Immigrant Parents' Perspectives on Heritage Language Maintenance and Multilingual

Digital Books

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ABSTRACT

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Many immigrant parents in Canada seek to foster their children's language and literacy development in a heritage language as well as the official languages of English and French. The purpose of this study is to describe immigrant parents' (a) beliefs and practices related to passing on a heritage language to their children and (b) views on using websites providing digital stories in multiple languages as a resource to support the heritage language.

Through two semi-structured interviews, eight parents reflected on their heritage language and literacy practices, shared their beliefs about heritage language maintenance, and described their experience of sharing digital stories on the Storybooks Canada and Global Storybooks websites with their children. Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that participants engaged in parent-child conversations, storybook reading, and storytelling to support their children's language development in both the heritage language and one or both of Canada's official languages. The parents also believed that multilingualism was pertinent to the future of their children and valued the role of extended family and community in passing on their home language, culture, and identity. To support their efforts to transfer heritage languages, parents reported they needed more resources, language schools, and access to books in their home languages. Additionally, parents believed that the storybook websites were helpful in the maintenance of heritage languages and most (6 of the 8 participants) showed interest in incorporating the websites into their language and literacy practices. The findings can inform schools, families, and immigration policymakers.

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Introduction

Parents play an important role in the language development of their children. Parents that speak the same language at home as is dominant in the local society (majority-language speakers) transmit their language to their children relatively easily since the children are exposed to the same language at home, school, and in the community. On the other hand, families who speak a different language at home than the dominant one in society (minority-language speakers), must navigate the mismatch between the language at home and school. Parents in this situation are usually the ones saddled with the responsibility of transmitting the minority language to their children, often while they are themselves in the process of learning the official language of their host countries.

Generally, immigrant families understand the official language of their host countries as a necessity to having social, economic, and personal success in their new communities, but parents still want their children to acquire the same "mother tongue" that they did to preserve their culture and stay connected to their countries of origin (Dagenais, 2003). The 'mother tongue' can be a minority language as is the case in Canada, meaning that it is a language other than French, English, or an Indigenous language (Cummins, 1992, cited in Duff & Li, 2009). Minority languages can also be referred to as *heritage languages*, both terms will be used interchangeably in the remainder of the thesis. Not all immigrants, however, speak a language that is different from the majority language of their host country. The Canadian immigration selection process, for example, gives priority to people who are more likely to integrate into Canadian society, and consequently, many immigrants can speak English or French, the two official languages of Canada. Nonetheless, many speak and/or understand a heritage language as well (Statistics Canada, 2017b). In these situations, it is up to the parents or primary caregivers to choose

whether to transfer their heritage language to their children. Some researchers have reported a loss or weakening of the heritage language while immigrant parents and their children focus on learning the official and majority language of their host countries (Guiberson et al., 2006; Nesteruk, 2010). This is unfortunate since bi- or multilingualism can be beneficial for children.

Research has shown, for instance, that bi- or multilingual (i.e., individuals with fluency or comprehension in two or more languages) outperform monolinguals (individuals with fluency or comprehension in one language) on some measures (Bialystok, 2017; Molyneux, 2006). For example, Kovacs and Mehler (2009) explored whether bilingual one-year-olds (i.e., children exposed to two languages) were better than their monolingual peers (i.e., children exposed to a single language) at learning two different syllabic structures concurrently. The researchers presented the infants with syllables in an AAB (e.g., lu-lu-po) and ABA pattern (e.g., lu-po-lu) and used a looking paradigm to assess the infants' learning. The bilingual infants were better than the monolingual infants at learning the two syllabic structures. The authors concluded that bilingual infants found it easier to adapt to change and were more flexible learners.

Similarly, Bialystok (2017) reviewed studies that investigated the relationship between bilingualism and cognition in infants and older children. She reported that childhood bilingualism is associated with greater imagination, open-mindedness, creativity, and flexibility. Based on her review, Bialystok concluded that bilingualism enhanced certain aspects of cognitive ability and proposed that having two or more different words for an object, concept, or idea heightens children's ability to see things from different perspectives.

Cummins (2005) argues that bilinguals have greater linguistic awareness which gives them broader and more diverse experiences in life. Moreover, according to Cummins, in situations where children learn one or more languages from birth at home, and additional

languages later, they can tap into their pre-existing knowledge of their heritage language to help them with learning the new language. Drawing upon the child's heritage language also sends children a message that their language is important, thereby contributing to the individual's sense of identity and belonging within language communities (Cummins, 2005).

In summary, research suggests that bilingualism, and more specifically, the maintenance of minority languages while a majority language is being acquired, can be beneficial for children's cognitive, social, language, and psychological development. Additionally, the literature suggests that although bi- and multilingualism can be assets for children, some immigrant parents struggle to maintain their language, particularly when it is a minority language in the host country.

Parents have been shown to use diverse strategies to raise their children bi/multilingually. Some of these are implemented outside of the home, such as parents sending children to heritage language schools. Others are internal to the home, such as speaking only the heritage language at home and using audio recordings, videos, books, and/or the internet as resources (Kennedy & Romo, 2013; Schwartz et al., 2011). More specifically, one of the ways suggested in the literature to support children's bi- or multilingual development is through reading the same books to children in more than one language. The focus of my study is on immigrant parents' perspectives on heritage language maintenance generally, and on using digital stories available in multiple languages as a resource to support their child's development of the heritage language(s) as well as the official languages of Canada. Before presenting the study in more detail, I provide additional information about the Canadian context and the role of the home language environment in supporting language development.

Canada, Immigration, and Bilingualism/Multilingualism

Canada is one of the top 10 destinations for international immigrants. Immigrants make up 1 in every 5 Canadians and more than 1 in every 3 school-aged children (United Nations, 2020) with 75.5% of them settling in the six largest metropolitan areas: Vancouver, Ottawa–Gatineau, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton, and Montréal (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Among the countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Canada has the second-largest percentage of first-and second-generation immigrant students (Huddleston et al., 2015), with almost 2.2 million children under 15 years old (37.5% of all Canadian children) who are first-generation immigrants or have a parent who is a first-generation immigrant (Statistics Canada, 2017b). Furthermore, the number of people in Canada who reported speaking languages other than English or French at home increased by 13.3% from 2011 to 2016 due to changing patterns in immigration (i.e., the countries from which newcomers to Canada have emigrated) and this increase was expected to continue (Statistics Canada, 2017a). The most recent census shows the expectation was fulfilled. While in 2016, 7.7 million people reported having a mother tongue or heritage language other than English or French at home, by 2021, the number had risen to 9 million people, an increase of about 16.8% in five years (Statistics Canada, 2017a, Statistics Canada, 2022). This means that a good number of students in Canadian schools are likely to have an immigration connection and possibly a heritage language that is different from French and English.

Within the province of Quebec, even though immigration rates dropped during the Covid-19 pandemic (Institut de la statistique du Québec, 2020), there is still a good proportion of children within the school system who are either immigrants themselves or the child of at least one immigrant parent. According to the Comité de Gestion de la Taxe Scolaire de l'ile de

Montréal (2020, Avril), the proportion of students in the public school system in Montreal who speak a mother tongue or a heritage language that is not French or English has been increasing steadily since 1998. The proportion rose from about 32% in 1998 to 43.16% in 2019. Depending on the neighborhood, the proportion can be higher. Quebec's educational system has both French and English sectors. By law, most students within the public education system are required to attend French schools until the end of their secondary school education (Gouvernement du Quebec, 1977). As a result, most immigrant-origin students are enrolled in French-language schools (Bakhshaei et al., 2016), and a considerable number of them have a heritage language that is different from the language of instruction at school.

Home Language and Literacy Environment

Studies investigating children's home literacy environments (HLE) are relevant to the present study since the HLE can promote the transfer of heritage languages from parents or other primary caregivers in the home to their children. The HLE includes child-centered and instructed activities that have been theorized to help children develop the oral language and decoding skills that underlie reading and writing development (Karpava, 2021). In addition, the frequency of reading at home by all family members, the frequency of adults reading to children, the number of books in the home, and the frequency with which families visit the library have been studied as components of the HLE (Niklas et al., 2016). HLE activities can be both formal and informal. Formal activities include teaching children the alphabet, referencing print to enhance children's print concepts, or focusing on letter-sound correspondences. Informal activities might include reading books to children in an interactive style while drawing attention to the meaning of a text, directing the child's attention, or supporting children's oral language (Sénéchal et al., 2017).

The HLE has been shown to predict children's later literacy competencies and learning outcomes. It also provides avenues to improve children's learning (Niklas et al., 2016). Studying the HLE in immigrant families can contribute to knowledge that can be useful in the development of culturally-appropriate strategies to support families, and in the understanding of potential discontinuities between the home and school environment. A rich HLE can contribute to children's linguistic repertoire in any language that they are learning.

The literature also shows that the home language environment is an important predictor of language and literacy among children. Definitions of the home language environment overlap with definitions of the home literacy environment provided above, in that they also refer to oral language interactions and reading activities in the home. As has been found for monolingual children, bilingual children's home language environment correlates with their language skills (Scheele at al., 2010).

According to Scheele et al. (2010), language input is an important factor within the home language environment. Bilingual or multilingual children tend to have an unbalanced exposure to their heritage language and the official language(s) due to their parents' unequal pattern of use (e.g., regularly or intermittently). If the language input is not divided equally between the minority and the majority language, then *subtractive bilingualism* may occur. In this form of bilingualism, individuals lose their first language as they acquire a second language. *Additive bilingualism* is the opposite; individuals maintain their first language while learning a second language (Durambari, 2021). It is general knowledge that proficiency in Canada's official languages of English and French is important for future opportunities and success, but there is a likelihood for children to experience subtractive bilingualism when they start school if parents do not have strategies and support in place to maintain the heritage language. Wright et al. (2000)

found that education in a minority language can reduce the subtractive language process that bilingual minority-language children experience from receiving instruction exclusively in the majority language. To avoid this, language input in the heritage language has to be more or less equal to input in the majority language in the home environment.

