reinforced by their parents' view of adult school as not "normal," not "regular."

> When you show . . . what school did you finish, adult school, everybody gonna be like. . . . My mother she wants me to stay in a normal school, regular secondary school to finish. (Miglena 46/R24)

Therefore, the system within which they found themselves, the French public school system, was their chosen option. Within that system they received or interpreted several messages about themselves academically. First, they weren't capable of succeeding in the mainstream. Second, they were academically behind their same-age peers. Third, they weren't participating in a legitimate secondary education program. Fourth, the French-only *accueil* program was delaying rather than facilitating their integration into the mainstream.

3.2 Who am I linguistically?

Perhaps the strongest message students felt they received about themselves by virtue of being placed for a second year in the *accueil* program was that of being linguistically deficient. As Chrissy states in the quote that begins this chapter:

> It is difficult for you to understand me . . . because I am not enough in English either [or] French. (Chrissy 33/1)

This sense of deficiency comes in part from the '*accueil*' label students receive by virtue of being isolated from the mainstream until they have proven themselves in French. However, the feeling of linguistic deficiency also comes from a failure, on the part of the school and perhaps the larger community, to recognize students' multilingualism as an asset. Dani speaks of being a language "thief" when he speaks his mother tongue in his "partial integration" physics course.

> Quand il [le professeur de sciences physiques] vient on parle français; quand il part, arabe [rire] . . . . comme des voleurs [rire] (Dani 44/64-5). [*When (the physics teacher) comes, we speak French; when he leaves, Arabic (laughs). . . . like thieves (laughs)*]

Elena, who, it bears repeating, was fully fluent in three languages prior to arriving in Quebec, expresses some frustration with this image of herself as a linguistic failure. She is especially frustrated because though she has worked hard at her French, she has not been rewarded for her efforts. She comes to resent French as a barrier to her educational progress and feels that what she has achieved in French, as well as her three other languages, goes unacknowledged, doesn't count.

> I wanted to study French so I could speak . . . but at the same time I wanna continue my education too. I don't like studying French. . . . The first year, I said 'yes I'm gonna put full efforts to my French. I did. I did go through it; but the second year . . . I expect to do French but with my regular studies. . . . It isn't make me possible to do my main education in French. . . . I didn't even do it in my language in my country; I did it in English. So I wanna continue in English. You can't change the language totally 'cause it doesn't help me. (Elena 21/3)

Unlike Elena, Chrissy doesn't have several languages in her background. She arrived in Quebec speaking some English along with her first language, Korean, and found herself frequently caught between two languages in her second year in *accueil*. In the summer between her first and second years at ESM, Chrissy looked into taking summer courses to improve her French; but neither ESM nor other local secondary schools offered language support or maintenance courses for *accueil* students. Because Chrissy needed to learn French in order to succeed academically and because she had little linguistic support outside of the *accueil* classroom, friendships became an important linguistic resource for Chrissy. It is not surprising, then, that Chrissy expressed a lot of interest in practicing French with her peers. However, because she also identified strongly with English, due to its linguistic capital both in the *accueil* class and in the world at large, she also felt very committed to maintaining her English-speaking friendships. Unfortunately, Chrissy discovered that with

certain peers she couldn't have it both ways. Elena, who had come to resent French, behaved (according to Chrissy) as though Chrissy's attempts at developing French-speaking friendships somehow betrayed her allegiance to her English-speaking friends.

> Now we have a Chinese girl in my class and she cannot speak in English, and she cannot speak [much] French but she wanna try and I wanna try with her. . . [but] Elena always say 'why you stay with her ? Why you don't stay with me or Miglena or Ashel?' (Chrissy 33/5,7)

Having to choose between the two languages, as Chrissy felt she must if she was to maintain her friendship ties with Elena, put Chrissy in a particularly awkward position especially because she understood friendships to be a very important language-learning source. In speaking about Sonia, one of the participants who moved to a different school before the second part of the study, Chrissy explained in detail why such friendships were so important to her:

> When I talk with [Sonia] the first time, it was very difficult because she can speak just French and I was not French just English. But I want to try to talk with her. Try, try, try, and she always change when I talk something wrong, she always check my pronounce. And so it was very nice, that's why I can speak in French. . . now. But she [is] not here. (Chrissy 33/5)

To sum up, the students describe themselves as both deficient in French and frustrated by society's and the school's expectation that their education be done in French. French is viewed not as a way to access the mainstream but as a barrier to that access. Perhaps it is because French becomes a resented barrier for some of the students that English becomes a marker of group allegiance and not just the *lingua franca* of the *accueil* class. Perhaps it is because English is displaced as the *lingua franca* in these students' second year of *accueil* (there were many non-English speaking students in that class) that such a linguistic allegiance formed. Yet, when one takes some distance on the dynamics of friendship cliques in this context, what stands out is that for students like Chrissy, who values English but is not fluent in it, linguistic integration means

developing proficiency in two additional languages simultaneously. While French is the official language of Quebec and Chrissy's language of education, both English and French are used in interactions with school peers and in Montreal's work force, colleges and universities. Moreover, many other languages are used in workplaces with international ties, a phenomenon of the global economy (Gouvernement du Québec, 2001). Therefore, it is not just the official language-of-education that shapes the linguistic integration of the five students discussed in this chapter, but the *un*official multilingual reality of Montreal life.

3.3 Who am I socially?

While Chrissy seems in many ways very attached to the friendships she has established at ESM, she also feels socially isolated. Like Ashel, whose extensive babysitting responsibilities keep her at home after school and weekends, Chrissy is tied to her parents' store. Working both after school and on the weekends, she rarely sees friends outside of school. As a result, Chrissy's mother, who is also both linguistically and socially isolated, becomes one of Chrissy's closest friends:

> Now I talk with my mother a lot, very. Now me and my mother we're good friends. . . . [W]hen we came here, because even my mother, she doesn't have here, no, she doesn't have friend here. And me, I didn't have a friend, like Korean people because my mother she need, can speak in Korean, right? . . . . But she needs a people who talk with her in Korean so then I talk with her. Even last night, I talk with her until morning. (Chrissy 45/64-6)

It is for somewhat different reasons that Miglena feels socially isolated. For Miglena and Dani, "real" friends are located in their country of origin and the friendships formed in Montreal can't replace the depth and history of those earlier relationships:

> Now I can't [imagine having such close friends here as those I have in Bulgaria] . . . because I spend with these girls 5 to 6 years of my life . . . this year that we try to understand who we are, just the most perfect years, teenage years and sisters, with the guys, and make-up and the clothes, and the problems in your home with your family . . . . These

> things you can't share with somebody else who weren't there." (Miglena 36/15)

After a full two years in Montreal, and despite the network of Arabic-speaking friends Dani has been able to tap into via his father, he echoes Miglena's sentiments saying:

> Mes amis, mais ils ne sont pas ici, [ils sont] au Liban. . . . C'est comme des frères maintenant, . . . je parle toujours au téléphone ou MSN; chaque fois j'appelle, ils m'appellent. Au Liban je sortais toujours avec eux, n'importe où on sort ensemble, on vit ensemble, on va ensemble, même depuis qu'on est, 10 ans je sais pas, 5 ans, quelque chose comme ça. C'est vraiment difficile. . . . Il[s] sait comme, tous les choses comme moi aussi, moi je sais tous les choses sur eux, toutes sortes de choses, des bons amis comme des frères, depuis 5 ans, c'est ça. . . .Ici on peut pas faire confiance à personne ici (Dani 44/238-243).
>
> *[My friends, but they're not here, they're in Lebanon. . . . They're like brothers now . . . I always talk on the telephone or MSN; each time I call they call me back. In Lebanon I always went out with them, we went everywhere together, we lived together, we moved around together, since we were 10 or 5 years old, something like that. It's really difficult. . . . They know like everything about me, me too I know everything about them, all kinds of things, good friends like brothers, since we were 5 years old. . . . Here you can't trust anyone.]*

The students' sense of isolation generally and more specifically separation from their "real" friends is likely aggravated by their sense of their lives as boring. The descriptions of *ennui* and "waiting" for things to change shared by most participants in the study is captured in the following quotes from Miglena and Elena:

> Now I don't have much to say here for Canada, it's all the same thing, every day the same. Boring stuff, how's school and home, check my e-mail . . . watch TV, like I can't move, like handicap, I'm always in front of the TV. (Miglena 25/10)
>
> I prefer working, passing my time doing things and waiting for my future to be much better. (Elena 21/2)

With feelings of isolation, separation, and boredom dominating these students' sense of themselves, it is not surprising that explicit references to depression and

even suicide punctuated my discussions with all four women in this part of the study. The three quotes that follow are a sampling of those darker feelings:

> [My life] is a deep hole that I'm in and I can't get out and I can't see any light. (Miglena 25/13)

> My inside of things are depressed, I'm trying to wake it out, but it's gonna take me time. (Elena 21/17)

> All around me there is negativity. Even in class. So difficult. Like, oh my god sometimes I wish I was dead. (Ashel 31/5)

4. Discursive Constructions and Acts of Resistance

Drawing on the theories explored in Chapter 3, I turn, in this section, to a discussion of the practices of *institutional naming, name resisting* and *renaming* for the five participants on whom this chapter has focused. *Naming* as it is used in the context of this analysis here refers to how people are categorized by others and how they categorize themselves. It bears repeating that the literature about this phenomenon in schools (see Chapter 3) indicates that individuals generally find it more difficult to categorize themselves than to categorize others. The reader may recall that the students in those various studies of identity construction were generally aware of complexities in themselves that went unnoticed by others. They tended to understand their identities as rather hybrid or aggregate and not easily named (e.g., Thesen, 1997; Olsen, 1997). Therefore, when students are named by others (individuals or institutions; implicitly or explicitly) they often resist by behaving in ways that pushed or contradicted the boundaries of the name they have been given. I have suggested, on the one hand, that when students push against institutionally sanctioned categories, they are engaging in dialogic identity construction; that is, they see themselves as being in dialogue with the world around them and as having the right to act (to varying degrees) on the world rather than simply having the world act on them. They are claiming their right to negotiate or even author (construct through narrative) their identities, who they are in the school and in the world. On the other hand, students who do *not* feel that they have such a right or an ability, do not claim such agency and do not push against the

categories into which they are placed. These students do not question the authority of social institutions and, therefore, their sense of self is more apt to be discursively constructed through institutional naming. Students are, thus, constructed as linguistically deficient and as such are not allowed to engage in the "*dépassement de soi*" that the school claims as its goal for all students. The next two sections discuss discursive constructions and acts of resistance, respectively, evident in behaviours and stated beliefs of the five participants on whom this chapter focuses.

4.1 Institutional naming and Discursive Identity Constructions

As discussed in Chapter 3, institutional naming is a form of discursive identity construction. By categorizing particular students into particular programs, institutional names are not just labels given to students but actions taken which situate students in particular roles in the school, roles that are associated with particular "ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking" (Gee, 1996 p. viii). These rules (and the constraints they place on the labelled students) are constructed through institutional naming both linguistically and structurally, both explicitly and implicitly. At the explicit level, the *accueil* program identified its students as simply not proficient in French. It conveys this explicit message in several ways. First, all students who speak minimal or no French upon registration are enrolled in this program. Second, almost the entire focus of the *accueil* program is linguistic mastery (including metalinguistic knowledge). Third, students are again labelled as deficient once in the mainstream via a list identifying students who are allowed to use dictionaries on exams. Implicitly, being a member of the *accueil* program carries many other meanings as well. First, by virtue of being in *accueil*, one is not a member of the *régulier* stream, suggesting that a lack of proficiency in French is somehow not normal, not regular. Second, inherent in the *accueil* program's emphasis on learning French to the exclusion of almost all other academic subject matter, suggests two things: first, that students are linguistically deficient, despite their multilingualism; and second, because of

this deficiency, they are also academically incompetent. Ironically, the program's isolation of *accueil* students from most core subjects creates a kind of academic disability by disrupting students' ongoing development in the various subject domains. Third, because of their physical isolation from their mainstream peers (except for the *intégration partielle* program, no courses have a mix of "regular" and *accueil* students), one implicit message is that these *accueil* students are probably not capable of interacting with those mainstream peers.

Some of these implicit messages are reinforced in the attitudes expressed by even the most dedicated teachers and administrators. In discussing ESM's long-term plans to develop various *projets accrocheurs* (programs designed to attract students who might otherwise enrol in neighbouring schools which offer specialty programs), the director of ESM's student life programs explains that because of their limitations in French, newcomer *accueil* students would not likely be eligible to participate in such projects.

> Un élève en accueil qui a déjà la difficulté au niveau de la langue ne pourrait peut-être pas [participer à un projet accrocheur qui permet aux élèves d'assister à moins de cours de français]. . . dès la première année; mais pourrait peut-être se joindre . . . quand il sera plus à l'aise avec la langue française (Mr. L, T07/42).
>
> *[An accueil student who already has difficulty in terms of language couldn't (participate in a projet accrocheur which allows students to attend fewer French courses). . . in their first year; but (he) might be able to participate when he is more comfortable with French.]*

While Mr. L suggests that inadequate language proficiency is what keeps newcomers on the outside of school community activities such as the sports-camp style *projet accrocheur* on which he has most recently been working, Mme F believes that immigrants generally, not just newcomers, are "handicapped" academically because of their "lack of cultural referents."

> Moi ce que j'ai trouvé difficile avec des immigrants c'est qu'il leur manquait beaucoup de référents culturels. . . . On en a de plus en plus qui naissent ici, mais ils sont toujours dans le giron de la famille traditionelle, ils ne sortent pas beaucoup, ils ne se mêlent pas beaucoup à la population en général. . . . Alors quand on enseigne le français c'est

> un grand handicap parce que les élèves, quand on leur demande de lire un texte, si on réfère à ce qui s'est passé la semaine précédente dans l'actualité, souvent ils ne vont pas le connaître (Mme F, T09/2).
>
> *[What I've found difficult with immigrants is that they lack a lot of cultural referents. . . . Increasingly, they are born here, but they remain in the traditional family fold, they don't go out much, they don't mix much with the general population. . . . So, when we teach French, it's a big handicap because when we ask the students to read a text, if we make reference to something that happened in the news the week before, often they won't understand.]*

Because discursive constructions of newcomers and immigrants reside not just in school policies and programs but in the belief systems of teachers and administrators who help shape the school community, these constructions are difficult to identify even (or especially) by those who express them. It is the unquestioned "common-senseness" of these discursive constructions that makes them so powerful.

By far the most remarkable example of discursive identity construction among the study's participants was that of Chrissy. Almost without exception, Chrissy understood herself according to how she was placed in the school system. She understood the deficiency messages of her *accueil* placement, and she believed them.

> In my country, it was just … usually I get the top, I was really, I think I'm strong, I think I'm smart myself. But I came here and it was not … it was not, I don't know why (Chrissy 33/3)

Thus, in the above excerpt, Chrissy expresses doubt about her own and others' identification of her as smart in Korea. She views those Korean-based interpretations as erroneous in light of her perceived failures in the Quebec education system, failures according to school discourses of what is normal (*régulier*) and what isn't.

Furthermore, while Chrissy is perplexed by the discrepancy between how her abilities and intelligence are interpreted in Korea as opposed to how they are recognized (or not) in Quebec, she doesn't question the legitimacy of the labels she has received due to her low level of French proficiency. Instead,

she sides with the institution, saying that she values the school and its decisions and doesn't value or like herself because she has performed so poorly.

> Now I understand why I have to stay here [in *accueil*]. I like here now I like here really but I am always worry about can I go up to secondary five next year . . . . Why I couldn't get good mark, always bads . . . . that's why I like here but I don't like me (Chrissy 33/2).

Chrissy's identity claim, then, is that of a failure, a person who, despite what might be the best intentions of the educational system, has failed to learn enough French to be considered *régulier*, to be recognized as a member of the mainstream. She understands (and as a result dislikes) herself in this context through the discursive construction of an *accueil* returnee.

4.2 Name Resisting and Renaming: Dialogic and Narrative Identity Constructions

While all of the students who returned to *accueil* for a second year were institutionally named in the same ways as was Chrissy, most of them did not accept these labels as entirely true or unquestionable. In contrast to Chrissy's internalization of her institutional name, Miglena, Ashel, Dani and Elena all resisted (to varying degrees) the school discourses that constrained them. Therefore, rather than abdicating their identity construction to the school and its discourses, these students talked back by insisting on a degree of shared agency in their identity construction. By talking back to the school discourses, the students create a dialogue, a conversation. It is in insisting on being part of a conversation, the other half of a dialogue, that the students challenge the institutional names and claim their agency or right to act in the world, their right to choose how they engage with the world and their right to make sense of themselves in the world. However, the students are not (and never likely to be) equal partners in a dialogue with educational and school discourses. They have to hide the ways in which they talk back to those discourses. Moreover, sometimes, their acts of resistance do more to hinder their own educational path

(e.g., dropping out or failing courses) rather than changing the nature or the effect of the discourses themselves.

As is evident in the students' perspectives on their academic, linguistic and social integration, all of them were affected by their placement in the *accueil* program for a second year. Nevertheless, most of them found ways to push against this categorization and stake claim to some degree of agency about how they were perceived and what they were allowed to do within the context of school.

Dani talks back by subverting the school rules about French-only by "stealing" some use of his mother tongue when the teacher isn't in earshot. He also suggests to me in our last interview that he could have succeeded in the mainstream without the extra year of *accueil*. Yet, rather than working to prove that Charlotte and the administration made an error in his *accueil* placement, Dani talks back to the school discourses by ignoring his homework and failing the *intégration partielle* courses he was enrolled in mid-year. His response to the school's failure to place him in what he thinks is a legitimate *régulier* program is to treat the *intégration partielle* program as not legitimate, and subsequently to fail. This is a form of resistance that doesn't necessarily help Dani achieve the higher education goals that he claims, but which does challenge the misrecognition Dani believes he is experiencing.

Similarly, Miglena talks back by using French only when she has to; the rest of the time she speaks in English. Like Dani, Miglena admits that if she studied more she would do better, but she chooses not to. Despite her sense that adult school lacks legitimacy, Miglena claims a bit more agency in stating that if she doesn't like things in the mainstream at ESM the following year, she will withdraw and attend an English-language adult school.

> I can't stay here anymore in this school, but if I pass my exams, I gonna try it here, and if I don't like it in regular. . . . I'm gonna go to other school [English Adult School] that's all (Miglena 25/10).

In this statement, she lays claim to her right to attend the school of her choosing (within reason) and complete her education in the language of her choice (again

within the constraints of what's available). She also maintains strong ties with friends and family in Bulgaria, making two, two-week visits "home" over the course of the study. It may be a stretch to suggest that Miglena's vacations represent a form of resistance, but it is important to note that her time in Bulgaria occurred during the school year when she was expected to attend classes. Furthermore, her commitment to her "real, real" friends in Bulgaria and her inability to imagine such friendships in Quebec suggest that Miglena is resisting social integration into the host society.

While Ashel believes her placement in *accueil* for a second year was probably appropriate in terms of her proficiency in French, she doesn't think it was appropriate given her academic abilities. Like the other participants, one of her greatest concerns is her academic delay and knowledge of the fact that her friends in St. Lucia are graduating from secondary school when she is only gaining access to it.

