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Language Skills and the Social Integration of Canada's Adult Immigrants

Tracey M. Derwing and Erin Waugh

Improving immigrants' language proficiency requires greater emphasis on pragmatic skills and opportunities to interact with people in an official language.

Pour améliorer les compétences linguistiques des immigrants, il faut mettre l'accent sur les connaissances pragmatiques et les possibilités d'interagir dans l'une ou l'autre langue officielle.



Diversité, immigration et intégration
Diversity, Immigration and Integration

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Summary

Skills in an official language (English or French) significantly affect the economic integration of Canada's immigrants, including their employment levels and incomes. Official-language skills also have an impact on how well immigrants integrate socially in their workplaces and communities. In this study, Tracey Derwing and Erin Waugh examine the relationship between official-language knowledge and the social integration of adult immigrants to Canada.

The authors review a range of research findings, including those from a recent Citizenship and Immigration Canada study of the English-language proficiency levels of 3,827 immigrants, whose speaking and listening skills were assessed at the time of their citizenship test (the average time spent in Canada at the time of testing was six years). One notable finding was the low scores of Mandarin and Cantonese speakers, the majority of whom had entered the country through the independent immigration class.

Derwing and Waugh also report data from a seven-year longitudinal study of two groups of newcomers, one composed of Mandarin speakers and the other of Slavic-language (Russian, Ukrainian and Serbo-Croatian) speakers. The participants in this study were recent arrivals at their first testing in year one; all were enrolled in Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada classes. They were assessed at the end of their second year in Canada and at the seven-year point. The research found that the Mandarin speakers, faced considerably more linguistic and cultural challenges than the Slavic-language speakers and that current approaches to language training do not necessarily help immigrants develop the "soft skills" they need to find employment and integrate successfully into the workplace.

The authors conclude that although language proficiency is important, so are pragmatic skills and opportunities to interact with those who speak English or French. In particular, lack of proficiency in an official language combined with inadequate access to cultural knowledge can lead to limited opportunities for immigrants to fully participate in Canadian society. Derwing and Waugh make a number of policy recommendations, including expanding eligibility for language training funded by the federal government and increasing the focus on oral language ability and pragmatics; expanding the Community Connections program administered by Citizenship and Immigration Canada so that more immigrants can benefit from informal dialogue and networking experiences; involving immigrant parents in school district activities to promote social integration; sharing lessons from successful social integration activities among the various orders of government, Local Immigration Partnerships and others; and developing awareness-raising activities for native-born Canadians, some of whom hesitate to engage in conversation with those whose mother tongue is not English or French.

Résumé

Les compétences des immigrants dans l'une ou l'autre langue officielle du Canada (l'anglais et le français) ont une incidence considérable sur leur intégration économique, notamment sur leur niveau d'emploi et de revenu. Elles influent de même sur leur capacité de s'intégrer socialement à leur milieu de travail et à leur collectivité. C'est ce lien entre les compétences linguistiques des immigrants adultes et leur intégration sociale à la société canadienne que Tracey Derwing et Erin Waugh examinent dans cette étude.

Parmi de nombreux résultats de recherche, les auteurs analysent une récente étude de Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada sur le niveau de maîtrise de l'anglais de 3 827 immigrants, dont on a évalué l'expression orale et la compréhension de l'oral lors de leur examen pour l'obtention de la citoyenneté (ils résidaient au Canada depuis six ans en moyenne). L'étude a révélé notamment une maîtrise linguistique particulièrement faible chez les locuteurs du mandarin et du cantonais, dont la plupart avaient été admis au pays en tant qu'immigrants indépendants.

Les auteurs analysent aussi les données d'une étude longitudinale de sept ans menée auprès de deux groupes de nouveaux arrivants, l'un formé de locuteurs du mandarin, l'autre, de locuteurs d'une langue slave (russe, ukrainien et serbo-croate). Tous ont été évalués au terme de leur première année au pays et ont participé au programme Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada ; puis ils ont été interrogés à la fin de leur deuxième et de leur septième année au pays. L'étude a montré que les locuteurs du mandarin éprouvaient des difficultés linguistiques et culturelles sensiblement plus grandes que les locuteurs d'une langue slave, et que les approches actuelles de formation linguistique n'aident pas nécessairement les immigrants à développer le « savoir-être » leur permettant de trouver un emploi et de s'intégrer à un milieu de travail.

Tout autant que les compétences linguistiques, les capacités pragmatiques et les occasions d'interagir dans l'une ou l'autre langue officielle revêtent donc une réelle importance, concluent Derwing et Waugh. En particulier, la faible maîtrise d'une langue officielle jumelée à un faible accès aux connaissances culturelles peut réduire les possibilités qu'ont les immigrants de participer pleinement à la société canadienne. Les auteurs formulent ainsi plusieurs recommandations en matière de politiques, notamment : étendre l'admissibilité aux formations linguistiques financées par le gouvernement fédéral tout en mettant l'accent sur l'expression orale et les connaissances pragmatiques ; élargir le programme Connexions communautaires de Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada pour qu'un nombre accru d'immigrants profitent d'échanges linguistiques informels et d'occasions de réseautage ; susciter la participation des parents immigrants aux activités scolaires pour favoriser l'intégration sociale ; partager les leçons tirées d'activités d'intégration fructueuses avec les différents ordres de gouvernement, les partenariats locaux en matière d'immigration et autres ; organiser des activités de sensibilisation destinées aux Canadiens de naissance, qui hésitent parfois à lier conversation avec des gens de langue maternelle autre que l'anglais et le français.

Language Skills and the Social Integration of Canada's Adult Immigrants

Tracey M. Derwing and Erin Waugh

Much of the research on the integration of immigrants in Canada has focused on their economic performance. As Picot and Sweetman (2012) have pointed out, official language skills “have significant direct and indirect influences on labour market success and are key to positive outcomes” (8). The growing income gap between immigrants and the Canadian-born has worried representatives in governments and researchers, particularly since immigration selection is largely motivated by economic factors. Most recently, social integration has also become a subject of interest. This is in part because of the immigrant unrest that has developed in several European countries, and a concern that similar situations may arise in Canada.

Several measures of social integration have been suggested. One study identified usage of local services, perception of educational and employment opportunity, local satisfaction, participation in cultural activities and use of public space, in addition to income (Reinsch 2001). A related term, social inclusion, is defined as the “realization of full and equal participation in the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of life in [immigrants’] new country” (Omidvar and Richmond 2003, 1). In this study of the role of immigrants’ official language skills, we will use Kymlicka’s description of social integration: participation in “the networks and spaces of civil society, from informal networks of friends and neighbours to membership in more formal organizations” (2010, 1).

We begin with an overview of the main language training programs for immigrants to Canada, the instruments that are used to assess language ability and factors that affect second-language acquisition. Results of several research studies follow, on immigrants’ linguistic proficiency after several years in Canada, language dynamics in a workplace with both Canadian-born and immigrant workers, and the relationship between linguistic proficiency and social integration (including civic and volunteer activities).

Practical initiatives by companies and voluntary organizations to encourage interaction and social integration are the topic of the next section. We then identify a number of emerging issues on which further research is needed: why children from some backgrounds seem to fare less well in school, the potential role of social media in helping immigrants improve their pragmatic language use and the implications of not providing language training for the growing numbers of temporary foreign workers in Canada.

Our policy recommendations are directed at improving the social integration of immigrants and their children through new or enhanced initiatives in several sectors, including expansion of the content and clientele of language training and related programs, particularly to improve newcomers’ listening, speaking and pragmatic skills; involving immigrant parents in school and school board activities to promote social integration; greater sharing of good

practices and lessons learned among the different governments and other organizations active in this field; and contact activities and training sessions to encourage native speakers to be more receptive to non-native speakers. We conclude that problems of social isolation and lack of opportunity to speak English still face many newcomers. These challenges must be met not only to ensure that newcomers feel home in Canada, but also to avoid the overall social unrest that can develop when immigrants are not integrated into the larger community.

Adult Immigrant Language Training

Many factors affect the social integration of immigrants, such as racism, ethnocultural residential concentration and institutional barriers in the health care and educational systems, among others. There is also an underlying assumption that, for an immigrant to be socially integrated in Canadian society, he or she must be relatively proficient in an official language. The federal program Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) is based on the premise that at least rudimentary knowledge of an official language is central to integration and to the “promotion of Canadian citizenship” (CIC 2010, v). Members of all permanent immigration classes (independent, family, refugee) are eligible to take LINC until they become Canadian citizens. LINC is offered across Canada, with the exception of Quebec, Manitoba and British Columbia, where federal funding is provided to provincial governments to administer official-language training programs.¹ In 2008-09, LINC expenditures totalled \$172 million, or approximately \$3,150 per student (CIC 2010). Federal government funding for language training in the non-LINC provinces is also substantial; for example, British Columbia received over \$57 million in 2010-11 (Welcome BC Settlement and Immigration Services 2011), in addition to another \$57 million intended for settlement purposes. The federal government also cofunds a smaller language training initiative, Enhanced Language Training.

