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Vessey, Rachelle (2017) Representations of language education in English and French Canadian newspapers. *Canadian Modern Language Review* 73 (2), pp. 158-182. ISSN 0008-4506.

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# Representations of language education in Canadian newspapers

Rachelle Vessey

This article examines the salience and content of representations of language education in a corpus of English- and French-Canadian newspapers. Findings suggest that English-Canadian newspapers foreground official-language education issues, in which public schools are represented as the primary means by which Canadians can gain equal access to social resources. In contrast, French-Canadian newspapers do not foreground language education issues; in the few cases where these are discussed, the focus tends to be specifically on immigrant acquisition of French. Since representations of these issues reflect beliefs and attitudes toward languages, the paper concludes that they also reveal the successes and failures of discourses concomitant with Canada's language policy.

**Keywords:** Canadian newspapers; corpus linguistics; discourse analysis; language education; language ideology; language policy

**Résumé:** Cet article examine l'importance et le contenu des représentations de l'enseignement des langues dans un corpus de journaux canadiens français et anglais. Les résultats montrent que les journaux anglophones mettent l'accent sur le sujet de l'éducation en langues officielles au sein d'écoles publiques, représentées comme le principal moyen pour les Canadiens d'obtenir un accès égal aux ressources sociales. En revanche, les journaux francophones abordent moins le sujet de l'éducation des langues. Lorsque le sujet est abordé, on cible en particulier l'acquisition du français par les immigrants. Les représentations de ces sujets reflétant les croyances et attitudes envers les langues, on conclut qu'elles révèlent aussi les succès et les échecs des discours relatifs à la politique linguistique du Canada.

Mots clés:

The official status of English and French in Canada reflects the aim to achieve equal language rights for the two “founding peoples” – francophones and anglophones. This status also arguably accords them intrinsic value as cultural assets with inherent worth. However,

the policies have also transformed languages into valuable commodities. Language education has served as an important ground upon which the status of languages can be played out; it has also served as a site of contention concerning the respective values of the official languages. This paper explores representations of language education in Canadian newspapers with the aim of establishing similarities and differences between English- and French-medium representations and, more specifically, whether these representations foreground the instrumental or the intrinsic value of languages. Such representations could be indicative of more fundamental beliefs about language (i.e., language ideologies), which in turn can affect the uptake of policy (Ricento, 2005).

Drawing on a corpus of 8,759 French-Canadian newspaper articles (3.5 million words) and 18,271 English-Canadian newspaper articles (7.5 million words) from 2009, findings suggest that language education is represented differently and is accorded different salience in English- and French-Canadian newspapers. The differences in the respective foregrounding and backgrounding of these education issues highlight the ways in which assumptions about languages (i.e., language ideologies) may interact – and sometimes conflict – with language policies. In turn, the differences suggest the existence of difficulties with regard to the task of establishing what the “equality” of Canada’s official languages really means (cf. Jedwab & Landry, 2011, p. 1).

## Language policy and education in Canada

English and French have been Canada’s official languages since the *Official Languages Act* (R.S., 1985, c. 31 (4th Supp.)) enacted recommendations from the pivotal reports of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. This Commission was created during the 1960s, a tumultuous period of Canadian history, when the English-

dominant status quo became questioned not only by the sizeable population of francophone Canadians but also by other groups marginalized by the history of British rule (Haque, 2012). The early mandate of the Commission was to “inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races [i.e. the English and the French]” (cited in Jedwab & Landry, 2011, p. 1). Although problematic – especially due to the lack of recognition of First Nations and their claim to being “founding peoples” of Canada – the Commission’s recommendations that Canada should become officially bilingual and develop official-language education were adopted into policy through the 1969 *Official Languages Act* (which made English and French the official languages of Canada), and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (*Constitution Act*, 1982, s. 33). Together, these policies served to re-brand Canada, making “the pursuit of equality between the English and French peoples part of the country’s *raison d’être*” (Jedwab & Landry, 2011, p. 1).

The Charter also afforded official-language minorities the right to education in their mother tongue. Section 23 of the Charter explains that citizens of Canada (and their children) who are raised or educated in English or French are entitled to receive primary and secondary school instruction in that language where numbers warrant (i.e., where there is a sufficient number of entitled individuals) (Heller, 2003a). Notably, though, there are far more francophones dispersed across English-dominant Canada than there are anglophones dispersed across French-dominant Quebec. The latest Canadian Census shows that 21% of Canadians have French as a first language and 86% of these French speakers (6.1 million) live in Quebec. In contrast, 57% of Canadians have English as a first language and 97% of these English speakers (18.2 million) live outside of Quebec. French speakers comprise

between 0.5% to 31.6% of provincial populations outside of Quebec (with Newfoundland and Labrador and British Columbia having the lowest proportion of French speakers and New Brunswick the highest), whereas English speakers comprise 7.7% of Quebec's population, but most of them (73%, or 439,834) are concentrated in the region of Montreal (Statistics Canada, 2011). Therefore, official-language education rights tend primarily to concern francophones outside Quebec and anglophones in Quebec.

The recognition of language rights was a momentous breakthrough for francophones, who had for many generations struggled in the pursuit of French-language education (although many other linguistic groups also struggled in their pursuit of language education and other linguistic rights; see e.g. Haque, 2012). Hayday (2005) outlines in detail the historic challenges faced by French-speaking minorities across Canada in their efforts to obtain French-medium education. For example, he notes that in early-twentieth-century Ontario, the Association canadienne-française d'éducation d'Ontario was forced to fight against the now-famous Regulation 17, which "made English the sole language of instruction for the province after grade 2 and called for strict enforcement of this regulation by school inspectors" (Hayday, 2005, p. 18; see also Heller, 1995, 2003a; Mougeon & Heller, 1986). Although this regulation was softened in 1927 to permit bilingual elementary schools, publicly funded French-language secondary schools did not exist in Ontario until 1968 (Hayday, 2005; Mougeon & Heller, 1986).

