LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE:

A SOCIOLINGUISITIC STUDY OF FEMALE TIBETAN IMMIGRANT YOUTHS IN
TORONTO, CANADA

by

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B.A., York University, 2004

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ASIA PACIFIC POLICY STUDIES

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

APRIL 2007

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores language maintenance and shift among female Tibetan immigrant youths in Toronto, Canada. It considers the various factors affecting language shift and maintenance such as pre-migration experience such as residence and educational history, linguistic repertoires, domains of language use, institutional support factors such as exposure to media and attitude to native language. Data from a survey questionnaire is analysed to inform the research with supplementary information provided from interviews. The thesis demonstrates that language shift from Tibetan to English is taking place among the respondents. First language (L1) oracy is receding in its function towards personal domains while L1 literacy is at a critical stage where the shift is more pronounced and it seems that it was already underway before the female Tibetans youths came to Canada. The only domain, where Tibetan language seems to be well maintained is in the personal domains of home, speaking to parents and in religious activities. Code switching and a new dialect formation or *koineisation* is taking place among the Tibetan in Diaspora.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, Tsering Kyipa and uncle, Ngawang Kalsang

for their bountiful love, support, and prayers across the miles.

Chapter 1 Introduction

One common concern for groups whose migration has crossed linguistic boundaries is language maintenance and/or shift in the newly created minority ethnic community (Gibbons & Ramirez, 2004; Seville-Troike, 2000). Immigrants, especially youths, are caught between the need to adjust to the dominant culture, where English is the main language of communication, and the pressure to maintain native language coming from the family, ethnic community or within the identity imperatives of individuals themselves.

Globalization and the accompanying increase in mobility have made the issue of language shift and language maintenance a pertinent one. This thesis will address the dynamics of maintaining one's native language as well as language shift among the female Tibetan immigrant youths in Toronto, Canada. Language shift takes place when an individual or a particular community gradually abandons its original native language and speaks another one instead (Trudgill, 2000, p.191). The use of the first language (L1) diminishes and second language (L2) increases in the process of the language shift, and when the shift is completed, the individual is said to have lost her language, or in the case of a community, they have lost their L1. The shift can be exhibited on a wide spectrum. The language shift can be towards the L2 in restricted domains such as school, workplace, friends and others, or alternatively, the shift can be more intense and pervasive when the L2 comes to be used in most situations such as with parents, at home and so forth. In the extreme case, the language shift is said to be complete; if the individual or community no longer uses their L1 and instead uses the L2 all the time in

all contexts. Language maintenance is the antonym of language shift. A language is maintained if L2 is not used for domains where L1 was previously used.

In the Tibetan community in Toronto, Tibetan language maintenance among those born in Canada and for those who migrated to Canada is a real concern. As such, this thesis will be of practical significance in contributing to the knowledge of the actual state of Tibetan language in the community through the lens of the female youths. Female youths are an important demographic determining language trends in communities and so offer a unique window into the Toronto Tibetan community. The overriding aim of this thesis is to explore and illustrate the process of language maintenance and language shift among the group by examining various sociolinguistic phenomena.

In terms of the layout of this thesis, the thesis will first detail the linguistic situation of the Tibetan language in a global context. It will be followed by background information on Tibetans in Diaspora with specific focus on the Tibetans in Canada. Then the various arguments for the importance of native language maintenance will be provided since the language maintenance studies are based on this premise. The literature review that follows will examine literatures that contribute to a better understanding of the sociolinguistic situation of female Tibetan youths in Toronto. The literatures reviewed here are mostly cases from immigrant communities in North America, U K and Australia.

The research questions to be examined will be laid out after the literature review. This will be followed by the research methodology section, which will explain the rationales for the methodological approach taken in this thesis. The next section will present the results from the survey questionnaires and analyze the data to answer the

research questions posed. A section will be dedicated to the policy implications of this research and finally, discussions will ensue followed by the conclusion.

The Socio-Political Situation of Tibetan language

Tibetan is a Tibeto-Burman language spoken by about 6 million people. Geographically, it is native to Tibetans on the Tibetan plateau that stretches from the west in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) to the east in the provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan and Gansu. Many neighbouring areas of Tibet such as Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and India also have ethnic groups who speak different variants of the Tibetan language. The Tibetan language comprises a very diverse range of dialects which are conventionally divided into several geographical groups with similar dialects: dialects of Sikkim (India) and Bhutan; dialects of the Khams, or South-eastern region, including the dialects of the interior plateau; dialects of Southern Qinghai, eastern Tibet, and parts of Western Sichuan, and Amdo, dialects of the West, including Balti in Pakistan, and Ladakhi in Jammu and Kashmir (India); dialects of the Central region, including that of Lhasa, the capital city of Tibet and most of the Nepalese dialects (including Sherpa); dialects of the northeast, including the dialects of northern Qinghai, southern Gansu, and northern Sichuan. Within each of these geographical pockets, the dialects differ as well.

In this thesis, we will only discuss the Tibetan language and dialects spoken by the Tibetan Diaspora. Since the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1959, when many Tibetans fled with their leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, into exile, the Tibetan language came in contact more intensely with other languages. The Tibetan Diaspora of about 150,000 are scattered in different countries with the highest concentration in India and Nepal.

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Canada has about 5000 Tibetans with about 4000 in Toronto (Canadian Tibetan Association of Ontario [CTAO] pamphlet 2005). Tibetans are a minority linguistic community everywhere, except in the TAR where they are still a majority. Even in the TAR, urban areas such as Lhasa are experiencing Han Chinese migration outnumbering the local population. Laponce pointed out that: "Globalization causes weak and powerful languages to be in increasingly frequent contact. Weaker languages are thus increasingly at risk of being sidelined and lost" (2004, p.15). With the increasing pace of globalization and the recent operation of the railway that runs from Qinghai to Lhasa, Han Chinese migration to Tibet is bound to increase, which means it will be harder for the Tibetan language to be retained in its homeland since language shift from Tibetan to Chinese in the urban areas will accelerate. We will consider the status of Tibetan language outside Tibet next.

In the Tibetan Diaspora, the Tibetan language has been maintained as the lingua franca despite the dispersion of Tibetans all over the world; however, there has not been a systematic study of the language situation in the Diaspora. Some studies do show indirect evidence. Klieger (2002), for example, while examining social change in Tibetan youths in Delhi briefly described their language situation. He notes that the Tibetan youths expressed concern that Tibetan youngsters were beginning to lose their abilities in Tibetan language, especially those in the Northeast (Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Sikkim etc.) where Nepali is the primary language. MacPherson (2005) considers the language contact and identity change among Tibetan nuns in Dharamsala, India. Her research looks at the strategies employed by the nuns in their contact with English.

The formation of a distinct Tibetan society and exile government in India has made it easier to maintain the Tibetan language in India. Tibetan is taught in schools and has been made the language of instruction from kindergarten to grade five in the early 1990s in some select Tibetan schools in India. In the 2000s, it has been extended to all Tibetan schools. In May 2005, the New Education Policy formulated by the Tibetan government-in-exile called for the extension of the Tibetanization (changing the medium of instruction from English to Tibetan) program from grade 5 to grade 12. The Tibetanization programme was mainly devised to improve educational standards of Tibetans in India; to maintain Tibetan language and culture; to make career plans to meet needs of the Tibetan community; and to strengthen Tibetan students' commitment for the Tibetan Independence movement in exile (Koetsier 1987 cited in Choedon, 1992, p.3). Most Tibetans living in Tibetan communities in India and Nepal are affected by the language policies of the Tibetan government-in-exile. However, the Tibetan Diaspora excluding India and Nepal are at a precarious situation in terms of maintaining their language. Geographically, they are widely dispersed resulting in low numbers of Tibetans living in the same area such as the fact that there are less than 100 Tibetans in the whole of Vancouver. As immigrants in those countries, they are exposed daily to the dominant majority language making it harder to maintain Tibetan.

Tibetan Diaspora in Canada

Tibetan immigration to Canada is relatively late compared to other immigrants from Asia. In 1970, the Canadian cabinet authorized 240 Tibetan refugees to enter Canada on an experimental basis. Between March 1971 and August 1972, 228 Tibetans refugees were allowed to settle in four Canadian provinces: Quebec, Ontario,

Saskatchewan, and Alberta (Dargyay, 1988). The second wave of Tibetan immigration to Canada mostly consisted of Tibetans who came as refugee claimants via United States. Following similar patterns as other immigrants, Tibetans are mostly clustered in Toronto. The Tibetan population in Toronto continues to grow as many Tibetans sponsor family members or seek wives or husbands from India or Nepal and subsequently have children.

Literature about Tibetan immigrants in Canada is scarce understandably due to its very small population. Nonetheless few studies were conducted such as Dhargyay's "Tibetans in Alberta and their Cultural Identity" (1988), Gardner's "Exile, Transnational connections, and the construction of identity: Tibetans in Montreal" (2000), and McLellan's "Religion and ethnicity: the role of Buddhism in maintaining ethnic identity among Tibetans in Lindsay, ONT" (1987). These studies deal with the identity construction of Tibetans in Canada. Language as an identity constructor is only mentioned briefly in those studies. This thesis will fill the gap in the literature about the Tibetan language maintenance and shift in the Tibetan community in Toronto.

Despite claims of language shift and loss among Tibetans in the community, to date no empirical investigation has been undertaken to ascertain the status and strength of Tibetan language maintenance and shift in the community. In most cases, elders assume that Tibetan youths are shifting their language to English. This study therefore offers a sociolinguistic picture of Tibetan youths in Toronto: such as number of languages spoken, domain of language use, self-reported language proficiency and language use. Such an exploration will provide a more informed state of Tibetan language among the youths in Toronto.

Importance of Language Maintenance

Language maintenance, language shift, language loss and other aspects of minority languages are well documented. In these literatures, the premise is that maintaining native languages is one of the major challenges facing linguistic minorities, whether indigenous, refugee or migrant and L1 is considered to be of paramount importance for various reasons. Here, the '3Ps' (Political, Psychological and Pragmatic) reasons as I call it, will be discussed.

Political

The rights of minorities including language rights have always been debated in liberal democracies such as Canada. The notion of *linguistic human rights* (e.g.,Skuttnab-Kangas & Phillipson, 2000) has pointed towards greater public acknowledgement and political legitimacy of 'minority' group language use (Stroud, 2001, p.345). The impact of political and economic forces of globalization has resulted in displacement of minority languages around the world by the dominant languages, which is English in most cases.

In a similar vein as the 'biodiversity' of species, some scholars adopt the notion of 'bio-linguistic diversity' highlighting the rapidly declining pool of languages in the world (Nettle and Romaine, 2000). The proponents of the 'bio-linguistic diversity' claim that with the loss of the languages, indigenous knowledge particular to that culture encoded in that language is lost. Therefore, the need to preserve minority languages from being displaced by dominant languages and subsequently becoming extinct is seen as an important political and social issue.

Psychological reasons

Language maintenance is important not only to the survival of minority languages, but also because of the psychological impact, it has on the immigrants and their families. Language is widely associated with identity such as ethnic identity. Gibbons and Ramirez (2004) noted that various aspects of identity such as class, gender and geographical origin are marked through language (p.225). Hoare (2000) concluded from her research on questions of identity and languages in Brittany that Breton (native language of Britanny) plays an associative role in characterising Breton identity (p.343). Generally, formation of ethnic identity among immigrants is positively correlated with self-esteem. Research on Asian Americans has shown that high levels of ethnic identity are positively related to self-esteem (Uba, 1994 cited in Yoon, 2000, p.55). Thus, being able to maintain their native language is good for the immigrant's self-esteem. It can even be a point of pride for an individual and the community as well (Gibbons and Ramirez, 2004, p.2). Self-esteem and pride are important attributes for immigrant minorities who face structural discrimination in most facets of life such as employment.

