



**Arnasguneak hizkuntza
gutxituen biziberritzean.**
Nazioarteko konferentzia

**Territories of higher speaker
density in minoritised
language communities.**
International Conference

2025eko urriaren 16 eta 17a
Azpeitia, Euskal Herria



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**Frantsesa Kanadan: hiztun-
dentsitatea eta hizkuntzaren
erabilera, transmisioa eta ezagutza**
63-77. or.

**The French language in Canada:
speaker density and language
use, transmission and knowledge**
211-225. or.

Étienne Lemyre (Statistique Canada)

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Sustatzaileak / Promoters:



UDALERRI
EUSKALDUNEN
MANKOMUNITATEA



4. Frantsesa Kanadan: hiztun-dentsitatea eta hizkuntzaren erabilera, transmisioa eta ezagutza

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Laburpena: Frantsesa hizkuntza ofiziala da Kanadan ingelesarekin batera. Alabaina, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten herritarrek (bakarrik nahiz beste hizkuntza batekin) estatu osoko populazioaren gutxiengo bat osatzen dute (% 20,9) probintzia eta lurralde guztietan, Quebecen izan ezik (% 77,8). Maila lokalean, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten quebecar gehienak frantsesa nagusi den auzoetan bizi dira, non frantsesdunek² populazioaren erdia baino gehiago osatzen duten (% 93,4); estatuko gainerako eremuetan, berriz, frantsesdunak populazioaren laurden bat dira soilik (% 25,4). Frantsesdunen proportzioa handiagoa den auzoetan, probabilitate handiagoa dago frantsesdunek frantsesa erabil dezaten etxeko hizkuntza nagusi moduan, probabilitate txikiagoa heldu frantsesdunek bikote linguistikoki mistoak osa ditzaten, eta gurasoek kopuru handiagotan transmititzen diete frantsesa hurrei bai familia elebakarretan, bai hizkuntza bat baino gehiago hitz egiten dituzten familietan. Ama-hizkuntza frantsesa ez duten pertsonen artean, frantsesdun-proportzio handiko auzoetan bizi direnek aukera gehiago dituzte etxeko hizkuntza nagusitzat frantsesa hartzeko edo frantsesa bigarren hizkuntza moduan ikasteko. Horrelako loturak Quebecen eta Quebecetik kanpo ikusi badira ere, frantsesak Quebecen duen gehiengo-estatusa eta Kanadako beste tokietan duen gutxiengo-estatusa argi islatzen dira emaitzetan, auzo-mailan frantses hiztunen tokiko kontzentrazioa edozein delarik ere.

Gako-hitzak: frantsesa, Kanada, Quebec, hiztun-dentsitatea, ama-hizkuntza, etxeko hizkuntza, hizkuntza-transmisioa, hizkuntza-ezagutza.

1. Testu honetan plazaratzen diren iritziak autorearenak dira, eta ez datoz nahitaez bat Statistique Canada erakundearenekin

2. Itzulpenean, laburtasunaren eta erosotasunaren mesedetan, «frantsesdun» terminoa erabili da ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten eta oraindik erabiltzen duten hiztunak izendatzeko, alegia, ingelesezko «people whose mother tongue is French», «French-mother-tongue people» eta «native French speakers» itzultzeko [itzultzailearen oharra].

Sarrera

Kanadan ehunka hizkuntza hitz egiten dira, tartean hirurogeita hamar baino gehiago jatorriz herrialde horretakoak. Hala ere, frantsesa eta ingelesa dira Kanadan gehien ezagutzen eta erabiltzen diren hizkuntzak, eta bi hizkuntzek dute estatus ofiziala maila federalean 1969az geroztik. Kanadako bi hizkuntza ofizialak herrialde osoko komunitateetan hitz egiten diren arren, frantses-hiztunak Quebecoko probintzian baino ez dira gehiengoak; gainerako probintzia eta lurraldeetan, frantsesa gutxiengo-egoeran dago, baita Kanada osoari dagokionez ere.

Quebecetik kanpoko Kanadan, hainbat ikerketak erakutsi dute badagoela erlazio bat frantses-hiztunek maila lokalean duten proportzio erlatiboaren eta hizkuntzaren erabileraren artean (Marmen, 2005; Castonguay, 2005; Corbeil *et al.*, 2007), baina, erlazio horrek Quebecen berdin funtzionatzen ote duen ikusteko, ikerketa gehiago behar da. Pisu demografikoa maila lokalean berdina izanik, antzekoak al dira frantsesaren erabileraren, transmisioaren eta ezagutzaren adierazle demolinguistikoak?

Kapitulu honek Kanadako erroldako zenbait hizkuntza-kontzeptu aztertzen ditu laburki, eta aurkezten du nolako garapena izan duten 1991tik 2021era ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten edo frantsesez badakiten quebecarren eta beste kanadar batzuen kopuruak eta proportzioak. Ondoren, honako alor hauetako adierazleak erakusten ditu: ama-hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen kontzentrazioa maila lokalean; frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza gisa mantentzeko edo hartzeko joera; bikote linguistikoki mistoen intzidentzia; guraso eta haurren arteko frantsesaren transmisioa eta frantsesaren ezagutza bigarren hizkuntza moduan. Ondorioetan, Quebecen eta Quebecetik kanpoko lurralde kanadarraren arteko antzekotasunak eta desberdintasunak eztabaidatzen dira.

Kanadako erroldako hizkuntza-kontzeptuak

Herriarren Errolda bost urtetik behin egiten da Kanadan, etxe bakoitzera galdetegi bat bidalita. Munduko errolden artean, hizkuntzei buruzko galdera gehien dutenen artean dago Kanadakoa (Christopher, 2010). Horri esker, posible da hainbat eta hainbat kontzeptu denbora-tarte luze batean aztertzea.

*Ama-hizkuntzat*zat jotzen da etxean haurtzaroan ikasitako lehen hizkuntza, baldin eta errolda egiten den unean oraindik ulertzen bada. Pertsona batek ez badu jada ulertzen umetan ikasitako lehen hizkuntza, ikasitako bigarren hizkuntza

adierazi behar du³. Ama-hizkuntza gisa bi hizkuntza markatu behar dira baldin eta hiztunak hizkuntza horiek aldi berean ikasi bazituen etxean eskolan hasi aurretik.

Erroldan, kanadarrek beren *etxeko hizkuntza* zein den ere adierazi behar dute. Etxean egunerokoan hizkuntza bat baino gehiago erabiltzen dituztenek, gainera, gehien hitz egiten dutena zein den adierazi behar dute. Informazio horri esker, ondorioztatzen da zein den kanadarren etxeko hizkuntza nagusia (etxean gehien hitz egiten den hizkuntza) eta zein diren etxeko bigarren hizkuntzak (egunerokoan baina ez nagusiki hitz egiten direnak). Etxean bi hizkuntza hitz egiten direla adierazi behar da baldin eta biak maiztasun berarekin hitz egiten badira.

Erroldak *hizkuntzen ezagutzari* buruzko informazioa ere biltzen du. Hiztun batek hizkuntza baten ezagutza duela adierazi behar du baldin eta gai bada hizkuntza horretan luzera jakin bateko elkarrizketa bat izateko hainbat gairen inguruan.

Goian deskribatutako kontzeptuez gain, beste informazio hau ere biltzen du Kanadako erroldak: lehen eta bigarren hezkuntza hizkuntza ofizial minoritarioan (ingelesez Quebecen, frantsesez Quebecetik kanpoko Kanadan) eta hizkuntzen erabilera lanean⁴.

Frantsesa Kanadan: azkenaldiko joerak

Frantsesez dakiten kanadarren kopuruak hazten jarraitzen du errolda batetik bestera; 1991n 8,5 milioi izatetik 10,7 milioi izatera igaro ziren 2021ean (Statistics Canada, 2023a). Hala ere, frantsesez ez zekiten herritarren kopuruak bizkorrago egin zuenez gora, Kanadako frantses-hiztunen proportzio erlatiboak jaitsiera txiki bat izan zuen: 1991n % 31,5 eta 2021ean % 29,1.

Quebecen, herritar gehienak gai ziren frantsesez elkarrizketa bat izateko 2021ean (% 93,7); proportzioa ozta-ozta aldatu zen 1991ko datuekin alderatuta (% 93,6). Soilik frantsesez⁵, eta ez ingelesez, dakiten quebecarren proportzioa jaisten ari da (1991n % 58,1 ziren eta 2021ean % 47,3), eta frantsesa eta ingelesa,

3. Kanadarrek erroldan ama-hizkuntzatzat markatzen duten hizkuntza errolda betetzeko unean oraindik ulertu behar dutenez, erroldatik kanpo gera daiteke hiztun batek haurtzaroan ikasitako baina ondoren «ahaztutako» lehen hizkuntza. Fenomeno hau nahiko arraroa da, eta haurtzaroan ikasitako lehen hizkuntza oso gutxitan erabiltzen dutenen artean gertatzen da. Maizago gertatzen da gutxiengo frantsesdunetan eta bigarren belaunaldiko immigranteen artean (ikus Lepage, 2011).

4. Lanean erabiltzen diren hizkuntzen inguruko informazioa biltzeko, errolda-galdetegi xehe bat bidaltzen da etxean % 25etara.

