Insights on Canadian Society

Language used at work by graduates of English, French or bilingual postsecondary institutions

by Étienne Lemyre

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by Étienne Lemyre

Overview of the study

Is there a link between the language of instruction of the postsecondary institutions attended by students and the language choices they make in the workplace after their studies? Since the answer to this question may guide certain policies, it is the subject of much debate in Quebec and in minority French communities across the country. Using data from the 2016 Census of Population integrated with the Postsecondary Student Information System, this study examines the relationship between the language of postsecondary studies and the language that graduates use predominantly at work. Specifically, it examines the use of English in the workplace in Quebec and the use of French in the workplace outside Quebec.

- In Quebec, there is a link between the language of instruction of the postsecondary institution attended and the language of work. For example, 23% of graduates whose mother tongue is French used English predominantly at work when their most recent degree was from an English-language institution, compared with 4% when their most recent degree was from a French-language institution.
- The relationship between the language of postsecondary education and the use of English at work is even stronger among graduates with an "other" mother tongue (other than English or French). For example, 46% of these graduates worked primarily in English when their most recent degree was from an English-language institution, compared with 7% when they had studied at a French-language institution.
- The proportion of graduates who worked predominantly in English was higher on Montréal Island and in Gatineau. University graduates and those who studied outside Quebec were also more likely to work primarily in English.
- When other factors related to education and work are taken into account, the language of instruction
 of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned emerges as the main factor
 associated with the predominant use of English in the workplace in Quebec, especially among graduates
 with another mother tongue.
- In Canada outside Quebec, there is also a link between the language of instruction of the postsecondary institution and the predominant use of French at work. As such, 48% of French-mother-tongue graduates worked primarily in French when their most recent degree was from a French-language institution, compared with 14% whose degree was from an English-language institution. Furthermore, graduates used French more at work in New Brunswick (including Moncton) and in Winnipeg.
- Outside Quebec, the proportion of graduates of French or bilingual postsecondary institutions who
 worked primarily in French was higher among college graduates than among university graduates,
 and among graduates whose field of study was not science, technology, engineering, mathematics or
 computer science.

In Canada outside Quebec, working in educational services was the main factor associated with French being used predominantly at work. More than 40% of French-mother-tongue graduates who worked primarily in French were employed in this sector. This proportion rose to more than 80% for graduates whose mother tongue is English or another language.

Introduction

Postsecondary education in Canada is mostly provided in institutions that offer courses and programs in one of the two official languages, English or French. Access to elementary and secondary schools that offer education in a minority official language is governed by law2 in Quebec and in the rest of Canada. However, it is not so for postsecondary education. It is in this context that the language of instruction of postsecondary institutions is the subject of concern and debate in Quebec and in Frenchlanguage minority communities elsewhere in Canada.

For example, in Quebec, there are periodic calls to limit funding to English-language universities and to restrict admission to English-language CEGEPs,3 raising concerns about the negative impact on the vitality of these institutions.4 One argument in favour of these restrictions is that English-language postsecondary institutions seem to encourage non-native speakers to use English predominantly in both the private and public spheres.5 The number of college students attending Englishlanguage institutions is increasing,6 particularly on Montréal Island, and this growth is fuelled by students whose mother tongue is not English.

Some studies suggest that there is a link between the language of instruction of the postsecondary institution attended and the language of work in Quebec. A study based on data from the 2005 National

Graduates Survey indicates that among French-language college graduates, 95% were working primarily in French, compared with 50% of those who had done college studies in English. Among university graduates, the proportion who worked primarily in French was 92% when they had studied in French, compared with 25% when they had studied in English.7 Other studies based on the results of a survey of college students on Montréal Island show similar trends in the language used at work during their schooling8 and the expected language of work after graduation.9 Lastly, another study shows that among those with a mother tongue other than French or English (other mother tongue), the main factor driving the trend of CEGEP graduates using English at work is their country of origin. 10

In Canada outside Quebec, we are witnessing mobilization in favour of protecting and creating bilingual or French-language postsecondary programs and institutions.11 The preservation of French-language educational institutions is a priority for minority Francophone communities, since these institutions help to uphold the use of French within these communities. However, the use of French at work after completing postsecondary education in French has not been a focus for researchers to date, even though the use of French as the predominant language in the workplace declined in Canada outside Quebec from 2006 to 2016.12

This study is based on data from the 2016 Census of Population, the Postsecondary Student Information System and the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials. Its purpose is to examine the relationship between the language of work and the language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned. Specifically, this study examines the language used predominantly at work, 13 by mother tongue, 14 by individuals who graduated from a public postsecondary institution located in Canada between 2010 and 2015, who were working at a fixed location in 2016¹⁵ and who were Canadians or permanent residents at the end of their studies.

As a first step, this study examines the prevalence of English being used as the predominant language in the Quebec workplace, by language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned. Next, the effect of education-related factors (location of study, year of graduation, type of institution, field of study) and workrelated factors (place of work, selfemployment or not, industry) that determine the use of English at work is then examined. Finally, use of French as the predominant language at work in Canada outside Quebec is examined.

Educational institutions may be French-language, English-language or bilingual (including institutions with only one bilingual campus).

Although their characteristics are different, bilingual institutions are grouped with English- or Frenchlanguage institutions in some parts of this study to contrast institutions that offer courses and programs in the minority official language with other institutions (see "Data sources, methods and definitions" text box). It is also important to keep in mind that the link between the language of work and the language of instruction of the institution where the most recent degree was earned may be the result of language preferences that predate postsecondary studies. As a result, it is impossible to establish a causal link between the language of instruction of postsecondary institutions and the language used in the workplace.

Despite its limitations, this study contributes to existing knowledge in several ways. It is based on recent data and a very large sample size that is representative of postsecondary graduates in Canada. Unlike previous studies, this one isolates the impact of the language of instruction of the postsecondary institution attended from other factors associated with language use in the workplace. Finally, this is the first study to examine the relationship between the language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned and the language used in the workplace in Canada outside Quebec.

There is a strong link between mother tongue and the language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned

In Quebec, English- and Frenchmother-tongue postsecondary graduates were more likely to have studied at an institution where the language of instruction was the same as their mother tongue.

