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Fabiana Menezes

University of Windsor, menezesf@uwindsor.ca

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**Educational Challenges of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners in Canada and
in the United States of America: A Systematic Literature Review**

By

Fabiana Menezes

A Major Research Paper

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

through the Faculty of Education

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the Degree of Master of Education at the

University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2020

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**Educational Challenges of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners in Canada and
in the United States of America: A Systematic Literature Review**

By

Fabiana Menezes

APPROVED BY:

C. Cobb

Faculty of Education

A. Allen, Advisor

Faculty of Education

January 23, 2020

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ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review (SLR) examined Canadian and American peer-reviewed articles published in the past ten years (2009 – 2019) which pointed out the main challenges that affect culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners in their educational settings in Canada and United States. More specifically, it scrutinized the central theories that have been used to explain the main challenges that hinder the success of CLD learners in their educational settings in North American schools. Four key themes emerged in the analysis of fifteen peer-reviewed articles: A research-to-practice gap in the education of CLD learners; inappropriate referrals of CLD learners to special education classes; cultural mismatch and stereotypical assumptions about CLD learners; and the need of parental involvement in decision-making. Within these four main themes, research indicated that there is a research-to-practice gap due to a mutual distrust between teachers and researchers. This mutual distrust makes teachers less prone to utilize strategies that would help CLD learners in their educational settings and redefine social constructs about race and linguistic ability. In scrutinizing these four themes, this SLR provides a summary of multiple studies and pointed out some recommendation for future research.

Keywords: CLD learners, challenges, second language education, ESL, evidence-based practices

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/SYMBOLS	vii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
<i>Research Question</i>	2
<i>Locating Myself in the Research</i>	2
<i>Significance of the Study</i>	5
CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY	6
<i>Data Collection</i>	6
<i>Criteria for inclusion</i>	7
<i>Criteria for exclusion</i>	7
<i>Data Coding and Analysis</i>	8
<i>Definition of Key Terms Used in this Study</i>	14
<i>Definition of culturally and linguistically diverse learners</i>	15
<i>A brief definition of language</i>	16
<i>A brief definition of culture</i>	19
CHAPTER 3 SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW	22
ANALYSIS OF MAJOR THEMES	22
<i>Research-to-Practice Gap in the Education of CLD Learners</i>	23
<i>Mutual distrust between teachers and researchers</i>	26
<i>Inappropriate Referrals of CLD Learners to Special Education Classes</i>	28

<i>Overrepresentation of CLD learners in special education programs</i>	35
<i>Cultural Mismatch and Stereotypical Assumptions about CLD Learners</i>	40
<i>Involvement of Parents in CLD Learners' Education</i>	45
CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	51
<i>Recommendations</i>	55
APPENDIX STUDIES IDENTIFIED FOR THIS SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW...	62
REFERENCES	65
VITA AUCTORIS	72

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/SYMBOLS

ASHA	American Speech and Hearing Association
CASLPA	Canadian Association of Speech–Language Pathologists and Audiologists
CLD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners
CRPs	Culturally Responsive Practices
EBPs	Evidence-Based Practices
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
PSTs	Pre-Service Teachers
RCBB	Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism
SES	Socioeconomic Status
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLR	Systematic Literature Review

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

North America is a dynamic migration region and both the United States and Canada are home to a large number of immigrants. According to the Census Bureau's estimates, foreign-born residents comprised 13.7 percent of the U.S. population in 2017 (Immigrant Profiles & Demographics, 2019). As of 2011, Canada was host to nearly 7 million foreign-born people, representing over 20 percent of the nation's population (Statistics Canada, 2015). Since that time, more than 1 million additional foreign-born people have arrived in Canada, and over 70 percent of this population speaks a language other than French or English as their native language (Statistics Canada, 2015). Something that both the United States and Canada have in common is that in the past, most of their immigrants came from Europe, but more recently, they have also come from different parts of the world, such as the Middle East, East and South Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and South America. As a result, many American and Canadian students now come from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) backgrounds that are different from classrooms just a few decades ago, and as a result, they have new and unique cultural and linguistic learning needs.

As North American classrooms are getting more and more diverse, an increasing number of CLD learners arrive in their new educational settings with cultural and linguistic knowledge that differ sharply from the school culture they encounter in North America (Bullock, Gable, Carrero, Lewis, Collins, Zolkowski, & Lusk, 2014; Thompson, Martinez, & Cavazos, 2018). In this changing educational landscape, teachers are challenged with creating classrooms where students of all backgrounds feel represented and welcomed. Understanding students' cultural

differences is a key factor to enable inclusive learning processes and avoid educators' stereotypical assumptions about CLD learners (Guo, 2009; Scanlan & López, 2012). Teachers who are assigned to teach diverse populations, however, remain predominantly White, English monolingual, and middle class (Salerno & Kibler, 2013). None of these characteristics relate to their learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The diversity of learners in today's classrooms means that traditional cultural norms and educational values must be reviewed and adapted (Bullock, Gable, Lewis, Collins, Zolkoski, Carrero, & Lusk, 2013). As a result of the cultural mismatch between the education system in North America and their CLD learners, students might become marginalized and face several cultural and linguistic educational challenges in their schools. Therefore, the purpose of this SLR is to examine current peer-reviewed articles from Canada and U.S. identifying educational challenges faced by CLD learners in their educational settings in Canada and United States and suggest future studies to develop strategies that can support them.

Research Question

The two-part research question at the heart of this study is as follows:

What are the central theories that have been used to explain the current challenges faced by culturally and linguistically diverse learners in their educational settings in Canada and United States? How have these challenges been addressed to provide culturally and linguistically diverse learners with better educational experiences?

Locating Myself in the Research

Recognizing the role of subjectivity and locating myself as the researcher in the research process can strengthen not only the ethical integrity of the study but also the research process, the analysis, and interpretation of the data (Mosselson, 2010). I have a passion for languages. It

might be due to the fact that my first experience learning an additional language started at the age of five. Now, I speak four languages and the passion continues to grow.

The question of fairness and social justice has always been a concern in my life and it reflects on my path as a teacher. I believe that observing my family composition, which is very diverse, has awakened my concern for fairness and social justice in marginalized communities. My paternal grandmother was a Brazilian Indigenous woman, my paternal grandfather was an immigrant from Germany, my maternal grandmother was Black, and my maternal grandfather was an immigrant from Portugal. Their life stories are full of ups and downs and while growing up, I have heard that some really sad events happened in their lives for no apparent reason, just because they belonged to a certain ancestry. I was born and raised in Brazil, in the city of Rio de Janeiro. By the time I was born, my parents had attained financial stability and I was privileged to be raised in a middle-class family, with access to education, leisure, and a lot of comfort. Yet, it has not driven me away from the reality that was in my surroundings.

Since 2002, I have been teaching Portuguese and English as additional languages to learners from diverse nationalities. In my professional experience, I have noticed that CLD learners have broadly different perspectives in terms of language learning approaches. Oftentimes, a teacher's own way of interpreting the world influences their teaching style and drifts them away from their students. In Canada, most teachers continue to be from a White European middle-class background and do not reflect an increasingly diverse classroom (Artiles, Kozleski, Trent, Osher, & Ortiz, 2010). I argue that the ingrained habits of a lifetime are naturally transmitted to their learners and most teachers may not realize that these practices do not reflect their learners' backgrounds, views, and perspectives. Teachers from diverse racial

backgrounds are role models, enabling students to recognize that their own differences are not liabilities but strengths to be built on (Michael-Bandeke, 1993; Villegas & Clewell, 1998).

From my own experience, I realize that deciding to live in a new country is not an easy choice. Those who go through this process have compelling reasons for choosing to leave their home country and come to another country. They are looking for a fresh start and to do so, they have to leave part of themselves behind. Adults who make this choice might be more aware of the consequences. Children and adolescents, however, are most times accompanying their parents with little or no knowledge of what to expect in their new host country.

As an international student myself, I have noticed that the theory of a multicultural inclusive country does not always apply to the practice. The moment I first set foot in Canada, all my privileges disappeared and I became a visible minority. The term “visible minority” is defined by Statistics Canada (2019) as “persons, other than aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-White in colour” (p. 1). It is difficult to define visible minority based on the academic literature because the term itself is problematic. The term visible minority has been used interchangeably in the literature with the terms like “of colour,” “racialized” and “non-white” (Galabuzi, 2006). In Canada, it refers to those in the Canadian population other than Aboriginal people who are not white or Caucasian (Statistics Canada, 2019), and in that way, it centres whiteness and relegates all others to the margins. For statistical purposes, Statistics Canada has traditionally used the definition visible minority, and they pointed out that the three largest visible minority groups indicated by the 2011 census were South Asians, Chinese and Black people, followed by Filipinos, Latin Americans, Arabs, Southeast Asians, West Asians, Koreans, and Japanese. For the purposes of collecting census data, using the term ‘visible

minority' reflects self-identification based on a national survey and can only be used to identify racial categorization for demographic purposes.

Being an adult woman who would be identified as a visible minority in Canada is twice more oppressive in a society that has been built upon values, traditions and culture that theoretically but not always in practice embraces diversity. Since my arrival in Canada, my experiences as a member of the visible minority group have made me wonder how the daily microaggressions of racism and linguicism impact the educational outcomes of CLD learners in North American educational settings. Fortunately for many students, in every country, there are dedicated teachers who are willing to transform their students' lives. In my teaching, I have always challenged the submission to the system and taught with passion and determination because I understand the role of a teacher goes beyond the use of classroom instructions to help students learn. In Chapter 3, I will explain the importance of investigating the educational challenges faced by CLD learners in North American schools.

Significance of the Study

Investigating the challenges CLD learners face is significant to CLD populations, educators, researchers, and the society as a whole. This study will offer a summary of what current literature has to say about the topic with a critical analysis adding to the knowledge of the challenges CLD learners face in their educational settings in North America. The results of this study will help to promote awareness of cultural and linguistic differences and help educators reflect on their cultural and linguistic perceptions in the process of second language acquisition (SLA). In the next section, I outline the methodology and the research design used in this SLR.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

According to Okoli (2010), a researcher may conduct a literature review for different reasons, such as providing a theoretical background for future research, learning how much a topic of interest has been studied so far, or finding out what current research has to say on the topic of interest. Additionally, it indicates what kinds of research questions, theories and methodologies have been used. A SLR is a reliable method that enables researchers to make sense of large bodies of information (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008). It must follow a methodological approach, meticulously explaining the procedures of data collection, making sure all relevant articles have been included in the study in a way other people will find the same results when replicating the step-by-step procedures (Fink, 2005).

This SLR is aimed at offering new perspectives in terms of understanding the educational challenges faced by CLD learners in North American schools. For this, I investigated the literature up to a point of exhaustion where I could find the central issues revolving around the topic, critically analyze them, identify weaknesses, and propose future studies to bring practical solutions. Since the potential audience for this study is composed of specialized and general scholars located in North America, I took a purposive sample, examining the central and important Scholarly peer-reviewed articles in the field of education over the past ten years in Canada and in the United States.