5. Gai izan litezke elkarrizketa bat izateko frantsesa edo ingelesa ez den beste hizkuntza batean ere.

biak hitz egiteko gai direnen proportzioa, berriz, gorantz doa (1991n % 35,4 eta 2021ean % 46,4). Horren arrazoia, hein handi batean, zera da, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten hiztunek ingelesa ikasten dutela (Lemyre, 2023). Quebecetik kanpo, 2021ean, kanadarren % 88,0 gai ziren ingelesez elkarriketa bat izateko, baina ez frantsesez hitz egiteko. Aitzitik, % 9,9k zekizkiten bi hizkuntzak, frantsesa eta ingelesa, 1991n baino pixka bat gutxiagok (% 10,6). Quebecetik kanpo, oso kanadar gutxi ziren soilik frantsesez zekitenak eta ingelesez hitz egiteko gai ez zirenak (1991n % 0,7 eta 2021ean % 0,4).

Ama-hizkuntza frantsesa zuten kanadarren kopuruak⁶ ere gora egin zuen: 6,6 milioi ziren 1991n eta 7,7 milioi 2021ean (Statistics Canada, 2023b). Baina proportzio erlatiboa, ordea, modu nabarmenagoan jaitsi zen: 1991n % 24,5 ziren eta 2021ean % 20,9. Ama-hizkuntza frantsesa zutenen proportzio erlatiboak antzera egin zuen behera Quebecen (1991n % 82,5 eta 2021ean % 77,8) eta Quebecetik kanpoko Kanadan (1991n % 5,0 eta 2021ean % 3,9). Hainbat faktore hartu behar dira kontuan beherakada horiek azaltzeko, besteak beste ama-hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen zahartzea nabarmenagoa dela populazio orokorrarekin alderatuta, nazioarteko migrazioan frantsesdunak gutxiago izan direla historikoki, eta Quebecetik kanpo gurasoek ez dietela haurrei frantsesa osoki transmititu (Houle & Corbeil, 2017).

Ama-hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen banaketa maila lokalean

Ama-hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen banaketa ez da uniformea ez Quebecen, ez Quebecetik kanpoko Kanadan. Bai Quebeceko, bai Quebecetik kanpoko Kanadak, frantses-hiztunen kontzentrazio txikiagoko edo handiagoko eskualdeak⁷ dituzte.

Quebeceko eskualde askotan, frantsesduna da populazioaren % 90 gutxienez. Proportzio hori apalxeagoa da Montreal inguruko eremuetan (Montreal da Quebeceko hiririk handiena), mugatik gertuko eskualdeetan⁸ eta Quebec iparraldean. Esaterako, Montrealgo Uhartean, zeinak metropoli-barrutiaren gune nagusia barne hartzen duen, herritarren erdiak baino gutxiago dira frantsesdunak (% 49,3), nahiz eta desberdintasun nabarmenak dauden auzotik auzora⁹.

6. Kopuru horren barruan daude ama-hizkuntza bakartzat frantsesa dutenak eta frantsesaz gain beste ama-hizkuntza bat ere badutenak. Ama-hizkuntza bat baino gehiago dituztenei buruz Kanadako erroldan jasotzen den informazioa eta haren interpretazioa eskuratzeko, ikus Lepage, 2020.

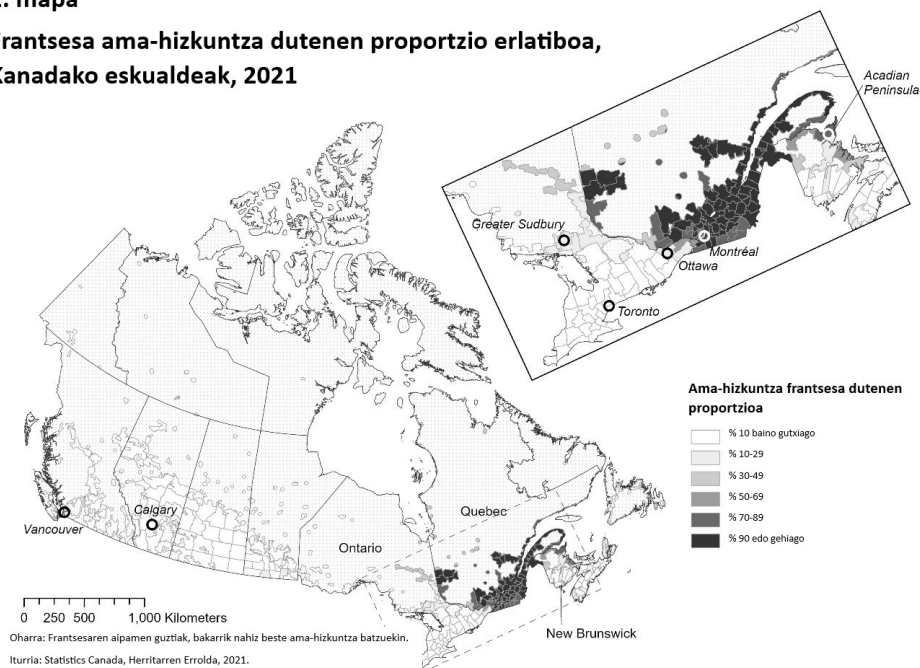
7. Errolda-banaketak dira; alegia, elkarren ondoan dauden udalerrien multzoak, jurisdikzio batzuetan «county» deritzen antzekoak.

8. Adibidez, Pontiac udalerrian (% 41,1), Ontariorekiko mugaren ondoan.

9. Ama-hizkuntza frantsesa zutenen proportzioa, Montrealgo Uhartean, % 6,2 eta % 95,9 artekoa zen 100 biztanletik gorako auzoetan.

1. mapa

Frantsesa ama-hiltuntza dutenen proportzio erlatiboa, Kanadako eskualdeak, 2021



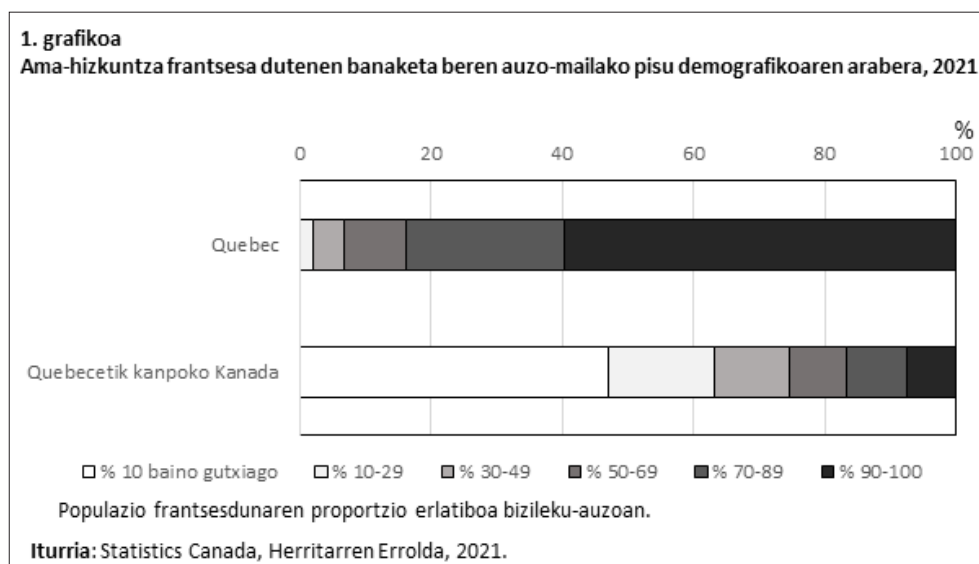
Quebecetik kanpo, ama-hiltuntza frantsesa dutenak populazioaren % 10 baino gutxiago dira. Hori gertatzen da Kanadako hiri handienetan, esaterako Toronton, Vancouverren eta Calgaryn. Kanadako hiriburua, Ottawa, desberdina da zentzu horretan, biztanleen % 15,7k baitute frantsesa ama-hiltuntza¹⁰. Frantsesdunen proportzio handiagoa duten beste eskualde batzuen artean daude, adibidez, Greater Sudbury hiria Ontario iparraldean (% 26,0) eta Penintsula Akadiarra New Brunswick probintzian (% 84,5)¹¹.

Ama-hiltuntza frantsesa dutenen banaketak eskualde-mailan erakusten dituen desberdintasunak auzo¹²-mailan ere islatzen dira. Quebecen, ama-hiltuntza frantsesa duten % 93,4 auzo frantsesdunetan bizi dira, hau da, frantsesdunek populazioaren erdia baino gehiago osatzen duten auzoetan. 5etik 3 inguru, gainera, frantsesdunak % 90etik gora diren auzoetan bizi dira. Quebecar frantsesdunen % 0,1 baino gutxiago bizi dira frantsesdunek tokiko populazioaren % 10 baino gutxiago osatzen duten auzoetan.

10. 100 biztanletik gorako Ottawako auzoetan, proportzio hori % 3,0 eta % 56,0 artekoa da.

11. Proportzio hori Gloucester errolda-barrutiari dagokio, zeinak Penintsula Akadiarraren zatirik handiena hartzen duen.

12. Erroldako auzo-barrutiak dira, alegia, elkarren ondoan dauden etxadien multzoak, batez beste 400 eta 700 biztanle artean dituztenak.