Some research has gone further to describe not just the language input but the 'discourse strategies' used by parents in the home. These strategies include *repetition*, *code-switching,* and *move-on* (Nakamura, 2018). As Nakamura explains, repetition occurs when the parent presents a model to the child by speaking in the target language with the expectation that the child will repeat their words. Code-switching involves the parent switching between two languages. In the move-on strategy, the parent continues speaking in the target language irrespective of the language the child uses. Another strategy reported in the literature by Schwartz (2020) is the "happylingual approach" where parents who speak their heritage language in the home show flexibility in their language practices by being unbiased towards other languages and allowing the child to choose which language to speak when responding to a parent.

The literature on home literacy and home language environment, as well as on language input and discourse strategies, concurs that parents play an important role in the language development of children and heritage language maintenance. In Canada, it is nearly impossible for teachers in metropolitan areas to teach several minority languages in addition to English and French, given the diversity of languages spoken by children in their classrooms. While teachers can promote linguistic diversity and integrate plurilingual books in the classroom (e.g., Armand et al., 2021) and school-based heritage language learning is offered via the province-wide Programme d'enseignement des langues d'origine (PELO; e.g., Centre de services scolaire de

Montréal, n.d.), the responsibility of maintaining the minority language still rests mostly with parents and depends on the resources at their disposal.

Maintaining the Minority Languages of Bi/multilingual Children

Several factors can affect parents' decisions regarding how to use languages in their home. One of these factors is their views on their role in supporting the heritage language. Parents' views can be influenced by the advice parents receive on raising bilingual or multilingual children. According to a review by Hollebeke et al. (2022), parents often seek or receive advice from early childhood educators, teachers, family members, other multilingual families, parenting magazines, websites, and social media regarding this issue. The information and advice that is provided to parents depends on the source. For example, in their survey of 776 Belgian families who spoke a wide variety of heritage languages regarding family language policies and the advice parents had received, Hollebeke et al. (2022) found that early childhood educators and teachers generally favored the acquisition of the society language because this is what was expected in the educational institutions where they worked. Parents also rely on their own language experiences to decide on how to use language at home, then turn to varying sources of information to validate their choices (King & Fogle, 2006).

Parents' Views

Understanding immigrant parents' perception of their role in their children's language development via the home learning environment and their views on multilingualism/bilingualism can contribute to knowledge that can create support for the maintenance of minority languages (Curdt-Christiansen, 2020). Past research has presented mixed findings concerning the value that immigrant parents place on the home language environment. Internationally, some parents use their minority languages at home to support their children's acquisition of the majority language,

sometimes based partly on teachers' advice as shown in a study by Bezcioglu-Göktolga and Yagmur (2018). The authors observed 20 Turkish-speaking families and conducted interviews with 35 parents and 5 classroom teachers in the UK. They found that teachers had the opinion that parents who used Turkish at home did not support their children's school education, and they advised parents that using the heritage language could slow down their children's academic development. Several of the parents agreed with this view.

Similarly, Curdt-Christiansen and LaMorgia (2018) found that parents had varying ideas. They used questionnaires and interviews to explore family language policy (FLP). The 2018 study involved Chinese, Italian, and Pakistani communities in the UK. The Chinese and Pakistani parents were more interested in their children learning English and provided fewer literacy resources and literacy practices in the heritage language. Some of them were worried that their heritage language could hinder their children's English education. These findings suggest that societal views that favor assimilation, as well as teachers' attitudes towards culturally diverse families, can discourage parents from using their heritage language for literacy activities (Bezcioglu-Göktolga & Yagmur, 2018).

Parents in one Canadian study felt that their roles were complementary to the roles of teachers in supporting their child's language development. Dagenais (2003) interviewed immigrant families of diverse origins who had enrolled their children in French immersion programs in Vancouver, Canada to examine the parents' interest in the programs. The author found that parents viewed multilingualism as a form of linguistic, economic, and symbolic capital. Parents invested in the children's acquisition of Canada's official languages as a means of increasing their social status but also invested in the maintenance of their family language to maintain ties to their country of origin and elsewhere. By giving their children access to several

language communities locally and internationally, the parents gave their children an advantage. The parents in this study generally associated learning many languages as an important part of education and used several strategies to ensure that their children became multilingual, including enrolling them in a French immersion program.

Even though immigrant parents in Dagenais's study supported and valued raising their children as bi- or multilingual, others have expressed concerns and challenges. Ballinger et al. (2020) explored the needs, beliefs, and practices of parents who were raising their children to be bi/multilingual in Montreal. Parents in this study were positive about the benefits of raising their children bi/multilingually but they were more confident in their children learning the two official languages of Canada – English, and French – than they were in transferring their heritage language to their children. Some of their concerns about passing on their minority languages included: not being a good role model, causing a delay in their children's education, lack of avenues outside the home to practice the heritage language, and concern about their child experiencing delays in language development, or overloading their children. One of their outstanding concerns was that they did not feel that they had sufficient resources to support their children's multilingualism.

Despite these challenges, some immigrant parents have found ways to ensure that their children do not lose their heritage language. They report strategies such as enrolling them in heritage schools, making sure that siblings speak the minority language to each other, and using the minority language for literacy activities in the home (Boit et al., 2020; Slavkov, 2017).

In conclusion, parents often struggle with raising their children as bilingual or multilingual depending on the context. They support and understand the importance of their children learning the dominant language, but they also want to keep their heritage language for

intergenerational communication and to pass along their culture. While several variables will affect parental success in raising children bilingually (e.g., the educational level of the parents, fluency in speaking the majority or minority language, presence of siblings or other family members in the home, or the language spoken between the spouses), parents could benefit from additional resources and support.

Resources and Support

Fostering the use of the minority language is not necessarily detrimental to the acquisition of the majority language. One of the resources that can be used to achieve this is dual language books. In print form, dual language books involve text in two languages on the same page or adjacent pages, allowing readers to support a child's bilingualism by either alternating between the two languages or by reading the story in one language and then the other. Zaidi (2020) implemented such books in two grade 5 classrooms. Guest speakers read 10 dual language books (one book per week), alongside the teacher who read the same books in English. Both students and teachers showed enhanced language awareness as measured through videorecordings of classroom interaction; a survey of and reflections by teachers, guest readers, and students; and student portfolios. Also, Lyster et al. (2009) found that one of the ways to improve children's language awareness and acquisition was by reading bilingual books. In this research, French and English teachers of six- to eight-year-old children read dual-language storybooks aloud for 4 months, alternating between French and English. The authors found that bilingual books gave children the opportunity to use their strengths in one language to acquire new knowledge/vocabulary in the other language. The authors of these studies suggest that parental reading of dual language books to their young children will have positive effects on their language acquisition (Lyster et al., 2009; Zaidi, 2020).

Websites such as Storybooks Canada (https://storybookscanada.ca/), Global Storybooks (https://globalstorybooks.net), Indigenous Storybooks (https://indigenousstorybooks.ca/), and African Storybooks (https://africanstorybook.org/) have also begun to offer free digital books in multiple languages, whereby a story can be read as well as heard in various languages. The genesis of these websites is connected to the African Storybooks initiative which was created to make stories available in different African languages. Then came the Global Storybooks project which built on the earlier initiatives by providing stories in non-African languages. Storybooks Canada and Indigenous Storybooks were then created to provide stories in Canada's popular languages and Indigenous languages respectively.

Storybooks Canada, which aims to promote children's language and literacy development, has 40 stories with text and audio in French, English, and other languages, including those commonly spoken by refugees and immigrants in Canada such as Arabic, Mandarin, Punjabi, and Swahili. It thus responds to the language and literacy needs of the linguistically diverse population of Canada. Moreover, the website has easy access buttons to change the audio language, audio speed, or reading level (1-5) of the book and a toggle feature that allows users to switch quickly between French and English. The stories can also be downloaded to be read offline.

Zaidi and Dooley (2021) researched the use of Storybook Canada as a classroom resource for French L2 learners and its potential impact on school-home connections. The study's goals were to determine whether the stories offered via Storybooks Canada could serve as a useful pedagogical tool in French immersion classrooms and whether teachers thought it had the potential for strengthening connections between the school and linguistically diverse homes. The teachers thought that Storybooks Canada could promote literacy engagement; as they suggested,

if a child who could not speak English or French well was having difficulties understanding a text, the language could be changed, giving the child an opportunity to better engage with the story. The teachers also thought that it could improve the children's self-efficacy and pride in their identity. Though the teachers were reluctant to use the multilingual feature of the website because their goal was to teach French, they noted that it was an important feature to be used to strengthen the heritage language.

In Vancouver, Gilman, and Norton (2020) interviewed 13 English language tutors to see if they felt that Storybooks Canada was a useful resource in improving children's reading and could help improve the home-school partnership. The tutors found that Storybooks Canada was not only a good resource for English language learners but also an important tool in the maintenance of first languages. The tutors appreciated the multilingual features and suggested that the website could be useful for parents to help their children with reading and language learning.

Studies have found that using dual language books can be helpful to children's literacy acquisition (Naqvi et al., 2012; Zaidi, 2020). Digital dual-language stories using a multilingual platform can be an additional tool to leverage the linguistic resources of language learners (Lyster et al., 2009) and provide opportunities for cross-linguistic transfer, in which students capitalize on strengths in their dominant language to support their nondominant language (Ballinger, 2013). According to the two studies on Storybooks Canada (Gilman & Norton, 2020; Zaidi & Dooley, 2021), teachers and tutors appreciate and value Storybooks Canada as a pedagogical resource to help children with reading and second language development. The present study adds to available knowledge by looking at parents' perspectives on using Storybooks Canada as a resource in first language maintenance.

The Present Study

Immigrant parents in Quebec have expressed their opinions in previous studies that they require support and resources in sustaining their heritage languages. Despite parents' efforts to favor the heritage language at home, children often still gravitate towards using the majority language at home, especially among siblings (Ballinger et al., 2020). If support is not provided to parents, an inter-generational heritage language shift may be unavoidable in the future. This, in turn, will affect the linguistic diversity of the immigrant population of Quebec. The main goals of this study are to understand the perspectives of immigrant parents with young children on the home literacy and language environment, to explore how they see their role in maintaining the bi/multilingualism of their children, and to get their opinions on the value of digital multilingual books, offered through Storybooks Canada, for supporting language and literacy in the minority heritage language and possibly the school language. The research questions are:

1. What are the practices, beliefs, and needs of immigrant parents who speak a non-official language at home regarding passing their language on to their children and supporting the school language?

