

## Bibliography of Writings about Experiences Learning English as a Second Language

- Poem:** “I Lost My Talk” by Rita Joe, a Micmac from Nova Scotia, can be found in the anthology *The Language We Share*, edited by Eva Karpinski and Marlene Lecompte. Published by Harcourt Brace, 1995. ISBN: 0774733551. Rita Joe speaks to her experience of being forced to learn English and to abandon her first language when she was at residential school as a child.
- Essay:** “The Other Side of the Schoolyard” by Andre McNicoll, a French Canadian Freelance journalist from Montreal, can be found in the anthology *The Language We Share*, edited by Eva Karpinski and Marlene Lecompte. Published by Harcourt Brace, 1995. ISBN: 0774733551. McNicoll describes the pleasure he has received by being fluent in both official languages of Canada. He also reminisces about how he began learning English as a child.
- Essay:** “All Accent on Learning English” by Sun-Kyung Yi, a Korean-born Toronto-based writer and broadcaster, can be found in the anthology *The Language We Share*, edited by Eva Karpinski and Marlene Lecompte. Published by Harcourt Brace, 1995. ISBN: 0774733551. Sun-Kyung Yi reveals her struggle to acquire correct English pronunciation and grammar and her feelings of being “stranded between two languages, neither of which [she] feels comfortable speaking or writing.”
- Essay:** “An Immigrant Child Remembers” by Lucy Fazio; at the time of writing (1994), Lucy was a doctoral student at McGill University, studying education in second languages. This essay can be found in the anthology *The Language We Share*, edited by Eva Karpinski and Marlene Lecompte. Published by Harcourt Brace., 1995. ISBN: 0774733551
- Play:** *New Canadian Kid* by Dennis Foon. Published by Pulp Press, Vancouver, 1989. ISBN 0889782156 Found at Bibliocentre: PS8561.062N483 and several Ontario colleges. Playwright Foon creates an interesting setting with the teenage immigrant being able to speak English, but everyone else in the cast speaking another (created, imaginary) language so that no one in the audience can understand the cast, thereby sharing the experience of the new immigrant being faced with learning a new language.

**Poem:** “How feel I do?” By Jim Wong-Chu, a founding member of the Asian-Canadian Writers’ Workshop. The poem comes from his collection *Chinatown Ghosts* (1986); it expresses his empathy with another immigrant who is embarrassed to be struggling with English.. The poem can also be found in the anthology, *Pens of Many Colours*, edited by Eva Karpinski and Ian Lea. Published by Harcourt Brace, 1993. ISBN: 077473146X.

**Essay:** “Pens of Many Colours” by Myrna Kostash, an Edmonton author of Ukrainian background. Ms. Kostash struggles with her relationship to English as a Canadian writer and as an ethnic Canadian. *Pens of Many Colours*, edited by Eva Karpinski and Ian Lea. Published by Harcourt Brace, 1993. ISBN: 077473146X.

**Autobiography:** Excerpt from *Lost in Translation* (1989) by Eva Hoffman who emigrated with her family from Poland to Canada when she was 14. She received her Ph.D. at Harvard and now lives in the United States. The excerpt, which focuses on the feelings and observations she had adapting to the English language, can be found in *Pens of Many Colours*, edited by Eva Karpinski and Ian Lea. Published by Harcourt Brace, 1993. ISBN: 077473146X.

**Story:** “The Middle Ground” by Genni Donati Gunn can be found in *Pens of Many Colours*, edited by Eva Karpinski and Ian Lea. Published by Harcourt Brace, 1993. ISBN: 077473146X. Through this story, Ms. Gunn shows how she struggled with her son’s easy adaptation to English and Canadian culture, eventually trying to find a middle ground between English and her own Italian language and culture.

**Essay:** “The Sound Barrier” by Himani Bannerji can be found in *Pens of Many Colours*, edited by Eva Karpinski and Ian Lea. Published by Harcourt Brace, 1993. ISBN: 077473146X. In her essay, Ms. Bannerji, who has written several short stories, essays, poems and novels, investigates the integrity of language and experience. She considers how to write creatively in English even when the experiences described have taken place in another time, space and language.