In fact, among graduates with French as their mother tongue, 93% had earned their most recent diploma from a French-language institution, 3% from a bilingual institution and 5% from an English-language institution. Among English-mothertongue graduates, 82% had earned their most recent diploma from an English-language institution, 6% from a bilingual institution and 11% from a French-language institution.

In Quebec, the majority of graduates with an "other" mother tongue opted for French instruction. Specifically, among graduates with another mother tongue, 61% had earned their most recent diploma from a French-language institution, 5% from a bilingual institution and 33% from an English-language institution.

The situation of graduates was different in Canada's other provinces and territories, where there are more bilingual institutions. For example, nearly one-quarter (23%) of graduates whose mother tongue is French had earned their most recent degree from a bilingual institution, 42% from a Frenchlanguage institution and 35% from an English-language institution.

In addition, the majority of graduates whose mother tongue is either English or another language (88%) had earned their most recent degree from an English-language institution. The remaining proportion (12%) had earned it from a bilingual institution. Fewer than 1% of graduates whose mother tongue is either English or another language had earned their most recent degree from a Frenchlanguage institution.

In Quebec, approximately one-quarter of graduates with French as their mother tongue whose most recent degree was from an Englishlanguage institution work primarily in English

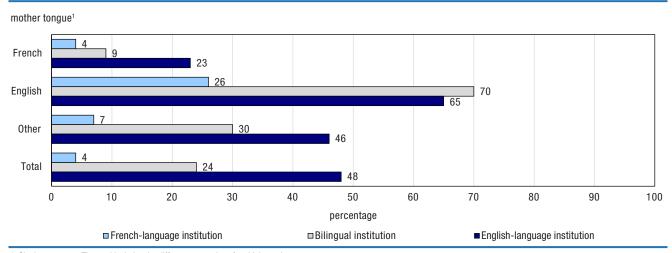
In 2016, nearly half (48%) of graduates from an English-language institution used English predominantly at work, compared with 4% of those whose most recent degree was from a Frenchlanguage institution (Chart I).

The predominant use of English in the workplace was most pronounced among graduates whose mother tongue is English, and even more so when their educational institution was bilingual or English. About two-thirds of English-mothertongue graduates used English predominantly at work when they had earned their most recent degree from a bilingual (70%) or English-language (65%) institution. Graduates whose mother tongue is English and who were educated at a French-language institution (26%) used English much less.

There is also a relationship between the language of work and the language of instruction of the institution where graduates with another mother tongue studied. Specifically, 46% of them worked predominantly in English when they graduated from an English-language institution, compared with 7% of those who had studied at a Frenchlanguage institution.

In comparison, about one-quarter (23%) of graduates whose mother tongue is French used primarily English at work when their most recent degree was from an English-language institution. This proportion

Chart 1
Proportion of graduates who used English predominantly at work, by mother tongue and language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned, Quebec only, 2016



1. Single responses. The total includes the different categories of multiple mother tongues.

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population and Postsecondary Student Information System; Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials.

was lower when the most recent degree was from a bilingual (9%) or French-language (4%) institution.

Nearly three-quarters of graduates whose mother tongue is French and who use primarily English at work received their most recent degree from a French-language institution

In Quebec, a significant proportion of graduates whose mother tongue is French and who use English predominantly at work had studied at a French-language institution. In fact, 72% had earned their most recent degree from a Frenchlanguage institution, 5% from a bilingual institution and 23% from an English-language institution.

The situation was different among graduates whose mother tongue is English or another language; a higher proportion of them had earned their most recent degree from an English-language institution. For

example, among graduates whose mother tongue is English and who worked primarily in English, 88% had earned their most recent degree from an English-language institution. This proportion was 71% among graduates whose mother tongue is neither English nor French.

Three-quarters of graduates whose mother tongue is French or another language and who were educated in a French-language institution can conduct a conversation in English

The ability to conduct a conversation in English goes hand in hand with the possibility of using it as the predominant language at work, especially for those whose mother tongue is not English. In Quebec, a significant proportion of graduates whose mother tongue is French or another language could conduct a conversation in English regardless

of the language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where they earned their most recent degree.

Of the graduates whose mother tongue is French or another language and who graduated from a Frenchlanguage institution, three-quarters (75%) could conduct a conversation in English. Fluency in English was somewhat more common among graduates of bilingual institutions (84%), and the difference between graduates whose mother tongue is French or another language was minimal.

Finally, approximately 99% of those who graduated from English-language institutions could conduct a conversation in English. A small number of graduates lacked the ability to do so because of attrition of their language skills following graduation or because they had attended a French-language program at an English-language institution.

The following sections focus only on graduates who reported being able to conduct a conversation in English.

Table 1
Proportion of graduates who used English predominantly at work, by mother tongue, language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned, and selected characteristics related to postsecondary education, Quebec only, 2016

					Mother to	ngue (single r	esponses)			
			French			English			Other	
		Languag	e of instruction	n of the p	ostsecondary institution where the			e most recent degree was earned		
			English or		English or			English or		
		French	bilingual	Total	French	bilingual	Total	French	bilingual	Total
						percentage				
Total		5	20	6	27	66	61	10	44	25
Type of institution	College (including CEGEPs)	4	14	5	16	56	52	8	37	22
	University	6	24	7	33	73	68	11	50	27
Province or territory of study	Quebec	5	20	6	27	62	58	10	43	24
	Other province or territory	6	17	14	0s	82	82	0s	56	53
Year of graduation	2015	4	20	6	25	66	60	8	42	22
	2010 to 2014	5	19	6	27	66	62	10	45	26
Field of study	BHASE ¹	5	19	6	28	65	61	10	43	24
	STEM ²	6	24	7	22	68	63	10	49	28

⁰s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded

Note: Excludes graduates who could not conduct a conversation in English.

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population and Postsecondary Student Information System; Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials.

University graduates and graduates who studied outside Quebec are more likely to use English predominantly at work

The level of education of the most recent postsecondary degree may have an impact on the language used in the workplace because college education often leads to different occupations and industries than university education. Among those who could conduct a conversation in English, the proportion of university graduates who worked primarily in English was higher than that of college graduates.

