

Contact and Attitudes towards Bilingualism in Canada

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1. Introduction

Contact theory posits that personal interaction with people from cultural, racial or linguistic groups other than one's own, whether as neighbors, friends, relatives, or coworkers breaks down stereotypes, produces cross-cultural understanding and over all better intercultural relations:

“The idea is that more contact between individuals belonging to antagonistic social groups (defined by custom, language, beliefs, nationality or identity) tends to undermine negative stereotypes and reduce prejudice, thus improving inter group relations by making people more willing to deal with each other as equals.” (Forbes, 1997: ix)

The greatest strength of contact theory is that it is intuitively obvious (i.e. it has what is called face validity) and has obvious policy implications and applications. However, this theory, rooted in Allport (1954) and once embroiled in desegregation debates in the US, has produced mixed results when tested. Negative results have led to a whole range of refinements to the theory. Most if not all of these refinements pertain to the nature of, or the conditions under which contact must take place in order for results to be positive. The main conditions identified in the literature are as follows (see Breton *et al*, 1980 or Forbes, 1997):

- 1) equality of status between the groups concerned (or between the individuals in contact),
- 2) cooperative interdependence in the pursuit of common goals, and
- 3) the presence of supportive social norms (including supportive legislation).

Forbes' (1997) comprehensive analysis of the empirical research addressing contact theory led him to make the following conclusion about it:

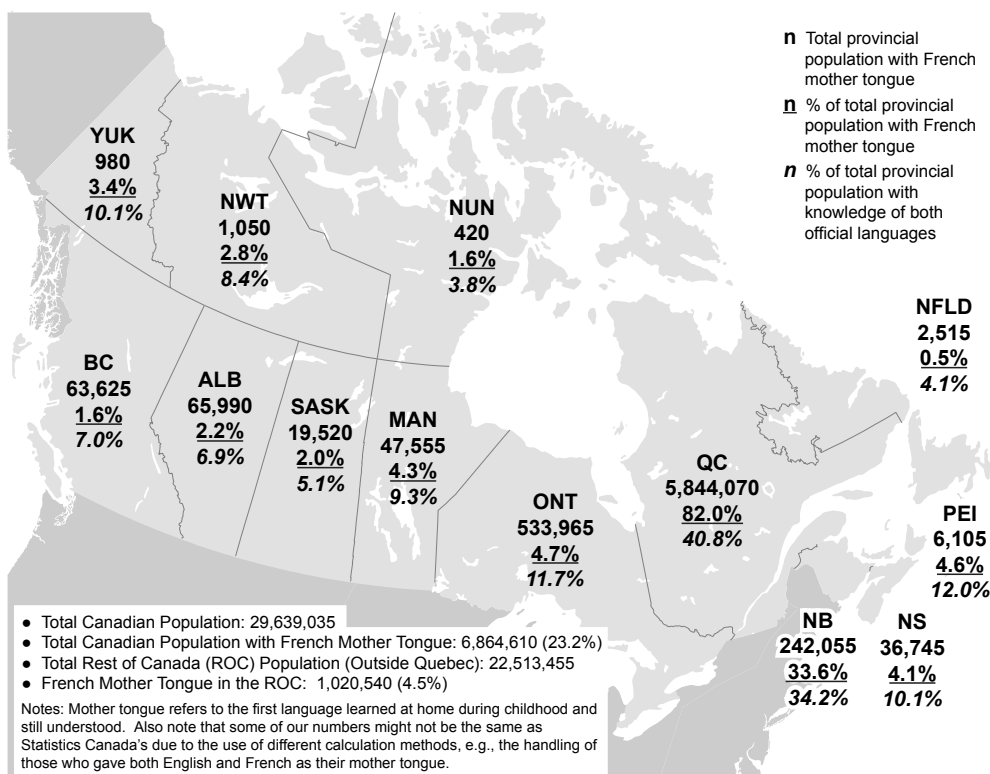
“Its limitations are most easily seen by carefully examining the results of the empirical research it has inspired and guided. The results show how important it is to distinguish between individual and aggregate levels of analysis when generalizing about the effects of contact on ethnic attitudes and behavior. Less clearly they show how unimportant or misleading are the main distinctions featured in the ‘contact theory’ that social scientists have developed in order to qualify and put limits on the basic idea [behind the theory]” (Forbes, 1997:x).

In other words, Forbes (1997) is unimpressed with the refinements that have been made to the theory, arguing that the level of the analysis is what really appears to influence results rather than the conditions of contact. The individual level of analysis relates to an analysis of reported individual interaction. The aggregate level of analysis refers to analyses of proximity or spatial and demographic-geographic analyses. These latter types of analysis make assumptions about interaction at the individual level and thereby expose the validity of their findings to what is known as the ecological fallacy. In other words, findings at the aggregate level do not always properly reflect what is actually happening at the individual level. In fact, when Forbes (1997) found that the results of studies about contact theory at the individual level were primarily positive while the results of studies dealing at the aggregate level were very mixed, he attributed this apparent contradiction to the ecological fallacy.

In the Canadian case, there have been a number of investigations into anglophone-francophone relations in the context of contact theory (see Breton, *et al*, 1980; Kalin and Berry, 1982; and White and Curtis, 1990). Whether at the aggregate or individual level of analysis, most of the Canadian

studies have produced positive results and these positive results have been obtained without attention to the conditions under which the contact has taken place.

Figure 1
Distribution of Canadian population with French mother tongue¹



This suggests that if the conditions surrounding contact do matter, then the contact between anglophone and francophone Canadians that has taken place has occurred more often under favorable as opposed to unfavorable conditions. This in turn might be related to the existence of supportive institutional norms in Canada such as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Official Languages Act, which essentially establish and provide for the promotion of equality between the two linguistic groups in Canada. The purpose of this study is to examine attitudes towards linguistic duality in Canada in the context of contact theory, at both the individual and aggregate (regional) levels of analysis. Specifically, this study looks systematically at the interaction between region (with known demographic compositions and proximity to other regions where the other official language group is numerically prevalent), contact and attitudes towards linguistic duality. The expectation is that known regional variations in attitudes towards linguistic duality can be explained by regional variation in contact.