Data Collection

In this literature review, I selected fifteen peer-reviewed articles published in the past ten years (2009 – 2019) focusing on the current challenges faced by culturally and linguistically diverse learners in their educational settings in Canada and the United States of America. The

data collection process began with a visit to the University Research Librarian, where we discussed the topic of this study and how to formulate the research question. He pointed out some key words we should utilize in the electronic search of academic databases (Leddy Library and Google Scholar). Firstly, on Leddy Library electronic search, I used the key words: ("culturally diverse" OR (linguistically diverse)) AND learners AND challenges AND Canada) and I received 13,437 results. In this first analysis, it was noticeable that most articles spoke about North American population even utilizing the key word "Canada" in our electronic search. Therefore, we realized the importance of widening the geographical scope of the search including articles from the U.S.A. In order to refine my results, I developed some criteria for inclusion and exclusion:

Criteria for inclusion.

- Only peer-reviewed articles
- Published in the past ten years (from 2009 to 2019)
- Both in Canada and United States
- Focused on CLD learners' challenges in Canadian schools and U.S. schools.
- Whose subject revolved around second language learning

Criteria for exclusion.

- Articles published before 2009
- In countries other than Canada and United States
- Excluding: Thesis, dissertations, magazine articles, internet articles, reviews, conferences proceedings, books, and book chapters
- Excluding the following subjects: Higher education, learning, teachers, teacher education, and teachers' attitudes.

When I chose the creation date between 2009 and 2019, the results were brought down to 7,971. I selected the resource type “Articles”- “Show only Peer-reviewed Journals”. The results were brought down to 1,308. To refine the search, I excluded the following resource types: Reviews, conferences proceedings and newspaper articles. I also excluded the following subjects: Higher education, Learning, Teachers, Teacher education, and Teachers attitudes. It brought the results to 774. Then I selected the subject: Second language learning and I got 85 articles. With these 85 articles, I started reading the abstracts and looking for evidence that indicated the article was focused on the challenges faced by CLD learners in their educational settings in Canada and United States.

When I found an article that specifically talked about the key theme, I would look it up on Google scholars and check related articles. I would also check the reference pages of every relevant article following the same procedure. These steps were repeated up to a point where no other significant articles were spotted. In order to make sure no relevant article was missing, I shared the list of articles with my advisor and asked him for additional inputs. Following this search criterion, I arrived at the pool of fifteen articles.

Data Coding and Analysis

Firstly, I separated and analyzed the articles according to the kind of journal they were published and the country of origin (Table 1). Out of the fifteen articles, only two were published by the same journal, titled *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*. Ten of the articles were from the United States and five were from Canada. It caught my eye that four of these journals were related to learning exceptionalities, communication disorders, school failure, and special education.

Table 1: Journal Pool

Journal	Organization	Country	Numbers of articles
<i>Developmental Science</i>	John Wiley & Sons	Canada	1
<i>Educational Administration Quarterly</i>	SAGE	USA	1
<i>Exceptional children</i>	SAGE	USA	1
<i>International Journal of Behavioral Development</i>	SAGE	Canada	1
<i>International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism</i>	Routledge	USA	1
<i>Intervention in school and clinic</i>	Hammill Institute on Disabilities	USA	1
<i>Journal of communication disorders</i>	Elsevier	Canada	1
<i>Journal of Research in Childhood Education</i>	Routledge	USA	1
<i>Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research</i>	American Speech-Language-Hearing Association	Canada	1
<i>Multicultural learning and teaching</i>	De Gruyter Online Journals	USA	1
<i>Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth</i>	Routledge	USA	2
<i>Teacher Education Quarterly</i>	Caddo Gap Press	USA	1
<i>The Journal of Educational Thought</i>	University of Calgary	Canada	1
<i>The Journal of Special Education</i>	SAGE	USA	1

Secondly, I separated and analyzed the articles according to their geographical setting. Observing the geographical analysis (Table 2), it was clear that most research from the United States took place at a national level while in Canada, research targeted large cities such as Toronto, Edmonton, and Calgary. Specifically looking into the regions of the United States, it was curious to see that Texas, California, and the South Atlantic Region of the United States were targeted areas for research on CLD learners. According to the *Immigrant Profiles and*

Demographics (2019), these areas host a large number of immigrants from Latin American countries. We can infer that CLD populations tend to concentrate in large cities and that is why most research usually takes place in these areas.

Table 2: Geography

Authors	Year	Country	Region
Artiles, Kozleski, Trent, Osher, and Ortiz	2010	USA	National wide
Bedore, Peña, Joyner, and Macken	2011	USA	Texas, California and Pennsylvania
Bullock, Gable, Carrero, Lewis, Collins, Zolkowski, and Lusk	2014	USA	National wide
Bullock, Gable, Carrero, Lewis, Collins, Zolkowski, and Lusk	2013	USA	National wide
Guiberson	2009	USA	National wide
Guo	2009	Canada	Calgary
Paradis and Jia	2017	Canada	Edmonton
Paradis and Kirova	2014	Canada	Edmonton
Paradis, Emmerzael, and Duncan	2010	Canada	Edmonton and Toronto
Paradis, Schneider and Duncan	2013	Canada	Edmonton and Toronto
Puig	2012	USA	New York
Salerno and Kibler	2013	USA	South Atlantic region of USA
Scanlan and López	2012	USA	National wide
Linan-Thompson, Lara-Martinez, and Cavazos	2018	USA	Oregon
Waitoller, Artiles, and Cheney	2010	USA	National wide

Thirdly, I separated and analyzed the articles according to the year of publication.

Thirteen articles were published between 2009 and 2014 and only two articles were published between 2017 and 2018. It indicated a gap of two years of research between 2015 and 2016. It is

worrying that researchers do not seem to have been conducting many studies on this topic lately, since immigration patterns tend to increase every year in both Canada and the United States. The research gap between 2015 and 2016 coincides with the peak of Syrian refugees landing in Canada and United States. This influx of refugees directly increased the number of CLD learners in schools. It seemed contradictory that as the number of the targeted population increased, the number of research decreased.

Table 3: Temporal Distribution

Year	Number of Articles
2009	2
2010	3
2011	1
2012	2
2013	3
2014	2
2015	0
2016	0
2017	1
2018	1
2019	0
Total	15

Fourthly, I separated and analyzed the articles according to the kind of study. Generally speaking, we can observe that most articles tended to be qualitative in nature, including:

Analysis of arguments, literature reviews, case studies, document analysis, narrative synthesis, and vignettes of actual observations. Bringing to a total of ten qualitative studies and five quantitative studies. We can also observe that three of the quantitative studies utilized a large number of participants, respectively: 549, 168, and 178 participants. A large sample size is more representative of a population, increasing the reliability of the findings.

Table 4: Types and sizes of articles

Authors	Type of study	Size of study
Artiles, Kozleski, Trent, Osher, and Ortiz	Analysis of arguments	3 claims
Bedore, Peña, Joyner, and Macken	Quantitative	549 participants
Bullock, Gable, Carrero, Lewis, Collins, Zolkowski, and Lusk	Literature Review	30 references
Bullock, Gable, Carrero, Lewis, Collins, Zolkowski, and Lusk	Literature Review	40 articles
Guiberson	Integrative Review	65 references
Guo	Qualitative	105 participants
Paradis and Jia	Quantitative Longitudinal Study	21 participants
Paradis and Kirova	Quantitative	21 participants
Paradis, Emmerzael, and Duncan	Quantitative	168 participants
Paradis, Schneider and Duncan	Quantitative	178 participants
Puig	Qualitative Multiple Case Study	3 families
Salerno and Kibler	Document Analysis	20 case studies
Scanlan and López	Narrative Synthesis (Systematic Literature Review)	79 empirical articles
Linan-Thompson, Lara-Martinez, and Cavazos	Vignettes of Actual Observations	10 teachers
Waitoller, Artiles, and Cheney	Systematic Literature Review	42 articles

Fifthly, in this final step, I analyzed the articles according to the main themes they addressed. I identified four major themes in order to better understand the central theories that have been used to explain the current challenges faced by CLD learners and how these challenges have been addressed to provide them with better educational practices. Out of the fifteen articles, fourteen of them pointed out that there is a cultural mismatch and stereotypical assumptions about CLD learners in their educational settings. Thirteen articles indicated that there are still inappropriate referrals of CLD learners to special education classes. Eight articles mentioned that there is a research-to-practice gap in this field and it may be due to a mutual distrust amongst parents, educators, and researchers. Seven articles suggested that the involvement of parents in CLD learner’s education may influence their learning outcomes.

Table 5: Four main challenges in the education of CLD learners

Author(s)	Research-to-practice gap in the education of CLD learners	Inappropriate referrals of CLD learners to special education classes	Cultural mismatch and stereotypical assumptions about CLD learners	Involvement of parents in CLD learner’s education
Artiles, Kozleski, Trent, Osher, and Ortiz			√	
Bedore, Peña, Joyner, and Macken	√	√	√	√
Bullock, Gable, Carrero, Lewis, Collins, Zolkowski, and Lusk	√	√	√	
Bullock, Gable, Carrero, Lewis, Collins, Zolkowski, and Lusk	√	√	√	
Guiberson		√	√	√
Guo		√	√	√

Table 5: (Continued)

Paradis and Jia	√	√	√	
Paradis and Kirova			√	
Paradis, Emmerzael, and Duncan		√	√	√
Paradis, Schneider and Duncan		√		√
Puig	√	√	√	√
Salerno and Kibler	√	√	√	√
Scanlan and López	√	√	√	
Linan-Thompson, Lara-Martinez, and Cavazos	√	√	√	
Waitoller, Artiles, and Cheney		√	√	

In the course of this investigation, four key themes emerged allowing me to dig into them and build concepts around them to understand why there are still challenges in the educational settings of CLD learners in North American schools. Before delving into the analysis of these four key themes, first, I will offer the definition of some major concepts largely debated in this study for better understanding their meaning within the context of this SLR.

Definition of Key Terms Used in this Study

Before pointing out the main challenges investigated in this SLR, I would like to define some of the major concepts used in this study. This section will define three terms that were broadly debated in this SLR: CLD Learners, Language, and Culture. I would like to highlight that the description of these concepts is neither absolute, nor universally definitive. The description of these concepts serves to better understand how they were defined by the literature and correlated to the challenges investigated.

Definition of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Culturally and linguistically diverse learners are defined as a group of immigrants or refugees who speak a variety of languages (other than or in addition to the language spoken in their country of residence) and come from diverse social, cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds (Counts, Katsiyannis, & Whitford, 2018). They have been in the United States or Canada for a short time, usually less than five years. The time frame of five years was suggested in a study conducted by Paradis and Jia (2016) which identified that it usually takes CLD learners four to six years to academically perform closer to monolingual norms from a North American perspective. After this period of time, they are still considered CLD learners but are in less vulnerable learning conditions than their newly arrived peers.