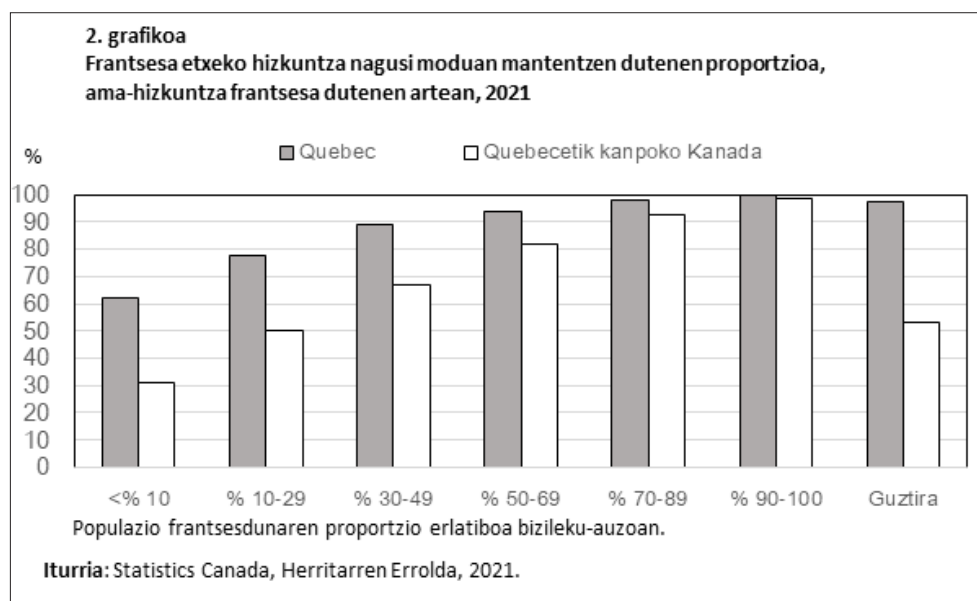
Aitzitik, Quebecetik kanpo, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen ia erdiak (% 47,0) bizi dira frantsesdunen proportzio erlatiboa % 10 baino txikiagoa den auzoetan, eta laurdena inguru (% 25,4), berriz, populazioaren erdia baino gehiago osatzen duten auzoetan. Quebecetik kanpo bizi diren frantsesdunen % 7,7 baino ez dira bizi ama-hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen proportzioa populazioaren % 90 baino handiagoa den auzoetan.

Frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza nagusi gisa mantentzeko edo hartzeko joera

Etxeko hizkuntza nagusi gisa frantsesa erabiltzen jarraitzen duten frantsesdunek aukera handiagoak dituzte hizkuntza hurrengo belaunaldiei pasatzeko. Orain arteko ikerketek erakutsi dute erlazio bat dagoela gutxiengo-egoeran dauden frantses-hiztunen kontzentrazio espazialaren eta etxean hizkuntza mantentzeko probabilitatearen artean (Sabourin & Bélanger, 2015). Hainbat arrazoik azaldu dezakete frantsesa haurtzaroan ikasi zuten herritarrek zergatik uzten dioten beren bizitzan zehar etxean nagusiki frantsesa erabiltzeari, eta zergatik hartzen duten beste hizkuntza bat, gehienetan ingelesa. Arrazoi horien artean daude bikotekidearekin beste hizkuntza bat erabili beharra eta hezkuntza-arrazoiak (Pépin-Filion et al., 2024).

Quebecen, frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza nagusi gisa mantentzeko joera oso zabalduta da: 2021ean, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa zutenen % 97,6k frantsesa erabiltzen zuten nagusiki etxean¹³. Aitzitik, Quebecetik kanpoko Kanadan, frantsesdunen erdiek baino gehixeagok (% 53,3) soilik erabiltzen zuten oraindik nagusiki frantsesa etxean; % 14,0k, berriz, etxean frantsesa erabiltzen jarraitzen zuten batzuetan, baina nagusiki beste hizkuntza bat erabiltzen zuten (gehienek ingelesa), eta % 32,7k ez zuten gehiago frantsesik erabiltzen etxean.

Quebeceko eta Quebecetik kanpoko egoeren arteko desberdintasunak ñabardura gehiago erakusten ditu ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten herritarren proportzio erlatiboa auzo-mailan aztertzean. Frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza nagusitzat mantentzen dutenak gehiago dira frantsesdunen kontzentrazioa handiagoa den auzoetan. Zehatzago esanda, etxean frantsesa mantentzen dutenen proportzioa % 90etik gorakoa da bai Quebecen eta bai Quebecetik kanpo frantsesdunen proportzio erlatiboa % 70etik gorakoa den auzoetan. Frantses-hiztunen kontzentrazioa apalagoa den auzoetan, frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza nagusi moduan mantentzen dutenen kopurua handiagoa da Quebecen Quebecetik kanpo baino. Adibidez, frantsesdunek populazioaren % 10 baino gutxiago osatzen duten eremuetan, quebectar frantsesdunen % 62k frantsesa hitz egiten dute oraindik nagusiki etxean: proportzio hori Quebecetik kanpoko frantsesdunen artean zenbatutako kopuruaren (% 30,9) bikoitza da.

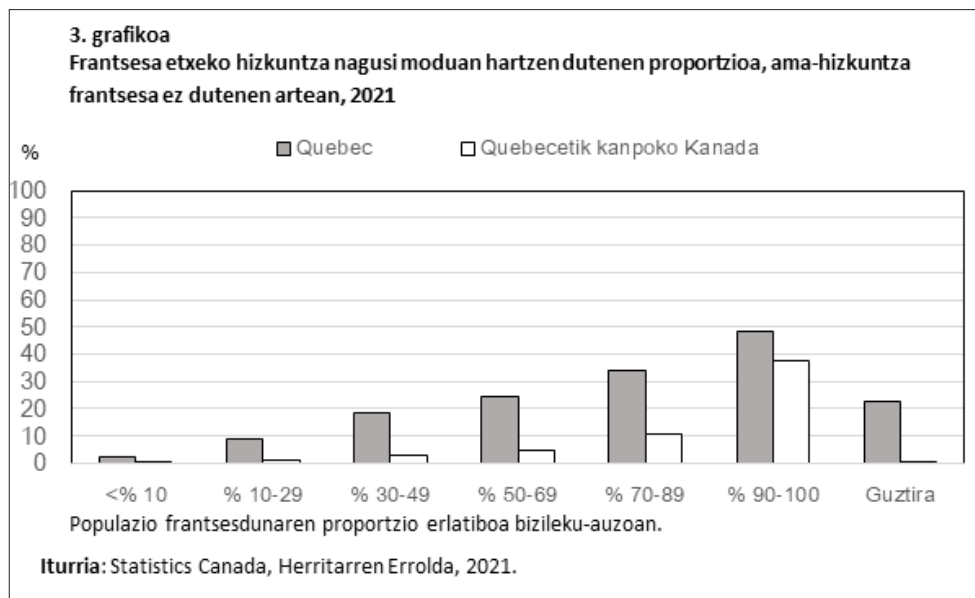


13. Etxean frantsesa hitz egiten zuten nagusiki, edo beste hizkuntza bat bezain maiz.

Hautzaroan frantsesa ikasi ez arren etxeko hizkuntza nagusitzat frantsesa hartzen dutenen kopuruak hizkuntzaren erakargarritasuna neurtzeko balio du. Etxeko hizkuntzatzat frantsesa hartzen duten etorkinen artean, gehiago dira frantsesa Kanadan bizitzen jarri aurretik erabiltzen zutenak edota herrialdera iritsi eta lehenengo urteetan bereganatu zutenak (Corbeil & Houle, 2014). Gainera, frantsesez hitz egiten den herrialdeetatik iritsitako etorkinek edota umetan etorri zirenek probabilitate nabarmen handiagoa dute etxeko hizkuntzatzat frantsesa hartzeko (Sabourin & Bélanger, 2015).

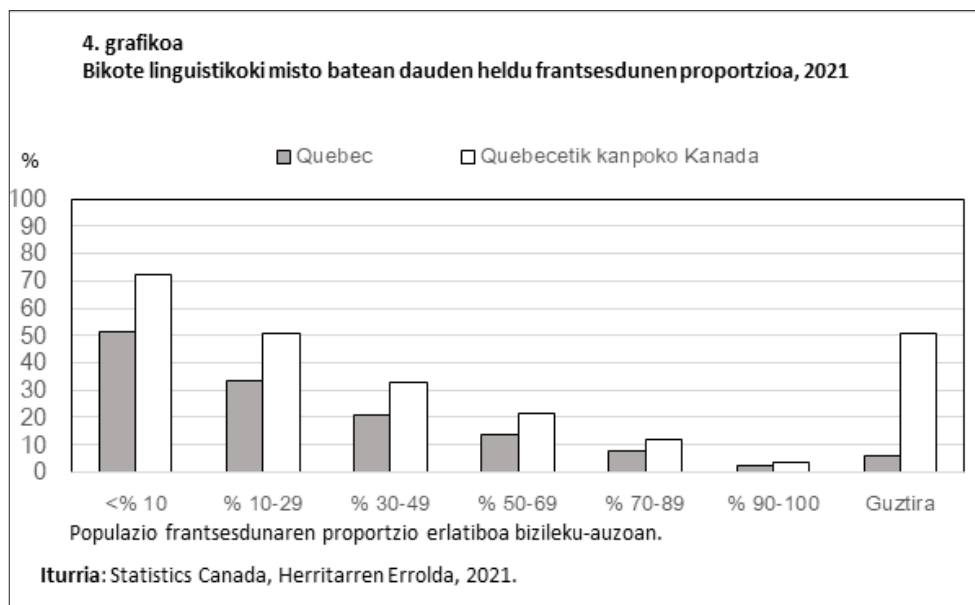
2021ean, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa ez zuten quebecarren % 22,8k frantsesa erabiltzen zuten nagusiki etxean; Quebecetik kanpo, berriz, proportzio hori % 0,2koa zen soilik.

