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**INKTITUT AND INUIT YOUTH:  
LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AS A BASIS FOR LANGUAGE PLANNING**

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## RÉSUMÉ

L'objectif de cette recherche est d'évaluer les possibilités pour la promotion de la langue inuite sur la Terre de Baffin, ceci à partir d'une étude approfondie des perceptions et des attitudes linguistiques des jeunes Inuit (de 18 à 25 ans) à Iqaluit, Pangnirtung et Pond Inlet. Cette recherche s'articule autour de l'idée que l'inuktitut ne peut survivre que si ses locuteurs sont engagés à utiliser et à maintenir leur langue ancestrale.

Les jeunes Inuit expriment ces perceptions et ces attitudes pendant des entrevues semi-dirigées (37) et des questionnaires fermés (130). Les entrevues et les questionnaires portent sur les perceptions de pratique linguistique et de problèmes linguistiques, sur des attitudes par rapport à la valeur symbolique et pratique de l'inuktitut et de l'anglais, ainsi que les désirs des jeunes Inuit pour la promotion de l'inuktitut au Nunavut.

Les résultats suggèrent que la langue inuite jouit d'une certaine force dans les trois communautés, mais que, pour des raisons diverses, les jeunes Inuit l'utilisent moins que ce qu'ils pourraient. Ces jeunes Inuit expriment toutefois le désir de garder leur langue ancestrale ainsi et expliquent également les facteurs qui les motivent ou les découragent à l'utiliser davantage. Notamment, on apprécie l'inuktitut car c'est la langue maternelle, la langue qu'on associe à la tradition, la culture et l'identité inuites, et une langue qu'on risque de perdre. Aussi, l'inuktitut possède une valeur pratique, pour obtenir un emploi et surtout pour participer et s'intégrer dans la communauté. En même temps, on apprécie l'anglais, car c'est une langue moderne, à la mode; une langue qui permet aux jeunes Inuit de voyager, de s'éduquer, d'obtenir un emploi, et de participer dans leurs communautés locales ainsi que dans la communauté globale.

En somme, les jeunes Inuit expriment une forte motivation à maintenir à la fois l'inuktitut et l'anglais. Ils ont besoin de ces deux langues afin de poursuivre leurs rêves de profiter au maximum des deux mondes dans lesquels ils négocient actuellement leur place.

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## ABSTRACT

The objective of this thesis is to identify language perceptions and attitudes among Inuit youth (18-25 years old) in three Baffin Island communities: Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet. The premise of the study is that the Inuktitut language will only thrive if young Inuit are committed to using and maintaining their ancestral language.

Semi-directed interviews (37) and closed questionnaires (130) elicit information on day-to-day language choice, perceptions of language use, problems or concerns in daily language use, symbolic and practical value of Inuktitut, English and French, and opinions about the promotion of Inuktitut in Nunavut. These language perceptions and attitudes expressed by young Inuit illuminate reasons for the current level of use of Inuktitut and help prioritize areas for future language planning.

Findings suggest that although Inuktitut remains relatively strong, Inuit youth are aware of and sensitive to the loss of Inuktitut, particularly in Iqaluit. Inuktitut is valued by Inuit youth because it is the mother tongue; the language of Inuit tradition, culture and identity; a “fun” language; a language that is being lost; a useful language for getting a job; and an effective tool for participating and integrating in the community. At the same time, English is valued because it is a “cool” language, the language of the new millennium that allows Inuit youth to travel, get an education, get jobs, and participate in their local communities and beyond.

Inuit youth are strongly motivated to maintain both Inuktitut and English. They need both languages in order to pursue their aspirations of making the best of both worlds in which they are currently negotiating their place.

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...[If I don't...] Who else is going to [promote Inuktitut]?

I was brought up to speak Inuktitut because it's in our lives,  
it's our world of communicating, it's our way of understanding each other,  
because English is to everyone their second language. But this generation, no.  
This generation is English first language. My generation. Even though I'm  
only twenty, for those of us who were born twenty years ago, Inuktitut was  
our first language. But the majority of the young people,  
the twenty-year olds I hang out with, just don't understand Inuktitut anymore.  
Why? Because their parents aren't speaking and the schools aren't hiring  
anybody to teach Inuktitut. So I try to speak Inuktitut as much as I can  
because I see it as a way of teaching other young people.  
(Inuit woman in Iqaluit, August 2000)

“Speaker’s attitudes are the wild card in this domain [language contact]”  
(Thomason 2001:61)

## INTRODUCTION

The threat of loss of ancestral languages is a concern for Aboriginal and minority groups around the world. Faced with increasing pressure to transfer to dominant or colonial languages, many Aboriginal and minority groups are making efforts to preserve and promote their languages. To take one Canadian example, the Canadian Inuit are taking steps to maintain Inuktitut, their ancestral language. In 1999, the creation of Nunavut added momentum to their efforts. In Nunavut, 85% of the inhabitants are Inuit. Reflecting this reality, Inuktitut became the first official language of Nunavut, and the government declared that it would promote increased use of the Inuit language in all domains throughout the territory.

Inuit leaders have expressed their desire and motivation to promote Inuktitut. This thesis examines the grassroots support for such initiatives. A basic premise of the research is that in order for a language such as Inuktitut to survive in contact with a dominant colonial language, the speakers need to value the language and desire to continue speaking it. Indeed, the key to successful promotion of the Inuit language will likely be how strongly the residents of Nunavut support its promotion and how committed they are to preserving it. This can be measured, in part, by the identification of language perceptions and attitudes of Nunavummiut (citizens of Nunavut), which are at times poignant or contradictory, especially among Inuit youth. Focusing on Inuit youth (18-25 years old) in three Baffin Island communities (Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet), this thesis presents perceptions and attitudes concerning Inuktitut and English as indicators of grassroots support for language planning. Attitudes are particularly important as they influence language behaviour; the language choices of the youth will

affect the future preservation of Inuktitut as the youth continue to use Inuktitut and pass it on to their children.

A chance encounter three days into my field work in Pangnirtung provided me with an insight about Inuit youths' relationship to Inuktitut; I have carried it with me and include it here by way of introduction to the language attitudes of Inuit youth. Walking out of the hamlet office, a middle-aged Inuk<sup>1</sup> stopped me, asking, "*Kinaugavit?*" ("Who are you, anyway?"). I told him my name and explained the reason why he had seen me around town for the past couple days. I was doing research on the promotion of the Inuktitut language. I was talking to Inuit youth, finding out how they were experiencing the contact between Inuktitut and English. He told me a story that I have not forgotten.

*The young Inuit... To them, Inuktitut is like a precious heirloom. Inuktitut is like a precious inheritance that the children receive from their ancestors, and put in their back pockets, to keep it for some day when they will need it. But you know, if you put something away in your back pocket, and never take it out, one day when you go to look for it, you'll realise it's not there. You've lost it...*

After conducting and analysing thirty-seven interviews and one hundred and thirty questionnaires among Inuit youth in three Baffin Island communities, I have seen evidence of what that man intuitively shared at the outset of my research. The young Inuit value Inuktitut and treasure it as a precious possession that they have inherited from their ancestors. It somehow connects them to those who came before. And yet as much as they value the possession of the language, its use becomes secondary, to the point that many young Inuit are finding that when they try to take out their Inuktitut and use it, that it has fallen out of their back pocket somewhere along their journey. This thesis meets young Inuit at varying stages of this journey. Some are forging ahead with their heirloom in their hands, or in their back pockets, or believing it is in their back pockets. Others, as we meet, are trying to pull it out, realise it is not there, and are looking back over their paths

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<sup>1</sup> *Inuit* is used as a noun or an adjective when the subject is plural, while *Inuk* is used as a noun or an adjective when the subject is singular.

trying to figure out how to recover what they have lost. Still others are already retracing their steps, or have succeeded in retrieving their Inuktitut, and are trying to figure out how to protect against losing it again. The following chapters present elements of these journeys, as young Inuit share their realities, their struggles and their hopes in relation to the maintenance of their ancestral language.

Chapter One provides the context in which the status of Inuktitut is studied and understood. Compared to other Aboriginal languages in Canada, Inuktitut is faring well. Others, with few exceptions, are declining in terms of actual numbers of speakers and the percentage of the group who still speak the ancestral language as their mother tongue and first language. Reasons for language shift among Aboriginal Canadians are presented, followed by a discussion of their reactions to language loss. Across Canada, loss of Aboriginal languages has led to efforts to preserve and maintain these languages within the respective groups. To some extent, the Canadian government has reacted to such attempts. Chapter One sets the stage for the specific case of Inuktitut, showing the Canadian context in which Inuktitut may be promoted.

Chapter Two presents theoretical elements which are helpful in understanding various aspects of the linguistic situation in Nunavut. Language contact and the resulting bilingualism are discussed as widespread, international phenomena. This chapter briefly discusses some problems which may arise in contact situations (including the extreme result of language loss), and presents language planning as one way in which such concerns may be managed. Language planning occurs on a case-to-case basis and a holistic understanding of the contact situation must be achieved before one can begin to suggest ways to reverse language shift. The important role of language attitudes in language maintenance, being the product of the history of language contact and a key to linguistic behaviour, is also discussed.

Chapter Three contextualises the current situation of Inuktitut in Nunavut against the backdrop of the history of contact between Inuit and Euro-Canadians, or Qallunaat,<sup>2</sup> in the Canadian North. The recency of intensive contact and the continued relative isolation of Inuit explain, in part, the continued vitality of Inuktitut. Conversely, socioeconomic and political inequalities resulting from the domination of Qallunaat society over Inuit society contribute to the pressure to use English. The creation of Nunavut makes the situation of Inuktitut unique in Canada as these Inuit have the opportunity and political clout to promote Inuit ways of being, including their language. Even without an Inuit territory, Inuktitut was one of the healthiest Aboriginal languages in Canada. These indices of strength continue; most Inuit in what is now Nunavut speak Inuktitut as their first language, the language itself is already well-developed, and Inuit use Inuktitut widely within their communities. The advent of Nunavut promised to increase the prestige of Inuktitut by making it one of the three official languages in Nunavut and by increasing the societal domains within which Inuktitut is used. The prestige of Inuktitut, reflected in the symbolic and practical value young Inuit attribute to it, as well as young Inuit's use of Inuktitut, are at the heart of this thesis. The discussion of language policies, use and attitudes in Chapter Three, based largely on a literature review, provides a backdrop for my study of Inuit youths' perceptions of and attitudes about the current linguistic situation in the Baffin region.

Chapter Four describes the field study. I introduce the reader to the research locations (Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, in the Baffin region of Nunavut) and the research population: Inuit youth between 18 and 25 years old. I describe how I used participant observation, semi-directed interviews and closed questionnaires in order to elicit Inuit youths' language perceptions and attitudes. Finally, I explain how the corpus of collected data was systematically analysed in order to reach the results presented in the subsequent chapters.

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<sup>2</sup> Qallunaat (Qallunaaq in the singular form) is a word of Inuit origin, which in common English usage refers to non-Inuit individuals (with the possible exception of other Aboriginals). Although Qallunaat, in its most restrictive sense, refers specifically to white, English-speaking Euro-Canadians, this thesis adopts the broader meaning of "non-Inuit", which is most common in English usage, in the literature and colloquially in the North.



Inuit youths' perceptions of their own competence in Inuktitut and English are the focus of Chapter Five. Most acquired Inuktitut as their first language and still consider their oral competence to be good to excellent. Almost all Inuit youth surveyed consider that they are also proficient English speakers. Other indices of competence, such as ability to communicate in diverse situations and confidence using Inuktitut and English, complement self-reports of perceived competence. Even though ability in both languages is perceived as strong, Inuit youth, particularly in Iqaluit, express reservations about the current linguistic situation, saying that their Inuktitut is not as good as it used to be. They recognise language loss in their own lives and attribute it to the encroaching presence of English. The majority of Inuit youth surveyed aspire to greater proficiency in Inuktitut.

Chapters Six and Seven discuss Inuit youths' perceived language use. Descriptions of language use in these chapters show that they use both Inuktitut and English in most speech situations. The only speech situations which clearly dictate use of Inuktitut are those associated with elders and/or traditional activities, while the only speech situations which require exclusive use of English are those dominated by Qallunaat. Chapter Eight explains motivations for language choice ranging from communicative need to personal preference to use Inuktitut or English. Motivations to use Inuktitut or English are complex and are at the heart of Inuktitut language maintenance. Although Inuit youth say that they are concerned with language loss and try to use Inuktitut as frequently as possible, they frequently speak English even where they could use Inuktitut. Most say that they are using increasing amounts of English, and that they would like to use Inuktitut more frequently than they do.

Following discussions of motivation in language use, Chapters Nine and Ten discuss reasons why Inuit youth value Inuktitut and English. Inuit youth say that both are important to them for symbolic (Chapter Nine) and practical (Chapter Ten) reasons. Many value Inuktitut because it is the language they grew up speaking. They associate Inuktitut with Inuit tradition and culture, and English with 'modernity'. The relationship between Inuktitut and Inuit youths' sense of self and belonging is also discussed in Chapter Nine.

Chapter Ten focuses on the practical value Inuit youth attribute to Inuktitut and English. Both languages are valued for securing a job in Inuit communities. English is considered necessary for getting an education, travelling, and communicating with Qallunaat. Inuit youth say that Inuktitut is important and useful to them because it is the language they use in daily interactions within their communities; use of Inuktitut favours their integration and participation. The pragmatic emphasis behind Inuit youths' desire to maintain Inuktitut is evident throughout Chapter Ten.

Inuit youths' reasons for valuing Inuktitut and English are related to their motivations for using one language or the other. As language attitudes determine, in part, linguistic behaviour, they are determinant to the future of the Inuit language. The objective of this thesis is to identify needs and possibilities for language planning among Inuit youth through the identification and analysis of language perceptions and attitudes. My hypothesis is that Inuit youths' language perceptions and attitudes are shaping the evolution of the current linguistic situation in Nunavut.

The current research project follows a bottom-up model of language planning, adopting the basic premise that any initiative to influence the linguistic situation should be informed and motivated by the desires and attitudes of the population concerned. In the case of Nunavut, the government has identified itself as a key player in managing the future of Inuktitut in the territory. However, its actions must line up with the desires and attitudes of the population. The purpose of this thesis, then, is to contribute to a solid foundation, consisting of concrete data about the current language situation, upon which initiatives to promote Inuktitut among Inuit youth may be established. Ideally, all potential actors in language planning can work together in concert to achieve maximum favourable impact on the linguistic future of Nunavut.

**PART ONE**

**BACKGROUND TO LANGUAGE ISSUES IN NUNAVUT**

## CHAPTER I

### ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES IN CANADA

#### **1.0 Introduction**

Although officially a bilingual country, Canada is home to great linguistic diversity. Besides the many immigrant languages that have been brought to this country over the years, Canada also has over 50 Aboriginal languages. These languages represent 11 language families and isolates. Canadian Aboriginal languages display many unusual characteristics, including the polysynthetic<sup>1</sup> nature characteristic of Algonquian, Athapaskan and Eskaleut languages (the three widest-spread language families in Canada). Some Canadian Aboriginal languages are also spoken in the United States, and the Inuit language is spoken from Alaska to Greenland, but many Aboriginal languages exist solely in Canada. This chapter presents an overview of Aboriginal languages in Canada. While each of the languages has experienced contact with English or French in a unique way, they share certain commonalities in terms of their recent linguistic history and their current state. Perhaps the most salient common characteristic of Aboriginal languages in Canada is that they are in decline and efforts are generally being made to reverse this language loss.

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<sup>1</sup> In polysynthetic languages, multiple units of meaning are combined within a single word, to the extent that one word can convey the meaning of what would be an entire sentence in a language like English.

## 1.1 Decline in Use

Contact with Europeans precipitated the decline in use of Aboriginal languages in Canada. This loss is seen in the decreasing proportion of the Aboriginal population which speaks an Aboriginal language, decreased frequency of use of that language among those who know how to speak one, as well as the full-blown loss of entire Aboriginal languages. While the actual number of people speaking Aboriginal languages in Canada is increasing (in 1996, 208,610 Canadians declared an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue, compared to 190,160 in 1991 and 178,545 in 1971 [Canada. Statistics Canada 1997]), the increase is due largely to the high birth rate among Canadian Aboriginal populations in general. Even while the actual numbers of speakers of Aboriginal languages increase by small increments, the proportion of Aboriginal people who speak their ancestral language is decreasing. Whereas in 1951, 87.4% reported an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue, this number dropped to 75.7% in 1961, then to 57.1% in 1971, falling to just below 30% in 1981 (Frideres 1988:158-159), and most recently to around 25% in 1996 (Canada. Statistics Canada 1998). The decreased proportion of Aboriginal Canadians who have the ancestral language as a mother tongue means that parents, for one reason or another, have transmitted to their children another language, most often English.<sup>2</sup> As a result, a growing percentage of Aboriginal Canadians have never known how to speak an Aboriginal language.

At the same time, an increasing number of Aboriginal Canadians who learned the ancestral language as their mother tongue are ceasing to use it in adulthood, adopting English (or French) as their primary language of use. Although approximately one quarter of Aboriginal Canadians reported an Aboriginal language as the mother tongue in the 1996 census, only 15% (about 120,000 individuals) reported an Aboriginal language as their home language in the same census (Canada. Statistics Canada 1998). Such a transfer in practice may lead to decreased ability to speak the language among even those who learned the ancestral language as the mother tongue.

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<sup>2</sup> Frideres and Gadacz (2001) report that 96.8% of Aboriginal Canadians who shift away from their Aboriginal language switch to English.

Although all Aboriginal languages in Canada are undergoing decline, each is experiencing the loss differently. In general, though, First Nations people living on reserves, and Aboriginal people living in remote or rural areas have higher levels of language retention than those living off-reserve and in urban areas. Also, the adoption of English or French as the first language is most prevalent among younger Aboriginal Canadians, while older individuals are more likely to still speak an Aboriginal language (Canada. Statistics Canada 1998). The more prolonged and the more intense a given group's contact with Euro-Canadians has been, the more pronounced the language loss appears to be.

As growing numbers of Aboriginal Canadians adopt one of the official languages of Canada, English or French, as their primary language of use, the survival of Aboriginal languages in Canada is threatened. It is difficult to estimate exactly how many languages have already been lost in Canada, but the number reaches at least ten (Norris 1998), including Huron (Iroquoian) and Tagish (Athapaskan). Many more languages, including Seneca (Iroquoian), Straits, Squamish and Sechelt (Salish) are threatened with extinction in the very near future, as they have less than 50 speakers, all of whom are past child bearing age. Of the 53 Aboriginal languages spoken in Canada in the 1980s, only three, Cree, Ojibway and Inuktitut, were considered to have "*excellent chances of survival* in the foreseeable future" (Foster 1982:8). All others were classified as moderately to extremely endangered, or bordering on extinction. Although Foster's assessment of only three Aboriginal languages in Canada having excellent chances of survival is frequently quoted, his appraisal was based on the number of speakers of the respective languages. The persistence of languages that were considered imminently threatened twenty years ago testifies to the many social factors that interact to influence a language's fate. Nonetheless, Foster's overarching thesis of the uncertain future of Aboriginal languages in Canada remains valid.

## 1.2 Reasons for Loss

The current threat to the survival of Aboriginal languages in Canada is directly related to the contact with the English and French languages (mainly English), and more accurately with the people who speak those languages. The effects are partly due to intentional efforts to assimilate Aboriginal people into Euro-Canadian culture and partly due to the natural course of language contact in situations of political and economic inequality.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Canadian Government's official policy was to assimilate Aboriginal Canadians into mainstream Canadian society. This aim was pursued through the education of Aboriginal children in residential schools with strict assimilationist policies. Attitudes of the time toward Aboriginal languages are seen in the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Affairs, statement from 1897:

Instruction of Indians in the vernacular is not only of no use to them but is detrimental to the cause of education and civilization and will not be permitted at any Indian school. It is believed that if an Indian vernacular is allowed to be taught on Indian reservations it will prejudice the pupil as well as his parents against the English language. This language which is good enough for a white man or a black man ought to be good enough for the red man. (Kirkness 1989:98)

Aboriginal children were thus forbidden from speaking their native languages at federal schools. While some children maintained fluency in their mother tongue despite this forced English-language immersion, others had difficulty communicating in their native language when they returned to their communities. In this way, the residential schooling system played a role in the interruption of intergenerational transmission of Aboriginal languages.

Although the residential schools and official policy of assimilation of Aboriginal people were eliminated by the 1960s, loss of the Aboriginal languages has continued. In part, sustained decline is to be expected due to the interruption of intergenerational

transmission of the language. Some parents who went through the residential school system were unable to transmit the language because they themselves could no longer speak it. Other parents were unwilling to pass it on due to residual feelings of shame or humiliation associated with speaking the Aboriginal language, or due to the belief that bringing children up in English would increase the children's opportunities for a better future, "For many decades, parents deliberately did not teach their children their Aboriginal languages. They were determined to teach them English only. In this way, they felt their children would not have to endure the same difficulties and punishments that they did" (Kirkness 1989:97). Whatever the reason, transmission of most Aboriginal languages in Canada is no longer assured, contributing to their decline across the nation.

Even without an official policy of assimilation, intense contact with the Euro-Canadians puts pressure on Aboriginal languages. In many areas of Canada, Aboriginal and European Canadians live in close proximity and have done so for hundreds of years. Social and economic connections are intense as institutions are shared, and friendships and marriages are formed between members of different ethnic groups. Many feel the pressure to know English, or French in Quebec, in order to secure employment. The prevalence of English in the mass media also plays a role in accelerating Aboriginal language loss. Such concentrated and prolonged contact on various fronts on its own can lead to linguistic assimilation, even without the Government's official policy.

Of course, it is not possible to know what would have happened if the Government had not had a policy of assimilation and had not operated the residential schools. However, we can observe that even following the end of the assimilationist era and during a period which is sympathetic, if not propitious to Aboriginal languages in Canada, the decline in Aboriginal languages continues. Indeed, assimilationist policies and programs were symptomatic of economic and political inequalities between Aboriginal Canadians and other Canadians; inequalities which continue to this day. The socio-economic dominance of Qallunaat society perpetuates Aboriginal Canadians' need to adopt a dominant language (and accompanying behaviours) in order to have equal access to socio-economic advancement. Patrick's (2003) research with Inuit in Northern



Quebec describes how social, political and economic factors have shaped the evolution of the linguistic situation in a particular Inuit community.

### **1.3 Reactions to Loss**

This decline in use, numbers of speakers, and overall numbers of Aboriginal languages in Canada is not passing unnoticed. Aboriginal people in Canada are disturbed by the demise of their languages and many are making efforts to reverse the trend toward language loss. The Canadian Government is also reacting, responding to the pressures being exerted by Aboriginal groups to intercede in favour of the maintenance of Aboriginal languages.

Many Aboriginal Canadians are concerned to observe that they themselves or those around them no longer speak the ancestral language, and that Aboriginal languages in Canada are dying. The loss of language troubles Aboriginal Canadians on many levels. At a most basic level, knowledge of the ancestral language is considered an inherent right. The loss of the Aboriginal language is seen as the loss of a valuable part of Aboriginal heritage, tradition and history. It also represents the loss of a precious entity which exists nowhere else. Further, the Aboriginal languages are considered to be an integral part of culture and group identity, part of what sets Aboriginal Canadians apart from all other Canadians. According to some, knowledge and use of an Aboriginal language helps an individual to feel proud, and to have self-esteem. Moreover, loss of the ancestral languages concerns Aboriginal Canadians because it entails the loss of a link to the past, a link between generations, and a whole way of communicating. For many Aboriginal groups, the language represents a way of being that the Aboriginal people cherish and do not want to lose. A few quotes express the importance of Aboriginal languages to Aboriginal people in the words of their spokespeople:

When we talk about our culture, when we talk about our language, and our beliefs, these are the things we should fight for. Without these things, we are not a nation. Without a nation, we have no land. Our language is a gift from the Creator. Language is culture, and culture is

language. Our language is a link between the young people and the Elders. Elders try to bring our language back by teaching our young people. (Assembly of First Nations 1993:19)

Language is the outward expression of an accumulation of learning and experience shared by a group of people over centuries of development. It is not simply a vocal symbol; it is a dynamic force which shapes the way a man looks at the world, his thinking about the world and his philosophy of life. Knowing his maternal language helps a man to know himself; being proud of his language helps a man to be proud of himself. (National Indian Brotherhood 1972:14-15)

It is now believed that the revival and retention of Aboriginal languages is vital because language is the principal means by which culture is accumulated, shared and transmitted from generation to generation. If Aboriginal languages are allowed to die, the nations of Aboriginal peoples will surely die. (Kirkness 1989:101)

For further statements about the importance of Aboriginal languages, expressed by individual Aboriginal Canadians, see *"You Took My Talk"* (Canada. Standing Committee for Aboriginal Affairs 1990) and the contributions of Aboriginal speakers on the future of their respective languages in Maurais (1996).

#### **1.4 Efforts to Maintain Languages**

Because many Aboriginal Canadians value their languages and are experiencing first-hand their decline, they are taking steps to counteract the trend toward their loss. Efforts are being exerted on at least two fronts. On the inside, attempts are being made to preserve what remains of the language and to promote the knowledge and use of the Aboriginal language within the group. On the outside, pressure is being put on official bodies, such as the Canadian Government, to intervene to assist Aboriginal Canadians' efforts to preserve their languages. On both fronts, creating awareness among Aboriginal populations and the general Canadian public of the threat to Aboriginal languages in Canada is a key component of the revitalization strategy.

Aboriginal groups in Canada have undertaken varied attempts to promote their languages from within. Efforts have been centred on the recognition that language promotion must be initiated from within the community, and more specifically from within the home. Attempts are being made to combat the tendency toward English becoming the language transmitted to children and the language of general use in the home. Strategies aim at increasing pride in the language as well as augmenting language knowledge and use through public awareness campaigns. Canada-wide celebrations of Aboriginal Language Day (Inuktitut Language Week in Nunavut), including promotional posters (see Figure 1: Inuktitut Promotional Material) are just an example of the ways in which Aboriginal groups are attempting to increase the value group members place on their ancestral languages. The Aboriginal Languages Steering Committee was implemented by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to oversee other promotional and developmental activities, including holding language workshops, developing teaching materials and curricula, and offering translation services. In all initiatives, the key role that elders must play as teachers, advisors and interlocutors in the Aboriginal language is emphasized.

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INOENAKTUN ATONIKAT  
 EAKMAN TAMAENI INUHIPTIKNI,  
 TAMAGEPKUN INUYUTIGIYAPTIKNIK  
 IHUMAGIYAPTIKALLKLO HILAKYOAMIK, UVALO,  
 UNALQAK, ILITAGIYAQYUTIGIGAPTOGU.  
 KUVEAGITIGU OKADHIKUN INOENAKTUN.

INUKTITUT ENCODES OUR ENTIRE  
 CULTURE, ENSHIRE OUR VALUES AND  
 WORLD VIEW, AND ABOVE ALL, BESTOWS  
 OUR IDENTITY. LET US CELEBRATE  
 INUKTITUT/INUINNAQTUN.

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inuktitut uqauttin

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada / Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada  
 Nunavut / ᓄᓄᓐᓂᓐ  
 Department of Culture, Language, Elders & Youth / Kaniatit Ekiqanait, Qisat, Inuktit, Inuqamit / Ministère de la Culture, de la Langue, des Aînés et de la Jeunesse  
 Nunavut Tunngavik / ᓄᓄᓐᓂᓐ ᐅᓄᓐᓂᓐ  
 KIA  
 Canada

**Figure 1: Inuktitut Promotional Material (Inuktitut Language Week)**  
 Source: *Nunatsiaq News*, January 5, 2001, p. 17

These awareness-building strategies within the communities often reach outside the communities as well, in the search for public support of the promotion of Aboriginal languages. Aboriginal groups in Canada have united to bring their language claims before the Canadian Government. In one instance, they lobbied the Government for the right to control their own schools (and thus determine the place of Aboriginal languages in the education of their children), resulting in a policy document, *Indian Control of Indian Education* (National Indian Brotherhood 1972). Aboriginal groups have also asked the Government to increase financing for language programs in their communities, and petitioned for the creation of a federal Aboriginal Languages Foundation (culminating in the unsuccessful Bill C-269, An Act to Establish the Aboriginal Languages Foundation). Furthermore, Aboriginal Canadians have repeatedly asked the federal government to give official recognition and status to Aboriginal languages in Canada. The Assembly of First Nations' 1988 Annual Report includes the following recommendation:

The government of Canada must accord Aboriginal languages with official status, constitutional recognition, and accompanying legislative protection. Necessary funds must be provided by the federal government to ensure the development of: language structures, curriculum materials, First Nations language teachers, resource centres and immersion programs. Aboriginal language instruction must be available from pre-school to post-secondary and adult education, and be acknowledged as meeting second language requirements at all levels. (Kirkness 1992:115)

Such a claim for equal status is reiterated in *Towards Linguistic Justice for First Nations: The Challenge: Report on the Aboriginal Languages and Literacy Conference* (Canada. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1994). In sum, Aboriginal efforts to preserve, protect and promote their languages can be seen, on the one hand, in attempts to develop the languages and to increase knowledge and use of the languages within their own communities, and on the other hand in attempts to gain exterior support which will enable the groups to further their interior efforts.

## 1.5 Government Reactions

Although the proposal to recognise Aboriginal languages as official languages in Canada has met with no success,<sup>3</sup> the Canadian Government has nonetheless come a long way from their earlier assimilationist policies, which remained in force until the 1960s. Articles 25 and 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* guarantee Aboriginal rights:

25. The guarantee in this Charter of certain rights and freedoms shall not be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from any aboriginal, treaty or other rights or freedoms that pertain to the aboriginal peoples of Canada including

(a) any rights or freedoms that have been recognized by the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763; and

(b) any rights or freedoms that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired. (92)

[...]

35. (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed. (Canada. Department of Justice 1999:64-66)

Article 27 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* has also been interpreted as protecting the linguistic rights of minorities within Canada, including Aboriginal language rights:

27. This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians. (Canada. Department of Justice 1999:65)

Aboriginal groups in Canada interpret these articles as constitutional protection of their right to maintain their ancestral languages. The proposed constitutional amendments of the Charlottetown Accord would have made this constitutional right explicit, “the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, being the first peoples to govern this land, have the right to promote their languages, cultures and traditions...” (Paragraph b of the Canada Clause, Canada 1992:1).

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<sup>3</sup> The claim is based on Aboriginal languages being the founding languages of the nation. Still, the claim may be considered in light of mother tongue statistics in Canada: while all Aboriginal languages considered together are the mother tongue of 0.7% of the Canadian population, 2.6% of the Canadian population have Chinese as the mother tongue, 1.8% Italian, and 1.6% German (Canada. Statistics Canada 1997).

The proposed *Act to Establish the Canadian Heritage Languages Institute* (Bill C-37) also set guidelines for the Canadian Government's actions in relation to minority languages in Canada. However, Aboriginal Canadians vehemently objected to their languages being included. They claimed that their languages should have a place in Canada apart from all other minority languages, and should accordingly be the subject of a separate Act. The *Act to Establish an Aboriginal Languages Foundation* (Bill C-269) was defeated in the House of Commons in 1989. At present, the Canadian Government's policy on Aboriginal Languages is included in its general provisions for minority languages in the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*:

3(1) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to [...]

(i) preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada;

(j) advance multiculturalism throughout Canada in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada.

[...]

5. The Minister shall take such measures as the Minister considers appropriate to implement the multiculturalism policy of Canada and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, may [...]

(f) facilitate the acquisition, retention and use of all languages that contribute to the multicultural heritage of Canada. (Canada. House of Commons 1988)

These articles explicitly attribute a certain value to minority languages in Canada. They present minority languages as having a legitimate place in Canada, a place that the Canadian Government is willing to support. At the same time, the articles underline the fact that the status and role of minority languages in Canada cannot (and will not be allowed to) in any way threaten the status and role of English and French.

The Canadian Government has also explicitly recognised and expressed support for Aboriginal languages in Canada in *Gathering Strength – Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan*:

Respect and support for Aboriginal language, heritage and culture is an important element of a renewed partnership. The Government of Canada will work to help preserve Aboriginal languages, both as a link

to our collective past and as a promise for the future of Aboriginal people. We will continue to work with Aboriginal people to establish programs to preserve, protect, and teach Aboriginal languages, and to ensure that these languages are kept alive for future generations. (Canada. Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development 1997:11)

The above statement is typical of what appears to be the Canadian Government's current policy on Aboriginal languages in Canada. The replacement of *promote* by *teach* in what has become a formulaic phrase, "preserve, protect and promote Aboriginal languages" points to the limits the Government is setting on its action. The Canadian Government will support the preservation and protection of what is left of Aboriginal languages, but go no further.

The role of the federal government in the preservation, protection and promotion of Aboriginal languages in Canada is significant because the Canadian Government has economic and political power that Aboriginal groups do not have. The Canadian Government has responded to Aboriginals' claims to their languages, at least at face value. It has listened to people voice their concerns and desires regarding the current and future status of their languages (Canada. Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs 1990). The Government has moved from an earlier position of attempting to annihilate Aboriginal languages to its current position of accepting them, and financially supporting local revitalization initiatives. However, the Canadian Government has stopped short of proactively promoting these languages.

Within this general framework of the history and evolving status of Aboriginal languages in Canada, the unique case of Inuktitut in Nunavut can be considered. In many ways, the history and current situation of Inuktitut in Canada is much like that of all other Aboriginal languages. Certainly, the federal government policies pertaining to Aboriginal languages in Canada apply to Inuktitut. Its decline in use is following the same pattern as the other Aboriginal languages, with younger and more urban Inuit speaking less Inuktitut than older and more isolated Inuit. In some Inuit communities, especially in the western and central Canadian Arctic, and in Labrador, children who know how to speak



Inuktitut constitute rare exceptions in what are now largely English-speaking communities. In the communities under study, children are still learning Inuktitut from their parents, but decreasing usage of Inuktitut, at least in Iqaluit, calls into question its long-term viability.

Despite these commonalities, the history and the current status of Inuktitut are unique among Aboriginal languages in Canada, and contribute to Inuktitut being one of the strongest Aboriginal languages in the country. Particularly in the Baffin region (the focus of this study), prolonged and intense contact with Euro-Canadians is much more recent than that of other Aboriginal groups. In fact, it is only since the Second World War that Inuit in this region have had intense social, political and economic ties with the rest of Canada. For example, it is only in the past fifty years or less that large numbers of Euro-Canadians have set up residence in Baffin Island communities. Even now, the only Baffin Island community with a significant non-Inuit population is Iqaluit. Consequently, the impacts of formal education in English and intense contact with English-speakers are relatively recent.

Language decline, although occurring, is not yet pronounced on Baffin Island. As such, the Inuit of Baffin Island are considered to have among the best chances of Aboriginal groups in Canada to attain their goal of preserving, protecting and promoting their language. The unique situation of Inuktitut on Baffin Island makes it an ideal setting to study the needs and possibilities for the promotion of a specific Aboriginal language in Canada.

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

#### **2.0 Introduction to the Study of Language in Society**

As seen in the previous chapter, Aboriginal languages in Canada are endangered. Evidence shows that the number of speakers, the domains of use of Aboriginal languages,<sup>1</sup> and the overall number of Aboriginal languages in Canada are declining. There are also indications that people care about this language loss; concern is expressed by Native groups, and by select members of the Canadian public and the international population. The study of language loss and efforts to control or influence the rate of language transfer fit into a broader framework of study, that is, language and society.

The basic premise of research and thought in language and society maintains that language only exists in its social use. In Labov's (1972) terms, the *only* linguistics is what some linguists would restrictively deem *sociolinguistics*, because the essence of language is social. Language is a tool, a resource. Language and society studies the ways in which this tool is and has been used.

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<sup>1</sup> Fishman (1971:586) proposes domains as a useful concept for identifying and compartmentalising variation in language choice, "Domains are defined...in terms of institutional contexts and their congruent behavioral co-occurrences."

In many ways, the study of language is a field of general interest and is essentially multidisciplinary. Language (or, at very least, communication) affects every person and every aspect of society. Over the centuries, a wide variety of individuals, linguists, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, economists, philosophers and others have consciously reflected on language and its role. Some make language the subject of systematic study, but even the lay person, when prodded, has something to say about language, at times producing and reproducing stereotypes, at other times expressing pure insights. Certainly, intelligent, critical and noteworthy thought about language is not exclusive to academics. Indeed, the aims of this research, which are to elicit non-academic perceptions and attitudes, reveal my bias that most people can provide convincing, relevant and useful arguments about ways to think about and manage language. Nonetheless, the published ideas of professional thinkers about language and its function in society provide a useful starting point for understanding the state of Inuktitut in the Baffin region. This chapter presents some founding theories of language in society, establishing a framework for studying and interpreting the needs and possibilities for language planning in the Baffin region.

## **2.1 Languages in Society**

### *Multilingualism*

Language is fundamental to human society. Everyone uses language, and in fact, from an international perspective, most individuals and societies in the world use *more* than one language. Across the world, most people experience bilingualism (the use of two or more languages) on a daily basis, whether at an individual level (personal use of two or more languages) or at a societal level (use of two or more languages within the community, though each individual in the community may be effectively monolingual). Many factors can give rise to such individual or societal bilingualism, including but not limited to the social, economic or geographic movement of individuals or groups (e.g. marriage, migration, etc.). When individuals or communities make use of more than one language, some would consider that they are making use of an additional tool and

resource. However, language contact is not always harmonious; it can lead to language conflict and language problems. When language contact-related problems occur, a need to manage the 'resources' and address issues may also arise.

### *Language Contact*

Language contact, and by extension bilingualism, is ancient and widespread. Although not inherently problematic, it has given rise to troubles, or problems have been blamed on it. These challenges are of various sorts and origins. One common source of conflict in bilingual communities is the inequality of the two languages within the society. Often one language, or more accurately, the people who speak that language, is in a position of dominance. Dominance can sometimes be measured by numbers, but there are also cases of minority groups which are nevertheless dominant due to political, economic, social or other factors. The real or perceived inequality of the languages can lead to linguistic rivalry at the societal level, as languages vie for official status and power (cf. Calvet 1998). Competition between languages is also experienced at the individual level: socially, as an individual chooses which language to favour in daily use, and psycholinguistically, as cases of subtractive bilingualism suggest that the acquisition of a second language can lead to incomplete knowledge of either language (cf. Lambert 1977; Cummins and Swain 1986; Louis and Taylor 2001; Wright, Taylor and Macarthur 2000). Although bilingual situations have the potential to remain stable (stability is a key characteristic of Ferguson's 1959 theory of diglossia), history has shown that most situations of asymmetrical language contact lead to some sort of change, either in the languages themselves or in the role that each language plays in the society.

### *Language Problems*

Some changes in the linguistic situation may go unnoticed, some may be embraced, while others are resisted. Perhaps the most drastic linguistic consequence of contact is language shift, which may culminate in language death. Language shift occurs when bilingual individuals in a bilingual community tend to favour their second language, the

dominant language in the community. Such preference can be observed in increased frequency of use of the second language, as the dominant language is employed in a growing number of domains, from the government, to the workplace, to the schools, and finally is used within the home. The tendency to favour the second language can also be seen in the linguistic competence of the individual, as his/her facility in the second language grows and the proficiency in the first language, the ancestral language, decreases. As a result, the first language learned or mother tongue becomes like a second language to the individual, both in the quantity and the quality of use, as the dominant language in the society becomes that individual's main language.

Bilingual communities with one dominant and one non-dominant language are often characterised by asymmetrical bilingualism, that is to say, the bilingual individuals in the community are exclusively the native speakers of the non-dominant language, while speakers of the dominant language remain monolingual. When a large number of bilingual individuals transfer, moving away from the ancestral language toward the dominant language, language shift occurs at the societal level. Language shift, often a defining characteristic of language death, implies that individuals transmit the dominant language to their children instead of the ancestral language. At such a time, when the ancestral language is no longer being passed on from the parents to the children, a vital link has been lost, and the language can be considered dying if it is no longer spoken by other groups in the world. In such cases, favourable attitudes about the value of the language (and of those who speak it) can help maintain a stable linguistic situation, at least temporarily.

Factors in language shift reflect the social roots of language contact. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997:273) identify three characteristics of a language shift situation that is ultimately leading to language death:

- (1) Parents are reluctant or unable to pass on a language to their children.
- (2) The language ceases to serve key communicative functions (registers) in the community.

(3) The community of speakers is not stable and/or expanding, but rather is unstable and/or contracting.

The factors creating such a situation may be social (e.g. a mixed marriage in which it is deemed appropriate to use only the dominant language, often the language of the father, in the home), economic (e.g. the dominant language is the language used in the workplace), or political (e.g. use of the ancestral language is forbidden). Language attitudes appear to play a key role in the development of each of the above characteristics, and will be further discussed below. Language attitudes can contribute to the stability of a language in contact with a dominant language, when such attitudes are positive. Particularly favourable language attitudes appear to be considering the language as a symbol of ethnicity as well as language loyalty (cf. Fishman 2001). Other factors which combat the pull to transfer to the dominant language include a large number of speakers and institutional support for the minority language.

Just as the factors in language shift are predominantly non-linguistic, issues arising from language contact are often not purely linguistic either. Indeed, language contact entails some degree of interaction between at least two groups of people. By the fact that language contact is interpersonal, the changes that result affect much more than the language, though they are evident on the surface of the language as well. The introduction of technology, for example, will show up in a linguistic change, (e.g. in the emergence of new vocabulary), but it will likely show up in many other societal changes as well, some obvious and some subtle (Kaplan and Baldauf 1997). In much the same way, language conflicts are often symptomatic of broader issues, “Language conflicts speak to us of social conflicts, linguistic imperialism always indicates other kinds of imperialism and behind the war of languages can be seen another war – economic, cultural...” (Calvet 1998:203). Consideration of these language-related problems then, and any attempts to remedy them, should accordingly focus on the social aspect of language as well as on the people who use the languages in question.

Various theories deal with the social aspects of language contact. Ferguson's 1959 theory of diglossia, for example, which has been revised and expanded over the years, is useful for categorising and describing certain stable bilingual situations. In a classic diglossic situation, most members of the society are bilingual or bidialectal. The two languages (or language varieties) are differentiated based on their relative prestige and their function in the society. The "high" language is recognised as more prestigious, is generally learned in school, and is used in all formal situations such as school, work and government. The "low" language is generally the speakers' mother tongue, and is used in informal situations such as family and community interactions. Elements of this theory are useful for understanding certain aspects of the language situation in Nunavut, for example, the relationship between the use one makes of a language and the prestige one attributes to it. However, factors contributing to the stability or instability of a minority language, which are at the heart of this thesis, are not explicitly dealt with in the theory of diglossia.

This thesis draws on elements of various theories in language and society in order to understand the situation of Inuit youth in the Baffin region. The theory of the ethnography of communication (cf. Hymes 1972), for example, is useful for beginning to understand the factors influencing Inuit youths' choices to use Inuktitut or English. The theory of speech communities (cf. Gumperz 1968) provides a framework for studying language as one component of social behaviour and for delimiting a social unit within which to analyse speech behaviour and communicative norms. This thesis draws on elements of these theories although it is not anchored in any one of them.

This research, instead, is grounded in a language planning approach, taking for granted that bilingual situations are dynamic. The use of languages in bilingual communities is not static; it is constantly evolving. The language planning approach considers (among others) the evolution of bilingual situations, having as a tenet that the outcome of contact situations can be influenced. This approach fits the objective of the thesis: to describe the situation in Nunavut with the aim of understanding how it is changing and why. The adoption of a language planning framework also reflects a desire

to engage in applied research; research that could have a direct, positive impact on the community in question. Other types of applied linguistic research have already taken place in the North, including the development of linguistic materials for use by the communities and the study of how Inuktitut literacy could best be taught in the schools.

## **2.2 Language Planning**

Attempts to remedy language problems have taken place across the ages. Language problems are as ancient as language contact, and even in monolingual situations, linguistic concerns (e.g. spread of literacy, changing a spelling system) arise. Worldwide, individuals, researchers, governments and Native organisations (just to name a few) have endeavoured to alter or sustain language development and language use. Responding in pragmatic ways to specific concerns, this wide variety of actors have begun to learn, through research, trial and error, some prerequisites and procedures for attaining linguistic goals in a community or in a nation. Cases requiring and obtaining linguistic attention became particularly prevalent in the 1960s and the 1970s, as countries emerging from colonisation sought to establish locally relevant linguistic foundations. Also, as greater attention was paid to human rights, particularly minority rights and the rights of Aboriginal peoples, initiatives to define and implement linguistic rights also drew greater interest from politicians, academics and the general public. This increase in activity in the very old field of attempts to manipulate language led to the delimitation of language planning as a field of study.<sup>2</sup> Language planning continues to stimulate interest and activity as English (and other major world languages) spread in use and prestige, threatening the survival of thousands of smaller languages.

### *Definition*

The relatively recent emergence of the field labelled ‘language planning’ is evidenced by the difficulties practitioners and theorists have in defining its scope. Language planning has historically been primarily descriptive, accounting for practical,

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<sup>2</sup> E. Haugen is accredited with the first use of the phrase ‘language planning’ in 1959.



case-by-case reactions to language dilemmas. The academic study of language planning, as the study of language in society in general, is multidisciplinary. In their introduction to *Language Planning: From Practice to Theory*, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997:x-xi) explain some of these factors which hinder the emergence of an integrative theory:

The defining literature for this relatively new and complex academic discipline – language policy and language planning – is scattered across books and journals in many fields. This is so because it has developed relatively recently from several disciplinary sources and because it has tended not to be theory driven, but rather responsive to real-world interdisciplinary solutions of immediate practical problems.

Indeed, a comprehensive theory of language planning may be unrealisable, due to the very pragmatic nature of the field. Some foundational components that are useful to understanding its scope, as well as the difficulties in establishing a theory of language planning, are discussed in this section.

As mentioned, individual authors define language planning in varying ways. In order to most accurately represent its breadth, a broader, rather than a narrower, definition is preferable. Drawing on the key elements of definitions given by such researchers as Ager (2001), Calvet (1998), Cooper (1989), Fishman (1974), Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) and Weinstein (1980), as well as my own experiences in the field, I propose the following definition of language planning: *Language planning is the development, implementation and evaluation of a medium to long-term coherent strategy, which aims to maintain or alter language, either the language itself or the status and use of the language.* That is to say, language planning involves a series of actions, from evaluating the current situation and setting goals, to developing a plan, implementing programs or policies and finally evaluating the efficacy of the work. Isolated, one-time efforts and certainly conflicting or incongruous actions would not be considered language planning. Language planning can target any aspect of language in community, from the development of modern vocabulary, to the passing of language laws, to building awareness of language loss in the community.

The proposed definition touches on the *what* and the *how* of language planning, but conveniently neglects to address the *who*, the *when* and the *why*. The latter elements elicit much contention and are problematic in the establishment of a theory, perhaps precisely because no limits should be set on such components. Nonetheless, in the practical realisation of a language planning project, all aspects of the situation should be identified; “what actors...influence what behaviors, of which people, for what ends, by what means, and with what results” (Cooper 1989:98). In the following pages, I will discuss the actors, the motivations, the targets and the actions that may be part of such an initiative.

### *Actors*

The actors in the language planning process are those who develop, implement and evaluate the plan; those who set the agenda and those who bring it to fruition. The potential actors in language planning are the subject of some controversy in delimiting the field, as traditional definitions maintain that language planning can only, or ideally, be undertaken by a powerful political entity with jurisdiction in the targeted area, generally the government (cf. Weinstein 1980). Governments certainly are key players in the language planning process because they have concentrated power and resources to effect change. In traditional language planning, governmental agencies were the key actors in establishing and effectuating language plans. The approach could be characterised as ‘top-down’ and autocratic.

However, such ‘top-down’, or ‘in-vitro’ approaches are criticized in current discussions of language planning. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997:55) summarise such contemporary arguments: “A number of authors (Luke *et al.*, 1990; Mey, 1989; Watson-Gegeo & Gegeo, 1995) have questioned the role of traditional language planners or *actors* and have argued for the inclusion of a broader participation base, i.e. those *people* for whom language is being planned should have a say in its actual planning and implementation.” Calvet (1998:203) makes a similar distinction between language plans that ‘belong’ to the authorities and those which ‘belong’ to the people: “This power, the

power of the state, intervenes in what I have called the search for *in vitro* solutions but, there are, in contrast to bureaucratic solutions like these, the *in vivo* solutions achieved in social practice.” Both quotations show that current thinking recognises that governmental agencies, though *likely* actors, are not the only potential actors in language planning. The people concerned can, and should, also be considered as actors, certainly for defining priorities and evaluating success, and potentially also for implementing ‘unofficial’ initiatives. Indeed, it is doubtful if any language plan can be successful if it is not espoused by the general population of speakers.

This contemporary, ‘bottom-up’ approach recognises that people’s opinions are valuable, that the stakeholders need to inform planning agendas, and that they also have power to effectuate change. Any attempt to control a linguistic situation, if it is to be successful, must take into account the desires of the population that will be affected. Ultimately, it is the linguistic behaviour of individuals that will determine the success of any language plan. Perhaps the impact of individual actions is less than that of a powerful entity, and yet without individual deeds, nothing will be accomplished. Observance of past instances of ‘unofficial’ language planning shows what conscious and deliberate influence individuals and so-called ‘powerless’ communities can exert upon their own language, thus debunking the myth that only powerful entities can act to alter or maintain the state of a language (cf. case studies of Navajo in Fishman 1997; Lee and McLaughlin 2001).

Of course, between governments and individuals, there are numerous other potential language planners, including non-governmental organisations, institutions and pressure groups. Native organisations such as the Assembly of First Nations or the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK; previously Inuit Tapirisat of Canada) are examples of non-governmental bodies in Canada that are exerting pressure for action on Aboriginal languages. A wide variety of potential actors can contribute to language planning initiatives, although their relative impact obtained will vary. In identifying the actors, one must also consider the population’s attitudes regarding those individuals’ right and ability

to influence the language situation. Ideally, all potential actors can work together in concert to achieve maximum impact in a mutually agreed upon direction.

### *Motivation*

The motivation for language planning involves asking, “On what grounds does one undertake language planning?” An initial response to this question would answer when one *could* undertake such initiatives. The second response to this question may answer when one *would* assume to influence the course of language. As seen above (Languages in Society), across the world languages *are* in contact, and are influencing each other. The prevalence of language planning initiatives indicates a belief that people *can* influence languages. However, such widespread practices also suggest a perception that efforts to influence language are either necessary or desirable. This section will present aspects of the response to “Why *would* one attempt to alter a linguistic situation?”

People generally engage in language planning on the basis of having identified some language-related problem. Depending on the focus of the group concerned, though, and of the language planners, the perception of what constitutes a linguistic problem varies. Some theorists have tried to limit the scope of language planning by restricting the field to certain motivations, focusing exclusively, for example, on practical problems of communication and participation (Weinstein 1980). However, in reality, action on language across the world is motivated by many different factors. Ager (2001), suggests seven motives, extracted from case studies around the world. Three of these, identity, integration and instrumentality are particularly applicable to Inuit youths’ motivations for maintaining Inuktitut.

The relationship between language and identity is a major theme in the study of language and society. The proposed relationship is a cornerstone of many efforts for language planning, especially the reversal of language shift. Fishman, a predominant author in the field of language and identity and reversing language shift (RLS) goes so far as to assert that efforts to reverse language shift *should* be *primarily* based on the ideal of

“Xmen-via-Xish”, that is, being an Englishman through use of English, a Spaniard through use of Spanish, a Frenchman through use of French, an Inuk through Inuktitut, and so on (Fishman 1997:26). According to Fishman (1997), the backbone of any language preservation efforts must be the portrayal of the necessity of the ancestral language for the continuation of cultural and ethnic identity. Fishman’s position is reiterated among Native groups across Canada which, when advocating promotion of their languages, emphasize their importance for their collective identity (cf. Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs 1990). That language is linked to identity is undisputed, and yet the exact nature of the link, and the appropriateness of basing language planning initiatives on the importance of the language for group identity is questionable.

Setting up an ideal “Xmen-via-Xish” backbone to all efforts to reverse language shift is problematic for several reasons. The first reason is that ethnic identity is not static; it is evolving as is the language situation. Copious publications by anthropologists and sociologists have addressed the theme of identity and ethnicity (cf. Jenkins 1996), and this thesis will not debate the topic; it focuses on the identities Inuit youth choose to put forth for themselves. Fishman (1997:393) adds nuance to the definition of ethnic identity by the practice of the ancestral language:

If the simplistic ethnic myth of fixed, homogeneous and completely bounded cultures must give way to a more realistic sense of the changeability and intersectedness of all cultures, the awareness of this myth, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the absolute necessity of undertaking attempts to cultivate the threads of intimacy, involvement and historical relevance, so that meaningful, unalienated social existence remains possible, are often better realized by minorities than by the majorities that smugly disregard, abuse or regulate them.

Accordingly, the concept of an inherent link between being a member of a group and speaking that group’s language may well be useful for giving individuals a sense of their place and belonging in the world. All the same, employing the concept to attribute or deny membership based solely on language knowledge and use is abusive, especially for a group that is experiencing rapid change at all levels.

The premise of an absolute link between language and ethnicity is also problematic because, although for some groups (e.g. Israeli Jews), language is indeed a key identity marker, for other groups the ancestral language does not appear to function as an identity marker in as important a way (cf. Smolicz 1992). Finally, even when language is an identity symbol, there are examples of groups who use a local variety of the new language, the language they have transferred to, as a *new* identity symbol. Kwachka (1991), for example, has written about how the Koyukon in Alaska speak a particular variety of English which incorporates culturally relevant patterns (such as narrative styles) from their ancestral language. In this way, and also in that the English spoken by the Koyukon is noticeably different from “standard” English, the variety of English spoken by the Koyukon has become a new identity symbol for the group. These observations add nuance to discourse about the relationship between language and identity. In this regard, if identity is the primary motive behind language planning, one must consider which identity the group (or individual members) wishes to adopt, and which identity it wishes to project.

Integration and instrumentality are two other factors which may motivate language acquisition, language maintenance and language use. The integrative motive involves liking, wishing to be like, and/or join, the speakers of a given language. Thus, an Aboriginal woman who speaks predominantly the Native language may have an integrative motive to improve her English, or to use English more frequently if she marries an English-speaking man, if her friends are primarily English-speaking, or if she wants to become part of an English-speaking community. Similarly, positive feelings about one’s own group can provide an integrative motivation to maintain the ancestral language, if that is the main language of the group.

The instrumental motive involves wishing to acquire or use a certain language because of the primarily economic benefits entailed. For example, a person may have an instrumental motivation to improve her English or to use English more frequently if she wishes to attend an English-speaking university or to work in an English-speaking environment. Gardner and Lambert (1972) have demonstrated the significant effect that integrative and instrumental motivations have on second language acquisition, with the integrative motive consistently contributing to greater success than the instrumental motive. It is feasible to suggest that the influence of these motives on other aspects of language behaviour resembles the influence they have been proven to exert on second language acquisition. Ager (2001) also identifies ideology, image, insecurity and inequality as motivations for language planning, but as these motivations do not frequently appear in Inuit youths' discussion of the importance of Inuktitut and English, they will not be discussed here.

Before engaging in language planning, it is important to understand the motivation of the planners and of the people concerned. Even in the restricted area of managing language shift, the population may be split as to their motivation and thus their desired end. For some, maintaining a clear group identity may be the strongest motivator, the desired end thus being preservation of the ancestral language as a symbol of that identity. (Dorais 1994, for example, discusses the political significance of Inuktitut as a symbol of Inuit identity in land claims negotiations.) For others, motivation might be primarily integrative or instrumental, based on a desire to master a language that confers the greatest opportunities for social integration or socioeconomic advancement. If the motivation is socioeconomic advancement within the dominant culture, greater access to the dominant language, regardless of the impact on the ancestral language, could be the desired end. Different groups of people will perceive and experience distinct aspects of difficulties arising from language contact and thus may pursue divergent solutions.

Language planning really aims at influencing people, not the abstract object of language. Ancestral language preservation and promotion can be a means of liberation to a group of people, but it can also be a means of subordination and exclusion. Language does not exist on its own; it is a tool that people use. In influencing language, we are influencing people's access to and use of linguistic tools, resources people make use of in order to create for themselves a desired future. Understanding motivations for language promotion helps planners to reflect the population's current reality and pursue their desired reality. Identifying the motivation for action on language is a challenging component of language planning. Motivation establishes that action must be taken, which action should be taken, as well as how planning should be administered. The language attitudes and desires of the people will determine the ways in which individuals are willing to act, and as such determine the success or failure of a plan.

### *Target*

In theory and practice, language planning addresses two primary branches. The first, corpus planning, focuses on the actual development of the language (among other aspects, the standardisation of a language, the development of modern and specialised vocabulary, the production of resources in the language as well as the development of language resources). Status planning takes into account the legal status of a language, the domains of language use and language attitudes. In this thesis, I am focussing on the type of status planning which aims at preserving, protecting and promoting a language, but status planning can equally aim at annihilating a language, as past assimilationist policies of the Canadian government demonstrate. Language attitudes, another key component of status planning, are discussed in a subsequent section.

In actual fact, the two branches of language planning overlap and mutually influence each other. Initiatives in one area often lay the foundation for work in another. For example, declaring a language official (status planning) is merely a symbolic gesture if the language is not sufficiently developed to fulfil any official functions. Yet this act of



status planning may trigger or enable corpus planning to take place. As the language is further developed, new status planning initiatives to implement the language into new domains can more feasibly be pursued. In many cases, language attitudes have been key to language planning, because they seem to influence linguistic behaviour to a greater degree than any external factor frequently targeted by linguistic initiatives. Very often, language planning must begin by targeting and molding language attitudes.

The desired outcome of language planning will also depend on the underlying problem and motivation for action. In the case of Aboriginal languages in Canada, the expressed desire is to reverse language shift and to preserve, protect and promote the ancestral languages. However, there is no model of what the corpus and status of a thriving, unthreatened Aboriginal language in Canada could or should look like. Indeed, this 'ideal' situation will depend, as do so many other elements of the language planning equation, on the current situation and on the desires of the people. Still, different individuals within a society will have different goals and even the same individuals will have conflicting goals. The many different possible outcomes, at many different levels, is part of the problem in developing a theory of language planning.

### *Actions*

Since the needs and desires of each group, as well as the means available to them, are so diverse, language planning cannot feasibly provide a cookie-cutter solution to any and all language problems. It must adopt a pragmatic, case-by-case approach, taking into account the unique context of each issue. Language planners should enter each situation with an open mind, with no assumptions about the ideal solution or the means to achieve it. That said, research and practice have identified certain prerequisites to language planning as well as factors to be considered before undertaking the promotion of a language.

The first prerequisite to any language planning initiative is an investigation into the history of the language contact and an evaluation of the current linguistic situation.

The historical analysis aims at understanding the background of the language issue and, more generally, the interrelationships and underlying assumptions of the groups involved. A linguist's role in the investigation can be to describe the linguistic behaviour of the target population, addressing both the quality and the quantity of the individuals' use of the language(s) in question. The theory of the ethnography of communication (Hymes 1972) is useful in this regard, as it identifies key components of communicative interaction (participants, setting, topic, etc.), the observation of which is helpful in order to understand which factors motivate or hinder use of a certain language or variety.

However, a linguist alone does not have the expertise necessary to conduct and carry through all necessary components of the background research. Language planning is a multidisciplinary activity and, to be effective, should draw on the resources of a broad range of specialists. The role of the anthropologist is particularly important in order to make sure that the planning is adopting a bottom-up approach, attempting to take into account as fully as possible the perspectives of the people who will be affected by the initiative. Fishman (1994:91) affirms the importance of an ethnographic approach to language planning, "only ethnography can save lp [language planning] research from fostering the above mentioned evils [of the top-down, autocratic approach]", thereby recognising the importance of engaging in language planning only by taking into account the desires of the people.

To be appropriate and effective, a language plan should be firmly anchored in data. Louis-Jean Calvet (1996:41-42) summarises the types of data that should be collected in language planning research. These include:

- 1/ quantitative data: how many languages present, how many speakers of each,
- 2/ legal data: status of languages, constitutional recognition of languages, use of languages in media, government, workplaces and so on,
- 3/ functional data: distribution of language use within the country and internationally, usefulness of language for communication with different groups and in different situations,
- 4/ diachronic data: language expansion, language transmission,

- 5/ symbolic data: prestige of each language, symbolic value attached to each language,
- 6/ conflict data: relationship between languages, complementary languages or languages in competition, etc. (translated and adapted from original French)

The importance of identifying language attitudes is mentioned here, but more recent research trends accord them an even greater significance. In all cases, it is important to remember that language planning and policy have more to do with *people*, their behaviour, relationships, perceptions and attitudes, than with the object ‘language’.

The possibilities for a data-driven language plan are as diverse as contact situations. William F. Mackey was one of the first to emphasise the need to consider each contact situation holistically before initiating any kind of intervention (cf. Mackey 1979, 2003). Language planners must keep an open mind throughout the process both as to the ultimate end of the planning process and the means by which that end will be achieved, “Not only is it important to have an adequate database for decision making, but it is also important not to force the data to fit desired a priori solutions; rather solutions must genuinely derive from the data. At the same time, solution must be sensitive to the cultural, social, and historical condition in the environment in which solutions will be applied” (Kaplan and Baldauf 1997:120). The development of the plan must take into account the “needs, rights and resources” (Ager 2001:99), as well as the desires, of the stakeholders. In this light, even deliberately transferring from the ancestral language to the dominant language is a possible solution, if the population no longer sees any reason to maintain their ancestral language.

As the combinations of factors in each case are so different, the people concerned cannot be presumed to resemble any other group of people previously involved in language planning, neither in their desires nor their actions nor their reactions to language initiatives. Even when a solid understanding of the past and present situation has been achieved, planners would be ill-advised to assume that solutions which were applied to one group will produce the same results in the group currently under study. Just because a certain language planning method worked in one situation does not mean it will work in

another. In the same way, a type of initiative that failed in one context may well succeed in another:

This does not mean that well-grounded RLS [reversing language shift] theory can provide us with a blueprint for the future. The future cannot be reduced to a series of technical applications of theoretically formulated stops, neither in economic planning, in agricultural planning, in educational planning, in family planning nor in RLS [reversing language shift] planning. The best that RLS theory can do is to provide greater societal perspective for negotiating the difficult priorities that any RLS-effort inevitably involves. (Fishman 1997:394)

Language planning theory can suggest a framework for approaching language-related issues, but cannot provide an instruction manual for solving language-related problems. ‘Normal’ reactions differ from society to society, and even from individual to individual. Theorising about language planning provides unsatisfactory results because human behaviour, the common target of language planning, remains essentially unpredictable.

Another fundamental component to the ‘how’ of language planning is that language planning is a sustained activity. It begins with an evaluation of needs and possibilities, establishes ideals, objectives and targets, then develops and implements a coherent strategy, with specific means by which to achieve these goals. As steps are taken, the efficacy of each action is evaluated, and the plan is reassessed. As such, language planning involves a medium to long-term commitment: “it is important to understand that language planning is not a one-off activity. It tends to generate its own needs. Because human societies are always changing, the planning process must change along with changes in the society. Planning, once undertaken, is an ongoing process” (Kaplan and Baldauf 1997:99). Informed interference into the natural development of language contact will produce results, hopefully ameliorating the problems which gave rise to the planning in the first place, but potentially creating new needs for involvement in the unfolding of the linguistic situation.

### 2.3 Language Attitudes

The Gage Canadian Dictionary (2000:94) defines *attitude* as “a way of thinking, acting, or feeling.” Using this loose definition, a language attitude is a way of thinking about language, a way of using language, or a way of feeling about language. In a stricter definition, language attitudes incorporate what one thinks and feels about language and incline one to use language in a particular way. In this thesis I use *language attitude* broadly to refer to the symbolic and practical value individuals attribute to Inuktitut and English (e.g. “Inuktitut is who I am”; “You need English to get around”), recognising that these feelings or beliefs generally have some factual basis and frequently are reflected in language behaviour.

Language attitudes are key through all phases of the planning process. Language contact situations provoke reactions, partly emotional and partly based in fact, about one’s own language variety and about the language variety spoken by the other group. These reactions, whether glaring or hidden, are believed to influence linguistic behaviour. As such, language attitudes must be identified before attempting to manipulate the language situation. Often, language planning will, at first, focus on shaping language attitudes in order to create an environment favourable to influencing the language in the desired direction.

As the above definition reveals, language attitudes are far-reaching. Attitudes about the language itself might include the way individuals view language in general, as an object, as a possession, as an heirloom, as a resource, or as a way of being. The attitudes could also be about a particular language; is the language fun to speak, or hard to learn? Does it reflect an individual’s identity? Is it generally useful? Does it hold the key to social, economic and geographic mobility? Does it give one a sense of belonging in the community? Is it vibrant or dead? Is it superior to other languages? Does it confer power? Attitudes about the symbolic and practical value of a language indicate personal attachment to (or detachment from) the language and are, as such, indicative of individual desire and commitment to maintaining, acquiring, or giving up a particular language.

On the other hand, attitudes could also address when certain uses of language are deemed appropriate or not. The appropriate use of a particular language variety could depend, among other factors, on the setting, the participants and the topic. Some settings, or social domains, have greater prestige than others, and demand use of a prestigious language variety (i.e. the standard language, or the “high” language in a diglossic situation [Ferguson 1959]). Attitudes about the domains in which a particular language is appropriate are one measure of the subjective ethnolinguistic vitality of a language (Allard and Landry 1986). Attitudes can also dictate that it is only appropriate to speak of certain topics or to certain people in a certain language, regardless of communicative competence of interlocutors. An example of such established language choice is the prevailing use of Standard English, as opposed to slang, when a student addresses a professor. An example of language choice being dictated by topic could be an attitude among Aboriginal people that their traditional practices should only be discussed in the ancestral language. Furthermore, language attitudes may suggest that only certain people have the *right* to learn or to use a given language. For example, some minority groups may be resistant to outsiders learning their language, or even to *insiders* using the language if these group members have otherwise adopted the majority culture (Kaplan and Baldauf 1997:78). Such attitudes about when, where and by whom a language may be used directly influence the frequency with which a language is employed, thus affecting the needs and possibilities for the promotion of a language.

Moreover, attitudes that are expressed as if pertaining to the language often express instead subjective judgements about the people who use that language. If English is considered to be a powerful language, this distinction has little to do with the structural characteristics of the English language and much to do with the political and economic power of the people and nations that use English as their first language. In the same way, emotional reactions to the language may also be transferred to the population which speaks that language: “All too easily, the emotive component of language attitudes is transferred towards those who speak the language, so people are often prepared to regard all speakers of a particular variety as attractive...” (Ager 2001:132). Such ambiguity

between the attitudes concerning the language and the speakers of the language can be seen in the idealised traditional Native person, who exhibits wisdom, skill and knowledge of traditional ways and also speaks the ancestral language. This crossover in attitudes about the language and the people who speak the language can be a motivating factor for individuals to monitor their own language use in order to speak like those that they wish to emulate (integrative motivation, see above).

The contrast between the languages in contact favours the apparition of attitudes about each language individually, but also about the interrelationship and opposition between the languages in contact. Attitudes about the pros and cons of multilingualism may appear in language contact situations: “People view multilingualism in different and often conflicting ways: it is a mark of high education and great prestige, it is a social or even a psychological handicap, it is a political liability, it is a necessity for daily living, it is an unremarkable fact of life, it is a vital part of a person’s ethnic identity” (Thomason 2001:32-33). In the same way, attitudes about the best way to manage individual and societal multilingualism emerge when a language problem is identified. In fact, attitudes relevant to the language planning process surpass language, addressing other areas of society such as the scope of authority, who has the right to influence whose behaviour, which aspects of that behaviour, in which domains, by which means, and so on. Other types of attitudes that could influence the direction of a language plan include how an individual feels about the other group, an individual’s desire to participate in the other group’s way of life (formal education, work, media, travel, etc.), even a person’s desire to distance him/herself from his/her original group. Such attitudes will contribute to determining an individual’s and group’s ideal language situation, thus helping to identify the desired outcome of the language plan.

Language attitudes are a key to language planning initiatives because they affect language behaviour, consciously or unconsciously. Despite much research into the outcomes of language contact, the end result of language contact remains impossible to foresee with any certainty, probably due to the unpredictability of language attitudes:

Speaker's attitudes are the wild card in this domain: they can and sometimes do cause violations of most of the generally valid predictions about contact-induced change. So after examining the social and linguistic factors that help us predict contact-induced change, we must reverse direction and consider why, in spite of the fact that robust generalizations can be drawn on the basis of these factors, contact-induced change remains essentially unpredictable. (Thomason 2001:61)

Although Thomason is referring to the role language attitudes play in the natural course of contact-induced language change, they play a similar role in determining the success or failure of attempts to consciously influence language. One of the three components of an attitude is the "readiness to take action" (Ager 2001:132), the feeling that something should be done. Of course, there is no guarantee that the inclination to act in a certain way will indeed result in concrete action. However, it is common sense that language planning that attempts to incite individuals to act in opposition to their attitudinal inclinations will encounter greater opposition than language planning that follows their general preferences. For these reasons, current research encourages the identification of language attitudes as part of the groundwork to any language planning initiative. In accordance with this trend, this thesis identifies language attitudes of Inuit youth, believing them to be indicative of possibilities for the promotion of Inuktitut.

Identifying prevailing language attitudes is only the first step in incorporating language attitudes into a language plan. Often language attitudes are conflicting and contradictory, even within the same individual! When language attitudes conflict with the type of language planning planners wish to undertake, they must opt to either change their chosen direction for the language planning or begin their language planning with an attitude and awareness campaign, attempting to bring the general population in line with the desires of the language planners. Such campaigns may actively promote a certain direction of language planning, or may rather provide the population with the information it requires in order to make an informed decision about the desired direction of the linguistic situation. Fishman (1997:394) identifies "consciousness heightening and reformation" as a first step in efforts to reverse language shift. The development of an effective language plan must begin by identifying the language attitudes of the people.



Implementation of the language plan must often start by shaping attitudes in order to sway people to lean in the direction that the language plan is pulling. When the people's language attitudes are in line with the aims of the language plan, language behaviour is most likely to coincide with the target of the language plan.

Considering the complexity of language attitudes and their role in language planning, not to mention the diversity of language contact situations in general, it is not surprising that language planners have difficulty establishing a theory of intervention. The difficulty in establishing a respected theory of language planning is evident in that researchers and specialists in the field cannot even agree upon one common definition of what exactly language planning is and is *not*. Even those who would propose a theory or definition are usually quick to nuance or limit its application, acknowledging the limitations of any effort to establish a theoretical basis upon which any and all language planning may take place. As outlined above, some of the challenges in developing a theory of language planning include the complex relationship between the actors and the activity of language planning; the wide variety of cases, motivations and potential outcomes; and the unpredictability of human behaviour. Language attitudes are the “wild card” in language contact and language planning, making it difficult to establish predictable relationships between linguistic problems and potential solutions.

All the same, the amount of research, thought, and practice in the area of language planning over the past 40 years provides a useful starting point from which to analyse the language contact situation currently under question: the case of Inuktitut on Baffin Island. The multitude of case studies of language contact and language planning across the world enable us to situate current research on the linguistic situation of the Baffin region in a broader, international perspective. The frameworks suggested by other researchers indicate what to look for and which factors are likely to be of interest. The insistence of current researchers on the importance of beginning language planning with a thorough background survey, including the identification of language attitudes, lends credence to the pertinence of the current study into the language attitudes of Inuit in the Baffin region. Research into the role of language attitudes in language planning, in particular,

supports the hypothesis that grassroots support for the promotion of Inuktitut, as evidenced through Inuit's language perceptions and attitudes, provides a foundation for language planning in the Baffin region.

## CHAPTER III

### BACKGROUND ON THE LANGUAGE SITUATION IN NUNAVUT

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The Inuit of Nunavut seem to have a unique opportunity among Aboriginal people in Canada to maintain their ancestral language. Despite experiencing the same trend toward language loss as all Canadian Aboriginal languages, indices of vitality show that Inuktitut is still relatively strong and may have a good chance of survival. A main factor contributing to the health of Inuktitut, and differentiating the situation of the Inuit language from that of other Aboriginal languages in Canada, is the weaker intensity of contact between the Inuit and the Qallunaat. The pressure to transfer to English has been more recent and less intense in Nunavut than elsewhere in Canada, and the creation of Nunavut has opened up new opportunities for the Inuktitut language as well. Consequently, the Inuktitut language is currently well studied, well described, and well developed. Within the Nunavut Territory, Inuktitut is widely used and has official status equal to that of English and French. The current chapter, based on a literature review, presents an overview of the situation of Inuktitut in Nunavut at the time of this study, highlighting the areas of relative strength as well as areas of concern. The history of language contact between Inuktitut, English and French<sup>1</sup> is discussed, providing the

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<sup>1</sup> Although French is a significant language in Nunavut, particularly in Iqaluit, discussion in this thesis will focus primarily on the interplay between Inuktitut and English due to the relative predominance of these two languages.

background for later discussion of needs and possibilities for language promotion in the Nunavut Territory.

### **3.1 History of Language Contact in Nunavut**

The history of language contact between Inuktitut, English and French is an obvious starting point for any attempt to understand the decline of Inuktitut because language contact is a primary factor in language transfer and loss. The nature and the intensity of contact determine the extent of the language loss. The intensity of contact depends on such factors as the duration of the contact and the relative isolation or integration of the linguistic communities. The relative dominance of each language will also affect the outcome of language contact. Dominance may be measured by numbers of speakers, but also by the political and economic sway held by the speakers of a given language. In cases where contact is less intense, and the two groups share greater equality, a higher degree of language maintenance can be expected. On the contrary, in cases where contact is very intense and one language is clearly dominant, transfer to the dominant language is likely to occur. In Nunavut, intense contact between Inuit and Qallunaat has been concentrated in the past 50 years. As a result, the linguistic situation was quite stable until recently. At present, contact is increasingly intense, although Inuit in Nunavut are making some gains in the area of political and, to a lesser degree, economic influence. The current strength of Inuktitut compared to other Aboriginal languages in Canada is the product of the history of contact between Inuktitut and English. The future of Inuktitut in Nunavut will depend on how the current juxtaposition of Inuktitut and English in the territory is managed.

#### *Early Contact*

The Inuit are the primary inhabitants of the Canadian Arctic. Their direct ancestors (bearers of the Thule culture) entered the Canadian Arctic from Alaska approximately 1000 years ago. Before this time, the Canadian Arctic was inhabited by bearers of the Dorset and Pre-Dorset cultures, who also entered Canada from Alaska,

starting around 4000 years ago. The Thule and Dorset people co-existed for some time, but the Dorset people finally became extinct around 1200 (1400 in Nunavik). Both the Thule and the Dorset people are most likely descendants of an Asian population that crossed from Siberia to Alaska perhaps 6000 years ago (Fortescue 1998). Currently, the Inuit inhabit predominantly the coastal areas, mainly above the tree line, from Alaska to Greenland, passing through the Canadian Northwest Territories (Mackenzie Delta and coast), Nunavut, Nunavik (Arctic Quebec) and Labrador. The Inuit are characterised by their adaptation to the local, frozen habitat. Traditionally, they made their homes (and everything else they needed) out of what was available to them above the tree line – earth, rock, animal parts, snow and ice. Hunters and gatherers, they subsisted on sea mammals, fish, and the few land mammals that live so far north (caribou in particular). Their nomadic way of life on the Arctic tundra and sea continued for thousands of years, until it was recently disrupted by contact with Europeans.

Sporadic and short-lived contact between European explorers and Canadian Inuit began in 1565, with the arrival of explorers in Labrador, followed by Martin Frobisher's contact with Baffin Island Inuit in Frobisher Bay in 1576.<sup>2</sup> Encounters between Inuit and explorers were sometimes characterised by violence and kidnappings, but at other times were peaceful, and the two groups would trade. These occasional interactions continued through the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and all of 17<sup>th</sup> century (Dorais 1990). More regular contact between Europeans and some Inuit groups began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with the coming of European traders and missionaries.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, contact between Inuit and Qallunaat increased in the Baffin region, with the arrival of missionaries. Moravian missionaries from Germany settled in Labrador beginning in 1771, but Anglican missionaries did not reach Nunavik (Arctic Quebec) and Baffin Island until around 1875. After 1900, these religious groups pushed deeper into the Canadian Arctic, reaching the Kivalliq (Keewatin) region, the central Arctic and the Mackenzie delta. Catholic missionaries arrived in the Canadian Arctic shortly after the Anglicans (Dorais 1996a).

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<sup>2</sup> Earlier contact with Vikings is also a possibility.

American and Scottish whalers also had contact with the Inuit around the Western Hudson Bay coast, South Baffin Island and the Mackenzie Delta, primarily between 1850 and 1910. The whalers usually only made short trips to the shore, so their contact with the Inuit was brief. However, a few whaling crews wintered in the Arctic, and their influence on the communities was accordingly greater.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police have also been in Inuit territory since 1904 (Dorais 1996a), enforcing Canadian laws, even if to the detriment of local customs. Up until 1945, the RCMP officers were the only official governmental presence in the Canadian Arctic.

Between 1905 and 1930, many Hudson Bay trading posts opened in Inuit territory, including a trading post in Ward Inlet, 50 kilometres from Iqaluit, that opened in 1914 and moved to Iqaluit (then known as Frobisher Bay) in 1950. By the Second World War, most Inuit in Canada were still living nomadic lives (except for Labrador, where contact with traders and missionaries had been intense since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) but trade had greatly changed their economy. They were hunting commercially, with guns, and trapping in order to trade. The Inuit had become somewhat dependent on the Hudson Bay Company for materials.

Although the early presence of the traders, missionaries, whalers and RCMP altered Inuit cultural practices, contact between the Inuit and Qallunaat up until the Second World War was generally either neutral or favourable to the survival of the Inuit language, at least in the Baffin region.<sup>3</sup> Early language contact was neutral in that the English- and French-speakers, very much alone in Inuit territory, had to learn the Inuit language in order to communicate. Contact with missionaries in some ways increased the vitality of the Inuit language, as the missionaries learned Inuktitut, developed writing

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<sup>3</sup> In other regions of the Arctic, contact became more intense earlier, precipitating earlier language shift. Labrador Inuit, for example, were living in sedentary communities by 1875 (Dorais 1990). Children in the Kitikmeot region, to give another example, were sent to federal residential schools as early as 1920 (Dorais 1989). The shift to English is predictably further advanced in these regions.

systems, taught Inuktitut literacy skills, and produced written religious materials in the Inuit language. As long as there were few Qallunaat making their permanent residence in the Arctic and the Inuit maintained a relatively independent way of life, the threat to the Inuit language was minimal.

### *Intense Contact after the Second World War*

However, during and following the Second World War, the intensity of the contact between Qallunaat and Inuit in the Eastern Canadian Arctic changed dramatically. The Arctic became strategically important in the war, bringing greater numbers of Qallunaat to the Arctic. The presence of Qallunaat in itself led to changes, as did the increased awareness of Inuit among the Southern Canadian population, especially within the Canadian Government.

Greater numbers of Qallunaat came and stayed in the North for prolonged periods of time during and following the Second World War, as defence systems were built and maintained in the Arctic. Starting in 1942, airbases were built in Inuit territory or just South of it, including an airport in Iqaluit (then Frobisher Bay). The presence of this military base led to the permanent settlement of Iqaluit by Qallunaat. Reacting to the perceived threat of Soviet attack following the Second World War, the Canadian and American Governments installed radar stations throughout Inuit territory. The DEW line in particular traversed Inuit territory from Alaska to Baffin Island.

Even if the military did not intentionally interfere with the Inuit way of life, its presence impacted Inuit culture and lifestyle. Perhaps the most significant effect of semi-permanent military establishments in the Canadian Arctic was the impetus they provided to Inuit to abandon their nomadic way of life and settle near the military sites. This practice was attractive to some Inuit as it allowed for a more secure life, where some work was available, and where discarded food, clothing and construction materials could

supplement Inuit sustenance (cf. Gagnon and Iqaluit elders 2002 for further discussion of the effects of the permanent military establishment in Iqaluit).<sup>4</sup>

The Inuit felt the effects of military presence in their territory. However, much stronger impacts were to be felt when the Canadian Government decided to make the Inuit ‘Canadians like all other Canadians’. This policy was established in reaction to the Inuit’s quality of life, considered far below the Canadian standard, and also to the need to establish Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic Archipelago (sovereignty could be established by the presence of “Canadians” living in the territory). Resulting programs aimed at providing Inuit with education, medical, and socio-economic services similar to what was available in Southern Canada. The federal government opened primary schools throughout the North and took over the existing mission schools. Starting in 1949, medical teams visited each community at least once per year, and those suffering from serious illnesses were sent South. Local health care facilities, including the Iqaluit hospital, were set up in the biggest communities.

The establishment of communities with nursing stations, schools, government offices, missions and trading stations provided further motivation for Inuit to settle in the vicinity of these amenities. In the late 1950s, the Canadian Government, in contrast to previous policies, decided to favour and enforce Inuit settlement in a limited number of communities (Dorais 1996a). The Government’s decision to relocate Inuit and bring an end to the nomadic way of life was partly achieved through persuasion, providing prefabricated homes, child benefits and other advantages to those who would settle in the designated communities. However, other techniques to force relocation and settlement were brutal. Inuit today tell stories of their camps being burned, driving them into the communities, or of their dogs being shot, effectively forcing them to abandon their traditional livelihood. The means and the ends of Inuit sedentarisation are disputable, but the government was successful in achieving its goal. For better or for worse, by 1960, 90% of Inuit families were living in sedentary communities rather than in seasonal

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<sup>4</sup> In fact, settlement near semi-permanent Qallunaat establishments, though discouraged, began even earlier, for example surrounding the Hudson Bay trading posts.



camps. In a period of less than 20 years, many Inuit went from little or no contact with Qallunaat and their ways of life to adopting, voluntarily or not, elements of the Qallunaat society imposed by the Canadian Government.

One element of Qallunaat culture imposed by the Canadian Government was the English language. When the Inuit children in the Nunavut region were sent to federal schools (as mentioned previously in Chapter One), these schools instructed the children in English, giving rise to a new, educated bilingual generation. The children being educated were in some ways cut off from their families; sometimes by a physical separation, as children were taken away to school, and other times by a cultural separation, as the children learned about things that their parents had never heard of. The English language also gained prestige in these communities, as powerful individuals – the government officials who distributed the cheques, or nurses and doctors who provided health care, or teachers who professed to higher knowledge – predominantly spoke English. The importation of Southern institutions such as schools, health centres, government offices and policing, as well as of individuals to staff these newly-introduced establishments brought with it greater amounts of English to Inuit communities. As Inuit society was transformed following the Second World War, the linguistic situation also shifted, moving toward increased use of English in the communities and greater knowledge of English among the Inuit, particularly among those attending school.

### *Isolation and Dependence*

Still, the relative isolation of the Inuit has tempered the spread of English. The Arctic communities, each one only accessible by plane, remain geographically far removed from mainstream Canadian society. As a result, even though the Inuit make up a very small minority of the Canadian population, they remain the majority within their communities and within their regions. The Inuit language enjoys relative strength as the language of the numerical majority in Nunavut.

Besides the geographic isolation, the Inuit have also, in many ways, remained socially, culturally and economically isolated from 'Southern' Canadian society, although this, too, is changing rapidly. The social, cultural and economic isolation continued as long as few Qallunaat were living in Inuit communities, mass media was not reaching Inuit communities,<sup>5</sup> and Inuit had not attained high enough levels of education to fully participate in the jobs created by the importation of the Southern Canadian economic system to the North. Another factor in maintaining social, cultural and economic isolation even while Southern Canadian programs brought these elements to the North was an Inuit feeling of self-sufficiency and distinctiveness. The Canadian Government's policies, however, threatened this pride, maintaining that Inuit culture was out-of-date and not suitable for modern life, and attempting to control, with no Inuit input, the economic, political and cultural development of the Inuit. Nonetheless, the Inuit displayed tenacity, holding stubbornly to their feeling of belonging to a land and a culture different from those of any other Canadians. The maintenance of the language has been one way of expressing this distinctiveness.

Even while remaining an isolated majority within the region that is now Nunavut, the Inuit way of life, including the language, has become increasingly threatened as Inuit have become dependent on Southern Canadian institutions. Sedentarisation led to economic dependence on the Canadian Government. Although Inuit continued to pursue a subsistence economy (and still do, to varying extents), their ability to do so in bigger communities is reduced. Inuit participation in the wage economy has equally been limited although it is growing, and as the population becomes more educated, Inuit are filling a greater proportion of the higher-paid, specialised jobs. Still, with better living conditions, the Inuit population is growing rapidly, and with little natural industry in the North (until natural resource extraction in the North becomes economically feasible), the economic independence of the Inuit in Nunavut is difficult to imagine. The more dependent Inuit become on English-speaking institutions, the greater the pull on Inuit to learn and use English, as will be seen in subsequent chapters. In this way, dependence poses a threat to the Inuit language.

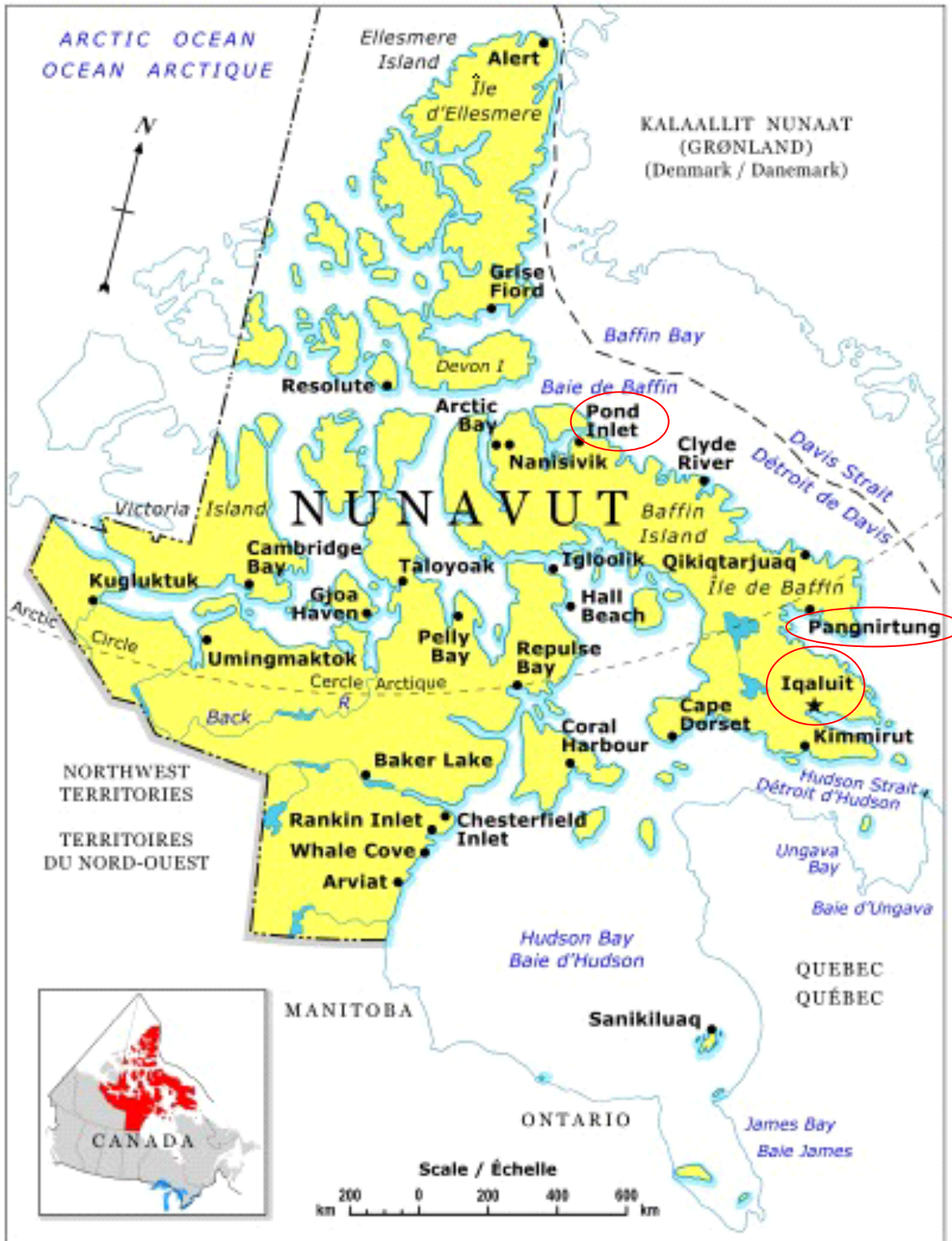
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<sup>5</sup> Television, for example, became available to some Inuit communities starting in 1973 (Graburn 1982).

### 3.2 Political Autonomy for the Inuit of Nunavut

Some Inuit have fought to maintain (or regain) their traditional independence from Qallunaat and their Southern institutions. In particular, the bilingual generation that emerged in the 1970s, that had been educated in federal schools, and was familiar with Southern institutions, was motivated and equipped to exploit Southern institutions for the good of the Inuit. In a climate where the federal government needed to sign land claim agreements with the Inuit (because there were no treaties or former documents in which the Inuit had ever ceded their traditionally-inhabited lands), and where other Inuit groups had ploughed the way for such negotiations (for example the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement of 1975), this new generation of Inuit from the Baffin, Kitikmeot and Kivalliq regions succeeded in negotiating the creation of Nunavut, an Inuit territory.

The creation of the Nunavut Territory involved two sets of concurrent and interrelated negotiations. The *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* is the end result of negotiations between the Canadian Government (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development), the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut to determine land ownership and management in the areas traditionally inhabited by certain groups of Inuit (Canada. Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development [DIAND] and Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut [TFN] 1993). Until land claims were settled in the eastern part of the Northwest Territories, any federal action or development in this region faced the threat of Inuit opposition leading to delays. The *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* settles the issue of Inuit and federal land use and rights of almost two million square kilometres of land in the Eastern Canadian Arctic, in what is now the Nunavut Territory (see Figure 2: Map of Nunavut). The agreement accords the Inuit of Nunavut ownership of 350,000 square kilometres of land, as well as mineral rights and shared profits on 36,000 square kilometres. The agreement also includes a monetary settlement of one billion dollars and a 13 million-dollar training fund. In return, the Inuit of Nunavut relinquish any further claim on their traditionally inhabited lands.



**Figure 2: Map of Nunavut**

Source: Canada. Department of Natural Resources 1999

The Canadian Government was motivated to conclude a land claims settlement with the Inuit, but the Inuit of Nunavut refused to negotiate a land claim that did not include self-government. As a small minority group within Canada, and even within the Northwest Territories, the Inuit felt that they had rapidly lost all control over their future. Their rights were somewhat protected in the Northwest Territories, as the Northwest Territories' population is largely made up of Aboriginal people from various groups, and the laws, including the language laws, reflect this reality. Still, with the territorial capital in Yellowknife, geographically far-removed from Inuit communities, the Inuit felt under-represented by the Northwest Territories Government and aspired to a government which would represent them (Nunavut Constitutional Forum 1983).

Accordingly, negotiations for the creation of an Inuit territory accompanied the land claims negotiations. Inuit negotiators showed perseverance, holding on to their aspirations of an Inuit homeland. Originally, the Inuit tried to negotiate the creation of a new territory in which only Inuit could serve as political leaders. However, seeing that the Canadian Government would not consider accepting an ethnic government, this position was softened. The *Nunavut Act* (Canada. House of Commons 1993), a law which creates and delimits the jurisdiction of the Nunavut Territory, was approved by the Parliament of Canada alongside the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* in 1993. The Nunavut Territory, inaugurated on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1999, has a public government, following the model of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. All the same, with roughly 85% of the population Inuit (total population = 26,745; Nunavut. Bureau of Statistics 2002), Nunavut is a *de facto* Inuit territory. Nunavut is the realisation of the dream of an Inuit homeland, where the aspirations of the Canadian Inuit may be respected and brought to pass. The strength of will which led the Inuit to success in the negotiations for an Inuit territory is now needed to maintain the Inuit language.

The creation of Nunavut, in theory, brought political autonomy to the Inuit of Nunavut. Nunavut is a territory with powers similar to the other Canadian territories, having jurisdiction in certain areas, while remaining subject to Canadian federal laws in others. A main ideal for the Nunavut Government is to incorporate *Inuit qaujimajatuqangit* (Inuit traditional knowledge), including the Inuit language, and this has been achieved to some

extent. Both the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* and the *Nunavut Act* specifically address the issue of language, propose areas where the Inuit language should or must be used, and give the Nunavut Government jurisdiction to legislate further in the area of language (see Language Policy, below). The creation of Nunavut gave Inuit a stronger political voice in Canada, through the publicity raised by the creation of the territory and also by gaining an Inuk Premier, who represents the *de facto* Inuit territory at federal and inter-provincial/territorial meetings. The establishment of Nunavut has also been symbolically powerful, fuelling the hope among Inuit that they can exert a controlling influence on their future.

Still, the creation of Nunavut has also led to greater intensity of contact between Qallunaat and Inuit. The establishment of a new territorial government has entailed the creation of many new jobs, some of which have been filled by Inuit, but many of which have been filled by Southern Canadians, coming north to take advantage of the job opportunities. Since the designation of Iqaluit as the capital of Nunavut, the influx of Southerners has almost equalled out the proportions of Inuit and Qallunaat in the capital city.

The creation of the Nunavut Territory gives Inuit new tools to shape their future, but does not address all of the issues emerging from contact between Qallunaat and Inuit. Economic independence has not been assured. Even though Nunavut aims at promoting and maintaining Inuit culture, Inuit youth appear increasingly dependent on Southern culture. Among the youth of Nunavut, many are unaware of Inuit traditional practices, unaware of the struggles that led to the land claims, and are lacking the pride and determination that led to the degree of Inuit autonomy that has been achieved. This emotional, cultural and social dependence on Qallunaat culture may push Inuit youth toward adopting English, counteracting the pull to maintain Inuktitut exerted by the creation of Nunavut. These opposite attractions, to English on the one hand and to Inuktitut on the other, will be seen in more depth in later chapters.

In the Baffin region, the transition from the nomadic lifestyle to sedentary community life has been rapid. Recent and limited contact between Inuit and Qallunaat contributed to the preservation of Inuktitut and restrained the spread and influence of English up until the 1950s. Still, the recent contact has been drastic, characterised by a strong impetus to rapidly transform Inuit into mainstream ‘Canadians’. Inuit youth today talk about being torn between two worlds, trying to hold on to the past, while preparing for the future. They are in a situation where their grandparents grew up in tents and igloos, their parents may have known something of the nomadic life as young children, but for the most part would have grown up in communities, if only to attend school, and yet the youth themselves, with rare exceptions, have never known anything but the sedentary, community living.<sup>6</sup> The recent contact is one reason why the language stayed strong for as long as it did; it is also the reason why the current situation is so desperate in terms of language management. The time for gradual adjustment to the presence of Qallunaat and the English language has been cut short and Inuit must swiftly decide how they will manage their societal bilingualism, if they are to attempt to manage it at all.

The nature of the contact between Inuit and Qallunaat affects the linguistic outcome of the contact. The missionaries, desiring to integrate, be accepted among the Inuit and communicate their message, learned and developed the Inuit language. The federal government, on the other hand, enforced, for a short period of time, a policy of assimilation. Many of the Qallunaat in the North made no effort to consciously influence the linguistic situation, and yet their behaviour and the results of their presence impact Inuit motivation to learn English or to maintain Inuktitut. While current relations are peaceful and generally friendly between Qallunaat and Inuit, the memories of forced assimilation, and of treating Inuit as lesser human beings are still alive in the minds of Inuit adults and affect current relations between Inuit and Qallunaat. Many Inuit take pride in being Inuk, and yet mingling with this pride, one occasionally catches glimpses of evidence of feelings of inferiority next to Qallunaat. The Qallunaat who go north are often (but not always) educated, middle class Canadians, with knowledge and material

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<sup>6</sup> The rapid transformation comes across clearly in *Saqiyuq* (Wachowich *et al.* 1999), the story of three generations of Inuit women in Pond Inlet.

possessions. (Unexpressed) regard and desire to access certain institutions traditionally associated with Qallunaat culture, such as education and high-paying jobs, can provide motivation for learning and using English, while desire to keep one's distance from Qallunaat and their ways can provide a motivation (among many others) for preferential maintenance of Inuktitut. These motivations for maintaining Inuktitut and English are developed in detail in Chapters Nine and Ten. The tension between Inuit and Qallunaat in Nunavut is underlying, rarely openly expressed, but the history of the contact, and the nature of current contact, is essential to understanding the development of the current linguistic situation and Inuit's desires for the linguistic future in their Territory.

### **3.3 The Current Linguistic Situation in Nunavut**

As previously stated, the current linguistic situation of Inuktitut in Nunavut, and more specifically in the Baffin region, is arguably favourable to the survival of the Inuktitut language. Inuktitut is experiencing the same trend toward loss as other Aboriginal languages in Canada, but several factors contribute to its relative strength. The Inuit language is spoken by thousands of Inuit in three countries. The language itself has been described quite thoroughly (see among others Dorais 1990, 1996a). A considerable amount of corpus work (standardisation, modern vocabulary, linguistic resources) has already been undertaken. The development of the language makes it possible for Inuktitut to be used in most domains, wherever individuals would choose to use Inuktitut. The creation of Nunavut, in particular, has had some immediate, positive effects on the status of Inuktitut in the territory. The following presentation of the current situation of Inuktitut, based on a literature review and on participant observation in Nunavut, highlights the relative strengths of the Inuit language, while pointing out problematic areas that contribute to many Inuit's desire for intervention to promote Inuktitut. Although the focus is on Inuktitut in the Baffin region, some information on Inuktitut in other regions is included in order to illuminate the overall current state of the Inuit language.



