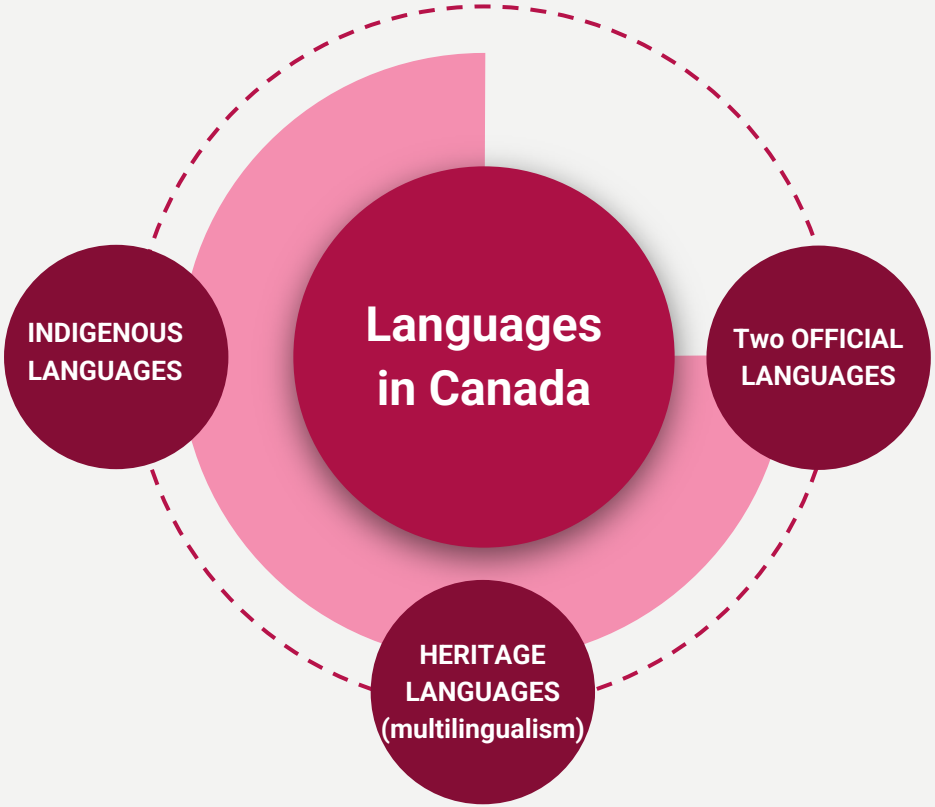
MULTI/BILINGUAL EDUCATION
LANGUAGE LANDSCAPE AND LANGUAGE IDENTITY

Isabelle Côté (with the support of
Carolyn Roberts & Robert Williamson)