Ama-hizkuntza frantsesa izan ez arren etxeko hizkuntza nagusitzat frantsesa hartu zutenen proportzioa desberdina zen populazio frantsesdunaren auzo-mailako proportzio erlatiboaren arabera. Proportzio hori gutxienez hiru aldiz handiagoa zen Quebecen, Quebecetik kanpo baino, salbu eta frantsesdunek populazioaren % 90 edo gehiago osatzen zuten eskualdeetan. Eskualde horietan, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa izan ez arren etxeko hizkuntza nagusitzat frantsesa hartu zutenen proportzioa handiagoa zen Quebecen (% 48,4) Quebecetik kanpo baino (% 37,8), baina desberdintasuna txikiagoa zen beste auzo batzuekin alderatuta.



Bikote linguistikoki mistoak

Bikote linguistikoki mistoetan, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duen heldu batek ama-hizkuntza frantsesa ez duen bikotekide bat du. Gorago aipatu bezala, bikote linguistikoki misto bat osatzea da frantsesdunek etxean nagusiki frantsesa erabiltzeari uzteko faktore nagusietako bat, baita kasu askotan frantsesak etxeko hizkuntza izateari utzi bazion ere bikote linguistikoki mistoa osatu baino lehen (Corbeil, 2005). Hizkuntza maioritarioaren ezagutzak eta demografia linguistiko lokalak eragin nabarmena dute bikote linguistikoki misto bat osatzeko probabilitatean, talde linguistikoen arteko harremanen maiztasunarekin lotuta baitaude (Bernard, 1995). Unibertsitate, institutu eta antzeko erakunde ingelesdunetan ikasten dutenek ere probabilitate handiagoa dute bikote linguistikoki misto bat osatzeko ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten gazteen artean (Lemyre, 2025).

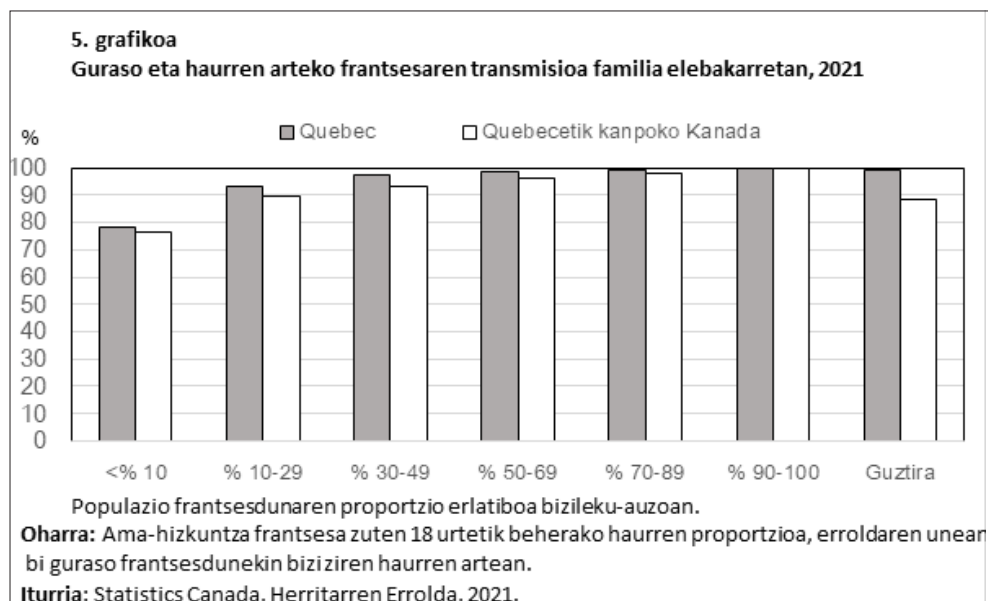


Quebecen, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten eta bikote linguistikoki misto bat osatu duten helduen kopurua apala da (% 5,7); Quebecetik kanpo, berriz, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten helduen erdiek baino gehiagok osatu dute bikote linguistikoki misto bat (% 51,0). Espero izatekoa den bezala, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten helduek probabilitate handiagoa dute bikote linguistikoki mistoak eratzeko frantsesdunen proportzio erlatiboa apalagoa den auzoetan, eta heldu frantsesdunen artean oso gutxi osatzen dituzte bikote linguistikoki mistoak ama-

hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen proportzioa populazioaren % 90 edo handiagoa den auzoetan (% 2,4 Quebecen eta % 3,5 Quebecetik kanpo). Hala ere, frantsesdunen maila lokaleko kontzentrazioa edozein izanik ere, bikote linguistikoki mistoak maizago osatzen dira Quebecetik kanpo Quebecen baino.

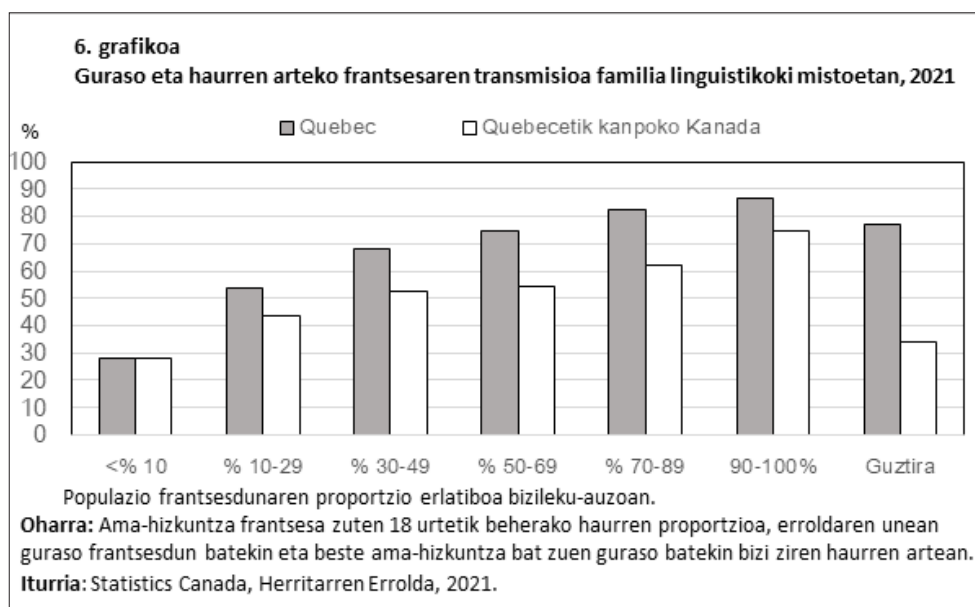
Guraso eta haurren arteko frantsesaren transmisioa

Guraso eta haurren arteko frantsesaren transmisioa neurtzeko, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa zuten 18 urtetik beherako haurren proportzioa kalkulatu zen erroldaren unean bi guraso frantsesdunekin bizi ziren haurren artean. Familia elebakarretako haurrek bi guraso frantsesdun dituzte, eta bikote linguistikoki mistoetako haurrek, berriz, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duen guraso bat dute batetik eta beste ama-hizkuntza bat duen guraso bat bestetik. Frantsesaren transmisioa handiagoa izan ohi da familia elebakarretan; familia linguistikoki mistoetan, berriz, egoera konplexuagoa da. Horrelako kasuetan, amaren hizkuntza izaten da gehienetan haurrek ikasten duten lehen hizkuntza (eta ez aitarena), eta frantsesaren transmisio-tasa aldatu egiten da gurasoen jatorrizko herrialdearen arabera eta bizilekuko demografia linguistikoaren arabera (Bouchard-Coulombe, 2011; Vézina & Houle, 2014).



Familia elebakar frantsesdunetan hazitako haurren gehiengo handi batek frantsesa du ama-hizkuntza, bai Quebecen (% 99,4), bai Quebecetik kanpo (% 88,4). Transmisio-tasa % 90 ingurukoa edo handiagoa izan ohi da frantsesdunek populazioaren % 10 edo gehiago osatzen duten auzoetan. Atalase horretatik behera, guraso eta haurren arteko frantsesaren transmisioa koska bat apalagoa da, bai Quebecen (% 78,0), bai Quebecetik kanpo (% 76,4).

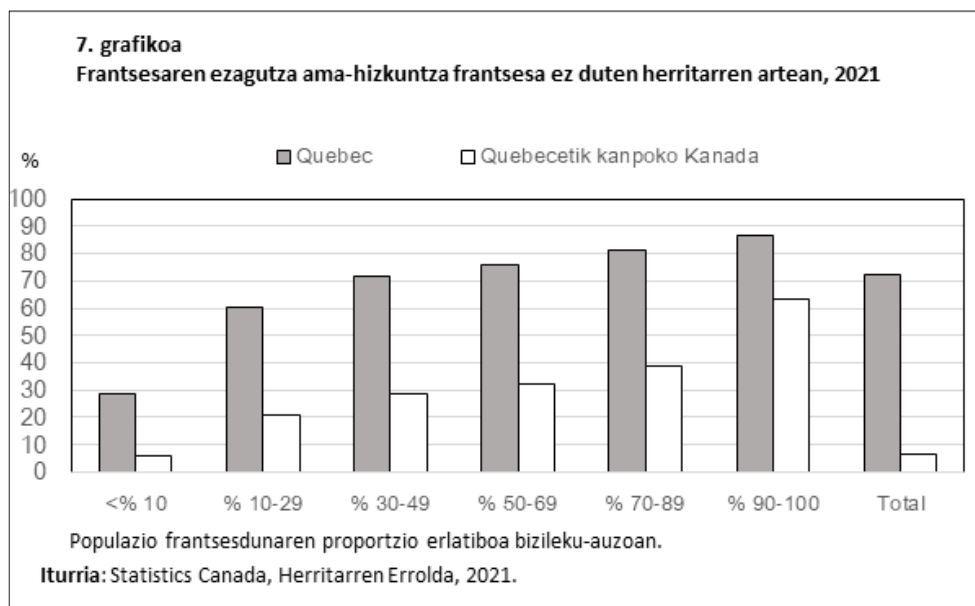
Familia linguistikoki mistoetan, guraso eta haurren arteko frantsesaren transmisioa bi aldiz baino handiagoa da Quebecen (% 77,2) Quebecetik kanpo baino (% 34,3). Quebecen, familia linguistikoki mistoetako haurren erdiek baino gehiagok frantsesa dute ama-hizkuntza frantsesdunek populazioaren % 10 edo gehiago osatzen duten auzoetan; Quebecetik kanpo, berriz, frantsesdunek populazioaren % 30 edo gehiago osatzen duten auzoetan lortzen da atalase hori. Familia linguistikoki mistoetan, frantsesaren transmisioa sistematikoki handiagoa da Quebecen Quebecetik kanpo baino, salbu eta frantsesdunen proportzioa % 10etik beherakoa den auzoetan. Auzo horietan, frantsesaren transmisio-tasak berdinak dira Quebecen eta Quebecetik kanpo (% 27,9).