There are many other examples in other parts of Canada where French-speaking communities struggled in their pursuit of French language education. Indeed, Hayday's (2005) detailed historical account suggests the extent to which understandings of language education have developed differently across the country. These regional approaches to language education are the result of historical, demographic, and cultural differences across

Canada, which arguably continue to inform to a large degree the extent to which support for language education rallies or wanes in these regions. Today, although the *Official Languages Act* and the Charter ensure that official-language groups do not face the roadblocks to education that they once did, other language groups continue to struggle in their own pursuits (see e.g. Haque, 2012). In addition, the *Official Languages Act* and the Charter arguably changed the very concept of language education across the country, making it an important issue for all Canadians.

Beyond constitutional rights, concerns over language education quickly turned to the newly acquired symbolic value of the French language in Canada (e.g., Haque, 2012, pp. 204–7; Heller, 2003a, 2003b). By making both languages official, the two obtained equal status despite French previously being disadvantaged (Jedwab & Landry, 2011). However, equality was not achieved instantaneously. For example, to allow all Canadians to access services from the federal government in the official language of their choice (a provision guaranteed by the Charter and the *Official Languages Act*), the public service had to become bilingual (McRoberts, 1997). This meant not only training the existing workforce (a task still being grappled with; see Gentil, O'Connor, & Bigras, 2009; Hayday, 2011) but also recruiting a new generation of public servants who would be bilingual. Private companies, too, found themselves with a new concept of the national clientele (see, e.g., Heller, 2001). Across the country, then, fluency in the other official language was gaining currency. In other words, not only did federal policies make the English and French languages symbols of Canadian identity (see Hayday, 2011), these languages also became commodified through social practice (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991; Heller, 2003b).

French language education initiatives quickly grew across English-speaking Canada, and especially French immersion programs (see e.g. Genesee, 1998; Heller, 1990; Swain,

2000). Access to language education was actively promoted by lobby groups such as Canadian Parents for French, which, in receiving financial support from the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and the Department of the Secretary of State, effectively acted as an arm's-length advocate of federal language policy (Hayday, 2005; McRoberts, 1997). Notably, the *Official Languages Act* and the Charter did not activate a similar movement for language education in the other official language in French-speaking Canada, where the historic socio-economic dominance of English speakers meant that access to English language education had never been a problem (Hayday, 2005, Heller, 1995, 2003a). Instead, French-language schools in francophone minority communities became a symbol and a means of resisting anglophone domination (Hayday, 2005; Heller, 1995).

One crucial reason that education became a contentious site of social engagement is a possible fundamental misunderstanding of Canada's language policies. As early as 1969, the year the *Official Languages Act* was passed, then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau lamented that "[o]ur policy on bilingualism has been widely misunderstood. It does not mean that every English-speaking Canadian must learn to speak French any more than it means that every French-speaking Canadian must learn to speak English" (cited in Hayday, 2011, p. 132). Rather, Trudeau explained, it meant that every Canadian would be free to use either language in dealing with the federal government (and other public bodies in areas where the size of the group justified) and – importantly for our purposes here – that they would have access to public education in their (official-language) mother tongue. However, the language policy also had the effect that the English and French languages acquired symbolic value and came to serve as resources; for many Canadians, language education became a means to access these resources.

To study the symbolic and resource value of language education in Canada, this paper examines discursive representations in newspapers. In the field of second language acquisition, Gardner and Lambert's (1972) proposal that learners have instrumental or integrative motivation has been widely influential. Instrumental motivation refers to "individuals ... acquiring sufficient communicative ability to satisfy their own specific goals, usually economic targets," whereas an integrative motivation refers to "the desire of individuals to associate themselves ever more closely with a target community to the point, eventually, of assimilating to it" (Ager, 2001, p. 109). Here, rather than focusing on "integrative" motivation (a notion that has been particularly critiqued; see, e.g., Dörnyei, 2009), the term "intrinsic" is preferred. The intrinsic value of language refers to the understanding that language has inherent worth as, for example, an identity marker or as a cultural asset, but it may also involve integrative associations if the language is understood as being crucial for cultural integration (Réaume, 2000).

Also, rather than motivation, here the focus is on the attribution of value to languages through discursive representations. From a discourse-analysis perspective, discursive representations are articulations that serve as ways of experiencing the world; this is because what happens socially often happens discursively (Fairclough, 1992). Discursive representations become embedded in everyday talk and are taken up by and disseminated through the media, which are powerful institutions but also "sensitive barometers of cultural change" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 60; see also Conboy, 2007; Cotter, 2010; Fowler, 1991). Representations of languages may therefore privilege their "instrumental" value by discussing fluency or multilingualism as an "asset" that provides access to, for example, high-paying government jobs (Bourdieu, 1977; Réaume, 2000).

The official status of English and French arguably accords them both intrinsic and instrumental value, which means that there is space for interpretation on the ground. In other words, it is possible for individual Canadians to understand the role of official languages differently and for these divergent interpretations to underpin (mis)understandings of other issues, too. The aim here is to establish whether language education is represented in Canadian newspapers more with a focus on the instrumental value of languages or more in terms of the intrinsic value of languages. The following research questions are addressed:

1. To what extent are representations of language education similar or different in English- and French-Canadian newspapers?
2. To what extent do the representations found in English- and French-Canadian newspapers foreground the instrumental or intrinsic value of the French and English languages?

## **Ideologies and language policies**

The value of language – whether intrinsic or instrumental – is arguably based on beliefs and assumptions about languages more generally; these are often studied through the lens of language ideologies. Language ideologies are beliefs about languages or a particular language that are shared throughout a community; some beliefs come to be so well established that they are socially reproduced and understood as “common sense” (Woolard, 1998). Language ideologies are not necessarily fact or fiction, nor are they always inherently right or wrong; rather, they are beliefs based on lived experience, embedded in discourse, and shared throughout a social group. Language ideologies include, for example, understandings of the role that language does or should play in society, the extent to which levels of fluency and regional or foreign accents are deemed “acceptable” or “appropriate” (cf. Garvin, 1993),

and beliefs about the kind or variety of language that is or should be spoken in (certain sectors of) society (Woolard, 1998). Language ideologies are not fixed or hegemonic; rather, they are manifold, historically specific, and changeable (Eagleton, 2007; Williams, 1973).