EDUC–400

SFU FACULTY OF EDUCATION

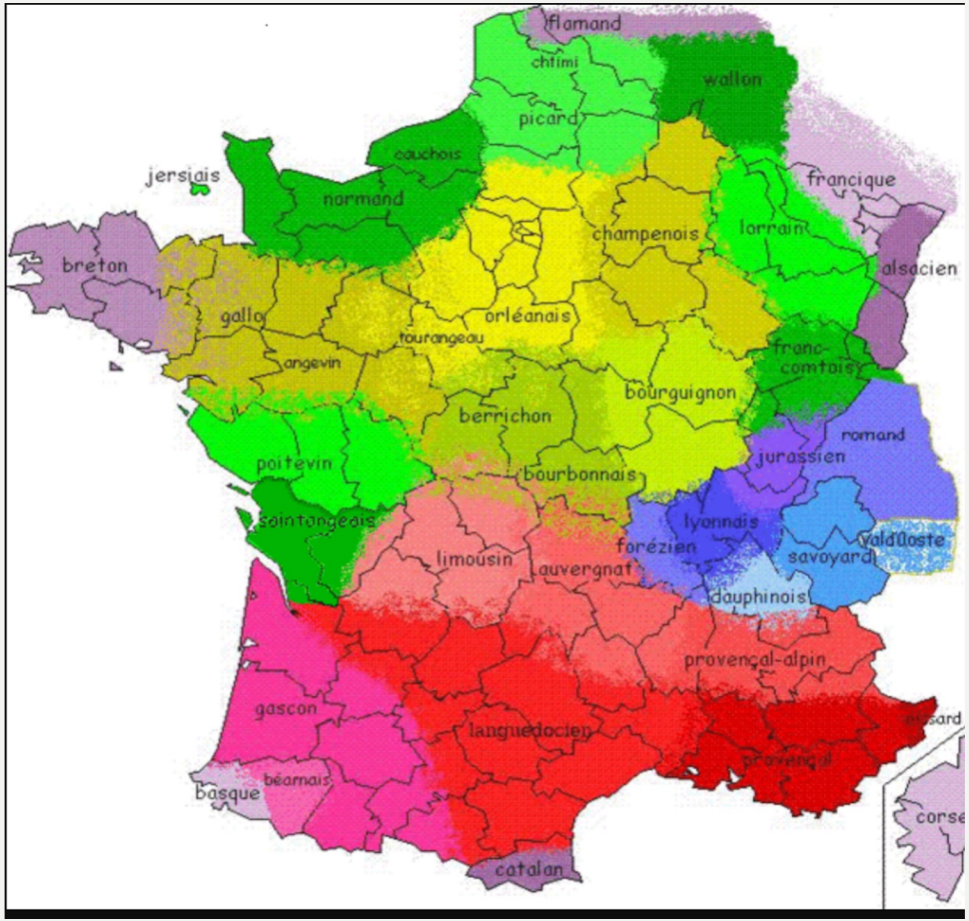



Languages in Canada
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES
Two OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
HERITAGE LANGUAGES (multilingualism)

MYTH OF "ONE NATION ONE LANGUAGE"

The Imagined Communities by Anderson (1983).

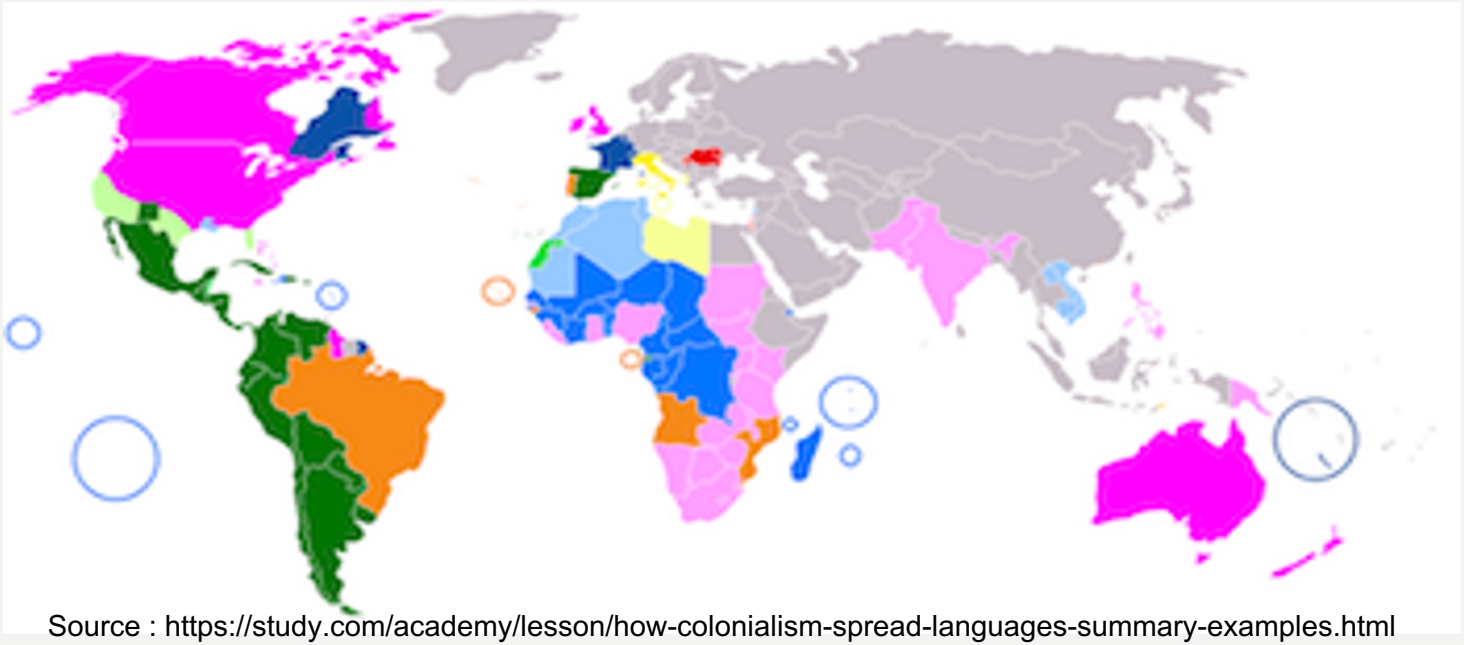
- Modern Times in Europe = Separation of the State & religious powers (200 yrs ago). Religion was gradually placed in private spheres.
- Arrival of print press = created a sense of community that was more horizontal, more secular and more intemporal. Imposition of a "national" language.