> The language and all this stuff, for me it's like, a must you know, I can't complain you know, I am tired of complaining and … I don't wanna complain anymore, I have to just accept ESM, accept everything, that's how I feel you know. And, the only problem I have with that… my friends are finishing, school back home, high school, and I'm not. And I wanna go back home for the prom and the graduation and maybe I'm gonna get, how do you say in English, summer school. And I don't want to really. . . . I'm going to secondary 4, may be, if I pass. And I don't wanna do secondary 4. I wanna go to secondary 5, finish high school like my friends. (Ashel 21/p3)

However, other than hinting at the school's failure to recognize her academic abilities, Ashel doesn't resist how she has been positioned in the school. She, unlike Dani, turns her frustration with the constraints imposed on her both at school and at home to an act of determination to do well, to excel. It is worth noting that school is Ashel's haven from a tense relationship with her mother and the almost constant demands of her infant brother. While Ashel initially resented the linguistic demands of her haven, she never missed class and completed all assignments on time and well. She even showed up for class projects that took place on the weekend, occasionally with her infant brother on

one hip. When faced with these myriad constraints, Ashel claimed responsibility for and authorship of her life. Thus, Ashel's resistance was not one of pushing against the boundaries of the school, but more one of pushing the boundaries of her patience, her determination, her concentration in order to subvert the depressing circumstances of her life by accepting them. She asserts herself in a conversation or dialogue with the constraints of her school and home life. In that conversation, she proves herself to be stronger than her adverse learning and living conditions by being a dedicated student and by remaining within her small family fold in Montreal. On the one hand, it may be argued that Ashel is very constructed and constrained by her life circumstances. On the other hand, she is a young woman with tremendous will and who, rather than adopting an oppositional identity, wilfully faces the constraints in her life with great determination.

Elena had imagined that she would learn French by attending secondary school. Yet, as was discussed in relation to some of her other interview excerpts, Elena didn't feel that the *accueil* program was really secondary school. It didn't feel legitimate. Therefore, staying in the program for a second year makes her feel like a failure:

> [T]his class is meant for us and at the same time it's not meant for us. Specially for me, I thought one year I would come to this school just to study my French basically, because I have already finished my high school... I could have gone to secondary but I don't wanna repeat my high school. Because I don't wanna make myself feel that, you know I failed or something (Elena 21/p2).

To challenge that institutional construction of her identity, Elena actively pushes against the *accueil* program, which she feels confines and inaccurately defines her. In November of her second year in *accueil*, she decided that she could no longer stay at ESM and she began exploring her options. She requested that her graduation papers be sent from India so that she could obtain the equivalencies necessary to enrol in cégep. Even before those papers had been processed, though, Elena had decided she would rather drop out than complete the year at ESM:

> If I don't get into cégep, . . . I would prefer quitting the school. I think it's better for me to just eh learn basically more French, and because I know anyways that I have to get into cégep. So I would prefer working more because I would take a break for some time. . . . Because right now, the atmosphere is like I always feel why am I staying here? And, it's possibly even the friends I'm staying with around even they have the same feeling. So what are we discuss about is that what are we doing here? (Elena 21/p2)

By January of that same academic year, Elena had obtained her equivalencies and enrolled in an English-language cégep. With more options available to her, she was able to take on more authorship, more narrative control of her identity. In the following e-mail, she expresses her initial enthusiasm:

> dear dawn,
> i am so sorry for replying so late but i was just out in a world of studies . . . . well its almost two weeks i am in [cégep] and i really enjoy it ,u know i always wanted to study from a long time and start my education, the time finally arrived. I like all my subjects especailly psycology and humainties-critical thinking, . . . as for other things i am again in a strange world i feel lonely a lot of times and havent made like friends really but the time passes really fast and fun in [cégep]. . . . .
> well hope to see ya soon
> =====
> KEEP SMILING,BELIEVE ME IT HELPS TO LIVE LIFE

Despite the positive changes for Elena, cégep did not entirely rid her of the depression she associated with missing her life in India. She continued throughout the study to wonder why her family was here (though she knew it was as an investment in her own and her two sisters' education), frequently citing examples of how and why her parents were not happy. While she attempted to distract herself from her sense of dislocation by focusing on her studies and having a part-time job, she admitted that she frequently went to the temple to cry so that she could express her sadness and frustration without upsetting her parents. Elena's dialogic identity construction – that is, her ability to claim some agency in how she read and was read by the world – was constrained not just by the discourses of the school, but by larger social discourses which she felt isolated her parents and made them unhappy. Elena's

most assertive identity claims, such as rejecting the ESM label by dropping out and enrolling in an English cégep, leave Elena not with a sense of empowerment as much as a sense of persistent dislocation. Elena's sense of dislocation and her changing relationship with her parents will be discussed further in Chapter 8.

5. Conclusion

> Before you was a child, you see things in a different kind but you didn't understand them. But then you wake up; and then probably when you are 30 it's like waking up again, in another life. Now I feel like I wake up from before and start to live another life and start to dream another dream (Miglena, 8b, May 2001)

Drawing on the same quote with which I opened Chapter 4, I conclude this chapter. In light of the year that passed between my first interview with Miglena (from which the quote is taken) and the last, Miglena's initial perception of Montreal as a new dream-phase in her life, a waking up, a fresh start, might not be such an accurate description of how she views herself in the world at the end of the study. Identified as linguistically deficient and constrained academically, Miglena (as well as the other four *accueil* returnee participants) felt socially isolated and resentful of the educational system and language that stood as barriers to her integration into the school, and to her future beyond secondary school. As Elena put it, these students are "waiting for [the] future to be much better" (21/2). In their dialogic identity construction, these students experience the *accueil* program, ironically, as an obstacle to, rather than a gateway into, the mainstream of regular courses and legitimate education. Their dialogues with ESM discourses become arguments, arguments which they know (as disempowered newcomers) they are unlikely to win. However, as is clear in the next chapter, simply placing *accueil* students in the mainstream is not the solution either.

In the next chapter, I focus on the five former-*accueil* students who were placed in the mainstream after their year in *accueil* with Charlotte. While these students differed academically, they shared a sense of social isolation with their *accueil*-returnee peers. In the next chapter, then, I draw again on identity theory

to explore these mainstreamed students' sense of social, academic, and linguistic integration.

Chapter 7

Integration or Homogenization? Newcomers in the Mainstream

1. Introduction:

> L'intégration . . . [qui est] un processus d'adaptation à long terme. . . . n'est achevé que lorsque la personne immigrante ou ses descendants participent pleinement à l'ensemble de la vie collective de la société d'accueil et ont développé un sentiment d'appartenance à son égard. (MEQ, 1998, p. 1)
>
> *[Integration . . . which is a long term process of adaptation . . . . is only achieved when the immigrant or his/her descendants participates fully in the collective life of the host society and develops a sense of membership in that society.]*
>
> [L]'intégration est un processus qui va dans les deux sens. Elle exige des efforts d'adaptation et l'adhésion aux valeurs communes de la part des élèves immigrants . . . mais aussi une ouverture à la diversité de la part du milieu social et scolaire qui les *accueille.* (MEQ, 1998, p. 2)
>
> *[Integration is a process which works in two directions. It requires immigrant students to adapt and adhere to common values . . . but it also requires an openness to diversity in the social and scholastic milieu of the host society]*

As I have argued earlier (see especially Chapter 2), inherent in Quebec's integration policies is a certain ambiguity about the gaps between social cohesion, unity, commonality and the cultural and linguistic pluralism that is both a Montreal reality and stated political philosophy of both Quebec and Canada. This ambiguity discursively smoothes over important tensions (theoretical and practical) between unity-through-commonality and recognition of difference. While this ambiguity suggests, in principle, that an openness to Quebec's increasingly diverse population and simultaneous preservation of the French fact is possible, real tensions between social unity and cultural diversity play out in the daily lives and feelings of newcomers in Montreal's schools. At the end of Chapter 2, I suggested that by looking at integration through the lens of identity construction, we can see past the ambiguity of policy documents to the ways in which school practices (which are intended to promote membership

and social cohesion) may be in conflict with the integration realities of the newcomers they target.

In this chapter I look at the tension between school integration practices and newcomer experiences as they are played out in the mainstream. I begin the chapter by focussing on the various discursive messages newcomers receive from ESM. I then look at how each of five mainstreamed participants responded to those constructions. I conclude by arguing that central to the tension between school discourses and student experiences are different understandings of integration: integration as a point of arrival, a destination; and integration as an ongoing and dynamic process.

2. Discursive constructions in the host community

As was discussed in the previous chapter, institutions send many messages to students about who they are and what they are capable of. They send those messages in the ways that they value (or don't) the knowledge that any given student brings to the institutional community. In the previous chapter, I discussed how placement in the *accueil* program for a second year sent particular messages to the five returning participants about their linguistic and academic abilities and worth. In this section I draw both on my observations in the school and on interviews with seven of the target students' mainstream teachers to describe how ESM's mainstream program (curriculum, schedule, rules, requirements, teacher expectations) conveys particular messages to newcomer students about their linguistic, academic and social identities. While I have divided this section into linguistic, academic, and social identity constructions, I have done so only for organizational purposes and not because I believe that these three aspects of students' integration function in isolation from each other. Furthermore, I focus only on these three elements of students' identities and not others (such as gender and ethnicity) largely because those aspects of identity did not emerge as central to the students' discussions of their integration in this context. (These identity facets might, however, be salient in a different version of the students' own narratives.) What follows here, then, are

three perspectives on how ESM communicates particular messages to the students about who they are in the school community: linguistic, academic, and social messages.

2.1 You are what you speak: Discursive constructions of linguistic identities in ESM's mainstream

As is clear in the discussions of ESM's various programs and placement processes, "French-first" captures the linguistic attitude of this school. Newcomer students are isolated from mainstream courses and mainstream peers until they are deemed linguistically proficient enough to manage in that environment. The central messages of the "French-first" *accueil* program are several: (a) students' prior education is of little value to them until they are linguistically proficient enough to apply that knowledge in the school's mainstream courses; (b) languages other than French are of little value in terms of succeeding in the mainstream and moving along one's educational path; (c) students who are deficient in French are not only unlikely to succeed academically in the mainstream, but they are also unlikely to succeed socially due to their inability to communicate in the common language. These French-centric messages, which emanate primarily from the *accueil* program, are reinforced in the mainstream in the following ways. There are no heritage language maintenance courses offered at ESM, nor are there any clubs which promote the language or culture of any of ESM's 55 different languages or 85 different countries of origin. Indeed, such clubs are consciously avoided, according to Mr. L (the director of Student Life at ESM) because it is believed they will underline differences rather than emphasize commonalities.

> Mais de là à vouloir former des clubs particuliers là pour telle éthnie, moi au contraire, j'essaie d'enlever ça...finalement que y'en a pas. Pour la même raison que j'ai expliquée tantôt, tout le monde est sur le même pied d'égalité, tout le monde a la chance égale de participer à des activités (T07/44).
>
> *[But to want to form particular clubs for particular ethnic groups, on the contrary, I try to eliminate that. In the end, there aren't any. For the*

same reason that I explained earlier; everyone is on an equal footing, everyone has the same chance to participate in activities.]

Mr. L's quote underlines a tension between the linguistic and cultural diversity in the ESM population and the school's desire to promote a common culture and language that cuts across (perhaps even neutralizes) the differences inherent in that diversity. The linguistic attitude captured in Mr. L's quote is also, possibly, a defensive stance against the prevalence of multilingualism that has been perceived as a threat to French as the *lingua franca* in Montreal's linguistically diverse schools (McAndrew et al., 2000). Furthermore, French is ESM's only language of communication with parents and the larger community; it is the school's only official language of communication and, as such, the only language that officially counts.

Yet French is not just a language of communication; it is also a subject, a required course which values specific kinds of subject-specific knowledge. The subject-specific knowledge valued by French teachers at ESM courses is what is commonly called metalinguistic knowledge (explicit knowledge of grammar rules) and knowledge of the four traditional modes of rhetoric (narrative, argument, description, exposition). The importance of this meta-knowledge was first evident both in the students' *accueil* classes with Charlotte and in mainstream French language arts courses, including *français trait-d'union*. Because Charlotte was concerned with facilitating her students' transition into mainstream French courses, she used mainstream French materials and toward the end of the study was involved in a *projet d'arrimage* (something like a "bridging program") between *accueil* and *régulier* French language arts. In discussing some of the key criteria in such an *arrimage*, Mme F (Luis' mainstream French language arts teacher) emphasized structural and grammatical knowledge as central to proficiency in French:

> On enseigne tous les types du discours. . . . Et dans la structure [de l'écriture] les élèves doivent [faire] des paragraphes . . . . Il y des élèves qui arrivent de l'accueil qui ne savent pas qu'on doit écrire jusqu'au bout de la ligne. . . . Les élèves ne savent pas écrire la date. Ils ne connaissent pas la différence entre la date en français et la date en anglais. . . . Ensuite, en orthographe grammaticale, il y a certaines règles . . . si les

> élèves écrivent en infinitif passé "après avoir marché pendant deux heures," 'marcher' ils vont l'écrire avec un 'er' parce qu'ils ne voient pas que c'est un infintif passé. [Ils] imaginent que parce que 'avoir' n'est pas conjugé que c'est pas un temps de verbe. (Mme F, T09b/6)
>
> *[We teach all of the discourse types . . . . And in terms of structure (written), the students need to be able to make paragraphs. . . . There are students who come from accueil who don't know that they're supposed to write all the way to the end of the line. . . . The students don't know how to write the date. They don't know the difference between the date in French and the date in English. . . . .And in terms of grammatical spelling, there are certain rules . . . . If the students write in the past infinitive "après avoir marché pendant deux heures," 'marcher' they write with an 'er' because they don't know it's a past infinitive. They think that because 'avoir' isn't conjugated, it's not a verb tense.]*

Mme F's concern about her students' knowledge of grammatical structure and spelling in French reflects the attention paid to such knowledge in the Ministry of Quebec's guidelines for French language arts instruction. In the *avant propos* to those guidelines (M.E.Q., 1995), the then minister of education, Jean Garon, states:

> Ce nouveau programme . . . va dans le sens souhaité par de très nombreuses voix au cours des dernières années . . . . Plus de rigueur et d'exigence dans les apprentissages, plus de précision dans la définition des objectifs pour chacune des cinq années du secondaire, accroissement de l'importance accordée à l'écriture et à la fréquentation d'oeuvres de qualité, é*tude plus systématique de la grammaire et des règles de fonctionnement de la langue* (MEQ, 1995, p. 1, my emphasis).
>
> *[This new program . . . takes the direction expressed by many over the course of the past few years. . . . More rigorous and demanding in terms of learning, more precise in its definition of objectives for each of the five years of secondary, more importance on written expression and the reading of quality literature, more systematic study of grammar and the rules of how language functions].*

Grammatical knowledge is not the only focus of the French language arts program; however, its importance is highlighted in the number of pages dedicated to listing the precise elements of grammar, vocabulary, and spelling to be mastered by secondary students before graduation: 50 of the document's 170 pages serve that sole purpose. While there is nothing inherently wrong in

striving for accuracy in French language use, such an emphasis on grammatical precision, expressed both by Mme F (and other French teachers) and the MEQ guidelines, may contribute to an exclusive rather than inclusive discourse of French-as-a-host-language learning.

2.2 You are what (and how) you know: Discursive constructions of academic identity in ESM's mainstream

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, to be "integrated" at ESM meant that one had been moved from the *accueil* program into the mainstream. Once in the mainstream, though, little or no support was provided specifically for newcomers. While teachers and administrators acknowledged the ongoing nature of integration, the school programs and procedures suggested that the integration was complete once the students entered the mainstream. Aside from an extra course in French, the institution offered no official support system to its newcomers. Furthermore, the supplementary French course (entitled *français trait-d'union*) into which *accueil* graduates were automatically enrolled, was viewed by the teacher of that course (as well as some of her colleagues) as almost totally ineffective for *accueil* students. Mme P (the teacher of that *français trait-d'union* course) explained that the course had become something of a catch-all for students who are not doing well in their mainstream French course:

> C'est un cours qui a perdu sa vocation première, qui a complètement perdu de vue quelle était sa vocation là... et c'est malheureux parce que ça fait en sorte que je réponds bien au besoin de personne parce qu'il y a trop de ... il y a trop, toutes sortes de monde dans le cours. Il y a des élèves qui proviennent de l'adaptation scolaire, il y a des élèves qui proviennent de l'accueil, des élèves qui proviennent du régulier qui ont échoué par exemple à la première étape au régulier (Mme P T08/19).
>
> *[It's a course that has lost its original purpose, which has completely lost sight of its purpose. . . and it's sad because that means that I'm responding well to no one's needs because there are too many...there are too many, all kinds of students in the class. There are students who come from the alternative program, there are students who come from accueil, and there are students who come from the mainstream and who have failed, for example, the first level of the mainstream program.]*

As a result, Mme P explains, in order for students to be successful in her course, they must be very autonomous. "*Autonomie*" is identified by several of the mainstream teachers as the key to students' success. Mr. B (a secondary 4 history teacher) explained that the student-participants who failed his course were those who either were not ready to be integrated or who lacked autonomy. Mme F suggests that many immigrant-origin students lack autonomy because their families protect them from the freedoms that Quebecois parents automatically grant their children:

> Ils manquent d'autonomie. Dans les familles on leur laisse beaucoup moins de libérté que dans les familles québécoises, peu importe l'origine je trouve. . . . Dans la famille québécoise on encourage beaucoup les enfants à s'exprimer, à faire l'initiative, alors que dans les familles immigrantes on leur montre plus à respecter, à écouter (Mme F, T09b/25 p. 7).
>
> *[They lack autonomy. In the families, they're given much less freedom than in Quebecois families, regardless of where they're from, I think. . . . In Quebecois families we really encourage kids to express themselves, to take the initiative, whereas in immigrant families, they are taught to be respectful and to listen.]*

Autonomy is also emphasized in classroom procedures. Group work for example was rejected by all of the teachers interviewed as wasting precious time needed for progressing through the mandatory and demanding curriculum. Group work was generally thought of as untenable for two reasons: (a) students don't focus on the task at hand and (b) when students do focus on the task at hand, the differences in their academic abilities means that some do all the work while others simply reap the benefits. As the math teacher for several of the student participants explains:

> Moi je crois pas beaucoup au travail en équipe. Ça je vous dis comme ça tout de suite. Parce que il y a toujours un déséquilibre au niveau du rendement académique. Y'en a un qui fait tout, et l'autre qui suit, qui reçoit (T10/4).

[I don't really believe in group work. I'll just tell you that right now. Because there's always an imbalance in terms of academic productivity. There are those who do everything and others who follow, who take.]

If autonomy is the key to academic success at ESM, it is a very particular kind of autonomy, an autonomy which challenges students' choice or agency and looks very similar to obedience. When asked why specific students were or were not succeeding in their courses, the mainstream teachers explained that those who were successful were those who took the initiative to get extra help from the teacher after school, those who paid attention and asked questions during class, those who attended regularly, who arrived on time, who completed their homework, and who studied hard for the final exam. Autonomy in this school context, then, meant obeying school rules, meeting teacher expectations, and passing standardized provincial exams. Such autonomy/obedience is central to the school's messages to newcomer students about who they are academically: (a) your academic success is entirely your responsibility; (b) you shouldn't need any special assistance because your integration is complete -- that's why you were allowed to leave *accueil*; (c) if you fail, it is either because you didn't work hard enough or you weren't ready to be mainstreamed.

2.3 You are on your own: Discursive constructions of social identities in ESM's mainstream

The autonomy expected of students in the academic arena of the school is also central to the school's approach to newcomer's social involvement in the school community. While there are numerous after-school activities announced over the school loud speakers on a daily basis, students are expected to take the initiative themselves to join clubs or sports teams. For newcomers who are just exiting the social and academic isolation of the *accueil* program, joining clubs full of unknown peers is likely to be intimidating. Furthermore, the new academic course load is potentially so demanding of these still-integrating (and language-learning) students that extra-curricular activities are more than some of them believe they can reasonably manage. The time constraints felt by newly

mainstreamed students are discussed in the next section. Further complicating the social integration of newcomers in the mainstream is the commonly held belief among mainstream teachers that group work inhibits students' progress through the curricula. Therefore, class time doesn't afford newcomers the opportunity to establish new friendships or develop a social network.

Because the teachers only spent time with their students in the classroom context, their assessment of their students' social integration was limited to attitudes and interactions they observed briefly in their classrooms or in the halls between classes. As one would expect, the teachers' descriptions of their students' social integration were brief and only revealed enough to confirm the students' own self-descriptions of their social activities. The teachers' descriptions did, however, shed some light on their students' participation in class. According to these descriptions, all five participants never asked questions in class in front of their peers. If they had questions they would ask them during the fifteen-minute break between periods. Students' unwillingness to ask questions publicly was generally attributed to the students' fear of being ridiculed by their peers for their incorrect or accented French.