### 3.3.1 Introduction to the Inuit language

Linguists generally agree that there is one Inuit language, spoken from Greenland to Alaska. Four main dialectal groups make up the language: Inupiaq (Alaska), Inuktun (Western Canadian Arctic), Inuktitut (Eastern Canadian Arctic) and Kalaallisut (Greenland). Inuktitut is a polysynthetic language, and a member of the Eskaleut language family. Related languages are spoken uniquely in Alaska and Siberia (Dorais 1990). Dorais (1996a:26-27, 29) estimates that in 1991, 114,500<sup>7</sup> Inuit lived in the vast expanses of land between Alaska and Greenland. Of these, 15,500 lived in Alaska, 49,000 in Canada and 50,000<sup>8</sup> in Greenland.

The Greenlandic Inuit provide an example of a linguistic situation in which the Inuit language thrives in most societal domains. Almost all Greenlandic Inuit have maintained Kalaallisut as their first language and use it widely (Dorais 1996a). Since 1979, the Inuit of Greenland exercise Home Rule Government. This limited independence, partly motivated by the widespread use of Kalaallisut, has perpetuated the accepted use of the Inuit language at school (including university), in the media, in workplaces and in the government. The vitality of Kalaallisut indicates that the Inuit language in and of itself is adequate for modern societal needs and can thrive under favourable conditions.

If the Greenlandic linguistic situation provides an ideal model of Inuktitut in Inuit society, the situation of Inupiaq in Alaska shows what the linguistic situation in Nunavut may become if the current linguistic decline continues. The University of Alaska Fairbanks' Alaska Native Language Center (2001) estimates that 13,500 Inuit live in Alaska, of which approximately 3,000 (or 22.2%) speak Inupiaq. Only in rare exceptions

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<sup>7</sup> For varying reasons, exact numbers are difficult to determine. The numbers used here and in the following paragraphs are taken from the sources judged most reliable for a given figure. As various sources have been used, some inconsistencies in the numbers, which do not hinder an overall appreciation of the current state of the Inuit language, may be noted.

<sup>8</sup> Included in this figure are 1,000 Greenlandic Inuit residing in Denmark.

is Inupiaq being transmitted to the new generations of Alaskan Inuit, as the Inuit who speak Inupiaq are past child bearing age. Although the Alaskan Inuit gained some amount of political and economic strength with the *Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act* (ANCSA) in 1971, the long history of contact had already undermined the vitality of Inupiaq. Inupiaq is still used in Inuit communities in Alaska, although its use is limited by the number of Inuit who can speak it. Looking at Alaskan Inupiaq, the Inuit of Nunavut can get an idea of what the loss of Inuktitut and the adoption of English can mean to individuals and to a community. Moreover, because the loss of the Inuit language is further advanced in Alaska than in Nunavut, efforts to redress problems related to language loss are accordingly further developed. In this way, the situation of Inupiaq in Alaska can also provide a helpful example for the Inuit of Nunavut.

According to 1996 Canadian Census data, 41,080 Inuit live in Canada (Canada. Statistics Canada 1996), of which 27,800 (67.7%) have Inuktitut as the mother tongue (Canada. Statistics Canada 1997). Although some Inuit now live in Southern Canada, most live in the North, in Labrador, Nunavik, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. Retention of the Inuit language is strongest in Nunavik and on Baffin Island, where 99% (5,450/5,490) and 96% (7,925/8,215) of Inuit, respectively, speak Inuktitut (Dorais 1996a:64). In Labrador and in the Western Canadian Arctic, loss of Inuktitut and transfer to English is considerably more pronounced. Ten percent of Labrador Inuit (490/3,790) speak Inuktitut (Dorais 1996a:60).<sup>9</sup> This figure rises to 30% (715/2,460) in the Northwest Territories, and then to 72% (2,155/2,990) and 95% (4,265/4,465) in the Kitikmeot and Kivalliq regions of Nunavut, respectively (Dorais 1996a:63-64).<sup>10</sup>

Geography is only one factor in the degree of maintenance of Inuktitut. The size of the community also affects language retention, with higher levels of language retention observable in smaller communities and lower levels of language retention observable in larger communities. Varying degrees of loss may be due to increased intensity of contact

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<sup>9</sup> The proportion of Inuit in Labrador who speak Inuktitut rises to 20% if one includes only those of uniquely Inuit heritage (Dorais 1996a).

<sup>10</sup> The statistics taken from Dorais 1996a here and elsewhere may be optimistic, as they are based on data from the mid-1980s.

between Inuit and Qallunaat in the larger communities, as such communities tend to attract more Qallunaat. The population of Inuktitut speakers is also divided by age, with older individuals being more likely to speak Inuktitut than the younger generations.

When Inuktitut is being lost, English (or French) is replacing it as the primary language of the individual or the community, passing through an intermediary stage of bilingualism. Bilingualism is a relatively new, but widespread phenomenon in the Canadian North and its sustainability is questionable. An estimated 47% of Canadian Inuit were monolingual Inuktitut speakers in 1981, decreasing to 27.5% in 1991 (Dorais 1996a:217). Today, most Canadian Inuit who speak Inuktitut also speak English; those who speak only Inuktitut are mainly elders and children. The prevalence of bilingualism in Baffin Island communities is evident in Dorais and Sammons' (2000:97) recent data:

78% (14/18) of all Iqaluit informants under 30, and 76% (13/17) of those between 30 and 50 are either fully bilingual or, in a few cases, more fluent in spoken English than in Inuktitut. In Igloolik the respective proportions are 57% and 67%. Bilingualism thus seems to be the rule, less so in Igloolik than in Iqaluit, among young and middle-aged adults (i.e., among those who benefited from at least a few years of formal schooling.)

Furthermore, many Inuit, especially among the children, as well as the residents of Labrador and the western Canadian Arctic, only speak English. Bilingualism, although in many ways favourable, desirable and even necessary for the Inuit, seems to be contributing to the loss of Inuktitut.

Still, among other Aboriginal groups in Canada, the Inuit have the highest level of language retention. The large number of speakers and high levels of language retention among Nunavut Inuit, especially as compared to other Aboriginal languages in Canada, contribute to its relative strength. A language spoken by at least 79,000 people in three countries (Dorais 1996a:57), maintained by 96% of the target population (Inuit on Baffin Island) has increased chances of survival. However, the tendency toward bilingualism which favours English is troublesome for the future of Inuktitut. Not only is preferential use of English leading to decreased use of Inuktitut among the bilingual generation, but it may also

contribute to the raising of a new generation of passive bilinguals, who understand Inuktitut but can only speak English. (Language choices of young parents are discussed further in Chapter Six.) Such a unilingual generation would be unable to pass Inuktitut on to their children. Once the intergenerational transmission of Inuktitut is halted, the language is dying in the community.

### **3.3.2 Corpus of Inuktitut**

As hinted at in the preceding paragraph, one of the reasons why knowledge and use of Inuktitut are declining in Nunavut is that Inuit who have the ability to use either Inuktitut or English are opting to use English, and consequently are using less Inuktitut (current choices of Inuit youth are expanded upon in Chapters Six and Seven). Such a choice is not uncommon among speakers of Aboriginal languages in Canada. For some Canadian Aboriginals, it would be motivated by the fact that the Aboriginal language is insufficiently developed to fulfil all daily communicational needs. Of course, as long as a language is used, it will evolve to fill all modern communicational needs, but this natural development may be aborted if speakers opt to use another language instead. Inuktitut has been widely used during the recent years of cultural upheaval and as such has evolved along with the Inuit and grown to fill many modern, as well as traditional, communicational needs. As well, over the years, significant work has been undertaken by linguists, anthropologists, missionaries, governmental agencies and the Inuit, to document, record, and otherwise deliberately enhance the Inuit language. Such work has included efforts to write and to standardise the previously solely oral language, to develop modern, specialised vocabulary, to produce linguistic resources, to train language specialists, and to establish linguistic organisations. As a result, Inuktitut is currently well-developed, and able to be used for most communicative functions. It goes without saying that the more communicative functions that a language *can* be used in, the greater the chances that it will indeed be used, facilitating its survival.

In many ways, the isolation of Inuit communities has led to the Inuit language developing, or being developed, differently from region to region. The development of a

writing system for the Inuit, for example, was undertaken independently by separate groups of missionaries, Inuit and academic centres in various regions. As a result, there exist today five standardised writing systems for the Inuit language. Inuit in Greenland, Alaska, the western Canadian Arctic and Labrador have distinct, standardised ways of writing their dialects using roman orthography. The writing system for Inuktitut in Nunavik and most of Nunavut is syllabic, based on a syllabary originally devised for Ojibway, then adapted for Cree by Rev. James Evans around 1840 (Dorais 1996a). Revs. John Horden and E. A. Watkins adapted this syllabic system for Inuktitut and Rev. Edmund James Peck, along with the Inuit, diffused it throughout much of the Eastern Canadian Arctic (Harper 1998). By 1925, most Inuit in the Eastern Canadian Arctic could read and write using the syllabic system (Dorais 1996a). Widespread literacy among Inuit in Labrador came even earlier (Jeddore 1979).

The early establishment of a writing system and a strong history of individual literacy in the ancestral language contribute to the relative strength of the Inuit language. However, some perceive the wide variety of writing systems for the Inuit language as a detriment. The use of multiple writing systems has increased the cost and complexity of promoting the Inuit language and sharing materials between communities. For years, Inuit leaders and politicians have debated the ideal solution for writing the Inuit language and proposed the possibility of an international, auxiliary writing system for Inuktitut (cf. MacLean 1979). However, symbolic attachment to the various writing systems complicates such initiatives. In addition, the historically high levels of literacy in Inuktitut among Inuit have not been maintained. In Nunavut, for example, although most Inuit children originally learn to read and write in syllabics, English literacy surpasses Inuktitut literacy. Even among Inuit adults who remain competent readers and writers of Inuktitut, many *prefer* to read and write in English.

Part of the difficulty in establishing a widespread writing system is the high variability in the Inuit language. The four dialectal groups break down into nine sub-groups, 16 dialects and 40 sub-dialects. There is no standard oral or written form of the Inuit language. Within Nunavut, there are two dialectal groups (Inuktitun [roman

orthography, except for Natsilingmiutut] and Inuktitut [syllabics]), three sub-groups (East Inuktitut, Keewatin and Baffin), and six dialects (Inuinnaqtun, Natsilingmiutut, Kivalliq, Aivilik, North Baffin and South Baffin) (Dorais 1996a). While the preceding breakdown attempts to represent the linguistic reality, in the minds of many Inuit, linguistic variation is even greater, with each community having its own, unique dialect.

This lack of standardisation presents a problem to efforts to use the Inuit language in more functions, such as in the schools, media, workplaces, signs and governments, due to the need to respect the dialect of each area. It also hinders the sharing of already limited Inuktitut language resources (such as teaching materials, dictionaries) between communities and regions. The differences in dialects may lead Inuit to speak English with Inuit from other regions, as they feel communication between dialects is too difficult (see Chapter Eight for further discussion of this notion among Inuit youth). Standardisation generally increases the vitality of a language and linguists and Inuit have worked toward the standardisation of Inuktitut, with some success. Following a series of initiatives to standardise Inuit writing, a working group of the Inuit Language Commission, under the direction of José Kusugak, proposed in 1976 a standardised phonological system capable of consistently representing the sounds of all dialects, with two forms, one syllabic and one alphabetic (Harper 1998). Today, the Nunavut Government officially adopts the dual orthography for its publications.

Despite a fair amount of work to standardise the Inuit language, standardisation remains a contentious issue. Leading up to and following the creation of Nunavut, discussions continue over the efficacy of maintaining two writing systems in the territory. Although greater standardisation of Inuktitut could, possibly, increase the vitality of the language, language attitudes seem to be blocking further efforts in this direction. Perhaps the time has come for those who would promote the language to accept the current level of dialectal variation, allow the language to develop on its own in this regard, while working on other areas of language planning.

The presence of modern and specialised vocabulary in Inuktitut contributes to making it a language which could be widely used. The polysynthetic nature of Inuktitut, and the attitudes of those using the language, favour the development of new, Inuktitut terms through the process of lexicalization, as opposed to borrowing from English (Dorais 1996a). However, as the specialised terms were often developed by each community in isolation, there are different terms for the same modern reality. At the same time, new terms are in constant increase through the efforts of the Interpreter/Translator program at Nunavut Arctic College, which has developed glossaries for speciality areas such as law, medicine, dentistry and environmental studies. The diffusion of the new terms beyond the realm of interpreters/translators is not yet guaranteed. As a result, Inuktitut has modern and specialised vocabulary to speak of modern realities, yet these words are not known by the general population, or different people use different words for the same reality. Furthermore, even as Inuktitut vocabulary increases to respond to modern demands, many Inuit decry the loss of words to speak precisely about past practices, as traditional words are being forgotten.

Increasingly, Inuit have linguistic resources and other materials produced in Inuktitut, which contribute to diffusing new words and preserving old ones. There are dictionaries and grammars for various dialects of the Inuit language, including monolingual Inuktitut-Inuktitut dictionaries (e.g. Ootoova 2000, Qumaq 1991) as well as Inuktitut-English, English-Inuktitut dictionaries (e.g. Spalding 1998). The *Asuilaak/Living Dictionary/Dictionnaire Vivant* (Nunavut. Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth 2000) is a recent multilingual, multidialectal virtual initiative in Nunavut to preserve, document and diffuse terminology. A great deal of effort has been invested to facilitate use of syllabics on personal computers (the work of Multilingual E-Data Solutions is particularly notable in this regard). Although such developments have encountered some problems, most recent computers are able to easily read and display Inuktitut fonts. Such developments create new opportunities for the creation and diffusion of linguistic resources via the Internet.

Paper publications in Inuktitut are limited, but they do exist. The most frequently published Inuit language materials now and in the past are probably newspapers and other periodicals. The greatest variety of literary production in the Inuit language comes from Greenland, although Inuit language literature is also published in Canada, including numerous children's books and materials treating traditional Inuit subjects.

The presence of written materials in Inuktitut is favourable for the language's survival. It is beneficial that Inuit are able to see their language used, are able to read books to their children in Inuktitut, use their computer in Inuktitut and have resources to improve their own competence in Inuktitut. However, the availability of language resources and literary production does not in and of itself ensure their use. Inuit must still be motivated to choose to use Inuktitut language materials rather than their English counterparts, and such choices are not evident. Further, more production in Inuktitut is still needed. In particular, educators and language specialists in Nunavut identify the limited availability of teaching materials in Inuktitut as a problem that must be addressed before Inuktitut can thrive as a language of instruction in the schools. The creation of Nunavut favours increased production in the ancestral language, as the Nunavut Government funds initiatives to develop more materials in Inuktitut.

Language specialists, who can teach Inuktitut and translate between Inuktitut, English and French, are also important to the relative strength of Inuktitut in Nunavut. Nunavut Arctic College runs the Nunavut Teacher Education Program (NTEP) in conjunction with McGill University, training and qualifying Inuktitut-speaking teachers. Nunavut Arctic College also offers an interpreter-translator program, which trains Inuit in the basics of translation, then allows students to specialise in a pertinent area: environment, land claims, education, government, and so on. The contribution of these programs is significant to the future of Inuktitut, although the number of language professionals graduating is insufficient to fill the demand for Inuktitut teachers and translators in Nunavut.



Although language organisations working with the Inuit language existed before Nunavut, its creation has led to new organisations which oversee language in the territory. One of the governmental departments, for example, is the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth (CLEY), whose mandate includes preserving, protecting and promoting the Inuit language. In the fall of 1999, a Languages Commissioner's Office was established. The Office's role is to protect language rights in the territory and to dialogue with the government as to appropriate measures for the promotion of Inuktitut. Also, the Nunavut Social Development Council (NSDC), while not specifically a language organisation, was particularly active in the promotion of Inuktitut until its dissolution in 2002. This council, for example, had organised the annual Inuktitut language week activities (taken on in 2003 in the Baffin Region by Qikiqtani Inuit Association [QIA]). A definite advantage of the *de facto* Inuit territory is the political ability to allocate resources to the promotion of Inuktitut. However, the acting power of these organisations (with the possible exception of the Languages Commissioner's Office) is mitigated by other pressing social and cultural needs in Nunavut.

Overall, Inuktitut is well-equipped to function in most societal domains in Nunavut. Moreover, the majority of the Inuit in Nunavut know how to speak Inuktitut. However, just because Inuit know how to speak Inuktitut and technically could speak Inuktitut in a given situation, does not mean that they will. Attitudes expressed around town suggest that the youth in particular, speak Inuktitut poorly and infrequently.

### **3.3.3 Status of Inuktitut**

Actual language use is influenced by language policies and laws, norms of interaction in certain domains, and language attitudes. Together, these three factors shape the status of Inuktitut. The status of Inuktitut is an important factor to consider in evaluating the needs and possibilities for promoting Inuktitut in Nunavut. Language policies dictate when and where a given language may, should or must be used. Domains of use show where a language is currently being used, and identify areas in which the actual language

use does not reflect the desired linguistic situation. Finally, language attitudes shape the current linguistic situation, providing the motivation for actual language behaviour and setting limits for language planning initiatives.

### *Language Policy*

Federal language policy on Inuktitut tolerates, and in some ways supports Inuktitut, by providing funding for language-development activities in Nunavut (see Chapter 1). The Canadian Government's commitment to provide funding for the promotion of Inuktitut in Nunavut was made concrete with the 1999-2001 Canada-Nunavut Co-operation Agreement for French and Inuit Languages, which allocated 2.2 million dollars to fund local initiatives to preserve, protect and promote Inuktitut, and to bridge the communication gap between monolingual Inuktitut-speakers and English-speaking society (Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut 2000:17). Of course, the other half of this agreement, the allocation of 2.9 million dollars to fund French-language programs in Nunavut, is even more telling of the Canadian Government's commitment to Aboriginal languages: Aboriginal languages may be maintained, but English and French must be maintained at a higher level.

Before the creation of Nunavut, Inuktitut was one of nine official languages in the Northwest Territories since 1984, when the territorial government passed the Official Languages Act, recognising the importance of Aboriginal languages in the Territory (Northwest Territories. Department of Justice 1995). As significant as this symbolic recognition of Inuktitut was and still is, the practical implications are questionable, because the Act stops short of dictating measures by which the use of Aboriginal languages is to be encouraged in governmental functions. It simply recognises that use of Inuktitut, and other Aboriginal languages, in higher governmental functions is possible.

The Nunavut Territory inherited the legislation of the Northwest Territories, including the *Official Languages Act*. Under this legislation, Inuktitut, English and French are the official languages of Nunavut. Nunavut's two "birthright" documents, the *Nunavut*

*Act* and the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*, though not language policy documents, also contain some elements of Nunavut's language policy. Further language policy is still under consideration (cf. Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut 2002a and 2002b).

The *Nunavut Act* attributes jurisdiction in the area of language to the Nunavut Territory, with some reservations. Notably, the Nunavut Territory has jurisdiction to preserve, use and promote Inuktitut, as long as such promotion does not impinge on the status of English and French in the territory:

Article 23.1 Subject to any other Act of Parliament, the Legislature may make laws in relation to the following classes of subjects: [...] (n) the preservation, use and promotion of the Inuktitut language, to the extent that the laws do not diminish the legal status of, or any rights in respect of, the English and French languages (Canada. House of Commons 1993:4,6).

Furthermore, article 38 states that the Government of Nunavut cannot amend the *Official Languages Act* without the approbation of the Canadian Parliament. The legal possibilities afforded by the *Nunavut Act* are, overall, favourable for the future of Inuktitut, in a unique position as the majority language in Nunavut. However, the stipulation to maintain English and French at their current status and rights raises the question of how all three languages may be successfully promoted in the territory. Indeed, it will be a challenge for the Government of Nunavut to implement Inuktitut into new domains (for example making it the language of government) without contravening its legal commitment to maintain the present status of English and French in the territory.

The *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* also includes some provisions for the use of Inuktitut in the new territory. Generally speaking, the articles pertaining to language use (including articles 5.2.18, 8.4.16, 10.6.1(g), 12.2.25, 13.3.11, 13.3.12, 21.5.13, 21.8.8, 23.4.2(ii) and (iii), 33.5.9, 33.5.10, 36.2.12 and 36.2.16) state where Inuktitut *may* be used, apparently aiming at improving communication and participation of Inuit in various functions of the territory. Article 36.2.16, just to give one example, serves to encourage Inuit participation in voting, "Voting ballots shall be in Inuktitut, and Canada's official

languages” (Canada. Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut 1993:243). Article 23, Inuit Employment Within Government, to give another example, contains elements of language policy, stipulating that government job postings must be in Inuktitut, English and French, and that fluency in Inuktitut should be included in search criteria and job descriptions. These stipulations in Article 23 are congruent with the Nunavut Government’s goal of implementing Inuktitut as the territory’s working language by 2020, as set out in the Bathurst Mandate (Nunavut 1999). According to the Bathurst Mandate, the target linguistic situation in Nunavut is a working bilingualism in Inuktitut and English without negating the role of French in the territory.

In the First Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut, Languages Commissioner Eva Arreak comments on the language policies of Nunavut, their success, and their relative importance to the future of Inuktitut in Nunavut:

I am pleased to note that the Government of Nunavut went far beyond its obligations under the *Official Languages Act* in setting ambitious language goals in the Bathurst Mandate. These include making Inuktitut the government’s working language by 2020, and creating a fully bilingual society in Inuktitut and English. These goals have realised high expectations in communities throughout Nunavut, along with some doubts about the government’s ability to achieve them. I fully believe the targets are attainable... I would like to emphasize, however, that work must begin immediately to ensure that today’s youth, those who will be taking on positions in the government over the next twenty years, have strong language skills in Inuktitut and English. Unfortunately, in many communities Inuktitut is not widely spoken among this age group. While parents and communities have a critical role to play in maintaining the health of Inuktitut, so, too, does the government as the provider of education and the largest employer in the territory. We are a long way from achieving education that is truly bilingual and Inuktitut speaking workplaces. (Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut 2000:5)

Arreak acknowledges the general usefulness of language policy but also explains that language policy in itself is insufficient to ensure the status of Inuktitut. Other linguistic and social needs must be addressed, including individual ability and motivation to speak

Inuktitut, and increasing domains where Inuktitut is used. These social factors in the maintenance of Inuktitut are at the heart of this thesis. Language policy promoting Inuktitut as Nunavut's working language is of little use unless Inuit acquire and maintain Inuktitut language skills, and choose to use Inuktitut as their daily language of use, at home, in the community, at school, at work, and in the government.

### *Domains of Use*

Speakers of a language confer pragmatic status on a language when they use the language in a wide variety of societal domains. Domains in which language use may be observed include the home, the community, media, education, work and the government. Some domains are considered particularly prestigious. Accordingly, use of the language in such domains confers, or reflects, prestigious status of the language. In the past, the situation of Inuktitut in the Eastern Canadian Arctic was considered a diglossia (see Chapter Two), because Inuktitut was generally used in what were considered less prestigious domains (such as the home) and English was used in the 'higher status' domains of advanced education, work and government (Dorais 1989). Today, there is still some tendency to favour use of Inuktitut or English in certain domains, but generally both languages are used in all settings. Frequency of language use in any given domain varies depending on the region, the type of community, and the age of the speakers. While speech behaviour of youth in the Baffin region is the focus of Chapters Six and Seven, this section presents an overview of language use in key domains in Nunavut, focusing on the Baffin region, but using data from other regions to complete the picture.

### *Home*

The home is often the one domain where use of an endangered language remains strong. Inuit in the Baffin region use Inuktitut widely at home, but they equally use English. Various studies of language socialisation and use in the home document the persistence of Inuktitut, accompanied by this transfer to English (see for example Allen, Genesee and Crago 1999; Crago, Chen, Genesee and Allen 1998; and Dorais 1989 for

studies in Nunavik and Nunavut). A current study by Dorais and Sammons in Iqaluit, Igloolik and Kimmirut, for example, shows this trend, “In Iqaluit, 89% (26/29) of all respondents under 50 years of age acknowledge a bilingual or mostly/entirely English language behaviour with their spouse, while as seen above, 72% of them address their children in both Inuktitut and English. In Igloolik, respective figures stand at 50% (8/16) and 31%” (Dorais and Sammons 2000:98). Children respond to their parents using increasing amount of English as they get older. Among siblings, both Inuktitut and English, or mostly English, are used. Discourse patterns in homes in the Baffin region show geography and age as key factors, with Inuit speaking more Inuktitut in smaller communities, as well as to young Inuit children and to elders, but speaking more frequently in English otherwise (Dorais and Sammons 2002).

The current use of Inuktitut in Inuit homes is ambivalent. The use of Inuktitut is encouraging because it suggests consistent transmission of Inuktitut in Baffin communities (Dorais and Sammons 2002), but the increased use of English, which could lead to monolingual homes, is worrisome for the future of Inuktitut. Many Inuit agree that the home needs to nurture acquisition, preservation and promotion of Inuktitut. However, current practice of this belief is inconsistent. The transmission and desire to transmit Inuktitut will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

### *Community*

Language use among Inuit within the community is similar to language use in Inuit homes, characterised by bilingualism, with more Inuktitut generally being used in smaller communities as well as with elders and very young children, and more English being used among peers. However, the transfer to English is even more pronounced among friends. Already in the mid 1980s, less than one third of young Baffin-Island Inuit used Inuktitut with friends (Dorais 1989). Among participants in grades 10 to 12 in Dorais and Sammons’ (2000) study, none use only or mostly Inuktitut with their friends. Inuktitut has a place in informal conversation among friends, but Inuit are tending to cede this place to English, to a greater or lesser degree depending on the community. The place

given to English in this speech situation where Inuktitut could feasibly be used raises questions about Inuit's individual commitment to using, and thereby implicitly preserving and promoting, Inuktitut. Youths' linguistic practices and motivations are discussed further in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight.

The use of Inuktitut on signs and labels is practically and symbolically important, in part to give an "Inuit image" to Nunavut communities. Leading up to Nunavut, Inuktitut was present on some signs and labels, though inconsistently. Inconsistent and, sometimes inaccurate, use of Inuktitut on signs was identified as a problem at the Nunavut Social Development Council (NSDC) conference on Traditional Knowledge in March 1998. Over the past years, new signs in Iqaluit often include Inuktitut, although usually with English below (most frequently), above or alongside. Increased use of Inuktitut on signs in Baffin Island communities suggests a public desire to reflect the territory's Inuit reality through the use of Inuktitut and perhaps also reflects the possibilities for language policy discussions to favourably influence public, written language use.

### *Media*

Written media is available in Inuktitut, as previously mentioned, although the actual use of the Inuktitut versions is not evidently strong. The *Nunatsiaq News*, Nunavut's weekly newspaper, with paper and virtual versions, is published in bilingual format (Inuktitut and English), with some articles also published in French. The radio plays a particularly important role in Nunavut communities, and much regular programming on CBC North Nunavut, not to mention the local community stations, is either in Inuktitut or bilingual. Some daily television programming is also available in Inuktitut on CBC North and Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), including children's shows and news reports. *Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)*, the first full-length feature film in Inuktitut to play in Canadian cinemas, produced by Isuma Productions, was well received both locally in the North and internationally following its release in 2001. On the Internet as well, Inuktitut is increasingly visible. Use of Inuktitut in the

various media is increasing, and policies and funding are in place to encourage greater media production in Inuktitut.

In few other areas of Canada is an Aboriginal language so widely used in media productions. Such use of Inuktitut in these productions both reflects and contributes to the strength of the language. Media use of Inuktitut increases Inuit's opportunity to use Inuktitut. Furthermore, it increases the prestige and perceived vitality of Inuktitut, as Inuit and non-Inuit alike see it being used in a wide variety of media.

Despite the availability of Inuktitut-language media, actual patterns of media use suggest preferential use of English-language media among Inuit. Dorais (1989) suggests that young Baffin Island Inuit spend little time listening to or watching Inuktitut language radio or television. Concerning written media, the general tendency among Inuit to prefer reading in English to reading in Inuktitut (cf. Dorais and Sammons 2000) suggests that although Inuit may symbolically appreciate their presence, the actual use of Inuktitut versions of texts may well be limited. The presence of media productions in Inuktitut is useful for the survival of Inuktitut as it may (if production is pertinent and high-quality) contribute to the prestige of Inuktitut, but in order for the presence of media productions to have the most beneficial impact on the survival of Inuktitut, they must be more widely used among Inuit.

### *Education*

Commonly, in the Baffin region, Inuktitut is the language of instruction from Kindergarten until Grade three, although instruction in Inuktitut may end earlier, or continue later, depending on the linguistic make-up of the community and on the availability of Inuktitut-speaking teachers. After these initial years of being taught solely in Inuktitut, Inuit children enter classrooms where English is the only language of instruction, often taught by unilingual English-speaking teachers. In Iqaluit, parents have the option of putting their children in the English stream as soon as they begin school. Throughout elementary and high school, students continue to study Inuktitut language as a subject. Post-secondary institutions, including Nunavut Arctic College and University



of Alaska Fairbanks, also offer courses which teach the Inuit language, though with varying degrees of consistency in the offerings.

The education of young children in Inuktitut, and the opportunity for adults to pursue language courses creates a favourable environment for the survival of the Inuit language. The first few years of education, including gaining literacy in Inuktitut, should cement the linguistic foundation laid by the parents and set up the children to maintain their mother tongue in the years to come. Also, education in the ancestral language can provide an opportunity to children (or adults, in continuing education) who have not learned Inuktitut as their first language to acquire it later. Finally, such use in education, especially in the higher levels, increases the prestige of Inuktitut, which could contribute to more positive language attitudes, which in turn encourage greater use of Inuktitut.

Despite the favourable presence of Inuktitut in education, the current educational system in Nunavut does not, as one might expect, securely anchor young Inuit in Inuktitut before adding English. The need for more and better Inuktitut language teachers and teaching materials has already been mentioned (and will be underlined by Inuit youths' comments in subsequent chapters). However, a more pressing need is to balance language instruction, in order to reverse the well-documented tendency for English-language instruction to lead to decreased competence and use of Inuktitut. This trend toward English-dominant bilingualism has been recorded in Inuit communities in Nunavut and Nunavik by, among others, Dorais and Sammons (2000), Louis and Taylor (2001), and Wright, Taylor and Macarthur (2000) and is also evident in the current research, as will be seen in Chapter Five. The propensity for increased competence in English to compromise Inuktitut competence must be counteracted before thriving bilingualism can be an envisionable target for Inuit communities.

### *Work*

If all well-educated Inuit become English-dominant, the opportunities for implementing Inuktitut into domains of work and government will be limited. In the

recent past, use of Inuktitut in the workplace was limited to traditional and non-qualified positions, while the use of English was predominant in qualified, salaried positions (cf. Dorais 1989). However, the establishment of Nunavut seems to have had a favourable influence on the use of Inuktitut in the workplace. As more Inuit are stepping into qualified positions, and value is placed on their knowledge of Inuktitut, the place of Inuktitut in the workplace is growing. Especially in the public sector (the largest employer), job postings frequently state, “Inuktitut is an asset”. Public opinion surrounding the creation of Nunavut, coupled with the Nunavut Government’s intention to make Inuktitut Nunavut’s working language by 2020, creates a public sphere where use of Inuktitut is at least acceptable, even if not widespread. In such an environment, Inuktitut *may* be freely used in workplaces where the majority of employees, and customers, are Inuit. The Nunavut Government offers Qallunaat employees the opportunity to take Inuktitut-language courses, in a further attempt to implement Inuktitut into the workplace. Dorais and Sammons’ most recent research (2002) suggests that although Inuktitut still plays a less important role than English in the Nunavut labour market, its relative importance may be increasing. Inuit youths’ perceptions of the usefulness of Inuktitut and English in the workplace provide motivation to learn and maintain these languages, and will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

### *Government*

In the Government of the Northwest Territories, 15% of the civil service was Inuit (Légaré 1998), so Inuktitut was rarely used. The Inuit of the Northwest Territories expressed this as a major problem, as they felt limited in their capacity to participate in and communicate with their government. A document developed by the Nunavut Constitutional Forum (1983:18) states, “The Inuit majority in Nunavut has long suffered for the fact that government administration has been inaccessible to them because it is conducted in English and French.” Furthermore, necessary documents, such as material for the driver’s licence test, Elders’ benefits documentation, Old Age Pensions Supplement applications, information regarding GST, Child benefits, and so on, were unavailable in Inuktitut, thus limiting Inuit access to these services.

As mentioned above, Inuktitut is now both an official language and the language of the majority of the population in Nunavut. As such, Inuktitut has a definite place in official governmental communication such as parliamentary debates, public meetings and official documents. Politicians and bureaucrats have the option of speaking or writing originally in Inuktitut, and some are exercising this right with greater freedom (Irniq 2000). In principle, interpreters and translators ensure that, regardless of which official language the original communication is produced in, Inuit may receive the message in the Inuit language. Nonetheless, Eva Arreak, Languages Commissioner of Nunavut, reports that the Inuit language is still largely underused in the Nunavut Government, and that bilingual Inuit often choose to communicate in English (Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut 2001).<sup>11</sup>

The current distribution of use of Inuktitut in the Baffin region as described above shows both reasons for optimism and concern for the future of Inuktitut in the region. On the one hand, Inuktitut has an established role in all domains. Inuktitut can be used, and is used, in the home, in the community, in the media, in education, in the workplace and in the government. Such widespread use of an Aboriginal language is remarkable among Aboriginal languages in Canada. And yet, alongside the momentum to implement Inuktitut into more and more formal areas (work, government), and to increase opportunities where Inuktitut can be used, there pushes a counter-current. This counter-current drives Inuit to use increasing amounts of English in personal interactions, even in areas which are traditionally the stronghold of an endangered language, the home. While, at first glance, politics seem to fuel the thrust toward greater use of Inuktitut, language attitudes, the focus of this thesis, provide a mitigating force, at times leading to greater use of Inuktitut, at other times leading Inuit youth to favour English.

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<sup>11</sup> The current use of Inuktitut in the Nunavut Government is documented in the Survey of Language Use and Language Services within the Government of Nunavut, contained in the 2000-2001 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut.

### *Language Attitudes*

Chapter Two expounds on the significance of language attitudes and how such attitudes affect the status of a language. In particular, language attitudes are important in the discussion of language policy and language use because they affect perceptions of what are acceptable policies and behaviour. Attitudes about a language and the people who speak it affect motivation to acquire and use that language. Further, the inclination to act in a certain way is an integral part of language attitudes. Chapters Eight and Nine discuss specific language attitudes of Inuit youth in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet. This section introduces the reader to language attitudes that have been identified and analysed in prior research.

Several studies have investigated (directly or indirectly) language attitudes in Inuit communities and some have considered more specifically the relationship between language attitudes and speech patterns. Dorais and Sammons (2000, 2002) relate language behaviour to perceptions about the value of Inuktitut, English and French, in terms of general usefulness, suitability for expressing emotions and the importance of transmitting Inuktitut to the next generation. They notice a correlation between actual patterns of language use in Iqaluit, Igloolik and Kimmirut and the relative, perceived usefulness of Inuktitut, English and French for “preserving the ethnic community”, continuing tradition, political power, the labour market and wider communication.

A number of concurrent Masters and Ph.D. theses have touched on language attitudes about Inuktitut in Inuit communities. Eriksson (1998) discusses the relative status of Inuktitut and English in Iqaluit, and especially the importance of Inuktitut for Inuit identity. Tagalik (1998) discusses the importance of language attitudes in decisions about and effects of language education, and, more widely, the continuation of Inuktitut in Arviat (Kivalliq region of Nunavut). Patrick (1998:ii), in her research on language, power and ethnicity in Kuujjuarapik, Nunavik, addresses the role that languages play “in boundary maintenance, in defining valued material and symbolic resources, in establishing national, ethnic and social identities, and in achieving access to education,

employment, and positions of power”. Each of the above factors can provide a root for language attitudes, as individuals sense or are aware of the role that language plays in each area and have feelings about that role. Resulting language attitudes contribute to or detract from the persistence of Inuktitut.

Taylor and Wright’s research in Nunavik communities also addresses Inuit language attitudes. Wright and Taylor (1995) show a relationship between patterns of language use in education and attitudes about oneself, one’s own ethnic group, and the other ethnic group in the community. More specifically, they show a positive correlation between use of the ancestral language in education and positive attitudes about oneself and one’s ethnic group. Taylor and Wright (1989) report on the connection between perceived language competence and use on the one hand, and language and intergroup attitudes on the other hand, based on research in Kuujuaq, regional centre of Nunavik. They conclude that the widespread use of English among all residents of this Inuit community, regardless of ethnicity, is a function of English’s perceived power. Nonetheless, they show that both Inuktitut- and English-speaking residents of Kuujuaq consider the Inuktitut language extremely important, and both groups believe all residents of the community should learn it. Their results also show some concern among Inuit adults that Inuit children are losing interest in Inuit language and culture (results that are called into question in subsequent chapters of this thesis). Taylor and Wright (1989:115-116) conclude:

Our examination of language attitudes, intergroup relations, and threat to Inuit culture and language in this Northern community point to one overall conclusion; there exists in the community feelings of *optimism* and *disquiet*. [...] The ambivalence that emerges as the overriding theme suggests that *now* is the time for community leaders to define the goals for the future. However these goals are defined, there exists in the community the optimism and feelings of good will necessary to maximize the chances that these goals can be achieved. At the same time, there is sufficient disquiet in the community to motivate people to take action.

The conclusions expressed in the preceding quotation are interesting, and foreshadow what appear to be current language attitudes in Nunavut. Furthermore, the conclusions

acknowledge language attitudes (optimism, good will, disquiet) as foundational to initiatives in language planning, which is a premise of the current study.

Discussions of potential language policy in Nunavut have similarly acknowledged, explicitly or implicitly, the important role that language attitudes play in language planning. Submissions to the Nunavut Language Policy Conference in 1998 address language attitudes and their relationship to language planning needs and possibilities. Kuliktana (1998) discusses the relevance of perceived language competence, language use and language importance to decision-making in the area of language policy. She shows how language attitudes in the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut are favourable to the implementation of a plan to promote balanced bilingualism, where the Inuit language is maintained alongside English. Arvaluk (1998) and Harper (1998) present the symbolic attachment to dialects and writing systems, and the problems such attachment poses to standardisation attempts. In fact, the Nunavut Language Policy Conference was conducted to elicit the desires for language planning among the population, because the Nunavut Implementation Commission (NIC) recognised the importance of such desires to the eventual success of a language plan. The Nunavut Implementation Commission clearly acknowledges that public support is an essential ingredient for language planning: “From the perspective of the NIC, however, one thing stands out above all the others: there is a central, irreducible need to obtain a clear picture, having broad public understanding and support, about where language figures in the kind of Nunavut society that Nunavut’s citizens want to build” (NIC 1996:206). The current research aims at taking one step in this direction by identifying the language sensitivities and language desires of Inuit youth in the Baffin region.

The above discussion of the current situation of the Inuit language shows that it is characterised by a mixture of strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, one can be hopeful as to the possible future of Inuktitut in Nunavut. In this *de facto* Inuit territory, Inuit are faced with a situation where Inuktitut is more or less equipped to respond to modern demands (and is on the way to becoming better equipped), where the majority of the population speak the language, and where the government is expressing its desire to

actively promote the language, and seems to be in a position to do so. Nonetheless, several factors threaten to undermine the hoped-for increase in use of Inuktitut. Inuit are using increasing amounts of English, even in situations where they could speak Inuktitut. Although initiatives following the creation of Nunavut have attributed some prestige to the Inuit language, many of the same societal factors that have contributed to the Inuit transfer to English over the past fifty years are still at work. As a result, even though Inuit may consciously value Inuktitut, English is also important to them. The desire and need for both languages, for varying reasons, leads to a certain ambivalence. The actual level of public support for the promotion of Inuktitut remains to be determined. The Nunavut Social Development Council recognises the fundamental importance of commitment and support of the people in order to promote Inuktitut in Nunavut: “Beyond this, there is the need for imaginative, long-term policies and programs, adequate human and financial resources and, above all, the determination and commitment of the people of Nunavut” (NSDC 1998:19). Considering that the language itself, as well as its official status, are propitious to a thriving future for Inuktitut, language attitudes will be determinant for its survival in Nunavut.

The Inuit of Nunavut and their language have experienced a great deal of change during the 20<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They have gone from being isolated and independent, with little need or opportunity to learn or use English, to having intense contact with and dependence on English-speaking society. The sudden, intense contact with dominant, English-speaking society caused a dramatic upheaval in the local linguistic reality. Individuals and communities went from being essentially unilingual in Inuktitut to being bilingual, with the looming threat of a transition to English-dominant bilingualism, followed by English-language monolingualism. Recently, political changes including the creation of an Inuit territory have provided tools to counteract the decrease in Inuktitut competence and use. At present, the momentum of Nunavut and all it entails are pushing for greater use and prestige of Inuktitut. However, other social factors related to the contact between Inuit and English-speaking society are still leading to greater use of English. This thesis, in the chapters to come, identifies the perceived levels of Inuktitut language competence and use among Inuit youth in three Baffin communities, and

analyses the accompanying language attitudes, in an attempt to illuminate needs and possibilities for the promotion of Inuktitut in the Baffin region.



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

Information presented in the preceding chapters provides background and theoretical considerations for the promotion of Inuktitut in Nunavut. Chapter One presented an overview of Aboriginal languages in Canada, showing that Inuit concerns about language decline and efforts for language maintenance are part of a broader movement across Canada. Chapter One also showed how the Canadian Government accepts Aboriginal efforts to promote their languages, but does not actively promote Aboriginal languages itself (beyond perhaps providing funding for Aboriginal-run initiatives). Chapter Two emphasized the importance of a grassroots approach to language promotion, stressing that language planning needs to be in accordance with speakers' perceptions of a language-related problem and desires for a solution. Language attitudes were presented as a "wild card" in language contact situations, able to push the outcome of contact in one direction, sometimes in spite of other "objective" indicators pulling in the opposite direction. Chapter Three demonstrated that many of the "objective" indicators would suggest that the corpus and status of Inuktitut are relatively strong in Nunavut. Nonetheless, English-dominant bilingualism and ambivalence about the future of Inuktitut, especially among the youth, are a concern. In light of the above information, my field research aimed at eliciting Inuit youths' perceptions of their ability to speak Inuktitut, their current use of Inuktitut, as well as their feelings about the

importance of Inuktitut and English, in order to illuminate some of their perceived needs and desires for language promotion in the Baffin Region of Nunavut. Perceptions of competence and use were elicited in order to identify whether or not Inuit youth see a need for intervention in their own lives. Language attitudes were identified in order to analyse evidence of motivations for language planning and desires for the linguistic future in the region.

This chapter discusses the various stages of the field research in some detail. In the pages that follow, I address the ethics of doing research with Inuit and the negotiation of my role in the northern communities. I introduce the reader to the three communities in question and to my research participants. My use of participant observation, closed questionnaires and semi-directed interviews in order to collect data is also described. Finally, I explain how I analysed the interview and questionnaire results. The methodological choices that are explained in this chapter provide the grounding for understanding the pertinence and the validity of the results presented in subsequent chapters.

#### **4.1 Ethical Considerations**

As my research aims for a grassroots, bottom-up approach, it is necessarily focussed on people, their experiences, their ideas, their concerns and their desires. As such, I made every effort to ensure my research was respectful of the people who shared with me the knowledge at the core of this project. In particular, I followed the ethical guidelines established by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC 2000) and by the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS 1998). The former are applicable to research with human subjects in general, while the latter reflect an emerging, negotiated understanding of acceptable research practices in Inuit communities. The essence of these policies is total respect for research participants.

In accordance with respecting my research participants, my desire was to conduct applied research, relevant to the communities in question. Social scientific research is increasingly emphasizing collaboration with local communities. Research is also recognised as a potential means of empowerment. Cameron *et al.* (1992:22) define empowering research as “*research on, for and with.*” These authors remind us of the pillars of empowering research, “Persons are not objects and should not be treated as objects. [...] Subjects have their own agendas and research should try to address them. [...] If knowledge is worth having, it is worth sharing” (Cameron *et al.* 1992:23-24). The desire in Inuit communities to exert more control over local research is reflected in the Nunavut Research Institute’s licensing procedure that approves research to take place in Nunavut. In my fieldwork, I attempted to follow the principles of respect, consultation, participation, and reporting back that underlie the licensing procedure and the goal of applied research.

Doing research that creates useful, new knowledge for local communities involves the adoption of a long-term approach. In my case, this included learning as much as possible about Nunavut and the Inuit before heading North, conducting a pilot study in Iqaluit to refine the research objectives and methods, then living among the Inuit for an extended period of time (16 months). Negotiating an appropriate research relationship was essential, as the nature of the research project is one that could be of potential use to the community, if the community accepts it.

The implicit negotiations began even before the research topic was established. The decision to focus on status planning for Inuktitut was based on a need expressed by the Inuit for status planning, and a recognition that very little research had been done in this area to date (see for example submissions to the Nunavut Language Policy Conference held by the Nunavut Implementation Commission in 1998, i.e. Arvaluk 1998; Harper 1998; Kuliktana 1998; see also Nunavut Social Development Council 1998). I was careful before I went North not to entertain preconceived notions of right and wrong in the area of language preservation and promotion, but to maintain an open mind, in

order to seek the Inuit perspective on the local linguistic situation and language-related needs.

When I finally made my first trip to the North, a pilot study illuminated the most pertinent areas for status planning research for Inuktitut. I conducted eight interviews with Inuit and Qallunaat representing a broad range of ages and occupations. At this time I observed that Inuit were not using Inuktitut even where they could. Language use in most cases reflected a choice rather than a necessity. The presenting need seemed to be an understanding of the motivation behind language choice, that is to say, the identification and analysis of language attitudes. At the same time, the experiences and attitudes expressed by the youngest Inuk interviewed (an 18 year-old female) stood out as very different from the ideas put forth by the other age groups. A refined research objective emerged as a result of my pilot study: to identify the language perceptions and attitudes of Inuit youth in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, in order to better evaluate the needs and possibilities for language planning in the Baffin region.

I realised after the pilot interviews that I needed to live in the community in order to first learn some of what is local “common sense” before pursuing the bulk of the interviews. Such an understanding was necessary so that the participants could explain their attitudes, feelings and opinions based on what would then be shared knowledge of the general language situation in the community. Being a recognisable face allowed for more personal interviews, and greater familiarity with me may have helped individuals to communicate more freely. The long-term stay in Iqaluit, in particular, allowed for meaningful relationships to develop, which led to a few particularly frank interviews. I am grateful to my Inuit friends for the ongoing critique they provided regarding my methods, and my way of understanding local phenomena, as well as for sharing their personal networks with me in order to find more research participants. I am also grateful to them for implicitly teaching me the norms of interaction and interpretation in Inuit communication (although to this day, communicative competence in the Inuit way eludes me).

Negotiating research relationships in communities is an ongoing venture. In the paragraphs above I have tried to show some initial steps I took to find my place as a linguistic researcher in the Baffin region. I followed explicit standards and tried to be sensitive to implicit norms in order to conduct research which is appropriate and acceptable in the communities. I listened to the youth and, in the following chapters, try to faithfully give voice to their ideas. I adopted a data-driven, descriptive approach, in line with the idea that the research is being done for the community. I have collected and organised data that I believe are relevant to the promotion of Inuktitut in the Baffin region, and I suggest what I make of the data in the chapters that follow, but the communities themselves will need to decide how they want to use and apply the current research.

#### **4.2 Geographical Focus: The Baffin Region of Nunavut**

The communities focussed on in this research are Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet in the Baffin (Qikiqtaaluk) region of Nunavut. A comprehensive and integrative approach to analysing the needs and possibilities for the preservation, protection and promotion of the Inuit language would be desirable, yet exceedingly complex given the diverse historical, political, social, cultural and linguistic climates in each country, territory and region within which Inuktitut is spoken. Even within the Territory of Nunavut, the linguistic situation is hardly homogeneous. For the purposes of this study, in order to be able to consider in depth the perceptions and attitudes of a particular group of people, I focussed my study on three of thirteen communities in one of three political regions of Nunavut. (See Figure 2: Map of Nunavut [p. 56] to situate Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet).

The Baffin region was chosen for several reasons. First, it is the region in which the capital city of Nunavut, Iqaluit, is found. Secondly, the Baffin region is the location of a study by Dorais and Sammons (2000; 2002), which this research hopes to complement. Thirdly, the Baffin region was considered an appropriate focus for this initial study because its communities may provide a sharp contrast between Iqaluit, the capital city, where the current situation of Inuktitut is considered to be relatively weak, and the smaller communities (for example Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet) where the language is still very strong.

### *Iqaluit*

Iqaluit is, in many ways, an obvious starting point for research on the promotion of Inuktitut, as it is the capital and largest community of Nunavut. It has also seen intense contact between Inuit and Qallunaat for the past fifty to sixty years. Since its designation as the capital of Nunavut, Iqaluit's population has grown considerably, due to the influx of both Inuit from other communities and Southerners moving to Iqaluit to take advantage of job opportunities. The 2001 Canadian census reports a 24.1% population growth rate between 1996 and 2001, (compared to an 8.7% growth rate in the Baffin region as a whole), with the population jumping from approximately 4,200 in 1996 to 5,200 in 2001 (Canada. Statistics Canada 2001). Based on this census data, 59% of the population of Iqaluit is Aboriginal. The non-Inuit population consists primarily of English-speaking Southern Canadians, although there is a significant French-speaking population in Iqaluit as well. Within the Inuit population, many were born and have lived their whole lives in Iqaluit, some grew up in camps surrounding Iqaluit, and many others have moved from neighbouring communities – Pangnirtung, Kimmirut and Cape Dorset, as well as from further afield, North Baffin, Kitikmeot, Kivalliq, and even the Northwest Territories. As Iqaluit has become a gathering place for Inuit from many different communities, it provides a location where one may benefit from a variety of perspectives voiced by the Inuit.

The population of Inuit and non-Inuit who have recently moved to Iqaluit is quite transient, with many completing their college degrees or job terms and then leaving Iqaluit within two to three years. Besides the large percentage of transient Qallunaat, there are also a large number of well-established, non-Inuit “northerners” in Iqaluit; some were born and grew up there, others moved to the community in their youth and are now retiring in the same community. This contact between almost equal numbers of Inuit and non-Inuit in Iqaluit has made it a community in which the interplay between English and Inuktitut is particularly apparent. Almost all Inuit in the community (but very few Qallunaat) are bilingual. Inuktitut is still the first language for most Inuit living in Iqaluit, although many appear to use English at least as frequently as Inuktitut. The intensive contact between English and Inuktitut, and the evident shift from Inuktitut to English taking place among the Inuit of Iqaluit, make the capital city an interesting (and important) starting point for a study of the promotion of Inuktitut.

Iqaluit is also a significant focal point for the promotion of Inuktitut because it is, at least for the moment (although this may change due to decentralisation), somewhat of an economic capital of Nunavut. As the political capital of a territory where the primary industry is government, Iqaluit is the locus of jobs. As the economic value of a language is one factor in determining the possibilities for its promotion, the value of Inuktitut in Iqaluit will affect the overall chances for the promotion of Inuktitut in the region and in the Nunavut Territory. Finally, as Iqaluit is the capital, it can be suspected that any territorial language policy must first succeed in this community if it can hope to succeed in the outlying communities. (Interestingly, the decision to make Iqaluit the capital of Nunavut was criticised by some because the Inuktitut language is considered weak there.) For the above reasons, I decided to begin my analysis of possibilities for language planning in Iqaluit. The data obtained there, however, can be effectively balanced by comparable data obtained in smaller Baffin region communities, predictably more optimistic for the future of Inuktitut. Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet were selected as representative smaller communities, for reasons given below.

### *Pangnirtung*

Pangnirtung is a small, primarily Inuit community to the north of Iqaluit, connected to Iqaluit by daily one-hour flights. The population in Pangnirtung is approximately 1,200. Linguistically speaking, the Inuit in Pangnirtung speak the same dialect of Inuktitut as in Iqaluit, although in the minds of many Baffin Island Inuit, the Pangnirtung dialect is distinct, known for its singsong quality. Inuktitut is very obviously the first language of the community, where most children not yet in school are unable to understand or speak English.

The breath-taking mountains surrounding Pangnirtung, and its location near the entrance to Auyuittuq National Park, make it one of the more popular tourist destinations in Nunavut. Some local residents, then, are able to earn money in the tourist industry, for example serving as outfitters and guides, or displaying and selling artwork at the local print shop. Fishing is also a significant industry in Pangnirtung. Decentralisation of the Nunavut Government is bringing some governmental jobs into the community as well. Still, as I attempted to meet youth in the community outside of the high school, it seemed as though many of the youth had left to go South, to Iqaluit or Southern Canada, to pursue higher education or to find work. Pangnirtung provides an interesting contrast to Iqaluit because of its geographic and dialectal proximity to the capital, yet its social, cultural and historical separation.

### *Pond Inlet*

Pond Inlet is also a small, primarily Inuit community, with a population of around 1,200. Located on the northern tip of Baffin Island, Pond Inlet is geographically further removed from Iqaluit (a three-hour, thousand-dollar plane ride away) than Pangnirtung. The dialect spoken in Pond Inlet is the North Baffin dialect, linguistically the same as the esteemed dialect spoken in Igloolik and Arctic Bay. (Even among Inuit who do not come from Igloolik or Arctic Bay, there seems to be some sort of agreement that the Inuktitut spoken in these communities is particularly pure or admirable.) North Baffin dialect is



closely related to South Baffin dialect, and it would be surprising to find real communicative difficulties between Inuit from the two regions; however, the perceived differences will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Although similar to Pangnirtung in its size, population and infrastructure, the people in Pond Inlet provide interesting points of comparison and contrast to both Pangnirtung and Iqaluit. Because of its geographical distance from Iqaluit, Pond Inlet in some ways has taken on the character of a regional centre for North Baffin. There is less evidence of out-migration of youth in Pond Inlet than that which I observed in Pangnirtung, as the youth are much more visible in the community (although among those I met, many were neither in school nor working). There also appears to be greater in-migration of Inuit to Pond Inlet (compared to the very little observed in Pangnirtung), in keeping with its character which approaches that of a northern regional centre.<sup>1</sup> Most children, youth and younger adults in the community are bilingual in Inuktitut and English, although many elders remain monolingual in Inuktitut and Inuktitut is widely used throughout the community.

While research on the language situation in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet reveals some predictable similarities between the two smaller communities, in contrast to Iqaluit, the territorial capital, it also brings out unpredicted and remarkable differences between Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet. These differences suggest that even among the smaller Baffin Island communities, each community has unique characteristics and may thus be experiencing the threat to the Inuktitut language differently. The results discussed later in this paper may give a general idea of language competence, language use and language attitudes in the Baffin region, but should be considered specific to each of the three communities studied. The results and discussion will hopefully provide a framework for future study beyond Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, but are not transferable to other communities and other regions.

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<sup>1</sup> In- and out-migration of youth was not specifically studied, so these comments are purely impressionistic.

### 4.3 Population Focus: Inuit Youth in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet

Just as the different communities visited exhibit strong differences, there is also great variety in the experiences, attitudes and linguistic situation among individuals within a single community. As mentioned above, in the pilot study I identified language perceptions and attitudes of Inuit and non-Inuit from a wide range of age groups. Based on that preliminary study, and taking into account other research taking place at the same time, I decided to limit the focus of the study to Inuit youth.

For the purposes of this study, an Inuk is any person who identifies him/herself as such and has at least one Inuk parent. Particularly in Iqaluit, and to a lesser degree in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, many young Inuit have mixed heritage, most often with an Inuk mother and a Qallunaaq father.<sup>2</sup> These individuals tend to identify themselves primarily as Inuit (an identification which has political and economic benefits in Nunavut). At this time, a distinct *métis* ethnic group has not emerged.

The age group targeted in this study is 18 to 25 year-olds, for several reasons. First, the Inuit youth interviewed in the pilot study expressed experiences and views strikingly different from all other age groups. Secondly, the 18 to 25 year-olds are the pivotal generation for the survival of Inuktitut, at least in Iqaluit. This age group is currently having babies, and choosing, consciously or unconsciously, whether to pass on English or Inuktitut as the mother tongue. Their choice is crucial, as over half of Nunavut's population is under 25 (Canada. Statistics Canada 2001). Most of the youth still speak both languages fluently, but they may be raising the next generation that does not speak Inuktitut. Such a possibility is already evident in Iqaluit, where some Inuit children only speak English. The language attitudes of the youth are particularly important as language behaviour and language choice of the youth will affect the preservation of Inuktitut 50 years down the road, as the young Inuit choose whether or

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<sup>2</sup> Strictly speaking, one could differentiate between Qallunaat (English-speaking Euro-Canadians) and Uivik (French-speaking Euro-Canadians) but this distinction is not systematically made in practice and will not be made in this thesis. Qallunaat is used as a noun or an adjective when the subject is plural, while Qallunaaq is used as a noun or an adjective when the subject is singular.

not to continue to use Inuktitut and pass it on to their children. James Arvaluk, former Nunavut MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly), recommends that development of language policy for Nunavut take into account the needs and desires of Inuit youth: “Youth must be involved in the decision making on policy guidelines if we wish to have any hope of continuity in our language and culture. They will [be] the users and enforcers of tomorrow” (Arvaluk 1998:12). The third reason why this project focuses on Inuit youth is because another study (Dorais and Sammons 2000; 2002) identifies the language situation of adults and children in Iqaluit and two smaller Baffin Island communities, but has only collected partial data on the youth. I believe that the language attitudes expressed by young Inuit bring out reasons for the current level of Inuktitut use and help identify priority areas for language planning.

While I focus on the experiences, perceptions and attitudes of youth, I recognise the key role elders play in the promotion of Inuktitut. The experiences, perceptions and attitudes of the elders are paramount to the survival of Inuktitut and to more widespread efforts to find a balance between the old way and the new way of life, as many of the youth interviewed suggest. By focussing on the youth, I simply intend to give voice to a segment of the population that has not yet been particularly vocal about language loss, but which is intimately affected by the loss, and which holds one of the keys to the future of the language, namely intergenerational transmission.

Any Inuk youth residing in the three targeted communities was a potential participant in this study. In order to find participants, I began with key figures in the community and asked for suggestions as to whom to meet with and where to find participants. In the smaller communities, I announced my arrival and purpose on the community radio station, and asked for those interested to contact me. The most successful way of finding participants was through personal networks (my own and those of my contacts) and word of mouth. The high school principals, teachers and librarians were also a great help to me in finding participants among the older students. I was also able to visit workplaces such as the retail stores and governmental offices in order to

recruit potential participants. For the most part, members of the community were very cooperative and I found that Inuit youth were agreeable interviewees.

In total, I interviewed 37 young Inuit, 17 in Iqaluit (identified here by codes D1-D13, D15-D17, and A4), 10 in Pangnirtung (coded P1-P10) and 10 in Pond Inlet (coded I1-I10). Closed questionnaires were administered to 81 respondents in Iqaluit, 24 in Pangnirtung and 25 in Pond Inlet, for a total of 130 individuals. In my best estimations, the sample population represents at least ten percent of the potential target population in each community, thus adequately representing a broad range of viewpoints of Inuit youth living in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet. The following paragraphs give a clearer idea of the demographics of the sample population.

In the semi-directed interviews, participants are roughly equally split between males (48.6%, 18/37) and females (51.4%, 19/37).<sup>3</sup> Most are between 18 and 22 years old (in Pangnirtung the majority of participants are between 18 and 19, in Pond Inlet between 20 and 22), with only a minority of participants (16.2%, 6/37) between 23 and 25 years of age. The majority (75.7%, 28/37) of participants are long-term residents of their community, including many who have never lived elsewhere. In Iqaluit, over half of the participants (58.8%, 10/17) have mixed ethnicity. In Pangnirtung, 40% of the participants (4/10) have mixed ethnicity, compared to 20% of participants (2/10) with mixed ethnicity in Pond Inlet. Interview participants also represent a fairly even spread of students (40.5%, 15/37) and non-students (59.5%, 22/37), workers (59.5%, 22/37) and non-workers (40.5%, 15/37).<sup>4</sup> All participants but two (both living in Iqaluit) have Inuktitut as their mother tongue, with four participants (three in Iqaluit, one in Pond Inlet) also considering English their mother tongue.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Although participants' gender was identified as a potential factor, no significant differences were found between men and women in any of the analyses, so this factor will not be discussed in subsequent chapters.

<sup>4</sup> Seven participants (six in Iqaluit, one in Pond Inlet) were concurrently going to school and working. Another seven participants (one in Iqaluit, seven in Pond Inlet) were neither in school nor working.

<sup>5</sup> Appendix D shows the specific attributes of each participant in the semi-directed interviews.

The sample population of respondents to the closed questionnaire resembles the distribution of participants in the semi-directed interviews outlined above. Roughly equal numbers of young men (47.7%, 62/130) and women (52.3%, 68/130) responded to the closed questionnaire. Respondents represent a wide range of ages between 18 and 25, although once again the bulk of respondents (77.5%, 100/129)<sup>6</sup> are between 18 and 22. (This distribution is not really surprising due to the generally young population in the Baffin region.)

Most respondents are long-term, or life residents of their respective communities. In Pangnirtung, 69.6% of participants (16/23) have lived in Pangnirtung their whole lives. This number drops to 48% (12/25) and 45% (36/80) for Pond Inlet and Iqaluit, respectively. This difference between the communities evens out somewhat when considering participants who have lived in their community of residence for at least half of their lives, with 65% (52/80) in Iqaluit, 73.9% (17/23) in Pangnirtung, and 84% (21/25) in Pond Inlet. All of the closed questionnaire respondents from Pond Inlet originally come from a small, northern community or outpost camp, including Clyde River, Hall Beach and Igloolik (North Baffin communities). Likewise for Pangnirtung, 91.7% of respondents (22/24) come from a small, northern community or outpost camp (almost all from Pangnirtung itself). As may be predicted, the majority of respondents from Iqaluit (67.5%, 54/80) originally come from a northern regional centre, generally Iqaluit, although some come from Rankin Inlet (centre for the Kivalliq region of Nunavut), Yellowknife (capital of Northwest Territories) and Kuujjuaq (regional centre for Nunavik, Northern Quebec). Of the remaining third of Iqaluit respondents, many come from small communities in the North Baffin region (such as Pond Inlet, Clyde River, Hall Beach, Igloolik, Resolute, Arctic Bay and Grise Fiord), while others come from South Baffin communities such as Pangnirtung and Kimmirut.

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<sup>6</sup> Here and elsewhere, totals of less than 130 responses to the closed questionnaire reflect that some individuals did not answer all questions.

Overall, and in Iqaluit, 40% of respondents (52/129 overall, 32/80 in Iqaluit) are students. In Pangnirtung, this ratio climbs to 50% (12/24) and in Pond Inlet the percentage of students drops to 32% (8/25). In terms of employment, 63.1% of participants overall (82/130) are employed. In Iqaluit, the employment rate among participants reaches 75.3% (61/81), but drops to 54.2% (13/24) in Pangnirtung and to 32% (8/25) in Pond Inlet.

All respondents are Inuit; that is to say, all identified themselves as Inuk, and have at least one Inuk parent. All the same, particularly in Iqaluit, and to a lesser degree in the other communities, many individuals have one Qallunaaq parent. In Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet respectively, 40.7% (33/81), 25% (6/24), and 12% (3/25) identify their ethnic origin as “mixed (Inuit-Qallunaat)”.<sup>7</sup> The Qallunaaq parent is usually, but not always, the father.

In Iqaluit, of the youth who have a spouse, girlfriend or boyfriend, 42.9% (24/56) identified the ethnic origin of the partner as “Inuit”. These numbers are higher in Pangnirtung (63.2%; 12/19), although in this community the rate of mixed couples seems currently greater among the youth than it was among their parents. In Pond Inlet, 87.5% of respondents (14/16) identify the ethnic origin of their partners as “Inuit”. The ethnicity of a respondent’s parents is significant to consider because it may, in part, suggest reasons for the linguistic upbringing of that individual. The frequency of mixed relationships among today’s youth is also pertinent to the promotion of the Inuktitut language because it is indicative of the social reality within which youth are interacting. Furthermore, the ethnicity of today’s couples sets the backdrop for the linguistic socialisation of the new generation. (At least 40% of the Inuit youth surveyed in all three communities are currently raising children.)

Overall, the perceptions and attitudes presented in this study are those expressed by diverse Inuit men and women, ranging in age from 18 to 25. The participants originate

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<sup>7</sup> The “mixed” category is intended to include all Inuit of mixed heritage, whether the non-Inuit parent is English-speaking, French-speaking or other.

from a variety of communities, and have lived in their local community (Iqaluit, Pangnirtung or Pond Inlet) anywhere from a few months to their entire lives. Slightly fewer than half of the participants are students, while almost two thirds are working in a variety of fields. The majority has both Inuit parents, although tendency toward mixed unions is evident, particularly in Iqaluit, both in the participants' parents and current relationships. Almost all have Inuktitut as the mother tongue, although all participants also speak English, to varying degrees. The broad range and varying combinations of personal characteristics of the research participants brings out, in the results, the heterogeneity of language perceptions and attitudes among young Inuit, as well as points of agreement even within such a diverse group.

As different as the participants in this study are, there may remain voices that are under-represented in the sample population. At least two groups of young Inuit may be considered as having had less of a chance to participate in the research. The first group consists of individuals that are neither in school nor working, thus more difficult to find. Nonetheless, the sample population does contain a number of such people, especially in Pond Inlet, identified through personal acquaintances and word of mouth. The second group is youth with low levels of English language skills. Such individuals may have been reluctant to participate in the interview or questionnaire due to inability or discomfort communicating in the English language, unease with the Qallunaaq conversational style of asking questions, or even being unsure of what was wanted or expected of them. Once again, the sample population does include a couple of participants with lower levels of English language skills, but even these participants may not have had the same opportunity to express their concerns and opinions as someone more fluent in English. I do not believe the language used in the research was a major hindrance to participation, but clearly the results do not include the point of view of monolingual (Inuktitut) Inuit youth. Very few, if any, youth do not speak English, but those who do not surely have interesting points of view on language promotion that are absent from the results of this research.

The participants in this research are fascinating individuals who shared their time with me for a variety of reasons, whether it was their desire to be heard, their desire to make a difference, or their concern over the current state of Inuktitut in their community. Youth have been accused of apathy, but their willingness (in some cases eagerness) to participate in this study suggests that they do care about the future of Inuktitut. By participating in the semi-directed interviews and responding to the closed questionnaires, each individual told me about their own experiences with Inuktitut and English, and their desires for the linguistic future from their unique points of view and the presentation of the results in the following chapters aims to accurately reflect their voices.

#### **4.4 Data Collection**

As mentioned in the previous sections, this research project made use of three complementary data collection techniques in its attempt to identify the current language perceptions and attitudes of Inuit youth in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet: participant observation, semi-directed interviews and closed questionnaires. This combination of research techniques is inspired by previous research on various elements of the language situation in Inuit communities (cf. Dorais 1989; Dorais and Sammons 2002; Langgaard 2001; Patrick 2003; Taylor and Wright 1989). The combined approach also seemed most appropriate for achieving my objectives. Among others, the use of three data collection techniques allowed me to compile different types of information, as well as to expand upon information obtained through another technique, as will be seen below.

##### *Participant Observation*

Participant observation was ongoing throughout my research project and served primarily to inform my method and contextualize my results. Overall, participant observation was used to understand the general language situation, to know what to ask and how to interpret comments in the interviews. I lived in Iqaluit for sixteen months, participating in the community in a number of ways. For example, I shared a house with Inuit women around my age for part of the time. Another part of the time I lived in the



college dormitory. I worked part-time in front-line customer service (with Inuit and non-Inuit co-workers and clients), attended church services, shared meals with Inuit and non-Inuit families, participated in evening sports activities, hiked or snowmobiled on weekends, babysat, grocery shopped, attended public meetings, community feasts, community games, among others. As I participated in community activities for a period of time, some of the participants in Iqaluit are friends, with whom I was able to share a part of their lives and observe first hand the types of experiences that they were telling me about. Prior observations were useful in the interviews because they allowed me to nuance or re-ask questions, or simply respond, “Oh, really?” when a comment in an interview seemed to contradict my experience in town.<sup>8</sup> My experiences in the smaller communities were more limited and I felt the difference in the data collection. I visited each of the smaller communities twice, staying for approximately ten days each time, hosted by relatives of friends from Iqaluit. At all stages of the research, on a daily basis and after each interview and questionnaire, I took notes about what was said, in which context, and so on, as well as my reactions to each encounter. However, as the purpose of participant observation in this study was to gain a global understanding rather than to amass specific data, I do not claim to have conducted systematic observation. Another researcher would have different social networks and would potentially notice different aspects of language use than those I observed. My observations are specific to my own experience in the North, and thus subjective. Overall, participant observation informed the research process and aided in the interpretation of data collected through more formal means (interviews and questionnaires), but is not in itself the basis for analysis in this project.

### *Semi-Directed Interviews*

Semi-directed interviews were chosen as one of the main data collection techniques in this research project for several reasons. The focus of the research is perceptions and attitudes, and these cannot be known without asking an individual to

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<sup>8</sup> That said, participants’ comments in the interviews generally corresponded with what I had informally observed.

share his/her reflections on the language situation. Semi-directed interviews allow participants not only to express acknowledged attitudes, but also to recount experiences, hopes, likes and dislikes that reflect underlying perceptions and values. Also, I wanted to give participants the chance to speak about their own preoccupations regarding language, without imposing my own priorities and biases in the language situation. The semi-directed format is favourable in achieving this goal, as the interviews invited participants to speak freely on suggested general themes. Participants (when they took the opportunity to speak, which was not always the case) were able to discuss the language issues in terms of what is important locally, introducing and emphasizing language issues of perceived importance, while skimming over or omitting other issues, which may seem negligible compared to more pressing concerns. Finally, the semi-directed interview format was inspired by prior research done in the North with similar objectives, as mentioned above. By adapting a practised research method, the results of my research are more useful as they can be compared to other researchers' findings.

The semi-directed interviews, conducted one-on-one and tape-recorded, consisted of an introduction, the collection of background information (age, gender, place of residence), and the interview itself. During the introduction, I emphasized that there are no 'right' answers to the questions, that I was really interested in the participant's personal experience and opinion. In the interviews, I invited participants to speak about several key themes, including perceptions of language competence and language use, perceived language-related problems, the symbolic and practical value of Inuktitut and English, and finally desires for the linguistic future in their communities. An interview with specific questions pertaining to each theme was applied very loosely as a framework for the conversations (a copy can be found in Appendix B), but as each interview progressed, I followed the participant's lead, picking up on and exploring the unique experiences of each individual. Keeping a very open and informal approach allowed me to obtain fascinating anecdotes and frank opinions about language in the community, while trying to avoid the tendency to lead the discussion or the responses in a given direction. Interviews have comparable content, though at times the content is more specifically elicited than at others.

I asked participants to be introspective about their own language competence and use. Recording participants' intuition of their own language use suits my purposes because I am most interested in perceptions and attitudes, which may influence behaviour, which I consider the basis for language loss or preservation. In some cases, I attempted to compare perceptions with actual use by eliciting very specific, recent behaviour (e.g. with your mother, just before I arrived), or by alluding to behaviour I had informally observed in other encounters. (Dorais and Sammons' 2002 data include self-reports and observed language use. Their study found that the two correlate.)

Interviews were conducted in English. My choice to conduct all interviews solely in English was governed by my own inability to conduct interviews in Inuktitut, additional concerns that working with a translator would have introduced (i.e. safeguard of anonymity in such small communities and the level of frankness with which the participant shared his/her personal experiences and attitudes) as well as the participants' ability to communicate fluently and comfortably in English. In spite of these considerations for using English, I am convinced that my ability to understand the linguistic situation in Nunavut and participants' abilities to communicate their perceptions of the situation are restricted by my limited capacity in Inuktitut. In future research, I would certainly benefit from being able to conduct research in the language of the participants' choice.

### *Closed Questionnaires*

Closed questionnaires were the final data-collection technique used in this research project. Their use allowed me to test on a greater number of Inuit youth the perceptions and attitudes expressed by the relatively smaller number of youth interviewed. Such duality in method is important for perception and attitude research, which necessarily elicits somewhat fluid data. Also, as mentioned above, closed questionnaires have been used in other language attitude research among Inuit (for example Patrick 2003; Taylor and Wright 1989). For the above reasons, the closed

questionnaire provided a useful data collection technique, allowing me to expand upon the data collected through the semi-directed interviews.

The format of the questionnaire is inspired by those used by previous researchers. The questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first section elicits background information. In section two, respondents are asked to rate their personal language use in a variety of speech situations on a scale from “only Inuktitut”, “mainly Inuktitut”, “Inuktitut and English”, “mainly English” to “only English”. Section three provides a list of language-related statements, most of which were taken from previous interviews. Participants are asked to indicate how much they agree or disagree with each comment on a scale from one (strongly disagree) to ten (strongly agree). An even-numbered scale was chosen in order to force participants to situate themselves as either in agreement with the statement or not in agreement, although responses of five or six are both considered neutral in the analysis. A ten-point scale was also used in order to allow participants flexibility to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with various statements. (In many cases, as seen in the interviews, participants’ responses seem to say, “Yes, but...” or “No, but...”, indicating that their language perceptions and attitudes are not black and white, and often require greater contextualization than is possible in a closed questionnaire.) In the discussion of results, responses are reduced to a five point scale: strongly agree (9 and 10), agree (7 and 8), neutral (5 and 6), disagree (3 and 4) and strongly disagree (1 and 2). Accompanying graphs show the detailed breakdown of original responses. Respondents also had the option of responding “no opinion”, or of adding comments after each statement, if they wished. Responses of “no opinion”, or questions left blank, have been excluded from the analysis. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.

As mentioned above, the content of the questionnaire derives from a preliminary analysis of the semi-directed interviews and observations within the community. As such, it addresses the same themes as the interviews: perceptions of language competence and language use; practical and symbolic importance of each language; perceived language-related problems in the community; and desire for the linguistic future of the

community.<sup>9</sup> The content of previous language attitude questionnaires was also considered in the final choice of statements to include in the questionnaire.

The closed questionnaires were administered in person, in written form. As I waited while each questionnaire was filled out, I was available to answer any questions that participants had. The questionnaire was distributed in a bilingual Inuktitut-English format, with Inuktitut in the dominant position, however only one individual filled out the questionnaire in Inuktitut.

Throughout the data collection, my objective was to elicit information which would help me to understand the current language situation of the youth in the three communities, and to understand what, from their point of view, could or should be done to influence its evolution. To this end, I conducted semi-directed interviews, closed questionnaires, and informally observed language use and listened to language-related comments around me. Further details of the content of the interviews and closed questionnaires will be given along with corresponding results in the following chapters.

#### **4.5 Method of Analysis**

The data collected in this study are subjected to both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The analysis of the interviews is primarily qualitative, assisted by NVIVO software. The overarching categories of analysis correspond to the basic themes elicited in the interviews and the questionnaires: 1/ language competence, 2/ language use, 3/ language importance, 4/ language-related problems, and 5/ language planning. Consistent with my general approach to language planning research, the more specific coding categories within these themes are determined from the bottom up. That is to say,

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<sup>9</sup> Some questions address more than one theme. The following breakdown gives a loose thematic classification of questions.

Language competence: Part one, question 12; Part three questions 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 12, 14, 23, 32, 36, 38, 39, 40

Language use: All of Part two; Part three questions 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 15, 37, 43, 45, 53, 56

Importance of languages: Part three questions 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 35

Language Problems: Part three questions 33, 34, 41, 42

Desire for Future: Part three questions 24, 25, 31, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 57

a preliminary analysis of the interviews identified relevant coding categories. The final analysis applied the thus-determined coding to all interviews.

In the analysis, I identified the wide variety of perceptions and attitudes expressed by the young Inuit on each of the themes. Both explicit and implicit comments were included in the analysis. I also took into account the questions, comments or prodding on my part (or lack thereof) that led to specific utterances. In the following chapters, I highlight the most salient thoughts and attitudes to show the overriding trends among young Inuit, but also present unique perceptions and attitudes to underline, once again, the diversity of attitudes found even among the small population of Inuit youth in the three communities.

While the results from the interviews show the wide variety of ideas and opinions of a small segment of the population, the results from the closed questionnaires show the perceptions and attitudes of a broader sample of Inuit youth. As such, the quantitative results show the percentage of respondents to the closed questionnaires that strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or are neutral to particular perceptions and attitudes expressed in the interviews, or that declare to have no opinion. Means are used to show trends in overall responses and in responses for each community. ANOVA tests were run on responses to part three of the questionnaire, to test the significance of differences between communities. Where differences are significant, probability scores of  $\leq 0.05$ ,  $\leq 0.01$  or  $\leq 0.001$  are given in the discussion, as appropriate.

The goal of this thesis is to put forth what the young Inuit are saying about Inuktitut, now and for the future, in order to understand their perceptions of current language-related problems (if any) and reasons why they would be motivated to maintain Inuktitut. In the chapters that follow, I present the various language experiences, perceptions and attitudes of the youth interviewed and surveyed as part of this study. I quote extensively throughout the results in line with my data-driven, descriptive approach. My aim is for the reader to understand and appreciate the experiences of Inuit

youth and their perceptions of the linguistic reality, which is best achieved by letting the participants speak for themselves.

**PART TWO**

**INUIT YOUTHS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE CURRENT LINGUISTIC SITUATION**



## CHAPTER V

### LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AMONG INUIT YOUTH

#### **5.0 Introduction**

Based on the Government of Nunavut's expressed desire to promote Inuktitut into new domains, along with early observations that Inuit youth were already not using Inuktitut where they could, I set out in this thesis to identify the language perceptions and attitudes of Inuit youth. Inuit youths' perceptions of their current linguistic reality show whether or not they perceive a threat to Inuktitut, as well as whether or not they consider the potential loss of Inuktitut to be problematic. Moreover, perceptions of language competence and use indicate the degree to which any perceived general threat to Inuktitut touches them, personally. The acknowledgement of a problem and the motivation to do something about it are key elements of a language planning initiative. As the following chapters show, Inuit youth in Iqaluit and Pond Inlet tend to be concerned about the future of Inuktitut, although their peers in Pangnirtung are more confident about the continued strength of their ancestral language. Generally speaking, Inuit youth strongly value Inuktitut and desire its continued vitality, even if knowledge of English is considered essential for the lives they wish to lead. Inuktitut, their first language, is treasured, but having English, for the moment the second language of most Inuit, is considered a necessity, as will be seen in the chapters to come.

The current chapter presents Inuit youths' perceptions of their ability to speak, understand, read and write Inuktitut and English. It shows that many Inuit youth have acquired and maintain “good” to “excellent” competence in both Inuktitut and English. However, beyond these perceptions of an adequate bilingualism, results show that most Inuit youth in Iqaluit, and a smaller number in Pond Inlet and Pangnirtung, are concerned about losing their ability to speak Inuktitut.

## 5.1 Mother Tongue

Inuktitut is the mother tongue of the majority of young Inuit surveyed. Based on responses to the closed questionnaire (see Appendix C, Part one, question 11), Inuktitut is the sole mother tongue of 82.0% (105/128) of respondents and a mother tongue alongside English for an additional 5.5% (7/128). On the other hand, for 10.9% (14/128) of respondents, English is the unique mother tongue and for two respondents (1.6%), neither English nor Inuktitut is the first language.<sup>1</sup> Clearly the majority of young Inuit surveyed learned Inuktitut as their first language (sometimes concurrently with English), as seen in Table 1.

**Table 1: Mother Tongue in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet**

	Iqaluit		Pangnirtung		Pond Inlet		Total	
<b>Inuktitut</b>	<i>63</i>	<i>78.8%</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>91.3%</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>84.0%</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>82.0%</i>
<b>English</b>	<i>12</i>	<i>15.0%</i>			<i>2</i>	<i>8.0%</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>10.9%</i>
<b>Inuktitut and English</b>	<i>3</i>	<i>3.8%</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>8.7%</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>8.0%</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>5.5%</i>
<b>Other</b>	<i>2</i>	<i>2.5%</i>					<i>2</i>	<i>1.6%</i>
<b>Total</b>	<i>80</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

Comparing communities, all of the respondents in Pangnirtung and all but two of the respondents in Pond Inlet learned at least Inuktitut as the mother tongue. In each of these communities, two individuals report English as an additional mother tongue,

<sup>1</sup> For one of these individuals, French is the mother tongue alongside English. The other individual's mother tongue is uncertain. This individual has both Inuit parents and comes from the Kivalliq region of Nunavut, so he may have been indicating that his mother tongue is another dialect of the Inuit language.

alongside Inuktitut. In Iqaluit, capital of Nunavut, the percentage of youth with Inuktitut as the mother tongue is still strong, though slightly lower, with 81.3% of respondents (65/80) having Inuktitut as the mother tongue, including the two individuals who acquired Inuktitut and English simultaneously. For 15% (12/80) of Iqaluit respondents, though, English is the only mother tongue.

Although the percentage of Inuit who have Inuktitut as their mother tongue is very high, and suggests a particularly optimistic future when compared to similar data for other Aboriginal languages in Canada, it is notable that a minority of Inuit parents have *not* passed on Inuktitut as a first language. The most obvious factor accounting for the variation in mother tongue is the place of residence. Fourteen of the sixteen (87.5%) individuals who do not have Inuktitut as their mother tongue are from Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut. Furthermore, twelve of these sixteen individuals (75.0%) originally come from northern regional centres, including Iqaluit, Nunavut (5), Rankin Inlet, Nunavut (3), Kuujuaq, Quebec (1) and Yellowknife, Northwest Territories (1). Of the remaining four, one comes from a major city in Southern Canada and two come from small communities in the Kitikmeot, a region of Nunavut where the transfer from Inuktitut to English is more pronounced. These results are congruous with the general trend for language transfer to be more pronounced in the larger communities.

The parents' ethnicity alone does not appear to be a particularly useful variable for explaining cases where Inuktitut was not passed on from parent to child. Of the participants with English as the mother tongue, half (8/16) come from mixed marriages, while the other half have both Inuit parents. In the whole sample population, 32.3% (42/130) come from mixed marriages, while 67.7% (88/130) do not. Otherwise stated, 81.0% (34/38) of the respondents from mixed marriages do indeed count Inuktitut as a mother tongue. Of course, the small number of individuals who do not have Inuktitut as the mother tongue makes it difficult to ascertain exactly which factors lead to Inuktitut not being passed on as the first language. Likely the combination of a number of factors contributes to this outcome, including parents' competence in and attitudes toward Inuktitut. Although the parents' choice is beyond the scope of this study, in Chapter Six,

participants in the current study who are now parents themselves explain their own choices and motivations in the transmission of Inuktitut and English to their children.

Overall, the responses for mother tongue show that a generation ago, Inuktitut was the main language being transmitted to Inuit children, although not consistently. Based on the high number of Inuit youth in the Baffin region who count Inuktitut as their first language, one would expect to find a solid base of Inuktitut competence among the youth, upon which the future of the language in the region may be built. This is only partly the case. The following analysis of language competence describes how Inuit youth surveyed have improved, maintained, or lost their initial competence in Inuktitut, shedding light on the ability of today's youth to transmit Inuktitut as the mother tongue to the next generation.

## **5.2 Perceived Linguistic Competence**

Most Inuit youth surveyed can indeed speak and understand Inuktitut well, as one would expect when this is the mother tongue of such a large majority. In addition, most can read and write Inuktitut. Although English is the mother tongue of only a small minority of participants, almost all have acquired proficiency in oral and written English as well, usually as a result of formal schooling. The results below outline the participants' self-reports of competence in Inuktitut and English in four areas: speaking, understanding, reading, and writing. Here and throughout this study, the focus is on perceptions rather than objective measures, and should only be considered to identify broad trends. Later in this chapter, other perceptions (such as comfort communicating) are used to qualify or support these self-reports. Further, Dorais and Sammons (2002) specifically report at least one instance in which perceived competence exceeds measured competence, as will be seen in discussions of Inuktitut literacy below. Nonetheless, the focus on perceptions is appropriate to the objectives of the current study as they indicate the Inuit youths' awareness of language loss and thus the perceived need and motivation for language planning. That said, future research which could objectively contrast Inuit youths' perceptions with an objectively measured reality would be desirable.

### *Oral Competence in Inuktitut*

As seen in Table 2, most Inuit youth surveyed do feel that they speak Inuktitut well, estimating that their competence is “good” (56.9%, 74/130) to “excellent” (24.6%, 32/130).<sup>2</sup> In the smaller communities, perceived competence speaking Inuktitut is highest; in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, a cumulative 95.8% (23/24) and 100% (25/25) of respondents, respectively, consider their ability to speak Inuktitut “good” to “excellent”, compared to a lower 71.6% (58/81) in Iqaluit. Considering only the individuals with the highest opinion of their competence speaking Inuktitut, 17.3% (14/81), 41.7% (10/24) and 32% (8/25) of respondents in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, respectively, reply that their ability to speak Inuktitut is “excellent”. In each community, proportionately fewer participants rate their competence as “excellent” rather than “good”. If these self-reports reflect the linguistic reality, the majority of Inuit youth surveyed speak Inuktitut well enough, but as not as well as they could.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 2: Perceived Competence Speaking Inuktitut**

		Place of residence							
		Iqaluit		Pangnirtung		Pond Inlet Inlet		Total	
Language knowledge: speaking Inuktitut	Excellent	14	17.3%	10	41.7%	8	32.0%	32	24.6%
	Good	44	54.3%	13	54.2%	17	68.0%	74	56.9%
	Elementary	21	25.9%	1	4.2%			22	16.9%
	None	2	2.5%					2	1.5%
	Total	81	100.0%	24	100.0%	25	100.0%	130	100.0%

<sup>2</sup> Based on responses to question 12 of part one of the closed questionnaire (see Appendix C).

<sup>3</sup> One could also consider the modesty of participants or the competence of participants’ peers, to whom the participants compare themselves, as factors in the choice of “good” over “excellent”. For this reason, responses of “good” and “excellent” are often grouped together in the presentation of results. Nonetheless, the consistency of the trend to express “good but not excellent” language competence (in Inuktitut, and less so in English) across a wide variety of measures makes it worthy of notice, as seen throughout this chapter.

In the semi-directed interviews, responses show a similar tendency to express that one's spoken Inuktitut is good, but not at the level they aspire to achieve, especially in Iqaluit:<sup>4</sup>

A4. Because I could put on my resume, no question, fluent in English, fluent in Inuktitut, although I am sort of struggling with my Inuktitut, I am still fluent.

D1. I speak Inuktitut, not fluently but I'm getting it back I'm trying to get it back. I don't want to lose it all. [...]

D1. Sometimes, it's like, it's all there, I'm on a roll speaking it, sometimes there's a block. It's just like. But I try to learn.

D7. It's kind of hard. I wish I was better in [Inuktitut].

R. Why is that?

D7. Just, I don't know, it's just comfortable. It's my native language, and so.

R. Are you comfortable when speaking Inuktitut?

D7. Uh huh. But I get confused in what I'm saying sometimes. Well, not confused, but I can't come up with the words and stuff.

P7. Maybe, I'm not excellent in my whole knowledge of Inuktitut, but I would still say excellent.

Most of the participants quoted above are expressing perceptions of 'good but not necessarily excellent' abilities speaking Inuktitut. Similar perceptions are noticeable in all areas of Inuktitut competence, as seen below. Furthermore, the variety in the perception of language competence expressed in the above quotations (from "I've lost it" to "I'm excellent") is also evidenced throughout the responses for all aspects of participants' experiences.

In contrast to the majority of young Inuit with good to excellent abilities speaking Inuktitut, a minimal 1.5% of respondents (2/130) say that they are totally unable to speak Inuktitut. A further 16.9% (22/130) report that their spoken Inuktitut is elementary. Of the respondents who say that their competence speaking Inuktitut is elementary to none, all but one (95.8%; 23/24) currently live in Iqaluit. Among the Iqaluit youth surveyed,

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<sup>4</sup> Participants are identified by codes to protect their anonymity. A4 and all "D" participants are from Iqaluit. "P" participants are from Pangnirtung and "I" participants are from Pond Inlet. A complete listing

2.5% (2/81) say that they have no competence speaking Inuktitut and 25.9% (21/81) estimate that their competence is elementary, as seen in Table 2 above.

For most respondents, perceived ability to understand Inuktitut is equal to the perceived ability to speak Inuktitut. The results for *understanding* Inuktitut (shown in Table 3) closely mirror the results for *speaking* Inuktitut just discussed. In Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet in particular, results are almost identical to those for speaking Inuktitut, with 41.7% (10/24) and 32% (8/25) of participants, respectively, considering their competence understanding Inuktitut “excellent”, and 58.3% (14/24) and 64% (16/25), respectively, considering their competence understanding Inuktitut to be “good”.

In Iqaluit, respondents have a tendency to evaluate their competence understanding Inuktitut slightly higher than their competence speaking Inuktitut. Among Iqaluit respondents, 29.6% (24/81) estimate their competence understanding Inuktitut as “excellent”, 55.6% (45/81) as “good”, 13.6% (11/81) as “elementary” and 1.2% (1/81) as “none”. Such responses bring Iqaluit respondents somewhat in line with the other two communities in terms of ability to understand Inuktitut, although perceived competence is still noticeably stronger in the two smaller communities, and strongest in Pangnirtung.

**Table 3: Perceived Competence Understanding Inuktitut**

		Place of residence							
		Iqaluit		Pangnirtung		Pond Inlet		Total	
Language knowledge: understanding Inuktitut	Excellent	24	29.6%	10	41.7%	8	32.0%	42	32.3%
	Good	45	55.6%	14	58.3%	16	64.0%	75	57.7%
	Elementary	11	13.6%			1	4.0%	12	9.2%
	None	1	1.2%					1	.8%
	Total	81	100.0%	24	100.0%	25	100.0%	130	100.0%

In many ways, the above responses support the idea that Inuit youth are learning, and to a certain degree maintaining oral competence in Inuktitut, because consistently

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of participants’ attributes can be found in Appendix D.

more than two thirds of respondents say that their competence in speaking and understanding Inuktitut is “good” to “excellent”. However, it is noteworthy that only a minority of participants have acquired or maintain “excellent” proficiency in Inuktitut, even though it is the mother tongue of the vast majority of participants. Furthermore, an interesting comparison to the 12.5% of all participants (16/128) who do not have Inuktitut as the mother tongue (see Table 1, above) are the 18.5% of participants (24/130) who consider their ability to speak Inuktitut as elementary to none. These two observations provide preliminary evidence for incomplete acquisition or loss of Inuktitut. Also, the higher results for understanding Inuktitut compared to speaking Inuktitut in Iqaluit may suggest that a minority of Inuit youth demonstrate passive competence in Inuktitut.

### *Literacy in Inuktitut*

Young Inuit in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet have also acquired and maintain a certain level of literacy in Inuktitut, even if their self-evaluated literacy levels are lower than their self-evaluated oral competence. As seen in Table 4, among all of the youth surveyed, a total of 67% (87/130) consider their competence reading Inuktitut to be “good” (46.2%, 60/130) to “excellent” (20.8%, 27/130). In Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet (where Inuktitut is the language of instruction until at least grade four, and sometimes until grade six), the proficiency in reading Inuktitut is higher than the overall average. In Pangnirtung, 70.8% (17/24) consider their competence reading Inuktitut to be “good” (33.3%, 8/24) to “excellent” (37.5%, 9/24), while in Pond Inlet, 84% (21/25) of respondents estimate that they are “good” (68%, 17/25) or “excellent” (16%, 4/25) readers of Inuktitut. In Iqaluit, fewer respondents (60.5%, 49/81) say that they are “good” (43.2%, 35/81) or “excellent” (17.3%, 14/81) readers of Inuktitut.



**Table 4: Perceived Competence Reading Inuktitut**

		Place of residence							
		Iqaluit		Pangnirtung		Pond Inlet		Total	
Language knowledge: reading Inuktitut	Excellent	14	17.3%	9	37.5%	4	16.0%	27	20.8%
	Good	35	43.2%	8	33.3%	17	68.0%	60	46.2%
	Elementary	20	24.7%	5	20.8%	4	16.0%	29	22.3%
	None	12	14.8%	2	8.3%			14	10.8%
	Total	81	100.0%	24	100.0%	25	100.0%	130	100.0%

As in the results for oral competence, the lowest levels of perceived Inuktitut literacy are found in Iqaluit, where 24.7% (20/81) and 14.8% (12/81) estimate their reading ability in Inuktitut to be “elementary” or “none”, respectively. However, a few young Inuit in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet are less than confident in their abilities to read Inuktitut. In Pangnirtung, 20.8% (5/24) consider their reading ability “elementary” and 8.3% (2/24) consider their reading ability “none”. In Pond Inlet, 16% (4/25) of respondents estimate that their ability to read Inuktitut is “elementary”.

In Iqaluit and Pond Inlet, the results for writing Inuktitut (seen in Table 5) parallel the results for reading Inuktitut, except that the number of respondents estimating that their competence is “excellent” writing Inuktitut is slightly higher in both communities. In Pangnirtung, although the number of “excellent” responses drops when participants estimate their writing abilities, overall a higher proportion of respondents consider their writing skills to be better than their reading skills; 87.5% (21/24) of respondents consider their ability to write Inuktitut “good” (58.3%, 14/24) or “excellent” (29.2%, 7/24).

**Table 5: Perceived Competence Writing Inuktitut**

		Place of residence							
		Iqaluit		Pangnirtung		Pond Inlet		Total	
Language knowledge: writing Inuktitut	Excellent	17	21.0%	7	29.2%	6	24.0%	30	23.1%
	Good	30	37.0%	14	58.3%	15	60.0%	59	45.4%
	Elementary	22	27.2%			4	16.0%	26	20.0%
	None	12	14.8%	3	12.5%			15	11.5%
	Total	81	100.0%	24	100.0%	25	100.0%	130	100.0%

These results need to be nuanced against results discussed by Dorais and Sammons (2002:67), where only 37.8% (31/82) of high school students who *said* they could read and write Inuktitut actually scored more than 70% on an Inuktitut literacy test. Of the grade twelve students and Arctic College students (that is, those who would fall into the age group of the current study), 50% and 72% of respondents, respectively, achieved higher than 70% on the literacy test. These results reported by Dorais and Sammons suggest that Inuit youths' perceptions of their ability to read and write Inuktitut may not reflect true performance on objective measures.

Nonetheless, the trend that emerges from the self-reports shows that participants perceive their literacy skills in Inuktitut as less developed than their oral skills. A greater number (33.1%, 43/130) of young Inuit estimate that their ability to read Inuktitut is "elementary" or "none" than those who estimate that their ability to speak and understand Inuktitut is "elementary" to "none" (18.5%, 24/130). The lower confidence in literacy skills than in oral skills is also evident in responses from the semi-directed interviews:

A4. But my Inuktitut reading is very slow. I'm dead slow. I don't even understand the whole thing and I'll have to read the sentence over again to fully understand it. But hearing it, I can understand it easily. But reading it, I'm very slow. It's not that I'm a bad reader, because I know that I can zip through this, but I'm saying that if I saw Inuktitut around me more often, I'd probably be able to. So I have to, and I end up having to practice, and to work harder to try to understand it...

P2. But when I read in Inuktitut, I read really slow. 'Cause we spend more time studying English than Inuktitut. There's only one class in Inuktitut. And I already finished that class, two classes, Inuktitut. I wish I could do more Inuktitut classes. [...]

P2. ...when you're writing, when I'm writing it's very slow in Inuktitut.

Nevertheless, two thirds of youth surveyed feel that their ability to read and write Inuktitut is "good" to "excellent". Once again, these responses give rise both to hope and to concern. On the one hand, it appears clear that most have indeed obtained a solid basis in written and spoken Inuktitut. Having a young population that can, for the most part, speak, understand, read and write Inuktitut, to varying degrees, bodes well for the potential preservation and promotion of the language. However, given that most of these

individuals would have learned to read and write Inuktitut during their first three years of school, it seems that acquired literacy skills may be diminishing over time, possibly in connection with the acquisition of English literacy.<sup>5</sup>

### *Oral Competence in English*

As seen above, the majority of young Inuit surveyed have Inuktitut as their mother tongue, and generally consider their ability to speak, understand, read and write Inuktitut to be more or less “good”. However, all have also acquired English. Even though English is the second language for most Inuit youth, almost all consider their competence in each of the four areas, speaking, understanding, reading and writing, to be “good” to “excellent”. Perceived competence in English equals, and in some cases surpasses, competence in Inuktitut.

As seen in Table 6, a total of 95.3% (122/128) of respondents say that their ability to speak English is “good” (53.1%, 68/128) to “excellent” (42.2%, 54/128). In Iqaluit alone, 97.5% (78/80) of respondents report that their English speaking skills are “good” (51.3%, 41/80) to “excellent” (46.3%, 41/80). Similarly, in Pangnirtung, 91.3% (21/23) estimate that their ability to speak English is “good” (47.8%, 11/23) to “excellent” (43.5%, 10/23). Although 92% (23/25) of Inuit youth surveyed in Pond Inlet estimate their speaking abilities to be “good” (64%, 16/25) to “excellent”, a relatively lower 28% (7/25) actually consider their speaking abilities “excellent”.

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<sup>5</sup> It is possible that some respondents were living outside of Nunavut during their early years of schooling. It is also possible that some of the Iqaluit respondents were educated in the English stream immediately upon entering kindergarten, so did not benefit from Inuktitut-language instruction.

**Table 6: Perceived Competence Speaking English**

		Place of residence							
		Iqaluit		Pangnirtung		Pond Inlet		Total	
Language knowledge: speaking English	Excellent	37	46.3%	10	43.5%	7	28.0%	54	42.2%
	Good	41	51.3%	11	47.8%	16	64.0%	68	53.1%
	Elementary	2	2.5%	2	8.7%	2	8.0%	6	4.7%
	None								
	<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

In all communities, competence in understanding English is very similar to the competence speaking English, as seen in Table 7. Once again, respondents show high levels of confidence in their abilities to understand English, although in comparison with the other communities, fewer respondents from Pond Inlet consider their ability to understand English “excellent”.