Frantsesaren ezagutza bigarren hizkuntza moduan

Haurtzaroan lehen hizkuntza gisa frantsesa ez beste hizkuntza bat ikasi duten herritar askok bizitzan beranduago ikasten dute frantsesa, adibidez eskolan. Hain zuzen ere, lehen edo bigarren hezkuntzan frantsesezko programetan parte hartzen dutenek askoz probabilitate handiagoa dute Kanadan frantsesa bigarren hizkuntza¹⁴ moduan bereganatzeko (Allen, 2008; Pépin-Filion & Lemyre, 2024). Frantses hitzunik maila lokalean duten presentzia ere faktore erabakigarria da Quebecetik kanpo frantsesaren ezagutza bereganatzeko probabilitatean (Turcotte, 2019).

Ama-hizkuntza frantsesa ez zuten quebecarren¹⁵ ia hiru laurdenek (% 72,1) bazekiten frantsesez 2021ean. Aitzitik, Quebecetik kanpo, kanadarren % 6,5 ziren gai frantsesez elkarrizketa bat izateko. Quebecarren proportzio handiago horrek frantsesak probintzia horretan duen gehiengo-estatusa islatzen du.



14. Testuinguru honetan, modu orokor honetan definitzen da bigarren hizkuntza: pertsona batek elkarrizketa bat izateko bezain ondo dakien edozein hizkuntza, baldin eta ez bada haurtzaroan lehenengo ikasi zuen eta erroldaren unean oraindik ulertzen duen hizkuntza.

15. Ama-hizkuntza gisa ingelesa edo Kanadan ofiziala ez den hizkuntza bat (bakarrik edo frantsesa ez den beste hizkuntza batekin batera) hitz egiten duten quebecarrak.

Oro har, jende gehiagok ikasten du frantsesa bigarren hizkuntza gisa ama-hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen proportzio erlatiboa handiagoa den auzoetan, nahiz eta desberdintasun handiak dauden Quebecen eta Kanadako gainerako eremuen artean. Quebecen, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa ez duten baina frantsesez badakiten herriarren proportzioa % 60tik gorakoa da frantsesdunek populazioaren % 10 edo gehiagoosatzen duten auzoetan. Quebecetik kanpo, frantsesdunek populazioaren % 90 edo gehiagoosatzen duten auzoetan baino ez du lortzen frantsesaren ezagutzak proportzio hori (% 60). Frantsesdunek populazioaren % 50 eta % 89 arteanosatzen duten auzoetan, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa ez duten hiztunen % 40 baino gutxiago dira elkarriketa bat frantsesez izateko gai Quebecetik kanpo.

Ondorioak

Kanadan, 2021eko erroldako datuek erakusten dute auzo-mailan frantsesdunen kontzentrazio handiagoa dagoen lekuetan joera handiagoa dagoela frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza nagusitzat mantentzeko edo hartzeko, joera gutxiago dagoela bikote linguistikoki mistoak sortzeko eta aukera gehiago daudela gurasoek haurrei frantsesa transmititzeko eta frantsesa bigarren hizkuntza moduan ikasteko. Kanada oro har hartuta, frantsesa gutxiengo-egoeran dago, baina Quebecen duen gehiengo-estatusa eta Quebecetik kanpo duen gutxiengo-estatusa argi islatzen dituzte adierazleek, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen proportzio erlatiboa auzo-mailan edozein delarik ere¹⁶.

Auzo-mailan pisu demografiko berdina izanik, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten quebecarrek probabilitate handiagoa dute Quebecetik kanpo bizi diren frantsesdunek baino frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza nagusi moduan mantentzeko, probabilitate txikiagoa dute bikote linguistikoki mistoak osatzeko, eta familia elebakarrek eta linguistikoki mistoek probabilitate handiagoa dute frantsesa beren haurrei transmititzeko. Gainera, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa ez duten hiztunek probabilitate handiagoa dute Quebecen Quebecetik kanpo baino frantsesa ikasteko edo frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza nagusitzat hartzeko.

Nahiz eta badagoen lotura bat hiztun-dentsitate lokalaren eta adierazle demolinguistikoen artean, ezin dugu erlazio kausal bat ondorioztatu. Auzoen osaera lingistikoaren ondoan, norbanako- eta komunitate-mailako beste hainbat faktore ere egon litezke jokoan. Adibidez, frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza nagusitzat hartzeko joera duen jendeak joera handiagoa izan dezake frantses hiztun

16. Salbuespena da guraso eta haurren arteko frantsesaren transmisioa frantsesdunek populazioaren % 10 baino gutxiagoosatzen duten auzoetan bizi diren familia linguistikoki mistoetan: kopuru horiek berdinak dira Quebecen eta Quebecetik kanpo.

gehiagoko auzoetara bizitzera joateko, eta horrek indartu egingo lituzke ikusten ari garen patroiak. Gainera, maila lokaleko hiztun-proportzio erlatiboa ez da hizkuntza baten bizitasunean eragina duen faktore bakarra. Dinamika lokalek frantsesezko erakundeetan parte hartzera bultzakete jendea, baita frantses-hiztunen kontzentrazio erlatiboa apala den eremuetan ere (Gilbert & Langlois, 2006).

Kanadako erroldako beste hizkuntza-kontzeptu batzuk ere azter litezke frantses-hiztunek auzo-mailan duten dentsitatearen arabera: esaterako, azter liteke zenbatekoa den frantsesaren erabilera lanean edo zenbatek egiten duten lehen eta bigarren hezkuntza frantsesez Quebecetik kanpoko Kanadan. Analisi-ikuspegi hori bera aplika lekiok, era berean, Gutxiengo Egoeran dagoen Hizkuntza Ofiziala hitz egiten duen Populazioaren 2022ko Inkestari, zeinak informazioa ematen baitu Quebecetik kanpo eremu pribatuan eta publikoan egiten den frantsesaren erabilerari dagozkion hainbat gairen inguruan, esaterako gobernuko zerbitzuen, osasun-arretaren, justiziaren, kulturaren edo komunitate-jardueren testuinguruan.

Gainera, Kanadako erroldak aukera emango luke aztertzeko zer erlazio duen hiztun-dentsitateak herrialdean hitz egiten diren baina maila federalean ofizialtasunik ez duten beste hizkuntza batzuen egoerarekin, bereziki indigenen hizkuntzen eta etorkinen komunitateek hitz egiten dituzten hizkuntzen egoerarekin.

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4. The French language in Canada: speaker density and language use, transmission and knowledge

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Abstract: French is an official language of Canada along with English, however, people whose mother tongue is French (alone or together with another language) represent a minority of the population nationwide (20.9%) and in all provinces and territories, except Quebec (77.8%). At the local level, most French-mother-tongue Quebecers reside in neighbourhoods where they represent over half of the population (93.4%), whereas this is the case for only one quarter of French-mother-tongue people in the rest of the country (25.4%). Higher proportions of native French speakers at the neighbourhood level are associated with a greater likelihood French-mother-tongue people retain the use of French as their main home language, a lower likelihood that French-mother-tongue adults form a mixed-language couple, and higher rates of transmission of French from parents to children in both monolingual and mixed-language families. Among people whose mother tongue is not French, those residing in neighbourhoods with a high proportion of people whose mother tongue is French were more likely to adopt the use of French as their main home language or to acquire knowledge of French as a second language. While these associations are seen both in Quebec and outside Quebec, the majority status of the French language in Quebec and its minority status elsewhere in Canada is reflected in the results, regardless of local-level concentration of French speakers at the neighbourhood level.

Keywords: French, Canada, Quebec, speaker density, mother tongue, home language, language transmission, language knowledge.

Introduction

Hundreds of languages are spoken in Canada, including more than seventy languages that are Indigenous to the country. Nevertheless, knowledge and use of French and English largely predominate in Canada, with both languages having official status at the federal level since 1969. While the official languages of Canada are spoken in communities across the country, French speakers represent

1. The views expressed in this text are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Statistics Canada.

a majority of residents only in the province of Quebec, while the language is in a minority situation in the other provinces and in the territories, as well as in Canada as a whole.

In Canada outside Quebec, several studies have shown a relationship between the relative proportion of French speakers at a local level and use of the language (Marmen, 2005; Castonguay, 2005; Corbeil *et al.*, 2007), but whether that relationship exists to the same extent in Quebec warrants more investigation. Assuming equal demographic weight at the local level, are selected demolinguistic indicators of French use, transmission and knowledge similar in Quebec and outside Quebec?