2. Methodology

The attitude and contact variables to be examined in this study are drawn from four separate surveys (see Table 1). All four surveys employed random sampling techniques except for the linguistic minority survey that forms part of the GPC International study. Each provides at least one attitude variable and at least one contact variable of interest. While the draw back in using multiple

¹ Mother tongue refers to the first language learned at home during childhood and still understood.

surveys is that it places limits on the ability to carry out multivariate analysis, the strength of such a study is that it produces repeated measures and thereby enhances the reliability of the research findings.

Table 1
Surveys examined

Polling Firm ²	Survey Title	Sample Size	Sample Type	Age of Respondents
Ekos	Rethinking Government IV 1997-1	n = 3022	Random weighted	Adults (minimum 18)
Enviro-nics	Omnibus - Focus Canada 1997-3	n = 2008	Random unweighted	Adults (minimum 18)
Ipsos-Reid	Reconnecting Government with Youth V (2002)	n = 2008	Random weighted	Young (aged 12 to 29)
GPC International	Study on Official Languages (2002)	Majority: n = 1153 Minority: n = 2001	Majority: Random weighted Minority: Non-random weighted	Adults (minimum 18)

The attitude variables used in this study to measure inter-group relations are at the level of identity. They relate to whether respondents perceive the country's two official languages as forming part of their vision of what it means to be Canadian and whether they perceive bilingualism to be important to the Canadian identity (see Table 2). In the context of inter-linguistic group relations, these variables provide an indication of whether the constitutional and demographic duality of Canada at the level of language is accepted and ultimately whether the other linguistic group is accepted as an equal in the Canadian project.

Table 2
Attitude variables: bilingualism as part of the Canadian identity

Question	Survey	Categorization of Responses ³
Rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statement, using a seven-point scale where "1" means you strongly disagree, and "7" means you strongly agree:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ekos 1997-1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disagree (1-3) • Neither (4) • Agree (5-7)
Having two official languages (English & French) is important to my sense of what it means to be a Canadian.		
Is bilingualism very, somewhat, not very or not at all important to the Canadian identity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environics 1997-3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not very or not at all important = 0 • Somewhat or very important = 1
Using a scale of 0 to 10 where "0" means strongly disagree and "10" means strongly agree, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ipsos-Reid 2002 • GPC Int'l 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disagree (1-3) • Neither (4-6) • Agree (7-10)
Having two official languages (English & French) is important to my sense of what it means to be a Canadian.		

² All contact questions used in this study were sponsored by the Department of Canadian Heritage.

³ Responses of "don't know" or "no answer" are included in the total on which the percentages shown in Figures 2 to 11 are based.

Table 3
Contact variables

Question	Survey	Categorization of Responses
Travel (Travel to the Region Where the Other Community Is Prevalent)		
How many times have you visited each of the provinces and territories and stayed overnight?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environics 1997-3 	For all categorizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never = 0 • Once or more = 1 Quebec respondents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROC (Rest of Canada) • ROC minus New Brunswick • ROC minus New Brunswick and Ontario ROC respondents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quebec • Quebec and/or New Brunswick
Personal Contact (Neighbors or Relatives from the Other Linguistic Community)		
Do you have any French/English [depending on whether the respondent is English or French speaking] neighbors or relatives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ekos 1997-1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Familiarity with the Other Official Language (Understanding of the Other Official Language)		
How would you rate your ability to understand French/English [depending on whether the respondent is English or French speaking]?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ekos 1997-1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor (1-3) • Average (4) • Good or Excellent (5-7)
Please use a scale where “1” means extremely poor, “7” means excellent, and “4” means average.		
Contact Quality (Evaluation of the Opportunity to Learn the Other Official Language)		
Using a scale of 0 to 10 where “0” means strongly disagree and “10” means strongly agree, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ipsos-Reid 2002 • GPC Int’l 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disagree (1-3) • Neither (4-6) • Agree (7-10)
My elementary/secondary education provided me with a good opportunity to learn my second official language.		

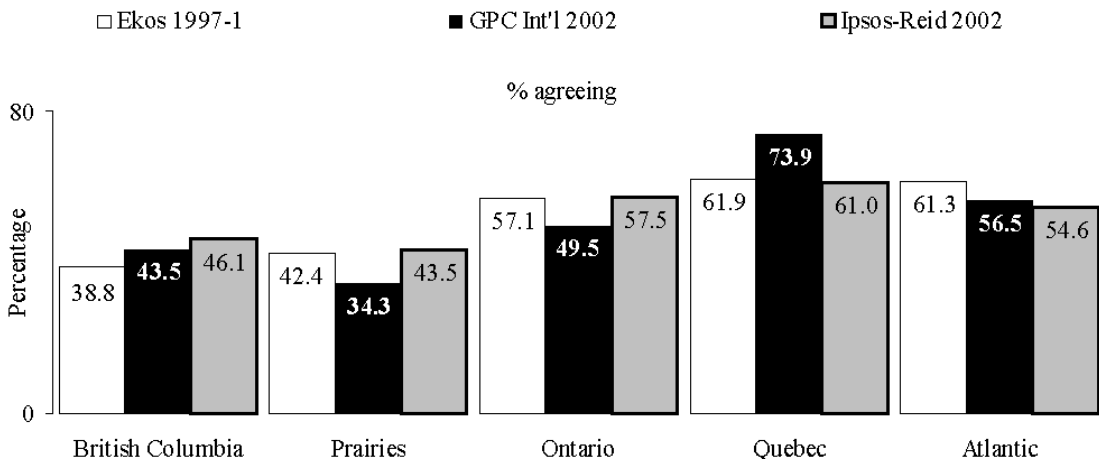
Tables 2 and 3 outline how the various variables have been categorized for the purposes of this study (also see Appendix 1). Note that it was necessary to categorize the number of visits to regions where the other linguistic community is prevalent into “zero” and “one or more” because of regional sample size considerations (see Appendix 2). The problem was compounded by the fact that very few respondents from some regions (e.g., British Columbia) had visited Quebec once, let alone more than once. This is unfortunate because the number of visits is quite likely to affect attitudes. As for the presence of neighbors or relatives from the other linguistic community, the question was asked in a manner that required a yes or no response. Yet, contact theory would lead us to believe that the number of relatives or neighbors would affect attitudes. To the extent this is so, the measures of contact through travel and the presence of neighbors or relatives from the other linguistic community used in this study will underestimate the ability of contact to explain regional variation in attitudes. This issue is discussed in more detail shortly.

