

Official Bilingualism Policy and Bilinguals

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Abstract

Lee, Seung-Ryul. 2018. **Official Bilingualism Policy and Bilinguals**, *Asian Journal of Canadian Studies*, 24-2. 73-95. Bilingualism is believed to be one of key identities of Canada. Unlike our expectation, bilingualism may not be a real face in provinces except New Brunswick where English and French are official languages. This paper attempts to look into data about bilingualism issued by Statistics Canada and reveal realities of bilinguals in terms of regions and ages. The results suggested that ratio of bilinguals has a little been increased since 2011 and has, particularly, been increased in the provinces near Quebec. The study also found that, reviewing bilingualism rate of the school-age populations, bilingual rate reached its height at the ages between 10 and 14 years old. This is consistent with the so-called critical period hypothesis in language acquisition.

I Introduction

Everytime I fly to Canada, I have listened to English and French announcements on board. They made me realize that this is the real face of Canada today and a very important identity of Canada which established a confederation by joining up with provinces and territories. Bilingualism in Canada was born out of its domestic political considerations. The former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau made a speech at the Senate in Ottawa in

1988: “bilingualism unites people; dualism divides them.” His words represent what bilingualism means in Canada: Canada has to adopt English-French bilingualism to unite two language groups. Canada adopted English and French as two official languages at the federal government level as well as a communication means due to social practices, historical and political causes.

However, this policy has not been adopted by all provinces and territories. Regionalism has worked in terms of the adoption of official languages. Only New Brunswick has adopted English and French as official languages. Other provinces has adopted monolingualism: French for Quebec and English in the rest of provinces. As a result, it is said that Canadian provinces can be “grouped according to the legal status of their language minorities” (Vaillancourt, et. al., 2012).

In this light, the former Prime Minister Trudeau’s vision of bilingualism seems to have failed, but minority language rights have been protected in public service and education. Moreover, another former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien issued the action plan for official languages in 2003 in which the government announced its plan to increase investment in promoting bilingual policies in education, communities, public service, etc.

Notwithstanding these efforts to promote bilingualism, there is a clear tendency toward regionalism in terms of official languages policies in provinces. Provincial legal

frameworks on language policies varied from province to province and affected the ration of bilingual populations in provinces and territories. So, when dealing with bilingualism in Canada, it is necessary to look into data at the provincial/ territorial level as well as at the federal level. Recent research pointed out that the rate of English-French bilinguals reached heights on 2001 after reviewing bilingual data from 1961 to 2011 (Lepage and Corbeil, 2013).

This paper will be more concerned with bilingualism in Canada between 2001 and 2016 than other periods in order to present the current trends of bilingualism. It begins with a brief account of research backgrounds, and is followed by some findings and discussion of this study. This section starts with bilingual rate from 1961 to 2001, and then discusses bilingual rate in terms of provinces and territories and school-age populations, and geographical distances.

II. Research Background

2.1 Threshold

Canada's bilingualism dates back to the beginning of European colonization of Canada (North America). Unlike other British settler states such as United States, New Zealand, and Australia, Canada was colonized and settled by two powerful European states: Britain and France. They arrived at northern parts of Canada at a

similar time and settled in proximity areas each other. John Cabot landed at Newfoundland and Champlain in Nova Scotia in the sixteenth century. These conditions create an environment for the two Europe powers to fight for the supremacy over the same land called Canada. In accordance with the Treaty of Paris in 1763, the French handed over all their sovereignty over Acadia (Maritimes) and New France (Quebec) to the British.

Although the British governed the British North America, there were still two distinct ethnic settler societies in Quebec and Maritime provinces who share their own language, religion and custom, and laws, respectively. Although French populations were living in Maritimes and Quebec, the British adopted different approaches to French Acadians and Quebecers: French Acadians was expelled from Maritimes to France, American colonies, and other provinces, but The French in Quebec were legally recognized as residents of Quebec and allowed to enjoy their language and culture. When it became an independent nation in 1867, Canada recognized Quebec as an autonomous province with an independent language and culture. Thus, Quebecers were allowed to practice their Catholic religion and observe civil law as well as to use both English and French as the official languages. Because of these practices, Canada is even said to be “a bi-national settler state, constructed through the joining together of its two founding people – the French and British settler

societies” (Kymlica, 2014, p.22).