Map of languages in France

http://www.cartesfrance.fr/geographie/cartes-france-sociales/carte-langue-regionale.html

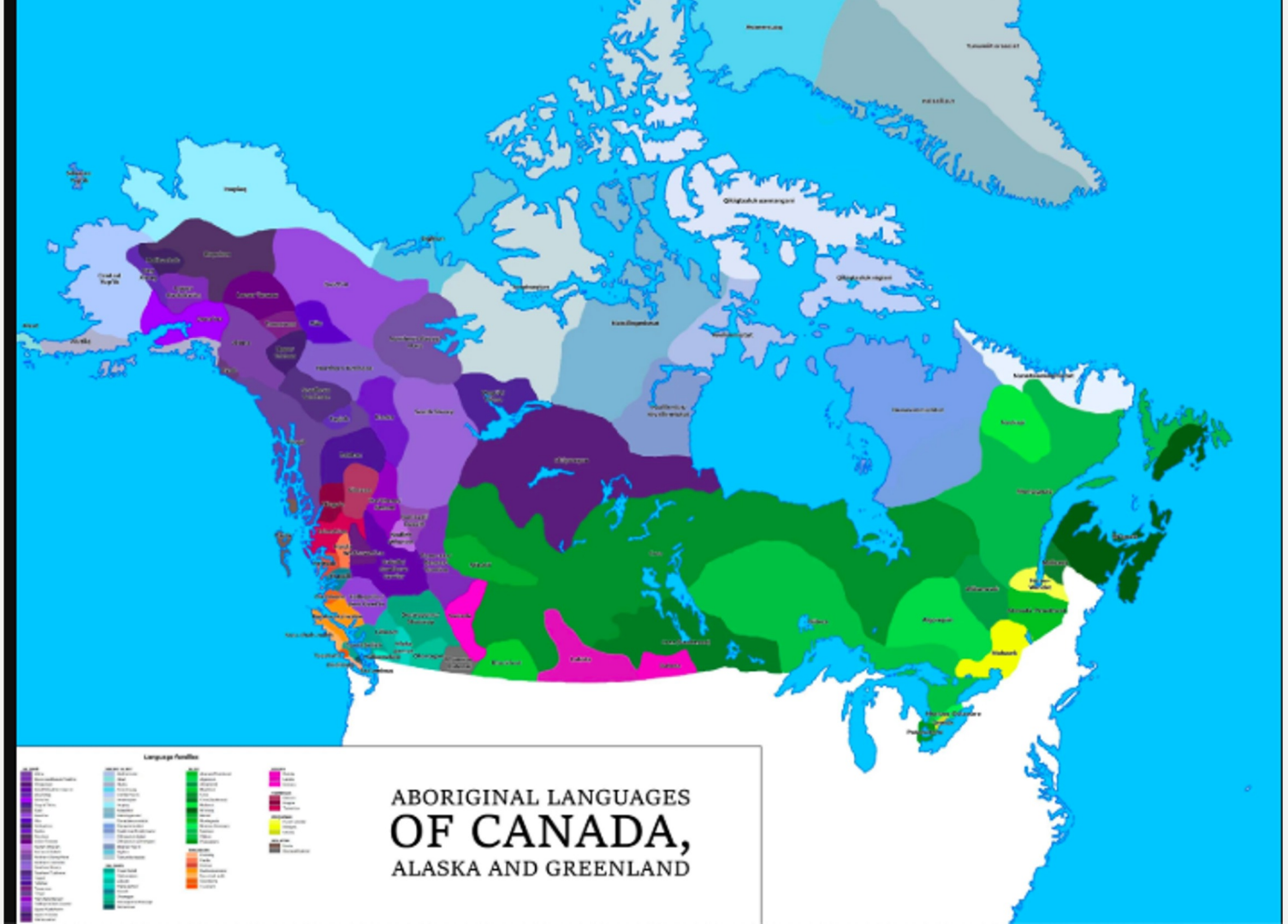
WHAT IS THE UNDERLINED POWER STRUCTURE AT WORK HERE?