**Table 7: Perceived Competence Understanding English**

		Place of residence							
		Iqaluit		Pangnirtung		Pond Inlet		Total	
Language knowledge: understanding English	Excellent	40	50.0%	10	41.7%	7	28.0%	57	44.2%
	Good	39	48.8%	12	50.0%	16	64.0%	67	51.9%
	Elementary	1	1.3%	2	8.3%	2	8.0%	5	3.9%
	None								
	<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### *Literacy in English*

Among the Inuit surveyed in the three communities, the perceived competence in reading English is also high, consistently higher than the perceived competence reading Inuktitut. As seen in Table 8, a total of 96.9% (125/129) of respondents estimate their ability to read English as “good” (54.3%, 70/129) or “excellent” (42.6%, 55/129). In each community, the combined responses of “good” and “excellent” total no less than 96%. As was the case in oral competence, respondents from Iqaluit and Pangnirtung show the greatest confidence in their ability to read English, with 46.3% (37/80) and 41.7% (10/24)

respectively responding “excellent”. In Pond Inlet, a lower 32% (8/25) feel that they are “excellent” readers of English.

**Table 8: Perceived Competence Reading English**

		Place of residence							
		Iqaluit		Pangnirtung		Pond Inlet		Total	
Language knowledge: reading English	Excellent	37	46.3%	10	41.7%	8	32.0%	55	42.6%
	Good	40	50.0%	14	58.3%	16	64.0%	70	54.3%
	Elementary	3	3.8%			1	4.0%	4	3.1%
	None								
	Total	80	100.0%	24	100.0%	25	100.0%	129	100.0%

The results for writing English, seen in Table 9, show that at least 92% of respondents from each of the three communities also feel that they have “good” to “excellent” abilities writing English. A total of 96.1% (124/129) of respondents consider their skill level in writing English to be “good” (56.6%, 73/129) to “excellent” (39.5%, 51/129).

**Table 9: Perceived Competence Writing English**

		Place of residence							
		Iqaluit		Pangnirtung		Pond Inlet		Total	
Language knowledge: writing English	Excellent	35	43.8%	9	37.5%	7	28.0%	51	39.5%
	Good	42	52.5%	15	62.5%	16	64.0%	73	56.6%
	Elementary	3	3.8%			2	8.0%	5	3.9%
	None								
	Total	80	100.0%	24	100.0%	25	100.0%	129	100.0%

The almost complete absence of individuals who consider their competence in any aspect of English to be less than “good” is evidence that the young Inuit surveyed feel that they have successfully acquired English, most often as a second language. Still, less than half of respondents rate their competence in each of the areas as “excellent”. This same perception is expressed in semi-directed interviews:

D17. ...as I grew up, I learned to accept English, because I could speak it well enough and read it well enough and understand well enough...

I9. I still make mistakes in English language.

A difference between the results for Inuktitut competence and those for English competence is seen in the tendency for respondents from Iqaluit to rate their competence in English higher than their peers in the other communities. Whereas respondents from the smaller communities generally express more confidence in their abilities in Inuktitut than their peers in Iqaluit, respondents from Iqaluit have demonstrated, in the preceding paragraphs, greater confidence in their abilities in English than their peers from the smaller communities. Such responses are a first indication of the difficulty of achieving and maintaining a balanced bilingualism in these Inuit communities.

### **5.3 Other Evidence of Language Competence**

The above discussion of language competence, based on information collected with the closed questionnaire, and supported by quotations from the semi-directed interviews, gives a broad idea of the linguistic competence of Inuit youth surveyed. However, the results are static, and based only on direct self-evaluation of competence. Other indices of competence provide a more dynamic view of the language competence of young Inuit in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet. Are their abilities in each language sufficient for reaching personal or communicative goals? How confident are they in their abilities in each language? What is the relative place of Inuktitut and English in each individual's life? How is the bilingualism of each individual evolving? Are the abilities in Inuktitut and English increasing, side by side, or remaining stagnant, or is one language being lost? The following sections discuss language competence from these perspectives, based on comments made in the semi-directed interviews and on reactions to specific statements on the closed questionnaire. Results from questions regarding, among others, the effectiveness, comfort and ease of communication in Inuktitut and English add breadth to the understanding of linguistic competence presented in the preceding section.

The idea that most Inuit youth maintain good but less than perfect competence in Inuktitut and English is supported by respondents' testimonies that they have some problems understanding, or making themselves understood in either Inuktitut or English. Difficulties in communicating in Inuktitut are most frequently expressed in Iqaluit and in relation to communicating with elders:

R. Are there ever situations where you want to use Inuktitut but couldn't?  
D5. Maybe when an elder is telling a story and I couldn't understand him. I could understand some of it, but not all of the words.

R. What made you want to get back to speaking more Inuktitut?  
D8. I don't know, elders talking to me and I wouldn't understand and then I would feel bad. Like, they're telling stories or something and I'll be interrupting them, asking someone else what are they talking about and I don't want to do that. I was raised to respect elders and keep our language strong...

R. Is it hard speaking Inuktitut?  
D11. Not with the words that you know, but with the words that you don't know, some people came up to me and asked me this question, I'd go, I don't know what you're saying. Usually I start understanding with the way they're, with their gestures, like, okay...I understand what you're saying, but...there's so many words in Inuktitut that I don't know. I'm like, I don't know what you're saying, so I have to go to another person to get them to translate to me. I knew that, but I didn't understand you. Especially with the elders. It's kind of hard.

R. Hard to understand the elders?  
D11. Yeah, at times, but when you know they want you to understand, so they try to put in the most simplest way, so then the Inuktitut words get so stuck up there, you kind of mix words together so they're like, what did you say, but then the word just comes out, on it's own you know, I understand what you're saying. So. It should have been easier.

The Inuit quoted above (all from Iqaluit) are expressing difficulties communicating with elders outside of one's family due to incomplete competence in Inuktitut.<sup>6</sup> At times, however, the difficulty in communicating is with one's own family members, a grandparent, or even a parent:

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<sup>6</sup> Some might argue that elders have acquired an additional register in Inuktitut; as such, the difficulty in understanding elders would reflect not having yet reached the elders' level of suppleness with the language (nor would a youth be expected to have), rather than language loss.

I8. Especially like, I can't understand my grandmother when she starts speaking Inuktitut about caribou hides and seal skins, or everyday little things, when she starts speaking, I can't understand her. So it'd be nice to be able to understand what she's saying.

D10. Yeah. Like some things I don't understand, but most of it, I understand it. When it comes to asking, some words in Inuktitut they're the same. Like you say them the same but they mean differently. So there was one time at home, my dad asked for the extension cord and ... I thought he meant the hymn book, that we sing out of, and I was like, oh, it's in my room and he went to go check and he was like, "Where is it? I can't find it." And then I asked him again, what is it that you want and he went ... and then my mom goes, "Extension cord". I was like, "Oh! I thought you meant the hymn book!" They went to go look for it. So, when it comes to something like that, I don't understand it but, yeah.

D11. ...Especially talking to my parents [who are both Inuit], I want to carry on a conversation with them, but then again, I go to English, and I felt like, thinking maybe they thought I was speaking to them in Inuktitut, but then again, I go to English, so it's kind of hard for me to talk to them. It's really hard. Especially having to go on with my feelings the way life is going... I don't know, I wish that I knew, that I know how to express my feelings with them, but it's hard, it's really hard, so I can't.

D13. Because when people ask me questions or when they ask, "Here, give me this and that" in Inuktitut, then kind of I don't know practically all of them. [...] Like at home, even I can't understand. Like I just know the basics. [...] It makes me want to speak Inuktitut more.

These individuals are referring to communicative problems within their families which provide evidence of insufficient Inuktitut competence.

Such difficulty communicating in Inuktitut touches some, but not all, of young Inuit surveyed. When asked in the closed questionnaire to indicate their degree of agreement with the statement, "*I have problems understanding the elders' stories,*" based on a scale of one to ten (where one indicates strong disagreement and ten indicates strong agreement)<sup>7</sup> the mean of responses bare disagreement in Iqaluit (4.6) and clearer disagreement in the other communities (3.61 in Pangnirtung and 4.16 in Pond Inlet). Overall, 3.1% (4/129) of respondents strongly agree, 20.9% (27/129) agree, 20.2%

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 23



(26/129) are neutral, 29.5% (38/129) disagree and 26.4% (34/129) strongly disagree. Such responses correspond with self-reports of competence in Inuktitut in that they suggest that most young Inuit do indeed have “good enough” Inuktitut for most communicative needs (shown in the overall disagreement with the statement, total mean = 4.34), but that their Inuktitut is not in all cases perceived as adequate (suggested by mitigated responses).

Less than perfect English is suggested by the indication of some problems communicating in English, notably at school. These difficulties were first expressed in the semi-directed interviews:

P1. Mostly the younger people, they can't talk English.

R. Really?

P1. In school, too. Some of them don't understand what the teacher's saying, so they're failing.

P10. With our teacher, sometimes, I have a hard time understanding a definition in English, and one of the students tells us in Inuktitut, and then we understand it better.

R. Do you see any other language problems or places where people can't communicate in Pond Inlet?

I1. Maybe in the schools. Some people quit school because some of them don't know English.

I5. No. But, like, there's the teachers here, most of them are white, and the kids don't understand them. They either don't want to go to school anymore or maybe they think it's hard.

The above statements from participants in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet refer generally to *others'* difficulties communicating in English, not one's own. Personal difficulty in communicating in English due to insufficient competence was later tested in the closed questionnaire. Reacting to the statement, “*I have/had some problems in school because I do/did not speak English well enough,*”<sup>8</sup> the mean of responses is 4.24 (disagreeing) in Iqaluit, 6.41 (barely agreeing) in Pangnirtung and 5.29 (neutral) in Pond Inlet. Overall, 8.3% (10/121) of respondents strongly agree with this statement, 25.6% (31/121) agree,

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 39

19.8% (24/121) are neutral, 22.3% (27/121) disagree and 24% (29/121) strongly disagree (overall mean = 4.82). Once again, the absence of a clear stance either way suggests that the participants do have a certain knowledge of English, but that for some participants, the level of competence is inadequate for particular communicative needs.

Good, but less than perfect competence in Inuktitut and English is further suggested by statements of insecurity speaking these languages. The first interview participant to speak of feelings of insecurity when speaking Inuktitut was A4:

A4. Okay, my problem is I consider myself fluent in Inuktitut, and really, I am, but when I'm around elders or anyone who speaks really good Inuktitut, like fluent, like all day, like main language, I get nervous, and I don't speak good Inuktitut. I don't know what it is. [...] I always speak English to [my boss], even though we both understand and speak Inuktitut. [...] I do that because, I think that I'm intimidated, because I heard him [...] correcting the person he was talking to, like correcting their Inuktitut [...] I'm afraid of making a mistake and because right away he'll assume that the rest of my Inuktitut is all bad [...] So I'm always worried about that. Even though I know that I speak it and read it and write it. Well, I don't read it very well, but I can write it really fast.

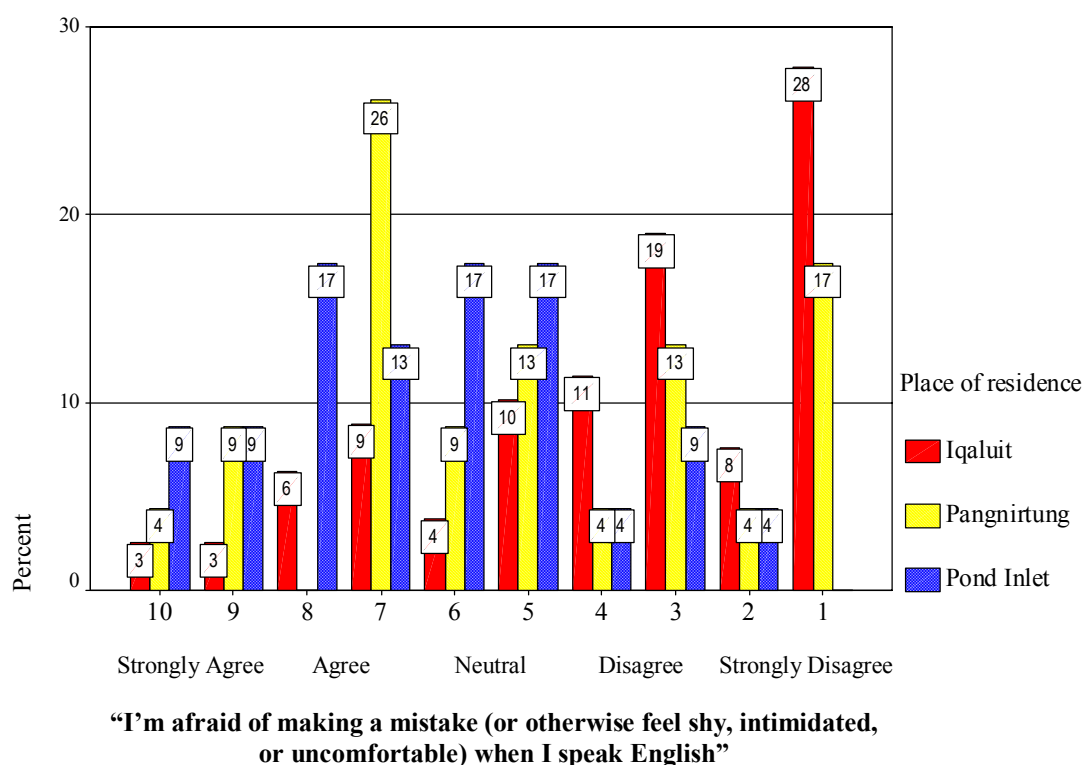
In contrast, on the closed questionnaire, participants tend to disagree with the statement, "*I feel intimidated speaking Inuktitut*"<sup>9</sup> (Iqaluit mean = 3.64, Pangnirtung mean = 3.43, Pond Inlet mean = 4.48), suggesting that *most* young Inuit still feel quite comfortable speaking Inuktitut. All the same, the absence of complete disagreement suggests that some can relate to A4's comments. Insecurity in the use of Inuktitut may suggest imperfect competence, and may also indicate sensitivity to language attitudes, sometimes negative, of other people in one's speech network.

Reactions to the statement "*I'm afraid of making a mistake (or otherwise feel shy, intimidated, or uncomfortable) when I speak English*"<sup>10</sup> are mixed, with significant differences between communities ( $p \leq 0.001$ ). Overall, 8.8% (11/125) of respondents strongly agree, 20% (25/125) agree, 19.2% (24/125) are neutral, 24.8% (31/125) disagree and 27.2% (34/125) strongly disagree (overall mean = 4.5). Respondents in Iqaluit tend

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 8

to disagree with this statement (mean = 3.80), showing a tendency to be more comfortable with use of English than not. However, the overall neutrality of responses in Pangnirtung (mean = 5.04) and Pond Inlet, where the mean verges on agreeing (mean = 6.39) suggests that some young Inuit are less than totally confident in their English language abilities; Pond Inlet respondents in particular express some insecurity in their use of English. Detailed responses for each community can be seen in Figure 3.



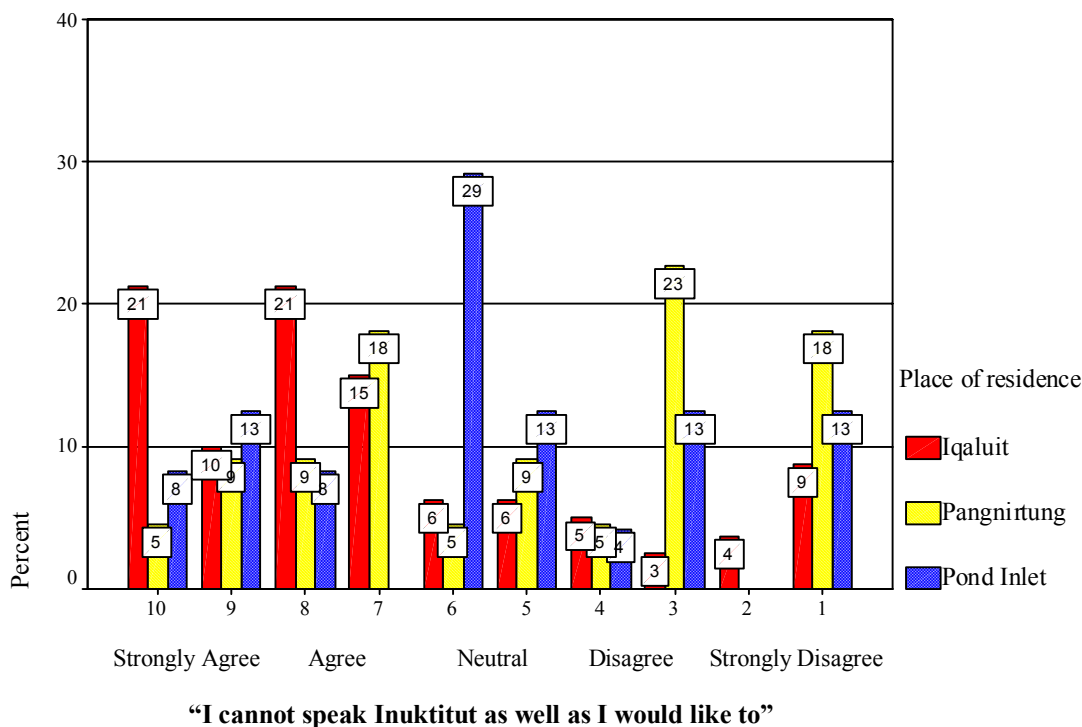
**Figure 3: Insecurity Using English**

Overall, the responses to the two statements above, referring to insecurity using Inuktitut and English, show varying levels of confidence in Inuktitut and English, and suggest that competence in both languages, though generally good, is not consistently perceived as “good enough”.

This perception that competence in Inuktitut and English is not satisfactory is perhaps most clearly seen in the statements that compare perceived to an internal

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 14

standard of *desired* competence. Participants in the closed questionnaire were asked to agree or disagree (on a scale of one to ten) with the statement “*I cannot speak Inuktitut as well as I would like to*”.<sup>11</sup> As seen in Figure 4, responses show, as with the previous questions, a broad range of opinions.



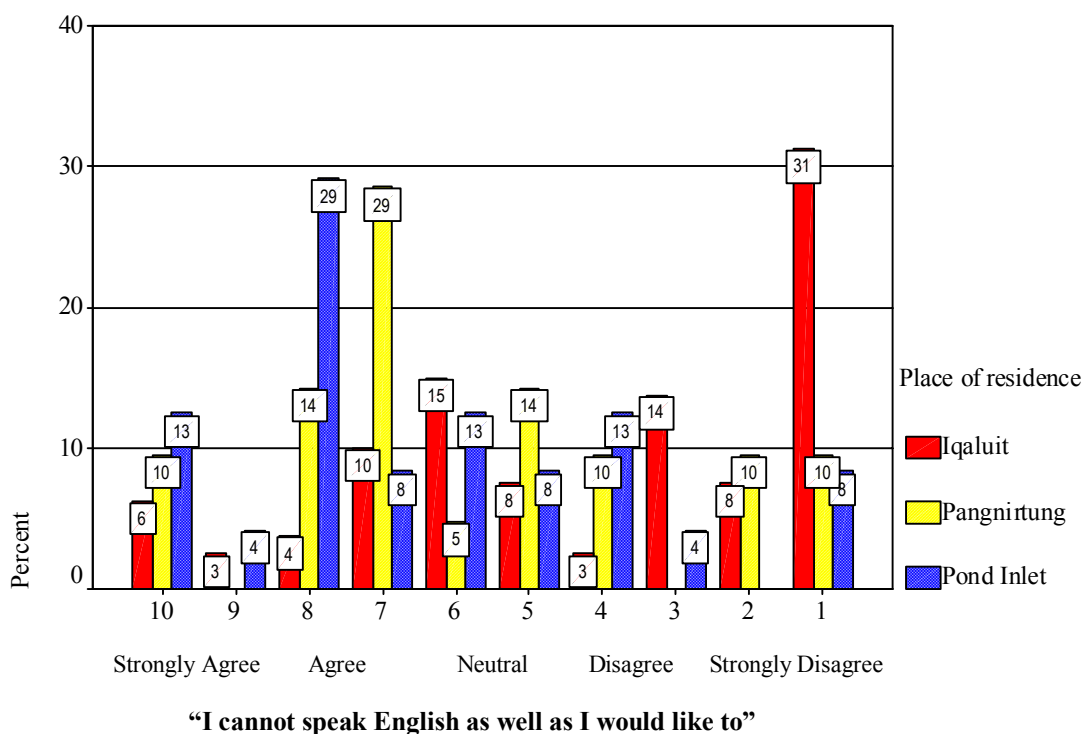
**Figure 4: Dissatisfaction with Perceived Competence in Inuktitut**

Overall, 26.2% (33/126) of respondents strongly agree that they cannot speak Inuktitut as well as they would like to, 29.4% (37/126) agree, 18.3% (23/126) are neutral, 12.7% (16/126) disagree and 13.5% (17/126) strongly disagree. In other words, a minority express satisfaction with their current level of competence in Inuktitut, while the majority of young Inuit agree or strongly agree that they cannot speak Inuktitut as well as they would like to. In Iqaluit, the dissatisfaction is clear (mean = 6.9). In Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, where oral competence in Inuktitut was previously consistently recorded as “good” to “excellent” (see Tables 2 and 3), respondents are neutral, or express mixed feelings, about their ability to speak Inuktitut (Pangnirtung mean = 5.05, Pond Inlet mean = 5.67). Taken together, these results suggest, once again, stronger perceived Inuktitut

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 32

competence in the smaller communities and weaker perceived Inuktitut competence in Iqaluit ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). The results also coincide with previously reported results suggesting that competence in Inuktitut is good, but not necessarily as good as the young Inuit would like it to be.

As for English, there is additional evidence that perceived competence does not correspond with Inuit youths' internalised desire for English competence, particularly in the smaller communities. In response to the statement, "*I cannot speak English as well as I would like to*"<sup>12</sup>, shown in Figure 5, respondents in Iqaluit tend to disagree (mean = 4.1), while respondents from Pangnirtung are split between agreeing and disagreeing (mean = 5.76) and respondents in Pond Inlet tend to slightly agree (mean = 6.42). These results suggest that incomplete competence in English is a concern for some of the young Inuit surveyed, particularly in Pond Inlet, while others, particularly in Iqaluit, are satisfied with their competence in English ( $p \leq 0.001$ ).



**Figure 5: Dissatisfaction with Competence in English**

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 38

Taken together, the reactions to the statements “*I have problems understanding the elders’ stories,*” “*I have/had some problems in school because I do/did not speak English well enough,*” “*I feel intimidated speaking Inuktitut,*” “*I’m afraid of making a mistake (or otherwise feel shy, intimidated, or uncomfortable) when I speak English,*” “*I cannot speak Inuktitut as well as I would like to,*” and “*I cannot speak English as well as I would like to,*” support the idea that young Inuit tend to have good, though sometimes incomplete competence in both Inuktitut and English. The comparison of the results from Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet also confirms that youth in Iqaluit express the greatest confidence in their abilities in English, compared to the other two communities, whereas Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet youth convey greater confidence in their competence in Inuktitut.

The results discussed above set the stage for recognising the wide variety of experiences (and thus needs) within communities and between communities, as well as for considering both Inuktitut and English as desired targets of language promotion. There is some evidence of a need to focus on increased learning opportunities, in order to assist youth in achieving their linguistic targets. Additionally, there is an apparent need for actions which would encourage and assist Inuit youth to maintain each aspect of proficiency in Inuktitut that they achieve. Furthermore, communication problems and insecurity rooted in linguistic competence are two possible motivations for language planning.

#### **5.4 Comparing Inuktitut to English Competence**

The Inuit youth in this study have been described as a bilingual population, with some ability in both Inuktitut and English. Up until this point, perceived competence in Inuktitut and in English have mainly been considered separately. However, this may be a false separation because the participants’ ability in one language at times may overlap and affect the other language. To better understand the current situation with regard to language competence, it is pertinent to consider the interface between Inuktitut and

English proficiency. More specifically, it is useful to identify whether Inuktitut, the mother tongue, is remaining the strongest language or whether English, the second language, is surpassing Inuktitut and becoming dominant in each individual's life. The following analysis provides an idea of how young Inuit in the three communities are managing their bilingualism, classifying participants as either Inuktitut-dominant, English-dominant or balanced bilinguals. The analysis is necessarily rough because it relies on participants' self reports of which language is easier or more comfortable to speak. The analysis does not account for the varying degrees of dominance in a language (some participants may have only a slight preference for their "dominant" language), or for the reality that individuals may consider one language easier in one situation, while the other language feels more natural in a different situation. However, even an admittedly over-simplified classification of participants as Inuktitut-dominant, English-dominant or balanced bilinguals is useful for describing the linguistic climate among the youth in each community.

We have already established that Inuktitut is the unique first language of the majority of respondents in the closed questionnaire. As for the participants in the semi-directed interviews, all but two (both of whom live in Iqaluit) have Inuktitut as their mother tongue (94.6%; 35/37). Four participants in the semi-directed interviews (10.8%; three in Iqaluit, one in Pond Inlet) also consider English as their mother tongue. Comments in the semi-directed interviews confirm that English was learned as a second language, usually only when the individual entered school:

R. When did you learn English?

D2. I remember when I was just a little kid, at my grandparents place and I remember knowing no English, but I don't know how old I was. But I've known English for quite some time now.

R. Do you have any idea who you learned English from, if it was at school, or from TV, or from somebody that you knew, or?

D2. I guess all over the place. School, friends, yeah, just everywhere.

R. When did you learn English?

D16. Well, I guess right from the day I started school. I can't really remember how far back. Growing up, I spoke nothing but Inuktitut at home. I mean, I was home a lot with my parents and the only time I ever

spoke English was in school and when I'm playing with my friends, growing up. Right up until the age of thirteen, maybe, twelve, thirteen, I didn't really speak any English at all, I mean I got to really use it.

R. Did you learn English before you came to school?

P2. I learned it at school. [...]

R. Did you learn English from school, or from TV, or?

P2. School.

P3. ...and then I started going to school, then I started picking up English. I couldn't speak English at all when I was younger.

R. When did you start to learn English?

P4. When I got to grade six or seven.

R. So you only learned it at school, you didn't learn it at home?

P4. Uh huh.

Particularly in Pangnirtung, but in the other communities as well, participants emphasize that they only learned English at school, and sometimes as late as grade six or seven. This emphasis clarifies English's status as a second language. (In an earlier study in Igloolik, another small Baffin Island community, Dorais [1995] also found that Inuktitut-English bilingualism was a consequence of formal schooling.) Most participants remember a time when Inuktitut was their clear, primary language, when they knew little or no English. As has been seen in the description of perceived language competence, this situation has evolved to the point where most young Inuit are now functionally bilingual. The experience of bilingualism varies from individual to individual and from community to community.

#### *Evidence of Balanced and Inuktitut-Dominant Bilingualism*

Generally speaking, youth in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet show the greatest ability to manage their two languages in such a way that Inuktitut remains the dominant language, or that skills in Inuktitut and English are balanced. As seen in the previous sections, Inuit youth in the smaller communities are generally confident in their abilities to speak and understand Inuktitut. Comparing the self-reported oral competence in Inuktitut and English from the closed questionnaires (shown in tables 2, 3, 6 and 7



above), results for speaking and understanding Inuktitut are comparable to corresponding results for competence speaking and understanding English. Results from the semi-directed interviews confirm this tendency toward balanced or Inuktitut-dominant bilingualism among participating youth in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet. In both of these communities, 60% of the participants (Pangnirtung 6/10: P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P9; Pond Inlet 6/10: I1, I3, I4, I6, I7, I10) express that their competence in Inuktitut is stronger or equal to their competence in English:

R. Are you more comfortable in [Inuktitut] than in English?

P9. I'm more comfortable in Inuktitut to Inuit people, but it's fine with Qallunaat.

R. Do you find that you can express your feelings better in Inuktitut than in English?

P9. I think. 'Cause I have more proper words in Inuktitut than in English. Maybe because it's my first language.

R. Are you more comfortable expressing your feelings in Inuktitut or in English?

I1. In Inuktitut. [...]

R. Which language is easier for you to speak, Inuktitut or English?

I1. Inuktitut.

R. Do you prefer speaking English or Inuktitut?

I3. Inuktitut.

R. Yeah, how come?

I3. Because, it's more comfortable. Yeah.

R. More comfortable because it's easier, or.

I3. Yeah, it's easier, so, you know.

R. Do you find it easier to express your feelings in Inuktitut or in English?

I6. I think I find it easier to express them in Inuktitut. Some words I find it easier in English but it depends on the word, or the occasion.

For some of these participants, the preference expressed for Inuktitut is slight. Other participants express no preference for Inuktitut or English. However, these results suggest that among a majority of participants from Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, acquisition of English is not threatening the individual's competence in Inuktitut.

Evidence for balanced or Inuktitut-dominant bilingualism in the smaller communities is further supported by reactions to certain closed questionnaire statements which specifically contrast ease of communication in Inuktitut and English. The majority of respondents in Pangnirtung (59.1%, 13/22) and Pond Inlet (52%, 13/25) agree or strongly agree with the statement “*I find it easier to express my feelings in Inuktitut (as opposed to English)*”<sup>13</sup> (Pangnirtung mean = 6.36; Pond Inlet mean = 6.6). Significantly fewer youth ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) in Iqaluit suggest that they find it easier to express their feelings in Inuktitut than in English; twenty-five percent (20/78) agree or strongly agree; 41% (32/78) are neutral and 33.4% (26/78) disagree or strongly disagree (mean = 5.36).

On the other hand, respondents in Iqaluit are more likely ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) to agree with the statement, “*English is easier for me to speak than Inuktitut*”<sup>14</sup> than their peers in the smaller communities. The spread of results indicates how much the experience of bilingualism varies from individual to individual and between communities. In Iqaluit, 47.5% (38/80) of respondents agree or strongly agree that English is easier for them to speak than Inuktitut, 25% (20/80) indicate neutrality, and 27.6% (22/80) disagree or strongly disagree (mean = 6.14). In contrast, 25% (6/24) of respondents in Pangnirtung agree or strongly agree that English is easier for them than Inuktitut, 12.5% (3/24) express neutrality and 62.5% (15/24) disagree or strongly disagree (mean = 4.79). Similarly, in Pond Inlet, 24% (6/25) agree or strongly agree, 36% (9/25) express neutrality and 40% (10/25) disagree or strongly disagree (mean = 5.12). These results suggest a tendency toward balanced or Inuktitut-dominant bilingualism in the smaller communities, but English-dominant bilingualism in Iqaluit.

#### *Evidence for English-Dominant Bilingualism*

Even though the comments from a majority of participants from Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet (as seen above) indicate that competence in Inuktitut remains equal to or stronger than competence in English, 40% of respondents from both communities

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<sup>13</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 9

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 5

(Pangnirtung 4/10: P1, P4, P8, P10; Pond Inlet 4/10: I2, I5, I8, I9) report that they find English an easier or more efficient tool for communication:

R. Would you consider yourself bilingual?

P1. Not really. I mean, I only use English most of the day.

P10. I find that English is better than Inuktitut for me. ...I understand him [when he speaks in Inuktitut], I just can't say it sometimes.

I5. Our Inuktitut is so bad that we decided to talk more English to each other. Because we can't explain anything in Inuktitut when we're talking. But my Inuktitut and hers, *ila*, it's good, but when I'm talking to her or when she's talking to me, we don't really know how to explain this or that. So, we decided to use English.

I9. They're fairly the same. In a way. But, I think I understand more English than Inuktitut, which I'm not so proud of. I mean, I'm proud of it, but I'd rather learn more Inuktitut than English.

The comments for P1 and P10 must be interpreted keeping in mind that these individuals grew up with an English-speaking father (as did P8 and I2, not quoted). However, the other participants, based on their self reports, appear to be experiencing English-dominant bilingualism. I5's comment, quoted above, brings out how language attitudes and perceptions can affect the relative dominance of languages. Earlier in the interview, I5 characterises her Inuktitut as excellent, but alludes to personal reasons for preferring English over Inuktitut. Her comments suggest that affective factors influence her choice to preferentially treat English as her dominant language, providing some initial insight into the key role that language attitudes play in language maintenance or loss.

If a few individuals in the smaller communities, where Inuktitut is strongest, are experiencing language transfer, a larger proportion of Inuit youth in Iqaluit are leaning toward English as their stronger language. Results from direct self-evaluation on the closed questionnaire (see Tables 2 through 9) show that Iqaluit respondents overall perceive their competence in English as superior to their competence in Inuktitut. For example, 97.5% (78/80) of respondents estimate that their English speaking skills are "good" to "excellent", whereas a lesser 71.6% (58/81) evaluate their competence speaking Inuktitut at the same level. Furthermore, results from other questions on the

closed questionnaire discussed above (e.g. “*English is easier for me to speak than Inuktitut*”) also indicate a preference for English over Inuktitut in Iqaluit. Results from the semi-directed interviews indicate as well that Inuit youth in Iqaluit tend to be English-dominant bilinguals.

In the semi-directed interviews in Iqaluit, only ten out of the seventeen respondents explicitly compare their competence in Inuktitut and English. Consequently, it is entirely possible (especially judging from the broad range of experiences expressed throughout the various interviews and closed questionnaires) that some Inuit youth in Iqaluit have stronger Inuktitut than English. Among those who compare Inuktitut to English competence, however, no one expresses stronger competence in Inuktitut than English, and only two say that they are equally competent in Inuktitut and English:

R. How well would you rate your knowledge of Inuktitut, from excellent, good, elementary, or you don't speak Inuktitut?

D4. I'm good. I'm bilingual.

R. And how well would you rate your knowledge of English on the same scale?

D4. My English? Yeah. It's on the same scale. Yeah.

D10. [My Inuktitut] is between good and excellent.

R. How about English?

D10. English? Same thing as Inuktitut, good. [...]

R. What about expressing your feelings? Do you find it easier in Inuktitut or in English?

D10. In both. Yeah, in both.

Other participants hesitate, but nonetheless say that their English is stronger than their Inuktitut:

R. How well would you rate your knowledge of Inuktitut now? Excellent, good, elementary, or?

D2. Good.

R. And your knowledge of English?

D2. I can probably speak English better than I speak Inuktitut, because I use it so much more. [...] I guess it's pretty much half and half. [...]

R. Do you find it easier to express your feelings in Inuktitut or English?

D2. Both. There's some things that I express myself better in English and then vice versa, as well. [...] I guess it's half and half. Some things I say better in English, some things I say better in Inuktitut.

A larger proportion of participants express definitively that they speak English more confidently, or with more ease, or better than they speak Inuktitut:

R. Is it easier to speak in English, or in Inuktitut, like with your mom for example?

D1. English is a lot easier, for me anyway. My mom [an Inuk] speaks it fluently.

D8. Oh, English is good. But in Inuktitut, it's elementary, so. [...]

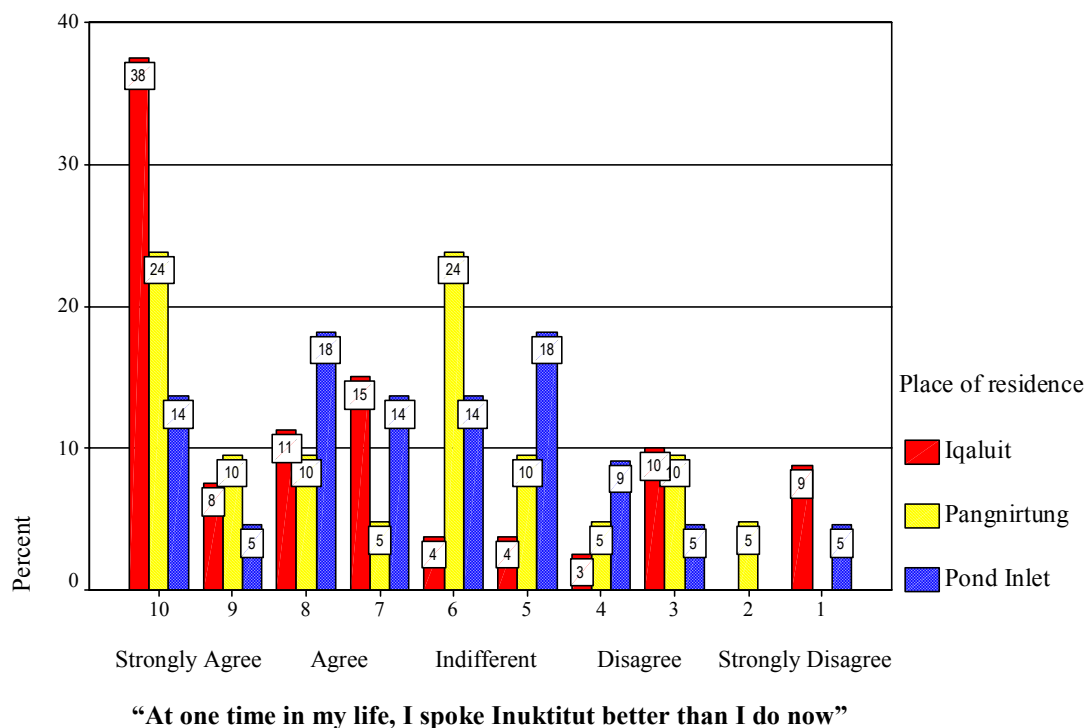
R. Do you find it easier to express your feelings in Inuktitut or in English?

D8. In English.

In Iqaluit, and to a lesser extent in the other communities as well, individuals have unique experiences and the relative dominance of Inuktitut or English varies for each individual. However, in comparing statements about competence in Inuktitut and in English, a trend emerges, showing a tendency toward balanced or Inuktitut-dominant bilingualism in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet and English-dominant bilingualism in Iqaluit. Other comments from participants in the semi-directed interviews, particularly relating to an awareness of language loss, support these conclusions.

### **5.5 Perceptions of Loss of Inuktitut**

Certainly in Iqaluit, there is a tangible feeling that Inuktitut is being lost. This loss is seen in Iqaluit participants' testimonies of personal language loss and in the descriptions of language loss in Iqaluit as expressed by participants from all three communities. Although the threat to Inuktitut is particularly evident in Iqaluit, some young Inuit in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet also feel that their level of Inuktitut is decreasing. This perception can be seen in reactions to the closed questionnaire statement, "*At one time in my life, I spoke Inuktitut better than I do now*"<sup>15</sup> seen in Figure 6.



**Figure 6: Perceptions of Language Loss**

In total, 63.4% (78/123) of respondents agree or strongly agree that they are experiencing some degree of personal loss of Inuktitut (mean = 7.05). Although agreement is most obvious in Iqaluit (mean = 7.28), it is evident in all three communities (Pangnirtung mean = 6.81, Pond Inlet mean = 6.45). Comments from the semi-directed interviews develop this idea that even though most participants perceive their competence in Inuktitut as “good” to “excellent”, for many participants, the competence is not as good as it once was.

### *Pangnirtung*

In Pangnirtung, where Inuit youth generally express confidence in their Inuktitut abilities, three out of ten participants (30%) nonetheless testify to personal loss of Inuktitut. P1 and P10 both identify that they no longer speak Inuktitut as well as they once did, and blame it on living a portion of their lives in Southern Canada. P5 also

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 36

experienced loss of Inuktitut while living down South. All three also have Qallunaat fathers. An additional participant, P8, says that she never completely acquired Inuktitut, and is now doing so. She attributes not fully acquiring Inuktitut as a child to being brought up by her father, who predominantly spoke English with her. P1 and P10 observe language transfer around them in Pangnirtung as well, although this observation is not shared by other participants, who tend to say that Inuktitut is strong there. Conversely, most of the participants (7/10; P1, P2, P3, P5, P7, P9 and P10) mention loss of Inuktitut in other Nunavut communities, generally Iqaluit, especially among teenagers:

P2. Big difference. Like compared to here. Here, they speak more Inuktitut. When we talk to the soccer team in Iqaluit, they couldn't understand us.

R. Because of the dialect, or because they don't speak Inuktitut?

P2. Because they don't speak Inuktitut. [...]

P3. Yeah. Iqaluit, it's like, teenagers there are speaking nothing but English now. Although they understand a bit of Inuktitut, but they still speak English. I see a big difference there, between Iqaluit and here. Us, we speak a lot more Inuktitut than them.

On the whole, participants in Pangnirtung seem to be saying that they are not experiencing a great deal of language loss within their community, but that they do perceive language transfer in Iqaluit.

### *Pond Inlet*

Overall, Inuktitut is also perceived as strong in Pond Inlet. However, in contrast to Pangnirtung, all of the participants in Pond Inlet allude to observing some degree of language loss in their community, whether speaking about themselves, their peers, or children. Half of the Pond Inlet participants (5/10; I2, I5, I6, I9, I10) speak of experiencing personal loss of Inuktitut. I2, for example, is aware of having lost some Inuktitut while living in Southern Canada. Her father is Qallunaaq, and her situation is reminiscent of P1, P5 and P10, mentioned above. I5, in contrast, describes a conscious choice to transfer to English, "I wasn't like that before. I used to speak Inuktitut all the

time. I didn't... Since last year I've been using more English, because of my friends, too.” Unlike the others, I5 does not have a Qallunaaq parent, and relates the switch to a deliberate choice (see quote on p. 135, above) and to the influence of friends (her new partner is Qallunaaq), rather than to time in Southern Canada.

Whether or not they speak of loss of Inuktitut in their own lives, most Pond Inlet participants acknowledge some degree of language transfer among others in their community. Similar to the explanations given by Iqaluit participants (see below), some Pond Inlet participants explicitly link the loss of Inuktitut to the increase in English usage:

I1. Lots of teenagers are beginning to lose their language. [...] A lot of them speak English now. They're forgetting their language.

I9. When they learn only English, or started talking about, started talking in pure English, they kind of lose the Inuktitut language, the tradition.

I10. But there's times when I can't explain in Inuktitut because, English is spoken a lot more than it was when I was a kid.

Additionally, a majority of Pond Inlet participants (6/10; I1, I2, I4, I5, I8, I9) specifically mention the decline of Inuktitut competence in other communities, including Iqaluit and Resolute Bay (a small community on Cornwallis Island, at the north-western extremity of the Baffin region):

I8. ...I just notice that once you're out of this region, it's all in English, everything is in English, everyone's speaking English. When I went to Resolute, too, everyone there speaks English. No one can hardly understand Inuktitut.

I9. I'd say...the Inuktitut language is slowly going, slowly dying. [...] Because there is a few words that we don't use anymore, we just use the English language instead. Inuktitut language is kind of disappearing. In some communities, Inuktitut doesn't really exist anymore. They speak English only. They can't speak Inuktitut, even though they're Inuit.

Pond Inlet participants testify to language loss personally, within their community, and to a greater degree, in other communities such as Iqaluit and Resolute Bay.



### *Iqaluit*

As one would expect, based on results for self-reported Inuktitut competence, compared Inuktitut and English competence, and reports from Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet about language loss in Iqaluit, indeed a higher proportion of young Inuit in Iqaluit speak of language transfer. Eleven participants (out of seventeen; A4, D1, D2, D3, D6, D7, D8, D10, D13, D15 and D17) explicitly describe personal experiences of language loss. Some now only know a few words in Inuktitut, even though it was their first language (i.e. D3). Others maintain excellent competence in Inuktitut, although they feel their proficiency is not as good as it once was (i.e. D2). For others (i.e. D6), loss of Inuktitut is restricted to a particular area of competence, such as reading and writing:

D6. But like if I wasn't to speak it for a bit, I'd probably lose it because I haven't done much writing in a long time, so I'm losing my writing a bit in Inuktitut, but, my understanding, like when I talk to people I understand it very clearly and I talk it clearly, so. Just my spelling's going a little bit.

The degree and area of loss of Inuktitut varies considerably from individual to individual, as each individual has a unique combination of experiences with Inuktitut and English.

Inuit in Iqaluit who are experiencing loss of Inuktitut equate decreased competence to increased use of and exposure to English. Generally, participants explain the transfer to English in terms of heightened presence of English in the environment and greater need to use English, although some participants also allude to decreased presence of Inuktitut in the environment and decreased contact with people who speak Inuktitut as contributing to Inuktitut loss. As the following examples show, living outside of Nunavut, moving to Iqaluit from a smaller community, going to school, getting a job, dating/marrying a Qallunaaq and having less contact with one's immediate family are all given as reasons for transferring to English.

As seen previously in the experiences of participants from Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, moving South can have a negative impact on one's maintenance of Inuktitut. D1 speaks of his loss of Inuktitut, which he attributes to time spent living in Southern Canada, "I speak Inuktitut, not fluently but I'm getting it back I'm trying to get it back. I don't want to lose it all. [...] That's a shame. When you lose your language. I almost lost it. I'm trying to get it back. Because I want to get it back and it's good to have it back." The significance of moving South is evidently that in Southern Canadian communities Inuktitut is rarely spoken. Inuit in Southern communities need to speak English. Interestingly, moving to Iqaluit can have a similar effect to moving South:

A4. ... When we moved here [to Iqaluit] from Pang, that's when I started speaking English all the time. [...] And then when I moved here, I started slowly losing it [Inuktitut] and kind of like it's been changing or whatever, but that's okay because it's not too late. I can go back and I can learn and I can improve, I can expand on my Inuktitut, but it's not lost, I'm not a lost case. I still have pretty good Inuktitut.

Participants from Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet express the perception that Iqaluit is becoming a place where less Inuktitut is used, and exposure to English is more pronounced. Participants from Iqaluit confirm this perception. (More will be said on language use in Iqaluit in the following chapter.)

Iqaluit participants account for their loss of Inuktitut not only in terms of location, but also in terms of participation in specific activities that give rise to particular communicative needs. Some feel that their attendance at school caused them to lose their Inuktitut. In D3's case, beginning school coincided with living outside of Nunavut, with drastic and permanent consequences on her ability to speak Inuktitut:

D3. Yeah, it was obviously, you start going to kindergarten when you're five and I only spoke in Inuktitut, I didn't speak any English. I took a bus to kindergarten like everyone else did. It's a five mile drive. And I got there and I was the only Inuktitut-speaking person among Indians, who obviously didn't understand and my teacher said, don't speak that language here, I don't understand you. And so, from that day, I went home and my mom spoke to me as usual in Inuktitut and I said, don't, I'm not supposed to speak that language, don't speak it to me anymore. Hearing what my

teacher told me. I don't exactly remember what my teacher told me, I was just told not to speak that language anymore so I told my mom the exact same thing and it just hurt her feelings very much to hear that, so she just stopped. And my dad stopped speaking to me, Inuktitut to me. So I never spoke it since.

In Nunavut, the educational system was no longer intentionally assimilationist by the time most of the participants began schooling (as opposed to previous assimilationist policies, see Chapter One, *Aboriginal Languages in Canada*). Nonetheless, some feel that schooling had a negative impact on their ability to speak Inuktitut, in that it led to increased exposure to, use, and perhaps also prestige, of English, which in turn contributed to the loss of Inuktitut. In the following quotations, D8, D10, D13 and D15 speak of losing Inuktitut due to increased exposure to English:

D8. It seems for me, English is taking over, more than before. [...]

R. ... Has going to school affected how much Inuktitut you speak?

D8. Yeah. Now, a year and a half ago, I kind of lost my Inuktitut. I was hearing English so much that I just started speaking more English than I used to. But now I'm getting it back. Slowly, but.

D10. I feel I almost lost [Inuktitut] once because I used all English for a bit. It's all Inuktitut now.

R. Tell me more about that, when it was all English.

D10. Well, when I was going to school, and with my jobs [...] maybe because in Iqaluit there's so many people who speak English and wherever we go, it's all English because they don't all understand Inuktitut, so. We realised that and went oh, we have to speak more Inuktitut now, so we tried to do that more. [...]

R. I wonder if there are any disadvantages to having two languages?

D10. Maybe, like I said, I speak more English than Inuktitut, you know, I started losing some of it, so that's one disadvantage, you start to lose some of the other language if you don't speak both of them all the time. If you speak one more than the other you tend to lose the other one, so. You got to keep it balanced.

D13. So it makes me want to... I don't even remember losing it, you know? Because I speak so much English.

R. And you grew up speaking Inuktitut?

D13. Yeah. Until high school. That's when I started speaking more English than Inuktitut. And where I work, well, I speak more Inuktitut now, which is good, because I realised that I was losing it because I have a lot of friends who live in smaller communities and a lot of them are

visiting and they kept saying speak more Inuktitut, you're speaking English too much. And so, it made me realise to speak more Inuktitut. So, and like, I can't, when I speak to my dad, usually, it's through my mom, my mom's translating. When I have something to say or something to tell to them, like the news, or whatever, I'll say it, but then I'll try to say it in Inuktitut, but he won't understand, so my mom will have to repeat it. That's how it is at home. That's how much I've lost my Inuktitut, you know? So. But with my sisters and brothers I'll just speak English, and Inuktitut, but, you know. That's how much I've lost so far. Like, my mom translates even when I'm speaking to my dad! [...]

D13. Because I didn't realise I lost it. Yeah, it was, like, last year I was in Pang and I spoke so much Inuktitut, it was so nice and then I was here, and then I was like a couple days later I started speaking English... It's like that here. English. Everyone's speaking in English. [...]

D13. It seems like I lost it so fast, you know? Without realising it.

D15. [...] So, grade seven it all really happened with English. And I lost it [Inuktitut] after that, because at high school, when you took Inuktitut, all you did was sewing and drawing, and it wasn't a real Inuktitut class when I was in to high school. It made me almost embarrassed, not knowing how to speak it, but now that I have it back, it's great.

D10, D13 and D17 (as well as others not quoted) identify school as a contributing factor to the loss of Inuktitut, along with other activities which entail increased use of English, such as working, and even just living in an increasingly English environment. Dorais and Sammons (2002:63) also conclude that years of formal schooling is negatively correlated to maintenance of Inuktitut, "...studies – including this one – have shown that both oral performance and literacy skills in Inuktitut decline in proportion to the number of years of formal education."

Evidently, no one factor alone is causing loss of Inuktitut in Iqaluit. D17 captures the complex interaction of factors influencing language shift when she speaks of her slightly decreased competence in Inuktitut. She implicates school, work, diminished communication with older members of her family, decreased participation in traditional activities and increased communication with Qallunaat (i.e. her child's father's family) in the slow erosion of her Inuktitut competence:

D17. I used to know a lot [of Inuktitut], but I don't go as much as I'd like to with my family anymore. And I'll read books and it will remind me

sometimes, but I wouldn't, if you ask me the intestines, it would probably take a couple of minutes to try and think back... I could have a conversation with anybody for a long time, but sometimes, I have to kind of think for, remember words that I haven't used in a very long time, very uncommon conversations. Yeah, like, here, [referring to questionnaire] “*At one time in my life, I spoke Inuktitut better than I do now,*” which is true. Probably didn't start, used to speak in English so much, like with work and whatnot. And especially being my son's father not being able to speak it so much...

R. So you used to speak Inuktitut better?

D17. I think so. Like I mentioned before, it takes me a couple minutes to think back to what, say, like for example, a part of a seal, but say when I was twelve, when I spoke only Inuktitut, I would be able to say it right away, but now that I am twenty-one, I have to, and there is that eight-year, twelve-year period where things have changed so much. Especially with school being English only...

Like D17, each Inuk interviewed has interacted with a variety of factors which have contributed to the maintenance or loss of linguistic abilities. In each case, the perceptions of the experience and its outcomes are different. The common result though, is that the majority of young Inuit in Iqaluit feel that their Inuktitut language abilities have decreased.

Additionally, some Inuit youth, not included in the above analysis, feel that they never adequately acquired Inuktitut. D11 explicitly states that she did not fully learn to speak Inuktitut as a child, “But I wish that I was able to learn a little bit more when I was young...” Inuit like D11 are beginning in a weaker position than some of their peers with regard to Inuktitut maintenance.

Furthermore, even among those who are not experiencing language loss on an individual level, most Iqaluit participants (13/17; A4, D1, D2, D4, D6, D7, D8, D10, D11, D12, D13, D16 and D17) are aware that Inuktitut is being lost or was never fully acquired by some of their peers. Participants in Iqaluit tend to agree with their counterparts from the smaller communities, saying that transfer to English is indeed occurring on a wide scale within the youth of the community:

D1. Yes and no. I think we are, like I said, I see it as we're losing it. Some people may say, "No. We're not even losing it, we're gaining it." But my point of view is and I see we're losing it.

D7. But the conversations [in Inuktitut] don't go on, because we're like, losing it. It's just going away. It's kind of hard.

D12. But from what I see now, that's what I think, it's just going downhill. Everybody's forgetting about their own language up here.

The loss of Inuktitut at the community level is explained in terms of a lack of access to Inuktitut instruction and to role models with whom to speak Inuktitut:

D4. But the majority of the young people, the twenty-year olds I hang out with, just don't understand Inuktitut anymore. Why? Because their parents aren't speaking and the schools aren't hiring anybody to teach Inuktitut.

D17. I worked with a lot of young people and when I tried to communicate with them have a long conversation in Inuktitut, half of the things, they don't even understand. I'm not disappointed in anyone, I'm more concerned than anything that they haven't really been taught, or been spoken to in Inuktitut.

Overall, in explaining Inuktitut's decline at the societal level, Iqaluit participants give the same reason as for individual loss. They link the loss of Inuktitut to the transfer to English, the latter being caused by increased exposure to and use of English, mainly in the schools:

R. You said English is taking over more?

D8. English, yeah. Like nowadays, little kids can't speak Inuktitut as well, now, but they're speaking more English. I mean, I kind of want that to change since, this is, they were raised Inuktitut, but then, when they reach school, they kind of lose their Inuktitut.

R. You said that you feel that Inuktitut is slowly dying?

D16. No, not personally, I don't think it's really, well, for younger adults, I do, but. And it is starting to come into homes, where it starts off, everybody ends up speaking English. [...] I haven't really seen any changes, I mean, with the older people now, a lot of people are still speaking [Inuktitut], just younger adults who are in school, high school. [...] once they graduate, and they can barely speak Inuktitut, only speak English.

In the final quotation, D16 adds an important nuance to the preceding discussion of language loss in Iqaluit. Even if most young Inuit describe language loss in Iqaluit, certainly it has not spread to the whole community; many residents of Iqaluit maintain excellent levels of Inuktitut competence. Loss of Inuktitut in Iqaluit is particularly noticed among the youth, the focus of this study, as well as among children.

The statements of language shift among Inuit youth should not be confused with more general trends to attribute poor linguistic competence to teenagers cross-culturally. Although one hears comments even in monolingual situations suggesting that the young people no longer know how to speak, or that they only use slang, or that they have a very limited vocabulary, these accusations are eventually passed on to each subsequent generation of teenagers without any real language decline taking place. As the teenagers grow older, they adopt a register appropriate for adults and continue their linguistic development. The youth in these interviews are denigrating their own use of Inuktitut, not just because they have not yet attained “adult” Inuktitut but also because they are no longer able to use Inuktitut at the same level as they could when they were younger. They feel that they are actually experiencing language loss which goes beyond the temporary adoption of a slang-based, “teenager” register.

The widespread perception of language loss among young Inuit is concerning in regard to the potential for the preservation and promotion of Inuktitut in Nunavut. It is worrisome to recognise a pervasive environment in Iqaluit, including but not limited to the dominance of English in school and in the workplace (seen in more detail in the following chapter), which compels some Inuktitut-speakers to lose some of their capacities in their mother tongue and hinders others from sufficiently learning Inuktitut. However, the analysis of individual explanations of language loss is also, in other ways, encouraging to one looking at the promotion of Inuktitut. The statements about language loss are hopeful because they regularly include explicit statements about the desire or the attempt to improve one’s ability in Inuktitut. The quotations above include statements to

this effect: “Now I’m getting it back” (D8), “I’m trying to get it back” (D1), “I can go back and I can learn and I can improve” (A4), “We realised that...we have to speak more Inuktitut now, so we tried to do that” (D10), “It made me realise to speak more Inuktitut” (D13), “But now that I have it back, it’s great” (D15). The direct mental link that participants make between realising loss of Inuktitut and desiring or attempting to regain their mother tongue is encouraging for several reasons. First, it suggests that Inuktitut is valued. Secondly, it shows that loss of Inuktitut is not accepted as a matter of course. Finally, it reveals that there is a real desire to preserve Inuktitut at an individual level, which is further motivated by recognition that the individual is losing Inuktitut, and sometimes results in concrete actions to improve the level of Inuktitut competence.

In summary, Inuit youth in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet for the most part are able to speak Inuktitut. Many of the youth acquired Inuktitut as their first language and subsequently acquired English. Although a majority of participants in this research say that they maintain “good” to “excellent” competence in Inuktitut, many express at the same time dissatisfaction with how well they speak it. Moreover, just over half of the interviewees (mainly from Iqaluit) are aware that they have lost or are losing competence in Inuktitut. The description of language competence is pertinent because proficiency is the first building block of a potential language plan. Having an idea of how well the current generation of youth speaks, understands, reads and writes Inuktitut lays the groundwork for where a language plan can begin, and what level of language use may be reasonably expected. More importantly, perhaps, the analysis of language competence of today’s youth is significant because it illuminates the linguistic inheritance available to the next generation. Already some young Inuit, who learned Inuktitut as a mother tongue, feel ill-equipped to transmit Inuktitut to their children:

D11. I’m trying to talk to my oldest one in Inuktitut, too. [...] I’m glad I get her to understand some more. But it’s kind of hard, especially all myself, not knowing so many words in Inuktitut, so it’s kind of hard to do something in Inuktitut. [...]  
So I’m like, I wish I grew up with that family [that speaks all Inuktitut], so I could talk with my kids like that. I didn’t get that, so I just got to talk to them the way I do.



Of course, Inuit having the ability to speak in Inuktitut is only the first step. Actually using Inuktitut where they are able to, and wanting to use Inuktitut, are essential to the preservation of the language. The following chapters consider reported practices of language use.

## CHAPTER VI

### DESCRIPTION OF LANGUAGE USE: INUKTITUT-DOMINANT DOMAINS

#### **6.0 Introduction**

Language use is a particularly important factor in the eventual maintenance or loss of a language. In the preceding chapter on language competence, many young Inuit express that they have lost some competence in Inuktitut due to increased use of English. Language competence and language usage are intertwined, as decreased use can contribute to decreased competence, and lower competence can hinder or discourage further use. In order for a language to thrive, it must be utilised. Inuit youth living in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, as bilingual individuals living in bilingual communities (multilingual in Iqaluit), often have a choice whether to use Inuktitut or English. The following three chapters explore the choices young Inuit make concerning their language use, describing perceived language use and the reasons or motivations behind their choices. The present chapter shows that the only domain in which Inuktitut is consistently favoured is in interactions involving traditional activities or elders. Already in the home, even if Inuit youth tend to favour use of Inuktitut with their parents, English is often used alongside Inuktitut. Chapter Seven shows that Inuit youth act out their bilingualism in almost every societal domain, from interactions with friends, to interactions in the workplace. The only situations where Inuktitut is hardly used at all are those in which the youth are interacting predominantly with Qallunaat. Chapter Eight discusses Inuit youths' explanations of why they use Inuktitut or English in specific

contexts, and identifies concerns that Inuit youth have about their own linguistic practices.

In the following discussion of language behaviour, responses from the closed questionnaires and semi-directed interviews are analysed together; participants are quoted extensively in order to portray the linguistic situation in the Inuit's own words.<sup>1</sup> In the closed questionnaires, respondents were asked to rate how much Inuktitut and English they use in a variety of speech situations (see Part two, Appendix C). Inspired by the theory of the ethnography of communication (cf. Hymes 1972), three main factors were identified as potentially affecting language choice: participants (elders, family members, friends, professionals, etc.), setting (at home, at school, at work, at camp, etc.) and topic (daily life, traditional activities, homework, work, etc.). For each speech situation (i.e. speaking to your mother, speaking at camp), the participants were asked to identify how much Inuktitut they typically use, based on the following scale: *Inuktitut only (5)*, *mainly Inuktitut (4)*, *Inuktitut and English (3)*, *mainly English (2)* or *English only (1)*. In the semi-directed interviews, participants were asked more broadly to describe a typical day, identifying when they would use Inuktitut and when they would use English. As a result, interviews identify patterns of language use in the speech situations particular to each individual. In the discussion of results, responses are grouped into seven societal domains (cf. Fishman 1971): 'traditional activities/elders', 'home', 'community', 'school', 'work', 'government' and 'professional services', incorporating the setting, participants and topics associated with each domain. Descriptions of language use reflect similar patterns in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, although participants in the smaller communities predictably tend to use more Inuktitut than their peers in Iqaluit in any given domain. Results present Inuit youths' perceptions of their own language use in each speech situation, and should not be interpreted as representing more generalised language use by the entire community.

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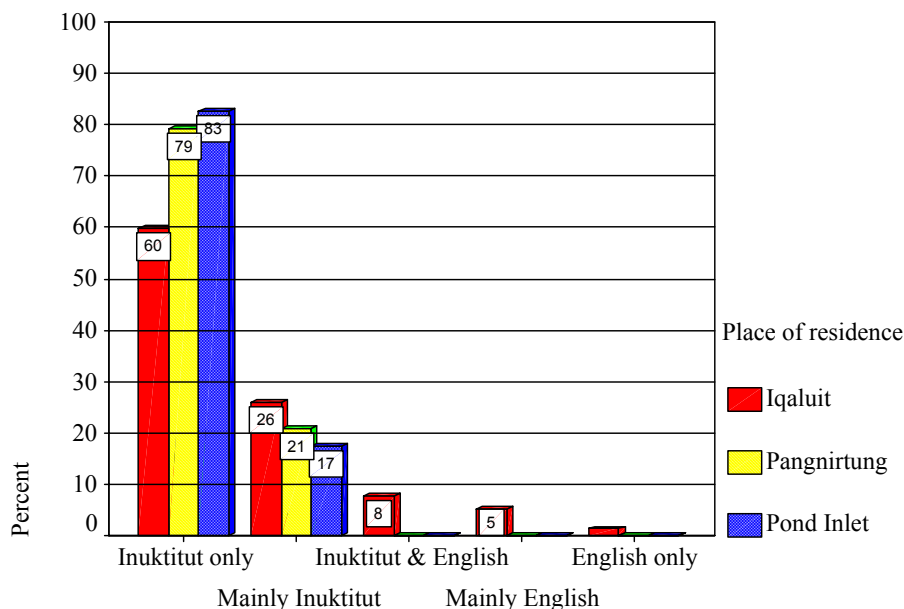
<sup>1</sup> Participants' attributes are listed in Appendix D, so that the reader can examine the characteristics of each individual.

## 6.1 Traditional Activities/Elders

The only domain in which Inuit youth consistently identify predominant use of Inuktitut is characterised by interactions involving traditional activities and/or elders. The speech situations included in this domain are those that are associated with older Inuit and traditional activities: speaking with elders, with one's grandparents, about a traditional activity (hunting, sewing, etc.), and while camping. These speech situations are grouped together based on parallel reported language use in each situation. Also, elders and traditional activities are in some ways naturally related, as the elders once practiced what are now called "traditional activities" as their daily way of life, and as such are the primary carriers of traditional knowledge. While many youth would naturally associate elders and traditional activities, the results below indicate that Inuktitut is favoured when speaking to elders regardless of the topic, and when participating in traditional activities, even with younger interlocutors. Overall, Inuit youth give the impression that they favour Inuktitut in any interactions that connect them with Inuit tradition and history, or to Inuit elders.

### *To Elders*

Inuit youth agree that speaking with elders generally requires the use of Inuktitut. As seen in Figure 7, in Iqaluit, 59.7% (46/77) of participants say that they use only Inuktitut with an elder (mean = 4.4/5, where '5' indicates only Inuktitut is used and '1' indicates no Inuktitut is used at all). In Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, 79.2% (19/24, mean = 4.8) and 82.6% (19/23, mean = 4.8) of participants, respectively, use exclusively Inuktitut when addressing an elder. Overall, 67.7% (84/124, mean = 4.5) of respondents report using only Inuktitut with an elder and 23.4% (29/124) report using mainly Inuktitut. A minor 4.8% (6/124) say that they use Inuktitut and English equally, 3.2% (4/124) use mainly English, and only one participant (0.8%) uses only English with an elder.



**Figure 7: Language Use Speaking to an Elder**

Comments from the semi-directed interviews support the behaviour reported in the closed questionnaires. Many participants state that Inuktitut is frequently used when speaking with elders:

D4. ...In Inuktitut being able to go to an elder, an elder person, and ask questions and just sit there and talk like we're talking with someone who doesn't speak [English].

R. How about when you visit the elders?

P6. Inuktitut.

In the context of promoting greater use of Inuktitut, it is important to realise that even if only Inuktitut is used when speaking with elders, Inuktitut still may not be regularly used. Youth may not regularly communicate with elders:

R. How about with elders in the community?

I6. I don't really talk to the elders but sometimes when I do, I just talk to them in Inuktitut.

In addition, English may in certain cases be used with elders:

R. When do you use English words?

D9. I don't know. Like trying to talk to an elder and I get mixed up with what to say and just saying English, but they still could understand English. So they're just like, "Okay, yeah."

R. The elders understand when you mix in, English and Inuktitut?

D9. Yeah.

D15. ...We can't communicate unless other people communicate to us in our language. Like, when we talk to elders, I will speak to them in Inuktitut, but they'll answer me back in English, thinking I can't understand them. But I could, which is really sad, because in a way, it's nobody's fault.

P10. I noticed, too, when I first came here, the elders spoke English to me, all the time. I asked them, "*Inuktitutuqausi*". Yeah, but when there's a new person coming in, they use English.

According to results from the closed questionnaires and semi-directed interviews, speaking with Inuit elders is almost exclusively an Inuktitut speech situation, although English is also used in a minority of cases. As seen in Chapter Eight, speaking with elders often gives rise to a communicative need for Inuktitut, as most elders are more comfortable conversing in Inuktitut. Dorais and Sammons (2002) also found that Inuktitut is associated with speaking with elders, though their results show that some elders use English as well.

### *To Grandparents*

Similarly, speaking with one's grandparents (as elder Inuit) also favours use of Inuktitut. In Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet respectively, 50% (19/38, mean = 4.1), 73.7% (14/19, mean = 4.8) and 85% (17/20, mean = 4.9) of participants use only Inuktitut with their maternal grandparents. Language use with paternal grandparents closely mirrors that of maternal grandparents in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet. In Iqaluit, however, language use with paternal grandparents varies greatly across participants (mean = 3.2). The more mitigated responses for speaking Inuktitut to grandparents in Iqaluit reflect the larger proportion of participants who have Qallunaat grandparents on the father's side; if one considers only the participants with Inuit mothers and fathers, language use with maternal and paternal grandparents is parallel.

Most participants in the semi-directed interviews also say that they use Inuktitut when speaking to grandparents. Such behaviour is most consistently reported in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet (as was also the case in questionnaire responses):

R. You said that you try to use [Inuktitut] frequently. Who do you use it with?

P4. My parents. My parents and my grandparents, or my grandpa.

I2. I always try to speak in Inuktitut with my grandma and grandpa.

I7. But for my grandpa I use Inuktitut language most of the time. For my grandparents.

I9. Maybe, usually, when I'm speaking to Dad, I speak pure Inuktitut, same with my grandma.

Even though speaking with grandparents shows preferential use of Inuktitut, some English is also used with grandparents, particularly in Iqaluit:

R. How about does it ever happen to you that you speak English to somebody and they speak Inuktitut back?

D9. Yeah. [I] do that sometimes with my Grandma. My mom too.

Similar to the results for speaking to elders, speaking to grandparents is associated with exclusive, or almost exclusive, use of Inuktitut. Motivations for using Inuktitut in this domain are discussed in Chapter Eight.

#### *About Traditional Activities*

Speaking about traditional activities (i.e. hunting, sewing) and while camping are also speech situations which favour use of Inuktitut, particularly in the two smaller communities. These two scenarios may be associated with speaking with elders as they involve a way of life that only the elders have experienced first hand. In Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, 36.4% (8/22) and 22.7% (5/22) of participants, respectively, use only Inuktitut to speak about traditional activities. In both communities, 40.9% (9/22) of

participants use mainly Inuktitut. Twenty-two percent (5/22) and 36.4% (8/22) of participants in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, respectively, use Inuktitut and English equally when speaking about traditional activities (Pangnirtung mean = 4.2, Pond Inlet mean = 3.9). As these results suggest, Inuit youth in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet tend to associate speaking about traditional activities with speaking Inuktitut.

In Iqaluit, ‘traditional activities’ is reportedly a topic for which both Inuktitut and English are used, though more Inuktitut than English. Almost half of the Iqaluit participants (49.4%, 38/77) report using both Inuktitut and English to talk about traditional activities, while 22.1% (17/77) use mainly Inuktitut and 16.9% (13/77) use only Inuktitut. The remaining nine participants use mainly English (6.5%, 5/77) or only English (5.2%, 4/77). Even if the distribution of responses shows only a slight preference for Inuktitut when speaking about traditional activities in Iqaluit, it remains a ‘relatively Inuktitut’ speech situation compared to all other speech situations tested, as the mean (3.4) shows the fourth-highest level of use of Inuktitut. Dorais and Sammons (2002) also found, in home observation of language use in Iqaluit, that almost all utterances related to subsistence activities (89.4%), across all age groups, were spoken in Inuktitut. (The only subject more frequently spoken about in Inuktitut, based on their data, is religion. “Weather and environment” accounted for the third highest frequency of observed Inuktitut utterances.) Overall, Dorais and Sammons’ home observation supports Inuit youths’ self-reports that Inuktitut tends to be the language used for subsistence activities.

#### *At Camp*

In line with their reported use of Inuktitut while speaking about a traditional activity, Inuit youth in the three communities also say that they use more Inuktitut than English while camping (i.e. while engaging in a traditional activity, usually with one’s family). In Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, 27.3% (6/22) and 29.2% (7/24) of participants respectively estimate that they use only Inuktitut while camping, whereas 50% (11/22) and 33.3% (8/24) respectively estimate using mainly Inuktitut and 22.7% (5/22) and 37.5% (9/24) report using both Inuktitut and English equally (Pangnirtung mean = 4.1;



Pond Inlet mean = 3.9). In Iqaluit, camping is reportedly a situation where both Inuktitut and English are used: 5.1% (4/78) of respondents use only Inuktitut, 29.5% (23/78) use mainly Inuktitut, 53.8% (42/78) use both Inuktitut and English, 6.4% (5/78) use mainly English and 5.1% (4/78) use only English (mean = 3.2). Once again, there is evidence that participation in an activity associated with Inuit traditional life leads to increased use of Inuktitut compared to other settings, but that English is still used alongside Inuktitut in all three communities.

Participants in the semi-directed interviews also relate speaking about or during traditional activities to speaking in Inuktitut:

D4. Inuktitut, tradition, maybe. Singing, drum dancing, those are Inuktitut stuff.

D8. Like, our shop teacher, he can, I don't mind if he's teaching us traditional ways of making things and stuff, like harpoons and qamutiqs.

R. Does he teach you that in Inuktitut or in English? [...]

D8. Oh, yeah, it's in Inuktitut, and English. He speaks a bit of English, but it's mainly in Inuktitut.

R. If you were out hunting, which language would you use to talk about what you're doing?

P5. Inuktitut. [...]

...But not being able to speak [Inuktitut, before], like at camp, that's all they spoke, Inuktitut.

I10. ... If I was doing something Inuit traditional, I would get to speak Inuktitut, because I'd remember it now.

These participants clearly relate participating in traditional activities to speaking in Inuktitut, a link that is discussed further in Chapter Nine (Symbolic Importance).

The results discussed above for language use while speaking with an elder or a grandparent, about a traditional activity or while camping suggest that any speech situation related to Inuit elders or traditional life is associated with greater use of Inuktitut, but no speech situation absolutely requires use of Inuktitut. Taking together results from the closed questionnaires and the semi-directed interviews, speaking to elders, grandparents and about/during traditional activities emerges as a clearly Inuktitut

domain, with more or less room for use of English, depending on the community and on the exact speech situation. The overall domain, “traditional activities”, is the only societal domain in any of the communities that the youth report as entirely Inuktitut-dominant. In Dorais and Sammons’ (2002) research, playing cards also emerged as an Inuktitut-dominant speech situation based on home observation of language use; they hypothesise that this speech behaviour reflects card-playing as a “traditional” leisure activity.

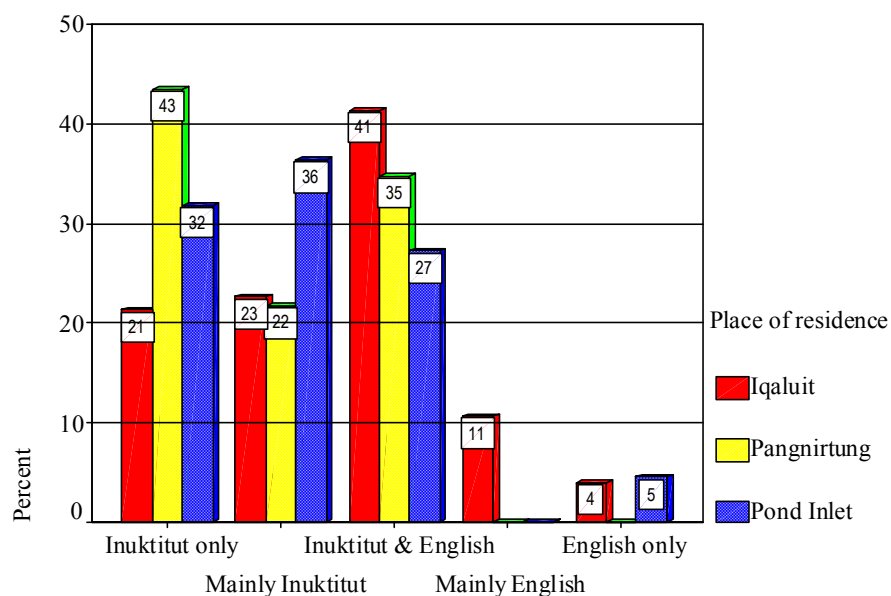
## 6.2 Home

The home is a domain in which both Inuktitut and English are widely used, although Inuktitut is still favoured, especially for speaking to one’s parents. The “home” domain is defined very broadly here to include speaking to one’s mother, father, siblings, spouse, children, and generally speaking at home. Such broad definition of the domain is necessary for this age group (18 to 25 year-olds) who are often at the frontier between membership in their parents’ family and establishing their own families. Even among those no longer living in their parents’ home, regular and frequent interaction with parents and siblings is common. Results from the closed questionnaires will be presented first, followed by participants’ detailed explanations of patterns of language use in the home, taken from the semi-directed interviews.

### *To Parents*

Inuktitut is used more widely with one’s parents than with anyone else other than the elders and grandparents. As seen in Figure 8, when speaking to one’s mother, young Inuit in all three communities report a tendency to use more Inuktitut than English (Iqaluit mean = 3.4, Pangnirtung mean = 4.1, Pond Inlet mean = 3.9). In Pangnirtung, speaking to one’s mother is most clearly marked as an Inuktitut–dominant speech situation, with 43.5% (10/23) of respondents reporting that they use only Inuktitut to talk to their mothers, 21.7% (5/23) using mainly Inuktitut and 34.8% (8/23) employing both Inuktitut and English. In Pond Inlet, respondents are fairly evenly distributed between using only Inuktitut (31.8%, 7/22), mainly Inuktitut (36.5%, 8/22), or Inuktitut and

English (27.3%, 6/22). In Iqaluit, the largest grouping of respondents uses both Inuktitut and English when speaking to their mothers (41.3%, 31/75), although smaller numbers report using only Inuktitut (21.3%, 16/75) or mainly Inuktitut (22.7%, 17/75). In contrast to the smaller communities where no one favours use of English with their mother, a few Inuit youth in Iqaluit use mainly (10.7%, 8/75) or only (4%, 3/75) English.



**Figure 8: Language Use Speaking to One's Mother**

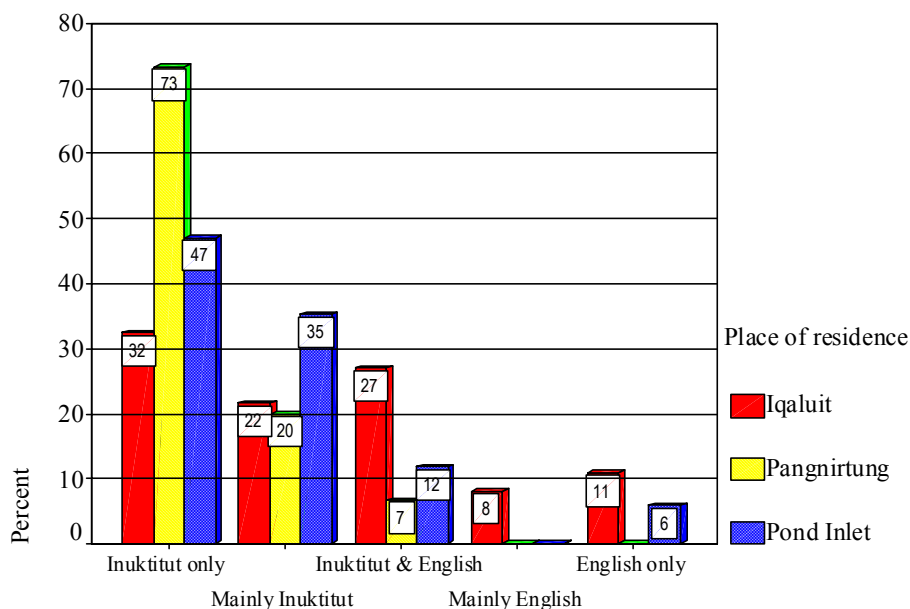
In Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, speaking to one's father is also strongly associated with use of Inuktitut, in fact more so than speaking to one's mother (Pangnirtung mean = 4.4, Pond Inlet mean = 4.9). In Pangnirtung, just over half of respondents (52.4%, 11/21) use only Inuktitut with their father. The remaining responses are equally spread between mainly Inuktitut (14.3%, 3/21), Inuktitut and English (14.3%, 3/21), mainly English (9.5%, 2/21) and only English (9.5%, 2/21). In Pond Inlet, 40.9% (9/22) use only Inuktitut when speaking to their fathers, 45.5% (10/22) speak mainly Inuktitut, 9.1% (2/22) use Inuktitut and English and only one individual (4.5%) uses only English. Interestingly, bilingual speech behaviour (still favouring Inuktitut) is more common when speaking to one's mother and exclusive use of Inuktitut is more prevalent when speaking to one's father in the smaller communities. This linguistic behaviour may suggest gender

differences in reactions to sedentarization among the parents' generation, as alluded to by I9 when he describes the language competence and use of his parents:

I9. Like I said, my father can't speak English or, he can kind of read English, but he's not so good at it. He has other skills, like going hunting, he's not really into reading and writing. My mother, she kind of started working in public places, like schools and stuff like that, she kind of learned this and that about English.

I9's comment is suggestive of a social reality where fathers continue to be more active in subsistence activities while mothers have taken up a greater role in community life, including wage labour. Recent research in Louisiana has illuminated a similar trend; however, such an analysis is beyond the scope of this study.

In Iqaluit, a quite different picture of language usage with one's father emerges, due to the larger proportion of respondents whose fathers are Qallunaat. In fact, in Iqaluit, the largest proportion of responses are grouped under "English only" (36%, 27/75), with the remaining responses spread out between "Inuktitut only" (16%, 12/75), "mainly Inuktitut" (14.7%, 11/75), "Inuktitut and English" (22.7%, 17/75) and "mainly English" (10.7%, 8/75; Iqaluit mean = 3.2). However, if one considers only the respondents with Inuit fathers, shown in Figure 9, respondents say that they use more Inuktitut than English when speaking to their Inuit fathers (Iqaluit mean = 3.6). In the smaller communities as well, language behaviour with one's father emerges as a much more clearly Inuktitut domain when only those with Inuit fathers are taken into account. (Results for speaking to one's mother change only slightly if one considers only those with Inuit mothers.)



**Figure 9: Language Use Speaking to One's Father (Inuit Fathers Only)**

In the semi-directed interviews, a wide range of language behaviour with one's parents is attested. Some individuals, especially in Pond Inlet, express a clear preference for exclusive use of Inuktitut with one's parents:

D10. With my mom, Inuktitut.

R. Only?

D10. Yeah.

R. And with your dad?

D10. Same thing, Inuktitut.

R. You said that you only speak Inuktitut to your parents?

P2. Yup. All the time.

R. And with your mom?

I1. All Inuktitut.

R. And with your dad?

I1. Same thing.

R. Okay, how about with your parents?

I4. Inuktitut.

R. Only, or mainly?

I4. Only. I hardly speak in English.

R. How does your mom react if you speak to her in English?  
 I5. I don't! I don't speak to her in English.

Beside these few individuals who use Inuktitut all the time with their parents, participants from Iqaluit, Pond Inlet and Pangnirtung more frequently express a tendency to use mostly, but not exclusively, Inuktitut:

D6. I guess, like if I lost it, my mother wouldn't be too happy, because I speak to her in Inuktitut all the time. Yeah. [...]

Well, I speak English with her sometimes...I speak Inuktitut to her, all of a sudden I say English words in between and speak. Just losing it altogether she wouldn't be happy, but I speak English to her sometimes too, but mainly Inuktitut.

R. Who do you speak Inuktitut with?

D10. My parents, at home, it's Inuktitut [...]

Yeah, with my parents, if I can't communicate with them, you know, it's like I say it in English and they're like, "*Qanu?* What's that?" And so.

D15. Before I used to speak Inuktitut to my mom all the time, from kindergarten to grade six, all my schooling was Inuktitut, everything. My father's Qallunaaq, he understood Inuktitut perfectly, I talked to both my parents in Inuktitut. [...] It was always Inuktitut first. And then English.

R. How about when you visit your mom, which language do you use?

D16. Inuktitut. Sometimes, I don't know... I'll mix it right up, but I notice it right there, when I do. Yeah. I mean, I grew up myself, speaking Inuktitut, a lot of Inuktitut. [...]

But, at home, when we get home to see our parents or grandparents, it's where we mostly speak Inuktitut.

R. Which language do you use more in your day-to-day life?

P3. I would say Inuktitut, at home, yeah.

R. With your mom, which would you use?

P3. I would say, Inuktitut and English.

R. And with your dad?

P3. Inuktitut and English.

R. ...What would you say you would use, with your mom, say?

[...]

P4. Half and half.

R. And with your dad?

P4. Just Inuktitut.

R. When you talk with your mom, for example, would you use only Inuktitut, <yeah> or mostly Inuktitut?

P6. Mostly Inuktitut.

R. Okay, and what about your dad?

P6. Yeah, same thing. Inuktitut.

[...]

R. Have you ever spoken English to [your mom]?

P6. Yeah.

[...]

R. What language does she answer you back in?

P6. Inuktitut and English.

R. How about your dad?

P6. Yeah, sometimes I talk to him in English.

R. And then, how does he answer you?

P6. Same thing.

P7. ... We use mainly Inuktitut at home.

R. You said that you use pretty much Inuktitut only with your dad?

P7. Mm hmm.

R. How about with your mom?

P7. Kind of, mixed. Some English, some Inuktitut, but mainly Inuktitut. Sometimes it's in English, but mainly Inuktitut, I would say.

P9. Inuktitut. Mostly Inuktitut.

R. With both your mom and dad?

P9. Yeah.

R. How about with your parents, do you use the same mixture of Inuktitut and English?

I6. Some words, but very few.

R. How about with your parents?

I7. Maybe Inuktitut more often.

[...]

R. But you use some English with them?

I7. Sometimes, once in a long while.

The participants quoted above say that they mainly use Inuktitut with their parents, but that some English is also used, corroborating the trend identified in the closed questionnaires. Fewer participants express that either Inuktitut or English may be used, and that both languages are in fact used interchangeably with parents:

A4. With my family. Like with my mom and my sisters, that for sure. But we're so like comfortable with each other, we know each other, it's like either-or and there's no big deal. Yeah, we don't even really notice like which language we're speaking because it's my immediate family.

R. Does it ever happen to you that you speak English to somebody and they speak Inuktitut back?

D9. Yeah. Do that sometimes with my Grandma. My mom too.

R. What happens when they speak Inuktitut back to you?

D9. I don't know, I talk back to them in Inuktitut or English.

R. Okay. Either one? Sometimes you keep going in a whole conversation where you're using English and they're using Inuktitut? [...]

D9. Yeah, when ever my mom gets, like gets mad at me, she starts throwing words at me in like English and I like talking back to her in Inuktitut.

In Iqaluit, but in neither of the smaller communities, as would be expected based on the results from the closed questionnaires, some participants acknowledge that they frequently use English with their parents, more than Inuktitut, even if the parent's mother tongue is Inuktitut:

R. With your mom [an Inuk] ... which would you use?

D1. English.

D2. Yeah. But I have a tendency to speak in just English to my parents [both Inuit] as well, and that's when they start calling me Qallunaaq and, so.

R. Okay, with your parents [both Inuit], do your parents ever speak to you in Inuktitut?

D3. No, they don't.

R. And Inuktitut is the first language that you learned to speak?

D11. Yeah, I think so, it should have been. But I, all I recall is mostly talking in English. With a little bit of Inuktitut here and there, but, we used mostly English but I'm not really comfortable with that at all.

R. You're not comfortable with that?

D11. No. I, especially talking to my parents, I want to carry on a conversation with them, but then again, I go to English, and like, I felt like, thinking maybe they thought I was speaking to them in Inuktitut, but then again, I go to English, so it's kind of hard for me to talk to them.

[...]

D11. Every time they asked me a question, it would be in Inuktitut. I would mix the two languages together if I told, gave them an answer,



they'd be like, Okay. I understand now, and stuff like that. It's still like that now.

As was the case in the closed questionnaires, participants from Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet express stronger tendencies toward using Inuktitut only or mainly Inuktitut with their parents, whereas participants from Iqaluit, even with Inuit parents, describe linguistic practices on a continuum, anywhere from exclusive use of Inuktitut to exclusive use of English. Increased use of English usually reflects the speaker's inability or discomfort speaking in Inuktitut, as discussed in Chapter Eight. In language use with the parents, even if there is a clear inclination to favour Inuktitut, the quotations above indicate a wide range of individual preferences, habits and experiences with regard to language choice that is repeated across domains, as will be seen in the following chapter.

In the cases quoted above, the language use described is with Inuit parents. As may be expected, in situations of mixed marriages, Inuktitut (or both Inuktitut and English) is generally favoured when addressing the Inuk parent and English is used predominantly to speak to the Qallunaaq parent (interestingly, in our data this is the case even when the Qallunaaq parent is francophone):

R. How about with your family?

D5. Mainly English. But sometimes I use Inuktitut with my father [an Inuk].

R. ...With your mom [a Qallunaaq], which would you use?

D5. English only.

D6. So, I speak mostly Inuktitut to my family. Besides my dad. Because my dad's only English and French.

[...]

R. With your mom, you use mostly Inuktitut or only Inuktitut?

D6. Mostly Inuktitut.

R. And with your dad?

D6. It's English.

R. Only?

D6. Only.

R. With your dad now, what language do you use?

D8. Only English.

R. And with your mom?

D8. Both. Inuktitut and English.

R. Which language do you use with them?

D9. Inuktitut for my mom and English for my dad.

The split in language use, where Inuktitut is used with the Inuk parent and English is used with the Qallunaaq parent is also expressed by participants coming from mixed families in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet. However, in these cases, just as there is some room for use of English with Inuit parents, there is also room for some use of Inuktitut with Qallunaat parents:

R. How about with your family, do you use any Inuktitut with them?

P1. Not really, just to my mom.

[...]

R. With your mom, which one would you say you use?

P1. Mostly Inuktitut.

R. With your dad?

P1. Mostly English.

P5. With my dad, *Qallunaatitut*<sup>2</sup>. Only my dad I speak to him in Qallunaatitut, the rest of my family I usually speak Inuktitut.

R. With your dad?

P10. I speak in English to my dad.

R. Only English, or any Inuktitut?

P10. Well... just simple things, I don't realise it, I do that. I did that to my teacher the other day... and he just looked at me. But when I do that to my dad, he understands it.

[...]

R. And with your mom?

P10. Mostly Inuktitut.

R. How about with your mom, which language do you use?

I2. Mostly Inuktitut.

[...]

R. And with your dad, you said that you speak mainly in English, or only in English?

I2. He sort of understands Inuktitut too, but only words. Like he can say, "*Unaalik*".

These descriptions of language use with one's parents show bilingual households, where both Inuktitut and English are used to varying degrees. In Iqaluit, the bilingual

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<sup>2</sup> *Qallunaatitut*, literally 'like Qallunaat', is the Inuit word for the English language.

households are particularly evident due to the number of mixed marriages. All the same, even in entirely Inuit homes, English is commonly used, at least sometimes. When the language use with siblings is included, households in Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet and Iqaluit all emerge as practising bilingual homes, although language usage in the smaller communities continues to favour Inuktitut.

Reported language use with one's parents gives some insight into use of English as a choice some youth are making. The majority of Inuit youth report that their parents passed on Inuktitut as the only mother tongue. Now, as young adults, they say that they use varying degrees of English when speaking with their parents, even if Inuktitut is still the main language used. Continuing to use *only* Inuktitut appears to be uncommon. This choice to at times use English, even with the ones who originally taught them to speak Inuktitut, is evidence of decreased use of Inuktitut in these individuals' lives. Understanding the motivations behind such a shift in linguistic behaviour (discussed in subsequent chapters) will be useful to discussions of the promotion of Inuktitut.

### *To Siblings*

With siblings, speech behaviour is largely bilingual in Iqaluit and favours Inuktitut in the smaller communities. In Iqaluit, more than half of the respondents say that they use Inuktitut and English equally with older and younger siblings (65.2% [42/66] and 55.4% [36/65], respectively; older siblings mean = 2.8, younger siblings mean = 2.8). In Pangnirtung, the dominant language pattern is to use "mainly Inuktitut" with siblings; fifty-six percent (10/18) use "mainly Inuktitut" with older siblings (mean = 3.8) and 42.9% (9/21) use "mainly Inuktitut" with younger siblings (mean = 3.7). In Pond Inlet, the largest proportion of respondents report using Inuktitut and English with siblings (70.8% [17/24] and 52.2% [12/23] with older and younger siblings, respectively). However, the remaining respondents use only or mainly Inuktitut with their siblings (older siblings mean = 3.4, younger siblings mean = 3.6). Overall, language use among siblings slightly favours Inuktitut in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, and is entirely bilingual in Iqaluit. No one in Iqaluit reports using exclusively Inuktitut with siblings.

In the semi-directed interviews, language use with siblings is also largely bilingual. Only a few participants express that they consistently use only Inuktitut with all of their siblings:

D10. With my brother, it's Inuktitut. All, with my whole family, is Inuktitut.

R. Do you have any brothers and sisters?

I5. Yes.

R. What language do you use with them?

I5. Inuktitut.

R. Only, or mainly?

I5. Only.

A number of participants in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet (and one in Iqaluit, who grew up in a small community) use mainly, but not exclusively Inuktitut with their siblings:

R. Did you use English a lot with [your brothers and sisters in Igloolik] <no!> or was it very rarely?

D4. Rarely. Very rarely. Just very rarely, yeah.

P4. I have one brother. Just mostly Inuktitut too.

R. Which language do you use with [your sister]?

P6. Sometimes English.

R. Okay, would you say Inuktitut and English, or mostly English?

P6. Mostly Inuktitut.

R. What language do you use with [your brothers and sisters]?

I1. Inuktitut, mostly Inuktitut.

R. Sometimes do you mix the two, or do you

I1. Yes. I mix them.

[...]

R. [Okay, have you ever tried speaking English with your] brothers and sisters?

I1. Sometimes I do.

R. Okay, and which language do you use [with your sister]?

I3. Inuktitut.

[...]

R. Does it ever happen that you ask somebody something in Inuktitut and they respond to you in English?

I3. Yeah. [...] It's mostly (with) my sister.

R. What language do you use with [your brothers and sisters]?

I6. Usually Inuktitut, some mix, and sometimes just English.

I9. When I'm home, I try and speak as much Inuktitut as possible. Even to my younger sisters and older sister, I speak Inuktitut.

The limited use of English with siblings appears to take a variety of forms; in some interactions only Inuktitut or only English may be used, some interactions may be characterised by code alternation, and other interactions by codeswitching. The practice of code alternation/codeswitching with one's siblings is most evident in the participants who say that they use both Inuktitut and English equally with their siblings:

D2. Yeah. My youngest brother's a kid... I've got another [younger] brother...an older brother [and an] older sister...

R. So you use Inuktitut or English with them?

D2. Both.

R. Would you say half and half, or mostly one or mostly the other?

D2. Half and half I guess.

R. And is it the same kind of thing that you would sometimes use Inuktitut and English in the same sentence?

D2. Yeah. I'm trying to get away from that, but it's hard.

D16. ...Yes, exactly, when I'm speaking Inuktitut. And if they say, if they give me an answer back in Inuktitut, I'll be fine. But if they'll give me an answer in English, I'll have to pause for a couple of seconds and think about it. I have to be able to understand it, or give them an answer. It's kind of hard at times.

R. Yeah, and you said that happens frequently?

D16. Yeah, it happens a lot. Especially with my little brothers. My little brothers and a few of the guys, friends.

R. And you said when you call your sister, that you speak sometimes in Inuktitut and then switch back to English?

I2. Yes. Because she can still speak Inuktitut but she forgot some of them.

R. Would you say it's kind of half and half with your sister?

I2. Yes.

The only participants who report consistently using English with their siblings live in Iqaluit:

R. And with your brothers?

D1. English.

R. And your sisters and brothers [do they ever speak to you in Inuktitut?]

D3. No.

D7. Little brothers and sisters, English. That's about it.

R. Tell me more about growing up, speaking the language that you spoke in the home growing up.

D11. ... But I had sisters there so I had to talk to them in English, the way it is right now.

In some cases, the pattern of language use with siblings depends on which sibling is being addressed, where one sibling is more frequently addressed in Inuktitut and another is more frequently spoken to in English. Differential language use depending on the sibling is most prevalent in Pangnirtung:

R. Okay, and you use which language with [your sisters]?

P1. English. [...] It depends which one.

R. Okay, with your older sister?

P1. I'd say, Inuktitut.

R. Okay, with the next one in age?

P1. Inuktitut. [...]

R. So the closest one younger, you would use mostly Inuktitut?

P1. Yeah. The youngest English.

R. Always English, or mostly?

P1. Most of the time.

R. And your [eldest] sister who lives in Iqaluit, do you use English with her or Inuktitut?

P2. Inuktitut. [...] Inuktitut and English. [...]

R. The next [eldest]?

P2. She lives here and I always talk to her in Inuktitut. [...]

R. And your youngest sister?

P2. Younger sister? Maybe Inuktitut and English...

[...]

R. Does it ever happen ... that you speak to someone in English and they'll respond in Inuktitut?

P2. Yeah, my [older] brother.

R. Okay. With your older brother?

P3. English. [...]

R. And with your younger brother?

P3. Inuktitut. Mostly Inuktitut.

R. With your older brother, what do you use?

P10. Inuktitut. [...]

R. And with your younger brother?

P10. English, mostly. But when I ask him a question, it's in Inuktitut. But it's mostly English with little bits of Inuktitut mixed in.

R. Okay. And does it change, like do you speak Inuktitut to them and they speak English back, does it change that way or you both speak

P10. My brother does. My younger brother? Yeah, I'll ask him in Inuktitut and he'll answer in English. More with my younger sister. Half English half Inuktitut, which I don't like.

Sometimes, the alternation between Inuktitut and English depending on which sibling is being addressed reflects different life experiences and resulting linguistic preferences even among close family members. Overall, language use with siblings is mixed. Few participants in the closed questionnaires or in the semi-directed interviews express exclusive use of Inuktitut or English with all of their siblings. Most participants in the semi-directed interviews use a combination of Inuktitut and English, though in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, Inuktitut is favoured.

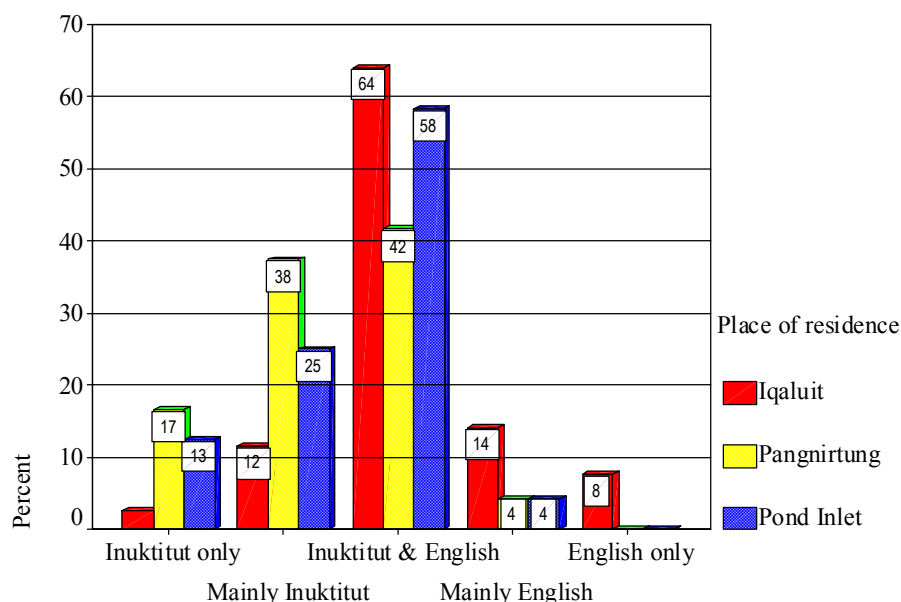
The evidence of use of Inuktitut and English with siblings is significant because, in many cases, the siblings would have the same predominantly Inuktitut upbringing as the participants, learning English subsequently at school. As such, it would be expected that participants could *choose* to use exclusively Inuktitut. However, as was noticed in language use with parents, it appears that English is being used in situations which would have once been (i.e. when the participants were younger children), and which could still be, exclusively Inuktitut. If Inuktitut is to remain a thriving language, it will be important to understand which factors compel young Inuit to use their second language, English, with individuals who are close to them and also grew up speaking Inuktitut.

