

The French-as-a-second-language Learning Experience of Anglophone
and Allophone University Students

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Abstract

To compare the French-as-a-second-language learning experience of anglophones ($n = 187$) and allophones ($n = 61$), demographic and background information, self-evaluations, data on language anxiety, and final grades are analysed for students taking first-, second-, and third-year French courses at a Canadian university. It was found that both groups share more characteristics than they differ in the process of learning a second language. More important, they experience comparable anxiety levels, and their final grades in language courses do not differ significantly.

Sont analysés pour fins de comparaison des données démographiques et des données relatives aux antécédents de 187 anglophones et de 61 allophones, ainsi que leurs auto-évaluations, leurs réponses à un questionnaire sur l'anxiété langagière et leur note finale. Ces universitaires inscrits à des cours de français langue seconde de première, deuxième et troisième année ont plusieurs caractéristiques communes. Notamment, ils éprouvent des niveaux d'anxiété semblables et leurs notes finales sont équivalentes.

Background

Does the French-as-a-second-language learning experience of university students differ depending on whether they are *anglophones*, that is, with English as their mother tongue, or *allophones*, that is, without English or French as their mother tongue? Data collected for a broader study (Coulombe, 2000) on the role of affective and cognitive variables in second-language learning provide some insights into answering this question.

Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) propose a socioeducation model of second-language acquisition that takes into account the sociocultural milieu in which language learning takes place, see Figure 1. According to Gardner and MacIntyre, all second-language learners bring with them “antecedent factors” to their language-learning situation: some are biological (age, gender, etc.), others are experiential (previous language training, etc.). Most important, learners’ individual cognitive and affective differences influence the language acquisition process. Cognitive variables such as intelligence, strategies, and aptitude are linked to the *process of knowing*, whereas affective variables, namely attitudes, motivation, and anxiety, refer to

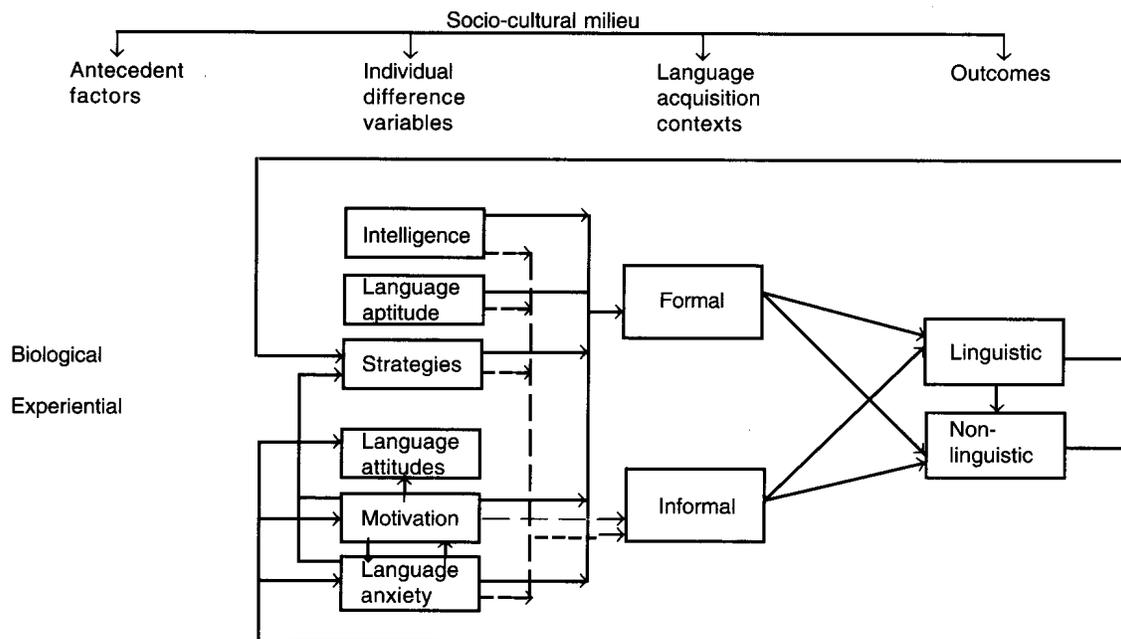


Figure 1. Gardner and MacIntyre's (1993) socio-education model of second-language acquisition.