Source : https://study.com/academy/lesson/how-colonialism-spread-languages-summary-examples.html

QUESTIONS….

- How many Indigenous languages were spoken on Turtle Island prior to contact?
- How many of those languages are still being spoken today?
- How many language families are there?
- How many languages are found here in BC?
- What does the research say about how many of these languages will be able to continue for future generations?


ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES
OF CANADA,
ALASKA AND GREENLAND

LANGUAGE & IDENTITY

"Indigenous languages are seen as the most tangible symbols of group identity, and the learning of those languages by community members has been shown to be positively correlated with overall health and well-being in those communities"

(Rosborough and al. 2017, p. 427).

LANGUAGE & WORLDVIEW

"A polysynthetic language expresses complex meanings and ideas via a single word" (Rosborough and al., 2017, p.428)

"Who the participants are, what the action is, when the action takes place, and also where it takes place can all be expressed in a single word in kwak'wala" (Rosborough and al., 2017, p.430).


IDENTITY
PEOPLE
COMMUNITY
CULTURE
LANGUAGE
WORLDVIEW

MY FAVOURITE TRANSLATIONS OF KWAK'WALA (C. ROBERTS)

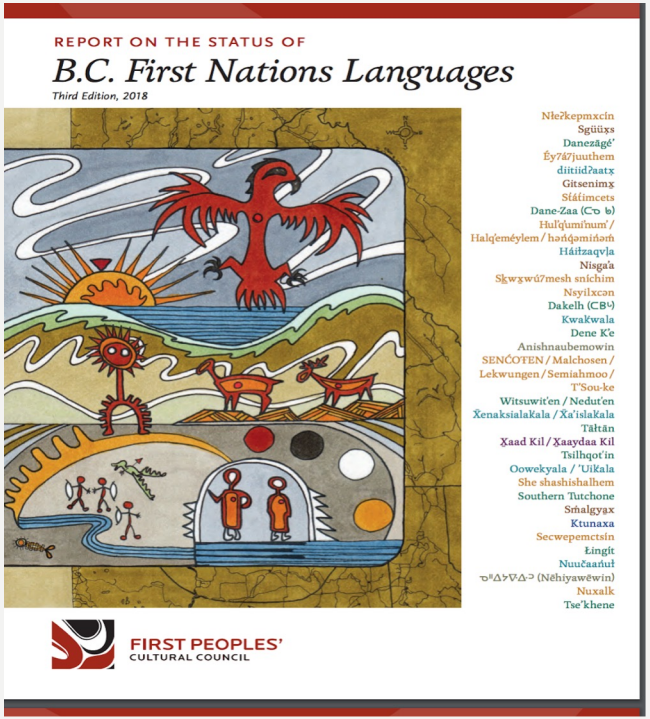
ḵ̓ wa̱la'yu – a term of endearment used to address a loved child, the literal meaning of this word is "my reason for living."

a̱ngwaxtłas – often taught as "what is your name?" but can be understood literally as "who is on your head?" (Boas et al., 1947, p. 264), referring to the responsibility when you carry an ancestral name

hayasa̱kola – often taught to mean "married couple," but the literal translation can be understood as "breathing together as one."

TIME FOR A PAUSE AND THINK…

Take a few minutes to think about how your world view would change if you only spoke about things within relationship with you *(what, where, who, when)*?



4.1 percent fluent speakers of Indigenous languages in B.C.

Just over half (51.9%) of the fluent First Nations speakers are aged 65 or older.