2.4 Synopsis of ESM's discursive constructions of newcomer identities and integration

The institutional messages to the student-participants about who they were or could be in the mainstream were many. Some of these messages will be familiar from the previous chapter's discussion of the five student-participants who remained in the *accueil* program. The messages include the following. Your languages are of secondary importance compared to the value of French proficiency in this context. Because French is the only language of education and official communication in this context, you are for all intents and purposes linguistically deficient until you reach a certain level of mastery of French. Without mastery in that common host-language, you are unlikely to succeed in the required mainstream courses. Furthermore, French is not just a language of communication but a required subject in its own right. To pass the subject of

French you must master metalinguistic knowledge of the language as well as be able to function in it. Your academic, linguistic, and social integration are really your responsibility. Your graduation from the *accueil* program means that you are ready for the mainstream and, in the mainstream, students are not coddled; they are expected to be autonomous learners. Therefore, if you don't succeed in school, you have only yourself to blame. Either you didn't work hard enough or your language skills are not strong enough (you were erroneously graduated from *accueil*). Autonomy is essential to your success in the mainstream because mainstream teachers have too many students to be able to work with them and follow their progress on an individual basis. Autonomy is also essential for developing a social network. The school offers many after-school activities. It is up to you to get involved.

Two themes run through the above messages: homogeneity and autonomy. The "Fordism" (Faigley, 1992) that lies at the heart of almost all North American public education systems promotes homogeneity through the use of a common curriculum, common language, standardized exams, and the same required courses for all students. Within this homogenizing environment, "autonomy" is another word for obedience. Those who obey the linguistic, curricular and assessment commands of the school are believed to be choosing to succeed, choosing to integrate. By the same logic, those who cannot or simply do not obey are believed to lack autonomy (and maturity) and are choosing to be marginalized or segregated. Successful integration in this context, then, means to be willing and able to fully embrace the academic, linguistic and social values and expectations of the mainstream program (as they are manifest in the school's language policy, classroom practices, teacher expectations, standardized curriculum, standardized exams, and graduation requirements). From this perspective on the role of schools in the integration of newcomers, an important question arises: How can institutions designed to promote sameness (in the name of equality) simultaneously recognize and accommodate diverse languages, cultures and ways of knowing? Integration, as it is theorized by John Berry and promoted by the MEQ policies (see Chapter 2), is perhaps beyond the

reach of schools which continue to function within a system which developed out of Fordism. That is, the machine-like, standardizing efficiency of Fordism pushes against the flexibility necessary for integration based on mutual accommodation. Thus, while schools accommodate cultural difference (to some extent) by allowing differences in dress and maybe even accepting absences during non-dominant-culture holy days, the overall effect of the school "canon" (schedules, courses, class lengths, languages) is, it seems, primarily homogenizing, assimilating.

The sameness with which the educational system treats its highly diverse student population supports a view of schools as homogenizing. As Mr. L suggests in Chapter 5, ESM accepts its diversity but doesn't encourage or celebrate that diversity. Rather, ESM, like most schools, attempts to foster commonality in order to promote the French fact and to prevent the cultural tensions it assumes would arise in its linguistically and culturally diverse student population. The practice and valuing of sameness suggests that integration is a misnomer for the homogenizing practices of school; and the diverse responses of the five mainstreamed participants on whom this chapter focuses attest to that contradiction.

3. Acceptance, resistance, or rejection: Five newcomers respond to the school's discursive constructions

In this section I discuss each of the five student-participants who were placed in the mainstream for the second academic year of the study. While the participants are similar in some of their responses to ESM's mainstream program and environment, it is their differences that are most striking and which highlight (by contrast) the static and homogenizing ethos of "integration" in ESM. The students' responses to ESM's discursive constructions of their identities and integration can be understood as the hidden side of a dialogue, that is, a *de facto* dialogue which is overlooked or silenced. Thus, these students are made the objects rather than the subjects of integration. I discuss each participant in terms of how he/she responded to the school's constructions of his/her linguistic,

academic, and social identities; that is, how the students responded to the school discourse, and in so doing shaped their linguistic, academic, and social identities.

3.1 Luis

Luis arrived in Montreal with his younger brother John (also a study participant) about 10 months before I met him. The boys' mother had come to Montreal three years prior to their arrival, working and doing the necessary paperwork to sponsor the boys' immigration. As Luis explains, living with his mother after three years of separation felt a bit strange at first.

> C'était difficile parce que on était 3 ans sans ma mère, et venir (vivre) avec elle c'était comme un personne un peu étrange. (Luis 16b/100-1)
>
> *[It was difficult because we were without my mother for three years, and to come (and live) with her it was a little like a stranger]*

Luis and John's father, with whom the boys lived while their mother was in Montreal, remained in Peru. Though their father was an archaeologist with a fairly good job in Peru, the boys explained that the economy was such that even a good job would not pay him enough to support his family. While the boys were in regular contact with their father via the internet over the course of the study, plans for his move to Montreal remained uncertain. On two occasions, the boys visited Peru to see their father, grandparents, and friends.

Shortly after I met Luis (at the end of his first year in Montreal and in *accueil*) he turned 18 years old. Because he would turn 19 before June 30 of the following academic year, Luis would not be allowed to remain at ESM beyond his second year there. Largely because of his age, then, Luis was placed in secondary 5 (the final year of secondary school) with the hope that he might complete all of his required courses and graduate from ESM with little or no academic delay. However, Luis' academic performance fell short of that expectation.

Of his eight courses, Luis passed only about half. His failure was attributed to what his French teacher referred to as "nonchalance." His *français*

trait-d'union teacher called it a lack of motivation. His high rate of absenteeism seemed to confirm this attitude; overall, Luis's academic integration was considered unsuccessful. Linguistically, Luis was described as having big gaps in his linguistic knowledge which contributed to the large number of errors he made in spelling and syntax. Socially, he was described as being very concerned with being cool and reserved, though he did ask questions of the teachers in private or when they circulated in class.

Luis had a different interpretation of his academic, linguistic and social integration. Overall, he was pleased with his integration into secondary 5 for several reasons:

> L'avantage que je vois à secondaire 5 c'est un, je connais plus des amis, et j'ai déjà tous mes amis dans la classe de, en secondaire 5. J'ai la chance d'avoir un, *grad party*, alors, ça va. C'était quelque chose que j'ai toujours voulu, et je sais si je vais à, à l'école des adultes, on n'a pas ce sorte de fête, alors que je (pouvais) en secondaire 5. Et si je n'étais à l'école, moi je sais que je vais aller à l'école des adultes, et la classe, le français que j'ai appris maintenant, ça va être plus facile, comme une langue seconde (Luis 49/51).
>
> *[The advantage that I see in being in secondary 5 is first, I know a lot more friends and I already have all my friends in secondary 5. I had the chance to have a graduation party, so that's good. That was something that I always wanted, and I know that if I go to adult school they don't have that kind of celebration, but I could have in secondary 5. And if I wasn't at this school, I know that I would go to adult school, and the class, the French that I have learned so far, it's going to be easier as a second language.]*

While Luis recognizes that he did not pass many of his classes and that he is, as a result, prohibited from entering cégep according to his plan, he also sees many advantages to his having been integrated into secondary 5 after his year in *accueil*. He made friends his own age, he was given the chance (even if he didn't end up being able to take advantage of it) of having a graduation party, and the French he learned in that year of secondary 5, he felt, would make things much easier for him when he continued his education in adult school. Adult school was not Luis' first choice as an educational path. He had initially hoped to complete most of his courses during the regular school year and then take the

one or two remaining required courses in summer school, allowing him to go on to cégep. However, as Luis explains, summer school was out of the question even if he had passed enough of his courses to complete secondary school in the summer.

> Non, pas de cours d'été, parce que eh, cela va prendre d'argent et maintenant, chez moi, on est pas dans l'état de payer, payer, payer. Surtout que on habite seulement avec ma mère, et moi et [mon frère], on n'a pas d'emploi pour aider. C'est pour ça que je pense, ne pas faire de cours d'été, essayer de trouver un emploi, lequel sera très difficile (49/53).
>
> *[No, no summer school because that takes money and right now at our house we're not in a position to pay, pay, pay. Especially because we're living only with my mom, and me and my brother we don't have jobs to be able to help out. That's why I don't think I'll be doing summer school, try to find a job which will be difficult.]*

With summer school no longer an option and knowing that he would not pass several required courses, Luis took a different tack toward the end of secondary 5. He focussed on passing certain courses (such as economics and math) in order to reduce the number of courses he would be required to take to complete his secondary education in adult school. Therefore, while Luis was not performing academically in the ways that the institution, and perhaps particularly his French teachers, recognized as successful, Luis did view his year in *régulier* with a more positive spin and more of a plan than his perceived nonchalance conveyed.

Linguistically, though, Luis felt he was at a disadvantage, particularly in his French class. In fact, Luis makes a distinction between French as a language of communication and education and French as a required subject when he speaks of being able to pass math (also taught in French, with the same peer group) but not being able to pass French because he is expected to study "français langue maternelle" with peers who have been living in Quebec for more than five years.

> Parce que je pense que en économie je peux tout lire et c'est pas si difficile je pensais. Mathématiques, je suis pas bon en mathématiques mais je sais qu'avec un peu plus d'efforts, je vais avoir des meilleurs résultats. Mais, en français, wow, ce n'est pas ma langue maternelle. Et le français j'étudie c'est, c'est français langue maternelle. Je suis avec

> les garçons qui ont, garçons et filles qui, habitent, je ne sais pas, plus de 5 ans, qui parlent français (Luis 49/9).
>
> *[Because I think that in economics I can read everything; it's not difficult. Math, I'm not good in math but I know that with a bit more effort I'll get better results. But French, wow, it's not my mother tongue. And the French that I'm studying, it's mother tongue French. I'm with guys who, guys and girls who have been living, I don't know, more than 5 years (here), who speak French.]*

When asked why he felt language proficiency inhibited his success in his French course but not his math or economics courses he suggested that it had to do with French being the focus of his French course:

> Par exemple mathématiques, on travaille avec les numéros, et les numéros je les comprends, c'est, c'est universel. C'est pour ça que je comprends plus. . . . En français, c'est pas seulement parce qu'on PARLE en français, on travaille tout en français. En économie, en mathématiques c'est pas nécessairement un travail TOUJOURS en français (16).
>
> *[For example, in math we work with numbers and numbers I understand, it's, it's universal. That's why I understand more. . . . In French, it's not just because we SPEAK in French, we do all our work in French. In economics, in math we don't necessarily do EVERYTHING in French.]*

While Luis doesn't use the term "metalinguistic knowledge," I believe (based on my observations of and interviews about French language instruction at ESM) that it is this distinction to which he is referring: courses like math and economics are taught in French; however, French is not only taught in French but requires metalinguistic knowledge, knowledge of how the language works, its grammatical and rhetorical rules. It is this expectation for advanced metalinguistic knowledge of French (rather than communicative ability in French) that makes Luis believe he can't pass his French class but can pass math and economics. Because Luis believes that the use of numbers (rather than his communicative ability in French) is what facilitates his math and economics courses, he appears to believe that he actually lacks communicative ability in French. While this is conjecture on my part, it is interesting to note that Luis believes he will be more successful in an English adult school than in a French

one, despite the fact that he has learned the bulk of his English informally with his bilingual peers at ESM.

While English is the language of affiliation or even allegiance (Leung et al., 1997) for Luis, multilingualism better describes the nature of his linguistic integration. Though English is the language he uses with most of his friends and the language he claims to be most comfortable in, Luis chooses to conduct his last interview with me entirely in French. He also acknowledges that he needs to learn both English and French in order to get a job in Montreal and is grateful for the French he has learned so far. While his immediate language concerns are for proficiency in French and English, he also expresses concern about maintaining an "academic" level of Spanish, the language his grandfather taught and of which Luis is very proud.

> Mon espagnol, c'est, était très bon. C'était pas vulgaire, c'était comme, . . . académique. . . . À différence de mes amis. Je connais . . . beaucoup de mots en espagnol que mes amis ne connaissaient pas, parce que, mon grand-père il était professeur d'espagnol, ma mère était professeur d'anglais,. . . mon père il aime aussi beaucoup lire et therefore, on lit beaucoup aussi (Luis 49/69-70) .
>
> *[My Spanish was really good. It wasn't vulgar, it was like, academic. . . . Better than that of my friends. I knew . . . a lot of words in Spanish that my friends didn't know because my grandfather was a Spanish teacher, my mother was an English teacher . . . my father he liked to read a lot, therefore, we read a lot too.]*

Thus, while the school's discourse focuses on students' proficiency in French, Luis draws attention to the social, practical and personal needs for all three of his languages.

Socially, Luis describes himself as isolated and much less active than he was in Peru. While he did make friends in secondary 5, he still finds himself alone, bored and unhappy frequently on the weekends. He tried to join the after-school soccer team but felt the try-outs were unfair and left disappointed. Luis seems to attribute much of his social isolation to a much smaller friendship group, a lack of easy access to a soccer field, and the physical distance between his friends' homes and his own. As a result, he spends much of his weekends in

front of the television or on the internet "chatting" with his father and friends in Peru. I discuss the role of physical space in Luis' integration and identity construction in more detail in the next chapter. To conclude my discussion of Luis' social integration in this chapter, I would like simply to focus on the contrast between the school's interpretation of Luis (unmotivated and nonchalant) and Luis' interpretation of himself as isolated, bored, unhappy, and without many choices.

> C'est que je sais ici, c'est une bonne place pour étudier et aussi pour le travail. Mais, je sais pas, moi je sais que, j'ai besoin de l'argent, pour vivre, mais j'aime pas (du tout) ici, Québec, Canada. . . . . C'est impossible Canada. J'aime plus Pérou, j'aimerais ça retourner mais malheureusement si je, si je retourne au Pérou, et si je retourne maintenant, et je sais pas quoi faire, parce que, pour étudier, pour aller à l'université ça va être problème après pour trouver un emploi. Ça va être plus difficile encore et maintenant je sais que au Pérou il y a des problèmes avec le président, qu'ils manquent d'emploi, que bon, les gens ont pas d'argent (Luis 49/100-101).
>
> *[It's that I know that here is a good place to study and also to work. But I don't know, I know that I need money to live, but I don't like it at all here, Quebec, Canada. . . . Canada is impossible. I like Peru better and if I return now, I don't know what to do because to study, to go to university, it would be hard to find work afterward. It would be even harder and now I know that in Peru they are having problems with the President, that there's no work, and well, that people don't have any money]*

Luis responds to his constraints strategically by rejecting ESM's measurements of success and setting his own goals to pass certain courses. Through his responses to the discourses of the ESM mainstream, we see Luis narrating his own life, describing himself as successful in many ways and rejecting the school's discourse as *mis*recognition.

3.2 John

Like his brother Luis, John arrived in Quebec never having studied French and with only a little knowledge of English. Two years younger than Luis, John would turn 16 years old just after I met him. Considered by Charlotte to be a strong, capable student with good proficiency in French, John was placed in

secondary 4 for his second year at ESM. Despite the fact that he failed most of his courses (including his favourite course, history), John was considered by most of his teachers to be very capable but simply not making an effort. His absenteeism (91 classes missed in the year) and his refusal to ask questions during class or to seek help from his instructors after school seemed to confirm the teachers' assessment of John's academic integration. While he is described as afraid to speak and timid (to the point of going unnoticed) in some classes, he was generally recognized as having lots of friends and being well liked by his classmates.

For the most part, John's self assessment matches the assessments of his teachers. He admits that he doesn't seek help from his teachers, that he spends very little time on his homework, and that he doesn't speak out in class. Academically, he describes his integration with a disinterested tone, suggesting in his body language, his intonation, the brevity of some of his responses, and his frequent laughter that he didn't really care about his academic integration. He had little to say about any of his courses except to express an intolerance for what he felt was useless memorization in some courses and difficulty or discomfort with reading aloud or oral participation in class. He said he hated his French course and complained that the teacher was ill-prepared, unfocused, and poor at managing his disruptive peers. Furthermore, he found this course to be the most difficult because the teacher frequently asked students to read aloud "in front of people." He refused to speak in some classes and was very pleased to recount that for an oral group presentation in his French class, he received 8/10 even though he was absent that day. Yet, in his English course, John said he spoke a lot.

> En anglais, je parle beaucoup. C'est la seule classe où je dois pas parler en français . . . . Et je suis plus confortable avec ça . . . à ne pas parler français . . . . Le français c'est compliqué, je n'aime pas trop ça. (John 55/80-84).
>
> *[In English I talk a lot. It's the only class where I'm not supposed to speak French. And I'm more comfortable with that . . . not speaking French. . . . French is complicated, I don't like it much.]*

Linguistically, John always seemed to attach his negative attitudes about French to accent, his own and that of others whom he found difficult to understand. While John made several visits to Charlotte at the beginning of that year in order to get help with his pronunciation, he continued to criticize French as too complicated and frequently identified the Quebecois accent as too difficult to understand. While John's criticisms of Quebecois French may arise from isolated incidents and frustrations, it is also important to note that in the macro-climate of debates about language in Quebec, French-from-France has often been touted as superior to Quebecois. John's comments about the Quebecois accent, therefore, raise some questions about how larger political discourses may shape the linguistic attitudes of Quebec's newcomers.

> L'accent québécois, parce que je connais des gens québécois, . . . ils parlent très vite pis c'est difficile de comprendre, c'est ça, un peu difficile (John 23/79-85).
>
> *[The Quebecois accent, because I know Quebecois people, . . . they speak really fast and it's difficult to understand them, that's it, it's a bit difficult.]*
>
> It's different than the France accent. Because I know people from France, and I understand when they speak, like their accent is understandable (John 55/34)

Therefore, in terms of linguistic integration, there are several indications that John is affiliating himself more with English than with French, though these indices may suggest only a slight lean toward one language and away from the other. First, he speaks of being uncomfortable speaking in French in class but very comfortable speaking in his English class because it is the only place in which he doesn't have to speak in French. Second, he expresses a preference for doing at least part of our first interview and all of our last interview in English. Third, he chooses the pseudonym "John" specifically because it is an English name. Finally, in considering his educational path choices at the end of his second year at ESM, he considers English adult school to be a serious option for obtaining his secondary level diploma. However, John's linguistic preference for English doesn't necessarily carry over to his social interactions. He describes

himself using all three of his languages during band practices, switching languages to accommodate the needs of his interlocuteur.

> **Y ellos hablan espagnol?. . . . Los amigos con quien tocas?**[19]
> Los que estan aqui? Uno es Roger, entonces espagnol. . . .Y con los otros amigos, con uno frances y con el otro, ingles.
> **Y entre ustedes, hablan que?**
> Ingles, si no frances. Si no comprendemos una cosa, el otro idioma [usamos]
> **Entonces cambian idiomas whenever necessary.**
> mhm (John 55/47-50).
>
> ***[And they speak Spanish . . . . The friends with whom you play?***
> *The one's here? One of them is Roger, so Spanish. . . . And with the other friends, with one, French and with the other, English.*
> ***And among yourselves, what do you all speak?***
> *English or French. If we don't understand something, we use the other language.*
> ***So you change languages whenever necessary***
> *mhm.]*

Socially, John placed a lot of importance on being known, being recognized. He didn't often speak of people in terms of friendship but rather in terms of being known by them; and he attributed "getting known" at ESM to his performance (as drummer in a band) in the school's student talent show.

> The third time we played we were the best. . . . Like the people like ... Oh yeah, you were good today! [Clapping hands] Walking, the (girls) like yeah, John (??). People are crazy. When I come to school, rock star. . . check le! It's cool! [Laughing] . . . . Yeah, like everyone knows me here, like "oh yeah, yeah, yeah, the drummer," you know. (John 55/ 67-70)

At the heart of John's social life, then, is his band. However, when asked if his group would play again in the talent show, John explained that he wasn't sure they would be allowed to because the last time they played, the singer broke the talent show rules and sang in English.

> **Did they rap in French?**
> Huh... no it was in English. We didn't tell M. L. that, that we were [going to] sing, so we did.
> **So do you think that it'll be a problem next year?**

[19] Bold font in all data excerpts represents the author's voice.