learners' *responses* to the learning. As indicated by the solid directional arrows in Figure 1, cognitive and affective variables not only influence one another, but also the language learning that takes place in either a formal (classroom) or an informal (e.g., on the street) context. In turn, the contexts in which language learning takes place influence the linguistic and the nonlinguistic (e.g., watching television in the target language) outcomes of any given language-learning situation. As seen in Figure 1, solid directional arrows indicate the direct influence of one factor on another. More specifically, the broken arrows indicate that cognitive variables and language anxiety come into play after a learner enters an informal context. Finally, the dotted arrow indicates that learners' motivation determines if they choose to use the second-language in informal contexts.

To compare the French-as-a-second-language learning experience of anglophone and allophone university students, we organized the data according to Gardner and MacIntyre's (1993) model. First, we look at antecedent factors, both biological, that is, gender and age, and experiential, that is, type of studies, previous French training, contacts with French speakers, exposure to the French media, sojourn in a French-speaking environment, and the allophones' fluency in English. Second, we examine language anxiety levels of anglophones and allophones. We note here that language anxiety is one of the most important affective variables involved in second-language learning (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Horwitz & Young, 1991). Third, we compare some factors pertaining to the formal context in which language learning is taking place, namely, student enrollment per course year and if French is a compulsory or optional course. Finally, linguistic outcomes are examined through students' self-evaluations of French proficiency and their final grades; students' evaluations of their overall French learning experience at the university provide data on nonlinguistic outcomes.

Biological Antecedents

Gender and age are two demographic variables that have received attention from second-language researchers. Ehrman (1996) observes that "language courses in [secondary] schools ... are heavily populated by females" (p. 168). We extend this

work here by establishing if there are gender imbalances in a large university sample comprising anglophones and allophones who study French.

Concerning age, the debate centres principally around differences in learning abilities between children and adult learners 15 years and older (Ellis, 1994). We extend this work by examining whether age differences are present between anglophones and allophones in a university context.

Experiential Antecedents

Although it is likely that background factors influence the acquisition of a second language, such factors have received scant research attention. As a result, we formulate two important questions: does an equal proportion of undergraduate and graduate anglophones and allophones take French? How do high school French levels compare for anglophones and allophones? It would seem reasonable to think that more anglophones would have had high school French for two reasons: French is still the most widely taught second language in the Canadian province where this study was conducted, and students from the home province need to have a foreign language for admission to their university.

Moreover, contacts with native French speakers, exposure to the French media, and visits to a French-speaking environment are manifestations of learners' interest in the French culture. Ehrman (1996) claims that exposure to another culture "tends to promote openness to the unexpected" (p. 172) and to reduce beliefs that one is the centre of the world. More specifically regarding contacts, research shows that linguistic intergroup contacts in Canada have a positive effect on adolescents' motivation to learn a second language (Desrochers & Gardner, 1978; Hamers & Deshaies, 1981). In our sample it is also likely that some Canadian university students participated in exchange programs before they attended university. On the other hand, allophones may have been preoccupied with integrating into the dominant English culture, thus lessening their interest in furthering their experience of the French culture.

Ehrman (1996) also underlines the importance of a "mind-set that tends to develop after one has learned one or more languages" (p. 171), a mind-set that allows

learners to acquire and use self-knowledge and preferred learning strategies that facilitate learning. Because data collection took place at a Canadian university where allophone students must pass an English entrance exam to be admitted,¹ for some students second language learning is in fact third-language learning. Thus it would seem reasonable to postulate that allophones should be better learners of French. In turn, this potential advantage of allophones could be outweighed by the fact that the language of instruction is likely to be English, at least in lower-level French classes. In order to clarify this point, because success on the English entrance exam is no guarantee of the successful use of English during the course of their studies, allophones were requested to provide a self-evaluation of their English proficiency. It appears legitimate to speculate that allophones would rate their English as average or better since they were admitted to university.