According to Garcia (2003), among the reasons for preserving or maintaining one's language is group's need for an ethnic identity (p.22). Lawson and Sachdev (2004) concluded, on the basis of research in social psychology, that "a substantial body of literature exists that demonstrates that linguistic criteria serve as an important markers of social categories and that language is often the central criteria attribute for a group identity" (p.56). Speaking the same language in the community and identifying themselves as a member of the same ethnic group creates an in-group solidarity that is more conducive to collective actions. Dagenais and Lamarre (2005) while examining the

representations of multilingual youth in Montreal and Vancouver cite Deprez (1994) and Woolard (1985) in maintaining that language is implicated in the construction of identities and serves to secure group solidarity for those multilingual youths (p.4).

Pragmatic reasons

Immigrants maintain their L1 for pragmatic reasons as well. Pease-Alvarez & Vasquez argued that language is also the means of socialization into one's culture, the vehicle for transmitting the cultural heritage of the past, reshaping it, and passing it on to the next generations (cited in Tannenbaum, 2003, p.374). Since language is an integral part of one's heritage, knowing and maintaining one's language allows the speaker to connect with one's heritage in a more meaningful way than learning about it through another language. For example, listening to Tibetan Buddhist teachings in Tibetan is a different experience from listening to it in English or any other language.

Hinton (1999) highlighted the poor communication between generations that results from first language attrition. Thus, L1 is important for communication within the family and for maintaining practical and emotional contact with relatives in the homeland (Guardardo, 2002; Tannenbaum, 2003). Diaspora communities in most cases are implicit in transnational activities. The significance of L1 for transnationalism activities can also be explained through the 'linguistic capital' thesis. This thesis credited to Bourdieu, states that those who possess, have access to, or develop linguistic capital have access to better life chances (Morrison & Lui, 2000, p. 473). Morrison and Lui defined 'linguistic capital' as, "fluency in, and comfort with, a high-status, world-wide language which is used by groups who posses economic, social, cultural and political power and status in local and global society" (p. 478). English is one such language, but differing contexts accords

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different languages the status of being 'linguistic capital' especially in the context of transnationalism. Dagenais and Lamarre (2005) explained that:

> [A] number of immigrants and second-generation youth look beyond the borders of a particular nation state, such as Canada, to adopt a transnational perspective as their frame of reference. This means that maintenance of a heritage/minority language might be perceived as valuable capital within one's local language community as well as within a larger transnational community. (p.5)

Thus, L1 might be maintained for economic or social reasons when negotiating oneself in the transnational setting, which is characteristic of Diasporas.

Finally, the pragmatic cognitive advantage of maintaining one's L1 is that it facilitates the learning of the L2 and L3. Cummins' (1996) 'Common Underlying Proficiency model' maintained that the better developed the children's L1 conceptual foundation; the more likely they are to develop similarly high level of conceptual abilities in their L2. Swain and Lapkin (2005) noted that one of Sociocultural theory's central tenets is that, "speaking and writing are cognitive tools that mediate learning" (p.178). Swain and Lapkin related a study, which showed that immigrant children with literacy in their home language outperformed mainstream Anglophone immersion students in French, the L2 of the Anglophone students and the L3 of the immigrant students (p. 181).

Therefore, L1 maintenance is important for political, psychological and for pragmatic reasons for the individual, speech community and the wider community. The next chapter will review the literatures on language maintenance.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Language Maintenance Research

Among the literature on language maintenance and shift among ethnic minorities in Canada, a quick overview of the last 10 years showed that most languages studied were European with preponderance of French. Given the change in pattern of immigrants coming from Europe before the 1970s to mass immigration from Asia in the last few decades, the literature does not reflect that change.

Tibetan is one of the relatively new languages in Canada making its appearance in the early 1970s. For immigrants, language contact with the dominant language has enormous implication for their language. Huffines and Dow (cited in Dow, 1991) asserted that in U.S, language death is an almost inevitable outcome of contact with English for minority languages (p.9). In the Canadian scenario, Swidinsky and Swidinsky (1997) argued that the growing body of empirical research on ethnic language shift points to a common conclusion that of a widespread erosion of native language proficiency in Canada. They remarked that despite varying rate of language shift, few ethnic groups could withstand the pressures to shift to the exclusive use of an official language in the long run (p 82). Tibetan language's contact with English is very likely to bring language shift towards the latter if individual Tibetans and the community does not take explicit initiatives to maintain it.

Factors affecting Language Maintenance

The literature on language maintenance points to multitude of factors affecting language maintenance and shift; however, some factors that feature consistently will be

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dealt in this thesis. Edwards (1992) drew an exhaustive list of factors affecting language discussed here. Edwards (1995) examined language shift and maintenance from a multidisciplinary angle with 33 variables based on different perspectives of demography, sociology, linguistics, psychology, history, geography, politics, education, religion, economics and the media (cited in Fase, Jaspaert & Kroon 1992, pp.49-50).He attributed three variables to each discipline. For example, from a demographic viewpoint, variables such as numbers and concentrations of speakers, the geographical distribution of the language and the rural-urban nature of the language settings are important variables affecting language shift and maintenance (p.48). Despite the exhaustive nature of Edwards' typological framework for minority language situation variables, it overlooks variables such as generation, age at migration and speakers social network, which are all important variables for influencing language shift or maintenance in an immigrant linguistic minority context. This oversight could be because he based his typology on the original typology of White (1987), which dealt with indigenous minority languages. Despite his claim that the model is extended to include immigrant groups, some important variables were missing such as generation. The next section will deal with variables specific to immigrant communities that affect language maintenance and shift.

Generation

Generation is one of the prominent and recurring factors in language maintenance and shift. Nambiar et al. (cited in David, 2002,) has asserted that generation is still a central construct for language maintenance and language shift research despite the problems encountered in categorizing generations for analytical purpose (p. 35). Gardner-Chloros et al. (2005) showed from their research of immigrant intergenerational language

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use that language shift takes place roughly over three generations with a bilingual stage before language shift is complete (p.52). The language shift to the dominant language is known to take place most intensely in the second generation of immigrants. Many researchers use the second generation for analyzing language shift in a community (for examples, Lawson & Sachdev, 2004; Slavick, 2001; Pauwels, 2005; Tannenbaum, 2003; Winter & Pauwels, 2005). The focus on second-generation immigrants in language shift has dwarfed the significance of language shift taking place in first generations. Waas found that a group of German speakers who moved to Australia after the age of 16 suffered considerable LI loss after living in Australia for 20 years (cited in Guardado 2002, p.345). This indicates the significance of age at migration and length of residence in the new country as a variable for language maintenance as well.

Age at migration and length of residence

The younger an individual immigrates to another country, the more likely it is for them not to maintain their L1 but instead shift their language use to L2 over time. Similarly, the longer an immigrant stays in the new country, the more likely she/he is to shift their language use to the dominant one and use less of L1. In a Hispanic group in California, Mills (2001) found that there was a tendency for using only English in many localities (domains) as early as the first generation. Her results showed that acculturation correlated negatively with Spanish use (cited in Garcia 2003, p.31). This indicates that the acculturation process, which is related to age at migration and length of residence in the country, is negatively correlated with L1 maintenance.

Household composition

Another important factor affecting language maintenance and language shift is the number of speakers in the immigrant's household. The number of speakers of Tibetan language in the household can affect language shift or maintenance. The lower the number of speakers in the household, the more likely the language shift will be towards English because if there are only few people to whom one can speak L1, then one is likely to use the dominant language more. Therefore, extended families have a more extensive network of L1 speakers as compared to some one living alone or a nuclear family as shown by Pauwel's research (2005, p.125). In a similar logic, an individual's social network is considered crucial in effecting language shift or language maintenance.

The Social Network Analysis is a relatively new approach devised to study the influence of social network on L1. Social network analysis assumes an individual's personal communities (social networks) as the primary factor affecting the language vitality of the community and its likelihood to succumb to language shift. The domains of L1 use within and among social networks are thus important for maintaining L1. Immigrants tend to network with their own ethnic community in the early phase of their immigration, such behaviour contributes to L1 language maintenance but with passage of time, they interact more with other linguistic groups and the use of L1 diminishes.

Attitude to L1

One of the factors cited by many that affect language maintenance and shift is the speaker's attitude towards it. Language attitude is generally divided into instrumental and integrative attitude based on the motivation of the attitudes. Instrumental motivation reflects pragmatic, utilitarian motives. It is characterized by having either positive or

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negative attitude towards the L1 because it accrues tangible or intangible benefits or disadvantages to the user respectively. An instrumental attitude to a language is mostly self-oriented and individualistic (Baker 1992). Integrative attitude on the other hand is mostly social and interpersonal in orientation. Such an attitude has conceptual links with the need for affiliation .Thus an integrative attitude to a particular language may concern attachment to, or identification with a language group and their cultural activities (Baker 1992, p.32). Generally, positive and negative instrumental and integrative attitude towards a L1 are associated with language maintenance and shift respectively.

Language attitude has been researched by linguists, sociolinguists and by social psychologists using different methods to measure it. The linguists have used the "Matched -Guises Test" where two separate recordings of the same individuals are made but each with a different language or a dialect. The recordings are later played in a random order to subjects who were each given a questionnaire and asked to judge the speakers, in terms of personality and character, based purely on the guises they hear. It has been used in various studies (Bentahila, 1983; Hoare, 2001; and Ladegaard, 2000; Weil & Schneider in Putz, 1997). While matched-guise method is popular in linguistics, social psychology and sociolinguistics have used survey questionnaires with responses on Likert scale to measure attitude towards a language.

Some reservations about the use of attitude as a variable for predicting language shift and maintenance have been raised. In her study, Slavik (2001) found that her results suggested that although most second generation Maltese-Canadians claim positive attitudes toward the maintenance of the Maltese language, few actually speak Maltese regularly. Slavik cites Fishman (1991) in highlighting that in some immigrant

communities, there is increased esteem for their L1 with concomitant increased relegation of these languages to fewer and narrower domains of language use. Therefore, a negative relationship between ethnic language use and positive attitudes over time is said to exist in such communities. The minority of respondents who had negative attitude towards Maltese language in Slavik's study expressed it mostly in terms of the uselessness of Maltese as a language in Canada (pp.142-150). Pauwels (2005) criticized that even though studies have shown that language maintenance attitudes often remain positive among adolescents in many ethno-linguistic communities, but these seldom have a direct impact on the use of the L1. Despite legitimate concerns, the cases mentioned above fail to distinguish between the instrumental and integrative attitude towards L1. It seems that in the cases mentioned above, the positive integrative attitude to the L1 has not decreased but it does not rule out the possibility that the instrumental attitude towards the L1 has decreased, which is evidently the case in Slavik's study. This seems to show that the delineation of instrumental and integrative attitude towards the L1 should be stressed instead of conflating the two during questionnaire construction and analysis.

Language attitude studies are also employed to discern the use of L1 oracy and literacy. Smolicz, Nical, and Secombe (2000) found in their comparative study of Tagalog-speaking school students in Philippines and Australia that both groups have positive attitude towards L1 oracy, but they have less than positive attitudes toward literacy activities in L1 on the whole, with a preference for literacy in English (cited in Garcia 2003, p.28).

Gender

Gender is an important variable affecting language shift and maintenance; however, the direction in which the change brought by gender is still not definitive. The Earlier studies demonstrated that women are the preserver of language and culture; maintaining their first language more than males (e.g., Bennett, 1992; Clyne & Kipp, 1997), a finding usually attributed to females spending more time at home and thus acquiring lower levels of L2. However, recent research has shown that it is not always the case. For example, MacPherson (2005) cited Norris's (2002, 2004) research where she found that Aboriginal women in Canada are experiencing more dramatic first language and culture loss than men, mostly through intermarriage and urban migration (p.587). Sociolinguists using quantitative methods to study language change in progress noted that women are more likely than men to experience language shift towards a prestige norm or the dominant language (Cameron 2003, p.187).

