



Consortium national
de formation en santé

Identifying Francophones: An analysis of definitions based on census variables

RESEARCH REPORT PREPARED BY

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ICRML
Institut canadien
de recherche
sur les minorités
linguistiques

CIRLM
Canadian Institute
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on Linguistic
Minorities



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INTRODUCTION

Many researchers and several organizations involved in studies or projects related to Francophones living in minority situations are pondering the most appropriate way to define “Francophone” based on Statistics Canada’s variables. Although this question may appear simple, it raises issues with direct consequences not only for research but also for public policies based on statistical analyses.

The relevance of this question is related to the various political and organizational repercussions resulting from the Francophone population numbers used in the public policy domain and by organizations responsible for delivering services to Francophones. On June 4, 2009, the Government of Ontario announced that it was adopting a new definition of Francophone that expanded upon the mother tongue definition. In an attempt to integrate Francophone newcomers, the new definition adopted by the Government of Ontario retains the mother tongue criterion and goes on to include persons “whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, but who have a particular knowledge of French as an official language and use French at home, including many recent immigrants in Ontario.”¹ The effect of this broader definition is to increase the proportion of Francophones in Ontario from 4.4% to 4.8% and to trigger increases in Toronto and Ottawa of 42% and 10%, respectively.² The impact that this change in the definition of Francophone may have on the organization of services is plainly evident.

Two definitions are commonly used to define Canada’s Francophone population. The first one considers the number of persons whose mother tongue is French, with mother tongue being defined as the first language learned and still understood. It excludes persons whose mother tongue is not French but who speak French most often at home and even those who, of the two official languages, only know French.

The second one, dubbed the “first official language spoken” (FOLS) definition, uses a variable derived from data on knowledge of the two official languages, on mother tongue, and on language spoken most often at home.

Based on this definition:

- 1) Where people only know French, French is their FOLS;
- 2) Where people know French and English, with French being their mother tongue, French is their FOLS;
- 3) Where people have French and English or neither of these languages as their mother tongue, the official language spoken most often at home is their FOLS.

Based on this method, persons who speak both official languages most often at home are placed in the “French and English” FOLS category. Persons who know neither official language and whose mother tongue is not an official language are placed in the “none” category.

While we recognize that arriving at a definition of Francophone is both a complex and difficult to grasp identity process, we will propose a few possible statistical definitions that build on the variables found in Statistics Canada’s surveys. We will reflect on these definitions to select the most relevant ones, keeping in mind that the variations existing in research and service delivery settings may influence the choice of definition. Government authorities may use the definition of Francophone as the basis for setting public policy and creating services for this population.

BACKGROUND

This project follows up on another one we conducted for the *Consortium national de formation en santé* (CNFS) in 2006 and constitutes an update based on the 2006 census data.

The project originates from a concern expressed by the CNFS and several researchers around how Francophones living in minority situations are to be defined and their demographic weight quantified for research and health care delivery purposes. The *Commission conjointe de recherche sur la santé des francophones en situation minoritaire* then recommended undertaking a process to examine this issue.

¹ Government of Ontario, press release, June 4, 2009, www.ofa.gov.on.ca/en/news-090604.html (consulted on July 7, 2009).

² Office of Francophone Affairs, “Francophone Population Re-Defined,” press release, June 4, 2009.

The objective is to foster and clarify reflection on the statistical methods used in major surveys as well as services and organizations to define “Francophone living in a minority situation” and to present different processes and their impacts%all as the basis for proposing solutions. In 2006, these technical processes were submitted to a group of experts from various sectors and to partners interested in issues related to the health of Francophones living in minority situations, including Statistics Canada, Health Canada, the Commissioner of Official Languages, the *Consortium national de formation en santé*, the *Société Santé en français*, the *Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne*, and Canadian Heritage. Further to a recommendation by the *Commission conjointe de recherche*, the *Consortium national de formation en santé* and the *Société Santé en français* adopted and disseminated the document.

DESCRIPTION OF LINGUISTIC VARIABLES

The first step in reflecting on the preferred linguistic variables to be used in the statistical definition of Francophone is to review the variables currently being used by Statistics Canada in the census and in statistical surveys.

Variables³

Mother tongue: First language learned at home in childhood and **still understood** by a respondent at the time of the census.

Home language: Language that a respondent spoke **most often** or **regularly** at home at the time of the census.

Knowledge of official languages: Indicates whether a respondent can conduct a conversation in French only, in English only, in French and English, or in neither of Canada’s official languages.

Language of work: This question relates to the language most often spoken at work by a respondent at the time of the census. Data was also gathered on the other languages used at work on a regular basis. This variable applies to the active population (persons in the labour market aged 15 years and over). Language of work was measured for the first time in the 2001 census.

Two questionnaires are used to collect the census data. The first one (the short questionnaire) contains questions, including those on mother tongue, asked to the entire population. The other linguistic variables are measured by questions asked to a sample of 20% of the Canadian population. These other variables are collected on what is commonly called the long questionnaire.

First official language spoken: See Appendix A for Statistics Canada’s description of how this variable was developed.

METHODS FOR DEFINING FRANCOPHONE

Here are some possible definitions of Francophone based on the variables used by Statistics Canada in the census and in surveys.

Mother tongue

Mother tongue is a widely used variable for identifying Francophones.

Strength: This variable captures persons who learned French as their first language and still understand it.

Weakness: The variable also captures persons who can understand French without being able to speak it. Furthermore, it excludes persons who do not have French as their mother tongue but who know the language, speak it most often or regularly at home, or have it as their first official language spoken.

Statistical impact: The number of Francophones was **1,020,580** in 2001 and **1,012,540** in 2006 (See Table 1). Based on mother tongue, the number of Francophones is declining in all provinces except Alberta, British Columbia and the Yukon.

We note that in many Statistics Canada documents, the common practice has been to assign persons who have both official languages as their mother tongue to the Anglophone and Francophone language groups.

