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LEARNING FRENCH AS A SECOND OFFICIAL LANGUAGE: RESERVED FOR ANGLOPHONES?¹

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This article reviews federal language policies and provincial curriculum documents as they relate to Allophones and their access to French as a Second Official Language (FSOL) programs across Canada. Results of a detailed document analysis reveal that policies provide obstacles to access for allophone immigrants to Canada who seek to learn both official languages. An examination of research reveals that implementation of policy also restricts Allophones' access to learning French in English-dominant provinces. We argue that increasing Allophones' access to FSOL programming would not only support Canadian government initiatives and goals related to linguistic duality and official bilingualism, but also allophone students' success in Canadian schools.

Introduction

Immigration is the single most significant contributing factor to growth in the Canadian population. In fact, in recent years, immigration has accounted for two-thirds of Canada's population growth. The vast majority of today's Allophones, close to 90%, (Canadian School Boards Association, 2006; Ontario Public School Boards, 2005) come from countries where neither French nor English is the first language. The former commissioner of Official Languages, Dyane Adam (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 1999), posited that such a

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diverse influx of immigrants presents a challenge to the linguistic duality of Canada—one of the federal government’s identified characteristics of Canadian identity. Yet, voices from those diverse groups heard in two discussion forums offered by the present Commissioner of Official Languages, Graham Fraser, suggest that the challenge to official language duality comes not from the groups themselves, as they support official language duality, but from the lack of access to French-language learning opportunities in English-dominant areas across Canada (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2007). The majority of the participating focus groups identified official language bilingualism as a Canadian value that was complementary to cultural diversity. The participant groups acknowledged official language bilingualism as advantageous for the allophone community to enhance integration, social and economic mobility, and citizen participation.

This article provides a review and an analysis of current federal language policies, provincial and territorial curriculum documents, and their implementation across Canada as they relate to Allophones and their access to in-school French-language learning opportunities. English and French second official language documents are examined for specific attention given to allophone issues. In particular, English and French second official language documents from English-dominant provinces were examined with respect to references to the inclusion or exclusion of allophone students in second official language study. In areas where learning French is obligatory at school and there is a great influx of immigrants in this area, our analyses reveal that allophone students are often excluded from in-school French-language learning opportunities. This exclusion may prevent Allophones from developing knowledge of both of Canada’s official languages, whereas the potential exists for them to not only support linguistic duality and bilingualism but also derive personal benefit from the economic and socio-cultural

opportunities provided by official language bilingualism. Multilingual acquisition theory (Aronin, 2005; Cenoz, 2003) and empirical studies in the field of multilingualism (Griessler, 2001; Keshavarz & Astaneh, 2004) lend support to the principle that bilinguals have advantages in additional language learning. Within the Canadian context, Mady (2007) showed that allophone students outperformed Canadian-born students on a number of measures of French proficiency despite their more limited exposure to French. With a similar allophone population, Carr (2009) demonstrated that Allophones' knowledge of French positively impacted their learning of English. Such academic benefits are of particular importance given Allophones' struggles in other areas of the curriculum (Simons & Connelly, 2000). Inclusion of Allophones in in-school French-language learning opportunities could also provide for the integration of two of Canada's distinguishing features: linguistic duality and cultural diversity.

For the purpose of this paper, the following definitions are used:

Allophone: a person who comes to live in Canada, as an immigrant or refugee, with a first language that is neither of Canada's official languages. For this paper, we consider allophone students who arrive in Quebec and study French as the dominant language and English as a second official language, and allophone students who arrive in English-dominant regions and study English as the dominant language and French as a second official language.

Core French: French as a second official language taught as a subject for one period each day, or a few times a week. Known as basic French in Manitoba and FSOL in British Columbia and Alberta.

French as a second official language: The term French as a second official language has been chosen to denote the fact that, in English-dominant Canada, many learners learn French as their second official language even though it may be the second, third or fourth languages they have learned.

French Immersion: A program delivery model where French is the language of instruction for a significant part of the school day.

Method

Since language policy in Canada falls under federal jurisdiction and educational policy falls under provincial and territorial jurisdiction, federal, provincial and territorial documents were analysed for the purpose of this paper. Federally, publications from the Commissioner of Official Languages, Canadian Department of Heritage and its Official Languages in Education program were analysed. Provincial and territorial French as a Second Official Language (FSOL) and English as a Second Official Language (ESOL) curriculum documents were analysed for reference to Allophones in French-language learning opportunities. Standard document analysis methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 782) were employed. References to Allophones were identified in the FSOL documents using the following keywords: Allophones, English as a Second Language, English as an Additional Language, English language learners, immigrants, and new Canadians. References to French-language learning as it pertains to Allophones in the FSOL documents were identified using the following key words: French, second language learning, and additional language learning. Qualitative content analysis was applied to all excerpts of the texts identified.

Findings

Federal Policy

Language policy in Canada is created federally. In recognition of the importance of language in building national solidarity and identity, the federal government passed The Official Languages Act (1969), an outcome of The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism that recognized equality of status for French and English in Canada. The overall goal of granting this equality status was to protect linguistic minority communities in Canada. Whereas the Act

did not address the spread of French and English in itself, the federal government, through The Department of Canadian Heritage, established the Official Languages in Education program (1970) to financially support provincial and territorial efforts to enhance second official language learning opportunities. Federal recognition of the importance of education in the spread of Canada's official languages remains pertinent as revealed in the federal government's policy statement *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality* (2003). In support of second official language learning, the federal government increased funding to the provinces and territories with a view to doubling the proportion of secondary school graduates with a functional knowledge of their second official language. With this goal in mind, the funds were targeted to improve core French/English, revitalize immersion, provide bilingual graduates the opportunity to put their skills to good use, and increase the number of qualified teachers for official language education. The federal government has since reiterated its commitment to and financial support for official language learning in *The Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future*.