Yeah, yeah [Laughing]
So M. L., maybe next year he won't let you do it, because he knows you're gonna do it in English?
Perhaps, I don't know, I don't care. We played a few times, it's good.

John had gotten enough exposure to be known, to have an identity, so that he didn't really need another school talent show. Such exposure, John suggests, is central to success in the music world.

> Like three weeks ago, we played in the show in this park . . . . How it works you play . . ., and if some people like you, I mean, the record companies they check you out if you're good or not. If you're good enough they go like ok, you want to make . . .maybe an album, and you can be famous or something. So we're working on that . . . . [M]any people told me that, even hum... even this girl that arranged everything last time for that show. Some people from Sony company is gonna be here she said. So maybe you want to play there because the guy, the producer or something, if he likes you, than you can make a deal or something, make an album or something(John 55/116-17).

Music was John's focal point, his center of gravity. It is through connections made at school and beyond (people who know people, or friends of friends of friends) that this center of gravity is legitimized and developed. However, outside of the student talent show, music is not part of John's life at school. Because he entered the mainstream from the *accueil* program and was, therefore, enrolled in a supplemental French course (*français trait d'union*) he had no elective credits to use on a music course.

> **Ah donc, il fallait laisser tomber la musique pour faire**
> Français langue seconde
> **Ça te dérange, tu fais une grimace**
> Ça ne me dérange pas mais j'aimerais avoir le cours de musique (John 23/95-6).
>
> *[**So you had to drop music to do***
> *French second language*
> ***Does that bug you? You're making a face***
> *It doesn't bug me, but I would like to have a music class.]*

Connections and networking, much more than academics or linguistic mastery, capture perhaps the most important dimension of school life for John. With academics in the background and French as just one of his three languages of

communication, John focuses on shaping himself into a musician, an identity that challenges or rejects the school's successful-integration discourse.

3.3 Ana

I met Ana when she had been in Montreal for just under a year. Her mother, like John and Luis' mother, came to Canada three years prior to the arrival of Ana, her older brother and father. Ana's parents owned their own business in the textile industry and Ana often worked with them on the weekends. The family was originally from the Ukraine and spoke Russian (and some Hebrew) in their home. Ana was also relatively fluent in both English and French and, therefore, one of the classic multilingual participants in this study. Ana loved to talk and she spoke openly and fluidly with me both during formal interviews and in informal, impromptu chats. She arrived from Russia at the age of 17 having completed all but the last two months of her secondary education. Because she turned 18 just after the June deadline, she was eligible to remain at ESM for two more years after the completion of the *accueil* program. However, Ana (and her mother) felt very strongly about wanting Ana to finish her secondary education as quickly as possible and so felt that she should be integrated into secondary 5 after *accueil*. However, Charlotte felt that Ana's proficiency in French was not quite strong enough to ensure her success in the final year of Secondary school. Because Ana's low score on the provincial French exam confirmed Charlotte's concern that Ana was weak in reading comprehension and since Ana would be allowed to remain at ESM for two years beyond *accueil*, Ana was placed in secondary 4 for her second academic year at ESM.

In the mainstream program, Ana was viewed by her teachers as generally not ready. Both her linguistic difficulties and her poor study habits were blamed for what most teachers described mid-way through the year as Ana's likely failure. The teachers described Ana as not very hard-working, unwilling to ask questions in class and unwilling to seek after-school help with her teachers. Her French teachers described Ana as having difficulty with both oral and written communication, with specific problems being limited vocabulary, errors in

syntax and reading comprehension as well as the inclusion of Cyrillic letters in her written work. These linguistic difficulties were identified by most of the teachers as the reasons for Ana's struggles in her various subjects. Socially, Ana was consistently described as not having many friends and as interacting very little with her classmates. The teachers attributed Ana's social distance from her peers to Ana's age and her own sense of being more mature than her secondary 4 peers.

My observations of and interviews with Ana confirmed much of what her teachers described. Socially, she acknowledged that she didn't have many friends and that she spent her lunch hour alone. Ana did have a close male friend with whom she had spent a lot of time (and learned some Spanish) at school during her year in *accueil*. However, because she was not allowed to date anyone until she was engaged, this relationship dwindled. At the beginning of Ana's second year at ESM, she was engaged to a family friend and the following summer was married. Her engagement and imminent entry into the institution of marriage may explain, if only partly, why Ana may have felt socially distant from her peers, and why she failed to initiate peer interactions inside or outside the classroom.

Linguistically, Ana was a classic codeswitcher:

> I don't have a lot of friends. Maybe one or two. And this is the people who I'm speaking different languages. Start from French, English, Spanish, Russian, everything. It depends. When we talk, sometimes it's easy to express in that or that language (Ana 28/24).

In all of our interviews she slipped easily and fluidly between French and English and in one informal conversation she admitted that she liked to include Cyrillic letters in her work. While Ana seemed comfortable, even proud of her code-switching, perhaps as a sign of her linguistic ability, she also said in her final interview that she felt confined by the additional languages in which she had to express herself most of the time.

> Sometimes I'm tired to talk in French, or whatever because it's like… you know that it's not your language. It's like pretending you're something but you're trying to be something else and one day you're just tired, tired to pretend (Ana 51/3).

Ana acknowledged that she had difficulty with written French, but never seemed to suggest that this weakness was the reason for her academic difficulties, as was suggested by several of her teachers.

Academically, Ana admitted that she hadn't worked as hard as she could and should have. She balanced this admission with explanations of her experiences in the mainstream which showed her integration to be more complex than the school system acknowledges. To say that Ana was disappointed with her placement in secondary 4 is an understatement. She was angry about her placement and its impact on her long-term educational path. At the end of the study, Ana had failed three courses and only barely passed two. While she acknowledged that she had perhaps not studied hard enough, she also felt that the school was to blame for what she described as a loss of time (educational delay) and a loss of content knowledge, both leading to a loss of interest and focus in her educational orientation. Ana blamed the school, first, for placing her at the wrong level and second, for preventing her from trying her hand at more challenging courses to see for herself if she was capable of meeting those academic demands.

> Par exemple . . . j'etais capable de faire maths plus haute que j'avais. Je ne l'ai pas eu. J'ai été mal intégrée. Je pourrais aller [j'aurais pu allé] au secondaire 5 facilement (Ana 51/69).
>
> *[For example . . . I was able to do a higher level of math than the one I had. I didn't have it. I was poorly integrated. I could go (could have gone) to secondary 5 easily.]*
>
> Je gagne si je réussis mais si je réussis pas je perde rien. . . . Même peut-être je sais pas en quoi chu capable. Et si j'essaye, je découvre quelque chose en moi.
>
> *[I win if I pass, but if I don't pass I don't lose anything. . . . Maybe I don't even know what I am capable of. And if I try, I discover something in myself.]*

Ana explains that she feels that her placement first in *accueil* and then in secondary 4 has meant two things for her educational path: (a) she will graduate

(at the soonest) a full two years later than she planned; (b) she has lost interest in and a feeling for the subjects about which she was so passionate when she was a student in Russia.

> J'ai PAS DE TEMPS à perdre. Quand tout le monde me disait, ah, "t'es jeune, toute ta vie devant toi, là, ne t'inquiète pas, c'est correct de finir l'école à 20 ans." Ah oui, c'est correct!? Aimerais-tu finir l'école à 20 ans? Je pense pas; moi non plus j'aime pas ça. [Soupir] (Ana 51/89).
>
> *[I DON'T have TIME to waste. When everyone tells me, oh you're young, you have your whole life in front of you, don't worry, it's okay to finish school when you're 20 years old." Oh really, it's okay?! Would you like to finish school when you're 20 years old? I don't think so, me neither, I don't like that.]*
>
> Les choses que je pourrais bien réussir ici, j'ai manqué. Maintenant je me rappelle presque plus de choses. Parce que je l'utilise pas. C'est la même chose avec la langue. . . . Mais si tu utilises pas l'information que tu as eu pendant 2 heures [ans], c'est sûr que tu l'oublies. Moi si quelqu'un me fait rappel, ah oui oui c'est ça, là je me rappelle. Si j'ai fait une petite révision, quelque chose de même. Mais j'utilise jamais. C'est drôle et c'est triste, parce que c'était pour rien (Ana 51/88).
>
> *[Things that I could have passed easily here, I missed. Now I remember almost nothing, because I don't use it. It's the same thing with language. . . . But if you don't use the information that you got for 2 (years), you will definitely forget it. If someone reminded me, oh yes, yes that's right, now I remember. If I had a little review something like that. But I never use it. It's funny and it's sad because it was all for nothing].*

As a result, Ana feels like she no longer knows what interests her. She lost her passion for the sciences about which she felt so strongly in Russia. At the end of her second year at ESM she says she has no particular interest in anything

> [Les sciences] m'intéressaient... Mais ça m'intéresse plus... parce que j'ai perdu le goût. Pis . . . c'est que triste parce que en cet âge quand tu découvres quelque chose pour toi, c'est ça ce qui t'aide à aller choisir ton métier. . . . Maintenant, je sais plus quoi faire! Là quand j'étais là-bas, j'aimais biologie et chimie, je voulais aller en médecin. Mais plus maintenant, je sais plus quoi faire parce que ça m'intéresse plus. . . . Je sais pas quel métier choisir parce que j'aime RIEN. Il n'y a rien qui m'intéresse (Ana 51/103).
>
> *[The sciences interested me . But they no longer interest me because I lost my taste for it. It's sad because at this age when you discover*

something for yourself, that's what helps you choose your career. . . . Now, I don't know what to do! When I was there (in Russia) I loved biology and chemistry, I wanted to go into medicine. But no longer, I don't know what to do because that no longer interests me. . . . I don't know what career to choose because I like NOTHING. Nothing interests me.]

Ana's descriptions of her linguistic, social and academic integration allow for several possible interpretations of her response to the school's successful-integration discourse. First, perhaps Ana's failure to get extra help is her way of rejecting what she feels was a misplacement in secondary 4. This is her form of resistance, not very effective, but resistance nonetheless. Second, it is also possible that Ana's occasional use of the Cyrillic alphabet is her way of marking her identity and a written form of forcing linguistic diversity into a system which focuses tightly on French mastery and use (see Thesen, 1997, for a similar phenomenon). Third, Ana's placement in secondary 4 may have contributed to her sense of alienation both from her favourite subject and her host language (which she perceives as a barrier rather than a tool).

3.4 Christian

Born in the Congo and educated in Kenya, Christian spoke four languages before arriving in Quebec: Kassai, his tribal tongue and first language; Lingala, the official language of the Congo; Swahili, the dominant language of Kenya and the language used in Christian's home; and English, the language of Christian's education in a Kenyan boarding school. He arrived in Quebec with his father, younger sister and younger brother almost a year before I met him. His mother remained in the Congo and his grandparents remained in Kenya. Upon arrival he was 16 years old, and his records showed that he had completed the equivalent of secondary 1 in Kenya. When I met Christian, he had added French to his linguistic repertoire and chose to interact with me only in French. He explained that he believed strongly in practicing the target language as much as possible in order to master it. His commitment to and discipline in learning French captures one of Christian's most prominent characteristics: a

hardworking and serious student. While Charlotte recognized that Christian took quite a bit more time than his peers in completing his written work, she felt his proficiency in French and his strong study habits (completing all homework with beautiful penmanship, never missing a class without a medical reason, his unwavering attention in class) were all indications that he was ready to be mainstreamed. Because he was 16 years old, he was mainstreamed into secondary 4.

Socially, Christian was described by his mainstream teachers as taciturn, solitary, timid, very polite, and uncomfortable with his peers. While my own interactions with Christian confirmed some of these descriptors, I hasten to add that Christian was also gentle, considerate, and always ready with a smile. While he was not by any means talkative with his *accueil* peers, he interacted easily and comfortably with them. Linguistically, Christian was described (by his *français trait d'union* teacher) as expressing himself well but as having some difficulty with writing. His regular French teacher had difficulty remembering who Christian was, noting only that he was African and seemed attentive in class. Academically he was recognized by most of his instructors as being very hard working and attentive. The only exception to this view was that of his mathematics instructor who claimed that Christian was not only weak in math but never sought help after school. Both regular French and math were the only two courses Christian failed. They were also the only two courses whose teachers Christian said were rarely available to help him after school.

Christian's educational work ethic is perhaps most obvious in how often he attended *récuperation* sessions with his instructors, the frequency with which he visited Charlotte for help with his French, and the number of hours he spent studying after school.

> **Combien de fois par semaine est-ce que tu restes après l'école pour étudier auprès de, un prof, quelconque?**
> Des fois trois fois, même quatre parfois. Mais ça dépend, quand on commence un module, si c'est difficile, moi je vois (directement) c'est difficile, il faut que je commence récupération [rire] avant . . . .C'est ça, si c'est dur vraiment, même une semaine, tous les jours, je suis (ici), oui (Christian 47/164-5).

*[**How many times a week do you stay after school to work with one of your teachers?***
Sometimes three, even four. But it depends, when we start a new module, if it's difficult I see right away that it's difficult, I have to start after-school help before [laughs] . . . That's it, it's really hard, some weeks I'm here every day.]

Et puis, tu travailles jusqu'à quelle heure, tu fais tes devoirs de 5h30 jusqu'à?
Quelquefois c'est beaucoup, des fois, jusqu'à onze heures comme ça, t'sé, c'est beaucoup. (Christian 27/37).

*[**And until what time do you study, you do your homework from 5:30 to?***
Sometimes it's a lot, sometimes until 11:00, you know, it's a lot.]

He was also very keen to make up for failing his math class by taking the course again in summer school; but like so many of the other student-partipants, he found the cost of summer school prohibitive.

Moi je pense de faire les, le cours de mathématique là [en cours d'été]. Mais c'est très CHER, le cours de mathématique.
Ah oui?
(il faudra) travailler.
Combien ça coûte?
Moi je pensais c'est comme, 100 quelque chose, mais c'est 200, presque 300 [dollars]. (Christian 47/349-51).

[I was thinking of taking a math course (in summer school). But it's very EXPENSIVE, the math course.
Really?
I would have to work
How much does it cost?
I thought it was something like 100 something, but it's 200 almost 300 (dollars)]

Math was something of a sore spot for Christian. He felt that his math teacher judged him negatively simply because he was very quiet in class. He told me that his math teacher was not often available for after-school support, but he seemed to feel that the more significant reason for his failing math was that it was taught differently in Kenya.

> Le cours je sais pas ce que je vais passer c'est les maths. Ça c'est sûr je peux pas passer. . . . Si j'avais l'algèbre, ah je pourrais passer, je pense, (je suis sûr). . . . Il y a beaucoup, il y a une grande différence entre (math et ici). Mais géométrie c'est presque la même, géométrie c'est presque la même.
> **Toi tu as étudié les maths probablement comme moi je les ai étudiés, comme prè-algèbre, algèbre, géométrie.**
> Oui, oui, c'est ça on les divise! (Christian 47/82-87).
>
> *[The class I know I won't pass is math. It's sure that I can't pass math . . . . If I had algebra, I could pass, I think (I'm sure). . . . There is a lot, there is a big difference between the math and here. But geometry is almost the same, geometry is almost the same.*
> ***You probably studied math the way I studied math, like prealgebra, algebra, geometry.***
> *Yeah, that's it, they divided them!]*

Failing math probably bothers Christian, in part, because he prides himself on being a strong student. In our first interview, he proudly explained that he was three times ranked third in his class in Kenya; and he states more than once that his primary reason for being in Canada is to get a good North American education.

> Je viens ici pour étudier et puis c'est fini. C'est ça je trouve dans ma tête. . . . peut-être je vais changer, je vais trouver, je vais être bon et puis je vais rester. . . . sais pas qu'est-ce que ça (va arriver) (Christian 47/334-6).
>
> *[I came here to study and then it's finished. That's how I'm thinking in my head . . . . maybe I'm going to change, I'm going to find, I'm going to be good and then I'm going to stay. . . . I don't know what's going to happen]*

As the above quote suggests, Christian is driven toward getting his education in North America largely because of the academic capital such diplomas carry with them.

Christian's thoughts of moving elsewhere when he finishes university in Canada don't, however, seem to deter him from concentrating on perfecting his French. It is important to note here that Christian, at the age of 17, is eligible to obtain his secondary school diploma by attending adult school in English, his dominant language of education. He chooses, however, to continue studying in

French which he describes as a difficult language. While he fails one of his French courses, he believes that his French has improved a lot during his year in the mainstream. He doesn't attribute his linguistic improvements to his French classes though; he feels rather that his history course is the one which most helped him with his French.

> **Et l'histoire, tu, tu suis bien le cours d'histoire?**
> Hum-hum.
> **Sans difficultés?**
> Non, et c'est la matière qui m'a vraiment augmenté dans le vocabulaire.
> **Ah oui?**
> Oui, même le français j'ai rien, j'ai pas vraiment obtenu beaucoup de choses. Mais . . . quelques fois . . . il faut qu'on étudie, puis, à l'examen il n'y a pas de réponses, il faut vraiment réfléchir puis écrire. Tu sais c'est vraiment, ça m'a aidé beaucoup, l'histoire (Christian 47/144-6).
>
> ***[And history, are you doing okay in your history course?***
> *mhm*
> ***No problems***
> *No, it's the subject that has most improved my vocabulary*
> ***Really?***
> *Yeah, even from French (class) I have nothing, I haven't really gained anything. But . . . . sometimes we have to study, then the exam doesn't have answers, you really have to reflect and then write. You know it's really, history really helped me a lot.]*

Socially, Christian acknowledges that he has few friends in Quebec. It is his friendships that he misses most about Kenya. In one interview he speaks of having regular phone contact with his best friend who now lives in New Zealand. In the mainstream program, Christian's social interactions are even more limited than they were in *accueil* because, he explains, during his year in the mainstream program he always studies during his lunch hour, either at home or in the library. Like other participants, Christian refers to his friends in Kenya as his real friends, and suggests that while he has made some acquaintances in Quebec, he doesn't really have any real friends.

> Hum, des amis, j'ai pas, comme amis, amis comme ça. Non je n'ai pas, mais parler, des choses comme ça, il y a beaucoup mais, des amis vraiment non, j'ai pas. (Christian 47/288).

[Hum, friends, I don't really have friend, friends like that. No, I don't; but to talk to and things like that, there are a lot; but real friends, no, I don't have any.]

Driven by his goal of obtaining a North American education, Christian is very hard-working and is considered to be academically well-integrated by most of his teachers. He is also linguistically very committed to learning French though his grades in his French class don't reflect that commitment. Indeed Christian remarks that it is in always speaking French and through his history class that his French has improved the most. However, despite his academic and linguistic commitment and (most would say) his successful integration, Christian remains on the outside of his host society. He has few or no friends at school, participates in no extracurricular activities, doesn't have a summer or after-school job, and suggests that while his opinion may change, he doesn't plan to live in Quebec once he has completed his education.

Thus, Christian's academic and linguistic integration (the two aspects of integration most valued and attended to in the school) mask his marginalization, his lack of a sense of membership or belonging in the Quebec community. One comes away from Christian's self-description with a sense that while he is living in Quebec at the moment, he is locating and constructing his narrative Self somewhere else.

3.5 Roger

When Roger left Mexico (at the age of 15) with his mother, father and sister and came to Montreal, he was ready for a change. After having spent over three years living with an aunt while his mother vigilantly advocated for Roger's father who was in the hospital with a degenerative blood disease, Roger was ready for a new life. In Mexico he had few friends, studied in a poor school, and felt confined. He describes, in his first interview with me, the totally positive transformation he feels he has undergone by moving to Montreal.