Yet other studies report no gender differences concerning language maintenance and language shift (Berkovich (2005), Oliver and Purdie (1998), and Tannenbaum (2003) cited in Tannenbaum & Howie 2002, pp.291-292). In addition to the differing observations about the role of gender in language change, Clyne and Kipp (1997) have looked at subtler realities such as gender relations in a community to find the differing role gender plays in language maintenance. They found that the effect of gender on language change is mediated by the particular form gender relations take in a given community. Such analysis is a step towards the research on gender and language since gender relations is what matters and not gender per se.

The gender difference effecting language shift in a culture or speech community has been documented in the classic work of Gal (1979), where she found that Hungarian women preferred to study German rather than their native Hungarian because of the perceived opportunities it offered which is not offered by learning Hungarian (cited in MacPherson, 2005). In a similar vein, MacPherson (2005) noted from her research on Tibetan nuns in Dharamasala, India that learning English can be an easy credential to compensate for the multiple negative discriminations women face elsewhere in society. She remarked that the modernistic conceptions and practices of women's equality and human rights that are embedded in English, "…can help women wrest themselves from negative self-images and limited roles prescribed within more traditional societies" (p.587). Thus, her conclusion was that, women from strict traditional cultures might be L1 unilingual speakers, whereas if given opportunities they may chose to exit the traditional culture and so engage in rapid language shift or they may become more bilingual and intercultural to negotiate both home and global/regional languages/cultures. Gender as an important and varying factor for language shift and maintenance is thus highlighted.

Domains of language use

Fishman (1997) conceptualizes domains as "all of the interactions that are rather unambiguously related (topically and situationally) to one or another of the major institutions of society: e.g., the family, work sphere, education, religion, entertainment and the mass media" (p.44). The domains where language is used are multiple. The choice of language use in the different domains can be indicative of the state of the language as well as predictive of future state of the language among the individuals in the

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community. In this thesis, the domains of language use will be classified as follows: 1) language used with different interlocutors and language used in different locations or spheres such as workplace, school, home, religious site etc; 2) language used in different contexts such as performing cognitive tasks and expressing emotions; 3) language used in oracy and in literacy: reading and writing

1. Language use in different spheres of the home, the workplace and school and with different interlocutors

The literatures have pointed to the greater maintenance of the L1 if it continues to be used across all these domains (Holmes, 2001; Pavlenko, 2006; Ryan et al., 1982; Holmes, 1992; Landry and Allard, 1992 cited in Kostoulas-Makrakis 1995, p.11; Schooling, 1990). Among the various domains, the domain of home or family is indicated as the most important (Clyne and Kipp, 1999; Fishman, 1997; Kostoulas-Makrakis, 1995; Tannenbaum, 2003). The home domain is of such importance that, once the L1 use in home ceases, all other domains become especially vulnerable (Fishman, p. 175). Language use with different interlocutors is also indicative of language shift and maintenance.

2. Language use in expressing emotions

Huls et al. (1992) found in their study of a Turkish Diaspora community that, the use of Turkish is correlated with topics and settings that are emotionally laden (cited in Fase et al., eds., p.113).Earlier studies such as Bounfour (1973) found that for Moroccans, French is the language of courtship between bi/multilinguals instead of Arabic, their native tongue. "French is perceived as the language of freedom and liberated values, in contrast to Arabic, the language of religion and morality" (cited in

Bentahila 1983, p. 28). Pavlenko (2006) concluded from her study on bilingualism and emotions that, "Studies in psychology and psychoanalysis suggest that languages learnt earlier and later in life may differ in experienced emotionality" (p.22). However, she warns that, the fact that the first language is often perceived as more emotional does not imply that this is also the language favoured for emotional expressions. Some speakers, feel much more comfortable discussing emotions in later learned languages, either because they grew up in a tradition of a 'stiff upper lip' or because they mainly live and interact in a realm of second language (Heinz, 2001; Pavlenko, 2005 cited in Pavlenko 2006, p.23). Pavelenko also concluded that, "The analysis of the present corpus suggest that as permeable and porous as they are, linguistic and cultural boundaries and entities exist and are real phenomena to be counted with" (p. 28).

Bilingual speakers commonly report experiencing greater emotional intensity when using swearwords or taboo words in their first language compared to their second language (Dewaele, 2004 cited in Harris et al., in Pavlenko 2006, p.259). Harris and colleagues conducted their study on language and emotions by carrying out skin conductance test. Such test is described as, "a well known psycho physiological measure. The automatic nervous system responds to signs of threat by preparing systems of the body to take action. Part of the overall physical response to danger is sweating of the palms and fingertips, signals that can be quantified by measuring the transient increase in the skin's electrical conductivity. A transient increase can be time-locked to a specific conductivity. A transient increase that can be time-locked to a specific stimulus is called a *skin conductance response* "SCR" (p.259). Two studies they conducted with Turkish/English bilinguals and Spanish/English bilinguals in U.S showed that at least for

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some kinds of words, a second language is less emotionally evocative than a first. However, they also found that other factors such as age of acquisition of the languages and proficiency in it affects the SCRs in the different languages (in Pavlenko 2006, p.269).

Dewaele (in Pavlenko 2006) examined the expressing of anger by 1454 multilinguals speaking 77 different first languages. His finding was that speakers' L1 is generally the preferred language for expression of anger with monotonic decline in languages learned subsequently. He also found that L2 could become the preferred language to express anger after a period of socialization (p. 127). Interviews, surveys, studies of autobiographical memory, and a few laboratory experiments have produced some sort of consensus that bilingual speakers experience reduced emotionality when speaking their second language such as in expressing love or anger but cultural contexts matter as well.

3. Language use in oracy and literacy

The majority of the literatures on language maintenance examine the L1 oracy exclusively. L1 use in literacy is less studied. In this section, the literature on L1 use in literacy will be discussed. In Chumak-Horbatsch's (1999) study of Ukrainian children in Toronto, she studied the linguistic profiles and proficiency of five children aged three years old and then did a longitudinal study of them after 10 years when they were 13 years old. Those children went to Ukrainian pre-schools where Ukrainian is the language of instruction. After pre-school, they attended Ukrainian school with English medium of Instruction. This is similar to the Tibetans youths in this research where majority of them attended kindergarten where medium of instruction was Tibetan and then went to school

where it is mostly in English. Chumak-Horbatsch found that in their early youth phase, all of them read enthusiastically in English all types of books and do not read Ukrainian leisurely except for assigned books from school. She concluded that:

> The subjects' lack of interest in L1 leisurely reading and their negative attitudes towards L1 writing are viewed here as the beginnings of loss in these two domains of L1. Taken one-step further, this foretells an end to future L1 literacy activities once all formal L1 schooling is completed. (1999, p.25)

Her findings draw attention to the big shift in literacy activities of immigrants towards the dominant language. Lawson and Sachdev (2004) looked at both oracy and literacy in their study of second generation immigrants aged 12-16. They found that English was the strongest language for the subjects in terms of both oracy and literacy. Availability and quality of literatures in L1 are also factors that affect language maintenance.

Chumak-Horbatsch (1999) reported that the children in her study preferred English literature to Ukrainian because of the various genres of literature available in English in contrast to Ukrainian. One of her participant described Ukrainian books as 'boring', 'too difficult', 'not interesting' etc (p.14). In her study of 'language autobiographies' of university students, Hinton (1999) has described the gradual shift and eventual loss of language competence especially in literacy over only few years. One student in Hinton's study reported that his writing and reading skills in L1 diminished dramatically in just three brief years (p.210). Thus, compared to oracy, language shift in literacy is more pronounced, however, it was given less attention in the literature. The lack of equally interesting and entertaining literature in L1 as compared to L2 in most cases is a major cause for concern.

Pre-migration experience

Pre-migration experience with language maintenance in the country of origin predisposes the group to a motivation to maintain a language or culture in the context of another dominant language or culture, as well as giving them experiences of the ways in which this can be achieved (Clyne and Kipp, 1999, p.37). In the Tibetan case, all the respondents have lived in more than two countries, thus for them, their experience of language maintenance pre-migration is very important. Clyne and Kipp cited the example of Hong Kong immigrants to Australia who were already exposed to English before coming to Australia. In their survey, they hypothesized that since the Hong Kong group has had considerably more experience with English in their country of origin, more English will be spoken in the homes of such families, as parents have the facility to respond in English to their children when addressed in English (Clyne and Kipp, p.329). Pre migration experience for the Tibetan female youths in this study will be explored by looking at their migration and educational history.

The previous sections reviewed the various factors affecting language maintenance and shift with focus on factors that are likely to affect the Tibetan female youths of this study. Next section will discuss the methodological approach taken in this thesis and its shortcomings. The section will be end with an outline of the research questions.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

Methodological approaches in the field

Quantitative methods examining language maintenance and shift tend to focus on census data with large dataset (e.g., Clyne & Kipp, 1999; Swindinsky, R & Swindinsky, M., 1997). National Census data are more appropriate for dominant minority languages such as French in Canada or Spanish in the United States. Census data group languages such as Tibetan under "other languages" thus it does not offer adequate means of examining smaller language groups. Communities can conduct their own census as well. For example, the Canadian Tibetan Association of Ontario (CTAO) is currently conducting a census for its community members; however, at present, the result is not available. Subsequent researchers might find that useful once it is completed. Quantitative methods of assessments other than census data include studies based on survey questionnaires (Tannenbaum, 2003; Tannenbaum and Berkovich, 2005; Pütz, 1991; Schooling, 1990; Yoon, 2000).

Qualitative methods such as participant observation and interviews (Xiao, 1998), and ethnographic research (Arthur 2004; Guardado, 2002) are used to explore the language shift and maintenance Yet others have devised alternative methods such as "linguistic autobiographies" (Hinton, 1999), "language diary technique" (Sachdev and Lawson, 2004), oral history method (Kourtizan, 1999) and document analysis (Yagmur & Kroon, 2003). Among the various approaches as outlined above, the most popular approach in the field of language shift and language maintenance seems to be a mixed method of both quantitative and qualitative methods (Bentahila & Davis in Fase et al., 1999; Chumak-Horbatsch, 1999; Hoare, 2000; Slavik, 2001; Kostoulas-Makrakis, 1995;

Winter and Pauwels, 2005). Such a mixed method usually consists of survey questionnaires that are analyzed statistically and with interviews and participant observations. As echoed by Sommer (cited in Putz, 1997): "Language shift is a sociolinguistic phenomenon which can only be fully understood when all methodological means available are in fact employed" (p.73). Ideally, the method of investigation for language shift and maintenance should involve quantitative, qualitative and alternative methods, which have the benefit of allowing for the triangulation of data as well as obtaining data from various sources. Reliability of research is enhanced by performing "triangulation" (Johnstone, 2000, pg 62).

Methodological Approach for this Research

This thesis is borne out of a larger Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) funded research grant awarded to Dr. Seonaigh MacPherson (principal investigator), under the title: "Resisting Language Shift in the Tibetan Diaspora." This thesis's author was the principal research assistant for the project. The original research employed ethnography, participant observation, survey questionnaires and interviews. For this thesis, only a subsection of the data collected will be analysed: mainly the results of the survey questionnaires conducted in Toronto among the Tibetan youths and some interview data to supplement it.

Participants: Youth as a unit of analysis

Tibetan youths are the unit of analysis. The disaggregating of the youth from the general Tibetan population in Toronto is partly for manageability and mainly because of the need for more disaggregated data on sociolinguistic behaviour of youths.