Disregard of this bi-nationality would provoke Quebecers’ repulsion and face their resistance such as the so-called rebellion of patriots in 1837. Ironically, in order to unite this bi-nationality, Canada adopted bilingualism and biculturalism in the federal government in stead of monolingualism and monoculturalism. These realities have made the Dominion of Canada enact Constitution Act including language rights which adopted English and French as the official languages of the Canadian courts as well as parliament. Thereafter, several laws has been enacted for the reinforcement of bilingualism such as the Official Languages Act in 1969 (amended in 1988 and 2005) and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982.

Despite these federal government’s endeavors of uniting the French and British Canadians, Quebec has still opposed the federal policies and tried to establish a unique French society within the province by enacting the provincial laws. The provincial Official Languages Act in 1974 required businesses in Quebec province to operate in French as well as made French the unique province’s official language. Furthermore, the Quebec government passed the Charter of the French Language in 1977 which required children of new immigrants to attend elementary and secondary schools which use French as a teaching language.

2.2 Recent Research and Questions

Makarenko (2007) has outlined some issues concerned with Canadian bilingual policies: competing visions of bilingualism, bilingual policy in public service, bilingual policy in education, language minority communities, and federal commitment to official bilingualism. Among these, bilingual policies in public service and in education are a discussion about the effectiveness of the bilingualism promotion policy. Issues of language minority communities are concerned with the frequencies of use of a second language, and federal commitment to official bilingualism related to the vulnerability of bilingual policies. Finally, competing visions of bilingualism traced back to the beliefs that Canada is, on the one hand, a single bilingual community and two different communities of the French community in Quebec and the bilingual community in other provinces and territories, on the other hand. Besides, there is a political party and populations who strongly oppose to the federal government's bilingual policies: for example, the Reform Party is based on the western provinces where there are very small French-speaking populations.

Boberg (2010) detailed the laws concerned with bilingualism and, especially, focused on Bill 101, the Charter of the French Language, enacted in 1977 which set French as the only official language in Quebec. As a result, Quebec's anglophones have not enjoyed their language and culture and had to be sacrificed for the

francophones in Quebec. Boberg (2010) continued to criticize the Quebec's official language laws by stating that "Quebec's language laws

In Korea, there have been some research about bilingualism in Canada: Yoon (2015), Kang (2009), Kim (2007), and Seo (2007). Yoon (2015) introduced bilingual policies in Canada and discussed the francophones' discrimination over anglophones. He developed his argument from the standpoint of English rather than French. On the other hand, Seo (2007) and Kim (2007) argued for the importance of French in Canada. Seo (2007) mainly focused on Quebec French which has functioned as a tool of unifying Quebecers and their culture. Kim (2007) stated that he tried to draw attention to the Canadian minority languages and cultures. Kang (2009) has reviewed bilingual policies chronologically and regarded them as a way of social integration in Canada. He also claimed that they implied linguistic justices for minorities. Reviewing these views, Seo (2007) and Kim (2007) represent a little different view from Yoon (2015) and Kang (2009). The former dealt with language policies in terms of Quebec French because they have majored the French language, but the latter supported for Canadian bilingualism which would give significant implications to the Korean society (Yoon, 2015) and play a role in realizing social justice for minorities (Kang, 2009). As these were mainly concerned with the past changes of bilingual policies, they did not

reveal the present status of Canadian bilingualism and could not display what the bilingualism would be.

Unlike these research, this research is closely associated with Lepage and Corbeil (2013) and Census in Brief (2017). Lepage and Corbeil (2013) have done research on the bilingualism between 1961 and 2011. They concluded that “the rate of English-French bilingualism in Canada increased, but seemingly reached a plateau in 2001” (p.1). I understand that September 11th in 2001 may affect the immigration policy in Quebec province because it has accepted few immigrants from French-speaking countries in Africa since then. I suppose that this may affect the bilingual rate in Quebec, but am wondering what the realities of bilingualism has been after 2001.

With these queries, the research questions were formulated in terms of regions and ages as follows:

1. What changes have bilingual users made with respect to provinces and territories since 2001?
2. What is the proportion of bilingual students in school age?