### *At Home*

As this research focuses on 18 to 25 year-old Inuit, for most of the participants the home environment would be, or would have been up until quite recently, the environment in which one primarily interacts with one's siblings and one's parents. As such, it is not

surprising that the results for speaking “at home” closely resemble combined results for speaking to one’s parents and one’s siblings. In all three communities, speaking at home is a speech situation in which Inuktitut and English are used, although more Inuktitut than English is reportedly used in homes in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet. Complete results for Iqaluit will be presented first, followed by results for Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet.

As seen in Figure 10, home is a clearly bilingual domain in Iqaluit, where 64.1% (50/78) of respondents use both Inuktitut and English equally (mean = 2.9). The remaining respondents are split between speaking mainly or only Inuktitut (11.5% [9/78] and 2.6% [2/78] respectively) and mainly or only English (14.1% [11/78] and 7.7% [6/78] respectively).



**Figure 10: Language Use at Home**

Even if the home emerges as a bilingual domain in Iqaluit based on results from the questionnaires, results from the semi-directed interviews show that many Inuit youth still associate the home with speaking in Inuktitut. For some Iqaluit participants, use of Inuktitut is predominant in the home:

D10. The only time I think, I’m around Inuktitut is when I’m at home, like really, all Inuktitut. It’s when I’m at home.



D11. ...mostly Inuktitut. That's the main language at my house

D16. Growing up [in Iqaluit], I spoke nothing but Inuktitut at home. I mean, I was home a lot with my parents. [...]

Pretty much the only time I spoke Inuktitut was at home, now, and getting together with friends, you mix. [...]

There's a lot of us who use it at home.

Some Iqaluit participants describe a large degree of bilingualism, or multilingualism within their homes. At times the multilingualism reflects the languages of the parents:

D6. Like, at home, my little brother, he's mainly English, and French, 'cause he speaks to my dad in French, and my mom gets him to speak Inuktitut so, he's using all three languages in the house. [...] I have one younger sister also. She speaks only, mostly English. And then she speaks to my mom in Inuktitut sometimes too. [...] And to my dad in French sometimes. So we use three languages in our house.

At other times, the linguistic practice is mixed even if all members of the household are Inuit:

D13. Yes. My whole family's Inuk. But when we have conversations it's mixed Inuktitut and *Qallunaatit*. So...when I speak to my dad, usually, it's through my mom, my mom's translating. When I have something to say or something to tell to them, like the news, or whatever, I'll say it, but then I'll try to say it in Inuktitut, but he won't understand, so my mom will have to repeat it. That's how it is at home. That's how much I've lost my Inuktitut, you know? So. But with my sisters and brothers I'll just speak English, and Inuktitut, but, you know. That's how much I've lost so far. Like, my mom translates even when I'm speaking to my dad!

A few participants express using English exclusively at home, especially if one mainly interacts with Qallunaat there. For example, D2, who lives only with his Qallunaaq girlfriend, says, "I speak English at home". Language use in Iqaluit homes is varied, but many young Inuit from entirely Inuit homes still associate being at home with speaking (and hearing) Inuktitut.

In Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, as seen in Figure 10, above, the largest proportion of respondents (41.7% [10/24] and 58.3% [14/24], respectively) view their language use

at home as bilingual as well. Among most of the remaining participants, more Inuktitut than English is reportedly used in the homes; 37.5% (9/24) and 25% (6/24) of respondents in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, respectively, use mainly Inuktitut and 16.7% (4/24) and 12.5% (3/24), respectively use only Inuktitut while speaking at home. Overall, as one might expect based on results for speaking to one's parents and one's siblings, more Inuktitut than English is reportedly used in the homes of Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet respondents (Pangnirtung mean = 3.7; Pond Inlet mean = 3.5).

In the semi-directed interviews in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, the participants express varying views of which language prevails in the home. Some use only or mainly Inuktitut:

R. Do you sometimes use English?

P7. Sometimes, yeah. Sometimes. Well, I use mainly Inuktitut at home and with friends.

[...] But we use mainly Inuktitut at home.

R. At home, you spoke only Inuktitut?

I3. Yeah.

I9. When I'm home, I try and speak as much Inuktitut as possible.

I10. At home, I usually speak Inuktitut.

In other homes, language use is bilingual:

P10. At home, we speak Inuktitut most of the time. It's kind of weird, hard, I don't realise it when we speak Inuktitut or English, because my dad's English and my mom's Inuktitut. I don't realise it, it's so normal.

R. How about here at home, which language do you use?

I2. Mixed.

I5. But when I'm here [at home] I speak English and Inuktitut for my kids and my friend... I use English and Inuktitut all the time.

R. Okay, like mixing the two, the two in the same sentence?

I5. Yes.

Results from the semi-directed interviews for language use in the home show a wide range of linguistic practice in the various homes. As has already been mentioned,

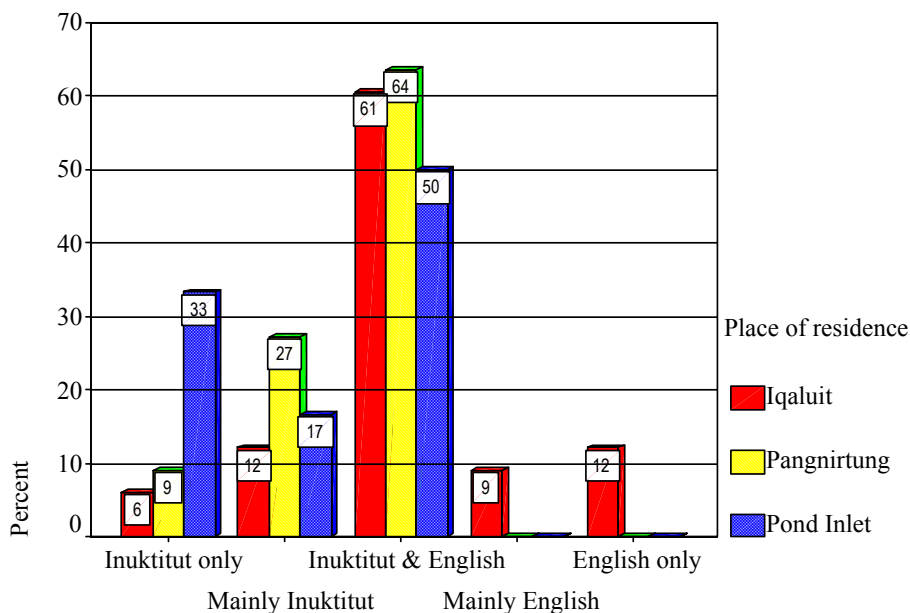
homes in which one parent is Inuk and the other is Qallunaaq (i.e. D6, P1, P10) entail a higher degree of bilingualism, as one would expect. Also, participants who describe language use in homes where the interaction is predominantly with room-mates, spouses (common-law or otherwise), or with their own children (i.e. D2, D9, I2, I5) tend to report using more English than do those who report on language use within their parents' homes. In the following sections, we will see that indeed participants with girlfriends/boyfriends/spouses and/or children report using both Inuktitut and English when speaking to members of their own emerging families.

### *To One's Own Children*

The age group focused on in this study is in the process or on the brink of redefining their personal identities, as they graduate from school, as they enter the workforce, or as they start a family. These life changes could bring about a change in linguistic practice also. More than half of the respondents had a spouse, girlfriend or boyfriend at the time of filling out the closed questionnaire, and a third to half of respondents have children. We will now look at language use within these emerging families.

Language use with one's own children is generally bilingual in Iqaluit (mean = 2.9), and favours use of Inuktitut over English in Pangnirtung (mean = 3.5) and Pond Inlet (mean = 3.8). As seen in Figure 11, the largest proportion of respondents in all three communities tends to speak both Inuktitut and English with their children. In Iqaluit, the majority of respondents with children (60.6%, 20/33) perceive that they use Inuktitut and English equally with their children. A minority use only Inuktitut (6.1%, 2/33), mainly Inuktitut (12.1%, 4/33), mainly English (9.1%, 3/33) or only English (12.1%, 4/33). In Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet also, the majority of respondents (63.6% [7/11] and 50% [6/12], respectively) use Inuktitut and English equally with their children. In contrast to Iqaluit, though, all remaining participants favour use of Inuktitut. In Pangnirtung, one out of eleven (9.1%) participants uses only Inuktitut with his/her children, and three (27.3%) use mainly Inuktitut. In Pond Inlet, four out of twelve respondents (33.3%) use only

Inuktitut and two (16.7%) use mainly Inuktitut. In Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, then, more Inuktitut than English is used with children, even if a majority of respondents are bringing up their children with both languages.



**Figure 11: Language Use Speaking to One's Own Children**

Responses from the semi-directed interviews show that young parents are exercising a variety of choices in the language that they use with their children. For some parents, language use with the children is very clear: Inuktitut is used exclusively. This linguistic practice is most common in Pond Inlet, in line with results from the closed questionnaires:

R. What language do you speak with your child?

P6. He's seven months. In Inuktitut.

R. Okay, so, at your home with your children, what language?

I3. Inuktitut.

R. So, for example, when you get up in the morning, who do you speak to first?

I4. When my son's awake, my son.

R. And which language do you use with him?

I4. Inuktitut. [...] Only Inuktitut.

Other parents explain that Inuktitut is the main language that they use with their children, but that some English may slip in:

P9. ...Say to your son, which language do you use?

P9. Inuktitut.

R. Only or mostly?

P9. Mostly. Yeah.

I7. I use English and Inuktitut for my son.

[...]

R. So, with your son would you say it's kind of half and half English and Inuktitut or mainly Inuktitut?

I7. Mainly Inuktitut.

I8. So [Inuktitut] has to be first thing at the home. Right now, whenever [my husband, who usually uses Inuktitut] starts speaking English, I correct him and tell him not to speak it so that my daughter can learn Inuktitut.

In the case of I8, quoted above, using mainly Inuktitut with her daughter is a conscious choice. Other parents purposefully choose to raise their children bilingually. P8, for example, has chosen to use both languages consistently with her children:

R. So with your children, for example, which language do you use?

P8. I always tell them in both languages. If there's something new they're learning, I'll tell them the Inuktitut term and then the English term. Or the English then the Inuktitut, but I always try to tell them both. And they're really good.

D16 and his girlfriend have chosen to raise their children trilingually, each using their native language with their children (Inuktitut and French), and letting the child "pick up" English:

D16. ...We have a son, and we are speaking to him only in French and Inuktitut, since, well, we figure English is simple. Because I mean, it's not hard to pick up, so he can pick that up on his own, when he's older. We're only speaking to him in French and Inuktitut.

As will be seen below, D16 and his girlfriend use English with each other, so the child is also exposed to English in the home.

In yet another type of bilingual interaction with children, one mother explains that, although she chooses to use Inuktitut with her son, her use of Inuktitut is unilateral. Communication with her son is bilingual, as she addresses him in Inuktitut and he responds in English:

D17. Same with [my son]...I speak to him all the time [in Inuktitut], but he doesn't really respond to me [...]  
 Yeah, I don't know why, it's just like say, when we go to my parents... He'll speak to them in Inuktitut, and he understands what they say, but when we're at home, or at the store or something, he won't speak Inuktitut, but fully English.

In this case, the child is nonetheless acquiring Inuktitut and English, as D17 explains that her son uses English with his father and paternal grandparents, Inuktitut with his maternal grandparents, and both languages in the day-care. A4, who is participating in the language socialisation of her nephew, reports a similar linguistic practice, "But my nephew he hears English in town and he refuses to speak Inuktitut. But we try to speak Inuktitut to him as much as possible at home."

In still another pattern of language use with one's children, sometimes one child will be addressed primarily in Inuktitut, the other one in English (similar to differential language use with siblings, seen previously):

R. What language do you use with [your children] in the evenings?

D11. Both, but with the oldest one, it's mostly English. The little one, she understands what I'm saying in Inuktitut, so, the little one in Inuktitut. I'm trying to talk to my oldest one in Inuktitut, too, but then again, she's like I don't know what you're saying so I'm just going to go play. She understands some basic words...in Inuktitut and stuff like that, but I want to actually try to discipline her in Inuktitut, she won't understand at all...But it's kind of hard, especially all myself, not knowing so many words in Inuktitut, so it's kind of hard to do something in Inuktitut.

R. Okay, with your kids do you use pretty much equal? Equal Inuktitut and English?

I5. With [my older son], I speak Inuktitut most of the time. Sometimes English but with [my baby daughter] I speak English most of the time with her. [...] Like, she doesn't really understand when I talk in Inuktitut. Like if I tell her to go get that, she won't do it unless I tell her in English. [...] I

use Inuktitut most of the time with [my son]. Like, sometimes he understands English. He's learning though.

In D11's case, the older child is addressed in English, in I5's case, the older child is addressed in Inuktitut. Each parent has their own reasons for passing on Inuktitut or English to his or her children, as will be seen in subsequent chapters.

Finally, a noteworthy characteristic of language use between Inuit youth and their children is that no one in the semi-directed interviews reports using only English with their children. Only one individual says she preferentially uses English with her children:

R. You speak to [your daughter] in English?

D3. Yeah. I know some baby words and stuff like that [in Inuktitut], so whatever, like nouns, mostly, I speak to her in, sock, or door, or going outside. Stuff like that. I try to speak to her as much as I can in Inuktitut.

In this case, D3 reports low levels of competency in Inuktitut, and says that although she never uses Inuktitut with anyone else, she uses what Inuktitut she can with her daughter.

These results concerning language use with children, taken from the closed questionnaires and semi-directed interviews, are significant to discussions of the future of Inuktitut in a few ways. First of all, even if Inuktitut is used with children, respondents use less Inuktitut with their children than they do with their parents, suggesting a switch in language transmission behaviour. Whereas respondents' parents, for the most part, transmitted Inuktitut as the only mother tongue, it seems that a majority of young Inuit in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung, and to a lesser degree Pond Inlet are transmitting two languages to their children right away.<sup>3</sup> Such linguistic practice could potentially threaten the stability of Inuktitut, if the current generation of Inuit children has no domain in which use of Inuktitut is the norm, in which to acquire a solid foundation in Inuktitut competence. For the current generation, the speech situations in which Inuktitut is predominantly used are with generally monolingual elders and about traditional activities. By the time today's babies are young adults, even elderly Inuit will belong to a bilingual population of Inuit,

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<sup>3</sup> The respondents' children would, in most cases, not yet be in school, as the parents are between 18 and 25, and many participants are at the lower end of this range.

and very few, if any, individuals will remain who experienced life on the land first hand. Perhaps the children of today's youth will have their grandparents with whom use of Inuktitut is expected. However, if patterns of language use between parents and children continue to follow the trend toward bilingual language use in the homes, as exposed in this research, this youngest generation of Inuit (today's children) may be the last to have any domain in which use of Inuktitut is the norm.

Finally, the comparisons between communities are interesting. Lower levels of use of Inuktitut with one's children in Iqaluit are not surprising, and follow the trend of predominantly bilingual language usage in Iqaluit homes, seen with parents and siblings as well. However, between the smaller communities, up until this point, evidence has pointed to stronger use of Inuktitut in Pangnirtung than in Pond Inlet. In contrast, in the case of language usage with children, the highest level of use of Inuktitut is reported in Pond Inlet, followed by Pangnirtung.

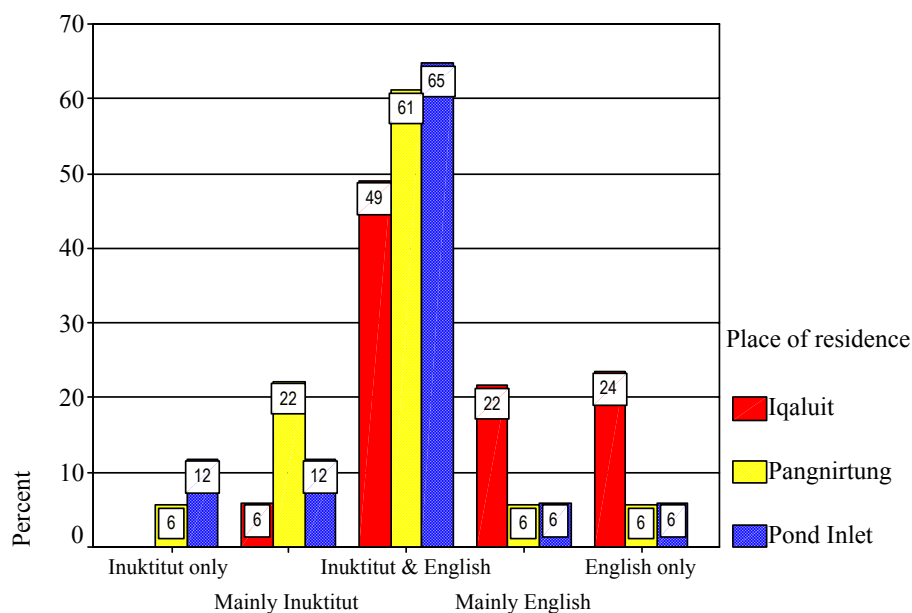
Also, in Iqaluit and Pond Inlet, participants use more Inuktitut with their children than with their spouses, as will be seen below (Iqaluit: to children, mean = 2.9, to spouse, mean = 2.4; Pond Inlet: to children, mean = 3.8, to spouse mean = 3.2). In Pangnirtung, although participants likewise use more Inuktitut with their children than with their spouses, the distinction is weak (to children, mean = 3.5, to spouse, mean = 3.3). Dorais and Sammons (2002) noticed a similar contrast in their results: young parents in Iqaluit use more Inuktitut with their children than with their spouses, whereas in Igloolik (a small, North Baffin community where Inuktitut is considered particularly strong), they use slightly less Inuktitut with their children than with their spouses. It is possible that the noticeably higher levels of Inuktitut with one's children (as compared to language use with other individuals, including one's spouse) in Pond Inlet and in Iqaluit reflects a reaction to the awareness of loss presented in Chapter Five. That is, observation and awareness of language loss may motivate greater use of Inuktitut with one's children. In comparison, it is possible that language use with one's children in Pangnirtung (and in Dorais and Sammons' research, Igloolik), which is more in line with patterns of language use with one's spouse (slightly more Inuktitut in the case of Pangnirtung, slightly less in



Igloolik) indicates that in these communities, parents are not altering their general way of speaking when addressing children. Possibly because Inuktitut is not perceived as threatened in these communities, young parents are not yet taking redressive actions to ensure that their children learn and speak Inuktitut. As such, the linguistic practice in Pangnirtung (and in Igloolik) may represent a different stage in language transfer, a stage before the threat of language loss is perceived, during which language behaviour which does not strongly favour Inuktitut is practised.

*To Spouse/Girlfriend/Boyfriend*

Although the discussion above interprets patterns of bilingual language use with one's children as indicative of a transfer to English (and accompanying loss of Inuktitut) creeping up on the communities, results for language use with one's children are optimistic when compared to language use with one's peers, and more specifically, with one's spouse/girlfriend/boyfriend. As seen in Figure 12, most respondents in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet (61.1% [11/18] and 64.7% [11/17], respectively) use Inuktitut and English equally with the spouse/girlfriend/boyfriend, while a few favour either Inuktitut or English. In Iqaluit, 49% of respondents (25/51) also use Inuktitut and English equally, while the remaining respondents generally use mainly (21.6%, 11/51) or only (23.5%, 12/51) English. As these results suggest, speaking with a spouse is associated with bilingual speech behaviour in the smaller communities (mean = 3.2 in both), but tends to slightly favour English in Iqaluit (mean = 2.4). Responses in the closed questionnaires are no more favourable to the use of Inuktitut even if one eliminates from the analysis those with Qallunaat partners.



**Figure 12: Language Use with One's Spouse/Girlfriend/Boyfriend**

Many participants in the semi-directed interviews, as would be expected based on results outlined above, describe bilingual speech behaviour with their partners, whether the partner is Inuk or Qallunaaq. Participants with Inuit partners generally report bilingual patterns of language use:

R. So you use both with [your husband]?

P8. Yeah.

R. Is it pretty much equal?

P8. I think so, yeah.

R. Is he Inuit?

P8. Yeah.

I7. I use English and Inuktitut ... for my girlfriend I use it, both too. [...]

R. Is your girlfriend Inuk?

I7. Yeah.

R. [...] Do you use both in the same sentence, or do you use?

I7. Yeah, both in the same sentence. So it can be, seems like it's weird using both but.

Even with a Qallunaaq spouse, some Inuktitut may be used. Some young Inuit explain that they insert some Inuktitut in conversation with their Qallunaaq partners, even if the speech situation is mainly English:

D2. When I first get up, it's normally good morning to [my girlfriend (a Qallunaaq)] in English, then...sometimes I say things to her in Inuktitut that I know she understands, and I try to use it just so she can get more familiar with it, and I say good-bye in English.

When the partner is francophone, sometimes language use is trilingual, with English, French and Inuktitut all being used, even if English prevails:

R. What language do you use when you are talking to your girlfriend [a francophone]?

D16. English. English and a little bit of French. [...] I'll say some words in Inuktitut to her at times [...] I mean, I won't say a whole sentence to her in Inuktitut, just the words I know she can remember...

[...]

...it just becomes like a habit, something normal for everybody, like they don't realise it, like I don't realise it, myself, at times. A lot of times I do, and I mix both languages right up. I find it funny at times. Especially when I am just communicating with my girlfriend and she doesn't really know English, and French, Inuktitut, sorry. It's funny, I will speak to her, and I'll have a conversation with her in English, and without even noticing sometimes, I'll just start blabbing away in Inuktitut, and once I realise, I just laugh about it. It's pretty interesting at times.

Generally speaking, though, Inuit with Qallunaat partners say that they use mainly or only English when speaking to their spouses, girlfriends or boyfriends:

R. With your girls' father [a Qallunaaq], did you speak Inuktitut with him or English?

D11. Mostly English.

I5. I'm seeing someone, so, *ila*, I'm going out with this guy who's a white man... [...]

R. The guy that you're seeing, do you speak English to him?

I5. Yes.

R. Only English?

I5. Yes.

Although bilingual speech behaviour is the norm with spouses, as seen above, a few Inuit favour Inuktitut, especially in the smaller communities:

R. And with (your boyfriend)?

P9. Inuktitut. We use Inuktitut a lot.

R. Who else would you see in the morning?

I4. My boyfriend.

R. How about with him? Which language?

I4. Inuktitut.

R. As in only, or mainly?

I4. Only.

In isolated cases, English may also be predominantly used even with an Inuk spouse:

R. With your girlfriend [an Inuk]?

D1. Mostly English, too.

Overall, results from the semi-directed interviews for speaking with one's spouse show a variety of linguistic practices, from using only Inuktitut to only English, with most participants using a combination of both languages, as was the case in speaking to one's children.

The results for speaking to one's spouse are concerning in terms of the promotion of Inuktitut for several reasons. Although a few young Inuit in the smaller communities preferentially use Inuktitut with their partners, the fact that the majority use both Inuktitut and English suggests that such linguistic behaviour is the preferred practice among young Inuit. If Inuit are choosing to use English half of the time for personal or practical reasons even to the individuals with whom they choose to have close personal relationships, then language planning will have to do more than create new situations where Inuktitut may be used.

Language use with the spouse is also troublesome because it sets the linguistic climate for the household. Even if the respondents who have children do report that they use more Inuktitut with their children than with their spouses, language use between spouses sends an implicit message to children about which language is valued and determines the amount of exposure the child will have to Inuktitut. As seen in the previous chapter on language competence, Inuit youth surveyed blame lack of exposure to Inuktitut and increased exposure to English as a contributing factor in their loss of Inuktitut. This bilingual language use with one's spouse and, to a lesser degree, with

one's children, is perhaps the most significant indicator of the future of Inuktitut, as it sets the scene for the future competence and linguistic practice of the next generation.

Overall, language usage in the home among young Inuit shows that the home is a bilingual domain, in which either Inuktitut or English can be used in most speech situations. Inuktitut is preferentially spoken by all young Inuit when addressing one's mother, and by most young Inuit when addressing the father. Beyond that, speaking to one's siblings, to one's children, to one's spouse, and generally speaking at home are all speech situations in which both Inuktitut and English are used. In all these situations, the lowest frequency of use of Inuktitut is reported by respondents in Iqaluit, who frequently favour use of English over Inuktitut. The highest levels of use of Inuktitut are attested in Pangnirtung for speaking with one's mother, one's siblings and generally speaking at home, whereas Pond Inlet respondents express the highest use of Inuktitut with their fathers and children.

There is some evidence that the language situation in Inuit homes is dynamic, with use of Inuktitut slowly decreasing, but then, in the case of Iqaluit and Pond Inlet, subsequently increasing once the individuals have children. In all three communities, Inuit youth report using more Inuktitut with their parents (with the exception of Qallunaat fathers) than with their children, or anyone else in the immediate family for that matter, showing a decrease in use of Inuktitut among younger individuals, as also noted by Dorais and Sammons (2002). Dorais and Sammons (2002) also suggest that having children can be a factor in compelling Inuit to use more Inuktitut.

The results for each speech situation in the home domain, taken together, suggest that Inuit youth are acting out their bilingualism even in the home, which is often considered the last stronghold of a threatened language. This active practice of bilingualism, where Inuktitut is being used in the home at least half the time (or else where both languages are consistently being used), could suggest that equal bilingualism has been achieved. Balanced use of Inuktitut and English could possibly be an end point, if the relative prestige of Inuktitut and English were equal, and there were nothing to push

people toward greater use of English. However, there is no evidence that this equal split between Inuktitut and English indicates stable bilingual practices in the home. Many participants say that as children, Inuktitut was the unique language of their household (although some do report a bilingual upbringing). To go from using only Inuktitut in the home to using predominantly both languages within one generation indicates a shift toward more English. The description of bilingual homes suggests instability in the linguistic situation, transferring to greater use of English. For Inuktitut to continue being used in the homes, this shift needs to either be halted or reversed. Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten identify factors (specifically attitudinal factors) which could halt or reverse the trend.

In this chapter, 'traditional activities'/elders and the home are discussed as the two domains in which use of Inuktitut is strongest. Inuit youth in the closed questionnaires and semi-directed interviews indicate that they associate speaking to elders and to their grandparents, as well as speaking about and during traditional activities, with speaking Inuktitut. Speaking to one's parents also appears to be a speech situation where use of Inuktitut is the norm, although there is evidence that English is making inroads in this situation, leading to decreased use of Inuktitut. Beyond speaking to one's parents in Inuktitut, language use in the home reflects the bilingualism of the younger generation of Inuit. Both Inuktitut and English are widely used. As will be seen in the following chapter, such bilingual speech behaviour is characteristic of Inuit youth in almost every domain.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **DESCRIPTION OF LANGUAGE USE: BILINGUAL AND ENGLISH-DOMINANT DOMAINS**

#### **7.0 Introduction**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Inuit youth report preferential use of Inuktitut when speaking about or during traditional activities, or to elder Inuit, or to one's parents. Beyond speaking to one's parents, language use in the home is reportedly bilingual, although Inuktitut continues to be favoured in the home in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet. In fact, as will be seen in this chapter, use of both Inuktitut and English is common in almost every domain outside of "traditional activities/elders", whether around the community, at work, at school or in the government. Just as most Inuit youth surveyed report that they are bilingual, equally competent in Inuktitut and English, they also say that they consistently act out this bilingualism, using both Inuktitut and English in most communicative situations. As discussed at the end of this chapter, the only domain in which Inuktitut is not commonly used alongside English is "professional services".

#### **7.1 Community**

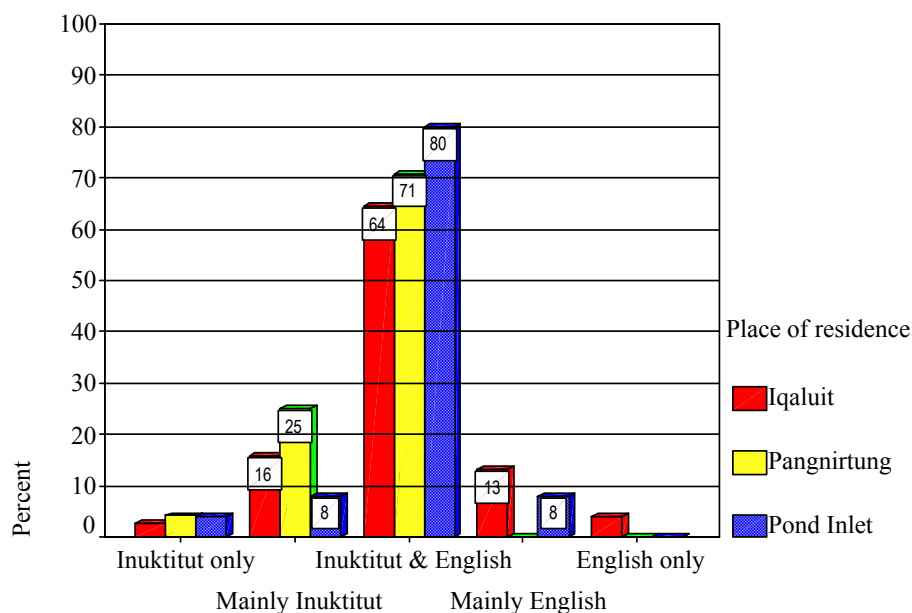
Language use in the community, for the purposes of this study, includes informal interactions outside the home, such as speaking to friends and speaking at social events.

Informal topics, such as speaking about daily life and sports are also included in the community domain. All speech situations in this domain, except for speaking with Qallunaat friends, show the same tendency as the home domain for mixed usage of Inuktitut and English, with slight preferences for English in Iqaluit, and slight preferences for Inuktitut or English, depending on the more specific situation, in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet.

### *Speaking with Inuit Friends*

Language use with Inuit friends is characterised by bilingual speech, where Inuit youth say that they use Inuktitut and English equally, and this in all three communities. (Iqaluit mean = 3.0; Pangnirtung mean = 3.3; Pond Inlet mean = 3.1). Totally bilingual speech behaviour is reported by a total of 68% (86/125) of respondents. A minority of respondents use either Inuktitut or English preferentially; 3.2% (4/125) use only Inuktitut, 16% (20/125) use mainly Inuktitut, 9.6% (12/125) use mainly English and 2.4% (3/125) use English only. As seen in Figure 13, this overall pattern of language usage with Inuit friends is repeated in each community, with the exception that most of the individuals who preferentially use English with their Inuit friends (twelve of the fourteen) live in Iqaluit. In Pangnirtung, the main divergence from the overall pattern is seen in the higher number of individuals who use mainly Inuktitut (25%, 6/24), as well as the lack of responses of mainly or only English.





**Figure 13: Language Use Speaking to Inuit Friends**

Participants in the semi-directed interviews spoke a fair bit about language choice with their friends, and their comments correspond to the results from the closed questionnaire: both Inuktitut and English are widely used. Participants' comments are helpful in gaining a clearer picture of the nature of bilingual speech behaviour between Inuit friends. Inuit youth surveyed describe three types of bilingual speech behaviour: alternating languages between conversations, alternating within conversations, and switching within a single utterance (for a theoretical discussion of bilingual speech behaviour, code alternation, codeswitching and code mixing, see Heller 1988 and Muysken 2000).

In the first instance, language use with friends alternates between conversations. Inuit youth preferentially use Inuktitut, English, or a combination of the two depending on exactly which friend is being addressed. This type of language alternation is mainly reported in Iqaluit, although it is also attested in Pond Inlet:

D6. With my friends it's a mix. To some friends I speak Inuktitut and to most of my friends, English. ...I don't speak Inuktitut as much as I do in English.

D7. Only certain friends you talk to in Inuktitut. But, it's mostly mixture, mostly, I'd say, mostly English now.

D10. Mixed. Because I have all different types of friends, who speak this language or that language, right? So, it depends, who my friends are, because if they speak Inuktitut, it's usually mixed, if they, it's more like if they speak English and Inuktitut, it's mixed, if they speak only Inuktitut, I'll speak only Inuktitut. If they're only English, I'll speak only English. It really depends on who you're talking to.

R. How about with your friends? How does that work, using Inuktitut as much as possible? You said sometimes mainly Inuktitut, sometimes it's mainly English?

I9. Yes, and when I speak to my friends, depending on who it is.

Recollecting the wide range of linguistic competence reported by Inuit youth in Iqaluit (Chapter Five), it is not surprising that they would vary their linguistic behaviour based on which friend they are addressing. Reactions to the closed questionnaire statement “*Most of my Inuit friends are fluent in Inuktitut*”<sup>1</sup> (Iqaluit mean = 6.89, Pangnirtung mean = 8.23, Pond Inlet mean = 6.4), suggest that while Pangnirtung youth consider their Inuit friends fluent in Inuktitut, Inuit in Iqaluit and Pond Inlet have less confidence in the linguistic abilities of their friends ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). Moreover, participants in the interviews spoke generally about “friends”, without distinguishing between Qallunaat and Inuit friends, which may also be reflected in their description of language alternation.

Other patterns of code alternation, where both Inuktitut and English are used within a single conversation, are evident in the linguistic behaviour between Inuit friends. In some cases, the first speaker begins in either Inuktitut or English, and the second speaker responds in the other language:

A4. And if I'm with a friend who speaks or understands Inuktitut, even if they're talking to me in English, I talk to them in Inuktitut, they kind of catch on and just.

[...]

I'll use my friend...as an example. She's fluent in Inuktitut and so am I, but she and I don't speak Inuktitut to each other. ...Sometimes I tell her

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 1

stories and I try to speak only in Inuktitut, but she notices that I'm trying really hard to speak only Inuktitut, and she's like, "What are you doing?" I'm like, "I don't know!" "Why not?" Right? I don't know. And then she'll laugh and she'll say, "Yeah, that happened to me too, then she'll tell me her story, but she'll say it all in English." I don't know. It's a struggle.

Sometimes such alternation is maintained consistently throughout conversations:

R. It sounds like sometimes it happens to you that you would speak Inuktitut to somebody and they would respond in English, does that happen?

D2. Many times, yeah. All too often.

R. Who does that happen with?

D2. I can't think of anybody specific. Well, my good friend, he understands most of Inuktitut I speak to him, but he answers all in English. He has a white father and an Inuk mother.

At other times, after an initial bilingual exchange, participants will settle on one language or the other for the interaction:

R. Does it ever happen that you speak Inuktitut to somebody and then they respond in English?

P2. Yup. Most of the time, my friends. But I don't like that. I don't know why.

R. Most of your friends use

P2. English.

R. And then you'll respond in Inuktitut?

P2. Yeah.

R. What do they say when you respond in Inuktitut?

P2. They understand.

R. And do they keep going in English or do they switch to Inuktitut?

P2. Both.

R. Does it ever happen that you speak Inuktitut to somebody and they respond to you in English?

I6. Yeah. Like, with my friends too, especially with people that don't really speak Inuktitut, but I still ask them in Inuktitut, and they respond back in English. And I understand them both.

R. And what happens then? What language do you respond back to them in?

I6. Usually English, but sometimes, when I feel like it, I switch going back in Inuktitut.

In another pattern of bilingual speech, some individuals say that they practice simultaneous translation with certain friends, stating the same idea in both Inuktitut and English:

D2. A lot of my friends ... they are mostly half Inuk, half white, and they understood Inuktitut, but a lot of them didn't really speak it. ...so we would use English, I would still speak Inuktitut to them when they would ask me, "What does that mean" and I would tell them in English.

R. Do your friends speak to you a lot in Inuktitut?

P1. Yeah. I don't understand them always.

R. And what happens then, if they speak to you in Inuktitut and you don't understand?

P1. They just tell me in English.

R. Do they speak to you just in English, do they address you in English, just to begin with sometimes?

P1. No. They usually talk to me in Inuktitut.

R. First. Okay. How do you feel about that when they talk to you in Inuktitut and you get them to repeat in English?

P1. It's all right. But when I know it, when I know what they say in Inuktitut, they translate it, I already know, it bugs me.

R. Yeah. Do they translate automatically?

P1. Yeah.

R. Okay, so they'll say it in Inuktitut and then in English?

P1. Yeah.

R. And then you'll respond in...

P1. Usually English.

These patterns of code alternation – where language choice changes between conversations, between turns or even within turns – are attested in all three communities. Although the description relies on self-reports of language use, the concrete examples provided by A4, D2 and P1 support that they are recalling actual speech behaviour.

In yet another pattern of bilingual speech behaviour with friends, some Inuit youth will switch between Inuktitut and English within a single utterance. Inuit youth in all three communities report using this mixture of Inuktitut and English:

D13. And usually when I'll talk to Inuks, put in some English words.

D16. Like I said earlier, I've noticed a lot, when people are communicating and they both know Inuktitut and English, they mix it up a lot.

[...] A lot of us, I mean, from what I've noticed, people from the age of eighteen to twenty-five, maybe, they know both languages very well, but they just mix it right up, like I do it myself.

[...] Getting together with friends, you mix.

R. Okay. Do they ever mix Inuktitut and English in the same sentence?

P2. Yup. Even me!

R. Is that when you're with your friends, only, or when you're with your parents, too?

P2. Sometimes with my parents, but most of the time with my friends.

R. Outside of school, which language do you use with your friends?

P3. I'd say, Inuktitut and English. Sometimes more Inuktitut, and sometimes it's mixed. So I say Inuktitut and English.

R. What do you mean when you say it's mixed?

P3. Like you say something in Inuktitut and you end it with an English word. I don't know how to explain it.

R. Do the young people mix Inuktitut and English a lot in the same sentence?

P5. Yeah. I do that a lot, too. [...] Like to my friends, I do it.

P7. Sometimes I use mixed languages. I'll say something in Inuktitut, and then, even in that same sentence I could start speaking English, so we blend it together sometimes. Not just sometimes, but a lot of times, too.

I6. A lot of young people are speaking much more English, especially to their friends. They're using mixed languages like Inuktitut and English at the same time. Even me, I'm doing the same thing too, to my friends.

I9. Sometimes, ... [I] kind of mix them up and then, I kind of start keeping, mixing the two languages, start talking both English and Inuktitut. Especially when I am talking to friends... Try and speak Inuktitut with friends when English comes along kind of thing. Then I start mixing the languages.

[...] I mix them up very often.

I10. Before I used to speak Inuktitut a lot and I was more comfortable speaking in Inuktitut. But now it's like I have two languages and those two languages I use at the same time because like what I'm saying is I have two languages and I'm pretty good at both of them, and when I'm talking to somebody, or one of my friends, I mix them, it feels like because I have two languages, it becomes to one language.

The quotations above show the prevalence of codeswitching between Inuktitut and English among Inuit friends in all three communities. My experience among Inuit youth concurs with their self reports. The self descriptions of language use also show that the Inuit youth are aware of mixing the two languages. The fact that they underline that such linguistic behaviour is particularly practised with friends (although it is also practised with other interlocutors) suggests that switching between languages with friends is, to a certain degree, a choice (conscious or sub-conscious) that the Inuit youth are making. In other words, with certain interlocutors Inuit youth may choose to use exclusively Inuktitut or exclusively English, indicating that they have the proficiency to use each language on its own, if the situation requires. However, as most of the Inuit friends are bilingual,<sup>2</sup> Inuit youth are choosing to use both Inuktitut and English to speak to their friends. At the same time, the repetition of “even me” by speakers who have previously asserted their competence and pride in using Inuktitut (i.e. P2, I6) indicates certain judgements toward mixing languages. Codeswitching will not be discussed further in this thesis. However, further research into this bilingual speech and its role in the maintenance of Inuktitut or transfer to English would help the understanding of the linguistic reality of Inuit youth.

A few participants mention preferentially using more Inuktitut or more English when speaking to their friends, despite the prevailing tendency to switch between languages. In Pangnirtung, the majority of participants express that they use more Inuktitut than English with their friends, even though, as seen above, they frequently use both languages:

P5. I tend to use both. With my friends I use Inuktitut. I use both. [...]  
 Mostly Inuktitut, with my friends. [...]  
 ...when [my friends] are around, I tend to speak Inuktitut.

In Pond Inlet, some participants in the semi-directed interviews clearly state that more Inuktitut is used than English when speaking to friends:

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<sup>2</sup> See for example reactions to Part three, question 2, “Most of the people that I speak with on a daily basis are bilingual”: Iqaluit mean = 7.91; Pangnirtung mean = 6.91; Pond Inlet mean = 7.91.

I3. *Ila* I usually talk to my friends in Inuktitut.

However, other participants in Pond Inlet preferentially use English with friends:

I5. Yeah. My best friend and I, we've talked about it. Our Inuktitut is so bad that we decided to talk more English to each other. Because we can't explain anything in Inuktitut when we're talking. But my Inuktitut and hers, it's, *ila*, it's good, but when I'm talking to her or when she's talking to me, we don't really know how to explain this or that. So, we decided to use English.

I10. And when I'm with my friends I mostly speak English.

In Iqaluit, participants who use more Inuktitut than English with friends are a rare exception:

R. How about with your friends?

D5. Mostly Inuktitut, I would say 65% Inuktitut.

R. Are there any places where you tend to use English or where you tend to use Inuktitut?

D5. At basketball games, there are a few Inuit on the team. We've just started to use Inuktitut to each other. [...] Just to communicate, like to say, there's someone on your back, or things like that.

More frequently, participants in Iqaluit (in line with results from the closed questionnaires) say that they use more English than Inuktitut with their friends:

R. What about here [in Iqaluit] with your friends?

D4. It's English. [...] Almost always. But. I try to make the best out of speaking Inuktitut. [...] my Inuk friends, sometimes I talk to them in English.

D6. Like, everyone who was sitting around that table, there was four Inuit people and we all spoke English.

D7. Friends... Usually it's English.

R. Do you use Inuktitut a lot with [your friends]?

D8. Some, not really. I don't know. It seems for me, English is taking over, more than before.

These young Inuit who selectively use either English or Inuktitut with their friends are the exception, though. The majority of participants in the semi-directed interviews, as

was seen in the closed questionnaires, estimate that they use Inuktitut and English equally with their friends.

Language use with peers is important because it is presumably a situation where (as with the spouse) the individual has a great deal of personal choice as to which language to use, seeing as most young Inuit report that they are bilingual. As such, language choice reflects personal preferences. Also, friends constitute a group of people with whom the 18 to 25 year-olds speak very frequently (as evidenced by the large number of comments about speaking to one's friends), so language use with friends is an important indicator of prevailing language practice.

#### *Speaking with Qallunaat Friends*

Contrasting language use with Inuit friends to language use with Qallunaat friends, it appears that speaking with Qallunaat usually entails use of English. Respondents from all communities indicate that speaking with Qallunaat friends compels them to use mainly or only English (Iqaluit mean = 1.6; Pangnirtung mean = 1.8; Pond Inlet mean = 2.0). In Iqaluit and Pangnirtung, the highest proportion of individuals (50% [38/76] and 42.1% [8/19], respectively) use only English with Qallunaat friends, followed by 40.8% (31/76) of respondents in Iqaluit and 36.8% (7/19) of respondents in Pangnirtung who use mainly English. In Pond Inlet, a lower 25% (6/24) of respondents use only English, and 54.2% (13/24) use mainly English. The highest (though still low) usage of Inuktitut with Qallunaat friends is attested in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, where 21.1% (4/19) and 20.8% (5/24) respectively use Inuktitut and English equally with Qallunaat friends. In Iqaluit, only 9.2% (7/76) of respondents use both languages equally. No one in any of the three communities reports consistently using more Inuktitut than English with Qallunaat friends.

In the semi-directed interviews, participants confirm that speaking to (or around) Qallunaat friends usually means speaking English:



A4. [...] Living in Iqaluit...now I'm speaking English to all white people and now English to some Inuit...people I met, and most of my friends, who were from down South or whatever...

D6. ...I'll just speak English. Because sometimes when I'm with my like Qallunaat friends, and I'm with my Inuk friends and I speak Inuktitut, they always give us weird looks...So we usually (use) English.

P5. [My friend, the teacher]'s daughter, I speak to her only in English.

I3. [The] nurse. She's a good friend.

R. And what language do you use with her?

I3. English.

Alongside this usual use of English, some participants explain that they can also use some Inuktitut with certain Qallunaat friends:

D2. Yeah, a friend of mine, [he's from] Southern Ontario...and he's been living up here most of his life, and I speak a lot of Inuktitut to him. He barely speaks any Inuktitut at all, but he understands a lot of it just because he's lived up here for so long.

R. If you're speaking to a Qallunaaq, who speaks Inuktitut, which language do you use?

I4. Both.

Evidently, English is used most of the time (for many Inuit youth, all of the time) when conversing with Qallunaat friends, although there is some room for using Inuktitut. In some ways, these results are unfavourable for the promotion of Inuktitut as the prevalence of English with Qallunaat friends is indicative of how few Qallunaat have learned Inuktitut sufficiently to communicate with their Inuit friends in this language. However, even the small degree of use of Inuktitut is hopeful for the future of the language, as it shows that some Qallunaat in all three communities do in fact learn enough Inuktitut to use it sometimes with their Inuit friends. Further, the use of Inuktitut, even though limited, indicates a certain willingness among the respondents to use Inuktitut when they can to speak with Qallunaat friends. Attitudes about teaching Inuktitut and using Inuktitut with Qallunaat are discussed in Chapters Eight and Ten. Overall, the language usage with friends very clearly indicates a split based on the

ethnicity of the interlocutor, with more Inuktitut being used with other Inuit, and more English being used with Qallunaat. This consistent use of English with Qallunaat is evident across domains, as was seen in the family and will be seen in school, in the workplace, in the government, and in professional services.

### *Speaking at Social Events*

Inuit youth in all three communities use both Inuktitut and English when speaking at social events, though to varying degrees. In Iqaluit, 67.9% (53/78) of respondents use both Inuktitut and English at social events, 20.5% (16/78) use mainly English and 7.7% (6/78) use only English. Only three individuals preferentially use Inuktitut (mean = 2.7). In Pond Inlet, a similar proportion of respondents (69.6%, 16/23) uses both Inuktitut and English. However, the remaining respondents, except for one, selectively use Inuktitut rather than English: 17.4% (4/23) use mainly Inuktitut and 8.7% (2/23) use Inuktitut only (mean = 3.3). In Pangnirtung, half of the respondents (10/20) use both Inuktitut and English at social events, whereas 35% (7/20) use mainly Inuktitut and 10% (2/20) use Inuktitut only (mean = 3.5). Once again, these results show that Inuit youth employ both Inuktitut and English widely in the “community” domain, although more Inuktitut is used in the smaller communities (especially in Pangnirtung) and less Inuktitut is used in Iqaluit ( $p \leq 0.001$ ). As the large majority of residents in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet are bilingual Inuit, language choice at social events reflects a choice to use both languages, even when one language or the other could be used exclusively. (Motivations for language choice are discussed in the following chapter.)

### *About Daily Life*

“Daily life” is a topic associated with (but not limited to) informal encounters within the community. Consistent with previous results, reported language choice when speaking about daily life shows bilingual language usage, with a slight preference for Inuktitut in the smaller communities ( $p \leq 0.001$ ). In Iqaluit, the large majority of respondents (70.9%, 56/79) use both Inuktitut and English when speaking about daily

life. The remaining respondents in Iqaluit are split between preferentially using English and, to a lesser degree, preferentially using Inuktitut (mean = 2.8). In Pangnirtung, consistent with previous responses within the “community” domain, the largest proportion of respondents (47.8%, 11/23) say that they use both languages equally to speak about daily life, but almost as many (43.5% (10/23) use mainly Inuktitut (mean = 3.5). Pond Inlet youths’ language use speaking about daily life mirrors their reported speech behaviour at social events: 68.2% (15/22) use both Inuktitut and English, 22.7% (5/22) use mainly Inuktitut and 9.1% (2/22) use only Inuktitut (mean = 3.4).

Comments in the semi-directed interviews support self-reports from the questionnaires and provide additional insights into language use when speaking about daily life. Participants who otherwise said that they rarely use Inuktitut, say that they do use Inuktitut in very basic, informal interactions, part of daily life:

R. Okay, can you give me examples of when you would use Inuktitut?

D1. Little things, like, what time is it? Who wants it? What’s happening?

D3. I know some baby words and stuff like that, so whatever, like nouns, mostly, I speak to her in, sock, or door, or going outside. Stuff like that. I try to speak to her as much as I can in Inuktitut.

R. Okay, in what kind of circumstances would you use [Inuktitut]?

P1. Saying hello, bye, that’s about it. [...] I’m bad at it.

Dorais and Sammons’ (2002) home observation specifies categories within “daily life”, and shows consistently more Inuktitut used than English (reflecting their wide age range, including older Inuit who use more Inuktitut than the youth). However, their results reveal relatively mixed speech behaviour in the kinds of utterances indicated above, “inquiries and information”, “remarks and expressions”, “time”, “clothing”, etc. Overall, results for speaking about daily life indicate bilingual speech behaviour.

*About Sports*

Results for speaking about sports, another topic associated with informal interactions within the community, show a high degree of bilingual speech behaviour. In Pond Inlet, all but two respondents (90%, 18/20) say that they use both Inuktitut and English to speak about sports (mean = 2.9). In Pangnirtung, a majority of respondents (59.1%, 13/22) also use both languages to speak about this topic, and the remaining participants are split between using mainly (18.2%, 4/22) or only (4.5%, 1/22) Inuktitut or mainly English (18.2%, 4/22) (mean = 3.1). In Iqaluit, the proportion of respondents using both Inuktitut and English is similar to Pangnirtung (58.1%, 43/74). However, all but two of the remaining respondents preferentially use English (mean 2.7). Once again, these results show that young Inuit in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet tend to use both Inuktitut and English to speak in informal settings or about informal topics, to varying degrees. Other informal topics mentioned in the interviews, for which both Inuktitut and English are used, include the weather (this is in contrast to Dorais and Sammons' home observation, see above) and talking about "girls" or "guys". Dorais and Sammons (2002) also noted in their home observations that comments about "leisure activities", most frequently uttered by teenagers, were more likely than comments on any other subject to be spoken in English.

Overall, reported language use among Inuit youth in the community domain, with the exception of speaking to Qallunaat friends, is largely bilingual. In Iqaluit, all informal speech situations elicited in this domain show bilingual, or slightly English-dominant language behaviour. In Pangnirtung, responses continue to lean toward slightly greater use of Inuktitut than English, although some speech situations favour bilingual speech behaviour. In Pond Inlet, the community domain is characterised by bilingual speech as well: 60 to 90% of respondents report that they use both Inuktitut and English in each "community" speech situation.

In all three communities, there is a gradual but clear diminution of use of Inuktitut as one moves from the "traditional Inuit life/elders" domain to the "home/family" domain

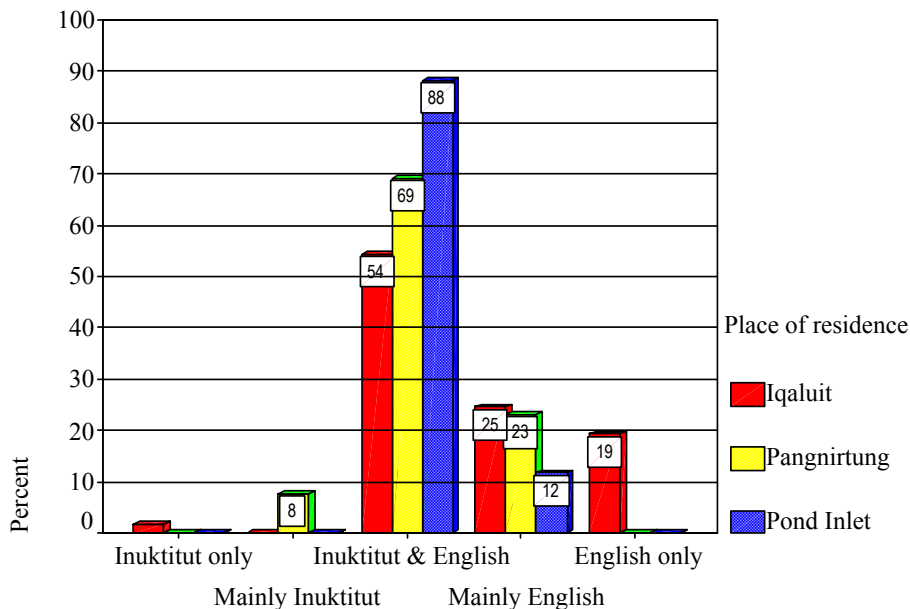
(seen in Chapter Six) to the “community” domain, although perceived language use in individual speech situations varies from community to community. In each of the remaining domains, school, work, government and services, as will be seen, the preference for English becomes more noticeable in Iqaluit, and emerges in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, although some Inuktitut continues to be used in each situation.

## **7.2 Education**

In Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, Inuit youth say that they use both of their languages in the school domain, although speaking at school, about school, and to a teacher are associated with using more English than Inuktitut, at least in Iqaluit. Speaking at school and about school remain bilingual speech situations in the smaller communities. However, all Inuit youth surveyed clearly associate speaking to a teacher with speaking English.

### *At School*

As seen in Figure 14, the majority of respondents use both Inuktitut and English when speaking at school. This is particularly true in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet (mean for both communities = 2.9), where the largest proportion of Inuit youth (69.2% [9/13] and 88.2% [15/17] respectively) say that they use both languages equally when speaking at school. All but one of the remaining respondents in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet use mainly English at school. In Iqaluit, 54.4% (31/57) of respondents use both languages at school, and all but one of the remaining respondents are split between using “mainly” or “only” English (mean = 2.4).



**Figure 14: Language Use at School**

These results indicating bilingual speech behaviour at school are repeated in results from the interviews. In part, bilingual speech behaviour at school reflects a general, widespread habit of using both languages:

R. Okay, how about at school?

D8. Yeah, to my friends. I mix it, sometimes, like. [...] If I ask them a question, about someone or something, I'll, first I'll speak in English and then I'll put an Inuktitut word in between, and then speak in English again, so.

R. Okay. What makes you use an Inuktitut word in between?

D8. I don't know, it's just habit.

More frequently, though, the combined use of Inuktitut and English at school reflects the variety of communicative interactions that occur at school, incorporating formal and informal interactions, in various settings, with different participants:

D10. Maybe at the school. There is a lot of Inuktitut there, like in the general courses it's mostly Inuit so half of, 85% of my class is Inuk, so we all speak Inuktitut to each other, so. But in the academic courses, it's all the English people and some Inuit, so it's all English. So it depends on which class you're with and which students, or which classmates you have and stuff, so.

R. So for you, when you are talking to your classmates, outside of class, it's mainly Inuktitut?

D10. Yeah. For the general courses, but then when I get to the academic courses it's all English.

R. Even with other Inuit?

D10. Yeah. Well, with some of the Inuit it's Inuktitut but then when you are talking to somebody who can't, you have to speak English.

R. At school, which language do you use?

P3. In class, I use mostly English but to my friends I use mostly Inuktitut. To my teacher, I just use English.

P6. At the school with all my teachers I use *Qallunaatitut*. But when I see my friends, we talk to each other in class, we speak in Inuktitut. Even in sports it's Inuktitut.

R. What language did you use when you were at school mainly?

I7. Both Inuktitut and English.

R. Together? Mixed?

I7. No. When I have English teachers I used my English and when I'm in Inuktitut I use English and a little bit of Inuktitut. No, no! Inuktitut and a little bit of English. Yeah.

R. And how about with your friends when you were at school?

I7. Most of the time in Inuktitut and a little bit of English.

As seen in the quotations above, most students use Inuktitut alongside English at school, depending on the situation. A few students say that they use more Inuktitut than English at school:

D6. Most of the students here speak Inuktitut, I think, yeah, they do speak Inuktitut most of the time, then all of a sudden they pause and they'll speak in English and then back to Inuktitut.

I2. Most of my classmates I speak to in Inuktitut. [...]

I2. When we're doing work, we just, if we don't know anything, we just ask the teacher. We just ask them what that sentence means in Inuktitut. And some stuff that the teachers don't understand.

More frequently, though, students say more English than Inuktitut is used at school:

A4. ...Because I was in an academic class and most of my class-mates were white, and the ones who were Inuk in my class, were speaking mostly English...

R. Okay, how about here at school?

D9. Mostly English. Yeah, because a lot of the students here don't speak much Inuktitut. [...] [They're] probably shy because when they talk Inuktitut, they tend to stutter and can't spit out the words. [...] I just like talk Inuktitut and English depending on who I'm talking to.

D11. So it was mostly English in the classroom. We were supposed to talk in Inuktitut, but then again, we carried on with English, not knowing how to say whatever.

D16. And growing up, ...going to high school, I mean, it was totally mixed up, I walk in there any day, and you'll hear nothing but English pretty much. [...] Because in high school, I spoke a lot more English, in high school. [...] that's where my little brothers speak English all the time.

R. How about in school with your friends, does it change whether you're in school or out of school, which language you use?

P4. It changes. Probably half and half, too.

R. In school it would be more?

P4. English. [...] Mostly English.

P10. It's mostly English. In school? [Nunavut Arctic College, in Pangnirtung] But when it's spare time, I would say that we're all speaking in Inuktitut a lot and laughing and one day the teacher's like, "I'm missing all the jokes." 'Cause, we'd be joking about something and everybody'd be laughing except the teacher and he'd just sit there, "I'm missing all the jokes."

The quotations above show that there is room for both Inuktitut and English to be used at school, depending on the more specific speech situation. However, further comments in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet underline that, of the situations in which the individuals interact on a day-to-day basis, they associate the school domain more closely with English than other domains:

P2. ...It's very hard for me trying to speak English not at school, because most of the time I speak English only at school.

I6. Some of my friends, usually the...people that dropped out from school, they tend to speak a lot more Inuktitut. But students that are in school, they tend to mix language. Myself, I went to high school, graduated high school and went to college, and I tend to do that too, because we did a lot of English language and we used a lot of English language, so when I'm talking to my friends, I usually mixed up and I get stuck to that language.



I9. Probably because of school. Because there's probably most of the people in school speak English. And out of school, at home or, somewhere else, they usually speak Inuktitut. Other than in school, kind of both, probably a little bit less Inuktitut and more English. When I'm out of school. When I'm home, I try and speak as much Inuktitut as possible.

Attending school is associated with speaking English, even if use of Inuktitut is also acceptable. As seen in Chapter Five, long term interaction in the school environment is associated with increased use of English, to the detriment of Inuktitut.

Inuit youth report that their speech at school remains bilingual. Although speaking at school involves more English than any other setting considered up to this point, the fact that Inuit youth say that they continue to use Inuktitut in this setting, even if not dominantly, suggests that Inuktitut is at least no longer a forbidden or strongly stigmatised language in the school setting. That being said, Dorais and Sammons' (2002:65) observation of language use in the classroom suggests that if Inuit youth, at least in Iqaluit, are using Inuktitut in school, it must be outside the classroom. Out of 65 observed utterances in Grade 10-12 classrooms, 57 (87.7%) were in English, and only one was in Inuktitut (seven utterances combined Inuktitut and English).

### *About School*

School is also a topic that is discussed in both Inuktitut and English, according to Inuit youth in this study. Pond Inlet youth in particular say that they use both languages equally to speak about school: 62.5% (10/16) of respondents use both languages, and the remaining respondents are equally split between preferentially using Inuktitut and preferentially using English (mean = 2.9). In Iqaluit (mean = 2.1) and Pangnirtung (mean = 2.6), the largest proportion of respondents, 40% (22/55) and 50% (6/12), respectively, also use both Inuktitut and English to talk about school. All but one of the remaining respondents in each community favour English to speak about school. While the respondents that favour English for speaking about school in Iqaluit are almost equally split between using mainly English (27.3%, 15/55) or only English (30.9%, 17/55), only

one participant in Pangnirtung (8.3%) says that English is used exclusively to discuss about school.

Comments in the semi-directed interviews attest to similar patterns of language use when speaking about school. Some participants say that they use a combination of Inuktitut and English to discuss school or homework:

R. How about if you were talking about your homework after school with your friends...can you think which language it would be in?

P4. ...Probably half and half. [...] We usually mix our words. And when we can't come up with meanings.

Other participants say that they favour English, as they associate it with certain school subjects:

R. Are there any subjects that are easier to speak about in English than Inuktitut?

D4. Subjects? Math, science, English is better.

R. Are there any subjects that it's easier for you to use English to talk about than Inuktitut?

[...]

D8. Like math, all the subjects at school but mainly, yeah, because I know that it's quite hard for them to try and teach science in Inuktitut. Socials and so on. Yeah, I prefer English in that area.

P7. ...If [my sister] asked a question, for her homework or something, if she asked me, I'd say something in English, more. Because, if she asked me and I answer in English, but if I answered in Inuktitut, then, sometimes she'd say, "How would I put it into English?"

Finally, although such a response is rare, some participants do prefer Inuktitut to speak about school:

R. Okay, what about talking about your homework after school?

P6. Inuktitut.

Once again, P6's comment underlines that even amidst strong general trends of language use among Inuit youth in particular situations, linguistic experience and behaviour among young Inuit remains varied.

The quotations above show that school is somewhat associated with English in reported linguistic practice, whether the communicative interaction actually takes place at school or is discussing school. The mental links between English and education will be discussed further in Chapter Ten. Even if English dominates when talking about school, at least some Inuktitut continues to be used. This bilingual linguistic practice may be influenced by the variety of people with whom one discusses school – family members, friends and teachers. As seen in previous sections, some individuals in other domains (especially parents) are preferentially addressed in Inuktitut. However, as seen in the following section, speaking with other individuals, for example the teacher, necessitates use of English.

#### *To Teacher*

Speaking to a teacher, in contrast to speaking at and about school, is definitely associated with speaking English. The three communities show a high level of consensus in patterns of language use with teachers (Iqaluit mean = 1.8; Pangnirtung mean = 1.7; Pond Inlet mean = 1.9). In Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet respectively, 45.1% (32/71), 47.4% (9/19), and 42.9% (9/21) of respondents speak only English to their teachers. Just over a third of respondents in Iqaluit and Pangnirtung (36.6% [26/71] and 36.8% [7/19], respectively) use mainly English with teachers, while 16.9% (12/71) and 15.8% (3/19) of respondents, respectively, use Inuktitut and English equally. In Pond Inlet, there is equal distribution (28.6% each, 6/21) of respondents who say that they use mainly English, or both Inuktitut and English with teachers. Over a quarter of respondents from Pond Inlet saying that they use Inuktitut and English equally with teachers is interesting considering that almost all of the teachers at this level would be Qallunaat, and the language of instruction is English. Possible explanations are seen below in quotations from the interviews.

Speaking to the teacher is the second speech situation seen so far that is so clearly associated with speaking English (the only other one being speaking with Qallunaat

friends). As mentioned above, most high school teachers are Qallunaat, so the dominance of English in this situation is to be expected, in line with a general reported tendency to use English whenever addressing Qallunaat. Asked when they tended to use English, participants in the semi-directed interviews also frequently identified speaking to teachers as an English-dominant speech situation:

P3. To my teacher, I just use English.

P7. Talking with the teacher and stuff like that you would use English.

R. Are there people that you use only English with, or mostly English?

I1. Maybe to the teachers, at the high school.

However, a number of students mention that they switch between languages, to some degree, when speaking to their teachers. In some cases, teachers (especially in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet) learn basic expressions in Inuktitut:

P6. Most teachers can say ‘how are you’, like *qanuippiit*. So. Any other time we use English.

I9. Then I start mixing the languages. Try and speak Inuktitut to my teachers, trying to teach them easy words like ‘good morning’, ‘good afternoon’, or, ‘hi’, *qanuippiit* or stuff like that.

At other times, use of Inuktitut reflects the teacher’s ability to understand, or communicate in Inuktitut, whether the teacher is an Inuk or a Qallunaaq who has learned Inuktitut:

D4. ...Because in Igloolik I even spoke to our teacher in Inuktitut. He understood it ‘cause he’s been there for a while. So.

P2. I *hope* so. Like even the teachers, I wouldn’t mind if they speak in Inuktitut, ‘cause ... [our social studies teacher], she’s an Inuk, ... and I understood. Like, when we didn’t understand some words, she would explain it to us in Inuktitut so we can get the point, and we did, and it was very, like it was a lot easier for us.

I7. ...When I have English teachers I used my English and when I’m in Inuktitut I use English and a little bit of Inuktitut. No, no! Inuktitut and a little bit of English. Yeah.

Dorais and Sammons (2002) found that Inuit children consistently accommodated the language of the teacher. In the case of speaking to the teacher, ethnicity and language competence of the interlocutor (sometimes affected by length of stay in the community) play a role, as seen in the above quotations. Some participants underline that they have no choice but to use English to teachers due to the absence of Inuit school teachers with whom to speak Inuktitut:

D8. Well, in elementary school, there's...more Inuktitut classes, more Inuktitut teachers, but when they reach high school, it's a couple Inuktitut teachers. It's like the secretary, or the guidance counsellor, both, and then there's like, a couple of them are CSA and the rest are janitors, so. I was hoping this year, that there'll be at least a couple Inuktitut, like Inuk teachers. But I guess it didn't happen.

R. Okay, and at school with your teachers?

I2. I only have one Inuktitut teacher. The rest of my teachers are in English.

Having Inuit teachers could create an environment in which more Inuktitut could be used. However, even the presence of an Inuk teacher (even teaching an Inuktitut class) does not mean that Inuktitut will consistently be used, as stated by the following participants in Iqaluit:

R. You mean Inuk teachers to teach Inuktitut language or Inuk teachers to teach other subjects?

D8. Yeah, that too, or, and languages. We had one last year, but he was mainly taking them outside and play soccer and not really teaching them, so.

D15. Well, when I was there, I can't say now, I haven't been in high school for two years, but I took Inuktitut in grade seven, eight, nine, it was, when I was learning how to speak, or, learning how to write English. It was sad, it was so sad. My teacher didn't even speak Inuktitut to me. She told me the questions in English. So, it was disgusting. Anything else?

As will be seen in subsequent results, interactions with professionals in general are characterised by preferential use of English. The prevalence of English reflects the dominance of Qallunaat in these positions.

Overall, school remains a domain in which Inuktitut and English are both used, although less Inuktitut is used here than in the community or home domains. Moreover, some speech situations within the school domain specifically require use of English, which was less frequently the case in the community and home domains. (The required use of English is related to the presence of Qallunaat, but also to the topics discussed in this domain.) These results further support the perception that Inuit youth use both languages almost everywhere, though to varying degrees. As well, they suggest that broad domains are only of limited use for explaining speech behaviour; a more specific combination of factors must be taken into account to explain the choice of Inuktitut or English, including whom one is speaking to, where, and about which subject.

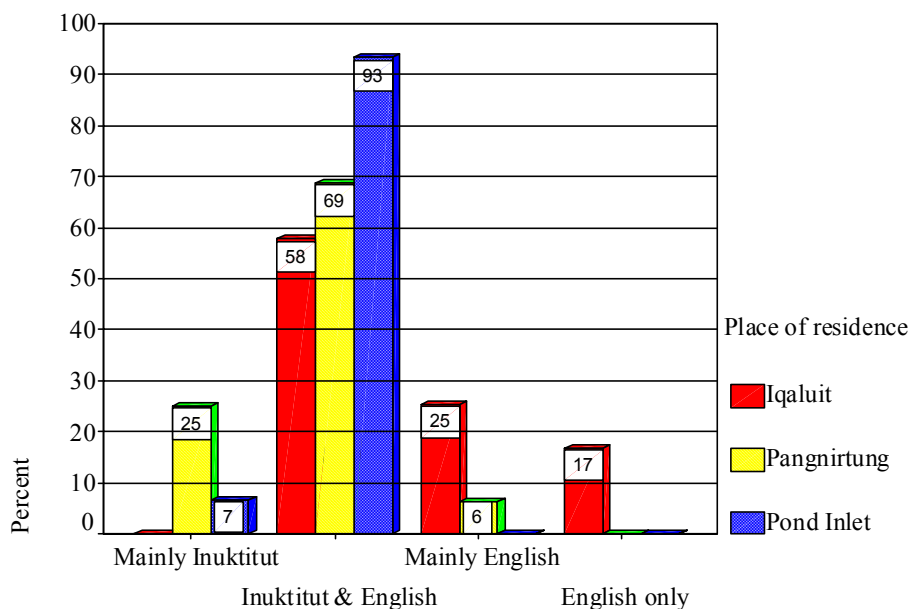
More importantly perhaps to discussions of language planning, reported language use in the schools indicates an element of choice and flexibility. It appears that Inuit youth could possibly use more (or less) Inuktitut in school, if other factors (such as number of Inuit teachers, number of Inuit in the academic stream or broader linguistic practices with friends) were to change. However, the degree to which Inuit youth value Inuktitut as a potential language of education remains to be seen, and Dorais and Sammons' (2002) observation of language use in the high school suggests that Inuktitut is in fact rarely used in the classroom. Discussion of the perceived practical value of Inuktitut and English in Chapter Ten shows that English is valued above Inuktitut as a language of education; this inequality in the value associated with Inuktitut and English is related to and reflected in disproportionate use of English speaking at school and about school. These reflections add sobering insights to what appears to be otherwise optimistic bilingual language practice in the school domain. Many logistical changes need to take place in the schools before use of Inuktitut can increase as a language of instruction (problems are outlined in Dorais and Sammons 2002). However, attitudes about the relationship between Inuktitut and formal instruction may also need to change before more Inuktitut will be used even informally when speaking at school or about school, as will be seen in Chapter Ten.

### 7.3 Work

Work is also a domain in which both Inuktitut and English are widely used, although English is favoured in Iqaluit. Once again, three different factors were elicited as potentially affecting language choice – work as a setting (speaking at work), work as a topic (speaking about work), and the interlocutors associated with the work domain (speaking to co-workers and speaking to one’s boss). Respondents tend to use equal amounts of both languages in the work domain except for when speaking to one’s boss, in which case English is reportedly used almost exclusively. As alluded to previously, this prevalent use of English with the boss may reflect the fact that many bosses are Qallunaat.

#### *At Work*

Inuit youth surveyed say that they use both Inuktitut and English when they are at work, as seen in Figure 15. In Pond Inlet especially, all but one respondent say that they use Inuktitut and English equally at work (93.3%, 14/15). The remaining respondent uses mainly Inuktitut. In Pangnirtung as well, the majority of respondents (68.8%, 11/16) use both languages equally, 25% of respondents (4/16) preferentially use Inuktitut, and only one participant uses more English than Inuktitut. The means from these communities reflect this bilingual speech behaviour (Pangnirtung mean = 3.2; Pond Inlet mean = 3.1). On the other hand, the results from Iqaluit show a tendency to use more English than Inuktitut (mean = 2.4) at work. In Iqaluit, 57.7% (41/71) of respondents estimate that they use Inuktitut and English equally at work, and the remaining respondents use either mainly English (25.4%, 18/71) or only English (16.9%, 12/71), closely paralleling reports of language use at school.



**Figure 15: Language Use at Work**

As was the case in the school domain, the bilingual speech behaviour at work in large part reflects the broad range of speech situations encountered in an average work day. Some of these specific interactions or tasks lead to greater use of English, while others lead to increased use of Inuktitut. Participants in the semi-directed interviews, employees in a variety of workplaces such as education, day care, retail sales, Inuit organisations and government, explain that they use both Inuktitut and English at work, depending on the participants, topic, channel (i.e. written or oral) and goals.

In accordance with responses to the closed questionnaires, most participants say that they use both languages widely at work, and some say that they use more English than Inuktitut in a typical work day:

R. Okay, and at work?

D10. At work? Which one? Just kidding. I'd say it's both, English and Inuktitut, at all three jobs. But really, it depends on who you're talking to, so it's always both. You know, at work, at the day-care, there's three people who speak English, so I always speak English to them. And then at my other work, at [the store], with my co-workers, actually, with my supervisors, it's all English, and then all my co-workers, Inuktitut. Well, some of them are English, too, but, like, it's all mixed at work.



P7. But here at work, I use mainly English sometimes. Like when there are phone calls.

I10. ...At work...we mostly speak English.

Although Inuit organisations may officially encourage employees to use Inuktitut, similar patterns of using both languages prevail. Two individuals working for Inuit organisations (based in Iqaluit) explain:

A4. Well, first of all I can say right now that I use more English than Inuktitut [at work]. [...] So my typical day. At work, they try to speak Inuktitut as much as possible. But I would still say, even then, it's like 50% Inuktitut and English with my co-workers and on the phone, but when my friends drop by, probably English, because most of my friends don't speak Inuktitut.

D4. ...Sometimes at work I have to translate some of our documents into Inuktitut when I have to hand them out to our members [...], when I'm doing reports, it's basically in Inuktitut that I do my reports. [...] It depends who I talk to at work. Because we're not all Inuit working in the organisation. ... Our interpreter-translator, she's my roommate, so I'll talk to her in Inuktitut. Sometimes I'll talk, we'll have conversations in English. ...I'll talk to a friend on the phone during work hours and I'll talk to her in Inuktitut. Like friends, different friends. It depends who I'm talking to, basically. ...When I feel comfortable speaking Inuktitut, when I feel comfortable in English, I'll do it in English. Most likely, maybe majority of time I'm speaking Inuktitut, English, I'll be honest with you. Majority of the time I'm speaking English.

Participants working for the Nunavut Government, another institution which explicitly promotes use of Inuktitut at work (as seen in Chapter Three) also report that they use both Inuktitut and English in a typical work day, sometimes more English than Inuktitut:

D2. Then I leave and go to work. It's pretty much all English. In our division, there's one Inuk lady, that I usually speak Inuktitut to...so I guess there's some Inuktitut. Then there's callers, with questions, and sometimes they speak Inuktitut, so they'll transfer the calls over to me so they'll talk to me. And I think that's pretty much it. Everybody else in my division, a lot of people mostly English-speaking. [...]

R. How much Inuktitut do you use at work. Would you say half Inuktitut, half English,

D2. I would say 10% Inuktitut. Yeah. Like, they have a status quo in the

government that you have to have so many people that are Inuit beneficiaries...I don't think they've quite reached that goal yet. The majority of them are non-speaking Inuit at work. But I think they're working on it.

P9. Both. Like there's some Qallunaat there [at work, in the Nunavut Government] and Inuit, so if they can't speak Inuktitut I'll have to speak to them in English.

R. When do you have to use English?

I5. When I'm working [for the Nunavut Government], when I have to deal with the contractors I have to talk to them.

[...] The guys I work with? There's this guy I work with who's an Inuk and doesn't speak English. Whenever he's on the phone, he transfers the phone to me and I would have to talk to them in English. So, *ila*, all of them are white, so I don't think they learn Inuktitut.

The quotations above show that both Inuktitut and English are widely used at work. The participants' descriptions of their own language use paint a picture of workplaces in which use of Inuktitut *and* English are both acceptable, desirable, or required, depending on the precise context. Chapter Ten discusses the use of Inuktitut in workplaces in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet in connection with the perceived need for Inuktitut in order to conduct one's job duties. In particular, Chapter Ten will suggest that the perceived practical need for and use of Inuktitut while conducting job duties is secondary to the perceived value of English in the workplace (even if Inuktitut is valued, particularly for getting a job). The perceived importance of Inuktitut as a language in which one works affects, and is affected by, the real use one makes of Inuktitut in the workplace. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, the Nunavut Government's plans to promote Inuktitut in the workplace must take into account not just practical issues of implementing Inuktitut, but also attitudinal issues about its value as a viable language of work and socioeconomic advancement.

### *About Work*

In the quotations above, participants in the semi-directed interviews explain that whom they are speaking to affects their language choice. Topic is another factor that influences Inuit to use Inuktitut or English. In particular, a few participants suggest that

speaking about work leads to greater use of English, whereas personal matters are discussed in Inuktitut:

A4. Yeah, if I'm talking about work, I speak in English. If I'm talking about personal, I speak in Inuktitut.

P7. I can, when you're talking to friends, I mean co-workers, if it's work-related, I tend to speak more English. But other matters, I use Inuktitut. Well, I do that, but I don't know about some of my co-workers.

Even though some Inuit youth use more English than Inuktitut to talk about work, results from the closed questionnaires show that the majority of respondents use both languages. In Pond Inlet, 85.7% (12/14) of respondents use both languages to speak about work. The remaining two respondents use more Inuktitut than English (mean = 3.2). In Pangnirtung, results show speaking about work as a bilingual speech situation with a slight lean toward preferring Inuktitut as well; just under half (7/15) of the respondents use both, a third (5/15) use mainly Inuktitut, and one respondent (6.7%) uses only Inuktitut. Only two respondents in Pangnirtung (13.3%) say that they use more English than Inuktitut (mean = 3.3). Iqaluit youth, on the other hand, lean toward using more English than Inuktitut to talk about work; 56.9% (41/72) of respondents use Inuktitut and English equally to speak about work, 22.2% (16/72) use mainly English, and 18.1% (13/72) use only English. Only two individuals in Iqaluit (2.8%) preferentially use Inuktitut to speak about work (mean = 2.4). Furthermore, Dorais and Sammons (2002) observed in a variety of workplaces in Iqaluit, among a wide age range, the same tendency reported above, for Inuit workers to use English to speak about work but to switch to Inuktitut to discuss personal matters.

#### *To Co-workers*

Both Inuktitut and English are also reportedly used when speaking to co-workers. Once again, the bilingual speech behaviour is most clearly marked in Pond Inlet, where 100% (13/13) of respondents say that they use both languages (mean = 3). The trend is also strong in Pangnirtung, where 71.4% (10/14) of respondents use both languages,

21.4% (3/14) use mainly Inuktitut and only one respondent (7.1%) preferentially uses English to speak with colleagues (mean = 3.1). In Iqaluit, the majority of respondents (55.7%, 39/70) use both languages, but the remaining respondents lean toward English dominance; 16% (11/70) use mainly English and 27.1% (19/70) use English only. Only one participant in Iqaluit (1.4%) preferentially uses Inuktitut to speak to co-workers (mean = 2.3).

Comments from the interviews expand upon the use of Inuktitut and English in this context. Participants explain their language choice in terms of the ethnicity of the co-worker. As seen previously in descriptions of language use at work, and across domains for that matter, more Inuktitut is used when speaking to a co-worker who is Inuk, and more English is used with Qallunaat:

R. Who do you use Inuktitut with?

D8. Other workers. Like, cashiers, or the janitor, the warehouse boys, and stuff. And our new H.R., we finally have a Inuk H.R. at work now, Human Resources.

R. So, who would you use Inuktitut with?

P8. My other co-workers... But English, I only use English to our finance, she's, she doesn't speak Inuktitut, so.

R. Is she Inuit, or non-Inuit?

P8. No, she's white. Non-Inuit. But a lot of the times, I usually speak Inuktitut.

Even where Inuit youth are able to use Inuktitut with Inuit colleagues, there is more of a tendency to use a combination of Inuktitut and English:

D17. ...The labour services, such as Public Works, the water, sewer, dump trucks, and all, like they're all Inuk and they all speak it. [...]

Like I go down to, like the arena, where they clean up and do the ice work, you know, they're all Inuit, and that's where you can speak it, but half the time, it's half English and half Inuktitut anyway, you kind of mix it up, I don't know, it's just a habit that I have, and that they have too, I guess. Yeah, cool.

I5. *Ila*, it was all right. At work we tried speaking in Inuktitut all day, but we kept mixing Inuktitut and English together and *ila*, we didn't, we couldn't help it anymore.

Inuktitut is not consistently used even between Inuit co-workers. Some Inuit co-workers have a tendency to use more English than Inuktitut with each other:

D2. There's me [and five other Inuit]. I think there's only six of us out of thirty-three. Yeah. And [co-worker], she's in my division, she barely speaks Inuktitut unless I speak Inuktitut to her. I never hear her speak Inuktitut any other time. [Another co-worker] she speaks Inuktitut. She's always speaking Inuktitut to me. And then there's [another co-worker], she speaks Inuktitut, I barely ever see her, but I've heard her speak Inuktitut. Then there's [another co-worker], he's the Kivalliq, or Kitikmeot dialect, but he speaks Inuktitut to me, and I barely see him...so, we'll speak Inuktitut to each other and if we don't quite understand, maybe we can kind of get the gist of it... There's only one other person who's Inuk, so I hardly ever get to speak it.

R. Are there some times when you talk English to other Inuit? [...]

P9. At work? Yeah. If they can speak English.

On a more optimistic note, there is also slight evidence that some Inuit youth may use small amounts of Inuktitut with Qallunaat at work:

D4. ...at work my co-worker, she's Qallunaat, so she understands, like sometimes I'll say some words to her in Inuktitut and she'll understand them because she was raised up here, but doesn't really know how to speak it?

R. What kinds of words would you say?

D4. *Qanuippiit?* How are you? And *Unalii?* What about this? *Kina?* Who? Or *Qanu?* What? Like basic questions... I'll help her.

Comments about using Inuktitut with Qallunaat co-workers are reminiscent of other reports of uttering basic Inuktitut phrases and words with Qallunaat in any domain, whether with a co-worker, a teacher, a parent, or a spouse. The message spoken in Inuktitut is limited to very basic phrases. As such, the described use of Inuktitut with Qallunaat is seen more as a symbolic gesture than otherwise. The significance of such use of Inuktitut with Qallunaat is touched on in Chapter Ten, in a discussion of the value of Inuktitut in building community.

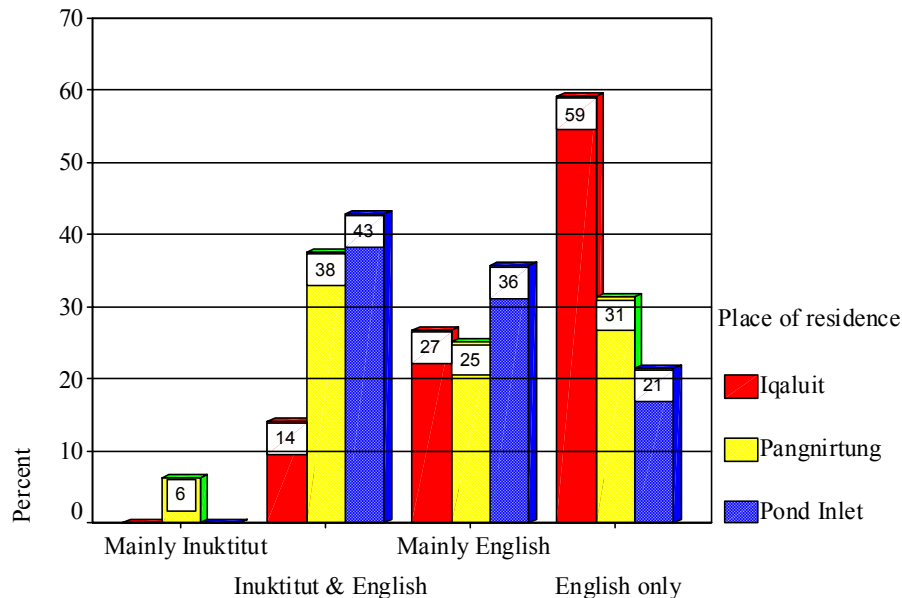
According to questionnaire and interview results, young Inuit frequently use both Inuktitut and English when speaking to co-workers. Greater presence of Inuit in the

workforce (something the Nunavut Government is actively promoting) could lead to greater use of Inuktitut. Also, it is promising to hear a few young Inuit report that they use small amounts of Inuktitut even with Qallunaat co-workers. Although such use is restricted to basic phrases based on the interviews, one young Qallunaaq civil servant reported to me (completely anecdotally) that after two years of participating in the government-run Inuktitut language courses for civil servants, she is beginning to understand conversations in Inuktitut around her at work. Although others have been critical of the efficacy of such classes, this particular woman's testimony (which may be exceptional) presents some hope that Inuit may increasingly be able to address Qallunaat co-workers in Inuktitut, at least in the government. However, reported language behaviour to co-workers is not entirely optimistic for the future of Inuktitut in Nunavut, because it shows that young Inuit are already sometimes using English (or a combination of Inuktitut and English) with Inuit co-workers even when they could use Inuktitut. Also, there is a potential danger of accepting token usage of Inuktitut in the workplace, as described above, as the achievement of Inuktitut as the language of work in Nunavut (as mandated by the Nunavut Government). Attitudes related to Inuktitut as a language of work, which are key to its potential promotion in the workplace, will be discussed in Chapter Ten.

### *To the Boss*

Inuit youth describe speaking at work and speaking to co-workers as bilingual speech situations, as seen above. Speaking to one's boss, though, often calls for English, even if the work domain overall is largely bilingual (just as speaking to one's teacher at school was a predominantly English speech situation in the otherwise bilingual school domain). As seen in Figure 16, in Iqaluit (the community in which the highest proportion of respondents are employed), English clearly dominates when speaking to one's boss: 59% (42/71) use only English to speak to their boss, 26.8% (19/71) use mainly English and 14.1% (10/71) use both Inuktitut and English (mean = 1.6). In Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, the largest proportion of respondents says that they use both languages to speak to a boss (37.5% [6/16] in Pangnirtung and 42.9% [6/14] in Pond Inlet). However, the

majority say that they preferentially use mainly English (25% [4/16] in Pangnirtung and 35.7% [5/14] in Pond Inlet) or only English (31.3% [5/16] in Pangnirtung and 21.4% [3/14] in Pond Inlet) to address a boss (mean = 2.2 in both communities).



**Figure 16: Language Use with One's Boss**

These results indicate, once again, a different linguistic climate in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet than in Iqaluit, even if the same general trends are evident. The trend shows that English is dominant when speaking to one's boss, which is a particularly 'Qallunaat' speech situation, as mentioned above, but that some Inuktitut may be used, particularly in the smaller communities.

In the semi-directed interviews as well, participants from Iqaluit express a clear tendency to use English with their bosses, sometimes explicitly stating that they have to use English because the boss is Qallunaaq:

D8. Like, at work...English is all the time because my boss, he has to understand.

D10. ...With my supervisors, it's all English.

D13. Because there's not that, well, as many Inuktitut-speaking in the big jobs and stuff, so, you know?

D17. ...Like, say in the office-wise, the management, that's where it ends. It's all basically English, everywhere you go.  
R. Even working for town.

One participant in Iqaluit, who works for an Inuit organisation, says that she also favours English to speak to her boss, even though he is an Inuk:

A4. But when I speak Inuktitut, like at [the Inuit organisation], our president, he's Inuk and he speaks mostly Inuktitut, but I always speak English to him, even though we both understand and speak Inuktitut. And I know he thinks that's weird, and I know he thinks I'm weird, because I give him messages in English, I tell him I'll be back in ten minutes, and I could have easily said that in Inuktitut, but I do that because, I think that I'm intimidated.

Even though A4 says she does not use Inuktitut with her boss, her comments indicate that working for an Inuit organisation increases her opportunities to use her mother tongue. In Dorais and Sammons' (2002) observation of language use in Iqaluit workplaces, they found that Inuktitut was used more frequently than English in the Aboriginal organisation office (64% of all utterances were in Inuktitut), and much more frequently in that office than in any other workplace.

Even if speaking to the boss in an English-dominated speech situation, there are some opportunities for using Inuktitut. Among the respondents who say that they use some Inuktitut with bosses, some make only limited usage of Inuktitut, along the same lines as the token use of Inuktitut seen previously with Qallunaat spouses, teachers and co-workers:

R. You mentioned that with your boss that you speak in Inuktitut.

D1. Yeah. I do. I do, anyway.

R. Who's the boss at [your workplace]? Is she Inuit?

D1. No, she's French.

R. Okay. But you speak Inuktitut with her?

D1. Yeah, sometimes. [...] She's not fluent or anything. She can understand the basic stuff. I just like to, here and there, to speak Inuktitut to her. She likes that.



D17. Oh yeah, every morning, it's just *ullaakut*, *qanuippiit* and whatnot.

In the smaller communities there is more evidence of young Inuit speaking to their bosses in Inuktitut. However, even the participants who say that they use Inuktitut with their (Qallunaat) bosses indicate that communication in Inuktitut is not always effective:

P7. Because my supervisor is non-Inuit, but he learned the language. So he knows Inuktitut really well, pretty good, I'd say.

R. Wow. So do you use Inuktitut with him at times?

P7. Yeah.

[...] I do simplify for my supervisor sometimes I don't even know, like, what I think I said in Inuktitut, like the information might be lost.

In Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet (and to a lesser degree in Iqaluit), participants sometimes use Inuktitut with their boss, although such use remains limited, at least in the self-reports. In particular, as the last quotation and previous quotations about "basic" use of Inuktitut suggest, participants do not seem to consider Inuktitut a particularly useful language for communicating with their bosses.

### *To Clients*

In contrast, Inuit youth who work in customer service say that they frequently need to use Inuktitut. Speaking with clients was not elicited in the closed questionnaire but was frequently mentioned in the semi-directed interviews, as many of the young employed Inuit participating in this research work in front-line positions and use Inuktitut in this capacity:

A4. ...I'm really glad that I work in an Inuit organisation because I answer the phone in Inuktitut and if they speak Inuktitut I try to speak Inuktitut to the person. Even if they ask me a question in English, I try to answer it in Inuktitut if they understand, that way I exercise my Inuktitut, which is what I'm trying to do.

R. Are there specific people that you would use Inuktitut with, or?

D1. ...At work, I would just basically speak to almost anybody if I really want to, the ones that say, do you speak Inuktitut?

D2. ...unless there's a caller, and then the main phone is in our division, so, the department, so a lot of those phone calls, if they're Inuit, and they prefer to speak Inuktitut, they'll transfer the calls to me and I'll speak Inuktitut to them, translate or whatever.

D9. ...we'd get a lot of the Inuk customers because we were paying the lowest rate in town, plus we were always speaking Inuktitut and those Inuk guys would come up to us and say what they would want fixed and how they want it... [our competitors] are all...speaking English or French, so a lot of them would come up to us and ask us to do the work.

D12. And I've got all these people here, I see all these people everyday, and they don't know if I speak Inuktitut or English or not, and they'll ask for something, and I say, okay, no problem but, when they ask for it, they usually ask in Inuktitut and I just look at them and say *qanu?* That means what did you say? *Qanu?* And they say it again...

In some cases, participants specify that the customers with whom they use Inuktitut are elders or monolingual Inuit:

D8. Like, at work, ...like if an elder comes, and they want me to translate, then I use Inuktitut but...

D13. I'll take my job for an example...there are some customers who can't speak in English at all and they'll ask questions and I'll be like, okay, what is that?

[...] When I'm helping some customers who are elders, like, I guess in Northmart and stuff, and they'll ask me stuff in Inuktitut you know? And I won't know.

D16. Especially with all of the elders in town, and they are still riding their snowmobiles, or when we have a complaint, and half of the time the complaints we receive are from older people, or elders who come in and they can barely speak in English. And, I don't know, there'll be phone calls and the first thing they'll ask is do you speak Inuktitut, yeah, I speak Inuktitut. Yeah, so it's a big help.

[...] Here at least. I'm glad I know Inuktitut because, every second day, we'll have a phone call and somebody can only speak Inuktitut. Yeah, makes my job easier.

In this way, Inuit youth underline that Inuktitut does have a particular practical use and value for them as workers, as many of their clients are Inuit. This need to use Inuktitut in specific situations makes Inuktitut valuable for getting a job, as will be seen in Chapter Ten. (There are other jobs in the communities which specifically require use of Inuktitut

in order to complete job duties, an obvious example being interpreter-translator, but no one in my sample population held such a job.)

At the same time, just as speaking to monolingual Inuit customers can cause one to use Inuktitut, English is consistently used to serve Qallunaat clients and may also be used with Inuit customers, depending on the precise context:

D6. ...When I work and stuff it's all English, never Inuktitut. [...] I work with, we have a family business going... So, all our clients, I never speak Inuktitut to. It's only mostly English.

R. Are your clients mainly Qallunaat, is that why?

D6. Yeah.

D10. At [the store], I'm a cashier and I get lots of customers and if they're English ...I have to, you know, it's different when I talk to them, you know? It's like, say you went and you were my customer, I'd speak English with you and then if it was [Inuit friend's name 1] or not [Inuit friend's name 1] I usually speak English with her, but. With [Inuit friend's name 2] it's all Inuktitut because you know, she's all for Inuktitut. She barely uses English. It just depends on who I'm talking to.

Young Inuit express that both Inuktitut and English are used with customers, with language choice depending on the customer, the topic, and the linguistic preferences of the speaker. (Motivations in language choice are discussed further in the following chapter.)

Overall, the work domain appears to be largely bilingual. Speaking at work, about work, to co-workers and to clients are bilingual speech situations in which either Inuktitut or English, or both, may be used. In most work-related speech situations, slightly more Inuktitut is used in Pangnirtung than in the other communities, and less Inuktitut is used in Iqaluit. This trend is consistent with results in all previously discussed domains. Each community seems to have its own pattern of language use in the workplace, a pattern which is repeated across speech situations.

In comparison to other domains, more Inuktitut is reportedly used in the work domain than in the school domain, which may underline the need to focus efforts for the

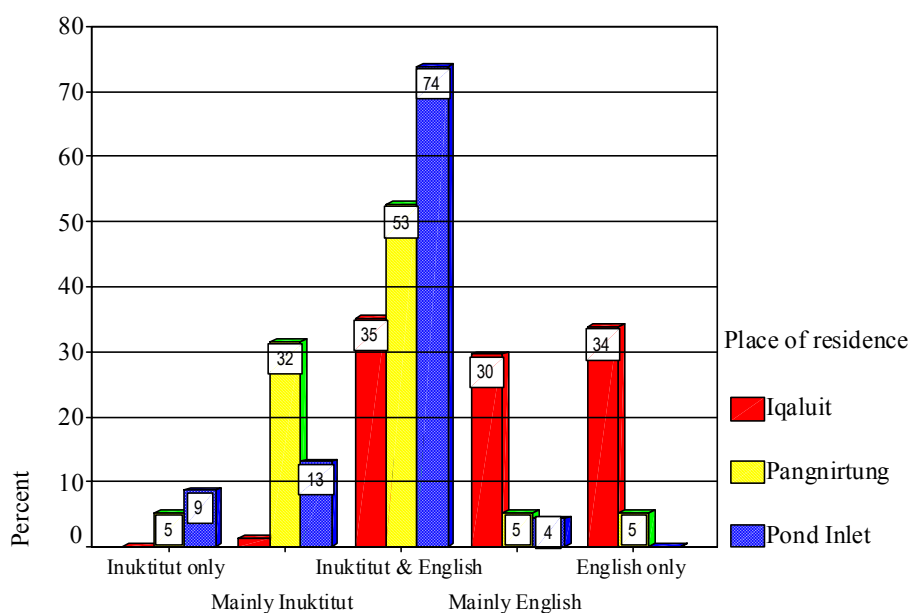
promotion of Inuktitut in education. Accommodating Inuit clients seems to encourage greater usage of Inuktitut in the workplace. Overall, the amount of Inuktitut used at work, about work, or speaking to co-workers in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet is similar to the level of Inuktitut used with Inuit friends or one's spouse. Workplaces of Inuit youth already appear to be bilingual, based on self reports of language use, which could bode favourably for the achievement and maintenance of stable bilingualism throughout the communities.

Dorais and Sammons (2002:56) reached similar conclusions based on observations of language use in a variety of workplaces; workplaces in Iqaluit are already bilingual, though English-dominant, "...the seemingly pervasive use of English at work should not be too surprising. What is interesting however, is that despite this strong presence Inuktitut still holds a definite position in the workplace, a position that could eventually increase..." More specifically, they found that although 62.8% of all observed utterances by workers under 30 years of age were in English, 25.5% were in Inuktitut and the remaining utterances combined Inuktitut and English. Considering that these figures include the language use of Qallunaat, it appears that the Inuit observed were frequently using Inuktitut. Still, as seen throughout this section, there is evidence in the workplaces, as in the other domains, that young Inuit are sometimes using English when they could feasibly use Inuktitut. In order to facilitate increased use of Inuktitut among Inuit youth, it appears that the issue is not just to create new opportunities to use Inuktitut, but to understand why Inuit youth are not exploiting already existing opportunities to use this language.

#### **7.4 Government**

In the "government" domain, the only speech situation considered is speaking at a government office. As seen in Figure 17, in Iqaluit, among the youth, more English than Inuktitut is used when speaking at a government office (mean = 2). Respondents are almost equally split between using equal amounts of Inuktitut and English (35.2%, 25/71), mainly English (29.6%, 21/71) or English only (33.8%, 24/71). In Pangnirtung

and Pond Inlet, respondents tend to say that they use both Inuktitut and English when speaking at a government office (mean = 3.3. in both communities). However, some report that they use more Inuktitut than English. In Pangnirtung, for example, 52.6% (10/19) of respondents use both languages, 31.6% (6/19) use mainly Inuktitut, and one respondent (5.3%) uses only Inuktitut. (Two respondents say that they use more English than Inuktitut.) In Pond Inlet, 73.9% (17/23) of respondents use both Inuktitut and English in government offices, 13% (3/23) use mainly Inuktitut and 8.7% (2/23) use only Inuktitut. Once again, the slight lean toward favouring Inuktitut that has been seen across domains in the smaller communities is evident in government offices as well.



**Figure 17: Language Use at a Government Office**

Participants in the semi-directed interviews did not describe much contact with the territorial government (such contact is possible, if not frequent; due to decentralisation, Nunavut Government offices are present in all three communities). Nonetheless, there is some qualitative evidence of Inuktitut in Nunavut government offices:

18. ...I noticed this a lot too, whenever you call a government department anywhere, someone in Inuktitut always answers. Someone who can speak

Inuktitut always answers. Before, with Yellowknife, you always ended up with an English-only-speaking person. I got so used to that, speaking only English when I started calling departments here I always asked first, do you speak Inuktitut? When they said yes, I was always surprised. Sometimes I kept speaking in English because I didn't know that the person could speak Inuktitut. That's what I noticed a lot everywhere, everyone was speaking Inuktitut when they answered the phone.

The results for speaking at a government office show that Inuktitut definitely has a place in the territorial government offices and is used alongside English in the three communities, though less so in Iqaluit. In Iqaluit, less Inuktitut is reportedly used when speaking at a government office than speaking at school or at work ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). These results are noteworthy because Iqaluit is the capital of Nunavut, and many governmental offices are located in Iqaluit. However, as the territorial government decentralises, if language use by youth is in any way indicative of broader patterns, expansion of territorial offices in smaller Inuit communities may help increase the levels of Inuktitut used.