³ Source: Statistics Canada

TABLE 1

Mother Tongue⁴

Provinces and Territories	2001			2006		
	French ⁵	French and English ⁶	Total	French	French and English	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,180	345	2,525	1,920	310	2,230
Prince Edward Island	5,665	435	6,100	5,370	510	5,880
Nova Scotia	34,155	2,595	36,750	32,675	2,240	34,915
New Brunswick	236,770	5,290	242,060	233,095	4,475	237,570
Ontario	493,630	40,335	533,965	496,600	36,255	532,855
Manitoba	44,775	2,780	47,555	44,390	2,720	47,110
Saskatchewan	18,040	1,490	19,530	16,300	1,275	17,575
Alberta	59,735	6,255	65,990	62,550	5,885	68,435
British Columbia	56,105	7,525	63,630	56,585	6,710	63,295
Yukon	890	95	985	1,115	110	1,225
Northwest Territories	970	95	1,065	985	50	1,035
Nunavut	405	20	425	390	25	415
Canada, excluding Quebec	953,300	67,245	1,020,545	951,975	60,565	1,012,520

KNOWLEDGE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

This variable captures persons who are capable of conducting a conversation in French. The question only applies to official languages and it identifies four categories of persons, namely those who know only French, know only English, know French and English, or are unable to conduct a conversation in either language.

Strength: This variable identifies persons who can express themselves verbally in French. The category captures French speakers based on their perceived verbal language skills (speaking and understanding).

Weakness: This variable is based on respondents' perception of their ability to participate in a conversation (a subjective variable), and thus does not ensure an "objective" evaluation of this competency.

Furthermore, it does not lend itself to studying the Francophone population because people who are able to conduct a conversation in French do not necessarily identify with this linguistic community. They may have a different mother tongue.

Finally, it is not possible to extract the number of Francophones (e.g. based on mother tongue) from persons who know both official languages.

Statistical impact: With respect to the number of persons who know only French, this variable represents the smallest possible number of Francophones because a majority of Francophones know both official languages (130,985 unilingual Francophones

¹ The data in this document comes from the Canadian Heritage CD-ROM entitled *2001 Census Custom Tables*, AO 4234. These tables were compiled based on the 20% sample of the population and the Statistics Canada CD-ROM entitled *Portrait of Official Language Communities in Canada, 2006 Census*, 92-592-XVB, whose tables were also compiled based on the 20% sample of the population.

² Unless otherwise indicated, respondents in the French, the English, or the French and English categories include single and multiple responses. In this document, the mother tongue Francophone category also includes persons who have French and another language as their mother tongues.

³ Respondents in the English and French and the English, French and other categories.

in 2006 compared to 2,561,975 bilingual persons). These figures were 115,175 unilingual Francophones and 2,430,990 bilingual persons in 2001 (See Table 2). The number of persons who know French increased in all provinces and territories except Saskatchewan. It should be noted, however, that many of these persons may have English or other languages as their mother tongue; the fact of knowing French does not make them Francophones. By including persons with English or other languages as their mother tongue, this variable does, however, demonstrate the attractiveness of French.

TABLE 2

Knowledge of French

Provinces and Territories	2001			2006		
	French only	French and English	Total	French only	French and English	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	145	20,890	21,035	85	23,680	23,765
Prince Edward Island	95	15,990	16,085	60	17,100	17,160
Nova Scotia	790	90,265	91,055	1,005	95,010	96,015
New Brunswick	66,415	245,870	312,285	73,755	240,085	313,840
Ontario	42,305	1,319,715	1,362,020	49,210	1,377,330	1,426,540
Manitoba	1,250	102,845	104,095	1,930	103,525	105,455
Saskatchewan	360	49,000	49,360	485	47,455	47,940
Alberta	1,895	202,905	204,800	2,200	222,885	225,085
British Columbia	1,810	269,365	271,175	2,075	295,645	297,720
Yukon	45	2,895	2,940	105	3,445	3,550
Northwest Territories	40	3,130	3,170	55	3,665	3,720
Nunavut	25	1,010	1,035	20	1,165	1,185
Canada, excluding Quebec	115,175	2,323,875	2,439,050	130,985	2,430,990	2,561,975

Home language

The language spoken most often at home has been measured since the 1971 census. Since the 2001 census, persons may indicate one or more languages regularly spoken at home in addition to those most often spoken. Thus, a mother tongue Francophone may speak English most often at home (e.g. to an Anglophone spouse) and also speak French regularly (e.g. to a child). Combining data from both questions makes it possible to identify persons who speak French at home at least regularly.

Language spoken most often at home

Strength: The language spoken at home constitutes a strong indicator of a language's vitality. Relating this variable to mother tongue makes possible to estimate the language continuity or language transfer rate.

Weakness: This definition does not capture Francophones who speak English or another language most often at home (e.g. because they live in an exogamous household).

Statistical impact: 589,665 persons spoke only French at home in 2001 and 584,790 did so in 2006 (See Table 3). By adding those who speak French and English most often at home, the totals grow to 641,835 and 631,080, respectively. Between 2001 and 2006, a drop was recorded in all provinces from Saskatchewan eastward. The provinces of Alberta and British Columbia along with the three territories recorded an increase in the number of persons speaking French most often at home.