Another indicator of the importance that the federal government puts on proficiency in an official language is the recent implementation of language testing in the country of origin for people applying for the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP) (CIC 2011a). However, the language skills of only the principal applicants in the FSWP are assessed; spouses and dependants may have greater needs for official-language training on arrival. Yet another sign of the federal government's concern for linguistic proficiency is evident in a 2011 evaluation of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP). Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) recommended the establishment of minimum language standards, with mandatory testing for lower-skilled workers (2011b). The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration subsequently announced (CIC 2012b) that, starting July 1, 2012, most applicants for provincial and territorial nominee programs from semiskilled and low-skilled professions will have to undergo mandatory language testing.

The Canadian Language Benchmarks

Two descriptors of official-language proficiency are widely used throughout the country: the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 (CLBs) for English and the corresponding Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens 2006 (NCLC) for French (CNCLC 2006). Both measures have 12 levels of proficiency, grouped into three stages: basic, intermediate and advanced. Each stage consists of four levels. The Canadian Language Benchmark Assessment (CLBA) tool is used to measure the four linguistic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing for

levels 1-8, based on the CLBs (Pawlikowska-Smith 2000); scoring procedures for levels 9-12 have not yet been developed. For a short description of linguistic tasks that speakers should be able to perform at each level, see appendix A.²

The CLBs were developed using a communicative competence framework. Initially proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) and later modified by Bachman (1990), communicative competence in second-language learning is characterized not only by linguistic competence (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation) but also by sociolinguistic competence (knowing what is appropriate in a given context), discourse competence (cohesive flow of language across sentences) and strategic competence (knowing strategies to enhance communication, either by repairing a breakdown or by expressing a message beyond one's current linguistic knowledge).

Although the communicative competence framework was the basis for the CLBs, the CLBA measures primarily linguistic competence. Clearly, if people lack linguistic competence (meaning they have extremely limited vocabulary, a weak grasp of grammar and problems using the sound or orthographic systems of English), they will have difficulty reading a newspaper, understanding the electoral system, following safety regulations at work and so on. They will find it very difficult, if not impossible, to function at more than a basic level, so the CLBA's focus on linguistic competence is not misplaced.

However, the CLBA cannot be used to comprehensively assess the so-called soft skills involved in sociolinguistic competence. It does not measure pragmatics, or the "secret rules of language learning" (Yates 2004), which aid in establishing rapport with an interlocutor. As Yates points out, these are the conventions of a given language that native speakers learn through exposure but that may differ dramatically from one language or culture to another. Interrupting, apologizing, disagreeing and teasing successfully and appropriately are examples of pragmatic behaviour that contribute to rapport, which leads to friendship, the basis of social integration (Argyle 2009).

Bardovi-Harlig (2001) argues that pragmatic competence does not develop in step with grammatical competence and that it is therefore important to include pragmatics when teaching language. Moreover, Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) conclude that, without explicit instruction, learners are not likely to develop pragmatic competence because it is so difficult to uncover its "secret rules." This suggests that not only is linguistic proficiency important to social integration, but pragmatic competence, which is governed by culture, also has a major impact on inclusion.

Factors affecting second-language acquisition

Several factors influence an adult's ability to learn a second language (L2). Some of the obvious determinants are quality of instruction, general educational level of the learner (higher is better), age (younger is better), linguistic aptitude (just as with math or music, some people have a greater natural facility with language learning than others) and mother tongue (it is easier to learn a language that is closely related to the mother tongue than one from an entirely different language family) (Derwing and Munro 2009). Motivation has also been shown to have a significant impact

on language learning (see Dörnyei and Ushioda 2009). Moreover, several social factors can have an effect, including social and cultural distance or difference, access to speakers of the L2 and host community support. The greater the social and cultural distance between two linguistic groups, the harder it is to bridge into the new language (Schumann 1976), in part because even in an L2 environment, finding speakers who are willing to talk to newcomers with limited official-language capacity can be difficult (Derwing, Munro, and Thomson 2008).

The impact of some of these factors can be seen in the English-language proficiency of Canadian immigrants when they become citizens. (Immigrants to Canada are allowed to apply for citizenship after a minimum of three years living in the country.) CIC collected combined CLBA scores in listening and speaking from over 3,827 newcomers from 121 countries when they attended their citizenship tests in 2004 (Derwing et al. 2010). CIC also collected demographic information from the citizenship applicants, such as gender, age, first language (L1), occupation, immigration class (independent, family, refugee), language training in Canada and language used at work. In most instances, there were no differences in official-language proficiency between men and women, although educational practices in the countries of origin may have contributed to the few cases where the average CLBA score for one gender was significantly higher than for the other. Age on arrival in Canada was significantly related to the CLBA scores at the time of citizenship: younger immigrants generally had higher scores.

The most striking differences among immigrants' CLBA scores were visible when the average proficiency levels were grouped by L1. Out of 20 language families, speakers of Romance languages (e.g., Italian, Spanish) obtained the highest mean score (7.8 out of 12). Many of the other L1 groups who obtained CLBA average scores over 7 were from European backgrounds; Filipinos (primarily Tagalog speakers) were also high scorers at 7.2. The largest L1 group to enter Canada in recent years, Mandarin speakers, ranked 17th out of the 20 language families at 6.1; Cantonese were 19th at 4.9; and Vietnamese/Cambodian speakers had the lowest mean score, 3.7. What makes these differences all the more remarkable is that 79 percent of the Mandarin speakers and more than half of the Cantonese speakers entered Canada through the independent class, which suggests that most were well educated, yet their language learning, at least in speaking and listening, was incongruous with what might be expected. The average CLBA score for all immigrants in the independent class was 6.8 (including the Mandarin speakers).

Language Ability and Social Integration

Two longitudinal studies have examined immigrants' linguistic proficiency after four and seven years in Canada; both suggest that some immigrants continue to experience barriers related to their lack of language skills. In another study, carried out in a workplace, Canadian-born and immigrant coworkers reflected on language issues in interactions between native and non-native speakers. A series of studies addressed the social integration of immigrants by examining such indicators as membership in voluntary organizations, voting and financial donations to voluntary groups. In some cases, the language spoken at home was used as a proxy for official-language proficiency to see if there was a connection between civic participation and language ability. Taken together, these studies suggest that social integration

depends not only on immigrants' linguistic proficiency, but on pragmatic and cultural awareness on the part of both immigrants and people born in Canada.

Longitudinal studies of immigrants' language proficiency

In 2005, in the last wave of its three-part Longitudinal Study of Immigrants to Canada, CIC examined 7,700 immigrants' social integration in Canada four years after their arrival (Xue 2007). Although all the newcomers reported gradually encountering fewer barriers to settlement over time, "lack of knowledge of one of Canada's official languages was still the most serious problem faced by refugees and other economic immigrants 4 years after landing (25% and 22% respectively)" (7). Language difficulties were a barrier to accessing other education programs that could help in overall social integration. This large-scale study suggests that significant numbers of newcomers still struggle with sufficient official-language proficiency to meet their integration needs at least four years after arriving in Canada.

Derwing and Munro (forthcoming) conducted a longitudinal study of two groups of adult immigrants, speakers of Mandarin and Slavic languages (Russian, Ukrainian, Serbo-Croatian), over a period of seven years. Initially each group had 25 people; they undertook a series of listening and speaking tests in English six times during their first year in Canada, again at the two-year point and finally at the seven-year point. They were also interviewed about demographic information, their daily exposure to English and their adjustment to Canada. All the participants had post-secondary education in their countries of origin, and all were initially assessed by a local agency as beginners in speaking and listening according to CLBA scores. The first round of data collection took place within the newcomers' first four months in Canada, while they were in LINC programs. A principal goal of the research was to compare the linguistic development of the two language groups, where variables such as length of time in the country, general education level and initial language instruction in Canada could be held constant.

The English-language development of the immigrants was gauged in a variety of ways, but the measures of most interest here came from listening experiments in which native speakers used 9-point Likert scales to assess randomized speech samples taken at the outset of the study, the two-year point and the seven-year point. The samples were taken from the immigrant speakers' descriptions of an eight-frame cartoon story. The listeners rated degree of L2 accent (from "no accent" to "very heavily accented"), comprehensibility ("very easy to understand" to "very difficult to understand") and fluency ("very fluent" to "very dysfluent," meaning many pauses, repetitions and false starts).

The native listeners perceived no significant progress in the Mandarin group from the first time they were tested to the last on any of the three measures of accent, comprehensibility and fluency. Although the Mandarin participants' vocabulary had expanded and their grammar constructions were more complex, they were no easier to understand for native listeners at the seven-year point than they were four months after arriving in Canada. The ratings for the Slavic-language speakers, on the other hand, showed significant ongoing improvement over the seven years in both comprehensibility and fluency, although listeners did not

perceive a change in accent between the two-year and seven-year points. Although the two groups started at the same proficiency level in English, were well educated and had taken similar language training in Canada, they fared differently.