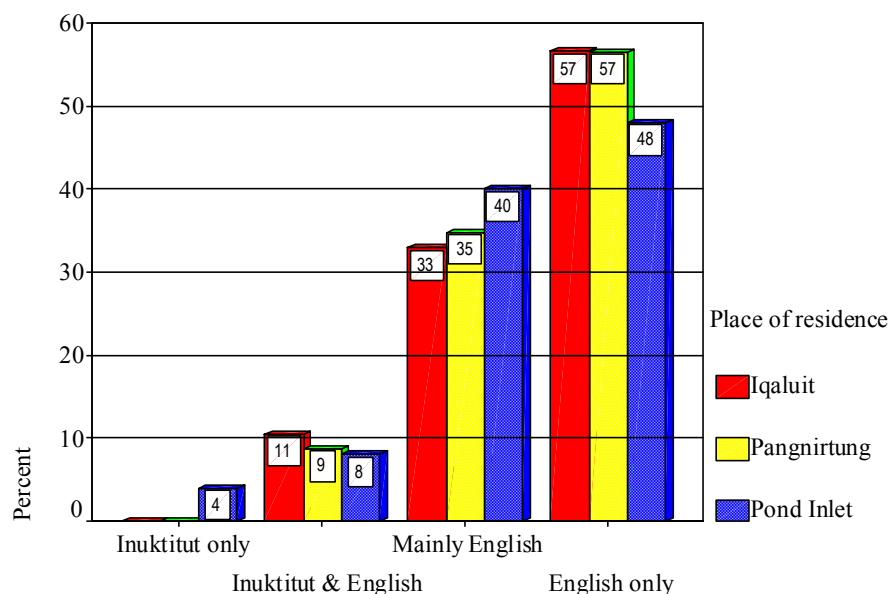
The described language behaviour in the community, school, work, and government (as well as in the home, seen in the preceding chapter) shows that both Inuktitut and English are consistently being used by Inuit youth in almost every domain. There may be a slightly greater need or preference to use English in more formal (or Qallunaat-related) settings, such as school, work and government, particularly in Iqaluit, but the increase in reported use of English in these domains is slight. Inuktitut continues to be used in the 'formal' settings, just as English is also used alongside Inuktitut in the more informal settings, home and community. The results for home, community, school, work and government underline just how bilingual the youths' speech behaviour is. Only a few speech situations (i.e. speaking to one's teacher or one's boss) appear to require English.

## 7.5 Professional Services

In the previous section, the Government of Nunavut was presented as a bilingual domain, where both Inuktitut and English are widely used. However, some of the professional services offered by the government are dominated by use of English, including health care. Speaking at the RCMP office is also dominated by English, according to respondents. Certain private services, such as banking, also require the use of English in Baffin Island communities.

### *Health Care*

Inuit youth state that they primarily use English when speaking with a nurse, speaking at a nursing station and speaking at the hospital. As seen in Figure 18, when talking with a nurse, English is used exclusively by the largest proportion of respondents in all three communities: 56.6% (43/76) in Iqaluit, 56.5% (13/23) in Pangnirtung and 48% (12/25) in Pond Inlet. A slightly lower proportion of respondents use mainly English; 32.9% (25/76) in Iqaluit, 34.8% (8/23) in Pangnirtung and 40% (10/25) in Pond Inlet. A small number of respondents (8-10%) from each community use both Inuktitut and English, and only one individual (from Pond Inlet) preferentially uses Inuktitut to speak to a nurse (Iqaluit mean = 1.5; Pangnirtung mean = 1.5; Pond Inlet mean = 1.7). This linguistic practice of using predominantly English probably reflects the fact that most nurses in the communities are Qallunaat. A Nunavut Arctic College program to train nurses may help introduce more Inuit into nursing positions, resulting in more Inuktitut conversations between nurses and Inuit patients.



**Figure 18: Language Use Speaking to a Nurse**

While speaking to a nurse is one of the most dominantly English speech situations in all three communities, speaking at the nursing station allows some room for using Inuktitut. In all three communities, more English is used than Inuktitut when speaking at a nursing station (Iqaluit mean = 1.8; Pangnirtung mean = 2.4; Pond Inlet mean = 2.5). This trend is seen most clearly in Iqaluit, where 44.8% (30/67) of respondents use English only, 26.9% (18/67) use mainly English and 28.4% (19/67) use both Inuktitut and English. In Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, the largest proportion of respondents uses Inuktitut and English equally when speaking at a nursing station. In Pangnirtung, 39.1% (9/23) use both Inuktitut and English, 26.1% (6/23) use mainly English and 21.7% (5/23) use English only. Three individuals (13%) use mainly Inuktitut at nursing stations. In Pond Inlet, 54.2% (13/23) of respondents use Inuktitut and English, 25% (6/24) use mainly Inuktitut and 16.7% (4/24) use only English. One individual (4.2%) preferentially uses Inuktitut. These results show that even if speaking to the nurse occurs in English, both languages are used more generally in nursing stations (i.e. with the broader range of participants in the nursing stations: friends, family, and potentially translators), at least in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet.



The only hospital in the Baffin region is in Iqaluit. Reported language use when speaking at the hospital is similar to reported language use when speaking at a nursing station: 42.3% (33/78) of respondents use only English, 29.5% (23/78) use mainly English and 28.2% (22/78) use Inuktitut and English (mean = 1.9). Participants from the smaller communities also use mainly English at the hospital. In Pangnirtung, 26.7% (4/15) of participants use only English, 46.7% (7/15) use mainly English, 20% (3/15) use Inuktitut and English and one respondent (6.7%) uses mainly Inuktitut (mean = 2.0). In Pond Inlet, 20% (3/15) of participants use only English, 33.3% (5/15) use mainly English and 46.7% (7/15) use Inuktitut and English while at the hospital (mean = 2.3).

#### *Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)*

Speaking at an RCMP office is another speech situation in which Inuit youth tend to use English in all three communities. In Iqaluit, 46.6% (34/73) of respondents use English only, 37% (27/73) use mainly English, 15.1% (11/73) use both Inuktitut and English and only one individual (1.4%) preferentially uses Inuktitut (mean = 1.7). In Pangnirtung, speaking at an RCMP office is also characterised by exclusive use of English: 61.1% (11/18) use English only, 33.3% (6/18) use mainly English, and only one individual (5.6%) uses both Inuktitut and English (mean = 1.4). Results from Pond Inlet show “mainly English” being used with the police: 39.1% (9/23) of respondents use only English, 21.7% (5/23) use mainly English and 39.1% (9/23) use both Inuktitut and English (mean = 2.0).

#### *Bank*

Speaking at the bank, like communicating at the RCMP office, necessitates English in all three communities. The dominance of English in this setting is clearly seen in Iqaluit, where 56.8% (42/74) of respondents use English only, 32.4% (24/74) use mainly English and 10.8% (8/74) use both Inuktitut and English (mean = 1.5). The smaller communities do not have banks *per se*, so the respondents who chose to respond to this question were presumably referring to ‘banking’ transactions at the local Co-op or

Northern stores. In Pangnirtung, 38.5% (5/13) use only English and 61.5% (8/13) use mainly English (mean = 1.6). In Pond Inlet, the six responses are equally spread between using only English (33.3%, 2/6), mainly English (33.3%, 2/6) and Inuktitut and English (33.3%, 2/6) (mean = 2).

When accessing services such as health care, policing and banking, Inuit youth have a strong tendency to use English. As seen throughout descriptions of language use, the speech situations that are dominated by English are those in which the primary interlocutors would be Qallunaat. The predominance of English in the service domain is significant to the discussion of language planning in several ways. First, if the widespread use of English reflects an inability to communicate in Inuktitut in these domains, then this could point to linguistic problems (risks, even injustice) for monolingual Inuktitut-speakers in the community. Also, if one cannot communicate in these key areas without using English, this underlines the need to be bilingual even to fully participate in Inuit communities (i.e. bilingualism is necessary even for individuals who have no intention of ever living outside the North). On the other hand, the fact that “services” is the only domain in which generalised use of English is to be expected (based on the limited number of situations elicited) can be interpreted favourably for the future of Inuktitut. Most individuals would have infrequent interaction with health services, RCMP and banks (as seen by the number of individuals who did not respond to these particular questions and the scarce references to services in the semi-directed interviews). As a result, the impact of English dominance in this domain is predominantly felt in the need to *know* English, rather than in a need to frequently use English. Furthermore, even though the service domain is predominantly English, there is still evidence of minor amounts of accommodation of Inuktitut in the various settings, as not everyone uses exclusively English.

Although the only speech situations in which Inuit youth consistently say that they need to use considerably more English than Inuktitut are those involving Qallunaat, the discussion above shows that they choose to use varying amounts of English in most situations. Overall, the description of language use by young Inuit in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung

and Pond Inlet illustrates that there is no clear differentiation of domains, contrary to what one might expect in a typical diglossia (cf. Fishman 1967). While it is true that in each community slightly more Inuktitut is used in the home and in the community, and slightly less Inuktitut is used at school, at work and in the government, the overriding linguistic reality of Inuit youth is that both languages are very widely used in most speech situations. Certain aspects of language choice may be problematic for the survival of the Inuit language in Nunavut, in particular the fact that Inuit youth choose to use English alongside Inuktitut in most informal interactions, including with their spouses, children, and friends. Some factors which influence language choice, including interlocutor, topic and setting have been discussed in this chapter. However, many other factors are influencing choice of either Inuktitut or English in these bilingual speech situations. As mentioned throughout this chapter, understanding the reasons behind choices to use Inuktitut or English where both languages are acceptable is essential to understanding the linguistic behaviour of bilingual Inuit youth. Their choices are key to the eventual survival or loss of Inuktitut. The following chapter will present Inuit youths' own explanations of what compels them to use Inuktitut or English in specific settings.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MOTIVATION AND PROBLEMS IN LANGUAGE CHOICE

#### **8.0 Introduction**

The description of perceived language use among Inuit youth in the previous two chapters shows that domain is in some cases useful for explaining when Inuktitut will be used (e.g. elders, traditional activities) or when English will be used (e.g. services). However, domain in itself is insufficient for understanding the motivation behind language choice, as evidenced by the wide use of both Inuktitut and English in most speech situations. At times, Inuit youth are able to consciously explain their motivation to use one language or the other. In this chapter, I outline some of the reasons given by Inuit youth for why they use (or think they use) Inuktitut or English. Certain motivations for using Inuktitut have already been alluded to in descriptions of language use: communicative need, dialect, desire to accommodate others, linguistic environment, marking identity, and so on. Some of these factors are linguistic, some are social, and many are personal. Understanding conscious motivations to use Inuktitut or to use English is an essential first step in any initiative to encourage greater use of Inuktitut. Before considering motivations for use of Inuktitut, and consequently possible areas for encouraging greater use, I will briefly address evidence that suggests that Inuit youth do in fact consider the current level of Inuktitut usage problematic.

## 8.1 Problems in Language Use

Chapter Five shows that most Inuit youth are competent in Inuktitut, but not as competent as they used to be, nor as competent as they would like to be. The preceding sections on language use have shown that they use Inuktitut in a wide variety of situations. However, many see problems in their daily use of Inuktitut. Some say that they do not use Inuktitut as frequently as they would like to, nor as frequently as they used to.

### *Problems in Quantity of Inuktitut*

Especially in Iqaluit, some Inuit youth express that current levels of Inuktitut usage are insufficient. Some are specifically dissatisfied with how frequently they use Inuktitut at an individual level, while others are more generally dissatisfied with the use of Inuktitut in the community:

A4. But I'm just saying generally, overall, there should be definitely more Inuktitut seen and heard all over the place, because this is the capital of Nunavut and we should see it and hear it everywhere. Right? But we don't. Like the kids, if they see and hear it, then they're going to speak it, they're going to live it, they're going to learn it. But if they don't, then why bother, right? I don't know.

D2. [...] I don't practice [Inuktitut] as much as I should be.

D17. And I would like to use [Inuktitut] more than I do now, but some times I find it difficult, like, say [at] my work place.

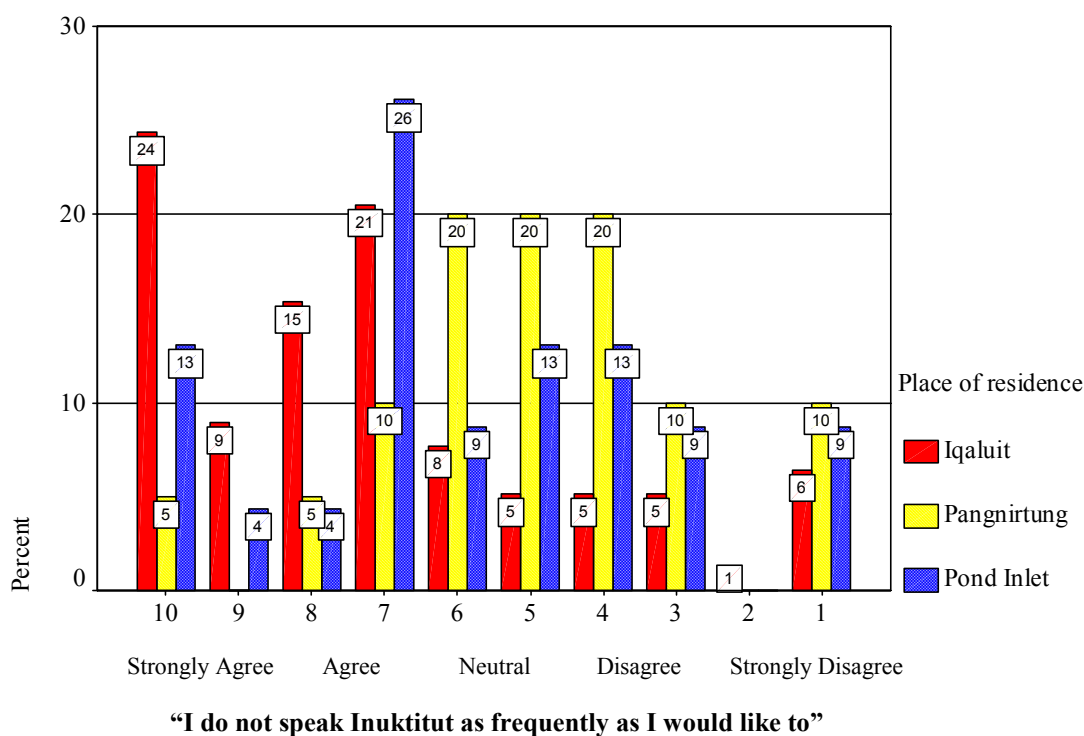
I10. It feels like, that's how you're going to lose the language. Because some of the words that you said in English, you could have said in Inuktitut but you didn't say it. Like, when you don't say it, you don't remember as much as if you said it.

Reactions to the statement, "*I do not speak Inuktitut as frequently as I would like to*"<sup>1</sup> on the closed questionnaire confirm that the opinions expressed in the quotations above are widespread in Iqaluit. Participants in Iqaluit express clear dissatisfaction with how

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 37

frequently they use Inuktitut: 69.2% [54/78] agree or strongly agree (mean = 7.08). Inuit youth in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet are significantly more mitigated in their reactions (Pangnirtung mean = 5; Pond Inlet mean = 5.91;  $p \leq 0.01$ ) although 47.8% (11/23) of respondents in Pond Inlet still agree or strongly agree that they do not use Inuktitut as frequently as they would like to. These results correspond with descriptions of language use in the previous chapters. Inuktitut is used slightly more frequently than English in most situations in Pangnirtung and, to a lesser degree, Pond Inlet, whereas Inuktitut is used less frequently than English in most speech situations in Iqaluit. One could suggest, based on the descriptions of use and the reactions to whether or not such use corresponds to one's desired practice, that Inuit youth in all three communities have similar standards of the ideal linguistic situation, but that only youth in Pangnirtung are living out their linguistic goals.



**Figure 19: Dissatisfaction with Use of Inuktitut**

In Chapter Five, participants attribute formal schooling in English to the loss of competence in Inuktitut. Although the interviews did not focus on language use at school,

many participants, including almost all Iqaluit participants, identify the degree of use of Inuktitut at school, as a subject or as a language of instruction, as particularly deficient:

D7. Grade three and four. Grade five, English, pretty much, and grade six, English, and from there on, that's, there hasn't been much Inuktitut available to us, in high school, there was almost nothing, just the students, gave the Inuktitut teachers a hard time, so it was kind of hard for them. It was more of a freelance class. It's kind of hard.  
[...] They need more Inuktitut courses.

R. Are you pretty happy with the language instruction that you got through your schooling?

D9. Yeah, it's all right, but. I don't know, they don't tend to teach as much as they should teach. [...] They have Inuktitut classes here, but they don't teach Inuktitut...

R. Do you see any problems in town, at all, with language, that you'd like to see addressed? Changes?

D10. Not really. Maybe the young people need an Inuktitut teacher, at high school. There's two people there who speak Inuktitut. But then, they're doing elementary Inuktitut, so it's not good, so you don't get to learn as much.

R. How was it for you in high school?

D11. Inuktitut classes were hard. Well, very easy. Elementary stuff, so you didn't really learn, like how to carry on a conversation and relatives' names or something like that...we never learned those kinds of words at all. It was really hard.

D13. And in school, Inuktitut classes, doesn't help. Honestly it doesn't at high school. They just let you sew and watch a movie and sew some more, you know?

D15. So, Grade 7 it all really happened with English. And I lost it after that, because at high school, when you took Inuktitut, all you did was sewing and drawing, and it wasn't a real Inuktitut class when I was in to high school.

D16. ...Maybe to try to have it more intense in school, something, I don't know, work something out in schools, because I think that is where the problem comes from.

D17. Yeah. I found...if you are in a class, and you find it...easy, you're not learning anything, not because the teacher's not trying, but, it's the same material, you know. You tend to just distract yourself and not respect

what they are trying to do, because, it's not teaching you anything. Maybe a few words here and there, but it's not challenging enough. And if you're the type to accept challenge, and want to take it, you will take it more seriously, but if you're not, you know, you just say ah, forget it, it doesn't matter anyway.

Inuit youth cited above (and others like them) are concerned about having opportunities to learn Inuktitut in order to fully acquire and maintain the language. They feel that Inuktitut is currently not being used frequently enough, especially in formal schooling, to facilitate their maintenance of the language.

Not only is the current degree of Inuktitut use deemed unsatisfactory by most participants in Iqaluit, many also notice the use of Inuktitut gradually declining, as it is displaced by English:

D1. I see Inuktitut as a somewhat fading away language, as a language that is fading away because there's not too many Inuit people in Canada, compared to other kinds of nationalities, and it's going away slowly but surely. [...] I see it as we're losing it. Some people may say, "No. We're not even losing it, we're gaining it." But my point of view is, I see we're losing it.

R. Do you see any problems in town for people communicating?

D11. Especially with the teens. I could see adults talking Inuktitut throughout their whole conversation, but the teens are always talking in English.

D16. And it is starting to come into homes, where it starts off, everybody ends up speaking English.

R. Yeah, I saw that. Do you see any problems in town, other than maybe that with language?

P10. Youth are starting to talk more English. Like my youngest sister.

I5. The way I see it now, a lot of people are speaking English now, young people. So maybe in 50 years they're going to be using more English than Inuktitut, like in Iqaluit.

I10. But there's times when I can't explain in Inuktitut because, English is spoken a lot more than it was when I was a kid. [...]

...Nowadays these kids, they don't have any discipline, and they speak a lot of English now. When we were kids, we used to speak a lot of Inuktitut



and nowadays they mostly speak in English. And when he said that I said, yeah, that's because we're the role models and we speak mostly English and that's why they're speaking English.

Even in the smaller communities, where participants consider the frequency of use of Inuktitut satisfactory (more so Pond Inlet than Pangnirtung), Inuit youth explain that use of English is increasing. As seen in Chapter Five, many Inuit youth, especially in Iqaluit, feel that they are losing their Inuktitut; many attribute this loss to decreased use of Inuktitut, caused by increased use of English personally and in their environment.

The advent of Nunavut sparked hopes and expectations in many Inuit that Inuktitut would be used more frequently once the Inuit had their own territory. Some young Inuit express, in contrast to previous quotations, that more Inuktitut is now being used in Nunavut, at a personal and a societal level:

A4. So. I'm glad now, I see more Inuktitut around the town, like the stop signs and stuff. Just, like, I take note of the little signs and a lot of times the translations are a little wrong. I've noticed, but that's okay.

R. You said...that you're spending more time around Inuktitut-speaking people and when they speak Inuktitut to you, you speak Inuktitut back. Did it use to happen that they would speak Inuktitut to you and you would speak English back?

D13. Yeah. You mean, that's what used to happen? Yeah. Still does, but not too much. Not as much, I don't think. So that's nice.

[...]

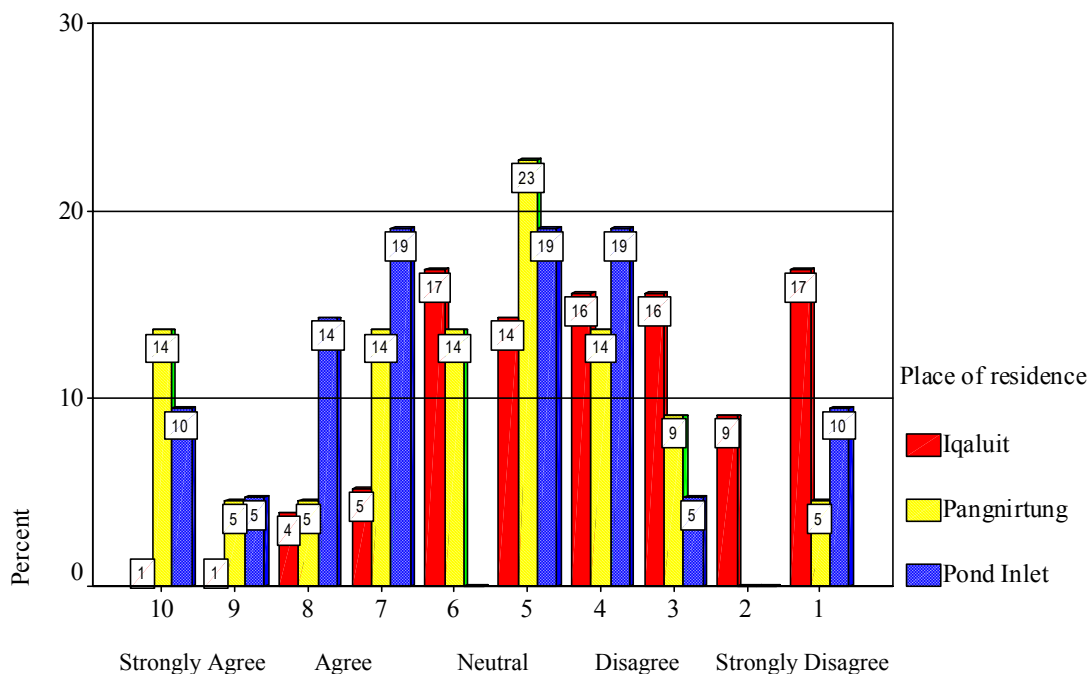
D13. And where I work, well, I speak more Inuktitut now, which is good, because I realised that I was losing it...

I8. I don't know, but I know that everything is more in Inuktitut now, everyone is speaking more Inuktitut.

[...] Whenever you call a government department anywhere...someone who can speak Inuktitut always answers. Before, with Yellowknife, you always ended up with an English-only-speaking person.

[...] Because when I was going to school, this was before Inuktitut teachers started taking control...I went to elementary school and we had mostly English teachers but now everyone at Ullayuk are now Inuktitut teachers, so that's a good change. My little brother knows more about Inuktitut than I do because he went through Ullayuk school.

Nevertheless, there is a general lack of optimism about the progression of the state of Inuktitut in Nunavut, evident in response to the statement, “*I hear more Inuktitut being spoken around town now than I used to, a few years ago,*”<sup>2</sup> as seen in Figure 20.



**“I hear more Inuktitut being spoken around town now than I used to, a few years ago”**

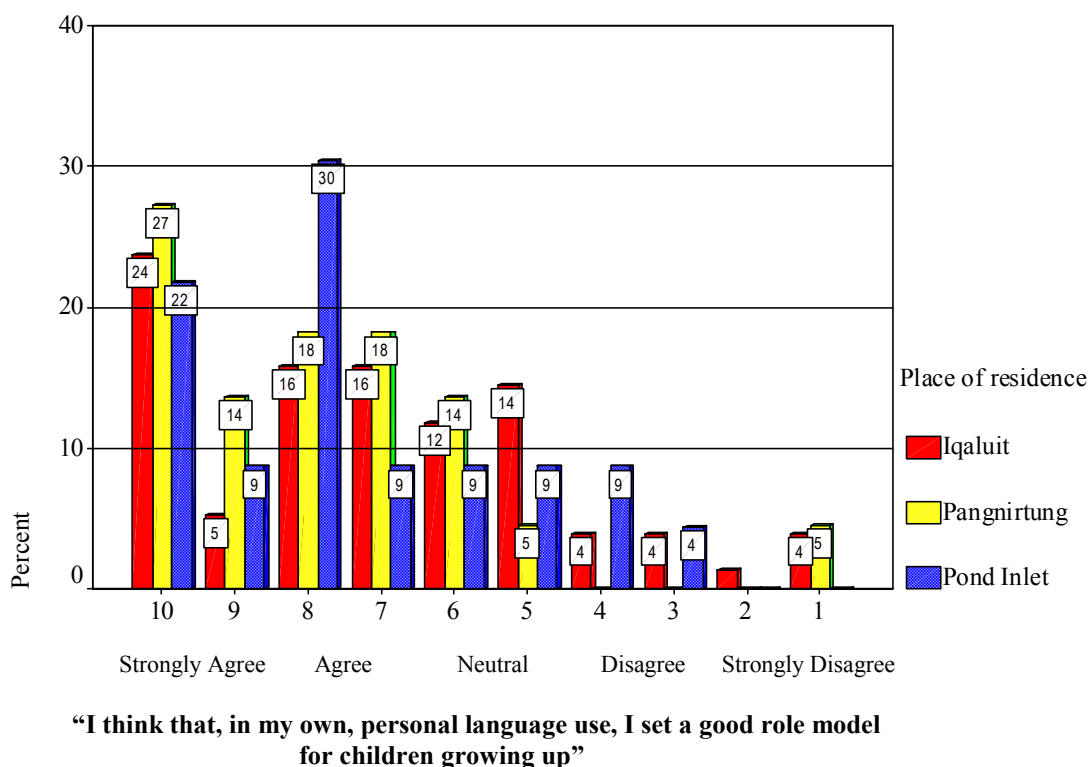
**Figure 20: Perception of Increased/Decreased Language Use Around Town**

In Iqaluit, 57.2% (44/77) of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that the situation is improving, saying that they do not hear more Inuktitut than they used to. Only 11.7% (9/77) agree or strongly agree (mean = 4.09). This general disagreement shows that youth in Iqaluit are not hearing more Inuktitut around town in the years leading up to and immediately following Nunavut, which could show stability, or could indicate loss of Inuktitut. In Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, respondents are significantly more mitigated in their responses (Pangnirtung mean 5.91; Pond Inlet mean = 5.81;  $p \leq 0.001$ ). There is some room for optimism, as 36.3% (8/22) and 47.6% (10/21) of respondents in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet respectively agree or strongly agree that they hear more Inuktitut around town now than they used to. The relatively high percentage of neutral responses (overall mean = 4.72) may indicate that the situation is remaining stable, or

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 34

perhaps that respondents are not really aware of whether the use of Inuktitut is increasing or decreasing.

An interesting twist to comments about not speaking Inuktitut well enough and not speaking Inuktitut frequently enough is seen in reactions to the statement, “*I think that, in my own, personal language use, I set a good role model for children growing up*” (inspired by I10’s statement, quoted above).<sup>3</sup> Presumably, agreement with this statement would show that an individual really considers his/her own frequency of use of Inuktitut acceptable and even admirable. As seen in Figure 21, 65.3% (79/121) of respondents agree or strongly agree that they set a good linguistic role model for children (overall mean 7.21).



**Figure 21: Inuit Youth as Children’s Linguistic Role Models**

Agreement is repeated across all three communities (Iqaluit mean = 6.99; Pangnirtung mean = 7.77; Pond Inlet mean = 7.43). Do these results suggest that their current combined use of Inuktitut and English is deemed admirable? Or that the youth perceive

that their language use is better than the children's in that they at least use some Inuktitut? Or do these results suggest that use of Inuktitut is improving, even if it is not satisfactory? Some participants express a feeling of "at least I'm trying". Others say that they recognised their loss of Inuktitut and acted to improve it, so the feelings of setting a good role model may be hopeful for the future of Inuktitut.

### *Problems in Quantity of English*

In order to balance the discussion of language use and language issues, it is important to note that problems are perceived with the current level of use of English as well as of Inuktitut. The primary concern with English is that young Inuit are generally using increasing amounts of English, which is generally perceived as detrimental to the use of Inuktitut. However, even when participants say that English is taking over, they still hesitate to state that *too much* English is being used. D13, for example, throughout her interview speaks about insufficient and decreasing use of Inuktitut, but when asked specifically if she sees any problems in Iqaluit's language situation she responds, "I can't say too much English, you know."

In the case of education, some participants from the smaller communities, especially Pangnirtung, express that the formal use of English in the schools (as a subject and as a language of instruction) is problematic:

P6. There's a couple of my friends, like in English, when they have homework, they usually ask me to help them. They don't understand and I have to tell them exactly what they have to do. Because they never understand it very well in class.

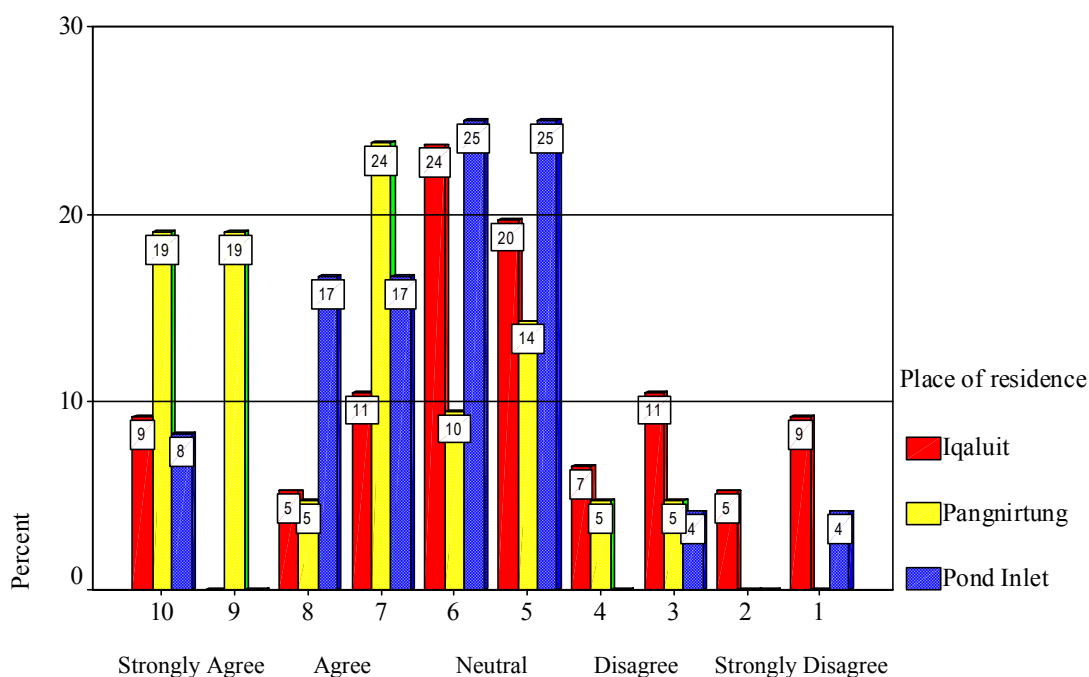
P10. With our teacher, sometimes, I have a hard time understanding a definition in English, and one of the students tells us in Inuktitut, and then we understand it better. It's in school.

As seen in Figure 22, two thirds of respondents (14/21) in Pangnirtung agree with the closed questionnaire statement, "*I would like to have/to have had more English language*

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 53

*instruction during high school*<sup>4</sup> (mean = 7.29). Responses in Iqaluit and Pond Inlet are significantly more mitigated, with means of 5.26 and 6.25 respectively ( $p \leq 0.001$ ). The underlying message from Pangnirtung respondents especially is that the language problem is *not* too much English, but rather is based in difficulty balancing the need for *both* Inuktitut and English. Language planning that promotes Inuktitut to the detriment of English will not solve linguistic problems for these individuals.



**“I would like to have/to have had more English language instruction during high school”**

**Figure 22: Desire for More English in School**

### *Other Problems*

Concerns relating to unsatisfactory or decreasing use of Inuktitut are directly indicative of the loss of Inuktitut. Participants’ comments deploring the current levels of use of Inuktitut indicate a desire for the promotion of Inuktitut. Youth also discuss other language-related problems – causes or effects of decreased competence and use of Inuktitut – briefly identified below.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 54

Many participants mention problems with the Inuktitut language itself. The primary concern is the absence of Inuktitut terminology for modern realities. This perception was tested in the closed questionnaire,<sup>5</sup> with very mixed responses (mean = 5.54). In fact, such terms do exist in translators' glossaries. Nunavut Arctic College has published a series of glossaries on subjects such as archaeology (Stenton 1997), dentistry (Pastori 1994), the environment (Sammons 1994), land claims (Crawford 1995), legal terms (Brice-Bennett 1996), and school math and science (Allen 1995, 1998), so the real problem is diffusing the vocabulary being developed.<sup>6</sup> Another key problem is the difficulty understanding other dialects, perhaps more accurately expressed as the unwillingness to accept that another dialect take priority over one's own, in translations or otherwise. The effect of such perceptions on language use will be discussed later in this chapter.

Negative judgements concerning others' or one's own abilities in and use of Inuktitut are a current linguistic concern in these three communities. Some young Inuit say that they feel (or used to feel) guilty, ashamed or embarrassed about the way they speak Inuktitut. Tested on the closed questionnaire,<sup>7</sup> only a minority of respondents (26.7%, 31/116) agreed or strongly agreed that this was true of them (mean = 4.44). Participants also spoke of Inuit negatively judging those who do not speak the Inuktitut language or who do not speak it well, judgements that lead to criticism, teasing, or even ostracism. Further, even competent Inuktitut speakers deplore their practice of mixing Inuktitut and English instead of speaking "pure" Inuktitut or "pure" English. Tested on the closed questionnaire,<sup>8</sup> respondents in Iqaluit (mean = 5.00) and Pangnirtung (mean = 6.23) tend to neither agree nor disagree that it is better to speak in one language, rather than to code-mix, while Pond Inlet respondents are most likely to disapprove of code-mixing (mean = 6.79;  $p \leq 0.05$ ).

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 41

<sup>6</sup> A complete listing of these glossaries can be found on Nunavut Arctic College's web-site, at <http://www.nac.nu.ca/library/publications.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 42

Attitudes about the quality of Inuktitut being used are playing a role in the future of the language. They could motivate youth to work at improving their Inuktitut, or could contribute to a feeling that what they have is not worth saving anyway. In other settings, similar attitudes among bilingual youth have been a final step in language death:

There are also anecdotes about the final stage in language death being precipitated by the decision of bilingual youngsters. This is reported for minority languages in the United States as different as Chinook in the Pacific Northwest and Swedish in areas of the northern Midwest populated by Swedish immigrants. In both cases, it is said, the elders in the community laughed at the children for making mistakes in the community's ethnic-heritage language; unwilling to undergo continual teasing, the children simply switched completely to English. (Thomason 2001:53)

Inuit youths' reactions to being teased or corrected based on their use of imperfect Inuktitut and the consequences on Inuktitut maintenance are discussed below.

Many participants spoke of communication problems due to unbalanced bilingualism in their communities. The primary problem in communication mentioned in the interviews in every community was difficulty communicating with the elders, grandparents, friends' parents, or other, older Inuit to varying degrees depending on the Inuktitut language ability of each Inuk. The extreme of this breakdown in communication is when youth do not even try to communicate. In other instances, the individuals mention some difficulties understanding certain words the elders would use, and more specifically, difficulties understanding the elders' stories (although, as seen in Chapter Five, only a minority of Inuit youth express such difficulties). Also, youth in each of the communities mention problems in being understood by the older Inuit, also due to the personal loss of Inuktitut vocabulary. Once again, results from the closed questionnaire suggest that such problems are only experienced by a minority of Inuit youth.<sup>9</sup> Dorais and Collis (1987) have documented the progressive loss of Inuktitut vocabulary among school-aged Inuit as they progress through the grades.

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 45

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 40

Inuit youth do not recall many personal problems communicating in English. Still, some mention not understanding some words in English, or having difficulty in situations where they *cannot* fall back on Inuktitut, such as in high school classes with teachers who speak no Inuktitut. In the smaller communities, the (primarily bilingual) youth do not see many language problems, but when pressed they say that they have witnessed or heard of communication problems between primarily monolingual Inuit and Qallunaat in places such as the RCMP station, parent-teacher nights at school, stores, offices and nursing stations.

*No Problem?*

Finally, many young Inuit, especially in Pangnirtung, consider that there is no language problem in their community. In Pangnirtung, participants tend to see themselves, children and other Inuit in their community as competent in Inuktitut and do not fear for its loss:

R. What do you think could be done to promote Inuktitut in Nunavut, or in Pangnirtung?

P3. Like to be more Inuktitut? I'd say it's good now. ...It's mostly Inuktitut in town. It's a little bit of English. I'd say there's no problem here.

R. ...Do you see anyone trying to do anything to make sure that Inuit don't lose Inuktitut in Pangnirtung?

P4. I haven't seen anything. I don't see any changes or anything. I don't see any problem.

R. Do you think it's important to promote Inuktitut?

P6. Yeah. [...] I'd say, here, it seems okay. There's Inuktitut classes in the high school.

P7. I'd say Inuktitut is – because most of the people here are, unlike other communities, for example, our community is mainly Inuktitut. So, our Inuktitut language is still pretty strong here.

These comments from Pangnirtung point to the relative strength of Inuktitut. There is no doubt that Inuktitut is widely used there, but it also seems plausible that Inuit in



Pangnirtung will face the same linguistic threat as Iqaluit in the future. Pre-emptive action now, before a problem arises, may help hold back the advance of English.

From another point of view, the phenomenon of loss discussed above, considered by many as problematic, is judged by others as a matter of course in a changing world. Thus, one occasionally comes across individuals for whom using predominantly English, or mixing English and Inuktitut, is an acceptable practice, especially insofar as it helps to communicate:

D6. ...I'm not putting the Inuktitut language down or anything, you know, like, I want it to stay alive in a sense, but it's not really needed, I don't think. Because most of the Inuit students here, mostly speak...English.

P3. Yeah. Iqaluit, it's like, teenagers there are speaking nothing but English now. Although they understand a bit of Inuktitut, but they still speak English. I see a big difference there, between Iqaluit and here. Us, we speak a lot more Inuktitut than them.

R. Is it a problem that the teenagers don't speak Inuktitut?

P3. Well, I don't have a problem with it, because I can speak a little bit of English. I don't have a problem with that.

In summary, results are discouraging on the one hand, as they show that Inuit youth are not using Inuktitut as frequently as they could. However, findings are encouraging on the other hand, as they, for the most part, indicate dissatisfaction with the current level of use of Inuktitut, and presumably a desire to make greater use of it. Such feelings could form an impetus for successful language planning. Of course, before language planning can target increased use, the reason for not using Inuktitut as frequently as one would like to must be ascertained.

## **8.2 Explanation of Language Choice**

Inuit youth use both Inuktitut and English in a broad variety of speech situations. Although at times the youth are forced to use either Inuktitut or English to communicate because it is the only language their interlocutor understands, more frequently language use is a choice. Bilingual Inuit youth choose to use Inuktitut (or English) for personal

reasons, even when they could, feasibly, communicate in either language. Some personal reasons given for using Inuktitut or English involve what one wants to *do* with the language: the desire to teach the language, the wish to maintain the language, and the intention to mark one's own identity or the identity of one's listener by using a particular language. Other personal reasons are particularly pragmatic: using the "easiest" language, or speaking out of habit. Feelings about the languages also influence one's language choice. Many participants comment that they are insecure in their use of either Inuktitut or English, and so use the other language. Related statements allude to the purity of Inuktitut, and the desire to speak Inuktitut well or else not at all.

### **8.2.1 Linguistic Factors**

#### *Competence – Communicative Need*

In some cases, the speaker's or the listener's inability to effectively communicate in Inuktitut or English leads to a communicative need to use whichever language both are able to understand. Although most Inuit youth in the Baffin region of Nunavut are bilingual, a few individuals say that they have to use English in almost all situations because their Inuktitut is insufficient to communicate. More frequently, Inuit youth say that they are constrained in their language choice by their listener's inability to understand either Inuktitut or English.

As seen previously, Inuit youth frequently use Inuktitut when they are speaking with older Inuit; such behaviour often (but not always) reflects their interlocutors' monolingualism in Inuktitut:

R. So, at home, it's mainly Inuktitut, or only Inuktitut?

D10. All Inuktitut because my parents, they don't speak English.

P7. Our instructors [in a parka-making class] were monolingual, so we were speaking mainly all in Inuktitut.

R. How about with (boyfriend)'s parents?

P9. They can't speak English, so we use Inuktitut all the time.

I1. Maybe because of my brothers. They can't speak English so we speak Inuktitut.

I4. It's my language and the elders, if we talk in English they wouldn't understand what we're talking about and we would have to translate it. So I speak in Inuktitut more.

I7. But for my grandpa I use Inuktitut language most of the time. For my grandparents.

R. Do they speak English?

I7. No. [...] They couldn't understand it.

Qallunaat, on the other hand, are most frequently addressed in English. In most cases, this choice reflects the fact that many Qallunaat only understand English:

D2. Because my girlfriend [a Qallunaaq], she speaks English and English only, so I speak English at home...

R. Do you have some friends where it would be only in Inuktitut or only in English?

P6. Some.

R. What would make it that you would use only English with them?

P6. They can't speak Inuktitut [ - they're Qallunaat].

P9. Both. Like there's some Qallunaat there and Inuit, so if they can't speak Inuktitut I'll have to speak to them in English.

R. Why do you use English when you speak to [your friend]?

I3. She speaks in English, so I have to speak in English. Yeah.

R. Okay, is she Inuit?

I3. No.

Generally, members of the community who are monolingual in English are Qallunaat. The communicative need to use Inuktitut in order to communicate with Qallunaat is underlined by reactions to the statement "*I use English because I have to in order to communicate with Qallunaat (i.e. because I cannot use Inuktitut with them)*";<sup>10</sup> three quarters of respondents agree (32%, 41/128) or strongly agree (43.8%, 56/128) (Iqaluit mean = 7.21; Pangnirtung mean = 8.17; Pond Inlet mean = 8.72).

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 3

However, some Inuit youth in Iqaluit also do not speak Inuktitut, and as a result must be addressed in English if communication is to be effective:

D6. Mostly English. Because all my friends,<sup>11</sup> most of them don't speak Inuktitut, so.

D9. ...Like there's some Inuk guys here that can't like, hardly speak Inuktitut, so I'd then speak to them in English.

D10. Yeah. Well, with some of the Inuit it's Inuktitut but then when you are talking to somebody who can't, you have to speak English. [...] Just so they can understand, you know, what I have to say to them, or, you know, when they talk to me and ask and I have to answer them, so. And the only language we both understand is English, so, there's no choice.

Evidently, in some cases, use of Inuktitut or use of English is not a choice, but reflects a necessity based on the interlocutor's monolingualism. In fact, as seen in the previous chapters, the only speech situations which show strong tendencies for monolingual speech behaviour are those associated with speaking to monolingual individuals (elders in Inuktitut, Qallunaat in English). Most speech situations around town involve interacting with other bilinguals. As such, personal or practical preferences, rather than absolute communicative need, are more frequently evoked to explain language choice.

### *Vocabulary*

One practical reason why Inuit youth say that they use English in situations where they could feasibly use Inuktitut, and contrastingly, why they use Inuktitut when they could use English, is the perceived availability of vocabulary in each language. Participants explain that they switch to English when they do not "have the words" to say what they want to say in Inuktitut. The lack of vocabulary may be a momentary lapse, may be a gap in Inuktitut vocabulary, or may be a word that the individual simply has not learned:

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<sup>11</sup> References to friends elsewhere in the interview indicate that D6 has both Inuit and non-Inuit friends.

D10. Oh, because sometimes we don't know how to say it in Inuktitut. If we don't know how to say an Inuktitut word, we say it in English, so we can understand each other. And when it comes to what we don't understand, we say it in English. That's when we mix it, when we don't understand.

I6. A lot of young people are speaking much more English, especially to their friends. They're using mixed languages like Inuktitut and English at the same time. Even me, I'm doing the same thing too, to my friends.

R. I wonder why?

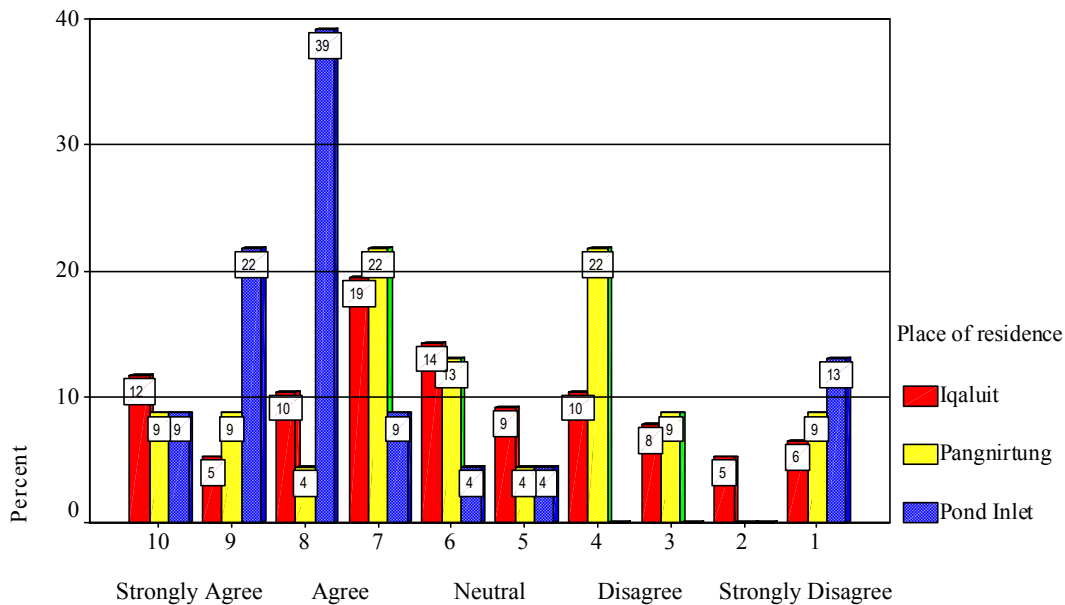
I6. Maybe because some words are more, like, some words have different meanings now, but. And some words it's really hard to say it in Inuktitut. Like TV and other stuff, remote control and that. [...] There's no names for meanings in Inuktitut because there used to be never any technology, so I think the technology is increasing more English language.

In the semi-directed interviews, the vocabulary gap is more frequently attested in Inuktitut, leading one to use English, than vice versa.

Reactions to closed questionnaire statements which test vocabulary as a perceived motivator in using Inuktitut or English are mixed. As seen in Figure 23, only Pond Inlet respondents express clear agreement (30.4% [7/23] strongly agree and 47.8% [11/23] agree; mean = 7.17) that lack of vocabulary in Inuktitut motivates them to use English.<sup>12</sup> Responses in Iqaluit and Pangnirtung are more equally spread across the scale (Iqaluit mean = 5.96; Pangnirtung mean = 5.74).

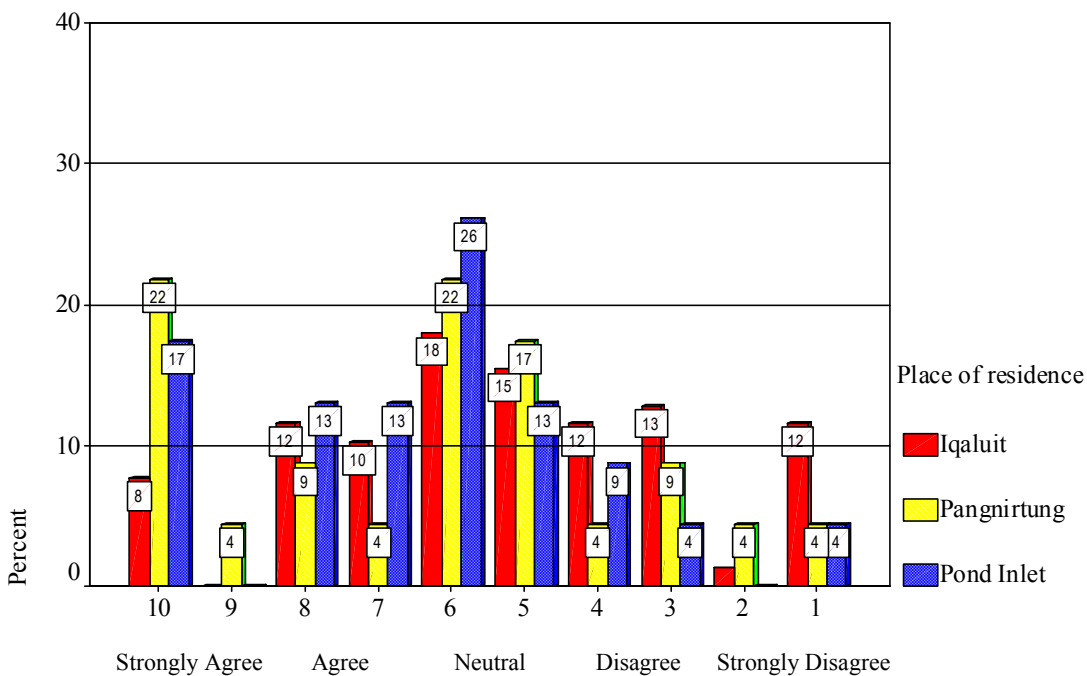
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<sup>12</sup> Based on reaction to Part three, question 6



**“One reason why I use English is because I do not have the words in Inuktitut to express what I want to say”**

**Figure 23: Vocabulary as a Motivator to Use English**



**“I have the right words to express myself in Inuktitut but not in English”**

**Figure 24: Vocabulary as a Motivator to Use Inuktitut**

In reaction to the statement, “*I have the right words to express myself in Inuktitut but not in English,*<sup>13</sup>” responses are clustered around the neutral point (Iqaluit mean = 5.24; Pangnirtung mean = 6.3; Pond Inlet mean = 6.43), although more respondents in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet agree or strongly agree with this statement than disagree or strongly disagree, as seen in Figure 24.

These rather mitigated reactions to the importance of vocabulary in choosing to use one language or the other suggest that the availability of words can motivate language choice in either direction, but it is not perceived as a primary motivator in language choice. Furthermore, in participants’ explanations, the need to fill a lexical gap generally leads to codeswitching rather than exclusive use of English (the use of Inuktitut to fill a lexical gap is less frequently attested in the interviews). Because this factor only leads to fleeting use of English, and I am focussing on motivations to move toward *predominant* use of English or Inuktitut, vocabulary as a factor in language choice will not be discussed further at this point.

### *Dialect*

As mentioned in Chapter Three, dialectal variation is a thorny issue in the promotion of Inuktitut. Attempts to standardise Inuktitut have met with resistance. As Dorais (1996a) points out, even though varieties of the Inuit language are remarkably similar, Inuit sometimes opt to use English with other Inuit because they perceive their dialects as different enough to impede communication. In the semi-directed interviews and closed questionnaires, some Inuit youth say that they use English with Inuit of other dialects, while others say that they continue to use Inuktitut regardless of dialectal differences.

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<sup>13</sup> Based on reaction to Part three, question 12

Usually when interview participants report switching to English due to dialectal differences, their interlocutors speak a dialect quite far removed from their own (i.e. Greenlandic, Kivalliq):

D6. I find, when I went to Rankin before, and I spoke Inuktitut, they're like, that's not what it means. I'm like, yes it does. Where I live, that's what it means. And so we both ended up speaking English because it's a lot easier, you know?

R. Does that happen a lot that Inuit use English because of the problems understanding dialects?

D6. Well, not too much with Baffin, but when you like split in between the Baffin and the Kitikmeot or Baffin and Keewatin [Kivalliq] or Keewatin, Kitikmeot, I think that's what happens, you know?

[...]

R. How, when there's that kind of a situation, when you say something and an Inuk says oh, that's not what that means, that's not how you say it, how do you react?

D6. Like, when they say that to me, I just come out and say, like, well, to me, where I live, that's what it means. I was taught that, so to me, that's what it means. And so I just carry on thinking to myself that's what I'm going to keep saying because that's what I was taught, and then I just switch to English because I don't want to get into this little argument about what something means because we have different dialects. Because you know with English, one thing means one thing and where in Inuktitut, with the dialects it's something different.

I9. Sometimes we don't usually have the chance of speaking in Inuktitut only, because of different dialects, especially, here and Iqaluit, or, here and Pang, because, like I said, when one word means this way, and in a different dialect means the other, you have to speak in English in order to understand what the other one is saying.

I10. I don't speak a lot of Inuktitut when I'm speaking with other dialects, like Inuktitut dialects. I don't speak because when I was young, it felt like which one was better, and which one was worse and stuff like that. ...You're speaking with them but you're speaking in English but not Inuktitut 'cause it doesn't feel comfortable talking with the person when you have different dialects and stuff. ...I try not to do that, but...

[...]

R. And if you're speaking and if it's someone who speaks a different dialect that you're not really comfortable with that person, you prefer to use English?



I10. Most of the time, yeah. But, some, most of the, if they keep on speaking Inuktitut, then I'll speak Inuktitut with them.

The quotations above show that some Inuit prefer to use English with Inuit of other dialects because they perceive it to be easier to communicate in that way. Part of the difficulty communicating in the Inuit language with speakers of other dialects lies in linguistic differences. D4, for example, at one point in her interview says that only one Greenlander spoke Inuktitut, evidently considering the Greenlandic dialect of the Inuit language a totally separate language from her own. Other participants explain that words have different meanings across dialects.

On the other hand, young Inuit also suggest in their comments that the difficulty communicating in Inuktitut across dialects can be based on affective and personal factors rather than purely linguistic differences. I6 describes the tension between feasibly being able to use Inuktitut and wanting to use Inuktitut, but switching to English when speaking to Inuit with other dialects:

R. What kinds of things did you do to make sure you kept your Inuktitut language?

I6. Just being with my friends, people from Pond Inlet. I find it easier to speak Inuktitut with people from the same community where I'm from, and that way, they don't say that we're speaking in another language, and another dialect. But I still kept talking to friends from other communities in Inuktitut. They had different dialects. Different dialects, you could understand the words, but it's different. But you still can understand each other.

[...]

But when I'm speaking to people from other communities, especially young people, I speak more in English because, I don't know why we do it, but it's like we speak English but we know we could speak Inuktitut. I don't know why we do it, maybe because of the different dialect. [...] I think that's the main reason.

As I6 suggests, speaking English with Inuit from other regions is not always based on communicative necessity.

Other participants reiterate this idea that they *can* use Inuktitut with people of other dialects, and indicate that they usually choose to do so:

D2. Like, I speak my dialect anyway and I just speak to everybody in my dialect, the whole conversation, regardless of what their dialect is. Like I work with someone who speaks Inuinnaqtun...and we speak to each other in our dialects.

[...]

D2. In my life? That I speak it to them. If they're Inuit, I'm going to speak it to them. And I just speak and speak it even though it's not their dialect, I'll still speak if for them. [...] If they don't understand it, usually they ask me. I know a lot of people here, I think I told you this already, but they kind of speak my dialect with me. So that's kind of cute.

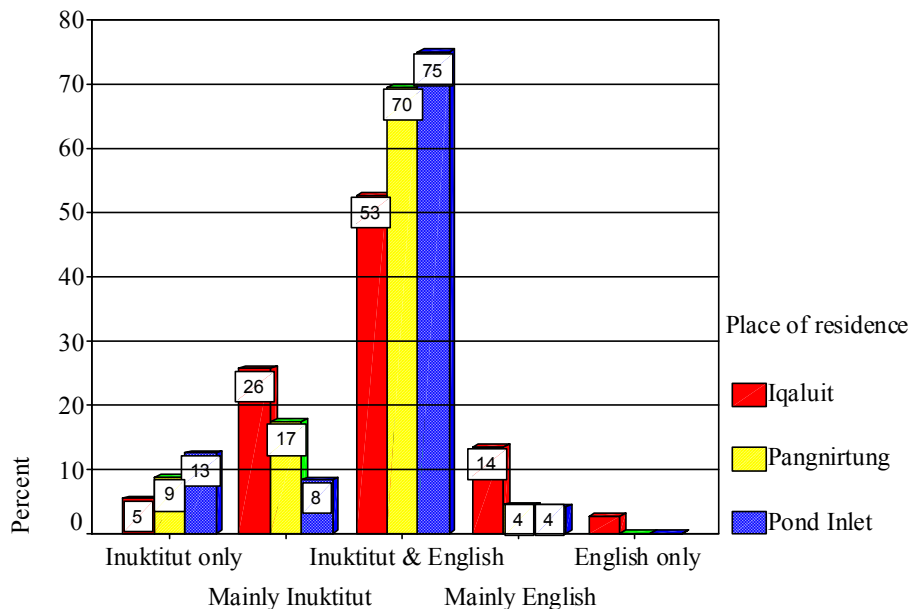
D13. ...I noticed how, well, like I said, when my friends told me to speak more in Inuktitut, *ila*, because, different dialects, we like hearing different dialects. Like, Nunavik dialect and Nunavut, it's totally different, and my friends from Nunavik, they always say oh, speak in Nunavut dialect, you know I like it. I'm like, oh, okay. That's when I realise.

For these participants, speaking their dialect is comfortable, allows communication and is a source of pride. The difference between dialects does not push them to use English.

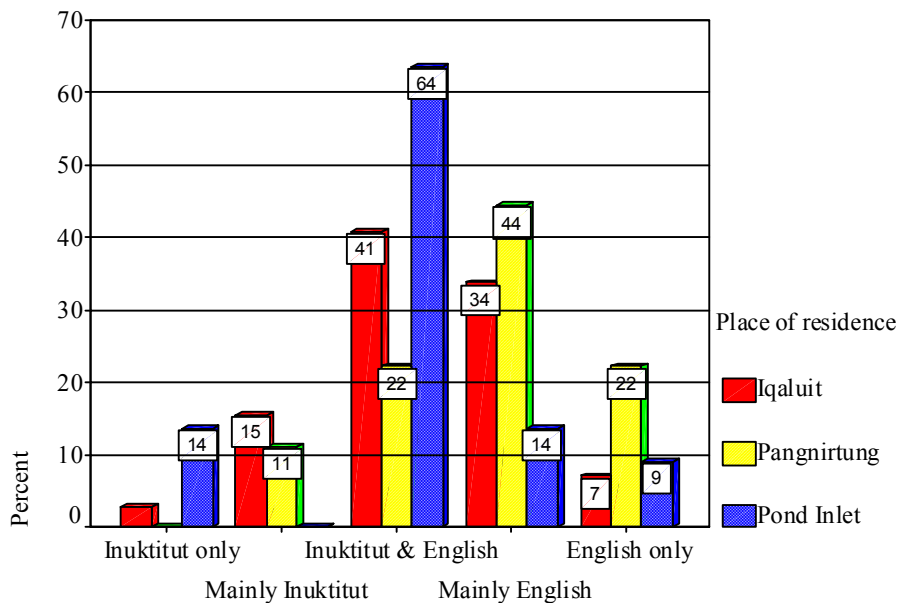
In part two of the closed questionnaires, participants were asked which language they tend to use with Inuit that come from within the Baffin region and with Inuit that come from outside the Baffin region as further evidence of how significant a factor dialect is in language choice. As seen in Figures 25 and 26, both Inuktitut and English are widely used in both situations, at least in Iqaluit and Pond Inlet (Speaking to Inuit from other Baffin communities: Iqaluit mean = 3.2;<sup>14</sup> Pond Inlet mean = 3.3; Speaking to Inuit from outside the Baffin region: Iqaluit mean = 2.7; Pond Inlet mean = 3.0). In Pangnirtung, respondents also tend to say that they use both languages equally when speaking to Inuit from other Baffin communities (mean = 3.3). However, Pangnirtung respondents are more likely than their peers in Iqaluit or Pond Inlet ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) to say that they favour English when speaking to Inuit from outside the Baffin region (mean = 2.2).

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<sup>14</sup> Based on a scale of one to five, where one indicates English only and five indicates Inuktitut only, as seen in previous chapters.



**Figure 25: Language Use Speaking to Inuit from Other Baffin Communities**

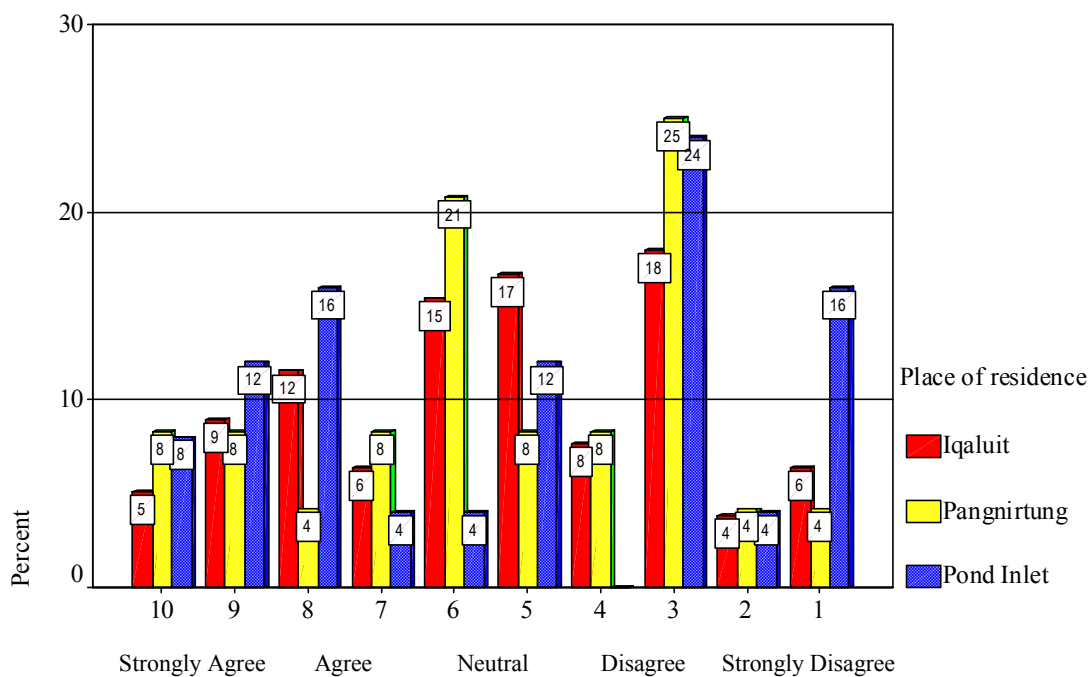


**Figure 26: Language Use Speaking to Inuit from Outside the Baffin Region**

In all three communities, Inuit youth tend to report using more English with Inuit from outside the Baffin region than from within ( $p \leq 0.001$ ), suggesting that dialectal differences could in fact motivate language choice to some degree. Of course, the choice to use English may also reflect more advanced transfer to English in other regions,

particularly speaking to Inuit from the Kitikmeot, who are less likely to be able to communicate in any Inuit dialect. Although both Inuktitut and English are used with Inuit from other communities, social and linguistic distance may play a role in instigating greater use of English. Furthermore, the importance attributed to this factor in language choice varies from community to community.

Corresponding to results discussed above, reactions to the statement “*I cannot understand Inuit from different regions when they speak in their Inuit dialect because we speak different dialects*”<sup>15</sup> are mixed (Iqaluit mean = 5.44; Pangnirtung mean = 5.38; Pond Inlet mean = 5.24). The range in responses, shown in more detail in Figure 27, supports the conclusions that while dialectal differences may influence language choice, use of English with other Inuit is not motivated by an absolute communicative need. Overall, comments in the interviews and responses to the closed questionnaires indicate that Inuktitut may be used with Inuit who speak other dialects, if the speakers so choose.



“I cannot understand Inuit from different regions when they speak in their Inuit dialect because we speak different dialects”

**Figure 27: Dialect as a Motivator in Language Choice**

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 4

## 8.2.2 Social Factors

### *Accommodation*

While young Inuit sometimes use Inuktitut or English because they *have* to in order to make themselves understood, they sometimes also *choose* to use a particular language in order to make communication smoother. In a variety of domains, Inuit youth use Inuktitut or English in order to accommodate the other members of the conversation, making it easier or more comfortable for the intended receiver to understand. Most participants consistently imply that their primary goal in speaking is to get their message across, and that they will use whichever linguistic behaviour most effectively helps them to reach their goal. Of course, it is very difficult to try to say at which point there is a choice to persevere in one language or the other, and at which point there is really no choice but to switch to the interlocutor's dominant language.

Modifying one's speech behaviour to reflect the dominant language of one's interlocutors occurs in both directions, as I10 aptly explains:

I10. Yeah. Like, how I explain to a person, if it's in English, if I could make a person understand more better that way, I'll speak to the person that way. If it's in Inuktitut, most of the time I could speak it well and make a person understand, but there's a lot of times, I speak English just to make somebody understand, like explaining something. [...]

I10. Yeah. Like, every person. If they understand more in English, I'll explain it to them in English. If they understand more in Inuktitut, I'll speak in Inuktitut...

Some Inuit youth explain that even when elders or children understand English, they may choose to use Inuktitut in order for their listener to be able to fully understand their message:

D7. ...But home, a little, grandmother, usually, I try to [speak Inuktitut], because she has a hard time, sometimes understanding English, but she's good at it, I'd say.  
[...]

D7. I try to speak it, I'm helping out at...the elementary school right now, and I try to talk to them in Inuktitut, even though it's an English class, they are trying to learn more English, but I try to, so they can understand me more I try to speak Inuktitut.

I3. *Ila*. Sometimes we try to talk to elders in Inuktitut language, because they're more comfortable in the Inuktitut language and they can understand.

I9. To my grandmother, I try and use as much Inuktitut as possible, because she doesn't really understand English, so. She kind of understands English, but she's more comfortable speaking Inuktitut, so I'm trying to speak Inuktitut as much as possible.

In much the same way, English may be used, even if the interlocutor understands some Inuktitut, in order to accommodate the listener and facilitate communication:

D2. A lot of my friends...they are mostly half Inuk, half white, and they understood Inuktitut, but a lot of them didn't really speak it. They understood but didn't speak it, so we would use English, I would still speak Inuktitut to them when they would ask me, "What does that mean" and I would tell them in English.

R. But when you use English, why do you use English?...What makes you not do Inuktitut only?

P2. I make sure that they understood. Like in English.

P10. But [my sister] can understand simple words. So when I try to talk to her, like have a conversation in Inuktitut, she'll be like, "I don't understand" and she'll just walk away. So I speak to her in English.

R. How about here at home, which language do you use?

I2. Mixed. [The people I live with] ... tend to speak English all the time. They're not really that good at speaking in Inuktitut.

I4. Inuktitut. But to [younger, adopted sister] both, Inuktitut and English because she speaks more in English.

In all of the above quotations, the emphasis is on communication. Even though the listeners could understand Inuktitut with some effort, Inuit youth perceive that choosing to use English will favour communication. Accommodation is a major motivator in choosing to use Inuktitut or English, and, as will be seen in Chapter Ten, Inuit youth

value Inuktitut and English because these languages allow them to accommodate the communicative preference of their interlocutors.

At the same time, some participants switch to English in order to accommodate bystanders to a conversation, allowing others to understand what is being said even if their understanding is irrelevant to the speaker's communicative goals. Three participants (all from Iqaluit) explicitly explain their language choice in this way:

D4. Yeah. Well, when, my Inuk friends, sometimes I talk to them in English. Maybe 'cause, sometimes I don't want to offend people? So I try not to keep them out of any conversations and stand there and speak Inuktitut and there might be four, five of us sitting around and without realising it I don't want to speak Inuktitut when there's two of them that don't understand. So unless I know. Like if I don't know that there's someone there that doesn't understand Inuktitut, if I don't know that, I'll just speak English. But if I know we all understand Inuktitut, I'll speak Inuktitut. You know, it's just a matter of trying to keep everyone in the conversation? Yeah.

R. So why do you speak English again? In that kind of a situation?

D6. Oh, 'cause, I don't know, it's just...I had a couple friends there who are English and I don't like leaving other people out, you know, and there's people who don't understand Inuktitut, I'll just speak English. Because sometimes when I'm with my like Qallunaat friends, and I'm with my Inuk friends and I speak Inuktitut, they always give us weird looks. For some reason they think that we're talking about them or something. So we usually use English.

R. Would you say, you said that with your friends at school, it's mainly English, but outside of school, there are some friends that you would use Inuktitut with?

D7. Like, we have a lot of Qallunaat friends, right? So, if they don't feel comfortable us speaking Inuktitut alone, they won't understand and, it's not, it's just better for the understanding and flow of the conversation. It's hard for them.

The desire to include as many people as possible in their conversation, and to exclude no one, motivates these individuals to use English. As will be seen below, Inuktitut is sometimes used for the reverse reason, to keep people from understanding what is being said. This motivation reflects Inuit youths' desire to shape their community by their language use. (In Chapter Ten, it will be seen that Inuit youth value Inuktitut and English

because these languages provide them with a tool for delimiting group membership through language choice.)

Another way in which Inuit youth accommodate the people with whom they are speaking is to mirror their linguistic behaviour. Sometimes one will choose to use Inuktitut or English in order to acknowledge and accept another's language choice:

D1. Or, it happens too that if a person does speak Inuktitut with me, I'll speak Inuktitut back.

D2. I find with everybody, when I speak Inuktitut to them, if they're Inuk, they'll speak Inuktitut back and if I speak English to them, they'll speak English to me.

R....Why do you think you use English with your friends mainly?

D11. Well, if they started off with Inuktitut, I would talk to them in Inuktitut, but they start off with English, so I just go along with their English, with the English language.

I10. ...If they keep on speaking Inuktitut, then I'll speak Inuktitut with them.

Interestingly, a few participants (notably in Pond Inlet) express that speakers may even mirror the variety of Inuktitut spoken by their interlocutor. For example, teenagers will switch between English and Inuktitut in all of their sentences, matching the codeswitching of their peers, but then will use "pure" Inuktitut to elders:

R. Okay, so the Inuktitut that he uses the same as what his grandparents would use?

I2. If he's speaking to them, yeah. If he's talking to someone else he'll speak both.

I5. ...I speak Inuktitut and English with my friends because they speak Inuktitut and English to me.

Of course, accommodation does not always occur. Sometimes speakers may be unable to accommodate even a direct request to use Inuktitut if they do not have the required linguistic competence. Sometimes care is not taken to make sure everyone around can understand the language being spoken. Inuktitut or English will be



unintentionally used in the presence of non-speakers, excluding them from the conversation:

R. Do people ever criticise that kind of use of Inuktitut [codeswitching]?

P7. Maybe some people who are older who can't speak English. Or the elders.

R. What do they say, have you ever heard them say anything?

P7. Well, my dad can't speak English and my mom can, so whenever there's something happening that my mom and I are talking about, we'll use parts of Inuktitut and parts of English and my dad would always say, "What are you saying? You don't have to, Can't you say it all in Inuktitut?" And stuff like that.

Other times young Inuit may intentionally choose to continue using Inuktitut in the presence of non-speakers:

D8. ...When I had a trip to Whitehorse in cadets...the other cadets wouldn't let us speak Inuktitut because they thought we were talking about them. And here we are trying to communicate and then they would be only speaking French and we were like, if you guys could speak your language, we could speak ours so, leave us alone, you know. That's the way we communicate and...

R. And they told you you can't speak Inuktitut?

D8. No, but we did anyways. These were other cadets, our officers didn't mind at all. They understood that it's their language, they can speak whatever they want, what language they want. Like, we never did put down other cadets, that way. If we can put them down, we'll just tell them in English.

R. And when you were in Igloolik, and he [a peer who does not speak Inuktitut] was there, did you have to use English, or did you use

P2. Yeah, most of the time we were using Inuktitut. But when he wants to know something, like, what we're talking about, we had to speak to him in English.

Furthermore, participants also explain that bilingual encounters occur, where each speaker maintains their language choice regardless of that of their interlocutor, showing other instances where accommodation does not occur. In the closed questionnaires, respondents tend to agree with the statement, "*It happens that I speak in one language*

*and the person I'm speaking with responds in a different language*" (Iqaluit mean = 7.17; Pangnirtung mean = 6.95; Pond Inlet mean = 6.87).<sup>16</sup>

Overall, accommodation leads some young Inuit to choose Inuktitut or English in certain contexts, but does not consistently determine language choice. Accommodation can mean speaking in the language that others understand, in the language preferred by the listener, the language being used by the listener, or a language directly requested by the person being addressed, as will be seen below (see "Norms of Interaction").

### *"Secret" Language*

Although accommodation/inclusion is more frequently a goal than exclusion, young Inuit also sometimes use Inuktitut or English as a "secret" language. Because Inuit youth are bilingual and certain other members of the communities are monolingual, Inuit youth sometimes switch to English or Inuktitut, even if they would normally use the other language in a given setting, in order to control who has access to their conversation. Particularly in the smaller communities, where fewer community members are fluent in English, English is sometimes used to block another person from understanding:

D4. ...Because when I was home [in Igloodik], there'd be times where maybe my sister and I or my aunt and I were in a conversation and we were talking about something and we didn't want my grandmother to understand and we'd say something in English.

I6. When we don't want to make our parents understand we just speak English, like, when we're talking about something.

Inuktitut may also be used in order to limit others' understanding, especially in Iqaluit, where half of the population are Qallunaat. This motivation for choosing Inuktitut is especially attested between peers:

A4. She's fluent in Inuktitut and so am I, but she and I don't speak Inuktitut to each other. Only if it were an awkward social situation or

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<sup>16</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 11

something, then I would say something to her in Inuktitut, like let's go, you know, something like that. But that's pretty well it.

D6. And during tournaments or something, other people don't understand it so we use Inuktitut and stuff.

D7. Going to school, usually just English. But Inuktitut if we don't want people would understand it. We just kind of tease them really, but we don't usually do that, just mainly English.

R. Which language do you use when you are with your friends?

D11. Both. Especially joking around, it's in Inuktitut. So that the white person wouldn't understand what we say, it's in Inuktitut at times. [...] Especially at work, if there's somebody that we don't like, we say, "Look at that guy" in Inuktitut or something. [...]

Especially with personal stuff. Emotional stuff and stuff like that. When there's white people around we just talk in Inuktitut, but when they're gone, we go on to English. That's how it is. [...] I wish you could go on in Inuktitut, but then again, we're like, okay, they're gone, we can talk now.

I2. Like, if we think it's boring, we say it in Inuktitut, and the teacher won't know.

In this way, young Inuit explain that one motivation for using Inuktitut is to demarcate in-group and out-group boundaries. As such, speaking Inuktitut exercises an important social function for young Inuit as it gives them a tool to mark solidarity. This is not the most significant motivation for using Inuktitut; however, it does provide an idea of some of the values attached to Inuktitut (a communicative function, an identity function, a unique possession), and how the values attached to Inuktitut are related to use of the language.

### *Norms of Interaction*

Related to accommodation, another social factor influencing language choice is the norms of interaction in a particular speech situation. In the speech situations where Inuit youth use the greatest amounts of Inuktitut, they frequently explain that they are motivated by either being told to use Inuktitut or understanding that Inuktitut is the appropriate language to use, based on an underlying norm. Speaking to elders, grandparents, parents and sometimes even friends is enforced by implicit and explicit

norms of interaction, although these norms may be broken for specific purposes, as seen above.

The consistent use of Inuktitut with elders and grandparents has already been partially explained above in terms of the linguistic competence and linguistic preference of these individuals. Participants state further that complying with one's grandparents' preference for Inuktitut reflects a norm of interaction. Sometimes this norm is explicitly stated and reinforced; Inuit youth are told to use Inuktitut with grandparents:

D8. Because my grandfather, he used to get mad at me every time I spoke in English, because he wouldn't understand. He was like, "Speak in Inuktitut!" and stuff like that, so. I got used to it.

P5. When I speak English around my grandparents, they'll say, "Speak Inuktitut, we can't understand."

At other times, use of Inuktitut is governed by an unspoken understanding of appropriate language use:

D4. ...We'd say something in English, and [my grandmother would] just be totally disgusted with it, I mean, for her, it's like, disobeying. Just not being respectful. It's just no respect if you speak English in the house with other Inuit there when you're an Inuk. Like some people just don't have exceptions to that? My grandparents are one of those people.

R. You said with your grandma, that she can use, that she can pretty much understand English but that you use mainly Inuktitut with her?

D7. Mm hmm.

R. Why do you use Inuktitut with her, even if she can understand English?

D7. It's, I guess more appropriate, I mean, if that's all they learned.

In many Inuit families, although not all, it is also expected that one would use Inuktitut with one's parents. Parents reinforce this norm in different ways. Some simply continue to speak in Inuktitut, even if their son or daughter speaks in English. Others ask their son/daughter to address them in Inuktitut. In other cases, parents refuse to answer when their children address them in English, or tease their children for using English. The following Inuit youth explain how their parents communicate and reinforce the norm of using Inuktitut:

D2. Like, my parents urge me to speak Inuktitut to them, and they tell me at my parents place, you know, “You’ve got to stop talking English to us,” and they’ll pretend sometimes that they don’t understand English, and so I’ll have to speak Inuktitut so they’ll answer me. So that’s good, they teach me that way.

R. And then keep going in Inuktitut?

D2. Yeah. But I have a tendency to speak in just English to my parents as well, and that’s when they start calling me Qallunaat and, so.

D4. It’s always in Inuktitut. At home, it’s a rule! If you don’t, your mother comes up and washes your mouth with soap, I don’t know (laughs). [...] I don’t see myself sitting there with my grandparents or my mother speaking English.

R. Outside of Inuktitut language class, does anyone ever tell you to speak Inuktitut?

D9. My mom! She always tells me to speak more Inuktitut.

R. How do you react?

D9. Like, “Okay.” But I don’t realise it so...

R. Has it ever happened that you started using more English with [your parents]?

D10. Yeah.

R. And what happens then?

D10. Oh, I don’t know, like, I’ll ask them in English and they’ll answer me in Inuktitut, so and then they ask me to speak more Inuktitut, so. Yeah.

R. No. Can you imagine if you went home and started speaking English with your mom? What would her reaction be?

P2. She would tell me to speak in Inuktitut. She always does.

R. What would change if you decided to go home and only use English with your mom?

P5. She wouldn’t speak to me in English. I tried it. If I speak to her in English, she’ll talk to me in Inuktitut.

R. Can you imagine how your mom would react if you went home and only spoke English to her?

P9. I don’t know. “Are you out of your mind?” Or something.

As the statements above show, Inuit youth generally perceive speaking to their parents as a situation where it is appropriate to use Inuktitut. The relatively high levels of use of Inuktitut with one’s parents (as seen in the description of language use, above) in each of the communities is evidence that the enforced norm motivates Inuit youth to use Inuktitut

with their parents. However, English is also sometimes used with parents, despite an implicit or explicit norm to use Inuktitut. I6 explains that some parents are flexible in their expectations of youth, because they recognise that young Inuit are trying to work out their place in a society where they need to use both Inuktitut and English:

R. How do [your parents] react when you use some English with them?  
Do they mind?

I6. Sometimes they mind, but usually they don't mind because I think they understand what we're going through too.

Although the norms of interaction governing language choice are most evident with older Inuit, a few young Inuit in Pangnirtung say that friends overtly encourage use of Inuktitut with each other:

R. Do your friends ever tell you to speak more Inuktitut?

P1. Some of them.

R. Do people like it when you tell them to speak in their language?

P2. I don't know. I don't tell my friends to speak in Inuktitut. Only my close friends.

R. How do they react when you tell them to?

P2. They start to speak in Inuktitut.

This encouragement between friends to use Inuktitut may be one of the reasons why use of Inuktitut is stronger in Pangnirtung than in the other two communities studied. Moreover, a few Iqaluit youth explain that they are motivated to use Inuktitut when they speak to Inuit from smaller Inuit communities. Especially in the case of youth who originally come from small communities, their friends "back home" set a standard of communicative interaction which involves speaking Inuktitut:

D4. I like it [in Igloolik]. ...When I get home...I'll try and talk to my friends, strike up conversations, and then they'll say, just speak Inuktitut, because we understand you in Inuktitut. [...] A lot of the times my friends say just speak Inuktitut because that's how we've been brought up. And it really makes me proud. I get kind of embarrassed and then I'm like, well, at least they're helping out. I mean, who else is going to tell me, not a lot of people tell me speak Inuktitut. But when I get home it's like, [D4], just speak Inuktitut because it's your language. ...It's kind of a wake-up call? Like, when I was in Greenland, I realised how much in Greenland, everyone's

speaking Greenlandic. And I was amazed how many people spoke Greenlandic because I really saw not a lot of the people here do speak Inuktitut? Even at my age. Or even older. Younger. You don't see that. When I get home it's always nice. That's all you hear, Inuktitut.

D13. I realised that I was losing it because I have a lot of friends who live in smaller communities and a lot of them are visiting and they kept saying speak more Inuktitut, you're speaking English too much. And so, it made me realise to speak more Inuktitut.

These young Inuit say that they are motivated to use Inuktitut with their peers in the smaller Baffin Island communities because those young Inuit speak Inuktitut and encourage them to speak it also.

In the closed questionnaires, respondents confirm that understanding their interlocutors' preference is a motivator in use of Inuktitut. Reactions to the statement, "*Sometimes I use Inuktitut because I know that the person that I'm speaking to (elder, parent, friend, etc.) prefers that I speak Inuktitut*"<sup>17</sup> show agreement to strong agreement in Iqaluit (mean = 8.09), Pangnirtung (mean = 8.79) and Pond Inlet (mean = 8.6). These results show once again how knowledge of another's preference to use Inuktitut can be a strong motivating force in Inuit youths' own use of Inuktitut.

Overall, respecting norms of interaction provides a certain motivation to use Inuktitut. Participants say that their interlocutors sometimes explicitly require them to speak Inuktitut, or that they use Inuktitut simply because they are aware that it is expected. In some cases, though, individuals do not use Inuktitut even though they are aware of a norm of interaction, as seen in interactions with one's parents. Norms of interaction provide one motivation for using Inuktitut, but choices to use Inuktitut or not cannot be entirely explained by this factor.

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<sup>17</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 13

*Linguistic Environment*

As seen above, part of the increased use of Inuktitut when Inuit from Iqaluit speak with Inuit from smaller Baffin communities is due to an enforced norm of interaction. However, the motivation to use Inuktitut also comes from being in an environment where one is surrounded by people using Inuktitut:

A4. I was recently on this exchange that I told you about...there were two people from Clyde River and they spoke Inuktitut a lot of the time, so I spoke to them in Inuktitut.

R. Are there any occasions in your day-to-day life where you would use Inuktitut?

D3. In Clyde River, there was, but not in Iqaluit anymore.

R. That sounds good. Are there certain places where you use more Inuktitut than English?

D6. I find, like I just said, the higher you go up North, the farther, Inuktitut is used more. Like, here, mainly here, and like Yellowknife, you know, it's mostly, a lot of English is coming round. It's mostly becoming English. But Pangnirtung or Cape Dorset or, like Kimmirut and all those other communities, it's mainly Inuktitut.

D10. Yeah, like I would like it [Iqaluit] to be like Pang, like how the young people there are, they all speak Inuktitut all the time, like 24/7 and here [in Iqaluit], it's all English and then Inuktitut, all mixed.

D13. Whereas in a small community, you speak Inuktitut. And it's good, you know. For you, you know? [...] Like I was in Pang for a month last year. [...] It was good because everywhere they speak Inuktitut there, whether it's in the store, school, outside, in the post office, bank, well, they have no bank, but you know. So you just take it all in, you know? Speak Inuktitut too. So that's good.

Some participants specifically attribute the increased Inuktitut environment to a predominance of Inuit in the smaller communities, as opposed to equal numbers of Inuit and Qallunaat in Iqaluit. The description of language use (Chapter Seven) clearly shows that whenever Qallunaat are being addressed, English, with few exceptions, must be used. As a result, it is not surprising that reduced numbers of Qallunaat would lead to increased use of Inuktitut:



P3. I say that that makes a difference there, too, because if there's more Inuit people, there's a lot more Inuktitut spoken, but if there's more white, then the Inuit people just go on and speak English.

R. What do you think makes the difference, why Inuit here [in Pond Inlet] still speak some Inuktitut and why Inuit in Iqaluit aren't really speaking Inuktitut?

I2. Maybe because there's a lot of Inuits here.

In Iqaluit, the situation is opposite. There are more Qallunaat in Iqaluit, which, as suggested in the quotation above, in itself leads to greater use of English. Just as Iqaluit participants say that they use more Inuktitut when they are in the Inuktitut environment of the smaller communities, participants from Pond Inlet say that they use more English when they go down to Iqaluit, where English is more widely spoken:

R. Are there places where you would use more English than Inuktitut?

I4. I use both languages when I go down to Iqaluit.

R. How come?

I4. Because they are talking more in English, hardly in Inuktitut.

R. And you said that that increased, that you got better at English and got used to using more English during that program in Iqaluit?

I6. Yes, because I spoke a lot more English and I was with a lot more Qallunaat. But I found it important to keep my language.

Of course, the environment in Iqaluit is not entirely English. Inuktitut is still widely used in the community. Nonetheless, many Inuit youth attribute their choice to use English to the widespread use of English around them:

R. What keeps you from using Inuktitut?

D1. Everyone just speaking English. That I'm around.

[...]

D1. Everything's in English. Everywhere you go, you hear English. It's like, you go to the small communities, smaller than Iqaluit, anyway, you hear a lot of Inuktitut, unless you go to Iqaluit, everywhere you go, you hear English, English, English.

R. Even among Inuit, do you hear a lot of English?

D1. I do.

D10. Well, when I was going to school, and with my jobs and when me and [my friend] were on the way to Pang, and they're like, why do you

guys speak so much English, you know, you guys don't speak Inuktitut. ...and we're like maybe because in Iqaluit there's so many people who speak English and wherever we go, it's all English because they don't all understand Inuktitut, so. We realised that and went oh, we have to speak more Inuktitut now, so we tried to do that more.

[...]

R. Why would you say that you only use English with [Inuit friend 1]. Or mainly English?

D10. Mainly English because...it's just been like that, English. Where, when we go to work, you know, we wake up and go to school, I go to school, and then my first class is English. So...I speak English and stuff and then when she goes to work with me, you know, she speaks English and stuff, and then at the end of the day, when we see each other, it's like, "Hi," you know. I don't know why. Maybe it's because everywhere we go, we're around English, not Inuktitut.

D13. ...Because I speak so much English. [...] I've been speaking English ever since. Because, you know, in Iqaluit, here, it's like that.

R. In Iqaluit, you use English all the time?

D13. Yeah. Everyone speaks English. Whereas in a small community, you speak Inuktitut. And it's good, you know. For you, you know?

[...] and then I was here [in Iqaluit], and...I started speaking English... 'cause...like I said, it's like that here. English. Everyone's speaking in English.

The Inuit youth quoted above comment that they perceive English as being very widely used in Iqaluit, and they attribute their own use of English to their constant exposure to others speaking in English. When they use English, it is not because they could not use Inuktitut, but more that they do not even think about using Inuktitut.

The environment is also created by the media. Several participants explain that exposure to English language media leads to generalised increased use of English. Also, exposure to English language media can lead to situational increased use of English, in that direct communication about the media (or activities which take place in English) are discussed in the language in which they took place:

R. What do you think influences whether you choose to speak Inuktitut or English with a given person?

A4. Our environment, our media. I mean, like using my nephew as an example. Like, we try to use Inuktitut with him as much as possible and we're his family, we're very close to him, but still he refuses, and that's like, odd. But the fact that he, all the movies that he watches, and all the

TV shows, all the people that he talks to on the street, it's all in English. So he speaks English. So he's just being influenced that way and it's the same for everybody. Like myself, even.

R. Do you have any idea what changed from the time that you were growing up to the time your little brothers grew up, that you speak Inuktitut fluently and that they hardly speak it?

D16. It could be, I don't know, I'm not really sure, it's something I've tried to figure out, too. It could be more people coming up from the South. And their, from watching TV, I guess, I don't know. They sit down a lot and watch TV, and that's where they pick it up. And growing up, in high school, going to high school, I mean, it was totally mixed up, I walk in there any day, and you'll hear nothing but English pretty much.

R. What makes the difference whether you choose to use English or Inuktitut with your mom or with your sister?

P7. Well, it depends on what the conversation is. ...It's just what we're talking about. For instance, if we were talking about something we heard on the news, we sometimes, I just, I don't know how to, put it in Inuktitut sometimes, or other way. So we talk in both of the languages, pretty much. I mean, not pretty much but, not all the time, but mainly in Inuktitut.

R. Do you remember why [you use English at the video store]?

P10. Maybe because you rent a movie in English and everybody knows how to speak in English. But when I ask them what is their name and their phone number, I ask them in Inuktitut. It just comes out. But, it's almost all in English.

[...]

R. Are there any subjects that you talk about that you'd use more English to talk about those subjects?

P10. Maybe watching movies? We watch a movie, we talk to each other in English.

R. ...Do you speak Inuktitut as frequently as you would like to?

I10. I don't do that...

[...]

I10. ...But it depends on how you say it, because we got used to it. We watched TV all the time when they were explaining something and we learned from it. We're watching someone and they're explaining something and we started watching and learning.

The Inuit youths' environment is created by the generalised language use in the community and in the media. Also in the environment are institutions and components of daily life closely associated with the English language, such as news reports, movies, and schooling. Talking about these "English"-language (or Qallunaat) things leads one to use

English. Dorais and Sammons (2002:122) reach the same conclusions about language choice, “In a more general way, English is used for expressing what many informants call the *qallunaujaniit*, the “things from the Qallunaat world,” i.e. most activities and implements that have to do with daily life in a contemporary Arctic community.” Dorais and Sammons (2002:122) immediately relate this language choice to the value associated with English, “English is, thus, chiefly perceived as the language of modernity and practicality.” In the following two chapters, I show, in a similar way, how the reasons why Inuit youth choose to use Inuktitut or English are closely related to the symbolic and practical value they place on these two languages.

Environment is clearly influencing language use, but the influence does not automatically lead to use of one language or the other. Even as the visible presence of Inuktitut increases in Iqaluit, not all youth are motivated to read, listen to or watch the Inuktitut-language media:

D2. Half the boards you put up or newsletters are translated into Inuktitut. I’m sure there’s people out there who do read the Inuktitut versions but just because I speak mainly English I read English, which is probably what I shouldn’t be doing, but there’s not enough time in my day at my work to stop and read Inuktitut. And I’m pretty burned out when I go home at night and have my supper and then it’s just watching TV, and I never watch TVNC or CBC, where Inuit are on. It’s usually just English-speaking sitcoms. Yeah.

Whether the increase in *impersonal* use of Inuktitut (i.e. in the media) motivates greater use of Inuktitut or not, it remains true that being spoken to in Inuktitut and hearing one’s role models speak Inuktitut can influence one to use this language. In suggesting needs for the promotion of Inuktitut, one participant clearly states the importance of the linguistic climate for promoting Inuktitut, saying that when one hears Inuktitut being spoken, one is motivated to use Inuktitut:

R. Do you think anything needs to be done to help it to hold steady?

D9. I don’t know. Have more, like educate it more in high school and have more job opportunities, like, *speak Inuktitut*, then like we’re going to want to speak it more often. [*my emphasis*]

As a final comment about the linguistic environment of the Inuit youth, D11 makes an interesting statement about the environment some Inuit youth choose to interact in. She perceives that Inuit teenagers are interacting primarily with their peers, and less so with their family, leading to decreased use of Inuktitut:

D11. Yeah. I don't want [my children] to grow up the way I'm talking now. I want them to carry on a conversation in Inuktitut with their friends. I wish I could do that, but I just go on and on in English, and stuff like that, so, especially having teenagers around me. They're not talking in Inuktitut. I don't know. So I just carry on the conversation in English. It's kind of hard. Especially the way teens are growing up in town, like having to be more with their friends than with their parents and stuff like that. I think it's just peer pressure or something. I don't know.

Indirectly, D11 is suggesting that when the environment (and thus communication network) of Inuit youth is peer-based and not family-based, there is less opportunity or impetus to use Inuktitut. Part of the solution to the impending loss of Inuktitut in Iqaluit may include youth speaking more often with their parents and other, older Inuit (which, as seen above, motivates use of Inuktitut for various reasons).

### **8.2.3 Personal Factors**

#### *Habit*

Linked to the notion of environment, participants say that they use Inuktitut or English just because they are used to using that language. Sometimes the habit reflects a norm for a specific situation (as discussed above):

D10. [...] So, but when you're at home, you're used to it because that person only speaks Inuktitut so you know they can't speak English...

I10. ...When I talk to somebody, it depends on the person how I talk, too, like if it's either in English or Inuktitut. If I'm used to speaking English with the person, I'll speak English mostly and if its somebody who I speak Inuktitut with the whole time, then I'll speak mostly Inuktitut. That's how it goes, I guess.

Other times, participants say that their broad habits of language use can lead them to employ either Inuktitut or English, even if the norms of interaction in that setting should require the other language:

R. Okay, how about the other way around, with your parents, you said you would use Inuktitut and English?

D7. Uh huh.

R. Why would you use English with them, if they understand Inuktitut?

D7. I guess I'm just used to it. Pretty much.

D13. Mm hmm. But then we forget right away [to use Inuktitut] because we're not used to it, you know?

I10. There's times when I was in high school the teacher asked me a question and I was explaining and I was explaining to the teacher and suddenly I started speaking Inuktitut. And then I was, "Oh! I didn't notice!"

Language use reflects ingrained habits. In view of language promotion, Inuit youth who want to maintain Inuktitut need to make the effort to reverse habits to use English in situations where Inuktitut would fill their communicative needs, while reinforcing current habits to use Inuktitut in other settings.

### *Marking Identity*

Inuit youth also choose to use Inuktitut (or English) in order to mark their identity or that of their interlocutor. In some cases, use of language to mark identity is explicitly stated in terms of Inuit being addressed in Inuktitut and Qallunaat being addressed in English. More specifically, using Inuktitut with other Inuit seems to send the personal message "I recognise that you are an Inuk":

D2. And you feel kind of bad, sometimes, because you don't want to make them think, make them feel sorry for themselves, because a lot of people do, who are losing their language, I find anyway, so I try to speak in English to them, but if they look Inuk, I usually talk to them in Inuktitut. I say hi, and I try to speak Inuktitut as much as I could.

R. Okay. What motivates you using Inuktitut with those friends that you use Inuktitut with?

D6. I don't really know. I just, when I know I can speak Inuktitut to a friend or a family member, and I know they understand it and speak it, I just force myself to, well, not force myself, but I just automatically switch to Inuktitut.

D9. Yeah, like if that person's Inuk, I'll talk to him in Inuktitut. I'd rather talk to him in Inuktitut than I would in English.

D10. ...At the boarding home, they're all mostly Inuit, so we speak Inuktitut there.

[...]

R. I wonder why you use mainly Inuktitut with [Friend 2]?

D10. She's all Inuk, too, you know. She...did all Inuktitut courses when she was in elementary. Her place is all Inuktitut, her, both of her parents are Inuk and all her family members are Inuk. And so she knows how to speak English, but you know, she uses Inuit, Inuktitut all the time because she is around it all the time, you know. ...So, where she is at, in her life, it's all Inuktitut and where I'm at, it's all English. So with her, to speak Inuktitut, it's just [Friend 2].

R. And when you go to work?

P9. Both. Some are Inuk and some are Qallunaat, so I have to use English and Inuktitut.

R. What language are you bringing your kids up to speak?

I4. Inuktitut.

R. Why?

I4. It's their language.

R. How about with your mom?

I5. With my mom? My mom's an Inuk, so I speak Inuktitut with her.

As seen in previous sections, English is most frequently used with Qallunaat. A few participants associate their use of English with their listener's ethnic identity:

D10. ... But in the academic courses, it's all the English people and some Inuit, so it's all English.

R. Mm hmm. When do you use English?

I4. I don't know. When I'm talking to a white person.

I5. When I'm working, when I have to deal with the contractors I have to talk to them.

R. Why do you have to talk to them in English?

I5. Because they're white. Most of them, so I have to use English most of the time at work.

Of course, even if some Inuit use Inuktitut or English to mark the identity of the person they are speaking with, this tendency is not systematically applied (as is the case with all potential motivators identified). Many other factors come into play, and Inuit youth have consistently stated that they use some English with other Inuit, and some Inuktitut with Qallunaat.

Inuktitut is important for ethnic identity, but Inuit youth are redefining their identity on a number of levels, and it appears that use of both languages helps them to create and reflect the emerging identity. The theme of identity (personal, cultural and ethnic) probably underlies many motivations to use language and is explored in further detail in Chapter Nine. The individuals quoted above explicitly state that they use language in connection with an individual's identity, but identity is implicitly wrapped up in language choice in a much more extensive way, as will be seen. (Dorais and Sammons [2002] have also shown in some detail the identity-marking function of language choice in Nunavut.)

### *Linguistic Insecurity*

Linked to the notion of projected self-image through language use is the factor of linguistic insecurity. A number of young Inuit express that they are insecure in their ability to speak Inuktitut (or less frequently, English). The fear of making mistakes and being ridiculed, teased, or otherwise negatively judged due to imperfect use of Inuktitut pushes these young Inuit to use English:

A4. Our president [at an Inuit association], he's Inuk and he speaks mostly Inuktitut, but I always speak English to him, even though we both understand and speak Inuktitut. [...] I do that because, I think that I'm intimidated, because I heard him...correcting the person he was talking to, like correcting their Inuktitut, and they would like laugh about it and whatever, and I thought, "Oooh", you know? I know he's not going to correct me, because he doesn't know me very well, and he's just going to kind of sit there and kind of think to himself, this girl's Inuktitut is bad, or



whatever. Even though I know it isn't, really. It's just when I'm trying, I kind of get nervous and searching for the words. ...So I'm afraid of making a mistake and because right away he'll assume that the rest of my Inuktitut is all bad and just I don't know, "No, you don't speak Inuktitut," kind of thing. So I'm always worried about that. Even though I know that I speak it...