Source : http://www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/FPCC-LanguageReport-180716-WEB.pdf

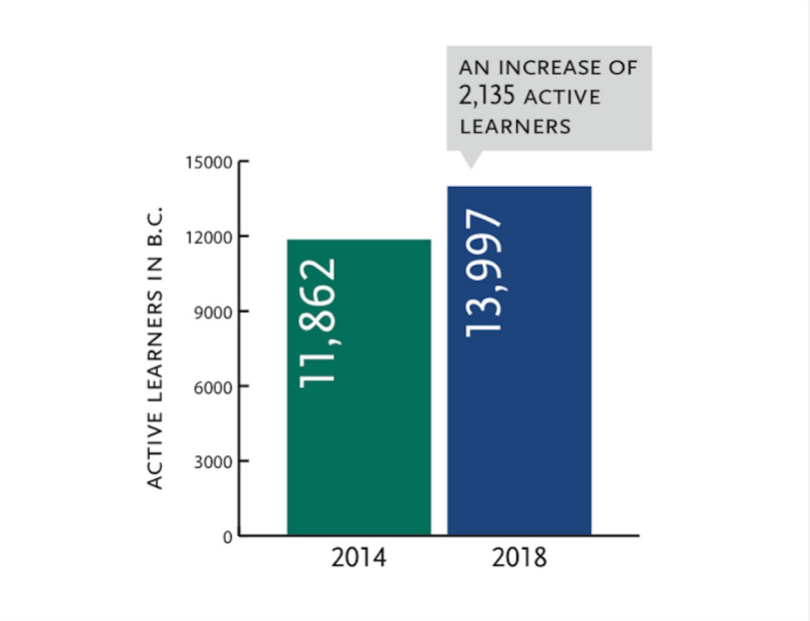
BC FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF SPEAKERS BY AGE GROUP IN 2018

AGE GROUP	FLUENT SPEAKERS	LEARNERS
65+ years	2,146 (51.9%)	222 (1.6%)
45–64	1,591 (38.5%)	1,182 (8.4%)
25–44 years	278 (6.7%)	1,659 (11.9%)
0–24 years	117 (2.8%)	10,934 (78.1%)
TOTAL	4,132	13,997

Source : http://www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/FPCC-LanguageReport-180716-WEB.pdf

BC FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES



Source : http://www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/FPCC-LanguageReport-180716-WEB.pdf

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES IN BC (FEW EXAMPLES)

UVic - Bachelor of Education in Indigenous language revitalization program

UBC Endangered Indigenous Languages Program

Some Indigenous language(s) curricula available in B.C. public schools and Band Operated Schools.

Squamish Language Academy partnership with SFU

Post-Secondary pathways continue to be developed with community based language programming



Some actions taken internationally

2019 : International year of Indigenous languages

HTTPS://WWW.APTNNEWS.CA/NATIONAL-NEWS/UN-WRAPS-UP-ITS-YEAR-OF-INDIGENOUS-LANGUAGES-DURING-NEW-YORK-CEREMONY/

The UN has declared a decade of indigenous languages starting in 2022

HTTPS://WWW.CBC.CA/NEWS/INDIGENOUS/UN-DECADE-INDIGENOUS-LANGUAGES-1.5401443

FUNDING FOR BC INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

2018 : New Announcement by Provincial Gov.

$50-million grant (over three years)