CLD learners have access to several services at settlement agencies, and receive language training, leisure activities, and immigration help. These services are of prime importance for their better adjustment to the new social and educational settings. However, professionals who deal with CLD learners including educators, speech pathologists and settlement service agents to name a few, often engage in practices that are based on instruments, domains of development, abilities, age norms, and child upbringing that is molded by Western expectations (Bullock et al., 2014). Consequently, settlement services have to deal with taken-for-granted assumptions of these CLD newcomers' capabilities in their daily lives and particularly in their education.

There are also some CLD learners who were born in the United States or Canada but live in a household where English or French is not their first language. It means that the first language they learn at home is their heritage language and they are going to formally learn English the moment they go to school (Counts, Katsiyannis, & Whitford, 2018). These CLD

learners may also face obstacles in their school adaptation and be subject to stigmatized assumptions about their capabilities.

A brief definition of language. In the literature, there are various definitions of language. For the purpose of this study, I am going to refer to three of them: The first is a structuralist definition proposed by Ferdinand De Saussure (2011), the second sees language as an innate ability proposed by Noam Chomsky (2014), and the third sees the functionality of language or language as a tool for communication proposed by Johanna Nichols (2017). I will also introduce the theory of linguistic relativity (Boroditsky, 2011) in order to ground the proposition that CLD learners should have their world views included and meaningfully considered in the educational process.

The structuralist definition of language was first introduced by Saussure who defined language as a formal closed system of signs organized by grammatical rules which are combined to convey meaning (Saussure, 2011). Language as an innate ability or mental faculty allows humans to learn languages, to produce and understand utterances. Proponents of this view understand that language is spontaneously developed by people who live in the environment where the language is spoken. In other words, children have an instinctive mental ability which allows them to acquire and produce language (Chomsky, 2014). Language as a tool for communication emphasizes the social functions of language and the way we use languages to express ourselves and manipulate the environment (Nichols, 2017). In this way, language is understood as a dynamic phenomenon which is always in the process of changing as time goes by.

All these concepts of language give us an understanding that the process of language acquisition is much more impartial and inclusive than discriminatory, or at least should be. In

this context, the ideas proposed by Saussure (2011), Chomsky (2014), and Nichols (2017) are antagonistic towards the ideas defended by language imperialism, especially in diverse contexts surrounded by multimodal approaches. Language imperialism is defined as a group of ideologies, structures and practices used to legitimate, regulate, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources between groups (Phillipson, 2009). Oppression through language imperialism is determined by the language someone speaks or the characteristics of the person's speech, such as accent, vocabulary complexity, and syntax.

This imposed dominance consequently breeds linguicism or linguistic discrimination which is the unfair treatment of an individual based exclusively on their use of language. It may include someone's first language or even regional differences in accent, the sophistication of vocabulary and the use of syntax. Based on these factors, people are judged upon their education, social status, character, and wealth. Additionally, oppressed and marginalized social minorities are more frequently subject to this judgement because the speech varieties associated with these groups are more stigmatized than others. These perceived judgements may lead to an unjustifiable treatment of the individual, affecting access to jobs, housing as well as shaping the perceptions of who belongs in a social group (Creese & Kambere, 2003).

Sapir (1921) posited that, "Language is the most massive and inclusive art we know" (p. 220). Language is one of the most important abilities humans have because we can transmit ideas, concepts, and knowledge to one another. Nearly seven thousand languages are spoken all over the world and there are many different ways in which languages differ from one another in terms of sounds, vocabularies, and structures. Having in mind that diverse North American classrooms may host students from a number of different linguistic backgrounds and that the concept of language may also be interpreted in different ways, there is a huge concern about how

teachers can understand these differences and accommodate their students' needs (Scanlan & López, 2012).

The notion that different languages may develop different cognitive skills has been investigated and discussed for centuries. The early stages of an investigation conducted by American linguists studied how languages vary and their findings suggested that speakers of different languages may think differently (Sapir, 1921). Since then, scholars have developed a solid body of empirical evidence showing how languages shape thinking (Gentner & Boroditsky, 2001; Kay & Kempton, 1984; Slobin, 1996; Traugott, 1978; Whorf, 1956). These results have important implications in the field of education, especially for second language acquisition.

Linguistic Relativity argues the close connection among language, culture, and perception. According to the theory of Linguistic Relativity, language functions as a cultural script to guide people on how to think and perceive the world. In other words, language influences the mental image described by vocabularies and syntactic grammars and this is one of the reasons that different people describe the same event in many different ways. They observe and narrate facts through the lenses of their cultural and linguistic perspectives (Boroditsky, 2011).

Languages differ from one another in several ways. Scholars who contribute to this understanding have conducted a number of experiments to justify their claims and prove that language shapes even the most fundamental dimensions of human experience such as space, time, causality and relationships to others (Boroditsky, 2011). In terms of spatial orientation and direction, Levinson (2003) identified a correlation between spatial thinking with language which is probably mostly responsible for the different cognitive styles. His investigation includes many cross-cultural studies about spatial memory, reasoning, types of gesture and geolocation abilities.

It explains a lot about the relationship between language and cognition and cross-cultural differences.

It is also true about the way one thinks about time. For example, Gaby & Sweetser (2017) conducted an experiment to analyze how speakers of different languages interpret temporal progressions. They asked two different language speakers to arrange shuffled photographs on the ground to indicate the correct temporal order. In this experiment, it was observed that English speakers arranged the cards so that time proceeds from left to right while Hebrew speakers lay out the cards from right to left. It means that writing direction in a language influences how someone organizes time. These experiments also show that speakers of different languages differ in how they describe events, how well they can remember who did what and whether the subject is more important than the object in a sentence structure, just to name a few.

Seeing these differences amongst languages, one may argue that current approaches to SLA are far from acknowledging and embracing the cultural and linguistic perspectives CLD learners carry along the process of SLA. Language instructors should understand that when someone learns another language, they do not only have to learn phonetics, lexicon, morphology, and syntax but also reshape their minds and adjust to new language patterns. It is just wishful thinking the idea that language instructors should be aware of the differences amongst languages, especially because most of them come from White, European, middle-class families whose language and social constructs are far from most of their CLD learners (Puig, 2012).

A brief definition of culture. There are also assorted definitions of Culture in the literature. Some may include material aspects of culture such as food, clothing, architecture, etc. Some others may include non-material aspects of culture such as history, language, norms, values, beliefs, and accepted behaviour (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). Together, all these aspects, and

more, form a people's way of life. This combination of elements affects how people think, act and what they own. Culture is an essential part of being human and no one is complete without a culture; however, one person can be part of two or more different cultures (Macionis & Gerber, 2018).

In the course of time, an elitist concept of culture emerges, asserting that arts, science, and manners have developed different degrees of sophistication according to each civilization. This level of sophistication can distinguish the civilizations in hierarchical perspectives on culture. Hierarchical relations become more evident in class-based distinctions between high culture, associated with the elite and popular culture, associated with lower classes (Veiga-Neto, 2003). It also highlights the Marxist views that culture can be used politically as a tool of the elites to manipulate and mislead the lower classes, which leads to the concept of cultural hegemony. Cultural hegemony is the domination of a culturally diverse society by the ruling classes to create social norms, value systems, and social stigmas to maintain a culture where their continued dominance is considered beneficial for everyone (Gramsci & Buttigieg, 2011). It reinforces the colonialist views on language minorities and how CLD populations are constantly linked to stereotyped assumptions.

It was not until the beginning of the 20th century that the relationship between language and culture was brought to the debate. Scholars such as Linda Hantrais, Edward Sapir, and Marie Emmitt, among others, largely contributed to the analysis of how language and culture hold inseparable characteristics and form someone's world views. Hantrais (1989) developed the notion that culture is the set of beliefs and practices conducting the life of a society where a specific language is the vehicle of expression. This statement contributes to the idea that our understanding of the universe is shaped by local culture and the language we speak. Emmitt and

Pollock (2014) explained that people who are raised under similar behavioural backgrounds and cultural context, but speaking different languages, will be likely to develop very different world views. The understanding of a culture and its people can be enhanced by the knowledge of their language.

Damen (1987) asserted that “Culture is the learned and shared human patterns or models for living; day-to-day living patterns that pervade all aspects of human social interaction. Culture is mankind’s primary adaptive mechanism” (p. 81). Different cultures see the world through different lenses and all students bring a combination of different lived experiences to their classrooms in the dimensions of race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, socio-economic status, age, ability, religious or political beliefs, or other different ideologies. I argue that it is primarily the teachers’ responsibility to recognize and celebrate these differences allowing a respectful interaction and appreciation of everyone’s unique cultural make-up. The challenge for teachers is how to make it possible in a safe and nurturing environment for learning. In the following section, I introduce the four main themes which emerged from the analysis of the fifteen selected articles for this SLR that indicate the current challenges faced by CLD learners in their educational settings in North America.

CHAPTER 3

SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

In addition to the articles analyzed in this SLR, I found a fair amount of academic work investigating the challenges of CLD learners in their learning environment. When I started searching for articles that focus on the educational challenges faced by CLD learners in North American schools, in my first search, I came across 13,437 results (see the data collection section). The number of articles at first glance may lead us to believe that this topic is saturated and over studied but when we look into the topic a little closer, I was able to identify gaps that need to be addressed. For example, in my search, I could not find articles focused on the educational challenges CLD learners face in North American schools that were published between 2015 and 2016. However, I found only one article published in 2017 and another one in 2018. In the past five years, this topic did not receive much attention from academic studies. This period of time coincides with the influx of immigrants and refugees arriving in North America, increasing the number of CLD learners in North American schools.

ANALYSIS OF MAJOR THEMES

In the course of this investigation, four key themes emerged from the analysis of fifteen peer-reviewed articles focused on the challenges faced by CLD learners in their educational settings in Canada and United States: Research-to-practice gap in the education of CLD learners; inappropriate referrals of CLD learners to special education classes; cultural mismatch and stereotypical assumptions about CLD learners; and the need of parental involvement in the education of CLD learners. In this section, I will exam these key themes in detail starting off with the existence of a research-to-practice gap in the education of CLD learners in North American schools.

Research-to-Practice Gap in the Education of CLD Learners

Research in education intends to explore issues that affect teachers, counselors, administrators, policy makers, and students. In theory, research in education should focus on educational issues that have significant implications for educators' daily practices and learners' outcomes. However, some teachers still believe that research alone does not have an impact on their teaching practices. For example, some teachers may suggest that their students' learning needs are not being met by the research-based curriculum (Salerno & Kibler, 2013; Bullock et al., 2013, 2014). In addition to that, scientific studies alone are not going to change years of ingrained beliefs of professionals from the field of education. It is necessary to develop a new mindset of educators in order to replace limiting beliefs with empowering ones.