**Story:** “Why My Mother Can’t Speak English” by Garry Engkent was first published in the anthology of Chinese-Canadian writing *Many Mouthed Birds* in 1991 but can also be found in the reader *Pens of Many Colours*, edited by Eva Karpinski and Ian Lea. Published by Harcourt Brace, 1993. ISBN: 077473146X.. Engkent describes his mother’s sudden desire to acquire Canadian citizenship at age 70 and her real reasons for not having learned English during her many years in Canada.

**Essay:** “The Language of Discretion,” by Amy Tan. *Language Awareness*. Published by St. Martin’s Press, 1994. ISBN: 0-312-08410-2  
“Having grown up in a bilingual family, Amy Tan, author of the best-selling *The Joy Luck Club*, questions just how seriously we are to take the so-called Sapir-Wharf hypothesis that the language one uses shapes reality and is, in turn, shaped by reality. Isn’t it too easy and aren’t we too prone to error if we associate particular worldviews to particular languages and thus, cultures? Are two languages every translatable, she asks? Can cultures be reliably compared? The answers, of course, are not easy to determine.”

**Essay:** “What’s in a Name?” by Itabari Njeri. *Language Awareness*. Published by St. Martin’s Press, 1994. ISBN: 0-312-08410-2  
“since the time that she legalised her traditional African name, Itabara Njeri has drawn unusual responses from strangers. The following encounter is typical:

‘Oh, what an unusual and beautiful name. Where are you from?’  
‘Brooklyn,’ I say. I can see the disappointment in their eyes. Just another home-grown Negro.

In “What’s in a Name?” a Los Angeles times journalist and the author of *Every Good-bye Ain’t Gone*, reflects on the importance of one’s name and investigates the consequences of changing it, of changing the way one views and is viewed by society.

**Essay** “Talking in the New Land,” by Edite Cunha. *Language Awareness*. Published by St. Martin’s Press, 1994. ISBN: 0-312-08410-2  
“Shortly after moving from her native Portugal to Peabody, Massachusetts, when she was seven years old, Edite cunha’s name was changed by a teacher. Far from being a helpful gesture, allowing her to fit into a new culture, the name change left cunha bereft of her personal identify, which only added to her difficulties in learning a new language. In addition, Cunha faced the difficulties of becoming bilingual. As her family’s translator, she had to be her father’s “voice,” a responsibility she dreaded.”

**Essay** “Drawing the Line” by Barbara Ehrenreich.. *Language Awareness*. Published by St. martin’s Press, 1994. ISBN: 0-312-08410-2  
“Barbara Ehrenreich is a columnist for Mother Jones and the author of several books, including *Fear of Falling: the Inner Life of the Middle Class* and *the Worst Years of Our Lives: Irreverent Notes from a Decade of Greed*. In this essay delves into the possible reasons why some people argue that English should be the only publicly recognized language in the United States. Using very heavy doses of irony, Ehrenreich reveals her belief that such a movement is not only illogical but if successful would, as she concludes, make her feel “dumb.”

**Children's Picture Book:**

*Spoken Memories; Painted Words* by Aliko Brandenberg. Published by Greenwillow in New York, 1998. Two children's stories in one beautiful book, one telling of Mari's experiences in a new school in a new country and her struggle to learn English. ISBN: 0688156622.

**Story:**

"Repeat Please" by Dilys Rose, a Scottish writer. Can be found in a collection by Rose, *Our Lady of the Pickpockets*. Published in London by Minerva, 1989. The story is about a Muslim woman in Britain who is taking weekly English lessons while trying to adjust to a new environment.

**Story:**

"Mother Tongue" by Amy Tan.

**Poem:**

"Don't Let Them Chip Away at Our Language" by Kitty Tsui

**Children's Picture Book:**

*I Hate English* by Ellen Levine. Scholastic Paperbacks, 1995. ISBN 0590423045.

**Children's Picture Book:**

*My Name is Yoon* by Helen Recorvits. Published by Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 2003. ISBN 13978037435114-4

**Children's Picture Book:**

*The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi. Published by Dragonfly Books, 2003. ISBN 0440417996

**Book:**

*Our Dream Was Canada: Two suitcases, Children and a Dog* by Eva Zidek, 2006, Trafford Publishing ISBN 1553958748

**Book:**

*The Chosen Shore: Stories of Immigration*, 2004, University of California Press.

**Children's Book**

*The Arrival* by Shaun Tan, Scholastic, \$24.99