Finally, the method employed in this study for determining the utility of contact in explaining regional patterns in attitudes towards linguistic duality is simply whether regional variation in the percentage with favorable attitudes is reduced or eradicated once the relevant attitude variable is cross-tabulated with a given contact variable.⁴ Said in another way, the expected regional pattern of variation in attitudes can be equated with proximity to regions containing large concentrations of people from the other official language community (see Figure 1). The hypothesis is that the proximity factor and regional variation in attitudes are in fact matters of differential contact.

3. Regional variation in attitudes

The percentage of Canadians having favorable attitudes towards bilingualism or official languages as they relate to Canadian identity tends to diminish in the western parts of Canada (British Columbia and the Prairies) according to distance from Quebec, as expected. Attitudes are generally most favorable in Quebec, followed by Ontario, one of Quebec’s neighboring provinces, or the Atlantic Provinces, which includes bilingual New Brunswick that also borders Quebec.

Figure 2
Having two official languages is important to my sense of what it means to be a Canadian



For example, in the Ekos, 1997-1 survey, the regional percentages agreeing with “The fact that Canada has two official languages is important to my sense of what it means to be Canadian” are as follows:

Atlantic (61.5%), Quebec (63.9%), Ontario (57.2%), Prairies (42.4%) and British Columbia (39.0%).

When francophones living outside of Quebec or anglophones living inside Quebec are removed from the sample, results remain much the same, largely because there are not many official languages minorities in the sample:

Atlantic (61.3%), Quebec (61.9%), Ontario (57.1%), Prairies (42.4%) and British Columbia (38.8%).

GPC International asked the same question about identity and official languages to anglophones in the ROC and francophones in Quebec, five years later. A similar East/West pattern in the responses

⁴ The Pearson’s *r* is the selected correlation measure used in this study to evaluate the strength of the relationship between the contact and attitude variables. The values were calculated using uncategorized variables and by excluding the respondents who gave no answer or refused to give one. All correlations were calculated on majority subsamples.

can be observed, though there is considerable variation between the two surveys in the regional percentages, especially for Quebec:

Atlantic (56.5%), Quebec (73.9%), Ontario (49.5%), Prairies (34.3%) and British Columbia (43.5%).

When Ipsos-Reid asked this same question to a national sample of youth and young adults 12 to 29 years of age in the same year (linguistic majorities only), the percentages agreeing are closer to the Ekos 1997-1 results for Quebec, Ontario and the Prairies; but closer to the GPC International results for the Atlantic and British Columbia. However, the same East/West pattern in results obtained in previous studies can be observed:

Atlantic (54.6%), Quebec (61.0%), Ontario (57.5%), Prairies (43.5%) and British Columbia (46.1%).

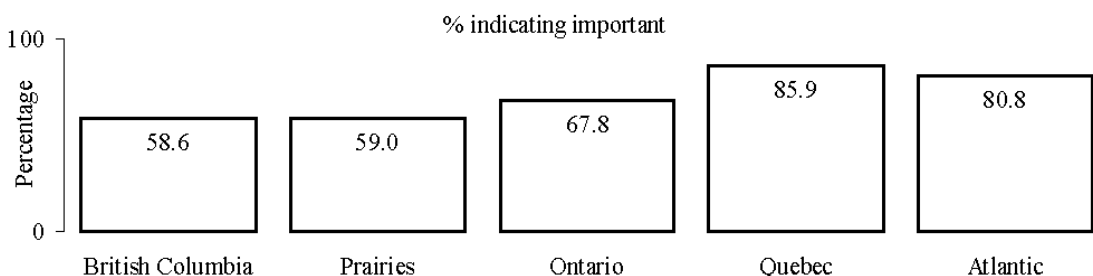
In fact, the East/West pattern is obtained even when linguistic duality at the level of identity is measured with a completely different indicator. When asked in an Environics 1997-3 survey “*How important is bilingualism to the Canadian identity?*” the percentages by region that replied that it was very or somewhat important are as follows:

Atlantic (80.8%), Quebec (86.0%), Ontario (68.0%), Prairies (59.0%) and British Columbia (58.6%).

When francophones living outside of Quebec or anglophones living inside Quebec are removed from the sample, results are much the same:

Atlantic (80.8%), Quebec (85.9%), Ontario (67.8%), Prairies (59.0%) and British Columbia (58.6%).

Figure 3
How important is bilingualism to the Canadian identity?
(Environics 1997-3)



This regional pattern has been found again and again with regard to attitudes towards bilingualism and official languages and as such, it is really the starting point of this study; what can explain this regional variation in attitudes? The hypothesis, as already stated, is that the explanation is differential contact with the other official language group or language, by region. Interestingly, the GPC International survey provides a rare opportunity to know how official languages minorities feel about linguistic duality, groups generally in high contact with the other linguistic group. The percentage of francophones living outside of Quebec who are in agreement with the question about official languages and identity is 93.5, much higher than the percentage obtained for francophones living in Quebec. The percentage of anglophones living in Quebec who are in agreement is 85.0, well above the ROC average of 46.0% and above the results obtained for francophone Quebecers (73.9%).

4. Regional variation in contact

Contact with the other linguistic group or the other language generally varies by region in the same pattern that attitudes do. This is what would be expected if contact were able to explain regional variation in attitudes.

4.1 Travel

According to the results of the 1997-3 Environics survey, the percentage of ROCers visiting Quebec at least once and staying over night is higher in the East than the West while Quebecers are far more likely to have visited the ROC than ROCers are to have visited Quebec:

Atlantic (51.5%), Quebec (79.2%), Ontario (69.4%), Prairies (39.0%) and British Columbia (34.0%).