TABLE 3

Persons speaking French most often at home

Provinces and Territories	2001			2006		
	French	French and English	Total	French	French and English	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	895	205	1,110	655	180	835
Prince Edward Island	2,710	215	2,925	2,680	150	2,830
Nova Scotia	19,025	1,590	20,615	17,245	1,335	18,580
New Brunswick	215,125	5,380	220,505	211,790	4,325	216,115
Ontario	292,905	33,125	326,030	292,100	29,455	321,555
Manitoba	19,765	2,355	22,120	19,625	1,925	21,550
Saskatchewan	4,415	800	5,215	3,910	865	4,775
Alberta	18,935	3,800	22,735	19,780	3,735	23,515
British Columbia	14,900	4,610	19,510	15,790	4,200	19,990
Yukon	415	30	445	540	65	605
Northwest Territories	355	50	405	445	40	485
Nunavut	220	10	230	230	15	245
Canada, excluding Quebec	589,675	52,185	641,860	584,790	46,290	631,080

Language spoken at home at least regularly

The number of persons speaking French at home at least regularly can be obtained by adding the number of persons who speak French most often at home to the number of persons who speak French regularly at home.

Strength: This variable estimates the number of persons who speak French **most often** or **regularly** at home. This variable takes into account the exogamy factor, which very often favours English as the language spoken at home, without necessarily preventing regular use of French (e.g. between a Francophone parent and children). This variable constitutes an indicator of the vitality of French, with the transmission of the language being largely based on its use at home.

Weakness: The variable sheds no light on the mother tongue of respondents and may exclude persons who have French as their mother tongue and continue to use this language outside the home (e.g. at work).

Statistical impact: Over all, **978,360** persons spoke French at home at least regularly in 2001, and **998,670** did so in 2006 (See Table 4). These figures include persons who speak French and English at home at least regularly (they speak a language other than French or English most often at home). Contrary to the findings with respect to language spoken most often at home, French spoken at home at least regularly is trending upward. This figure is, however, declining in several provinces, including Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan, while in some provinces and territories (Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Ontario, Yukon and Nunavut), the number of persons speaking French at home at least regularly may even exceed the number of Francophones based on mother tongue.

TABLE 4

Persons speaking French at home at least regularly

Provinces and Territories	2001			2006		
	French ⁷	French and English	Total	French	French and English	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,860	215	3,075	2,910	180	3,090
Prince Edward Island	4,980	215	5,195	5,095	150	5,245
Nova Scotia	32,050	1,630	33,680	32,060	1,465	33,525
New Brunswick	240,235	5,450	245,685	239,685	4,425	244,110
Ontario	491,080	37,575	528,655	509,260	34,765	544,025
Manitoba	37,360	2,440	39,800	37,505	1,970	39,475
Saskatchewan	12,630	855	13,485	11,745	980	12,725
Alberta	48,845	4,045	52,890	52,560	4,130	56,690
British Columbia	48,430	5,180	53,610	52,070	5,030	57,100
Yukon	835	30	865	1,190	65	1,255
Northwest Territories	925	60	985	940	55	995
Nunavut	415	20	435	420	15	435
Canada, excluding Quebec	920,645	57,715	978,360	945,440	53,230	998,670

First official language spoken

Once again, this variable is derived from three questions asked on the census, namely knowledge of official languages, mother tongue, and language spoken most often at home (See Appendix A).

Strengths

- This variable captures Francophones who do not have French as their mother tongue.
- The variable allows those who know both official languages to be classified based on their mother tongue, and if their mother tongue is bilingual, based on their home language.

Weaknesses

- The definition fails to capture Francophones who have both English and French as mother tongues and who speak English most often at home. It also fails to capture many children in exogamous homes who are the offspring of beneficiaries under section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The dominance of English in most exogamous families outside Quebec accounts for this situation. The definition based on mother tongue may also omit children of Francophone beneficiaries when their mother tongue is not French.

⁷ As with mother tongue, the "French" category includes persons who only speak French as well as those who speak French and a language other than English. The same reasoning applies to persons who speak English and French at home.

- The name of this variable creates confusion by leaving the impression that respondents speak one specific language to a greater extent, when, in reality, the question is primarily designed to measure their linguistic potential. Only when home language is included (which represents the third criterion for categorizing respondents) can the frequency with which a language is used be determined. It should also be remembered that this situation only applies to a small proportion of the population.

Statistical impact: If Francophones are defined as persons whose first official language spoken is French or French and English, their number was **1,038,955** in 2001 and **1,053,790** in 2006 (See Table 5). In provinces and territories with the highest immigration levels, the number of persons with French as their first official language spoken tends to be higher than the number of persons with French as their mother tongue. This is especially true in Ontario and British Columbia, where the number of Francophones based on FOLS increased between 2001 and 2006. The same applies to the three territories.

TABLE 5

Number of Francophones based on first official language spoken

Provinces and Territories	2001			2006		
	French	French and English	Total	French	French and English	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,055	100	2,155	1,835	195	2,030
Prince Edward Island	5,235	80	5,315	5,085	95	5,180
Nova Scotia	33,175	1,185	34,360	31,510	1,425	32,935
New Brunswick	237,620	1,665	239,285	234,155	1,945	236,100
Ontario	489,905	75,605	565,510	497,150	80,890	578,040
Manitoba	42,415	1,940	44,355	42,125	1,985	44,110
Saskatchewan	16,205	685	16,890	14,475	745	15,220
Alberta	55,650	6,355	62,005	58,575	8,425	67,000
British Columbia	51,975	14,795	66,770	53,060	17,345	70,405
Yukon	850	65	915	1,120	120	1,240
Northwest Territories	875	80	955	950	115	1,065
Nunavut	380	60	440	385	80	465
Canada, excluding Quebec	936,340	102,615	1,038,955	940,445	113,370	1,053,815

Language spoken at work

Since the 2001 census, data has been available on language spoken at work. As with home language, the questions identified the language spoken most often and regularly.

Language spoken most often at work

Strength: Language spoken at work is a key indicator of linguistic vitality within a given sector, namely the economy, which contributes to assimilation or linguistic continuity.

Weakness: This variable focuses on the active population (persons aged 15 and over), i.e. on a small portion of the population.

Statistical impact: **295,060** persons spoke French or French and English most often at work in 2006, compared to **286,425** in 2001. This increase was observed in all provinces and territories except Nova Scotia (See Table 6).