2. What are parents' perspectives on the value of using a low-cost tool, such as Storybooks Canada, in the home to enhance young children's literacy and bi/multilingualism?

Method

According to Hays and Singh (2012), "the task of qualitative analysis is to understand a phenomenon… by talking to or observing those individuals who are affected by the phenomenon and who directly experience it most comprehensively and engagingly possible" (p. 4). The use of qualitative analysis for this study provided the opportunity to hear participants' perspectives in their own words and to understand their thoughts on the issues of heritage language maintenance

and bilingualism. A phenomenological approach was used to understand participants' direct and immediate experience with the transfer of their heritage language to their children, their views on bilingualism, and the Storybooks Canada website.

As an immigrant mother with a minority language, I have not had a completely successful experience in the transmission of Kwale, my first language, to my children mostly because my partner has a different first language (Arabic). We communicate with each other in one of Canada's official languages (English) and our children tend to follow that pattern when they speak to us or each other. When they were younger, we both spoke Arabic and Kwale to them and they started to pick up both languages. But as they got older, they started to prefer either French or English and are slowly understanding less of Kwale and Arabic each day. This is one of the reasons why I am interested in this topic. I have seen this same pattern of language loss happen to some immigrant families and I have also seen other families who have successfully transferred their minority languages to their children. I hope that this study will contribute to the understanding of the varying experiences of immigrant families who are raising their children to be multilingual.

Recruitment and Inclusion Criteria

Participants were recruited mainly through word of mouth and referrals from previous participants, although the recruitment ad (see Appendix A) was posted on the researcher's personal Facebook page. Participants were recruited only in Quebec, a distinct sociolinguistic context, with an ethnically diverse group of immigrants, particularly in Montreal and its surrounding areas.

To participate, parents had to speak a minority language (i.e. a language other than English or French) at home and to be raising a young child (see age criterion below) to be bi- or

multilingual. While English is considered a minority language to some degree in Quebec, it has a distinct status given its wide use locally and even worldwide. As reflected in the recruitment ad (see Appendix A), I initially recruited parents whose heritage language was one of those used on the Storybooks Canada website, namely Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, German, Italian, Korean, Mandarin, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, Turkish, Ukrainian, or Urdu. Later, to expand my sample, I expanded this to include other languages on the Global Storybooks website which has the same stories as Storybooks Canada and a similar interface but offers the texts and audio in additional languages.

Participants also had to be parenting one or more children between 3 years, 0 months (3;0), and 7 years, 11 months (7;11). I chose this age group because children needed to give their parents feedback on their experience and most children can talk by age 3. Also, older children might experience greater peer or social pressure in terms of their language choices. Thus, this seems to be a reasonable age range that covers children who are yet to enter school – preschoolers - as well as children who have recently entered the school system.

Additionally, parents needed Internet access and a computer, as most of the study was conducted online. The procedures for virtual data collection were described in the ethics application and approved by Concordia University's Research Ethics Unit. As elaborated in the Procedures, the interviews were conducted virtually in line with the preference of the families.

Participants

This study was conducted between the fall of 2022 and the winter of 2023. Ten participants volunteered to participate in the study and completed the first interview. However, two of the participants declined to schedule the second interview and noted that they could not find the time for it due to changes in their family situation or work schedule. Of the eight

participants who completed the study, six lived in the city of Laval and two in Montreal. All the participants were first-generation Canadian immigrants and had lived within the province of Quebec for a minimum of 5 consecutive years. While the study was not restricted to first-generation immigrants, Puig (2010) has noted that second and third-generation immigrants may be less likely to still be speaking their first language at home.

Participants were parents only; family members or caregivers who lived in the same home and/or spent a substantial amount of time with the children did not participate. The parents' ages ranged from 30 to 45 years old. All the participants were the primary caregivers of at least one child between the ages of 3 and 7 years. The ages of all the children in the families and other details about the participants are provided in Table 1, including the participants' pseudonyms used throughout the thesis. As the table shows, all participants had university degrees with the highest being a Master's degree.

As Table 1 also shows, the participants spoke various languages as a first language such as different dialects of Arabic (Lebanese Arabic, Algerian Arabic, etc.), Yoruba, Igbo, or Pidgin English. However, each of the families additionally spoke French and/or standard English at home, Thus, six of the families spoke three languages at home and the remaining two families spoke two languages. The participants' first languages – minority languages in the Canadian context – were among those represented on either the Storybooks Canada or Global Storybooks websites. While not listed in the recruitment ad, during my first contact with parents I confirmed that they were able to read and understand a simple text in the minority language. Setting this language criterion ensured some degree of commonality among parents in the sample.

Table 1

Participants' Profiles

Participant	Languages (in order of fluency)	Place of Emigration	No. of years in Canada	No. of children and ages	Education
Michelle	Arabic (HL), English	Lebanon	15	3 (7, 4, 2)	Master's in Computer Engineering
Rawad	Arabic (HL), English, French	Lebanon	12	3 (6, 4, 1)	Master's in Computer Engineering
Nekka	Yoruba (HL), Igbo, English	Nigeria	19	1 (7)	B.Sc. Nursing
Helen	Arabic (HL), French, English	Lebanon	5	2 (4, 2)	Master's in English Literature
Mathilda	Arabic (HL), English and French	Lebanon/Syria	8	2 (7, 4)	Teaching certificate
Femi	Yoruba (HL), English	Nigeria	6	3 (11, 9, 3)	Master's in Business Administration
Khadija	Arabic (HL), French, English	Algeria	9	2 (4, 2)	M.Sc. Biochemistry
George	Arabic (HL), French, English	Syria	8	2 (10, 7)	B.Sc. Computer Science

Note. HL Heritage Language

Procedures

Interested participants made contact by sending an e-mail to the researcher. They

received a reply with information about the study such as its goals, the inclusion criteria (as

outlined above and in Appendix B), and what was expected from them. The consent form (see

Appendix C) was also attached to the reply. Participants were asked to read, sign, and return the

consent form if they still wished to participate or to reach out to me if they had questions. After parents signed and return the consent forms, data collection began and involved three steps: a first interview, a period during which parents and their children used either the Storybooks Canada or Global storybooks website and a second interview.

The first interview was scheduled on Zoom at the preferred time of the participants and recorded with the participants' permission using the Zoom recording function. Using an interview guide (Appendix D), parents were asked about their literacy and heritage language maintenance practices and beliefs as well as their thoughts on bi/multilingualism, societal influence, and language learning strategies. At the end of the interview, the participants were introduced to the Storybooks Canada or Global Storybooks website using the screen-sharing feature on Zoom. The purpose of the website and the navigation system were explained.

Both Storybooks Canada and the Global Storybooks websites have the same setup, goals, and stories (See Figures 1 and 2). The only difference is that the Global Storybooks website offers stories in yet more languages. Two participants who spoke the Yoruba language used the Global Storybooks website and every other participant used the Storybooks Canada website.

The parent was asked to use either the Storybooks Canada or Global Storybooks website to read approximately five stories in their heritage languages to their children and incorporate them into their literacy practices. Five stories were chosen by the researcher before the interviews of parents (see Table 2 below) because they seemed to be stories that children would find interesting, and involved themes that seemed to be relevant to people from various cultures.

The participants were contacted weekly to check if they had completed at least five stories. One parent completed the stories within a week and the others took two to five weeks. Parents were also encouraged to explore the website and read as many stories as they liked.

Participants were also given a log sheet to help them keep track of their readings, thoughts, or comments as they read the stories (see Appendix E).

Figure 1

Screenshots from Storybooks Canada Website

Figure 2

Screenshots from Global Storybooks Website

Table 2

Selected Stories on Storybooks Canada and Global Storybooks Websites

	Level number	Story title
1	Level 1	Feelings
2	Level 2	Andiswa soccer star
3	Level 3	Sakima's song
4	Level 4	What Vusi's sister said
5	Level 5	Magozwe

In the final step of data collection, I conducted a second individual interview on Zoom with each parent, using the interview guide presented in Appendix F, and once again recorded the interview. The goal of the interview was to obtain the participants' perspectives on the Storybooks Canada or Global Storybooks website and their thoughts on its potential to support their child's bi/multilingualism.

Data Analysis

The Zoom recordings of the interviews were saved in an encrypted folder on the researcher's laptop. All interviews were transcribed verbatim using Microsoft Word. The transcriptions were closely examined individually and coded using both deductive (previously determined categories) and inductive coding (categories are developed from the data) (Saldana, 2009). For the deductive coding, each transcript was read carefully and the responses directly reflecting the two research questions were identified and grouped using colour coding in the transcript, in Word. Other sections that did not address the research question directly but seemed important and relevant to the general topic of heritage language maintenance or language and

literacy support were also coded. In the first round of coding, I used in-vivo codes (i.e., the codes were the participant's exact words) for ideas expressed in single phrases. Longer responses (reflected as paragraphs in the transcripts) were summarized using key words as close to the original as possible to reflect the intent, meaning, and language of the participants.

The coded data were then transferred to another Word document where another round of coding was done. In this round, words or phrases that meant the same thing were assigned a single code. After that, the individual responses were then grouped where possible, and others were listed to ensure that everyone's voice was heard, and no one was under-represented. Common themes were then generated. The themes were based on ideas and patterns that came up repeatedly (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Some themes concern the practices, beliefs, and needs of immigrant parents as it relates to bi/multilingualism and other themes captured their perspectives on the value of the storybook websites as a means of enhancing children's literacy and bi/multilingualism in the home. See Appendices G and H, respectively, for samples of the coding and theme development.