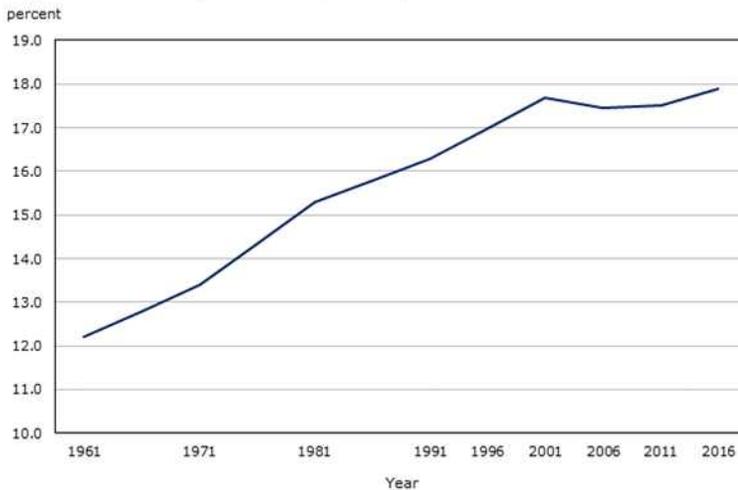
These questions will be pursued based on data released by Statistic Canada. Especially, a census about English-French bilingualism in 2017 is mainly investigated for this study.

III. Results and Discussion

3.1 The English–French bilingualism rate from 1961 to 2001

The census released in 2017 displays the steady increase of English-French bilingualism rate from 1961 to 2001 and nearly levels off during fifteen years between 2001 and 2016. This bilingualism rate is between 17.5% and 17.9% which is the highest proportion in Canada. This phenomena are shown in the following chart.

Figure 1. English-French bilingualism rate, Canada, 1961 to 2016



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016.

The constant increases of bilingualism since 1961 relate to enacting a few important laws which promote bilingualism during 1960s to 1980s. In 1963, during the period of the quiet revolution, the Government of Canada established the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and

Biculturalism, and in 1969, Canada officially passed the Act on the Official Languages in which English and French are required to be used in congress and in court. Through this law, English and French are equally recognized and adopted as official languages in Canadian society.

Quebec province, however, did not adopt the bilingual policy of the federal Government of Canada and enacted the Bill 101 in 1977 to strengthen the use of French in Quebec. The provincial government of Quebec acknowledged French as their official language and trying to improve the quality of their use of French in all living areas. As a result, many cities in Quebec, including Montreal and Quebec City, posted signs and signs in French on the exterior of buildings. And the use of French by workers in corporate activities has greatly increased and the gap between anglophones and francophones in salaries and status has sharply decreased, which was disadvantageous to French users. In particular, the ratio of immigrant children to French schools has greatly increased, contributing to the integration of Quebec society. French-speaking consumers were able to receive service in their own language. Due to the Quebec's policy of language. anglophones in Quebec have to use French and immigrants have to learn French as well as English. As a result, there are increases of bilinguals in Quebec from 1961 to 2001.

In the rest provinces, the Charter of Rights and Freedom, as amended in the 1980s, defines the basic rights

of Canadians, including those of language. Articles 16 to 22 stipulate the right of ordinary citizens to use English and French in government agencies, courts and parliaments with equal status as official languages. And Article 23 gave citizens the right to learn in language of choice. Another important law, Official Language Act, has been enacted in 1988 (and last amended in 2017) which included provisions that the government would ensure French language rights and encourage their language use in minority communities in Canada. These laws have also contributed to the increases of bilinguals from the 1961 to 2001.

However, September 11 attacks in 2001 seemed to affect the bilinguals growth stagnation. Before then, Quebec had accepted many immigrants from French-speaking countries in Africa but been reluctant to receive them. Quebec has been the largest portion in bilinguals increases and stagnation of Quebec populations would have resulted in that of bilinguals.

3.2 Bilingualism rates increases in provinces and territories.

Between 1961 and 2016, there are bilingual rate increases in all provinces and territories. Among provinces and territories, the biggest one is Quebec (20%), the second one is New Brunswick (14.9%) in terms of differences of bilingual rates. And the provinces and territories less than one percent increase is Saskatchewan (0.2%) and Nunavut (0.9%).