> Quand j'étais au Mexique, c'était comme avec des barres, comme des *walls*. . . . Je pouvais voir disons la vérité. J'étais comme mhmm, la vie passait, c'est ça. Et quand je suis venu ici, tout ce que j'avais ça c'est

> disparu. C'est ça. Je commençais à parler une autre langue à m'intéresser dans les langues, à m'intéresser sur les choses que j'aime, sur les études, c'est ça. J'ai changé totalement (Roger 12/128-9).
>
> *[When I was in Mexico, it was like with bars, like walls. . . . I could see, let's say, the truth. I was like, hmm, life passed, that's it. And when I came here, everything I had disappeared. That's it. I started to speak a new language and to be interested in languages, to be interested in things that I like, in my studies, that's it. I changed totally.]*

He refers to his transformation as an "opening up" by virtue of learning two new languages:

> Je suis venu ici et ça s'ouvre. Il ne faut pas beaucoup de temps pour apprendre l'anglais encore, mais j'ai une base. Maintenant j'apprends le français et ça me permet de m'ouvrir dans une autre langue, dans deux autres langues (Roger12/121).
>
> *[When I came here things opened. You don't need a lot of time to learn English, but I have a foundation. Now I'm learning French and that is helping me open up in another language, in two other languages.]*

This openness to and through language is why Roger believes he is completely integrated by the end of his first year in Montreal.

> [C]'est l'intégration; je peux parler à n'importe quelle personne, puis avant je ne pouvais pas faire ça. (Roger 12/175).
>
> *[It's integration; I can speak to anyone, and before I couldn't do that.]*

Integrated is how Roger was viewed by his teachers in the mainstream. Academically he was described by almost all of his secondary 4 teachers as successful and smart. Within the first six weeks of his mainstream year his schedule was rearranged to accommodate his being placed in advanced math and advanced science courses. His science and math teachers said that he asked lots of questions and demonstrated a lot of autonomy. Few comments were made about Roger's linguistic proficiency, suggesting that, at the very least, language learning didn't inhibit Roger's academic progress. By one of his French teachers, he was described as very expressive. Socially, Roger was considered well integrated because he had a Quebecois girlfriend and because he participated in the school talent show (playing the guitar). Overall, Roger was

considered to be well integrated in all areas: socially, linguistically and academically.

While Roger wouldn't disagree with his teachers' assessments, his comments suggest that his academic success comes at something of a cost to his social life. He explains that he spends three to five hours each weeknight and most of Sunday on homework. He says that he studies so hard he feels sometimes like he's suffocating

> Parfois il y a beaucoup de devoirs à faire dans un seul jour. Je me sens parfois étouffé, comme je veux tout faire puis laisser tomber tout ça. Mais je fais pas ça (Roger 26/3).
>
> *[Sometimes there is a lot of homework in one day. I sometimes feel suffocated, like I want to do everything and then just drop everything. But I don't do that.]*

He struggles with what he perceives as a lack of focus and clarity by his French instructor and so regularly seeks out Charlotte for extra help. His *français trait d'union* class is "more serious" but he sees no connection between that course and his regular French course. He finds his math course to be challenging because what is review for his peers is all new to him (because of the poor math instruction he received during his year in *accueil* and because of his being bumped up to a higher level of math mid-term).

Socially, Roger believes life in the mainstream is better because he has more exposure to people who have experience with living in Quebec and speaking French. He describes his social life as being *"un niveau plus haut"* as opposed to *accueil* which he describes as being more like primary school because of its focus on language learning only. Aside from his girlfriend, though, Roger has made few new friends largely because he simply has no time after school and partly because no interaction with his peers is really permitted in his classes. While Roger is not unhappy with his social life, he does wish he had a bit more free time.

As for his linguistic integration, Roger feels that his progress in English during his year in *accueil* was greater than during his mainstream year simply

because he is exposed to less English in the mainstream than he was in *accueil*. He explains:

> [E]n accueil on parlait plus l'anglais que français, . . . [à] cause du fait qu'on savait pas encore le français, et on savait l'anglais déjà. C'est pour ça. Il y a pas d'autre façon de s'exprimer (Roger 26/71-2).
>
> *[In accueil we spoke more English than French. . . . because we didn't know French yet and we already knew English. That's why. There wasn't another way to express ourselves.]*

Less access to English in the mainstream is of relatively little concern to Roger who has very specific plans for his language learning, plans that include not only the mastery of French and English but also Japanese, a language he has been studying on his own. Living in Japan is something of dream for Roger, as he explains:

> La première, j'aime . . . toutes les appareils électroniques. Deuxième j'aime l'architecture. Troisième j'aime la langue. . . .Je suis en train d'apprendre [le japonais] avec des livres, apprendre de parler, de lire, d'écrire, mais un petit peu. (Roger 26/78)
>
> *[First, I like . . . all electronic equipment. Second, I like the architecture. Third, I like the language. . . . I'm learning (Japanese) with books, learning to speak, to read, to write, but just a little.]*

Because of his desire to master three additional languages and one day live in Japan, Roger describes himself as a nomad, incapable of staying too long in one place.

> [J]e ne peux pas rester au Québec. Je suis un nomade, je suis nomade. Je peux pas rester beaucoup de temps dans un même endroit. . . . j'aimerais m'en aller dans une autre place après . . . [au] Japon . . . . C'est pourquoi je ne peux pas rester ici parce que oui c'est bon mais en premier j'aimerais aller dans une ville anglaise, après avoir appris bien le français, pour apprendre vraiment bien l'anglais. Après ça je peux m'en aller. . . . J'aimerais beaucoup aller à Vancouver. Vancouver [ou] Toronto (159-166).
>
> *[I can't stay in Quebec. I'm a nomad, I'm a nomad. I can't stay long in the same place. . . . I'd like to go somewhere else after . . . . to Japan. . . . That's why I can't stay here because yes it's good but first I want to got to an English city to learn English, after having learned French well.*

After that I can go. . . . I'd really like to go to Vancouver. Vancouver (or) Toronto.]

Roger's descriptions of himself as being both fully integrated and nomadic and his expressed desire to be fluently multilingual suggest that he views himself as having a transnational identity, an identity that cuts across linguistic, cultural, national and political boundaries. Integration for Roger seems to be integration into a world without borders, a world in which he is free to be a nomad. His integration into French and Quebec culture via the Montreal school system is but the beginning of what he hopes will be a much larger linguistic and socio-cultural integration into the world. Roger's transnational identity claims raise some important questions about integration at ESM: (a) Does Roger's "nomad" identity claim mean that he is not really an example of successful integration? (b) Does transnationalism challenge the integration agenda of the MEQ? How? (c) Is it possible that the Quebec society is sending mixed messages to its newcomers by embracing the global market while insisting on a national allegiance and identity?

3.6 Synopsis of students' responses to ESM's integration program

Some common themes arise among the five student participants' responses to their mainstream year. Perhaps the most striking is that all of them describe a very limited social life and varying degrees of isolation. None of them participates in any after-school activities and several of them feel they don't have any "real" friends in Montreal. All of them value multilingualism and practice it on a daily basis, but they also all feel disappointed in and frustrated with their French classes (for a variety of reasons) and none sees any value in the *français trait d'union* class.

Other important issues that are raised by these students in this chapter (and touched on again in the next chapter) include the prohibitive cost of summer school courses; the desire for summer jobs but the unlikelihood of getting such jobs given students' linguistic proficiency; the value of a North

American education as recognizable capital in almost all other countries in the world, allowing for post-graduation travel possibilities.

Of course all of the students are likely to change their minds many times about where they want to work and live over the course of their education. However, the students' responses are interesting but not because they suggest any kind of permanent or definitive stance *vis à vis* long-term integration (residence) in Quebec; indeed, I have been arguing that such definitiveness is contrary to the theories of identity construction and integration as dynamic and context-dependent phenomena. Rather, it is the diversity of responses to the school's efforts, both across all five students and within each individual, that sheds light on the nature of integration. The students' diverse responses to their integration into ESM support a view of integration not as a point of arrival in the school community, but as an ongoing, ever-changing process of identity construction which occurs in dialogue with and often against school discourses of homogeneity.

4. Conclusion

One of the purposes of this chapter was to draw attention to the tension between educational policies and philosophies which embrace diversity and an educational system (constrained by schedules, standardized exams, required curricula, etc.) that can only enforce homogeneity. The tension between diversity and homogeneity echoes the tensions described in Chapter 2 between diversity/pluralism and unity/social cohesion.

Perhaps more important than the conflict between the philosophies and practices of the educational system is how that conflict affects newcomer students' educational integration. The views described by the teacher participants in this chapter suggest that the homogenizing discourses of ESM allowed for a kind of double speak in which "autonomy" meant obedience to norms of individual achievement, and in which linguistic proficiency sometimes meant metalinguistic knowledge rather than communicative ability. Teachers, strapped to their curricula by standardized provincial exams (also a way of

assessing teachers) were something like cogs in a machine designed to manufacture students who were all proficient in the same kind of knowledge and the same way of knowing. For some teachers, French was a means to an end, and for others it was the end itself, the subject of study. Integration was the act of moving out of *accueil* and into the mainstream where students were expected to be "autonomous" enough to pass their courses, like everyone else. Most teachers worked hard, stayed after school and expressed a willingness to help any and all students who sought that help.

For the students, integration was about so much more than autonomy; it was about reconstructing themselves, about re-establishing themselves in new relationships and about repositioning themselves *vis à vis* their favourite subjects, their educational paths, their academic performance, and their prior education. Much of what was linguistically, socially and academically valued prior to their immigration remains in the students' countries of origin. For these students, then (and for those discussed in Chapter 6), integration is not just language learning or even just academic success. Rather, it is a recontextualizing of the Self, a reconstruction of one's identity in dialogue with a new social, linguistic, and academic environment. The next chapter, then, explores integration as a redistribution of the Self.

Chapter 8

Recontextualizing newcomers: Integration as Redistribution of the Self

> It's just that it's not ME here. I can't explain to you how I felt, those two weeks back home. I just can't explain to you... It's just a COMPLETELY different world, and you can't recognize me there. (Miglena 46/52)

1. Introduction

This penultimate chapter proposes a view of integration as a complex process of relocation and reconstruction of the self. In contrast with this theory of integration as *recontextualizing the self* are the school's integration practices (described in earlier chapters), which focused almost solely on host language mastery as a prerequisite to accessing mainstream courses and peers. Specifically, this chapter focuses on how language, physical space, and human (social) interaction mediate newcomers' sense of who they are in their host country. As Miglena indicates in the opening quote, relocation can lead to a divided sense of self, a "here" self and a "there" self, leaving this immigrant adolescent with a sense of being "unrecognizable." This chapter begins with a brief discussion of a theory of distributed Self and its relationship to integration and identity. The chapter then discusses data from all of the study's student participants (occasionally drawing on previously used quotes) with a particular focus on how the students' self-descriptions support a view of one's Self (identity) as distributed in the world and a view of integration as a process of recontextualizing that distributed Self.

2. Mirror, Mirror on the wall, tell me who I am here

I would like to begin my discussion by ventriloquating (as Bakhtin says) the voices of my participants. In one voice, I would like to gather the many questions and ideas and images that I have gleaned from my interviews. What I hear them say is this: I am not just the person standing in this school, struggling to express my ideas in French, to my not "real" friends. I am also (or have been,

and don't know if I will be again) a fluent and efficient communicator, a successful student, a close friend, a member of an extended family. I am a dancer, a painter, a musician, an athlete. I am fluently multilingual. Here, in this place, with this language and these people, I am none of those things or only some of them. Much of who I am resides in the mirrors I had to leave behind in my country of origin. So, who am I here without those mirrors? Where do I find or how do I make or choose new mirrors? How do I recontextualize myself?

While these ventriloquated questions are undeniably an interpretation of my participants' experiences of recontextualization, I think they effectively and accurately capture the nature of a distributed Self supported in my data. Before exploring that data, I will briefly discuss the concept of a "distributed Self" which was introduced in Chapter 3 as a form of identity construction. Much has been written on the topic of distributed cognition (Bateson, 1972; Cole & Engström, 1993; Salomon, 1993), situated knowing (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and local knowledge (Geertz, 1973) which, for my purposes, all refer to a similar understanding of "knowing": that is, knowledge as mediated by the context in which the knowing occurs, mediated by such tools as language, computers, books, desks, buildings, bodies of water, and the list could go on. Bateson provides us with a helpful metaphor:

> Suppose I am a blind man, and I use a stick. I go tap, tap, tap. Where do I start? Is my mental system bounded at the hand of the stick? Is it bounded by my skin? Does it start halfway up the stick? Does it start at the tip of the stick? (1972, p. 459 cited in Cole & Engeström, p. 13)

Cole and Engeström (1993) explain that "Analysis of mind's focus must include not only the man and his stick, but his purposes and the environment in which he finds himself" (p. 13). The metaphor of the blind man and his stick helps us understand knowledge as not only mediated by tools (in this case a stick for reading the world) but located beyond the mind and in the context in which the knowing is occurring. As Michael Cole (1991) states, "the borders of the mind cannot reasonably be drawn at the skin" (p. 413). Thus, when I speak of a distributed Self, I am suggesting that Self-knowing always occurs in a particular location and is always mediated by the tools used in that location. Self, as

Bruner (1998) explains (see discussion in Chapter 3), is always negotiated in social practices. It is this dialogue-dependent or transactional nature of Self that allows us to view it as distributed in the world.

Much of my interest in the notion of a distributed Self comes from my participants' being located in two (or more) physical places or contexts (countries) simultaneously. Over there students have different interactions with different people about different activities and different topics than what they experience here. While those students were not physically located in both places simultaneously, psychically they were; that is, their identity referents (friends, family, performance in school, activities) were distributed across both the country of origin and the host society. Thus, the following question arises: when I speak of being distributed am I really just speaking of being distributed between two countries or am I talking about being distributed in language, in space, and in interaction as the title of this chapter suggests? In response, I would like to suggest the following: it is because our understanding of who we are is mediated by language, space and human interaction, that we are distributed across contexts; in other words, when our mediational means (language, space, interlocutors) change we are forced into understanding our Self in a different way, through different lenses or in mirrors[20].

This abstraction matters because it has to do with how we understand the integration of our newcomer youth and what we do, as a result, to and with them in our schools. If we understand that integration is not merely about learning a new language as a way of accessing the mainstream, but about developing a sense of coherence between our emerging identity referents, our new mirrors, and those we remember but left behind, then school programs would be much more oriented toward providing the physical space and human interactions that help students recontextualize themselves in the host culture, that is, help students add to their storyline without losing track of their narrative thus far.

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[20] While lenses and mirrors are distinct metaphors (one filters and the other reflects), I am using them both to refer to the ways in which our self understandings are refracted by and/or reflected in the languages, activities, and people with which we engage.

Suggestions as to how this might occur are discussed in the next and final chapter.

For the remainder of this chapter I will focus on the ways in which the participants described language, physical spaces (and the activities they constrain and afford), and human interactions as their tools for reading the world and themselves in it. While the categories of language, physical space, and human interaction suggest (like most categories) distinct boundaries, this is not the case. As will be evident in the excerpts that follow, the boundaries frequently blur and weave together. They serve this text, therefore, strictly as a broad organizational tool.

3. Self as distributed in language

Depending in part on our proficiency in a language as well as the knowledge and experience we bring to that language and the linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1982) of the language itself, a given language can both help and hinder us in our efforts to say and do certain things. In this section, I look specifically at how my participants described language as a tool for facilitating and/or constraining their integration; that is, as enhancing and/or limiting these newcomers' sense of belonging (recognition) in their host community.

> À travers une journée je parle les trois. Première quand je me reveille je parle espagnol avec ma soeur, avec mes parents. J'arrive ici, je parle l'anglais et le français (Roger 12/130).
>
> *[Within a given day, I speak all three. First when I get up I speak Spanish with my sister, with my parents. I come here, I speak English and French.]*

As described earlier, over half the participants in my study were bi- or multi-lingual before they moved to Quebec and began learning French. For almost all of those students who arrived with only one language, English and French were learned simultaneously. As one participant explained:

> [E]n accueil on parlait plus l'anglais que français, . . . [à] cause du fait qu'on savait pas encore le français, et on savait l'anglais déjà. C'est pour ça. Il y a pas d'autre façon de s'exprimer (Roger 26/71-2).
>
> *[In accueil we spoke more English than French . . . because we didn't yet know French and we already knew English. That's why. There isn't another way to express oneself.]*

Because of the multilingual population at ESM many students also met peers with the same mother tongue. Hence, while multilingualism was not necessarily part of the students' everyday life before they arrived in Quebec, it was soon a daily reality for almost all of them in their new school. Multilingualism was essential because the context demanded it: French and English are both essential for work in Montreal's service industry where many youth find summer employment; mother tongue maintenance is essential for maintaining family ties and contact with friends in the country of origin; and multilingual code switching both in and outside the classroom was the norm among this multicultural and multilingual student population as a whole.

It is important to remember (as was discussed in Chapter 5) that while multilingualism was a reality (and usually a valued one) for most students, it was not supported or reinforced in official school practices. First and foremost, students' access to the mainstream was based primarily on their proficiency in French; so while a student's age and educational path were taken into consideration, generally, promotion from *accueil* into the mainstream depended on students' performance on a provincial French language arts exam. Second, in keeping with the promotion of French as the language of public use, all school business including extra-curricular activities was conducted in French only (although English was occasionally used, informally with parents, if all forms of French communication failed). Third, except for ESL courses, no other languages were taught, and the use of English was discouraged. While multilingualism (and especially bilingualism in English and French) were demanded of students for getting a job and making friends, the school's focus on French as the language of public use and assessment of its students' progress

contributed to a variety of constraints (economic, academic, social and psychological) for the students.

In the following quote, Luis' reference to both English and French as necessary in the work place is an indication that, for some students, access to learning both languages is essential for some aspects of their integration. Anyone who has worked with immigrant families knows of the "Catch 22" in which immigrant parents typically find themselves: because they have not yet learned the host language, they cannot work in jobs that demand use of that language; thus they often find themselves in jobs which isolate them from the mainstream host society and access to the language learning that would allow them to get ahead. For Luis, we see this dilemma arising in part due to his need for two languages:

> Mon problème maintenant c'est que mon français et mon anglais sont pas si bons comme celles de Gil ou de mes amis. Pour moi, trouver un emploi c'est difficile parce que je comprends pas toujours ce que les gens dit quand ils parlent en français ou en anglais (Luis 49/32).
>
> *[My problem now is that my French and my English aren't as good as Gil's or my friends'. It's difficult for me to find a job because I don't always understand what people say when they speak in French or in English.]*

To tie this to Bateson's metaphor of the blind man and the stick, for Luis, the stick is multilingualism, and perhaps more specifically bilingualism in two new languages, English and French. What Luis reads about himself in his multilingual world is that he is unemployable because of his linguistic deficiencies.

Elena, who spoke Punjabi, Hindi, English and some Arabic prior to moving to Quebec expresses frustration with having to learn French in order to access mainstream education.

> I wanted to study French so I could speak . . . but at the same time I wanna continue my education too. I don't like studying French. . . . The first year, I said 'yes I'm gonna put full efforts to my French. I did. I did go through it; but the second year . . . I expect to do French but with my regular studies. . . . It isn't make me possible to do my main education in French. . . . I didn't even do it in my language in my country; I did it in

> English. So I wanna continue in English. You can't change the language totally 'cause it doesn't help me. (Elena 21/3)

John, an aspiring professional musician, cites the school's language policy as the reason his band was not allowed to play a second time at the school's talent show, the activity through which he felt most membership in the school community. Language as a tool for reading the world of the school, in this instance, tells John that his affiliation with English users is not acceptable in official school activities.

> The second time they didn't let us play at the school with our singer. . . . He [an administrator] said because the first time the songs, it was in English and it's a French school. (John 55/52-55)

Finally, Chrissy and Ana offer some insights into the psychological impact of linguistic constraint. Chrissy, held back for a second year of *accueil*, adopts an understanding of herself as unacceptable based on her low proficiency in French. However, Ana, who speaks Hebrew, Russian, English and French, simply admits that she is tired of feeling as though the language in which she speaks most often now doesn't adequately represent her. Her comment suggests that she feels more like an actor delivering a monologue than a person engaging in dialogue.

> Sometimes I'm tired to talk in French, or whatever because it's like... you know that it's not your language. It's like pretending you're something but you're trying to be something else and one day you're just tired, tired to pretend. (Ana 51/3)

The students' expression of feeling left out, isolated, or misrepresented is also found, as is discussed in the next two sections, in their descriptions of changes in the physical spaces, activities, and social interactions that shape their integration landscape.

