Immigrant students' heritage language and cultural identity maintenance in multilingual and multicultural societies

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Abstract

The issue of immigrant students' linguistic and cultural diversity is a source of constant debate in multicultural and multilingual societies (e.g., Park & Sarkar, 2007; Park, 2011). Through a thorough review of literature, this paper provides a detailed discussion of immigrant students' heritage language (HL) and cultural identity maintenance, with a specific focus on North American countries (i.e., The United States and Canada). This paper argues that HL maintenance has substantial advantages and that immigrant students' HL and cultural identity maintenance should be supported by host societies. Furthermore, by framing the issue of immigrant students' bilingualism in relation to the potential consequences of HL loss, it encourages further research seeking solutions for promoting HL and cultural identity maintenance.

Immigrant students' linguistic and cultural diversity is constantly debated in multicultural and multilingual societies (e.g., Park & Sarkar, 2007; Park, 2011). This paper closely reviews literature relating to heritage language (HL) and cultural identity maintenance, with a specific focus on North America (i.e., The United States and Canada) owing to the multilingual

and multicultural aspects of these countries. It also provides a review of literature on HL loss in order to reframe the issue of immigrant students' bilingualism in relation to the potential negative consequences of losing one's HL. The paper begins with a definition of heritage languages and heritage language speakers, followed by a description of three major orientations in language planning in multilingual societies.

DEFINING HERITAGE LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND SPEAKERS

In this paper, heritage language (HL) refers to all languages, except for aboriginal languages, brought to host societies by immigrants. The term was originally defined in Canada as "a language other than one of the official languages of Canada that contributes to the linguistic heritage of Canada" (Canadian Legal Information Institute, 1991, 'Definitions'). Cummins and Danesi (1990) define HLs in the Canadian context as all languages brought to Canada by immigrants, with the exception of aboriginal languages, English, and French. There are also several synonymous terms that have been used in North America, such as "ethnic language, minority language, ancestral language, third language, non-official language, community language, and mother-tongue" (Cummins & Danesi, 1990, p. 8).

Montrul defines heritage speakers as individuals "of a linguistic minority who grew up exposed to their home language and the majority language" (Montrul, 2010, p. 4). He indicates that "the term, heritage speaker, was first introduced in Canada in the mid-1970s but has been gaining ground in the United States since the 1990s" (Montrul, 2010, p. 4). In a similar vein, Polinsky and Kagan (2007) define heritage speakers as "people raised in a home where one language is spoken who subsequently switch to another dominant language" (p. 368). Valdés (2001) also defines a heritage language speaker as an individual who "is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken" and who "speaks or at least understands the language and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English" (p. 38) in the US context.

Positions taken towards HLs differ in host countries depending on their particular social and political contexts, and different attitudes toward language and its role in host countries. In this regard, this paper begins with a description of three major orientations in language planning in multilingual societies.

ORIENTATIONS IN LANGUAGE PLANNING

Ruiz (1984) proposes three basic orientations in language planning in the United States: 1) language-as-problem; 2) language-as-right; and, 3) language-as-resource (p. 15).

In a language-as-problem orientation, the main goal of language planning has been the identification and determination of language problems of linguistic minority students (Ruiz, 1984). In this orientation, linguistic minority students' HLs have been treated as a social problem that should be eradicated and resolved through an educational approach which is aimed at the promotion of linguistic minority students' educational equity with linguistic majority students rather than the maintenance and development of their HL skills (Cummins & Danesi, 1990; Ruiz, 1984). These assimilation policies in education, which seem to represent a language-as-problem orientation (Ruiz, 1984), keep forcing linguistic minority students to renounce their HLs by presenting linguistic diversity as a problem that has to disappear (Cummins, 2001b). This is not limited to educational policies in the United States. Cummins claims that most European and North American countries, including Canada, also have similar educational policies. In the Canadian context, Cummins and Danesi (1990) critically reviewed various research findings that focused on the context of the contentious debate over the promotion of HLs. They explain that the increase in diversity has been caused by economic migration to Canada, an influx of refugees from countries suffering from war, natural disasters, and poverty, as well as from economic globalization. As a result, multilingual and multicultural students have become the general norm, mostly in urban areas. According to Canadian Heritage (2004), "Canada became the first country in the world to adopt an official Multiculturalism Policy in 1972". However, Cummins and Danesi (1990) claim that regardless of the adoption of these policies, which represent a superficial Canadian identity, racial discrimination and intolerance against linguistic and cultural minority students in the educational system in Canada, has accelerated the loss of immigrant students' HLs. They also find that the adoption of multicultural policies has served to obscure and conceal "the continuing reality of racist assumption among the majority of Canadians" (p. 15). In addition, they criticize the continuous racial and systematic discrimination against minorities in Canada, characterized by the intolerance against minorities' culture, language, and race in the field of education. In addition, Kondo-Brown (2006) points out that the issue of HL education in Canadian public

schools is still controversial regardless of the adoption of multicultural policies in Canada.