To represent participants' voices as accurately as possible, it is important to pay attention to potential sources of bias including the researcher's interpretation of the data. Thus, a reflexive journal was kept throughout the interview and data processing stages of this study. An in-depth reflexion on my practices, values, belief, and experience as an immigrant parent who is interested in passing on her heritage language was done, and notes were kept in a reflexive journal. The goal of this was to prevent my underlying beliefs from influencing how I conducted the interviews and interpreted the data. Credibility and authenticity were also important in this study. Participants were involved in the research process through member checking. The transcripts were sent to participants for review and confirmation. All participants gave their

approval and they did not ask for any change. Peer debriefing also occurred through Feedback and comments from my thesis supervisor. This was important to increase the trustworthiness of this study.

Findings

Results from the interview data and analysis are presented below in response to each of the research questions. Findings related to the first research question – ***What are the practices, beliefs, and needs of immigrant parents who speak a non-official language at home regarding passing their language on to their children and supporting the school language?*** – have been broken down into five subgroups: language and literacy practices, beliefs about bi/multilingualism, motivation for wanting to transfer their heritage language, factors in Quebec society that hinder or support the transfer of heritage languages, and useful strategies. The results are illustrated with excerpts from the interviews.

Language and Literacy Practices

When asked about their language and literacy practices at home, the participants responded in similar ways by differentiating their practices as they relate to English or French from those that relate to their heritage language.

For English and/or French, all the participants in this study reported reading stories to their children with varying frequencies over the years, from occasionally to daily. They also reported using activity books and/or applications on smart phones or tablets to aid their children in learning numbers, letters, sounds, and reading. Parents with older children encouraged their children to read at least once a day in the language used in school. Other practices included watching shows on TV in the target language and singing songs that were encountered on TV or in other contexts. The participants collectively alluded to their practices being linked to

schoolwork. For example, some parents said that they read daily in French with their child(ren) because that was part of their child's homework and further stated that they bring books from school to practice reading every day.

> *French of course French, it's every day. So you know while doing the homework. So some little stories are sent by the school, so we have to go and read them. Let's say like once was once per week, two weeks, I try to go through an English story because I want him to learn how to read English as well. - Michelle*

This was similar to what Nekka said "In English, Yes, we do that every day, schoolwork, all kinds, I mean that is like part of him because that's what they speak in school… We read every day."

All participants reiterated the importance of reading for literacy. Six of them used their local library regularly to borrow books and sometimes used it as a space to read or do puzzles. Two other participants hardly visited the library and preferred to buy books. Books were chosen with the child(ren) in mind. Participants with younger children reported choosing books that had easy words or short sentences to keep the attention and interest of their child but all of them reported choosing books with themes/characters that were familiar to their child.

> *I'm trying to not choose a book with too much like difficult words for their age. I try to choose something that it's easy to understand and something that they like, they know, like animals and Superheroes and something like that." - Khadija*

Only one of the participants who was an educator chose books that were related to everyday life or in her words "the themes of life".

> *I love books with good manners. I follow seasonal changes like Autumn I read about autumn, and apple-picking, I read like, for example, "Une pomme pour tout le monde', I*

follow the theme that goes in life and sometimes I followed their interest when I see like

they are interested in something I can do that. We go to the bibliothèque Multicultural,

next to Curé-Labelle, [boulevard] *Saint-Martin something there. And if they like*

something, we borrow and we are members of the Bibliothèque on Dagenais, so they

select something and we read with them. - Mathilda

Language and Literacy Practices Related to the Heritage Language

When it came to the language practices of the heritage language, all participants

explained that their main practice was communicating with their children in their heritage

language, repeating words and phrases in the heritage language, and translating their words to

either English or French to help their children understand. Repetition was a resounding theme

that was talked about in all the interviews.

We do a lot of repetition especially when it comes to the need for us. To hear them

speaking in Arabic, for example, as our maternal language, we would need to say it

three, or four times and then say it in English one time so that they can get it. - Rawad

Four participants said that they visited their country of origin regularly to visit extended

family and to help their children practice their heritage language. As mentioned by Mathilda, for

example, "….like every two years. I like to go to visit my parents … So when they go there they

don't need English and French … to communicate the main language that's there…

All participants, even those who did not visit their country of origin regularly, reported

that aside from the regular communication between them and their children, they talked to

extended family on the phone, including video calls, and this communication was part of their

effort to help their children practice their heritage language. One participant mentioned that he

also socialized with friends who spoke Arabic to promote it among his children.

Other practices included watching shows or movies in the heritage language, singing songs, reading books, and storytelling. All of the participants reported having difficulty finding books in their heritage language. Some of them brought books back whenever they visited their country with one participant making photocopies of educational books in Arabic from Syria because they were easier to carry. Another participant who loved to read but could not find books in her language resorted to storytelling. She would regularly tell her son bedtime stories in her language.

In general, all participants viewed both the societal and heritage languages as important and necessary. Only one participant seemed to focus more on the heritage language and English. Rawad, a father of three children whose children attend French elementary school, believed that as long as the children grow up here in Quebec, they will be good in the French language so there was no need to focus too much on that language.

> *Daycare, they are working on English mainly. School, they are working on French now. We are doing something in between English and Arabic. So we're doing the link between English and Arabic at home. French, to be honest with you, not much effort that we are doing, except the one that is related to schooling. So whatever studies that they give Renee, we do it. Other than that there is less time, there is less dedication to developing the French. Probably we assume that he's going to be good in French anyway in school.*

Beliefs About Bi/multilingualism

Participants in this study strongly support the idea of a person being bi/multilingual. They all agreed that a person should learn as many languages as possible, with some suggesting that learning a new language is like adding a persona. According to Mathilda who is trilingual,

"every more like language you add, that's another personality that you can use." This was similar to what was said by Nekka, who speaks multiple languages.

> *But I think, me because I speak multi-languages. I speak English, I speak Yoruba, I speak Igbo, you know. So to me, I feel like I have an identity like I'm connected to multi stuff, multi tradition, and all that….I think it gives me the confidence to know that I am not only one thing, I'm multi things in life.*

Other responses pointed to the advantages that being bi/multilingual brings to the professional world. All participants mentioned that it was good for work as many employers are seeking employees who speak at least two languages, as is the case in Quebec. Rawad put it this way "and I know as well that in professional development, language makes the first barrier that you can have toward having a bright future."

Some participants added that it gives one "confidence", "power" and "makes traveling and communication easy". Some also mentioned that it makes it "easier to integrate into society as an immigrant". George contended that "it is good and gives power" and Mathilda summarises that "it makes for an easier life and makes communication easy". One participant suggested that it could help one to be more open. According to Helen "being multilingual helps you to know more about cultures and accept other communities". She explained that speaking another language other than your own somehow allows you to be more open to accepting other people's way of life.

Some participants mentioned that bilingualism has health benefits. Khadija explained that apart from all the professional and work benefits of being multilingual, studies have shown that it could have health benefits "I think like there are some studies that say the more the people know languages more, like less they have chance to have Alzheimer's disease or something like that.

So, I think it's really important". Femi thinks that it could make children smarter indirectly. She explained that learning a new language is not easy and that putting your brain through that process could make children smarter.

Motivation For Transferring Heritage Language

When asked about what keeps them motivated in passing on their heritage language, participant responses range from communicating with extended family, passing on culture and identity, further employment or professional development, the likelihood that children may need the language in the future, creating a human being similar to or better than themselves, and feeling at home when they visit their country of origin.

Similar to previous research, one of the major motivating factors for the transfer of heritage languages from parents to their children in this study was to communicate with extended family. All participants mentioned this. As Michelle put it "the Arabic is more because of the parents. So, they can at least communicate with them". Some other participants explained that their language was their culture and identity and they wanted to pass that unto their children. One participant said that it would help her child to know *"who they are or where they are from"*. Another participant who felt strongly about passing on her language explained that because she speaks her language with her parents and siblings, she would not like to keep her child out of it.

A few participants disclosed that they desired to create a similar or better human being than themselves. Rawad explains below.

> *It would be the desire of parents to create a similar species…. But at least there is always*
>
> *that desire that if you speak something, if you talk Arabic. you would like your kid to*
>
> *understand and be able to talk like you. If you know three languages you want them to*
>
> *learn three and four, right?...*

Almost all the participants revealed that their children might need the language in the future. Some expressed concern that maybe their children would decide to move back to their country of origin when they become adults and would need the language to function. Others wanted their children to feel at home whenever they visited their country of origin with two participants expressing hope that when their children meet others from the same country here in Canada, they would be able to communicate and not feel like an outsider. Others reasons included the concern that their children may need the language for work or school in the future.

Even with all of these motivating factors, parents seemed relaxed with the task of transferring their languages. They did not seem stressed or overly burdened with the task. Most of them expressed their feelings that even if their children ended up not speaking their language, they would be happy if they understood only. This is apparent in some of the strategies that they mentioned.

Strategies and Role of Technology

When it came to the strategies that have been useful for the participants in the task of transferring their heritage languages, all the participants insisted that repetition, along with the immediate translation, is an important strategy, namely, speaking directly to the child in the heritage language, repeating the words, and translating words to them providing the words in English or French to help their child understand. Other useful strategies that parents mentioned included:

- Trying. "Simply trying is better than doing nothing".
- Finding and creating time to dedicate to the teaching of the heritage language.
- Spending family time and socializing with others who speak the same language. One participant reported getting very good results after her son had played with some

children who spoke neither English nor French in her country of origin. After only 24 hours, her son knew several words in Arabic.

- Reading with them in the heritage language

- Starting to expose them to the language at a young age. Some participants mentioned that exposing them to the language when they were younger was easier than trying to teach them when they were older.

- Making it fun, going one step at a time. Doing it in the context of an activity that the child enjoys and not giving the child too much information at a time.

- Making sure that siblings interact in the heritage language. One participant said that it was important that siblings spoke the language to each other instead of French or English.

Regarding strategies that do not work, the participants reiterated that it was important to not stress the child. In the words of Femi, bad strategies involved "Forcing them to learn the language, being aggressive, making them feel bad or putting pressure on them". Some participants reported that watching shows on TV or YouTube does not work because their dialect was different from the one being used in the shows and they were interested in their children acquiring their dialects.