One major distinction between the two groups is the nature of their L1s. Mandarin, as a Sino-Tibetan language, is not related to English, whereas Slavic languages are Indo-European — the same language family to which English belongs. Because Mandarin is linguistically more distant from English, English is somewhat more difficult to learn for speakers of this L1. However, linguistic distance is not always a factor in ultimate achievement in second-language learning. Tagalog speakers from the Philippines, who also speak a first language that is completely unrelated to English, have achieved excellent results (Derwing et al. 2010). Many Filipinos attend school in English in their own country, which partially explains why many immigrants from the Philippines scored highly on the CLBA at the time of Canadian citizenship.

The Mandarin and Slavic-language groups differed in other ways that may explain their linguistic outcomes: the nature and quality of their exposure to English, cultural differences in willingness to communicate, perceived efficacy of language training, and perceptions of the challenges of adjusting to life in Canada.

Exposure to English

To determine the participants' exposure to English, Derwing, Munro, and Thomson (2008) asked them to report the frequency of "conversations of 10 minutes or more" on a scale from "never" to "several times a day." The 10-minute minimum was selected to exclude brief routine conversations, such as greetings, shopping or restaurant exchanges and the like. When the Mandarin participants were interviewed at the end of their second year in Canada, Mann-Whitney *U* tests revealed that they had had significantly fewer conversations of 10 minutes or more with both native speakers and other non-native speakers of English than the Slavic-language speakers. Furthermore, the Slavic-language speakers listened to English-language radio broadcasts significantly more often than did the Mandarin speakers. Although these were rough measures, the differences in degree of exposure to English were also reflected in interviews. One Mandarin participant expressed a sentiment shared by many of her compatriots: "Some students are very smart, they speak a lot. But, like me, maybe shy. Can't to speak much" (370). A typical Slavic-language speaker also professed nervousness when speaking English but said, "I trained for this [small talk] very well during my salesperson practice, you know, when you just really need to start conversation to sell something. You just have to do it. That's it" (370).

Willingness to communicate

The two linguistic groups differed in their "willingness to communicate" (MacIntyre 2007; MacIntyre et al. 1998). Willingness to communicate (WTC) is the "probability of engaging in communication when free to choose to do so" (MacIntyre et al. 1998, 546). The factors that lead to WTC include social and individual contexts (intergroup relations, personality), affective-cognitive contexts (intergroup attitudes, social situation, communicative competence) and

motivation (self-confidence, intergroup motivation, interpersonal motivation). MacIntyre et al. suggest that “certain groups may be more homogeneous than others with respect to certain traits or profiles. As well, groups may show different average or baseline levels of a given trait” (1998, 558), which can result in heightened or reduced levels of WTC.

Derwing, Munro, and Thomson (2008) found that the Mandarin and Slavic-language speakers demonstrated distinct patterns in several of the more stable factors that make up WTC. The Mandarin participants were more reluctant to initiate conversations with others and appeared to be less aware of current local events (e.g., elections, sports) than the Slavic speakers. The Slavic-language speakers as a group were more assertive and more deliberate in their efforts to learn English. They also had an advantage in some instances because of interests some of them shared with the larger community (e.g., hockey), which could lead to conversations. One aspect of the WTC framework, intergroup relations, encompasses discrimination. This issue did not emerge in the interviews, although discrimination may certainly have affected these learners' day-to-day experiences.

Derwing, Munro, and Thomson (2008) made several recommendations for LINC and other English-as-a-second-language (ESL) programs to enhance listening and speaking components, especially since many of the Mandarin participants were not taking opportunities to speak or listen to English outside of class, even though they lived in a primarily monolingual English-speaking city. Strategies for initiating small talk, background information on topical issues of local interest, oral fluency development, explicit pronunciation instruction and contact activities that require interaction with other speakers were suggested as ways to enhance learners' opportunities to use English.

Perceived efficacy of language training

When the same participants were interviewed seven years after they began the study, they were asked to reflect on their language training, in both LINC and subsequent ESL classes (Derwing and Munro, n.d.). Fifty-four percent of the Mandarin speakers and 93 percent of the Slavic-language speakers indicated that the programs had been helpful, but the majority of the Mandarin speakers felt that their classes had not provided sufficient opportunities for listening and speaking practice. Furthermore, some felt that they were ill prepared for language in the “real world.” As one participant put it, “I feel seems like after — because after finished the school, I work in the company. Seems like different.” The interviewer followed up: “So the language was different?” The participant confirmed: “Yeah! Different.” Another Mandarin participant said of his language instruction, “So I don't think that meet my needs...Other Chinese classmates also complained the same...We just prefer to go back to the Chinese learning style, just the teacher push us to learn grammar, to give presentation, so the teacher can write down the results and give advice how you improve this.”

Mandarin students who prefer Chinese approaches to teaching, such as a heavy emphasis on learning grammar rules, should be helped to understand why these are ineffective ways to enhance listening and speaking skills. To improve oral and aural skills, students need practice interacting with others. To convince students who have this attitude toward

language teaching, instructors would be well advised to discuss with them the research findings on oral fluency development.

The Slavic-language speakers were generally pleased with the instruction they received, although some complained that there were too many other speakers of this language group in their classes; for example, "My regret is because in my class were lots of Russian people...and they keep talking in Russian, so it was kind of distracting for me." Others indicated that they would have preferred more opportunities to interact with native speakers of English. "What was maybe missing was the aspect of communication with the native speaker. We didn't have really a lot of opportunities to talk to them. We were stuck in this group of our peers...and we were forced to talk to each other, but it wasn't the native speaker, [so] who could correct you?" On the whole, however, the Slavic-language speakers in the Derwing and Munro study felt that they benefited from their language training. "You know what? I was happy I got those courses, because this is the environment. These are the people around, the same problems, and you can see you're not separated from society. You're in society. You are in a special group of society, it's true, but you are still in society."

In focus groups of former LINC students, CIC (2010) also found that students complained about the lack of opportunity to use oral language; in fact, in a comparison study with a non-instructed group, CIC found that LINC students did not improve significantly in listening or speaking, although reading and writing skills improved significantly.

Challenges of adjusting to life in Canada

At the seven-year point, the participants were asked about the most difficult challenges of adjusting to life in Canada (Derwing and Munro, n.d.). Several from both language groups chose language as the most difficult barrier. Many of the participants also discussed culture, but there were clear differences between the two linguistic groups' responses. The Mandarin speakers identified more problems:

"The most difficult thing, the way you thinking, maybe your heart. I mean, when I came here, I just think, you know, I am Chinese, right. I am not even Canadian. You come to here, you bring your way of thinking. And sometimes, you just feel uncomfortable, right?"

"The most difficult thing is how to fit into society, especially the culture."

"I think it's culture. Culture is, yeah, a really big part. I think it's more than language" [emphasis added].

"I, I think it's maybe culture. It's a little different. Uh, and talk about, I think it's uh, many Chinese idea in my, in my, in my, in my head, so I can't talk to other, other people...China and Canada life is totally different and most people keep Chinese, Chinese life."

"I think the most [difficult] thing is culture. Different culture. Like, before I think, it's language. But now, since I working, I stay here so long, I think it's culture is the most difficult part" [emphasis added].

The Slavic-language speakers' comments on culture were quite different from those of the Mandarin speakers:

*"Culture is a little bit different here, but for some reason it's close to me and it was easy to adjust. And honestly, it's just my opinion, I like when people who come here, they leave behind their troubles and actually even their cultures."
"You can change your attitude, for sure. And part of it is 'fake it till you make it.' We're in the luckiest place to be English-as-a-second-language people because Canadians are*

amazing. They have a lot of patience. They have lots of support and a sense of humour as well, like, I had no problem to make a joke...I appreciate all the opportunities that we have here. Basically what I really like in this kind of lifestyle and environment is that what you give is what you get. And that's absolutely true because you can become basically anything you want, depends on the amount of effort. Nothing is in your way. There are some rules, absolutely, and there are some principles in place, and barriers that you have to kind of jump over, but still, if you have your goal in front of you, you can do anything."

One person who thought English was the most difficult adjustment went on to say:

"Honestly, I am happy that my kids are here."

Interviewer: *"So even though your kids are going to speak Russian, they're going to be Canadians in the end."*

"But they are Canadians — they are already Canadians."

Interviewer: *"Does that bother you?"*

"No. Honestly, I just like separate. I cut myself from children now on purpose, because I do not want my culture, my level, my understanding of life interrupting them from becoming part of Canadian society."