This chapter briefly covers language concepts from the Canadian census and presents the evolution between 1991 and 2021 in the number and proportion of Quebecers and other Canadians whose mother tongue is French or who have knowledge of French. Selected indicators are then shown according to the concentration of the French-mother-tongue population at the local level; the retention or adoption of French as a main home language, occurrence of mixed-language couples, parents-to-children transmission of French and knowledge of French as a second language. In conclusion, similarities and dissimilarities between Quebec and the rest of Canada are discussed.

Language concepts in the Canadian census

Conducted every five years, the Census of Population is administered to all households in Canada. The Canadian census ranks among those with the most language questions in the world (Christopher, 2010), which allow to examine a wealth of different concepts over a long span of time.

Mother tongue refers to the language first learned at home in childhood that is still understood at the time of census. If a person no longer understands the first language learned, they must indicate the second language they learned². People may report two languages or more as their mother tongues if those languages were learned at the same time at home before the person started school.

In the census, Canadians also report their *home language*. People who speak more than one language at home on a regular basis must report which one is spoken most often. This information allows to determine the main home language

2. As the mother tongue reported in the census must still be understood by Canadians, this implies people may «forget» the first language they learned in childhood. This phenomenon is relatively rare and happens among people who seldom use the first language they learned in childhood. It's more frequent in minority French-speaking communities and among second generation immigrants (see Lepage, 2011).

of Canadians (the language spoken most often at home) and their secondary home languages (spoken on a regular basis, but not most often). People may speak two languages most often at home if they are spoken equally often.

The census also collects information on the *knowledge of languages*. A person reports having knowledge of a language if they know the language well enough to conduct a conversation of some length on various topics.

In addition to the other concepts described above, the Canadian census also collects information on primary secondary instruction in the minority official language (English in Quebec, French in Canada outside Quebec) and language use at work³.

The French language in Canada: recent trends

The number of Canadian who have knowledge of French continues to grow from census to census; it rose from 8.5 million in 1991 to 10.7 million in 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2023a). However, as the population who did not know French grew faster, the relative proportion of French speakers in Canada slightly declined, from 31.5% in 1991 to 29.1% in 2021.

In Quebec, most people could conduct a conversation in French in 2021 (93.7%), a proportion virtually unchanged compared to 1991 (93.6%). The proportion of Quebecers who can speak only French⁴, but not English, is declining (from 58.1% in 1991 to 47.3 % in 2021), while the proportion of people who can speak both French and English is on the rise (from 35.4% in 1991 to 46.4% in 2021). This is in large part due to French-mother-tongue people acquiring knowledge of English (Lemyre, 2023). Outside Quebec in 2021, 88.0% of Canadians could conduct a conversation in English, but could not speak French. In contrast, 9.9% had knowledge of both French and English, slightly down 1991 (10.6%). Very few Canadians outside Quebec knew French only and could not converse in English (0.7% in 1991 and 0.4% in 2021).

While the number of Canadians whose mother tongue is French⁵ also grew, from 6.6 million in 1991 to 7.7 million in 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2023b), their

3. Information on language use at work is collected through a detailed census questionnaire administered to 25% of households.

4. They may also have the capacity to conduct a conversation in a language other than French or English.

5. Includes persons whose sole mother is French or who have French and another language as their mother tongue. For more information on multiple mother tongues in the Canadian census and their interpretation, see Lepage, 2020.

relative proportion fell more markedly (from 24.5% in 1991 to 20.9% in 2021). Such a decrease in the relative proportion of the French-mother-tongue population was observed in Quebec (from 82.5% in 1991 to 77.8% in 2021) and in Canada outside Quebec (from 5.0% in 1991 to 3.9% in 2021). Several factors are at play to explain these decreases, such as the more pronounced aging of the French-mother-population compared to the overall population, a historical underrepresentation of people whose mother tongue is French in international migration, and outside Quebec, the incomplete transmission of French from parents to children (Houle and Corbeil, 2017).

The local-level distribution of the French-mother-tongue population

The distribution of the French-mother-tongue population is neither uniform in Quebec nor in Canada outside Quebec. In fact, both Quebec and the rest of Canada have regions⁶ with either lower or higher concentrations of French speakers.

In several Quebec regions, the French-mother-tongue population represents at least 90% of the population. This proportion is somewhat lower in parts of the Montréal area (Quebec's largest city), in border regions⁷ and in Northern Quebec. For example, on the island of Montréal, which include the core part of the metropolitan area, just under half of people (49.3%) have French as their mother tongue, with important differences across neighbourhoods⁸.

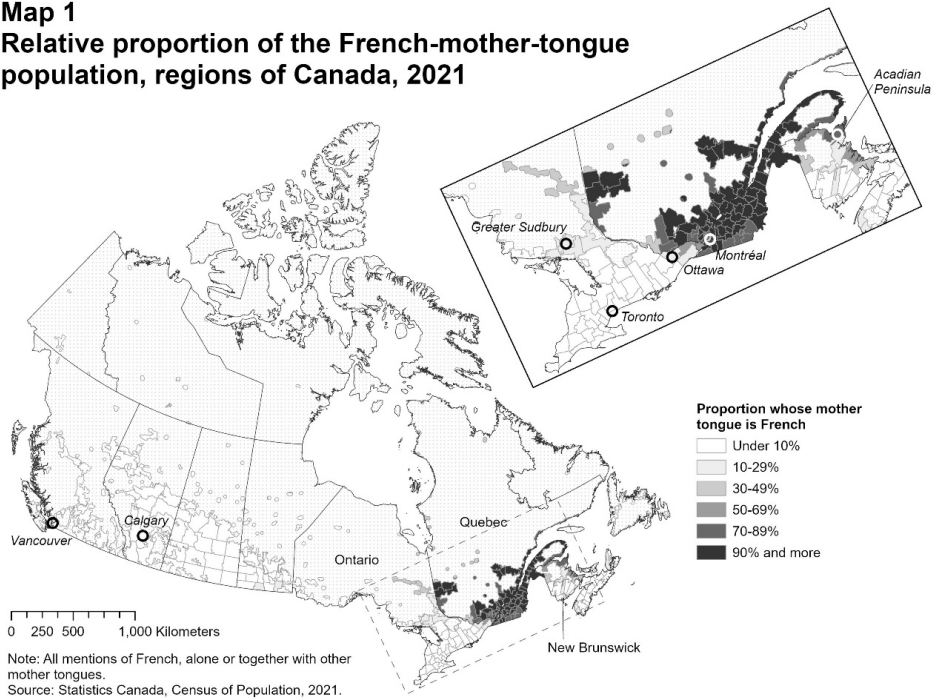
6. Refers to census divisions, which are groupings of neighbouring municipalities that are akin to counties in some jurisdictions.

7. For example, Pontiac (41.1%) along the Ontario border.

8. The proportion represented by French-mother-tongue people on the Island of Montréal ranged from 6.2% to 95.9% in neighbourhoods with at least 100 residents.

Map 1

Relative proportion of the French-mother-tongue population, regions of Canada, 2021



In most regions outside Quebec, the French-mother-tongue population represents less than 10% of the population, including in some of Canada's largest cities like Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary. The capital of Canada, Ottawa, differs in that respect, as 15.7% of its inhabitants have French as their mother tongue⁹. Other regions with a high relative proportion of native French speakers include for example the city of Greater Sudbury (26.0%) in Northern Ontario and the Acadian Peninsula¹⁰ in New Brunswick (84.5%).

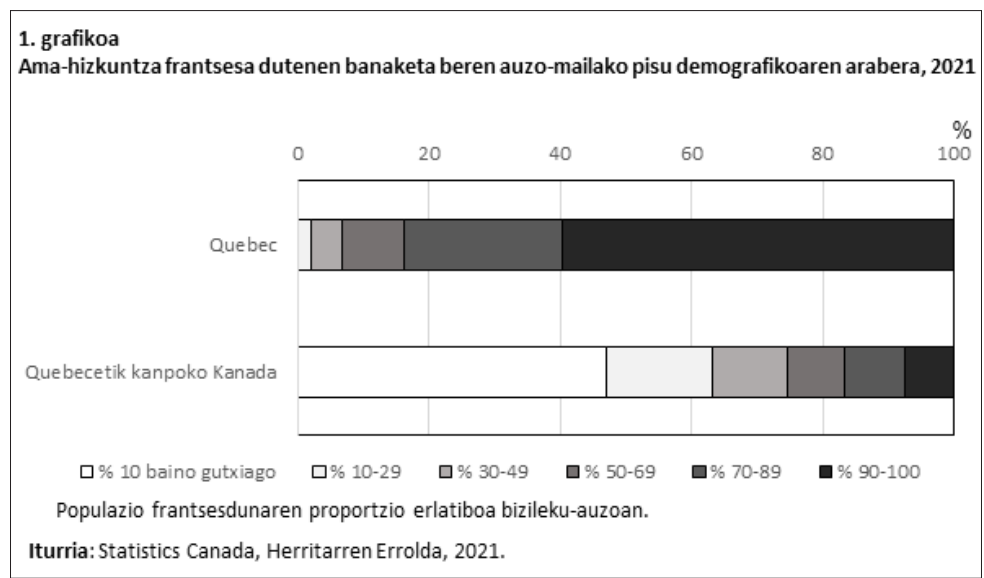
Differences in the distribution of native French speakers at the regional level are reflected at the neighbourhood¹¹ level. In Quebec, 93.4% of French-mother-tongue people reside in neighbourhoods where they form more than half of the population. In particular, close to 3 in 5 reside in neighbourhoods where the relative proportion of French-mother-tongue people is 90% or more. Fewer than

9. In Ottawa's neighbourhoods with at least 100 residents, this proportion ranged from 3.0% to 56.0%.

10. This proportion is for the census division of Gloucester, which encompasses most of the Acadian Peninsula.

11. Refers to census dissemination areas, which are groupings of adjacent street blocks with an average population of 400 to 700 persons.