Additionally, disaggregated data is also more conducive to testing theories put forth by previous research. Little 'youth focused' research in sociolinguistic exists (Pujolar, 2001; Rampton, 1995), and even these are restricted to language choice in youth culture and do not specifically examine language maintenance and language shift. These studies consider more established 'youth communities' than recent immigrant youths, the focus of this thesis. Usually, the result of immigrant youth's linguistic behaviour is either subsumed under other age groups (children or teenagers) or other immigrant categories (e.g., household head's children or as second/third generation children). Yet, as remarked by Roberts (cited in Bennett, Cieslik & Miles 2003, p. 16), everything of sociological significance is different for adults than it is for children (or for that matter it is different for youths too). Sociolinguistic change is no different and need to be analysed accordingly. Concurring with such views as aforementioned, Pauwels (2005) remarked that:

> Unlike pre-school and young children whose social dependence on the family is very high, adolescents tend to move the centre of their social life from the family to friends and school. These domains are seldom strong sites for CL (community language) use, at least in the eyes of the adolescents. (p.129)

In her work with Vietnamese, German and Greek youths in Australia, Pauwels found that the youths' use of community language in domains outside home is very low. Taking account of Pauwels's urgent call for more research on language use in adolescence or youth, this thesis provides one such study and provides valuable insights into language use among a particular ethnic youth group.

This thesis is also an attempt to map a space for youth sociolinguistics, which accurately categorizes 'youth' according to the lived sociological reality of youth as ascertained through research. Right now, the literature on adolescent or youth linguistic behaviours categorizes adolescent as those aged 12 and above and generally goes up to university aged students and not beyond that. Most of the adolescent or youth studies are conducted in schools and universities because of easier data collection. The use of adolescent or 'youth' as subjects have not encompassed those who would be classified as 'youth' in the modern sociological sense of the term as it has evolved in response to social changes. The use of school-aged groups as research subjects also misses information about those who are not in the schools or in university systems.

Sociolinguistic researchers have taken the legal categorisation of youth; however, legal institutions rarely enact laws ahead of sociological phenomenon and thus cannot capture the present social realities. United Nations considers those between the ages of 15-24 as youth while the Quebec Federation of Labour defines youth as those between the ages of 15-35 (Beauvais, McKay, & Seddon, 2001, p.4). The government of Canada's broadest definition of youth is those between 15-30 years of age (Service Canada, 2007, para 1).

In this thesis, the broader definition of youth as defined by the Government of Canada as those between the ages of 15-30 years is adopted to capture the extended youth phase. The extension of the youth phase has been alluded to various factors such as change in labour market with youth spending more time on education and less in workforce, greater mobility of youths, the delaying of family formation, and so forth (White, 1999; Cieslik, 2001; Cieslik and Pollock, 2002 in Cieslik *et al.,* 2003 p 2).

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Tibetan youths in Toronto

The research participants in this research are Tibetan youths in Toronto between the ages of 15-30. These youths exhibit features characteristic of the extension of youth phase since more than 60% of them are still in school and majority of them have lived in at least three countries and almost half of them were still single. The survey administration yielded 33 returns from Tibetan youths. Out of the 33 responses, only eight were males. Thus, it was decided to focus on the female youth respondents to secure a more accurate and generalizable conclusion about Tibetan female youths. Since gender plays an important role in language change including male respondents with their limited responses might not portray the accurate sociolinguistic situation of the Tibetan male youths. It would have been interesting to have male samples as well; however, the male proportion was too small to make for any worthwhile comparative analysis. The data may be richer and more amenable to such analyses once all data collection at the other sites in the larger study is completed.

Research tools and procedure

The research was conducted in the summer of 2006 in the months from June to August. The survey questionnaires were administered at the Dalai Lama's birthday (6 July) gathering in Toronto. The Dalai Lama is the spiritual and temporal leader of Tibetans around the world. (For an in-depth discussion of the pivotal role of the Dalai Lama for Tibetans, see Gardner, 1999, pp. 58-74). Since no list of the Tibetan population in Toronto was available, it was not possible to obtain a truly random sample of respondents. The Dalai Lama's birthday event was chosen because it is one of the few days in the whole year where the largest numbers of Tibetans get together. This choice of

distributing the survey during a Tibetan cultural/social/religious event has implications for the data analysis. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, community participation has been found to be positively correlated with positive attitude and use of L1. However, the alternative of trying to reach Tibetans through other networks such as workplace, school, and other types of gathering such as political events are all fraught with their own restrictions as well. With time and budget constraints, the most viable method was chosen.

Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaires were modelled after questionnaires from other language maintenance and language shift studies such as Macpherson (2005 unpublished), Gibbons and Ramirez (2004), Papapavlou and Pavlou (2001), Guardado (2002) and Tannebaum (2003). The questionnaire was divided into five sections to elicit data about factors that were shown to affect language shift and language maintenance. The five sections are: 1) demographic background, 2) migration history, 3) language choice in various domains, 4) language vitality such as fluency in language and exposure to the languages, and 5) social vitality such as participation in community events. All the questions were close-ended but at the end of the questionnaire, an 'open-ended venting question' was posed to obtain 'richer' information. A modified version of the survey questionnaire is included in the appendix.

The questionnaires were translated into Tibetan by a professional Tibetan teacher from the community. Both the Tibetan and English versions were distributed at the event. The public gathering took place at a public park where the Tibetans spent their whole day enjoying entertainment and food together. In total, 300 survey questionnaires were

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distributed that day. It was a self-administered survey to allow for confidentiality and anonymity in public. Of those, 200 questionnaires were returned; making the response rate 66.6%, which is more than satisfactory for the purposes of analysis especially given the short time span of a day (Rea &Parker, 2005 considers 50% as a satisfactory survey response rate). Out of the 200 respondents, there were 25 females between the ages of 15 to 30, only one of whom was born in Canada. This participant was dropped to avoid skewing the data because she is the only second generation Tibetan and as outlined earlier in the literature review, generation is an important variable in language maintenance. Thus, her responses will likely vary from the rest.

Methodological Shortcomings

One constraint of this study is that the survey approach gives us only a picture of language use at one point in time and thus a static picture of language maintenance or shift. Another is the self-reported nature of the data, since we do not know the standard the respondent's criteria for self-rating on language skills. However, it is a common practice to employ self-reported data in this area of investigation as explained by Kostoulas-Makrakis (1995, p5). Surveys usually suffer from non-response errors, which are in many ways unavoidable in most surveys of this nature. The non-response error occurs when people who did not respond to the survey being different from the percentage that did in a way relevant to the study. For example, those who attended the public gathering and answered the survey might have linguistic situation that is different from those who did, especially, when community participation is considered an important

factor for language shift and maintenance (Baker 1992, Slavik 2001). The resultant low response rate from males could be attributed to non-response error.

Research Questions

The following research questions about Toronto's Tibetan female immigrant youths will be explored:

1. What is the general state of their Tibetan language proficiency and usage in terms of both oracy and literacy?

2. What trends do they exhibit in language usage?

3. What factors affect the shift or maintenance of Tibetan language?

4. Are there any unique sociolinguistic phenomena worth noting?

Due to the small sample size, hypotheses will not be formed or tested here. Rather, the effect of variables on certain linguistic behaviour will be analysed.

Chapter 4 Results and Data analysis

The survey questionnaires yielded rich results of the immigrant Tibetan female youths' language repertoires, migration and educational history, attitudes to Tibetan language, domains of language use, exposure to Tibetan and other languages and the actual (self-reported) use of Tibetan, English and other languages in their daily lives.

Table 1 summarizes the results of the survey questionnaires. A brief summary of the findings will be provided in this section. Some of the results confirmed previous findings on language maintenance. Generation seems to be an important independent variable when the Canadian born (second-generation) respondent's data was analyzed on its own. The number of years in Canada or the acculturation process is negatively correlated with use of L1 in the workplace. L1 is still used in the personal domain of home and with parents and friends. One of the surprising results was that one respondent considered English as her first language and Tibetan as her second language. This seems to indicate how L1 loss is already in progress even before migrating to Canada.

The results showed the multilingualism of the Tibetan female youths. Their linguistic repertoire is rich with almost all being trilingual. The pre-migration residence and educational history demonstrate that language shift from Tibetan to English especially in literacy is already at a critical stage for the immigrant Tibetan youths. With oracy in L1, the domains of language use have receded towards personal ones such as use at home and with parents, since migration to Canada. In addition to personal domains of L1 use, religious activities seem to be a domain where Tibetan in still used. Language use in expressing love by the female Tibetan youths seems to confirm findings in the research that language use in such contexts are mediated by cultural factors. The

respondents are equally divided between those who use Tibetan and English. The language use for expressing anger also confirms the prevailing theory that speakers' L1 is generally the preferred language for expressing anger; more respondents reported cursing in Tibetan than in English.

The institutional support for Tibetan language in Toronto is good in terms of the existence of many Tibetan organizations; however, the institutional support of Tibetan media is not strong. The only viable mode of media support is in terms of the respondent's exposure to Tibetan music. Thus, the institutional factors available mostly assist the respondents in maintaining L1 oracy and not literacy.

One of the interesting findings was that the attitude towards L1 is very high both in their integrative and instrumental motivation. Most previous research has not probed further between the instrumental and integrative motivation for attitude towards a L1. The findings here revealed that the Tibetans female youths have strong positive attitude towards L1 both in their integrative and instrumental attitude. This might be explained by the heightened sense of Tibetan language's precarious situation. Many reports by Human rights group and Tibetans in exile claim that China is destroying Tibetan language and culture. Thus, this awareness of the precarious existence of Tibetan language is very likely to be correlated with the respondent's positive attitude towards their L1 in their integrative motivation. Code switching as a sociolinguistic phenomenon is also present as evinced from interview data.

Table 1: Summary of Findings

Case	Years in Canada	L used most often in the workplace	L used most often in religious events	L used most often with parents	How often do you write in Tibetan?	How often do you write in English?	L used for reading newspaper	Knowing Tibetan has economic benefits?	Importance of speaking Tibetan
1	0-1	N/A	N/A	Tibetan	Rarely	Daily	English	Some benefits	Very important
2	5-10	English	Tibetan	Tibetan	Never	Daily	English	No benefits	Very important
3	4-5	N/A	N/A	N/A	Daily	Daily	N/A	Many benefits	Very important
4	5-10	English	Tibetan	Tibetan	Rarely	Daily	English	Many benefits	Very important
5	0-1	English	Tibetan	Tibetan	Weekly	Daily	N/A	Some benefits	Very important
6	1-2	English	Tibetan	Tibetan	Daily	Daily	English	Many benefits	Very important
7	0-1	English	Tibetan	Tibetan	Monthly	Daily	English	Some benefits	Very important
8	1-2	English	Tibetan	Tibetan	Rarely	Daily	English	Some benefits	Very important
9	2-3	.N/A	Tibetan	Tibetan	Weekly	Daily	English	Some benefits	Very important
10	1-2	N/A	Tibetan	Tibetan	Never	Daily	English	Some benefits	Very important
11	2-3	Hindi	Tibetan	Tibetan	.N/A	Daily	English	Some benefits	Important
12	0-1	N/A	Tibetan	Tibetan	Weekly	Daily	English	No opinion	N/A
13	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Rarely	Daily	English	Many benefits	Very important
14	5-10	English	Tibetan	Tibetan	Rarely	Daily	English	Some benefits	Very important
15	1-2	English	Tibetan	Tibetan	Weekly	Daily	English	No opinion	Very important
16	3-4	N/A	N/A	Tibetan	Rarely	Daily	English	No opinion	Very important
17	3-4	English	Tibetan	Tibetan	Never	Daily	English	No opinion	Very important
18	4-5	English	Tibetan	Tibetan	Rarely	Daily	.N/A	Some benefits	Very important
19	2-3	English	Tibetan	Tibetan	Rarely	Daily	English	Some benefits	Very important
20	3-4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Rarely	N/A	N/A	Very important
21	0-1	Tibetan	N/A	Tibetan	Weekly	Daily	English	Many benefits	Very important
22	4-5	.N/A	N/A	Tibetan	Rarely	Daily	English	Some benefits	Very important
23	1-2	English	Tibetan	Tibetan	Weekly	Daily	N/A	Some benefits	Very important
24	5-10	N/A.	N/A	N/A	Daily	N/A	N/A	Some benefits	Very important
Total	23	15	17	20	22	23	18	23	23

Note L=Language

Survey Results

This section will provide more details of the survey results. In the final analysis, 24 female Tibetan youths' responses on the survey questionnaires were analysed. The differential gender participation in the survey questionnaires could indicate important differences between the genders such as male youths having indifferent attitude about Tibetan language in Canada, thus possibly not maintaining the Tibetan language. It could also be interpreted as their lack of participation in Tibetan cultural or social activities in the community in general, which also depicts their lack of interest in L1. Even if they do participate in activities, they could be mere bystanders rather than active participants. One possible cause of the low return rate from the male youth could be attributed to the gender of the researcher. The survey questionnaire administrator, my self, being women, might have affected the return rate of completed survey questionnaires. This effect was minimized by distributing the questionnaires to all who accepted it irrespective of gender and were told to leave the completed survey in a box rather than hand it to the researcher, which could have made male respondents uncomfortable.

