



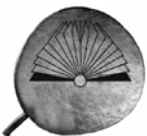
## Article Summary: Louis & Taylor 2001

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- A social-psychological approach to language learning looks at how indigenous people retain and lose their languages. In the past, mainstream educational institutions insisted children speak only English and most lost their indigenous language. Almost all North American indigenous languages have been extinguished and replaced by English.
- Inuktitut is one of three indigenous languages in Canada with potential for long-term survival. 90% of Inuit in Nunavik speak Inuktitut as their first language. In Nunavik 40% of Inuit school children and 72% of adults speak Inuktitut fluently.
- Nunavik schools teach children in Inuktitut, their first language, for grades one to three. Starting in grade four children receive three one-hour Inuktitut classes per week. They choose the English or French second language stream for all other classes.
- Formal education in the dominant language raises serious concerns about if and how indigenous languages will survive.
- Most indigenous people want their children to learn the dominant language so they can interact with and function well within the dominant culture.
- Young children commonly use Inuktitut with family members in the home and with friends in the schoolyard. English becomes attractive because it connects people with things such as sports broadcasting, TV movies, and pop music.

### **Main comments and conclusions:**

- When Inuit children start their second / dominant language instruction in grade four, children in the English stream know a lot more English than children in the French stream know French.
- All Inuit children have higher conversational skills than academic skills when they start second / dominant language instruction, especially children in the English stream. By grade five English and French streams make progress in conversational skills and are catching up with academic skills.





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- Inuit children who start English or French language education at an early age – before grade three – have trouble and progress poorly both with Inuttitut and with second language English / French skills.
- Schools need Inuttitut teachers and Inuttitut curriculum materials that reflect Inuit culture.
- The research found large differences between French and English streams. For example, French stream children develop good conversational skills in English, the third language. English stream children develop no French skills.
- We need to further examine some questions central to the issue of Inuttitut survival. Do Inuttitut academic skills continue to decline in higher grades? What is the relationship between this decline and ongoing second / dominant language learning?