Because Quebecers visiting the Atlantic would not necessarily be in contact with anglophones, i.e. they could be visiting francophone communities within New Brunswick, and because anglophones visiting New Brunswick could come into contact with francophones, the data were further refined to take this into account. The major difference in results in categorizing the data in this way is for the Atlantic:

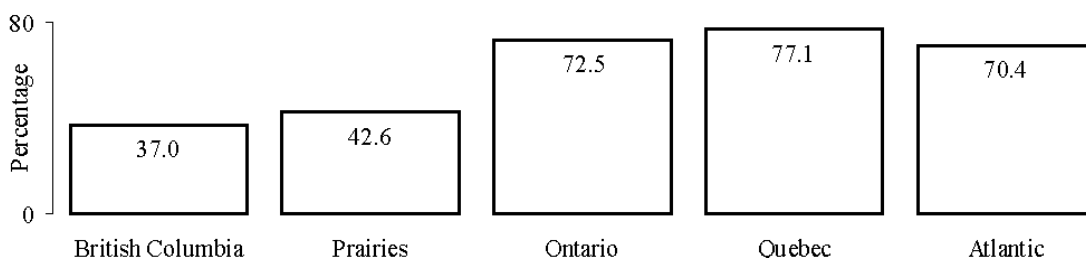
Atlantic (70.4%), Quebec (77.0%), Ontario (72.3%), Prairies (42.6%) and British Columbia (37.0%).

Many from the Atlantic (excluding New Brunswickers themselves) have obviously visited bilingual New Brunswick since the percentage who have visited a region where the other linguistic community is prevalent increases from 51.5% to 70.4% when New Brunswick is included in their visit count.

When linguistic minorities are removed from the samples, the results are essentially the same because there are very few linguistic minorities in them:

Atlantic (70.4%), Quebec (77.1%), Ontario (72.5%), Prairies (42.6%) and British Columbia (37.0%).

Figure 4
Respondents who visited the other linguistic region one or more times
(Environics 1997-3)



Thus, when visits to bilingual New Brunswick are factored into the analysis, a regional pattern of contact emerges that is even more in line with the regional pattern of attitudes towards linguistic duality. Since New Brunswickers, who constitute a sizeable percentage of the Atlantic sample (27.8%), would not have to leave their province to be in contact with the other linguistic community, one would expect respondents from the Atlantic to be among those with the most favorable attitudes towards bilingualism and official languages, regardless of travel. The same could be said of many Quebecers living in the Montreal region or the Eastern Townships. This is in fact what is observed in Figures 2 and 3.

The travel data by region also reveal that most visits by residents of a given region are made to neighboring regions. In the case of Quebecers, for example, the data reveal that 79.2% have visited the ROC at least once but only 77.0% have visited the ROC when New Brunswick is excluded from the visit count. When Ontario is also excluded, only 38.9% of Quebecers have made at least one visit to the ROC. Thus, visits to another region or province do not tell the whole of the story about contact. In fact, anglophone residents from Ontario and New Brunswick would be more likely to meet francophones from Quebec in their own province of residence than Westerners since these are the provinces Quebecers are most likely to visit. This aspect of travel/contact, unmeasured in this study, will show itself as an unspecified proximity factor, to the extent it affects the data, and it will impede our ability to explain all of the regional variation in attitudes towards linguistic duality with the travel variable. So too will the fact that sample sizes by region were not always large enough to allow us to take into account the number of visits to regions where the other linguistic group is prevalent since the number of visits to these other regions is also affected by proximity. Thus, to the extent the number of visits/contacts affects attitudes, our travel data will not produce parity in attitudes by region and the effect of visits/contact will be underestimated.

4.2 Neighbors or relatives from the other linguistic community

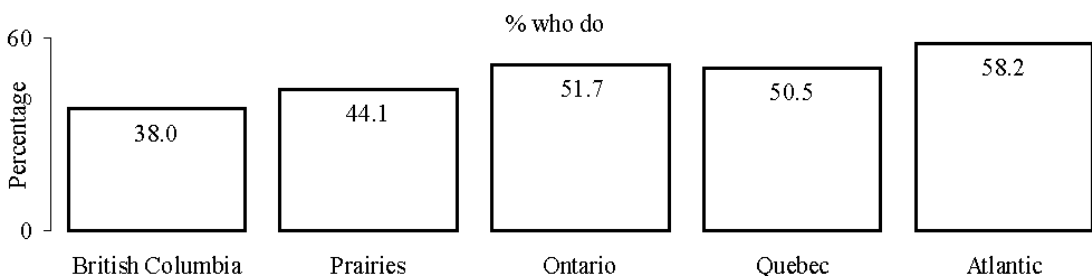
According to the results of the Ekos 1997-1 survey, the regional pattern in the percentage of respondents having a neighbor or relative from the other linguistic community is similar to the regional pattern in attitudes towards linguistic duality and in line with what one would expect if contact were to explain regional variation in those attitudes:

Atlantic (58.4%), Quebec (55.7%), Ontario (51.8%), Prairies (44.1%) and British Columbia (38.2%).

Removing francophones living in the ROC and anglophones living in Quebec from the data did not change the percentages by much. This is in part due to the small percentages in most of our regional samples that are official languages minorities:

Atlantic (58.2%), Quebec (50.5%), Ontario (51.7%), Prairies (44.1%) and British Columbia (38.0%).

Figure 5
Do you have any neighbors or relatives from the other linguistic community?
(Ekos 1997-1)



As with the travel variable, the neighbors/relative one does not measure the number of neighbors or relatives from the other linguistic community that respondents have. Since the number is likely to matter and since the number undoubtedly varies by proximity, this measure of contact is likely to underestimate the true extent to which having neighbors and relatives from the other linguistic community can explain regional variation in attitudes.

4.3 Understanding the other official language

Except for Quebec, the percentage indicating that they have a good to excellent understanding of the other official language is low in every region, though a sizeable percentage of respondents from Ontario and the Atlantic report a good to excellent understanding:

Atlantic (17.2%), Quebec (54.3%), Ontario (20.8%), Prairies (10.2%) and British Columbia (9.6%).

As is to be expected, the percentages are generally lower when official languages minorities are removed from the data:

Atlantic (16.8%), Quebec (54.0%), Ontario (20.7%), Prairies (10.2%) and British Columbia (9.3%).

Figure 6
Respondents who evaluated as good to excellent,
their understanding of the other official language
(Ekos 1997-1)



However, an East-West pattern, albeit weak, is nonetheless obtained.