The Derwing and Munro longitudinal study (forthcoming) had a small number of participants, but the much larger Derwing et al. study (2010) using CIC data revealed similar patterns of language development: Slavic-language speakers scored much higher on the speaking and listening assessment at the time of citizenship than did Mandarin speakers. The Derwing and Munro study (forthcoming) indicates that native listeners perceived the Slavic-language speakers to have made significantly more progress in English over seven years than the Mandarin speakers. Some Mandarin participants, after seven years in Canada, identified cultural differences to be more significant hurdles than language, although they originally assumed that English was their greatest barrier. However, language and culture are inextricably intertwined; the Mandarin speakers in the study have more limited language skills, less pragmatic competence, less exposure to English and greater cultural distance. They live in a city with a relatively large and cohesive Chinese community. All are well educated, and all are employed, although some are underemployed (e.g., a medical doctor is now a dealer at a casino). The Slavic-language speakers, on the other hand, have generally re-entered their original occupations or have retrained. The majority said they were happy with their current status.

Socializing at work: Immigrant engineers and their Canadian-born colleagues

Newcomers spend a significant portion of their day at work, so many of their opportunities to develop pragmatic competence and build social networks come from interactions with their Canadian-born coworkers. These colleagues, however, may not be motivated to socialize at work or outside of work with their immigrant coworkers, especially when there may not be easily identified avenues for developing rapport.

In a study investigating Canadian-born engineers' perceptions of their immigrant colleagues' comprehensibility and accent, Derwing and Munro (2009) found that, by and large, the engineers showed a greater preference for "easy to understand" speech than they did for a particular accent. This finding suggests that they were not necessarily biased against accented L2 speech, but were more concerned with understanding the message. However, these same engineers expressed frustration at the English skills of many of their immigrant colleagues.

When asked whether their immigrant colleagues had problems communicating, all 24 Canadian-born engineers in the study said that they did, and 92 percent indicated that it took much more effort to talk with an L2 speaker than with a native speaker. When asked about socializing at work with colleagues, 96 percent of the Canadian-born said that employees preferred to stay within their own first-language groups, and two-thirds of the Canadian-born reported that they were reluctant to initiate conversation with the immigrant engineers. Speaking of her colleagues, one Canadian-born engineer said, "Some are impatient, don't like the hassle; sometimes there are cultural barriers." The Canadian-born engineers cited cultural differences and silence on the part of their L2 colleagues as problems. When the native speakers were asked what topics they discussed socially at work with any of their coworkers, regardless of background, they identified weather, family, weekend and recreational activities, entertainment (movies, music, video games), the news and sports. When asked whether they would be less likely to discuss any of these topics with L2 speakers, two-thirds suggested that cultural differences and language made it more difficult to discuss movies, news, family matters and humour. It appears that most social interactions with L2 engineers were limited to mundane topics, such as the weather, thus limiting the immigrants' opportunities to improve their pragmatic skills.

When the Canadian-born engineers were asked what advice they would give to their immigrant colleagues, most suggested that they should practise speaking English. Some proposed that they should speak English at home with family members to improve their communication skills at work, and some went so far as to say that the immigrants should give up their first language altogether. One engineer indicated that the immigrants should "learn more about the culture and norms of our conversation" because "it's frustrating to adapt to their language level" (Derwing 2009). Unfortunately, practising English at home with family members is unlikely to help L2 speakers learn Canadian conversational norms, nor is it a reasonable request, as some of the Canadian-born engineers acknowledged.

When 15 immigrant engineers in the same study were interviewed, they were asked with whom they typically ate lunch. Only one said that he ate with whoever was in the lunchroom; the majority reported eating lunch alone at their cubicles or eating with other immigrants. The L2 engineers reported very little socializing with Canadian-born colleagues after work hours and only two (13 percent) reported having close friends who were Canadian-born. Some L2 engineers said they found it relatively difficult to get to know their neighbours and to fit into the local culture. The non-native speakers indicated that the hardest things about working in a new culture were tied to communication. The following comments are representative of the group:

*"Sometimes you have more knowledge, but you don't express it. You stand in a very low position."
"Language is very, very important in the working place."
"Adapting to your office mates. It's a blend of cultures here, so you have to be sensitive that what you do or say won't be offensive, or you know, offend somebody."
"Your confidence level, because confidence level is already zero due to having no job for a long time."*

Language and social integration

Although the research is not extensive, there have been some studies of the relationship between language background or ability and social integration. Huang, Anderson, and Grabb (2007)

examined participation in voluntary associations by language and region. In a telephone survey of over 4,500 respondents (based on data from a 2000 Equality, Security and Community survey; Green and Kesselman 2006), they compared volunteerism rates of francophones, anglophones and allophones (speakers whose first language is neither French or English) and determined that the region in which the immigrants resided was a strong predictor. For example, francophones in Quebec reported lower rates of volunteerism than francophones in the western provinces. Anglophones' participation rates also varied by region, and allophones appeared to have rates slightly lower than but similar to those of their regional counterparts. However, there was no indication whether the response rate of allophones was affected by the language of the survey; only allophones with a reasonably high proficiency in English or French would have been able to respond. Thus the full range of newcomers were likely not assessed for civic involvement, making this study's results somewhat unreliable.

Baer (2008) conducted a study of civic participation in several immigrant communities. His premises were that a lack of linguistic proficiency may explain limited engagement in voluntary associations and that some immigrant communities, because of their cultural background, may be more inclined than others to volunteer. In addition, Baer hypothesized that, the larger the ethnic community, the less likely it was that immigrants from that community would participate in mainstream volunteer organizations. Baer cited a study conducted by Grabb, Huang, and Anderson (2007), which indicated that "with the exception of East Asians, members of ethnic groups do not engage in significantly less voluntary association activity than those identifying as 'Canadian'" (2008, 9). To explore this question further using data from the General Social Survey 2003, Baer examined the number of voluntary association memberships reported by respondents, whether respondents had done any unpaid voluntary work in the last 12 months and how often respondents participated in group activities and meetings. Baer reported that "non-official language use at home constitutes a major barrier to civic involvement" (21), as the persons involved "are much less likely to get involved, either at meetings, as non-paid volunteers, or simply as holders of memberships" (23). Immigrants from China and Hong Kong were the least likely to speak an official language at home, at 13.3 percent; immigrants from India, at 28.6 percent, were the next least likely to use English or French at home. It should be noted here that the use of L1 at home is correlated with less civic involvement but it is not necessarily the cause. Many newcomer parents are encouraged to use their L1 at home to ensure development of that language in their children, which, in turn, would support strong language skills in the L2 (Cummins 2009).

When he compared immigrant source countries, Baer found that immigrants from the Netherlands had higher volunteer involvement than Canadian-born people, whereas immigrants "from India, France, and China/Hong Kong have significantly lower levels of participation than Canadian-born individuals" (25). When time of arrival in Canada was taken into account, Baer found that Asian immigrants engaged less often in voluntary activities than other immigrant groups and the Canadian-born. Baer concludes that language background is an important factor that determines the extent to which immigrants engage in voluntary associations.

In a study using Statistics Canada's Ethnic Diversity Survey (2003), Boyd (2009) analyzed respondents' answers to the following question: "Are you a member of, or have you taken part in the activities of any groups or organizations at any time in the past 12 months? For example, a sports team, a hobby club, a community organization, an ethnic association, etc.?" (2). Boyd then examined the data according to the respondents' usage of an official language (using data only from respondents 25 or older). She first divided the sample into Canadian-born and foreign-born and then categorized the respondents according to official-language use (see table 1). Boyd's assumption was that the foreign-born type 3 group would have lower linguistic proficiency in an official language. Three groups (Canadian-born type 1, Canadian-born type 2 and foreign-born type 1) showed very similar participation rates in groups or organizations.

Table 1: Membership and participation in voluntary associations according to official language use (percent)

	Canadian-born		Foreign-born		
	Type 1 ¹	Type 2 ²	Type 1 ¹	Type 2 ²	Type 3 ³
Participation in groups or organizations	47	44	45	35	32
Belonging to service club, agency or charity	16	14	14	7	5
Belonging to ethnic or immigrant association(s)	2	9	9	21	28
Belonging to religion-affiliated group(s)	12	24	21	22	32

Source: Adapted from Boyd (2009).
¹ English and/or French was the first language learned; English and/or French is spoken most often at home.
² The first language learned was neither English nor French; English and/or French is spoken most often at home.
³ The first language learned was neither English nor French and it is spoken most often at home.

When Boyd examined how many groups the respondents had joined, foreign-born types 2 and 3 were most likely to indicate only one (82 percent and 81 percent, respectively). These figures suggest that official language use is related to participation in formal organizations. Further analyses based on the types of organizations involved revealed that foreign-born types 2 and 3 had considerably higher levels of participation in ethnic or immigrant associations than the other respondents, and that foreign-born type 3 respondents participated in religious groups to a greater degree than any of the other categories. Presumably, many of the ethnic, immigrant and religious associations are places where type 3 individuals especially can interact in their mother tongue, whereas service clubs and charities, which tend to be broader in scope, will more likely conduct themselves in English and/or French.

Boyd also examined voting as a measure of civic participation. Foreign-born type 3 immigrants (that is, those who use a language other than an official language most of the time at home) were far less likely to report voting in elections than any of the other respondents. Finally, Boyd noted that in response to a question about their "feeling of belonging" to Canada, a large percentage of all groups, including foreign-born type 3, reported "they had a very strong sense of belonging to Canada" (2009, 12), despite a limited capacity to participate in some aspects of civil society for those with language challenges.

The Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (Hall et al. 2009) compares immigrants' and native Canadians' financial donations to charities and other nonprofits, as well as the time they volunteer to charitable organizations. The 2007 survey results show that

immigrants tend to give less money than the Canadian-born overall, but those who do donate give larger contributions. Immigrants were also less likely to volunteer, but those who do so generally give more hours than the Canadian-born. Immigrants “were more likely to say that they did not know how to become involved...that the costs associated with volunteering were a barrier...and that they were dissatisfied with a previous volunteer experience” (45). Unfortunately, there is no information in the survey as to the language proficiency of the respondents or their ethnic background. However, the survey indicates that immigrants who have been in the country for a longer time are more likely to donate or volunteer. Immigrants are also more likely to volunteer or donate to a religious institution than the Canadian-born, which may be indicative of feeling more comfortable with others from a similar background.

Scott, Selbee, and Reed (2006) produced a report on volunteering, donating to charities, group membership, civic engagement (voting) and informal help and giving by immigrants, based on the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating and the 2003 General Social Survey. Their principal findings were that immigrants volunteer for many of the same reasons as the Canadian-born, with the additional motivation of using volunteering as a way to find employment. Fewer immigrants than Canadian-born people vote in elections, but this appears to be tied to recency of arrival in Canada: those who have been in the country longer are more likely to vote and more likely to donate to charity. As was pointed out by Couton and Gaudet (2008) and Hall et al. (2009), the surveys in question do not provide information on country of origin. Moreover, there is no information about language proficiency in the surveys, but it is safe to assume that persons with limited official-language skills did not participate. Nonetheless, volunteering is an activity that could lead to greater social participation and integration.

Some similar themes were examined in an extensive study of language training and settlement success of newcomers to Australia. The authors (Yates et al. 2010) determined that “most of the participants reported few opportunities to speak English and many seemed to be socially isolated. This severely restricted their opportunities for improving their spoken English through social interaction with both native and non-native speakers of English” (67). The authors made several recommendations to the government of Australia, most of which linked language acquisition and social inclusion. They suggested that language classes should direct “explicit attention to language learning and social networking strategies” (80). They also recommended that the government develop and promote “community outreach programs to increase awareness in the broader community of migrant issues and strategies for interacting with speakers from different language backgrounds, in particular programs that bring expert speakers of English and newly arrived migrants together” (80).

Approaches to Encouraging Interaction and Integration

It is clear that ongoing exposure to an official language facilitates language development, but since many immigrants have limited opportunities to talk with people outside their own linguistic communities, approaches that encourage both interaction and integration are needed. In recent years, some companies, having identified linguistic and cultural issues that are barriers to success, have sought assistance from experts in intercultural education and pragmatics to work with their staff. The resulting workplace initiatives, described below, are

intended to improve the communication skills of both immigrants and Canadian-born workers. Another viable source of interaction to promote integration is volunteering; we look at suggestions for providing mutually beneficial experiences for both immigrants and the organizations providing the volunteer activities. Finally, we discuss some of the gaps in language classrooms that may limit immigrant students' understanding of pragmatics.

Language and cultural training in the workplace

One of the primary sites where adult immigrants may have opportunities to establish social connections with others is at work. Although some workplaces are not suitable for encouraging interaction, the social and linguistic skills and cultural knowledge required in some jobs are not very different from the social, linguistic and cultural knowledge that is valued in the wider community. Particularly in professional positions, conversations at work are not all based on job-related issues; they often refer to culturally significant local activities. As immigrants outpace the Canadian-born as a source of net labour force growth (HRSDC 2007), effective approaches to enhancing communication in the workplace become more necessary and may well have far-reaching social consequences outside of work. In response to the need for immigrant workers to develop pragmatic competence and for Canadian-born workers to gain intercultural sensitivity, community colleges and other organizations across the country have launched training programs targeting essential communication skills.

NorQuest College's Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education in Edmonton has a series of workshops that explicitly teach pragmatic competence, or the "secret rules," for immigrants and intercultural communicative competence for Canadians. This training provides opportunities to raise awareness of cultural differences that can lead to greater understanding within multicultural teams and facilitate the process of social integration. Holmes, Waugh, and Evans (2009) found that leaders in a large Alberta-based engineering company had difficulty promoting their internationally educated professional (IEP) team members, not because they lacked technical skills but because they were missing the critical pragmatic skills to interact effectively with their Canadian-born coworkers and company clients: "Moreover, leaders observed that even after IEPs were told in performance reviews that they needed to improve their pragmatic and cultural awareness, the IEPs seemed unable to do so." For example, the IEPs had difficulty knowing how to admit to an error, how to show initiative and how to communicate project difficulties in a timely manner during project meetings and to clients. Workshops were developed to assist the IEPs with these skills.

At the end of the project, 60 percent of the IEP participants showed significant improvement in discourse completion tasks (a type of written role play). They were given scenarios such as interrupting a project leader, disagreeing with a manager and giving feedback to a subordinate. In each instance, the IEPs had to indicate what they would say. These linguistic functions are all culturally mediated; knowing how to respond effectively is an indicator of an understanding of broader communication norms. When asked whether they found the workshops helpful, the IEPs' responses were overwhelmingly positive:

"Oh, yeah — I was introduced to the Canadian workplace culture."

"Yeah, sure, it helped but it was too short. The culture aspect was the most helpful."

"Ah, yes, definitely...I think this course could help me in the future."

"The focus on speaking and communication was most helpful."

Training Canadian-born people to work in multicultural settings also benefited the IEPs. Often an awareness of cultural and linguistic differences gave the Canadian-born workers some insights into the challenges facing their colleagues and resulted in more communicative effort on their part. As one IEP indicated, "I'm getting cooperation. People are friendly...Acceptance value is more. And the main thing is management is aware of immigrant limitations, so it's easy to move ahead."

These sorts of programs are occurring across the country, spearheaded by organizations such as TRIEC, the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, whose goal is to help immigrants become employed at levels commensurate with their skills. TRIEC has brought many stakeholders to the table: employers, government, nongovernmental organizations, regulatory bodies, community organizations and others. This inclusive approach has resulted in a greater awareness of some of the barriers facing newcomers, including culturally determined linguistic behaviours. As a result, materials such as training videos and discussion guides have been developed that focus on enhancing communication across cultural groups, especially between immigrants and nonimmigrants (TRIEC 2012).

Volunteering and language development

In a study of relatively newly arrived immigrants, Dudley (2007) explored to what extent they participated in voluntary activities and why. Adult immigrants in official-language instruction programs are surrounded by their classmates — other immigrants who are not fully proficient in the language of instruction. Some of them may share the same first language, which may lead to shortcuts in communication that serve the immediate need but limit acquisition of the L2. When immigrants come from different language backgrounds, they have to use the L2, but they may feel as though they cannot benefit to the same degree as if they were speaking to a person with higher proficiency. It is certainly the case, especially with relative newcomers, that pragmatic competence, which is culturally determined, is unlikely to be learned from classmates.

The advantage of L2 classrooms is that instructors can bring aspects of language to the attention of students that they cannot get from textbooks; furthermore, students can receive explicit feedback about their own use of the L2, which has been shown to be important for language learning (Lyster 2001; Lyster and Ranta 1997). However, the instructor must deal with the needs of the whole class, which in some programs could contain up to 25 people. For learners who are eager to get more practice speaking the L2 with native speakers, volunteering in a context that allows for social conversations may be appealing. Furthermore, research on study-abroad programs, where learners are immersed in a second language, suggests that oral fluency can be enhanced with speaking and listening practice (Freed and Segalowitz 2004).

Dudley (2007) surveyed 55 ESL students from CLB 6 (intermediate) and CLB 8 (advanced) classes to determine whether they had volunteered in an English-speaking organization, and for what reasons. Eighty-four percent of the students indicated that they had not volunteered; their primary reasons, in rank order, were "lack of opportunity and knowledge about volunteering, lack of time, [and] limited language ability" (546). A large majority (87 percent)

indicated that they would like to volunteer in the future. Those who had volunteered in an English-speaking organization gave as their reasons “help[ing] others, killing time, improving English speaking skills, meeting people, [and] gaining professional experience” (547). The students volunteered in a range of settings, including elementary schools, immigrant-serving agencies, a retirement centre for veterans, a summer festival, a tax organization and a church. Although some were able to interact with several other people in English, three students did not have many opportunities to practise the language. Two of these worked with people who shared their first language, and the volunteer who worked at the veteran centre found that the veterans had difficulty communicating due to either physical or mental disabilities.

Dudley (2007) recommended that language programs for immigrants make students aware of volunteering possibilities, by arranging for various volunteer agencies to make presentations in ESL classes. She also suggested that language programs make volunteering a part of the curriculum and ensure that placements are appropriate for the students in terms of their preferences, their current language abilities and the opportunities to engage with either native speakers or people with higher proficiency.