[...]

So, now when a relative comes in, I just get nervous and end up speaking English. And then they wonder why I'm speaking English. They ask me, "Do you still speak Inuktitut? You know, you've moved away." And I'm like, "Yeah, I do." And they're like, "Okay, why aren't you using it?" And it's like, "I don't know."

D2. Just English in general if I'm speaking it, because it's like, when I'm talking to somebody who's Inuk, I'll speak better Inuktitut to them than I do to my parents, because when I talk to my parents in Inuktitut, I try to think, what should I say? And to word it just right, so I stumble on words, and I'll start to speak in English, and then I'll speak Inuktitut, and then whatever I'm more comfortable with, I guess. I'm just more relaxed when I'm talking to other people, who aren't my parents.

R. Can you tell me again, what you told me about why you think you speak more English, and not so much Inuktitut?

I2. Because a lot of people are always correcting me in Inuktitut. I don't know a lot of words in Inuktitut.

R. Yeah. How do you feel about Inuit telling other Inuit how to speak more Inuktitut, or how to speak Inuktitut?

I2. I think it's okay. I'm not really into it. I'm not interested in it [Inuktitut] because I suck at it.

Other participants express linguistic insecurity, without explicitly saying that this leads to greater use of English:

D13. *Panniqtuuq* dialect I like, because, you know, I don't know, I can speak it, you know? Because, I don't know. But when I try to speak my own dialect, it's hard, like, *kutak*, saying, you know?

R. What's *kutak*?

D13. *Kutak* is like, me trying to speak French but can't really say it... You know, the French accent, you know? Like that. That's *kutak*. But, yeah.

Although A4, D2 and I2 cited above claim that being corrected makes them feel insecure in Inuktitut and pushes them to use English instead, correction is also described

favourably, where youth explain that being corrected helps them to maintain and improve their Inuktitut:

D13. Well, that's different, though, it's just at times, like when they speak to elders, you know? It's good when they correct me... [...] Then...I'll be proud that I learned something.

R. Does it ever discourage you from speaking Inuktitut when people correct you?

D13. No. It doesn't discourage me at all.

In fact, reactions to the closed questionnaire statement, "*I think that it is good for Inuit to correct people when they make mistakes speaking Inuktitut*"<sup>18</sup> show strong agreement in all three communities (Iqaluit mean = 8.79; Pangnirtung mean = 8.3; Pond Inlet mean = 9.21). As a result, the findings presented above should not be interpreted as suggesting that correction of mistakes is necessarily detrimental to the survival of Inuktitut. However, for some young Inuit correction leads to linguistic insecurity which in turn motivates use of English. Some young Inuit would rather use English than what is perceived as poor Inuktitut (see also Language Purity, below). (Insecurity in using Inuktitut may also be based on the feeling that use of Inuktitut will be out of place, as seen in D4's comment: "I find English speaking is better when I'm talking to different people around here. Then you won't get weird looks or whatever.")

Finally, linguistic insecurity also works the other way around. Some participants in the smaller communities express insecurity in English, which encourages them to continue using Inuktitut:

I4. So I speak in Inuktitut more. 'Cause sometimes it's kind of embarrassing to talk in English.

R. Why is it embarrassing?

I4. I don't know. I hardly talk in English, maybe that's why.

Linguistic insecurity apparently motivates young Inuit to use what they perceive as their dominant language, or the dominant language in the community. While in Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet Inuktitut is still the dominant language of many individuals, and the

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<sup>18</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 55

dominant language in the community (at least in terms of numbers of speakers), in Iqaluit, English is increasingly a dominant language. Young Inuit in Iqaluit choose to use English for a number of reasons, one of which being that they feel vulnerable when they use Inuktitut.

### *Language Purity*

The notion of linguistic insecurity reflects a desire to portray a positive image of oneself and not be negatively judged. At the same time, the comments expressing insecurity in one's use of Inuktitut reflect an attitude that "pure", well-spoken Inuktitut is valued. A small number of individuals express that their desire to keep their Inuktitut pure sometimes leads them to use English. That is to say, if some young Inuit are not sure that they can convey their message in "proper" Inuktitut, they would prefer to just speak in English:

D4. Like when I talk in Inuktitut I like to make sure I'm saying the right things. Otherwise, if I know I'm not going to say it right, I'll say it in English.

D4 would rather use English exclusively than to use imperfect Inuktitut. Such an attitude that Inuktitut should be used perfectly or not at all can have obvious repercussions on the future of Inuktitut in communities like Iqaluit, but also the others, where a minority of respondents consider that their ability to speak Inuktitut is excellent. A reluctance to use less than perfect Inuktitut can be a motivator to maintain a high level of Inuktitut competence, but it can also be detrimental to efforts to maintain or renew one's abilities in Inuktitut in the case of individuals who are experiencing language attrition (a significant proportion of respondents in Iqaluit and Pond Inlet, as seen in Chapter Five).

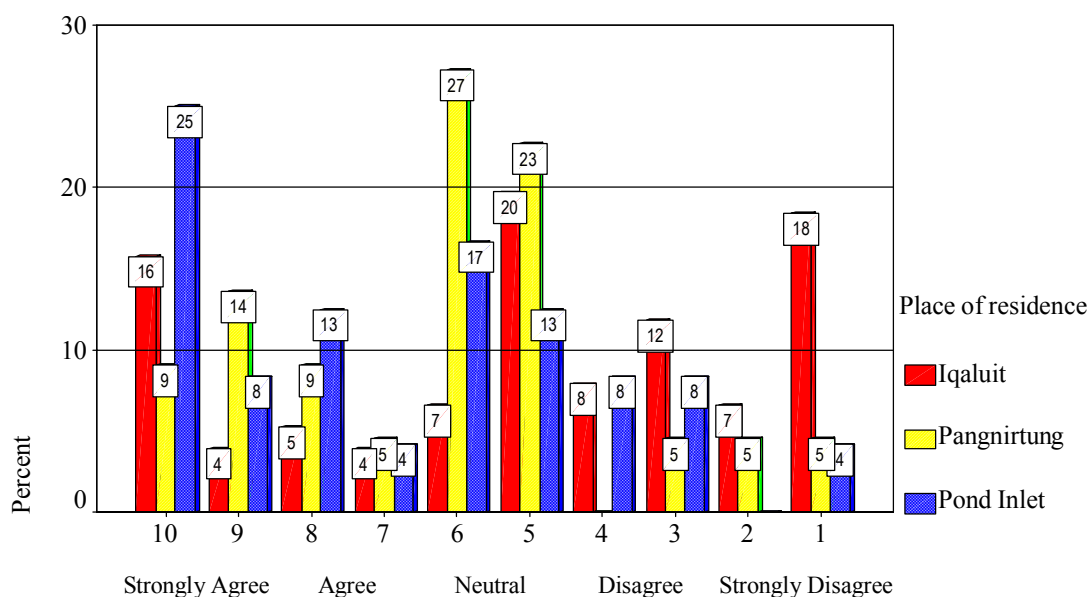
Other participants express a preference for using 'pure English' or 'pure Inuktitut' rather than codeswitching:

D16. ... if [my friends] speak Inuktitut I'll...try to have a conversation with them in Inuktitut and I try to keep it in one language, not use English, not that I am saying that I am against English at all, or anything, just, I

mean, I don't know, I just feel that I am comfortable to be able to keep it in one language.

I9. I'd prefer speaking one language only, like pure Inuktitut or English, try and speak as much Inuktitut as possible. When I'm speaking in Inuktitut, or when I'm speaking in English, like I'd prefer pure English. [...] When you speak in Inuktitut, try and use as much Inuktitut as possible, and not mix the two languages, or if you speak English, try and speak all English, not mixing the two languages together. I'd say that's it.

When a similar statement was tested in the closed questionnaire,<sup>19</sup> reactions were mixed (Iqaluit mean = 5; Pangnirtung mean = 6.23; Pond Inlet mean = 6.79), with significant differences between communities ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). A desire to avoid codeswitching was only evident in Pond Inlet, where 33.3% [8/24] strongly agree and 16.7% [4/24] agree that it is “better to speak in one language than it is to speak in a mixed language,”<sup>20</sup> as seen in Figure 28. Pangnirtung responses hover around the neutral point, with 50% (11/22) giving responses of five or six on the ten-point scale.



“I think it's better to speak in one language than to speak in a mixed language (Inuktitut and English at the same time)”

**Figure 28: Judgement of Codeswitching**

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 45

That said, respondents also clearly agree in all three communities (Iqaluit mean = 7.14; Pangnirtung mean = 7.13; Pond Inlet mean = 7.63) with the statement “Speaking a mixture of Inuktitut and English at the same time (mixing Inuktitut and English) helps me to communicate effectively,”<sup>21</sup> indicating a certain level of acceptance of the practice of codeswitching. These results, taken together with the expressions of linguistic insecurity above, point to a need for appreciating appropriate and acceptable use of Inuktitut, and perhaps reconsidering one’s priorities in language use in order to maintain Inuktitut.

### *Effort*

As seen above, although a few participants make an effort to use “pure” Inuktitut or “pure” English, ease of self-expression is a factor which leads Inuit youth to codeswitch. Participants rarely express ease of self-expression as a primary motivator in speaking exclusively Inuktitut or English. Participants do address which language is easier for them to communicate in (in response to a specific question to that respect; see also “Comparing Inuktitut to English Competence” in Chapter Five) but only rarely make a link to actual language practice:

R. Is [Inuktitut] an easy language to speak?

P7. For me it is, ‘cause I’ve been using it since I first started talking, so. It’s easy for me to say it, but.

R. Do you prefer speaking English or Inuktitut?

I3. Inuktitut. [...] Because, it’s more comfortable. [...] It’s easier, so, you know.

R. Is it easier for you to express your feelings in Inuktitut, or in English.

I3. Inuktitut.

The results directly reflect perceived language competence, and perhaps language habits, but participants do not explicitly say that they use Inuktitut or English because it is easier for them to do so.

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<sup>20</sup> The term “mixed language” was used in my interactions with research participants as this is the term widely used by the Inuit youth to describe codeswitching.

<sup>21</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 43

*Desire to Teach*

Turning to a different kind of motivation, for some young Inuit, the desire (or ability) to teach Inuktitut or English to others inspires them to use that language. Using a language due to a motivation to teach the language is most often seen in interactions with children. As seen in the description of language use with children, a few parents choose to use English alongside Inuktitut in order to teach their children this language. However, more frequently, Inuit youth speak Inuktitut to children with the intention of helping them to learn Inuktitut and to promote the use of Inuktitut in the younger generation:

R. Does the age of the person affect whether you use Inuktitut or English?

A4. Not so much with me, personally. I try to talk to kids in Inuktitut, because if I ask them a question in Inuktitut, right away, like first time meeting a kid, how they answer kind of shows me, like where they are really. If I ask them a simple question, “How are you?” in Inuktitut, and if they say in English, “Fine.” Then it’s like, “Okay, you speak probably mostly English.” Then I’ll say something a little harder, like “What did you do today?” or something. And then if they say, “Huh?” then they don’t speak Inuktitut at all. But then a lot of time, most of the kids here, they actually answer in English. And if they answer in Inuktitut then that’s great, right? So.

D2. ...My sister will tell me, “Ah, talk Inuktitut to them. They know too much English, they don’t know enough Inuktitut.” So. I try to make an effort to talk Inuktitut to [my nephews] as well.

D4. What really disappoints me is when I’m looking after a kid and I’m trying to talk to them but they just don’t understand what I’m saying? So I have to say it in English. But I make sure I say in Inuktitut either in English and then I translate it, just so they could at least hear it? That’s the best I could do in promoting Inuktitut.

R. Tell me about at the day-care. Do you use Inuktitut or English with the kids?

D10. With the kids that speak Inuktitut, I try to speak more Inuktitut to them, but if they don’t understand, I’ll say it in both languages, so they can understand, and then with the kids that only speak English, I tend to just speak English to them and then, when we’re playing, I show them, you know, like *ataata* means daddy, or *anaana* means mommy and stuff. So I try to teach them Inuktitut, so. But they all speak English, you know,

they don't speak. When I talk to them in Inuktitut, they respond back in English, so.

R. All of them?

D10. Yeah. All of them. So, I'm trying to speak more Inuktitut there so they can learn while they're young.

D11. I'm trying to talk to my oldest one in Inuktitut, too. [...] I'm glad I get her to understand some more.

P7. ...Like I have a baby cousin, he's almost two. We talk to him all the time in Inuktitut, but sometimes we say something in English, and he'll understand. We're trying to teach him both languages. But more of Inuktitut. Just little bits of English here and there. Stuff like that.

P10. Yeah, here in Pang. I only speak Inuktitut to them. Even if they are English, like Qallunaat, I'll still speak Inuktitut. It's so fascinating, when kids, they understand, fast English and Inuktitut. The pre-school kids, we talk Inuktitut to them all the time. Two of them are bilingual, but it's all Inuktitut.

I3. I don't know. Yeah, *ila* we tried to talk in Inuktitut to teenagers and kids.

R. So then they'll hear it?

I3 .Yeah.

Young Inuit are evidently motivated to use Inuktitut by the prospect of passing Inuktitut on to the next generation. This motivation is also reflected in responses to the closed questionnaires, where respondents strongly agree with the statement, "*It is important to me to pass the Inuktitut language on to my (future) children*" (Iqaluit mean = 8.89; Pangnirtung mean = 8.79; Pond Inlet mean = 9.17).<sup>22</sup>

The possibility of teaching Inuktitut to an interested public also motivates some young Inuit to use Inuktitut. A few young Inuit express that they have taught Inuktitut to their peers – co-workers, fellow students, spouse or friends:

D2. I try to use [Inuktitut with my girlfriend] just so she can get more familiar with it.

[...]

R. How about with (Qallunaaq friend), did you speak Inuktitut with her?

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<sup>22</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 24

D2. Yeah. She was really eager on learning Inuktitut so I did try to teach her a few things here and there and she likes my dialect better. I don't know why.

R. Okay. Is there anything that anybody could do to motivate you to speak Inuktitut more often?

D6. Say like when I go down South and people are really interested in the language and they really want to learn, that motivates me. When they ask me, what's that? I tell them and so, that's when I start feeling that I'm happy that I know this language, I could teach other people what it means.

D7. I think [Qallunaat] should learn, it's just, I mean, they're living in, on Inuit land, so why not learn it? It's going to be better for them, if they're planning on staying here. And people down South, they love the language, I just came from Newfoundland, and they were just amazed. They had fun with it. So, it's one way to get friends, teach them Inuktitut. It's cool, when they just enjoy it all the time.

[...]

R. Do you enjoy teaching people Inuktitut?

D7. Yeah, it's fun. It's nice to see people learning and stuff.

R. So what motivated you to do that hard work, to give them that course?

D16. Well, they showed a lot of interest. I took pride in it. ...I was just willing to help them out, just to see how much interest they were showing. And then it made me feel real good, that, and I noticed that we teach it to them.

I6. Some people, I think they like it when I speak Inuktitut, because they want to learn, I think that helps too. When I was in Iqaluit, I had friends from Kitikmeot, from the West, they spoke a lot more English, but we were with our friends and they were with us, and we were speaking much more Inuktitut than they were, and they started learning a lot more Inuktitut, since they came to Iqaluit, so I think speaking in Inuktitut with our friends helps a lot...

The interest of these co-workers, friends and peers to learn Inuktitut motivates the young Inuit in the above quotations to use Inuktitut and to teach it. These young Inuit are motivated by the desire to teach Inuktitut, but also by the value others place on knowing their language. The quotations above provide a clear example of how *others* valuing a language can increase the motivation to maintain and transmit a language.



*Desire to Maintain*

In aims of preserving Inuktitut, young Inuit make a conscious effort to use the language in their daily interactions. As previous quotes have suggested (including I6, above) many Inuit choose to use Inuktitut because they realise use of Inuktitut is necessary for the maintenance of the language. As seen in Chapter Five, for some young Inuit, choosing to speak Inuktitut is a direct reaction to the recognition that one is transferring to greater use of English:

D8. ...A year and a half ago, I kind of lost my Inuktitut. I was hearing English so much that I just started speaking more English than I used to. But now I'm getting it back. Slowly, but.

R. How are you getting it back?

D8. Speaking to my mother. She'll talk to me in Inuktitut and I'll answer her or to my grandmother and aunts and uncles, friends.

D10. When we speak too much English, we're like, we should speak Inuktitut, it's like, okay, let's try to do it all day, you know. So, it's sort of a game, but then, when we, when we feel that we are speaking too much English, we try to speak more Inuktitut.

D13. ...My friends and I... 'cause we still notice when we're speaking so much English, we'll just talk and say, hey, look we're speaking so much English, let's speak more Inuktitut. And...try to speak it one hour straight, you know? And speak it as much as we can and that's good, you know. That helps. When we get used to it, you know? Like, not just words but conversation. That helps.

Realising that one is losing Inuktitut has triggered these individuals' recognition of the importance of the ancestral language and motivates them to use Inuktitut in order to maintain it. Even without recognition of language shift, the threat of potential language loss also motivates youth to use Inuktitut:

D17. Yeah, like when I read the Nunatsiaq News, I read the Inuktitut side, and I'll correct a few spelling mistakes and stuff like that. I don't want to lose it, and if I avoid, well, not avoid, but if I don't make an effort to read as much as I can in Inuktitut, then, you know, eventually I'll forget.

P4. I think it's really important that we keep our language. Just, something that when your parents speak Inuktitut, and then all you speak is...English in school, and then, you try not to forget your language.

R. Mm hmm. Are you concerned about people losing Inuktitut?

P4. Not really. But for myself, I'm trying to keep my language.

R. What do you do to try and keep it?

P4. Just try to speak Inuktitut frequently and learn as much as I can.

Even among young Inuit who do not perceive language loss, choosing to use Inuktitut is a way to promote Inuktitut more broadly, and to show that one values Inuktitut by using it:

R. You say that you try and speak Inuktitut as much as you can, why is that?

D4. Because who else is going to do it? I was brought up to speak Inuktitut because it's in our lives, it's our world of communicating, it's our way of understanding each other, because English is to everyone their second language.

R. Does it matter which language you use?

P6. Yeah. Inuktitut is more important to me.

R. How about your friends do you think that they think that Inuktitut's important? Do they ever say anything?

I4. They never.

R. They never say anything.

I4. But they talk in Inuktitut more.

R. Is there anything else that you do personally to promote Inuktitut?

I6. Basically speaking Inuktitut and I don't know. Yeah, pretty much speaking.

Previously, I suggested that higher levels of Inuktitut use with children in Iqaluit and Pond Inlet demonstrates a reaction to Inuktitut loss in the community, where an awareness of loss leads to a conscious effort to prioritise use of Inuktitut. The quotations above support the idea that the recognition of language loss is favourable for the eventual maintenance of a language because it can compel individuals to take redressive action. More specifically, language loss leads one to think about why the language is important to them, and realising the value of the language leads Inuit youth to try to use it more frequently.

The discussion above shows that Inuit youth give a variety of explanations for why they use Inuktitut or English in specific situations, and yet none of the factors, other than competence/communicative need, is consistently useful for explaining language choice. At the beginning of this chapter, it was evident that although linguistic factors influence language choice to some degree, Inuit youth more frequently say that both Inuktitut and English are effective tools for communicating their messages. The discussion of social factors suggests that the social message communicated through language choice, such as respect of one's interlocutors, especially if these individuals are Inuit elders, can be powerful motivating forces in language choice. Also, the general linguistic environment in the community affects patterns of language use among bilingual Inuit youth. Furthermore, personal factors, such as the desire to project a positive self image and the value one personally attributes to maintaining Inuktitut, strongly influence language choice, according to Inuit youth. Based on explanations of language use, it seems that Inuit youths' linguistic behaviour is influenced more by social and personal factors than by linguistic factors. If this is the case, initiatives to promote Inuktitut will be most effective if they target the social and personal value attributed to using Inuktitut or English.

Inuit youths' explanations of why they use Inuktitut or English are significant because they help to pinpoint attitudes that need to change before widespread use of Inuktitut can be achieved or maintained. As the quotations from participants show, developing the Inuktitut language and creating increased opportunities to use Inuktitut will only go so far. The promotion of Inuktitut among Inuit youth does not appear to hinge on implementing Inuktitut into new domains but rather finding ways to encourage Inuit youth to continue to use Inuktitut in domains where its use is already acceptable and normal. As such, language planning should target how Inuit youth feel about Inuktitut. At a most basic level, promotion of Inuktitut may need to expand young Inuit's perceptions of where, when and with whom it is appropriate, desirable or acceptable to use Inuktitut. Promotion may also need to take into account how young Inuit feel about the way they speak Inuktitut. Just based on Inuit youths' explanations of when they choose to use Inuktitut, and why, increasing the Inuktitut environment, providing opportunities to teach

Inuktitut and making Inuit aware of the threat of losing Inuktitut may increase levels of Inuktitut use. The following chapters on language attitudes delves deeper into the underlying feelings individuals have about Inuktitut and English. These language attitudes and beliefs help to better understand why bilingual individuals choose to use Inuktitut or English, as well as why Inuit youth may be motivated to regulate their linguistic practice in order to maintain Inuktitut.

**PART THREE**

**LANGUAGE ATTITUDES**

## CHAPTER IX

### SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGES TO INUIT YOUTH

#### **9.0 Introduction**

Inuit youths' use of Inuktitut and English in a wide variety of speech situations, described in Chapters Six and Seven, is motivated by a number of factors. As seen in the preceding chapter, Inuit youth can sometimes consciously explain why they use Inuktitut or English. In other cases, language use is automatic, subconsciously motivated by the symbolic and practical value Inuit youth attribute to Inuktitut and English. The following two chapters examine reasons why young Inuit value Inuktitut and English, making the link between the perceived importance of each language and young Inuit's choices to learn, maintain and use one language or the other or both. The chapters focus on positive values associated with Inuktitut and English. As a result, negative symbolic attachments, which may hinder use even alongside overwhelmingly positive articulated values, are not fully addressed.

Theories about the importance of languages in bilingual communities and for bilingual individuals abound. My analysis of the importance of Inuktitut and English for Inuit youth is informed by previous studies on language attitudes, the importance of languages, and reasons why languages are used and valued by individuals. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Ager (2001), for example, has written about various motivations for promoting languages, including identity, integration and instrumentality. Gardner and

Lambert's research (cf. Gardner and Lambert 1972) has shown how feelings about the native speakers of a language, as well as about the usefulness of a language, can play a role in second language acquisition. Allard and Landry (1994) have shown a strong correlation between ethnolinguistic beliefs (including feelings and desires regarding the native language) on the one hand and language vitality and use on the other. Fishman's research (cf. 1996, 1997) emphasises the value of considering why a language is important to its native speakers when planning for language promotion.

More specific to the language situation in the Arctic, Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998) discuss how desires and good intentions to promote a language can be mitigated by residual feelings of shame attached to the native language. They underline the importance of evaluating and eventually shaping attitudes about the native language as a first step in efforts to promote greater use of the language. Taylor and Wright (1989) have written on feelings about Inuktitut, English and French in an Arctic Quebec community, linking these feelings to language vitality and use. Dorais (cf. 1989, 1995, 1996a) has written extensively on the practical and symbolic value of Inuktitut to Inuit, including a recent study on Inuit discourse and identity in the Baffin region (Dorais and Sammons 2000, 2002). These studies are helpful as they suggest what to look for and ways of interpreting certain trends in Inuit youths' comments. In particular, comparisons between results from the current study and previous studies with the Inuit (i.e. Dorais 1995) show a certain short-term continuity in the perceptions of Inuit with regard to the value of their language, as will be seen below.

In keeping with my overall stance that language maintenance issues must be approached on a case-to-case basis because of the unique characteristics of each contact situation, and of each group of people, I focus on the value of Inuktitut and English in the eyes of Inuit youth. The key to this discussion of the promotion of Inuktitut is not a theoretical link between the ancestral language and the people who speak it, but the real-life reasons why one person feels he or she has lost something no longer speaking Inuktitut, why another chooses to pass on Inuktitut to his or her daughter, or why another wants to keep Inuktitut at all costs. The premise of this thesis is that if a language is to

survive, the impetus must come from the value the speakers put on that language (following Fishman's emphasis). As such, I kept initial questions as broad as possible in the interviews (i.e. why is Inuktitut important to you?) in order to elicit Inuit youths' preoccupations.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, categories for analysis (sub-titles in this chapter) come from the responses. The data and analysis presented in the following two chapters show that Inuit youth definitely value Inuktitut. Most Inuit youth express a clear desire and commitment to maintaining Inuktitut because it is symbolically and practically important to them.

To some degree, the value young Inuit associate with Inuktitut and English is already suggested by the use they make of these languages in various domains, as discussed in the previous chapters. In Chapter Five, the concern expressed by Inuit youth over the loss of Inuktitut also indicates that Inuktitut is important to them. At this point, I examine explicit value judgements, where participants explain in their own words why Inuktitut or English is valued, useful or important. I show that both Inuktitut and English are valued for symbolic and practical reasons. The value of Inuktitut is sometimes expressed in terms of an attachment to Inuktitut as one's first language, and as the language of Inuit tradition, culture, and identity. English is also an identity-marker, but to a lesser degree and in a different way. As will be seen in the following chapter, the value of English is more frequently expressed in terms of English being a tool for socioeconomic advancement – it is a necessary language in order to succeed in education and employment. In this area, and elsewhere, the value attributed to Inuktitut and English overlaps, because in the context of Nunavut, Inuktitut is also perceived as useful for socioeconomic advancement. In many cases, the importance of both Inuktitut and English are expressed pragmatically. Inuktitut and English are valuable resources, allowing Inuit youth to communicate, and as a result fully participate and integrate in their communities. These broad, generalized statements about the importance of Inuktitut and English will be nuanced in the paragraphs that follow.

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<sup>1</sup> Beyond this initial question, I also invited participants to speak on more specific themes such as language and culture, language and identity, and the usefulness of languages in the community.



“Symbolic” importance of Inuktitut and English, as expressed in the interviews, includes the value individuals place on each language as an object, or a possession. In contrast to practical importance of a language, symbolic importance focuses on the language itself, rather than the use one makes of that language. As will be seen in the comments below, the symbolic and practical values of a language are often intricately linked; the abstract and the concrete value are difficult to separate. As a result, this distinction is meant to facilitate the classification of responses rather than to present two distinct and discrete types of language attitudes. At the same time, the distinction is useful for discussions of language planning because it suggests how Inuktitut in particular is valued as both a possession and a resource. Comments about the “symbolic” importance of languages in Nunavut (granting that they may also have a practical value) include sentimental attachment to one’s first language, the relationship between language, tradition, culture and identity, general appreciation of the language, and appreciation of the language because it is being lost. The order in which these values are presented in the following paragraphs reflects their relative prominence in interview responses.

Before entering into the discussion of *why* Inuktitut is important to Inuit youth, it is important to note that some Inuit youth cannot explicitly explain why Inuktitut is important to them, even if they feel strongly that the language is important. Although some participants’ explicit answers say that Inuktitut “just is” important, their implicit answers, included in the analysis below, suggest reasons why Inuktitut language is valued. Part of the difficulty in producing an explicit answer may be that some Inuit youth, especially those who have not faced language loss at a personal level (i.e. in Pangnirtung), have never been challenged to consider why Inuktitut is important, or have never reflected on the matter (in much the same way that an average English speaker would have a hard time saying why he or she values English). One participant explicitly and vividly told me that he was having difficulty articulating the importance of Inuktitut because he had really never thought about it before:

D9. I don’t know, never really thought about it, like if I care about it...it’s just like you’re asking me if I care about that spoon or not. (both laugh)

However, most Inuit youth are familiar with the threat of losing Inuktitut, have thought (or heard) about why Inuktitut is important, and explain the value of their two languages on a number of levels, as seen below.

### 9.1 First Language

The most frequently expressed reason young Inuit give for valuing Inuktitut is because it is their mother tongue, their first language. This attachment to Inuktitut is generally expressed sentimentally; participants give the impression that the mother tongue belongs to them in a way that a second language does not, or connects them with their childhood and their family in a way that a second language cannot. They talk about Inuktitut as “my language”:

D2. I can't really pinpoint why it's that important to me right now, but it is important to me, just because it's my first language and it's the first language of my family and just who I am, I guess.

D7. It's my language, it's what I grew up with and I want to keep it.

[...]

R. You'd like [your children] to speak Inuktitut?

D7. Yeah, every day.

R. Why is that?

D7. It's my language... It's how I grew up. I want it to stay around. [...] Because I don't know what I'll do if I lose it, I hope I don't lose it, but, I'm going to keep it, it's my language.

D10. And so it's good to have two languages. One that everybody speaks, the other one your own language.

[...]

R. Do you think there's any chance that one day down the road, that you'll lose your Inuktitut again?

D10. No. No. (laugh)

R. Why not?

D10. I want to keep it. It's my language. I don't think I will. I hope I won't. [...] I want to keep my language so it will always be with me.

R. Can you explain why it's important to you to make [your Inuktitut] strong again?

D13. Because it's my language. (little laugh)

R. Is it important to you personally to keep using it?

P7. Yeah.

R. What makes it important for you?

P7. Well, it's our mother tongue, so basically you don't want to lose it.

R. Is speaking Inuktitut important to you?

I4. Yeah.

R. How come?

I4. It's my language

I5. ...But, most of the time I try to use Inuktitut because it's my language.

[...] Inuktitut is my language and it's important to me.

[...]

R. Have you ever thought about why it's important to you?

I5. No. (laughs) No. It's just our language.

R. Is Inuktitut important to you?

I9. Very much. Because it's my first language, and I want to keep it my first language, no, I want to keep it my tradition. I try and use it as much as possible.

[...]

And here, [quoting closed questionnaire] "I would be sad, personally, if Inuktitut disappeared." I'd say I strongly agree, because I love Inuktitut and it's mainly my language, and I wouldn't want that to disappear so I will try and keep it as much as possible.

These Inuit youth emphasize that they value Inuktitut because it is a part of them and always has been. Others say that they value Inuktitut because it is their mother's language:

R. Okay. If you don't need [Inuktitut], why is it good to keep it alive?

D6. Well, like I want it. I want it to stay with me, like forever, because it's on my mother's side.

D12. ...that's why I'm trying to learn it, it reminds me of my mom. So, that's what drives me to go on. Inuktitut.

Similarly, some young Inuit are attached to their first language due to its link to their childhood:

R. Are there any other reasons why Inuktitut is important or anything else that speaking Inuktitut signifies for you?

D4. It's... I don't know. It's the way I was brought up.

R. I wanted to ask you some more about how important Inuktitut language is to you and in what way, why it is important to you?

D17. Well, I grew up with Inuktitut ...

R. Do you think it's important for young people to speak Inuktitut?

P3. I say it's important for me, because I was born, I was raised talking Inuktitut...

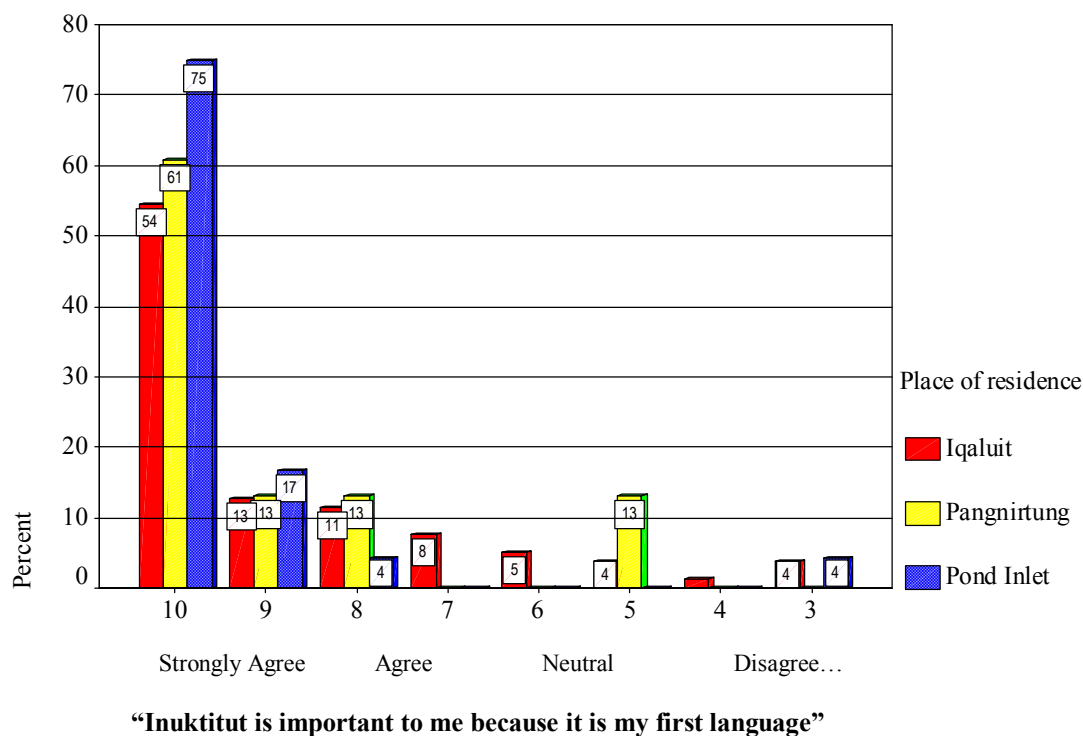
Consistently, across the three communities, participants explicitly say that they value Inuktitut because it is their first language. Inuktitut is the language of the Inuit youths' parents, the language that they grew up with, a language Inuit youth consider their own. In many of the quotations above, Inuit youth from Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet express not only that they value Inuktitut because it is their mother tongue, but specifically link this value that they attach to Inuktitut to their desire to speak and maintain Inuktitut.

At times, Inuit youth suggest a practical value alongside the sentimental value of the mother tongue. As the first language, Inuktitut allows some Inuit youth to express themselves comfortably and accurately, in a way that may not be possible in a second language. This pragmatic value of the first language is expressed more rarely than the sentimental attachment to the mother tongue, and is discussed further in the following chapter.

In line with results from the semi-directed interviews presented above, most young Inuit surveyed in the closed questionnaires strongly agree that Inuktitut is important to them because it is their first language (Iqaluit mean = 8.68; Pangnirtung mean = 8.96; Pond Inlet mean = 9.46).<sup>2</sup> These results are illustrated in Figure 29.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 19



**Figure 29: Inuktitut's Importance as Inuit Youths' First Language**

These data set the back drop for further discussions of the importance of Inuktitut to young Inuit and their reasons for wanting to speak and maintain Inuktitut. However, if young Inuit value Inuktitut only because it is the first language they learned to speak, and are transmitting Inuktitut and English simultaneously to their children, it is possible that they are diluting the value of Inuktitut for the next generation. Inuit youth do not tend to speak about valuing English as the mother tongue (indeed, very few have English as a mother tongue), but if the value of Inuktitut to Inuit youth truly lies in its status as the first language the individual learned to speak, the language one learned from one's parents and the language one grew up with, English could potentially fill this role for coming generations. D10 says she is attached to English for exactly this reason; even though it is not her mother tongue, it has taken on some characteristics of the first language for her now because she uses it so frequently:

R. Why don't you want to lose English?

D10. I don't know. I just, it's just English...It's what I use to communicate with other people...It's English, you know, everybody

speaks English...I don't want to lose English. It's the same reason as Inuktitut, you know. It's just a language I knew and I learned it only about when I went to grade 5, I was all Inuktitut up until grade 4, until they put me in English class, so I've had English for that long and when you've had something that long, you can't just say, "I don't want it anymore," you know. [...] It's just a part of me, I think.

R. Yeah, English.

D10. And Inuktitut.

In summary, first and foremost Inuit youth value Inuktitut because it is their first language and mother tongue. English is rarely valued for this reason. Because Inuktitut is their mother tongue, most Inuit youth consider it only normal to use and maintain Inuktitut. However, Inuit youth have many other reasons for valuing Inuktitut.

## 9.2 Tradition and History versus Modernity

As suggested above, Inuktitut is important because it is the mother tongue of most Inuit youth and connects these individuals to their families and immediate past. However, for many Inuit youth, Inuktitut is further valued because it provides a connection to more distant ancestors, to the history and traditions of previous generations. Participants move from saying "Inuktitut is *my* language" to "Inuktitut is *our* language". Knowing and speaking Inuktitut is a way for Inuit youth to know where they come from and stay connected to their past:

D2. ...I was born into it. My parents are Inuit, everybody in my background. [...] So who I am is very important to me and what I speak and where I come from and my parents are Inuit tradition and culture, whatever, and I just don't want to lose that. It's so important to me.

D4. [...] I was brought up to speak Inuktitut because it's in our lives, it's our world of communicating, it's our way of understanding each other, because English is to everyone their second language.

[...]

R. ...Why is it important to you?

D4. For my kids to speak Inuktitut? Like I said, it's our life and we have different ways of communicating, we have different ways of understanding [...] Not that I don't think Inuit who don't speak Inuktitut aren't Inuk, but to be able to have the knowledge of our ancestors, maybe, carrying on the traditions, because, like, I'm a senior drum dancer. A lot of

people when they look at tradition it's singing, drumming, how they dealt with people, but Inuktitut to me is also one of those things. If we want the government to be 85% Inuit and speaking. I might as well start somewhere if I want it to be like that, too.

R. So you said you want Inuktitut to stay alive, but it's not necessarily useful? Why do you want it to stay alive if it's not useful?

D6. 'Cause like, that's how it started here in the North, Inuktitut, and I just don't want it to disappear, because it would be really sad. And it's mainly like elders, that's their life, you know, in Inuktitut? It's what they have and if that was lost in the town, I think in a sense they'd be lost, too, you know? Yeah.

[...]

D6. Well, I think that Inuktitut should be kept alive, forever, at least try. Because it's a good language and it's most elders main culture and language.

R. How important to you is it that [your children] know Inuktitut?

D8. A lot. Because my ancestors are Inuk.

[...]

R. Okay. Why is Inuktitut language important to you?

D8. I don't know. It just is. Like my grandmother and great-grandfather spoke it and I want to be able to speak it.

R. Do you think it's true? That you have to speak Inuktitut to be a real Inuk?

D11. Not really. No. Maybe you've just got to be in the modern time, but then, you've got to know your culture, where you're from, who you are. What your language is and stuff like that.

R. ...Why it is [Inuktitut] important to you?

D17. ...Why it's important to me, I just want to kind of help out to preserve the language. It's very old, a lot of people have used it to communicate with the other people in the other communities.

R. ...How would you feel personally if Inuktitut disappeared, if the children did not speak Inuktitut anymore?

P3. I would say that that would be pretty sad, because their ancestors spoke nothing but Inuktitut and they will know how to speak nothing but English.

In the quotations above, Inuktitut is valued because it connects Inuit youth to a past that they can only experience through the collective memory of their group. As such, the importance of Inuktitut expressed in such comments is somewhat abstract.

However, for many Inuit youth, the link between Inuktitut and Inuit tradition is very concrete. Inuktitut is not just an intimate part of Inuit tradition; it is integral for maintaining and transmitting traditional knowledge. As already seen in Chapter Six, use of Inuktitut is strongly associated with participation in traditional activities and communication with elders, the keepers of Inuit traditional knowledge:

D9. ...For more traditional stuff like. Yeah.

R. You use Inuktitut for more traditional stuff?

D9. Yeah, it's easier.

[...]

R. Can you imagine sitting and talking to an elder about traditional Inuit life in English?

[...]

D9. Oh no, talk about traditional stuff in Inuktitut, but not in English.

R. ...Are you concerned about Inuktitut language disappearing?

D11. Yeah, especially elders going, dying, not knowing who to turn to, like having some stories, legends, and whatever they did in the past. Hearing these elders at times talking to their grandchildren in English. That's kind of sad.

D12. And, if...from their home...if they didn't learn their own language, they wouldn't know anything about their past life, their past, uncles and great grand-parents and what they did back then. That's the traditional, the old traditional, oil lamp, igloos, you can go way back, if you want, and what I mean by that, is that kids don't learn their own language, if they don't learn Inuktitut, they won't know the words from the traditional parties or the traditional, everything that happened.

R. You said that you think that the Inuit language is important. Do you think that other Inuit think that it's important also?

I7. I think it's important? ...For example, I heard down in Mexico they lost their culture and they have old documents from their old culture and none of them know how to read them...And the people who write them they died out and they never got translated for other version. I think it's very important to me to know Inuktitut. And for generation and generation. I think it's very important.

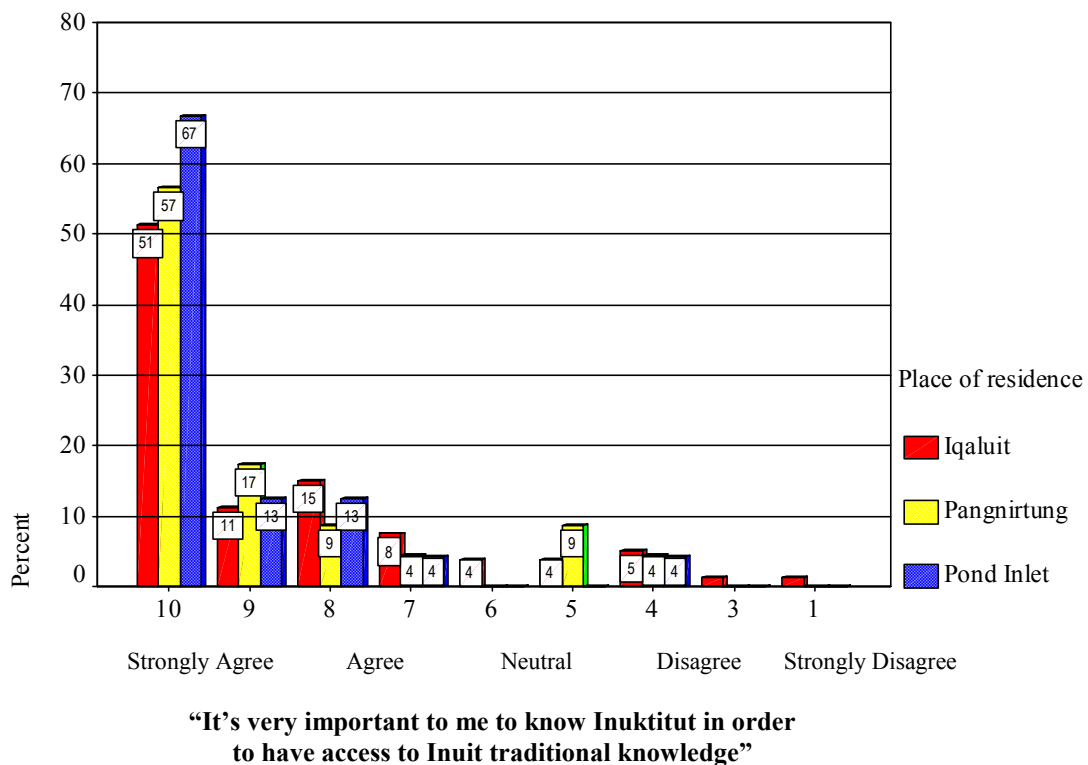
I9. Like, the big words, they used to use when they were little, when they were growing up. Stuff like, I don't know, animal parts or land, what they're called. Which part of the land, like, there's some mountains and hills, how they say the words in Inuktitut. Or, whatever. I don't understand, the big words they used to use. I try and use them as much as possible when speaking to my parents.



[...]

When they learn only English, or started talking...in pure English, they kind of lose the Inuktitut language, the tradition. Probably the tradition.

In line with the previous quotations, which mention a practical need to use Inuktitut in order to participate in and learn about Inuit traditional knowledge, responses to the closed questionnaire also show that Inuktitut is perceived as a key to Inuit traditional knowledge, as seen in Figure 30.



**Figure 30: Inuktitut’s Importance as the Language of Inuit Tradition**

Inuit youth in all three communities tend to strongly agree with the statement, “*It’s very important to me to know Inuktitut in order to have access to Inuit traditional knowledge*” (Iqaluit mean = 8.53; Pangnirtung mean = 8.83; Pond Inlet mean = 9.25).<sup>3</sup> In some ways, the strong link between Inuktitut and Inuit tradition is expressed sentimentally, “it’s our language...”, but in other ways the link is more pragmatic, showing how using Inuktitut helps Inuit youth to speak and learn about Inuit traditional ways of living.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 16

In comparison to the importance of Inuktitut because it is the first language of a given individual, an importance that can change within one generation if transmission of Inuktitut ceases, valuing Inuktitut as the traditional language of the Inuit cannot change so rapidly. The value attributed to Inuktitut as the ancestral language, connected to Inuit tradition, remains despite language loss. Inuktitut's importance to the individual in terms of its connection to Inuit traditional knowledge is perhaps less immediate and intimate than in the case of valuing Inuktitut because it is one's first language. It is nonetheless a powerful reason why Inuit youth value and wish to maintain Inuktitut. In this case, the loss of Inuktitut is felt as the loss of a social and cultural resource, the loss of a connection to a collectivity. Whereas English could eventually replace Inuktitut as the mother tongue of Inuit, it cannot replace Inuktitut as the language of Inuit tradition. At best, English is a language into which Inuit tradition can be translated, and which Inuit could use while participating in activities associated with Inuit tradition. Even if English could feasibly play these minor roles (and does in areas where language loss is more advanced, such as among the Inuvialuit of the Northwest Territories), the reluctance among some Inuit surveyed to use English in these ways has been noted in discussions of language use (Chapters Six and Eight). For these reasons, the underlying value attributed to Inuktitut as part of Inuit tradition is a particularly important language attitude because it indicates a motivation to maintain Inuktitut even once the practical communicative need for Inuktitut is gone.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast to the value associated with Inuktitut because of its link to tradition and the "old ways", some young Inuit value English because of its link to western modernity. For these individuals, English is the language of new realities that are becoming a part of modern Inuit culture, including wage labour and openness to the broader world through communication (i.e. Internet), education and travel. These Inuit youth value English as a requisite for advancing, living in the twenty-first century and being connected to broader Canadian and international society:

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<sup>4</sup> For further discussions of the limitations of the new language in transmitting traditional ways of thinking and being, see Part III of Grenoble and Whaley 1998.

D6. I don't really think you really need Inuktitut anymore, here, because English is mainly taking over. Like most, only elders usually speak Inuktitut all the time, now everyone else practically speaks English everywhere else. So, it's good to like learn Inuktitut and like talk Inuktitut but like...you don't really need it anymore, I guess in a sense.

R. How about English? How is English important to you?

D13. Oh, it's important to me. To live here. To live in this world. Because it's everywhere. You know? I find it's important.

R. ...Do you ever hear anybody talking, like the elders talking about people mixing Inuktitut and English. Do they say anything about that?

I5. Elders, yeah. [...] They say that they don't like it when you mix Inuktitut and English together.

R. And how do the young people respond?

I5. It's 2000! (laughs)

I6. There's no names for meanings in Inuktitut because there used to be never any technology, so I think the technology is increasing more English language.

[...]

I6. But, I believe that English is important too because all over the world it's becoming the international language. I believe it's important to keep the English language too.

I7. Maybe some of [the workplaces] are both language 'cause, for example, hamlet...it's about laws, and other things. They're about English...

For these young Inuit, the link between English and modernity is symbolic and practical. Speaking English allows Inuit to interact in settings associated with western modernity, as seen in Chapter Seven, and the significance young Inuit attribute to this practical value will be discussed further in the following chapter. However, the link is also symbolic in that, for young Inuit in the quotations above, English *represents* participation in the modern world (I5. It's 2000!).

In the quotations throughout this section, Inuit youth explicitly state or implicitly imply that Inuktitut is part of traditional skills and traditional life on the land, while English is part of modern life. For the most part, Inuktitut's connection to the past is part of what gives it value today. While Inuit youth say that Inuktitut is the language of Inuit

history and tradition, very few suggest that Inuktitut is *only* useful in the past. As seen in Chapter Seven, Inuktitut is widely used in many “modern” spheres as well. However, English is also used and valued alongside Inuktitut in these domains and is more concretely linked to modernity in the eyes of Inuit youth participating in this research.

These results are significant to discussions of language maintenance in that they clearly underline that Inuktitut is valued, but that English is too, sometimes for contrasting reasons. Inuit youth are continuing to use Inuktitut and want to maintain it because it connects them to their tradition. However, there is evidence of pressure to favour English as the language of modernity. Language promoters may need to consciously put forth Inuktitut as not just a language of past, but as a fruitful language in the present and for the future. Alongside showing how Inuktitut is valuable for “modern” pursuits (and increasing the presence of Inuktitut in such arenas), the promotion of Inuktitut can exploit the “traditional” value already attributed to Inuktitut. For example, programs which increase access to traditional activities could provide undisputed forums for the use and promotion of Inuktitut:

R. So you think that they should do the land program in Inuktitut?

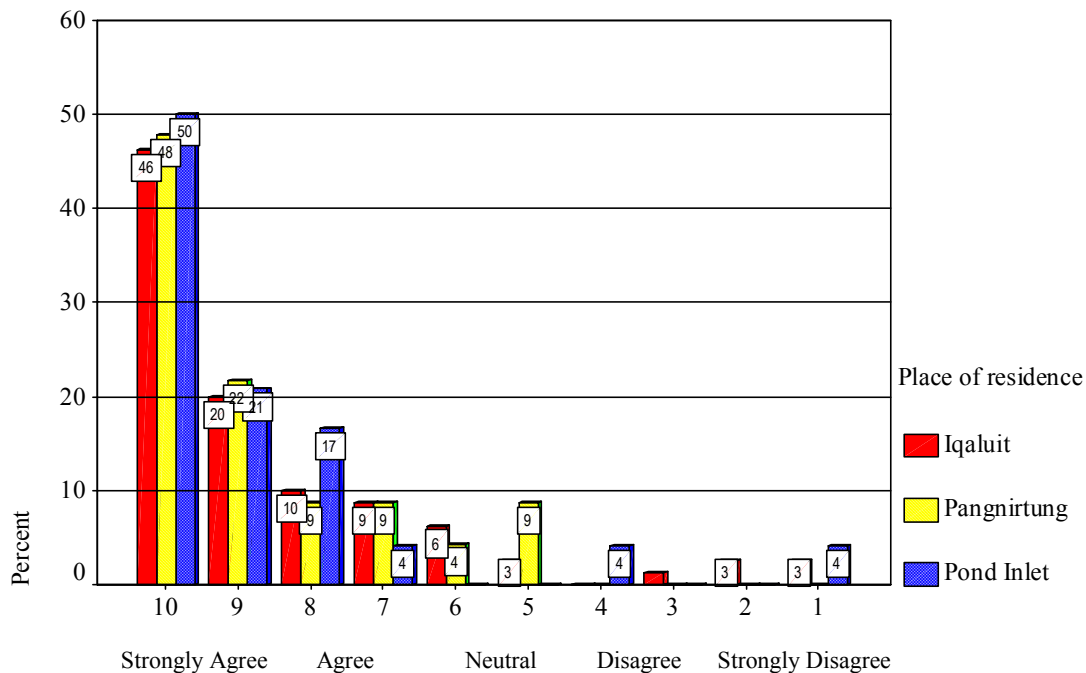
D17. Yeah, it’s a land program, it’s very Inuit tradition, why not slap in the language with it as well, you know?

At the same time, English must be maintained alongside Inuktitut as it, too, is symbolically part of a world in which the Inuit youth want to participate. (More will be said on this topic in the following chapter.)

### 9.3 Culture

Tradition, traditional activities, connections to the past and to one’s ancestors are all elements of Inuit culture. Being able to communicate about the traditions is a way of maintaining culture, as previously seen. Inuktitut, literally translated, means “*like an Inuk*”. Many young Inuit associate speaking “like an Inuk” and acting “like an Inuk”; both are part of what they consider Inuit culture.

In the closed questionnaires, Inuit youth show strong agreement that Inuktitut is useful for accessing and maintaining Inuit culture. As illustrated in Figure 31, 86.6% (110/127) of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement, “*The Inuktitut language is a tool for me to keep in touch with Inuit culture*” (Iqaluit mean = 8.45; Pangnirtung mean = 8.74; Pond Inlet mean = 8.71).<sup>5</sup>



“The Inuktitut language is a tool for me to keep in touch with Inuit culture”

**Figure 31: Inuktitut’s Importance as the Language of Inuit Culture**

Some young Inuit have clearly thought out and are able to express the importance of Inuktitut for Inuit culture. The link is primarily expressed symbolically, where Inuktitut is part of and a symbol of Inuit culture. Some Inuit cannot imagine living “Inuktitut” – *like an Inuk* – without the Inuit language. They agree with a statement prevalent in aboriginal discourse across Canada relating to language loss, that if you lose your indigenous language, you lose your culture. Such Inuit youth back up this notion by explaining how speaking Inuktitut is closely related to acting like an Inuk and understanding Inuit ways:

<sup>5</sup> This statement (see Appendix C, Part three, question 22), taken from I6’s interview, quoted below, emphasizes a practical link between Inuktitut and Inuit culture alongside the symbolic link.

R. Do you think that you can separate language and culture?

A4. Well, if you did, then I can't imagine having traditional Inuk lifestyle and culture and all that and only speaking English. I don't really see that. I think it might be possible, but not likely. It wouldn't really work. I don't know. I've never thought about that.

R. Do you think that Inuit language and Inuit culture go together?

D7. Yes. You have to be able to understand the language to know the culture, I think. If you can't, you know, speak it, or whatever, I don't think you know the culture. It just doesn't go. You have to know one thing to know the other, so.

[...]

R. What other things are important for Inuit culture?

D7. Culture. The way we live, I guess. The way we grew up. Just, the way we grew up.

I6, a young Inuk from Pond Inlet who considers himself firmly grounded in Inuktitut and Inuit culture, eloquently describes the practical and symbolic relationship between Inuktitut and Inuit culture. In speaking about Inuktitut and Inuit culture, he makes it clear that he values and wishes to maintain both, while allowing room for each to evolve:

I6. I feel that it would be good to speak in Inuktitut but I believe that the language is always changing. ...Different generations, they change, like in the past they must have spoken another language that we don't even understand right now. But I believe that language always changes and maybe it's better to cope with that change and move on. But I believe that Inuktitut language should not be completely forgotten because if we do lose the language, then there's not really much Inuit. I believe that language is powerful tool for our culture. [...] If we stop using Inuktitut, we would maybe start losing our culture a lot more. We would forget what we are, how we live... [...] I believe that language is the most powerful tool or way to success to keeping the culture.

[...]

...But I found it important to keep my language. I didn't want to lose my Inuktitut language because I believe it's valuable to keep my culture.

[...]

Because, Inuktitut, any language, no matter who you are, I think it's the only way that we keep our culture because if we don't speak language we'll start thinking of another culture, like English. We'll just concentrate on that culture, not our culture, in that way we'll start losing our culture. But if we keep using our mother tongue, and use that language, I think it's the only way that we can pass it on to our children and the next generation.

In the previous quotation, I6 underlines that the relationship between Inuktitut and Inuit culture is practical as well as symbolic, as Inuktitut provides a means for accessing and practicing Inuit culture. This overlap between more symbolic and more practical reasons for valuing Inuktitut was also seen in the value attributed to Inuktitut as the language of Inuit tradition.

Even while agreeing with the concept that language and culture are interrelated, several participants nuance this statement, suggesting that while language is important for culture, it is not the *only* important aspect of culture, and culture can be maintained even in the face of language loss:

R. Some people say that language and culture are essential, that they go together and if you lose your language, you lose your culture. What do you think about that?

D1. I think that you can lose some of your culture if you do lose your language. I have to admit that a little bit, but not necessarily the whole culture. It's good...for an Inuk person to speak Inuktitut, of course, because it's like our, I don't know. It's hard to explain. I think, though, it's good to have Inuktitut if you're Inuk anyway.

Even when participants are not explicitly speaking about the relationship between language and culture, the perceived link is evident in the close association between Inuktitut and other elements of Inuit culture. Often Inuktitut and Inuit culture are mentioned in the same breath:

R. How would you feel if the Inuktitut language were to disappear?

D7. Be sad, pretty sad, I guess. That's a culture lost, a way of living. It would be bad to lose it.

D8. Maybe it would be a lot better if they had more Inuktitut courses here so we could learn more about their culture and stuff. []

[...]

Well, more people speaking Inuktitut. A lot more, keep the culture strong, that's what I want to see.

P10. It means, speak Inuktitut, I want to speak Inuktitut. I missed the, I have to have the traditional food, like caribou, seal and arctic char, blueberries, all of it.

Whether explicitly stating an opinion, or implying a relationship through other comments, participants tend to agree that Inuktitut and Inuit culture are closely related. Only a few explicitly disagree (although even their disagreement is contradicted in other statements):

D6. ...To learn your language and your culture, to know the understanding and everything, is good...

[...]

R. ...Do language and culture go together?

D6. Well, no, not really. I don't know why I put culture in (laugh), but language is cult-, (correcting) language and culture is totally different.

R. Okay. So when people say if you lose your language, you lose your culture?

D6. No, that's not true. I don't think so.

R. How about Inuktitut and Inuit culture? Do you think they go together?

D10. Inuktitut and Inuit culture? Like?

R. Like speaking Inuktitut? Like some people say that if you lose your language you lose your culture.

D10. No, I don't think so. I don't know, I don't think so.

[*later in interview*]

R. Well, you said, for example, your parents are really Inuk. <Yeah.> If you can explain what you mean by 'really Inuk'

D10. Like, you know, they drink tea everyday, I don't know, they have a lot of bannock, stuff like that, they speak Inuktitut all the time, and they just do, they're just Inuk. How can I explain it? Just little things. Well, not too little, but you know. Like them speaking Inuktitut all the time and the way they act, they see things, and the way, how they, you know, you can just see it. [...] Yeah, I don't know how to say it but, they're just Inuk, you know. They go camping all the time, and boating, fishing, stuff like that. Go to all the Inuktitut games and stuff. Tell stories and some of those things.

R. I've heard some people talk about Inuit language and Inuit culture, that they go together, that if you lose Inuit language that you lose Inuit culture. Do you think that that's true?

P7. I don't think that it's necessarily true for me. Like if somebody stopped using the Inuktitut language but still you could keep the culture in some way. It's always in your head.

R. What things are important for the Inuit culture?

P7. It's mainly the language and going out on the land and learning new stuff. Sewing, too, like making something out of an animal, or...if



somebody caught a caribou, how to scrape the fat off of the skin and stuff like that or even seals, stuff like that.

R. Are those the kinds of things that you do?

P7. No.

Even when individuals say that Inuktitut and Inuit culture can be separated, other comments imply that there is still a certain link. D6, for example, off-handedly links language and culture, but when asked to explain the link, says that language and culture are actually separate. D10 consciously separates Inuktitut from Inuit culture, but later closely associates speaking Inuktitut with participating in activities she relates with Inuit culture. Their comments can be understood as representing a reality where Inuktitut is part of Inuit culture and associated with practicing Inuit culture without being an absolute, defining characteristic of that culture, as suggested by P7. D3 illustrates this point, describing her relationship with her parents as “not so Inuk anymore”, now that they use only English, while maintaining that Inuktitut is not the only element of Inuit culture:

D3. I guess more or less there's other ways of expressing your culture [other than just Inuktitut] and that's handiwork, or stuff like that. There's more to a person than just their culture, it's being able to relate with other humans, Inuk or otherwise. And it's not just all about being Inuk, or speaking Inuktitut, or sewing. I mean I've tried asking my parents and other people to speak in Inuktitut to me more, and they're like, oh yeah, I'll help you and stuff, but it just never worked out. I just got tired of trying, you know.

The participants who can *explain* the relationship between Inuktitut and Inuit culture are in the minority, even if most participants affirm that such a link exists. When asked, the largest proportion of participants state that Inuktitut and Inuit culture go together, but they do not explain further, even when pressed (except perhaps to underline that they do not want to lose their language or their culture):

R. You mentioned about the culture. Is there a relationship between Inuktitut and Inuit culture?

D2. I guess it goes together. You can't really have one without the other.

R. ...It's my language. You know, my culture. And I don't want to lose it.

R. Why is Inuktitut so important to you?

P2. I don't want to lose my culture but I'm losing part of my culture. Like eating traditional food, I don't like to eat that kind of stuff.

R. Some people say that the Inuit language and Inuit culture go together. Do you think that that's true?

P4. Yeah.

R. Yeah? What are the most important things of Inuit culture for you?

P4. Just trying to keep our language strong, that's mostly it.

R. Is it important to you, that say your children down the road, speak Inuktitut?

P5. Yeah.

R. How come?

P5. It's our culture.

P10. Because when I was a kid, I wanted my first language to be Inuktitut.

R. How come?

P10. It's our culture. It's our culture, it's our heritage.

R. Did anybody teach you that Inuktitut is important?

I1. My parents did. [...] Well, all the elders say that too. They say it's important for the culture. We're beginning to lose their culture.

R. Do the culture and the language go together?

I1. Yes.

R. How so? When you say you are losing, starting to lose the culture, what kinds of things are you starting to lose?

I1. The language, hunting.

Responses on this subject are particularly mitigated in the smaller communities; some participants hesitate to comment at all on the relationship between Inuktitut and Inuit culture:

R. Okay. Can you see any way that the Inuit language is important for Inuit culture, do they go together, or are they separate?

P1. The culture and language? I don't know. I never took language classes.

R. How about for Inuit culture?

I2. Probably.

While for a minority of Inuit youth, quoted earlier in this section, the relationship between Inuktitut and Inuit culture is palpable, it seems that others have heard and are reproducing the discourse that language loss entails cultural loss (prevalent in the

discourse of Aboriginal leaders, cf. Dorais 1994). If these young Inuit are merely repeating discourse that they have heard from their leaders without interiorising any justification behind the discourse, then the importance of Inuktitut for Inuit culture may not provide a strong grassroots motivation for the maintenance of Inuktitut for these young Inuit after all.

Moreover, for a few Inuit youth surveyed, the question of the relationship between Inuktitut and Inuit culture is irrelevant:

R. Do you think that Inuktitut is important for Inuit culture?

P3. Yeah... I guess so.

[...]

P3. I guess it doesn't matter, the language and the culture.

R. Some people say that Inuit language and Inuit culture go together...that if you lose the Inuit language that you'll lose the Inuit culture. Do you think that's true?

I4. I don't know. Maybe not.

R. Mm hmm. For you, what's important in Inuit culture?

I4. (laughs) I don't know. I don't really think of something important. I just live my life.

R. How about for Inuit culture?

I5. Culture and language, they're not that important to me. But, Inuktitut, it's like, important and not important. It used to be important for me but now, most of my friends speak English so, and I have to use English to them, that's why it's not that important anymore.

These individuals express indifference toward the Inuit culture. Even though most Inuit youth who participated in this research express pride in being an Inuk (see Identity, below), a couple give the impression that *others* may be ashamed of Inuit culture:

D11. ... Hearing these elders at times talking to their grandchildren in English. That's kind of sad. I know they can teach them, but then again, maybe the kid doesn't want to learn. Maybe they're ashamed of their culture or something.

D13. Like, I don't want to be seen as Qallunaat-wannabe, or doesn't want her own culture, you know? I'm proud of culture, so I don't want to lose it.

Inuit youth tend to express Inuit culture and Inuktitut's link to Inuit culture in a positive light. They produce the discourse that Inuktitut and Inuit culture are related, even if they cannot always explain or back up this assertion. Speaking "Inuktitut" is part of acting like an Inuk, and yet they leave room for Inuktitut, Inuit culture, and the relationship between the two to evolve.

However, even if Inuit youth tend to agree that Inuit culture and Inuktitut go together, the response, "Inuktitut is important to me *because* it is part of Inuit culture," which would directly associate the value of Inuktitut to its link with Inuit culture, is quite rare. Whereas the expression of valuing Inuktitut because it is the first language was most frequently accompanied by statements expressing the desire to maintain and use Inuktitut, descriptions of the connection between Inuktitut and Inuit culture are more vague.

Inuit culture is changing, integrating elements of recently introduced "Southern" society into more traditional elements of Inuit society. The emerging "culture" of Inuit youth, as evidenced in their behaviour, is one that incorporates both Inuktitut and English and one in which both languages are valued. That said, none of the Inuit youth surveyed explicitly said that English is important to them because it is part of their culture. Although Inuit youths' behaviour reflects that English is also part of their emerging Inuit culture, their explicit statements do not attribute cultural value to English.

Overall, there is some evidence that the relationship between Inuktitut and Inuit culture and the desire not to lose Inuit culture motivates some Inuit youth to maintain Inuktitut. This value attributed to Inuktitut is clearly attested in the closed questionnaires, although an analysis of the semi-directed interviews gives more nuanced responses. For a few Inuit youth a clear vision of the relationship between Inuktitut and Inuit culture provides strong motivation to promote and maintain Inuktitut. For a majority of Inuit youth, the relationship between Inuktitut and Inuit culture is affirmed, and implicitly referred to, even if the youth cannot consciously explain it. The relative strength of the perceived link between Inuktitut and Inuit culture as a motivator for language preservation and promotion is unclear.

## 9.4 Identity

The first language, tradition and culture of Inuit youth are constituents of their personal and ethnic identities. The importance of language for identity has been widely discussed in theoretical circles and was a frequent theme in the interviews as well. Theoreticians and practitioners of language maintenance evoke the relationship between the ancestral language and identity as a key motivator for maintaining the language. As seen in Chapter Two, Fishman (1997), for instance, argues that the link between language and identity is the *reason* why languages should be maintained and that emphasizing the link between language and identity is a *means* to reversing language shift. The specific relationship between Inuktitut and Inuit identity has been developed by Dorais (1994, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1997), Dorais and Sammons (2000, 2002), Eriksson (1998), Langgaard (2001), and Patrick (2003) among others. Such a relationship has also been presumed by many Inuit across the Arctic, both in informal conversations and formal declarations.

Identity can be defined in many ways, and every person has multiple identities (personal, cultural, ethnic, etc.). Identity and ethnicity have been the subject of numerous publications, as mentioned in Chapter Two. In keeping with the focus of this thesis on Inuit youths' perceptions and experiences, identity in this section is defined very broadly, from the perspective of the speakers, as how Inuit youth identify themselves (expressed in terms of "who I am"), how they identify their group membership, and finally how they express who they should (or would like to) be. Responses to this question are often mixed, or contradictory. In many ways, responses concur with previous research results, supporting that Inuktitut is an important marker of Inuit identity, while not being an absolute requirement for one to be recognised (from within the community or from outside the community) as an Inuk (cf. Dorais 1994, 1995, Dorais and Sammons 2002, Tulloch 1999). Beyond qualifying the relationship between Inuktitut and Inuit identity, reactions to this portion of the interview and questionnaire add nuance and caution to using the relationship between language and ethnic identity as a justification or

motivation for language preservation efforts. These arguments further underline the necessity to study each situation of language contact and language loss on a case-by-case basis.

In some ways, the importance of Inuktitut for creating, maintaining and marking Inuit identity has already been reflected in comments where participants say that they value Inuktitut because it is their first language, the language of Inuit tradition, and part of Inuit culture. Participants allude to the identity function of Inuktitut in comments about their own language use as well (see Chapter Eight), explaining that marking identity is a factor in language choice. Descriptions of motivations for language use also show how using Inuktitut is a way of maintaining identity by controlling access to conversations. Given that those aspects of the relationship between language and identity have previously been developed, this section focuses on four further elements of the relationship between Inuktitut and identity and their implications for language promotion activities. First, I develop how participants' comments demonstrate an implicit link between Inuktitut and Inuit identity, in line with what was seen in the link between Inuktitut and Inuit tradition and culture. Secondly, I describe participants' explicit comments about the relationship between being an Inuk and speaking Inuktitut. Thirdly, I discuss how beliefs about the relationship between speaking Inuktitut and being an Inuk create a sense of moral obligation among young Inuit, a sense of what they "ought" to be. Finally, I discuss the relationship between speaking Inuktitut and personal identity, underlining the impact that the previous points have on young Inuit's sense of self-pride, security and well-being.

There is little doubt that Inuit youth associate speaking Inuktitut with "being Inuk", at least to some degree. For some participants, this link between Inuktitut and identity is one of the reasons why Inuktitut is perceived as valuable:

R. Okay. What does speaking Inuktitut signify for you, or why is it important for you?

D2. Just because that's who I am I guess. [...] I was born into it. My parents are Inuit, everybody in my background.

[...] I just know the language, how to speak it, so I at least [want] to keep it. It's a big part of who I am.

I6. If we stop using Inuktitut, we would maybe start losing our culture a lot more. We would forget what we are, how we live...

Even (and especially) when participants are not explicitly speaking about identity, their comments and sub-conscious word associations suggest a link between Inuktitut and Inuit identity (as was also the case with Inuktitut and Inuit tradition and culture). Inuit youth suggest that speaking in Inuktitut is a way of acting out one's identity, showing one's group membership, recognising others' membership in the group, and reflecting one's own identity:

D8. Like what I said earlier, if you're around me, type thing, speak Inuktitut, because I don't want you to lose it, because you're Inuk and stuff.

[...]

R. How would it change your life if you didn't speak Inuktitut?

D8. Oh, a lot. Because I've been around elders all my life and then they would be like talking to me and I'd be like, "What?" You know, kind of mad, not mad, but a bit upset that I don't understand or speak it. They know my mother's Inuk and stuff, so.

D10. It's nice to have it all Inuktitut, it's more *us*, like. (*italics mine*)

R. How would you feel, personally if Inuktitut disappeared?

I6. That wouldn't be so great to me. Because, we're Inuit...

Furthermore, the association of speaking Inuktitut with being Inuk is also clearly seen in statements where participants seemingly subconsciously associate "Inuk" and "Inuktitut":

R. But I don't know how the road was to get to the English that you have now from grade five to now.

D10. It was confusing. Like, I was all Inuk, and then she would be speaking another language and like, what is she saying?

[...]

If you're all Inuk and they're speaking English, you know, you'll be in trouble.

R. You said at home you can just understand the basics?

D13. Yeah, like, you know. Like, you would understand it, being an Inuk, how to speak Inuktitut.

D15. Second of all, I was happy I was Inuktitut, so I knew, I knew my language, I knew it inside out...

Without coming out and actually saying it, Inuit youth show an underlying association between speaking Inuktitut and Inuit identity based on the word associations they make.

However, many Inuit youth surveyed hesitate to explicitly adopt speaking Inuktitut as a criterion for identifying someone as an Inuk. The question of whether or not one can be a “real” Inuk without speaking Inuktitut has come up in prior research (cf. Dorais and Sammons 2002; Eriksson 1998) and conversations with Inuit youth show that this kind of statement is heard in their communities. Even if a majority of Inuit youth make comments which, reading between the lines, suggest a strong link between speaking Inuktitut and Inuit identity, only a minority take a clear affirmative stance when faced with the question, “Can you be a real Inuk without speaking Inuktitut?” (or a version thereof).

Only three participants (P1, I1, I10) clearly state in the interviews that speaking Inuktitut is *necessary* in order to be (or be recognised as) an Inuk. P1’s agreement is particularly interesting because he feels he has lost his competence in Inuktitut after living in the South, and says that he now predominantly identifies himself as a Qallunaaq (the ethnicity of his father):

R. Okay. I’ve heard people make comments about, to be a real Inuk, you need to speak Inuktitut. Have you ever heard that comment?

P1. Just as a joke, that’s about it. Just my friends.

R. [...] Do you see any truth behind it?

P1. Well, yeah, so we can talk more and get to know the language better and keep the community.

R. Okay. When you use Inuktitut to define your identity, what would you use to call yourself?

P1. Qallunaaq.

R. You call yourself Qallunaaq?

P1. Qallunaaq. (laugh)

R. Is that what other people here would call you, too?

P1. Some people call me that.



It is also interesting to note in P1's comment that the link he makes between speaking Inuktitut and being Inuk is largely pragmatic, "so we can talk more...and keep the community". The importance Inuit youth put on the "language of community" will be discussed in the following chapter.

Sixteen participants (D1, D2, D4, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D16, P3, P4, P5, P9, I5 and I7) explicitly affirm that one can still be an Inuk, even if he or she does not speak Inuktitut:

R. One of the questions on the survey was about whether or not you can be a real Inuk if you don't speak Inuktitut. What do you think about that?

D9. You could be a real Inuk.

R. Do you know Inuit who don't speak Inuktitut?

D9. Yeah. I know quite a bit.

R. Okay. Do you see any difference between, Inuit who speak Inuktitut and Inuit who don't speak Inuktitut?

D9. No, never really noticed it.

Many of these qualify their affirmations with explanations of how Inuktitut is, nonetheless, important for Inuit identity, or by alluding to a moral or social obligation for Inuit to know or learn Inuktitut, even if *not* speaking Inuktitut does not strip them of their identity as Inuit:

D2. Just that, let's say if you were Inuit and you don't speak Inuktitut, it just, I don't know, it just seems, not wrong, but, like, I don't understand why Inuit who don't really understand Inuktitut, maybe because they've lived in the South for some time, they just don't speak it anymore, or they don't try to learn it. I don't know. It just. Yeah, I guess that's about it.

R. How about, do you know any Inuit who don't speak any Inuktitut?

D6. No, not that I think of right now. Yeah, I do know this one person, but I'm not going to mention his name.

R. Okay...but...he's still Inuk, even though he doesn't speak Inuktitut?

D6. Yeah, he's like, he's Inuk throughout, like he's one hundred percent Inuk. I don't like those kind of people, who they know they're Inuk and they don't bother to try to speak it or, you know, do what Inuks do. He thinks he's a Qallunaaq.

R. Have you ever heard the comment that the real Inuit are the Inuit that speak Inuktitut and if you don't speak Inuktitut, that you're not a real Inuk?

D7. If you, don't speak Inuktitut, doesn't mean you're not an Inuk, but it's, I mean, there's Qallunaat that speak Inuktitut, but they're not Inuit. It's weird how Qallunaat, some Qallunaat know more than Inuit, the language and everything. But, if you, well, if you don't know the language, it's kind of hard, like, you can know the culture, but not the language. But it's just weird, it's just not right. [...] I mean, I guess you have to know the language, you have to know some at least. But it's, I can't say that you're not an Inuk, when you have Inuit blood in you and everything, but it's just, I don't think it's right.

R. You don't think it's right not to speak Inuktitut?

D7. Well, if you're Inuk, yeah. But...I mean, if you lose it, it's really not your fault. But, try and keep it in yourself. Just hold on to it.

R. Yeah, I understand that too. How do you feel about it, Inuit that don't speak Inuktitut?

D8. It gets me mad, like inside. I can't say anything, because I'm not the one who raised them, or they might be adopted to Qallunaat people and, you know.

These Inuit youths' comments suggest that they recognise Inuit identity on a variety of levels. In some ways an individual who does not speak Inuktitut can still be an Inuk, but this individual is missing out on certain elements of shared Inuit experience. Other statements in the interviews suggest that the frustration with Inuit who do not speak Inuktitut (as expressed in the previous quotations) may be rooted in a pride and respect for previous generations of Inuit. As shown previously, Inuktitut is clearly associated with Inuit history and tradition, and is a tool for learning about that background. Illuminated by these further comments, the quotations above seem to express a frustration with those who are seemingly ill-equipped (lacking a key tool) to learn about that background. Dorais (1995:296-297) sums up similar responses from his study on language, culture and identity in Igloodik, stating:

As important as [Inuktitut] was, however, this element was not deemed essential to Inuit identity. Fourteen of the fifteen respondents stated that any person whose parents were Inuit, and/or who was himself or herself living in the Inuit way, should be considered an Inuk, even without any knowledge of Inuktitut (though, to quote some, such a person would be a "bad little Inuk" or "a very ignorant individual").

Dorais and Sammons (2002) also found that Inuktitut plays an identity function in Inuit communities, but is not an absolute criterion for “Inuit” identity.

Nine participants (I2, I3, I4, I6, I9, P2, P6, P7 and P10) in the current study give mitigated responses, indicating that they have no opinion, or do not know, or have mixed feelings on the relationship between speaking Inuktitut and being an Inuk. A common thread once again is the moral obligation to speak and know Inuktitut if you are an Inuk, even if not doing so does not strip you of your ethnic identity:

R. Have you ever heard the comment that real Inuit speak Inuktitut, or that if you don't speak Inuktitut, you're not a real Inuk?

I6. Yeah, I've heard that comment before. In a way, I believe it, but even if we...lose our language, like, it's still in our blood. In a way, I believe that because language is the only way that we can keep our culture. But in a way, I don't like it, though, but in a way, I do. So I have mixed feelings about that.

R. What's the way that you don't like it?

I6. Because some Inuit, they forgot their language, but they still feel that they're Inuit because it wasn't their fault because they lost their language. But they still have to be Inuit, because they are.

I6's comment, quoted above, underlines points previously made and introduces the component of Inuit identity that most Inuit youth feel is undeniable, regardless of language maintenance or loss, which is one's ancestry (also seen in Dorais 1995, see above). Other Inuit youth underline ancestry as a key criterion of Inuit identity as well:

R. So would you say that you can be a real Inuk without speaking Inuktitut?

D1. You bet!

R. Why?

D1. Because. Just because you don't speak the language doesn't mean that you're not Inuk, like.

R. What makes you an Inuk then?

D1. My mom's Inuk, and I'm also French, so I'm both. [...]

R. So do you think that somebody can be an Inuk without speaking Inuktitut?

D2. When you're born from Inuit parents, you're automatically Inuk, I guess. You can't call yourself anything else, right? And so you are Inuk, yeah. Even if you don't speak it.

D10. Like I know some people who are Inuk but they can barely speak Inuktitut, and both their parents are Inuk so. I don't know how that happens but.

[...]

R. Have you ever heard people make the comment that to be a real Inuk, you have to speak Inuktitut?

D10. Yeah. Some people say that.

R. What do you think about that?

D10. I don't think that you have to speak Inuktitut to be Inuk. I mean, if your parents are Inuk, you're Inuk. Like, I'm half French, I don't know how to speak French but that doesn't mean I'm not French. So, if they can't speak it, that doesn't mean they're not Inuk so, it just comes down to their parents. If they're Inuk, then you're Inuk.

Other explanations given by Inuit youth as to why Inuit identity does not depend on language ability include observations that individuals who do not speak Inuktitut may still “feel Inuk” and will likely still be recognised by others as Inuk. Also, Inuit youth identify other behaviours that they associate with “being Inuk”, such as hunting and Inuit games, explaining that these behaviours can act as identity markers independent of speaking Inuktitut:

R. Have you ever heard the kind of comment that to be a real Inuk you have to speak Inuktitut?

P3. Yeah, but, I don't think so. As long as you go with the culture, if you go hunting a lot and you're always going hunting and always doing Inuit games and, I don't know.

The perceived relationship between speaking Inuktitut and being recognised as an Inuk is complex. Even if a majority of participants do not wish to exclude others as “not Inuk” based on inability to speak Inuktitut, several feel that speaking Inuktitut is part of and goes along with other actions and behaviours that define being an Inuk, such as those mentioned above in the discussion of Inuktitut, Inuit tradition and culture (see also comments from D4 and D10, previously quoted on pages 298 and 308):

R. What about the [statement on the closed questionnaire] that said to be a real Inuk, you have to speak Inuktitut language? What do you think about that one?

[...]

I9. I'd love to have it, like I don't know. I'm not sure how to say it. There was something about for that, I put down no anyway.

[...]

I9. "*You can be a real Inuk without speaking Inuktitut language.*" Kind of strongly disagree with that, because without the Inuktitut language, you'd still be a real Inuk, but without the language, that's like half of an Inuk, and I'd say it that way, because if you don't have Inuktitut, if you're an Inuk and you don't have the Inuktitut language...probably about half of you is gone. You lost of half of you. When you are an Inuk, and you speak Inuktitut, that's a really good thing. Same with English, if you're a white person and not know how to speak English, you're just like half, half a white person.

[...]

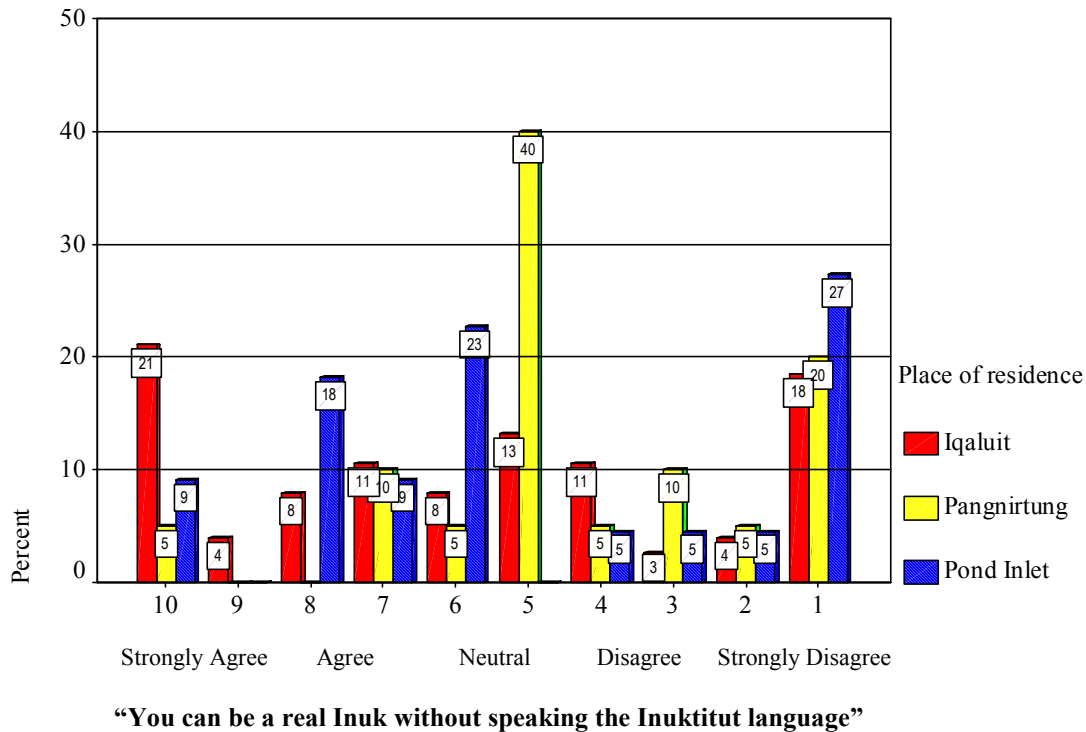
They speak English only. They can't speak Inuktitut, even though they're Inuit. I wouldn't want that to happen here.

According to I9, and others previously quoted, speaking Inuktitut is a tool to maintain and participate in other behaviours associated with "being Inuk". Using Inuktitut is also necessary for communicating within Inuit communities and as such arguably plays a key, if not absolute, identity function, as will be seen in Chapter Ten.

Reactions to the statement, "*You can be a real Inuk without speaking the Inuktitut language*" were tested across a broad sample population by means of the closed questionnaire.<sup>6</sup> Inuit youth in all three communities are split in their responses, as seen in Figure 32.

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 21



**Figure 32: Inuktitut's Importance as the Language of Inuit Identity**

Responses in Iqaluit and Pond Inlet show, overall, neutrality on the issue of whether or not speaking Inuktitut is a key criterion for Inuit identity (Iqaluit mean = 5.72; Pond Inlet mean = 5.05). Responses in Iqaluit are fairly evenly split between strongly agreeing (25%, 19/76), agreeing (18.4%, 14/76), neutral (21.1%, 16/76), disagreeing (13.2%, 10/76) and strongly disagreeing (22.4%, 17/76). In Pond Inlet, responses are also mixed, although the distribution is slightly different: 9.1% (2/22) strongly agree, 27.3% (6/22) agree, 22.7% (5/22) indicate neutrality, 9.1% (2/22) disagree and 31.8% (7/22) strongly disagree. Overall, participants in Pangnirtung tend to disagree with the statement, "You can be a real Inuk without speaking the Inuktitut language" (mean = 4.3). Although reactions are mixed in this community as well, proportionately fewer strongly agree (1/20; 5%) or agree (2/20; 10%), the largest proportion (9/22, 45%) express neutrality, while 15% (3/20) disagree and 25% (5/20) strongly disagree.

Part of the discrepancy between results in the three communities can be explained by the relative pertinence of the question. In Pangnirtung, neither the Inuit language nor

Inuit identity is perceived as threatened, rendering the question irrelevant to many respondents. On the other hand, questions of language and identity are particularly at issue in Iqaluit, where transfer to English is most prevalent. Louis-Jacques Dorais (personal communication) suggests that the ambivalence seen particularly in Iqaluit responses (and also in Pond Inlet) may reflect young Inuit's hesitation between the experienced reality of language loss on the one hand, and the symbolic attachment to Inuktitut as part of Inuit identity on the other hand. Once again, results underline the differences in experience and perception across communities, and even within communities.

The question of Inuktitut and Inuit identity on the closed questionnaire and in the semi-directed interviews occasionally evoked strong reactions from participants, underlining the sensitivity of the issue, and the danger, perhaps, of asking such questions. In the semi-directed interviews, some participants were reluctant to comment, even though the expression on their face indicated that they clearly knew what I was talking about:

R. I've heard people make comments about, to be a real Inuit, you have to speak Inuktitut. Have you ever heard that kind of a comment?

P7. Yeah. I've heard it before. Not directly, but, I know I've heard that.

R. What do you think people mean by that?

P7. I'm not sure how to answer that.

Other participants specifically relate the statements about not being a real Inuk if you do not speak Inuktitut with racism or bigotry. These young Inuit express that although they do not believe such a statement is accurate, they have definitely heard it, perhaps targeted at themselves, or perhaps they have even said it as an insult to someone else. They have negative reactions to what they perceive as a limiting and divisive classification:

R. I've heard some people make comments about the real Inuit are the Inuit who speak Inuktitut and if you don't speak Inuktitut you're not a real Inuk. Have you ever heard that kind of a comment?

D1. Hmm. Let's see. Probably some of them.

R. What do you think they mean by that?

D1. Between someone who speaks Inuktitut and someone that doesn't? They're not an Inuk? I don't know. They're looking at a small picture. Not

the big picture. They see one way and that's all. Close-minded people. That's how I see it.

R. ...I've heard people make the comments before about real Inuit speak Inuktitut or people who don't speak Inuktitut, you're not a real Inuk. Have you heard that kind of comment?

D2. Some angry, hard-headed people may say that. I've heard it before a couple times. Even I, to myself. I was at the [coffee shop], here, and this girl asked me a question, and she said something in some other dialect that I've never heard before. And I asked her, is this such and such dialect, and she said, "No. You're not really Inuk, are you?" She asked me that and I just didn't answer her, I just let her be. Yeah. You get some funny people out there...

R. Have you ever heard people make the comment that to be a real Inuk, you have to speak Inuktitut?

D11. Yeah. I've said that to a kid one time. But then again, I went why did I say that? Here I am, I don't know much Inuktitut, but I just said it to you. I felt pretty bad, saying that. Feeling so stupid. Actually saying that to a person that I know he or she's like me. Not having to know all these words and stuff like that, especially going on with English. Like I was stupid.

R. Yeah, some people say that if you don't speak Inuktitut, you are not a real Inuk. Have you ever heard that?

D16. Yes, I have heard that, a lot. That never bothered me, but, I noticed that people get upset with it. And, you know, just because they can't speak it, doesn't mean they're not Inuk. I've got a friend who's got Inuit parents, she's been away in school most of her teenage life, and she's about my age now, she's in university. She sort of lost it, Inuktitut, she can hardly speak it, but she can still understand it, and people would tell her, you're not an Inuk anymore. She got upset over it, she actually cried over that. So, personally, I wouldn't say that to anybody.

R. Okay. Have you ever heard the comment that in order to be a...real Inuk you need to speak Inuktitut? And that if you don't speak Inuktitut, you're not a real Inuk.

I5. Mmm.

R. You've heard it. What do you think people mean by that?

I5. I don't know. *Ila*. Maybe kind of racist.

Reactions show that the concept of a strong link between Inuktitut and Inuit identity is being used, in some cases, to denigrate or alienate certain individuals. Some Inuit resist the idea that someone else can assign them an identity, in any case:



A4. And then we were driving around one night, and the guy said something, and I said, “What’s that?” Something in Inuktitut. And he’s like, “You don’t know what it means?” And I said, “No, I don’t, so what is it?” And he said, “Then you’re not Inuk, then, if you don’t understand it.” And I said, “Yeah, I am Inuk, but I just happen to not understand that particular word. I just don’t know the definition for that. That doesn’t mean I’m not Inuk. So why don’t you help me learn it, and maybe then I can be Inuk, by your standards.” Or whatever. So he taught me what it meant, and I said, “There. I’m never going to forget that now. Thanks. Now I know the word. Now am I Inuk?” But anyway. I’m an Inuk now, thank-you. I don’t know. But. So. Yeah, you hear that a lot, especially in the smaller communities, because, me, being Inuk, if I went to a smaller community...

As a twist on this idea, a couple of Inuit youth say that Inuit speaking in English are sometimes accused of denying their Inuit identity:

D2. They’ll go “*Qallunaanguvit?*”, like, “Are you a white man, you’re speaking all this English, we can’t understand you, speak Inuktitut to us, otherwise we’re not going to answer,”

[...]

D2. Yeah. But I have a tendency to speak in just English to my parents as well, and that’s when they start calling me *Qallunaaq* (laugh) and, so. And I’ve heard it said in Inuktitut.

R. How does it make you feel when your parents <Good.> say *Qallunaaq*, or

D2. Good. Like, I know they’re saying it joking and it’s good because it kind of forces me to speak Inuktitut in order to keep it strong in me, so, I like it.

R. Can you explain why it’s important to you to make it strong again?

D13. Because it’s my language. (little laugh). You know, my culture. And I don’t want to lose it.

R. Yeah.

D13. Like, I don’t want to be seen as *Qallunaat-wannabe*, or doesn’t want her own culture, you know? I’m proud of culture, so I don’t want to lose it.

Participants such as A4 and D2, quoted above, are proficient speakers of Inuktitut and claim to have brushed off insinuations that they are less of an Inuk because they do not speak Inuktitut as well as they could. However, weaker speakers of Inuktitut have assimilated such attitudes toward themselves, affecting their self-identification:

D3. And people, at first, when they didn't realise that I didn't speak Inuktitut, they would give me dirty looks. ...maybe you're not an Inuk, or someone once told me, oh, I thought you were Inuk, and it's just like, okay... I just. Yeah. I don't. That's maybe why I sort of see myself, more as a Canadian, or, I don't know. I just don't identify myself so much as being an Inuk.

P10. I say I'm more English than Inuk. ...My Inuktitut is not as strong.

[...]

[My boyfriend] said to me a couple months ago, I asked him, "Am I more of a Qallunaaq or more of an Inuk?" He said, "More of a Qallunaaq." "Why?" "Because you speak lots of English." (laugh) But I think he's right, I do speak more in English than in Inuktitut.

Although such statements from D3 and P10 add weight to the notion that speaking Inuktitut significantly contributes to one's identity as an Inuk, the pain, discomfort or alienation expressed in their comments points to the danger in emphasizing the importance of Inuktitut for Inuit identity. Although such a link can be a positive motivator for using and maintaining Inuktitut, too much emphasis on the link between Inuktitut and Inuit identity can have negative consequences on the personal identities (self-confidence, self-esteem, belonging, etc.) of Inuit youth, especially in a community like Iqaluit where many Inuit youth are threatened with the loss of their ancestral language.

Regardless of participants' reluctance to draw a hard-cut line between who is an Inuk and who is not based on knowledge of the Inuktitut language, near consensus appears along two lines. First, Inuit youth associate speaking Inuktitut with Inuit identity to some degree, even in sub-conscious ways. Secondly, Inuit youth express a sense that Inuit "ought" to know Inuktitut, as seen above. This sense of what one "should" know or "should" do comes up frequently in the interviews, where participants express what could be interpreted as a moral obligation to know, learn, use and teach Inuktitut. In many cases participants are aware of expectations in this regard, whether coming from within or without, but some express consternation that they do not meet the standard:

D2. I can read and write Inuktitut. I just don't read it as fast as I should.

[...]

And, too, that I don't practice it as much as I should be.

[...]

I don't know, I'm not even speaking it as much as I should, so.

[...]

Because I speak mainly English I read English, which is probably what I shouldn't be doing...

D4. They're going to think I don't speak Inuktitut or I don't want to be judged or something. I don't know. Maybe a part of being young. I don't know. Sometimes I'll just be shy. I'll be embarrassed about the fact that I don't fully maybe understand them? When I should, at least?

R. Do your little brothers and sisters speak Inuktitut?

D7. They speak a little. Not as much as I think they should. It's they don't speak Inuktitut enough, I don't think. But, I think they're pretty good at it.

R. How do you feel about that?

D13. I think, I don't like that. I shouldn't be like that, but, like I said, I didn't notice when I lost it...

I8. I've never really been very good in Inuktitut but, I know I have to learn more.

These quotations, suggesting a feeling that one "should" use and maintain Inuktitut suggest an internalised awareness of and ascription to the group's standards, a key component of ethnic identity (cf. Barth 1969).

Inuit youth are in the process of defining and redefining who they are, as Inuit, as teenagers and as young adults. Although my conversations with the Inuit youth focussed on language, their comments elucidate how others' expectations of them, even on a purely linguistic basis, influence their sense of self. For many, speaking Inuktitut brings a sense of security in who one is, both personally and as a member of their ancestral group:

R. Okay. Do you think it's important for young people to speak Inuktitut?

D2. If they're Inuk, yeah. If they live up here, yes.

R. Why?

D2. Just for self-knowledge, pretty much. I think.

R. Would something change inside of you if you couldn't speak Inuktitut anymore?

D4. Not inside of me, no. I'm not sure. If I couldn't speak Inuktitut would something change? Maybe people would look at me differently? But I don't like to pretend to be somebody else. I mean, what's going to happen

in the long run when people realize that's not the real [D4]? This is the real [D4] and she likes to hide herself and that's not good? You know? But it's sometimes hard, too. You know, like I'm only 20. Sometimes I need to get into, like, I don't know. Sometimes I need to do what people expect of me.

D10. [...] It's just a part of me, I think.

D17. I can't imagine myself without Inuktitut.

Speaking Inuktitut is "part of" many Inuit youth. More specifically, speaking Inuktitut is a source of pride and self esteem for many young Inuit on a variety of levels. The personal satisfaction derived from speaking Inuktitut is partly based on being a proud member of the group (in contrast to previous quotations about the use of English):

D4. [...] Just being able to say I'm Inuk and I am proud to be an Inuk when I speak Inuktitut...

D10. So, but I love, like, the throat-singing and stuff, all the dancing, games and stuff, so I, you know, I'm like proud to be an Inuk so. So I always talk Inuktitut to people who I know speak it, so. I'm a proud Inuk.

I6. Because, in the past, our ancestors they struggled to survive, just so we can be the next generation. They struggled so much to keep our culture, too, I think. We should respect them and try to keep our culture because they went through a lot.

R. Do you think that other young people would agree with you?

I6. I think so, because they're Inuit too. They should be proud of who they are.

R. Are there other reasons why it's important to speak Inuktitut?

I7. Maybe to show I am Inuk, to be proud as an Inuk, I could speak Inuktitut more instead of English more.

In other ways, the pride is based on knowing and being able to pass on something that is unique and something that other people value:

R. Okay. Is there anything that anybody could do to motivate you to speak Inuktitut more often?

D6. Say like when I go down South and people are really interested in the language and they really want to learn, that motivates me. When they ask me, what's that? I tell them and so, that's when I start feeling that I'm happy that I know this language, I could teach other people what it means.

D7. And people down South, they love the language, I just came from Newfoundland, and they were just amazed. They had fun with it. So, it's one way to get friends, teach them Inuktitut. It's cool, when they just enjoy it all the time.

R. Do you enjoy teaching people Inuktitut?

D7. Yeah, it's fun. It's nice to see people learning and stuff.

R. Would you have liked to learn more Inuktitut in high school?

D9. Yeah, it's a lot of fun. Plus it's, you know what you are doing, so it's very easy.

D16. I (took pride in it.) It's just not that I, I was just willing to help them out, just to see how much interest they were showing. And then it made me feel real good, that, and I noticed that we teach it to them.

I6. And that way, I understand maybe more than my brothers and sisters. And sometimes they ask me what words mean. I find that uplifting. It helps me to keep my language.

In contrast to the pride derived from *teaching* Inuktitut, other Inuit youth derive a sense of worth from *learning* Inuktitut, continuing to advance in their knowledge and ability:

R. What do think motivates people to learn the language? What changes when you learn the language?

D12. Just a feeling inside you. And, there's a certain spot...there's a certain way you feel inside. I don't know if everybody has it or not. But there's a certain way inside, you know that you can really do this, that wants to drive on and learn more...

[...]

It's a nice feeling that someone says something about, that I can actually speak and I spoke it, right? I actually didn't make a mistake, and I knew what I was talking about. So, it's that certain feeling you get, you know?

D13. [...] It's just at times, like when they speak to elders, you know? It's good when they correct me...

R. It's good when they correct you because?

D13. Then I'll...be proud that I learned something.

Finally, speaking and transmitting Inuktitut is sometimes associated with a more general sense of self-worth and well-being:

R. Okay. What would happen if you used Inuktitut in those cases? What, would that change something in the relationship? Or would it change something in the communication?

D1. It would change something in my life...it would change something in me. I would acknowledge myself a little more. I would get used to, get the habit of speaking more often. For sure. That's how I see it if I were to speak it all the time. I'd pick it up a lot faster.

R. Is it important to you that your future children speak Inuktitut?

D5. Yes. (eyes light up)

R. Why?

D5. Because I've never felt that before. It would feel good to hear them speaking in Inuktitut.

Regardless of the exact source of pride, the sense of self of many Inuit youth is affected by their competence in and use of Inuktitut.