Language ideologies are important in language policy and planning in particular because they may affect the extent to which policies are adopted by the population. Since beliefs about languages within the population may have a bearing on language behaviour, and since the desire to influence the language behaviour of a group is integral to language planning (cf. Cooper, 1989), ideologies may affect the extent to which a language can be planned. Ricento (2005, p. 50) explains:

Understanding how ideas and beliefs become ideologies and how ideologies provide frameworks to coordinate the social interpretations and practices of dominant groups allows us to predict with some confidence how particular language policies and practices might be interpreted – and supported or opposed – by dominant or majoritarian social groups. Such understanding can also help advocates for particular policies or policy orientations develop strategies to counter such dominant ideologies in specific domains (for example, schools, the media)...

In other words, top-down language policy cannot be implemented within a void of previously existing language practice; therefore, language policies must contend with the explicit or implicit beliefs and norms of that social group.

This paper examines the language ideologies underpinning representations of language education in Canada and a large corpus of English- and French-Canadian newspapers is used as data. Newspapers are a useful site for studying language ideologies, because they reflect popular beliefs and reproduce discourse already in circulation in society

(Conboy, 2007; Cotter, 2010; Fowler, 1991). The newspaper's "audience design" (Bell, 1991) tends to accommodate addressees and their interests in part by reporting the "familiar and culturally similar" (Kariel & Rosenvall, 1983, p. 431). Also, by including letters to the editor, the newspaper includes in a more visible way the discourse of its readers. Several other studies have examined representations of language education in the news (e.g. Anderson, 2007; Goldstein, 2011; Thomas, 2006; Wallace & Wray, 2002). Blackmore and Thorpe (2003, p. 590) argue that although representations of education policy in the media do not necessarily determine its effects, they do "mobilize attention by teachers, school administrators, students, and parents ... by deciding what constitutes an educational issue and what constitutes a desirable outcome." Thus, the ways in which policies are perceived by the public and promoted through the media are significant to policy-makers and the government, too.

## Data and methods

The corpus of newspapers is examined using corpus-assisted discourse studies (see, e.g., Baker, 2006). In this approach, quantitative and qualitative techniques are used to examine patterns in large bodies of electronically stored language data known as corpora. Some of the main components of a corpus-assisted discourse-studies approach include word frequency, collocation, and statistical significance. Frequent words and phrases are theorized to be meaningful in that they indicate items that are repeated within the data, which may reflect the prominence of topics within the community from which the data are drawn (e.g., Baker, 2006; Stubbs, 2001). This reasoning is in line with the social theories of Bourdieu (e.g., 1991) and Giddens (1984), among others, who contend that routine and often mundane processes serve to reproduce culture through tradition and conventions (see Stubbs, 2001).

Low-frequency items, too, are important: low-frequency words could reflect an absence of awareness of concepts or issues, or they may indicate that these issues are not popular topics of discussion in the community from which the data sample is drawn. In addition, low-frequency words could indicate topics or issues that are taken for granted or “common sense” within a corpus. When corpora are of different sizes, normalized frequencies (e.g., per million words) are used to compare the salience of items between data sets. However, no conclusions can be drawn from word frequencies alone; for this reason, words are also examined in context.

Corpus linguistics theory builds on the work of John Sinclair (e.g., 1991, 1996), who theorized that meaning in language is not created by words used in isolation from one another but rather from words used in combination. To study such meaning, researchers can examine collocates, which are words that “co-locate” or occur in proximity to another word (i.e., usually within four or five words of the node word). When a node word tends to collocate with a semantically related set, it is argued to have “semantic preference” for a category of words (Baker, 2006). Often, the strength of collocation is established using Mutual Information scores of statistical significance. Mutual information works by calculating all of the places where two potential collocates occur in a corpus and then uses an algorithm to compute the expected probability of collocation between these words based on their relative frequencies and the overall size of the corpus. It then compares the expected figure to the observed figure and converts the difference between the two into a number that indicates the strength of the collocation (Baker, 2006). Collocation patterns can indicate some of the ways in which a node word is discussed; that is, collocation patterns have implications for studies of representations.

Finally, statistical significance tests can be used to establish which words are unusually frequent or infrequent in a data set by comparing one corpus (the “primary” corpus) against another corpus (the “reference” or “comparator” corpus). Normalized frequencies of all words are compared across the corpora and chi square or log likelihood tests are used to establish if the differences between frequencies are statistically significant, with keyness scores used to rank the differences (see, e.g., Baker, 2006, pp. 121–50).

The data under examination consist of newspaper articles and letters to the editor from the most widely circulated daily newspapers per region (where available) as well as national newspapers. Data collection was restricted by availability: no French daily newspapers are published in the Prairies, British Columbia, or the Yukon, and only one is published in each of Atlantic Canada and Ontario. Three French daily newspapers were selected from Quebec, with two of these being considered “national” in scope. Because the larger project<sup>1</sup> examined language ideologies and discourses of national identity, data were collected over a three-week period in 2009 around Canada’s two most widely celebrated national holidays: St-Jean-Baptiste Day (June 24) and Canada Day (July 1). Since the two national holidays are so close to each other, they allow for corpora to be compiled synchronically within a specific time period (15 June to 8 July 2009). In total, the corpora consist of 7,524,331 words (18,271 texts) in English and 3,589,786 words (8,759 texts) in French (see Figures 1 and 2).

## **FIGURES 1 AND 2 HERE**

In keeping with other research applying a corpus-assisted discourse-studies approach (e.g. Baker, 2006), the procedure for analysis was not unidirectional but rather a cyclical process of related and increasingly precise steps of analysis. First, the most frequent words and phrases and the highest-ranked keywords were established. Keywords were derived by

comparing all of the texts that contained at least one reference to “language” or a language-related issue<sup>2</sup> against the sum of all newspapers. Keywords were then organized according to emergent thematic categories, and the collocates, clusters, and concordance lines of relevant words were examined to flesh out the details of how they were used in context. In addition, the relative frequencies of references to official languages (e.g. “English,” “French”) were compared across corpora; the collocates of these words were also analyzed according to emergent thematic categories (e.g., language standards, identity, endangerment), and concordance lines were analyzed using discourse-analytic tools as appropriate (see Vessey, 2013). When a saturation point was reached with the findings from keywords and frequent words, downsampled articles were analyzed. The downsampling procedure involved establishing which texts in English and French contained the most references to language (see note 2) per million words. Four English and four French texts were downsampled using this procedure and were examined using fine-grained discourse analysis. Due to space restrictions, details of the discourse analysis are presented elsewhere (Vessey, 2013); this paper presents only the corpus linguistics findings.