Language Anxiety

Researchers in second-language acquisition recognize the importance of learners' "individual differences" (Ellis, 1994; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992, 1993; Skehan, 1995, 1998), principally accounting for variations in learning speed and accuracy. In this article we focus on language anxiety, which is experienced by at least one student in 10 (Coulombe, 2000; Horwitz et al., 1986). The literature reports that anxiety in language classes correlates negatively with final grades of university language students enrolled in courses at various levels of difficulty (Aida, 1994; Horwitz, 1986; Saito & Samimy, 1996) and indeed is reported to be one of the best predictors of final grades (Coulombe, 2000; Daley, Onwuegbuzie & Bailey, 1997; Saito & Samimy, 1996). It accounted for 8-22% of the variance in course grades.

If Ehrman's (1996) hypothesis of the mind-set holds true, allophones should feel less anxiety than anglophones when learning French, which would lead to more successful outcomes.

Formal Context

How many anglophones and allophones take French and at what level? How many anglophones and allophones take French as a compulsory course? Students who feel that they are obligated to take French would probably be under more

pressure to do well in their courses.

Outcomes

How do anglophones and allophones evaluate their own French proficiency? How do anglophones and allophones evaluate their overall French-learning experience? There is no reason to believe that evaluations between the two groups should be different. They should, however, be consistent with students' final grades. On the other hand, if allophones actually have the advantage of a particular mind-set that facilitates language learning, their final grades should be higher than those of anglophones, or at least equal if English represents an additional difficulty to them.

In summary, because the major part of this study is exploratory, we can hypothesize a number of possible differences between anglophones' and allophones' French-as-a-second-language learning experience: (a) it is likely that more anglophones will have taken high school French; (b) anglophones will have had more contact with francophones, will have used the French media more than allophones, and will have visited francophone regions more extensively than allophones; (c) allophones would deem their English proficiency to be at least average; (d) allophones would experience less anxiety than anglophones and, consequently, (e) they would tend to get higher grades than anglophones.

Method

Participants

In early 1997, 250 students registered in language courses² in the French Department of Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, participated in our study on a voluntary basis. Of the 250 participants in the original project, 248 specified their mother tongue(s). Nearly one quarter of participants (61) were allophones. The largest linguistic group among these comprised 26 native speakers of Cantonese or Mandarin, whereas the remaining 35 shared 21 different languages from the rest of the world as their native tongues. Eleven participants reported that they had two mother tongues including English; these were counted in the group of 187 anglophones. Ninety-six percent of participants had Canadian citizenship or were landed immigrants.³ Other demographic data are presented in Table 1 for participants

who had English and those who had neither English nor French as their mother tongue.

As shown in Table 1, and consistent with secondary school populations, university French-language learners were mostly female (77% overall) and under 20 (44% overall).^a

Overall, anglophones and allophones did not differ by gender or by age.^b

Table 1

Demographic information on anglophones ($n = 187$) and allophones ($n = 61$)			
Item	Category	Anglophones n (%)	Allophones n (%)
Gender	Female	140 (75%)*	51 (84%)
	Male	46 (25%)	10 (16%)
Age	18-20	79 (42%)	31 (51%)
	21-23	71 (38%)	23 (38%)
	24 and over	37 (20%)	7 (11%)

* For gender one case is missing for anglophones; $n = 186$.

Instruments

Information on biological and experiential antecedents and evaluations of various aspects of participants' second-language learning were self-reported through multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Five-point scales ranging from "excellent" (= 5) to "very poor" (= 1) were used for self-evaluation of proficiency in English and in French, and for assessment of French-learning experience. For anxiety, Horwitz et

^a For female, $\chi^2(1) = 73.78$, $p < .00001$, and for age, $\chi^2(1) = 28.67$, $p < .00001$, where χ^2 is used to test the null hypothesis for categorical data; p is the probability of obtaining an χ^2 value as extreme as the one observed in this study, assuming the null hypothesis is true. The p value is not significant if larger than .05.

^b For gender, $\chi^2(1) = 1.82$, $p > .17$, $V = .09$. For age, $\chi^2(2) = 2.55$, $p > .27$, $V = .10$. Cramer's V is a measure of effect size, corresponding to the correlation coefficient. It can range from 0 to 1.00, where a value of 0 indicates no relationship and a value of 1.00 indicates a perfect relationship.

al.'s (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was administered, and final grades were released through a consent form.

The FLCAS has satisfactory levels of validity and reliability and is widely used. It comprises 33 statements to be evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" (= 5) to "strongly disagree" (= 1). Examples of FLCAS items are: "I often feel like not going to my language class", "I get upset when I don't understand what the language teacher is correcting", and "The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get". Factor analysis confirmed that for the present sample, as for other samples, a single factor structure was appropriate (Coulombe, 2000).