On the other hand, in a language-as-right orientation, the protection of minority groups' linguistic rights is emphasized as a main purpose of language planning. Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) investigates bilingualism and multilingualism issues with respect to linguistic minority children's education through the comparison of several educational programmes in different countries. Based on the results, she claims that bilingualism or multilingualism has become the general norm in the world, not because of the desirability and benefits of multilingualism, but because of the power relationship between powerless minority languages and powerful majority languages in host countries. She also mentions the opposing perspectives of minorities and majorities concerning multilingualism. Minorities think that keeping their language is a right based on the notion that every language is equally valuable and should be respected, whereas majorities think that multilingualism provokes societal divisiveness for the nation. She considers that "linguicism" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1998, p. 13), a term that refers to "ideologies and structures which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources between groups which are defined on the basis of language (on the basis of their mother tongues)" (p. 13), rather than bilingualism-as-desirable, has been practiced in educational programmes for linguistic minorities in host countries. Skutnabb-Kangas (1994) describes two levels of linguistic human rights for linguistic minorities: "an individual level and a collective level" (p. 625). First, mother tongue must be identified positively by its users and this positive identification must be respected and accepted by other language users at an individual level. Second, linguistic minority groups must have the right to develop and to maintain their mother tongues in the field of education at a collective level. However, she claims that the current educational policies in most European countries do not promote this type of multilingualism in general. In this regard, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) clearly states that "one of the basic linguistic human rights of persons belonging to minorities is-or should be- to achieve high levels of bi- or multilingualism through education" (p. 569).

Ruiz (1984) finds that the predominant orientations to language planning in the international literature have been language-as-problem and language-as-right regardless of the fact that these two orientations are not sufficient as a basis for language planning in multilingual and multicultural contexts because of their inherent hostility and divisiveness.

In this regard, Ruiz emphasizes the fact that priority should be given to a language-as-resource orientation because of its inclusive and incorporative characteristics. Concerning the strengths of a language-as-resource orientation, Ruiz claims that this orientation can have a direct and measurable influence on reinforcing the language status of minority languages by reducing tensions between minority and majority communities, serving "as a more consistent way of viewing the role of non-English languages in U.S. society", and highlighting the significance of cooperative language planning (Ruiz, 1984, p. 25). Thus, Ruiz argues that the language-as-resource orientation helps solve problems which are obvious in the other two orientations. Cummins and Danesi (1990) also argue that seeing linguistic minority students and their communities as a problem instead of a valuable resource should be decreased through school-based language policies and teachers' active and positive interactions with linguistic minority students in the classroom. From a language-as-resource orientation, they conclude that immigrant students' multilingual skills should be encouraged and supported as national resources that can strengthen Canada's competitive position in the rapidly changing world markets. In addition to seeing linguistic diversity as economic capital, Ruiz (1984) argues that minority children's HL should also be regarded as important sources for social well-being and collaboration in multilingual societies.

HERITAGE LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL IDENTITY MAINTENANCE

The promotion of HL and cultural identity maintenance and the facilitation of bilingualism or multilingualism have been supported and recognized by many scholars (Cummins, 1976, 1979, 1999, 2000, 2001a; Fishman 1991; He, 2006; Lambert, 1975; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988, 2000; Tse, 1998) and empirical research (Cavallaro, 2005; Cummins & Schecter, 2003; Garcia, 2003; Guardado, 2002; Hakuta & Diaz, 1985; Hinton, 1998; Kondo, 1998; Kouritzin, 1999; Park, 2011; Tse, 1997, 2001; Wong Fillmore, 1991). The following section discusses how these theories and studies support the promotion of HL and cultural identity maintenance of the younger generations from immigrant communities.

Theories and research findings in support of the promotion of HL and culture, and the facilitation of bilingualism or multilingualism

Cognitive development and academic achievement. Up to the 1960s, several studies had projected a negative view of the effects of bilingualism or multilingualism on cognitive development (Cavallaro, 2005). For instance, Darcy's (1953) comprehensive review of literature on the effects of bilingualism on educational and intellectual development led to the conclusion that bilingualism or multilingualism had a negative effect, especially with respect to verbal tests of intelligence. In general, the common assumption in the literature until the 1960s was that bilinguals suffered from cognitive deficiencies due to "the psycholinguistic burden of processing two or more languages" (Cavallaro, 2005, p. 573).