This difference was especially pronounced when the most recent degree was earned from an Englishlanguage or bilingual institution. For example, among graduates whose mother tongue is French and who

attended an English-language or bilingual institution, 24% of university graduates used primarily English at work, compared with 14% of college graduates (Table I). Among graduates whose mother tongue is neither English nor French, these proportions were 50% and 37%, respectively.

In addition, graduates who studied in a province or territory other than Quebec were more likely to use primarily English at work. For example, among graduates whose mother tongue is neither English nor French, the use of English as the predominant language at work was significantly higher when they had studied outside Quebec (53% versus 24%). This trend was similar for graduates whose mother tongue is French (14% versus 6%) or English (82% versus 58%).

Furthermore, having studied in a science, technology, engineering, mathematics or computer science (STEM) program was also somewhat linked to using English predominantly in the workplace, but only when the most recent degree was from an English-language or bilingual institution. For example, among graduates whose mother tongue is French and who earned their degree from an English-language or bilingual institution, 24% worked primarily in English when they had undertaken studies in STEM fields, while this proportion was 19% when they had undertaken studies in business, humanities, health, arts, social science and education (BHASE) and other non-STEM fields. It should be noted that the use of English is often associated with the STEM fields¹⁷ in the literature.

^{1.} Business, humanities, health, arts, social science and education and other non-STEM fields.

^{2.} Science, technology, engineering, mathematics and computer science.

The proportion of graduates who use primarily English in the workplace is higher in Gatineau and on Montréal Island

Graduates who work in Gatineau¹⁸ and on Montréal Island were more likely to work primarily in English, especially if their studies were completed at an English-language or bilingual institution.

Among graduates with French as their mother tongue whose most recent degree was from an English-language or bilingual institution, 28% used English predominantly at work on Montréal Island, a proportion three times higher than that

observed among their counterparts whose degree was from a Frenchlanguage institution (9%) (Table 2). The gap was even more pronounced among graduates whose mother tongue is neither English nor French. In Gatineau, for example, the proportion of graduates with neither English nor French as their mother tongue who used primarily English at work was about seven times higher when their most recent degree was from an English-language or bilingual institution (57%), compared with graduates whose degree was from a French-language institution (8%). The concentration of the Anglophone population on Montréal Island and in Gatineau may largely explain the observed trends.

The use of English at work was also strongly linked to the educational services field, particularly among graduates of English-language or bilingual institutions. Among graduates of English-language or bilingual institutions who worked in educational services, 31% of those with French as their mother tongue, 65% of those with neither English nor French as their mother tongue, and 87% of those with English as their mother tongue used English predominantly in their workplace. Educational institutions of all levels are environments where the predominant language is generally the language of instruction. It is also in these environments that second languages are taught. Thus,

Table 2
Proportion of graduates who used English predominantly at work, by mother tongue, language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned and selected work-related characteristics, Quebec only, 2016

<u> </u>					Mother to	ngue (single	responses)			
			French			English	,		Other	
		Languag	e of instruct	ion of the p	ostsecond	ary institution	n where the	most rec	ent degree wa	s earned
		French	English or bilingual	Total	French	English or bilingual	Total	French	English or bilingual	Total
						percentage				
Total		5	20	6	27	66	61	10	44	25
Census metropolitan	Québec	2	4	2	20	36	26	3	17	4
area (CMA) of work ¹	Montréal: Montréal Island	9	28	12	36	67	64	12	47	29
	Montréal: Outside Montréal Island	3	10	3	14	50	43	5	28	14
	Ottawa–Gatineau (Quebec part)	8	22	11	22	85	81	8	57	35
	Elsewhere in the province	2	8	3	17	68	54	5	34	12
Class of worker	Employee	5	20	6	27	65	61	10	44	25
	Self-employed	3	13	4	27	75	68	10	46	25
Industry, based on	Private services ²	6	20	7	23	62	58	10	44	26
the North American	Trade, transportation and warehousing	5	16	6	19	53	50	12	38	25
Industry Classification System (NAICS)	Educational services	4	31	6	50	87	83	12	65	39
	Health care and social assistance	3	19	4	22	60	54	8	39	19
	Information, culture and recreation	6	17	7	31	72	69	6	47	28
	Public administration	4	18	5	19	76	71	5	39	16
	Goods manufacturing sector ³	6	17	7	23	62	57	10	44	23

^{1.} In the selected census metropolitan areas, 100 or more graduates from each mother tongue group had earned their most recent degree from an English-language or bilingual institution.

Note: Excludes graduates who could not conduct a conversation in English.

^{2.} Real estate, professional, scientific and technical, administrative, support, waste management, remediation, financial and insurance, corporate and business management, accommodation and food services and other services.

^{3.} Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining, oil or gas extraction, utilities, construction and manufacturing.

teaching English and teaching in English account for much of the high prevalence of jobs in which the use of English predominates in the education field.

Finally, among graduates with English as their mother tongue and whose most recent degree was from an English-language or bilingual institution, those who were self-employed were more likely to use primarily English at work than those who were employees (75% versus 65%). The opposite trend is observed among graduates whose mother tongue is French (13% versus 20%). 19 Among graduates whose mother tongue is English, this type of result may be explained in part by the fact that self-employed people are more easily able to work in the language of their choice, in this case their mother tongue.

In Quebec, the language of postsecondary education and place of work are the factors most strongly associated with English being used predominantly at work by graduates whose mother tongue is French or another language

Logistic regression analysis was conducted to control for the contribution of factors related to work and to postsecondary education. In a logistic regression, the odds ratio (OR) is used to determine how much more likely a category is to have the observed criterion compared with a reference category. As such, a category with an OR greater than I is more likely to have the observed criterion than the reference category, and a category with an OR less than I is less likely to have the observed criterion than

the reference category. The OR of the reference category is always equal to 1.

The results of the multivariate analysis confirm the results of the descriptive analysis. They indicate that the language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned and the place of work are the factors most strongly associated with English being the predominant language used in the workplace in Quebec. In fact, graduating from an Englishlanguage or bilingual institution was associated with the highest OR among the estimated models for graduates whose mother tongue is French (OR = 4.1), English (OR =4.8) or another language (OR = 7.0). This association tends to confirm the strength of the relationship between attending an Englishlanguage or bilingual institution and the likelihood of working primarily in English (Table 3).