Differing effects of fieldworkers in sociolinguistic research have been highlighted by Cukor-Avila and Bailey (2001). They contended that the presence of the investigator herself creates unusual circumstances, making it difficult to obtain an accurate estimate of what is *normal* for the community (pg 254). If the researcher was a male or a non-Tibetan, the response rate and the responses might vary. In this study, the low male respondents could also be reflective of the community demography. Since we do not know the gender and age distribution of the Tibetans in Toronto, one cannot reach such

conclusions. More in- depth study employing ethnographic methods are better equipped to find out the real situation on the ground.

Demographic Background

In the first section of the survey questionnaire, respondents were asked about their demographic information: age, educational level, family type and country of birth to get a sense of their background. Tables 2 show the demographic background of the respondents.

Table 2: Demographic Background

Age	Frequency	Country of Birth	Frequency	Highest level of education	Frequency	Martial Status	Frequency
15-19	4	Tibet	3	High School	11	Single	11
20-25	6	India	14	Bachelor degree	11	Couple	7
26-30	14	Nepal	7	Graduate degree	2	Nuclear	4
Missing	0	Missing	0	Missing	0	Missing	2

As seen from Table 2, most of the respondents are between the ages of 26-30 years. More than half of them were born in India with seven respondents born in Nepal and only three born in Tibet. All of the respondents have completed education at least at the high school level and almost half of them have Bachelor degree with two respondents who have finished graduate level studies. It also shows that almost half of the respondents are single and the rest are either in a relationship or live with their parents and extended family.

Table 3 gives more details about the household composition. The living arrangements of the Tibetan female youths in Toronto are quite diverse. Most of them live with their parents and siblings. The others live with their grandparents, or partner and

the rest of them have other living arrangements such as living with friends and other relatives. Only one person lives on her own. These responses are not surprising; like many Asian cultures, living arrangements such as extended families are the norm. Klieger (2002) in his study of social change in two Tibetan communities in India found from the questionnaire data administered to adults aged from 18-40, that the respondents preferred to live with their parents after marriage. In both localities, more than 60% of the respondents wished to live with their parents after marriage (p. 145). The lone female Tibetan youth in Toronto living on her own might not have any close relatives in Toronto. The question about the family composition was designed to capture the number of Tibetans living under the same roof. Such data are important for analyzing language shift in terms of social network. Language maintenance is greatly affected by the number of the language speakers in the household and in the community. The data indicates that home domain is a potential place for language maintenance since most of them live with other Tibetans.

Table 3: Household Composition

Household composition	Frequency
Parents and siblings	7
Spouse/partner	4
Friends	3
Parents	2
Relatives	1
Siblings	1
Spouse/partner and parents	1
Spouse/partner and relatives	1
Parents and relatives	1
Spouse/partner and siblings	1
Singles	1
Missing	1

Table 4 shows that the majority of the respondents live in the same neighbourhood of Parkdale-High Park. Proximity to other speakers helpful in maintaining the L1 and also in facilitating gatherings where L1 can be used, thus increasing opportunities for L1 use. Slavik (2001) notes that the dispersion of Maltese-Canadians from the Junction area to the suburbs has resulted in decreased participation in Maltese community activities and the Maltese atmosphere of the Junction area, conducive to language maintenance, has disappeared (p. 144). Similarly, the small Tibetan ethnic enclave in Parkdale along Jameson Ave is a place for Tibetans to gather and meet other Tibetans. If the trend in the community similar to the Maltese case occurs, then Tibetan language maintenance is threatened. It is widely known in the community that many Tibetans who buy a house move out of that area into the suburbs. If the trend continues, it hinders Tibetan language maintenance in Toronto.

Table 4: Place of Residence

Place of residence	Frequency
Parkdale-High Park	17
North York	1
Greater Toronto Area	3
Other	1
Missing	2
Total	24

Linguistic Repertoire

Gumperz (1967) uses the term "linguistic repertoire" to describe the "full range of styles which an individual needs to fulfil all his communicative needs in the most

appropriate way" (cited in Bentahila 1983, p. 50). The linguistic repertoire in its broadest

sense of languages spoken by a person is captured in Table 5.

Table 5: Multilingualism

Language spoken	Frequency
Tibetan only	1
Tibetan and English	2
Tibetan, English and Hindi	8
Tibetan, English, Hindi and Nepali	8
Tibetan, English, Hindi and other	2
Tibetan, English, Hindi, Nepali and other	1
Tibetan, English and Nepali	2
Total	24

Table 5 shows that the respondents are mostly multilingual. Almost all of them

(21) are at least trilingual; speaking Tibetan, English and another language. Almost half

of them speak four languages. Only one claims to be unilingual in Tibetan. She was the

one who chose Nepali as her second language. She is 24 years old and the highest level of

education that she completed was high school. The medium of instruction for her

secondary school was in Tibetan, but she never writes in Tibetan and rarely writes in

English. She does not seem to engage in literacy activities. Since the research did not test

an individual's linguistic competence, it is hard to establish whether this is due to lack of

interest or lack of competency to engage in literacy activities. Table 5 strongly reflects

the migration background of the respondents with the preponderance of those speaking

Tibetan, English, Hindi and Nepali.

When asked about their second languages, the majority of the respondents, 18,

chose English. A very few chose Nepali and Hindi. Surprisingly, one respondent chose

Tibetan as her second language. This respondent also speaks Tibetan at home. I will refer

to this respondent as R1. She was born in Nepal and later moved to India where she lived most of her life before coming to Canada. All her education was in English from kindergarten to Postsecondary. It is interesting to note that even though other respondents reported their main language of education as English and still reported English as their second language, R1 considered English her first language and Tibetan her second language. Perhaps her pre-migration experience with English is different from the rest. The survey questionnaires cannot fully explain this unusual situation. I found during data collection for another study on educational history of Tibetans in Toronto that some Tibetans parents from higher socio-economic classes sent their children to top elite English medium schools in India. It is likely that children attending elite school are more likely to report English as their first language. This youth might be one of those.

Dialects add another dimension to the linguistic repertoire. The dialects in Table 6 are not an exhaustive list of dialects in Tibet.

Table 6: Dialects

Native dialect	Frequency
Lhasa dialect (Lhasa, capital city)	8
Kham-khe (South Eastern Tibet)	4
Am-khe (North Eastern Tibet)	2
Toe-Khe (South Western Tibet)	2
Tsang Khe (North Western Tibet)	1
U-khe (Middle Tibet)	3
Total	20
Missing	4
Total	24

The survey questionnaire asked the respondents their native dialect. However, the youths are mostly born in India or Nepal and in most cases do not speak these dialects. In

the Tibetan Diaspora community, people usually report their native dialect as the one their parents or grand parents spoke even if they do not speak it. Thus, the reported dialects in the table do not imply their proficiency in it. As such, this survey could not determine whether various dialects form a part of their linguistic repositories but nonetheless, it is interesting to see the various linguistic backgrounds of the respondents' parents or grandparents. A quarter of the respondents claim Lhasa dialect to be their native dialect. Lhasa dialect being the dialect of the capital city is naturally accorded the highest status among the other dialects of Tibet.

There is a rich potential for dialect change studies in the Tibetan Diaspora. Geographic, political, social and economic reasons have contributed to a rich dialect pool on the Tibetan plateau. The widely dispersed nature of human settlement on the Tibetan plateau has resulted in various dialects. Additionally, the highly stratified society of Tibet has given way to sociolects as well. In the Tibetan Diaspora, the coming together of people from all over the plateau in small towns around India and Nepal has resulted in new dialect formation or *koineization.*

Pre-Migration Experience

The second section of the survey questionnaire dealt with migration history. It was designed to capture the pre-migration experience, which is one of the clear-cut factors for language shift and maintenance as noted by Clyne and Kipp (1999). This factor is rarely explored in other studies despite the fact that there is almost no country in the world where only one language is spoken. The migration data in this thesis is explored to unearth the Tibetan female youth's experience with Tibetan and English

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language before coming to Canada. In most sociolinguistic studies, migration patterns of the participants are typically from the native country to the host country. However, such a neat migration pattern is not the norm in our highly globalized world, especially in the case of refugees where they cross more than one border to reach a safe country. This research takes the migration history of the participants into perspective to understand the post-migration linguistic experience better. Table 7 shows the number of years the respondents have lived in Canada.

Table 7: Years of Residence in Canada

Years in Canada	Frequency
0-1	5
1-2	5
2-3	3
3-4	3
4-5	3
5-10	4
>10	0
Missing data	1
Total	24

As seen from Table 7, the majority of the respondents are recent immigrants and have been in Canada for 1-5 years. Four female youths have lived in Canada for more than 5 years and less than 10 years. The data is representative of the migration pattern of Tibetans in Canada where the majority arrived in the late 1990s.

Table 8 shows that more than half of the respondents have lived in India for more than 10 years. Six respondents have lived in Nepal for more than 10 years. Only one person has lived in Tibet for more than 10 years, and that person lived in India for about 5-10 years. The multilingualism of the Tibetan youths can be accounted for from their

migration history; most of them speak the language of the host country, mainly Hindi and Nepali.

Table 8: Migration and Settlement History

Countries	0-4 years	5-10 years	> 10 years
Tibet	1	0	1
India	0	3	15
Nepal	3	1	6
Bhutan	0	0	2
Europe	3	0	0
U.S	2	0	0
Other	0	0	0

Educational history

The medium of instruction of the educational history of the respondents were examined because their present linguistic behaviour and linguistic repertoire will most likely reflect that experience. The medium of instruction policies are highly politicized in the Tibetan Diaspora, where an exile government based in India adhering to Indian laws exists with the intention of going back to Tibet. In such situations, medium of instruction is crucial for identity formation as well as for practical purposes and thus, it has been highly debated (Choedon 1992; Tsering 2001). When the Tibetans first arrived in India, due to lack of Tibetan teachers trained in the modern educational system, the medium of instruction in the Tibetan schools was in English, taught by Hindi-speaking Indian teachers. In the 1990s, The Tibetan government-in-exile introduced the Tibetanization programme, which entailed changing the medium of instruction in the Tibetan schools from English to Tibetan from kindergarten to grade five. More recently, the New Education Policy of May 2005 called for the extension of the Tibetanization programme

from grade 5 to at least grade 12. Table 9 shows the medium of instruction for the

respondents in kindergarten, primary school, high school and post secondary school.