In 1986 Horwitz reported that the range of scores on the FLCAS for a sample of 108 students enrolled in introductory Spanish classes at the University of Texas was from 1.4 to 4.5 ($M = 2.8$, $SD = .65$). Aida's (1994) sample of 96 second-year Japanese learners had a range of 1.4 to 4.4 ($M = 2.9$, $SD = .67$). In our sample of 248, scores also ranged from 1.4 to 4.4 ($M = 2.7$, $SD = .61$). The similarity in reported anxiety levels suggests that US undergraduates taking first- and second-year courses experience anxiety levels comparable to Canadians taking first-, second-, and third-year second-language courses.

Procedure

Data were collected for 11 French-language courses (4 first-year, 4 second-year, and 3 third-year) in 19 separate classes (7 first-year, 8 second-year, and 4 third-year) during regular class hours. After giving informed consent, students completed the self-report instruments.

Results

In this section categorical results are presented for (a) experiential antecedents, (b) contextual aspects of the language-learning experience, (c) language anxiety levels, (d) self-ratings of French proficiency and overall evaluations of the French-as-a-second-language experience, and (e) final grades and other variables.

Experiential Antecedents

Ninety-five percent of anglophones and allophones were undergraduates, and the remaining 5% were graduate students.

Participants were asked to specify the last high school French completed (French 10, 11, or 12, Français 12 – for immersion, etc.) and were given the option to check "does not apply" as some were true beginners. The answers are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Last high-school French course completed by anglophones
(*n* = 187) and allophones (*n* = 61)

Level *	Anglophones <i>n</i> (%)	Allophones <i>n</i> (%)
12	143 (76%)	26 (43%)
11	20 (11%)	11 (18%)
10	12 (6.5%)	3 (5%)
None	12 (6.5%)	21 (34%)

* In Canada the school system is made up of 12 years of study or grades. Grade 12 is the year of graduation.

There were significant differences between anglophones and allophones: fewer allophones had had grade 12 (standardized deviate, which is similar to a z score, = -4.93), and more allophones reported having had no high school French (standardized deviate = 5.59).^c Although results lend support to hypothesis (a), this suggests that as a group allophones were somewhat less prepared for French at the university level.

An equal proportion of both anglophones and allophones (33%) reported having had personal contacts with a French speaker other than their instructor.

As shown in Table 3, 37% of anglophones and 48% of allophones had experienced some aspect of the French media; these percentages did not differ for the two groups.^d

^c $\chi^2(3) = 37.003, p < .0001; V = .39$

^d $\chi^2(1) = 2.18, p > .13; V = .09$

Table 3

Exposure to the French media for anglophones ($n = 187$) and allophones ($n = 61$)		
	Anglophones n (%)	Allophones n (%)
Yes	69 (37%)	29 (48%)
No	118 (63%)	32 (52%)

There were significant differences between the two groups who had visited a French-speaking environment.^e As shown in Table 4, more allophones reported no trips to a French-speaking environment (standardized deviate = -2.21); more anglophones, however, reported having stayed in a French-speaking environment for up to one year (standardized deviate = 2.87). The two groups did not differ if they stayed for over one year, with a standardized deviate = -.95. These findings only partly support hypothesis (b) because anglophones and allophones differ only on visits to francophone regions, not on contacts with francophones or on exposure to the French media.

Table 4

Visits to a French-speaking environment by anglophones ($n = 187$) and allophones ($n = 60$)		
Duration	Anglophones n (%)	Allophones n (%)
None	91 (49%)	39 (65%)
Up to one year	79 (42%)	13 (22%)
Over one year	17 (9%)	8 (13%)

With a value of 5 for "excellent," the mean score for the 61 allophones who rated their own English proficiency was 3.95, $SD = .87$. This means that most allophones in our sample thought that their English proficiency was average to excellent, with only two participants rating their English as poor. This finding lends support to our hypothesis (c). The fact that the great majority of participants had

^e $\chi^2(2) = 8.276, p < .02; V = .18$

Canadian citizenship or were landed immigrants indicates that many students may have been born or have resided for an extended period in Canada, hence their high English self-ratings.