In the next section, findings pertaining to representations of language education that emerged from corpus linguistic methods are presented. In order for the meaning of these representations to be fully understood, though, some more general findings about representations of languages within this data set are first reviewed. A discussion of findings will conclude the paper.

## Findings

Findings revealed that language issues – and particularly issues pertaining to the French language – are discussed more frequently and more explicitly in French-Canadian

newspapers, whereas English-Canadian newspapers discuss language issues less, suggesting that the role of the English language tends to be embedded and inexplicit (Vessey, 2016). More specifically, 15.9% of all French-Canadian newspaper texts contained at least one reference to “language” (i.e., “langue”) or a variety of terms indexing language issues (see note 2). In contrast, only 7.9% of all English-Canadian newspapers contained at least one reference to “language” or terms indexing language issues (see note 2). In other words, language issues and metalinguistic commentary appear to be more salient in the French-Canadian newspapers than in the English-Canadian ones. In addition, while French is the language most discussed in the French newspapers, it is also the language most discussed in the English newspapers. In other words, whereas the first language predominates in the French newspapers, the foreign or second language predominates in the English newspapers. This is clear from the frequencies of individual words. While in normalized frequencies (per million words) there are 320 references to FRANÇAIS, 107 references to FRANÇAISE and 19 references to FRANÇAISES in the French corpus, there are only 104 references to ANGLAIS, 14 references to ANGLAISE, and 1.4 references to ANGLAISES. Thus, references to FRANÇAIS/E/S occur more than twice as often as references to ANGLAIS/E/S. In contrast, in normalized frequencies (per million words) there are 105 references to ENGLISH and 198 references to FRENCH in the English corpus. Thus, references to FRENCH occur nearly twice as often as references to ENGLISH.<sup>3</sup>

English tends to be discussed most often when other languages are also under discussion. In other words, references to ENGLISH tend to collocate with other language-related terms; thus, discussions of English tend not to occur on their own. This is not only the case with the word ENGLISH, but also with other English-related terms such as ANGLOPHONES. In the English newspapers, 42.5% of occurrences of ANGLOPHONES collocate with

FRANCOPHONES, FRENCH, and ALLOPHONES. In contrast, the term FRANCOPHONES appears to be much more capable of existing on its own (i.e., not compared with another language or language group), with only 15% of occurrences of FRANCOPHONES collocating with ANGLOPHONES, FRENCH, and ENGLISH. Discussions of francophones can therefore occur on their own, whereas discussions of anglophones tend to take place in discursive contexts where other language groups are also under discussion. Thus, in English newspapers, ANGLOPHONES is a term that tends not to be used on its own; rather, it is often used in opposition with other languages or linguistic labels. **Box 1** shows selected concordance lines in which ANGLOPHONE collocates with language-related terms, including FRANCOPHONE/S, QUEBEC, and FRENCH.

**BOX 1 HERE**

When English language issues are discussed on their own, it is often with reference to fluency and use of language. There are numerous evaluations of fluency (e.g. “broken” English; “gradually improving” English; “good” English) and remarks on a lack of fluency (see selected examples in **Box 2**).

**BOX 2 HERE**

These examples suggest not only that languages (and English in particular) are tools to be used, but also that fluency (e.g. ‘speak English’) is an important part of why languages are discussed at all. Native-like fluency in English is especially valued: although references to FRENCH are far more frequent than references to ENGLISH (see above), there are far more *evaluations* of English. For example, while there are six references to ‘broken English’, there are no references to ‘broken French’. According to **Garvin (1993)**, individuals’ fluency is highly prized when a language has predominantly instrumental value; in contrast, if a

language has a predominantly integrative value, then expectations for individual fluency in a standard language may be lower. Notably, he cites English-speaking countries as places where instrumental attachment to language dominates. Thus, these and other findings from English Canadian newspapers suggest that languages are represented as having predominantly instrumental value.

In contrast, there is less evidence in the French-Canadian newspapers of languages having predominantly instrumental value. There are fewer references to using language in this corpus, and the only (comparatively rare) evaluations of fluency pertain to English language fluency (see **Box 3**).

### **BOX 3 HERE**

Thus, despite the fact that there are comparatively more references to languages and language issues in French-Canadian newspapers, these tend not to occur within discussions of fluency. Instead of foregrounding the instrumental value of languages through such topics, discussions of the French language tend to be varied, diverse, and creative and not focused on a limited range of topics (e.g., education).

To summarize, some of the major differences between overall representations of languages in the English- and French-Canadian newspapers are that (a) languages and language issues are discussed more in French than in English; (b) discussions of the first language predominate in French, whereas discussions of second languages predominate in English; and (c) discussions of language use and fluency are more frequent in English than they are in French. Another important distinction between the two data sets is that language issues are diverse and varied in French, whereas they tend to be included in fewer contexts in English. In fact, in English-Canadian newspapers, language issues tend to be raised most often in discussions of language education.

In the English corpus, numerous keywords pertain to language education: SCHOOL (866 occurrences; keyness score 307), STUDENTS (397; 166), EDUCATION (312; 161), IMMERSION (57; 158), LITERACY (85; 145), SCHOOLS (225; 114), CLASSES (120; 98), TEACHERS (129; 75), COURSES (79; 66), STUDENT (148; 48), TEACHING (78; 46), KINDERGARTEN (55; 44), CAMPUS (56; 43), LEARNING (125; 41), GRADUATES (61; 35), TAUGHT (58; 31), TEACH (56; 31), and ACADEMIC (60; 30). Since these keywords are unusually frequent in comparison with another data set (see above), they suggest that discussions of education are particularly prominent in English-Canadian newspaper texts that discuss language issues, even those where language is mentioned only fleetingly.