Table 1. Bilingual Rates between 1961 and 2016

	1961		2016		Differences	
	person	ratio	person	ratio	person	ratio
Newfoundland and Labrador	5.3	1.2%	25.9	5.0%	20,600	+3.8%
Prince Edward Island	7.9	7.6%	17.8	12.6%	9,900	+5.0%
Nova Scotia	45.0	6.1%	95.4	10.5%	50400	+4.4%
New Brunswick	113.5	19%	250.0	33.9%	136500	+14.9%
Quebec	1,338.9	24.5%	3,586.4	44.5%	2247500	+20%
Ontario	493.8	7.9%	1,490.4	11.2%	996600	+3.3%
Manitoba	68.4	7.4%	108.5	8.6%	40100	+1.2%
Saskatchewan	42.1	4.5%	51.4	4.7%	9300	+0.2%
Alberta	56.9	4.3%	264.7	6.6%	207800	+2.3%
British Columbia	57.5	3.5%	314.9	6.8%	257400	+3.3%
Yukon			4.9	13.8%	2000	+3.8%
Northwest Territories			4.3	10.3%	1200	+1.9%
Nunavut			1.5	4.3%	500	+0.9%

The data of differences of bilingual rates can be classified into two groups: ones over 10% and the others less than 10%. The former group includes Quebec (20%) and New Brunswick (14.9%). The other group comprises Prince Edward Island (5.0%), Nova Scotia (4.4%), Newfoundland and Labrador (3.8%), Yukon (3.8%), Ontario (3.3%), British Columbia (3.3%), Alberta (2.3%), Northwest Territories (1.9%), Manitoba (1.2%), Nunavut (0.9%), and Saskatchewan (0.2%). These provinces and territories are

substantially less than 5%.

The clear division between these two groups trace its causes back to policies of the provinces. Unlike other provinces and territories, Quebec and New Brunswick have different official languages policies from other provinces and territories. The drastic increases in Quebec attributed to the then Premier Jean Lesage from 1960 to 1966. He was elected an assembly member of the Legislative Assembly of Quebec and became a Premier of Quebec province with the famous slogan, "It's time for a change." His election have paved the way to the rapid and drastic change of values, attitudes, and behaviors in Quebec society based on Quebec nationalism. In 1977, Quebec government enacted Bill 101 which is called the Charter of French Language. It is stipulated that Quebec is not bilingual society but a monolingual French society in this act. This adoption of Bill 101 would have promoted to use French in the province's government, businesses, and education sectors, thus francizing the Quebec province.

New Brunswick Province represented the second highest ratio of bilinguals by 33.9% which is by far higher than other provinces and territories except Quebec province. The cause for this can also be traced back the two strong European countries' colonization of Canada like Quebec. The two ethnic groups, the English and the French, has constituted nearly all population of New Brunswick province as : The French is 32% and the English is 65%. Due to

this proportion of two ethnic groups the New Brunswick province has adopted the bilingual policy in government and court. However, there are less than 10% of french people in other provinces. These provinces then adopt only English as their official language.

During 15 years between 2001 and 2016, there is little change in terms of ratio, but increases in terms of numbers of bilinguals. Little increase of ratios may imply that bilingualism reached the highest in 2001 in Canada. Bilingual rates between 2001 and 2006 are shown in the following table 2:

Table 2. Bilingual Rates between 2001 and 2016

	2001		2016		Differences	
	person	ratio	person	ratio	person	ratio
Newfoundland and Labrador	20.9	4.1%	25.9	5.0%	5,000	+0.9%
Prince Edward Island	16.0	12%	17.8	12.6%	1,800	+0.6%
Nova Scotia	90.3	10.1%	95.4	10.5%	5,100	+0.4%
New Brunswick	245.9	34.2%	250.0	33.9%	4,100	-0.3%
Quebec	2907.7	40.8%	3,586.4	44.5%	678,700	+3.7%
Ontario	1,319.7	11.7%	1,490.4	11.2%	170,700	-0.5%
Manitoba	102.8	9.3%	108.5	8.6%	5,700	-0.7%
Saskatchewan	49.0	5.1%	51.4	4.7%	2,400	-0.4%
Alberta	202.9	6.9%	264.7	6.6%	61,800	-0.3%
British Columbia	269.4	7.0%	314.9	6.8%	45,500	-0.2%
Yukon	2.9	10.2%	4.9	13.8%	2,000	+3.6%
Northwest Territories	3.1	8.4%	4.3	10.3%	1,200	+1.9%
Nunavut	1.0	3.8%	1.5	4.3%	500	+0.5

Among provinces and territories, Quebec is the highest increases in number and ratio. Quebec has displayed steady growth of bilingual populations rate during 15 years. However, New Brunswick have shown an increase in number but a decrease in ratio which is quite different from the data in the table 1. There is a difference of language policy between these two provinces: Quebec adopted French as an official language and New Brunswick did English and French as official languages.