To sum up, most participants of both groups were undergraduates. Fewer allophones had reached grade 12 French, and more of them had no high school French. Fewer allophones had stayed in a French-speaking environment, and fewer of them had spent up to one year in such an environment. Both groups had had personal contacts with French speakers other than their instructors, and they were exposed to the French media to the same extent. Most allophones rated their proficiency in English as very good.

Contextual Aspects of the Language-Learning Experience

As the age of participants suggests, allophones were under-represented in third-year courses, and over-represented in first-year courses.^f This is shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Enrolment per course year for anglophones ($n = 187$) and allophones ($n = 61$)		
Course year	Anglophones n (%)	Allophones n (%)
First	53 (28%)	33 (54%)
Second	90 (48%)	22 (36%)
Third	44 (24%)	6 (10%)

The French course taken by participants was compulsory for 40% of anglophones versus 18% of allophones, as shown in Table 6. This difference was significant.^g This shows that allophones, who already have a second language, are less keen than anglophones to work toward a degree that includes French courses.

^f $\chi^2(2) = 14.56, p < .001, V = .24$

^g $\chi^2(1) = 9.47, p < .005; V = .20$

Table 6

Compulsory or optional French course for anglophones ($n = 187$) and allophones ($n = 61$)

	Anglophones n (%)	Allophones n (%)
Compulsory	74 (40%)	11 (18%)
Optional	113 (60%)	50 (82%)

Language Anxiety

The means for language anxiety levels as measured by the FLCAS were 2.75 for anglophones and 2.71 for allophones. Because allophones were under-represented in third-year courses and over-represented in first year courses, we examined anxiety in a two-way analysis of variance (mother tongue x course level). Contrary to our hypothesis (d), anxiety levels did not differ, as indicated by the main effect for mother tongue and course level.^h

Self-ratings of French Proficiency and Evaluations of Overall French-as-a-Second-Language Learning Experience

Participants of both groups rated their French proficiency on a similar scale. Ratings for anglophones ($M = 3.33$, $SD = .69$) and allophones ($M = 2.92$, $SD = .73$) differed, as anglophones rated their French proficiency significantly higher than did allophones.ⁱ Means indicate that most participants considered their French proficiency average.

Ratings given to the French language-learning experience by anglophones ($M = 3.58$, $SD = .69$) and allophones ($M = 3.59$, $SD = .80$) were identical. Overall, participants thought their learning experience was average to very good.

Final Grades and Other Variables

A total of 225 participants, 170 anglophones and 55 allophones, consented to

^h Effect for mother tongue, $F(2, 242) = 1.68$, $p > .19$; $\eta^2 = .01$; effect for course level, $F(2, 242) = 1.44$, $p > .24$; $\eta^2 = .01$, where η^2 indicates the variance for which groups are accounting.

ⁱ Pooled $t(246) = 3.98$, $p = .0001$; $r^2 = .06$

release their final grades. On a scale of 0-4.33, there was no difference between the final grades of anglophones ($M = 2.88$, $SD = .68$) and those of allophones ($M = 2.94$, $SD = .71$).^j This does not support our hypothesis (e) that a particular mind-set could account for higher grades for allophones, nor that the advantage provided by such a mind-set could be outweighed by English proficiency, as most allophones rated the latter as very good.

The expected negative correlations between anxiety levels and final grades were equivalent for anglophones ($r = -.21$, $p < .01$, $n = 170$; 95% confidence interval: $-.07 \leq \rho \leq -.35$) and allophones ($r = -.44$, $p < .001$, $n = 55$; 95% confidence interval: $-.20 \leq \rho \leq -.63$). This is consistent with significant correlations found in other samples ranging from $r = -.24$, $p < .01$, $n = 134$ (Saito & Samimy, 1996) to $r = -.54$, $p < .01$, $n = 32$ (Horwitz, 1986). Irrespective of their level of proficiency in the second language, learners who experience language anxiety are less likely to do well in their second-language courses.