Often the effect of knowing and using Inuktitut on one's sense of self is positive, as seen above, but in cases of language loss, the opposite may also be true. For some Inuit youth, loss or incomplete acquisition of Inuktitut is a source of insecurity and shame:

D3. Yeah. And I guess I thought I had to find my identity, like other teenage kids and not really finding myself in the Inuktitut way, just finding myself in another way.

D13. It's just my dad. I just wish my mom wouldn't have to translate, you know? I'm still young and already, you know? Because I find that stupid my mom translating for my dad and I. Or at least I'm not, you know, I didn't lose it, like, all together.

R. How would you feel, personally, if when you're an elder, the children don't speak Inuktitut anymore.

I7. I would be ashamed of myself. If my grandchildren speak, don't speak Inuktitut and they are Inuit, I would be ashamed of myself as an Inuk.

I8. But being snickered at...I was really good in English, but I was like a dunce at Inuktitut. So I was teased a lot.

I9. Probably, yeah. I can they're fairly the same. In a way. But I think I understand more English than Inuktitut, which I'm not so proud of. I mean, I'm proud of it, but I'd rather learn more Inuktitut than English.

(See also D4, quoted on p. 327.)

One's competence in and use of Inuktitut shapes young Inuit's sense of self in both positive and negative ways, as the quotations above suggest. Reactions to the closed questionnaire confirm that feelings of intimidation or insecurity speaking Inuktitut exist, but suggest that such feelings are fleeting, or restricted to very specific encounters. Overall, respondents tend to disagree with the statement, "*I feel intimidated speaking Inuktitut*" (mean = 3.78),<sup>7</sup> as seen in Chapter Five.

Similarly, overall disagreement with the closed questionnaire statement, "*I think that people feel negatively toward me when they hear me speak Inuktitut*" (mean = 3.52)<sup>8</sup> supports the idea that speaking Inuktitut is viewed by most Inuit youth as a neutral, or perhaps positive experience, more frequently than as a negative experience. Still, the feelings and experiences of respondents are mixed, as they are in most areas of the survey. A minority of respondents (13.9%, 17/122) agree or strongly agree with this statement, indicating either that they think Inuktitut is generally poorly perceived (for which there is little evidence in the interviews), or that their Inuktitut, personally, is poorly perceived (for which there is some evidence in the interviews, as seen above). For this minority, the perception of being negatively perceived when speaking Inuktitut could discourage use, or motivate improvement, depending on the person, as previously discussed in Chapters Five and Eight. Overall, an analysis of comments from the interviews and closed questionnaires shows that in the experience of Inuit youth surveyed, speaking Inuktitut (or not) is significant to the definition of personal identity alongside its value as a marker and a tool for maintaining a collective "Inuit" identity.

The desirability of claiming Inuit identity is also a significant aspect of the discussion of the relationship between speaking Inuktitut and being an Inuk. In the context of Nunavut, it can be profitable to be an Inuk, as the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement entrenches affirmative action policies for increasing Inuit employment:

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 8

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 15

D1. I'm half Inuk half white, so...if I was to apply for a job I would say I'm Inuk, because I'm under the preferential thing there...so I'm considered Inuk. So I'd put down Inuk...

Beside the Government's overt preference for hiring Inuit beneficiaries of the Nunavut land claims agreement over non-Inuit (or over Inuit from other regions), though, a socioeconomic reality that favours Qallunaat in these communities persists.

Further, even though it appears that most Inuit are proud to be Inuk, the history of racism between Inuit and non-Inuit still lurks in these communities, as alluded to by D11:

D11. I've heard some white people [say] that all an Inuk could do is be on welfare, go to the bar, and get some food from other people. They kind of put me down...

[...]

My girl's father...he gave me this joke: you know what Inuk are good for? I go what's that? Going to the bar and get drunk. I was like, you're Inuk too, you don't like your race?

Although such explicit comments are extremely rare, they may point to underlying tensions affecting the choice of which identity to put forth, as reflected in one's language selection:

D13. Yeah, when you don't, when you barely know how to speak [Inuktitut] or understand it, you know. Some people will say Qallunaat-wannabe...like thinking you're all that, she's all that, she's not, she's saying she can't understand it but she really can, you know?

In summary, Inuit youth express a nuanced link between speaking Inuktitut and their cultural and personal identities. Even if they hesitate to make language a defining characteristic of identity, their comments indicate that proficiency and use of Inuktitut help give Inuit youth a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self-worth.

At the same time, there is some evidence that English is playing an identity function in the communities as well. A first sign of this can be seen in Inuit youths' comments, quoted above, that Inuit identity can be expressed even without the Inuit language (although such statements do not explicitly show that the replacement language,



English, is playing an identity function). Other indices of English reflecting an emerging identity of Inuit youth are seen in previous quotations where Inuit youth talk about English being “a part of them”, because they have spoken it for so long (see for example D10, quoted on page 297). Furthermore, the comments linking speaking English with participating in the modern world suggest that English is a tool, along with Inuktitut, for shaping the identity Inuit youth aspire to:

R. Sure. How would it change your life, if you didn't speak English?

D7. Friends. Probably less friends. I don't think I'd be going to school. It would be too hard. Work wouldn't be too bad. I don't know. I'd probably be confused, to know what's going on. There's a lot of things changing.

D9. Plus they want to be like everybody, like the majority of the world so they...tend to speak more English than they do Inuktitut.

R. Can you imagine if you had gone in Inuktitut-language teaching all the way through high school, and never had any English?

D10. I think...I'd be at home by now! Like, I wouldn't be in school. I'd probably have a baby now, just kidding! No, I'm just kidding! I think I wouldn't be the person I am today, you know. I wouldn't have my job at the [store], or at the daycare. I wouldn't know the things that I know today. I wouldn't be talking to you today.

R. How do [your parents] react when you use some English with them? Do they mind?

I6. Sometimes they mind, but usually they don't mind because I think they understand what we're going through too.

I6 articulates here an idea that is present under the surface of many interviews. The Inuit youth feel caught between two worlds. Using both Inuktitut and English is one way in which Inuit youth can negotiate their place in the world. Inuit are undergoing a transformation of identity, where some elements of the previous identity, such as being able to survive in the cold, are no longer as pertinent. Their mixed language use in part reflects this negotiation, trying to find the best of both worlds. It seems from the comments of Inuit youth, though, that both Inuktitut and English, both Inuit traditional ways and Southern Canadian ways of being, have a place in the identity they are shaping.

Similar to the link perceived between modernity and English, some Inuit youth explicitly say that speaking English reflects a personal identity of being “cool”. This comment is particularly evident in Pond Inlet:

R. Do you ever use English when you could use Inuktitut?

I6. Yes. Maybe sometimes, when we feel like we’re just being cool or, I don’t know. It’s a different feeling.

R. English is cool?

I6. Some people think that way, like when they see it on TV, or, whatever. Some jokes and that stuff.

R. I guess, one of the things on here was, do you speak Inuktitut as frequently as you would like to?

I10. I don’t do that, because, you start thinking maybe if I speak this way, I’ll sound cool, or something.

R. Which way is cool?

I10. It depends on how you say it.

R. English or Inuktitut?

I10. Most of the time it’s in English.

R. English is cool?

I10. Yeah, but it depends on how you say it, because we got used to it. We watched TV all the time when they were explaining something and we learned from it. We’re watching someone and they’re explaining something and we started watching and learning.

Furthermore, sensitivity to others’ expectations of them and reactions to their language use also contribute to English playing an identity function for Inuit youth. Just as using Inuktitut is sometimes threatening to some young Inuit’s sense of self, as they are ashamed of their lower level of competence, speaking English can also be a humbling experience, especially for Inuit in the smaller communities:

I4. ‘Cause sometimes it’s kind of embarrassing to talk in English.

R. Why is it embarrassing?

I4. I don’t know. I hardly talk in English, maybe that’s why.

The problem of insecurity related to use of English is a concern in Pond Inlet, and also in the other two communities, as previously discussed in Chapter Five.

Finally, there is some evidence that some young Inuit feel self-conscious using Inuktitut in public spaces where use of Inuktitut is uncommon, and prefer to use English in order to blend in:

D4. English is more useful around here...It should be the other way around. Work-wise and being able to talk to people and. I don't know. Just...I find English speaking is better when I'm talking to different people around here. Then you won't get weird looks or whatever. To me, if I'm able to speak both, I won't be judged, I think. It's scary, in some ways.

D9. It's like, if you go down South and you're with an Inuk person you rather prefer to speak English than you would Inuktitut.

The quote from D9 underlines how the use of English is desirable for some young Inuit specifically because it undermines their difference and uniqueness. To reiterate a point made previously, even if language planning recognises a link between language and identity, the question remains as to which identity (as identity is not fixed) the Inuit youth want to put forth. Is it one emphasizing the distinctness of Inuit or one emphasizing Inuit as “Canadians like other Canadians”? The comments from Inuit youth suggest that their aspirations combine a bit of both desires. (For a discussion of the political discourse which emphasizes difference, in contrast to these “grassroots” aspirations, see Dorais 1994 and 1995.)

In summary, comments from Inuit youth about the importance of Inuktitut for defining their identity are conflicting. On the one hand, Inuit youth are motivated to learn and maintain Inuktitut because it gives them a sense of belonging, of pride, and of well-being. On the other hand, many participants refuse the idea of an absolute link between Inuktitut and identity because such a proposition does not reflect their reality. Further, many have witnessed negative consequences of an emphasis on speaking Inuktitut as a criterion for Inuit identity. As such, promoters of Inuktitut may reinforce the positive aspects of using Inuktitut for feeling proud and part of the community, but should be wary of the negative flip-side of their comments.

## 9.5 Personal Appreciation

Although the attachment to Inuktitut as the first language, the language of Inuit tradition, culture and identity are the most salient “symbolic” reasons young Inuit give for valuing Inuktitut, Inuit youth also give other reasons why they value the language. Sometimes they express a general appreciation of Inuktitut, or of using Inuktitut, beyond any of these more specific reasons. In the semi-directed interviews, some Inuit youth express pleasure in speaking Inuktitut:

D2. ...And then we'll start talking Inuktitut and we'll really get into our dialect and we'll just speak it and it's great.

P6. I don't know, I just like speaking in Inuktitut.

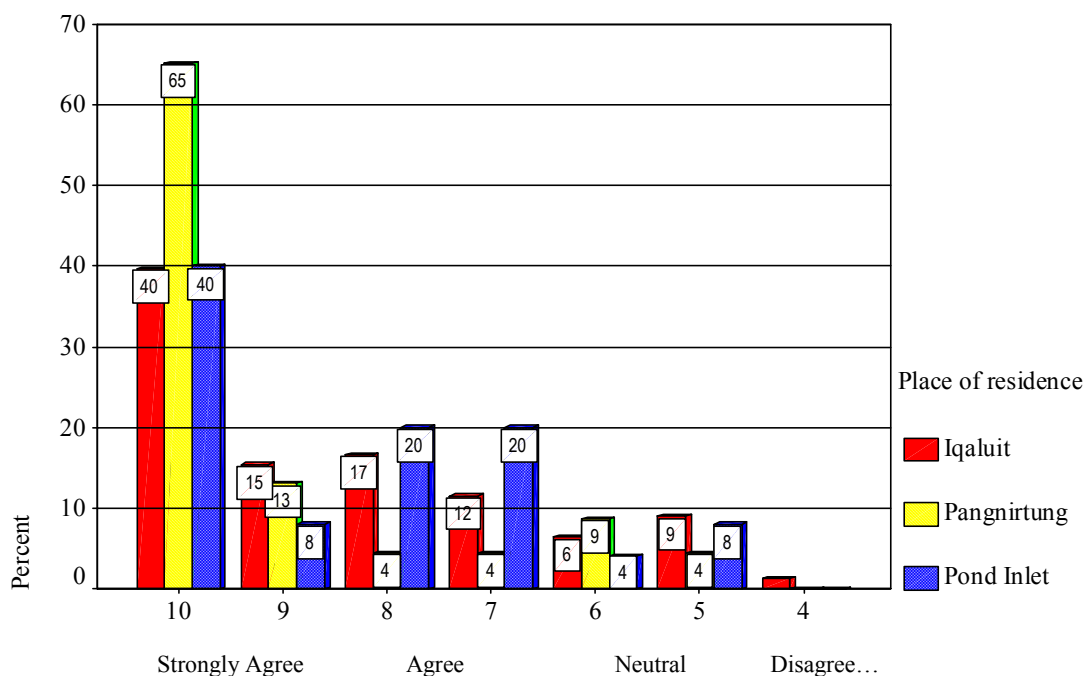
I2. ...Even when I was in Winnipeg, sometimes I used to think it would be nice to speak to someone, at least friends, in Inuktitut and they'd understand. Sometimes [we] would try to speak to each other in Inuktitut.

I9. I usually like talking Inuktitut more... [...] I just like speaking Inuktitut...

Tested in the closed, questionnaire, Inuit youth tend to strongly agree that “*Inuktitut is fun to speak*”, with similar results across communities, as shown in Figure 33 (Iqaluit mean = 8.38; Pangnirtung mean = 8.36; Pond Inlet mean = 9.09).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 10



**Figure 33: Personal Appreciation of Inuktitut**

In much the same way, some Inuit youth say that they love being in places where Inuktitut is used:

A4. ...Pangnirtung, where even the teenagers and everybody speaks Inuktitut, and I love that, that's so cool.

D13. ...Last year I was in Pang and I spoke so much Inuktitut, it was so nice.

P10. ...When I was coming back home, after eight months, I was at the Ottawa airport and I was like, oh, look there's Inuit people. I was so happy. I called home, crying [...] "Speak Inuktitut, I want to speak Inuktitut."

In addition, certain young Inuit express admiration and appreciation for the Inuktitut language itself. This personal admiration and appreciation is frequently expressed in conjunction with the awareness that other people admire the language, which gives its speakers a certain prestige (as also seen in identity, above):

D2. Because I...like to speak it more than I speak English. I like the words, and how you explain things and, I don't know, it's just more comfortable. And I like it, especially my dialect, I like it.

R. Are there other reasons why it's important to you to teach your children Inuktitut, other than so that Inuktitut will stay alive?

D6. Well, it's like an interesting language. ...I came back last week, from Corner Brook... We went to one school...to talk to them about the North and taught them the alphabet and they just wanted to know some words translated in Inuktitut, so that's one good thing I like about speaking Inuktitut is everyone finds it interesting.

[...]

Well, I think that Inuktitut should be kept alive, forever, at least try. Because it's a good language.

D15. Because how many words do we have for snow, or windy snow, in so many different dialects, it's so different. And our writing system is amazing. I went to Australia and talked about our language, writing system, and they couldn't believe it! Two, Inuktitut and Roman orthography, are just the most amazing things.

D17. And it's a very interesting language, there's so many different meanings or words...

I6. Yeah, it must be. I think Inuktitut is a difficult language. But the language is very structured and every sound has a meaning. I think it's a really good language.

R. Yeah, I like it too. Are there other reasons that you like it, why you think it's a good language?

I6. Because there's more meaning, you can say a lot more in a few words than in English you'd have to say a lot more words in order to be understood, but in Inuktitut they say less words. But nowadays, Inuktitut language is longer now, we pronounce things longer but in the past they used to have every word, or every thing for animal or place used to be shorter and more complex, but nowadays it's all mixed up. From different communities, different dialects. We tend to make the words longer. I think in the past it used to be better, because we would say things shorter.

I7. So it...seems like it's weird using both but...Inuktitut is more useful...and...somehow it's a little bit better but, the other way around, it's pretty complicated, sometimes.

R. Mm hmm? Can you explain how Inuktitut is better?

I7. Maybe the names and the other things like, some Inuktitut words are not completely translated to other language. Sometimes Inuktitut language is better when the translation is not completely translated. Somehow it's in between.

I9. ...I love Inuktitut and it's mainly my language, and I wouldn't want that to disappear so I will try and keep it as much as possible.

Many Inuit youth admire the Inuktitut language. Such admiration is favourable for the promotion of Inuktitut as it suggests an underlying value attributed to Inuktitut regardless of communicative need for the language. That is, if Inuit's feelings of "loving" Inuktitut and enjoyment of speaking Inuktitut can be encouraged, this could motivate Inuit youth to use the language, even when they could use English. Of course, not all Inuit youth share this admiration. Some denigrate the language or parts of it, especially as it exists today. Already, I6 quoted above, as much as he appreciates the Inuktitut language, says that Inuktitut is difficult and that it used to be "better".

#### **9.6 Important because it is Being Lost (Inuktitut)/Because it is Spreading (English)**

As suggested in previous chapters on language competence and language use, sometimes awareness that Inuktitut is being lost, whether at a personal or societal level, leads to greater sensitivity to the value of Inuktitut and increases efforts to use and maintain the language. Interestingly, in line with these previously stated observations, when young Inuit speak about why Inuktitut is important to them, some attribute value to Inuktitut directly because it is threatened (even if this is not the primary reason given for valuing Inuktitut):

A4. If you know my mom, she kind of stresses that. And I grew up with my sisters and my mom talking about how important it was and...I know even without them having to tell me that, I know it's important because. I don't know, you're hearing it and seeing it less and less. And when you go to another country, if you went to Germany, you'd see German everywhere, if you went to France, you'd see French everywhere, right? But if you come to Nunavut, oh, you can get by, they speak English, you know.

R. Are there other reasons why it's important to you to keep it?

D1. Yeah. Because I see Inuktitut as a somewhat fading away language, as a language that is fading away because there's not too many Inuit people in Canada, compared to other kinds of nationalities, and it's going away slowly but surely.

D7. I think the people will realize you can't lose it, so they'll, it will keep growing. I don't know how much, but it will grow a bit more than now, hopefully.

R. I wanted to ask you some more about...why it is important to you?

D17. Well, I grew up with Inuktitut in my home and in school, and in my grade school. And, now that I see that it's almost, slowly, going away [...] And why it's important to me, I just want to kind of help out to preserve the language.

R. Do you think that it's important for young people in Pangnirtung to speak Inuktitut?

P2. Yeah. Because, I don't want them to lose their language like the Coppermine people did. It's very difficult.

R. Do you think the Coppermine people are missing out on something?

P2. They're missing their language!

[...]

P2. Because it's important for me. I don't want to lose my language.

Beyond the value they personally attribute to Inuktitut, some comments from Inuit youth suggest that Inuktitut is important because the elders say it is and because the elders warn it is being lost:

P1. (Elders) say that we should keep our language, that's about it. And my friends.

P4. ...Elders tell us that we shouldn't lose our language and all that stuff.

R. What do the elders say about it?

P6. You don't have to forget our language.

R. Why will you teach [your children] Inuktitut?

I1. It's important. [...] It's something that I feel.

[...]

R. Did anybody teach you that Inuktitut is important?

I1. My parents did. [...] Well, all the elders say that too. They say it's important for the culture. We're beginning to lose their culture.

R. Okay. Do you see any proof in Pond Inlet that other people think that the Inuit language is important?

I3. Only, *ila*, usually to elders. [...] 'Cause some of them were complaining that teenagers and kids are starting to talk in English.



Although valuing Inuktitut because it is being lost does not really address the question of why one should *care* if Inuktitut is lost, it does show that the recognition of loss can beneficially impact language attitudes (as seen in Chapter Five), motivating individuals to value Inuktitut and work toward its maintenance.

An interesting contrast to comments valuing Inuktitut because it is being lost is seen in comments from participants who say, ironically, that English is important because it is spreading:

R. So why do you think it's important to do more English and not more Inuktitut?

P5. There's more and more English taught and more and more people speak English.

R. ...Do you think that one language is more useful than the other?

I3. Yeah. [...] English. [...] Because some of them are talking English.

R. Who is talking English?

I3. Kids, some of the kids.

While Inuit youth express a motivation to maintain Inuktitut based on the perceived threat to their ancestral language, they also express that English is important because of its influx in their communities (the increasing practical need for English is discussed in the following chapter).

Overall, Inuit youth in the interviews and in the closed questionnaires indicate that they value Inuktitut for a number of symbolic reasons, and that the reasons why they value Inuktitut generally motivate them to maintain Inuktitut and transmit it to their children. Inuit youth say that Inuktitut is important because it is their first language, the language of Inuit tradition and culture, a language which gives them a sense of belonging and a language which, even more generally, they like and they enjoy speaking. In many ways, Inuit youth express this value sentimentally. However, even in what I have classified as “symbolic importance”, the practical value of Inuktitut and the pragmatic emphasis of Inuit youth shine through. Beyond the symbolic link between Inuktitut and Inuit tradition and culture, for instance, lies the concrete importance of Inuktitut as a tool for accessing Inuit tradition and culture through communication with other Inuit.

Alongside an abstract association of speaking Inuktitut with being Inuk, participants describe how speaking Inuktitut facilitates or denies participation and integration in the Inuit community. Without denying the “symbolic” importance of languages to Inuit youth, the following chapter, “Practical Importance of Languages in the Baffin Region” shows how Inuit youth value Inuktitut and English not just as objects and possessions, but as instruments for achieving their goals and aspirations.

Although English is in some ways symbolically valued by Inuit youth, particularly because of its association with modernity, its “cool” feel and its influx in the community, Inuit youth speak little about the symbolic value of English.<sup>10</sup> The attachment to Inuktitut as a prized possession has no parallel in comments about the value of English. As suggested at the beginning of this chapter, reflection about the symbolic importance of the language to an individual seems to increase alongside an awareness that the language cannot be taken for granted. Inuit youth seem to assume English as a necessity, as will be seen in the following chapter. Inuit youths’ silence on the symbolic value of English may reflect the unquestioned status of English in Inuit communities. However, the emphasis on the symbolic value of Inuktitut, next to very few comments about the symbolic value of English, also suggests how these two languages occupy different affective roles for Inuit youth.<sup>11</sup>

In terms of language promotion, the symbolic value Inuit youth attribute to Inuktitut is in some ways cause for hope. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the only absolute communicative need Inuit youth currently have for Inuktitut is conversing with Inuit elders, and this communicative need will disappear in the next twenty or thirty years. However, the comments above show that Inuit youth value Inuktitut even if they do not need it to communicate. The symbolic reasons why Inuktitut is valued are

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<sup>10</sup> Inuit youth with a Qallunaaq parent do not speak any more frequently about the symbolic importance of English than those without.

<sup>11</sup> The absence of comments on the symbolic value of English may also reflect participants’ knowledge of the focus of the research: the promotion of the *Inuit* language. The interviews also explicitly elicited comments about the value of Inuktitut for Inuit culture and identity, whereas similar comments about the value of English for identity and culture were not specifically elicited. Future research which specifically elicits the symbolic value attributed to English would provide a valuable point of comparison to this research.

important as they point to underlying values attributed to Inuktitut that may persist even as English becomes the only language they really need. As Gardner and Lambert (1972) show that “liking” a language, and admiring the people who speak that language (which they label “integrative motivation”) are strong indicators of success in acquiring a second language, Inuit youths’ personal appreciation of Inuktitut and respect for the tradition and culture it reflects may motivate them to make the effort to maintain Inuktitut. (As seen in Chapter Eight, maintaining Inuktitut is now an effort for some Inuit youth, in some ways comparable to the effort required to learn a second language studied by Gardner and Lambert.) At the same time, if Inuktitut is *only* valued as a symbol, as a possession, and not as a tool, then it is possible that Inuit youth will consider it satisfactory to *know* Inuktitut, without actually using this language. Such an attitude would be detrimental to the long-term survival of the language.

Finally, even if consciously valuing Inuktitut is an essential building block for its promotion, previous research has shown that positive statements do not always translate into concrete actions to preserve the language. Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998:62), for example, discuss how unspoken negative associations with the ancestral language can counteract explicitly stated desires to maintain the language, “...a broad gap and disparity have developed between verbally expressed goals on the one hand (generally advocating language and cultural preservation) and unstated but deeply felt emotions and anxieties on the other (generally advocating or contributing to abandonment).” Inuit youth in Nunavut are unlikely to have experienced first-hand the overtly anti-Native clashes with Qallunaat (such as occurred in residential schools) that Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer say lead to persisting unpleasant memories, fears and feelings of shame or embarrassment about using the ancestral language specifically, or being Native, more generally. Even so, their experiences and those of their parents may have given root to some of these unspoken anxieties, hindering the promotion of Inuktitut even in an environment which overtly favours Inuktitut. Underlining the value of Inuktitut, and of being Inuk, are arguably essential components of a plan to promote Inuktitut.

This chapter has shown that even as knowledge and use of English spread in Inuit communities, Inuit youth attribute greater symbolic value to Inuktitut than they do to English. The following chapter examines the degree to which Inuktitut is also practically valued alongside English.

## CHAPTER X

### PRACTICAL IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGES TO INUIT YOUTH

#### **10.0 Introduction**

As seen in the previous chapter, comments attributing “symbolic” importance to English are relatively sparse (although present), especially in contrast to the many “symbolic” reasons Inuit give for why Inuktitut is important to them. When participants speak about the value of English, they frequently refer to English’s value as a tool for socioeconomic advancement; it is the “language of opportunities”. Inuktitut is a tool for getting ahead in Inuit communities as well, but not to the same extent. Beyond its importance for getting a job and an education, English is valued as a *lingua franca*, for communicating and participating within one’s community and beyond. To an even greater extent, Inuktitut is valued as the “language of community”, allowing Inuit youth to effectively communicate, participate and integrate as members of their home communities. Both languages are valued as useful languages. Inuit youth need both in order to reach all of their communicative ends. In this chapter, the “practical” reasons why Inuit youth value Inuktitut and English are discussed. Under the headings “socio-economic advancement” and “travel”, the value attributed to English is discussed first, followed by the value attributed to Inuktitut; the order reflects participants’ emphasis on the relatively higher value of English for socioeconomic advancement. In the subsequent sections (“language of community”, “general usefulness”), the value attributed to Inuktitut is presented first, followed by the comparative value of English. Again, the

order reflects the relatively higher importance participants attribute to Inuktitut in these areas. Overall, the discussion of the practical value attributed to Inuktitut and English reflects Inuit youths' pragmatic outlook on their current linguistic situation. As much as Inuktitut is valued symbolically, it is *also* a valued resource and tool. English, even if it is not (consciously) highly valued as the language of culture or identity among Inuit youth, is considered a necessity to function in modern communities.

### **10.1 Socioeconomic Advancement**

In discussing the value of English and Inuktitut, many Inuit youth refer to the effectiveness of each language as a resource for achieving socioeconomic advancement. Socioeconomic advancement is expressed primarily in terms of securing desirable jobs, for which English is a necessity and Inuktitut is an asset. Inuit youth are also mindful of the importance of education in order to become successful candidates for desirable jobs (40.3% [52/129] of respondents are currently in school). The obligation to speak English in order to obtain the requisite education is also addressed by Inuit youth.

English is definitely valued in the communities as a language which opens doors for socioeconomic advancement. As discussed in Chapter Three, the institutions associated with socioeconomic advancement (education, government, salaried jobs, etc.) were imported from Southern Canada along with the English language. Intensive integration of Inuit into these institutions in the Baffin region is fairly recent. For many years, English was the dominant language in education, salaried jobs and government (cf. Dorais 1996a), and the corresponding institutions were largely staffed by Southern Canadians. Even though today an impetus exists to increase Inuit employment in Nunavut, the distribution of jobs is not representative of the majority Inuit population. Moreover, despite increased Inuit presence in most sectors, Qallunaat are still the key players in many institutions (teachers, bosses, etc.). In order to gain access to and communicate in these domains, Inuit youth say that they need English. In this section I consider how Inuit youth consider English, and then Inuktitut, important for socioeconomic advancement.

### 10.1.1 Work

In Chapter Seven, work is described as a bilingual domain, in which both Inuktitut and English are frequently used (except when speaking to one's boss, in which case English prevails). Comments in the interviews about the importance of language for work are interesting in light of the descriptions of language behaviour. Statements about the importance of English for work show that participants *need* to use English in order to *do* their jobs and in order to *get* a job. Some of the comments about English being important in this way are quite general:

R. ...Why is English important?

D2. [...] Because where I work that's the language I speak to do be able to do my job.

R. Is one language more useful than the other in Iqaluit? Inuktitut or English?

D4. English is more useful around here. It should be the other way around. Work-wise and being able to talk to people...

R. How would it change your life if you didn't speak any English? If you only spoke Inuktitut?

D13. It would be hard! My friends...who live in small communities, *ila*, when they speak English...there'll be some words in English, like a lot of words that they won't know, and it will be more frustrating for them, work-wise, job-wise. ...So I think English is very important.

R. Is it important for them to speak English?

P6. I don't know. When they have a job, yeah. It's important for that.

R. Yeah. Can you give me an example of a job where it's important to have English?

P6. If you want to be a teacher, and in the office.

Comments about the importance of English for actually doing one's job focus on the need to communicate with Qallunaat in the workplace, whether coworkers, clients, or more frequently, bosses:

D6. That's the only reason why I think Inuktitut's good, for me, anyways, because...when I work and stuff it's all English, never Inuktitut.

[...] All our clients, I never speak Inuktitut to. It's only mostly English.

R. Are your clients mainly Qallunaat, is that why <Yeah.> Okay.

R. How about English? Is English important to you?

D11. Not really important, but I grew up in it, so I know, I know it's part of life. Especially at work, having a lot of white people around. So you've got to know what to say, how to say it.

R. Overall in the community, which do you think is more useful, Inuktitut or English?

D13. English, that's what I think. Well, both! But, both, but, like, it's becoming more English because there's like more, you know? Because there's not that, well, as many Inuktitut speaking in the big jobs and stuff, so, you know?

R. Do you think it makes a difference in finding a job?

P1. Finding a job? No, 'cause, most of the big companies here, they usually speak English.

[...]

R. ...In Pangnirtung, you said that most of the companies in Pangnirtung are English, so you need English to get a job?

P1. The manager's usually English. Not all of them are English. It's usually Northern and stores like that are mostly English.

R. So does the language that a person speaks affect their chances of getting a job?

P1. Maybe. Depends if they know them or not. (laugh).

R. Is it important to speak English to get a job?

P10. Here? I think so, 'cause most of the people you work for, they're English, and you speak to Qallunaat. [...] I think it's essential to speak English or understand English, read English because in the new Nunavut government, every dialect they have interpreters and people who speak English, that could speak English to the Qallunaat.

R. Is speaking English important to you?

I4. Yes and no. Because now they have to have English and Inuktitut to get a job. [...] Most of the Qallunaats working here *ila* each of the companies have Qallunaats so maybe we need both.

R. When do you have to use English?

I5. When I'm working, when I have to deal with the contractors I have to talk to them.

R. Why do you have to talk to them in English?

I5. Because they're white. (laughs). Most of them, so I have to use English most of the time at work.

R. And they don't learn Inuktitut?



I5. The guys I work with? There's this guy I work with who's an Inuk and doesn't speak English. Whenever he's on the phone, he transfers the phone to me and I would have to talk to them in English.

These comments show how the presence of Qallunaat in the workplace leads to a communicative need for English. Many participants comment on the necessity to know English in order to even get a job:

R. Is English important to you?

D9. Yeah, it is, very important. [...] Because everybody, the majority of what people say is English. And all, most of the jobs out there, you have to speak English too.

R. Okay. Do you think it's important in the community to speak English in order to get a job?

P5. Most jobs, yeah.

R. How about for getting a job? Which language is important?

I2. I'd say English.

R. What do people in Pond Inlet need English for?

I6. Maybe finding jobs and stuff...

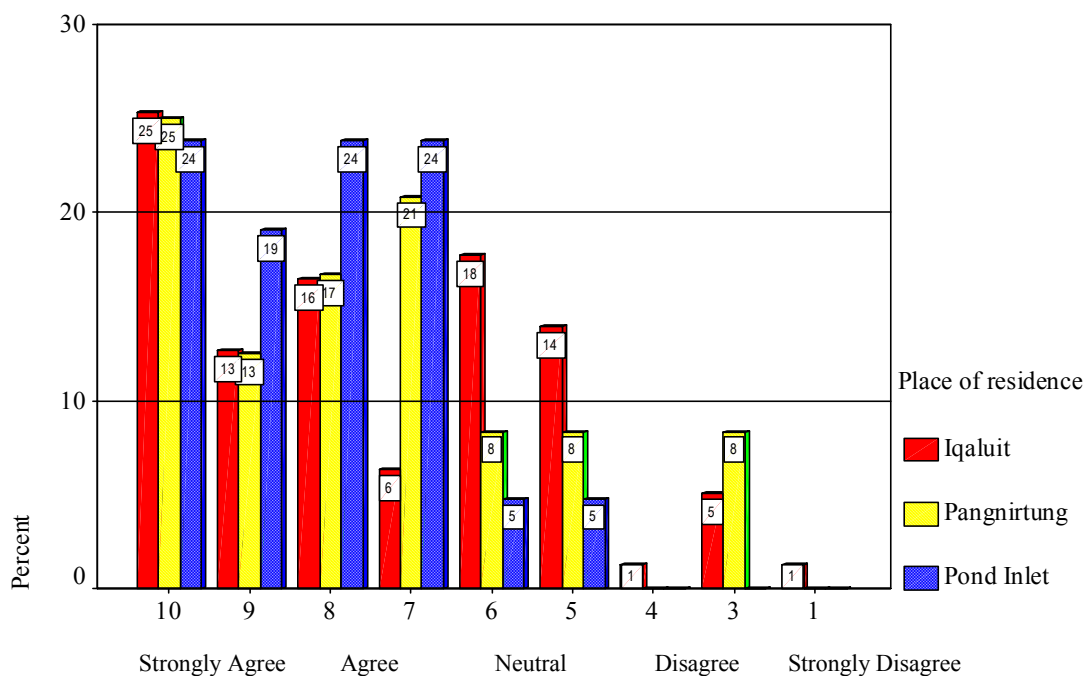
I8. But like I said, it's hard to promote at a place where it's accepted, where English is accepted. I guess other schools try to encourage English, other communities because they want them to be able to have jobs or understand English.

I10. English is important to me because if I don't speak English I wouldn't have a job, I wouldn't be able to get a job, because everything I see, when I'm trying to get a job, everything's in English, and if I don't know that, I won't get anywhere.

English is practically valued for getting a job, but to varying degrees depending on the individual. As seen in Figure 34, respondents tend to agree with the statement, "*Speaking English is important to me so that I can get the job that I want*" (Iqaluit mean = 7.41; Pangnirtung mean = 7.58; Pond Inlet mean = 8.19).<sup>1</sup> Overall, means show agreement, but not absolute agreement, that English is important because it helps Inuit youth get the jobs they want.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 29



“Speaking English is important to me so that I can get the job that I want”

**Figure 34: Importance of English for Getting a Job**

Comparing Inuktitut and English, some young Inuit overtly say that English is more useful than Inuktitut for getting a job, or acknowledge that others put forth this opinion, even if there is little consensus on this subject (as seen in comments about the relative usefulness of Inuktitut, further below):

R. Which is more useful, Inuktitut or English?  
D5. I would say English. [...] For getting a job, going to school.

R. Which language do you think is more important for getting a job? Or more useful for getting a job?  
D9. Probably English.

D13. And like I see some families...they're both Inuk and their kids can't even speak it...I find that sad. Because they're raising the child for the government, *ila*, you know, for the jobs and for the school, you know. They're thinking about that so much that Inuktitut isn't an asset or anything, you know?

R. Okay. Is one language more useful than the other, Inuktitut or English?  
[...] For example, is one more useful for getting a job?

17. Yeah. English is better because I could get more job and Inuktitut is kind of poor to getting a job. [...] If I applied to somewhere else and the other one I have to speak English all the time and I know how to speak Inuktitut better, it would be a lot harder for me to take that job.

18. I guess other schools try to encourage English, other communities because they want them to be able to have jobs or understand English.

English is valued directly for getting a job and successfully interacting in the workplace. The value of English for accessing desirable job opportunities is also expressed indirectly when participants say that in order to get a good job, they need to gain a high level of education, which requires English:

R. Why do you think [your younger siblings] don't speak [Inuktitut] very much?

D7. I don't know, just school, having English, you need English, for certain jobs or whatever, but Inuktitut is going to, you know, you're going to need it more, in a few years.

[...]

R. Why is it important to you to speak English?

D7. For school. Probably for future jobs too.

R. Is it important to you to speak English?

P10. Yes, 'cause, to get a job, Inuktitut and English [...] I think it would be bad for me if I didn't know how to speak English and I wanted to work for the (government). I wouldn't have enough education.

15. It's not bad [to have to use English in school]. If [children] are going to learn more from English then it's better. They can get better jobs, maybe.

R. Is English more useful for getting a job, or, does it get you a better job?

15. No. But...

R. Is English language important to you?

19. Yeah, very much. Probably equally important. We now have to have education in order to find a job, or if there's a job that has both English and Inuktitut. ...I'd say they're pretty equal. I've already learned it, I don't mind learning more...equal amount of both languages.

Furthermore, Inuit youths' descriptions of their use of English in the workplace (see Chapter Seven) indirectly make a statement about the importance of English for doing one's job. Overall, comments about the importance of English emphasize its usefulness

for reaching a point where the young Inuit can successfully apply for desirable jobs and conduct job duties. English is important to get a job, and to actually do one's job.

On the other hand, when participants talk about the value of Inuktitut for socioeconomic advancement, they focus on the usefulness of Inuktitut for *getting* a job, as opposed to actually completing job duties. Some participants do say that speaking Inuktitut helps them to *do* their job well. These individuals generally need to use Inuktitut to serve monolingual Inuit clients:

D13. [...] Okay, I'll take my job for an example, like in the office, there are some customers who can't speak in English at all and they'll ask questions and I'll be like, okay, what is that? I'll try to translate it to my boss or to my co-worker and say what they're asking and stuff? Sometimes it's hard you know? ...but, yeah, it's good everywhere.

R. How about for your job here? How important is it that you speak Inuktitut?

D16. Yeah, it's quite important, because, yeah, it's a big help. Especially with all of the elders in town, and they are still riding their snowmobiles, or when we have a complaint, and half of the time the complaints we receive are from older people, or elders who come in and they can barely speak in English. And, I don't know, there'll be phone calls and the first thing they'll ask is do you speak Inuktitut, yeah, I speak Inuktitut. Yeah, so it's a big help.

[...]

I figure that it's very useful, because, it's still to this day, mainly all the people say it's dying. There's a lot of us who use it at home, and every now and then, there'll be somebody coming into a workplace and, you know, looking for something, research, or whatever, just questions and they'll ask only in Inuktitut because they can't speak English. So I figured that would be a big asset in work places, to have both languages. Yeah...I think it really is important to learn. Here at least. I'm glad I know Inuktitut because, every second day, we'll have a phone call and somebody can only speak Inuktitut. Yeah, makes my job easier.

P8. I find it hard, a lot of people I deal with in my work, they're Inuktitut-speaking only, they can't speak English. And sometimes I find it really hard to talk to them because my Inuktitut is poor. Like, it's not poor, it's getting better, but I know it would be a lot better if I grew up speaking Inuktitut only.

[...] And especially coming into work, too, everybody, here in the office, [speaking Inuktitut is] a very important thing to some of the girls.

D13, D16 and P8 say that they need Inuktitut in order to do their jobs well. D13 needs Inuktitut in order to act as an interpreter between her Qallunaaq boss and monolingual Inuit clients. D16 uses Inuktitut at work also to serve monolingual Inuit clients. P8, in Pangnirtung, needs Inuktitut to communicate with her coworkers. D16 and P8's expressed need for Inuktitut to do their jobs may reflect the similar contexts in which they work, which are particularly sensitive to representing and serving the needs of Inuit.

Other participants hypothetically speak about how it is important to speak Inuktitut in order to do specific jobs well, such as translating, teaching or front-line customer service, even if they are not currently employed in or seeking these jobs:

D1. It would be nice to speak it fluently. It would help a lot in certain jobs and whatnot.

R. Can you give me an example in what kind of a job it would help to speak Inuktitut fluently?

D1. Interpreter. [...] Operator. A lot of jobs it's useful to have Inuktitut. You get paid extra, too.

R. ...Do you think it's important for young Inuit to speak Inuktitut?

D8. Yeah, because most of the jobs now, they expect you to be bilingual, trilingual...because it would be kind of weird if a company was all Qallunaats and then an Inuk person, like an elder phones and there's no one to translate. So, it would be quite hard.

D11. It's important for workers up here, having to have translators. There are so many jobs up here that I want, but then again, it says you have to translate, I'm like, oh, man, I can't do that. I've got to go, go learn some more. I know there's going to be so many words that I can't even put into Inuktitut. It's like, I can't I don't go for that kind of job, which I wish I could. So, it's good for jobs and...

Only a few Inuit youth surveyed (i.e. D13, D16, P8) explicitly say that Inuktitut is important for them personally to do their jobs, while a few others (i.e. D1, D8, D11) state the attitude or perception that Inuktitut is generally important for doing certain jobs. These comments focus on specialised, language-related jobs (translator) or limited interactions within jobs (serving monolingual Inuit).

D1, quoted above, addresses another concrete reason why it is useful to know Inuktitut in the workplace: higher pay. A few Inuit youth, quoted below, value knowing Inuktitut in the workplace because they make more money, either through a bilingual bonus in salaried work (knowing English is taken for granted as the base language in most workplaces) or through attracting more clients in private enterprise:

D2. Yeah, I guess, you need it. I mean you get a bilingual bonus if you speak Inuktitut.

R. Is speaking Inuktitut important to you?

D9. It is. [...] If you speak Inuktitut you have a better chance, of like, especially right now in Iqaluit you have a good chance of getting high paying jobs, stuff like that.

[...]

D9. ...We'd get a lot of the Inuk customers because we were paying the lowest rate in town, plus we were always speaking Inuktitut and those Inuk guys would come up to us and say...how they want it, and the [competition]...they're...all speaking English or French, so a lot of them would come up to us and ask us to do the work and go pick stuff up.

R. So they would come to your place specifically, for the prices but also because you could speak to them in Inuktitut?

D9. Yeah.

D16. I think most workplaces are doing that now, I mean paying extra for people who can speak both languages. Which is good, in a way, I guess. English, most workplaces are looking for Inuktitut-English...

Returning to descriptions of language use in Chapter Seven, Inuit youth arguably demonstrate the importance of Inuktitut for doing jobs by saying that they use it in work situations. However, relatively fewer explicitly say that Inuktitut is valuable for doing their jobs, compared to comments about the importance of English in the workplace. Inuit youth tend to highlight instead Inuktitut's value for securing a job.

A frequent theme among Inuit youth, especially in Iqaluit, is the feeling that being able to put "fluent in Inuktitut" on one's resume increases one's chances of finding a job:

A4. ...At [Inuit organisation], we receive a lot of resumes and I read through it before I pass it on and, right away, under languages, if they say fluent in English and then if they say, they don't speak Inuktitut, then right away I know that maybe they don't have a very good chance, here. But I

pass it on anyway and a lot of times they don't get it, you know. They don't get the job. But. Even though I haven't applied to a place and, well, I speak both, so right there I have an advantage, I think. Because I could put on my resume, no question, fluent in English, fluent in Inuktitut, although I am sort of struggling with my Inuktitut, I am still fluent. But, for me, on the receiving end of the resume, I look at it and right away, if they don't speak Inuktitut, you're kind of like, "O-h, good luck." You know.

D4. When you don't know both, I think. I'm scared to not be able to speak Inuktitut in 10 years. I'm scared. What's going to happen? Is my life going to change? Am I not going to be able to get a job?

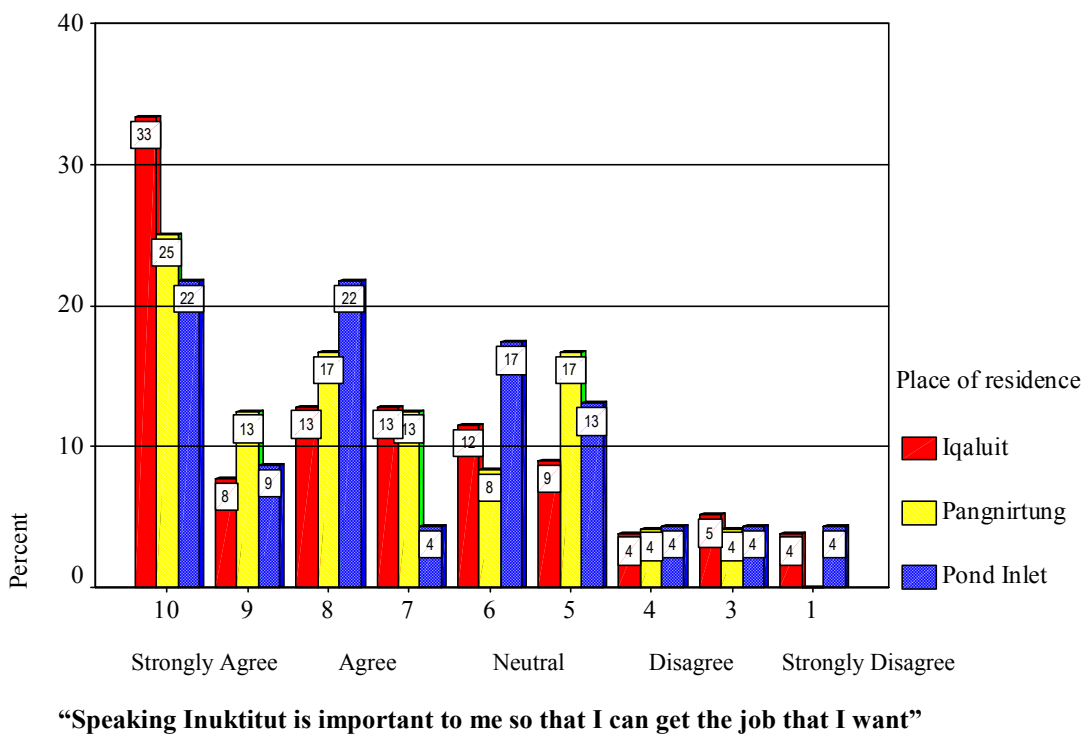
R. Is speaking Inuktitut important to you?

D9. It is.

R. How so?

D9. I don't know, like if you speak Inuktitut you have a better chance, of like, especially right now in Iqaluit you have a good chance of getting high paying jobs, stuff like that.

In the closed questionnaires, respondents tend to agree that knowing Inuktitut is helpful when looking for a job, as seen in Figure 35.



**Figure 35: Importance of Inuktitut for Getting a Job**

Overall, 64.8% (81/125) of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement, “*Speaking Inuktitut is important to me so that I can get the job that I want*”, as seen in Figure 35.<sup>2</sup> There is less consensus on the practical importance of Inuktitut for obtaining a job than there is for the symbolic value of Inuktitut as the language of Inuit tradition and culture, but the agreement is there nonetheless. All three communities show the same general trend of agreement (Iqaluit mean = 7.44; Pangnirtung mean = 7.46; Pond Inlet mean = 7.04). Results confirm that a majority of Inuit youth value Inuktitut as a practical language for socioeconomic success.

Comparing reactions to the statement “*Speaking English is important to me so that I can get the job I want*,” (earlier in this section) to reactions about the importance of Inuktitut for securing a job, Inuktitut and English seem to be almost equally valued for obtaining a job in Iqaluit and Pangnirtung. In contrast, Inuit youth in Pond Inlet agree more strongly that English is important for getting a job (mean = 8.19) than that Inuktitut is important for getting a job (mean = 7.04;  $p \leq 0.05$ ).

In the semi-directed interviews, a few participants (i.e. D7, D8, D10; all from Iqaluit, as may be expected based on responses to the closed questionnaires) specifically say that Inuktitut is more important than English for finding a job, especially in the context of Nunavut:

R. You said that down the road, you think it will be important for a job?

D7. Yeah, Nunavut’s growing. Inuktitut is going to have to be a, you know, a fluent thing, for jobs and everything. We have to build it, because we’re going to need it later, that’s for sure, if you want to live in the North.

R. Do you think, which do you think is more useful for getting a job? Inuktitut, or English?

D7. In town, Inuktitut, because a lot of people speak it, and that’s what they’re looking for, people who speak Inuktitut and everything, so.

R. Do you think that Inuktitut or English is more useful for getting a job?

D8. Oh, Inuktitut now.

R. Inuktitut’s useful for what kinds of jobs?

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 18



D8. Like, if you're a secretary, or courthouse, you know. All that kind of stuff.

R. You need it.

D8. Yeah. You need it now, a lot.

R. Do you know of any situations where somebody has not gotten a job because they did not speak Inuktitut?

D8. Not that I know of.

R. Is one language more important than the other for finding a job?

D10. Here, since there's Nunavut, I'd say they want more people speaking Inuktitut than English. But then, it would be good if you have English and Inuktitut than just Inuktitut. Like, if you're working somewhere and somebody comes up to you and you don't know what language they're speaking, you know? If you're all Inuk and they're speaking English...you'll be in trouble. Well, not in trouble, but...it wouldn't be fun... And so it's good to have two languages. One that everybody speaks, the other one your own language. So it's good to have both English and Inuktitut. [...] It is a big advantage.

[...]

R. Do you see evidence that more Inuktitut is being used since Nunavut?

D10. I'd say, yeah, I do. With the jobs, you know, you need Inuktitut for that. You need Inuktitut for this and that. I'd say, it will because they're creating more jobs which you need Inuktitut for, so. That helps.

Inuit youth certainly say that Inuktitut is valuable for getting jobs in their communities, especially in Iqaluit, the territory's capital.

However, generally when individuals say that Inuktitut is more important than English for getting a job, the comparison seems to compare English monolingualism to Inuktitut-English bilingualism, rather than English monolingualism to Inuktitut monolingualism. The underlying assumption appears to be that if one speaks Inuktitut, one also speaks English, although the reverse is not necessarily true. The following quotations underline that Inuktitut-English bilingualism is an asset:

D2. I think it's mandatory for any clerical receptionist positions that they have to be bilingual. It's in the job description, you can't get the job unless you speak, you're bilingual.

R. Okay, that's for the government?

D2. Yeah. So I don't think there's really a problem there. There, I guess there's no problem there, you have to speak English and Inuktitut for those positions.

[...]

D2. I'd say if you only spoke English and you didn't have much experience and you were looking for a clerical position, it would be kind of hard to get a job in the government. Because you have to speak Inuktitut, since the Nunavut government, it's kind of mandatory that you do speak Inuktitut.

R. What do you think about that?

D2. I agree with it, yeah. Because if they're promoting Inuit employment then you have to give the Inuit person looking for a job, I believe. Yeah, I guess, you need it. I mean you get a bilingual bonus if you speak Inuktitut. It's a critical position that requires Inuktitut or bilingualism.

R. How does speaking Inuktitut affect your chances of getting a job?

D13. Oh, it's good. Like, practically all jobs...some jobs I find...you'll get the job if...you're bilingual, like in Inuktitut and English, because...it's like, Iqaluit, you know? Like small communities and stuff, you know? Because most, majority of the population is Inuit, well smaller communities and stuff, and that way you get the job easier...

[...]

R. So most jobs want people to be bilingual, to have both Inuktitut and English?

D13. Yeah, like, 'cause I have some friends, like Qallunaat, who looks for jobs, but they can have the experience and stuff, but another lady who has Inuktitut will get it, because she can speak Inuktitut.

R. Do you think it's important in the community to speak English in order to get a job?

P5. Most jobs, yeah.

R. How about Inuktitut?

P5. Same.

R. Do you have any idea which jobs you need Inuktitut and which jobs you need English?

I7. ...Maybe some of them are both languages...

Interestingly, D2 sees the benefit in knowing Inuktitut for finding jobs even outside of Nunavut, although this is an exceptional comment:

D2. A lot of Inuit live in Ottawa, a lot of Inuit organisations, it would be easier for me to get a job if I couldn't get a position with the federal government, I could go to one of those Inuit organisations and, be able to speak Inuktitut, I guess there's another asset.

Regardless of whether or not the youth actually feel that they need to use both Inuktitut and English at work, many believe that knowing both increases their chances of

getting a job. It seems as though most of the Inuit youth who are looking for jobs or working already take for granted that they can and will speak English in a work setting. There are workplaces where only English is spoken, but very few workplaces where Inuktitut is predominantly spoken (this is in contrast to reports of language use in Nunavik, where Inuktitut is the dominant language of some workplaces, cf. Dorais 1995). These results suggest that even if young Inuit have instrumental motivation (cf. Ager 2001, Gardner and Lambert 1972) to know Inuktitut, and for some jobs speaking Inuktitut is really necessary, the overriding motivation is to be able to put “fluent in Inuktitut” on one’s resume, rather than to practically use Inuktitut in the workplace (with the exception of specific jobs or specific contexts within jobs).

If this is true, what at first glance appears to be evidence that Inuktitut is valued as a practical language in the work domain is really further evidence that Inuktitut is valued as a symbol. Inuktitut is valued as a symbol, not as a tool, if participants only have to *know how* to speak Inuktitut, and do not ever actually have to use it. Some Inuit youth have mixed feelings about the importance of Inuktitut for work for exactly this reason:

R. Do you think that the language that somebody speaks affects their chances of getting a job?

D3. On paper, yeah! Like, for secretaries and stuff, you need, they say you need to be able to speak in Inuktitut. But, often, if you can’t be faithful in just coming to work, there’s something a little bit wrong there, where a person who is really good at being a secretary and they can’t get the job because of their English, their Inuktitut...the office is missing out on hiring someone who will do a good job rather than putting an Inuktitut sticker there and saying, yeah, we’ve got one here.

R. I wonder for the jobs, when they’re saying Inuktitut is an asset, if they really need people that speak Inuktitut in the workplaces? If there’s a practical need?

D6. Like, I don’t really think so, because most of the people they deal with in businesses, say like, take for example QC [Qikiqtaaluk Corporation] or NTI [Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.], they say...if you can speak Inuktitut it’s good, but most of the people they deal with are mainly English, you know? The only time they...use Inuktitut is when they travel to other communities, for like board meetings, or something, because you know how the higher North you go or the farther North you go, Inuktitut’s stronger, you know? Because there’s not many Qallunaat down up there?

Like, here, it's, a lot of people come here for jobs. See, like in most of the businesses here, you know how they say, if you want a good job, you need a university degree? See like, I find that many Inuit here, like, to them, school isn't really for them, you know? And some of the people just enjoy going out to the land and hunting and so they don't need to go through this whole step of high school? And they don't think about university. So they think that they'll just get a good job here, but most businesses are wanting people with university degrees and stuff. Like, a lot of white people are coming here for jobs. So I don't really think when they say you need Inuktitut, it's not really true, in a sense. Because, how could, there's not many people, not many Inuit people, who have university degrees? So they need some qualified people from the South to come up here?

R. So education is more important than the language?

D6. Yeah, I think so. I mean, what's, why bother hiring someone who doesn't know what they're doing and can speak Inuktitut? Like, for me, if I was running a business, I'd hire someone who has more experience or something. I wouldn't hire them just because they know how to speak Inuktitut.

A minority of Inuit youth consider that Inuktitut is not that important for getting jobs, or say that while speaking Inuktitut is important, other factors need to take precedence, for example education and reliability. D6 points to the limited number of individuals who are fluent in Inuktitut *and* have post-secondary training, which makes it difficult to staff certain positions with Inuktitut-speakers. D16 goes along with D3 and D6, saying that a small number of employees who speak Inuktitut can help monolingual clients, and fulfill the limited need for Inuktitut in the workplace:

D16. I've noticed that in a lot of cases, they'll mention that they want to promote Inuktitut in jobs and, you know. But I haven't really seen anything done yet, in the last three years, I've just seen them trying to work on it and I haven't really seen anybody going anywhere with it, at all.

[...]

Not everybody needs it, as long as you have at least one or two people in the department or, in the building, who can speak Inuktitut.

Finally, as seen above, even if Inuit youth aspire to use Inuktitut, the need for English, as the language of many bosses, much private industry and many of the clients in Iqaluit (most Qallunaat being monolingual speakers of English), can overwhelm the desire or need for Inuktitut in workplaces. The attitude that English is a required language while

Inuktitut is (only?) an asset is particularly prevalent in the workplace, but is attested in other settings as well.

In relation to language planning, as D16 states above, leaders in Nunavut have stated that Inuktitut should be widely used for conducting work in Nunavut. The Bathurst Mandate (Nunavut 1999) calls for the implementation of Inuktitut as the official language of work by 2020. There certainly exists some degree of awareness among young Inuit that Inuktitut is valued and/or valuable for finding, and in some cases, conducting work in Nunavut. In terms of promoting Inuktitut, it seems that it would be beneficial to continue encouraging Inuit (as some Inuit leaders already are) to think of Inuktitut as a language that they work in first and foremost, and of English as a language that they switch to when necessary to deal with Qallunaat. This would entail a shift in the current attitudes about the languages of work, in which English is used as the default language.

Inuit may not necessarily esteem the workplace as a highly prestigious domain in quite the same way as Southern Canadians do, but valuing Inuktitut as a language of socioeconomic advancement can be useful for the promotion of Inuktitut in a few ways. First, even having “Inuktitut is an asset” on job postings provides an additional motivation for Inuit to learn and maintain Inuktitut, in order to have more job opportunities. Secondly, encouraging use of Inuktitut in the workplace provides additional opportunities for Inuktitut to be used. Increased practice of Inuktitut will help individuals maintain competence and will also favour the development and diffusion of work-related vocabulary. Thirdly, seeing Inuktitut in the workplace can increase the overall prestige of Inuktitut, as not just the language of Inuit tradition, culture and identity, but as a language integral to all aspects of an evolving Inuit society. For the moment, there is evidence that Inuit youth, especially in Iqaluit, consider Inuktitut a useful language for socioeconomic gain. However, the importance of English in this area may overshadow the value attributed to Inuktitut.

Overall, as seen in this section, English is required for socioeconomic advancement (i.e. having a desirable job) while Inuktitut is considered an asset. The

importance of both languages reflects the tasks one carries out at work, most significantly the people with whom one communicates at work. At present, according to Inuit youths' comments, English is largely needed at work because the bosses and many co-workers are English-speaking Qallunaat, from the South, filling jobs for which there were no suitable Inuit candidates. With the affirmative action policies of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, and as younger generations of Inuit gain higher levels of education, Inuit may become increasingly well-represented in all jobs, including management positions. If this generation of Inuit youth maintains their Inuktitut language skills and begins now to actively use Inuktitut whenever they can in the workplace, they could foreseeably become Inuktitut-speaking, Inuit bosses for the next generation of Inuit youth. Today's children (if they are brought up with sufficient Inuktitut language skills) can hope to enter a workforce twenty years from now in which they can interact with Inuit bosses in Inuktitut. Such an outlook corresponds to the Bathurst mandate's vision of Inuktitut as the language of work in 2020. The outlook for the increasing value of Inuktitut as a language for securing jobs within Inuit communities is positive, but hinges on Inuit making the choice to use Inuktitut now, where they can, maintaining their language skills, and passing Inuktitut on to the next generation.

### **10.1.2 Education**

As seen previously, obtaining advanced formal education is becoming more and more important in the North in order to secure desired jobs. Although Inuktitut is used in the first few years of primary school, English is still the language of most formal education. The practical importance of English for getting an education has already been seen in Chapter Seven in the expressed need to speak English in order to understand and speak to the teachers (an obvious prerequisite for success in school):

R. Okay. What makes the teenagers start using English?

P1. I think because of the teachers. You pretty much have to learn English to understand them.

The attitude that English is most useful for school has also been seen in speech behaviour where English is used in order to discuss the topic of school. Beyond these examples, the

importance of speaking English in order to go to university or even continue in grade school is often stated explicitly in the interviews.

To begin with, speaking English is valued as a necessity for Inuit who want to attend university:

R. Why is English important?

A4. For me? [...] At one point I'm going to want to go to school down South or go and travel to the States...

R. ...Is English important to you? And why?

D4. Yeah. [...] If you want to be able to travel and learn and go to school and, you know? To be able to go to school, to college, to university, you need to be able to speak a good amount of English and if English is your second language you'll have to take a test, you don't have a choice, to get into university.

D7. ...If you want to go higher, like university, you need English.

R. Why is speaking English important to you?

P3. I don't know. It's going to help me a lot if I get down to university, to speak English, because there's no Inuktitut teachers or anything, so I have to, it's all English.

R. What makes English important?

P5. Going to university. You need English.

R. You said English was important for travelling down South?

P7. Not just down South, like, if you went to college, you'd probably have to speak English.

R. Even at NAC [Nunavut Arctic College]?

P7. Yeah.

The language of instruction in the universities Inuit youth are likely to attend is English. Moreover, as seen in the preceding quotations, going to university is frequently associated with going South, travelling, and seeing the world in a more general sense. Going to university almost always entails leaving Nunavut, and communication outside of Nunavut is almost always in English.

Even if only a minority of Inuit youth pursue university education, English is valued as the language of education at the community level in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet as well:

R. Which is more useful, Inuktitut or English?  
 D5. I would say English. [...] For ... going to school.

R. Why is it important to you to speak English?

D7. For school.

[...]

R. ...How would it change your life, if you didn't speak English?

D7. [...] I don't think I'd be going to school. It would be too hard.

R. Why is English important to you?

D8. [...] And school work. It will be easier to do school work.

R. Would it change anything for you if you only spoke Inuktitut?

P3. Yeah, I guess so...I'd have a harder time going through high school if I spoke nothing but Inuktitut. That's for sure.

R. Is high school important to you?

P3. Yeah.

R. How come?

P3. I want to head off to university. See something. I don't know yet. I don't know what to do.

R. Can you explain a little bit the importance of Inuktitut and the importance of English? Why each one is important?

P4. [...] English in school is very important.

R. What about if you couldn't speak English, what would change?

I2. School.

R. What would change at school?

I2. I would fail a lot.

I7. Like, I would need diploma in the school from all different kinds of courses, it's a good thing, but if I'm not in school, I would have to take those courses to get a diploma. If it's hard for me to speak English and I have to try and take those courses and they would be, it would be complicated.

R. Is English language important to you?

I9. Yeah, very much. Probably equally important. We now have to have education in order to find a job [...]

R. English is important for education?

I9. Pretty much for everything. Same with Inuktitut, like, they're both important in a different way, but equal. I wouldn't like it too much if I was to forget about English.



These Inuit youth value English because it is the current language of instruction in higher grades. Not only are most courses taught in English beyond primary school, but also some Inuit youth specifically value education in the English language and resist the suggestion that education could be primarily in Inuktitut:

D7. I mean, you can't really teach math in Inuktitut, it's it would be hard to explain, but... [...] I think it's too difficult to teach Inuktitut at a higher level unless you go through it all the way, you don't have anything interrupting, or whatever. I mean, for chemistry and physics and stuff, I think it would be a hell of a lot easier to understand in English because it's, that's how it was made, or whatever, so it would be too hard to translate anything to Inuktitut. So you need English to learn...depending upon what you want to do when you grow up. It's just hard.

R. Yeah, that's hard. How about if they did high school all the way through in Inuktitut, would that be good?

P5. I don't think so.

R. Why not?

P5. I'm planning on going to university.

Education is valued in English partly because Inuit youth associate schooling with western concepts and thus western languages (although the Inuktitut language is in fact perfectly capable, and could be further developed to express concepts transmitted through formal education). Participants such as P5 are concerned that the transition to university would be even more difficult if one's education were in Inuktitut through to grade twelve and value education in English for this reason. Other Inuit youth disagree with these participants though, saying Inuktitut should be used more widely in the school system, as will be seen below.

Sometimes the importance of speaking English in order to get a "good" education is only implied, by individuals who believe that even at the younger levels, the quality of education provided in Inuktitut is inferior to its counterpart provided in English. Other individuals say that they needed to learn English in order to continue in school, or move into the academic stream, or in order to get through primary and elementary schools outside of Nunavut. In these cases, it is implied that Inuktitut was of no use to these individuals in pursuing formal education at a particular point in their lives:

D3. And I got there and I was the only Inuktitut speaking person among Indians, who obviously didn't understand and my teacher said, don't speak that language here, I don't understand you.

D15. ...If I wanted to continue school in Inuktitut, I'd have to go into a general stream, which is not what I needed because I was smart enough to do it, I just didn't know English.

To sum up, for a number of young Inuit, school, alongside work, is one of the first things that comes to mind when asked why English is important to them. English is the language in which formal education currently takes place; it is the language of those who introduced formal education; and it is the language of most upper-level teachers. Even beyond surface recognition that English is currently the language of instruction (beyond primary grades in schools), some young Inuit feel that it is appropriate and desirable for formal schooling to occur in English. The need to master English in order to succeed in school contributes to Inuit youths' desire to maintain English and to transmit it to their children.

In spite of the widespread consensus that English is important for obtaining an education, some participants also underline that Inuktitut is, at least to some degree, important for the same reason. Inuktitut may be valued alongside English for obtaining an education, but in contrast to English, getting an education is never the first reason given by young Inuit as to why Inuktitut is important. For a few Inuit youth, speaking Inuktitut is valued for formal education. The use of Inuktitut in the Nunavut school system (studied by Tagalik 1998, among others) is only briefly addressed in this thesis, but merits much wider investigation, especially as many Inuit youth in this research identify education as the domain in which they would most like to see Inuktitut promoted. As seen previously, Inuktitut is sometimes used as a language of instruction, usually in the early grades, then occasionally for more 'traditional' subjects in higher grades. Moreover, Inuktitut is a subject studied by Inuit students through to grade 12, even if participants call into doubt the amount of Inuktitut used in these classrooms.

The attitudes expressed in the interviews suggest that some Inuit youth are open to Inuktitut becoming a useful language for obtaining a formal education. Many value

Inuktitut enough to want it in the schools. Some see it as being able to fill greater functions in the schools (though not to fully replace English):

I10. Yeah, that's good. Like, what I wrote here is Inuktitut should be studied and taught from Kindergarten to Grade 12, just like the way English is taught, but at the same time in a traditional Inuktitut way, like, by watching, when you're watching, I'll learn. If you watch somebody fixing something, and they do it you think about that, how they fixed it, I'll learn how to fix it. If you do it a lot you start to become smarter. You learn a lot...

However, only rare comments explicitly express that Inuktitut is presently important for succeeding in school. If Inuit want to succeed in school, they need to know English.

Nonetheless, some Inuit youth emphasize that they value other forms of education, for which Inuktitut is valuable. Their comments in this regard underline the importance of a data-driven approach which allows Inuit to set the parameters within which the importance of Inuktitut and English are defined. Inuktitut is valuable for 'traditional' forms of education, particularly being able to receive 'traditional knowledge' that older Inuit are able to transmit.<sup>3</sup> In Chapter Six, young Inuit are quoted stating that they consistently use Inuktitut to speak to elders about traditional activities, in other words when receiving a kind of 'traditional education'. A few young Inuit specifically state that they value Inuktitut because it allows them (or would allow them, if they were competent in Inuktitut) to learn about traditional activities from the elders:

R. How about, you said that English was important for an education. Do you need to speak English to get an education?

P10. I think here you do. Well, if you don't go to school, your elders can teach you stuff, about how tradition and different foods. I never did that, but some of my friends did. I'm not sure.

R. Is it important to you personally, that you speak Inuktitut?

I7. Yes.

R. What makes it important to you?

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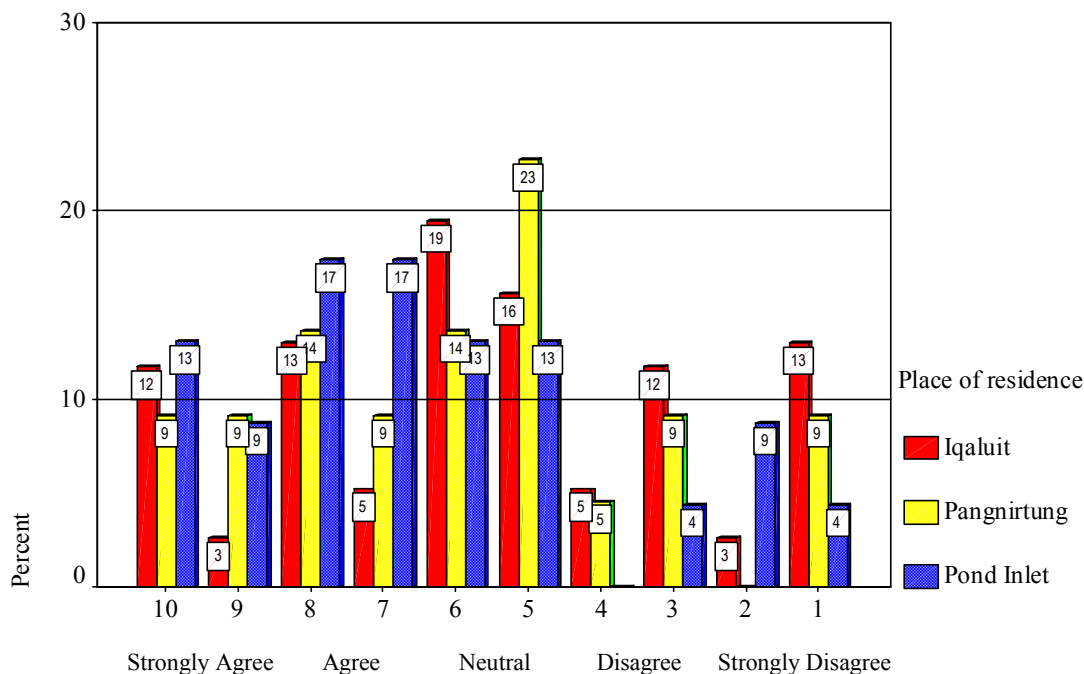
<sup>3</sup> Here 'traditional education' is used very loosely to refer to learning about 'traditional' Inuit practices. I am referring specifically to spoken transmission of Inuit tradition, although I recognise that the 'traditional' Inuit way of educating children was frequently based on observation, rather than explicit instruction.

17. To talk to the elders and learn about what's new and what was back in old days.

(See also D3 quoted on pages 383 and 384 and P7 quoted on page 246.)

Inuktitut is valued as a tool for forms of informal education, learning from others and being able to pass on what one knows.

Valuing Inuktitut as a tool for traditional forms of education is intricately linked to valuing Inuktitut as an instrument by which Inuit tradition is transmitted (see “Tradition and History vs. Modernity” in Chapter Nine). Even if Inuit youth do not tend to talk about Inuktitut being important in order to get an education, when asked to explicitly respond to this question on the closed questionnaire, responses are mixed, as seen in Figure 36.



“For getting an education, English is more important to me than Inuktitut”

**Figure 36: Relative Importance of English for Getting an Education**

The wide range of responses, and the means around the neutral point (5.49 in Iqaluit; 5.95 in Pangnirtung; 6.48 in Pond Inlet) suggest that Inuit youth are ambivalent

about the relative importance of Inuktitut and English for education. In line with responses for the importance of Inuktitut and English for securing a job, where Pond Inlet respondents perceive English as more useful than Inuktitut, respondents from Pond Inlet are also most willing to attribute greater importance to English in terms of getting an education, although differences between communities are not significant in this case.

In terms of language planning, the results above can be interpreted and applied in a combination of ways. First, the usefulness of Inuktitut for transmitting Inuit tradition is uncontested. Building on the value young Inuit already attribute to Inuktitut as the language of “traditional” education, opportunities for such forms of education could be encouraged as encounters where Inuktitut could be nurtured.

Secondly, the preceding analysis of interviews with Inuit youth shows that English is valued above Inuktitut for success in the school system, even if responses to the closed questionnaire suggest instead that neither language is perceived as more important than the other for academic success. Inuit youths’ desire to succeed in school and move on to university, through use of English, motivates them to master English. The promotion of Inuktitut needs to recognise these needs and desires to have continued access to opportunities to learn and master English. At the same time, efforts to slowly make Inuktitut a more useful language in the formal school system could also be beneficial. Such efforts could start out in line with existing desires for Inuktitut as a more rigorous *subject* of instruction in the higher grades. Judging from some of the attitudes expressed above, though, any effort to implement more Inuktitut in the school system will also need to be accompanied by an awareness campaign of some sort, which validates Inuktitut as a language in which upper level math and science can be taught (see for example Kawagley’s [1995] argument for teaching sciences in Yup’ik, a related Eskaleut language in Alaska). Other practical concerns must be addressed before Inuktitut could actually *become* a more widespread language in the school system, but a first step would be shaping the public’s *attitude* to see Inuktitut as valuable language for education. Overall, there is some potential in the communities for Inuktitut to gain ground as a “language of opportunities” for socioeconomic advancement. However, for

the moment, Inuit youth seem to emphasise the value of English, more than Inuktitut, as a tool for accessing education and job opportunities.

## 10.2 Travel

English is also valued by Inuit youth because it is a language which allows them to have access to the world beyond their local communities. English is particularly valued by young Inuit as a language which allows them to travel or move outside of Nunavut:

R. Why is English important?

A4. For me? Because I'd like to see the rest of the world. I am pretty-well bound to the North because I'm Inuk and I grew up and I love the North, I love the Arctic, but at one point I'm going to want to...visit all the other Canadian provinces and everything. And if I don't have English, then tough luck for me getting around with Inuktitut...

R. Do you think if you have children one day that they will speak Inuktitut?

D1. I hope so. And French. And English.

R. Would it be important to you that your children speak all three languages?

D1. Yes, it would. [...] Because, I wouldn't want them to speak only one language. I would rather that they speak two languages and be able to communicate with people around the world and not only speaking Inuktitut and not knowing how to communicate with other people if they'd rather go away from Nunavut to Canada, it's important to speak three languages.

R. What does speaking English signify for you or why is English important?

D2. Because the majority of the earth's population understands English, I guess.

R. ...Is English important to you? And why?

D4. Yeah. English is important if you want to be able to get out there into the outer world. If you want to be able to travel...

[...]

D4. So it's important to speak English too, to be able to get around, like you want. Otherwise you won't be able to, I think. I mean, I even had a hard time in Greenland trying to get around. Yeah. And down South you don't see signs in Inuktitut, no one speaks to you in Inuktitut...

R. How about English? Is English important to you?

D5. English is important because that's the way it is around the world.

R. You have to know [English] for what reason?

P1. When I go away to different cities, and stuff like that, where I want to go...

P7. But English is also important because when you go away, you need to speak it. Like I went to Ottawa for about a year. I lived there for about a year. We were using mainly English all the time, except, I had two room-mates, so at home we spoke Inuktitut. But when you're out, like going some places, to ask them for directions, or stuff like that, ask them questions, you always need to know English.

I10. Getting places we want to go? If I went down South, if I didn't speak Inukti-, or English, I would need a translator to go into places, if I didn't I would be totally lost.

[...]

For travelling, explaining things to somebody. And meeting people. Like when I meet somebody I'll usually speak in English, because I don't know if they speak in Inuktitut or not.

The desire expressed by certain youth to interact with others beyond their community shows that they need English in order to pursue the lives they choose for themselves. This practical need for English underlines Inuit youths' practical motivation to learn and maintain English.

Inuktitut, as the language of only 79,000 people, even if it is spoken in three countries (Dorais 1996a:57), offers limited possibilities for travelling and opening oneself up to the world. Inuit youth in Iqaluit recognise that more Inuktitut is spoken in the smaller Baffin Island communities, and as seen in Chapter Eight, sometimes use Inuktitut more when they travel to these communities. However, English is also used when travelling within the Baffin region, "P2. Like when I go to other communities...some communities they don't speak in Inuktitut so I have to use my English. Like when I went to Coppermine, I had to, we had to use English." Overall, mobility is rarely mentioned as a reason for valuing Inuktitut.

### 10.3 “Language of Community”

In terms of the practical value associated with Inuktitut and English in Baffin Island communities, Inuit youth value both languages as useful for socioeconomic advancement, as seen above. However, English tends to win out over Inuktitut as a language which is necessary to get a job, do a job and even get the education which facilitates subsequent access to desirable jobs/employment. Furthermore, English is also valued over Inuktitut as the language which provides mobility, allowing one to travel and access the world beyond Nunavut. In Chapter Nine, I showed that Inuktitut is largely valued due to its status as the individual’s first language and the language of Inuit tradition, history, culture, and to some extent, identity. However, to an even greater degree, Inuit youth value Inuktitut as the “language of community”. Inuktitut is the language that allows them to get their ideas across, to communicate within their communities, to participate in most aspects of community life and to effectively integrate as members of the community. English is also valued for similar reasons, but in a different way. English is generally valued as a language which allows Inuit youth to communicate specifically with Qallunaat in their communities. Also, use of English gives Inuit youth a sense of membership in a larger community, on a national and international scale.

#### 10.3.1 Inuktitut as the Language of Local Community

When asked in the interviews why Inuktitut is important, or useful, or what would change if the individual no longer spoke Inuktitut, Inuit youth frequently emphasize Inuktitut’s role as the first language of the community (although they may not use these words). The need or preference to speak Inuktitut in order to effectively communicate was touched upon briefly in Chapter Eight. In this section, the reasons why Inuit youth *value* Inuktitut are in line with the reasons already reported for why Inuit youth *use* Inuktitut, showing a link between language attitudes and language use.

As previously seen (Chapter Eight), Inuit youth are pragmatic in their reported motivations for language choice. They emphasize getting their message across.



Sometimes this pragmatism shines through when Inuit youth imply that the Inuktitut language is important for effective communication because it allows the expression of meanings that are less adequately conveyed in English:

R. Do you think if they could speak to you about it in Inuktitut that they would talk to you about it more?

D3. Yeah. I think that their feelings would be able to be better expressed and we would be able to pick the right words in Inuktitut to express their feelings.

D7. I guess sometimes you describe things like, *qiviq* there's no real translation for *qiviq*, it's like, haunting, or not haunting, like, upset and mad in a way, sometimes *qiviq*. It's kind of hard sometimes, but there is no real translation...So you just go with some words some words we can't describe.

D16. There would be times when I would get so frustrated, get all mixed up in French and English, everything, in the program... There'd be times when I'd just want to blurt right out in Inuktitut, this is what it means, you know, this is what it really means.

R. Is it important to you to speak Inuktitut?

P9. Yeah.

R. Why?

P9. It's my first language.

R. Are you more comfortable in it than in English?

P9. I'm more comfortable in Inuktitut to Inuit people, but it's fine with Qallunaat.

R. Do you find that you can express your feelings better in Inuktitut than in English?

P9. I think. 'Cause I have more proper words in Inuktitut than in English. Maybe because it's my first language. [... And] some Inuktitut words don't have any English.

I1. Some of the words in Inuktitut are quite hard to explain in English.

R. ...Are there other reasons...why you think [Inuktitut] is a good language?

I6. Because there's more meaning, you can say a lot more in a few words than in English you'd have to say a lot more words in order to be understood, but in Inuktitut they say less words.

R. ...Can you explain how Inuktitut is better?

17. Maybe the names and the other things like some Inuktitut words are not completely translated to other language. [...] Some of the meanings are lost.

In these cases, participants are not explicitly stating that they *value* Inuktitut because the language contains words to convey precise meanings which are unavailable in English. However, their comments imply that they value Inuktitut because it has this specific vocabulary, allowing them to effectively communicate.

Inuktitut is important to Inuit youth because it opens doors for communication. Frequently, Inuit youth say that they value Inuktitut for specific communicative situations, as will be seen below. However, some Inuit youth value Inuktitut as they would any other language, as a general tool for communication:

R. Can you explain why Inuktitut is important to you?

D5. For culture, communication.

[...]

D5. I don't think that Inuktitut will disappear because people believe in it.

R. How do you see proof that they believe in it?

D5. Communication, family, relationships.

R. Okay. In what ways is it good to learn Inuktitut and speak Inuktitut?

D6. Well, it's always good to have more than one language [...] and plus like if your family's Inuk, it's always good to have Inuktitut and to speak it and understand it. That's the only reason why I think Inuktitut's good, for me, anyways, because like for my, when I work and stuff it's all English, never Inuktitut.

In the quotations above, young Inuit express in very general terms that they value Inuktitut as a tool for communicating.

In some cases, Inuktitut is specifically required in order to favour smooth communication. Speaking with elders and about traditional activities has already been established as a domain in which Inuktitut is widely used (see Chapter Six). When asked about the value of Inuktitut, Inuit youth state specifically that it is important to them to speak Inuktitut *because* it is expected or required in this domain:

R. Is it important to speak Inuktitut to be able to communicate with people here in Iqaluit?

D1. Yeah. It is. Let's say, if I wanted to get some advice from my grandma, if she was still alive and I wanted to get some advice, I could speak to her, she'd want me to speak Inuktitut to her not *Qallunaatitut*.

[...]

D1. It can be. It can be more useful than the other. It can be. Say I was out on the land hunting, and I don't speak a word of Inuktitut...

R. Okay. So you said Inuktitut for you is mainly important for communicating with your family.

D6. Yeah.

R. And with elders.

D6. Mm hmm.

R. Can you, could you communicate with the elders if you didn't speak Inuktitut?

D6. I don't know. No, I don't think so. Well, some of them, very little know how to speak English, but...not too many elders, I don't think I'd be able to. If I didn't know how to speak Inuktitut.

[...]

R. That's true. Are there other things that Inuktitut is an asset for, other than getting a job?

D6. I think that just being able to speak it to your friends, and to your family and the elders is good.

R. So, keeping the Inuktitut language strong, is that important to you?

D16. Yes, it is, to me.

R. Why is it important to you?

D16. Well, first of all, I have good relationships with older guys, my mom's boyfriend, and grandparents and those are the people I'll go out camping with every year, and it's pretty much the only language they speak is Inuktitut and it's important for me to know, to be able to understand and speak it. I feel they would (get) so frustrated.

R. Would you say that Inuktitut or English is more important in Pangnirtung, or more useful in Pangnirtung?

P1. I would say Inuktitut, because of the elders. Most of the elders don't understand English here. So they can't talk in English.

R. Is one language more useful than the other in Pangnirtung? Inuktitut or English?

P2. For me it's Inuktitut, I don't know about others. Our family, Inuktitut. [...] My grandma she doesn't know how to speak in English, so we always have to speak to her in Inuktitut. That's why it's important for our family. So we can talk to her.

R. Do you think it's important for young people to speak Inuktitut?

P3. Yeah. Like, yeah, I think it is. To communicate, with their grandparents, they speak nothing but Inuktitut so they wouldn't be, well, so they could communicate.

R. How important is speaking Inuktitut to you, personally?

P5. Quite important. If I'm going to live here.

R. What makes it important?

P5. Being able to speak to my grandparents and family members.

[...]

R. Is it important to your grandparents that you speak Inuktitut?

P5. Yeah.

R. How come?

P5. To be able to understand.

R. Is speaking Inuktitut important to you?

I4. Yeah.

R. How come?

I4. It's my language and the elders – if we talk in English they wouldn't understand what we're talking about and we would have to translate it.

[...]

R. Do you think that it's important for young people to keep speaking Inuktitut?

I4. Yeah, I don't know. Yes and no. Maybe if they start talking in English more they wouldn't know how to explain it in Inuktitut when an elder asks them. Maybe that's the only problem. [...] Because the elders always ask some questions to the teenagers. Sometimes they don't know how to respond.

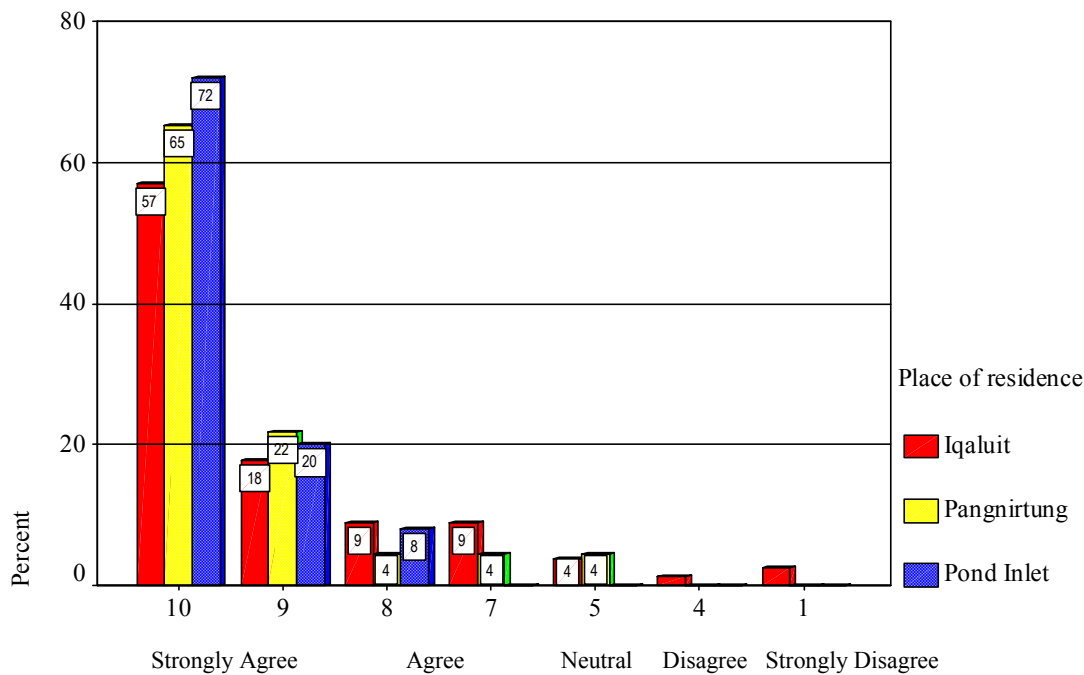
R. What happens then?

I4. They try.

Speaking to elders consistently leads to a communicative need for Inuktitut as Inuit youth accommodate the linguistic abilities or preference of the elders. The prevalence of comments to this regard shows that this importance of Inuktitut is a preoccupation among Inuit youth (Dorais 1995 and Dorais and Sammons 2002 also attest that the importance of Inuktitut is expressed, among other reasons, in terms of speaking to elders). As seen in Figure 37, almost all Inuit youth surveyed in Iqaluit (92.4%, 73/79), Pangnirtung (95.7%, 22/23) and Pond Inlet (100%, 25/25) agree or strongly agree with the statement, "*It is important to me to speak Inuktitut in order to communicate with my grandparents and/or other older Inuit.*"<sup>4</sup> Moreover, most of these respondents express strong agreement (Iqaluit mean = 8.89; Pangnirtung mean = 9.35; Pond Inlet mean = 9.64). The slightly

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 17

lower agreement in Iqaluit reflects the higher number of respondents with one Qallunaaq parent; the majority of respondents who disagree (71.4%, 5/7) have Qallunaat grandparents on one side.



**“It is important for me to speak Inuktitut in order to communicate with my grandparents and/or other older Inuit”**

**Figure 37: Communicative Value of Inuktitut**

Inuit youth acknowledge that other Inuit, beyond the elders, sometimes also prefer to speak in Inuktitut for practical or personal reasons. Inuit youth value Inuktitut as the “language of community” in order to interact with these individuals as well, considering Inuktitut the language of everyday life, speaking at home and around town:

R. Do you think that Inuktitut or English is more useful in Iqaluit? One or the other?

D3. Well, there’s. If you’re here to work for the government and stuff, you won’t need it, but if you’re here for people that have lived here a long time, then it’s important to speak with them, too.

R. Yeah. Overall, which one is more useful?

D7. If you’re talking about in town, Inuktitut. But you would need some English, for other things.

R. How else is [Inuktitut] important to you?

D9. Just everyday life.

R. Is one language more useful than the other here in Pangnirtung, Inuktitut or English?

P3. I'd say, Inuktitut. Like, a lot of people speak mostly Inuktitut here. Like teenagers, they speak English and Inuktitut, but mostly Inuktitut. But, like, others speak a lot of Inuktitut, and in the homes, in public...

[...]

R. Do you see evidence around you that people in Pangnirtung feel the same way as you, that Inuktitut is important?

P3. I'm pretty sure, that my friends would say that. 'Cause some of them, their parents can't speak English and they've got to communicate, so that would be pretty important.

R. Can you explain a little bit the importance of Inuktitut and the importance of English? Why each one is important?

P4. Inuktitut because I can, hear people talking...in Inuktitut, and trying to listen to them, it's interesting...

R. I wonder, is it important to speak Inuktitut?

P6. Yeah. It's important to me. Yeah.

R. What makes it important to you?

P6. You can speak to others. And learn about Inuktitut.

P7. Yeah, for me it is. Inuktitut is also important for me, at home or with friends or in the community.

[...]

R. Is Inuktitut or English, is one or the other more useful in Pangnirtung? What do you think?

P7. I'd say Inuktitut is, because most of the people here are, unlike other communities, for example, our community is mainly Inuktitut. So, our Inuktitut language is still pretty strong here.

R. Do you think that one language or the other, Inuktitut or English, is more useful in Pangnirtung?

P8. I'm not sure. Useful?

R. For communicating, for participating in the community? For getting a job? For?

P8. For participating in the community, I think Inuktitut.

R. Which language is more useful, English or Inuktitut, here in Pangnirtung?

P10. Inuktitut. (no hesitation)

R. How come?

P10. Because the majority of the people here speak Inuktitut and prefer to speak Inuktitut.

R. Is it important to you to speak Inuktitut?

I2. In some ways, yes. Like speaking with my family it's good. Other than that, not really that [important].

R. Do you think that Inuktitut or English, that one or the other is more useful in Pond Inlet?

I5. Inuktitut.

R. Why?

I5. Most of Inuit here, they speak Inuktitut.

R. Which do you think is more useful in Pond Inlet? English or Inuktitut?

I6. In the town, I think it's Inuktitut that is more useful because it's being used more often. And I don't know. I think it's better to speak in Inuktitut.

R. Yeah. How is Inuktitut language important to you?

I10. Very important. At home, I usually speak Inuktitut.

Inuktitut is a shared language. Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet are Inuit communities, and for some Inuit youth (especially in Pangnirtung) it is just normal and expectable to speak Inuktitut in them. The prevalence of comments explicitly stating that Inuktitut is important because it is the preferred language of communication among Inuit in the community (whether this reflects actual practice or not) shows how many Inuit youth consciously value Inuktitut because it is a practical, useful language.

The theme of valuing Inuktitut for pragmatic reasons, so that one can communicate within the community, is consistent throughout the interviews. In the preceding paragraphs, participants explicitly state that Inuktitut is practically important to them because it facilitates communication. The same idea is implied throughout most of the interviews, even when participants are not directly addressing the importance of Inuktitut. For example, some Inuit youth say that it is “good” to speak Inuktitut, because this favours understanding:

D1. It's good to communicate with people in their own language sometimes because some people don't all speak English, Inuk people, anyway, some people speak Inuktitut only, and it's good to speak both.

D4. In Inuktitut being able to go to an elder, an elder person and ask questions and just sit there and talk like we're talking with someone who doesn't speak...English.

D7. ...so they can understand me more I try to speak Inuktitut.

I3. Some [people my age] are talking English. Some of them talk in Inuktitut, too.

[...]

R. How do you feel when you hear them speak Inuktitut?

I3. I could understand more.

[...]

R. If you had to choose between only English or only Inuktitut, which would you choose?

I3. Inuktitut. [...] Because I would understand more.

R. And are there any other reasons why you speak Inuktitut with [older son] other than it's your language?

I5. No. Our relatives, they're all Inuit and he's always visiting them, playing with them. I want him to be able to speak English and Inuktitut, but I use Inuktitut most of the time with him.

I6. But when I'm writing to my parents, I would use Inuktitut. That's the only way they can really understand.

R. How come you want to use more Inuktitut?

I9. I don't know... Because, I like communicating with people in as much Inuktitut as possible, same with English. And, I'm not sure. Probably, mainly, I'm communicating. Mainly communicating.

[...]

I'd say, if you were to speak in Inuktitut only, then you communicate more with Inuit friends...

These Inuit youth favour Inuktitut because its use facilitates communication. Others talk about *needing* Inuktitut in order to communicate (without specifically saying that they value Inuktitut for this reason):

D2. ...Just so I keep it strong, being able to speak to relatives in Arctic Bay and stuff, I need Inuktitut.

R. Could you get by in town without Inuktitut?

D9. You could get by, but it's kind of hard? Yeah.

R. Who could you not speak to if you didn't speak Inuktitut?

D9. My Grandma.



P3. Problems? If I didn't speak Inuktitut? I don't know. If I went to go visit my grandma, and I spoke nothing but English, I'd have to have a translator, because she doesn't speak English. So that would be a problem.

R. What do you think would change, for example, if you went home and you started speaking English with your dad, only English, can you imagine that?

P4. No! (laugh) He wouldn't like. <No?> He wouldn't like it.

R. Would he say something?

P4. Mm hmm. Speak in Inuktitut. That's about it.

R. Do you think it would change your relationship?

P4. Yeah.

R. In which ways?

P4. We wouldn't be talking that much.

R. How would it change your relationship with your grandparents, if you only spoke in English?

P4. We wouldn't be talking anymore.

P9. [My boyfriend's parents] can't speak English, so we use Inuktitut all the time.

P10. [My sister] will have to learn [Inuktitut] one of these days, because if she goes anywhere with the elders, or Inuit elder ladies. Maybe they'll speak in Inuktitut to her.

R. What would change in your life if you didn't speak Inuktitut? At all.

I2. I wouldn't be able to be able to talk with my grandma. I would maybe need a translator.

I7. But for my grandpa I use Inuktitut language most of the time. <Mm hmm.> For my grandparents.

R. Do they speak English?

I7. No.

R. So what happens if you try to use English with them?

I7. They couldn't understand it.

These Inuit youth describe situations where Inuktitut is required in order to interact with other members of the community. When Inuit youth describe situations of communicative breakdown due to loss of Inuktitut, they are also indirectly pointing at the communicative value of Inuktitut for building community:

A4. [My friend] speaks only English. And when she visits her grandmother, they can't communicate. And it's just, I don't know, there's something missing.

R. Are there ever situations where you want to use Inuktitut but couldn't?  
 D5. Maybe when an elder is telling a story and I couldn't understand him. I could understand some of it, but not all of the words.

R. How did you feel when you came back and you couldn't remember very much of it?

P5. It sucked. I tried to talk to my friends and they'd speak Inuktitut and I wouldn't, I'd be able to understand them, but I wouldn't be able to speak to them.

P7. Well, my dad can't speak English and my mom can, so whenever there's something (happening) that my mom and I are talking about, we'll use parts of Inuktitut and parts of English and my dad would always say, "What are you saying? You don't have to, can't you say it all in Inuktitut?" And stuff like that.

Generally the explicit statements about Inuktitut being important for communicating focus on all participants being able to speak the same language. This focus on language choice to ensure communication was also seen in explanations of motivation for language choice (Chapter Eight). When participants say that they need to use Inuktitut in order to communicate, they are saying that Inuktitut has a practical, communicative value, showing their pragmatic focus.

In the preceding paragraphs, Inuit youth show how Inuktitut is valuable as the "language of community" in that it allows Inuit to communicate with one another. Some Inuit youth value Inuktitut as "*the Inuit way*" of communicating (as seen in Chapter Nine, under the heading "Tradition and History vs. Modernity"). Others specifically value the language itself, its vocabulary for example, as enabling them to convey their precise messages. For almost all Inuit youth surveyed, Inuktitut is important for communicating because it is a common language among Inuit. Using Inuktitut is valued because it allows most Inuit to understand, and its use conforms to communicative norms in certain situations.

Beyond getting one's linguistic message across, Inuit youth say that they also value Inuktitut as the language of community because, in using it, they create rapport with other Inuit, and integrate more fully as members of the community. Among many

Inuit youth interviewed, there is a feeling that Inuktitut is important because speaking Inuktitut brings Inuit closer together. For some, common use of Inuktitut strengthens the sense of community by increasing communication:

D2. Communication-wise, probably. It's probably another topic totally, but I used to be very quiet and shy and withdrawn and alone when I was younger. I was just kind of like, whatever, but I didn't really talk to anybody, really. I was just listening and listening and observing, whatever. But I'm sure I'd communicate more if I spoke Inuktitut, and if I just talked more in general, I would probably be better. Communication is always good.

R. What do you think it would change for you if you could speak Inuktitut?

D3. I could go to my dad's friends' house and speak with their wives and learn how to sew and learn what they thought was important and learn of their experiences of how they grew up and because their views, unilingual speakers are important and their experiences are important. Just so that it would help them feel that it's not, that their views are important even though the Nunavut government sort of is in the limelight and is very important in people's minds, that they're not just on the back burner, that they're important, too.

R. Any ideas how it changes things for Inuit, whether they speak Inuktitut or not, like, the difference between an Inuk who speaks Inuktitut really well, and an Inuk who doesn't speak Inuktitut very well, does it change things for them?

D11. Yeah, it's really hard. And wanting to connect with the elder, and you know somehow you know, they want to connect with you, but then again, there's a language barrier right there.

R. What would it change with your parents if you only spoke Inuktitut, if you never used English? [...] Would it change anything in the relationship or in the communication?

I9. Probably. I think it does, because we'd have more communication to elders if we know how to speak Inuktitut.

R. Why is it important to be able to speak to the elders?

I9. Like, when we have a problem, when I have a problem, I try and talk to an elder because we're both Inuit and the elder usually knows more about the problem than somebody who is white because they don't have the same problem as the way the elder did. Elders [have] gone through it, so, they'd probably know more about it. The white person would have, like, they could solve the problem, but when I go to an elder, they really know what I'm talking about, and they're in the same language.

Inuit youth know that they need to speak Inuktitut in order to communicate in certain spheres. In the quotations above, the speakers demonstrate how important it is to them to be *able* to communicate in these situations, for example how much they value communicating with elders. The strength of the desire to preserve and enhance communication with family and elders through use of Inuktitut rivals the compulsion to pursue English in order to have access to jobs and education and provides a strong motivation for maintenance and use of Inuktitut.

Speaking Inuktitut can also increase a sense of intimacy between some Inuit. This intimacy is a function of being able to speak to each other, but is nourished through a sense of sharing Inuktitut (a treasured heirloom, in a certain Inuk's words) as well:

R. Do you feel like that changed the way your relationship with your mom or your dad, that you use English with them?

D3. Yeah, it does, but. It does, just because it's not so Inuk anymore.

[...]

D3. Well, we just. They come from, I guess, the Inuk culture, I would almost sort of be in between, leaning more towards the white culture. Just not relating to one another deeply as Inuks? They don't speak to me about their experiences in Inuktitut of being out on the land, or just day-to-day things from their perspective because their first language is Inuktitut and not English.