The prominence of language education in English-Canadian newspapers is also evident in the collocations of the words LANGUAGE, FRENCH, and ENGLISH. These words have a semantic preference for words pertaining to education, and many of these collocations (here marked with an asterisk) have statistically significant Mutual Information scores. For example, the collocates of LANGUAGE (671 occurrences) include SCHOOL\* (10), LEARNING (11), SKILLS\* (11), LEARN (9), TEACHING (6), STUDENTS (6), TRAINING (6), CLASSES\* (6), and EDUCATION (5). Similarly, the collocates of ENGLISH (794 occurrences) include SCHOOL\* (25), SCHOOLS\* (19), CLASSES\* (11), UNIVERSITY\* (8), INSTRUCTOR (6), STUDENTS\* (6), TEACHER\* (5), and TEACHING (5). Finally, the collocates of FRENCH (1,489 occurrences) include IMMERSION\* (48), SCHOOL\* (39), SCHOOLS\* (20), EDUCATION (14), STUDENTS (13), LEARNED\* (9), CLASSES\* (7), KINDERGARTEN\* (7), and STUDENT (7). These collocations indicate that languages tend to be discussed within the context of education.

Keywords and collocation scores can indicate the prominence of language education in the English-Canadian newspapers, but to understand the ways in which this is being discussed, we must turn to individual texts. These show the contentious nature of language

education in Canada. Two of the four downsampled English texts (see above) focus specifically on language education. While space does not permit a detailed consideration of the findings that emerged from the discourse analysis, let us illustrate some of the principal characteristics of these texts.

Notably, the two English texts (Ferency, 2009; Howlett, 2009) both discuss the proposed expansion of French Ontario school admissions. These changes proposed that students from outside Canada who acquired French in their country of origin should be able to attend Ontario's French schools but that this expansion should not extend to English-speaking Canadian students. The reason for expanding admission eligibility was the dwindling numbers of French Ontarians, that is, those who are constitutionally entitled to education in their mother tongue. However, the exclusion of English-speaking Canadian students from the expansion in admissions was being met with resistance.

One of the downsampled texts is a letter to the editor of the *Ottawa Citizen* from Monika Ferency, former president of the Ontario division of Canadian Parents for French. Ferency's letter expresses support for the expansion of admission guidelines for French-language schools in Ontario, explaining not only that Canadian Parents for French "encourages initiatives to improve access to education in French" but also that "all students should have opportunities to become proficient and literate in both official languages." This emphasis on inclusive language education for proficiency and literacy purposes foregrounds the instrumental role of languages while backgrounding the intrinsic role of languages in social life (i.e., the symbolic role of language for French Canadians; the symbolic role of bilingualism for Canadians). In other words, the equality of access to fluency in both official languages – but especially French – is privileged over French-speaking Canadians' desire for

intergenerational linguistic and cultural transmission, which is, in fact, at the heart of their constitutional rights.

Similarly, the other downsampled text (Howlett, 2009) frames the announcement of changes in eligibility with reference to the recent cuts made to the highly popular French immersion programs for English-speaking Canadians. Given their popularity, Howlett (2009) reports that the government is “under siege over [the] cuts” and that there is resistance to the suggestion that students should travel to more remote schools where French immersion is still offered. Here, too, the concern over changes to admissions is underpinned by the understanding that the role of education is to distribute language resources equally to Canadian students. The main issue seems to be that non-English Canadians are being provided unequal access to French language education, which is seen as a valuable social commodity.

In contrast, even though language issues are more topical in the French-Canadian newspapers than in the English-Canadian ones (see above), language education is far less topical in the French newspapers. For example, while numerous education-related keywords emerged from the English newspapers, only four emerged from the French newspapers: ÉCOLES (105 occurrences; keyness score 56), ÉLÈVES (145; 56), ENSEIGNANTS (58; 40), and L'ÉCOLE (172; 28). Instead of focusing on education, the French keywords often referred to linguistically indexed identities (e.g., FRANCOPHONE/S, ANGLOPHONE/S, FRANCO) and issues pertaining to language and culture (e.g., FÊTE, RADIO, CULTURE, SPECTACLE).

Also, despite the high frequency of the word form FRANÇAIS (i.e., “français/e/s”) (1,601 occurrences), it has few education-related collocates, and none of the following are statistically significant collocates (i.e., using Mutual Information Scores): L'ÉCOLE (7), L'ENSEIGNEMENT (7), ÉCOLES (6), and ÉTUDES (5). The word form LANGUE (“langue/s”) (489

occurrences) collocates with ÉCOLES in only six instances, and ANGLAIS (“anglais/e/s”) (423 occurrences) has no collocates pertaining to education. Finally, although four texts were downsampled from the French corpus for closer analysis, the only discussion of language education pertains to French language education for immigrants.

Havrankova’s (2009) letter to the editor argues that immigrants to Quebec should feel privileged to learn French, which is both a “belle [beautiful]” language that inspires pride and joy, as well as being a valuable language internationally. While other languages, such as Swedish and Dutch, are geographically limited, Havrankova argues that “la connaissance du français ouvre la porte non seulement sur la culture québécoise, déjà riche, mais aussi sur l’immense culture francophone mondiale [knowledge of French opens the door not only to Quebec culture – already rich – but also to the immense culture of international Francophonie].”

The argument that immigrants must learn French also occurs in other texts. In fact, FRANÇAIS is the only non-grammatical (or “function”) word to collocate with IMMIGRANT (“immigrant/e/s,” “immigration”) (5 occurrences), and although the strength of this collocation is not statistically significant, concordance lines indicate the extent to which it is seen as important that French is adopted by immigrants (see **Box 4**).

#### **BOX 4**

In these examples, language education (“apprentissage,” “cours du français”) and fluency in French are foregrounded with relation to immigrants in Quebec.

In summary, although language education is comparatively less topical in the French data, when language education is discussed it is sometimes with regard to immigrant acquisition of French, suggesting its integrative and intrinsic value. Unlike in the English Canadian newspapers, there is little discussion of education in the other of Canada’s two

official languages. Although these findings may be a result of the limited time period of collection (June–July), the fact that language education is less topical in the French newspapers nonetheless suggests that in French-speaking Canadian newspapers (a) language is not only or even predominantly an education issue (e.g., as discussed above, discussions of language often pertain to identity and cultural issues), and (b) when language education is discussed, there tends to be concern over immigrant acquisition of French rather than French-speaking students' acquisition of the other official language.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

This study began by posing two research questions, the first of which asked about differences between representations of language education in English- and French-Canadian newspapers. Findings showed that although language issues are discussed much more frequently in French-Canadian newspapers, the English-Canadian newspapers in fact contain far more discussions of language education. In English-Canadian newspapers, a dominant issue appears to be education in the other official language, with salient references to French immersion and both downsampled texts focusing on access to education in the official languages. In contrast, the French-Canadian newspapers contained far fewer discussions of language education. Where language education was topical, the need for immigrants to learn the French language was foregrounded. In the downsampled texts, only one discussed language education, and that text, too, focused on immigrants learning French.