In this literature review, eight out of fifteen articles indicated that there is a research-to-practice gap in the education of CLD learners in North American schools (Bedore, Peña, Joyner, & Macken, 2011; Bullock, Gable, Carrero, Lewis, Collins, Zolkowski, & Lusk, 2013, 2014; Linan-Thompson, Lara-Martinez, & Cavazos, 2018; Paradis and Jia, 2017; Puig, 2012; Salerno & Kibler, 2013; Scanlan & López, 2012). Salerno and Kibler (2013), Scanlan and López (2012), Puig (2012), Linan-Thompson et al. (2018), Bullock et al. (2013, 2014), Bedore et al. (2011) seemed to agree that teachers should use CLD learners' first language, through a combination of Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs), and Culturally Responsive Practices (CRPs) as resources in the education of CLD learners. At the same time, they acknowledged that teachers did not demonstrate to have expanded views of culture and did not frequently use the strategies suggested by researchers (Bullock et al., 2013, 2014; Puig, 2012). Only Paradis and Jia (2017) alerted that both educators and researchers may develop a set of expectations for CLD learners based on monolingual models of development which could create friction in attaining better

educational results. This disconnect with researchers' beliefs may indicate the reason some teachers distrust their suggestions and findings. EBPs are those practices that rely on scientific evidence for guidance and decision-making and practices that are not evidence-based rely on tradition, intuition, or other unproven methods (Groot, Wouden, Hell, & Nieweg, 2013). Linan-Thompson et al. (2018) define CRP as a multidimensional approach to teaching that affirms students' cultural identities. Next, I will show some examples to better illustrate the inconsistency between what is recommended by researchers and what is actually done in CLD classrooms according to the eight articles from this SLR.

Salerno and Kibler (2013) used the example of a teacher education program to demonstrate the challenge of addressing the gap between educational theory and teachers' personal practical knowledge; where teachers' personal practical knowledge might not necessarily be based on EBPs. They pointed out that mentor teachers might influence novice teachers in the perception of how EBPs can be implemented for CLD learners. In their study, Salerno and Kibler (2013) narrated the experiences of a pre-service teacher who tried to persuade a mentor teacher about modifying some assignments to better suit a CLD learner's needs who had just transitioned from an English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classroom. The mentor teacher replied negatively to the request alleging that it would be unfair to the other students, even when examples in the academic literature advocated otherwise. Bullock et al. (2014), on the other hand, identified some examples of effective practice for CLD learners including reading instructions for struggling learners, task variability and academic performance, and communal learning. The disagreement between the pre-service teacher and the mentor teacher indicated that there is a clear disconnection between the recommendations that pre-

service teachers bring from their university teacher education program and the more experienced mentor teacher's advice in practice.

Researchers have recommended the use of CLD learners' languages and families as learning resources for a while (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; de Jong and Harper, 2010; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Salerno & Kibler, 2013; Valdés, Bunch, Snow, Lee, & Matos, 2005). Scanlan and López (2012) found that using CLD learners' primary language can promote the acquisition of English while fostering the development and maintenance of their primary language. Despite that, teachers tend not to follow researchers' suggestions and would actually recommend the opposite in their practices (Scanlan & López, 2012). Using CLD learners' primary language and considering their family or cultural background as a learning resource is an example of Culturally Responsive Practice (CRP). CRPs require a broad understanding of CLD learners' characteristics, experiences, and perspectives and when well applied, used individually or combined, have proven to help CLD learners overcome language, social, and cultural challenges (Linan-Thompson et al., 2018; Scanlan & López, 2012). Linan-Thompson et al. (2018) endorsed that EBPs and CRPs should be used together in order to achieve better educational results and bridge the differences between CLD learners and their new school culture.

Another concern is that simply placing scientific information in the teachers' hands does not necessarily mean that they will use it to develop different or better educational practices. The literature in this study indicate that teachers believe that the scientific findings do not represent the issues they face in their daily practices. Teachers should not only rely just on intuition or from experiences in their teaching practices but should be open to new theories and ways of thinking because their practices result in the behavioral changes of a group, the learners. A group

of learners and the society at large benefit from the final product of teaching. Keeping in mind that the successful outcome of CLD learners is a collective responsibility, I suggest that educators should seek to develop their practices collaboratively both with their colleagues and with educational researchers. With the active participation of teachers, learners, families, and researchers, it will be more effective to cater to CLD learners' educational needs and close the research-to-practice gap. This first step in addressing this gap is to focus on the relationship between teachers and researchers, in addition to addressing the importance of collaboration between teachers and families in developing better strategies for CLD learners.

Mutual distrust between teachers and researchers. Another issue emerging from the findings is that teachers tend to discredit researchers because they believe that researchers are not actually facing the problems they encounter inside the classroom. At the same time, teachers believe that researchers tend to discredit teachers because they do not follow scientific methods for developing their practices. Researchers such as Boardman, Arguelles, Vaughn, Hughes, and Klinger (2005), Bullock et al. (2014), Burns and Ysseldyke (2009), and Little and King (2005) also claim that teachers are not well informed about research methods and findings which prevent them from utilizing EBPs. This mutual distrust makes it difficult to bring actual change to the field of education and close the research-to-practice gap. For example, one author had this to say about the issues of teachers and researchers' distrust; "Teachers feel that researchers have failed to bridge the gap that exists between the rigor of empirical investigation and the reality of daily instruction" (Bullock et al., 2013, p. 4). Part of the reason for this mutual distrust is that it is difficult to change teachers' perspectives, especially when they are based on traditional teaching methods, teacher intuition, emotions, and group affiliations. Another reason is that it is not always simple to make a research relevant to what is actually happening in the classrooms.

Ultimately, Bullock et al. (2013) suggest that teachers are often skeptical of researchers because academics seem to be far from the daily work experience of their classrooms.

Researchers recommend that educators use EBPs in their classrooms (Bedore et al., 2011; Bullock et al., 2013; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018). However, Bullock et al. (2014) identified in the literature that there are few teaching strategies that have been carefully examined and considered evidence-based accessible to teachers. The reason for the lack of implementation of best practices for CLD learners may be lack of awareness as Scanlan & López (2010) suggested or even lack of appreciation for one another's point of view as Bullock et al. (2014) suggested. This distance between teachers and researchers feeds competition and increases the mutual distrust. The key to bring teachers and researchers together is collaboration. CLD learners' learning experiences and their teachers' practices may improve the moment we see a narrowing of the research-to-practice gap. However, it can only happen if there is practical collaboration between educators and researchers. As one author puts it, "We need to keep in mind that research cannot function without the support of practitioners" (Bullock et al., 2014, p. 107). According to Bullock et al. (2014) collaboration is an important element to successfully develop teachers' practices and CLD learner' outcomes. Indeed, an important consideration is that, "Collaboration includes researchers working with educators to address questions and needs, involves educators in the research process, and provides feedback" (p.107)

Klinger, Ahwee, Pilonieta, and Menendez (2003) suggested implementing a research-teacher partnership as the first step to create a "community of learners". This kind of partnership has the potential to equip teachers with effective practices for classroom management and instructions. Ongoing collaboration between teachers and researchers will foster knowledge base

obtained from real or actual professional experiences, support continuous connections, and help close the research-to-practice gap. Therefore, theory can support practice while practice can communicate knowledge to theory (Bullock et al., 2013, 2014; Puig, 2012; Scanlan & López, 2012). In the next section, I explore the second major theme identified in this SLR addressing the reasons for inappropriate referrals of CLD learners to special education classes and their implications.

Inappropriate Referrals of CLD Learners to Special Education Classes

In this section, I bring the main points of what the articles from this SLR say about the inappropriate referrals of CLD learners to special education classes. Inappropriate referral is the main reason for the overrepresentation of CLD learners in special education classes. I am going to touch on questions related to why the inappropriate referrals frequently happen, the culture behind them, and some examples of current practices that can avoid this problem.

In the analysis of the fifteen articles of this SLR, it surprised me that thirteen of them indicated there is a problem with the referrals of CLD students to special education classes (Bedore et al., 2011; Bullock et al., 2013, 2014; Guiberson, 2009; Guo, 2009; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018; Paradis et al., 2010; Paradis et al., 2013; Paradis & Jia, 2017; Puig, 2012; Salerno & Kibler, 2013; Scanlan & López, 2012; Waitoller et al., 2010). In analyzing, comparing and contrasting the articles from this literature review, I found that a majority of researchers attributed the inappropriate referrals of CLD learners to special education classes to a cultural mismatch (Bullock et al., 2013, 2014; Guo, 2009; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018; Paradis et al., 2013; Puig, 2012; Salerno & Kibler, 2013; Scanlan & López, 2012; Waitoller et al., 2010) and

lack of correct assessment tools for CLD learners (Bedore et. al., 2011; Guiberson, 2009; Guo, 2009; Paradis et al., 2010; Paradis & Jia, 2017; Scanlan & López, 2012; Waitoller et al., 2010).

I also noticed that quantitative research (Bedore et. al., 2011; Paradis et al., 2010; Paradis & Jia, 2017) focused more on the assessment tools available for CLD learners while qualitative research (Bullock et al., 2013, 2014; Guo, 2009; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018; Puig, 2012; Salerno & Kibler, 2013; Scanlan & López, 2012; Waitoller et al., 2010) addressed to issues related to cultural mismatch. I believe this division happened due to the nature of quantitative research which is used to quantify a defined variable and generalize results from a larger sample population which enables researchers to use test as parameters for their analysis. Bedore et al. (2011), for example, examined the validity of parent and teacher reports in determining CLD learners' language proficiency and ability using 549 participants. On the other hand, qualitative research is used to disclose trends in conclusions and analyze the problem in more depth. Scanlan and López (2012), for example, conducted a SLR and synthesis of findings from 79 empirical articles showing the importance of crafting effective and integrated service delivery for CLD learners. Next, I point out some examples of what these authors said about the inappropriate referrals.

The criteria for placement in special programs are determined by individual districts, provinces, states, school boards with the help of teachers and English as a second language (ESL) specialists. I have argued in a previous section that there is a mutual distrust between teachers and researchers. Consequently, teachers might not apply research findings in their classrooms and researchers might not be investigating the challenges that have been identified by teachers. This brings us to question the current assessment criteria utilized in the identification

process of CLD learners because “the language assessments commonly used with these students are suspected to incorrectly identify language abilities contributing to disproportionately high disability labeling.” (Scanlan & López, 2012, p.584). When school staff analyze students’ English skills isolated, they can mistakenly recommend ineffective strategies for CLD learners (Scanlan & López, 2012). For example, Scanlan & López (2012) showed in their analysis that teachers tend to place CLD learners in remedial reading classes together with English native speakers who presented difficulty in reading skills. These two groups of learners need to utilize different strategies to cope with their reading challenges.