TABLE 6

Number of Francophones by language spoken most often at work

Provinces and Territories	2001			2006		
	French	French and English	Total	French	French and English	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	705	230	935	860	275	1,135
Prince Edward Island	1,110	290	1,400	1,055	435	1,490
Nova Scotia	7,360	2,130	9,490	7,020	2,220	9,240
New Brunswick	94,195	16,465	110,660	99,085	12,740	111,825
Ontario	88,980	49,490	138,470	98,200	44,495	142,695
Manitoba	6,360	1,780	8,140	7,320	1,665	8,985
Saskatchewan	1,770	375	2,145	1,945	590	2,535
Alberta	4,995	2,500	7,495	5,595	2,960	8,555
British Columbia	4,650	2,675	7,325	5,650	3,330	8,980
Yukon	110	65	175	190	40	230
Northwest Territories	120	30	150	185	25	210
Nunavut	40	0	40	70	10	80
Canada, excluding Quebec	210,430	76,020	286,450	227,180	68,795	295,975

Language spoken at work at least regularly

The number of persons who speak French at work at least regularly can be obtained by adding the number of persons who speak French most often at work to the number of persons who speak French regularly at work.

This variable evaluates the number of persons who speak French at work at least regularly.

Strength: It indicates the number of persons who make at least regular use of French at work.

Weakness: It focuses on the active population (persons aged 15 and over), i.e. a small portion of the population, and excludes persons who know French or have French as their mother tongue but who do not speak it at work.

Statistical impact: The number of persons who speak French at work at least regularly was **700,850** in 2006 and **639,149** in 2001. This increase was observed in all provinces and territories

TABLE 7

Number of Francophones based on language spoken at work at least regularly

Provinces and Territories	2001			2006		
	French	French and English	Total	French	French and English	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,815	230	3,045	3,730	275	4,005
Prince Edward Island	3,720	290	4,010	4,115	435	4,550
Nova Scotia	20,295	2,150	22,445	21,370	2,240	23,610
New Brunswick	133,305	16,475	149,780	143,615	12,755	156,370
Ontario	331,525	49,780	381,305	366,530	44,815	411,345
Manitoba	20,080	1,820	21,900	22,305	1,675	23,980
Saskatchewan	6,165	375	6,540	6,400	590	6,990
Alberta	25,530	2,525	28,055	29,540	2,980	32,520
British Columbia	27,955	2,735	30,690	32,165	3,440	35,605
Yukon	565	65	630	790	50	840
Northwest Territories	510	30	540	665	25	690
Nunavut	300	0	300	335	10	345
Canada, not including Quebec	572,800	76,475	649,275	631,570	69,280	700,850

DEFINITIONS BASED ON COMBINATIONS AND CROSS-TABULATIONS OF VARIABLES

We have previously discussed a definition%namely first official language spoken%that combines several linguistic variables. Other statistical definitions of Francophones may be envisaged by cross-tabulating variables; some of these definitions optimize the number of Francophones. A few of these combinations showing some relevance are discussed below.

Mother tongue and knowledge of official languages

Description: Persons with French as their mother tongue or French and English as their mother tongues, who still know French plus persons who know French without having French or English as their mother tongue. This combination captures persons with French as their mother tongue or French and English as their mother tongues who still know French (French alone or French and English), and adds persons who do not have French or English as their mother tongue but know French.

Strength: This combination measures the number of Francophones by putting emphasis on knowledge of French by persons who have French as their mother tongue and by capturing newcomers whose mother tongue is neither French nor English but who know French.

Weakness: The combination does not capture the children of beneficiaries under Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* who have English as their mother tongue and does not capture mother tongue Francophones who no longer know French. It may also capture persons who know French but who do not speak it regularly.

Statistical impact: Based on this combination, there were **1,233,685** Francophones in 2001 and **1,269,400** in 2006 (See tables 8 and 9).

TABLE 8

**Number of Francophones based on mother tongue and knowledge of official languages
(2001 Census)**

Provinces and Territories	French Mother Tongue		English and French Mother Tongues		Other Mother Tongues		Total
	KOL French	KOL English and French	KOL French	KOL English and French	KOL French	KOL English and French	
Newfoundland and Labrador	120	1,870	0	265	15	355	2,625
Prince Edward Island	95	5,095	0	310	5	210	5,715
Nova Scotia	720	32,000	10	2,175	40	2,810	37,755
New Brunswick	66,000	169,230	110	4,750	85	2,090	242,265
Ontario	36,230	438,540	180	33,540	5,365	182,070	695,925
Manitoba	1,090	40,815	0	2,090	140	6,355	50,490
Saskatchewan	265	15,720	0	1,135	80	2,345	19,545
Alberta	1,480	53,050	25	4,745	355	19,040	78,695
British Columbia	1,035	49,180	25	5,720	680	41,225	97,865
Yukon	35	790	10	60	0	215	1,110
Northwest Territories	35	825	0	80	5	220	1,165
Nunavut	20	345	0	20	5	140	530
Canada, excluding Quebec	107,130	807,460	350	54,885	6,740	257,090	1,233,655

TABLE 9

Number of Francophones based on mother tongue and knowledge of official languages (2006 Census)⁸

Provinces and Territories	French Mother Tongue		English and French Mother Tongues		Other Mother Tongues		Total
	KOL French	KOL English and French	KOL French	KOL English and French	KOL French	KOL English and French	
Newfoundland and Labrador	75	1,730	0	200	0	655	2,660
Prince Edward Island	55	4,980	0	345	0	265	5,645
Nova Scotia	970	30,190	0	1,795	35	3,425	36,415
New Brunswick	73,065	158,605	90	4,040	515	3,100	239,415
Ontario	43,225	436,870	225	30,280	5,430	206,090	722,120
Manitoba	1,715	39,770	0	2,065	175	6,650	50,375
Saskatchewan	415	13,925	0	835	60	2,515	17,750
Alberta	1,680	55,140	30	4,390	465	23,800	85,505
British Columbia	1,375	49,920	20	4,860	595	49,425	106,195
Yukon	85	990	0	75	20	310	1,480
Northwest Territories	40	875	0	35	15	310	1,275
Nunavut	0	350	0	15	20	180	565
Canada, excluding Quebec	122,700	793,345	365	48,935	7,325	296,725	1,269,395

Mother tongue and home language

Some researchers may perform analyses on Francophones (based on mother tongue) who speak French most often or regularly or French and English at home. Francophones who may be qualified as active are those who said French and French and English when asked to identify their mother tongue.