Moreover, even after other factors were controlled for, using English as the predominant language at work was still strongly related to the place of work, with this use of English more significant on Montréal Island and in Gatineau than elsewhere in the province. The place of work is the second most important factor, after the language of instruction of the postsecondary institution.

Outside Quebec, graduates whose mother tongue is French are three times more likely to use primarily French at work when their most recent degree was from a French-language institution

In Canada outside Quebec, the future of French-language or bilingual postsecondary institutions is being

questioned because of financial difficulties these institutions face, leading to calls for protecting them and helping them grow. Preserving a French-language education continuum—from preschool to postsecondary—is a priority for Francophone communities outside Quebec because it allows the use of French to be maintained in these communities. Obviously, the possibility of studying in French also raises the question of the possibility of working in French outside Quebec.

Outside Quebec, using French predominantly at work was also related to the language of postsecondary education. For example, the proportion of graduates with French as their mother tongue who used French predominantly at work was more than three times higher among those whose most recent degree was from a Frenchlanguage institution (48%) than among those whose degree was from an English-language institution (14%). A significant proportion (39%) of graduates with French as their mother tongue who earned their degree from a bilingual institution also used primarily French at work (Chart 2).

Moreover, 20% of graduates whose mother tongue is English or another language used French predominantly at work when they earned their most recent degree from a Frenchlanguage institution, compared with 1% of those with a degree from an English-language institution and 2% of those with a degree from a bilingual institution.

Table 3

Logistic regressions – odds ratios of the predominant use of English at work, by mother tongue and selected characteristics related to work and postsecondary education, Quebec only, 2016

		Mother	Mother tongue (single responses)		
		French	English	Othe	
Characteristics related to postsecondary educati	on		odds ratio		
Postsecondary institution where the most recent	French-language institution (ref.)	1.00	1.00	1.00	
degree was earned	English-language or bilingual institution	4.14*	4.81*	7.00*	
Type of institution	College (including CEGEPs) (ref.)	1.00	1.00	1.00	
	University	1.48*	1.47*	1.50	
Province or territory of study	Quebec (ref.)	1.00	1.00	1.00	
	Other province or territory	0.70*	2.07*	1.45	
Year of graduation	2015 (ref.)	1.00	1.00	1.00	
	2010 to 2014	1.11*	0.98	1.20	
Field of study	BHASE ¹ (ref.)	1.00	1.00	1.00	
	STEM ²	1.27*	1.07*	1.17	
Work-related characteristics					
Census metropolitan area (CMA) of work ³	Québec	0.79*	0.40*	0.48	
	Montréal: Montréal Island	3.94*	1.51*	2.20	
	Montréal: Outside Montréal Island	1.14*	0.72*	0.95	
	Ottawa-Gatineau (Quebec part)	3.96*	2.09*	2.63*	
	Elsewhere in the province (ref.)	1.00	1.00	1.00	
Class of worker	Employee (ref.)	1.00	1.00	1.00	
	Self-employed	0.64*	1.56*	1.11	
Industry, based on the North American Industry	Private services ⁴ (ref.)	1.00	1.00	1.00	
Classification System (NAICS)	Trade, transportation and warehousing	1.01	0.80*	1.03	
	Educational services	0.99	3.73*	1.80*	
	Health care and social assistance	0.67*	0.94	0.87	
	Information, culture and recreation	0.91*	1.45*	0.91	
	Public administration	0.81*	1.10	0.60	
	Goods manufacturing sector ⁵	1.21*	1.06	1.05	
Number of observations		240,000	34,800	49,600	
Pseudo R ²		22.4	48.9	55.7	

^{*} significantly different from reference category (ref.) (p<0.05)

Note: Excludes graduates who could not conduct a conversation in English.

^{1.} Business, humanities, health, arts, social science and education and other non-STEM fields.

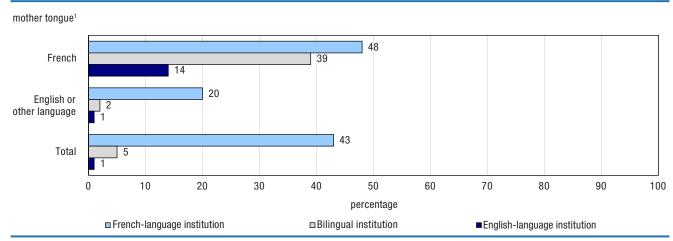
^{2.} Science, technology, engineering, mathematics and computer science.

^{3.} In the selected census metropolitan areas, 100 or more graduates from each mother tongue group had earned their most recent degree from an English-language or bilingual institution.

^{4.} Real estate, professional, scientific and technical, administrative, support, waste management, remediation, financial and insurance, corporate and business management, accommodation and food services and other services.

 $^{5. \,} Agriculture, \, forestry, \, fishing, \, hunting, \, mining, \, oil \, or \, gas \, extraction, \, utilities, \, construction \, and \, manufacturing.$

Chart 2
Proportion of graduates who used French predominantly at work , by mother tongue and language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned, Canada outside Quebec, 2016



Single responses. The total includes the different categories of multiple mother tongues.

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population and Postsecondary Student Information System; Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials.

The vast majority of graduates with French as their mother tongue who work primarily in French received their most recent degree from a French-language or bilingual institution

Outside Quebec, the majority of graduates with French as their mother tongue who used French predominantly at work had earned their most recent degree from a French-language (59%) or bilingual (26%) institution. Furthermore, fewer than one in six graduates with French as their mother tongue who used primarily French at work had earned their most recent degree from an English-language institution (15%).

Conversely, 59% of graduates whose mother tongue is English or another language and who used primarily French at work had earned their most recent degree from an English-language institution. Among

graduates whose mother tongue is English or another language and who worked primarily in French, the proportion of those who earned their most recent degree from a bilingual institution (30%) far exceeded the proportion whose degree was from a French-language institution (12%).

