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## CANADIAN BILINGUALISM AND BICULTURALISM IN DIACHRONIC DIMENSION

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The article concerns Canadian bilingualism and biculturalism phenomenon in diachronic dimension. It will provide general overview of this phenomenon and try to cover the distinguishing factors that make Canada great. The distinction between individual bilingualism and institutional bilingualism is studied. The legal status of English and French languages in Canada, the measures which enabled the public authorities to ensure an equal status to these two languages are examined. Canada's cultural duality and the concept of biculturalism are also under consideration.

**Keywords:** language, culture, bilingualism, biculturalism, Anglophones, Francophones.

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**Problem statement.** The preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity in today's world is a major concern to many scientists, artists, writers, politicians, leaders of linguistic communities, and defenders of linguistic human rights. Cultural diversity is seen and used as a valuable resource to enrich the lives of all. It appeals to the better nature of people to see languages and cultures not as problems to be

solved by assimilation but rather as human rights and resources for mutual enrichment. Canadian bilingualism and biculturalism in diachronic dimension, its positive impact on the society are regarded in the context of this discussion.

**The latest research and published works analysis.** The topic of bilingualism as a sociolinguistics phenomenon has always drawn attention in a variety of contexts. The pioneering phase of bilingual-

ism research in linguistics began with the works of Weinreich U., Haugen E., Mackey W.F., Peal E. and Lambert W.E. in later half of the 20th century. These seminal works continue to impact the field of bilingualism research. Many current researches conducted by Canadian scholars explore linguistic and nonlinguistic factors of Canadian bilingualism, biculturalism, and multiculturalism. Among them are Linda Cardinal, France Martineau, Martin Meunier, Marie-Claude Thifault. A prolific researcher, Linda Cardinal is focused on the study of language policies and more specifically on the relations between the state and language minorities. She studies the models that ensure the preservation and growth of linguistic diversity in a world of growing integration. Professor E.-Martin Meunier's research program seeks to better understand how the main cultural changes since the Quiet Revolution have transformed the relation of the citizens of Québec and of the Francophone communities to their nation and to their identity.

**Unsolved questions under consideration.** Topicality is determined by the world-wide prestige of Canada as a bilingual, bicultural and multicultural state of a unique kind. English and French – the two languages and the two communities which speak them coexist in this country under conditions duplicated nowhere else. This phenomenon as world's model is worth being studied.

**The aim** of this paper is to analyze Canadian bilingualism and biculturalism as a social and cultural phenomenon. The most important reasons are to examine how linguistic duality and cultural diversity, tolerance and a sense of accommodation became fundamental and complementary values of Canadian identity and the resources of mutual enrichment.

**The main part.** The preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity in today's world is a major concern to many scientists, artists, writers, politicians, leaders of linguistic communities, and defenders of linguistic human rights. Cultural diversity is seen and used as a valuable resource to enrich the lives of all. It appeals to the better nature of people to see languages and cultures not as problems to be solved by assimilation but rather as human rights and resources for mutual enrichment.

The notion of Canada as a bilingual country is not a new concept in Canadian politics, but can be traced back to the European colonization of Canada. Canada has long expressed support for the political principle that cultural diversity is a valuable and enriching quality of national life. The nation's cultural diversity was in fact a major determinant of the particular form of federalism adopted at Confederation. Language politics and the issue of official bilingualism have been a factor in Canadian politics since before Confederation. They have impacted not only the operation of federal institutions, but also the cultural and linguistic makeup of Canadian society [6, p. 27].

It is necessary to indicate the meaning we shall give in particular to the words "bilingualism" and "biculturalism". Since these terms are understood in different ways it is important at the outset to be clear about which meaning or meanings we shall use. The main task is to inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism

in Canada and steps that were taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution.

The word "bilingualism" may seem to many clear and unambiguous. Yet there are certain distinctions which must be made. In general, this is a study of the people who speak more than one language and the social motivations for bilingualism – why people learn a second language and the net result in their lives. It also considers how the fact that speakers are bilingual influences the structure of the languages themselves. Both bilingualism as a feature of an individual speaker and bilingualism as a feature entire nation are discussed. The bilingualism which here concerns us applies only to Canada's two official languages, English and French.

Thus, our goal is not necessarily to define this term, but to unpack all that comes with it – the social, cultural, educational, cognitive, developmental, biological, psychological, and linguistic components that would together assist us in understanding how humans acquire, process, and use more than one language. We know, for example, that language is learned within a sociocultural environment and that culture has a great influence on the pragmatics or uses of language within a particular group of language speakers [2, p. 178].

Bilingualism is the term for speaking one or more languages. Usually the speakers' mother tongue or first language is one of the two languages that make them bilinguals. Bilingualism is used as a cover term for multilingualism, too – speaking more than two languages. Some researchers use the term plurilingualism for speaking more than two languages. It may come as a surprise, but more people in the world are bilingual than monolingual – a clear reason why bilingualism is worth studying.