4. Self as distributed in physical spaces and activities

> Places are important for young people, because these contexts play a large part in constructing and constraining dreams and practices. (Aitken, 2001, p. 20)

As critical geographer Stuart Aitken suggests in the above quote, space is a mediator of human activity and hence, I would add, a mediator of the Self: We are (partly) what we do. In the quotes that follow, several of my research participants describe the ways in which spatial changes associated with their move to Montreal have changed their activities (practices) as well as their rapport with family and friends. In general, the changes described reflect a shift toward *less* activity and increasing isolation, that is, a narrowing of the spaces, people, conversations, and activities to which the students had access.

Miglena, in very general terms, describes how she feels she is straddling two places (here and there) and that, because of this straddling, she is cut off from her "real" friends and the experiences (activities) and memories around which she has built her sense of who she is in the world.

> I love there because I was born there, I have my real, real friends there. I have all these experiences and memories back there (Miglena 36/13).

When I asked Elena to identify some of the most important people and events of her life so far, she adjusted the question to meet her needs, identifying not an event but a place, her family home in India. In describing that home, she emphasizes not just the abundance of space she had there (as opposed to the small apartment in which she lives in Montreal), but the activity, interactions, and privacy that space afforded her. In Montreal those activities and interactions don't occur, in part because the family cannot afford such a large home, but also because, as Elena points out, her now only five-member family would be lost in such a large space.

> It was a BIG HOME, my room, my dancing room, my painting room, I had a room for everything. . . . It's like a house, and then it separates and there's another house but always the food was in one home. . . . and there's big, big noise, because someone's talking to someone, . . . and it's like "HELLO! WHAT HAPPEN WITH YOUR EXAM???" and another one "IT WAS FINE!" When I came over here, forget about getting a home here. . . . They are really expensive, ... Even if you get them, they're not like the ones you have back there, they're very small. So my dad is like "Even if we want to make a home, buy a old

> place and make one, but then it's no use because we're just alone!" (Elena 43/37-38)

Home and the interactions that occur in that home are the mediational tools by which Elena reads her world and herself. In her big home in India, she is a member of a supportive and interested extended family. She is also a painter and a dancer. In her family's much smaller Montreal apartment, however, there are fewer interactions and no room for dancing or painting. Several mediational tools have been lost and, as a result, several dialogues have ended for Elena.

Later in the same interview, Elena more pointedly describes how the shift from a large home to a small one has affected not only her desire and ability to paint, but her rapport with her parents. In the end, it seems that it is only to minimize her parents' concern for her that Elena picks up her brushes, an activity she feels no longer serves as the tool of expression it once did:

> I wasn't painting since a long, long time and then my dad's like, "what's wrong with you, you're not painting?" . . . . Before I tried painting but I throw my brush again, because it's the same place! I used to start yelling that I don't have place because I'm used to my painting room, I throw my colour over here, over there, no problem. . . . . But then I realised that I'm bugging my parents more by saying that I don't have space. It makes my dad feel even more bad, that ok, we didn't get a big home so he's bugged. . . . . [So] I started painting the same way I used to. . . . [My dad's] happy, he sees that I'm getting through it. Though sometimes, I'm not really to it, because it's not the same place, it's not the same room. (Elena 43/ 48)

John also identifies a change of homes as affecting his artistic expression. For John, the difference has to do not with the size of his home, but the attitudes of his apartment complex neighbors. In Peru, sharing space in an apartment complex meant putting up with electric guitar at all hours. In Montreal, however, he explains that by 5 p.m. he has to reduce his volume and by 10 p.m. he has to stop playing altogether:

> Por ejemplo acqui cuando quiero tocar la guitara en mi casa, puedo tocar tranquilo con volumen alto hasta las 5:00 de la tarde, el volumen mas o menos hasta las 8:00, el volumen bajo hasta las 10:00, y yo no puedo tocar. Alla puedo tocar hasta las 1:00 de la mañana sin problema, la

> gente no dice nada, no esta encombrada, no hay problema alla (John 7/100).
>
> *[For example, here, I can play the guitar with the volume high without any hassles until about 5:00 in the afternoon, with the volume more or less high until 8:00, with the volume low until 10:00 and then I can't play anymore. Over there, I could play until 1:00 in the morning; nobody would say anything, nobody was bothered (put out?) by it, there's no problem there.]*

While John may have, as he implies in later interviews, *more* opportunity in North America to achieve professional status musically, his artistic expression and development (like those of Elena) are limited in important ways because of the spaces he inhabits. As an aside, it is important to note that neither John nor Elena were given the space or the time at school to continue developing this aspect of themselves.

For Luis, distance between important places in Montreal constrains both his physical activity and social interactions. In Peru, almost immediate access to a soccer field behind his home meant easy and frequent pick-up soccer games, games which were both facilitated by and a facilitator of a large group of friends. In Montreal, though, Luis lives 40 minutes away from the closest soccer field (at school). Despite Luis' efforts to get his friends interested both in soccer (for which they are too few to make teams) and in early morning physical fitness, no one seems interested (including Luis, in the end). The result (evident in more than one interview) is that Luis feels not only completely inactive but also socially isolated, and this despite the fact that he was integrated into the mainstream for his second academic year:

> Par exemple j'ai des amis ici, mais, on a rien à faire ici. Comme si on va jouer au soccer mais on est seulement 4 ou 5. Au Pérou avec mes amis des fois on était presque 30. On dit on va jouer au soccer, ok va jouer au soccer, on a 4 équipes, on joue 15 minutes chacun (Luis 49/104).
>
> *[For example I have friends here but we don't have anything to do here. Like if we go play soccer but there are only 4 or 5 of us. In Peru with my friends sometimes there were 30 of us. We would say we're going to play soccer, okay play soccer. We would have four teams; we would play 15 minutes each.]*

Au Pérou si je sors chez-moi, ah, je sais, mes amis vont être là. Après ça si je veux jouer au soccer, c'est derrière chez-moi. Il y a un *soccer field.* . . . Un terrain de soccer. Eh, c'est ça. Ici, si je veux aller voir un de mes amis je dois lui appeler et dire, eh où on se retrouve, et après où on va aller. Et pour trouver un terrain de soccer on doit venir ici à l'école. On doit attendre l'autobus, si je viens, si je marche de chez-moi jusqu'ici ça me prend quarante minutes. Et je viens tout fatigué, je veux plus jouer. . . . [A]u Pérou, je sais, quand c'était l'été je me réveillais à 4, 5 heures du matin, pour aller appeler mes amis et aller courir seulement, de chez-nous jusqu'à, je sais pas. . . . On (s'entraînait à 5 heures du matin). . . . Mais ici, une fois j'ai essayé de le dire à, et "on s'entraîne à 5 heures du matin, on se retrouve ici et on court jusqu'à, je sais pas au moins . . . d'une station de métro, à l'autre." "Non, parce que j'habite trop loin, non parce que je vais être fatigué, non j'aime pas ça" (Luis 49/ 119-123).

[In Peru when I leave my house, ah I know my friends will be there. After that if I want to play soccer, it's right behind my house. There's a soccer field . . . a soccer field. That's right. Here if I want to go see one of my friends, I have to call him and say where we'll meet, after where we'll go. And to find a soccer field we have to come here to the school. We have to wait for the bus, if I come, if I walk from my house to here it takes me 40 minutes. And I arrive really tired, I don't want to play anymore. . . . In Peru, I know when it was summer I would get up at 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning to go call my friends and simply go running from my place to I don't know. . . . But here, once I tried to say that to, "we'll train at 5:00 in the morning, we'll meet here and run to I don't know where but at least from one metro station to the next." "No, because I live to far, no because I'm going to be too tired, no I don't like that."]

So far, I have explored the ways in which I see my participants describing their sense of self as mediated by and distributed in language and space. Students are linguistically assessed and located (both physically and academically) in the school. These locations serve as one set of mediational identity tags which provide the students with particular kinds of information and images about who they are in their new context. Another set of tags, comes from the spaces provided (or not), both within the school and beyond, for the activities and interactions that the students associate with themselves. These new mirrors, then, provide the students with new information about themselves that is in constant dialogue with who the students understood themselves to be in the world before they moved to Montreal. Am I proficient or deficient? Am I a

slow learner or a good student? Am I marginal or normal? Am I a friend or just an acquaintance? Am I a painter? A musician? Am I physically fit or inactive?

As is evident in the previous discussion of spatial and linguistic distributions of the Self (and as I suggested in the chapter's introduction) these aspects of identity formation are not mutually exclusive categories functioning side-by-side. Rather, we see in the examples provided how language, activity, space and human relations interact so that a large home is both what allows daily contact with extended family, and is only necessary (desirable) when one has extended family. Access to a soccer field facilitates the development and maintenance of friendship groups, but without a large number of friends, one can't really play soccer even if the field is close by. Multilingualism is essential in the development of friends, but French is the language by which students are assessed academically and which allows them access to same-age peers where friendships (and with them, language) are most likely to develop. In many ways, human interaction has already been discussed as one of the ways in which students' sense of self is mediated and distributed. What follows in the next section, then, can be considered an extension of that discussion in which I will focus more pointedly on how my participants understood themselves in dialogue with others.

5. The Self as distributed in human relations

> [A]n utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication, and it cannot be broken off from the preceding links that determine it both from within and from without, giving rise within it to unmediated responsive reactions and dialogic reverberations (Bakhtin 1986, p. 94).

As was discussed in Chapter 3, Taylor (1998) draws on the work of Bakhtin to explain identity construction as "dialogical" and negotiated within the context of shared agency, that is, we understand ourselves always as "integrally part of a 'we'" (p. 311). He explains that this construction occurs in part through the internalizing of our *conversations* with others, that is, "the interanimation of [our own and their] voices." Taylor provides the example of internalizing conversations with parents (or other significant others) to explain an aspect of

dialogical identity construction. He states that even when such people have gone from our lives, "the conversation with them continues within us for as long as we live" (p 33).

While Taylor quote draws attention to the power and persistence of internalized conversations, he doesn't necessarily speak to the ways in which those ongoing and developing conversations can be altered or interrupted or silenced. Central to the uniqueness of the identity constructions of these young newcomers is that dialogues with family members and friends who remain in their country of origin are suddenly ruptured. While e-mail, phone calls, and a trip "home" for some, provided some contact, financial constraints as well as the distance of time, space, and context altered these conversations with significant others and left many of the participants with a feeling of being fully located neither in Montreal nor in the country of origin.

For half of the study's participants, one parent remained in the country of origin and was thus mostly absent from the daily conversation of the participant's life. Not only did the dialogues with the absent parent change, they also changed with the parents who accompanied their children. Altered by the changes in their own social, professional, and personal landscape, these parents necessarily interacted differently with their children. While the participants were somewhat sheltered from concerns about money, health and household chores in their country of origin, in the host society -- where the parents' support network was diminished or absent -- the children became aware of those concerns and were expected to assume more of the household responsibilities. As was mentioned in previous chapters, Chrissy worked 30 hours per week in her parents' convenience store both to keep her mother (for whose safety she was worried at night) company, and to ease the financial concerns that would arise if she were replaced by a paid employee. Li, who acts as the translator for his father during doctor appointments, also notes that he never had to think about money in China because his parents always provided him with what he wanted or needed. Now in Quebec, he has to work after school and weekends to support himself and save money to bring his mother over to join the rest of the family.

Elena, who also serves as her mother's translator, worries constantly about both of her parents' chronic health problems and her father's struggle to reestablish himself professionally. She also knows that when she worries, they worry; so she maintains a façade, to the extent that she can, for them:

> I never cry in front of them like I used to do. Because I know my dad loses confidence and I have to be supportive of them. Even if I wanna cry, I just go away, somewhere apart . . . or I go to the church or somewhere where I could cry, where they can't hear me. It helps. Before, I was doing that in front of them but I realised that it's a mistake, a big mistake. And though sometimes I don't wanna be happy, I wanna go back BADLY, I keep on telling them "I'm perfectly all right over here. And I'm gonna be fine." I keep on telling that to myself and make it happy but there are days where you just can't. (Elena 43/38p22)

Miglena, whose mother suffered from cancer soon after arriving in Quebec, worries about how hard her mother works to support the family:

> But it's difficult and my mother, she so tired. But I mean me and my sister we are very afraid of [for] her because she works too hard, and she had this eh . . . cancer, and it could come every, it could come back (Miglena 25/p14).

Ana and Chrissy both say that because their fathers work so hard they rarely ever see or speak to them anymore. The frequency and content of the parent-child conversations has changed, changing also the ways in which the participants view themselves in the world.

Of course, parents are not the only significant others in the participants' lives. Extended family members as well as old friendships and new peers also shape the participants' changing sense of self in the world. According to Taylor (1998), this identity-shaping dialogue occurs both overtly in "public" conversations and in the "private" internalizing of those conversations; and, therefore, he suggests that *recognition* is fundamental to the ways in which individuals negotiate their identities between these public and private spheres or conversations. Recognition (or *mis*recognition) is in a sense the other side of the dialogues an individual actor engages in, the mirrors which reflect back to the individual an image of who he/she is in the eyes of the target group or community. What follows in the quotes below are examples of the ways in

which students struggle to find that recognition among their peers, in their conversations, in developing friendships, and in relocated-family ties.

Perhaps the most successful (and blatant) example of peer recognition in the study is that of John who explains the impact of his musical performance at the school talent show:

> The third time we played we were the best. . . . Like the people like … Oh yeah, you were good today! [Clapping hands] Walking, the (girls) like yeah, John. . . . People are crazy. When I come to school, rock star ... *check le*! It's cool! [Laughing] . . . . Yeah, like everyone knows me here, like "oh yeah, yeah, yeah, the drummer," you know (John 55/ 67-70).

In this example, John's identity is shaped in dialogue with his peers, that is, together they have created a mutually valued image of John. Through peer interaction he has gained recognition as "the musician."

Whereas John seems satisfied with achieving a "musician" identity tag, Dani distinguishes this more public recognition from that of "true" friends whom he locates in his country of origin. While Dani has made friends in Montreal, they are not friends he feels he can trust, not like his friends in Lebanon whom he thinks of as brothers.

> Mes amis, mais ils ne sont pas ici, [ils sont] au Liban. . . . C'est comme des frères maintenant . . . je parle toujours au téléphone ou MSN; chaque fois j'appelle, ils m'appellent. Au Liban je sortais toujours avec eux, n'importe où on sort ensemble, on vit ensemble, on va ensemble, même depuis qu'on est, 10 ans je sais pas, 5 ans, quelque chose comme ça. C'est vraiment difficile [rire]. . . .Ils sait comme, tous les choses comme moi aussi, moi je sais tous les choses sur eux, toutes sortes de choses, des bons amis comme des frères, depuis 5 ans, c'est ça. . . . Ici, on peut pas faire confiance à personne ici (Dani 44/238 – 40).
>
> *[My friends, but they aren't here. They're in Lebanon. . . . They're like brothers now. I speak to them on the phone or on MSN. Each time I call, they call. In Lebanon I would always go out with them anywhere. We went out together, we lived together, we went together, for 10 years, 5 years, I don't know something like that. It's really difficult [laugh]. . . . They know like, everything like me too, I also know everything about them. Good friends, like brothers for 5 years. . . . Here, you can't trust anyone here.]*

Without the shared experiences and the trust developed over a long period of time, the friendships Dani has managed to develop in Montreal offer him a very different stick (to use Bateson's metaphor) with which to feel his world and his place in it. In this world, he feels he must trust less and share less. In the world of ESM, Dani doesn't feel he has real friends who know "everything" about him and who recognize him (mirror back to him) as the person he came to know himself to be with his brother-friends in Lebanon.

Like Dani, Miglena continues to identify her "real" friends as those with whom she has grown up and shared and developed a history. For Miglena (as was described in Chapter 6), those "real" friends are members of a long and ongoing conversation in which she locates her own story, her narrative or biographical identity. The stories and experiences shared with her longtime Bulgarian friends are, as she says, "things you can't share with somebody else who weren't there"(Miglena 36/15). In a later interview Miglena explains that these friendship conversations are embedded in other conversations located in the larger Bulgarian culture, casual conversations with mere acquaintances who touch on topics she has found inaccessible or simply absent from her life in Montreal. Without these conversations, the tool by which Miglena reads her world, Miglena explains that she forgets who she is, a dialogue gone monologue.

> You can't imagine the conversations that I had with people these two weeks [in Bulgaria]. I was like "I forget what kind of people they're here!" I told you once, here it's only clothes, music, but THERE, you speak more deeply about things, like . . . other level of mind. . . . Here I forget. I don't know how to express. I forget, uh, what is in me, the other way I can think of because I don't have the people here for these conversations, except my mother. (Miglena 46/R110-122)

Elena anticipated the maintenance of some of these grounding conversations when she thought of the members of her extended family who either had already moved or would eventually move to Canada. However, in what follows, she explains that the physical and social environment in which these family

members find themselves, changes them and, therefore, changes her conversations with them.

> We thought . . . in Canada we have a lot of relatives; they're gonna come over here, [and] it's gonna be the same. But [sighing] it's not the same country, it's not the same place, it's, NOT the same people! Probably it's the same old aunt of mine, . . . who was perfectly fine with us five years ago. And now when I see her, I mean, she's totally changed! (Elena 43/R19)

Throughout the study, Luis sought to maintain (as did most of the participants) conversations with key friends and family in his country of origin via the internet and phone. Indeed, the computer becomes the location, the physical space of those interactions for Luis (so much so that in another part of the interview he describes fighting with his brother, John, for computer time). The narrowing of Luis' social interaction from a soccer field to a computer terminal is translated into social and physical inactivity and a general sense of unhappiness.

> Malheureusement je suis pas si content de ici. C'est parce que par exemple, le vendredi, samedi, j'ai rien à faire. Je reste chez moi, des fois devant l'ordinateur pour voir si mon père est là ou mes amis. Mais au Pérou, parce que je faisais le vendredi, samedi, c'était sorties avec mes amis, jouer au soccer,. . . j'étais plus content là. (Luis 49/102)
>
> *[Unfortunately I'm not very happy here. It's because, for example, Friday, Saturday I have nothing to do. I stay home, sometimes in front of the computer to see if my dad is there, or my friends. But in Peru, because on Friday, Saturday, I was doing, going out with my friends to play soccer . . . I was happier there.]*

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I proposed recontextualization as a way of understanding the integration processes of my study's principal participants. I argued that the students' experiences supported a view of integration as a process of reconstructing one's identity, an identity that develops through images one receives of oneself via use of particular languages, engagement in particular activities, and in interactions with particular people. This interactive or dialogic nature of identity construction supports a view of the Self as distributed in the

world. By locating one's identity in the world beyond the physical body, integration can be understood as a process of relocation, reconstruction and redistribution of the Self.

For some of the students in this study, much of their sense of identity remained in their country of origin where relatives, "real" friends, particular activities and languages were essential dialogue partners. In the absence of those particular dialogues, certain newcomers struggled with a sense of dislocation in which they were physically located in the host country but dialogically located in the people, places, activities, and languages of their country of origin. In their attempts to relocate themselves, the newcomers attempted to create the same or similar dialogues with different people, under different circumstances and in new places. However, the same dialogues weren't possible. Miglena couldn't find any real friends to engage in philosophical conversations; Elena couldn't get inspired to paint; Luis couldn't find enough friends for an after-school soccer game; Christian simply couldn't imagine settling in Quebec. All of them were looking for elements of their Selves that remained (dialogically) in their place of origin. What they seemed to want (and what some of them got, to varying degrees) was recognition or acknowledgement of their linguistic, academic and social characteristics, acknowledgement that they were and are legitimate speakers of legitimate languages, legitimate students from legitimate educational systems, legitimate social beings with close friends and important family ties. Dani made Arabic-speaking friends; Roger developed a relationship with a Quebecois girlfriend; Christian proved himself to be a serious and dedicated student; and John established himself as a musician.