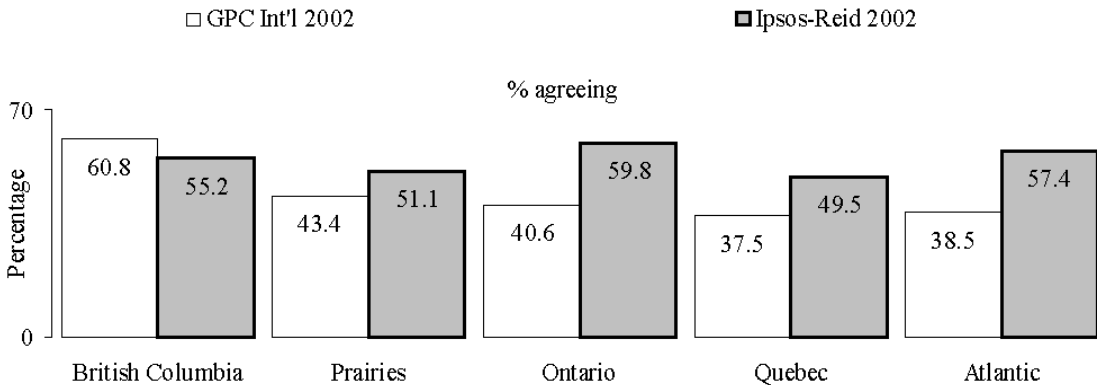
4.4 Opportunity to learn the other language through schooling

While the percentage of anglophone respondents in ROC regions who estimate that they have a good to excellent understanding of French is generally quite low, the percentage who indicate that they had a good opportunity to learn it through elementary or secondary schooling is considerably higher. According to the GPC International Survey, the following percentages of respondents by region stated in 2002 that they had had a good opportunity to learn the other language through their education (French for anglophones in the ROC and English for francophones in Quebec):

Atlantic (38.5%), Quebec (37.5%), Ontario (40.6%), Prairies (43.4%) and British Columbia (60.8%).

The low percentage for francophone Quebecers might be related to the protective policies of the Government of Quebec, designed to keep the province French. Officially a unilingual province, many francophone Quebecers nonetheless master English outside of the school system (e.g., watching English-language television). The result for British Columbia is unreliable since the sample size is only 69. However, the overall regional pattern in the percentages is opposite to what one would expect and because of this, this quality of contact variable might not help explain regional variation. Nonetheless, what might be underlying these results by region is an assessment of the opportunity one had to learn the other language relative to one's actual need for the other language in every day life (i.e. contact with the other language). Thus respondents from British Columbia and the Prairies feel comfortable with the level of French they did or did not learn given their low need to use it or their low level of contact with the other linguistic group.

Figure 7
Had a good opportunity to learn
the other official language through schooling⁵



The results from the Ipsos-Reid youth survey (linguistic majorities only) are more in line with expectations, though the results for British Columbia are still slightly higher than one would expect:

Atlantic (57.4%), Quebec (49.5%), Ontario (59.8%), Prairies (51.1%) and British Columbia (55.2%).

Also note that the percentages from this youth survey are generally higher than those from the GPC International adult survey. One would expect younger respondents from the ROC to be more inclined than their older counterparts to say they had a good opportunity to learn the other language because many younger anglophone Canadians would have been raised in a country that was officially bilingual and that encouraged second official language learning. This would not be the country in which many of their older regional counterparts would have been raised. Because the percentages by region do follow the expected East/West pattern, albeit weakly, this contact variable in this instance will probably help reduce regional variation in attitudes towards linguistic duality.

5.0 Attitudes by contact and region

The correlations between contact and attitudes towards linguistic duality within regions vary in strength from weak to moderate, depending on the region and the contact variable used, and unless otherwise indicated, the relationships are statistically significant. However, what is more important to this analysis is how regional variation or the proximity factor is reduced by contact.

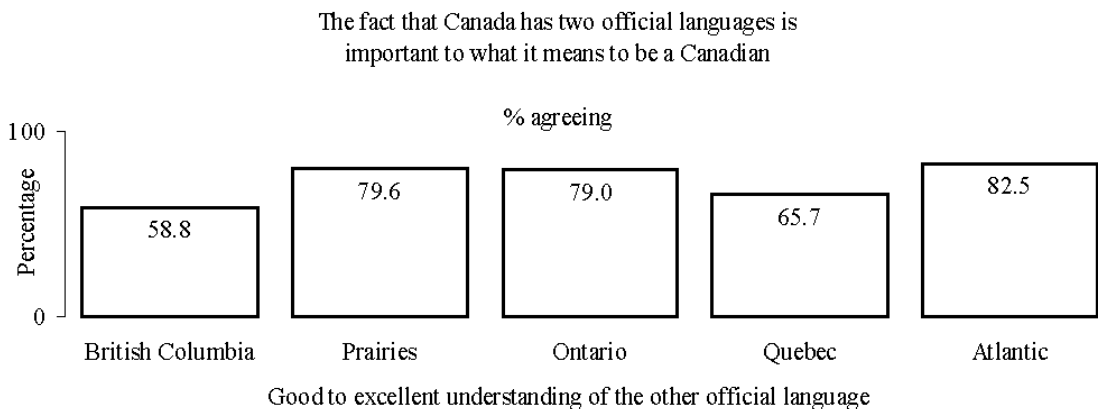
5.1 Understanding the other official language

Of all the contact variables investigated in this study, the most powerful one in the ROC with respect to attitudes towards a dual Canadian identity is the ability to understand French. If all respondents in each region had a good to excellent understanding of French, percentages in agreement with a dual Canadian identity, compared to the general level of agreement by region shown in Figure 2, would increase by 21.2 percentage points in the Atlantic, 21.9 in Ontario, 37.2 in the Prairies and 20.0 in British Columbia. One would not expect the percentage point increase in agreement to be as large for the Atlantic relative to the Prairies, since the percentage of anglophones who report understanding French at a good to excellent level is higher in the former relative to the latter region; this would raise the regional average for the former relative to the latter (compositional effects). One way around this problem of comparing effects is to look at the percentage increase in agreement within each

⁵ The percentages from the GPC International survey are based on the sample of linguistic majorities.