Strength: This combination includes mother tongue Francophones who speak French at home.

Weakness: This combination excludes Francophones who speak English at home due to exogamy, as well as children of beneficiaries who do not have French as their mother tongue or do not speak French at home. Furthermore, it fails to include persons who do not have French as their mother tongue but who speak French most often or regularly at home.

Statistical impact: Based on this definition, there were **603,650** Francophones in 2001 and **618,160** in 2006 (See Table 10).

⁸ Calculation method: We cross-tabulated the variables mother tongue and knowledge of official languages in order to capture, among those with French mother tongue, only those who know French.

TABLE 10

Number of Francophones based on mother tongue and language spoken most often at home

Provinces and Territories	2001			2006		
	Language spoken most often at home: French	Languages spoken most often at home: French and English	Total	Language spoken most often at home: French	Language spoken most often at home: French and English	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	795	90	885	605	85	690
Prince Edward Island	2,560	175	2,735	2,590	125	2,715
Nova Scotia	18,045	1,150	19,195	16,360	1,000	17,360
New Brunswick	210,290	4,320	214,610	205,820	3,505	209,325
Ontario	276,910	24,720	301,630	273,470	21,425	294,895
Manitoba	18,990	1,835	20,825	18,555	1,490	20,045
Saskatchewan	4,145	595	4,740	3,670	645	4,315
Alberta	17,275	2,750	20,025	17,655	2,440	20,095
British Columbia	12,915	3,120	16,035	13,790	2,585	16,375
Yukon	380	15	395	495	50	545
Northwest Territories	330	40	370	420	10	430
Nunavut	195	10	205	180	10	190
Canada, excluding Quebec	562,835	38,840	601,675	553,610	33,365	586,975

It is possible to add to these active Francophones those who speak French regularly at home. It is also possible to calculate the number of active Francophones based on the language spoken at home **at least regularly**.

Strength: This combination includes all mother tongue Francophones who speak French at home at least regularly.

Weakness: This combination excludes Francophones who speak English due to exogamy, as well as children of beneficiaries whose mother tongue is not French or who do not speak French at home. It also excludes persons who speak French regularly but whose mother tongue is not French.

Statistical impact: Based on this definition, there were **746,815** Francophones in 2001 and **775,850** in 2006 (See Table 11).

TABLE 11

Number of Francophones based on mother tongue and language spoken at home at least regularly

Provinces and Territories	2001			2006		
	Language spoken at home at least regularly: French	Language spoken at home at least regularly: French and English	Total	Language spoken at home at least regularly: French	Languages spoken at home at least regularly: French and English	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	1,295	90	1,385	1,235	85	1,320
Prince Edward Island	3,680	175	3,855	3,685	125	3,810
Nova Scotia	25,010	1,150	26,160	23,430	1,000	24,430
New Brunswick	223,340	4,320	227,660	220,350	3,515	223,855
Ontario	371,925	25,205	397,130	376,450	21,980	398,430
Manitoba	28,640	1,835	30,475	28,880	1,505	30,380
Saskatchewan	8,350	595	8,945	7,080	655	7,735
Alberta	31,605	2,770	34,375	33,110	2,480	35,590
British Columbia	26,930	3,185	30,115	27,720	2,685	30,400
Yukon	570	15	585	810	50	860
Northwest Territories	585	50	635	615	10	625
Nunavut	280	10	290	250	10	260
Canada, excluding Quebec	722,195	39,410	761,605	723,635	34,105	757,740

French or non-official language as mother tongue and language spoken most often at home

Rather than limiting the definition of Francophone to persons with French as their mother tongue who speak French at home, it may be expanded by including persons with French as their mother tongue and persons who, without having French as their mother tongue, speak French most often or regularly at home. We have also added in persons who also speak English or French most often or regularly at home, while excluding mother tongue French (to avoid double counting) and mother tongue English (to avoid including Anglophones). Here is the data on language spoken most often at home.

Strength: This combination makes it possible to include persons who have French as their mother tongue to persons who have a non-official language as their mother tongue but who speak French most often at home.

Weakness: This combination excludes persons who know French but who do not speak it at home.

Statistical impact: The number of persons whose mother tongue is French or a non-official language and who speak French most often at home was **1,035,795** in 2001 and **1,031,720** in 2006, if persons who speak English and French most often at home are factored in. Despite this apparent national inter-census stability, the provincial data shows variations (See Table 12).

TABLE 12

Number of Francophones based on mother tongue (MT) and language spoken most often at home⁹

Provinces and Territories	2001				2006			
	MT French and French and English	Language spoken most often at home: French	Language spoken most often at home: English and French	Total	MT French and French and English	Language spoken most often at home: French	Language spoken most often at home: English and French	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,525	0	15	2,540	2,230	10	0	2,240
Prince Edward Island	6,100	10	15	6,125	5,880	5	0	5,885
Nova Scotia	36,750	140	45	36,935	34,915	115	15	35,045
New Brunswick	242,060	425	30	242,515	237,570	1,045	65	238,680
Ontario	533,965	7,725	3,240	544,930	532,855	10,425	3,215	546,495
Manitoba	47,555	205	165	47,925	47,110	445	155	47,710
Saskatchewan	19,530	70	70	19,670	17,575	85	50	17,710
Alberta	65,990	695	465	67,150	68,435	1,075	550	70,060
British Columbia	63,630	1,115	740	65,485	63,295	1,135	695	65,125
Yukon	985	15	15	1,015	1,225	20	0	1,245
Northwest Territories	1,065	0	0	1,065	1,035	15	20	1,070
Nunavut	425	15	15	440	415	35	5	455
Canada, excluding Quebec	1,020,545	10,415	4,790	1,035,750	1,012,540	14,395	4,755	1,031,690

Mother tongue and language spoken at home at least regularly

Adding persons who speak French at home regularly broadens the definition of Francophone.