From the table 2, together with the case of New Brunswick, official bilingualism policy may not affect the acquisition of a second language in actual life. So, the number of bilinguals has a few been increased and the ratio also little changed except Quebec and territories. Another, the number of new immigrants may have outnumbered that of new bilingual populations such that this difference caused the ratio to decrease.

3.3 bilingualism rate of the school-age populations

In Canada outside Quebec, French is taught as a second language in school for Canadians who are English as a mother tongue. There was an increase in the bilingualism rate for 5 to 14 years old category of the school-age population with English as a mother tongue between 2011 and 2016.

Table 3. Rate of English-French bilingualism by age group of people with English as their mother tongue outside Quebec

	2001	2006	2011	2016
5 ~ 9 years	6.0	7.2	8.2	9.7
10~14 years	11.5	12.0	13.0	14.9
15~19 years	14.7	13.0	11.9	13.5

There are a little increase in 2001 and 2006 for the 15~19 years olders but a little decrease from 13% to 11.9% in 2011 and 14.9% to 13.5% in 2016 for the age group between 15 and 19 years old. These represent that number or ratio of bilinguals falls off for the age group between 15 and 19 years old and increases for the 5 to 14 year olders. This is an interesting but strange phenomenon because a command of language has increased until 14 years old and then diminished from 15 to 19 years old. It is not consistent with the common view of language acquisition that linguistic competence may increase steadily till at the age of poverty and be stagnant or quite a little increase after that age.

However, these data may be interpreted differently if we consider the growth of the bilinguals. In the table <3>, the bilinguals between 5 to 9 years old would be 10 to 14 years old in five years and then 10 to 14 year olders would be grouped in the age category of 15 to 19 years old in 5 years. If there is not much population change in Canada, the bilinguals between 5 to 9 years old in 2001 would be 10 to 14 years old in 2006, and they would be in the group of 15 to 19 year olders in 2011. Similarly,

the bilinguals between 5 to 9 years old in 2006 would be 10 to 14 years old in 2011, and they would be in the group of 15 to 19 year olders in 2016. Then we can pull two groups out of the table <3>: Group A who are 5 to 9 years old in 2001 and group B who are 5 to 9 years old in 2006. These groups show how the proportion of the bilinguals has changed over time as in the following table.

Table 4. Proportional changes of bilinguals from 2001 to 2016

age \ group		5~9 years old	10~14 years old	15~19 years old
Group A	year	2001	2006	2011
	ratio	6.0	12	11.9
Group B	year	2006	2011	2016
	ratio	7.2	13	13.5

The commonalities between the two groups (group A and group B) are that the proportion of bilingual users increases dramatically between 5 to 9 year olders and 10 to 14 year olders and after the age of 15 that of bilingual users are stagnant. The proportional differences between first two age ranges (5~9 and 10~14 years) display from 6.0 to 12 percent for group A and from 7.2 to 13 percent for group B. The rate of bilinguals has doubled for group A and increased by 80 percent for group B. On the other hand, there are little difference between the last two age groups (10 to 14 and 15 to 19 years). Group A represents that there is a slight decrease by 0.1% and group B shows

a little increase by 0.5%. Thus, after fifteen years of age, we may state that numbers of bilinguals have stagnated without significant increases and decreases.

Considering the relations between age and language acquisition these trends support the critical period hypothesis which claims there is “a biologically determined period of life when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which time language is increasingly difficult to acquire” (Brown, 2007, p. 57). Brown (2007) stated that “a critical point for second language acquisition occurs around puberty, beyond which people seem to be relatively incapable of acquiring a second language” (p. 58). Generally speaking, people may reach their puberty around 13 or 14 years of age which is included in the age range from 10 to 14 years. According to the critical period hypothesis, the number of bilinguals can reach the highest in the age range from 10 to 14 years. Beyond that age range or puberty people may not be easy to acquire a new language and so the proportional rates of bilinguals are similar between 10 to 14 years and 15 to 19 years.