However, since the 1970s, the positive importance of bilingualism has been recognized and supported by several scholars (Baker, 2003; Cummins, 1976, 1979, 2000; Lambert, 1975). Lambert (1975), for instance, claimed that bilingual students had a more flexible and diverse structure both in intelligence and in thought. He indicated that an additive form of bilingualism, meaning "the learning of the second language without the dropping or the replacement of the other" (p. 67), should be pursued in education policies. He also pointed out that linguistic minority students' cognitive development and second language learning could not be positive if they were submersed in a totally new environment where they had to come into contact with a new language even before they developed their HL skills. It is in this situation that bilingual students' cognitive development might be negatively affected (Lambert, 1975).

Cummins has been advocating the importance of HL maintenance since the 1970s. In order to account for the relationship between bilingualism and cognitive development, Cummins (1976) proposed the threshold hypothesis. He claims that bilinguals' cognitive development can be positively influenced by their attainment of a certain level of competence in two languages. Cummins (1979) later proposed two levels in the threshold hypothesis, the lower threshold and the higher threshold. The lower threshold level of language competence in both languages should be attained in order to avoid negative cognitive effects. On the other hand, when bilinguals reach the higher threshold level, they will have positive cognitive effects regardless of the language of testing. In addition, Cummins claims that students' level of second language competence rests on the degree to which they have competence in their HL at the time when they are introduced to intensive second language learning. This

explanation based on the developmental interdependence hypothesis, which holds that children's high HL skills are positively related to high levels of second language competence. However, Cummins (1989) claims that linguistic minority students who have a deficiency in their HL literacy skills due to lack of educational support lose their HL skills while they acquire second language skills, which is a form of subtractive bilingualism. Furthermore, according to the linguistic interdependence principle, a strong base in minority children's HL literacy skills enhances their second language learning and academic skills. Cummins (2000) revisited the interdependence hypothesis which he proposed more than 20 years ago and reconfirmed the importance of immigrant students' literacy skills in their HL for the development of their literacy skills in the majority language. In this regard, Cummins (2000, 2001a) suggests that an additive educational context in which immigrant students can develop literacy skills in both languages should be provided so that they can develop flexibility in their thinking by comparing and contrasting two different languages.

Cummins' theories for the positive effect of bilingualism on cognitive and academic development have been supported by many empirical studies. Cummins and Swain (1979) reported a number of positive effects of bilingualism on cognitive development such as academic success, flexible thinking, and improvement of linguistic skills. In the US context, Hakuta and Diaz (1985) conducted a longitudinal study with 123 Spanish-dominant speaking students enrolled in the Bilingual Education program classes in public elementary schools. The study reveals that cognitive development can be fostered by bilingualism. They report that "bilinguals' greater sensibility to linguistic structure and detail is then transferred and generalized to different verbal and nonverbal tasks" (p. 340).

However, the facilitation theories and principles for bilingual education are not always supported and accepted among researchers (Cavallaro, 2005). The most well-known argument against the facilitation theories is Rossell and Baker's (1996) meta-analysis. In order to investigate the educational effectiveness of bilingualism and transitional bilingual education, particularly in the United States, they reviewed more than 500 studies and books, including 300 program evaluations. Based on this review, Rossell and Baker argue that transitional bilingual education, which uses students' native language in the classroom until they become proficient in English, is never superior to regular classroom education which uses only English. They also claim that transitional bilingual

programs are inferior to structured immersion programs which mostly use the second language (English in this case), except in rare cases when limited English-proficient students really require assistance from teachers who can speak students' first language in order to finish their task. Rossell and Baker (1996) conclude that educational intervention alone cannot explain children's academic achievement, since it is just one of many other important factors in children's academic achievement and the success of second language learning. In this regard, they suggest that "children's family characteristics, their intelligence, the characteristics of their classmates, and the intelligence and talent of their teacher" (Rossell & Baker, 1996, p. 43) should be considered together with several educational interventions in order to explain children's academic achievement and acquisition of English.

In contrast to Rossell and Baker's claims, Cummins (1999) argues that Rossell and Baker's conclusions are inaccurate, because of misinterpretations of the results of the studies reviewed and inaccurate labelling of programs. For example, Rossell and Baker took the Canadian French immersion model as an example of the American-type structured immersion when comparing structured immersion and transitional bilingual education. Cummins argues that Rossell and Baker overlooked the different characteristics of these two models. Canadian French immersion is aimed at English-speaking majority students' acquisition of bilingualism, while structured immersion aims at linguistic minority students' acquisition of English. Interestingly, several researchers (Cavallaro, 2005; Cummins, 1999; Dicker, 1996; Escamilla, 1996) argue that some of Rossell and Baker's findings actually support the effectiveness of bilingual education. Dicker (1996), for instance, finds that the Canadian French immersion program is supported over the transitional bilingual education program in Rossell and Baker's meta-analysis. Dicker claims that "if in fact Canadian immersion is superior to transitional bilingual education, this argues for the substantial use of two languages in instruction and the linguistic goal of bilingualism" (p. 374). Escamilla (1996) also points out that Rossell and Baker left out any sort of qualitative study in their review. In this regard, Dicker (1996) claims that the "social, political, cultural, and linguistic environments in which bilingual education programs are implemented" (p. 372) should be understood through qualitative research in order to gain a better understanding of the educational effectiveness of bilingual education.