L2 language classrooms

As noted earlier, the intent of LINC classes is to provide learners with sufficient language skills to integrate into Canadian society. Although LINC is a federally funded program, there are considerable differences across the country in implementation. For example, in the three provinces that have agreements with the federal government to manage settlement services (Quebec, Manitoba and British Columbia), different forms of language training programs have emerged. The levels of training also vary from one province to the next. Manitoba, for instance, offers language training from beginning to advanced levels. In Ontario, LINC classes go from literacy levels (beginners who are not literate in their first language) to CLB 7/8, whereas in Alberta, LINC is largely limited to the range from literacy to CLB 5. Alberta provides additional ESL instruction that dovetails with LINC offerings, but in several other provinces, federal funding is the principal source of immigrant language training. In other words, official language learning opportunities are not equal across the country, even within CIC's own programs.

In the lower levels of LINC the focus tends to be, as one would expect, on foundational aspects of language: vocabulary development, grammar, listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Most programs use a communicative approach to language learning, as opposed to rote learning or a heavy focus on rules. The goal of communicative language teaching is to encourage learners to use the L2 as soon as possible and to engage in authentic language. In the past 15 years, many communicative classrooms have also incorporated task-based language learning, wherein tasks are designed to enhance the students' acquisition of English and particularly their “noticing” of differences between their own output and that of the models provided (Ellis 2003). Significant research has gone into determining the most effective means of L2 acquisition, but time is limited for adult immigrants. They often need not only to learn an official language but also to requalify for their occupations or find a new occupation to support their families. Some complexities of pragmatics, the culturally determined social

aspects of language, are often covered superficially in language classrooms because of the competing demands of other aspects of the language. Language classes for L2 newcomers are essential to their integration; without language, they would be unable to interpret much of what goes on around them. But undeniable gaps occur, in part because of time constraints and in part because of the difficulties in teaching pragmatics, some aspects of which are best taught when students are relatively advanced in the L2 acquisition process.

Another important consideration with regard to L2 classes for immigrants is the nature of the content through which language is taught. LINC was initially intended to help low-proficiency newcomers to gain an understanding of Canadian society and to impart “Canadian values” to them (Employment and Immigration Canada 1991). However, the interpretation of Canadian content by teachers and materials developers varies widely. Thomson and Derwing (2004) conducted a survey of ESL teachers in Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta to determine which textbooks were most often employed in LINC classrooms. The authors then assessed the textbooks for cultural content, using the categories of geography; history; government (e.g., the parliamentary system); law and policy (e.g., the Charter of Rights and Freedoms); functional skills (e.g., filling out an employment application); cultural facts (e.g., descriptions of people, places and food); and cultural values (e.g., multiculturalism, peace, civic responsibilities). Sixty-four percent of the textbooks contained little or no content that could be considered Canadian, rather than generally North American in nature. Although many teachers reported that they tried to supplement the texts with other sources of information, they were challenged by the introduction of topics that were somewhat beyond the language proficiency levels of the students and by their own professed lack of knowledge as to what Canadian culture is meant to entail.

In addition, language textbooks often also fail to introduce pragmatics in a useful way. Because so many popular textbooks are written for the international market, they are largely devoid of culturally based communication (Cook 1998), cannot account for sociocultural variables (Hinkel 2001) and therefore “cannot be counted on as a reliable source of pragmatic input for classroom language learners” (Bardovi-Harlig 2001, 25). The language is usually inauthentic (Bardovi-Harlig et al. 1991), and the choice of options to express a given message is often limited and simplistic (Vellenga 2004).

Emerging Issues in the Relationship between Language and Social Integration

Immigrant children and youth

Whether parents successfully learn an official language and are able to fully integrate into Canadian society is an important question, but a potentially more pressing concern is the adaptation of their children. Although many immigrant and 1.5-generation children achieve high proficiency in an official language — many are near native or native-like in their usage — other children do not fare as well.³ As Toohey and Derwing (2008) pointed out, overall demographic trends can obscure what happens in smaller immigrant communities. They showed, for example, that although the academic success of young immigrants in British Columbia was reported to exceed that of Canadian-born youth overall, when the students’

countries of origin were disaggregated, some communities were doing very poorly. In an examination of graduation patterns and provincial examination results in four large high schools in Vancouver, Toohey and Derwing found that speakers of Tagalog, Vietnamese, Spanish and Indo-Punjabi had graduation rates below 50 percent. In an earlier study, Gunderson (2007) found that these same four groups did less well than Canadian-born students in their school grades. Mandarin and Cantonese speakers, on the other hand, outperformed the Canadian-born. Garnett (2010), who also examined ESL students in British Columbia, determined that “ethnocultural background predicts [ESL trajectories] robustly” (701). Students speaking Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese were not as likely to graduate as their peers, while Chinese students were more likely to do so. Garnett observed that those who took ESL only when they reached high school had a higher dropout rate than the overall rate for all immigrant children and youth who took ESL at any point in their schooling. In a forthcoming study, Corak suggests that the high school dropout rates of immigrant children and youth are higher the older the child is at the time of arrival in Canada, starting at age nine (Corak forthcoming).

The extent to which any immigrant students are socially integrated, regardless of their background, is unknown, but it is likely that those who drop out of high school and who have difficulties with an official language do not face positive prospects. Research is necessary to focus on the social integration and linguistic development of immigrant and 1.5-generation students over an extended period.

Social media

Another area that has not yet been researched sufficiently is the role of social media in providing immigrants with access to the “secret rules” of language, or the appropriate pragmatic use of language in order to promote social integration. Kabilan, Ahmad, and Abidin (2010) proposed using Facebook for second-language learning, with instructors devising activities to enhance learners’ access to aspects of language of which they might otherwise be unaware. Blattner and Fiori (2009) suggested that Facebook could serve to build community for language learners and to develop intercultural understanding and pragmatic competence. It remains to be seen, however, whether Facebook and other social media can be utilized successfully by teachers or learners to support increased awareness of pragmatics and, ultimately, greater social integration. In a very preliminary study, Lee (2009) found that many adult immigrant ESL students had Facebook accounts but used them to interact with others from their own ethnic groups rather than joining groups outside their own communities. Some controlled investigations of the impact of social media on immigrant language learning and integration into the wider community are needed.

Temporary foreign workers

In the past decade or so, the number of temporary foreign workers (TFWs) in Canada has risen considerably. However, TFWs are not eligible for language training. Participants in the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) often spend up to eight months in Canada before returning home at the end of the season. A considerable proportion of these workers, primarily from Mexico, have been travelling back and forth to Canada for

as long as 25 years (Hennebry 2012). Another category of TFWs, those who enter under the Pilot Project for Occupations Requiring Lower Levels of Formal Training (NOC C and D), are required to return to their countries of origin after four years and cannot return for another four years. Certain high-skilled TFWs (e.g., university professors) can be streamed into the Provincial Nominee Program soon after they arrive; they are not typical of TFWs entering Canada, but universities and other employers utilize the PNP to avoid the lengthy delays through the FSWP. High-skilled TFWs have another pathway to permanent residence status through the Canadian Experience Class, launched in 2008. Once they complete the transition, they are eligible for federally funded language training and other settlement services.

As Hennebry (2012) has highlighted, many TFWs are socially isolated and have limited skills in English, so much so that their well-being is threatened. Currently, there are very few supports for TFWs, and outside of Manitoba and Alberta, where some assistance is offered, workers have very little recourse if there are difficulties at work. Bradford (2004, cited in Hennebry 2012) interviewed Mexican workers in the SAWP and heard comments that showed the real need for more English-language skills. "Sometimes...you can't express an opinion about work...I don't know, like how it could be faster or better or safer, but it is difficult without English" (15).

Canadians should question the ethics of bringing TFWs for extended periods of time to do what is often dangerous or undesirable work, without also providing them with language learning and social interaction opportunities. As Max Frisch, a Swiss playwright and novelist, once said, we need workers, but human beings will come. Hennebry's overview points to many problems with the TFW program that are caused in part by limited language proficiency.

Policy Recommendations

In considering the role of official-language knowledge in the social integration of immigrants, the four possible approaches to integration outlined by Hiebert and Sherrell (2009) are useful. The first is to provide no assistance to immigrants, making them fully responsible for their own integration. This scenario has never happened in Canada. There have always been some supports in place for newcomers (Vineberg 2011), and printed materials to assist with integration appeared early in the twentieth century, such as *The Education of the New Canadian* by Anderson (1918) and *A Handbook for New Canadians* by Fitzpatrick (1919).

The second possibility outlined by Hiebert and Sherrell is that a single branch of government, perhaps assisted by settlement agencies, could oversee "immigrant integration operating in a kind of 'silo,' isolated from the rest of the state" (6). The third option is the "whole of government" model, involving coordinated activities on the part of federal, provincial and municipal jurisdictions.