However, when recognition failed and legitimacy was not granted, some of the students adopted a negative and destructive self-image. Chrissy believed she was stupid; Miglena, Ashel and Elena all became depressed; Luis described himself as isolated and inactive. Nonetheless, some of those same participants also resisted the school's misrecognition. Elena dropped out of ESM and enrolled in an English cégep; Luis focussed his attention on only certain courses with an eye to completing his secondary diploma in an English adult school;

Dani refused to study; Ana and Miglena studied only minimally. An exception to such resistance was Roger, who seemed to struggle relatively little with his relocation. Academically he excelled and was recognized as a very good student. Linguistically he performed well enough to avoid comments or criticisms from his teachers; and socially he was viewed as totally integrated because he had a Quebecois girlfriend. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, Roger viewed himself as integrated and described his integration as an opening up through French and English. Roger, unlike all of the other participants, expressed a strong desire to be in Montreal and no sense of loss in the absence of ties to his country of origin (Mexico). Therefore, it seems that Roger came to his host culture ready to find new dialogue partners and didn't seem to need as much recognition of who he knew himself to be in Mexico. Rather, he seemed keen to start a new narrative in Montreal, a narrative that granted him legitimacy as an excellent student, an adequate speaker of French, and a socially well-adapted young man.

Nevertheless, despite Roger's exceptional attitude toward and apparent success with his relocation to Montreal, his experiences at ESM support a view of identity as dialogical and distributed. His experiences also support an understanding of integration as the reconstruction of identity dialogues, dialogues which seem to rely on recognition. In the absence of recognition is the dialogue gone monologue, a sense of loss and isolation. Whether that recognition which allows for the redistribution of the Self comes in the form of particular activities, use of particular languages, and/or particular kinds of social interactions, the overall message of most of the participants is similar to the following: I can know myself only if you recognize me. I am me only in dialogue. Many of my former dialogues are now monologues. As a result, here, I am a narrow version of my former self.

How can newcomer-receiving schools counter this phenomenon of the narrowing Self? How can we as educators and researchers provide better tools for students to find or create more positive identity reconstructions in their new context? The next and final chapter discusses some of the ways schools might

facilitate newcomer students' Self relocation and Self reconstruction through more recognition.

Chapter 9

Conclusion:
Identity reconstruction and implications for educational integration

As the title of this concluding chapter suggests, I focus here on the implications of my study for both research and practice in the area of educational integration. I begin the chapter with a discussion which brings together key points, arguments, and concerns touched on in previous chapters. I then address each of the research questions delineated in Chapters 1 and 4. In addressing the last of those questions, I discuss the pedagogical implications of the study specifically for the context in which the study took place: ESM. Finally, I conclude with suggestions for studies which might investigate the many questions this study raises.

1. Synopsis and discussion

If I am an integrator, what does it mean to integrate? This question, asked in the last vignette which introduced this dissertation (p. 1), launched the study you have just read. Asked from the position of a host language teacher, the question attempts to locate integration less in school curricula/programs and more in the experiences of newcomers. As a host language teacher in California, I was charged with preparing my students for the mainstream, preparing them to meet the demands of the school system, to get a diploma, to find a job, to fit into their host society. How much language does it take to fit in? Fit into what? I had been a newcomer in France and Mexico, and I knew that fitting in involved much more than learning a language.

However, language is a socio-political flashpoint in California where the Spanish of a growing Mexican-immigrant population has been identified as a threat to English, the language invested with the powers of social cohesion in America's melting pot. The English language, therefore, was and is the symbol of America, the protector of national unity, and the measure of newcomer integration. Hidden behind this symbol, this language, however, were the complexities of my newcomer students' integration, complexities that could

never be addressed by language learning alone. For the school, integration was embedded (or buried and, thus, oversimplified) in host-language learning. For my students, it was the other way around: the host language was embedded in, and just one part of, their integration.

In Quebec, I encountered similar assumptions about the central role of host-language learning in newcomer integration. For reasons similar to those identified in California, French was and is a socio-political flashpoint in Quebec; it is a symbol of Quebec's identity as a distinct society, the protector of social unity. However, as a minority language in an English-dominant North America, French faces a more difficult challenge: it must promote and protect the French-fact of Quebec's distinct society while embracing the linguistic and cultural pluralism of its much-needed immigrant population. Furthermore, French has been charged with bridging this distance between commonality and plurality in competition with English, currently the most internationally valued language.

In Quebec's language and education policies, this seemingly irreconcilable conflict between commonality and plurality is smoothed over with a discourse of ambiguity. However, in the everyday reality of newcomer integration in Quebec's schools, such policy ambiguity does not easily translate into educational practice. It is in the context of those educational practices that I sought to understand what it means to integrate in one of Quebec's schools.

The literature on educational integration in Quebec's schools describes integration as much more complex than host-language learning. These studies (discussed in Chapter 2) identify several problems with current integration programs in Quebec's schools, problems which include the following: schools fail to be as inclusive, flexible, and open as they need to be; older adolescents too frequently experience educational delay; and teachers are ill-prepared to recognize and respond to the cultural and linguistic diversity of their students.

In introducing the theoretical lens which frames my study of integration, I suggest that the problems associated with newcomer integration in schools are first about how integration has been theorized and conceptualized by policy makers and educators. Current integration policies and programs in schools

seem to conceptualize integration as a process of adaptation to and adoption of the host society's linguistic and social norms. Thus, integration both in policy and in practice seems to focus on the host language and society as the location or destination of integration rather than locating integration in the newcomers who are doing the integrating. Newcomers are, thus, the objects of integration rather than the subjects.

By contrast, in this dissertation I have attempted to conceptualize integration as identity construction. In so doing, I place newcomers in the subject position, the subjects of a physical relocation which demands a psychic redistribution of one's identity (Self) into the new language(s), activities and social interactions of the host society. From within this theoretical framework, then, integration is conceptualized as a process of identity re-construction. By exploring adolescent newcomers as the subjects of this broader understanding of integration in a francophone secondary school, the study reveals a conceptual blind spot in current integration policies and school programs. Those policies and programs treat host-language learning as a technical skill that should come first in a linear sequence of integration. I am proposing, and my data support, a view of integration as not linear and not driven or preceded by host-language learning. Rather, the data in this study support a view of host-language learning as embedded in the process of reinventing oneself. By separating host-language learning and newcomers from the mainstream program, ESM's integration programs turn French into just another subject (at best) and a barrier to participation in the school community (at worst). Rather than being a means for newcomers to make sense of their new lives, French becomes an obstacle to that meaning-making.

Using an understanding of discourses as "the ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking . . . accepted as instantiations of particular roles . . . by specific groups of people" (Gee, 1996, p. viii), the study discusses the various school discourses which label and limit newcomer students. Broadly and for organizational purposes only, I separate here these

school discourses into three overlapping categories: linguistic, academic, and social.

The linguistic discourses of ESM include the school's recognition of French as the only institutionally sanctioned and valued language. French is the only language of school business, of classroom instruction, of extra-curricular activities. There are no clubs or classes (other than the required ESL classes) which use a language other than French. Furthermore, it is only after proving their proficiency in French that newcomers are allowed access to mainstream courses. (Thus, it is somewhat ironic that ESM offers no intensive French language courses for newcomers over the summer months.) Through ESM's French-centric discourses, newcomers come to understand themselves in the official school context as linguistically deficient and thus both academically and socially incapable of performing well in the mainstream. This deficiency message, however, is challenged by the multilingual reality of ESM's student population and the bilingual demands of the Montreal workforce.

Academically, ESM offers no extra support to newcomers outside of the *accueil* program. Partial integration, offered only to older students and only midway through the academic year, practically ensures failure for newcomers' first academic endeavors in the mainstream. Expected to catch up on the first semester's materials while learning the second semester's material, *accueil* students in the partial integration program find themselves at a linguistic and academic disadvantage when compared with their mainstream peers. Further hindering newcomers' integration once they are fully mainstreamed is a supplemental French course (*français trait d'union*) which has become a remedial French course for all students, rather than a course specifically designed to meet the needs of newly mainstreamed language learners. For some newcomers this course was simply not useful, a waste of time; for others it was the course that prohibited their enrolment in elective courses that interested them, such as music. To overcome the lack of linguistic and academic support they receive in the mainstream, newcomers are expected (according to school discourses) to be "autonomous" by asking questions in class, getting extra help

after school from the teacher, by attending regularly, and doing all their homework. For those who are not adequately autonomous and who fail a course or two, summer school is available, in principle; but for students whose families cannot afford the $300 fees, summer school is not an option.

Socially, students are on their own at ESM. *Accueil* students are isolated from their mainstream peers through separate courses and separate school-wide excursions (in which *accueil* students are combined with students in the *adaptation scolaire* program). While newcomers are presumably welcome in any and all extra-curricular clubs and sports activities, their participation depends on their taking the initiative in a context from which they have previously been excluded. Overall, the discursive messages of ESM suggest that newcomers should adapt to its social, linguistic and academic norms; and they should do so of their own volition and with little or no institutional support.

From within an understanding of integration as the adaptation to and adoption of social and linguistic norms, therefore, ESM focuses integration programs on making sure newcomers are aware of those social, academic, and linguistic norms as the measure of newcomer success. Not surprisingly, French is promoted as both the tool for achieving those norms and as a norm (perhaps the most important one) unto itself. It is ironic, then, that the French language is so consistently perceived by the participants as a barrier to their participation in the mainstream.

However, ESM's French-centric integration practices are not surprising given the ubiquity of English and the political, economic, and cultural dominance of English-speaking North America. It is equally ironic and even more detrimental, then, that as a product of the standardizing imperative of most North American educational systems, ESM also promotes homogeneity by failing to recognize and legitimate its culturally and linguistically diverse population. The detriment, here, resides not only in ESM's exclusive rather than inclusive stance toward cultural and linguistic diversity, but in the rejection of French by newcomers who associate this host language with their own alienation and exclusion.

2. Responses to this study's questions

I turn now to those three questions that I posed at the beginning of this dissertation and which guided my study:

- How is integration experienced by adolescent newcomers in a francophone school in Montreal?
- How do these students' experiences inform our understanding of the relationships among host (second) language learning and teaching, integration, and identity construction?
- What are the implications of these newcomer students' integration experiences for the educational theories, policies and programs and practices that target such newcomers?

In response to the first question, my data suggest that in matters of newcomer integration, institutional discourses have the upper hand. Students are not empowered to engage in dialogue with the discourses that shape their experiences in schools. Integration is not really a two-way street (as policy suggests) in the day-to-day workings of the school. Thus, the constraints that students experience socially and academically are only aggravated by the fact that they can't talk back or resist in any meaningful way. Most cannot officially gain linguistic, academic, or social recognition of who they are and have been. As objects rather than subjects of integration, their background is of little concern within the specific socializing goals of ESM. Rather, ESM focuses on what it looks like to be integrated (the mythical point of arrival) and what kinds of programs should be in place to maintain the norms of that integration. However, the students don't experience the ESM integration programs as facilitating their participation in the mainstream and they don't experience the mainstream as the completion of their integration. They continue to struggle socially, linguistically, and academically. Even those students who were recognized by the school discourses as most successful had to work hard to achieve that institutional legitimacy, to gain that recognition. For most of the

students, achieving recognition and legitimacy and institutionally sanctioned success was generally elusive. Rather than feeling that they were adding to their social, academic, and linguistic repertoire by learning French and living in Montreal, most of the participants felt that their place in the world had narrowed, that they had become more constrained and limited.

Therefore, in response to the second of my study's guiding questions (how students' experiences inform our understanding of the relationships among host-language learning, integration, and identity construction), the newcomer participants' experiences suggest that host-language learning does not, by itself, produce successful academic, social, or linguistic integration. On the contrary, when integration programs and practices focus on host-language learning as a prerequisite to (and sole tool for) integration, the host language can be experienced as a barrier to newcomers' sense of recognition and belonging. With host-language learning as a gatekeeper (rather than a gateway) for participation in the mainstream, newcomers experience that language as inhibiting participation in the school community and inhibiting their engagement in the activities and social interactions that facilitate a reconstruction of their Self in the host society. By conceptualizing integration as a process of identity reconstruction and thus situating newcomers as the subjects of that process, we can understand host-language learning as embedded in and not a precursor to that reconstruction.

The above response to my second research question also responds to the first part of my final question: What are the implications of these newcomer students' integration experiences for the educational theories that target such newcomers? When integration is theorized as identity reconstruction, host-language learning becomes a tool embedded in that reconstruction rather than a precursor to it. I would like to return, here, to the participation metaphor to which Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) refer in their exploration of immigrant autobiographies (see Chapter 3). The authors draw on the work of Sfard (1998) to offer a different lens through which researchers might broaden their understanding of host-language learning and teaching. They suggest that host-

language learning, when understood as self-translation, allows us to view host-language learning as something other than language acquisition, whereby language (and knowledge, generally) are thought of as "a commodity that is accumulated by the learner" (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000, p. 155). Contrasted with this acquisition metaphor, Sfard's participation metaphor forces us to understand host-language learning as integral to "becoming a member of a certain community" (ibid.). Drawing on a social constructionist framework, Pavlenko and Lantolf explain that while the acquisition metaphor helps host-language learning researchers address "the study of the *what* in SLA . . . [the participation metaphor] stresses contextualization and engagement with others... in its attempt to investigate the *how*" (p. 156). The shift in metaphors (from acquisition to participation) extends the authors' argument to signal a shift in SLA research paradigms, away from a view of language as a tool or skill and the mind as a container, and toward a view of language learning as "doing," "knowing," and "becoming" (ibid.). While this social constructionist stance is relatively new in the study of host-language learning (Pavlenko, 2002, suggests it only began to appear in the SLA literature in 1995), it is a paradigm whose benefits are borne out in the work of numerous well-known language education researchers. (See Pavlenko, 2002, for a discussion of these benefits and the research that supports them. See also Chapter 3).

It is within this same social constructionist paradigm that I have investigated how newcomer adolescents "translate" themselves in the context of host-language learning. Central to my study of this translation was my understanding of integration as the process of identity reconstruction. My data support a view of this identity reconstruction as something like a dialogue between individual newcomers and the school discourses that categorize them. However, my data also suggest that institutional discourses most often have the upper hand in this "site of struggle" (Peirce, 1995) for identity. Thus, while newcomers might display some individual agency in their acts of resistance against these discourses, those acts of resistance do little (or nothing) to challenge or change the homogenizing discourses which deny or ignore

students' identity claims. Worse still are those instances when students internalize those institutional labels as legitimate identity tags for themselves. The tension between institutional discourses and host language learners' identity claims has been well documented in studies I have discussed particularly in Chapter 3. My study adds to that theoretical discussion by reconceptualizing integration as the re-distribution of one's self in the world, the relocation of one's dialogues and activities that serve as identity mirrors. When theorized as Self redistribution, integration looks much more like participation in a host community and less like the adoption of the linguistic and social norms of that community. Furthermore, my study supports a view of host-language learning as being in conflict with rather than facilitating the integration of newcomers when that host language is used as a gatekeeper to participation in the host community. Therefore, rather than attending to the acquisition of language (as a discrete system, or even as a form of capital as it is theorized by Bourdieu and others), host-language learning researchers and educators, I am arguing, should focus on language not as something we obtain in order to gain membership in a given community, but as something we learn and use partly as a result of being included in a particular linguistic community. It is through an emphasis on participation and inclusion that newcomers are likely to develop new relationships and engage in new activities that allow for the redistribution of their identity (Self) into the host community. When host-language learning rather than participation becomes the focus of newcomer integration, those newcomers can end up feeling alienated and excluded not only from the host community but from the host language itself.

In response to the policy portion of my final question (the implications of students' integration experiences for educational policy), it is important to note that, while I have suggested that integration policy might better reflect integration realities in schools by reconceptualizing integration as a non-linear process of identity construction, my primary purpose here is not to advise the Quebec government on integration policy. However, to the extent that educational policy informs educational programs and practices,

recommendations for changes to practice necessarily have implications for changes to policy. As for the implications of this study for school programs and practices, it is also not my intention to offer recommendations for all Montreal schools. Rather, my study's participants have spoken out of a specific school context, and it is to that context that I now address the following thoughts and suggestions.

3. Recommendations for ESM: Implications for educational practices

As I explained earlier in this chapter, one of the most striking findings of this study was that the newcomer participants consistently viewed French (the subject and the gatekeeper) as getting in the way of rather than facilitating their academic, social and even linguistic integration. I have argued that this particular finding is important not only because it suggests that ESM's host-language learning-based integration programs are limited in their effectiveness, but also because French, as a minority language in North America, cannot risk alienating the immigrant population on which it partly depends for its maintenance as the official and dominant language of Quebec. The following suggestions, therefore, have as much to do with promoting French in Quebec as with providing newcomers with the activities, social interactions, and pedagogical support they need for a sense of inclusion, worth, and recognition in their host society and school community.

First, French-host-language instruction might be more effective for all parties if it were embedded in rather than a precursor to newcomer students' participation in the mainstream. Academically, such a repositioning of host-language learning does not necessarily mean the elimination of *accueil* programs. Newcomers can be provided intensive language instruction through *accueil* while also participating in mainstream instruction. Participation in mainstream courses could be limited to less academically demanding courses such as physical education and arts. It could also, ideally, include a core-subject course in the mainstream, a course subject in which the newcomer has proven to be especially strong in his/her country of origin. Prior knowledge in a carefully

selected mainstream subject could, with proper support from the mainstream teacher, provide newcomers with a kind of academic success and legitimacy that is absent in the *accueil* program. Furthermore, to avoid creating a sense of academic failure, newcomers should not be integrated (as they have been) in mainstream courses half-way through the academic year. The current *intégration partielle* program may initially serve to motivate newcomers who are desperate for academic legitimacy and recognition; but that motivation is likely to disappear when newcomers find themselves faced with a year's worth of physics (for example) to be mastered in half the time allotted to their mainstream peers. Instead, partial integration should occur at the beginning of the school year so that newcomers have all the same advantages as their mainstream peers.

Moreover, once enrolled in any mainstream courses, newcomers would ideally be provided with ongoing linguistic and academic support. While most of ESM's mainstream teachers offer after-school support for all of their students, another form of support (such as peer tutorials) might be made available for students who find a particular teacher confusing, intimidating, or simply not available. Charlotte's unofficial role as liaison between her newly mainstreamed students and their mainstream teachers is evidence both of the support that newcomer students continue to need once mainstreamed, and of the value of communication between the mainstream and *accueil* teachers who function in somewhat separate worlds and segregated programs. Furthermore, by embedding host-language learning in mainstream courses through various forms of partial integration, responsibility for and awareness of newcomers' integration processes are distributed across the teaching staff and student body. Buddy programs and peer-led tutorials could be overseen by teachers and provided to newcomers (including non-immigrant newcomers) and oldtimers alike.

My second set of recommendations has to do with increasing or strengthening the relationship between the school and its community. As one of the mainstream teachers suggested:

> Il faudrait que l'école soit plus ouverte sur le quartier, sur la ville, que l'école soit ouverte le soir, que la bibliothèque soit ouverte le soir, que les gymnases [soient ouverts] tout le temps, qu'il y a une véritable vie communautaire. (Mme F T09/25)
>
> *[The school should be more open to the neighborhood, to the city; it should be open at night; the library should be open at night; the gyms should be open all the time; there should be a real community life here.]*

By opening its library and gyms, for example, to the community both after school and on weekends, ESM could become something more like a community youth center where newcomer and oldtimer students could participate together in any number of activities throughout the year. In the summer, the school could also offer host-language learning classes to newcomer students (and their parents) as well as other courses and extra-curricular activities. Members from the community could also take advantage of this school-community link to recruit students for part-time jobs as well as for volunteer work. To increase all students' participation (and sense of membership) in the community, ESM could require a certain number of community service hours each year.

