

Francophones accounted for a third of the population in New Brunswick. In other provinces, French minorities accounted for 5% or less of residents, including Ontario with 484,265 persons whose only mother tongue was French — the largest number of francophones outside Quebec.

At the national level, the proportion of the total population speaking English at home rose from 67.0% in 1971 to 68.9% in 1986, while the proportion speaking French at home declined from 25.7% to 24.0% over the same period.

The proportion speaking a language other than French or English remained at about 7%. Within this latter group, there was strong growth in the number reporting languages associated with the birth places of recent immigrants — notably Spanish and Asiatic languages such as Chinese, Vietnamese, Persian (Farsi) and Tamil.

To better reflect the linguistic reality in Canada, the 1986 Census was the first Census in which Canadians could indicate more than one mother tongue, if the mother tongues had been learned simultaneously and were spoken as frequently during childhood. Nearly one million persons, or a little less than 4% of the population, reported having more than one mother tongue. The distribution of these responses was as follows: English and French, 333,000; English and language(s) other than French, 526,000; French and language(s) other than English, 36,000; English, French and other language(s), 47,000; and more than one language other than English and French, 14,000.

The existence of multiple responses makes comparing 1986 Census results with those of the previous Censuses difficult.

The proportion of francophones in Canada and the proportion of anglophones in Quebec continue to decline. However, because of this change between 1981 and 1986 data, it is difficult to accurately estimate the variations in the linguistic composition of the population from 1981 to 1986.

The drop in the percentage of persons with French as their mother tongue began in 1951. The French-language group then accounted for 29% of the Canadian population, compared with approximately 25% in 1986. In Quebec, the percentage of persons with English as their mother tongue has been falling since 1941. (This was the year of the first Census from which we have data that can be compared with today's data.) This group accounted for 14% of the province's population in that year, compared with approximately 10% at the time of the last Census.

In Quebec, the proportion of Quebecers reporting that they most often spoke French at home rose from 80.8% in 1971 to 82.5% in 1981

and to 82.8% in 1986. During this period, the proportion of Quebecers speaking English at home decreased from 14.7% in 1971 to 12.7% in 1981 and to 12.3% in 1986, while the proportion reporting a language other than English or French rose to 4.9% from 4.5% in 1971 and 4.8% in 1981.

In 1986, more than half of persons with English as their mother tongue, living in Quebec, were bilingual. Almost half of Quebec residents with neither English nor French as their mother tongue also reported they could carry on a conversation in both English and French; as did almost one-third of persons with French as their mother tongue, living in that province.

Less than 6% of persons residing outside Quebec with English or a language other than English or French as their mother tongue reported they were able to converse in both official languages in 1986.

Some Canadians speak a language most often in their home that is other than their mother tongue. These language shifts are a major factor in determining the mother tongue of following generations and contribute to the growth of the language spoken. Most Quebec residents who first learned a language other than English or French as mother tongue and who made a language shift, adopted English as their dominant home language; the French-speaking community in Quebec neither gained nor lost population through language shifts but a loss was recorded for the francophone population living outside Quebec.

In 1986, more than 4 million Canadians reported they could conduct a conversation in both English and French. Bilingual persons represented 16% of the population, up from 15% in 1981 and 13% in 1971. Quebec and New Brunswick recorded the highest rates of bilingualism at 35% and 29%, respectively. Slightly over half of Canada's bilingual population lived in Quebec. The 1.8 million who lived outside Quebec resided mainly in Ontario (1,058,000), New Brunswick (204,000), British Columbia (176,000) and Alberta (150,000).

In most provinces other than Quebec, there has been a downward trend in the proportion of the francophone population since 1981, continuing a trend from previous Censuses. However, the proportion seems to have remained the same in New Brunswick, while rising in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. In New Brunswick, when the multiple responses given in 1986 are allocated among the various languages as in 1981, the proportion of persons with French as their mother tongue shows little change. Francophones accounted for a third of the population