Table 9: Medium of Instruction

Languages	Kindergarten	Elementary School	High	Post Secondary
Tibetan	15	10	3	0
English	5	9	16	16
Nepali	1	1	0	1
Hindi	0	0	1	0
Missing	3	4	4	4

As Table 9 indicates, the medium of instruction is mostly in Tibetan during

kindergarten and elementary school but changes dramatically to English in high school

and culminates in no one taking Tibetan as the medium of instruction in post secondary

schools. There are post secondary schools taught in Tibetan but they are all programs

such as Tibetan language, literature, philosophy, religion, medicine, astrology and so

forth and no modern education is imparted in Tibetan at the post secondary education

level in India and Nepal. The medium of instruction and other languages learnt pre-

migration can help explain some of the language choices of the respondents in various

domains to which we turn next.

Language Use in Various Domains

Fishman (1997) and other researchers have stated that the language that is used in

the home domain will be maintained. Clyne and Kipp (1999) reported that, "The home

has been cited as a key element in language maintenance –if a language is not maintained

in the home domain, then it cannot be maintained elsewhere" (p.47). In the case of the

Tibetan female youths, the main language spoken by all at home is Tibetan as

demonstrated in Table 10. This shows that at present, Tibetan language is maintained at least in the personal domain of home among the female Tibetans study regardless of the number of years residing in Canada. The domains where English is taking over Tibetan are inevitably the workplace and school.

Table 10: Domains of Language Use

Language	Home	School	Social	Religious	Political	After-	Workplace
Tibetan	23	12	13	16	14	12	1
English	0	9	1	0	1	3	12
Other	0	0	0	0	0	1(Nepali	1 (Hindi)
Missing	1	3	10	8	9	8	10

Language use in school is equally divided between Tibetan and English. Since the Tibetans mostly live in the same neighbourhood, it would not be surprising if many of them went to the same high school, adult day school, college and so forth where they could talk in Tibetan even at school. In the workplace, English is spoken in all the cases except for two individuals who spoke Tibetan and Hindi. These two individuals might be employed in businesses located in ethnic enclaves where minority languages are spoken comfortably. One of the respondents is employed in the private sector while the other is a self-employed person. Tibetan language is displaced by English in the workplace. In other domains such as cultural, social, political and religious events and after-school activities, Tibetan is still the predominant language spoken. A crosstabulation between years in Canada and language used in the workplace and school shows the correlation between the two variables. Table 11 and 12 display the results.

Table 11: Crosstabulation of Years in Canada and Language Used most often in the Workplace

Years in Canada	Language used most often in the workplace		
	Tibetan	English	Hindi
0-1 years	1	2	0
1-2 years	0	4	0
2-3 years	0	1	1
3-4 years	0	1	0
4-5 years	0	1	0
5-10 years	0	3	0
Total	1	12	1

Table 12: Crosstabulation of Years in Canada and Language Used most often in School

Number of Years in Canada	Language used most often in school		Total
	Tibetan	English	
0-1 years	4	1	5
1-2 years	3	2	5
2-3 years	1	2	3
3-4 years	1	1	2
4-5 years	1	0	1
5-10 years	1	3	4
			20

Despite the small sample size, one can discern from tables 11 and 12 that a negative correlation exists between the variables, years in Canada and language used in the workplace and school. At the workplace, no one speaks in Tibetan if they have lived for more than a year in Canada while at school, speaking in Tibetan declines with each passing year in Canada and becomes constant after more than 2 years. The persistent speaking of Tibetan in school even after more than 2 years in Canada could be explained by having Tibetans as classmates. This finding confirms earlier findings by Mills (2001) among the Hispanic children in California that there was a tendency for using only

English in many localities (domains) as early as the first generation. This indicates that the acculturation process, which is related to length of residence in the country, is negatively correlated with L1 maintenance.

In terms of language use with interlocutors, Table 13 shows that all the respondents speak in Tibetan with their grandparents and parents, which is a sign of language maintenance. All the respondents speak in Tibetan with their siblings and Tibetan friends except for R1. In this survey questionnaire, respondents were only asked about their language use with Tibetan friends, since it is unlikely that they will use Tibetan with non-Tibetans. Thus, this result does not exhibit the full extent of their social network such as non-Tibetan friends. As years of residence in Canada increases, it is very likely that they will have more non-Tibetan friends, which will increase their domain of English use while decreasing it for Tibetan use.

Table 13: Language Used with Different Interlocutors

	Parents	Grandparents	Siblings	Relatives	Tibetan
Tibetan	20	18	16	20	21
English	0	0	1	0	1
N/A	0	1	3	0	0
Missing	4	5	4	4	2

Note N/A= not applicable, those with no siblings or grandparents

The cognitive aspect of language use is measured in this thesis in terms of expressions such as singing, joking and counting, while expressing love and anger are used as expression of emotions. Generally, L1 is the language one used most comfortably and most often. As explained in the literature review earlier, it will be expected that most of the female Tibetan youths will use Tibetan for most of these activities; however, they

might use English in expressing love and anger since in Tibetan culture, such expressions are not encouraged in public. Thus, they might feel more liberated by using English.

The findings in Table 14 reveal what was expected. Respondents are equally divided between those who use Tibetan and those who use English for expressing love. The reasons mentioned earlier about using either native language or other language for expressions might be germane here. For some, English might be a more liberal language to express love. The youths might not adhere to cultural norms but it would not be easy for them to steer away drastically from the expected cultural norm when you are bound by expected behaviours from the community. Another reason for use of English in such activities could be the influence of excessive exposure to English media.

Table 14: Language Use in Cognitive tasks and Expressing emotions

Cognitive Tasks/Expressing	Tibetan	English	Tibetan and	Other	Missing data
Singing	15	3	3	1	2
Joking	22	1	0	0	1
Expressing love	10	9	2	0	3
Cursing	11	5	3	1	4

Other expressions such as cursing and singing are also equally divided between those who use Tibetan and those who use English. In singing, some other languages such as Hindi are used as well. Tibetans who were born in India, Nepal and Bhutan or who grew up in those countries are heavily influenced by the surrounding Bollywood culture around them. It is surprising that more Tibetans did not report singing in Hindi rather than Tibetan and English. It could also be because of the recent popularity of Tibetan songs among the Diaspora with many new singers releasing albums from Tibet, India,

Nepal, Europe and North America. For some, leaving India where the Tibetan communities are geographically enclaves on their own has made them realise the importance of being a Tibetan and going back to their roots by associating themselves with all things Tibetan such as songs, music and other markers of identities. The Tibetan music scene is quite active in Toronto with its own local talents who have produced albums and toured different countries and other artists from outside Canada who come to Toronto to perform. If this continues, it will aid the maintenance of Tibetan language.

Only with joking, do the majority of the respondents (22) use Tibetan. The jokes are most likely best told in Tibetan since humour/comedy translated from Tibetan into English lose much of their intent and do not generate much laughter.

The literacy of an individual is important to understand the mechanisms of language shift. This aspect of language is rarely studied while a disproportionate number of studies look at oracy in native language to assess language shift or maintenance. More research on language shift in literacy will reveal a great deal of information such as English replacing native language in many literacy activities. Fishman (1991) has emphasized the examination of four separate areas of language: understanding, speaking, reading and writing to reveal whether shift or language loss have taken place or not (cited in Chumak-Horbatsch, 1999, p.3). Here, speaking, reading and writing of Tibetan and English will be explored to assess if language shift is taking place or if Tibetan language is being maintained.

As seen in Table 15, Tibetan is still the most used language with English trailing behind and Hindi and Nepali used by only few. One respondent speaks Hindi daily. She turns out to be R1, who is an anomaly in most instances. Two respondents claim to speak

Nepali daily. I will refer to them as R2 and R3. R2 was born in India and lived in India more than 10 years and has lived in Nepal for less than 5 years but in response to proficiency in Nepali, she has added another category "Excellent" in front of "very well". This indicates her strong confidence in that language and maybe her friends are Nepali or Tibetans who also speak Nepali. R3 was born in Nepal, but lived mostly in Bhutan. It is hard to explain from her pre-migration experience why she speaks Nepali daily, unless where she stayed in Bhutan was in the region where Nepalese Bhutanese live. One might expect the respondents to use Hindi and Nepali more than reported because of their residence history in India and Nepal, however, the Tibetans in India and Nepal mostly live in Tibetan communities where the community is self-sufficient and has much less interaction with the Indian community as compared to Tibetans in Canada's interaction with English speaking people.

Table 15: Frequency of using Tibetan and other Languages

Languages	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never	Missing
Tibetan	23	0	0	0	0	1
English	18	1	0	1	0	4
Nepali	2	1	1	3	7	10
Hindi	1	0	0	9	3	11

Table 16 displays that most of the respondents can speak, read and write Tibetan. These are all responses based on self-reports. If these self-reports are an accurate portrayal of their actual proficiency, then Tibetan language seems to be maintained well, however, results from other questions concerning use of L1 in literacy shows different outcome, as will be detailed in the later sections.

Table 16: Tibetan Proficiency

Proficiency in Tibetan	Frequency
Speak, read and write Tibetan	17
Speak and read Tibetan	3
Speak and understand Tibetan	4
Only understand (not speak) Tibetan	0
Total	24

In terms of level of fluency in spoken Tibetan and English, almost all of the respondents reported that they could speak Tibetan very well, while half of them can speak English either very well or moderately well. Literature has demonstrated that for those who are already familiar with the host country's language and culture, it is easier for them to assimilate and shift their language towards the dominant one (Clyne & Kipp 1999). From the two cases who reported that their Tibetan fluency is moderately well and not very well as expected, one was interestingly the only respondent who chose to fill the form in Tibetan. This seems to indicate that the self-reported nature of this survey can be misleading at times since people are judging their own fluency based on their own criteria, which is relative. Thus future researches should try to assess the fluency and proficiency of respondents if possible to avoid obtaining misleading results.

Literacy in Tibetan and English

Similar to the Ukrainian subjects studied by Chumak-Horbatsch, most of the female Tibetan youths in this study attended Tibetan medium schools at kindergarten and the higher levels were in English. Chumak-Horbatsch found that despite their early immersion in Ukrainian in kindergarten, the subjects read English many times but did not read Ukrainian during their early adolescence. Similar results are expected here. Table 17 shows the literacy of the respondents in Tibetan and English.

Table 17: Literacy in Tibetan and English

Frequency of reading/writing	Reading in Tibetan	Writing in Tibetan	Reading in English	Writing in English
Daily	1	2	19	22
Weekly	5	6	2	0
Monthly	4	1	0	0
Rarely	10	9	1	1
Never	3	4	0	0
Missing	1	2	2	1

As expected, the results are similar to the ones that Chumak-Horbatsch obtained. Among the Tibetan female youths in this study, more than half of them rarely or never read or write in Tibetan. Only nine read in Tibetan either weekly or monthly, while only seven write Tibetan with such frequency. Only one person reads Tibetan daily; she was the same respondent who chose Tibetan as her answer in most of the questions. In sharp contrast to the data about frequency of reading and writing in Tibetan, almost all the respondents read and write English daily. Only two read weekly and just one respondent rarely read in English. The one who rarely reads English also reported that she rarely writes in Tibetan as well, so her linguistic literacy is limited in both languages. This same respondent indicated Hindi as her second language thus explaining her literacy level in English being lower than the rest of the respondents. Only one rarely writes in English and the same respondent never writes in Tibetan as well. This shows her low literacy with activities in Tibetan faring worse than English does. Klieger's (2002) study showed that among the Tibetan university students in Delhi, India, the preference was for English in completing surveys and he attributed that not only to the greater bilingual competence of the students but an English speaking preference as well (Klieger 2002, p. 144). Thus, the

female Tibetan immigrant youths in Toronto are no different from their counterparts in

India in their preference for English. The choice of English over Tibetan in literacy

therefore seems to be a pre-migration effect and years in Canada might exacerbate it.