Strength: This combination makes it possible to include persons whose mother tongue is French to persons with another mother tongue who speak French most often or regularly at home.

Weakness: This combination includes mother tongue Francophones who may understand French without being able to speak it.

Statistical impact: The number of persons with French as their mother tongue and who speak French most often or regularly at home was **1,047,135** in 2001 and **1,051,195** in 2006 (See Table 13).

⁹ Calculation method: The Francophone population includes persons based on French mother tongue, persons who speak French most often at home (excluding persons whose mother tongue is French and/or English), and persons who speak French and English most often at home (excluding persons whose mother tongue is French and/or English).

TABLE 13

Number of Francophones based on mother tongue (MT) and language spoken at home at least regularly¹⁰

Provinces and Territories	2001				2006			
	MT French and French and English	Language spoken at least regularly at home: French	Languages spoken at least regularly at home: English and French	Total	MT French and French and English	Language spoken at least regularly at home: French	Language spoken at least regularly at home: English and French	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,525	55	25	2,605	2,230	50	0	2,280
Prince Edward Island	6,100	40	15	6,155	5,880	45	10	5,935
Nova Scotia	36,750	460	75	37,285	34,915	455	135	35,505
New Brunswick	242,060	725	90	242,875	237,570	1,505	165	239,240
Ontario	533,965	29,355	6,985	570,305	532,855	32,460	7,755	573,070
Manitoba	47,555	1,845	240	49,640	47,110	1,455	190	48,755
Saskatchewan	19,530	70	125	20,325	17,575	650	130	18,355
Alberta	65,990	3,885	680	70,555	68,435	4,075	870	73,380
British Columbia	63,630	6,505	1,245	71,380	63,295	6,355	1,410	71,060
Yukon	985	45	15	1,045	1,225	50	0	1,275
Northwest Territories	1,065	40	0	1,105	1,035	50	35	1,120
Nunavut	425	40	10	475	415	55	5	475
Canada, excluding Quebec	1,020,545	43,685	9,480	1,073,710	1,012,540	47,165	10,665	1,070,370

Knowledge of official languages and mother tongue

It bears repeating that the weakness of the knowledge of official languages variable resides in the fact that it does not extract mother tongue Francophones from persons who know French. We have therefore performed a cross-tabulation to make this distinction.

Description: Knowledge of French only, plus persons who know both languages and whose mother tongue is French, plus persons who know French and English and whose mother tongues are French and English.

Strength: This combination makes it possible to extract mother tongue Francophones from persons who know both official languages.

Weakness: The combination does not capture mother tongue Francophones who no longer know French.

Statistical impact: Based on this combination, there were **922,630** Francophones in 2001 and **924,330** Francophones in 2006. Also capturing persons who know both official languages and have these languages as their mother tongues produced **977,610** Francophones or bilinguals in 2001 and **973,265** Francophones or bilinguals in 2006 (See tables 14 and 15).

¹⁰ Calculation method: Mother tongue persons are added to persons who speak French or French and English at least regularly at home.

TABLE 14

Number of Francophones based on knowledge of official language (KOL) and mother tongue (MT) (2001 Census)¹¹

Provinces and Territories	KOL French only	KOL French and English and MT French	Total	KOL French and English and MT French and English	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	145	1,865	2,010	270	2,280
Prince Edward Island	95	5,100	5,195	310	5,505
Nova Scotia	790	32,000	32,790	2,170	34,960
New Brunswick	66,415	169,225	235,640	4,755	240,395
Ontario	42,305	438,540	480,845	33,535	514,380
Manitoba	1,250	40,810	42,060	2,095	44,155
Saskatchewan	360	15,720	16,080	1,130	17,210
Alberta	1,895	53,045	54,940	4,745	59,685
British Columbia	1,810	49,185	50,995	5,720	56,715
Yukon	45	790	835	55	890
Northwest Territories	40	830	870	75	945
Nunavut	25	3453	370	20	390
Canada, excluding Quebec	115,175	807,460	922,635	54,885	977,520

¹⁴ Calculation method: Variables were cross-tabulated to subtract persons who know French or French and English from those with French or French and English as their mother tongue(s).

TABLE 15

Number of Francophones based on knowledge of official language (KOL) and mother tongue (MT) (2006 Census)

Provinces and Territories	KOLFrench	KOLFrench and English and MT French	Total	KOLFrench and English and MT French and English	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	85	1,730	1,815	200	2,015
Prince Edward Island	60	4,980	5,040	345	5,385
Nova Scotia	1,005	30,190	31,195	1,795	32,990
New Brunswick	73,755	158,605	232,360	4,040	236,400
Ontario	49,210	436,870	486,080	30,280	516,360
Manitoba	1,930	39,770	41,700	2,065	43,765
Saskatchewan	485	13,925	14,410	835	15,245
Alberta	2,200	55,140	57,340	4,390	61,730
British Columbia	2,075	49,920	51,995	4,860	56,855
Yukon	105	990	1,095	75	1,170
Northwest Territories	55	875	930	35	965
Nunavut	20	350	370	15	385
Canada, excluding Quebec	130,985	793,345	924,330	48,935	973,265

Mother tongue and first official language spoken

This definition combines the two most commonly used definitions. It begins by defining Francophones based on mother tongue and then adds in persons who have French not as their mother tongue but as their first official language spoken.