3.4 Geographical Connection of Bilingualism

The number of bilinguals has increased in most provinces and territories since 1961. The differences of number of people are 20,600 in Newfoundland and Labrador, 9,900 in Prince Edward Island, 50,400 in Nova Scotia, 136,500 in New Brunswick, 2,247,500 in Quebec,

996,600 in Ontario, 40,100 in Manitoba, 9,300 in Saskatchewan, 207,800 in Alberta, 257,400 in British Columbia between 1961 and 2016, and 2,000 in Yukon, 1,200 in Northwest Territories, and 500 in Nunavut between 2001 and 2016.

Table 5. Order of provinces in number of differences of bilinguals between 1961 and 2016

Provinces	Difference of Bilinguals	Percent
Quebec	2,247,500	56.53%
Ontario	996,600	25.06%
British Columbia	257,400	6.47%
Alberta	207,800	5.2%
New Brunswick	136,500	3.43%
Nova Scotia	50,400	1.27%
Manitoba	40,100	1.01%
Newfoundland and Labrador	20,600	0.52%
Prince Edward Island	9,900	0.24%
Saskatchewan	9,300	0.23%
Canada	3,976,100	100%

Quebec represented the largest portion in number, which account for 56.53% among new bilingual people (no., 3,976,100). The second largest portion of bilinguals is Ontario by 25.06%, the third is British Columbia by 6.47%, the fourth is Alberta by 5.2%, and the fifth is New Brunswick by 3.43%. These five provinces cover 96.7% and the top two provinces, Quebec and Ontario, account for 81.6%. It is conjectured that bilinguals has grown more in Eastern Canada areas than in Mid and Western Canada areas.

In addition, Ontario has attempted to support

minority language populations and communities by establishing Ministry of Francophone Affairs. This ministry provides expert advice to ministries and agencies and develops resources to support them in their efforts to offer and deliver accessible and high-quality French-language services to francophones in Ontario.

IV. Conclusion

This paper has examined the evolution of bilingualism in Canada since 2001 with respect to provinces and territories and to school-age groups. Bilingualism rate has steadily been increased from 1961 to 2001 and seems to be stagnant since 2001. During fifteen years between 2001 and 2016, however, the bilingual rates have a little been increased. Quebec has displayed the highest increase of bilinguals in number and rate since 2001 as well as between 1961 and 2001.

However, other provinces show little changes of bilinguals in number and rate from 2001 to 2016. This may suggests that English is the dominant language in provinces except Quebec where anglophones do not feel uncomfortable in their lives and that francophones in Quebec have more necessities to communicate others with English than anglophones with French in other provinces. Another, there is quite a little decrease in bilingual rate in six provinces such as New Brunswick (-0.3%), Ontario

(-0.5%), Manitoba (-0.7%), Saskatchewan (-0.4%), Alberta (-0.3%), and British Columbia (-0.2%) though these provinces show increases in bilinguals during that period. This implies that immigrant population growth outpaces the growth of bilingual users.

Next, this study have revealed that bilingual users increases dramatically between 5 to 9 year olders and 10 to 14 year olders and after the age of 15 that of bilingual users are stagnant. This is consistent with the critical period hypothesis of language acquisition which explains when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which time language is increasingly difficult to acquire. According to the critical period hypothesis, number of bilinguals can reach the highest around puberty (in the age range from 10 to 14 years). Beyond puberty, people may not be easy to acquire a new language and so the proportional rates of bilinguals are not increased.

Finally, number of bilinguals has grown more in Eastern Canada areas than in Mid and Western Canada areas. This is closely concerned with Quebec which is not only a land of French language users but may also be a focal area of bilingualism. The residents of neighboring areas of the focal area of bilingualism use a second language more than those in far-away areas because the former has more chances to communicate than the latter. So, Maritime provinces and Ontario disply more proportional rates than Mid and West provinces such as

Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Albert, and British Columbia.

This study has been conducted limited resources which are posted on web sites so that, I have to admit, this is not enough to generalize the results. However, this study would be helpful in future study who investigates the features of bilingualism in Canada.

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