The second question asked if the intrinsic or instrumental value of languages was foregrounded in representations. Representations in English-Canadian newspapers, and particularly the downsampled texts that were overviewed, tended to prioritize fluency in languages and equality of access to language education through, for example, French

Immersion (e.g., Ferenczy, 2009; Howlett, 2009). If we understand language fluency as the ability to *use* language rather than an identification with, for example, a linguistic or cultural group, then ultimately a focus on fluency privileges an instrumental (rather than intrinsic) understanding of languages. If language education is understood as the route toward language fluency, then it is also the central means by which to access valuable social resources; this could explain why findings suggest that language education should be democratically available to all. Such an explanation would corroborate an argument made by Heller (1990, p.79):

To the extent that Franco-Ontarian schools represent a particularly attractive path to the valued resource that bilingualism has become, they have also become a battleground between francophones and anglophones over who will have access to those schools. Many francophones claim that anglophone access effectively destroys any possibility francophones may have to really preserve their language and their identity. Many anglophones, essentially not understanding the fragile position of minorities in Canadian society, argue for open, democratic access to any and all forms of education (after all, there are no obstacles to francophone access to English-language schools).

As Heller argues, bilingualism is recognized as a resource by English-speaking Ontarians (and arguably English-speaking Canadians more generally), and public education is key to accessing this resource. A focus on the benefits of bilingualism (i.e., fluency in two languages) for personal gain rather than for identity or cultural purposes indicates a perspective through which languages are seen to have instrumental – rather than intrinsic – value. Moreover, this finding supports Garvin's (1993) arguments about the privileging of fluency and the instrumental value of languages in English-speaking countries.

In contrast, in French-Canadian newspapers, the fact that language education is represented as most important for immigrants suggests the intrinsic value of the French language as central to integration. This was also corroborated by a downsampled text (Havrankova, 2009) that explained the value of the French language in Quebec society, as well as the keywords that focused on identity and cultural issues rather than education. These findings are in line with previous research (e.g., Oakes & Warren, 2007), which explains that integrative motivation is central to the policy goal of making French the language of public communication in Quebec. The authors explain that French does not have the same level of instrumental value in Quebec as the English language does throughout most of North America; therefore, Quebec authorities set about using policies to improve the instrumental value of French and make it the common language for all. The reasoning was that instrumental motivations would result not only from the simple increase in status that French would enjoy in these fields, but also “it was hoped that the instrumental motivations created would in time spill over into integrative ones, thus further reinforcing the commitment of immigrants to learning French” (Oakes & Warren, 2007, p. 92).

The divergence between English and French representations may suggest some of the reasons why there continue to be lingering issues with language policy in Canada. Representations of languages – and language education – are underpinned by language ideologies, which appear to differ insofar as they are manifested in the newspapers under examination. These language ideologies may affect the viability of implementing policy because language policy literature has demonstrated that beliefs and values are central to policy uptake (see Ricento, 2005; Spolsky, 2012). English speakers have for some time failed to understand the cultural and identity-related importance of the French language to French-speaking Canadians. Haque (2012, p. 161) notes that the Commissioners of the Royal

Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the 1960s found that anglophones were complacent about language maintenance and had little understanding of the role of language in intergenerational cultural transmission. If English speakers continue to ignore the importance of the French language in intergenerational cultural transmission in French Canada (i.e., the intrinsic value of language for French speakers in Canada), then it follows that the language education will not be understood in the same way in English- and French-speaking Canada.

Saul (1997, p. 424) contends that if French is to have a future in Canada, then the key to strengthening it is “in constantly seeking to understand the experience of those who use it – that is, their culture.” If Canada’s language policies are to be effective, then the findings from this research suggest that the focus should not be more or less exclusively on education and fluency. The findings outlined here suggest that differences in the salience of representations of language education, and differences between the content of these representations, may pertain to broader divergent language ideologies in English- and French-speaking Canada. While English-Canadian newspapers foreground the learning of French for instrumental purposes (although ideological reasons such as national unity could also be a motivation, albeit less salient), the French-Canadian newspapers do not foreground discussions of language education; when it is discussed, concerns over immigrants learning French tend to predominate. The explanation for these different representations may be that it is largely taken for granted that in English-speaking Canada immigrants will learn English; in contrast, in French-speaking Canada, assumptions are not (or cannot) be made about immigrants acquiring French. Furthermore, that francophones (and allophones, too) will learn English may be less salient in the data because it, too, can largely be assumed. What the results suggest, then, is the ways in which issues become foregrounded or backgrounded in the

newspapers as a result of the collective interests (and stakes, concerns, and assumptions) of each group. Also what they suggest is that there are different collective interests being expressed in English- and French-Canadian newspapers.

It must be acknowledged that there are limitations to this study. Notably, Ontario has been overrepresented within the English data, especially with regard to language education, and regional specificities have been glossed. Another limitation is that these findings are based only on newspaper data – which may be influenced by commercial interests or ownership –and only a small three-week sample of articles; more research on larger, more diverse data sets is needed for corroboration. The paper also glosses over the important differences between the different types and levels of language education available in Canada (e.g., French immersion, core French, ESL). Nevertheless, the findings outlined here are in fact in line with other research that has suggested that French language education is central to English-Canadian engagement with bilingualism (e.g., Heller, 2003a; Hayday, 2005). However, the focus on education in English-speaking Canada continues to reassert the fact that languages have instrumental rather than intrinsic roles in society. Not only has the “language-as-resource” approach to language planning been highlighted as problematic (e.g., Ricento, 2005) but such an instrumental approach also misses out on the fundamentally important identity value of the French language in Canada. Indeed, the intrinsic value of the French language has been the driving force for French-speaking Canadians to preserve their language and culture over the past four centuries. Rather than just language education, then, it is perhaps the case that the Canadian bilingual model would be better served by improved cross-cultural communication, wherein the different roles that languages have in Canada are critically assessed and the important intrinsic value of languages is highlighted. If renewed cross-cultural communication were possible, it would be ideally supported by the media,