Because there were 26 speakers of either Cantonese or Mandarin, the most widespread languages of the People's Republic of China, among the 61 allophones, and because the Canadian West Coast receives many Chinese immigrants, a suggestion was made to explore possible differences between these Cantonese / Mandarin speakers (sinophones), anglophones, and others. Separating sinophones from other allophones did not materially increase the strength of the relation between mother tongue and either anxiety or grades. Means for anxiety levels of anglophones, sinophones, and other allophones were 2.8, 2.9, and 2.6 respectively.^k Means for final grades were 2.88, 2.94, and 2.94 respectively.^l In light of these findings, potential differences between sinophones and the other groups were not investigated further.

Correlations between French proficiency and final grades for anglophones and

^j Pooled $t(223) = -.52$, $p > .60$; $r^2 = .001$

^k $F(2, 245) = 1.68$, $p > .18$; $\eta^2 = .01$

^l $F(2, 222) = 0.13$, $p > .85$; $\eta^2 = .001$

allophones were respectively $r = .415$, $p < .0001$, $n = 170$ and $r = .245$, $p < .05$, $n = 55$. These correlations do not differ significantly.^m Therefore, our best estimate of the relation is the correlation for the whole sample, $r = .34$, $p < .001$, $n = 225$; 95% confidence interval: $.22 \leq \rho \leq .45$.

For the French-as-a-second-language experience and final grades, the correlation for anglophones was $r = .21$, $p < .01$, $n = 170$, and for allophones, $r = .27$, $p < .05$, $n = 55$. The correlations are not significantly different, thus our best estimate of the relationship is the correlation for the whole sample, $r = .23$, $p < .001$, $n = 225$; 95% confidence interval: $.10 \leq \rho \leq .35$.

Overall, anglophones and allophones did not differ on language anxiety levels and final grades, and the expected negative correlations between anxiety and final grades materialized for both groups. Anglophones and allophones did not differ either on the relation between self-rated French proficiency, French-language-learning experience, and final grades.

A summary of findings in terms of similarities and differences between anglophones and allophones is presented in Table 7 for the four aspects relevant to the French-as-a-second-language experience that were examined. The summary presented in Table 7 is discussed in the next section.

^m $z = 1.26$, $p > .20$

Table 7

Summary of findings: similarities and differences between anglophones and allophones studying French as a second language at the university

Similarities	Differences
ANTECEDENTS	
◆ Gender	
◆ Age	
◆ Type of studies	
◆ High school French (grades 10 and 11)	◆ High school French - <i>more anglophones had grade 12; more allophones had no French</i>
◆ Contacts with francophones	
◆ Exposure to French media	
◆ Visits to French environment (over one year)	◆ Visits to French environment - <i>more allophones had none; more anglophones stayed up to one year</i>
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCE	
◆ Language anxiety levels	
CONTEXT	
◆ Course level (second year)	◆ Course level (first and third year) – <i>more allophones in first year; more anglophones in third year</i>
	◆ Course as optional - French compulsory for more anglophones
OUTCOMES	
◆ Final grades	◆ French proficiency - <i>rated higher by anglophones</i>
◆ University French learning experience	

Discussion and Conclusion

Our study provides new insights into the experience of anglophone and allophone students enrolled in French-as-second-language courses at the university level. It shows that anglophones and allophones share more characteristics than they differ. The differences are discussed first.

More anglophones than allophones had grade 12 French. This is not surprising given the admission requirements to this university (grade 11 in a second language) and the incentive of receiving credit for beginners courses if students do well on an initial placement test. University-bound students in British Columbia and Canadian schools in general are very well informed of high school graduation and university entrance requirements. Allophones may have devoted their energy in high school to other pursuits involving the mastery of the English language, as more of them declared that they had no French.

We note a few more features. First, the finding that fewer allophones had visited a French-speaking environment is consistent with the fact that more of them were taking first-year French courses. Generally, people who wish to make the most of their travel experience acquire a host country language first. It is also possible that, if they travel at all, allophones prefer going to countries where their mother tongue is spoken. In addition, in Canada exchanges between members of the two official language groups are strongly encouraged in the school system as they motivate second-language learning and foster respect for both cultures. This could explain why more anglophones had stayed up to one year in a French-speaking environment.

Our finding that more allophones were taking first-year courses and that more anglophones were taking third-year courses may be a onetime event that could be attributable to the larger context of Canadian immigration.⁴ It may be that the influx of Asian immigrants between 1986 and 1996 has influenced reported figures. Further research is necessary to determine whether university enrollment patterns after the Spring semester of 1997 reflect new immigrant movements and continue to affect the pattern of results in second-language acquisition.