In terms of reported literacy practice in various contexts as shown in Table 18,

only two youths read their community notices in Tibetan. As a member of the

community, who frequents the Tibetan area in Toronto, I noticed that most community

notices are either bilingual in Tibetan and English or unilingual in English. I saw some

community notices in Tibetan only but those were rare and mostly targeted older

generation such as Tibetan parent's association notices. The frequency for reading e-

mails, websites, and books in Tibetan is only one. On closer examination of the data, it

was the same respondent, who chose Tibetan in all these varying reading contexts. To the

best of my knowledge, e-mail systems are not easily accessible in the Tibetan language as

it is in English. It is plausible that the person might be reporting her aspirations rather

than the reality as alerted to by other researchers such as Lawson and Sachdev (2004).

Table 18: Reading in Various Contexts

Languages	E-mails	Notices	Websites	Religious	Newspapers	Books
Tibetan	1	2	1	13	0	1
English	22	19	20	6	18	18
Total valid	23	21	21	19	19	19
Missing	1	3	3	5	6	5
Total	24	24	24	24	24	24

Reading religious texts

The data for use of Tibetan in reading religious texts stands out in the table. Only

in this literary activity, Tibetan use surpasses English language use. In terms of reading

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religious texts, those who read in Tibetan are twice the size of those who read it in English, which is in stark contrast to the other reading activities. According to Clyne (1991), "The relation between language and religion varies and is complex. Some religious groups regard a particular language as central to the practice of their faith; others consider language as totally independent of it" (in Clyne & Kipp. 1999, p.48). Klieger (2002) found that among the Tibetan youths in Delhi, only a handful indicated religious practice as demonstrating their cultural identity.

The results so far has shown that Tibetan is used in the religious domain such as religious events and reading religious texts, Table 19 is depicted here to give a better sense of literacy in L1 assuming that the more religious you are, the more likely you are to use L1. Half of the Tibetan female youths consider themselves religious while a quarter considers themselves very religious. The remaining females consider themselves somewhat religious, neutral, or indifferent to religion. No one reported to be "not religious". This indicates that as a group, they are religious. When age is crosstabulated with religiosity, it is clear that there is a positive correlation between age and religiosity. For example, those 26-30 claimed to be very religious and religious with more frequency than the younger ones in the ages of 15-19 and 20-25.

Table 19: Religiosity

Religiosity	Frequency
Very religious	6
Religious	12
Somewhat religious	4
Neutral	1
Not religious	0
Missing	1

Kostoulas-Makrakis (1995) stated that when the minority or immigrant language is also the language of the religion or used in the church services as well as in the parish activities this will be a driving force for its maintenance (p.14). The Tibetans do not have churches per se, but there are Tibetan Buddhist temples in Toronto that they can visit and the local Tibetan community organizes monthly or twice bi-monthly prayer gatherings. In Tibetan Buddhist practice, there is no requirement to attend temples for prayers since worship is mostly done in the house where each family has an altar. Thus, gathering for religious practice is less frequent among the Tibetans compared to other ethnic groups such as Christian Koreans.

The data collected here did not set out to find the relationship between language and religion; however, historical facts do point towards a strong relationship between Tibetan language and Buddhism. Tibetan language is considered a central part of Tibetan Buddhism. Historically, the Tibetan written language was introduced in Tibet by the minister of King Songtsen Gampo, the 33rd King of Tibet in the 7th Century. The minister, Thumi Sambota created the Tibetan alphabets based on the Indian Devnagri alphabets after his studies in India. The same king is credited for introducing Buddhism to Tibet. Since then, Tibetan has been the medium of transmission of Buddhism in Tibet. Tibet was a hub of Buddhist activities for many centuries during which many Buddhist texts in Sanskrit and Pali were translated into Tibetan.

Traditionally, most Tibetan Buddhist texts are not available in English; however, since the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism in the West in the 1970s, Tibetan Buddhist publications in English are now more readily available. This enables people who are more familiar with English as compared to Tibetan to choose to read in English rather

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than in Tibetan. Another important issue is the problem of Tibetan religious texts being incomprehensible to most readers since it is a classical writing. The vocabularies used in the religious texts are quite different from the spoken language. Thus, it is not surprising to see a sizeable portion of the respondents reading religious texts in English.

The domains of Language use as analyzed in the previous sections point to the dominance of Tibetan in oracy even though it is mostly in the personal domains and the preponderance of English in reading and writing in all contexts except for religious text.

Institutional Support Factors

Institutional support factors refer to the extent to which an ethnolinguistic group and its languages are represented in various formal and informal social institutions. The mass media have been considered a social institution that powerfully affects the retention of immigrant or minority languages (Kostoulas-Makrakis, 1995, p.14). The Tibetan language has a relatively good institutional support in the community. Tibetan language instruction is provided by the local Tibetan Parent's Association and the Toronto District School Board. There are many organizations of all forms: religious, political, cultural, social, recreational, and alumni associations from various schools in India/Nepal who are active in fostering a sense of community and initiating activities where the opportunity for the use of L1 is presented. There is a burgeoning local businesses catering to the population such as restaurants, shops, video stores, and so forth. There is no local Tibetan media in Toronto but Tibetan songs and music are imported from India and are readily available. The exposure of the Tibetan youths to mass media as shown in Table 20 is predominantly in English. One reason is the easy availability of such media in English

while its counterpart in Tibetan is minimal. Compared to other Tibetan media, the respondents are more exposed to Tibetan music/songs.

Table 20: Exposure to Tibetan and English media

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never	Missing
Tibetan Radio	2	3	0	11	4	4
English Radio	12	2	1	2	2	5
Tibetan TV/movies	1	3	3	10	1	6
English TV/movies	19	1	1	0	0	3
Tibetan books	3	1	2	9	4	5
English books	15	1	1	1	0	6
Tibetan newspaper	1	2	0	9	5	7
English newspaper	20	1	0	0	0	3
Tibetan music/songs	7	5	1	8	0	3
English music/songs	15	2	1	0	0	6

Attitude to Tibetan Language

Respondents' attitude towards the Tibetan language will either have negative or positive effect on language shift depending on whether it was an integrative attitude or an instrumental attitude. For example, if Tibetan is valued less than English, seen as 'useless' in the country of immigration, this will correlate with resulting language shift towards English. Such instrumental attitude usually causes language shift while if the integrative attitude to L1 is stronger than one's instrumental attitude towards it, then L1 might be maintained. The instrumental attitude to Tibetan is measured by the questions that look at the benefits accruing to the speaker for knowing Tibetan such as for economic, social and cultural/religious purposes. Tables 21 and 22 demonstrate the positive attitude that the female Tibetan youths have towards Tibetan language.

Table 21: Instrumental attitude to Tibetan

Knowing Tibetan has	Economic	Social	Cultural/religious
Many benefits	5	16	20
Some benefits	13	6	3
No benefits	1	0	0
Some disadvantages	0	0	0
No opinion	4	1	0
Missing data	1	1	1

Table 21 neatly demonstrates that the Tibetan female youths view the Tibetan language positively in terms of their instrumental attitude. They think that knowing Tibetan will benefit them economically, socially and culturally/religiously. They think it will benefit them more so in the social and cultural/religious contexts than in the economic context. Only one respondent reported that knowing Tibetan has no economic benefit. Not surprisingly, it was R1, who uses English in most domains and considers Tibetan her second language. Few chose 'no-opinion' regarding the economic benefits. Thus, the respondents have positive instrumental attitude towards the Tibetan language in terms of its utility in social and cultural/religious context but there is less agreement that Tibetan is economically useful even though they still view it positively. Both the survey questionnaires and the interviews did not ask the respondents why they felt learning Tibetan will benefit them economically. However, a study (unpublished) that I conducted in 2005, among the Tibetans in Vancouver asked the interviewees, "why they wanted to learn Tibetan?" Five youths were interviewed: four males and one female. The male interviewees cited the Tibetan language as an economic resource for learning Tibetan in addition to their integrative motivation, while the female, only cited integrative motivation for learning Tibetan. For example, one of the male interviewee was already

making a living teaching Tibetan. Another wanted to become a Tibetan teacher in future. The same participant also noted the various careers that you can make out of learning Tibetan such as using Tibetan as a tool for doing research in Tibetan culture and religion as is done in universities around the world and in Buddhist institutes. That interviewee asserted that,

> "If you know Tibetan well, doors are open to Buddhism, Medicine and other
>
> fields and if you have access to them, it is very beneficial. These days, foreigners
>
> find our culture very valuable which we ourselves might not notice".

Even though, it is hard to establish whether the same kind of reasoning of Tibetan as an economic resource exist among the Tibetan female youths in Toronto, the largely positive attitude expressed for Tibetan language's use in economic terms clearly demonstrates the perceived linguistic capital of Tibetan language.

Integrative Attitude

Integrative attitude to Tibetan is measured through respondents' answers on the questions of how important they find maintaining the Tibetan language, and for the future generations of Tibetans to speak in Tibetan. Such questions test the respondent's group affiliation with Tibetans.

Table 22: Integrative attitude to Tibetan

	Maintaining Tibetan language	Future generation of Tibetans have to speak in Tibetan
Very important	23	22
Important		1
Neutral	1	
No response		1

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Table 22 shows almost a unanimous assertion from the respondents that it is very important to maintain Tibetan language. This indicates a strong positive integrative attitude that the female Tibetan youths have about the Tibetan language. A strong positive response shows a high aspiration for the continuity of Tibetan language in the community. In most cases of language maintenance studies, people hold positive integrative attitude towards their native language either because of emotional attachment to the L1 or because of the perceived threat against the loss of that language. In the Tibetan context, the threat is more intense because of the political situation of Tibet being under Chinese rule. The political dimension of the Tibetan linguistic situation is exhibited by respondents writing comments, at the end of the survey questionnaire such as "Free Tibet", "Keep working for Tibet" and other similar comments.

A question about which language the respondents value the most was posed. All but three chose Tibetan as the most valued language. Since the question did not ask why they value it, for the purposes of finding out whether instrumental or integrative attitude is present, this question is not very useful. Nonetheless, Tibetan is highly regarded be it for instrumental or integrative purposes. Summarizing from the instrumental, integrative and the value question, the Tibetan female youths have positive attitude towards the Tibetan language. Such positive attitudes can be predictive of continued maintenance of L1. Lawson and Sachdev's (2004) study on language attitude and language use showed that the attitudes closely mirror reported patterns of language use (p. 61). If the positive attitude towards the L1 is only through the integrative motivation, then L1 is less likely to be sustained since many feel emotionally attached to their heritage but in practice do not maintain it if the instrumental attitude towards it is negative. Between integrative and

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instrumental attitude, the latter is a more powerful indicator in language maintenance. In the case of the Tibetans in this study, the positive attitude of both instrumental and integrative motivation will assure the maintenance of the Tibetan language as long as the attitudes do not change over time. However, one should be aware that positive attitude only seems to be of effect for spoken Tibetan since the writing and reading in Tibetan seems to be almost abandoned. Klieger (2002) relates a similar story from the youths in Delhi,

> Tibetan language use is a major issue of identity performance among the survey respondents. Although the vast majority of all respondents indicated that the use of the Tibetan language was very important for maintaining Tibetan identity, it was surprising to learn that many of the students said that their literary language was their English, not Tibetan. Similarly, others indicated that English was their primary language in general. (p. 149)

To examine the respondents' own perception of language shift since migration, a direct question was asked as to whether they feel that their Tibetan language skills have weakened since immigrating to Canada. The responses were mixed. Almost half of the respondents felt that their Tibetan language skills did weaken (9) or at least weakened somewhat (2). Eight respondents reported that their Tibetan language skills did not weaken and three chose "Do not know" as answer and two did not answer. A crosstabulation between years in Canada and response to whether their language weakened or not did not reveal any important correlation.