Ethnic group membership and cultural identity. With regard to ethnic minority students' ethnic identity development, Tse (1998) proposed "a four-stage model of ethnic identity development (i.e., Unawareness, Ethnic Ambivalence or Evasion, Ethnic Emergence, and Ethnic Identity Incorporation)" (pp. 15-16), which focused on racial minorities' attitudes toward the HL and the majority language. Tse claims that it is not easy for "visible or racial minorities" to be integrated into the host society due to their physical differences (p. 15). Tse explains that ethnic minorities in the Unawareness stage tend to be children who are unaware of their ethnic minority identity and language status. The second stage, Ethnic Ambivalence, is likely to take place in adolescence or young adulthood. Ethnic minority adolescents are likely to have ambivalent attitudes towards their ethnicity and HL. Then, the Ethnic Emergence stage takes place, especially if the minorities are in an ethnically diverse social context (e.g., University) where they have to deal with issues of unclear ethnic identity and group membership. After this period, they end up in the final stage, Ethnic Identity Incorporation, where they can solve their ambivalent and contradictory feelings towards their ethnic identity and HL. Through these four stages, Tse emphasizes two core elements for ethnic minorities' HL maintenance and development: "comprehensible input and group membership" (p. 17). Tse indicates that ethnic minorities who receive enough linguistic input in their HL are likely to maintain and develop the HL. In addition, ethnic minorities who acquire ethnic group membership are also likely to have positive feelings about their ethnic identity and HL, which leads to their HL maintenance. With regard to ethnic group membership, language is often referred to as one of the most important factors for the maintenance of ethnic group membership in multilingual situations (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977). Cavallaro (2005) suggests that several key factors, including "a common language, a system of shared beliefs, and other common traditions such as food, clothing, residential preferences etc." (p. 567), contribute to a sense of ethnic group membership, with language as the most significant among the factors.

Phinney, Romero, Nava, and Huang (2001) define an ethnic identity as "an identity as a member of an ethnic group within the larger society" (p. 135). In the US context, Phinney et al. investigated the role of ethnic language, parents, and ethnic friends within their ethnic community as the key factors for immigrant adolescents' ethnic identity development. They examined 216 second generation immigrant adolescent students and their parents through an adolescent and a parent questionnaire. The results of

the study show several ways in which immigrant students' ethnic identity is positively related to their HL proficiency. First, immigrant students' HL proficiency plays a positive role in their ethnic identity, since their HL is closely linked to their parents' heritage culture. Second, immigrant students' socialization practices with ethnic friends have a strong impact on their ethnic identity. Third, parents' encouragement of the use of HL at home and cultural maintenance enhances immigrant students' ethnic identity development.

In addition to promotion of a healthy sense of cultural identity, researchers have supported the personal and societal benefits of immigrant students' HL maintenance in the host society. Garcia (2003), for instance, examined research trends from 1998 to 2002 in the field of ethnic and minority language maintenance and shift. The findings show that the preservation of immigrants' HL has been advocated by current research; HL maintenance is also beneficial to the practical ends of nations in a global world. Cho (2000) also shows that Korean Americans' proficiency both in English and Korean would be of great benefit to Korean-Americans in their careers. Her study also reveals that developing their HL would be of much benefit to society as "an act of interpreting or translating" (p. 346) with their bilingual skills in English and their HL.

Factors in enhancing immigrant students' HL and cultural identity maintenance

Parental involvement and home environment. There is consistent evidence that parental use of HL at home is an important factor in enhancing immigrant students' HL maintenance. Portes and Hao (1998) found this in their study regarding patterns of language adaptation of more than 5,000 second generation students in the United States. They emphasize that parental use of the HL with their children within a supportive home environment can lead to a greater possibility of maintaining children's HL. In the same vein, Kondo (1998) examined social-psychological factors influencing HL maintenance through interviews with second generation Japanese university students in the United States. The results show that mothers play a significant role in fostering children's HL maintenance, since immigrant children have "much more extensive informal contacts and use in the HL" (p. 373) with mothers. She also emphasizes mothers' role as communicators in the HL with their children, and also as facilitators who support children's HL education. Li (1999), an immigrant mother from China, also conducted a

case study with her own daughter in Hawaii. She reports that positive attitudes toward both languages and interactions with children in the HL have a positive impact on children's HL development and identity formation.