Research suggested that the identification of CLD learners to special education is a challenge because schools may lack or ignore adequate assessment tools, not following protocols specifically designed to CLD learners (Paradis et al., 2010). Studies analyzed also implied that referrals to special education could be more accurate when educators follow the protocol recommended by research. Schools should also rely on parents reports about their children first language acquisition, while considering the process of language attrition (which is considered a natural process once the CLD learner immerses in the second language environment). Educators should also compare CLD traditionally developing learners to CLD learners with language impairment in order to avoid unfair comparisons from a North American, White, English-speaking middle-class standard (Paradis et al., 2013) and understand that IQ tests are not applicable to all CLD learners. Different cultures may respond to IQ tests differently which can alter the test results (Waitoller et al., 2010). It is also important to bring into play evidence-based practices to make sure CLD learners’ needs are being addressed (Bullock et al., 2013) and offer CLD learners continued sheltered language instructions to make sure they will have positive academic outcomes (Guiberson, 2009). In addition to the aforementioned, both the American

Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA, 1985, 2004), and the Canadian Association of Speech–Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA, 1997) recommend that educators assess CLD learners using data from their first and second languages.

CLD learners bring a lot of cultural and linguistic knowledge to their classrooms that when well utilized, can enrich learning opportunities for everyone. However, when they come to their new educational settings, they usually have to handle differences in communication, teaching and learning styles that do not necessarily celebrate their own. This cultural disconnection can contribute to inadequate referrals for special education, condemn CLD learner to poor educational outcomes, and may also lead teachers to focus on students’ perceived deficits instead of acknowledging their cultural and linguistic differences (Bedore et. al., 2011; Bullock et al., 2014, & Scanlan & López, 2012). Bedore et al. (2011) recognized that “educators need more information to distinguish between normal variability in bilingual language learners and language impairment or other learning disabilities.” (Bedore et. al., 2011, p.490). Bullock et. al. (2013) and Scanlan and López (2012) assured that educational decisions for CLD learners may continue to be inaccurate unless educators embrace the use of culturally and linguistically sensitive practices and dynamic assessment practices to avoid culturally biased assessments and ensure successful educational outcomes for this population.

This literature review compiled the most highlighted obstacles for the effective assessment of CLD learners. For example:

- socioeconomical status (SES) may affect the identification rates (meaning that CLD learners from lower SES are more frequently identified to special education) (Waitoller et al., 2010);

- processes and eligibility criteria that rely on unfair comparisons amongst different ethnic groups (Waitoller et al., 2010);
- distorted assumptions about ability and intelligence that inform assessments and professional practices (Waitoller et al., 2010);
- the use of monolingual norms to interpret bilingual abilities can mistakenly identify traditional developing CLD learners to special education (Paradis et al., 2013);
- the reliability and validity of standardized tests to identify CLD learners (Guiberson, 2009);
- lack of bilingual qualified professionals (speech pathologists, interpreters, cultural brokers, etc.) to administer tests and collect language samples (Paradis, Schneider, & Duncan, 2013);
- inappropriate tests disregarding cultural differences and key clinical linguistic markers in the first language (Paradis, Schneider, & Duncan, 2013); and
- limited access to documentation that could trace the CLD learner's first language development because children who present a developmental language disorder in their second language acquisition process would have presented the same pattern in their first language acquisition process (Paradis, Schneider, & Duncan, 2013).
- Paradis et al. (2010) reinforced the importance of tracking CLD learner's first language development affirming that "information on both languages provides a more complete picture of a bilingual's linguistic abilities" (Paradis et al., 2010, p. 475).

There is current research showing that lack of content knowledge and required skills is not a solid reason to place CLD learners in lower than age-appropriate grades (Waitoller et. al., 2010). Lack of fluency in English does not indicate limited cognitive capacity either. If these CLD learners do not have the opportunity to interact with peers in the same age, it can create obstacles for their adjustment to learning. The placement of CLD learners in English Language Learner classroom or special education environments can deeply affect their achievements and is as serious as placing them in lower than age-appropriate grades (Guiberson, 2009; & Waitoller et. al., 2010). Waitoller et al. (2010) described that CLD learners identified to special education programs can be placed in more separated or specialized settings than their White peers with the same disability identification. Some other studies also discussed the negative impacts of placing CLD learners in segregated settings. They pointed out that as a consequence of segregation, CLD learners may be denied access to general education curriculum, receive services that do not correspond to their needs, are more vulnerable to be removed from school, less likely to receive vocational services, and enroll in higher education when compared to their non CLD peers with the same identified disability (Guiberson, 2009; & Waitoller et. al., 2010).

Schools can use different interventions based on CLD learners' language demands. Scanlan and López (2012) identified in their study that early interventions allowing opportunities for language development have proven to bring positive impacts for CLD learners' outcomes and to reduce inappropriate referrals to learning disability. Scanlan and López (2012) also listed accommodation strategies that can give CLD learners access to a high-quality curriculum and at the same time enable teachers to effectively assess them, and avoid inappropriate referrals. Some examples of accommodation strategies included: A clear discernment between English language proficiency and content knowledge, providing CLD learners with content-specific language

instruction to support their performance on content area assessments, setting sufficient time for them to show what they know, and using customized dictionaries or glossaries regardless of their level of English language proficiency. Reducing complex language structures and using clear language will be useful for every learner in the classroom, regardless of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

When investigating the expectation of when English second language children catch up with their monolingual peers, Paradis & Jia (2017) identified that cognitive factors were not significant predictors of children's outcomes. Language environment factors (for example: Greater exposure time to English, a richer English environment, a mother with higher level of education, and a mother with greater fluency in English) accounted for more variance in children's performance than cognitive factors. They also noticed a difference when they divided CLD learners into low and high-exposure groups. Their study indicated that English-language tests would better identify a CLD learner with language impairment when they had more proficiency in English. In addition, as CLD learners' language proficiency increases, evaluators' expectations may increase following a North American, White, English-speaking middle-class standard.

Heller (as cited in Waitoller et al., 2010) categorized six main rubrics that explained the inappropriate referrals of CLD learners to special education including: Policies that fund particular disability labels offering incentives to place students in certain categories; CLD learners' biological and emotional characteristics; quality of instruction CLD learners receive; biased assessment criteria; characteristics of CLD learners' family environment; and the broader historical and cultural processes that collectively influence minority status within a dominant

majority culture. Amongst these six rubrics, I noticed that none of the articles from this SLR investigated policies that fund particular disability labels offering incentives to place students in certain categories. It seems reasonable to assume that this topic deserves further attention and should be investigated more carefully. On the other hand, most articles attributed the inappropriate referrals to cultural biases in the assessment, family characteristics and involvement, and social, historical, and cultural traces of the teachers and learners. This way, the major themes in this study are connected and cultural mismatch (third major theme) and parental involvement (fourth major theme) will be explored in more depth in the next sections. Since the inappropriate referral of CLD learners to special education is one of the causes of overrepresentation, I explain what it means and its impact on CLD learners.

Overrepresentation of CLD learners in special education programs. Speaking about overrepresentation is a complex subject that gives us the chance to understand social and educational discrimination of specific groups. Guinier and Torres (2002) came up with a metaphor to explain the problems with American democracy that could shed light on the phenomenon of overrepresentation. They called it “the miner’s canary.” In other words, this metaphor indicates that the overrepresentation of certain cultural groups is not a secondary problem, it is much more systemic involving the education system, its policies, and practices that can either grant or restrain learners’ opportunities. Waitoller et al. (2010) translated this metaphor into the overrepresentation of CLD learners in special education by stating that “The canary warns us about potential unequal distributions of access to opportunities and participation in society that might result from inadequate use of educational practices” (p.29).

In this SLR, several scholars identified that CLD learners are often overrepresented in special education programs in North American schools (Artiles et al., 2010; Bullock et al., 2013 & 2014; Guiberson, 2009; Guo, 2009; Linan-Thompson, Martinez & Cavazos, 2018; Paradis, Emmerzael & Duncan, 2010; Paradis & Jia, 2017; Paradis, Schneider & Duncan, 2013; Puig, 2012; Salerno & Kibler, 2013; Scanlan & López, 2012; Waitoller, Artiles & Cheney, 2010). One noteworthy point in this analysis was the fact that most research about CLD learners tended to analyze this population through a disability lens. From the fifteen articles analyzed, four of them were published in journals related to learning exceptionalities, communication disorders, school failure, and special education (Table 1 p.9). At some point, most authors referred to CLD learners' education as if it were something exceptional. It may confirm the idea proposed by Paradis and Jia (2017) that both teachers and researchers may develop biased expectations about CLD learners, applying a disability label to them. CLD learners are frequently labeled as those who will require classroom assessments and practices that are appropriately differentiated for their backgrounds and their learning needs. Race and ethnicity become determinants of students' achievement and their perceived ability to succeed in school. This overrepresentation is apparent for certain racial or ethnic groups of students in special education programs and cultural and linguistic diversity is invariably associated with learning disabilities.

The number of CLD learners in Canadian and American schools is expected to continue growing as the number of immigrants and refugees go up. As the CLD infant population increased, so did the number of students identified as having special needs (Bullock et al., 2013). According to the expectations of inclusive service delivery, students should be uniformly distributed in their educational settings. In other words, in the United States, CLD learners represent 9.5% of public-school enrollees (Bialik, Scheller, & Walker, 2018) while in Ontario,

for example, about 10% are CLD learners according to the Government of Ontario (2014). There is a clear discrepancy looking at the data because CLD learners are not the majority of students enrolled in schools, yet they represent a large percentage in special education classes. Educators need to make use of appropriate tools to distinguish cultural and linguistic differences from students with learning disabilities and provide appropriate services to the growing population of CLD learners. Additionally, educators must constantly question their assumptions to avoid misdiagnosis of their CLD students and offer their learners equitable access to transformative education as previously noted.

Gutierrez (2002) asserted that CLD learners have been inadequately excluded from the general education classroom and that they could be well integrated into regular classrooms with care and better preparation. I assume here that teachers would rather exercise caution by recommending compounding special education service for their CLD learners in an attempt to make sure their language acquisition process is not overlooked. However, when teachers play it safe, they do not always consider the consequences of an inappropriate referral for their CLD learners. Overrepresentation in special education leads CLD learners to negative consequences. Most often, the quality of instruction or the teachers' expectations in special education classrooms might be lowered when compared to general education classrooms. In the future, it can keep these misreferred CLD learners from going back to regular classes due to this gap (Waitoller et al., 2010). In addition to this, Hosp and Reschly (as cited in Waitoller, et al., 2010) indicated three reasons to explain the problematic nature of overrepresentation in special programs, including: labeling effects, segregation of placement, and presumed ineffectiveness of special education services.

Artiles et al. (2010) also investigated the disproportionality in special education referrals for CLD learners and suggested indicators to monitor the placement patterns, considering both academic and social support services that contribute to this overrepresentation. Artiles et al. (2010) also claimed that CLD learners who receive less support and instruction in their native language tend to be placed in special education programs more than their counterparts in bilingual settings. Garcia and Cuellar (2006) noted that monolingual models may lead to the overrepresentation of CLD learners in special education and the referrals grow gradually as the amount of language support is reduced.