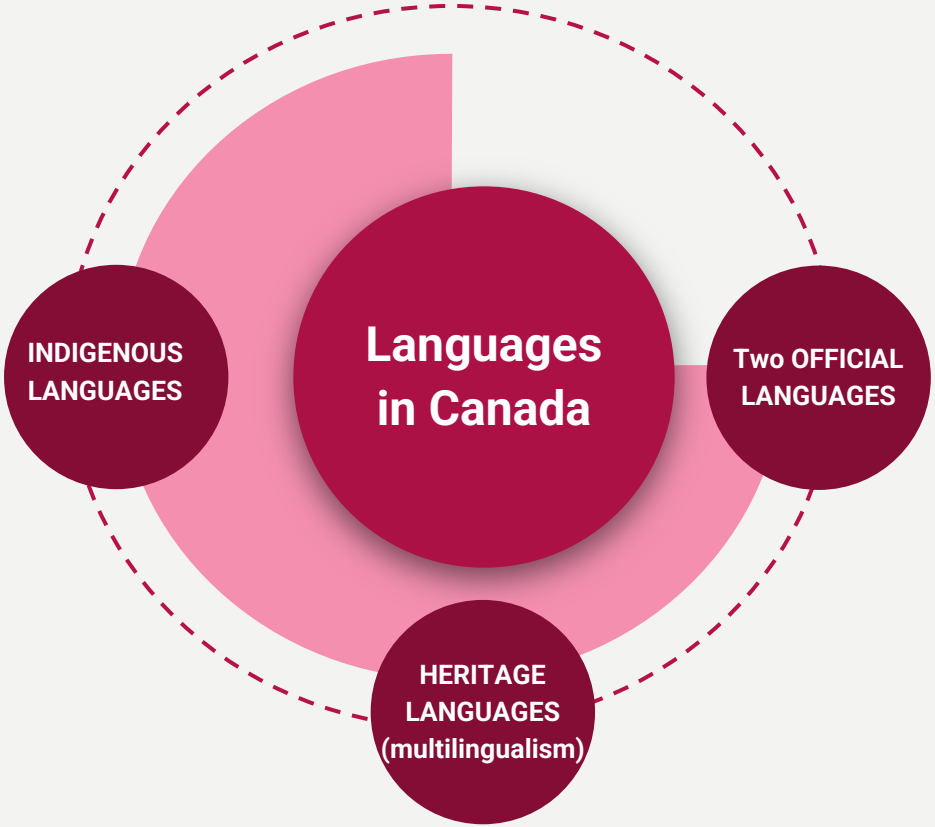
to First Peoples' Cultural Council to help revitalize Indigenous languages in B.C.

(FPCC, 2018, p.6)

32 languages

http://www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/FPCC-LanguageReport-180716-WEB.pdf




Languages in Canada
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES
Two OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
HERITAGE LANGUAGES (multilingualism)

PART 2

BC Schools Language Policy (BC Curriculum)

Please see BC Language Education Policy https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/language-education-policy

L2 TEACHING IN BC

L2 is mandatory in Grade 5, 6, 7 and 8 (for BC high school graduation)

- **Requirements for different post-secondary programs may require L2 in Grade 9, 10, 11 and 12**

Difficulties : no language specialists in Grade 5-6-7

***L2 = second language**

CONNECTING THE DOTS…

DIFFICULT to separate MULTICULTURALISM from MULTILINGUALISM

Could we say that the BC Ministry of Education has a very "multicultural" approach to teaching and learning L2/L3/L4?



MYTH OF ONE LANGUAGE ONLY

Professor at Cambridge University, England (1890) :

«If it were possible for a child to live in two languages at once equally well, so much the worse. His intellectual and spiritual growth would not thereby be doubled, but halved. Unity of mind and character would have great difficulty in asserting itself in such circumstances.» **(Laurie 1890, cited in Lüdi, 1998).**

This myth of bi/plurilingualism as problematic and detrimental persisted all the way to 1960's in the research and STILL today (2021) in schools (beliefs held by parents, teachers, support staff, counselors, administrators)

WHAT DOES THE LATEST RESEARCH IN L2-L3 LANGUAGE ACQUISITION SAYS?

TAKE A QUIZ! TRUE OR FALSE??

1. Learners need to know how to read and write before they learn another language.
2. Learning a L2/L3 will not have negative long-term effects on the learner's L1 language learning.
3. L2 & L3 classes or immersion programs are only for students who do not struggle in L1.
4. If a student in your class is ELL, he/she should not be enrolled in a FSL class.
5. If a student is struggling in a Spanish (L2) class, she could get the support in English.
6. Content learned in a L2/L3 can hardly be transferred in L1 context (and vice versa).
7. It is almost impossible for a learner to do well in L2/L3 without a parent speaking the language(L2/L3) at home.
8. New language learners are always very chatty, eager to share their learning.
9. In a L2 immersion class, only the L2 should be use. Never the L1.
10. ELLs are not ready to engage in higher level thinking until they learn English basic language skills.