Outside Quebec, graduates of bilingual institutions whose mother tongue is English or another language are almost twice as likely to be able to conduct a conversation in French as graduates of English-language institutions

For those who are not native speakers, the ability to conduct a conversation in French is essential for using it as a predominant language in the workplace. In Canada outside Quebec, graduates whose mother tongue is English or another language were more likely to know French when their most recent degree was from a French-language or

bilingual institution. Some graduates, however, could no longer conduct a conversation in French because of attrition of their language skills after graduation or because they had completed a program of study in English at a French-language institution.

The proportion of graduates whose mother tongue is English or another language and who could conduct a conversation in French was 19% when the postsecondary institution that awarded their most recent degree was bilingual. This proportion was just over half as high (11%) when it was an English-language institution.

Nevertheless, although only a small number of graduates whose mother tongue is English or another language earned their most recent degree from a French-language institution, the majority (88%) could conduct a conversation in French.

Finally, among graduates whose mother tongue is French, the vast majority of graduates from Frenchlanguage or bilingual institutions could conduct a conversation in that language (99% or more). However, this proportion was lower (96%) when it was an English-language institution.

The following sections focus only on graduates who reported being able to conduct a conversation in French.

Graduates who studied in a field other than science, technology, engineering, mathematics or computer science are more likely to use French at work

In Canada outside Quebec, graduates of French-language or bilingual colleges were more likely to use French predominantly at work than university graduates. It was the

case for nearly half (49%) of college graduates whose mother tongue is French and about one-quarter (26%) of graduates whose mother tongue is English or another language (Table 4). Among graduates whose mother tongue is English or another language, college graduates (26%) were more than twice as likely as university graduates (10%) to use primarily French at work.

In general, graduates who studied in fields other than science, technology, engineering, mathematics or computer science (STEM)—that is, business, humanities, health, arts, social science and education (BHASE) and other non-STEM fields—were significantly more likely to use French at work. This is especially true for graduates of French-language or bilingual institutions whose mother tongue is French; they were twice as likely to use French at work after

studying in BHASE fields (48%) than after studying in STEM fields (24%). This was also true for graduates of French-language or bilingual institutions whose mother tongue is English or another language and who studied in BHASE fields (12%); they were three times more likely to work primarily in French than those who studied in STEM fields (4%).

Finally, graduates whose mother tongue is French were more likely to use primarily French at work after having studied outside Quebec (36%) than in Quebec (30%), especially when they studied at a French-language or bilingual institution (49% outside Quebec compared with 33% in Quebec). The concentration of these graduates in certain industries seems to explain this trend to a certain extent.²⁰

Table 4
Proportion of graduates who used French predominantly at work, by mother tongue, language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned and selected characteristics related to postsecondary education, Canada outside Quebec, 2016

		Mother tongue (single responses)							
			French		English or other language				
		Language of instruct	ion of the postseco	ondary institution	titution where the most recent degree was earne				
		French or			French or				
		bilingual	English	Total	bilingual	English	Total		
				percentage					
Total		45	15	35	11	4	5		
Type of institution	College (including CEGEPs)	49	12	33	26	2	3		
	University	43	17	35	10	5	6		
Province or territory of study	Quebec	33	13	30	11	2	5		
	Other province or territory	49	15	36	11	4	5		
Year of graduation	2015	44	13	32	10	3	5		
	2010 to 2014	45	15	35	11	4	6		
Field of study	BHASE ¹	48	16	38	12	5	6		
	STEM ²	24	5	16	4	1	1		

^{1.} Business, humanities, health, arts, social science and education and other non-STEM fields.

Note: Excludes graduates who could not conduct a conversation in French.

^{2.} Science, technology, engineering, mathematics and computer science.

Table 5
Proportion of graduates who used French predominantly at work, by mother tongue, language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned and selected work-related characteristics, Canada outside Quebec. 2016

		Mother tongue (single responses)					
		French English or other lange Language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned					juage
		French or bilingual	English	Total	French or bilingual	English	Total
				percent	age		
Total		45	15	35	11	4	5
Province or territory of work ¹	Atlantic Canada excluding New Brunswick	45	20	32	26	6	7
	New Brunswick	71	28	64	44	4	7
	Ontario	37	12	29	12	4	6
	Manitoba	50	27	33	27	8	9
	Saskatchewan	53	19	37	12	5	7
	Alberta	22	9	16	4	2	3
	British Columbia	26	9	16	8	2	3
	Territories	37	0	25	0	2	1
Class of worker	Employee	45	15	35	12	4	6
	Self-employed	41	7	28	3	1	1
Industry, based on the North	Private services ²	31	8	21	3	1	1
American Industry Classification System (NAICS)	Trade, transportation and warehousing	33	5	21	2	1	1
	Educational services	80	46	71	33	18	22
	Health care and social assistance	49	12	38	7	1	2
	Information, culture and recreation	39	11	27	2	1	1
	Public administration	23	7	19	3	1	1
	Goods manufacturing sector ³	41	8	27	4	0	1

^{1.} Some provinces or territories have been combined to reach the threshold of 100 or more graduates, from each mother tongue group, who earned their most recent degree from a Frenchlanguage or bilingual institution.

Note: Excludes graduates who could not conduct a conversation in French

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population and Postsecondary Student Information System; Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials.

Graduates working in New Brunswick or in educational services are more likely to work primarily in French

The province or territory where graduates worked was strongly associated with the propensity to use French predominantly at work. In New Brunswick, the proportion of graduates from French-language or bilingual institutions who worked primarily in French was 71% among graduates whose mother tongue is French and 44% among those

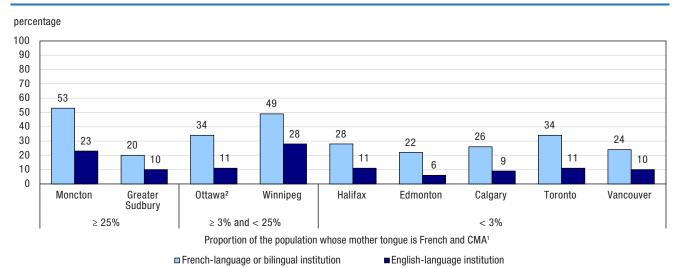
whose mother tongue is English or another language (Table 5). A significant proportion of graduates from French-language or bilingual institutions whose mother tongue is French were also working primarily in French in Saskatchewan (53%) and Manitoba (50%). Alberta (22%) and British Columbia (26%) had the lowest proportions.