It is indeed challenging for teachers to be able to assure that such a diversity of cultural and linguistic needs is being met in the same classroom. However, the literature also indicated that teachers who belong to diverse racial and cultural backgrounds can achieve great results with their students when they receive training to explore EBPs and CRPs with CLD learners and families (Scanlan & López, 2012). Teachers who belong to diverse racial and cultural backgrounds have experienced similar adversities in their educational trajectories. Their similar experiences create a support system, where teachers empathize with their learners and learners rely on their teachers for guidance. However, it is not commonplace to find teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds in North American schools (Scanlan & López, 2012). Teachers' lack of cultural reference may translate into negative interactions or experiences of bias and discrimination, feeding into the mutual distrust between parents and school staff (Guiberson, 2009). Although having more teachers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in a school helps to address the issue, schools have also invested in language and cultural development training for their staff to help them better understand their students. In addition, teachers should be taught to be aware of preconceived ideas about the students in the classroom

to guard against biased judgement. Waitoller et. al. (2010) brought an interesting perspective analyzing teachers biased judgement. They argued that it is not enough to provide professionals with cultural training and professional development. Additionally, it is important to understand that these professionals “are constrained by their own limited understanding of the intersection of culture and learning and by the cultural tools, roles, resources, assumptions, and policies of institutions.” (p. 43). As previously stated, overrepresentation is a systemic problem and must be handled as such.

Surprisingly, Guiberson (2009) and Waitoller (2010) seemed to disagree when it comes to whether the study about overrepresentation is something recent or if it has been under investigation for a long time. Guiberson (2009) showed that in 1968, the topic was already being investigated. In 1968, Dunn’s investigation revealed that 60 to 80% of learners in special education programs belonged to minority groups of lower SESs (as cited in Guiberson, 2009). On the other hand, Waitoller et al. (2010) affirmed that overrepresentation research is new and justified that by saying that researchers drew more attention to the topic as of 2000 and it might be due to the changes occurred with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) promoting the idea that children with disabilities should have the same opportunities for education as those who do not have a disability. According to Waitoller et al. (2010), these changes in the IDEA forced professionals from the education field to pay attention to ethnic, cultural, racial and linguistic differences in order to decrease racial disproportionality.

As noted, overrepresentation is a systemic problem. Thus, investigating sociodemographic characteristics alone will not explain the core issues and identify strategies to change the present scenario. Oswald, Coutinho, Best, and Nguyen (2001) studied identification patterns all across the United States and pointed out that learners’ characteristics are not uniform,

but they are all pertaining to a minority group. There is perhaps a good reason to believe that it is crucial to work with educators on the deconstruction of stereotyped assumptions about not only CLD learners but all learners that belong to a visible minority group, make it clear that stereotypes inhibit empathy for others, and understand how and why they affect this population of learners. In the next section, I explore the third major theme identified in this SLR pointing out the common stereotypical assumptions about CLD learners and showing that these distorted perceptions build up a cultural mismatch between the dominant and the non-dominant culture.

Cultural Mismatch and Stereotypical Assumptions about CLD Learners

As previously mentioned in this investigation, at schools, CLD learners are often overrepresented in especial education programs in North American schools. This overrepresentation mostly occurs due to a cultural mismatch between CLD populations and teachers who cannot accept and encourage cultural and linguistic diversity in their classrooms (Artiles et al., 2010; Bullock et al., 2013 & 2014; Guiberson, 2009; Guo, 2009; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018; Paradis et al., 2010; Paradis et al., 2013; Paradis & Jia, 2017; Puig, 2012; Salerno & Kibler, 2013; Scanlan & López, 2012; Waitoller et al., 2010). Outside schools, assumptions based on negative stigmatization can be noticed in the ways that society perceives students from CLD population, underestimate their capacities, and negatively associate their ethnicity to such extreme conditions such as terrorism, poverty, and criminality.

This distorted view of being less capable is due to the perception that speaking in a primary language other than English is associated with one's ability to assimilate effectively into North American society. There is an assumption that different world perspectives from a North American norm implies poor judgement due to a cultural mismatch, which does not necessarily mean CLD learners have limited cognition or limited linguistic proficiency (Paradis et al., 2013).

Scanlan & López (2012) asserted that CLD learners remain amongst the most marginalized in North American schools. They brought back a term coined by Medina (1988) named the “Hispanic economic and social apartheid” which means that Hispanic students suffered an increasing segregation and consequently high rates of failure and dropout in North American schools (Scanlan & López, 2012).

Fourteen out of fifteen articles from this SLR (Artiles et al., 2010; Bedore et al., 2011; Bullock et al., 2013 & 2014; Guiberson, 2009; Guo, 2009; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018; Paradis et al., 2010; Paradis & Kirova, 2014; Paradis & Jia, 2017; Puig, 2012; Salerno & Kibler, 2013; Scanlan & López, 2012; Waitoller et al., 2010) pointed out that there is a cultural mismatch between CLD learners and educators in North American education settings. They also stated that CLD learners still suffer serious consequences because of the stereotypical assumptions about their abilities. Certain points seemed to be a consensus amongst these researchers. Firstly, they could not find scientific evidence that learners’ low achievement is connected to their cognitive ability, as assumed by some educators. Secondly, they indicated that low achievement is connected to other factors such as: approaches to classroom instruction, discrepancies between student life experiences and classroom teacher expectations, students’ motivation for learning, cultural insensitivities, level of parental involvement (which will be covered in more depth in the next section), teachers’ lack of familiarity with the process of second language acquisition, and the general correlation between CLD learners and linguistic deficiency.

In order to exemplify some of the stereotypical assumptions about CLD learners, Salerno and Kibler (2013) noted how educators usually describe CLD populations. CLD learners and their families are described as quiet, reserved, shy, and not participative. Teachers generally

focus on what CLD learners and parents do not do rather than what they can deliver. This example offered by Salerno and Kibler (2013) indicates the limited perspectives teachers base their instructional decisions on. Salerno and Kibler (2013), Scanlan and López (2012), and Puig (2012) all agreed that teachers consider CLD learners first language a barrier to develop their proficiency in English; reinforcing the idea of a ‘deficit model’ which prevails in English language learning settings. This deficit model considers CLD first language as a liability. Despite, Artiles et al. (2010), Delgado-Gaitan (1992), de Jong and Harper (2010), Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992), Puig (2012), Salerno & Kibler (2013), Scanlan and López (2012), and Valdés, Bunch, Snow, Lee, and Matos (2005) all considered the use of CLD learners’ first language an asset in their process of second language acquisition. Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) asserted that families provide ‘funds of knowledge’. The main idea behind the concept of ‘funds of knowledge’ is that children are not blank slates, empty boxes ready to be filled with knowledge acquired from schools alone. They come to class with previous experiences learned from their households and communities. This previous knowledge should inform classroom instructions and allow teachers to develop effective pedagogy, providing opportunities to bridge the space between CLD learners’ lives and school (Puig, 2012).

In essence, the disability label placed upon CLD learners still remains. There is a body of research showing how bilingualism positively affects cognitive development (Adesope, Lavin, Thompson, & Ungerleider, 2010; Diaz, 1983, Scanlan & López, 2012). It is vital to bring teachers and researchers closer in order to narrow the research-to-practice gap and raise awareness about these effective strategies to utilize in the education of CLD learners. Unfortunately, hitherto, there are still professionals of education who are not willing to change their instructions, disregarding the recommendations for using culturally responsive practices

because they believe the best teaching practice should serve both native English speakers and CLD learners, just like a ‘one size fits all’ perspective (Scanlan & López, 2012). CRPs have come into play in order to deconstruct discriminatory biases about ethnicity, race, faith, family structure, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, language ability, body ability, cognitive ability, and mental health. The goal here is to eliminate obstacles that can hinder learners’ achievements (Scanlan & López, 2012). In order to make CRPs viable, it is crucial that educators acknowledge CLD learners’ multiple social identities and how they intersect with the community and school setting. Otherwise, the discourse of equity and full inclusion cannot be realized unless educators challenge the current educational norms.

Paradis and Jia (2016) found out that CLD learners tend to have superior grammatical abilities when compared to Native English speaker-learners. If teachers were aligning research findings to their practices, they could use this superior grammar ability from CLD learners as a classroom resource and place students in small groups to participate in learning activities, supporting academic instructions and social skills. CLD learners would feel recognized and validated while the rest of the class would have the chance to challenge the general stigma concerning CLD learners perceived language abilities. The pathway for success consists in bridging the differences between teachers and learners, and teachers and researchers, evidence-based practices and non-evidence-based practices. Linan-Thompson et al. (2018) interpreted that, “When teachers demonstrate intimate knowledge of their students’ cultural experiences, learning experiences are enriched” (p.11).

The growing population of CLD learners in North American schools shows that schools must adapt their practices to address the needs of the group they serve. Educators must raise

awareness of the cultural differences and learning preferences of CLD learners. Bullock et al. (2013) explained, “A broadened cultural knowledge base and increased awareness may provide guidance in designing effective instructional and management programs” (p.3). Puig (2012) alerted that developmental delays or disabilities can be interpreted differently depending on teachers’ cultural expectations and norms because they are socially mediated constructs. Bullock et. al. (2013) also suggested that assessment, curriculum, and instruction, which are designed by White middle- class Eurocentric standards, are usually incompatible with the growing diversity of schools.

The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (RCBB, 1965) states that linguistic variety is undeniably an advantage and that all Canadians, whether they belong to the Francophone, Anglophone or other language origins, deserve equitable treatment. Despite the aforementioned, the literature showed that not everyone is able to benefit from the same favourable circumstances and most visible minorities end up facing serious social restrictions. CLD learners’ experiences of inclusion and exclusion are complex. This population has been historically marginalized and classified based on assumptions about their cultures (Linan-Thompson et al., 2018). What happens in practice diverges from the values of cultural plurality defended by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism creating the illusion of equity and inclusion.

Globally today, the world is also seeing an increasingly growing atmosphere of intolerance and fear of immigrants in most countries. Some current world leaders feel that a wall would stop undocumented immigrants from entering their country. Whilst some others think that their withdrawal from the European Union would possibly make their economy grow and protect

their jobs. This situation isolates and stigmatizes CLD populations even more and in turn, incites hatred towards members of those particular groups.

Colonization, cultural genocide, globalization, and racist nation-building projects have forced visible minorities to endure standards imposed by a dominant group that identifies socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic differences as weaknesses. This dominant group generally has the power supported by politics, market forces, and the education system in a country. A system that segregates minorities, retains the dominance of the middle class at the expense of those in the lower class. The negation of these CLD learners' linguistic and social abilities can prevent them from completing their education and in the future, affecting their life chances (Scanlan & López, 2012; Guo, 2009). Waitoller et. al. (2010) noted that CLD learners have carried the disability label for a long time as if they lacked knowledge and skills to succeed in schools. This question should be constantly investigated in order to raise awareness amongst educators and members of the society that have had distorted perceptions about CLD learners' potentials. It is the role of all citizens to deconstruct stigmatized assumptions that have been growing due to the intolerance towards visible minorities. It is vital to ensure that equal opportunities and personal growth are accessible to everyone, regardless of their cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. As Scanlan and López (2012) said: "Racial, ethnic, and cultural dimensions of identity directly affect students' experiences of schooling." (p. 607). In the next section, I explore the fourth major theme identified in this literature review addressing the importance of parental involvement in the education of CLD learners.