In the Canadian context, Guardado (2002) conducted semi-structured interviews with parents of four Hispanic families about their children's Spanish loss and maintenance in Vancouver. The four families were divided into two groups (i.e., language maintenance families and language loss families) based on children's proficiency in both languages, Spanish and English. The findings reveal that the parents in language maintenance families encouraged their children to use the HL in an active and positive way, whereas the parents in language loss families underscored only the ideal importance of the HL without actual promotion of children's HL use. Overall, all participants expressed the view that parents played a very significant role in their children's HL and culture maintenance. Park and Sarkar (2007) also investigated immigrant parents' attitudes toward their children's heritage language maintenance through a questionnaire and interviews with nine Korean immigrant parents in Canada. The results imply that "parents' positive attitudes toward their children's heritage language maintenance will help their children develop and enhance the Korean language skills in a multilingual context" (Park & Sarkar, 2007, p. 232).

Ethnolinguistic vitality. Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977) proposed the term "Ethnolinguistic Vitality (EV) which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations" (p. 308). They suggest that EV is influenced by "the Status, Demographic and Institutional Support factors" (p. 309). As regards the four status factors (i.e., economic, social, socio-historical, and language status), linguistic minorities who have more status are likely to have more vitality than those who have less status. Demographic factors, which include the concentration of group members, their distribution, and immigration trends, also greatly influence the EV of linguistic minority groups. The concentrated distribution of group members and the increase in group population by the group's higher birth rate and influxes of immigrants from a common linguistic group area are demographic variables which seem to provide group members with a better chance of maintaining EV in the intergroup situation. Lastly, Giles et al. propose that linguistic minority groups are likely to enhance the degree of their EV through institutional support factors, including "the degree of formal and informal

support a language receives" (p. 315) from the government, workplace, community, religious institutions, and schools. In other words, the more informal and formal support a group receives, the more EV they are likely to have. Both objective EV "based on census data and measurable institutional support" (Bourhis & Landry, 2008, p. 191), and subjective EV (Bourhis & Landry, 2008; Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977) based on a linguistic minority group's self-beliefs and perceptions of its EV are considered to be important factors in a group's language loss and maintenance.

Education and schools. There is a general belief that education should play a crucial role in maintaining linguistic minority students' HL (Baker, 2003; Garcia, 2003; Tse, 1997, 2001). Tse (1997) reviewed several studies on the effects of ethnic language programs and attitudinal factors on HL maintenance. She found that ethnic language programs would be of benefit to minority students' proficiency in and appreciation of the ethnic language. In addition, she mentioned that more positive attitudes were found in ethnic language programs integrated into the day school and the regular curriculum than community-based HL programs, since a majority of immigrant students also have negative memories of their community sponsored HL schools. Rincker (1991) provides several reasons for students' negative memories of "out-of-school" (p. 643) HL programs based on the results of a questionnaire study with 154 heritage language teachers and administrators in Canada. These schools are shown not to be successful for immigrant students to develop their HL skills due to insufficient instruction time, low motivation of students due to the marginalization of HL classes within the regular curriculum, poor quality of materials and curriculum, insufficient funding, different ages and language levels in the same class, and lack of opportunities for teachers to improve teaching skills. In a similar vein, Park (2011) also found that the ethnic church-sponsored HL school was not effective for similar reasons in his ethnographic and qualitative study with 15 Korean immigrant students in Canada. Thus, the results of his study suggest that the ethnic church-sponsored HL school should be supported by closer partnership with all the members (i.e., students, teachers, and pastors) in order to make itself more active, operative, and effective in the preservation of the HL among the Korean immigrant youth in the church.

In addition, Tse (1997, 2001) also claims that immigrant students' HL should be supported from mainstream schools by recognizing the value of immigrant students' HL skills and "by placing implicit importance on the

language each time it was used in official and public ways" (2001, p. 689). With regard to the role of bilingual education, Baker (2003) emphasizes "strong forms of bilingual education" (p. 97) which are aimed at the promotion of "bilingualism, biliteracy, and cultural pluralism" (p. 97). Baker also claims that research on future bilingual education should focus on the improvement of "the probability that language minority children experience equity, justice, and tolerance, not just in school, but as the empowered citizens of tomorrow" (p. 106). Furthermore, Garcia (2003) highlights the role that teachers play in increasingly multilingual classrooms in North American public schools. Garcia claims that teachers should be aware of students' linguistic diversity and develop their understandings of how to deal with linguistically diverse students in multilingual classrooms.

With regard to linguistic minority students' HL as a resource in school and in the classroom, Cummins and Schecter (2003) argue that linguistic minority students' HL development does not hinder their academic progress. On the contrary, their bilingual skills can enhance their academic performance in school, since they can benefit from concrete conceptual skills in both languages. Furthermore, their academic development in the majority school language is not affected adversely by the use of a minority language as an instructional language in the classroom. S. K. Lee (2002) found similar results in his investigation of 105 Chinese-American and Korean-American public high school students who were born in the United States. Through questionnaires, observations, and interviews, S. K. Lee examined the relationship between immigrant students' HL and culture maintenance, and their academic achievement in school. The results show that those who were more interested in maintaining their heritage culture and language achieved a higher level of academic success than those who were less interested in keeping their heritage culture and language.