The fourth and last scenario is similar to the third, but with the addition of several other partners such as employers, mainstream institutions and other community groups, so that the whole of society would contribute toward the integration of newcomers. This is the approach that many would favour and the one that is likely to result in the greatest levels of social

integration for newcomers, but only if there is strong leadership. To implement a whole-of-society approach, it is incumbent upon all three orders of government to cooperate to ensure that a fragmented, piecemeal set of programs to support the social integration of immigrants does not result. The following policies (summarized in the box on page 26) are recommended to enhance the linguistic ability and social integration of newcomers with whole-of-society involvement.

Expand the content and clientele of language training programs

Many adult newcomers — spouses and dependants of independent class immigrants, family and refugee class newcomers — need extensive language training through LINC (Derwing et al. 2010). It is clear from CIC's evaluation of LINC programming (2010) and from Derwing and Munro's longitudinal study of L2 immigrants (forthcoming) that newcomers' listening and speaking skills (including pronunciation) are not improving sufficiently in the language classroom. LINC instructors should be familiar with current research and approaches in order to assist learners to improve in these areas. The Mandarin students who indicated they wanted their teachers to use Chinese teaching methods should be provided with research evidence to support the types of activities that lead to greater oral fluency. To convince students to take risks with new approaches, teachers must be familiar not only with pedagogical strategies but with the rationale behind them.

A lack of comprehensibility is a major barrier to social integration for speakers with pronunciation problems. Many teachers, however, feel uncomfortable teaching pronunciation and report having little professional development in this area (Foote, Holtby, and Derwing 2011). Programs that train ESL instructors should review their offerings to ensure that graduates of their programs have a good background in teaching strategies to motivate and encourage speaking and listening, pronunciation and pragmatics.

L2 speakers who have high linguistic scores on arrival still often need pragmatics and cultural support to understand their new communities (Derwing and Munro 2009). Programming in LINC and other ESL classes should put much greater emphasis on speaking, listening and pragmatics to promote the social integration of newcomers. Workplace programs for newcomers about pragmatics and intercultural training for the Canadian-born can facilitate better relations (Holmes, Waugh, and Evans 2009). Currently there are partnerships between governments and employers for such programs (Holmes, Waugh, and Evans 2009), but a significant expansion of high-proficiency language training in workplace settings will be necessary in the coming years. For small and medium-sized businesses, the federal government may need to provide greater financial support.

Volunteer programs that are beneficial both to adult learners of an official language and to the volunteer sites should be made an optional component of many LINC programs. This would require monitoring the students' experience, to be sure that this experience actually opens up more language use opportunities and to make certain that the students are not exploited. Additional administrative funding for LINC programs would be necessary.

Mentoring arrangements can also be valuable components of language programs (Laroche and Rutherford 2007). When a learner is matched with a mentor from the same occupational background, the immigrant receives constructive information on Canadian practices. The mentor may also open doors to social networks to which the immigrant might not otherwise have access.

LINC programs should be open to citizens and to temporary foreign workers. Representatives of settlement agencies and language training organizations have argued for years that the restriction of LINC to noncitizens is unfair and counterproductive. As Seidle (2010) has pointed out, some immigrants, because of a range of circumstances, are unable to take language classes during their first few years in Canada. The most common reason is the need to work to support oneself or one's family (CIC 2010). Other common reasons include having to care for small children and a lack of transportation. If circumstances change once a newcomer has become a citizen, it is utterly unproductive from a social integration point of view to deny him or her language classes. Moreover, LINC programming at more advanced proficiency levels (over CLB 7) should be available across the country. Many of the critical "soft skills" for successful workplace and social integration require advanced-level language training.

Temporary foreign workers, as Hennebry (2012) has pointed out, are not very temporary in many instances. The social isolation experienced by some TFWs is extreme, and some face serious physical dangers associated with a lack of linguistic skills. Some TFWs spend time in Canada year after year, paying into social programs. Others are here for four years at a time. These workers are all contributing to the success of the Canadian economy. The Canadian government should, at the very least, ensure that TFWs have the opportunity to obtain basic knowledge of an official language. If language training is left to employers, then there should be random assessments to determine whether workers have sufficient language proficiency to perform their jobs safely.

Expand the Community Connections program to increase social integration

The federally funded program Community Connections, formerly known as the Host Program, pairs newcomers with local volunteers who are either permanent residents or Canadian-born hosts. These connections help establish an initial social network in Canada within which newcomers can practise speaking and listening in English and can learn about some cultural norms and traditions, while the volunteers gain an appreciation of the newcomers' culture. Unfortunately, there are often long waiting lists for newcomers to be matched with volunteer counterparts. CIC should survey the providers of this program for suggestions on how to expand it. Clearly, this would require additional funding, but more support for this program can bring Canadian-born people and immigrants in contact with one another, with mutual benefit. Consider this comment from a highly educated Mandarin speaker who had been in Canada for two years and had completed LINC: "It's not easy to find native speakers to talk to. Yesterday, I talk to my husband. I said, we should found the opportunity to speak to native people. My husband also say, 'It's difficult. Where can we found native people who can, who can talk to us?'" (Derwing, Munro, and Thomson 2008, 372). Social integration requires willingness to communicate not just from immigrants but also from members of the host society.

Involve immigrant parents in school districts' activities to promote social integration

Many school districts now have sizable populations of immigrant-background students; in some locations, they are the majority. How districts and individual schools interact with parents varies widely (Rossiter and Derwing forthcoming), but schools are a site of social integration within the community where parents should be welcomed. Some schools have made serious efforts to reach out to immigrant parents, often providing some interpretation supports through the SWIS (Social Workers in Schools) program or cultural brokers. Not all immigrant parents can spare the time to participate in school programming, but schools have an important role to play in providing parents with opportunities to understand the Canadian education system and the values that underlie it. Schools using the best practices for inclusion should serve as models for others. Ultimately, L2 parents may have an opportunity to develop their own official-language skills by participating in school events: for example, serving on committees or the school board, preparing lunches, helping on field trips, attending school concerts or observing their children's classes.

Share successful initiatives and coordinate social integration activities of provinces, municipalities and Local Immigration Partnerships

Provinces have become major players in immigration through the use of PNPs. Manitoba has been particularly successful in increasing its inflow of immigrants, including to smaller centres (Carter, Morrish, and Amoyaw 2008). However, although the majority of principal applicants to the Manitoba PNP indicated that they had official-language proficiency before they arrived, 80 percent took language training within their first two years in Canada; they needed the additional support in order to function successfully in the workplace and the community (Carter, Morrish, and Amoyaw 2008). In addition to offering language supports, Manitoba devised a formal agreement with communities that expressed an interest in receiving provincial nominees. This agreement requires that the community assist the newcomers, not only by providing employment but also by ensuring that the newcomers and the members of the existing community have meaningful opportunities to interact. Manitoba's model has been highly successful and provides several lessons to be learned.

Provinces vary considerably in their support of language training and other integration services. It would be useful for them to compare practices and to negotiate with the federal government to ensure that language supports are adequate to facilitate social integration.

Until recently, many municipalities, particularly those other than Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, were not very involved in immigrant integration programs, which were viewed as a responsibility of the federal, provincial and territorial governments. Several Canadian cities, however, are now making efforts to include immigrants by working in partnership with settlement agencies to identify and address needs in the community. In Edmonton, for example, the city council approved the resources to move forward with the following initiatives: ongoing development of city immigration and settlement policies; establishment of an internship program for immigrants; implementation of a grants program and rental subsidy for a facility to support immigrant organizations and groups; hiring another multicultural liaison coordinator; putting into place an ongoing public involvement process with immigrant and

refugee communities; publishing a newcomers' guide; maintenance of the labour attraction website (movetoedmonton.com); and implementation of an action plan addressing racial discrimination both in the city's employment and service structures and in the broader community (Reilly and Derwing 2009). Some of these initiatives enhance language development in important ways. The public involvement process has resulted in a multicultural coalition of immigrant and refugee groups who meet regularly to discuss issues, to conduct community-based research and to confer with the city on matters of concern. In participating, these immigrants and refugees are learning about several processes that are typical of municipal politics.

In 2008, CIC, in recognition of the importance of municipalities to newcomer integration, announced a program, Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs), to promote integration at the local level in communities ranging from cities to small towns. The partnerships were initiated in several communities in Ontario (1 city-wide and 14 neighbourhood programs in Toronto and 30 elsewhere in that province) and are now expanding to other parts of the country. Stakeholders from a wide range of sectors are included in LIPs. Windsor was one of the first municipalities to participate. Its LIP developed a community plan, indicating that English was an essential skill for newcomers, that there was a need for occupation-based ESL instruction and that language was a barrier to accessing services such as those offered by health institutions. The plan suggested that to address these needs, more collaboration and less competition was necessary in the settlement sector (Windsor-Essex Local Immigration Partnership 2010). The Windsor-Essex Action Plan for 2010-12 includes priorities such as urging "funders to provide child-minding and transportation supports to allow newcomers access to settlement and language programs" and developing "a public awareness campaign promoting multiculturalism and the benefits of settlement and integration" (City of Windsor n.d., 3). As new LIPs are being established across the country, it would be useful to have a regular forum, funded by the federal government, where best practices for social integration of immigrants can be shared, so that problems already encountered in early partnering arrangements can be avoided in the future.⁴

Develop and implement awareness-raising educational initiatives for native-born Canadians on the benefits of immigration

Social integration of immigrants requires public education for the Canadian-born; as Mulder and Krahn (2005) stated, "Educating Canadians about how immigration benefits Canada could also generate increased support for diversity" (442). Negative behaviours on the part of the Canadian-born (e.g., accent discrimination) clearly affect the quality of immigrants' lives and their social integration; these are issues that require ongoing and vigilant interventions.