0.1% of French-mother-tongue Quebecers reside in neighbourhoods where their relative proportion is less than 10% of the local population.



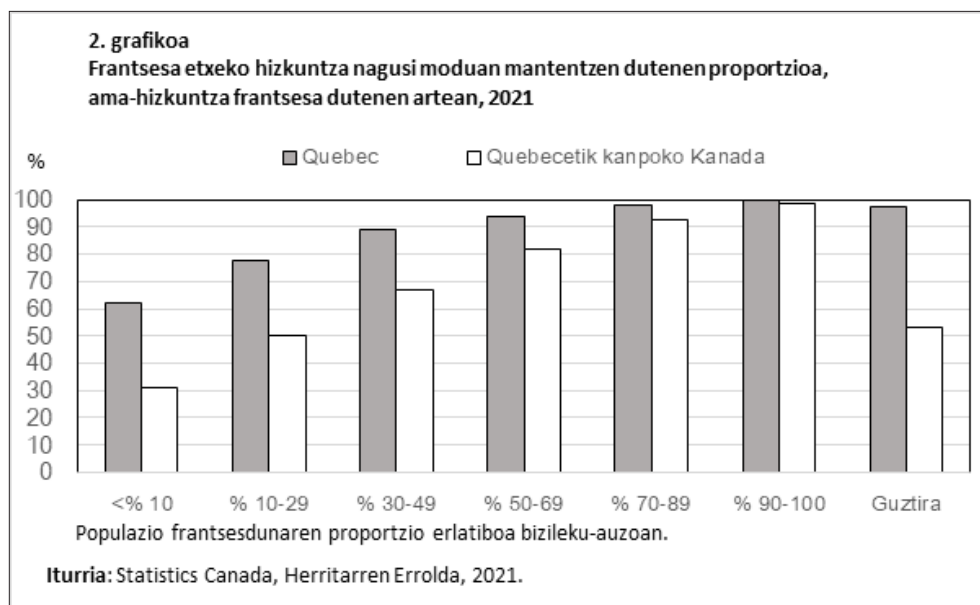
In contrast, outside Quebec, close to half of people whose mother is French (47.0%) reside in neighbourhoods where their relative proportion is under 10%, and about a quarter (25.4%) reside in neighbourhoods where they form over half of the local population. Just 7.7% of French-mother-tongue people outside Quebec live in neighbourhoods in which the relative proportion of the French-mother-tongue population is 90% or more.

Retention and adoption of French as a main home language

The continued use of French as a main home language by native speakers is associated with an increased likelihood that the language will be passed on to the next generation. Previous studies have shown a relation between spatial concentration of French speakers in a minority situation and the likelihood of home language retention (Sabourin and Bélanger, 2015). Several reasons may explain why people who learned French in childhood may stop to speak French most often at home over the course of their life and adopt the use of another language, that is English in most instances. These reasons include speaking with a spouse or partner in the context of a mixed-language couple, or for education reasons (Pépin-Filion *et al.*, 2024).

In Quebec, the retention of French as a main home language is widespread, with 97.6% of French-mother-tongue people speaking the language most often at home¹² in 2021. In contrast, in Canada outside Quebec, just over half (53.3%) of French-mother-tongue people still spoke French most often at home in 2021; 14.0% still spoke French at home on a regular basis, with another language spoken most often (English in most cases), and 32.7% no longer spoke French at home.

The contrast between the situation in Quebec and outside Quebec is more nuanced when accounting for the relative proportion of the French-mother-tongue population at the neighbourhood level. The retention rate of French as a main home language is higher in neighbourhoods where the French-mother-tongue population is more concentrated. In fact, the retention rate of French is above 90% both in Quebec and outside Quebec in neighbourhoods where the relative proportion of native French speakers is at least 70%. In neighbourhoods where the concentration of French speakers is lower, the retention rates of French as a main home language are markedly higher in Quebec compared to outside Quebec. For example, in areas where native French speakers represent under 10% of the population, 62% of French-mother-tongue Quebecers still spoke French most often at home, more than double the proportion observed among native speakers outside Quebec (30.9%).

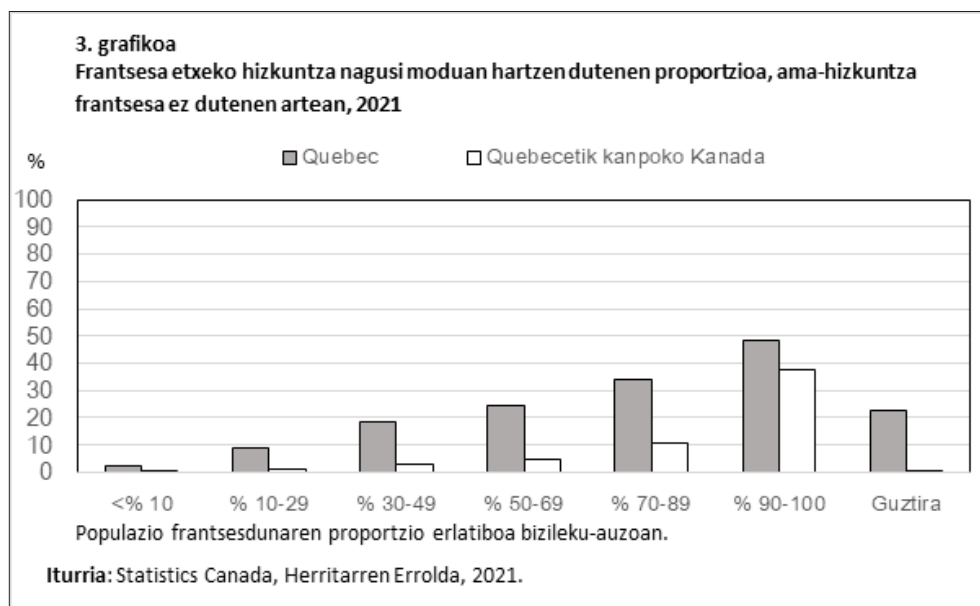


12. As the sole language spoken most often at home or equally often with another language.

The adoption of French as a main home language by those who did not learn the language in childhood is a measure of the language's attractiveness. Immigrants who adopt the use of French as their home language are more likely to have done so prior to settling in Canada, or in the first years that followed their arrival in the country (Corbeil and Houle, 2014). Moreover, immigrants from French-speaking countries or who arrived as children are significantly more likely to adopt the use of French at home (Sabourin and Bélanger, 2015).

In 2021, 22.8% of Quebecers who did not have French as their mother tongue spoke French most often at home, while this proportion was just 0.2% outside Quebec.

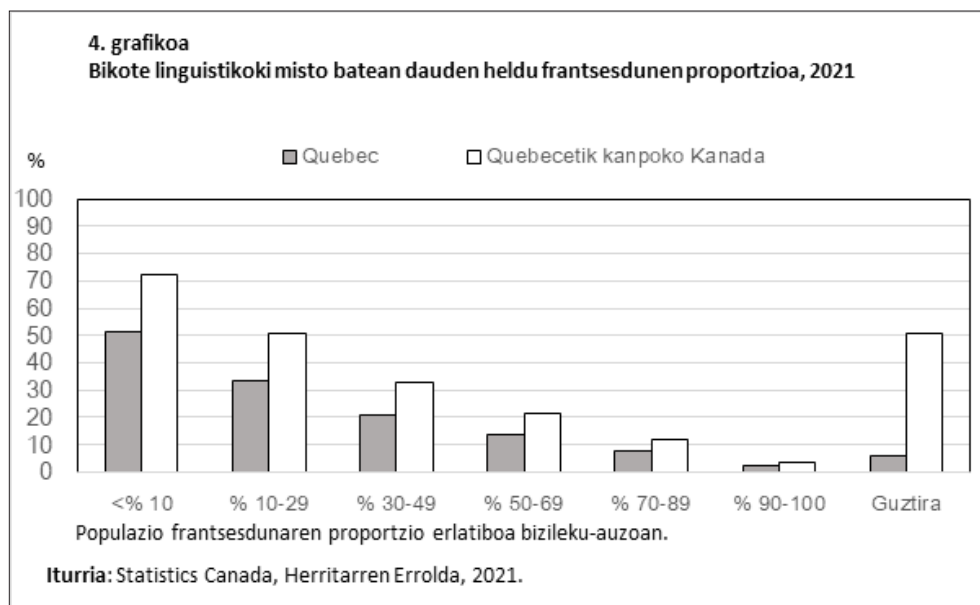
The proportion of non-native speakers who adopted the use of French as their main home language varied according to the neighbourhood-level relative proportion of the French-mother-tongue population. It was at least three times higher in Quebec compared to outside Quebec, except in regions where native French speakers represented 90% or more of the population. In those regions, the proportion of people whose mother tongue is not French that adopted the use of French as their main home language was higher in Quebec (48.4%) compared to outside Quebec (37.8%), but with a smaller difference compared to other neighbourhoods.



Mixed-language couples

French-mother-tongue adults in a mixed language couple have a spouse or partner whose mother tongue is not French. As previously mentioned, forming a mixed-language couple is a key factor associated with native French speakers no longer speaking French most often at home, even if in many instances French stopped being spoken at home before the formation of the mixed-language couple (Corbeil, 2005). Knowledge of the majority language and local language demographics influence the likelihood of forming a mixed-language couple, as they are related to the frequency of contacts between language groups (Bernard, 1995). Attending English-language institutions like colleges and universities is also associated with a higher likelihood to form a mixed-language couple among French-mother-tongue young adults (Lemyre, 2025).