Other factors that may promote HL and culture. In addition to the factors discussed above, there are several other important factors in supporting the promotion of HL and cultural identity for linguistic minority students.

First of all, researchers note that making return trips to the country of origin is one of the best means of HL retention (Hinton, 1998; J. S. Lee, 2002). J. S. Lee (2002) investigated the relationship between HL proficiency and cultural identity among second generation Korean-American university students (n=40) and found, based on their self-rating in a

questionnaire, that the students who had visited Korea more than four times had a higher level of proficiency in the Korean language. This is largely because these trips can provide a motivation for them to learn the HL, since they are immersed in a monolingual environment for the duration of the visit. Therefore, J. S. Lee suggests that more opportunities to visit Korea should be provided for Korean-American students. Hinton's (1998) study with Asian-American university students also indicated that visiting their country of origin was positively related to HL development. In addition, Cho and Krashen (2000) find that watching TV and reading in the HL can improve Korean-American students' HL skills. Cho and Krashen distributed a questionnaire to 114 Korean-American young adults who were enrolled in Korean language classes. Sixteen of them participated in in-depth interviews. The results reveal that more than 50% of the participants watched TV in the HL at least sometimes, which contributed to their HL maintenance. However, a majority of participants responded that they never read any materials in the HL. This is unfortunate, since studies have highlighted the importance of reading in the HL (McQuillan, 1996, 1998) for enhancing HL maintenance for young members of immigrant communities. It is assumed that young members' low proficiency in HL literacy skills may make them lose interest in reading any materials in the HL (Cho & Krashen, 2000).

Language brokering is also reported as another factor in supporting the promotion of linguistic minority students' HL skills (Tse, 1995, 1996). Tse finds that many immigrant children act as language brokers, translating and interpreting the majority language for parents who are not proficient in the majority language. Tse (1995) investigated the language brokering of 35 young native speakers of Spanish in the U.S. through a survey. The participants were 25 U.S.-born students and 10 foreign students. The results reveal that all the participants have experience in language brokering. Among the 25 U.S.-born students, 50% of the participants responded that they could learn Spanish through the act of brokering, while almost 50% among the 10 foreign students responded that they could acquire English faster through language brokering. In addition, brokering has a positive effect on the promotion of immigrant students' level of independence, even though a few students complained about the burden and embarrassment caused by language brokering. Tse (1996) also explored the linguistic and cultural impact of language brokering on Asian American immigrant children in the United States. She surveyed 64 Asian American students about their experience in language brokering. The results reveal that nearly 90% of participants have experience in

brokering for their parents, relatives, sibling, neighbours, and friends in various situations, and more than half of the participants responded that language brokering helped them develop competence in both their HL and the majority language.

Thus far, I have reviewed literature relating to HL and cultural identity maintenance among immigrant students in North America. Overall, this review offers insights into understanding why immigrant students should maintain their HL and cultural identity, and what factors reinforce their HL and cultural identity maintenance in multilingual and multicultural societies. Now I shift my attention to the loss of HL and cultural identity in order to understand what factors contribute to HL loss and how members are influenced by HL loss. Even though there has been increasing support for the preservation of HLs, many researchers (Cummins, 2001a; Hinton, 1998; Kouritzin, 1999; Wong Fillmore, 1991) point out that it is still often the case that the younger generations of immigrant families fail to maintain their HL in the host society due to the influence of education, peer and social pressure, and the lack of resources to support their HL maintenance. The issue of immigrant children's HL maintenance should therefore be framed in relation to the potential consequences of HL loss, to enhance motivation to find possible research-based solutions for their HL and cultural identity maintenance.

HERITAGE LANGUAGE LOSS

HL loss usually begins with young members of immigrant communities, since they are much more likely to be vulnerable in the sense of losing their HLs and cultural identities than adult immigrants (Hinton, 1999; Wong Fillmore, 1991).

Kouritzin (1999) describes the meaning of HL loss in terms of educational, social, and economic frameworks. She explains her theoretical framework on the basis of current understandings which regard HL loss as "restricted minority language acquisition in a majority language submersion setting" (p. 11). In order to explore the meaning of loss of HL of immigrants in the Canadian context, she interviewed 21 adults who had lost their childhood HLs. Some participants associated this loss with a loss of heritage culture and identity. Others associated HL loss with "a loss of ease with the language that resulted from leaving the language community" (p. 202). She found that participants had different points of view about their HL loss depending on their ages. The younger participants tended to link their HL loss to "the loss of marketability,

employment opportunity, and economic advantages" (p. 203), whereas the older participants tended to associate their HL loss with the loss of connection to their HL identity and culture. She concludes that HL loss is a powerful and negative individual experience.