As with the use of English at work in Quebec, graduates outside of Quebec who worked in educational services were especially likely to work in French. For example, among graduates with French as their mother tongue who worked in this field, 80% worked primarily in French when their most recent degree was from a French-language or bilingual institution. A significant proportion (33%) of graduates whose mother tongue is English or another language and who attended a French-language or bilingual institution also used French predominantly at work when they worked in this industry. Again, this is largely because many of these

^{2.} Real estate, professional, scientific and technical, administrative, support, waste management, remediation, financial and insurance, corporate and business management, accommodation and food services and other services.

^{3.} Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining, oil or gas extraction, utilities, construction and manufacturing.

Chart 3
Proportion of French-mother-tongue graduates (single responses) who used French predominantly at work, by language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned and census metropolitan area, Canada outside Quebec, 2016



- 1. The selected census metropolitan areas (CMAs) are those where the highest number of French-mother-tongue graduates worked.
- Ottawa–Gatineau (Ontario part).

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population and Postsecondary Student Information System; Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials.

graduates teach French or work at an institution where the language of instruction is French.

Furthermore, use of French as the predominant language at work was higher among employees than among self-employed workers, regardless of mother tongue.

In Moncton and Winnipeg, about half of graduates with French as their mother tongue and whose most recent degree was from a French-language or bilingual institution work primarily in French

In the following section, census metropolitan areas (CMAs) were classified by the proportion of the population whose mother tongue is French, resulting in the following three groups: 1) CMAs where the proportion of people whose

mother tongue is French is less than 3%, 2) CMAs where the proportion of individuals whose mother tongue is French is between 3% and 24%, and 3) CMAs where the proportion of people whose mother tongue is French is 25% or more. The analysis focuses only on graduates whose mother tongue is French.

Moncton and Winnipeg stood out from the other CMAs for their high proportion of French-mothertongue individuals and for their significant number of Frenchmother-tongue graduates whose predominant language of work was French. In fact, about half of the graduates of French-language institutions and one-quarter of the graduates of English-language institutions in these CMAs used French predominantly at work. This is significantly higher than what was observed in the other CMAs (Chart 3).

This is consistent with the fact that Moncton and Winnipeg differ from the other CMAs in that they have universities where courses are taught only in French. These environments offer both the possibility of completing studies solely in French and many opportunities to work in that language. Furthermore, the high proportion of the Francophone population in these CMAs may be related to a greater opportunity to work in French.

While the proportion of the population that is Francophone is relatively high in Greater Sudbury, the use of French at work by graduates of French-language or bilingual institutions (20%) is comparable to Calgary (26%), Halifax (28%) or Toronto (34%). This result could be explained in part by the presence of a bilingual university in Greater Sudbury rather than a French-only university;²¹ by

Table 6
Logistic regressions - odds ratios of the predominant use of French at work, by mother tongue and characteristics related to work and postsecondary education, Canada outside Quebec, 2016

		Mother	tongue (single responses)
		French	English or other language
Characteristics related to postsecond	lary education		odds ratio
Postsecondary institution where the	English-language institution (ref.)	1.00	1.00
most recent degree was earned	French-language or bilingual institution	4.59*	3.39*
Type of institution	College (including CEGEPs) (ref.)	1.00	1.00
	University	0.66*	0.73*
Province or territory of study	Quebec	1.04	1.40*
	Other province or territory (ref.)	1.00	1.00
Year of graduation	2015 (ref.)	1.00	1.00
	2010 to 2014	1.01	1.07
Field of study	BHASE ¹ (ref.)	1.00	1.00
	STEM ²	0.38*	0.24*
Work-related characteristics			
Province or territory of work ³	Atlantic Canada excluding New Brunswick	1.02	1.26*
	New Brunswick	5.18*	1.76*
	Ontario (ref.)	1.00	1.00
	Manitoba	1.79*	1.60*
	Saskatchewan	1.05	0.73*
	Alberta	0.38*	0.29*
	British Columbia	0.40*	0.42*
	Territories	0.86	0.18*
Class of worker	Employee (ref.)	1.00	1.00
	Self-employed	1.06	0.36*
Industry, based on the North American	Private services ⁴ (ref.)	1.00	1.00
Industry Classification System (NAICS)	Trade, transportation and warehousing	0.80*	0.77*
	Educational services	15.50*	28.42*
	Health care and social assistance	1.68*	2.24*
	Information, culture and recreation	1.88*	0.85
	Public administration	0.87*	1.20*
	Goods manufacturing sector ⁵	1.46*	0.93
Number of observations		40,300	126,900
Pseudo R ²		79.3	49.7

^{*} significantly different from reference category (ref.) (p<0.05)

Note: Excludes graduates who could not conduct a conversation in French.

^{1.} Business, humanities, health, arts, social science and education and other non-STEM fields.

 $^{2. \} Science, technology, engineering, mathematics and computer science.\\$

^{3.} Some provinces or territories have been combined to reach the threshold of 100 or more graduates, from each mother tongue group, who earned their most recent degree from a Frenchlanguage or bilingual institution.

^{4.} Real estate, professional, scientific and technical, administrative, support, waste management, remediation, financial and insurance, corporate and business management, accommodation and food services and other services.

 $^{5. \,} Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining, oil \, or \, gas \, extraction, \, utilities, \, construction \, and \, manufacturing.$

the large proportion of graduates in the goods manufacturing, trade, transportation and warehousing industries; and also by the fact that the French-speaking population in this CMA is less mobile than in the other CMAs mentioned.²²

Working in educational services is the factor most associated with the use of French as the predominant language at work outside Quebec

The results of the multivariate analysis show that employment in educational services is the factor most strongly associated with French being used as the predominant language at work outside Quebec. The likelihood of working primarily in French in educational services, compared with private services, is high among both graduates with French as their mother tongue (OR = 15.5) and graduates whose mother tongue is English or another language (OR = 28.4) (Table 6).

The importance of school settings where a minority official language is taught or instruction is provided in an official minority language was raised earlier in this study since a similar trend was observed in the use of English in the workplace by graduates in the education services field in Quebec whose mother tongue is English.