More allophones than anglophones were taking French as an optional course.

Already having a mother tongue other than English or French may have lessened allophones' need or inclination to take another compulsory language course.

Self-ratings of French proficiency differed between the two groups, with anglophones rating themselves higher than allophones. Because final grades were equivalent for the two groups, this difference may be cultural: allophones may tend to be more modest about their own knowledge of a second language.

Although much speculation can be done to account for differences between anglophones and allophones, the similarities in anxiety levels and final grades certainly are the key findings of our study.

Learning French with English as the language of instruction did not create higher anxiety levels in allophones. Of course, this is consistent with allophones' ratings of their English proficiency from excellent to average. In turn, this indicates that allophones had prolonged or intensive exposure to English, perhaps in school, possibly while maintaining their mother tongue at home, a usual occurrence where parents believe that their children should retain their mother tongue. Further research is required to determine the exact circumstances that surround allophone students' acquisition of English.

There was no difference in final grades of anglophones and allophones. This finding does not lend support to the notion of a mindset that facilitates learning other languages after a first one is mastered, even though the language of instruction, in this case English, was not an added obstacle for learners. It is also somewhat puzzling that overall final grades remain the same when levels of French studies before entering the university differ between linguistic groups (see Table 2). This suggests a need for further inquiry into the relationship between high school French completed and final grades at the university level.

The equivalence of final grades between anglophones and allophones could also be due to the admission criteria of Simon Fraser University. These criteria may be sound, in that only good students with good English are actually admitted. By the time they enter university, Canadian allophones may in fact be bilingual. Replication of this study at other Canadian universities where admission standards and the

immigrant influx differ may yield different results. Whatever the case may be, additional information on length of stay in Canada and schooling of allophones would prove useful.

Although no causal relationship has been established between language anxiety and final grades, the two have been negatively associated in several studies over the last decade. A comparable correlation is also present in our sample, and it adds credibility to our results regarding final grades.

Although our sample size is large for studies of this nature, simple replication could still prove useful. Other research avenues are, however, possible. Would comparisons between francophones and allophones taking English-as-a-second-language courses at a francophone university yield results similar to ours? Would we see comparable results for anglophones and allophones taking non-official languages, for example, Spanish or Mandarin courses at a Canadian anglophone or francophone university? These are some of the many questions open to further research.

Finally, results of our study have implications for policy-makers. Primarily, our findings provide new information to immigration officials, educational institutions, and educators of immigrants. This new information focuses on the acquisition of both Canadian official languages.

First, we found that the second-language acquisition of immigrants from non-English speaking countries who reach the university level in Canada is equivalent to that of Canadian-born students. This seems to indicate that the present policy of no explicit language requirement for citizenship represents no major obstacle for educated allophones to reach good levels of second-language acquisition.

Moreover, keeping in mind that participants were at the university level, our results reveal that allophones' fluency in English is high, irrespective of their previous language experience in Canada or elsewhere. Policy-makers would do well to keep this in mind when energy and funds are invested in debates about the best possible integration formula in schools.

Third, irrespective of former second-language acquisition, in the final analysis allophones fare just as well as anglophones with higher schooling in French. In other

words, when allophones decide to learn a second official language, they do it as well as anglophones. This suggests that no particular teaching methodology is required for allophones to acquire a third language. Language educators must, however, keep in mind that anxiety affects learning in their classrooms and seek to reduce it. To conclude, our study indicates that those allophones who reach the university level do as well as anglophones when they study French. It remains to be seen if our finding applies to other areas of study at the university.

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Notes

1. Students in the sampled university can also request an exemption from the TOEFL exam if they believe their English to be sufficiently good.
2. These language courses concentrate on the students' ability to use French, as opposed to linguistics or literature courses (not included) that focus on analysis and description of the language. Thus francophone students, who were allowed to take third-year French writing courses, were excluded from the study.
3. Landed immigrants admitted to Canada belong to one of three categories: economic, refugees, or family members. Canadian citizenship can be obtained after a minimum of three years of residence in the country. Knowledge of either official language is neither an entry nor a citizenship requirement.
4. Prior to the study period, 1990-onwards, an unusually large surge of 50,000 entrants yearly occurred in British Columbia, where the data was collected.

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