region across the reported level of understanding French. It increases by 26.6 percentage points between those who gave themselves a low rating of French comprehension and those who gave themselves a high one in the Atlantic. For Ontario, the percentage point increase is 30.7; the Prairies, 43.2; and British Columbia, 24.0 (which is unreliable due to a sample size at the higher end of the understanding scale). The end result would be that between 79.0% and 82.5% of anglophone respondents in ROC regions would be in agreement with a linguistically dual national identity if all had a good to excellent comprehension of French, with the exception of British Columbia where the percentage obtained (58.8%) is unreliable due to the low percentage (and thus small sample size) that understand French. Since regional variation in attitudes is greatly reduced (and close to eradicated if British Columbia were excluded) when only those who have a good to excellent understanding of French are considered, this contact variable clearly explains both within and between variation in attitudes by region. Proximity to major francophone communities would no longer appear to have much of an effect on attitudes about linguistic duality as they relate to identity, once ability to understand French is considered.⁷

Figure 8
Understanding the other official language and attitudes towards bilingualism
(Ekos 1997-1)



For francophone Quebecers, the ability to understand English does not have a large effect on the percentage that agrees with a Canadian identity that is linguistically dual. This is reinforced by a very weak Pearson's r of 0.08. The percentage point increase over the provincial average (comparing Figure 2 to Figure 8) for those who rate their ability as good to excellent is only 3.8 (i.e., it increases from 61.9% to 65.7%). The difference in the percentage agreement between those with a poor comprehension of English and those with a good to excellent one is somewhat higher (9.1%). In addition, the percentage of francophone Quebecers who have a good to excellent comprehension of English and agree with a Canadian identity that is linguistically dual is substantially lower than the percentages for their anglophone counterparts in the ROC. Together these results suggest that there might be different meanings and implications attached to bilingualism and linguistic duality in Quebec compared to the ROC. For example, English might be acquired by francophones relatively more out of sociological necessity and non-purposive exposure to English (the immersion in a continental sea of English) while anglophones might acquire French relatively more out of personal choice and high

⁶ The data in this chart relate to linguistic majorities only (i.e. francophones in Quebec, anglophones in the ROC).

⁷ Compared to other relationships between contact and attitudes evaluated in this study, this one is one of the stronger ones. The Pearson's r values range from 0.21 (for British Columbia) to 0.35 (for the Prairies). The correlation values for Ontario and the Atlantic are 0.29 and 0.25 respectively.

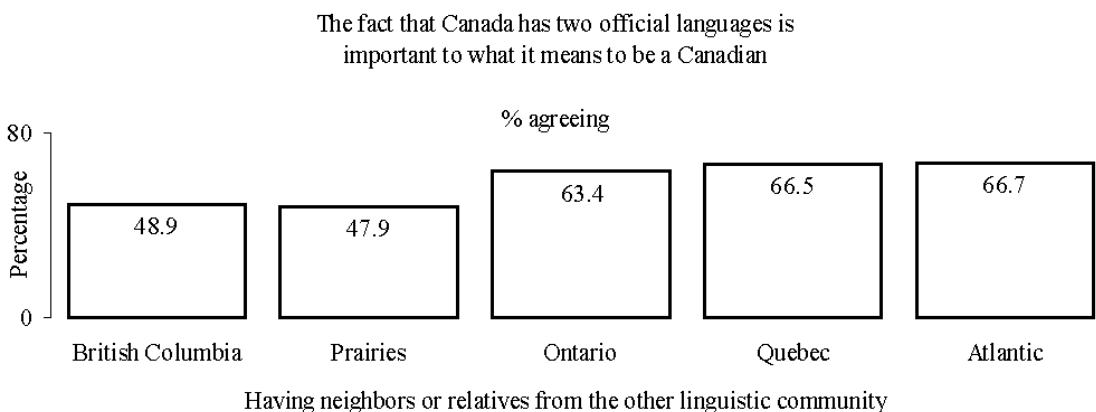
motivation. If this is so, it would mean that anglophones who learn the other official language are more likely than francophones who do so, to choose to learn it because they and/or their families value bilingualism (i.e. the value of bilingualism and recognition of Canada's linguistic duality precedes their learning French). This is not to say that francophones in Quebec do not value bilingualism or recognize Canada's linguistic duality any less than anglophones. On the contrary, the data demonstrate that they generally value it more. It is to say that the ability to speak the other language has a hyper effect on anglophones that can quite possibly be attributed to differences in their value acquisition and language acquisition processes.

Another possibility is that bilingual francophone Quebecers are ambivalent towards linguistic duality relative to bilingual anglophone ROCers because for the latter group, bilingualism is perceived as a personal economic asset while for the former group, it is also perceived as a cultural threat (e.g. assimilation and maternal language retention). Similarly, official bilingualism might pose an economic threat to unilingual ROCers while for unilingual francophone Quebecers (or unilingual francophones in New Brunswick), it would allow bilingual anglophones to carry some of the inter-linguistic communications load. It would also help unilingual francophones to function as unilinguals in New Brunswick or in the ROC, e.g. official bilingualism provides for government services in French. Either way, results suggest that the surest way to increase the percentage of ROCers that share the bilingual and linguistically dual vision of Canada espoused in the Canadian constitution and the Official Languages Act is to increase the percentage of Canadians in the ROC who have a good to excellent comprehension of French.

5.2 Neighbors or relatives belonging to the other linguistic community

For the Atlantic region, agreement with an identity that is linguistically dual increases from 54.5% for those who do not have neighbors or relatives from the other linguistic community to 66.2% for those who do. When francophones are excluded from the Atlantic region, the percentages are similar to those obtained for Ontario. The percentage increases from 54.5% to 66.7% between anglophones in the Atlantic who do not and do have francophone neighbors or relatives, and from 50.5% to 63.4% for anglophone Ontario respondents who do not and do. For the Prairies, the change is from 38.6% to 47.9%. For British Columbia, it is from 33.8% to 48.9%.

Figure 9
Personal contact and attitudes towards bilingualism
(Ekos 1997-1)



Thus, while having a neighbor or relative from the other linguistic community greatly increases the percentage with favorable attitudes towards linguistic duality and reduces regional variation within the ROC in those attitudes, a clear East-West divide in attitudes still remains. The remaining regional variation might be explainable by an interaction between the proximity to the two major francophone

communities in Canada (Quebec and New Brunswick) and some additional contact variable related to proximity, e.g. number of neighbors and relatives, travel, or some unspecified proximity factor.