Six participants agreed that technology has a role to play in the maintenance of heritage languages. One of the participants said it can be beneficial with supervision, while another said that it was not for very young children but could be good for older children. The two Nigerian participants reported that it was good for widely spoken languages and there was not enough for languages spoken by smaller numbers of people. Two participants proposed that technology has

no role to play in the maintenance of heritage languages. They both favor real-life interactions and thought that technology was a distraction.

Influence of Quebec Society

Generally, participants felt that Quebec society did not support the maintenance of heritage languages. They all reiterated that Quebec society supported only the French language and in some ways the English language also. Rawad who lives in a community with many Arabic-speaking families thought that this was an advantage to him but when talking about Quebec as a whole, he came to the same conclusion as the other participants.

In particular, in Quebec, the Arabic community is big. Okay, you have a lot of Arabic people here or Arabic-speaking people… you have the variety….which is good for my kids…. So I would say it would play a role. However, the language, the cultural attachment to the French language is pushing them to go, very far toward one language only, which is against the Constitution and human nature… forcing the French language a lot in Quebec that would be in a negative point, not allowing immigrant children to be taught in English or to choose the language.

George and Nekka both had a response I did not expect, saying that society has nothing to do with it. They thought that society does not influence the language spoken at home. According to George *"because we have freedom, we can do what we need, it's my home"*.

The two Yoruba-speaking participants had other issues apart from the push towards French in Quebec. They reported that not having a community of people who speak their language was influencing how quickly their children learn the language. According to them, their child knows or sees no other person except them speaking the language making it harder for them to be interested.

I think that that's one of the biggest barriers because we're not surrounded by our people or we don't live in a community where they speak the same language. So, community is one thing. So yeah, that would be a barrier but I don't let it be a barrier. But I think that would have sped things up … nothing helps in the environment because it's a foreign country. So, nothing helps, I just have to do what I can do by myself in my space and that's it.

Even though most participants expressed concern that Quebec was supporting mostly the French language, they were also pleased with the support in learning the English language within the province.

To answer the second research question, ***what are parents' perspectives on the value of using a low-cost tool, such as Storybooks Canada, in the home to enhance young children's literacy and bi/multilingualism?*** Participant responses were grouped into three categories: their views on the website/initiative, their experience using the website, and their thoughts on its value in helping parents maintain their heritage languages.

Views on Storybooks Canada/ Global Storybook Website/initiative

Parents in this study unanimously expressed their opinion that the Storybooks Canada/ Global Storybooks initiative is good and interesting. They believed that it does serve the purpose of helping people learn the immigrant languages that are featured on the website. All participants noted that the website was very easy to use, user-friendly, and straightforward. They especially appreciated the ease of changing between languages, stories, and levels, the illustrations, pictures, wordings, and reading-out-loud features.

Although comments were generally positive, some participants gave suggestions on ways to make the website better and more inclusive. They suggested that the website needed more

stories as most of the stories were short and all of them could be read in a short time. They also suggested that the stories need to be longer and include stories from different backgrounds.

Experience Using the Storybooks Websites

Each family's experience with using the websites was similar in some aspects and different in other aspects. Similarly, participants reported that their children preferred to read the stories in either English or French and tried to make them change the language. Some of the older children who were able to use the website alone sometimes switched the language during the reading when they had difficulties understanding.

> *When I'm reading out to him, and he doesn't understand a certain thing he will quickly, click the English button to see what it means, and then clicks back. He loves that bit. You know that option is very interesting for the children and it also encourages them to use the website because they are not afraid, because they know that if I don't understand a certain word I could get an interpretation of it in English.*

Younger children generally were reported to have started losing interest after a while when their parents did not switch to English or French (depending on the household). Parents in this situation, read the stories in their heritage languages but added a few words in English or French to keep the children interested. They all reported that after a while, these younger children seemed to become more comfortable hearing the stories completely in the heritage language.

Parents generally enjoyed the time that they spent reading the stories in their heritage language with some of them reporting that they enjoyed this time because it counted as quality time with their children. According to Femi "*the fact that the kids had fun made me happy. So it's a way of having some me time with the kids.*" This was similar to what Mathilda reported:

It gave me some time to spend with my kids, normally we read in English or French, so, now in my language. And the funny part was when my little child wanted to copy and repeat what I said and that was super funny because like especially with formal Arabic, she said it to be funny. So yeah, it makes me, it's not the stories themselves but like being together that was mainly, having a lovely experience with my kids.'

Nekka's experience was a little bit different from other parents in this study because she normally only tells stories to her child in her heritage language and has never read to him in that language. She was 'fascinated' at how quickly he was able to learn new words as opposed to when she simply spoke to him directly. She attributed some of that to the novelty of the situation and to the images in the stories which helped with understanding.

Some parents who have previously read to their children in their heritage language found that the type and topic of the stories were different from those that they would normally read to their children. Collectively families liked these stories - Feelings, I like to read, Punishment, Andiswa soccer star, The very tall man, Tingi and the cows, 'Goat, dog, and cow', Holidays with grandma, Fire, and Sakima's song. They did not like these stories - Magozwe, School clothes, What Visu's sister said, and 'Chicken and millipede'.

Value of Storybooks Canada/Global Storybooks Website in Maintaining Heritage Languages

Even though participants in this study all agreed that the Storybooks Canada and Global Storybooks websites can be valuable in the maintenance of heritage languages, there were small differences in opinion. Six out of the eight participants reported that their children picked up new words or phrases during the reading activities but they also noted that the activity will need to be

repeated regularly to have any lasting results. For example, when asked if the Storybooks Canada website can help in maintaining Arabic, Michelle responded

Probably? Yes. Like, of course with Arabic you need to repeat, even with any language, you need to repeat to memorize the vocabulary. No, you cannot just, you know, if you mention one word, now, you cannot expect them, the second day. If you ask about it, I don't think he will remember, it's about repetition.

Two other participants with younger children reported that they did not notice any language benefits after reading the five stories but were confident that repeating the exercise will be beneficial. They thought that the children benefited from learning lessons from the stories but probably not in their heritage languages. Helen, for example, expressed the following about her three-year-old son whom she did not think gained any Arabic: *He learned a new story… he was happy that the girl had a chance to perform on her team … it gave him the idea that okay, not just boys play soccer, also girls. So, he benefitted from it.*

This was similar to Mathilda's opinion but she went on to give a reason why she thought they did not gain in their language*, it's difficult for them, they are not that fluent and especially with formal Arabic. It's very difficult.*". The last participant did not perceive any heritage language benefit as his child insisted on replying in English.

He didn't count any in Arabic I was telling him wahad, itnan, talate. And then he was saying one, two, three. So he insisted on going in English… But he enjoyed the numbers, and he did it in English unfortunately. he didn't, he didn't do Arabic. While counting he didn't use Arabic.

Figure 3, below, presents a summary of participant responses and indicates the issues that were raised by each participant.

Figure 3

Findings per Participant (shaded cells indicate issues discussed)

	Nekka	Femi	Michelle	George	Khadija	Helen	Mathilda	Rawad
Practices								
Speaks HL directly to child				■	■	■	■	■
Tell stories in HL	■	■						
Reads stories in HL		■	■	■		■		
Watches TV or videos in HL		■				■	■	■
Uses apps on the iPad			■		■		■	■
Literacy activities/reading in French or English	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Visits/calls HL speakers (family, friends)		■		■	■	■	■	■
Spoke only HL at home when children younger				■				
Motivations								
Helps communicate with family or other HL speakers	■	■	■			■	■	■
Pass on tradition, identity	■							
Maybe needed in the future						■		■
Beliefs about multilingualism								
Gives confidence	■							
Promotes employment and job opportunities		■	■				■	■
Mentally good for children		■						
Travelling is easier			■		■			■
Communication is easier			■		■		■	■
Integration is easy		■					■	■

	Nekka	Femi	Michelle	George	Khadija	Helen	Mathilda	Rawad
Provides future opportunities			▨				▨	▨
Gives power				▨				
More academic choices					▨			
Prevents Alzheimer's disease					▨			
Added value to one's life					▨			
Brings success						▨	▨	
Learn about other cultures, accept other communities						▨		
Create a similar or better person								▨
Needs								
Community that speaks HL	▨	▨						
More resources		▨						
Access to books in HL		▨						
More language schools			▨					
Encourage children to learn other languages than Fr, Eng					▨	▨	▨	▨
Storybook websites								
Can support the learning of HLs	▨					▨		
With regular use, can be beneficial over time		▨	▨	▨	▨		▨	▨
Belief about reading								
Good literacy activity	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	
Enriches one's vocabulary			▨					▨
Sharpens reading skills			▨					

It is necessary to note that participants in this study so far are having varying success with transferring their heritage languages to their children and this had no clear correlation to the ages of the children. For some of the participants, their children understood only simple words and phrases but rarely spoke the language and for others, the children spoke the heritage language but not fluently. The one exception was George, whose children speak Arabic, English, and French fluently.

Discussion

The study had two main aims. The first was to understand the practices and beliefs of immigrant parents who speak a heritage language other than English or French at home regarding passing on their heritage language to their children and supporting either English or French. The second aim was to elicit parental views on the Storybook Canada and Global Storybooks websites as a tool to enhance young children's literacy and bi/multilingualism. Findings indicated that participants practiced parent - child communication, storybook reading, and storytelling to help their children's language acquisition; believed that multilingualism was pertinent to the future of their children; valued the role of extended family and community in passing on their heritage language, culture, and identity; and need more resources, language schools, and access to books in their heritage languages. These themes and how they support or extend the literature will be addressed below.