HL loss in immigrant families causes a lack of communication between children and parents in the families. As a result, relationships with families, parents, and heritage cultures may be impaired, since immigrant children who lost their HL have fewer ways to maintain these relationships (Kouritzin, 1999). In this regard, Kouritzin suggests that a more personal and deeper perspective should be included in current research on HL loss. This provides part of the motivation for the design and procedures in the present study, since loss and maintenance of HL and cultural identity among the younger generations from Korean immigrant families cannot be understood without considering their personal experiences within the family, Korean ethnic community, and the host society.

The processes of HL loss may differ depending on social situations and individual experiences. As immigrant students learn the majority language, they are likely to use it more exclusively and for the sake of convenience; however, without support, they also lose their HL. This is normally a gradual process, although it may be accelerated at the onset of schooling in the majority language and subsequent pressure to acquire the dominant language rapidly with concomitant HL neglect. However, immigrant children's HL loss is not an inevitable process in multilingual societies. In the next section, the various factors causing immigrant children's HL loss in multilingual societies are briefly reviewed.

Factors which cause HL loss among the immigrant younger generations

Wong Fillmore (1991) points out that the problem of HL loss cannot be addressed without considering immigrant students' social context. In multilingual and multicultural societies, they encounter influential social pressures when they start their schooling. Immigrant students are forced to assimilate into the host society through the rapid acquisition of the majority language. This means that immigrant students are likely to lose their HL rapidly while they are acquiring the majority language. This pressure can come, for example, from their classmates in school (Hinton, 1998). Immigrant students may feel strong pressure from their peers and

may think that their differences could hinder their sense of membership in the majority group in school.

One of the most important factors causing immigrant students' HL loss in immigrant family is parents' choice of the home languages. According to Hinton (1998), parents' language choice at home may increase the possibility of their children's HL loss. With regard to involuntary language loss among Asian-American immigrants, through a set of linguistic autobiographies written by about 250 students, Hinton reveals that the introduction of English within the family by parents accelerates children's HL loss. As immigrant parents' level of proficiency in English grows, they want to try to help their children to learn English more rapidly and efficiently by using English at home with their children.

Another factor causing HL loss is the influence of siblings. Wong Fillmore's (1991) nationwide interview study with more than 1,000 linguistic minority families in the United States revealed that younger children in the family were more likely to lose their HL because of the earlier exposure to English from their older siblings, who learned English in school.

As noted above, HL loss usually begins with children in immigrant families when they start their schooling in the host society. The HLs of linguistic minority students are not actively encouraged in school, where they learn the majority language in order to be easily assimilated into the mainstream of the host society. Ghosh and Abdi (2004) report that linguistic, ethnic, and cultural differences have been neglected and even regarded as a threat to the host society in Canada; therefore, immigrant students' HLs have been devalued and neglected. This makes students have a negative self-concept toward their HL, culture, history, and even ethnic identities and their negative self-concept toward their own ethnic groups then leads to HL loss.

Krashen (1998) finds that language shyness can also be a factor in HL loss, especially in students who are not native-like speakers of the HL. From the case histories of 3 Hispanic background graduate students, Krashen found that less proficient speakers of HL are subject to criticism and ridicule from more proficient speakers of HL in the HL community. Language shyness often leads immigrant children to reject or give up their HL. For fear of being ridiculed or criticized by those who are more fluent speakers of HL, they may reject the use of the HL and they may be estranged from the HL community due to this rejection.

Negative consequences caused by immigrant students' HL loss

As reviewed above, there are many interrelated factors that cause HL loss of the younger generations from immigrant families. There is no doubt that immigrant students' HL loss often causes a variety of negative consequences. These are discussed below.

To begin with, linguistic minority students' HL loss can cause a negative self-image and cultural identity, since language represents the most significant aspect of culture and identity (Kouritzin, 1999; Wong Fillmore, 1996). Kouritzin (1999) provides two kinds of negative views, "inward and outward forms" (pp. 177-178), in order to explain the relationship between HL loss, culture, and identity. The inward negative view means that immigrant students can become ashamed of their own HL and culture. Kouritzin finds that they resist becoming minorities linguistically and ethnically by speaking the majority language and behaving like members of the majority culture. In Kouritzin's study, some participants referred to themselves as "bananas" or "apples" (p. 177) which are yellow or red on the outside, but white on the inside. One of her participants also said that she always wanted to have "a nice White name" (p. 177).