One aspect of public education that has been ignored is the role of native speakers in communication exchanges with L2 immigrants. A common complaint of native speakers regarding L2 speakers is that they are too difficult to understand, because of their foreign accents. Some actively avoid having a conversation with a non-native speaker, because they are afraid that they won't understand and worry that they will embarrass the L2 immigrant (Derwing, Rossiter, and Munro 2002). It has been shown, however, that brief training on how to listen to accented speech (Derwing, Rossiter, and Munro 2002) or intergroup contact activities (Kang 2008; Kang and Rubin forthcoming) would help native speakers to be more receptive to non-

native speakers. Governments, post-secondary institutions, health facilities and employers should include contact activities and training sessions on listening to accented L2 speech in their orientation or professional development processes. Such programs could increase Canadians' willingness to communicate with L2 immigrants in general. Furthermore, people who work directly with immigrants would gain a better understanding of their coworkers from the sorts of intercultural activities that illustrate the interconnectedness of linguistic pragmatics and culture. This will become increasingly important as the number of immigrants in the labour force grows.

Policy Recommendations

1. Expand the content and clientele of language training programs.
 - Ensure a stronger focus on speaking, listening, pronunciation and pragmatics in Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)
 - Introduce "pragmatics in the workplace" programs
 - Fund volunteer programs associated with LINC
 - Fund mentoring programs associated with LINC
 - Allow citizens and temporary foreign workers to take LINC
2. Expand the Community Connections program to increase social integration.
3. Involve immigrant parents in school districts' efforts to promote social integration.
4. Share successful initiatives and coordinate social integration activities of provinces, municipalities and Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) through federally funded conferences.
5. Develop and implement awareness-raising educational initiatives for native-born Canadians on the benefits of immigration.

Conclusion

The studies on social integration discussed here point to the importance of language proficiency, and the studies of language development show the necessity of pragmatic skills and of sustained opportunities for learners to interact with speakers of an official language. Raising language requirements at the selection stage will not in itself guarantee the integration of newcomers. Without exposure to pragmatics, which is culturally based, immigrants with high test scores in an official language may experience considerable difficulties fitting in and will have communication problems at work and in other contexts.

For effective social integration to take place, newcomers with limited or no official-language skills would benefit from LINC classes that emphasize listening and speaking skills. Those with intermediate or advanced test scores would also benefit from increased opportunities to develop their pragmatic abilities. Many talented immigrants with relatively high language proficiency and strong occupational skills struggle because they do not have a grasp of the soft skills that help with the establishment of social bonds. Currently, whether an immigrant has access to pragmatic content is largely dependent on luck and location. Language classrooms, workplace settings and volunteer organizations are all contexts in which teaching pragmatics could be introduced or enhanced.

Although publicly funded language training programs focus on adult newcomers, Canada's future success depends in part on how children and youth fare in schools. Despite the fact that many immigrant youth have better high school completion rates than Canadian-born students, the fact that some children from certain backgrounds are falling significantly behind their peers is troubling. Without appropriate interventions, these newcomers are unlikely to integrate successfully, either socially or economically, into mainstream society.

Compared with many European democracies, Canada has been relatively free of social unrest within immigrant communities, but this cannot be taken for granted. Recent initiatives such as the Local Immigration Partnerships suggest that communities and governments recognize the importance of helping Canadian-born citizens understand some of the adjustments that immigrants must make. Many other projects have been implemented in schools, settlement agencies and other organizations. But if immigrants are truly to integrate socially, more linguistic supports and additional opportunities to interact with Canadians are needed. Willingness to communicate — an important concept in this regard — is a two-way street. Immigrants need the linguistic and pragmatic skills to communicate, and Canadians need to be proactive in welcoming newcomers and helping them to understand the informal aspects of language and life in Canada.

Appendix A

Table A1: Language proficiency checklist: sample tasks (adapted from Canadian Language Benchmarks [CLB] "Can Do" Checklist)				
CLB level	Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing
Pre-CLB (literacy)	I can greet people (e.g., "hello" and "how are you?")	I can understand short greetings.	I can recognize some but not all of the letters in the alphabet and some but not all numbers.	I can write some but not all of the letters in the alphabet and some but not all numbers.
1	I can greet people.	I can understand short greetings.	I can read the alphabet and numbers.	I can write the alphabet and numbers.
2	I can talk about my family.	I can understand parts of conversations.	I can read a simple greeting card.	I can write a cheque.
3	I can say a few simple sentences about familiar, everyday topics: my work, family, health, the weather, etc.	I know when a greeting is formal or informal.	I can read and understand a short story or simple news item.	I can fill in a short, simple form. I can write an invitation.
4	I can use short sentences to buy something or talk to the doctor.	I can understand a conversation on a familiar, everyday topic when you speak slowly.	I can read simple news items.	I can fill out a simple application form of up to 20 items.
5	I can join in conversations on familiar topics. I feel comfortable using English with people I know in social settings.	I can identify the situation, emotional state and relationship of speakers.	I can read information that I receive regularly, such as a gas bill, or some items in a newspaper.	I can write a short letter, note or e-mail using appropriate language.
6	I can interrupt politely when necessary.	I can follow a conversation about a familiar topic at a pace slightly slower than normal.	I can scan an extended chart or schedule for specific information.	I can write a short letter, note or e-mail using appropriate language and layout.
7	I can express and respond to gratitude, appreciation, complaint, disappointment, dissatisfaction, satisfaction and hope.	I can understand a formal or informal conversation on familiar topics at a descriptive level.	The language I read is both concrete and abstract, dealing with facts, opinions and feelings.	I can respond in writing to appreciation, complaint, disappointment, satisfaction and hope.
8	I can manage a conversation, check comprehension, encourage others and handle minor conflicts.	I can understand some technical conversations, especially about my line of work.	I can infer the writer's intention in messages containing general opinions and assessments.	I can write an effective résumé and cover letter.
9	I can prepare a 15- to 30-minute formal presentation.	I can separate facts from opinions and identify a speaker's purpose and point of view.	I can read a wide variety of authentic multipurpose texts: newspaper articles, short stories, novels, academic materials, manuals and business documents.	I can write formal and informal notes or e-mails to schedule, cancel or reschedule business or academic appointments.

Table A1: Language proficiency checklist: sample tasks (Adapted from Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) "Can Do" Checklist.) (cont.)				
CLB level	Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing
10	I can persuade, counsel, assess basic needs or evaluate detailed information in one-on-one routine situations.	I can understand most general-interest and technical topics in my field. I may not always understand cultural references and humour.	I can read a wide variety of complex multipurpose texts in printed or electronic format: charts, tables, forms, letters and research papers.	I can write effectively for most academic and business tasks for most audiences: detailed minutes of meetings, e-mails and reports.
11	I can contribute to extended authentic exchanges about complex, abstract, conceptual and detailed topics in large formal and informal groups.	I can understand complex, detailed information, ideas and opinions needed for complex tasks (work, academic, personal).	I can identify politeness conventions and their violations in making and denying claims.	I can write formal texts needed for complex, nonroutine tasks in demanding contexts of language use.
12	I can lead formal group discussions, meetings and workshops.	I can understand Canadian cultural references, symbolic and idiomatic language, irony, sarcasm and verbal humour.	I can identify/evaluate instances of "face threatening" talk (e.g., challenges to defend criticism) or violations of social politeness/cooperation.	I can produce effective and stylistically polished essays, documents, articles and theses.
Sources: Canadian Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (n.d.); Pawlikowska-Smith (2000).				

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Notes

- 1 In April 2012, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration announced that, during the ensuing two years, the Government of Canada will resume management of federally funded settlement programs in Manitoba and British Columbia (CIC 2012a).
- 2 For more detailed information, see the website of the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, <http://www.language.ca/>. In addition, a CLB document describes the needs of literacy students (those who have limited or no literacy in their first language), who require pre-CLB courses to give them elementary reading and writing skills before they can graduate to CLB 1 (Johansson et al. 2000).
- 3 The 1.5 generation includes immigrants who were born in another country but who moved to Canada as children or adolescents.
- 4 The project Pathways to Prosperity: New Policy Directions and Innovative Local Practices for Newcomer Attraction and Integration, a cross-regional initiative headquartered at the University of Western Ontario in London, may be an appropriate host for such events.

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