MYTH OF ONE LANGUAGE ONLY STILL VERY PRESENT IN SCHOOLS

Indigenous students and ELL students are often excluded from L2 classes and language programs

ELL students are not encouraged to use their L1 in schools to built on their knowledge

Students with different learning profiles are often excluded from L2 language programs (Arnett and Bourgoin, 2018; 2017)

WHAT WOULD A MULTI/BILINGUAL SCHOOL LOOK LIKE?

ALL students are invited to take language classes at school (inclusive education)

Students are encouraged to read books and novels in their L1

The school library has books in languages that represent the students' language diversity

Students are encouraged to work with their L1 when it helps them understand what they are learning in English or in French (French immersion / Francophone programs)



INQUIRE AND MAKE CONNECTIONS DURING YOUR EXPLORATION C

1) Learn more about Indigenous & heritage languages spoken by many students in your school

2) Find out where is the Francophone school in your community (CSF website https://www.csf.bc.ca/)

3) Reflect on the place of other L2/L3/L4 in your school. How are they integrated in students' learning?

4) Reflect on the "myth of multiculturalism/ multilingualism" and how it has shaped and still shapes many Canadians' discourse on national history & identity.



WHAT DOES THE LATEST RESEARCH IN L2-L3 LANGUAGE ACQUISITION SAYS? TAKE A QUIZ! TRUE OR FALSE?? ANSWER KEY

1. Learners need to know how to read and write before they learn another language. (F)
2. Learning a L2/L3 will not have negative long-term effects on the learner's L1 language learning. (T)
3. L2 & L3 classes or immersion programs are only for students who do not struggle in L1. (F)
4. If a student in your class is ELL, he/she should not be enrolled in a FSL class. (F)
5. If a student is struggling in a Spanish (L2) class, she could get the support in English. (T)
6. Content learned in a L2/L3 can hardly be transferred in L1 context (and vice versa). (F)
7. It is almost impossible for a learner to do well in L2/L3 without a parent speaking the language(L2/L3) at home. (F)
8. New language learners are always very chatty, eager to share their learning. (F)
9. In a L2 immersion class, only the L2 should be use. Never the L1. (F)
10. ELLs are not ready to engage in higher level thinking until they learn English basic language skills. (F)

PLEASE READ Bourgoin and Arnett (2018) article for the explanations.



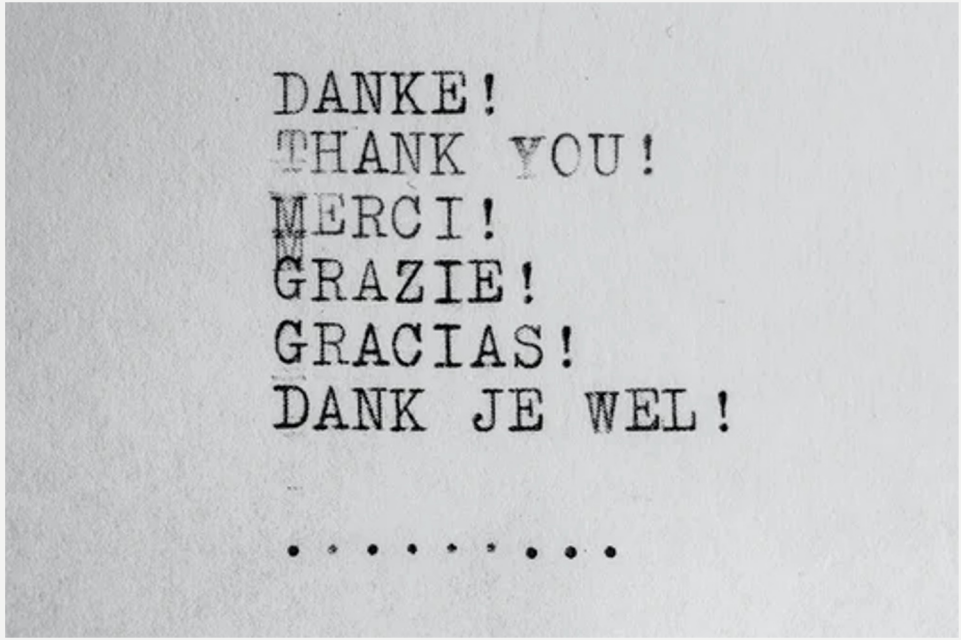


Photo by Wilhelm Gunkel @Unsplash