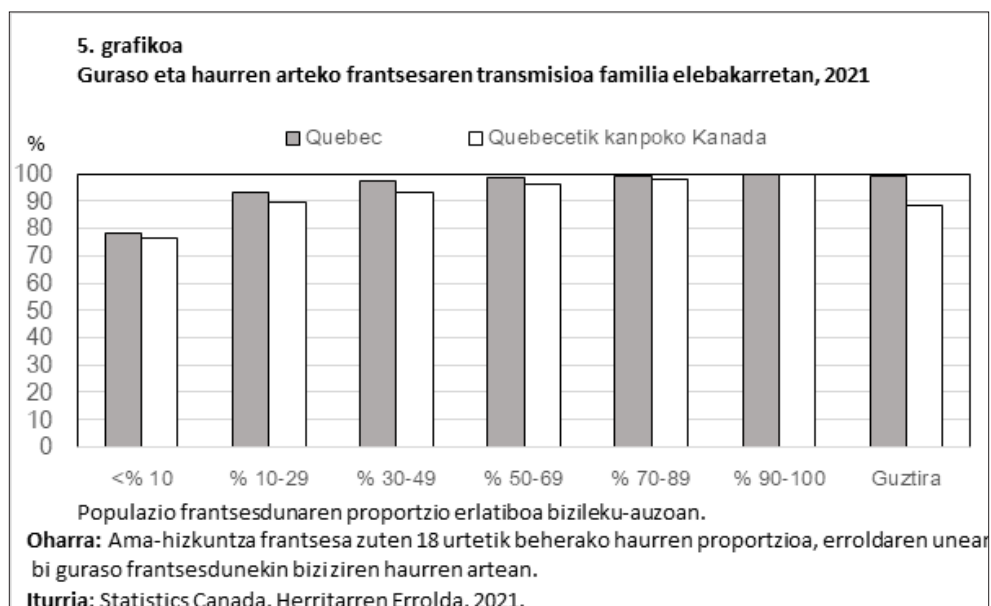
In Quebec, few adults whose mother tongue is French are in a mixed-language couple (5.7%), while it's the case for over half of French-mother-tongue adults outside Quebec (51.0%). As expected, French-mother-tongue adults are more likely to be in a mixed-language couple in neighbourhoods where their relative proportion is lower, and very few French-mother-tongue adults are in a mixed-language couple in neighbourhoods where native French speakers represent 90% or more of the population (2.4% in Quebec and 3.5% outside Quebec). However, regardless of the local-level concentration of native French speakers, mixed-language couples were more frequent outside Quebec than in Quebec.



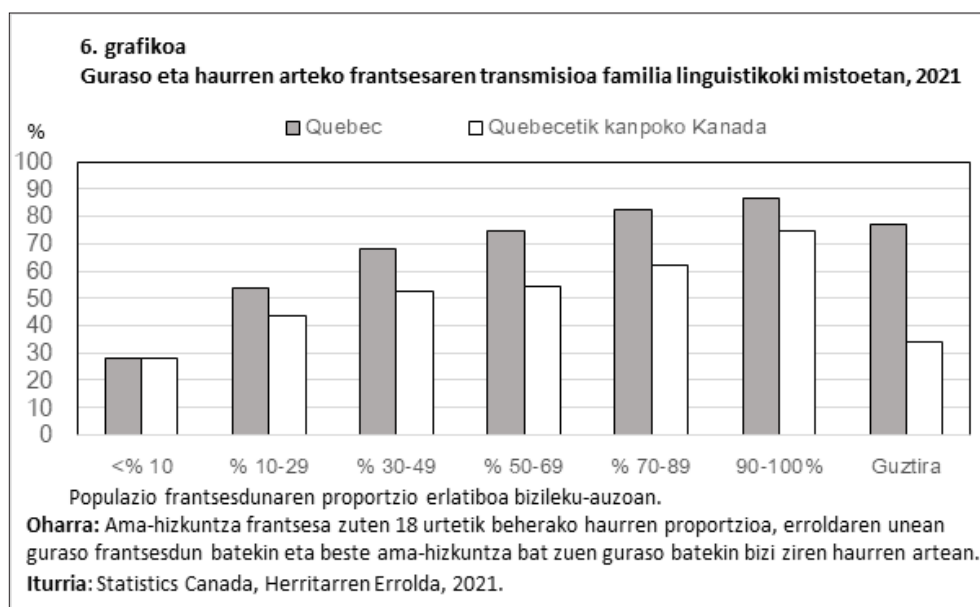
Parents-to-children transmission of French

The transmission of French from parents to children is represented as the proportion of children aged under 18 who have French as their mother tongue among those who lived with both their parents at the time of the 2021 census. Children in monolingual families have two French-mother-tongue parents, and children in mixed-language families have one French-mother-tongue parent and one parent whose mother tongue is a different language. While transmission of French in monolingual families tends to be high, the situation is more complex in mixed-language families. In these settings, the mother's language is more often the first language learned by children compared to the father's language, and the transmission rate of French varies according to the country of origin of parents and language demographics of the place of residence (Bouchard-Coulombe, 2011; Vézina and Houle, 2014).

The vast majority of children who grow up in monolingual French-speaking families end up having French as their mother tongue both in Quebec (99.4%) and outside Quebec (88.4%). Transmission rates are approximately 90% or higher in neighbourhoods where native French speakers represent at least 10% of the population. Under that threshold, transmission of French from parents to children is noticeably lower, both in Quebec (78.0%) and outside Quebec (76.4%).



The transmission rate of French from parents to children in mixed-language families in Quebec (77.2%) is more than double that of the rate observed outside Quebec (34.3%). In Quebec, more than half of children from mixed-language families have French as their mother tongue in neighbourhoods where native speakers represent at least 10% of the population, whereas outside Quebec this threshold is met in neighbourhoods where native French speakers represent 30% or more of the population. Transmission of French is consistently higher in Quebec than outside Quebec in mixed-language families, except in neighbourhoods where the proportion of native French speakers is under 10%. In those neighbourhoods, transmission rates of French are identical in Quebec and outside Quebec (27.9%).



Knowledge of French as a second language

Several people whose first language learned in childhood is not French learn the language later in life, for example in school. In fact, participation in French-language programs in primary or secondary school is a key factor in acquiring French as a second language¹³ in Canada (Allen, 2008; Pépin-Filion and Lemyre,

13. In this context, second language refers broadly to any language in which a person can conduct a conversation, but that was not the first language learned in childhood that is still understood at the time of census.

2024). The presence of French speakers at the local level is also associated with a higher likelihood to acquire knowledge of French outside Quebec (Turcotte, 2019).

Close to three quarters (72.1%) of Quebecers whose mother tongue is not French¹⁴ had knowledge of the language in 2021. In comparison, outside Quebec, 6.5% of Canadians could conduct a conversation in French. Quebec's higher proportion reflects the majority status of French in the province.

Overall, more people acquire knowledge of French as a second language in neighbourhoods where the relative proportion of native French speakers is higher, with important differences between Quebec and the rest of Canada. In Quebec, the proportion of people whose mother tongue is not French who have knowledge of the language is 60% or higher in neighbourhoods where native French speakers represent at least 10% of the population. Outside Quebec, knowledge of French reaches the same threshold only in neighbourhoods where native French speakers represent 90% or more of the population. In neighbourhoods where native French speakers represent 50 to 89% of the population, less than 40% of people whose mother tongue is not French could conduct a conversation in the language outside Quebec.

Conclusion

In Canada, results from the 2021 Census show that a higher concentration of native French speakers at the neighbourhood level is associated with higher rates of retention or adoption of French as a main home language, a lower occurrence of mixed-language couples, and higher rates of parents-to-children transmission of French and acquisition of French as a second language. While the French language is in a minority situation in Canada overall, its majority status in Quebec and minority status outside Quebec is reflected by indicators, regardless of the relative proportion of the French-mother-tongue population at the neighbourhood level¹⁵.

Assuming equal demographic weight at the neighbourhood level, French-mother-tongue Quebecers are more likely than their peers outside Quebec to retain the use of French as their main home language, are less likely to form a mixed-language couple, and both monolingual and mixed-language families are more likely to pass on French to their children. Furthermore, people whose mother

14. Includes people whose mother tongue is English or a non-official language in Canada, alone or together with another language, except French.

15. Except in the case of transmission of French from parents to children in mixed-language families in neighbourhoods where French speakers represent less than 10% of the population, with rates being identical in Quebec and outside Quebec.

tongue is not French are more likely to learn French or adopt French as their main home language in Quebec compared to outside Quebec.

While there exists an association between local speaker density and demolinguistic indicators, we cannot infer a causal relationship. Several other individual and community-level factors besides the linguistic composition of neighbourhoods might be at play. For example, persons who are prone to adopt the use of French as their home language might be more likely to move to neighbourhoods with more French speakers, hereby reinforcing the patterns we are observing. Moreover, the relative proportion of speakers at a local level is not the sole factor that plays a role in a language's vitality. Local dynamics may foster participation in French-language institutions, even in areas where the relative concentration of French speakers is low (Gilbert and Langlois, 2006).

Other language concepts from the Canadian census could also be examined in relation to French speaker density at the neighbourhood level, such as the use of French at work or participation in French-language primary and secondary instruction in Canada outside Quebec. This analytical lens could also be applied to other results from the 2022 Survey on the official language minority population, which provides information on a variety of topics pertaining to the use of French in the private and public sphere outside Quebec, for example in contexts of access to government services, healthcare, justice, culture or community activities.

Furthermore, the Canadian census would also allow to examine the relation between speaker density and the situation of other languages spoken in the country that do not have official status federally, such as Indigenous languages and languages spoken by immigrant communities.

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