The language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned remained a significant factor related to the likelihood of working primarily in French for graduates whose mother tongue is French (OR = 4.6) and graduates whose mother tongue is English or another language (OR = 3.4). The province

or territory of work was also significantly related to French being used as the predominant language at work. Graduates whose mother tongue is French were more likely to work primarily in French in New Brunswick (OR = 5.2) or Manitoba (OR = 1.8) than in Ontario. This was also the case for graduates whose mother tongue is English or another language (OR = 1.8 in New Brunswick and OR = 1.6 in Manitoba).

Conclusion

In Quebec, English-language postsecondary institutions are potentially facing caps on the number of new students and on funding. These caps are being proposed because of concerns that attendance at these institutions could lead to non-native speakers adopting English as their primary language of use. This study shows that in addition to the place of work, location of studies and the type of institution attended, the language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned is in fact associated with the predominant use of English at work, as suggested by previous studies on the subject.

About one-quarter of graduates whose mother tongue is French worked primarily in English when they had studied at an Englishlanguage institution. This compares with 4% for those who had studied at a French-language institution. However, a large proportion of graduates with French as their mother tongue who used primarily English at work had earned their most recent degree from a Frenchlanguage institution. As a result, the contribution of graduates from English-language or bilingual institutions to the total number

of individuals with French as their mother tongue who worked primarily in English is relatively modest.

The relationship between the language of instruction of the postsecondary institution where the most recent degree was earned and English being used as the predominant language at work is stronger for graduates whose mother tongue is neither English nor French. About half of these graduates used primarily English at work when they had studied at an English-language institution, compared with 7% when they had studied at a French-language institution. Furthermore, graduates whose mother tongue is neither English nor French were more likely to attend English-language institutions; 71% of graduates with neither English nor French as their mother tongue and who worked primarily in English earned their most recent degree from an Englishlanguage institution. In a previous study on this topic, the country of origin of graduates whose mother tongue is neither English nor French was considered a factor that could explain this finding.²³ However, more research on the language orientations of these graduates before postsecondary education is needed. For example, examining the language of instruction at the elementary and secondary levels would help better identify the role of postsecondary education in these graduates' adoption of English as the predominant language of work.

Outside Quebec, Francophone minority communities want to reaffirm the role of Frenchlanguage or bilingual institutions at the end of the French-language education continuum, since the

future of some of these institutions is in question because of financial difficulties. The results show that there is a link between the language of instruction and the use of French at work. Specifically, the proportion of graduates with French as their mother tongue who worked primarily in French was more than three times higher when their most recent degree was from a Frenchlanguage institution (48%) than when it was from an English-language institution (14%). Moreover, those who worked primarily in French in Canada outside Quebec were largely graduates of Frenchlanguage or bilingual postsecondary institutions, which accounted for 85% of graduates with French as their mother tongue who worked primarily in French.

Other factors were associated with the predominant use of French in the workplace outside Quebec—such as place of work, type of institution attended and field of study—although the most significant factor was working in educational services. In fact, outside Quebec, working in this field was the factor most associated with French being used as the predominant language at work. For example, graduates working in educational services accounted for over 40% of graduates with French as their mother tongue and over

80% of graduates with English or another language as their mother tongue who worked primarily in French. These results indicate that the teaching of French or teaching in French, and the institutional networks that give rise to these teaching activities, make this field conducive to the use of French in the workplace, including by graduates whose mother tongue is French, English or another language.

Predominant use of a language is only one facet of language use at work. For example, the Census of Population data allow for an examination of languages used equally with another language or used regularly as a secondary language. Moreover, the predominant use of a language at work is only one dimension of language use in the public sphere. It is therefore not possible to generalize the results of this study to other aspects of language use, including language use in the private sphere, such as language spoken at home.

Of particular interest is the adoption of English or French as the predominant language at home after attending a postsecondary institution, ²⁴ including the implications for intergenerational transmission of language. Working in a language does not necessarily mean that this language will be

spoken at home. A future study could address this issue by using data from two censuses integrated with data from the Postsecondary Student Information System. It would allow for consideration of a graduate's home language and household composition before and after attending a French-language, English-language or bilingual postsecondary institution.

Finally, to better understand the results of this study, it is important to be able to report on the likelihood of choosing a postsecondary institution with a specific language profile, since language orientations of future graduates may predate postsecondary education. This type of study will be possible thanks to data from the new 2021 Census questions on language of instruction at the elementary and secondary levels, as well as data from the 2022 Survey on the Official Language Minority Population, which will include questions on the postsecondary education intentions of future students. It will provide a more detailed picture of the Frenchand English-language education continuum all the way through to the labour market.

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Data sources, methods and definitions

Data sources

Statistics Canada's Postsecondary Student Information System (PSIS) contains comprehensive information on student enrolment and the number of graduates from public postsecondary institutions²⁵ in Canada. This information includes the type of institution,²⁶ the type of program, the field of study and the name of the postsecondary institution where the degree was earned. Once the PSIS is fully integrated with the 2016 Census of Population long-form questionnaire, it will be possible to determine the mother tongue, languages used at work, place of work, class of worker and industry of graduates from these postsecondary institutions.

The integration rate of the 2016 Census of Population with the PSIS is approximately 90%. The census long-form questionnaire is distributed to a sample that represents 25% of the population. The weighting used is that of the 2016 Census of Population long-form questionnaire.

Information from the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC), of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, was used to determine the official language or languages of instruction of the postsecondary institutions listed in the PSIS (i.e., English, French or English and French).

Based on information from the PSIS and the CICIC, it is not possible to differentiate the language of instruction of bilingual campuses (i.e., French and English) from that of their parent institution. As such, if the institution has a bilingual campus offering courses and programs in both languages, the entire institution will be categorized as bilingual.

Population

The population includes people 15 years and older who were employed during the 2016 Census reference week and who

- worked at a fixed address in Canada
- had graduated from a public college or university located in Canada between 2010 and 2015
- had completed a career, technical or professional training program,²⁷ a pre-university program, an undergraduate program,²⁸ or a graduate program
- were Canadian citizens or permanent residents at the end of their studies.