Communication, Storybook Reading, and Storytelling

Immigrant parents in this study were focused on raising their children to be trilingual. They desired their children to be completely fluent in French and English, and to be at least able to speak their heritage languages. Some of the strategies that they employed to achieve this included speaking two or three languages directly to their children, reading books in all three

languages, watching videos or shows in the target language, and using language apps on their smart devices. The most common strategy was speaking directly to their children in both the heritage language and school/societal language. All the parents reported speaking their heritage language to their children and translating it into either English or French when the child had difficulty understanding. This is similar to bilingual discourse strategies reported in previous literature where parents consciously chose the language that they used at home to communicate with their children. For example, Schwartz et al. (2011) found that the immigrant parents in their study chose their heritage language as the dominant language to use at home in parent-child communication, while the children learned a different language at preschool, to balance the bilingual development of their children. Similarly, a longitudinal case study by Kennedy and Romo (2013) found that the child grew up completely bilingual because of the efforts of the parents to speak only the heritage language at home. The participants in my study did not use only their heritage language but instead interchanged with English or French. They did this to provide flexibility so that their children can learn to love the heritage language and not feel pressured to learn it. They believed that this method allowed the children to naturally acquired the heritage language without added stress since they were already expected to be completely bilingual in two other languages.

The second method that is mostly used by parents is storybook reading or storytelling. All the participants reported reading as a daily activity that they engage in to help their children learn new vocabulary and improve proficiency in all three languages. The only exception was Nekka who reads to her son in English but tells him stories in her heritage language because she could not find books in her heritage language until she participated in this research and discovered the Global Storybooks website. Research has shown that storybook reading or

storytelling can help children build the vocabulary that is needed to become proficient in a language (Pollard-Durodola et. al, 2017). Storytelling not only helps children build their vocabulary but also supports their pronunciation and speech patterns (Abreu-Fernandes & Melander Bowden, 2022).

Previous research has highlighted the importance of the home language and the home literacy environment in the language development of children. One of the components of the home literacy environment is the frequency of reading by all members of the family and the frequency of adults reading to their children (Niklas et. al, 2016). Participants with older children made sure that their children read every day and those with younger children reported reading to them daily. Participants were more likely to do formal activities such as naming letters and counting in English and/or French and informal activities such as interactive storybook reading in more than one language as part of their language environment. An important factor in the home language environment is language input. If children are exposed to 2 or more languages equally then there is a lesser chance for subtractive bilingualism to occur. We see that in the case of one of the participants - George - who has two functionally trilingual children. According to him, his children, who are twelve and seven, speak Arabic, French, and English fluently because they had a home language environment of speaking only Arabic at home when they were younger. He is now more flexible with the home language use because he is satisfied with their fluency in Arabic.

Finally, parents in this study also used apps to learn English or French and watched shows on TV in their heritage languages or one of the other languages if the child was not strong enough in it. Most of the parents reported that this method helped them learn the societal language but not the heritage language.

These practices and strategies used by immigrant parents show that minority language-speaking parents must explicitly teach their children their minority language. Even in cases where both parents speak the same minority language and communicate with each other in this language, they still need to have a plan and strategize to ensure that their children learn the minority language if that is what they desire.

Multilingualism for the Future

Parents' reasons for teaching their children their heritage language and raising trilingual children varied. All the parents mentioned the future when explaining the reasons behind their decision. They believed that knowing several languages can positively impact one's future. One of the reasons was that it could provide better job opportunities in the future because employers are increasingly looking for multilingual employees. Another reason was for travel and resettlement opportunities, in case their children decided to resettle in some other country when they got older. The educational opportunity that multilingualism offered was also stated, where the children can have more choices of schools to attend. This is probably because children of immigrants in Quebec must attend French schools resulting in them being stronger in French academically and leading to them attending French universities. Thus, by raising their children to be trilingual, they are trying to create the opportunity for them to attend English, French or Arabic schools (where possible).

Intercultural relatability was important to a few participants. They believed that each language that a person acquired came with some cultural understanding and by extension helps one to be more open and appreciative of other cultures. While some participants talked about multilingualism giving a person confidence and improving communication, others talked about the cognitive and health benefits. One of the parents believed that learning more than one

language can make a person smart because "learning languages is hard" and going through that process makes one smarter. The idea that bilingualism offers cognitive benefits has been examined empirically, but with mixed results. Some research suggests, for example, that there is a positive correlation between bilingualism and performance on executive function tasks (Weber et al., 2016), while other research is inconclusive, showing no significant differences in performance between monolingual and bilingual children (Abdelgafar & Moawad, 2015; Ross & Melinger, 2017).

Extended Family and Community

Participants wanted their children to learn the heritage language to keep in contact with extended family in the country of origin. For some participants, their parents did not speak English or French and so the only way to communicate with the grandchildren was through the heritage language. This motivated those families to ensure that their children spoke the heritage language so that they can have a relationship with their grandparents. Aside from the primary family, extended family members, especially grandparents, play a critical role in maintaining minority languages (Kennedy & Romo, 2013). Because the families believed that by transferring their language, they were also transferring their culture, grandparents may be viewed as supporting the intergenerational transfer of not only language but culture as well. Having a community of heritage language speakers was a motivating factor for a few parents and was a missing resource for two others – Nekka and Femi. They suggested that the lack of people who speak Yoruba in their environment might be why their children were not interested in learning the language. Heritage language speaking Communities can support families who wish to transfer their heritage language to their children.

These findings are consistent with those found by Liang (2018). After reviewing 17 studies on the views and practices of immigrant parents in the United States and Canada, the author found that one of the reasons to promote the HL was for family communication and bonding, as well as promotion of cultural and ethnic identity, promoting future employment opportunities, and for intellectual benefits.

Resources, Schools, and Access to Books in Heritage Languages

Like parents in the Montreal area interviewed in the Ballinger et al. (2020) study, parents in this study also felt that they did not have avenues outside the home to practice their heritage language. Most of them expressed concern that their children were not interested in learning the heritage language because they do not see many people speaking the language and may feel that it is less important than English or French. They also felt that they did not have sufficient resources to support their children's trilingual development. Parents explained that they would need more books in their heritage language, more language teachers who spoke their heritage language, and more resources. At the same time, participants generally felt that it was their responsibility, not that of society, to transfer their heritage languages to their children.

Storybook Canada and Global Storybooks

Similar to previous research by Zaidi and Dooley (2021) and Gilman and Norton (2020), parents thought that the websites were useful for learning languages. Parents believed that with frequent use, the websites can be useful in the maintenance of heritage languages. Parents enjoyed the experience of spending time with their children and doing something important with them. The multilanguage nature of the stories was interesting to parents, with many of them reporting that they could use the website for English or French also. Given that parents often view language as part of their culture, one of the concerns I had was that the parents might view

African stories as culturally specific and not relatable. This was not the case, as the parents were able to find relatable lessons in each story. Nevertheless, some of the stories were not suitable for young, sensitive children. For example, the story of Magozwe (an orphan who ran away from his physically and verbally abusive uncle and ended up living on the street) was too sad for some young children, though it had a good and happy ending. The story 'What Visu's sister said' was too complex for some to understand. For another parent, her three-year-old who has a heightened fear of fire started crying after seeing the images of fire in one of the stories. One parent mentioned that the "chicken and millipede" was a pointless story, but another parent proposed that the 'chicken and millipede' story seemed pointless but was more about learning the vocabulary and creating conversation at the end of the stories. Thus, it may be necessary to choose stories while considering the characteristics of the child. Furthermore, most of the stories are short, but they provide room for more discussion that can be done in the heritage language.

Generally, children relied more on the pictures to understand the stories instead of the linguistic cues because most of them were not very fluent in their heritage language. This can prove to be beneficial if the story is read often. After the children know the stories, they will rely less on the images and may begin to learn words and phrases. Parents reported that the children enjoyed the feature of switching languages directly to English or French. This is a useful feature for older children allowing them to learn by themselves, though many parents reported using this feature when they came upon an unfamiliar word in their heritage language.

There seemed to be some discrepancy between what parents valued and what they practiced. Seven out of the eight participants reported that they value their HL and wish that their children learn this language, but also described their families as gradually using the societal language more for various reasons. They reported having started off speaking the HL to their

children when they were born, but slowly moved more towards English or French as the children grew older. Some of the reasons were to reduce tension between them and their children, to prevent their children from lagging behind their peers at school, and a general lack of time and energy to continue with their efforts to transfer the HL. Other studies have found similar results. Using case studies, Li (2006), for example, found that some parents were dissatisfied with their children's accents in English, so started speaking more English at home to help the children improve in this area; although parents in that study did not insist on speaking Chinese at home, they nonetheless believed that their children would learn to speak Chinese. Participants in Nesteruk (2010) similarly reported using the societal language to reduce parent-child tension and revealed that they did not have enough time and energy to continue their efforts at maintaining the HL. This is echoed in the review by Liang (2018) who found that one of the reasons why parents speak more of the societal language at home is because they lacked time and energy.

Limitations and Future Directions

Though this qualitative study provided rich data, there are certain limitations. First, the study sample was not diverse enough in terms of heritage languages. Six out of the eight participants were Arabic-speaking parents and the remaining two were Yoruba-speaking parents. Thus, only two languages on Storybook Canada and the Global Storybooks websites were represented. This may have been due to the snowball effect of recruitment. The first two participants told their friends and coworkers about the study which resulted in more participants. Furthermore, the intended sample size for this study was ten families but I ended up with only eight families. With this small sample size and lack of linguistic diversity amongst the participants, the data derived from this study only apply to the participants of this study. Future studies could involve more participants who speak different languages that are representative of

those on the Storybooks websites, to derive more generalizable findings and understand if immigrant families with other languages have the same or different experiences.

Secondly, the snowball sampling may have led to the high education levels of the parents in my study. All the participants held University degrees. A highly educated sample could have affected the results because educated parents may be more likely to favor reading with their children or have more positive views about multilingualism and online learning. Although I did not administer a formal measure of SES, there are studies showing that SES, and parents' education in particular, relates to the transmission and maintenance of HLs. Some research suggests that the more educated the parents are, the less likely they are to try to transmit their HL to their children. For example, according to Nesteruk (2010), as parents attain higher levels of education and fluency in the societal language and come to accept it as the language of their new country, they may relax their efforts to transmit the HL. On the other hand, Zhang (2012) found that well-educated parents were more likely to transmit their HL because they have more resources at their disposal. Thus, studies show mixed results regarding the effects of parental education on the transmission of HL.