which could contribute to greater understanding of the decisions that went into the creation of Canadian language policies and their continued relevance in the globalised and “super-diverse” age in which we live.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The data were collected for the purposes of doctoral research (Vessey, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> French terms included ANGLAIS, ANGLAISE, ANGLAISES, ANGLICISME, ANGLICISE, ANGLO, ANGLOS, ANGLOPHONE, ANGLOPHONES, BILINGUE, BILINGUES, BILINGUISME, FRANÇAIS, FRANÇAISE, FRANÇAISES, FRANCO, FRANÇOS, FRANCOPHONE, FRANCOPHONES, FRANCOPHONIE, LANGAGE, LANGAGES, LANGAGIER, LANGAGIÈRE, LANGAGIÈRES, LINGUISTIQUE, LINGUISTIQUES, LANGUE, LANGUES. English terms included ANGLO, ANGLOS, ANGLICIZE, ANGLOPHONE, ANGLOPHONES, BILINGUAL, BILINGUALS, BILINGUALISM, ENGLISH, FRANCO, FRANCOPHONE, FRANCOPHONES, FRANCOPHONIE, FRENCH, LANGUAGE, LANGUAGES, LINGUISTIC, LINGUISTICS, MONOLINGUAL, MULTILINGUAL, UNILINGUAL.

<sup>3</sup> The cases where ENGLISH and FRENCH refer to national identity were not excluded here because the larger study explored language *and* national identity. Also, the difference between national identity (France), national identity (French-Canadian) and linguistic identity (French/French-Canadian speaker) is often impossible to distinguish. Certainly, some obvious cases could be excluded, but since such categorization could not be exhaustive or wholly objective, it was abandoned at early stages.

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## Box 1

Selected English concordance lines in which ANGLOPHONE/S collocates with FRANCOPHONE/S, QUEBEC, and FRENCH

have a facility for languages. Well, **anglophones** are just as smart as **francophones**.”  
atural fear **when speaking French that anglophones feel more than francophones**  
(who s  
er cent of **non-francophones feel that anglophones speak French** at a satisfactory  
lev

**Anglophones speak satisfactory French: 36 per**

onsidered a francophone is a Canadian anglophone who also speaks French. Not  
content  
n English. After all, the majority of anglophones who have weathered Quebec's  
politi  
kely to be able to speak English than **anglophones are to speak French**, with 43.4  
per  
ts of eyes to see if **francophones and anglophones** can appreciate the humour. In this  
into **heavily-francophone regions than anglophones** might do. But as long as  
Montreal  
rtunities to **use the French language. Anglophones will develop their skills** in conte

## Box 2

### Selected English concordance lines discussing fluency in English

Frank was three."My mother **didn't speak English**," Frank said. At first, all she cou  
he haltingly explained she did **not speak English**. After that, we exchanged greeting  
h. He asked Mamma also to **speak** to us in **English which she refused**. She taught us  
to  
oncentration, and a few who **speak little English**. At least one worker has a large fa  
it students who **speak neither French nor English**. The raison d'être of our French-la  
in his gear." He **didn't speak very good English**, but the big fish turned out to be  
the mask," says the director, in **halting English**." At the beginning of life, he was

ming Canadian. He intends to **improve his English** so he can volunteer as an English  
i  
more fans while in Moncton. He says his **English isn't very strong**, but Bussires add  
” Malkin said in his **gradually improving English**. “Now, we're couple years older  
and  
Normandeu before him, is **not at ease in English**, although he made a commitment,  
aft  
age of 30; a huge number of them have **no English at all**. I volunteered in a centre f  
he village; his mother Nathalie spoke **no English** but somehow managed to chat with  
he  
are Chinese. Most of the clients have **no English** despite having been in Canada for y  
d not be found. Dziekanski, who spoke **no English**, eventually began throwing around  
f  
which is usually passed along in **broken English** and riddled with grammatical errors  
s curious about Canada, but spoke **broken English**. Then again, we could barely  
string  
d the images. I was questioned in **broken English** for about 20 minutes – sometimes  
he

### Box 3

Selected French concordance lines discussing fluency in English

autres avec Robert Redford, même si elle **parlait mal anglais**. Je n'aime pas la télé trop lèche

handicap: linguistique d'abord (il **parlait à peine anglais**) et musical par le fait qu'il n'e

omprenait pas les paroles parce qu'il ne **parlait pas anglais**, mais il connaissait toutes les c

vite dû demander à la guide de parler français: son **anglais était pratiquement inintelligible**

nt des jeunes vêtus à l'occidentale, parlant un **bon anglais**, ou encore des **étudiants, des jo**

#### Box 4

Selected French concordance lines with FRANÇAIS and IMMIGRANT/E/S

dais. Pour promouvoir **l'apprentissage du français par les immigrants**, le gouvern  
ébécois dont **la langue maternelle est le français estiment que «les immigrants**  
lusieurs stratégies: rendre **les cours du français** accessibles, jumeler **les immig**  
e **l'intégration des immigrants, c'est le français** et l'emploi.» Il se demande e