"Being bilingual" doesn't imply complete mastery of two languages. Speakers are rarely equally fluent in two languages. All humans of normal intelligence speak at least one language. We say that speakers are bilingual when they have also acquired or learned to speak or understand some phrases that show internal structural relations in a second language. The problem is that there is no accepted formula for exactly what's necessary for a person to claim to be a bilingual. Usually, being bilingual is associated with being able to speak two or more languages. But only few bilinguals are as proficient in any second language as they are in their first language. And, if they do speak several second languages, they generally don't speak all of them equally well. There are two socially based main reasons: few bilinguals have been equally exposed to all languages in their repertoire and they don't use them with the same frequency or in the same situations [7, p. 9].

The bilingual nature of an institution, a province, or a country is totally different from the bilingualism of individuals. A bilingual country is not one where all the inhabitants necessarily have to speak two languages; rather it is a country where the principal public and private institutions

must provide services in two languages to citizens, the vast majority of whom may very well be unilingual. The same is true for a bilingual province or a bilingual institution. Consequently, "the existing state of bilingualism" in Canada is not so much a question of the number of bilingual people as of the position of each of the two languages in everyday life and of the opportunities actually offered to each of them. Naturally a bilingual institution, province, or country can function efficiently only if there are a sufficient number of bilingual people to maintain contact between the two language groups. The problem of the first language must come first: it is vital; it is more essential for the human being than questions about a second language. Therefore the existing state of bilingualism in Canada, in our opinion, means first the existing state of the English and French languages, each being first considered by itself. We must inquire whether each has, in a real sense, the means to live [6, p. 29].

Consider the importance of language for a particular group, and the political dimensions of this problem when the group is sufficiently important and moved by a common will to exist. This is very much a contemporary problem, which is dividing many countries, especially states born of post-war decolonization. This happens because of the failure to appreciate the importance of the language problem its explosive character. Canada was not engulfed in similar disputes. Why is this so? Canadians have understood on time that a language permits communication with anyone who understands it, but that the problem goes deeper than the mere question of communication. Language itself is fundamental to activities which are distinctively human. It is through language that the individual fulfils his capacity for expression. It is through language that man not only communicates but achieves communion with others. It is language which, by its structure, shapes the very way in which men order their thoughts coherently. It is language which makes possible social organization [8, p. 92-94].

Thus a common language is the expression of a community of interests among a group of people. It is not surprising, then, that any community which is governed through the medium of a language other than its own has usually felt itself to some extent disenfranchised, and that this feeling has always been a potential focus for the political agitation. Moreover, like skin colour, language is an easily identifiable badge for those who wish to take issue with a different group, and thus it provides them with a rallying sign even for contests which are basically not those of language or race. On one hand, language, viewed as a means of expression, is at the core of the intellectual and emotional life of every personality. On the other hand, viewed as a means of communication, it makes possible social organization. It is used for the trivia of everybody living, on the labour market, in professional activities, in several forms of recreation, in church, in clubs, in schools, and so on [7, p. 385].

Before exploring the relationship between language and culture, and even before analyzing the concept of biculturalism, we wish to dwell for an instant on the word "culture" and explain the sense in

which we shall use it. About three hundred definitions of this word have been recorded, and in some disciplines several are used simultaneously.

We know that all North Americans, if not most of the people of the Western world, live in highly industrialized societies within the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and consequently possess a common culture. This conclusion is true, but it is too broad to help us much. The same can be said of the traditional humanistic sense of the word "culture," but for the opposite reason: it is too restricted [4, p. 43].

The reality covered by the neologisms "biculturalism" and our definition of "bicultural" appears to us to be broader, including more than intellectual and artistic activity. Moreover, the majority of briefs dealing with this question chose this broader conception of culture. In this sense, which we ourselves shall use, culture is a way of being, thinking, and feeling. It is a driving force animating a significant group of individuals united by a common tongue, and sharing the same customs, habits, and experiences. Clearly the two cultures designated in our terms of reference are those associated with the English and the French languages in Canada. But as there are the two dominant languages, there are two principal cultures, and their influence extends, in greatly varying degrees, to the whole country [5, p. 42].

As can be seen, we use the words "bilingualism" and "biculturalism" to indicate two styles of living which are distinct, even though they obviously have much in common. Just as bilingualism should not lead to a blend of two languages, so Canada's cultural duality cannot be taken to mean a mixture of the two cultures; each has its own existence. Certainly the cultures are not watertight compartments; they are evolving and constantly borrowing from each other. To the extent that they are alive, they continually undergo change in accordance with their own drive and line of development.

Understood in this way, culture is the sum of the characteristics particular to a group and common to its individual members. Depending upon the degree of education, the social class, or the region, there will be different ways of living the same culture, as there are different ways of speaking the same language. Culture is something that draws together individuals who otherwise are clearly different [8, p. 98].

Furthermore, individuals participate in a culture with varying intensities. People placed in a strange environment will be influenced by it, perhaps in every aspect or only in certain parts of their lives. This is the phenomenon of acculturation. We know that some Francophones whose family life is still French in character gradually adopt at the plant or office behaviour patterns prevalent in the English-speaking environment. This progressive acculturation can be as difficult as learning a new language and subject to the same sort of problems. The existence of two great, distinct cultures in Canada may seem unreal to many people, particularly to those who have very little contact with other cultures, and especially if they have no knowledge at all of other languages [5, p. 49-52].