Involvement of Parents in CLD Learners' Education

The importance of parental involvement in their children's education is unquestionable. I argue that it is fundamental for parents to get involved in the education of their children in order

to help them flourish. It is important to define what parental involvement is and cite the different kinds of parental involvement. First, parental involvement is how much parents participate in their children's school life. In my experience as a teacher, I noticed there are different kinds of parental involvement such as: home-school communications, attending school functions, parents serving as classroom volunteers, parent-teacher conferences, homework assistance, home educational enrichment, parent involvement in decision making, amongst others.

Current research indicates that family engagement in schools is responsible for learners' improvement in many aspects such as: promoting learners' achievement, behaviour, and social skills, earning higher grades, reducing absenteeism, and restoring parents' confidence in their children's education (Bedore et al., 2011; Guiberson, 2009; Guo, 2009; Paradis et al., 2010; Paradis et al., 2013; Puig, 2012; Salerno & Kibler, 2013). However, in this SLR, it was noticeable that not all kinds of parental involvement are welcomed by teachers and researchers for reasons that sometimes are clearly stated and other times are implicitly assumed. I will show some examples next.

Salerno & Kibler (2013) found that pre-service teachers (PSTs) do not generally make use of CLD learners' families as a resource, despite being recommended by researchers. This disagreement implies that novice teachers might go into teaching believing or even aware that families are not considered reliable agents to help with CLD learners' education. CLD parents' involvement is welcomed, but the information they provide is not always correctly applied or interpreted (Guo, 2009). Parental involvement in the education of CLD learners may not be validated by teachers for an array of reasons. One of them is that parents and teachers interpret children's achievements in different contexts contributing to contrasting views on CLD learners' proficiency (Bedore et al., 2011). Another reason is connected to parents' language proficiency.

It is fundamental to collect information about CLD learners from different sources, but teachers and researchers will only make good use of this information collected from parents if they can fluently communicate with them in one of their languages, whether it be CLD learners' first language or English.

Bedore et al. (2011) emphasized the importance of understanding CLD learners first language use for educational decision making by using both parents' and teachers' observations. They alleged that the information obtained from parents enlightened teachers with intervention strategies that can better address CLD learners' language needs. In their study, parents had high levels of accuracy when rating their children's language development in both first and second languages. They also called attention to the fact that it is difficult to identify language delay if CLD learners' parents and former teachers do not share their children's first and second language learning history.

Keeping in mind the relevance of parent reports, there is still a mutual distrust in the relationship amongst parents, teachers, and researchers. Bedore et al. (2011) cited that educators may not know the best approach to work with families or how to use the information they provide. Bedore et al. (2011) exemplified, "Challenges facing educators when incorporating parent information include differences in judgments of child needs, level of parent (and teacher) knowledge of the child's performance in two languages, coupled with a misuse of the limited instruments available for such purposes" (p. 490). Bedore et al. (2011) also brought up an issue showing that intersectional social identities may increase this mutual distrust. Bedore et al. (2011) explained that educators may "rely less on parent input from low Social Economic Status (SES) or non-mainstream parents." (p. 491).

There are some studies that indicate that parents from both higher and lower SES accurately reported their children's language development to the teacher, providing educators with crucial information to detect whether or not their CLD learners had a developmental language disorder (Bedore et al., 2011; Dale, 1991; Thal, Jackson-Maldonado, & Acosta, 2000; & Thal, O'Hanlon, Clemmons, & Fralin, 1999). Bedore et al. (2011) also referenced a study conducted in 2003 by Gutiérrez-Clellen and Kreiter to determine how effective parent reports were to measure learners' performance based on their judgement of proficiency. Parents' judgments of English skills did not match the teachers' assessments because teachers were more concerned with English grammar rather than narrative performance alone. This example showed why some teachers hesitate to rely on parents' reports and why some researchers question the utility of parents' reports in their studies.

Studies suggested that educators cannot accurately interpret the information provided by CLD learners' parents (Bedore et al., 2011; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018; Puig, 2012; Salerno & Kibler, 2013). Bedore et al. alerted that the inaccurate interpretation may be "lack of awareness" or "a different way of interpreting or expressing the same information." (p. 506). Puig (2012) explained this phenomenon by pointing out that education differs in meaning according to different cultures. The Western meaning defends the idea that a learner gains knowledge and develop skills in the course of their education while the Eastern may view education as a transfer of values and culture (Puig, 2012) where discipline can solve any academic difficulty and their achievements are based on meritocracy. These discrepant interpretations of what education means raise different expectations from both teachers and parents confirming the cultural mismatch and the stereotypical assumptions previously mentioned.

One last point mentioned was that collaboration between educators and CLD families was described as one-directional. By one-directional they mean that the collaboration model was actually a one-way transfer of ideas from educators to CLD parents. Educators do not motivate the exchange of reciprocal information fostering an open dialog to empower families in the decision-making (Puig, 2012). Some educators may justify this one-directional approach by claiming that CLD parents lack language proficiency to fully participate in their children's educational decisions. Lack of language proficiency may distance parents from schools and give them a label of unsupportive and not interested in their children's achievements (Salerno & Kibler, 2013). In order to get rid of misconceptions about CLD families, Puig (2012) suggested that schools provide family-centered services to better support CLD learners, fostering informed dialog and decisions between educators and CLD learners' families. Linan-Thompson et al. (2018) also assured that a positive relationship between educators and CLD learners is as important as a positive relationship between educators and CLD learners' families by saying that "Active reflection, building relationships and trust, and building a sense of community by both teachers and students have been found to improve the academic outcomes of students from diverse backgrounds, including those learning English as an additional language." (p.10).

Nonetheless, Guo (2009) reported his findings from a research titled "Parents' Nights" where parents were invited to school to discuss their children's developments and needs. The result was not what teachers expected. Instead of taking the opportunity of the event to discuss their children's developments, parents saw this event as means to express their dissatisfaction because they felt their concerns were disregarded and they never had the opportunity to negotiate with their children's teachers. I doubt whether this event was as unsuccessful as teachers claimed to have been. The purpose was not met but it was the only chance parents felt they could

advocate for their children and finally be heard. Having a meeting similar to this with CLD learners' parents where they can freely express how they feel about their children's educational needs would help teachers and parents to develop appreciation to one another. I would suggest that they bring a mediator for this kind of meeting. A mediator who is sensitive to diverse cultures and also sensitive to teachers' challenges in addressing CLD learners' needs. Now, that the four major themes have been analyzed, I next present the main discussions and conclusions from this analysis in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Over the course of this investigation, I approached the central theories that have been used to explain the current challenges faced by CLD learners in their educational settings in Canada and United States. Four key themes have been identified and two particular topics stood out from all the others: The first topic is the notion that there are inappropriate referrals of CLD learners to special education due to a cultural mismatch between educators and CLD learners and the second topic is the stereotypical assumptions about CLD learners' capacities. Cultural mismatch and stereotypical assumptions about CLD learners appeared in fourteen out of fifteen articles (Artiles et al., 2010; Bedore et al., 2011; Bullock et al., 2013 & 2014; Guiberson, 2009; Guo, 2009; Linan-Thompson et al., 2018; Paradis et al., 2010; Paradis & Jia, 2017; Paradis & Kirova, 2014; Puig, 2012; Salerno & Kibler, 2013; Scanlan & López, 2012; Waitoller et al., 2010), indicating how grave these problems are and the urgency that they should be addressed. At the same time, there is every possibility that the inappropriate referrals (which appeared in thirteen out of the fifteen articles) are a consequence of everything discussed in this analysis. For example, we cannot isolate the problem of inappropriate referrals because it starts with the lack of evidence-based practices and culturally sensitive methods for assessment. Inappropriate referrals are also a consequence of the cultural mismatch, which leads to a mutual distrust between educators and CLD learners and their parents. In such a situation, families may not rely on educators and educators may not rely on parents' inputs to help develop better educational practices for CLD learners. The challenges are systemic, so they can potentially affect everyone in the education system, not only CLD learners. The challenges are also structural and institutional as institutions are implicitly biased and operate in ways that do not always lead to

equal outcomes for all students. If educators, government officials and policy makers want to change this situation, it is necessary to evaluate the structure as a whole, including the present policies in the North American educational settings concerning CLD learners. Therefore, it is important that teachers are not to be blamed solely for the challenges faced by CLD learners and in some instance, despite the teachers' best efforts, students can still suffer negative consequences in their learning.

Another point is that most articles which approached the topic of CLD education end up correlating CLD education with special education. I wonder if the general mindset of researchers and educators tend to associate CLD learners with language impairment or intellectual disability. In this investigation, only four out of the fifteen articles were published in journals related to learning exceptionalities, communication disorders, school failure, and special education (Table 1: Journal Poll). However, by reading the articles I noticed that all of the authors ended up advertizing to CLD learners as if they had some sort of exceptionality. I understand that these articles were focusing on the challenges in the CLD learners' education. Consequently, they may have focused on the negative issues involved with CLD learners and perhaps only highlighted students identified as struggling in the system. This seems like a form of deficit theorizing where special needs or learning disabilities might be conflated with CLD learners. An additional issue here is that even if teachers are introduced to the research literature like the ones used in this study, it may inadvertently reinforce biases about CLD learners and perpetuate a negative association between CLD learners and learning disabilities. However, it should be clear that learning an additional language does not make anyone exceptional. If educators were more aware of concepts such as "Linguistic Relativity" as defined in the introduction, maybe they would acknowledge their CLD learners' cultural scripts and understand how CLD learners' world

perceptions impact their learning preferences. If language shapes thinking and the unique way one perceives the world, and learning another language is a process of reshaping the mind and adjusting it to new language patterns, then the strategies, approaches, and the theories that inform second language development and bilingualism in classrooms can be guided by linguistic relativist perspectives. For example, Professor Jim Cummins at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto argued that, conceptual knowledge developed in one language helps to make input in the other language comprehensible. He explains that if a child already understands a concept in their own language, then they only need to acquire the label or the translation for that item in English (Cummins, 2000). However, different concepts have different meanings in different cultural contexts. For example, the ideas of “freedom” and “self-determinism” may require a CLD learner to have to understand the cultural context in which those concepts are taken up. In addition to acquiring the language, CLD learners also have to undergo a process of reshaping their minds and adjusting it to the new language patterns of the North American English culture in Canada or the United States. At a classroom level, the process of language learning is a matter of constant practice, dedication, getting the right input, producing comprehensible outputs, and getting feedback to improve learners’ skills. Consequently, CLD learners’ education should be seen as an elaborate and dynamic process that considers both the language and cultural nuances that affects language acquisition.