For francophone Quebecers, having an anglophone neighbor or relative puts agreement with a dual identity to the same level as that obtained for anglophone respondents from Ontario and the Atlantic who have a francophone relative or neighbor (66.5%). For all Quebecers who have a neighbor or relative from the other linguistic community, the percentage is 68.6. The percentage of Quebecers who have no neighbors or relatives from the other linguistic community and who think linguistic duality is important to the Canadian identity is between 9.9 and 9.0 points lower than it is for those who do, depending on whether anglophone respondents are included or excluded from the sample. Thus, when having a neighbor or relative from the other linguistic community is considered, Quebec falls in line with the rest of Eastern Canada creating a general East-West divide. Again, number of neighbors or relatives or the simultaneous control of another contact variable would probably help to close this divide. What is perfectly clear is that there is no variation in the East or in the West in identity as far as linguistic duality is concerned, when the presence or absence of a neighbor or relative from the other linguistic community is taken into consideration.⁸

5.3 *Travel to the other linguistic region(s)*

Having visited Quebec or New Brunswick at least once and stayed overnight generally increases the percentage of respondents in ROC regions who believe bilingualism is important to the Canadian identity. For British Columbia or the Prairies, the percentage increases from 54.4 and 54.1 to 65.8 and 65.5 respectively, between those who have not visited Quebec or New Brunswick and those who have. For Ontario, the percentage increases from 62.5 to 69.8; but for the Atlantic (including New Brunswick respondents who have visited Quebec), the percentage decreases from 86.3 to 78.4%. This negative effect in the Atlantic might be due to the fact that respondents from New Brunswick do not have to leave their province to be in contact with the other official language community. In addition, one cannot ignore the influence of official bilingualism at the provincial level in New Brunswick on the attitudes of New Brunswickers towards a linguistically dual Canadian identity. Nonetheless, the percentage for the Atlantic remains higher than the percentages obtained for any other region. When respondents from New Brunswick are excluded from the Atlantic subsample, there is no travel effect at all; the percentage in agreement does not change to any statistically significant degree (from 86.7 to 83.4%). However, in this instance, results become unreliable because the sample size is now small.

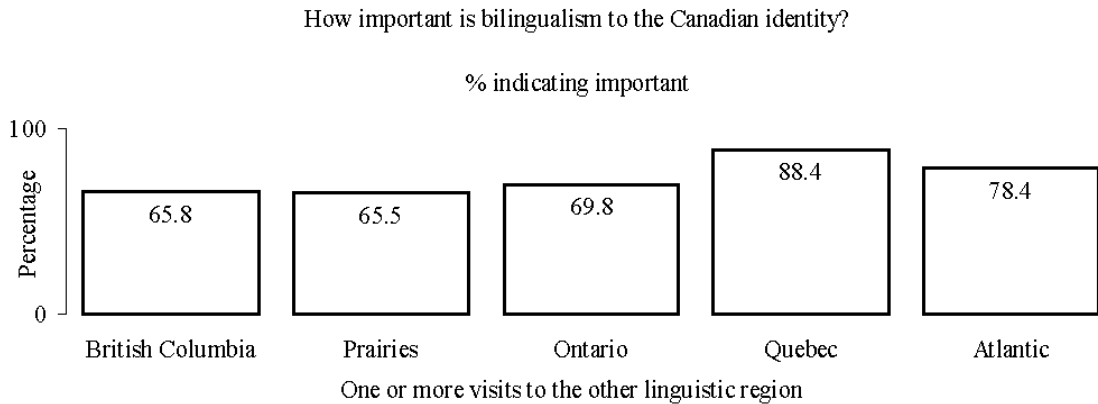
When the percentage in agreement with the importance of bilingualism by region in general (see Figure 3) is compared with the percentage in agreement among the respondents who visited the other linguistic region at least once, a decrease of 2.4% can be observed in the Atlantic (but an increase of 2.6% if New Brunswickers are excluded from the subsample). The increase in other regions is slightly higher: in British Columbia, it is 7.2%; in the Prairies it is 6.5%; in Ontario, 2.0%; and in Quebec, 2.5%. Thus, knowing whether an ROC respondent has traveled to Quebec or New Brunswick reduces the regional variation between Ontario and the West in responses to the identity question; but sets the Atlantic apart from the rest of the ROC. Had it been possible to take into consideration the number of visits, regional variation would undoubtedly have been further reduced.

As for francophone Quebecers, the percentage agreeing that bilingualism is important to the Canadian identity increases from 76.3% for those never having visited the ROC to 88.4% for those having visited it at least once. The latter percentage is essentially unchanged when New Brunswick is excluded from the visit count (88.4%), though it increases slightly to 90.9% when both Ontario and New Brunswick are excluded from it. Thus, the travel variable helps to close the divide between the West and Ontario but sets Quebec and the Atlantic, the two francophone regions, apart from the rest of Canada as far as sharing a linguistically dual vision of Canadian is concerned, largely because travel causes increases to an already high percentage of Quebecers agreeing with linguistic duality, in

⁸ No such East-West pattern can be observed in the correlations. The regional correlations are weak, albeit statistically significant, ranging from 0.09 in Quebec to 0.15 in Ontario, the Atlantic and British Columbia. For the Prairies, the correlation is 0.11.

amounts similar to those it causes in the West. Travel has little effect on the Atlantic region which contains officially bilingual New Brunswick. Again, number of visits would undoubtedly help to reduce at least some of the remaining regional variation.⁹

Figure 10
Visits to the other linguistic region and attitudes towards bilingualism
(Environics 1997-3)



5.4 Opportunity to learn the other official language

Youth and young adults in the Atlantic who agree they have had a good opportunity to learn the other language in an educational setting are 14.7 percentage points more likely than youth and young adults in general from their region to agree that their idea of being a Canadian means linguistic duality. The percentage point increase is 8.0 in Quebec, 9.3 in Ontario, 12.5 in the Prairies, and 15.7 in British Columbia (compared to results from Figure 2). The end result is a decrease in regional variation in attitudes.