The sample in my study was also affected by other factors. Given that the recruitment, interview, and storybook reading by parents and children were done online, participants needed access to social media and the internet. a requirement made explicit in the recruitment flyer. This means that participants will tend to be from a certain demographic. This is strengthened by the requirement of having children between the ages of 3 and 7 years old. All but one of the participants were between the ages of 30 to 39 years old, an age group that is the second largest group of social media users (Alexander et al., 2020), and might have been most comfortable with the online procedures used in the study.

Future research could use more varied means of recruitment to find and explore the experiences and views of families with older children. One could follow families for a longer period of time, and in addition to gathering parents' views on the Storybooks Canada and Global Storybooks websites, could observe the families using the websites to better understand how they spontaneously use it and interact with one another.

Feedback from the participants regarding the Storybook websites also suggests some directions for further developing the software or content. One of the concerns of parents was that when the language was changed while reading a story, the read aloud feature still used the previous language. The toggles feature only affected the on-screen text and not the speaker. Users had to go back to the top of the page to change the language and back to the page to hear it in the language of their choice. Participants also noted that the website could have more books, include stories from different cultures and make the experience more interactive.

Implications

This study provides insights into the practices and experiences of immigrant families who have a heritage language that is not English or French, and their views on a low-cost tool to support heritage language maintenance. The findings can inform school and home practices as well as educational policies. Low-cost websites such as Storybook Canada can be used in schools to learn not just the language of society but also immigrant languages. Supporting and representing the heritage languages of immigrant children in school can be beneficial to their development. For parents, it can provide an inexpensive way to support their efforts to transfer their languages to their children.

All participants in this study benefitted in various ways from the experience and six out of eight of them plan to continue using the Storybooks website. The other two have alternatives

similar to the Storybooks websites that they plan to keep using in their efforts to raise their children to be multilingual. These results could encourage other parents and educators to try these sites. The findings also suggest that having more dual language schools that teach minority languages and books in various languages may be beneficial to immigrant families.

Conclusions

Previous research has sought the opinion of language teachers and tutors on the usefulness of Storybooks Canada in language learning. This research sought to fill a gap in the research by getting parents' perspectives on the use of Storybooks Canada or Global Storybooks in the maintenance of their heritage language as well as understanding their practices, beliefs, and needs. Overall, interviews with eight immigrant parents and the qualitative data collected showed that immigrant parents' language and literacy practices involved mostly storybook reading, storytelling, and some electronic use such as apps. They desired their children to learn both the heritage language as well as English and French and they used internal strategies, particularly their language choice during parent-child interactions. They generally believed in the importance of reading and raising their children to be multilingual. The parents found the Storybook Canada/ Global Storybooks websites to be easy to use, and interesting. They believed that it can be beneficial in the maintenance of heritage languages with frequent use while showing insight into some of the limitations of the collection (i.e., the relatively small number of short stories). Even though parents in this study were motivated in transferring their heritage languages to their children, they were realistic in their expectations of their children's trilingual development. They did not believe that their children will be completely literate in their heritage languages but will be satisfied if they could at least understand them. The findings can be useful to parents, policymakers at different levels, and researchers.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Ad

Families needed for a study on how immigrant parents transmit their native language to their children

Participation in this study consists of:

- 2 interviews (30 – 40 minutes each)
- Using a website to read short stories to your children in your native language

To participate in this study, you must

- Be an immigrant to Canada
- Live in the province of Quebec and speak one of the following languages at home: Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, German, Italian, Korean, Mandarin, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, Turkish, Ukrainian, or Urdu.
- Have at least one child between the ages of 3 and 7 years old
- Be interested in passing on your native language to your children
- Have access to a computer and the internet.

If you or anyone you know is interested and wants to know more about this study, please contact me or pass on my contact information.

Thank you.

Onyemechi Fikani (Mechi)

Email: o_fikani@live.concordia.ca

Appendix B

Questions to Establish Inclusion Criteria

<u>General</u>

1. Are you an immigrant? If yes, from what country?

2. Do you live in the province of Quebec?

3. Do you have at least one child between the ages of 3 and 7?

4. a. Do you speak at least one language other than French or English at home? Please state them or it (in case of only one)

   b. Do you want your children to learn this/these language(s)?

5. Do you have access to a computer and internet at home?

<u>Language use in the home</u>

6. What is your child's or children's first language?

7. What languages do you or other adults who live in the home speak with your child(ren)?

8. What languages are your child or children exposed to outside your home (for example, the languages used at school, at community centers, at places of worship, and so on).

9. What language(s) does your child(ren) currently understand?

10. What language(s) does your child(ren) currently speak?

Appendix C

Consent Form

(printed on university letterhead)

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Immigrant parents' perspective on minority language maintenance
Researcher: Onyemechi Fikani
Researcher's Contact Information: o_fikani@live.concordia.ca
Faculty Supervisor: Diane Pesco
Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information: diane.pesco@concordia.ca

You are invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A.   PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to acquire immigrant parents' perspectives on (a) the transfer and maintenance of their native language to their children and (b) using digital dual language books such as those offered by Storybooks Canada as a resource to support children's development of a native language(s) as well as the official languages of Canada.

B.   PROCEDURES

If you participate, you will be asked to participate in 2 interviews with a duration of 30 - 40 minutes each. You will also be asked to navigate and use the Storybooks Canada website to read short stories to your child(ren) in your native language for one or two weeks. The first interview will cover your practices and beliefs as it relates to maintaining your native language and your home learning environment. The second interview will cover your feedback on the use of the Storybooks Canada website. In total, participating in this study will take approximately 3 hours of your time over three weeks.

C.   RISKS AND BENEFITS

This research is not intended to benefit you personally, but you will learn about resources that are intended to support children's language development and may choose to use these in the future. The research does not involve any known risks to you or your children; you could, however, experience a range of emotions and thoughts, both positive and negative, when reflecting on your family's language use and goals for your child.

D.   CONFIDENTIALITY

The information we will gather as part of this research includes: your name, your child or children's names, their ages, your phone number, email address, province of residence, and country of origin. We will not allow anyone to access this information or any other information you provide in response to the interviews, except people directly involved in conducting the

research. We will only use the information for the research described in this form.

We will protect the information we gather from you by using a pseudonym to replace your name and your children's names on any documents and digital files. Only the researcher will have a list that links the aliases to your names. We intend to publish the results of the research and we might include the information you provide in the publication along with aliases to replace your names (no other identifying information will be included). We will destroy the information five years after the end of the study by securely deleting any digital files and shredding any paper documents.

E.   CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time by informing the researcher or her supervisor Diane Pesco at diane.pesco@concordia.ca. You can also ask later that information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must tell the researcher or her supervisor before November 21, 2022.

There are no negative consequences for not participating in the study, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

F.   PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME   _____

SIGNATURE   _____

DATE   _____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca.

Appendix D

First Interview Questions

Background information

1. Please state your name.

2. How many children do you have? What are their names and ages?

3. Do all your children live with you? Do any other adults live in your home?

4. How long have you lived in Canada? How long have your children lived in Canada?

5. Would you please tell me a little bit about the languages you speak and/or understand? Do you also read and write in those languages?

6. Please tell me briefly about your education, including the language(s) you were instructed in at each level of your education. (If applicable, prompt for the same information for a partner or other primary caregiver in the home).

Home language and literacy environment

1. How do you support your children's language and literacy development at home?

2. What are your thoughts on reading? (Prompt: How so? Why?)

3. How often do you read to your children? In what language do you read to them? How do you select the books?

4. Do you read or write with your children in your native language?

5. If you visit a public library, how often do you visit? What activities do you do there?

6. Do you use any type of media technology such as radio, television, games, or audiobooks to support your child's reading or writing?

Bi/multilingualism

1. What are your thoughts on monolingualism, bilingualism, and multilingualism generally?

2. Please tell me about how your child has been learning different languages (native language(s), English, French, other).

3. Please share your motivations for wanting your children to be bi/multilingual and what you would like to achieve from it.

4. Why would you like your child/children to speak your native language?

5. Could you briefly explain how you teach them your native language?

6. Are there any factors in your environment or society that you think will help or hinder you in reaching your goal?

7. What strategies do you think work well and which ones work less well in terms of your child speaking or understanding _____ (native language)?

8. What role, if any, do you see technology playing in the maintenance of native language(s)?

9. Is there anything more that you want to add?

Appendix E

Participant's Log Sheet

Book title and picture	Date and time	Comment
	Duration	
Feelings		
Andiswa soccer star		
Sakima's song		

What Vusi's sister said		
Magozwe		

Appendix F

Second Interview Questions

1. What do you think about the Storybooks Canada initiative? How easy or difficult was it to use the website?

2. Overall, what do you think of the experience of reading these books to your child/children?

   a. Do you think that your child enjoyed it?

   b. Was there one of the books that you feel your child liked more or less than the others? Why?

   c. How do you think your child benefitted from the experience?

   d. Were there any challenges?

3. How did your child(ren) first respond to your reading activities using Storybooks Canada? Why do you think they responded this way? Did their response change over time?

4. How did the activity fit with the kinds of activities you usually do at home related to your child's language and literacy?

5. Because of the format (online and multilingual), do you think you approached the reading differently from how you would normally read to or interact with your child? If so, how?

6. Did participating in this research give you any insights into your child's abilities/needs in their languages? Did it influence the attention you gave to your child's language learning needs?

7. Do you think you will continue to use this platform or some other online bilingual reading platform? Elaborate on why or why not.