Something that became evident in this investigation was that research about CLD learners tends to be carried out at a national level in the United States while in Canada, research is often carried out in large cities such as Toronto, Edmonton, and Calgary. I infer here that CLD populations tend to concentrate in large cities where they tend to settle and look for employment opportunities. Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada (2018) asserted that a great

number of the foreign-born population lived in the nation's largest urban centres and I assume that conducting research about CLD learners in large cities might be more prevalent because of economies of scale in CLD population sizes and funding and convenient due to the availability of participants. However, I wonder how different the research findings would be if this sort of research was conducted in small towns, focusing on the analysis of the cultural mismatch between educators and CLD populations and the stereotypical assumptions about CLD learners' capacities. This might be an area for further studies looking at CLD learners' experiences in a diverse range of communities and settings to identify context specific factors affecting their education.

Considering the relationship between theory and practice and keeping in mind that theory is the abstract form of practice and practice is the materialization of theory, the four major findings from this SLR are related to both theory and classroom practices. The findings from this study suggest the use of evidence-based research and culturally responsive practices to be effective in meeting the needs of CLD learners. While theoretical resources can be added to both teacher education and teacher development programs, the challenge for teacher educators and school and board administrators is helping teachers to resolve the conflicts between their own personal practical knowledge based on their own experience and EBP and CRP. Teachers need the time and space to discuss, review, and rethink their own perspectives and help them to appreciate the insights that research and theory might offer. In addition, teachers accepting new ways of thinking and having the opportunity to reframe and recast their current perspectives is important in bringing about change in attitudes.

Inappropriate referrals, cultural mismatch and stereotypical assumptions, and parental involvement have additional implications for change at a policy and procedures level in the

school system. School boards could review their referral procedures to ensure that the procedures are fair and equitable. Although most schools in North America are required to have some form of equity and social justice policies, implementing and monitoring these policies are achieved with varying degrees of success depending on the community, teachers, administrators, school culture, etc. Coupled with these policies should be a robust assessment and evaluation plan that monitors the implementation and effectiveness. In the next section, I give some recommendations based on the analysis of the four main themes explored in this SLR.

Recommendations

Based on all themes investigated in this SLR, I offer three recommendations: In order to close the research-to-practice gap and avoid the mutual distrust amongst teachers, researchers and CLD populations, I suggest that the strategies used in the education of CLD learners be developed collaboratively; bringing teachers, researchers, CLD learners and their families together to encourage sharing of each-others' ideas. A possible cause for the research-to-practice gap and mutual distrust has to do with the perception of a possible lack of communication between theorists and practitioners. The findings from this study could be disseminated and shared with both education practitioners in the field and education researchers. I also suggest presentations and readings on the research-to-practice gap be offered in teacher education, teacher development and graduate education programs. In order to avoid inappropriate referrals of CLD learners to special education classes, I suggest that educators and researchers be aware of the effects of investigating and assessing CLD learners through the disability lens. Additionally, I had previously mentioned that Waitoller et al. (2010) identified a study conducted by Heller that categorized six main rubrics to explain the inappropriate referrals of CLD learners to special education and I noticed that none of the articles from this SLR investigated the policies that fund

particular disability labels offering incentives to place students in certain categories. I believe it would be difficult to investigate the policies that fund particular disability labels because schools would not welcome this kind of study. However, when a topic is understudied, there is every possibility that it deserves further attention and should be investigated more carefully. In order to avoid a cultural mismatch and the stereotypical assumptions about CLD learners, I suggest the coordination of debates, workshops and cross-cultural work experience amongst educators and researchers focusing on social constructs that affect their perception of CLD learners considering their intersectional identities. The deconstruction of stereotyped assumptions would benefit all learners that belong to a visible minority group.

Since the most discussed topic in all the articles was about the cultural mismatch between educators and CLD populations, the stereotypical assumptions about CLD learners, and the inappropriate referrals to special education classes, I recommend that researchers continue to study these interconnected topics but not through the lens of disability studies. Professionals in the field of education need to see second language acquisition as a dedicated program of study that will offer specialization in language acquisition and not a course to make up for a language disability. Every classroom teacher in a diverse classroom setting which hosts CLD learners must be prepared to serve the needs of the local population. However, in today's classrooms, with the increasing diversity of our school population, many teachers are required to be a second language and bilingual educator. Scanlan and López (2012) asserted that language and learning cannot be separated. They added, "School leaders must help all teachers recognize that they are language learners." (p.601). In order for changes to take effect at a systemic and institutional level, the entire educational community should embrace responsibility in this mindset change.

In order to address the issue of the mutual distrust between teachers, researchers, CLD learners, and their families, efforts should be made to open up communication between all parties involved. Bringing teachers, researchers, CLD learners, and their parents together is a way to create a cohesive community that understands and respects each other focusing on the solution of the challenges not the differences amongst themselves. The researchers mentioned in this SLR have been investigating relevant topics that could help overcome the challenges of CLD learners, but overcoming the challenges can only happen if teachers are willing to effectively apply research findings to their daily practices and provide feedback to researchers. As Klinger, Ahwee, Pilonieta, & Menendez (2003) suggested, it is important to implement a research-teacher partnership in order to create a “community of learners”. I would suggest including CLD learners and their families in this community of learners because CLD learners would feel they had their voices heard and parents would provide deeper personal and insider information to be used by practitioners and researchers to help determine their need. Bedore et al. (2011) added, “Current statements of best educational practices emphasize the importance of bridging gaps between home and school knowledge bases” (p. 504). However, including CLD learners’ parents’ inputs might prove to be a challenge because intercultural miscommunication and differences between cultural groups can result in different interpretations in communication (Guo, 2009). R. Scollon and S. Scollon (2001) argued that when teachers fail to understand CLD learners’ parents values it can result in more tension in the interactions between teachers and parents. A solution for this barrier would be to involve cultural brokers, certified interpreters, and educators from CLD backgrounds with cross cultural experience whose views on cultural diversity are expanded to mediate the conversations between teachers and CLD learners’ families.

Culture is also very complex and language as a conveyor of culture shapes how different cultural groups interact. There are different ways that cultural mismatch between teachers and the CLD population including learners and their parents are manifested and experienced. As previously mentioned, culture affects how people think, act, and communicate collectively. Cultural mismatch is a societal problem. Educators should be encouraged to question and challenge their assumptions about CLD learners to make sure that their learners are responding well to the practices and assessment tools utilized in their educational settings. Being subject to the possibility of creating distorted perceptions about the others depending on the environment we have been raised in is an issue to be concerned about. As previously discussed, regarding the mutual distrust between teachers and researchers, it is difficult to change perspectives, especially when they are based on traditional teaching methods, teacher intuition, emotions, and group affiliations. The deconstruction of stereotypes is a very complex process of introspection and re-evaluation of values and beliefs.

This SLR has assessed the main challenges faced by CLD learners in their educational settings in North America. Throughout this investigation, it has become apparent that the challenges faced by CLD learners are far pervasive and persistent for several decades now. As Canada and United States have become increasingly diverse, the education system has been slow to adjust to the needs of CLD learners. Some educators carry certain belief clusters that directly affect the way they assess learners and choose their teaching approaches. The same pattern could be seen amongst other professionals who deal with CLD populations, including teachers, school staff, speech pathologists, counselors, settlement service agents, etc. Some of them carry implicit bias about CLD learners' race, cognitive capacity, physical strength, language proficiency, and special needs. This bias indicates that the challenges in the educational settings for CLD learners

in North American schools are more connected to social and moral acceptance of divergent cultural values than to cognitive abilities to learn a new language and get adapted to a new culture. It is not necessarily about CLD learners accepting North American values and becoming linguistic proficient, it is more about North America accepting CLD learners, acknowledging that CLD learners' achievements have nothing to do with the place they were born, the first language they speak, or the color of their skin. Their educational achievements should be based on the fair access to opportunities in a nurturing environment where they feel appreciated and respected (Puig, 2012).

Considering the definitions of language and culture previously stated on pages 16 to 21, we may conclude that language is not just simply form and function. Educators need to teach language as both an individual mental and a collective social activity. In other words, it is important to teach the cultivated pattern, offering CLD learners language training but it is also important to show the social relevance and real-life applicability of what is being formally learned inside the classrooms. In this respect, language instruction for CLD learners should be experiential, situational, fluid, and dynamic just like a collective social human activity. Language instructions for CLD learners should be based on meaning making and used for social and cultural purposes. This way, both learners and educators will find the process relevant and connected to their universe.

The same way a learner's language and culture influence the way they navigate the world, an educator's language and culture also influence the way they see the teaching and learning process, the practices they utilize, the educational reforms they suggest, and the way educational policies are interpreted and applied to the whole educational system. Keeping in mind that language and culture shape thought, we cannot think about policy changes without

thinking about challenging education paradigms of language teaching. One may successfully change education policies that may improve CLD learners' education outcomes, but this improvement is not going to be sustainable unless educators (including: teachers, researchers, school administrators, school staff, etc.) review and reshape the way they see the process of second language acquisition. It is impossible to think about language without thinking about power. English language teaching paradigms have been developed by White-European middle-class educators. They are the ones who determine what is the cultivated pattern of accent and way of thinking, creating a clear distinction between what is acceptable and not acceptable. If educators do not challenge their assumptions, in ten years' time, the educational challenges faced by CLD learners will remain the same.

On a personal level, studying the challenges faced by CLD learners and the concepts of language and culture have changed my own perceptions of learning and teaching additional languages and CLD learners' needs. The critical analysis of the challenges pointed out in this SLR helped me deconstruct my ingrained perceptions about SLA and notice how these perceptions directly affect my teaching practices and the learning outcomes of CLD learners. When I started this study, I believed that most CLD learners considered the efforts made to provide them with better adjustment to multicultural educational environments satisfactory and inclusive. Little did I know that my South American perceptions, in comparison to the variety of other cultures living in Canada, is actually much more assimilated to North American standards than I had imagined. As a teacher, I could be unintentionally perpetuating stigmatization and segregation of CLD backgrounds that differed from mine. Applying the principles of Linguistic Relativity to understand CLD learners' unique needs has strengthen my classroom practices and consequently the perceived level of satisfaction of my CLD learners. I believe this SLR may

offer new perspectives to educators in the field of SLA because it analyzed the challenges faced by CLD learners through the lenses of Linguistic Relativity.

CLD learners experience numerous challenges that can limit them to access future opportunities. These challenges include but are not limited to the issues examined in this study which are connected to academics, socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and socio-emotional strains. These obstacles make it difficult for CLD learners to think of their future without questioning their possibilities. This SLR investigated peer-reviewed articles from Canada and United States published in the past ten years that pointed out challenges that affect CLD learners' learning experiences in North American schools. It is important to understand that the obstacles CLD learners face in their educational settings can decrease their education opportunities and affect their academic and life trajectories. In response, the recommendations provided can help close the research-to-practice gap, raise awareness of implicit biases, and develop an inclusive mindset of acceptance and respect to cultural differences.

APPENDIX

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VITA AUCTORIS

NAME: Fabiana Menezes

PLACE OF BIRTH: Rio de Janeiro, R.J., Brazil

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1980

EDUCATION: Grande Rio University, B.A., Rio de Janeiro, BR, 2000
University of Windsor, M.Ed., Windsor, ON, 2020