The outward negative self-image is often related to people's internalized racism against their own ethnic group, which is usually expressed by differentiation. Kouritzin (1999) finds that former immigrants try to differentiate themselves from new immigrants by speaking the majority language in order to show that they are superior to new immigrants. Along the same lines, Wong Fillmore (1996) reports that Chinese-American children call new immigrants from China "FOB (Fresh-Off-the-Boat)" (p. 444) and ask them to go back to their country. In order to differentiate themselves from new immigrants, they refer to themselves as "ABCs (American-Born-Chinese)" (p. 444). By using these terms, they try to differentiate themselves from new immigrants. However, Wong Fillmore claims that it is not an easy task for immigrant students to identify themselves with either their heritage identity or the dominant society identity. In the same vein, Kouritzin (1999) mentions that some participants used the term "Canadianized" (p. 179) instead of Canadian to refer to themselves. The participants, who all lived in Western Canada, felt that because of visible difference, "they were not permitted to be Canadian" (p. 179) regardless of their status as Canadian citizens. Concerning the issue of acceptance, Ghosh and Abdi (2004) insist that "it is an us-versus-them politics of location, in which visible minority groups

remain immigrants in the perception of main-stream groups, even after several generations" (p. 71).

HL loss among the immigrant younger members has negative consequences for their academic success in school. Cummins (2001) maintains that the rejection of immigrant students' HL in school has negative consequences for their school performance. He claims that if immigrant students are encouraged implicitly or explicitly by the teacher to leave their HL at home, then their active and confident participation in classroom is not likely to happen. Wong Fillmore (1991) also brings evidence to show that immigrant students' HL loss is closely related to educational difficulties in school. She says that linguistic minority students will "end up with fossilized versions of inter-languages" (p. 345) when they decide to give up their HLs before they acquire English fully. This result implies that immigrant students lose the educational opportunities that they are supposed to have.

Another negative consequence reported by many researchers (e.g., Cummins, 2001b; Hinton, 1998; Kouritzin, 1999; Thomas & Cao, 1999; Wong Fillmore, 1991, 1996, 2000), which can be one of the biggest negative consequences of immigrant students' HL loss, is the destruction of family relationships. Thomas and Cao (1999) investigated language shift and loss by analyzing examples of discourse of an immigrant family from Vietnam to the United States. The results of this study reveal that that the parents' authority was lost because the use of English dominates in the home. The study also shows that the children in this family make their parents who do not know English less authoritative by "putting them into a secondary position of decision making" in their school life (p. 112). The children in this family realized that their parents were not educated in the American educational system and they did not know the English language and the American culture. As a result of this, the children and parents could not communicate well due to an increasing language gap caused by children's HL loss. Both Wong Fillmore's (1991) study and Hinton's (1998) study support this idea that children's HL loss has a negative influence on family relations because of the weakening of communication between generations. The results of their studies also reveal that immigrant children who have lost their HL are open to criticisms from grandparents, relatives, and friends due to their poor command of the HL. In addition, Wong Fillmore's (2000) qualitative study with one Chinese immigrant family composed of 4 adult members and 4 children in the United States also shows that the language shift from Chinese to English led by the

children negatively affected their family relations because of the difficulty of communication between adults and children.

CONCLUSION

This review shows that immigrant students' HL and cultural identity maintenance can be enhanced when they realize the usefulness of their HL and culture in the host society, and when they have a high level of motivation and interest in their HL maintenance, and positive attitudes toward their HL and culture. In addition, immigrant students' HL and cultural identity cannot be expected to be automatically maintained unless their HL and cultural identity are actively protected and promoted by parents and families, ethnic communities, and schools in the host society. As the theories and research findings outlined in this paper have shown, linguistic minority students' HL development is of great benefit to their cognitive development, academic achievement, second language acquisition, maintenance of ethnic identity, and maintenance of heritage culture. It also confers personal and societal benefits. Furthermore, lots of negative consequences caused by immigrant children's HL loss outlined in this paper have revealed the importance of immigrant students' HLs in multilingual societies as a valuable resource.

Regardless of the importance of immigrant students' HLs and cultural identity in multilingual societies, there are only few immigrant communities that maintain their heritage languages beyond the third generation, since stable bi or multilingualism is not easy to be maintained over the third generation (Garcia, 2003). In a similar vein, Cummins and Danesi (1990) warn that ethnic communities are solely responsible for children's heritage language development in spite of the important role of schools in the national multiculturalism policy in Canada. They attribute this result to the indifference of the dominant groups in Canada toward minorities' heritage languages. This result seems to suggest that the complicated characteristics of the factors of language preservation and shift such as the family, the ethnic community, social networks, educational institutions, and friendship networks, governmental policies should be considered for future investigation in the field of immigrant students' HL maintenance in order to help their HL and cultural identity maintenance.

Overall, this paper suggests that the linguistic diversity should be recognized as resources in North America in the long run and immigrant students' multilingual skills should be encouraged and supported as

national resources, since the importance of linguistic diversity has increased for the global world. Furthermore, this paper also suggests that linguistic minority groups' multilingualism should be considered as a central element for the successful settlement of the national multiculturalism in North America through "the explicit valorization of multiculturalism and the equalization of the status of minority groups" (Cummins & Danesi, 1990, p. 114).

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