Appendix G

Sample of In-Vivo Coding

Yellow = Language and literacy practices

Green= Thoughts on bi/multilingualism

Turquoise = Motivation to transfer language to children

Purple = Beliefs about Quebec society in relation to home language maintenance

B : Belief
V : Value

Participant's name: Rawad

Transcripts	First cycle of in-vivo coding	Comments
Researcher: How do you support your children's language and literacy development at home? So language generally I'm talking generally now: French, English, Arabic any other languages, you speak, and literacy?		
Parent: Yeah, we do depending on the age. We do a lot of repetition especially when it comes to the need for us. To hear them speaking in Arabic, for example, as our maternal language, we would need to say it three, four times and then say it in English one time so that they can get it. Okay. So, it's a repetition it start at smaller age like third child now a year and a half you repeat the terms he repeat it unconsciously just repeat After you, he try to say what you are saying and this is, this worked a lot with my first child. It worked a lot with him and he actually can speak a little bit of Arabic now besides the French and English. Daycare They are working on English, mainly, school, they are working on French now, we are doing something in between English and Arabic. So we're doing the link in between English and Arabic at home, French, to be honest with you, not much of effort that we are doing, except the one that is related to schooling. So whatever studies that they give, they give my first child, we do it. Other than that	**Home language:** Repeating words or phrases three or four times, then translating to English. *"We do a lot of repetition…we would need to say it three, four times and then say it in English one time so that they can get it."* Focused more on Arabic & English. *"So we're doing the link in between English and Arabic at home"* Start at a young age *"So it's a repetition it start at smaller age like Rowen now a year and a half you repeat the terms he repeat it unconsciously just repeat"*	

there is less time, there is less dedication to develop the French. Probably we assume that he's going to be good in French anyway in school. With [child's name; second-born] English little bit less Arabic than [child's name; my first-born] because we wanted him to get to the point where you can reason with him fast and you want to catch the first language that he goes with. He's comfortable with English because of the daycare we go with him in English. Also, when you, when they are two, you don't focus that much like you, when you were focusing on one with my second is a less focus on Arabic. When my first was alone, we were doing a lot of Arabic, repeat in English. As I said one time so that he gets it. But with my second, now they need to understand as well. It become like three parties now and then the common language in the three parties is easier to be English and is difficult to catch the attention to develop the other languages. With my last it is even more difficult. Okay? Because he's still, smaller. We, my wife used to read stories for them my wife. She used to read stories for them. In the last few months, I don't see her doing so that much except for the exercises that she was doing like, last couple of weeks. TV. We tried TV as well, it developed it, develop their language a lot through the TV but the TV as well is is not controlled so, its kind of automatic, you don't control what they are learning but it develops the language as well.	**Literacy:** Work related to school, homework from school *"..except the one that is related to schooling. So whatever studies that they give they give Renee, we do it.."* Reading periodically B: Assumption that child will be good in French. *"there is less time there is less dedication to develop the French. Probably we assume that he's going to be good in French anyway in school."* **Technology use:** Watching TV to develop English language through songs *"We tried TV as well, it developed it, develop their language a lot through the TV but the TV as well is is not controlled so, its kind of automatic, you don't control what they are learning but it develops the language as well."*	Children attend French schools and English daycare. Skeptical about the use of television.
And what do you think about bilingualism, multilingualism and monolingualism?		
…. I came to Quebec, I was not able to communicate in French, it requires a lot of practice, and the dialect that they use the words the terms that they use here. It's somehow a bit difference to pronounce the pronunciation is different, am not comfortable. I don't find terms when I want to when I want to talk to somebody and I still miss the terms. So I know the importance of the language when as an immigrant when you move into a new society. And I know as well that in the professional	Beliefs on bi/multilingualism: Language is important for professional development. Language is the first barrier to a bright future. *"So I know the importance of the language when as an immigrant when you move into a new society. And I know as well that in the professional development language makes the first barrier*	

development language makes the first barrier that you can have toward having a bright future, if you want, if you do not to speak French. For example, good luck in finding a teaching job. Okay. If you do not perfectly speak French, you're going to apply to schools? The first time you say hi. How you doing? And you miss one, one word in French or you misutilize it, you lose your chance and that as well. We know it what we as immigrant, we came to this this country or to other countries, we know that the importance of the language. And therefore I would say that, the more languages, the more languages, for example, my kids will learn, the better. But I don't think too much. it depend on their situation? For example, they moved into Germany, they must learn how to speak German But here in Canada, minimum. In my opinion, they need to be good in three, two in reading, and writing, one in, at least speaking, which is the Arabic. reading and writing is French and English.	*that you can have toward having a bright future,"* *"The more languages, the more languages, for example, my kids will learn, the better…. But here in Canada, minimum. In my opinion, they need to be good in three, two in reading, and writing, one in, at least speaking, which is the Arabic. reading and writing is French and English."*	
Is this your main motivation? Professional success?		
That is part of it That's not the whole, the whole thing is not even the biggest thing. So, it's, it's, it's big. If I want to say 40%, it would be this. another 40 percent, it would be the desire of the parents to create a similar species. it's you want them to get from you as much as possible. The good things though. Now the bad things I don't want to I want them to reject it. But at least there is always that desire that if you speak something if you talk Arabic you would like your kid to understand and be able to talk Like you learn. if you know three languages you want them to learn three and four, right? You have this is another big its as equal as as like Like, it's going to be good for their future. The other one is I would say communicating with their relatives abroad. For example, my parents, they can communicate neither in English nor in French, Arabic is the only way to go. So they have at least to learn the basics to be able to communicate also as part of, giving them the	Motivation to teach home language to children: 40% for their professional development and bright future. 40% desire of parents to create a similar specie or a better specie and 20% to communicate with the relatives. *"I want to say 40%, it would be this. another 40 percent, it would be the desire of the parents to create a similar species…. But at least there is always that desire that if you speak something if you talk Arabic you would like your kid to understand and be able to talk Like you learn. if you know three languages you want them to learn three and four, right?... The other one is I would say communicating with their their relatives abroad.*	Wants to give children the tool to be able to communicate if they choose to return to Lebanon.

opportunity because we hold the multi nationalities, right? Like we do have a Lebanese, a nationality. We do have as well, a Canadian citizenship. So I would like that when they grow, they can still decide to go back to Lebanon. Right? Maybe they would love to go back to Lebanon, right? Maybe they would go there and they would find there that oh its a better environment to live. Now, we left there, that's our decision. But I would like to give them the option that maybe they can decide to go there, so they should be able to communicate as well. That's another I'm talking about daily life Communication is not related to professionalism, is not related to the other one. Like I want them to speak Arabic like me, or so, no. No, it's to be able to connect to the people over there if they decided to go, they would have the tool at least.		
Do you think that there's any factors in this environment in the Quebec, any factors in the Quebec Society. That Could hinder or that could help with this goal.		
The Quebec society is, Canada in general. I would say, is if we have a, almost, everybody's immigrant over here….. You have a lot of languages being spoken. in particular in Quebec, The Arabic community is Big. Okay, you have a lot of Arabic people here or arabic speaking. People. Not necessary Arabic, so Lebanese, Syrian, Egyptians too` many people that they are from countries where they speak Arabic, that would encourage as well the person to that, he has a tool that he can communicate with them. He can hear them communicating in Arabic, it would be interesting to listen and understand what the others. They are saying in Arabic most people, they think we are fighting when we speak in Arabic. …If you understand the words, you would know that it's nothing related to fighting or so. So I'd say Quebec as a part of Canada, you have the variety, you have the majority of Arabic speaking Community, as well, here in compared to Canada, which is good for my kids. So I would say it would play a role. However, the language the the cultural attachment to the French language is pushing	Quebec has many Arab speaking communities which will encourage one to teach their children Arabic. ". *You have a lot of languages being spoken. In particular in Quebec, The Arabic community is Big. Okay, you have a lot of Arabic people here or arabic speaking. People. Not necessary Arabic, so Lebanese, Syrian, Egyptians too` many people that they are from countries where they speak Arabic, that would encourage as well the person to that, he has a tool that he can communicate with them. He can hear them communicating in Arabic, it would be interesting to listen and understand what the others……. So I'd say Quebec as a part of Canada, you have the variety, you have the majority of Arabic speaking Community, as well, here in compared to Canada,*	

them to go, very far toward to one language only, which is against, the Constitution. Now, and against human nature. You see, I believe in in me myself, I believe in difference. There is, there is no single person that is like, another person, ….. And then they put it as a law. . I think my only like negative feedback about that would be that that a lot forcing the French language a lot in Quebec That would be in a negative Point, not giving the opportunity for immigrant children to be taught in English or to choose the language. So you don't have the freedom to choose the language you want to study in Quebec, if you want to, if you, if you want to have that freedom, you would have to pay 10,000 or 12,000 dollar per year for your kid, to go in private school. If you want to have the freedom, which I consider as a, as a A little bit pushing too much toward the French. I think they should keep it a little bit flexible.	*which is good for my kids…. So I would say it would play a role. However, the language the the cultural attachment to the French language is pushing them to go, very far toward to one language only, which is against, the Constitution. Now, and against human nature… forcing the French language a lot in Quebec That would be in a negative Point, not giving the opportunity for immigrant children to be taught in English or to choose the language."*	

Appendix H

Sample of Grouping of Codes and Theme Generation

Topic	Grouping of codes	Theme Generation	Themes
Language and literacy practices	Practices - Repetition in both home language and English or French (x8) - French literacy practices are related to schoolwork (x3) - Storybook reading - Apps on iPad, TV, songs, electronic toys - Read everyday (x6) Reads periodically (x2) - Books are chosen with easy words, familiar themes and themes related to life. - Visits home country/ makes regular calls to extended family (x4) Belief - Reading can help with learning new vocabulary - Child will be good in French.	Practices – English and/or French - Storybook reading with books that had few words or familiar themes. - Apps, electronics - Activity books Practices – native language - Repetition in both home language and society language - Stays in contact with extended family - Reading books - Storytelling Belief - Reading is good and can help with enriching vocabulary	- Communication, Story book reading and storytelling. - Multilingualism and a better future - Extended families or a sense of community are important in passing on language, culture and identity More resources, schools, and access to books
Belief about multilingualism	- Professional development - Immigrating and settling (travelling is easier)(communication)x6 - Future opportunities - Good for work, job opportunities, employment (x6) - Confidence - Easy communication - Travelling and communication are easy (x5) - Provides future opportunities. Gives confidence and power	- Knowing multiple languages is good for professional development, travelling and integration, employment, and communication.	

Note: The number in parenthesis shows the number of participants who raised that issue. The codes without numbers were raised by one parent.