Code Switching

The sociolinguistic phenomenon of code switching surfaced during the interviews with the youths. When asked about the difference between their parent's generation and their generation in terms of language use, all of the youths answered that their generation speak Tibetan but mixed with other languages such as English and that their grandparents and parents speak 'pure' Tibetan. They are alluring to code switching between Tibetan and English or another language.

Code switching; or alternating between languages in one sentences or paragraph is usually associated with language shift (Holmes, 2001, p. 36). Most people disapprove of it and condemn mixing languages. Reactions to code switching are negative in most communities. In French speaking Canada, "joual" is a put down label for switching between French and English (Holmes, 2001, p.45). In the Tibetan context, code switching between Tibetan and other language is called "ra-ma-luk" (neither goat nor sheep), implying that it is neither Tibetan nor English thus technically not a 'real' language. Despite the negative connotation attached to code switching in the speech communities, research has shown that code switching is not necessarily bad. For example, Milroy and Muysken (1995) argued that the late development of code-switching research is because of the structuralist bent towards integrity of the grammatical system, for which code switching and code mixing were seen as a potential disturbance (p.8). They cite Gumperz's analysis on code switching as contradicting the view of code switching as representing a deficient knowledge of language, a grammarless mixture of two codes. In Gumperz's analysis, language alternation is conceptualized not as a deficit to be stigmatized, but as an additional resource through which a range of social and rhetorical

meanings are expressed. He focuses on the discourse and interactional functions which code switching performs for speakers. He examines it in terms of the influence of situational factors such as topic, participants and setting (cited in Milroy & Muysken 1995, p.9). Code switching between Tibetan and another language mostly English presents a ripe area for further studies.

The results of the survey indicate language shift taking place among the Tibetans in terms of decreasing number of domains of L1 use and a pronounced shift in L1 literacy.

Policy Implications of the Study:

This research has a potential benefit for the participants to reflect on their linguistic situation after undergoing the survey questionnaires and interviews. Some participants might experience what Freire (1970) refers to as the *conscientisation*, that is developing a critical understanding of one's circumstances and social environment that will lead to action (cited in Leach, 2003, p.21). For example, understanding your language attitude and behaviour might trigger conscious actions from their part such as putting more efforts in L1 maintenance.

This research also has potential benefits for various institutions at varying levels of governance. At the local Tibetan community level, this research will aid in informing the local Tibetans of the situation of Tibetan language among its youth to direct the discussion about Tibetan language in the community on a more informed basis. It might also be used in devising policies by the various local Tibetan community organizations. The local organizations can also use the research with its 'statistical data' and academic

legitimacy to apply for funding or other assistance from government. In the transnational context, the Tibetan government-in- exile based in India can use the data to devise its policies for the Tibetans in America as disseminated and sometimes implemented through the Office of Tibet in New York. They can also use the results of the research to aid them in devising effective policies in India such as the already existing program of offering Tibetan language and culture training during the summer holidays to North American Tibetan children and youth

In the Canadian context, the local school boards in Toronto can use the research to aid them in policymaking and delivering service to Tibetans. At the national level, this research will build knowledge about one of Canada's smallest and growing ethnic groups. In the academic arena, this research being an interdisciplinary study will contribute to the literatures on immigration, youth studies, linguistics and sociolinguistics. In the field of immigration research in Canada, the majority of Canadian social science research and published literature have focused mainly on the adult portion of this population (Anisef & Kilbride, 2000 cited in Shansiah, 2005). Thus, this research contributes to that field by taking immigrant youth as the unit of analysis. In linguistics and sociolinguistics field, this research on the Tibetan language contributes to knowledge to the field such as the existence of new dialect formation in the Tibetan Diaspora and code switching between Tibetan and English.

Chapter 5 Conclusions

Discussions

In this section, the questions posed at the onset of the research will be answered based on the findings.

1. What is the general state of Tibetan language proficiency and usage in terms of both oracy and literacy among the immigrant Tibetan female youths?

As seen from the survey results and the analysis, spoken Tibetan is strong among the female Tibetan youths with all of them speaking it very well with only two speaking it moderately well. The self-reported nature of the results rather than actual testing of their proficiency might have distorted some results. As noted earlier, the only respondent who chose to write in Tibetan declared her Tibetan fluency to be moderately well as compared to others who filled the questionnaires in English and claimed that they speak Tibetan very well. There could be other explanations such as the questionnaires being filled by some one else for the individual since it was a self-administered survey and not administered face-to-face by the researchers but rather in a big gathering. Tibetan is still used at home while its usage outside school is undergoing a shift towards English in places such as schools and workplaces.

In terms of L1 usage with various interlocutors, Tibetan is used mostly within the personal domains of home and with parents and during cultural/religious events. Spoken Tibetan is used daily by all respondents. Tibetan is still used in expressing emotions such as love and anger even though English seems to be taking over Tibetan in expressing love. Cognitive tasks such as counting and telling jokes are still predominantly done through Tibetan.

However, in terms of literacy: reading and writing in Tibetan, the shift towards English is almost complete with only few domains such as the religious text readings and listening to Tibetan music and songs as the last bastions of L1 usage. Most of the respondents hardly read or write in Tibetan and they prefer English in reading books, newspaper, websites, community notices and so forth. However, this finding does not seem to be exclusive to Tibetans who migrated to Canada since Klieger (2002) reports that Tibetan youths especially university students prefer English to Tibetan. Nonetheless, efforts need to be directed towards improving L1 literacy for the Tibetan female youths.

2. What trends do the female Tibetan youth exhibit in their language usage?

The trend among the female Tibetan youths seems to be towards using more English as the number of years in Canada increases. Mainly due to acculturation processes, one's social network expands beyond the Tibetan friends through work and school resulting in less use of L1 over time. Even with this small data, one can discern such a trend. There is no doubt that the larger data will highlight that.

Some tend to use English with their siblings while they still speak in Tibetan with their parents and grandparents. Such a trend indicates a language shift towards English since the domains of Tibetan use become smaller and smaller. Listening to Tibetan music and songs is a persistent trend despite the massive exposure to English media such as numbers of English radio and television channels as compared to the absence of Tibetan radio or television. This trend should be capitalized by community leaders or those interested in maintaining Tibetan language by reaching to the youth through Tibetan music. The Tibetan youths still seem religious and use Tibetan in reading their religious texts, but from personal observation in the community, youths in the younger age

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brackets especially from 15 to 24 hardly attend religious gatherings. The youths in the older age brackets of 25-30 might be more likely to attend. It is noticeable during religious gatherings that there are a huge proportion of seniors to youths. This is supported by the crosstabulation of religiosity and age that the younger an individual is the less likely they are to be religious. One of the key trends as ascertained from the survey research was the erosion of L1 use in more cognitively demanding activities such as literacy with the sole exception of using L1 in reading religious tasks.

3. What factors affect the shift or maintenance of Tibetan language for the group under study?

Numerous factors seem to be affecting or likely to affect this group's Tibetan language maintenance and shift. Generation stands out as an important variable. Even though this group is composed of second generations only, when the Canadian born female youth was analyzed, she was markedly different from this crowd. For example, she speaks English to her parents and at home and only understands Tibetan but does not speak it.

Household composition might affect the language shift even though it cannot be discerned from this study. Presently all the female Tibetan youths except for one lives with parents, spouse, relatives and friends, which is useful for using the L1.

The place of residence seems to be an important factor for language maintenance for the female Tibetan youths because, right now most of them are located in the same area thus making it easier to interact with others sharing same language. Being closer to speaker of same language makes organizing activities easier. Organizing Tibetan activities has the benefit of imparting Tibetan language and culture to the youth and giving them space to engage among themselves, be it through political, social, cultural or

religious events. Such participation is also correlated with positive attitude towards L1. The more domains there are for the use of L1 such as home, the better it will be for the maintenance of L1. Parents urging their children to speak in Tibetan and youths speaking among each other in Tibetan helps in maintaining Tibetan language.

Pre-migration educational history and past contact with English all affect language maintenance or language shift. For example, those who did not have education in Tibetan such as attending Indian or English medium schools are more likely to shift their language towards English than those who are more exposed to Tibetan as a medium of instruction during school years.

The presence of institutional support such as the one that exists right now that offers Tibetan language and cultural classes will assist in resisting the language shift towards English. The availability of Tibetan media such as newspapers, magazines and music/songs will support language maintenance among the community.

Finally, one of the important variables is the existence of positive instrumental and integrative attitude towards the Tibetan language. This will promote language maintenance while negative attitude of both sorts will affect language shift towards English.

4. Are there any unique sociolinguistic phenomena worth noting?

Some unique phenomena that are known in some other languages but which are not highlighted in the Tibetan language are found. For example, the presence of new dialect in the Diaspora is ripe for analytical examination. There is some research on Tibetan dialects done at the University of Bern, but their research purview is limited to dialects of certain parts of Tibet. The presence of code switching not just between

Tibetan and English but between Tibetan and Hindi and Nepali are interesting areas to explore further.

To conclude, this thesis explored and displayed the sociolinguistic situation of the Tibetan language among Tibetan female immigrant youths in Toronto through the lens of examining various factors affecting language shift and maintenance. The thesis advanced the role of some of the variables previously known to affect language shift such as generation and pre-migration residence and education history, while questioning the use of certain constructs such as conflating instrumental and integrative attitude to L1. It also called for a more appropriate categorization of "youth" based on new sociological realities. Areas for future research were highlighted such as the new dialect formation in the Tibetan Diaspora and code switching. The analysis in the thesis points towards the need to take action towards resisting language shift from the individual Tibetan female youths, parents, teachers and people concerned about Tibetan language. If left to the devices of time, the L1 literacy might be lost among the female Tibetan youths and the L1 oracy might face huge shift towards English such as not using it even at home.

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Appendix 1 Survey Questionnaire

Section A:Background Information

1. Gender
2. Age:
3. Country of birth
4. What is the highest level of education completed?
5. Which area of Toronto do you live in?
6. Please indicate the number of Tibetans living in your household?

Section B:Migration

7. How old were you when you migrated to Canada?
8. How many years have you lived in Canada?
9. How long did you live in the following places?

Section C:Language Choice

10. What is your first language?
11. What is your native dialect?
12. What is the main language spoken at home?
13. What is/was the medium of instruction in your schooling?
14. Which language do you use the most in the following contexts?
15. Which language do you use most with the following people?
16. Which language do you use most often in the following situations with Tibetans?

Section D:Language Vitality

17. Which of the following languages do you speak?
18. How often do you read in the following languages?
19. How often do you write in the following languages?
20. In what language do you read the following?
21. If you had a chance, would you like to study Tibetan?
22. Do you think maintaining Tibetan language is important?
23. Do you think knowing Tibetan has economic benefits?
24. Do you think knowing Tibetan has cultural and/or religious benefits?
25. Which language do you value the most?
26. Have your Tibetan language skills weakened since you moved to Canada?
27. Do you think it is important for the future generation of Tibetans to speak Tibetan?
28. How often do you talk in the following languages with people?
29. Exposure to Tibetan language media
30. Exposure to English language media?

Section E:Social Vitality

31. How religious are you?