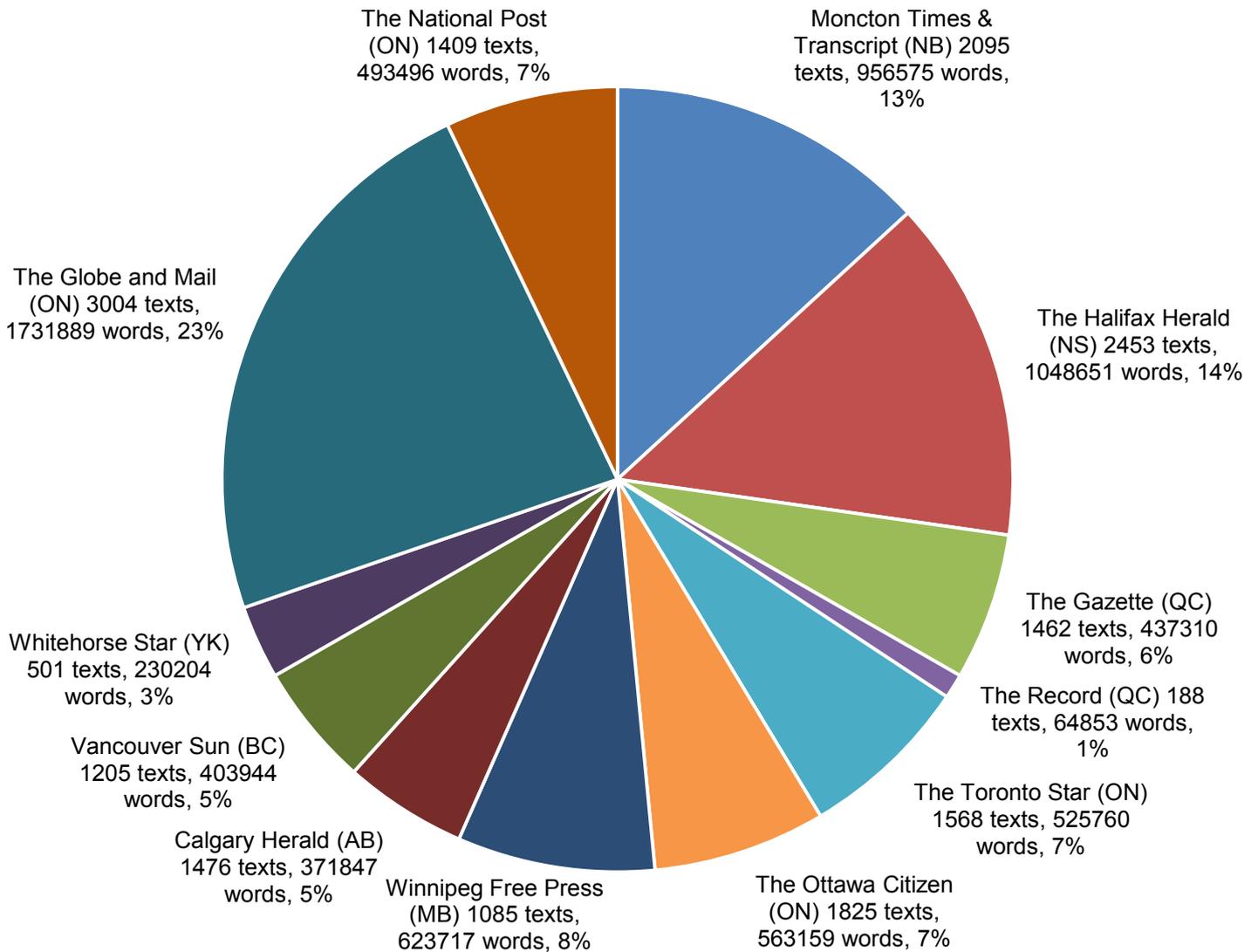


Figure 1: English-language newspapers represented in the corpus.  
Note: The corpus contained 18,271 texts and 7,524,311 words in English.

**<Note to comp: Please do the following to the text in the figure: (1) Italicize all newspaper names; (2) replace YK with YT in the Whitehorse Star entry; and (3) add commas for millions and thousands in the digits. Do the same for Figure 2.>**

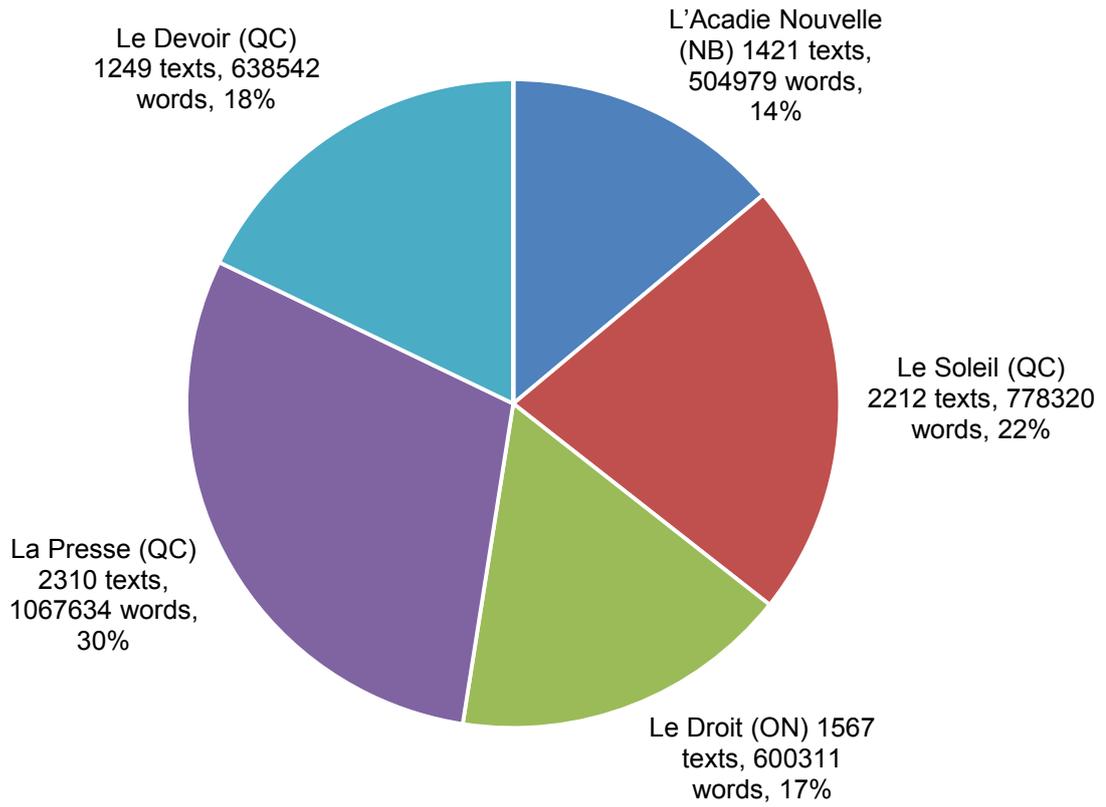


Figure 2: French-language newspapers represented in the corpus. The corpus contained 8,759 texts and 3,589,786 words in French.