The results from the GPC International survey of adults are generally similar but generally weaker than those found in the Ipsos-Reid youth survey; the percentage point increase in agreement over the regional averages are 4.6% for the Atlantic, 6.1% for Quebec, 10.4% for Ontario, 9.9% for the Prairies, and 0.9% for British Columbia.¹⁰ These relatively small increases in agreement do not contribute to any discernible reduction in regional variation in attitudes.¹¹

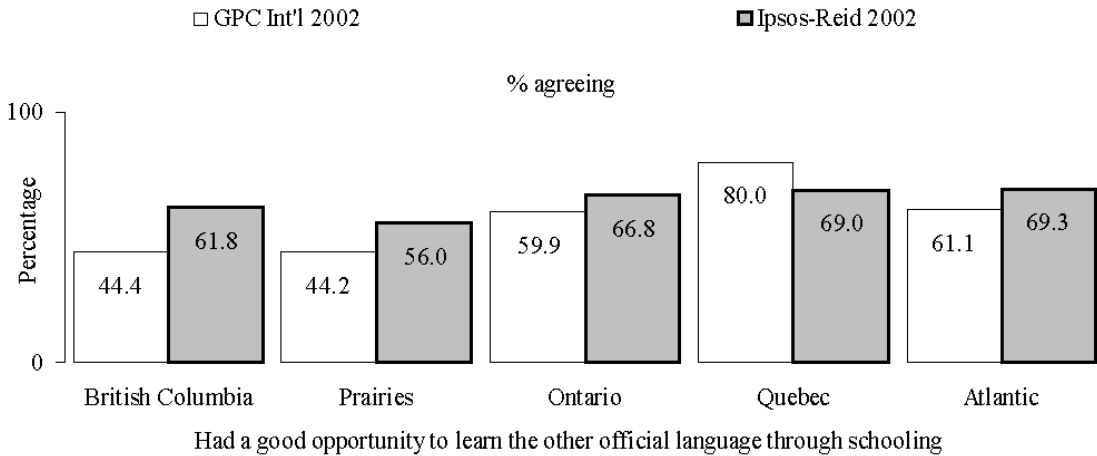
⁹ It would also provide a more precise estimate of the regional correlations. Statistically significant correlations between attitudes and travel were observed for Quebec (0.18), Ontario (0.10) and the Prairies (0.10).

¹⁰ Recall that the results for British Columbia are unreliable due to small sample size.

¹¹ As for the regional correlations, in the ROC, the values from the Ipsos-Reid Survey are moderately strong, ranging from 0.33 in Ontario to 0.44 in the Atlantic; these are among the strongest correlations found in this study. The values for the Prairies and British Columbia are 0.34 and 0.41 respectively. For Quebec the value is 0.26. The values obtained from the GPC International study of linguistic majorities are weaker than those obtained from the Ipsos-Reid survey. They ranged from 0.16 in the Prairies to 0.27 in the Atlantic. For Ontario and British Columbia, values of 0.20 and 0.23 were obtained. The value for Quebec in this case was too weak to be statistically significant.

Figure 11
Opportunity to learn the other official language and attitudes towards bilingualism
(Ipsos-Reid 2002)

The fact that Canada has two official languages is
important to my sense of what it means to be a Canadian



6. Conclusions

The contact variables investigated in this study all fared well in explaining regional variation in the percentage of Canadians who accept a Canadian identity that is linguistically dual, except for “opportunity to learn the other language” when examined using the GPC International survey. The ability to understand the other official language at a good to excellent level proved to greatly reduce regional variation in the ROC. Quebec remained apart, probably because the language acquisition process and the meaning of bilingualism are different for francophone Quebecers relative to anglophone ROCers. The presence of a neighbor or relative from the other linguistic group reduced regional variation to zero within the East and within the West but a clear, albeit reduced, East/West divide remained. The travel variable helped to diminish variation between Ontario and the West but caused Quebec and the Atlantic, the two regions containing sizeable concentrations of francophones, to be set apart from the rest of Canada in terms of the percentage agreeing that bilingualism is important to the Canadian identity. Regarding these latter two findings, more refined data on the number of neighbors or relatives from the other linguistic community and on the number of visits to the regions where the other linguistic community is concentrated would undoubtedly further reduce much if not all of the remaining regional variation. In short, while better data is needed, the data investigated in this study generally behaved according to contact theory. Contact with the other linguistic community, whether personal or through travel, and the ability to understand and having had a good opportunity to learn the other official language, all increased the percentage of Canadians who share the bilingual vision of Canada outlined in the Canadian constitution. With one minor exception, all of the contact variables examined in this study reduced regional variation in the percentage that share it, though some reduced it more than others. It can be concluded, without the danger of committing an ecological fallacy, that varying degrees of regional variation in attitudes towards linguistic duality can be attributed to differential contact. In addition, if the conditions under which contact between linguistic groups matters, it can also be concluded that the conditions under which francophones and anglophones have come into contact in Canada have on balance been favourable as opposed to unfavourable.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Demographic variables examined

Variable	Survey	Categorization
Language		
Language used during interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ekos 1997-1 • Environics 1997-3 • Ipsos-Reid 2002 • GPC Int'l 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • French <p>Used along with province of residence to determine whether respondents are anglophone or francophone minorities or majorities.</p>
Province		
Province where respondent resides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ekos 1997-1 • Environics 1997-3 • Ipsos-Reid 2002 • GPC Int'l 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atlantic (Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick) • Quebec • Ontario • Prairies (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta) • British Columbia.

Appendix 2 Un-weighted subsample sizes

Ekos 1997-1		Environics 1997-3	
Region	Subsample Size	Region	Subsample Size
British Columbia	n=340	British Columbia	n=235
Prairies	n=403	Prairies	n=472
Ontario	n=875	Ontario	n=530
Quebec	n=1004	Quebec	n=501
Atlantic	n=400	Atlantic	n=270
Ipsos-Reid 2002		GPC Int'l 2002 (Majority Study)	
Region	Subsample Size	Region	Subsample Size
British Columbia	n=300	British Columbia	n=69
Prairies	n=351	Prairies	n=213
Ontario	n=607	Ontario	n=210
Quebec	n=547	Quebec	n=210
Atlantic	n=200	Atlantic	n=351
GPC Int'l 2002 (Minority Study)			
Regional Group	Subsample Size		
Francophones from Canada (excluding Quebec)	n=1138		
Anglophones from Quebec	n=863		

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