In our view the term "biculturalism" covers two main realities. The first is the state of each of the two cultures, and the opportunity of each to

exist and flourish. The second is the coexistence and collaboration of these two cultures within our country; that is to say, the set of conditions which will enable members of these two cultures to cooperate effectively. Cultural diversity has widened horizons; it has also given opportunities for varied approaches to the solution of different problems. Finally, the coming together of diverse peoples in Canada also benefited the culture [6, p. 33].

We have already approached the subject of the relationship between a given language and the culture of which it is the principal element. Language is in the first place an essential expression of a culture in the full sense of the word; from the intellectual standpoint language is certainly the most typical expression of culture. As a means of communication, language is the natural vehicle for a host of other elements of culture. It fulfils this function in many ways. Not only does it convey the notions and modes of expression which are part of a culture, it is also the means by which a cultural group discovers and assimilates new elements originating outside it. The integration into a language of new ideas or of foreign modes of expression is both a criterion of the vitality of the language and of the culture of the group which speaks it; conversely, the absence, more or less pronounced, of integration at this level is a symptom of weakness or of inadaptability in a language or culture [3, p. 125].

The life of the two cultures implies in principle the life of the two languages, which postulates an equal partnership between the two founding races or le principe de l'egalite entre les deux peuples fondateurs. As we understand, this equality should be the equal partnership not only of the two peoples which founded Confederation but also of each of their respective languages and cultures. For Canadians the principle of equal partnership takes priority over all historical and legal considerations, regardless of how interesting and important such considerations may be. Canadians did not simply recognize two main languages and cultures, they examined the ways in which the Canadian Confederation could develop in accordance with the principle of equal partnership [6, p. 31].

Equality may be simply that of the members of a linguistic and cultural group, or that of the group itself considered collectively. Individual equality means essentially that everybody has the same access to the various benefits of a society without

being hindered by his cultural identity. Thus, it is not enough for members of a minority group to have access to the same activities, institutions, and benefits as the members of the majority group; that simply requires an absence of discrimination against individuals as such. The equality to which we refer requires that a person who engages in some activity or associates with some institution need not renounce his own culture, but can offer his services, act, show his presence, develop, and be accepted with all his cultural traits [4, p. 87].

The principle of equality implies respect for the idea of minority status, both in the country as a whole and in each of its regions. Within the provinces or smaller administrative entities, both Anglophones and Francophones live in some cases as a majority, in some cases as a minority. Since the English-speaking population is larger across the country, its members are less often in the minority; but they are the minority in some areas, especially in the province of Quebec. The Francophones are usually in the minority outside Quebec. In either case, however, the principle of equality requires that the minority receive generous treatment. This proposal may seem Utopian, but is it really so? Recognizing the rights of a linguistic minority does not reduce those of the majority: with a little good will, the rights of both can be exercised without serious conflict, as is clearly demonstrated by the example of Canada [5, p. 52-54].

**Conclusion.** The investigation of Canadian bilingualism and biculturalism is a broad linguistic, cultural and social field. What makes Canada unique as a bilingual state is that two official languages English and French and the two communities which speak them coexist in this country under conditions duplicated nowhere else.

Bilingualism provides a perspective on linguistic and cultural diversity. The value of becoming bilingual or multilingual extends to intercultural communication.

The present investigation examined the impact of bicultural identity and bilingualism on the development of Canadian society and the benefits of becoming bilingual and bicultural. Languages and cultures are not seen as problems but rather as human rights and resources for mutual enrichment. Despite Canada's policy critics it has positive implementation and serves as a model to many other countries.

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## **БІЛІНГВІЗМ ТА БІКУЛЬТУРАЛІЗМ КАНАДИ В ДІАХРОНІЧНОМУ ВИМІРІ**

### **Анотація**

Стаття присвячена білінгвізму та бікультуралізму Канади. Досліджено особливості функціонування білінгвізму та бікультуралізму в канадському суспільстві. Проаналізовано основні принципи формування канадської ідентичності засобами державної культурної політики. Сконцентровано увагу на специфіку формування та реалізацію мовної політики. Розглянуто два типи білінгвізму: індивідуальний та державний.

**Ключові слова:** мова, культура, білінгвізм, бікультуралізм, англофон, франкофон.

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## **БИЛИНГВИЗМ И БИКУЛЬТУРАЛИЗМ КАНАДЫ В ДИАХРОНИЧЕСКОМ ИЗМЕРЕНИИ**

### **Аннотация**

Статья посвящена билингвизму и бикультурализму Канады. Исследованы особенности функционирования билингвизма и бикультурализма в канадском обществе. Проанализировано основные принципы формирования канадской идентичности. Сконцентрировано внимание на специфику формирования и реализацию языковой политики. Рассмотрено два типа билингвизма: индивидуальный и государственный.

**Ключевые слова:** язык, культура, билингвизм, бикультурализм, англофон, франкофон.