Third, I believe that newcomers might have a stronger sense of belonging in and recognition by ESM if the school valued multilingualism through increased interest in languages other than French and English. A version of PELO courses could be offered by community volunteers after school or on weekends. Clubs which embrace particular languages and cultures could also be encouraged to promote both a sense of belonging for newcomers and a sensitivity to and comfort with the cultural diversity of ESM's student and community population. Other community-based activities using languages other than French could also help newcomer parents to feel more welcome at ESM, and ideally more involved in their children's education. Recently, Charlotte and some of her *accueil* colleagues at ESM arranged for volunteers from the community to translate information about the school, its programs, its evaluation system, its extra-curricular activities and various other school business, to a group of 200 newcomer parents at a parent-teacher meeting. At the two-hour meeting, 12 volunteers from the community provided an orientation to the

school for those parents in 12 different languages, an event which benefited the parents, the school, and the community as a whole. Such initiative leads nicely into my final set of recommendations.

The fourth and final set of recommendations relates to ways of building on the cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical expertise of ESM's faculty and staff. In the time that I spent as a researcher at ESM, I was impressed by the dedication of its faculty and administrators. Many, if not most, of the teachers were available to their students after school and during the lunch hour. Many were involved in extracurricular activities such as the bi-annual talent show, lunch-hour sports competitions, and various arts-based projects. Toward the end of the study, Charlotte and Mme F had begun to organize meetings which would focus on the ways in which the *accueil* curriculum could draw on and overlap with the mainstream French language arts program, a project they referred to as *arrimage*. Mr. L's work as the director of Student Life ensured that ESM students had a wide variety of after-school activities (see Chapter 5); and at the time of the study, Mr. L was involved in the development of a *projet accrocheur,* a special program designed to attract and keep successful students who might otherwise enroll in one of ESM's neighboring schools, schools which already offered a variety of *projets accrocheurs*. At the time of my interview with Mr. L, specialty programs in both the sciences and sports were being considered. Also at that time, Mr. L had participated in securing funding for a two-year project entitled "ESM: Centre de sa communauté" *[ESM: The centre of its community]* whereby ESM students would be trained to work with elementary school children who would attend "playdays" (offering various extra-curricular activities) that coincided with teachers' pedagogical days, thus serving both the school community (giving older students work experience and some income) and working parents who would otherwise need to seek day-care for their children. From these many examples of pedagogical and extracurricular activities, it is obvious that the ESM staff is committed to providing its students with an engaging learning environment and one which makes links to the

community. It is on this foundation of commitment that I would like to build some pedagogical recommendations for ESM.

Since my study has as a central focus the role of French language learning in newcomer integration, I would like to recommend, here, some of the ways in which I think host-language learning could be made more accessible and effective for newcomers in the process of identity reconstruction. While I have argued in this conclusion that we need to locate the phenomenon of integration in the newcomers who are experiencing it, I do not mean to suggest that by situating newcomers in the subject position schools are somehow exempt from any responsibility in these students' integration experiences. As is evident in the data described in this dissertation, schools have a powerful impact on newcomers. I have tried to highlight those aspects of schooling which facilitate (or hinder, as the case may be) integration as a process of identity reconstruction through participation in and engagement with the school community. Furthermore, while I have suggested that host-language learning should not be a precursor to that participation, I have focused on host-language learning as, nonetheless, central to successful integration and positive identity constructions. I have argued that both host language instruction and newcomers' integration would benefit from programs which embed host-language learning in the mainstream and reduce the current segregation of mainstream and *accueil* programs.

Inspired by the *arrimage* project which Charlotte and Mme F were developing, I would like to suggest an integrated curriculum as a valuable pedagogical tool for newcomer and oldtimer students alike. Such disciplinary overlapping facilitates the learning of new information and, linguistically, reinforces key lexical items. If mainstream core-subject teachers are aware of and interested in the linguistic development of their newcomer students, they could draw newcomers' attention to the role of particular linguistic features in that subject-specific context. An integrated curriculum, of course, also encourages cross-disciplinary exchanges and possibly planning among teachers, and stimulates new pedagogical approaches to what might be overly familiar

material for experienced teachers. Furthermore, through these exchanges, ESM's linguistically and culturally diverse teachers would serve as valuable resources to each other in effective group-work and peer tutoring strategies. Finally, an integrated curriculum would support the current educational reform (to be introduced in the secondary schools in 2005) which emphasizes interdisciplinary, project-based teaching and learning.

While integrated curricula have long been promoted (by advocates of "language across the curriculum" for example) as reinforcing both subject learning and language mastery, such an approach to host-language learning has not generally been embraced in Quebec. Despite (or perhaps because of) the success and popularity of French immersion programs (which teach the French language through subject-matter instruction. See Lyster, 1999) among Quebec's English speakers, the teaching of French to newcomers in Quebec continues to focus almost entirely on linguistic mastery as a precursor to subject-specific learning. Perhaps further research within the Quebec context as to the benefits of and strategies for the use of an integrated curriculum might encourage changes in this province's host-language learning programs.

4. Questions and future research suggestions that arise from this study

One of the great ironies of conducting the kind of research I have presented here is that I end the study with many more questions than I began. These new questions in turn suggest the possibility (even the need) for further research. To address a variety of concerns and questions raised in this study, I would like to propose three different kinds of research: comparative studies, participatory action research (PAR) studies, and intervention studies. A comparative-studies approach could investigate the ways in which Quebec's approach to educational integration compares with approaches used by other immigrant-receiving societies. In particular, studies which compared urban communities which are demographically similar to Montreal would be of particular value in understanding the range of approaches to bridging the gap between cultural and linguistic diversity and social cohesion. Furthermore, within such comparative

studies, terms like "diversity" and "commonality" and "social cohesion" could be probed (similar to the ways I have probed "integration" in this study) for their theoretical or conceptual assumptions.

Another kind of comparative study could look at different approaches to educational integration used in the province of Quebec. For example, I am aware of a "direct integration" program currently being used by the school board of Laval (one of Montreal's suburban communities). While such a study would in no way seek out the "correct" or "perfect" model of educational integration for Quebec (because integration is so context dependent, it is unrealistic to want such a model), such comparative studies would provide a bank of information on the various educational integration contexts and approaches that exist in Quebec. This bank of information might be used to inform various school boards of integration options that they might not have considered, thus encouraging the kind of institutional flexibility that the Quebec-based studies of educational integration suggest is lacking.

A second kind of research, participatory action research (PAR), would seek not to compare integration contexts, but to engage in collaborative research with educational institutions seeking to improve their approach to newcomer integration. Some of the issues raised in my study that might effectively be addressed through PAR include collaboration toward the weaving together of schools and their local communities. A very different kind of PAR might seek to facilitate the integration efforts of newcomer adolescents and their parents. Working with educational institutions and the larger community, such a research project might study the interwoven needs of a newcomer family and the various ways that the host society can meet those needs.

Third, intervention studies (which aim to study the benefits of a particular intervention in a given context) might serve to better understand the feasibility and effectiveness of programs such as partial integration, integrated curricula, and/or embedded host-language learning at ESM. Such studies would involve the collaboration of teachers and administrators but would be a researcher-driven study (as opposed to participant-generated as in PAR) of

whether or not these approaches are appropriate for ESM. The range of the issues and methodologies offered here as possible research avenues suggests that the area of newcomer integration in schools is a rich research terrain.

Finally, at the end of this study, some questions arise for me about the extent to which schools have been charged with the integration of newcomers. Just as educational integration is best understood as the responsibility of the whole school, and not just those teachers and administrators involved with *accueil* programs, so too is integration best understood as the responsibility of the whole host society. To what extent are our various news and information media charged with representing the cultural and linguistic diversity of the host society? How might those same media be charged with educating the host society about that diversity? How might the entertainment industry be implicated in the integration of newcomers to the host society as well as the integration of the host society to its newcomers? How might professional organizations and businesses be held accountable for facilitating the integration of newcomers into the workforce, an integration which respects and builds on the knowledges that newcomers bring? How can pluralist societies expand the integration agenda beyond the walls of the school and into the development of an inclusive host community? We are really only at the beginning of understanding how to welcome newcomers in ways that allow and encourage them to be both shaped by and shapers of their host society.

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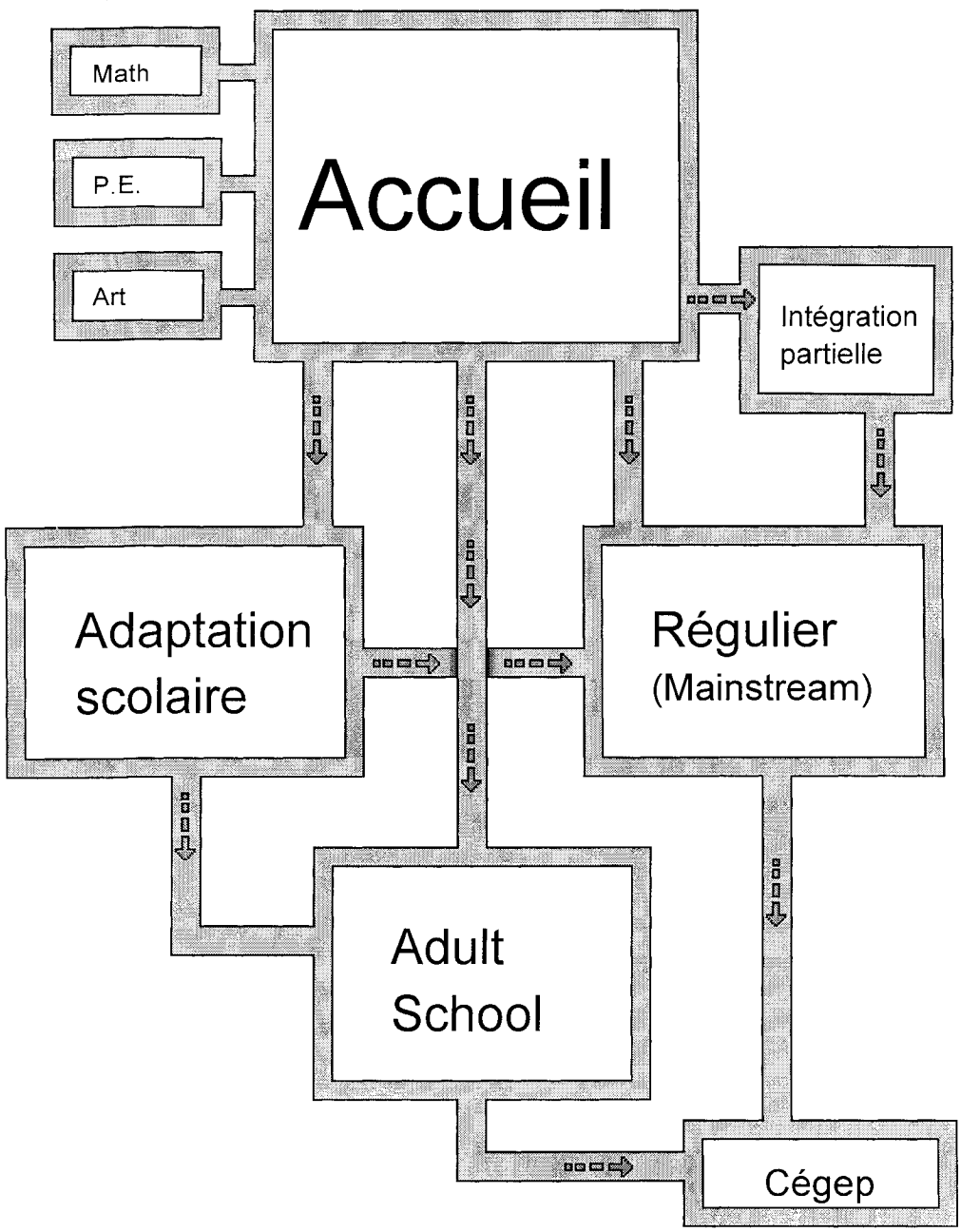
Appendix 1

Data Gathering Timeline

Mar 23, 2001	• Initial meeting with ESM *accueil* teachers
April	• Participant observation (group work, field trips, classroom assistant to Charlotte) • Initial interviews with student participants, • French proficiency assessment • Placement of students for September '01
May	
June	
July	• Transcription and analysis of initial interviews • E-mail contact w/ students and Charlotte
August	• Introduction to ESM teaching staff re: my study and the possibility of my interviewing mainstream teachers of my participants
September	• Meet students on first day back at ESM • Informal conversations • Party to reunite and welcome back all students at my house
October	• Scheduling problems at ESM • Maintain contact with students via e-mail
November	• Second round of interviews with students
December	• Image-based interviews with small groups of students
January 2002	• Transcription and analysis • Interviews with 3 administrators
February	• Interviews with mainstream and *adaptation scolaire* teachers
March	
April	• Transcription and analysis
May	• Final interviews with student participants
June	
July 2, 2002	• Final interview with Charlotte

Appendix 2

Programs Flow Chart[21]



[21] Thank you to James Poirier who did the computer design work for this flow chart.

Appendix 3

Primary participants (focus of this dissertation)

Participant pseudonym	**Age during study**	**Country of origin**	**Mother tongue**	**Other languages**	**Education prior to study**	**Placement in Sept. 2001**
Ashel	15-16	St. Lucia	English	Creole, French	sec. 3 in St. Lucia; 7 months in *accueil*	advanced *accueil*
Chrissy	17-18	South Korea	Korean	English, French	sec. 3 in Korea; 9 months in *accueil*	advanced *accueil*
Dani	16-17	Lebanon	Arabic	French	sec. 4 in Lebanon 7 months in *accueil*	advanced *accueil*
Elena	16-17	India	Punjabi	Hindi, Arabic, English, French	sec. 5 in India 7 months in *accueil*	advanced *accueil*
Miglena	17-18	Bulgaria	Bulgarian	English, German, French	sec. 3 in Bulgaria 6 months in *accueil*	advanced *accueil*
Ana	18-19	Russia	Russian	Hebrew, English, French	sec. 5 (not finished) in Russia; 8 months in *accueil*	secondary 4
Christian	16-17	Congo	Kassai	Lingala, Swahili, English, French	sec. 1 in Kenya 7 months in *accueil*	secondary 4
John	15-16	Peru	Spanish	English, French	sec. 2 in Peru; 8 months in *accueil*	secondary 4
Luis	17-18	Peru	Spanish	English, French	sec. 2 or 3 in Peru 8 months in *accueil*	secondary 5
Roger	15-16	Mexico	Spanish	English, French	sec. 2 in Mexico 8 months in *accueil*	secondary 4

Appendix 3 (cont'd)

Secondary participants (*not* focus of this dissertation)

Participant pseudonym	**Age during study**	**Country of origin**	**Mother tongue**	**Other languages**	**Education prior to study**	**Placement[21] in Sept. 2001**
Gil	18-19`	Angola	Portugese	Spanish, English, French	sec. 3 in Angola; 9 months in *accueil*	sec. 5 (French adult school)
Jian	16-17	China	Mandarin	English, French	unknown; 2 ½ years in *accueil*	*adaptation scolaire*
Li	18-19	China	village dialect	Mandarin, Cantonese, French, English	sec. 3 in China 17 months in *accueil*	French adult school (English adult school)
Mahalingam	16-17	Sri Lanka	Tamil	French	elem. 5 in Sri Lanka 18 months in *accueil*	*adaptation scolaire*
Micha	13-14	Hungary	Hungarian	English, French	sec. 1 in Ontario 7 months in *accueil*	sec. 2
Sonia	16-17	Cuba	Spanish	French	elem. 6 in Cuba 17 months in *accueil*	*adaptation scolaire*
Thaveswaran	18-19	Sri Lanka	Tamil	Singalese, English, French	sec. 3 in Sri Lanka 12 months in *accueil*	adult school (English adult school)
Victor	18-19	Romania	Romanian	English, French	sec. 5 in Romania 7 months in *accueil*	no placement (English cégep)

[21] Because some students chose educational options other than the one in which they were placed by Charlotte in June 2001, I have indicated in parentheses the educational program in which they actually enrolled in September 2001.

Appendix 4
Research Participant Parental Consent Form

I understand that Ms. Dawn Allen is a doctoral student at McGill University, and that she is interested in learning about the experiences and opinions of adolescent students who have learned or are learning French as a second language in a Québec secondary school. Ms. Allen believes that learning a language changes the way we understand ourselves and others. She also believes that students who have recently learned or are in the process of learning a language can help her understand how language learning changes us.

To understand how language learning changes the learner, Ms. Allen will interview many students and some teachers and other school personnel at ESM. She will also work at the school as a volunteer assistant in some classes. She will interview and take notes on only those students and school personnel who give her permission to do so.

The two main goals of Ms. Allen's research are 1) to encourage second language learners to become more conscious of how they change through language learning and 2) to raise teachers' awareness of how learning a second language is transformative.

As the parent of a participant in Ms. Allen's study, I understand the following important information:

- Ms. Allen will ensure my son's /daughter's privacy by using no real names for people and places in the study.
- Any interview excerpts used in publications or presentations will be selected and edited so that they do not reveal the identity of the study's participants.
- I can withdraw my son / daughter from the study at any time I wish without penalty.
- Interviews with students and school personnel will not interrupt classes or school business.
- Interviews will be tape recorded and listened to only by Ms. Allen
- When her thesis is completed, Ms. Allen will make a copy or synopsis of it available to all the participants.

I give my son / daughter permission to work with Ms. Allen as a participant in her study.

_____	_____	____
Student's name	Student's signature	Date
_____	_____	____
Parent's name	Parent's signature	Date

Note: If you have any questions concerning any aspect of the study, please feel free to contact Ms. Allen by phone [XXXX] **or by e-mail** [XXXX]

Appendix 5

Lettre de Consentement Parental au Projet de Recherche

Je comprends que Mme Dawn Allen est une étudiante au doctorat à l'Université McGill et qu'elle s'intéresse aux expériences et opinions des étudiant(e)s adolescent(e)s lesquels ont appris ou sont en train d'apprendre le français langue seconde dans une école secondaire au Québec. Mme Allen croit que l'apprentissage d'une langue seconde (ou tierce, etc.) change notre manière de se connaître et de connaître les autres. En plus, elle croit que les étudiants qui ont récemment appris ou qui sont en train d'apprendre une autre langue peuvent l'aider à mieux comprendre de quelles façons l'apprentissage d'une langue nous change.

Pour comprendre comment l'apprentissage d'une autre langue nous transforme, Mme Allen tiendra des entrevues avec des étudiant(e)s, des professeur(e)s et d'autres types d'employés de ESM. En plus des entrevues, Mme Allen travaillera dans l'école en tant qu'assistante de classe et tutrice bénévole. Elle tiendra des entrevues et prendra des notes seulement auprès des personnes dont elle aura obtenu la permission.

Les objectifs principaux du projet de recherche de Mme Allen sont: 1) de mieux comprendre la nature des changements expérimentés par l'étudiant(e) lors de l'apprentissage d'une autre langue; 2) d'augmenter la connaissance des professeur(e)s et des administrateurs / administratrices en ce qui concerne l'aspect transformateur de l'apprentissage d'une langue seconde (ou tierce, etc).

À titre de parent / tuteur d'un(e) participant(e) au projet de recherche de Mme Allen, je comprends les informations suivantes:

- Mme Allen assurera l'anonymat des participant(e)s en utilisant les pseudonymes à titre de référence pour les personnes et les lieux mentionnés dans l'étude.
- Tous les extraits d'entrevues qui seront utilisés dans les publications ou les présentations seront sélectionnés et édités pour qu'ils ne dévoilent pas l'indentité des participants.
- Chaque participant(e) peut se retirer du projet en tout temps sans conséquences négatives.
- Les entrevues avec les étudiants et le personnel de l'école ne devront pas interférer avec les cours ni avec les affaires courantes de l'école.
- Les entrevues ne seront enregistrées et écoutées que par Mme Allen.
- Une fois la thèse terminée, Mme Allen fournira à l'école une copie ou une synthèse qui sera aussi disponible à tous les participants.

Ayant pris connaissance de ce qui précède, je donne ma permission pour que l'étudiant(e) puisse participer au projet de recherche de Mme Allen.

Nom de l'étudiant(e)	Signature de l'étudiant(e)	Date
Nom du parent /tuteur	Signature du parent / tuteur	Date

Noter: Si vous avez des questions concernant tout aspect du projet, n'hésitez pas à contacter Mme Allen par téléphone [XXXX] **ou par courriel** [XXXXX]**.**