International students are excluded from the target population because the integration rate of the 2016 Census of Population with the PSIS is lower for this population.

Graduates of other types of programs²⁹ offered by postsecondary institutions, which included relatively few graduates, are also excluded from this study. In addition, graduates of some programs not classified according to the 2016 Classification of Instructional Programs were excluded from this study's target population. It should be noted that very few graduates were

excluded for this reason.

This study mainly examines the most recent degree or diploma earned following completion of the most recent program of study. In rare cases, individuals have completed two programs of study on the same date. The selection criteria for their most recent degree were considered in the following order: highest degree; program offered at a bilingual or minority official language institution; program taken in Quebec; or program in science, technology, engineering, mathematics or computer science.

Definitions

Language used predominantly at work

This study focuses on the language used predominantly at work, which is determined based on responses to Part A of the 2016 Census question on the languages used at work. This part focuses on the languages used at work most often. A person uses a language predominantly at work when that language is used at work most often (single response).

People who use two languages at work equally (multiple response) are not considered to use either language predominantly.

This study does not consider Part B of the question regarding languages used at work, which focuses on secondary languages used regularly. A person who uses one language predominantly at work may or may not use one or more other languages regularly at work.

Mother tongue

Mother tongue refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the person at the time data were collected. Mother tongue groups presented in this study are "French," "English" and "(an)other language." The "(an)other language" category includes individuals whose mother tongue is a language other than English or French. These groups include only single responses, because of distinct dynamics unique to individuals with more than one mother tongue. In contrast, the totals reported in figures and tables include the different categories of multiple mother tongues.

The "English" and "(an)other language" mother tongue groups are presented under the same category in the section on Canada outside Quebec. This is because of the fact that in many regions, a small number of graduates with English or another language as their mother tongue could conduct a conversation in French and had earned their most recent degree from a French-language or bilingual postsecondary institution. In Canada outside Quebec, the observed patterns of French being used as the predominant language at work were similar for these two groups.

Limitations

The language of instruction of postsecondary institutions and the language of study

The language of instruction of a postsecondary institution corresponds to the official language or languages in which courses are offered, but is not necessarily the language of study. This is especially the case at bilingual institutions, which offer programs and courses in both French and English, and where the language in which a graduate studies may be French only, English only or French and English. This is also the case for unilingual English-language or French-language institutions, which are free to offer courses and programs in other languages. However, this is rare at unilingual institutions.³⁰

Treatment of bilingual institutions

Bilingual institutions include institutions with a variety of programs and course offerings. Some of these institutions may offer several courses and programs in both languages, while in others, instruction is provided primarily in one language. This is especially true of institutions where only one campus is bilingual.

The profile of bilingual institutions varies greatly from province to province. For example, in Quebec, bilingual institutions exist largely at the college level, while in Ontario they exist mostly at the university level.³¹ In some regions, the only institution offering courses and programs in a minority official language is a bilingual institution, while bilingual institutions are absent or have little presence in other regions. This is reflected in the opportunity for separate presentation of relevant statistical information on graduates of unilingual and bilingual institutions offering courses and programs in a minority official language.

An analysis of the impact of attending a bilingual institution on the language of work would require a detailed study dedicated to this type of institution or one that is regionally specific. This is not the focus of this study. The bilingual institution category is retained where numbers permit. However, in some of the tables and multivariate analyses in this article, bilingual institutions are grouped with English-language institutions when referring to Quebec, and with French-language institutions in the sections dealing with Canada outside Quebec. The objective is to establish a clear contrast between institutions with no or very limited course and program offerings in the minority official language and institutions that formally offer courses and programs in the minority official language.

Notes

- That is, English in Quebec and French in Canada outside Quebec.
- 2. In Canada, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms governs access to minority language education at the primary and secondary levels, as does the Charter of the French Language in Quebec.
- 3. Conseil supérieur de la langue française (2011).
- 4. English College Steering Committee (2021).
- 5. The public sphere corresponds to interactions outside the home, particularly at work. Languages used at work are only one of the indicators of languages used in the public sphere. Other examples include languages used in institutions and businesses, languages used with friends and immediate contacts or languages used when consuming media. However, languages used at work are the only indicator of languages used in the "public sphere" for which it is possible to obtain information from the Census of Population.
- 6. Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur (2021).
- 7. Maheu (2010).
- 8. Sabourin et al. (2010a).
- 9. Sabourin et al. (2010b).

- 10. Béland (2009).
- 11. Bérubé-Lupien and Castonguay (2021).
- 12. Statistics Canada (2017).
- 13. Single language used most often at work.
- 14. Single responses only. Totals include the different multiple response categories.
- That is, those who were employed during the 2016 Census of Population reference week (May I to 7, 2016).
- 16. Because of rounding, totals may not add up to 100%.
- 17. St-Onge et al. (2021).
- 18. Ottawa-Gatineau (Quebec part).
- 19. The results were similar regardless of the language of the most recent degree in all industries except for educational services and for trade, transportation and warehousing. There were no self-employed individuals in public administration.
- French-mother-tongue graduates who worked outside Quebec after studying in Quebec were more likely to work in public administration (32%) than graduates who studied outside Quebec (13%).

- 21. The majority of French-mother-tongue graduates who worked in Moncton or Winnipeg and whose most recent degree was from a French-language or bilingual institution had earned their most recent degree from a unilingual institution (97% and 80%, respectively). This proportion was lower in Greater Sudbury (51%).
- 22. Greater Sudbury is the CMA with the lowest proportion (2%) of French-mother-tongue graduates whose most recent diploma was from an institution located in Quebec. This compares with 7% in Moncton and Winnipeg and over 25% in Ottawa, Halifax, and Vancouver.
- 23. Béland (2009).
- 24. Béland (2009).
- 25. Includes private, non-profit institutions recognized under a public act.

- Whether the institution is a college (including CEGEPs) or a university.
- Includes post career, technical or professional training programs.
- 28. Includes post-baccalaureate undergraduate programs.
- Basic education and skill acquisition programs, qualifying programs for career, technical or pre-university programs, health-related residency programs, or other programs.
- 30. Conseil supérieur de la langue française (2011).
- 31. Dupuis et al. (2015).

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