Description: Persons whose mother tongue is French and persons whose mother tongue is not French but whose FOLS is French or French and English.

Strength: This combination captures Francophones whose mother tongue is not French.

Weakness: As with the first official language spoken variable, the combination does not capture as Francophone those persons whose mother tongues are English and French and who speak English most often at home (e.g. due to an exogamous household).

Statistical impact: In 2001, this combination added 21,305 persons to the mother tongue Francophone population, for a total of **974,625** Francophones. In 2006, it added 23,870 persons to the mother tongue Francophone population, for a total of **975,845** Francophones.

Further adding persons whose mother tongue and first official language consist of the two official languages brings the total to **1,131,345** in 2001 and **1,036,410** in 2006 (See tables 16 and 17).

TABLE 16

Number of Francophones based on mother tongue (MT) and first official language spoken (FOLS) (2001 Census)¹²

Provinces and Territories	MT French	FOLSFrench	Subtotal	MT French and English	Subtotal	FOLSFrench and English	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,180	20	2,200	345	2,545	55	2,600
Prince Edward Island	5,665	10	5,675	435	6,115	30	6,140
Nova Scotia	34,155	130	34,285	2,595	36,880	815	37,695
New Brunswick	236,770	450	237,220	5,290	242,510	495	243,005
Ontario	493,630	10,885	504,515	40,335	544,850	66,720	611,570
Manitoba	44,775	300	45,075	2,780	47,855	1,475	49,330
Saskatchewan	18,040	125	18,165	1,490	19,655	535	20,190
Alberta	59,735	770	60,505	6,255	66,760	5,490	72,250
British Columbia	56,105	1,380	57,485	7,525	65,010	13,665	78,675
Yukon	890	25	915	95	1,010	65	1,075
Northwest Territories	970	5	975	85	1,060	60	1,130
Nunavut	405	15	420	25	445	55	495
Canada, excluding Quebec	953,300	14,115	967,415	67,245	1,034,660	89,460	1,124,120

¹² Calculation method: The total population of each province and territory was divided by mother tongue and first official language spoken. Only the following categories were retained: French mother tongue, first official language French but mother tongue not French, and first official language French and English but mother tongue not French.

TABLE 17

Number of Francophones based on mother tongue (MT) and first official language spoken (FOLS) (2006 Census)

Provinces and Territories	MT French	FOLS French	Subtotal	MT French and English	FOLS French and English	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	1,920	0	1,920	310	170	2,400
Prince Edward Island	5,370	10	5,380	510	50	5,940
Nova Scotia	32,675	120	32,795	2,400	1,055	36,090
New Brunswick	233,095	1,220	234,315	4,475	820	239,610
Ontario	496,600	13,225	509,825	36,255	73,205	619,285
Manitoba	44,390	510	44,900	2,720	1,635	49,255
Saskatchewan	16,300	110	16,410	1,275	595	18,280
Alberta	62,550	1,290	63,840	5,885	7,720	77,445
British Columbia	56,585	1,345	57,930	6,710	16,415	81,055
Yukon	1,115	40	1,155	110	90	1,355
Northwest Territories	985	25	1,010	50	100	1,160
Nunavut	390	20	410	25	75	510
Canada, excluding Quebec	951,975	17,920	969,895	60,565	101,930	1,132,390

Mother tongue and knowledge of official languages

This combination captures Francophones based on mother tongue and persons who have a different mother tongue but only know French. Also included are persons who have both official languages as mother tongues and persons who know French and English without having either of these languages as their mother tongue.

Strength: This definition captures persons who know French and whose mother tongues are the two official languages.

Weakness: The definition may capture persons who know French without speaking it regularly.

Statistical impact: The number of persons who know French or have French as their mother tongue was **1,285,705** in 2001 and **1,317,190** in 2006 (See tables 18 and 19).

TABLE 18

Number of Francophones based on mother tongue and knowledge of French (2001 Census)¹³

Provinces and Territories	Mother tongue French	Knowledge of French only (MT other)	Total	Mother tongue French and English	Knowledge of French and English (MT other)	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,180	15	2,195	345	355	2,895
Prince Edward Island	5,665	5	5,670	435	205	6,310
Nova Scotia	34,155	40	34,195	2,595	2,820	39,610
New Brunswick	236,770	85	236,855	5,290	2,090	244,235
Ontario	493,630	5,365	498,995	40,335	182,080	721,410
Manitoba	44,775	140	44,915	2,780	6,355	54,050
Saskatchewan	18,040	80	18,120	1,490	2,350	21,960
Alberta	59,735	330	60,065	6,255	19,040	85,360
British Columbia	56,105	680	56,785	7,525	41,230	105,540
Yukon	890	0	890	95	215	1,200
Northwest Territories	970	5	975	85	215	1,285
Nunavut	405	5	410	20	135	565
Canada, excluding Quebec	953,300	6,740	960,040	67,245	247,090	1,284,375

¹³ Calculation method: The total population of each province and territory was divided by mother tongue and knowledge of official languages. Only the following categories were retained: French mother tongue, knowledge of official languages (KOL) French and knowledge of official languages (KOL) English and French.