R. Can you imagine in your relationship with your parents, if you went home and only spoke Inuktitut with them? Would that change your relationship?

D7. Yeah, I think so. Just, I bet, well I think we'd be closer. A bit closer.

D15. It almost brought [my mom and I] closer, after I learned how to do all that [Inuit drum dancing and singing], it's a lot. But I talked to her about all of the songs I learned and everything. So, it's excellent.

R. Can you be really close friends with someone who doesn't speak Inuktitut?

P2. No. No, I can't. I don't know why. It's very hard. It's very hard for me trying to speak English not at school, because most of the time I speak English only at school.

R. Has it changed anything in your relationship with your mom from when you spoke only English with her and now that you speak mostly Inuktitut, does that change anything in your relationship?

P10. She said it once. “You speak Inuktitut to me now. I’m so glad.”

Yeah, she said that.

[...] When we were living down South that changed and when she said that, I want to speak Inuktitut to my mom.

I6. ...I think [Inuit who don’t know how to speak Inuktitut] should try and learn Inuktitut, so they will be accepted more.

[...]

...So I think speaking in Inuktitut with our friends helps a lot and maybe if we keep using the language we won’t be shy to each other and help promote it and keep it.

Speaking Inuktitut favours communication, and thus a sense of community among Inuktitut-speakers in the community. For many Inuit, Inuktitut is a shared language; sometimes it seems like a prized possession that creates a sense of intimacy when Inuit “take it out” and share it.

At the same time, language experiences remain individual, as seen throughout the research results. For some young Inuit, Inuktitut is not particularly important for building community in the broadest sense. One individual says that Inuktitut is not that important because almost everyone he speaks to regularly uses English anyway:

D6. Yeah, see, that’s what I mean. Like, in a sense, I’m not putting the Inuktitut language down or anything, you know, like, I want it to stay alive in a sense, but it’s not really needed, I don’t think. Because most of the Inuit students here, mostly speak Inuktitut, like you notice, I mean speak English, like you notice.

Another individual says it does not matter if others use only English, because he can understand English as well (although he quickly follows up by giving reasons why Inuktitut is important to him, personally):

R. Is it a problem that the teenagers don’t speak Inuktitut?

P3. Well, I don’t have a problem with it, because I can speak a little bit of English. I don’t have a problem with that.

A few others say that they maintain (or believe that they would maintain) the same level of relationship with other people in their lives (family or friends) regardless of the

language used. Thus, next to a general feeling that use of Inuktitut builds a sense of community, there is an accompanying ambivalence among a minority of Inuit youth about the relative necessity of Inuktitut to play this role in the community.

As mentioned previously, Inuit sometimes purposefully use Inuktitut as a “secret language”. This is another way that speaking Inuktitut can create a sense of belonging by including or excluding certain people from the conversation. As seen in Chapter Eight, language choice can be motivated by a desire to mark the speaker or the listener’s identity as an Inuk, enhancing community by emphasizing sameness. In the explicit value Inuit youth attribute to Inuktitut, these roles played by Inuktitut to create a sense of intimacy, sameness and belonging are evident. In these cases, a direct link appears between the language attitudes, where Inuktitut is valued as a “language of community” and language use, where Inuktitut is used to shape community.

Some of the quotations above allude to the poignant consequences that language loss can have on the sense of community during a time of rapid language loss, such as is occurring in Iqaluit. In Iqaluit, a minority of Inuit are monolingual, either in Inuktitut (elders) or English (children and youth). Sometimes these monolinguals have difficulty bridging the language gap to continue communicating and building relationships. The communication breakdown, social breakdown and language loss are interrelated, and are in themselves significant problems in these communities. The problem of the relationship between language breakdown, communication breakdown and social breakdown would merit investigation in future studies.

Another way in which use of Inuktitut builds a sense of community in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet is that speaking Inuktitut is taken as a sign of respect to other Inuit. The respect shown by using Inuktitut is made explicit by a few participants:

R. Okay. What would change if you tried to use English?

D4. Like, communication, just wouldn’t be the same...I’ll just see my grandparents in a really confused look on their face or disgusted? [...] It’s just no respect if you speak English in the house with other Inuit there

when you're an Inuk. Like some people just don't have exceptions to that. My grandparents are one of those people.

Using Inuktitut is a means of being respectful to certain Inuit, especially elders, the lack of which could rupture communication.

In this section, quotations from Inuit youth have shown how they value Inuktitut as the language of community. Knowing and using Inuktitut is vital to young Inuit in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet in order to work out and maintain their place in and connection to the collectivity. In the following section, comments about the value of Qallunaat knowing and using Inuktitut further underline the importance of Inuktitut as the language of the local community.

### **10.3.2 Qallunaat's Use of Inuktitut**

This thesis focuses primarily on Inuit youths' perceptions of their own linguistic competence and use, and the value they attribute to Inuktitut and English for their own lives, in order to understand needs and possibilities for language planning in Nunavut. Nonetheless, it is also significant to remark at this point that some Inuit youth consider that Inuktitut is a valuable tool for Qallunaat as well, facilitating their communication and integration into the community. According to some, Qallunaat, as well as Inuit, benefit from speaking Inuktitut in order to communicate with certain Inuit:

D15. ...[A particular Qallunaat] can understand [Inuktitut], he can have a regular conversation with an elder...  
[...] He had to learn [Inuktitut] if he wanted to communicate with us pretty much.

I7. Maybe it's a good thing that Qallunaat learn Inuktitut, so they won't have to ask lot of questions what they mean. For example, if the teacher stayed over 20 years and when the students says something in Inuktitut and the teacher can understand it and if they say something bad to the teacher in Inuktitut and the teacher understands it someone who said Inuktitut bad for the teacher, and the teacher could punish them.

I9. I have a few friends who are Qallunaat, there's this guy who is pure English and he knows a lot of Inuktitut words, so if I don't understand a

word in English, or if I can't really explain, I just say it in Inuktitut, so. We have a better communication because of that.

Speaking in Inuktitut gives Qallunaat communicative access to monolingual elders. It also allows Qallunaat to follow and participate in conversations taking place in Inuktitut. Another way in which Qallunaat knowing Inuktitut favours communication, as I9 suggests, is that bilingual Inuit and Qallunaat together can maximise the communicative potential of both languages, in order to conveniently communicate and fully convey their meaning. These Inuit youth explain once again, in a different way, the importance of Inuktitut for enhancing communication and, as a result, building relationships, suggesting that Qallunaat *should* be motivated to learn Inuktitut.

Inuit youth also consider that Inuktitut is a valuable tool for Qallunaat because those who speak Inuktitut may be considered more likable or easier to get along with, favouring their integration into the community:

R. How do you think it affects [a certain Qallunaat]'s life that he speaks Inuktitut? Or how does it affect your relationship with him?

A4. He's easier to get along with because right away...it shows his character. Like him speaking Inuktitut shows that he worked really hard to learn it because you know he didn't learn it anywhere else. He had to come up here [...] he must have had to have worked really hard, to work with the people and really do his homework, right. [...] So, right away you know that he's a hard worker and that he really cares and that he really wants to know and speak and learn the language that we speak and it's kind of a sign of respect to us. I don't know. But. When, right away, if he's working with an Inuk, because he works at [Inuit organisation], so he's dealing with Inuit, I'm sure ...If, when he talks to the Inuit I'm sure right away they warm up to him and they're more comfortable, as opposed to somebody who comes in and they're like, "blah blah blah" in English. And then the Inuk a lot of times kind of shies away and they feel intimidated by this big, corporate, white guy whose trying to, "I'm trying to serve you" or, I don't know. So that's what I'm saying about a white person coming into the North and actually learning Inuktitut right away you're going to feel more comfortable with them, whatever. You asked what difference that makes, so. It makes a big difference.

R. How do you feel about those Qallunaat who speak Inuktitut?

D7. Excellent! They're awesome. I think they're awesome. It's good that they know the language.



D17. ...It shouldn't be mandatory [for Qallunaat to learn Inuktitut], but you know, at least they should make an effort, or...express an interest to learn, to be able to understand a few words, and whatnot.

R. Do you think it makes a difference, to how they're accepted, or how they integrate?

D17. Yeah. It makes a lot of difference, I find, in how they will be respected within the community, anyway, with the Inuit population. And it's, you know, it impresses them and it kind of makes them feel as part of the community more than an outsider. Because there is a lot of that, when you look around, a lot of people feel very negatively towards white, even up to today, because of what has happened before, that, you know, it could change, if people made an effort. I think it would be good and they would be more accepted...I am not saying it would make a world of difference, but at least, that they have that respect with each other, and for the community and for the language.

I6. Yeah. I find it, when I hear people, Qallunaats speaking Inuktitut I find it, like, it sounds good and I tend to respect those people more than people that don't try. So, I think, Inuit, when they hear somebody try and speak Inuktitut, they start respecting that person more often and if they keep trying and they learn Inuit culture too, then they respect that person and they can talk to him more easily in the Inuktitut language. [...] And I've noticed it too, because Qallunaat people when they start speaking the language, Inuktitut language, and start learning the culture, the Inuit tend to like them more and help them, too and respect them.

These young Inuit say that they respect Qallunaat who learn Inuktitut. They are more inclined to encourage and accept a Qallunaat's place in their community when that Qallunaat speaks Inuktitut. Qallunaat speaking Inuktitut favours integration because it allows increased communication and it makes Qallunaat more appealing in the eyes of some Inuit. Some young Inuit are also more accepting of Qallunaat who learn Inuktitut because they consider it a sign of respect to them and commitment to Inuit communities when Qallunaat learn "their" language:

D2. I don't know. I see it in both ways, I guess. Like, some people, if you're a foreigner, some people will respect you more, I guess, when they observe that you try to make an effort and speak their language and some people take it into offence that you're trying to speak their language, that you're not saying it right, or you know, they'll look down on you. I think it's good. Yeah, I think we should all have Inuktitut language anyway.

D17. Well, yeah, it's up to them whether or not they are going to make the effort to understand. It's just, I find, if you're going to stay within a northern community where the majority of the population is Inuit, you know, you should at least make an effort to kind of understand or respect the language that they speak and the traditions that they have.

[...]

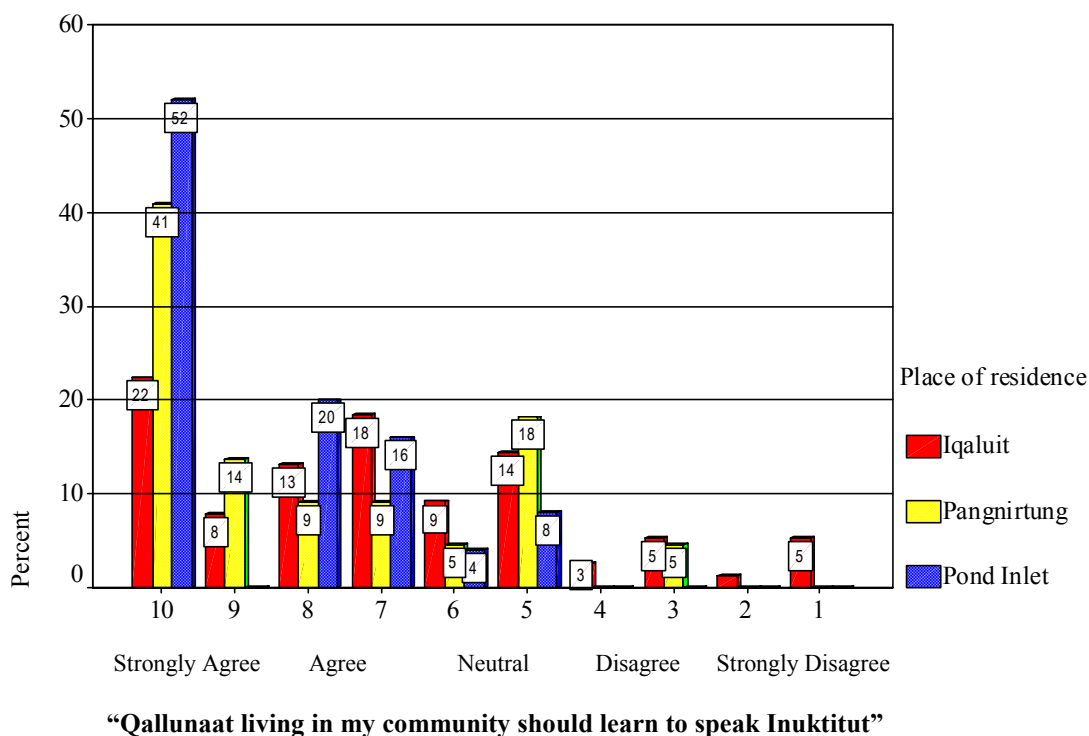
R. So Qallunaat learning Inuktitut is kind of a sign of respect? A question of respect?

D17. I really, yeah, I think so. And it shows them, well, it shows the people that, you're interested in learning what's around you, your environment. It kind of gives you a signal that, to say, you know, "I'm not only here to make money, but I'm here to also live and whatnot."

Even if many young Inuit appreciate and consider it valuable when Qallunaat learn Inuktitut in order to integrate into the community, some nuance their comments. In certain cases the qualification alludes to Qallunaat not really *needing* Inuktitut to function in most areas of the community. In other cases, the hesitation refers back to Inuktitut's place as the *Inuit* language that is used to create a sense of community and intimacy among Inuit, by limiting "outside" access to certain conversations. As seen in Figure 38, young Inuit tend to agree with the statement, "*Qallunaat living in my community should learn to speak Inuktitut*" (overall mean = 7.44),<sup>5</sup> with significant differences between communities ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). Agreement is stronger in the smaller communities (Pangnirtung mean = 8, Pond Inlet mean = 8.56). Relatively weaker agreement in Iqaluit (mean = 6.91) may reflect the widespread use of English, and the large percentage of the population who are Qallunaat, diminishing the communicative need for Inuktitut.

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 44



**Figure 38: Perceived Value of Inuktitut for Qallunaat**

Overall, in young Inuit’s comments, Inuktitut emerges as the “language of community” for Inuit and Qallunaat alike in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet.

Inuit youths’ attitudes about whether or not it is valuable and desirable for Qallunaat to speak Inuktitut are relevant to discussions of language promotion. At a most fundamental level, the fact that Inuit youth believe that Qallunaat in their communities benefit from knowing Inuktitut confirms that Inuit youth consider Inuktitut a useful and vital language. Inuktitut is not *just* the language of Inuit tradition and culture. Inuktitut is valued as a language which contributes to the health and vitality of Baffin Island communities. Moreover, the value Inuit youth attribute to Qallunaat knowing Inuktitut suggests an element of resistance to the *status quo*. At the moment, Inuit youth use predominantly English when speaking with Qallunaat (see Chapter Seven), and quotations below will show that English is to some extent valued as a “language of community” for this reason. However, if the motivation to use Inuktitut as a language which builds community can be spread among other Inuit and Qallunaat alike, if

Qallunaat learn Inuktitut and are encouraged in these pursuits by Inuit, then greater use of Inuktitut throughout the community may be encouraged. Greater use of Inuktitut throughout the community is integral to the preservation and promotion of the language.

Furthermore, the comments from Inuit youth stating that Qallunaat should learn and use Inuktitut may suggest favourable possibilities for integration and community growth. The comments may reflect a willingness to recognise Qallunaat as members of the community. Qallunaat are evidently not held to the same standard of Inuktitut knowledge and use as Inuit ascribe to themselves, and yet there is some overlap in the expectations of Qallunaat and Inuit as members of the same community, as expressed in the above quotations. The willingness and desire for Qallunaat to learn Inuktitut could be favourable for the promotion of Inuktitut, but on a larger scale may also be beneficial for promoting harmonious relations in the community.

Inuktitut is valued as a tool for maintaining and building community in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet. As long as Inuktitut remains strong in the communities, residents will have a communicative and integrative need for Inuktitut. The value attributed to Inuktitut as the “language of community” enhances its use. As long as Inuktitut is used, it will remain strong.

### **10.3.3 English as a *Lingua Franca***

Nonetheless, Inuit communities are clearly bilingual. Even if many Inuit youth, as cited above, consider it normal and appropriate to frequently use Inuktitut in various situations in their community, their behaviour shows that they frequently consider it necessary or appropriate to use English as well. All of the communities have some residents who are monolingual in English, including most of the Qallunaat (almost half of Iqaluit’s population) and some Inuit, particularly in Iqaluit. Moreover, full participation and integration in these communities, as they exist today, entails interaction within institutions that were imported from Southern Canada along with the English language. Even though Inuit youth report that they can use both Inuktitut and English in such

domains (work, government, etc.), their comments indicate that English is, alongside Inuktitut, an important language for communication, participation and integration in the community.

English is valued pragmatically, as is Inuktitut. Inuit youth are quoted above expressing the importance of Inuktitut in terms of its place as a common, shared language among Inuit in the communities. English cannot rival the *personal* value of Inuktitut as a shared language, increasing intimacy through its use (except perhaps in the instances where one parent is anglophone). However, English is the common language of most residents of the Inuit communities studied (especially in Iqaluit where there are proportionately more Qallunaat). It is a *lingua franca* within the communities as well as beyond.

The importance of English as a national and international *lingua franca*, enabling Inuit youth to integrate into “Canadian” society and communicate beyond the borders of their communities has already been discussed under the headings “Tradition and History versus Modernity” (Chapter Nine), “Socioeconomic Advancement” and “Travel” (above). Using English is sometimes necessary in order to “expand communication” in D2’s words, whether with other Inuit, with people coming in from outside the community, or with Qallunaat residents in the community. Many participants explicitly say that they value English because this is a language that everyone, Inuit and non-Inuit alike, understands:

R. What does speaking English signify for you or why is English important?

D2. Because the majority of the earth’s population understands English, I guess. Just to expand communication, and interaction, I guess. Yeah. Because where I work that’s the language I speak to do be able to do my job and half my friends are English-speaking, half the people I know are English-speaking. So, it’s important that way, for communication, I guess.

R. How about English? Is English important to you?

D5. English is important because that’s the way it is around the world.

R. Okay, how about English? Is English important to you?

D9. Yeah, it is, very important.

R. How so?

D9. I don't know, because everybody, the majority of what people say is English.

R. What would you say is the most important reason why you use English in town?

D10. Why?

R. Like, you just said, when you're talking to people who don't speak Inuktitut, you have to use English. Would that be the most important reason, or are there other reasons?

D10. Just so they can understand, you know, what I have to say to them, or, you know, when they talk to me and ask...and I have to answer them, so. And the only language we both understand is English, so, there's no choice.

[...]

R. Why don't you want to lose English?

D10. I don't know. I just, it's just English, I don't know. It's what I use to communicate with other people...It's English, you know, everybody speaks English, you know.

[...]

And I want [my future children] to learn both French and Inuktitut...and then English we know, everybody speaks English, so they can communicate with everybody, so.

R. Is English important to you for any reason?

P1. Yeah. Most of the world is English, so you have to know it.

R. Why is it important to you to teach [your children] English?

I3. Because if they start, *ila*, if they started to have a visitor, and if it's a Qallunaat or an Inuk, they have to learn, they have to talk English.

R. What do people in Pond Inlet need English for?

I6. Maybe...other people come in they could be understood more.

I10. For travelling, explaining things to somebody. And meeting people. Like when I meet somebody I'll usually speak in English, because I don't know if they speak in Inuktitut or not.

English is required to communicate. While Inuktitut is very useful within Inuit communities, English is perceived as useful around the world. Even within Inuit communities, English is required to communicate with Qallunaat residents or visitors, and even Inuit who do not speak Inuktitut.

Reports of motivations for language choice, seen in Chapter Eight, also show how using English can be useful to create a sense of community by increasing communication. Many participants, as previously quoted, use English in mixed company in order to accommodate everyone in the conversation:

D4. Like if I don't know that there's someone there that doesn't understand Inuktitut, if I don't know that, I'll just speak English...You know, it's just a matter of trying to keep everyone in the conversation?

Inuit youth sometimes imply, through their comments and through their bilingual speech behaviour, that using English facilitates communication even among Inuit fluent in Inuktitut, helping them to get their message across most effectively:

R. Yeah. Can you imagine what it would change for you if you only spoke Inuktitut?

I9. I'd have less communication with other people. With friends...I could have a fairly good conversation with a friend, but not as much as if I was speaking English...

R. Even with your Inuit friends, you need English?

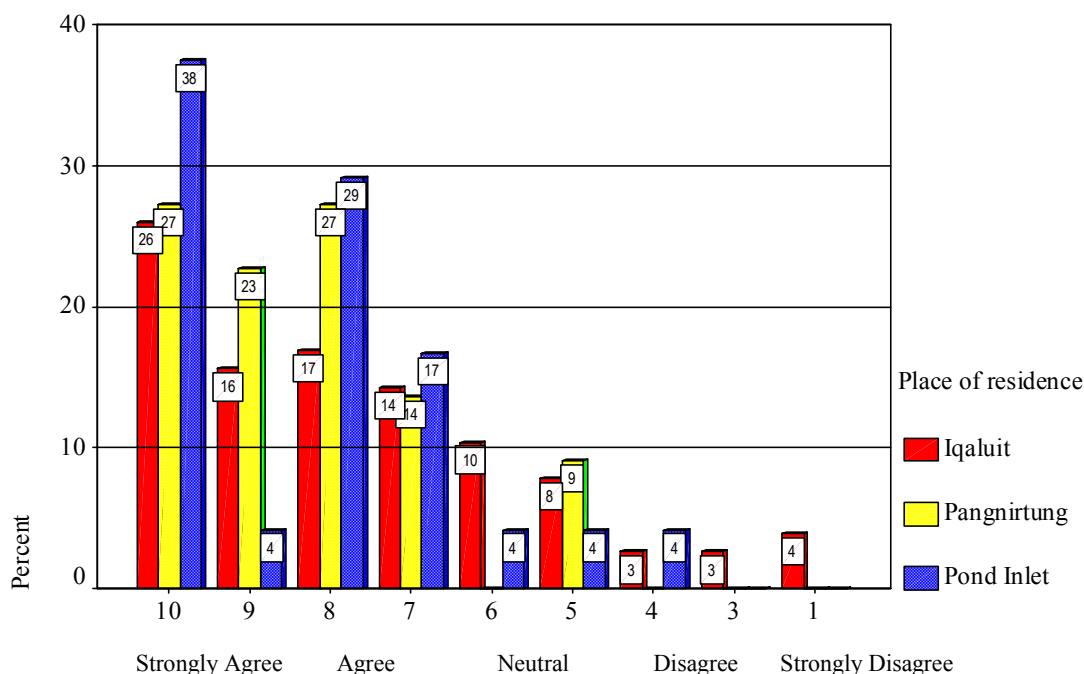
I9. Yeah. Because some of them, they don't understand, they...can't find the words in Inuktitut, so they just speak in English. Or, when they can't find the English word or we just use a Inuktitut. Fairly important language, I'd say.

Here, I9 suggests, indirectly, that bilingualism is really the most effective tool for enhancing communication.

English is valued by some Inuit youth as a “language of community”. Use of English enhances Inuit youths’ communication, participation and integration in certain realms, especially those involving Qallunaat. As seen in Figure 39, respondents tend to agree (and 43.1% [53/123] strongly agree) with the statement, “*English is important to me in order to be able to speak to Qallunaat*”.<sup>6</sup> Agreement is strongest in Pangnirtung (mean = 8.36) and Pond Inlet (mean = 8.25), but is evident in all three communities (Iqaluit mean = 7.58; overall mean = 7.85).

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 27



“English is important to me in order to be able to speak to Qallunaat”

**Figure 39: Communicative Value of English**

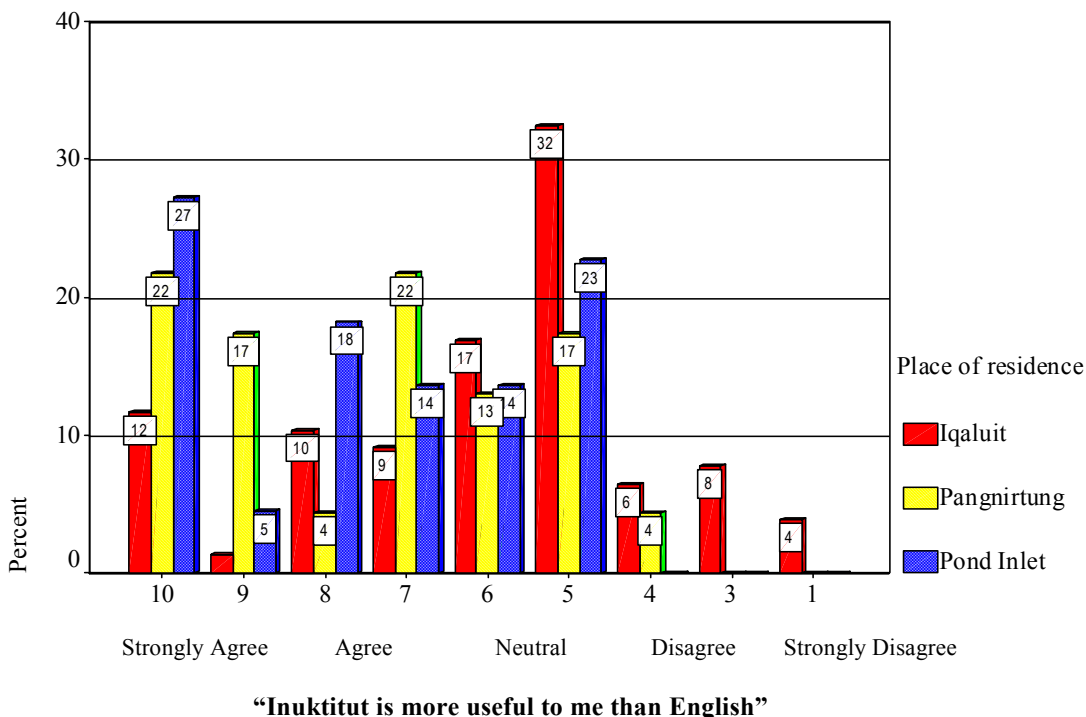
In summary, it is evident that Inuit youth need a language other than Inuktitut in order to function outside of their home communities, and even to a certain degree within their communities. However, Inuktitut is strongly valued locally as the “language of community”. This contrast emphasizes the tension in Inuit communities between maintenance of Inuktitut and maintenance of English. Inuit youth want both languages. The difficulty in balancing motivations to use and maintain both languages, though, is seen in the decreasing levels of Inuktitut use, due in part to the perception of English as a ‘necessary’ language and of Inuktitut as a ‘desirable’ language.

#### 10.4 General Perceived Usefulness of Inuktitut and English

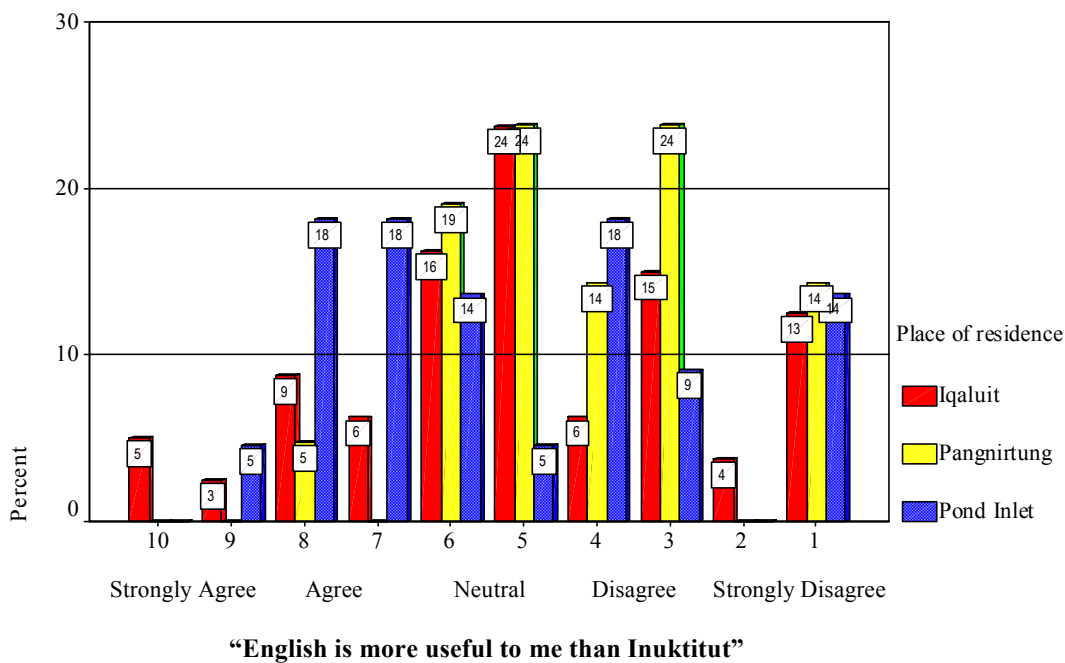
Among bilingual Inuit youth in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, personal, symbolic or sentimental attachment to a language is usually reserved for Inuktitut. However, both Inuktitut and English are valued as useful and practical languages in the community. This shared practical value of both Inuktitut and English is confirmed in



reactions to the closed questionnaire statements, “*Inuktitut is more useful to me than English*” and “*English is more useful to me than Inuktitut*”, seen in Figures 40 and 41.<sup>7</sup>



**Figure 40: Relative Usefulness of Inuktitut**



**Figure 41: Relative Usefulness of English**

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, questions 20 and 30, respectively

In general, Inuit youth hesitate to say that either Inuktitut or English is more useful than the other language, as seen in the high number of responses around “neutral” (five or six on the ten point scale). This hesitation may reflect, in part, the pragmatism of Inuit youth; their tendency is to say that it does not really matter which language you speak, as long as you can get your message across:

R. Is one language more important than the other language?

D2. No. Just as long as you can get your word across, I think any language is okay.

R. Is one language more useful than the other language?

D2. I don't think so. If you could explain...Just as long as you understand what they're saying.

Although many Inuit youth hesitate to say that Inuktitut or English is more useful, when forced to choose, more say that Inuktitut is more useful to them than English than the reverse, as seen in Figures 41 and 42, above. In the smaller communities, the relatively higher practical value attributed to Inuktitut is most prevalent ( $p \geq 0.001$ ). In Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet, respondents tend to agree with the statement, “*Inuktitut is more useful to me than English*” (Pangnirtung mean = 7.43, Pond Inlet mean = 7.5), whereas in Iqaluit, responses are grouped around the neutral point (mean = 5.92). In comparison, statements about the relative usefulness of English show that it, too, is considered useful, but not necessarily more useful than Inuktitut. Reactions to the statement, “*English is more useful to me than Inuktitut*” are mixed in all three communities, with responses in Iqaluit and Pond Inlet showing ambivalence (Iqaluit mean = 4.93; Pond Inlet mean = 5.32), while respondents from Pangnirtung tend to disagree (mean = 4.14). Although 40.1% (9/22) of Pond Inlet respondents agree that English is more useful than Inuktitut, this agreement should be interpreted as English being more useful in certain contexts only, and Inuktitut being generally more useful, as seen in the stronger agreement that Inuktitut is more useful than English, seen above. Overall, these results underline the importance that Inuit youth confer on Inuktitut; Inuit youth are giving the message that Inuktitut is a useful language for them because they value the interactions that take place in Inuktitut.

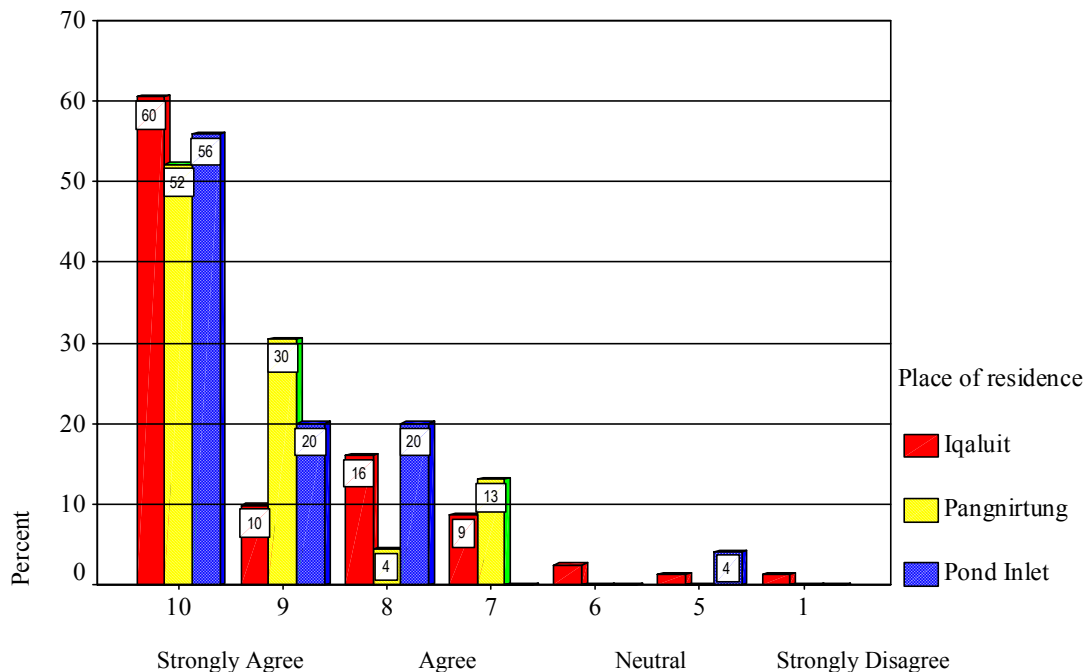
These results add a nuance to results previously reported for Inuit communities. Dorais' earlier results, for example, emphasize the symbolic, or sentimental value of Inuktitut next to the practical value of English, "As far as language is concerned, a majority of the Eastern Arctic Aboriginal people seem to view the Inuktitut/English dichotomy...as one opposing identity and practicability" (1995:303). Dorais and Sammons (2002) also found that Inuktitut was largely valued for symbolic reasons (identity), and less so for practical reasons, although they predict that the practical value of Inuktitut will increase in the context of Nunavut. Their prediction to date seems to be holding true. The current results, while in agreement with the importance of Inuktitut for identity and of English for wider communication, add a pragmatic emphasis; Inuktitut is a practical and valued "language of community". Inuktitut may not be valued as a useful language beyond the community, but this fact should not undermine how much Inuit youth value Inuktitut for acting out their membership in the community (and for that matter, how much they value their community, within which they use Inuktitut). This emphasis could be very pertinent, as Fishman (2001), drawing together the results from threatened languages internationally, underlines that valuing and using the ancestral language as the language of the immediate community is exactly the kind of motivation and action needed for language maintenance.

Furthermore, as seen above, Inuktitut is granted a certain importance for securing jobs. It would be interesting to test in further research whether the pragmatic emphasis noted in this study is characteristic of the age group in question (18 to 25 year olds), or really shows an increasingly practical value attributed to Inuktitut.

Finally, regardless of the exact reason why Inuktitut is valued, there is almost absolute consensus among Inuit youth in all three communities that Inuktitut is important for Inuit youth. Respondents tend to strongly agree with the statement, "*I think that it is important for young Inuit to speak Inuktitut*" (Iqaluit mean = 9.05; Pangnirtung mean = 9.22; Pond Inlet mean = 9.20), as seen in Figure 42.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 35



**“I think that it is important for young Inuit to speak Inuktitut”**

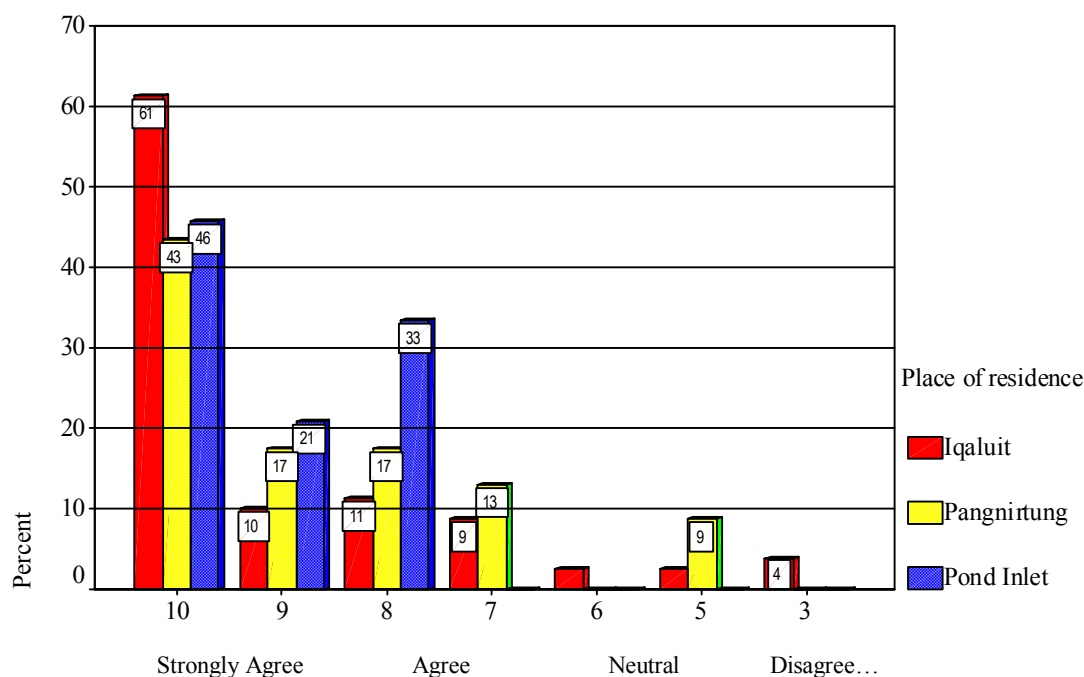
**Figure 42: Perceived Importance for Young Inuit to Speak Inuktitut**

At least in their conscious statements, Inuit youth say that they value Inuktitut. Attempts to promote Inuktitut can use this existing appreciation of the importance of and desire for Inuktitut as a starting point.

Inuit youth say that they value Inuktitut for diverse reasons and are committed to maintaining their ancestral language. However, there is no evidence that Inuit youth would support an initiative that would promote Inuktitut to the detriment of English. Although Inuit youth do perceive that the threat to Inuktitut, both at a personal and a societal level, is due to the increasing presence of English (see Chapters Five and Eight), they do not speak about “too much English”. Both Inuktitut and English are valued, as has been seen above, and Inuit youth desire to maintain both languages in a stable bilingualism. This desire is reflected in strong agreement with the closed questionnaire statement, “*It is best to be bilingual (know how to speak both Inuktitut and English),*”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 31

(Iqaluit mean = 8.93; Pangnirtung mean = 8.65; Pond Inlet mean = 9.13). The high consensus across communities that bilingualism is desirable is seen in Figure 43.



**“It is best to be bilingual (know how to speak both Inuktitut and English)”**

**Figure 43: Desire for Bilingualism**

No one in the sample population is arguing for English or Inuktitut monolingualism. Inuit youth aspire to bilingualism, and language planning should search for a way to favour stable bilingualism. Part of maintaining Inuktitut in the face of increasing pressure to transfer to English involves emphasizing and enhancing the value of Inuktitut in the eyes of Inuit youth.

This chapter, along with the previous chapter, has shown that Inuit youth have many different reasons for valuing Inuktitut and English. Inuktitut is important because it is the mother tongue; the language of Inuit tradition, culture and identity; a “fun” language; a language that is being lost; a useful language for getting a job; and an effective tool for participating and integrating in the community. English is important because it is a “cool” language, the language of the new millennium that allows Inuit youth to travel, get an education, get jobs, and participate in their local communities and

beyond. Inuit youth are strongly motivated to maintain both Inuktitut and English. They need both languages in order to pursue their aspirations of making the best of all worlds that they are now exposed to. The challenge is to find a way to balance conflicting motivations in order to achieve, or maintain, stable bilingualism. The bilingualism in Pangnirtung described in this study most closely reflects what could be considered a stable Inuktitut-English situation. More research is needed to describe (even imagine) what a stable Inuktitut-English bilingualism could look like throughout Nunavut.

## CONCLUSION

### **Language Attitudes as a Basis for Language Planning**

In the preceding chapters, I have discussed Inuit youths' perceptions of the needs and possibilities for language planning under three different lights: language competence, language use and language attitudes. In Chapter Five, I showed that Inuit youth, especially in Iqaluit, tend to see a need for language planning because their competence in Inuktitut is neither as good as it could be, nor as good as it used to be. At the same time, discussions of language competence show a strong base for language promotion, as most Inuit youth are still fluent speakers of Inuktitut and wish to maintain or regain high levels of fluency in their mother tongue. In much the same way, discussions of language use in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight indicate a need for language planning in that Inuit youth are using increasing amounts of English, even where they could use, and used to use, Inuktitut. Meanwhile, the accepted and frequent use of Inuktitut alongside English in almost every domain, along with the expressed desire of many Inuit youth to use Inuktitut frequently, indicates that promotion of greater use of Inuktitut throughout the community should be feasible. Comments about the importance of Inuktitut and English presented in Chapters Nine and Ten also suggest a strong foundation for the promotion of Inuktitut among Inuit youth, as Inuit youth consciously value Inuktitut for a number of reasons.

Perceived language competence, language use and language attitudes are interrelated, as has been suggested in each chapter describing the current language situation of Inuit youth. Language attitudes shape the real and perceived need for language planning in that they affect an individual's perceived linguistic competence as well as decisions to use Inuktitut (or not) in various settings. Language attitudes may also

direct language planning as they illuminate possibilities for and benefits (or potential dangers) of intervening on a given linguistic situation. In this thesis, I have considered language attitudes as providing a foundation for language planning. The relationship between Inuit youths' experience of the current linguistic reality in their communities, the value that they attribute to Inuktitut and English and their desires for the linguistic future in their communities, as evidenced in interview and questionnaire data, is summarised below.

### **Language Competence and Language Attitudes**

In some ways, language competence affects language attitudes. As alluded to in previous chapters, some young Inuit's feelings about Inuktitut are influenced by how well they feel that they speak Inuktitut. For many, the relationship between competence in Inuktitut and feelings about Inuktitut is entirely positive. As seen in Chapter Nine (Symbolic Value), speaking Inuktitut well can be a source of pride. Some Inuit youth who speak Inuktitut well express pride in the language itself (e.g. it is fun to speak). Others express personal pride in knowing something valuable and unique, that not everyone knows. Other competent Inuktitut-speakers express pride based on what they can do with Inuktitut, specifically teaching Inuktitut to others. These positive language attitudes are rooted in the individual's perceived ability to speak Inuktitut well. The pride in Inuktitut is a direct and indirect motivator to use Inuktitut and also shapes young Inuit's desire to keep Inuktitut.

At the same time, perceived high levels of competence in Inuktitut can also lead to complacency, which may quell initiatives to promote Inuktitut. As seen in Chapter Five, perceived competence in Inuktitut is high in Pangnirtung. Inuit youth in Pangnirtung also express the highest degrees of ambivalence regarding the need for initiatives to promote Inuktitut:

R. So is the promotion of language or the importance of language something that you think about...?

P4. Not very often.



[...]

R. Do you see anyone trying to do anything to make sure that Inuit don't lose Inuktitut in Pangnirtung?

P4. I haven't seen anything. I don't see any changes or any, I don't see any problem.

R. ...Do you think it's important to promote Inuktitut?

P5. Yeah.

R. How do you think the government should promote it?

[...]

P5. I'd say, here, it seems okay. There's Inuktitut classes in the high school.

R. ...Do you think anything needs to be done here in Pangnirtung to make sure the same thing [transfer to English] doesn't happen?

P7. Maybe not here in Pang, but maybe not now, but, maybe somewhere down the line. Something will need to be done.

R. So is the promotion of Inuktitut something that you hear a lot about in Pangnirtung?

P8. Not really. [...] I don't think it's something a lot of people think about, including care about.

R. Is that because there's not a problem, or?

P8. I don't know. It's just something they don't think about.

Such expressions of ambivalence are widespread in Pangnirtung. Responses to the closed questionnaire statement, "Nothing needs to be done right now in my community in order to preserve Inuktitut"<sup>1</sup> indicate ambivalence in both Pangnirtung (mean = 4.83) and Pond Inlet (mean = 4.68). Inuit youth in Iqaluit, in contrast, are significantly more engaged in their desire to see actions taken to preserve Inuktitut (mean = 2.97;  $p \geq 0.05$ ).

The sense of security expressed in Pangnirtung (and in the closed questionnaires, also Pond Inlet) is only negative if the situation is not as stable as the speakers believe it to be. Perceived stability in an unstable situation could lead to unnoticed language loss as seen in the described experiences of Iqaluit youth (Chapter Five). In contrast to the complacency of Pangnirtung participants, numerous participants from Iqaluit bemoan their loss of Inuktitut, saying that they used to speak Inuktitut very well, but that they lost it before they even realized what was happening. As such, it would seem appropriate, as a

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C, Part three, question 57

first step in language promotion, to sensitise Inuit to how quickly their peers have experienced language loss. Even if the current generation speaks Inuktitut fluently, socioeconomic pressures to transfer to English are strong. It may be helpful to safeguard against complacency even if current levels of competence in Inuktitut are high.

In contrast, comments about competence in Iqaluit, and to a lesser degree in Pond Inlet, show how perceived decreasing levels of competence can positively impact language attitudes in some ways. Inuit youth in Iqaluit and Pond Inlet, as seen in Chapter Five, are less secure than their counterparts in Pangnirtung in their abilities to speak Inuktitut. However, they are also more vocal than their peers in Pangnirtung as to the value of Inuktitut. Some specifically say that they value Inuktitut because it is being lost at a societal level. Many suggest that losing competence in Inuktitut has made them realise how important Inuktitut is to them. Among most of the participants in Iqaluit, recognition of personal language loss seems to have led to a desire to learn and maintain Inuktitut (as seen in Chapter Five). In this way, lower levels of competence can also have a positive impact on language attitudes.

Perceived lower levels of competence can have a negative impact on language attitudes as well, although this reaction is not frequently attested. One or two participants (for example in Pond Inlet) say that they do not really care about Inuktitut because they are not good at it anyway. Other participants express an unwillingness to communicate in Inuktitut in certain situations based on perceived low levels of competence. It goes without saying that if decreased competence is seen as a problem, decreased use due to insecurity speaking a language that one does not master only aggravates that problem. Other studies of language contact situations have shown that perceived low levels of competence can lead speakers to believe that the level of language that they possess is not worth speaking or saving anyway (cf. Thomason 2001). Although this attitude is not currently attested among Inuit youth, they do express a certain awareness that some individuals make disparaging comments about their competence in Inuktitut, saying that they have not achieved an adult's standard of Inuktitut. It seems that for the survival of

Inuktitut, such comments would be more appropriately reframed in such a way as to encourage learning Inuktitut.

The way one perceives one's competence can affect the way one feels about a given language. As seen above, either positive or negative perceived competence can be exploited to favour positive attitudes about Inuktitut and its promotion. Awareness of the negative impact perceived Inuktitut competence can have on language attitudes can help individuals who want to promote Inuktitut to be sensitive to and resist these potential hindrances to the promotion of Inuktitut.

### **Language Use and Language Attitudes**

Language attitudes also indirectly affect competence as they affect language use, which directly impacts the language competence of the current and next generation. Attitudes affect language behaviour directly and indirectly. As seen in Chapter Eight, attitudes or beliefs, whether about Inuktitut specifically or about communicative interactions more generally, can provide a conscious motivation to use Inuktitut or not in a given situation. In fact, the analysis of language choice in Chapter Eight shows that language selection is often motivated by factors other than pure communicative need to use one language or the other. Sometimes the motivation comes from the general environment or habit, but often the motivation is based in feelings about what is appropriate or rewarding language behaviour.

Beliefs about Inuktitut that lead to use of English include supposed (or real) dialectal differences and deference for “pure” Inuktitut. Attitudes about English such as English being a “cool” language, or the language of “modernity” also motivate some Inuit youth to use English in certain contexts. In the interviews, participants mainly limited their comments to the positive value of Inuktitut. However, a few fleeting comments suggest that at some level, a few Inuit youth have negative associations with using Inuktitut (see for example suggestions of racism under “culture” in Chapter Nine).

Investigation into negative connotations of speaking Inuktitut would be useful to further understand choices to use increasing amounts of English.

Attitudes that favour greater use of Inuktitut, on the other hand, as attested in the semi-directed interviews, include feelings about the appropriateness of Inuktitut in certain situations, especially when talking to one's parents or elders. The belief that using Inuktitut signals respect of one's Inuit interlocutors, regardless of their age, also motivates greater use of Inuktitut. Furthermore, Inuit youth explicitly say that they value Inuktitut, to some degree, because it is a part of who they are (see Chapter Nine). They also say that their desire to mark their identity, or their interlocutor's identity, as Inuit sometimes motivates them to use Inuktitut (see Chapter Eight).

A belief among many Inuit youth that getting one's message across is the most important goal in interaction, emphasized in "language of community", in Chapter Ten, opens the door to use Inuktitut, English, or any combination of the two as the speaker sees fit in order to communicate efficiently. In much the same way, a general attitude about the importance of language for building and maintaining community influences young Inuit's choice of Inuktitut or English depending on who is present and who they wish to include. These attitudes about using Inuktitut to shape one's community are expressed explicitly both in terms of motivation to use Inuktitut (seen in Chapter Eight) and in explanations of why Inuktitut is important to Inuit youth (as discussed in Chapters Nine and Ten). In these ways, different attitudes about Inuktitut and English, which are not necessarily positive or negative in themselves, impact the amount of Inuktitut used by Inuit youth. Obviously, sustained use of Inuktitut is key to its continued health.

Also, more indirectly, language attitudes affect use because they shape the individual's desire for their linguistic future. The desire for a certain linguistic future can motivate Inuit youth to act in such a way as to secure what they hope for. For example, the desire for Inuktitut to survive as the Inuit's first language motivates many Inuit youth to speak Inuktitut with their children. Furthermore, attitudes that go beyond language also affect language use. In particular, there is some evidence in the interviews that Inuit

youth use language to mark their choice of group association: attitudes about being proud as an Inuk (or not) affect some young Inuit's choice of Inuktitut or English.

Although reported motivations for choosing Inuktitut and reported reasons for valuing Inuktitut seem to line up, participants' value statements and actions are not always congruous. To give one example, respondents to the closed questionnaire agree wholeheartedly that it is important that their children (or future children) speak Inuktitut; as seen in their strong agreement with the statement, "*It is important to me to pass the Inuktitut language on to my (future) children*" (Iqaluit mean = 8.89; Pangnirtung mean = 8.79; Pond Inlet mean = 9.17).<sup>2</sup> Reports of language use show that parents are in fact transmitting Inuktitut to their children, but the parallel transmission of English (especially in a context where the spouse is addressed in both Inuktitut and English) seems inconsistent with the wholehearted agreement that Inuktitut should be passed on. The actions and attitudes are not entirely contradictory, but neither are they completely analogous. Dorais (1995:297) also noted cases in Igloolik where actions and attitudes do not seem to line up:

Such a contrast between the two languages indicates some ambiguities. As seen above, the actual language practices, influenced for a great part by the overwhelming presence of English at school, in the media and in public life, seem to disclose, at least among the younger generations, a neat predominance of the non-Native language. There thus exists some degree of conflict between what people do (English is increasingly used in the community) and what they think (Inuktitut is greatly valued, and most respondents are confident that it will survive into the next generation).

Although Dorais' study occurred in a different political context (Nunavut had not yet come into being) and in a different community, his results are repeated in the present study. In the example cited above, and in other exceptions to the link between language attitudes and linguistic behaviour, the discrepancy may be due in part to conflicting desires. Inuit youth speak about feeling between two worlds; about needing and wanting to belong to both and to function in both; and about wanting and needing to use Inuktitut

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix C, Part three, question 24

and English in order to shape the community in which they live. But because they associate Inuktitut and English with contrasting worldviews, the traditional and the 'modern', both of which are valued, Inuit youth come up with wanting both languages in most settings. The bilingual language use across domains reported in Chapter Seven perhaps reflects this tension. The use of both Inuktitut and English in so many speech situations facilitates communication, but also allows Inuit youth to respond, at least temporarily, to conflicting (conscious and subconscious) language attitudes and desires.

### **Language Attitudes and Language Planning**

Language attitudes are a basis for language planning in that they, in combination with other factors, can affect perceived language competence and language use. As seen in Chapters Five and Eight, the need and desires for language planning are evident in young Inuit's beliefs that they do not speak Inuktitut as well or as frequently as they used to, nor as well or as frequently as they would like to. Language attitudes also form a foundation for language planning in that they suggest where planning can start, the means by which planning may occur, as well as benefits of language planning beyond the immediate goal of the continued use of a language.

The way that Inuit feel about the current linguistic situation in their communities lays the groundwork for language planning. As language planning responds to a real or perceived language-related problem in a community, Inuit youths' perceptions and beliefs about the status of Inuktitut and English in their communities shape their perceptions about the need for intervention. As regards language competence (Chapter Five), participants in this research make it clear that they consider decreasing levels of competence in Inuktitut a problem when they express dissatisfaction with their current levels of competence and aspirations of becoming more fluent Inuktitut speakers. They also indicate that they consider decreased competence a problem when they speak about problems communicating alongside their desire for comfortable communication with all members of their social and professional networks (including monolingual elders and Qallunaat).

Inuit youth also express that they consider the current frequency of use of Inuktitut problematic when they say that they do not speak Inuktitut as frequently as they used to, nor as frequently as they would like to (see Chapter Eight). Further, their comments about areas where they consider the quantity of Inuktitut used particularly insufficient (e.g. in school) point to areas where language planning initiatives could begin. Other language-related problems mentioned in the interviews with Inuit youth, such as the lack of accessibility of new terminology in Inuktitut, people being negatively judged based on their linguistic abilities, and the breakdown of communication between some Inuit youth and older Inuit also point to a perceived need for intervention in the linguistic situation. These perceived problems and perceived needs could provide an impetus for action to promote Inuktitut.

Inuit youth clearly put forth decreased competence and decreased use of Inuktitut as linguistic problems in their communities that they would like to remedy (with only a very few exceptions). They also speak of cultural loss, or the risk of cultural loss accompanying language transfer as a language-related problem in their community. However these comments are sparse and are generally framed in terms of what “the elders say.” Interestingly, the pragmatic emphasis in Inuit youth’s comments, wanting to maintain Inuktitut because it is their first language and the language that they need to communicate, is in accordance with Weinstein’s (1980) definition of language planning as necessarily targeting practical communication problems in a community (as seen in Chapter Two), as opposed to the more prevalent political discourse in Canada, which says that Aboriginal languages must be promoted based on their relationship to Aboriginal cultures. This pragmatic motivation evidenced by Inuit youth also departs from previous research results of Dorais (1995), Dorais and Sammons (2002) and others, who found, among a broader age range, an emphasis on the symbolic value of Inuktitut in contrast with the practical value of English.

Other motivations for language planning discussed in Chapter Two include integration, instrumentality and identity. Inuit youths’ comments about why they use and

especially why they value Inuktitut and English suggest integrative and instrumental motivation to maintain both languages. Inuit youth have an integrative motivation to maintain Inuktitut in that it is the language of their family and their community and the language that gives them access to a valued heritage. In much the same way, Inuit youth also have an integrative motivation to maintain English because this language is useful for full participation in domains where there are many Qallunaat. Furthermore, English is essential for integration in broader Canadian society. The instrumental motivation to maintain English is clear in participants' described behaviour and expressed need to use English in order to get an education and succeed in the workforce. Inuit youth also have instrumental motivation to maintain Inuktitut, as many of the jobs available in the Nunavut Territory include "Inuktitut is an asset" in the job description. These motivations are also attested in Dorais and Sammons' (2002) study, and lead to competing desires in Inuit youth to enhance their knowledge and use of both Inuktitut and English.

Concerning identity as a motivation for language planning, Inuktitut as an emblem of Inuit identity has certainly been at the root of political discourse to promote Inuktitut (cf. Dorais 1994, Dorais and Sammons 2002). The comments of Inuit youth discussed in Chapter Nine show that identity in some ways motivates Inuit youth in the promotion of Inuktitut, especially as regards Inuktitut's link to Inuit traditions and culture. However, their comments also show that the relationship between Inuktitut and Inuit identity is ambiguous, not absolute, so the link between Inuktitut and Inuit identity does not appear to be, in itself, enough to mobilise grassroots support for the promotion of Inuktitut, at least not among Inuit youth.

Furthermore, analysis of Inuit youth's comments about the link between Inuktitut and identity suggests that emphasizing such a link as a means to promote Inuktitut may produce negative side effects. Although Inuit youth see a link between Inuktitut and their identities as young Inuit, they are also aware that the discourse, "you need to speak Inuktitut to be a real Inuk," is being used by Inuit to put down or ostracize other Inuit. In the context of social problems such as low self-esteem among Inuit youth, emphasizing



an absolute link between Inuktitut and Inuit identity may be counterproductive, and does not reflect the perceived reality of Inuit youth.

The distinction between the dominant political discourse in the promotion of Aboriginal languages and the beliefs of Inuit youth as to why Inuktitut is important reinforces the value of a grassroots approach which listens to the layperson's preoccupations about language. Inuit leaders promoting Inuktitut emphasize the relationship between language, culture and identity. In some ways, the voices of the Inuit youth surveyed in this project echo the collective voice of their leaders. However, other elements of Inuit youth's motivation for maintaining Inuktitut are notably more pragmatic. The differences underline the importance of encouraging dialogue to test the will of the general public with regard to language promotion. The differences may also emphasize the need for all Inuktitut speakers to be involved in promoting Inuktitut on a personal level, based on their individual needs and desires.

In conjunction with the idea of individual, personalised language promotion, another attitude demonstrated in the interviews addresses who has the right to influence an individual's language behaviour. This attitude is not focussed on a particular language, but rather on cultural rules of interaction understood and followed in Inuit communities. Through their reported language behaviour and motivations in language choice, Inuit youth indirectly suggest that parents and elders, and even friends, have the right to influence their language choice. This disposition is seen in comments where individuals say that they modify their language behaviour to accommodate the preference of their grandparents, parents or friends. And yet, even though Inuit youth frequently say that they accommodate, they resist the suggestion that anyone would force language selection, saying that they should have freedom to choose the language that they want to use. In the closed questionnaires, respondents strongly agree with the statement, "It is my personal choice to use the language that I want to" (Iqaluit mean = 8.9; Pangnirtung mean = 8.87; Pond Inlet mean = 8.33).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Appendix C, Part three, question 56

These results are significant to discussions of promoting greater use of Inuktitut because they indicate who Inuit youth hold responsible for their language use, and who they allow to influence their language use. Language use is first and foremost a private choice, as seen in closed questionnaire results, but it is also a choice that those closest to an individual can influence. Perhaps language planning initiatives could encourage Inuit to choose Inuktitut by emphasizing to individuals that they are making a choice to promote Inuktitut every time they choose to speak it. Participants in the semi-directed interviews, as seen in Chapter Eight, are already aware that making a personal effort to use Inuktitut is an effective way to promote Inuktitut. These individuals could be encouraged to persist in using Inuktitut, influencing their family members and peers to adjust to their choice of Inuktitut, resisting the tendency to switch to English.

Beyond underlining motivations and potential means for language planning, attitudes and beliefs about language, as expressed in the interviews, also indicate areas in which language planning will facilitate community development in a broader sense. Language problems appear minor beside other social problems facing Inuit youth. However, some social problems have a link to language use. Inuit youth suggest how speaking Inuktitut helps them to communicate with the elders, to whom they wish to go for advice. Speaking Inuktitut favours communication within families. Inuit youth directly and indirectly talk about how using Inuktitut gives them a sense of well being on a number of fronts, increasing feelings of pride, self-worth and belonging. These attitudes and desires for enhancing communication and building community through use of Inuktitut are important justifications for promoting sustained use of Inuktitut.

In this thesis I have tried to show why a language plan must take into account language attitudes. In Thomason's (2001:61) words, language attitudes are the "wild card" in language contact situations. The root of a language-related problem, the perception of the problem and the potential remedy to a language-related problem are all influenced by language attitudes. The goal of this thesis is not to say that certain beliefs about the aboriginal language or the dominant language are good or bad for the promotion of a language, but to point out some of the attitudes present among Inuit youth

concerning Inuktitut and English and to suggest how they are influencing Inuit youth's experience of the current linguistic situation in their community.

Some of the ways in which the attitudes influence use and desires for the promotion of Inuktitut may be found in other language contact situations as well. However, as emphasized in Chapter Two, language planning must take a case-by-case approach. The current linguistic situation in Nunavut, as well as Inuit youth's perceptions of and attitudes about the current situation, are the product of a long history of contact between Inuit and those who brought English to the North. Attempts to intervene to promote continued use of Inuktitut in Nunavut need to be informed by all the complexities of that language contact, most of which are beyond the scope of this thesis. This thesis has mainly presented and suggested ways of thinking about the promotion of Inuktitut as a first step in language planning. These suggestions are summarised in Appendix E.

### **The Promotion of Inuktitut on Baffin Island**

In this thesis, I have described elements of the linguistic situation in Nunavut as expressed by Inuit youth in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet. In most ways, the data presented in this thesis confirm and complement other research results in Inuit communities (discussed in Chapter Three), broadening the understanding of the current situation of Inuktitut. As Dorais and Sammons (2002) and others have noted, the future of Inuktitut in Nunavut is hopeful, but uncertain. Inuktitut is, from one point of view, strong and thriving. But from another point of view, the future of Inuktitut is uncertain as Inuit risk transferring to being predominant English-speakers in the not too distant future.

In some ways, Inuktitut is a vibrant aboriginal language in Canada. As seen in Chapter Three, Inuktitut shows many signs of vitality in Nunavut. Most of the Inuit in Nunavut learned Inuktitut as their mother tongue and today, even among the youth, language competence remains fairly strong. The language itself is well-developed in that it is a written language, with modern terminology, some publications, language resources

(dictionaries and grammars) and has language specialists (teachers and translators). Inuit youth can use Inuktitut in just about any speech situation that involves other Inuit, from the home to the government. Further, Inuit youth see and hear Inuktitut around them on signs, public announcements, job postings, on the radio, on television, in the newspaper, almost everywhere they go in town. With the advent of Nunavut, Inuktitut is one of three official languages in the territory. The government has the mandate to promote Inuktitut and some funding is available to encourage the further development of the language. On top of these 'objective' indices of vitality, a promising future for Inuktitut can be seen in Inuit youth's pride of Inuktitut, in their pleasure speaking their ancestral language and in their expressed commitment to maintaining Inuktitut and transmitting it to their children. Moreover, Inuktitut (or more accurately, Inuktitut-English bilingualism) is increasingly becoming profitable in order to secure employment.

Most of the data contained in this thesis point to the objective and subjective strength of Inuktitut. Yet despite these obvious signs of strength, the threat of losing Inuktitut is so salient among Inuit youth that most (especially in Iqaluit, and to a lesser degree in Pond Inlet) say that they have witnessed language loss first-hand in their own lives as they transfer to English as their dominant language (see Chapter Five). Descriptions of language use among Inuit youth suggest that even as Inuktitut gains ground in official circles, such as in legislative assembly debates, it is losing ground in informal situations. To give one example, Inuit youth say that they used only Inuktitut in the home when they were children. Now, they say that they use English alongside Inuktitut in the home. With their parents they use mainly Inuktitut, but some English, and with their own children they use Inuktitut and English more or less equally. English has gained ground in these informal situations from the time the research participants were children, at least according to their perceptions of the situation.<sup>4</sup> Generally, participants in this study feel that they use Inuktitut less frequently than they used to when they were younger.

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<sup>4</sup> Participants' perceptions of past language use are upheld by studies such as reported in Dorais 1996b, where 73% of Inuit children observed in Iqaluit, and more than 80% of children observed in Igloolik and Kimmirut used only Inuktitut to address their parents.

This perception of language loss at a personal and societal level expressed by Inuit youth stands in stark contrast to objective and subjective indices of vitality identified above. Inuktitut is strong. Inuit youth say that they and their peers still speak Inuktitut well and use it everyday. At the same time, Inuit youth, at least in Iqaluit and Pond Inlet, see that Inuktitut is losing ground to English. This contrast between the so-called vitality of Inuktitut and the reality of Inuit youth who experience an imminent threat to Inuktitut underlines the importance of a broad approach to studying language loss. It is not enough to look at the situation of Inuktitut in isolation to understand the needs and possibilities for promoting Inuktitut, but one must look at the interplay between Inuktitut and English (and between Inuktitut-speakers and English-speakers) to begin to understand the pressure on Inuit youth to learn and use English and to transmit this language to their children. Inuit youth will continue to use Inuktitut if it continues to have value for them, if they continue to want it, and if the desire and need for English does not overshadow Inuktitut.

The feelings that Inuit youth associate with Inuktitut and English are suggestive of the underlying tension between the need and desire for Inuktitut and English. As seen in Chapters Nine and Ten, Inuktitut has symbolic and practical value for Inuit youth. Beyond appreciation of Inuktitut in its own right, Inuktitut is important to Inuit youth because it gives them access to their family, to their community, to their history, to elders, and even to procurement of jobs. Inuit youth *want* Inuktitut and find it useful, and yet they say that they *need* English. If they are to get jobs and an education (which are deemed necessary; no research participant speaks about returning to the subsistence lifestyle), Inuit youth have no choice but to use English.<sup>5</sup> Inuit say that they value English because of the doors it opens for geographic and socioeconomic mobility, as well as for communicating with Qallunaat in their communities. The importance associated with Inuktitut and English in Inuit youths' comments points to the reasons why they are motivated to maintain Inuktitut and English.

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<sup>5</sup> That is, as Nunavut exists today, English is necessary for most jobs and education. This does not preclude the possibility of Inuktitut (or French) playing a greater role in education or the workplace in the future.

Language attitudes are shaped by and reflect other social, political, economic and cultural realities of the contact between English and Inuktitut. Inuit youths' comments about the value of Inuktitut and English provide a small window through which some of the issues of contact between Inuktitut and English can be viewed. However, a much broader picture must be obtained before experiences related to the contact of English and Inuktitut can be understood, let alone before desirable and feasible ways of molding the language situation can reliably be identified.

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**APPENDIX A**

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

Participant Consent Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the undersigned, freely consent to participate in the research project entitled: "The Promotion of Inuktitut in Nunavut", the nature and the procedure of the project being as follows:

1. The objective of the project is to identify perceptions of language use and language attitudes of Inuit youth in Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet and Iqaluit. The results will help identify needs and possibilities for the promotion of Inuktitut on Baffin Island.
2. The interviews, which are face-to-face and recorded on audio tape, last approximately one hour.
3. The interview will include my observations of the use of the Inuit language, as well as my attitudes and desires with regard to the Inuit language in Nunavut.
4. I understand that, if I wish to withdraw from the study, I may do so at any time, without any explanation and without any repercussions. Any and all data that I provide may be withdrawn at my request.
5. In order to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of responses, the researcher will take the following precautions:
  - Participants' names will not appear on any report;
  - A code will be used on all research documents. Only the present researcher will have access to this code and to the list of participants' names;
  - Only the present researcher will have access to the audio tapes from these interviews. In the case that future researchers are granted access to transcribed versions of these interviews, only the code will appear on the documents.
6. The results of this study will be made available to the Nunavut Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth. A research summary will also be sent to each participant in this study.
7. A research summary will also be sent to the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, who partially subsidise this research.
8. This research is undertaken as part of a Ph.D. in Linguistics, and may be used in scientific publications or communications.

This research project is undertaken by Shelley Tulloch, a graduate student in Linguistics at Université Laval. Shelley Tulloch may be reached for further information at: 1310 Griffith Place, Oakville, ON, L6H 2V8, (905) 842-7791, email: [abj619@agora.ulaval.ca](mailto:abj619@agora.ulaval.ca).  
Research Director: M. Conrad Ouellon, Office 2244, Pavillon De Koninck, Université Laval, Québec, QC, G1K 7P4, tel.: (418) 656-3482, fax: (418) 656-7144.

Read and signed \_\_\_\_\_  
date

\_\_\_\_\_  
participant's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
witness' signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
participant's address



## **APPENDIX B**

### **FRAMEWORK OF SEMI-DIRECTED INTERVIEWS**

## The Promotion of Inuktitut in Nunavut

Researcher: Shelley Tulloch

### Interview

#### Identification form

Interviewer:

Interviewee code:

People present:

Interview location:

Date of interview:

Number of cassettes:

Recording time:

Sex:

Age:

Place of residence:

Year of arrival:

Birth place (village and region, or Mother's place of residence at time of birth):

Other places of residence:

Ethnic origin:

Spouse's ethnic origin:

Parents' ethnic origin:

Parents' birth place:

Highest diploma/grade level achieved:

Occupation/Place of work:

Previous occupations:

First language learned/Mother tongue:

Languages spoken:

Languages written:

Languages read:

If Inuktitut, which dialect:

Self-rating of Inuktitut knowledge: Excellent, good, elementary, I don't speak Inuktitut

Self-rating of English knowledge: Excellent, good, elementary, I don't speak English

## The Promotion of Inuktitut in Nunavut

Researcher: Shelley Tulloch

### Interview

#### Introduction to interview

- remind of research objectives.
- sign consent form.
- "I would like to have your opinion about certain questions pertaining to language in Nunavut; who speaks which language when, where, speaking about what, the place of each language in the community now, the promotion of languages in Nunavut, the importance of language in Nunavut."
- remind that there are no 'right' answers.
- remind that I'm not in a hurry, he can take as much time as he wants with each question.
- participant can also follow any other tangents if they consider other avenues pertinent and interesting.
- they do not have to answer any question that they choose not to.
- anything that they will tell me about language in Nunavut is interesting and important for me.

## The Promotion of Inuktitut in Nunavut

Researcher: Shelley Tulloch

### Interview

### Questions

#### A) Day-to-day language use

1. Describe for me a typical day, explaining where and when you speak each language, with who, speaking about what, etc. Take yesterday, for instance...

- People: spouse, children, boss, colleagues, friends, other;
- Places: home, workplace, store, government office, bank, other;
- Topics: work, personal affairs, niceties, computers, feelings, other;
- Times: coffee break, official meetings, other;
- Written correspondence: private, work, other;
- Media: television, radio, magazines, other;
- Private language: thoughts, dreams, other.

2. With the following people, do you normally speak...

	Inukt. only	Mostly Inukt.	Inukt./Eng.	Mostly Eng.	English only
Parents					
Children					
Spouse					
Siblings					
Friends					
(At work)					

3. a) Why do you speak this way with (your parents, children, spouse, siblings, friends, workmates) (i.e. What are your reasons/motivation for using/not using Inuktitut? English? French?)  
What would happen if you spoke otherwise?

b) Are there people with whom or situations in which you would like to use a certain language but are unable to?

c) What is the significance of being able/not being able to use L1? (Inuktitut or English)

4. Does it ever happen that you speak English or Inuktitut with someone and they respond to you in the other language? Could you give me an example of when/where/with who that might happen? Give a recent example? How does it make you feel?

5. When you have a document presented to you in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun and English, which version do you read? Why? (Is one easier to read?)

4. Do you find it easier to express your feelings in Inuktitut or English? Why?



## B) Problems or concerns in day-to-day language use

6. What about Southerners that come up to Iqaluit? Which languages do they use? (Do they, can they, should they learn Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun?) What kind of contact do you have with people from the South?
7. Here in Iqaluit, how does the language one speaks effect one's chances of finding a job? Of being promoted? Why is this? Do you find this acceptable/desirable? Can you give me an example of this in your own life/friend's life?
8. What problems have you witnessed in day-to-day use of Inuktitut or English in Iqaluit, if any? What do you think causes these problems? What changes would you like to see?

## C) Importance of languages

9. Are most people in Iqaluit (Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet) bilingual?
10. How did you learn English? Inuktitut?
11. What does being bilingual signify for you? (What are the advantages/disadvantages for you in being bilingual?)
12. I would like to have your insights into the importance of Inuktitut and English here in Iqaluit. What does speaking Inuktitut signify for you? What do people say about the importance of Inuktitut? Is English or Inuktitut a more useful language than the other? In what kind of circumstances? Why?
13. Is it important to you that your children speak Inuktitut? Why? How about English? Which languages do your parents speak?
14. I've heard some Inuit refer to those Inuit who speak the Inuit language as 'the real inuit'. Have you ever heard people make that sort of comment? What do you think they mean by it? For you, does speaking Inuktitut define who you are as a person? Does it influence the kind of person that you are? If so, is there a difference between Inuit who speak Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun and Inuit who do not speak the language? If so, can you describe this difference? Can you be a real Inuit without speaking Inuktitut? Why?

## D) Promotion of Inuktitut

15. Do you think that it is important for young people to speak Inuktitut? Why (not)?
16. Do you think that your children (grandchildren) will speak Inuktitut? Why (not)? Is it possible that Inuktitut will one day disappear? Why (not?) How would you feel, personally, if Inuktitut disappeared? Why?
17. Some people say that language and culture go together. Are there elements of Inuit culture that are particularly linked to the Inuit language? Can you give me some examples?

18. What evidence is there that people value the Inuit language? What do people want for Inuktitut in Nunavut? What do you want? How committed are you to this viewpoint? What evidence is there of this commitment?

19. What do you think could be done to promote Inuktitut in Nunavut?

E) Conclusion

20. How representative do you think your views are (of a sub-group of the population)?

**APPENDIX C**

**CLOSED QUESTIONNAIRE**



## Note

The purpose of this questionnaire is to allow you to share with us your feelings and experiences about languages in your Baffin Island community. It is hoped that your answers will help us to have a better understanding of the uses and attitudes toward Inuktitut and English.

This is not a test of your knowledge. There are no right and wrong answers. Please answer the questions according to what is true in your experience, in the community where you are filling out the questionnaire. Your personal opinion is important.

The questionnaire is designed to be anonymous. Please do not put your name on it.

**Thank-you very much for your interest and assistance.**

## Instructions for the completion of this questionnaire

1. This questionnaire has all questions in both Inuktitut and English. This may help you to understand better the purpose of each question BUT **only answer the questions in one language** and leave the other language blank.

2. If you do not understand a question, please leave the question blank and do not answer it.

3a) In part one, you are asked for some background information. Please put a mark in the box immediately to the left of your answer, filling in the blanks where necessary.

b) In part two, you are asked to rate whether you use Inuktitut or English in a variety of situations. Please put a mark in the box that most accurately describes your personal language use in that situation. If the situation does not apply to you, please put a mark in the column below “not applicable”.

c) In part three, you are asked to indicate on a rating scale of 1 to 10 how much you agree or disagree with a comment, depending on how true the comment is for you, personally. Please circle a single number on the scale. Do not circle the words below the numbers. It is the number that you select that will represent your opinion. Feel free to select any number from 1 to 10. **Please circle only one number for each question.**

For example, if I did not speak any Inuktitut at all, but I understood a little bit, then I might circle 9 in the following example:

**Example:** I have problems communicating in Inuktitut.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Strongly disagree</i>		<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Indifferent</i>		<i>Agree</i>		<i>Strongly agree</i>		<i>No opinion</i>

d) If you cannot answer a question for any reason, please put a mark in the box above “no opinion”. Please do your best to answer as many questions as possible on the number scale.

e) You may add comments to your answers on the lines below each question and at the bottom of each page.

Part One – Your Background Information

1. Sex:  Male  Female

2. Year of birth: 19 \_\_\_\_\_

3a) Where do you live now?:  Iqaluit  Pangnirtung  Pond Inlet  Other

b) How long have you lived in the above community? \_\_\_\_\_ years

c) Where are you originally from? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Your ethnic origin:

Inuit  Qallunaat  Mixed (Inuit-Qallunaat)  Other

5. Your spouse/girl-/boyfriend's ethnic origin (if applicable):

Inuit  Qallunaat  Mixed (Inuit-Qallunaat)  Other

6. Your mother's ethnic origin:

Inuit  Qallunaat  Mixed (Inuit-Qallunaat)  Other

7. Your father's ethnic origin:

Inuit  Qallunaat  Mixed (Inuit-Qallunaat)  Other

8. Are you a student?  No  Yes

9. Number of years completed at school: \_\_\_\_\_ years

10. Do you have a job?  No  Yes, place of work \_\_\_\_\_

11. What is the first language you learned to speak (mother tongue)? :

Inuktitut (dialect \_\_\_\_\_)  English  Other

12. Please rate your knowledge speaking, understanding, reading and writing Inuktitut and English.

Language knowledge		None	Elementary	Good	Excellent
Inuktitut	Speaking				
	Understanding				
	Reading				
	Writing				
English	Speaking				
	Understanding				
	Reading				
	Writing				

## Part Two – Your Daily Language Choice

In the following circumstances, which language(s) do you normally speak?

Language Situation		Inuktitut only	Mainly Inuktitut	Inuktitut and English	Mainly English	English only	Not applicable
Speaking with:	Mother						
	Father						
	Your children						
	Spouse/girl-/boyfriend						
	Older brothers/sisters						
	Younger brothers/sisters						
	Maternal grand-parents						
	Paternal grand-parents						
	Inuit friends						
	Qallunaat friends						
	Inuit from other Baffin Island communities						
	Inuit from outside of the Baffin region						
	Nurse						
	Teacher						
	Elder						
	Boss						
Co-workers							
Speaking at:	Work						
	School						
	Home						
	Social events						
	Camping						
	Bank						
	Nursing station						
	Hospital						
	RCMP						
Government office							
Speaking about:	Daily life						
	School i.e. homework						
	Work						
	Feelings						
	Traditional activity i.e. hunting, sewing						
Sports							

Part Three

1. Most of my Inuit friends are fluent in Inuktitut.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*    *Disagree*    *Indifferent*    *Agree*    *Strongly agree*    *No opinion*

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2. Most of the people that I speak with on a daily basis are bilingual.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*    *Disagree*    *Indifferent*    *Agree*    *Strongly agree*    *No opinion*

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3. I use English because I have to in order to communicate with Qallunaat (i.e. because I cannot use Inuktitut with them).

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*    *Disagree*    *Indifferent*    *Agree*    *Strongly agree*    *No opinion*

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4. I cannot understand Inuit from different regions when they speak in their Inuit dialect because we speak different dialects.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*    *Disagree*    *Indifferent*    *Agree*    *Strongly agree*    *No opinion*

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5. English is easier for me to speak than Inuktitut.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*    *Disagree*    *Indifferent*    *Agree*    *Strongly agree*    *No opinion*

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6. One reason why I use English is because I do not have the words in Inuktitut to express what I want to say.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*    *Disagree*    *Indifferent*    *Agree*    *Strongly agree*    *No opinion*

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7. I mix Inuktitut and English together in the same sentence.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*    *Disagree*    *Indifferent*    *Agree*    *Strongly agree*    *No opinion*

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8. I feel intimidated speaking Inuktitut.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree            Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree            No opinion*

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9. I find it easier to express my feelings in Inuktitut (as opposed to English).

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree            Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree            No opinion*

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10. Inuktitut is fun to speak.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree            Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree            No opinion*

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11. It happens that I speak in one language and the person I'm speaking with responds in a different language.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree            Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree            No opinion*

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12. I have the right words to express myself in Inuktitut but not in English.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree            Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree            No opinion*

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13. Sometimes I use Inuktitut because I know that the person that I'm speaking to (elder, parent, friend, etc.) prefers that I speak in Inuktitut.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree            Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree            No opinion*

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14. I'm afraid of making a mistake (or otherwise feel shy, intimidated, or uncomfortable) when I speak English.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree            Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree            No opinion*

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15. I think that people feel negatively toward me when they hear me speak Inuktitut.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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16. It's very important to me to know Inuktitut in order to have access to Inuit traditional knowledge.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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17. It is important for me to speak Inuktitut in order to communicate with my grandparents and/or other older Inuit.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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18. Speaking Inuktitut is important to me so that I can get the job that I want.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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19. Inuktitut is important to me because it is my first language.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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20. Inuktitut is more useful to me than English.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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21. You can be a real Inuk without speaking the Inuktitut language.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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22. The Inuktitut language is a tool for me to keep in touch with Inuit culture.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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23. I have problems understanding the elders' stories.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree            Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree            No opinion*

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24. It is important to me to pass the Inuktitut language on to my (future) children.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree            Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree            No opinion*

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25. It is important to me that my children (or future children) speak English.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree            Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree            No opinion*

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26. I've never really thought about whether or not Inuktitut is important to me.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree            Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree            No opinion*

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27. English is important to me in order to be able to speak to Qallunaat.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree            Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree            No opinion*

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28. For getting an education, English is more important to me than Inuktitut.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree            Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree            No opinion*

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29. Speaking English is important to me so that I can get the job that I want.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree            Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree            No opinion*

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30. English is more useful to me than Inuktitut.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree            Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree            No opinion*

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31. It is best to be bilingual (know how to speak both Inuktitut and English).

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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32. I cannot speak Inuktitut as well as I would like to.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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33. I think that my future grandchildren will still speak Inuktitut.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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34. I hear more Inuktitut being spoken around town *now* than I used to, a few years ago.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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35. I think that it is important for young Inuit to speak Inuktitut.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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36. At one time in my life, I spoke Inuktitut better than I do now.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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37. I do not speak Inuktitut as frequently as I would like to.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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38. I cannot speak English as well as I would like to.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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39. I have/had some problems in school because I do/did not speak English well enough.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
Strongly disagree    Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree    No opinion

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40. My grandma and/or grandpa (or any other, older Inuk) does not understand me when I'm talking in Inuktitut because my Inuktitut is different from theirs.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
Strongly disagree    Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree    No opinion

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41. Inuktitut does not have words to talk about many modern things (disease, health, legal issues, etc.)

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
Strongly disagree    Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree    No opinion

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42. I feel, or used to feel, guilty (or ashamed, or embarrassed) about the way I speak Inuktitut or about not speaking Inuktitut.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
Strongly disagree    Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree    No opinion

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43. Speaking a mixture of Inuktitut and English at the same time (mixing Inuktitut and English) helps me to communicate effectively.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
Strongly disagree    Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree    No opinion

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44. Qallunaat living in my community should learn to speak Inuktitut.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
Strongly disagree    Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree    No opinion

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45. I think it's better to speak in one language than to speak in a mixed language (Inuktitut and English at the same time).

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
Strongly disagree    Disagree            Indifferent            Agree            Strongly agree    No opinion

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46. I am involved in the debate over Inuktitut preservation and promotion.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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47. I think that the Government of Nunavut should promote the Inuktitut language.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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48. I would be sad, personally, if Inuktitut disappeared.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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49. The essence of the Inuktitut language will be lost if it is made it into one dialect.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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50. I would like to have/to have had more Inuktitut language instruction during high school.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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51. I make an effort to learn new words in Inuktitut.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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52. I do not care whether or not I speak Inuktitut.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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53. I think that, in my own, personal language use, I set a good role model for children growing up.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10              
*Strongly disagree*      *Disagree*      *Indifferent*      *Agree*      *Strongly agree*      *No opinion*

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ገጽ ርቀት - የግብርና ልማት ደንብ ለማረጋገጥ የሚያስፈልጉትን ጥያቄዎች ይጠቅሙ

1. የግብርና ልማት ደንብ ለማረጋገጥ የሚያስፈልጉትን ጥያቄዎች ይጠቅሙ:  አዲስ  የግብርና
2. ልማት ደንብ: 19 \_\_\_\_\_
3. ልማት ደንብ ለማረጋገጥ የሚያስፈልጉትን ጥያቄዎች ይጠቅሙ:  የግብርና  የግብርና ልማት  የግብርና ልማት  የግብርና ልማት
- ለ. የግብርና ልማት ደንብ ለማረጋገጥ የሚያስፈልጉትን ጥያቄዎች ይጠቅሙ: \_\_\_\_\_
- በ. የግብርና ልማት ደንብ ለማረጋገጥ የሚያስፈልጉትን ጥያቄዎች ይጠቅሙ: \_\_\_\_\_
4.  ልማት  የግብርና ልማት  የግብርና ልማት  የግብርና ልማት  የግብርና ልማት
5. የግብርና ልማት ደንብ ለማረጋገጥ የሚያስፈልጉትን ጥያቄዎች ይጠቅሙ:  ልማት  የግብርና ልማት  የግብርና ልማት  የግብርና ልማት
6. የግብርና ልማት ደንብ ለማረጋገጥ የሚያስፈልጉትን ጥያቄዎች ይጠቅሙ:  ልማት  የግብርና ልማት  የግብርና ልማት  የግብርና ልማት
7. የግብርና ልማት ደንብ ለማረጋገጥ የሚያስፈልጉትን ጥያቄዎች ይጠቅሙ:  ልማት  የግብርና ልማት  የግብርና ልማት  የግብርና ልማት
8. ልማት ደንብ ለማረጋገጥ የሚያስፈልጉትን ጥያቄዎች ይጠቅሙ:  አዲስ  ልማት
9. የግብርና ልማት ደንብ ለማረጋገጥ የሚያስፈልጉትን ጥያቄዎች ይጠቅሙ: \_\_\_\_\_ የግብርና
10. የግብርና ልማት ደንብ ለማረጋገጥ የሚያስፈልጉትን ጥያቄዎች ይጠቅሙ:  አዲስ  ልማት የግብርና ልማት ልማት: \_\_\_\_\_
11. የግብርና ልማት ደንብ ለማረጋገጥ የሚያስፈልጉትን ጥያቄዎች ይጠቅሙ:  ልማት ደንብ \_\_\_\_\_  የግብርና ልማት  የግብርና ልማት
12. የግብርና ልማት ደንብ ለማረጋገጥ የሚያስፈልጉትን ጥያቄዎች ይጠቅሙ: ልማት ደንብ, ልማት ደንብ, ልማት ደንብ ለማረጋገጥ የሚያስፈልጉትን ጥያቄዎች ይጠቅሙ: ልማት ደንብ

የግብርና ልማት ደንብ		ለግብርና	ለግብርና ልማት	ለግብርና	ለግብርና ልማት
ልማት ደንብ	ልማት ደንብ				
	ልማት ደንብ				
	ልማት ደንብ				
	ልማት ደንብ				
የግብርና ልማት ደንብ	ልማት ደንብ				
	ልማት ደንብ				
	ልማት ደንብ				
	ልማት ደንብ				



















54. ልራ-ሙላጥ ስርዓት ለግሪክ ምዕራባዊ ልራ-ሙላጥ ምዕራባዊ ነው።

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10   
አሳይላኝ ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች

55. ልራ-ሙላጥ ስርዓት ለግሪክ ምዕራባዊ ልራ-ሙላጥ ምዕራባዊ ነው።

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10   
አሳይላኝ ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች

56. ልራ-ሙላጥ ስርዓት ለግሪክ ምዕራባዊ ልራ-ሙላጥ ምዕራባዊ ነው።

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10   
አሳይላኝ ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች

57. ልራ-ሙላጥ ስርዓት ለግሪክ ምዕራባዊ ልራ-ሙላጥ ምዕራባዊ ነው።

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10   
አሳይላኝ ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች ለሌሎች

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**APPENDIX D**

**ATTRIBUTES OF INUIT YOUTH INTERVIEWED**

**PARTICIPANTS' ATTRIBUTES**

Code Name	Place of Residence	Gender	Age	Type of community originally from	Years lived in place of residence	Has children	Employed	Student	Highest grade level achieved
A4	Iqaluit	Female	18-19	Small community	= half life	No	Yes	No	Grade 12
D1	Iqaluit	Male	23-25	Regional centre	= half life	No	Yes	No	Grade 10 or less
D2	Iqaluit	Male	20-22	Small community	= half life	No	Yes	No	Grade 12
D3	Iqaluit	Female	23-25	Small community	= half life	Yes	No	No	Grade 12
D4	Iqaluit	Female	20-22	Small community	= two years	-	Yes	No	Post-secondary
D5	Iqaluit	Male	18-19	Regional centre	= half life	No	No	Yes	Grade 11
D6	Iqaluit	Male	18-19	Regional centre	Life	No	Yes	Yes	Grade 12
D7	Iqaluit	Male	18-19	Regional centre	Life	No	Yes	Yes	Grade 12
D8	Iqaluit	Female	18-19	Regional centre	Life	No	Yes	Yes	Grade 11
D9	Iqaluit	Male	18-19	Regional centre	= two years	No	Yes	Yes	Grade 12
D10	Iqaluit	Female	18-19	Regional centre	Life	No	Yes	Yes	Grade 11
D11	Iqaluit	Female	20-22	Regional centre	Life	Yes	Yes	No	Grade 12
D12	Iqaluit	Male	20-22	Southern Canada	= half life	No	Yes	No	Grade 11
D13	Iqaluit	Female	20-22	Regional centre	Life	No	Yes	No	Grade 12
D15	Iqaluit	Female	20-22	Regional centre	Life	No	Yes	Yes	Post-secondary
D16	Iqaluit	Male	20-22	Regional centre	= half life	No	Yes	No	Post-secondary
D17	Iqaluit	Female	20-22	Regional centre	Life	Yes	Yes	No	Grade 12
P1	Pangnirtung	Male	18-19	Small community	= half life	No	No	Yes	Grade 12
P2	Pangnirtung	Male	18-19	Small community	= half life	No	No	Yes	Grade 11
P3	Pangnirtung	Male	18-19	Regional centre	= half life	-	No	Yes	Grade 12
P4	Pangnirtung	Female	18-19	Small community	Life	-	No	Yes	Grade 12
P5	Pangnirtung	Male	18-19	Small community	= half life	No	No	Yes	Grade 12
P6	Pangnirtung	Male	18-19	Small community	Life	Yes	No	Yes	Grade 11
P7	Pangnirtung	Female	20-22	Small community	= half life	No	Yes	No	Post-secondary
P8	Pangnirtung	Female	-	-	?	Yes	Yes	No	?
P9	Pangnirtung	Female	20-22	Small community	Life	Yes	Yes	No	Grade 12
P10	Pangnirtung	Female	20-22	Small community	= half life	No	Yes	No	Post-secondary
I1	Pond Inlet	Male	20-22	Small community	Life	No	No	No	Grade 12
I2	Pond Inlet	Female	18-19	Small community	= half life	No	Yes	Yes	Grade 12
I3	Pond Inlet	Female	23-25	Small community	Life	Yes	No	No	Grade 10 or less
I4	Pond Inlet	Female	20-22	Small community	Life	Yes	No	No	Grade 10 or less
I5	Pond Inlet	Female	20-22	Small community	Life	Yes	Yes	No	Grade 11
I6	Pond Inlet	Male	20-22	Small community	Life	No	No	No	Post-secondary
I7	Pond Inlet	Male	20-22	Small community	Life	Yes	No	No	Grade 11
I8	Pond Inlet	Female	23-25	?	?	Yes	Yes	No	?
I9	Pond Inlet	Male	20-22	Small community	= half life	No	No	Yes	Grade 11
I10	Pond Inlet	Male	20-22	Small community	Life	No	No	No	Grade 12

Code Name	Ethnicity	Mother's ethnic origin	Father's ethnic origin	Spouse's ethnic origin	Mother tongue	Knowledge of Inuktitut	Knowledge of English
A4	Mixed	Inuk	Qallunaaq	?	Inuktitut	?	?
D1	Mixed	Inuk	Qallunaaq	Inuk	Inuktitut	Good	Excellent
D2	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Qallunaaq	Inuktitut	Good	Excellent
D3	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Qallunaaq	Inuktitut	None	Excellent
D4	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	?	Inuktitut	Good	Good
D5	Mixed	Qallunaaq	Inuk	NA	Inuktitut & English	Elementary	Elementary
D6	Mixed	Inuk	Qallunaaq	Mixed	Inuktitut	?	?
D7	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	?	Inuktitut	Good	Good
D8	Mixed	Inuk	Qallunaaq	NA	English	Elementary	Good
D9	Mixed	Inuk	Other	Inuk	Inuktitut & English	Good	Good
D10	Mixed	Inuk	Inuk	NA	Inuktitut	Good	Good
D11	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	NA	Inuktitut & English	Good	Excellent
D12	Mixed	Inuk	Other	Mixed	English	Elementary	Excellent
D13	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	NA	Inuktitut	Good	Good
D15	Mixed	Inuk	Qallunaaq	?	Inuktitut	Elementary	Excellent
D16	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Qallunaaq	Inuktitut	Excellent	Excellent
D17	Mixed	Inuk	Inuk	Mixed	Inuktitut	Good	Good
P1	Mixed	Inuk	Qallunaaq	NA	Inuktitut	Elementary	Good
P2	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Inuktitut	Excellent	Good
P3	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Inuktitut	Elementary	Good
P4	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	?	Inuktitut	?	?
P5	Mixed	Inuk	Qallunaaq	NA	Inuktitut	Good	Good
P6	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	NA	Inuktitut	Good	Good
P7	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	?	Inuktitut	Excellent	Excellent
P8	Mixed	Inuk	Qallunaaq	?	?	Elementary	?
P9	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Inuktitut	Excellent	Good
P10	Mixed	Inuk	Qallunaaq	Inuk	Inuktitut	Good	Excellent
I1	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Inuktitut	Excellent	Excellent
I2	Mixed	Inuk	Qallunaaq	Inuk	Inuktitut	Elementary	Good
I3	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Inuktitut	Good	Good
I4	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Inuktitut	Excellent	Good
I5	Mixed	Inuk	Qallunaaq	Qallunaaq	Inuktitut	Excellent	Good
I6	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	?	Inuktitut	Good	Good
I7	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Inuktitut & English	Good	Elementary
I8	Inuk	Inuk	-	Inuk	Inuktitut	?	?
I9	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	NA	Inuktitut	Good	Good
I10	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Inuk	Inuktitut	Excellent	Excellent

**APPENDIX E**

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROACHING LANGUAGE PROMOTION IN THE BAFFIN REGION OF NUNAVUT**

As mentioned throughout this thesis, more thorough data collection is required before the needs and possibilities for language promotion can be fully addressed. Nonetheless, some potential components of an approach to promoting Inuktitut have been identified throughout this thesis and are summarized below.

### **1) AWARENESS**

Based on research results, building awareness of language issues may be a first step in language promotion. Steps to be taken may include:

- Recognizing the wide variety of experiences (and thus needs) within communities and between communities;
- Creating awareness that language use in many settings is a choice, and that choosing to use Inuktitut will encourage its perpetuation at an individual and societal level;
- Creating awareness that language use in the home is shifting from being predominantly in Inuktitut to being largely bilingual;
- Sensitizing Inuit youth to how quickly other Inuit youth have experienced language loss. (It may be helpful to safeguard against complacency even if current levels of competence in Inuktitut are high; i.e. take pre-emptive action in the smaller communities now, even if no problems have been identified.)

### **2) ATTITUDES**

Feelings about language have been shown to influence the language situation. Language promoters may target language attitudes in the following ways:

- Promoting Inuktitut by encouraging young Inuit to expand their perceptions of where, when and with whom it is appropriate, desirable or acceptable to use Inuktitut;
- Recognizing factors which hinder young Inuit from taking advantage of already existing opportunities to use Inuktitut;
- Promoting Inuktitut by targeting the social and personal values Inuit youth attribute to using Inuktitut;

- Encouraging existing feelings of “loving” or enjoying Inuktitut;
- Using caution when putting forth a link between language and identity as a justification for language promotion;
- More widely, promoting a sense of pride in being Inuk;
- Promoting Inuktitut as a fruitful language in the present and for the future; including promoting appreciation of Inuktitut as a potential language of formal instruction (i.e. understanding that Inuktitut has capacity to express scientific concepts);
- Continuing to promote Inuktitut as a useful language for getting a job, and for doing one’s job well;
- Creating awareness that Inuktitut may become more useful for socioeconomic advancement in the future, if today’s youth (tomorrow’s bosses) maintain high levels of Inuktitut competence.

### **3) INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE**

Results suggest that individual initiatives will play a key role in the promotion and eventual preservation of Inuktitut. Examples of personal initiatives (which are nonetheless not limited to individuals) include:

- Committing to maintaining and enhancing current levels of competence in Inuktitut;
- Encouraging and assisting Inuit to maintain each aspect of proficiency in Inuktitut that they achieve; encouraging and assisting Inuit who do not speak Inuktitut to learn this language; supporting other Inuit (and Qallunaat) in their attempts to use Inuktitut accurately and to develop their linguistic skills;
- Accepting others’ instruction to improve one’s own Inuktitut skills;
- Continuing to use Inuktitut in situations where one already consistently uses Inuktitut, and taking the initiative to interact more frequently in such situations (i.e. with parents, elders);
- Speaking Inuktitut to one’s children; encouraging others to use Inuktitut with their children; using Inuktitut with one’s spouse in order to expose one’s children to Inuktitut by using Inuktitut in their presence;
- Making a personal effort to speak Inuktitut to bilingual friends and to encourage friends to speak Inuktitut back; persisting in using Inuktitut when a bilingual individual switches to English, waiting until the other accommodates to Inuktitut language use, rather than allowing English to become the default language.



#### 4) ACCESS

Another crucial element of language promotion is access, to both Inuktitut and English, including opportunities to learn, hear and use each language. Examples of efforts to enhance access include:

- Considering both Inuktitut and English as desired targets of language promotion;
- Increasing learning opportunities, in order to assist youth in achieving what they would consider excellent competence in both Inuktitut and in English;
- Making efforts to implement Inuktitut as a more useful language in the formal school system, which could begin with making Inuktitut a more rigorous subject of instruction in the higher grades;
- Increasing access to and participation in activities which provide undisputed forums for the use and promotion of Inuktitut, e.g. land programs;
- Encouraging use of Inuktitut in the workplace;
- Increasing accessibility of programs to train Inuit professionals;
- Accompanying government decentralisation with specific policies and programs to assure that in the smaller communities, use of Inuktitut continues to be strong in government offices;
- Finding effective ways of diffusing corpus development, i.e. terminology;
- Encouraging increased use of Inuktitut in the linguistic environment, e.g. media, signs, etc.

As mentioned throughout the thesis, the challenge is to find a way to balance conflicting motivations in order to achieve, or maintain, stable bilingualism. The bilingualism in Pangnirtung described in this study most closely reflects what could be considered a stable Inuktitut-English situation. As previously stated, more research is needed to describe (even imagine) what a stable Inuktitut-English bilingualism throughout Nunavut would look like, let alone how it can be achieved.