TABLE 19

Number of Francophones based on mother tongue and knowledge of French (2006 Census)

Provinces and Territories	Mother tongue French	Knowledge of French only (MT other)	Total	Mother tongue French and English	Knowledge of French and English	Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	1,920	0	1,920	310	655	2,885
Prince Edward Island	5,370	0	5,370	510	265	6,145
Nova Scotia	32,675	35	32,705	2,240	3,425	38,370
New Brunswick	233,095	515	233,610	4,475	3,100	241,185
Ontario	496,600	5,430	502,030	36,255	206,090	744,375
Manitoba	44,390	175	44,565	2,720	6,650	53,935
Saskatchewan	16,300	60	16,360	1,275	2,515	20,150
Alberta	62,550	465	63,015	5,885	23,800	92,700
British Columbia	56,585	595	57,180	6,710	49,425	113,315
Yukon	1,115	20	1,135	110	310	1,555
Northwest Territories	985	15	1,000	50	310	1,355
Nunavut	390	20	410	25	180	615
Canada, excluding Quebec	951,075	7,305	959,280	60,565	296,710	1,316,555

Discussion

The definition that captures the greatest number of Francophones is based on the knowledge of official languages variable, which accounted for **2,561,975** persons in 2006 (See Table 2). However, the weakness of this variable is that it captures a considerable number of persons who know French but who do not identify with the Francophone community.

Based on the definition combining mother tongue and FOLS (See tables 16 and 17), there were **1,138,340** Francophones in 2006. The strength of this definition resides in the fact that it combines the two variables most commonly used to identify Francophones on a statistical basis. Combining these two variables into a single definition amply compensates for each variable's individual weaknesses. For instance, the variable FOLS has the downside of classifying as Anglophones those persons whose mother tongues are English and French but who speak English most often at home. As we have mentioned, among those excluded are children of Francophone beneficiaries who have both official languages as their mother tongues and who speak English most often at home. This exclusion may expand if more Francophone beneficiaries in exogamous households are successful in imparting both official languages to their children as mother tongues. Although respect for the equality of official languages would be enhanced, the official language minority community population would diminish. As for the mother tongue variable, it excludes the growing number of Canadians who can identify with the Francophone community but whose mother tongue is not French. This variable also excludes approximately half the children of Francophone beneficiaries, namely all those who have a Francophone parent but whose mother tongue is not French. The combination of the mother tongue variables and FOLS is clearly more inclusive but it fails to capitalize on the Francophone community's full population potential.

The definition combining mother tongue and knowledge of official languages (See tables 18 and 19) captured **1,317,190** Francophones in 2006. These are persons whose mother tongue is French, or, if they have a mother tongue other than French, they know only French, or, if they have mother tongues other than French and English, they know both official languages. This definition ensures that everyone who may **potentially** identify with the Francophone community is captured, without preventing them from identifying with other linguistic communities. The data clearly shows that newcomers have a greater tendency to join

the Anglophone community, but nothing justifies associating them from the outset with one official language community in particular. This combination captures the largest number of Francophones while also offering the advantage of excluding persons whose mother tongue is English and who know French and English. We could envisage factoring in home language and limiting this definition to those who speak French at least regularly at home, which would bring us closer to the definition used by the Government of Ontario. This calculation cannot be performed on the databank used in this case. We note, however, that the definition combining mother tongue and language spoken at home most often or at least regularly approximates this calculation (See tables 12 and 13). In 2006, this approach identified 1,051,195 Francophones. Indeed, it is reasonable to expect that persons who speak French at home will indicate that they know French.

Finally, it should be mentioned that it would, at the very least, be problematic to propose a single variable or combination of variables serving to define Francophones on a statistical basis, since the relevance of the definitions selected depends on the related research or intervention context. We have noted that the Francophone population varies considerably depending on the definitions adopted. If some definitions capture a large number of Francophones, it is crucial to question their relevance. If the intention is to capture the largest number of Francophones, including Francophiles, the variable determining knowledge of the language appears relevant. However, if the intention is to capture Francophones for identity definition purposes, it is important to apply a variable or combination of variables that is relevant to this purpose.

We can identify at least three sources of legitimacy with respect to the Canadian Francophone community. Mother tongue would represent a variable that remains relevant from several perspectives. It expresses **legitimacy of origin** in relation to the Francophone community. However, in regard to the delivery of some services, knowledge or use of the language are variables that should be taken into consideration. A combination tailored to capture newcomers who know French or both official languages appears almost inevitable, given Canada's official languages policy. The Government of Ontario has opted for this approach. It is through a **legitimacy of choice** that newcomers who speak languages other than French or English may wish to integrate into the Francophone language community.

From a legal perspective, given section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the definition that is used must be designed to capture beneficiaries. This involves a **legitimacy of right**. Even children whose mother tongue is not French can attend French-language schools if one of their parents is a beneficiary. They can become productive members of the Francophone community through their education rights. Although the combination of mother tongue and FOLS denotes progress in this direction, we have identified a limitation to this combination. More in-depth analyses using Statistics Canada databases could take these limitations into account and devise a combination that would capture all Francophone beneficiaries. Although it appears justified to ask Statistics Canada to supply more accurate linguistic variables, it is nonetheless up to the players and stakeholders involved to appreciate the relevance of the variables they apply in their analyses.

APPENDIX A

FIRST OFFICIAL LANGUAGE SPOKEN

This variable was derived within the framework of the application of the *Official Languages Act*.

This derivation method is described in the regulations concerning the use of official languages for the provision of public services. It takes into account: first, the knowledge of the two official languages; second, the mother tongue; and third, the home language.

Persons who can conduct a conversation in French only are assigned French as their first official language spoken. Persons who can carry on a conversation in English only are assigned English as their first official language spoken. The responses to questions on mother tongue and home language are subsequently used to establish the first official language spoken by people who speak both English and French, or who cannot speak either of the two official languages. The French category includes people who have French only or French, and at least one non-official language as their mother tongue. People who have English only or English, and at least one non-official language as their mother tongue, are included in the English category. For cases that have not yet been classified, people are assigned to the French category when they speak French only or French, and at least one non-official language as their home language. The procedure is the same for English. Thus, the population is classified into two principal categories: English or French. It is necessary to add two residual categories for people who cannot be classified in accordance with the information available: English and French and neither English nor French.

Source: Statistics Canada

www12.statcan.gc.ca/english/census01/Products/Reference/dict/pop044.htm (consulted on March 15, 2005)



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