This analysis of federal documents, from the foundation of the Official Languages Act to the present, revealed that reference to opportunities for Allophones to learn *both* official languages is absent. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1967) and The Multiculturalism Act (1985), for example, limited the government's assistance to facilitate immigrants' learning of one of Canada's official languages, but not both. In English Canada, immigrants must learn English, but their access to also learn French at school is not guaranteed by federal policy documents. Such limitations continue to this day; *The Next Act*, for example, limits its description of improved access to linguistic duality to Anglophones and Francophones as it seeks to double the proportion of bilingual graduates.

“Today, the proportion of bilingual Francophones and Anglophones in the 15 to 19 age group is around 24%. The objective of the Action Plan is to raise this proportion to 50% by 2013” (Privy council, 2003, p. 27). Limiting official language bilingualism to Anglophones and Francophones (disregarding Allophones) would make it difficult, if not impossible, to double the proportion of students studying French. Moreover, *The Roadmap for Canada’s Linguistic Duality 2008-2013* (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2008), does not address any more clearly than previous policy whether allophone students may be required to or encouraged to study *both* official languages. Given that the federal government claims that linguistic duality is part of the Canadian identity, it is surprising that it does not explicitly include Allophones in policy on second official language learning. Similarly, given that the federal government states that cultural diversity is also a core Canadian value, it is puzzling that it does not clearly encourage the interaction of cultural diversity with linguistic duality.

Such silence with regard to official language bilingualism for Allophones is contrary to the federal commitment to promote linguistic duality and bilingualism particularly given that 95% of allophone Canadians believe that it is important for their children to learn a language other than English (Parkin & Turcotte, 2003). As it pertains to official language bilingualism in particular, Allophones were more supportive of such bilingualism than Anglophones. Parkin and Turcotte linked Allophones’ support for official language bilingualism to their complementary support for multiculturalism. The federal government’s disregard for the allophone population with regard to official language bilingualism policy is especially perplexing given that this issue has been explicitly highlighted by Canadian Commissioners of Official Languages. For example, Dyane Adam highlighted the need for the federal government to integrate linguistic duality and cultural diversity for the benefit of Allophones (Office of the Commissioner of Official

Languages, 2006). Similarly, the present Commissioner of Official Languages, Graham Fraser, recognizes the desire of Allophones to become official language bilingual and that in addition to encouraging a response to Adam's 2006 recommendation, he encourages the federal government to place greater importance on promoting linguistic duality for newcomers to Canada. At present, it remains, as per this federal document analysis, that there are no federal policies or programs that provide Allophones with the opportunity to learn both official languages.

Provincial Policies

While Canada is an officially bilingual country, all of its provinces and territories, with the exception of New Brunswick, are not. As indicated above, language policy is created federally in Canada, while education (including the provision for classroom second language learning opportunities) is a provincial or territorial responsibility. With regard to in-school French-language learning opportunities in particular, French is an obligatory area of study in six provinces, but optional elsewhere. The analysis of FSOL and ESOL curriculum documents (see Table for a summary of provincial and territorial FSOL policies across Canada) in the English-dominant provinces and territories across Canada, including New Brunswick, revealed little reference to and an absence of direct policies and specific programs that *ensure* allophone students' access to learn FSOL.

British Columbia and the Yukon. In British Columbia and the Yukon, all boards of education must offer a second language (French being among those languages offered) from Grades 5 to 8. According to their Language Education Policy (1997), all students must study a second language; however, schools can choose to withdraw students and deny them access to FSOL programs as per the order (Province of British Columbia, 2001, p. 7):

Students may be exempted from the second language requirements. An exemption may apply to a student who is:

- identified as a student with special needs or receiving English as a Second Language service

All Anglophones, with the exception of those with learning difficulties, then would have the option to learn French in British Columbia. All Allophones, however, can be granted an exemption from this opportunity. There is no mention of Allophones in the British Columbia French Immersion policy document that dates back to 1996 when immigration was not such a significant reality in this province or in Canada.

Alberta, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. The Ministry of Education in Alberta, Alberta Education formally Alberta Learning, (also providing French curriculum to the Northwest Territories and Nunavut) announced the plan to make second language learning obligatory in 2004, but has since chosen not to implement that policy citing the lack of readiness in some jurisdictions. Given the optional nature of French study, then, it is not surprising that the issue of including Allophones in FSOL is absent in the FSOL (2005) and ESOL (1997) curriculum documents. Although there is not the same need to address issues of inclusion where French study is optional, it is encouraging to note that Alberta Education recognizes the multifaceted potential French could offer allophone students in the document *French as a Second Language: Nine Year Program of Study: Guide to Implementation* (2008) when it states,

Many students in today's classroom may be learning French as a third or additional language while working at developing their knowledge of English as well. Being on the same level in French as other FSOL students can help boost the morale of students who are struggling to catch up to their anglophone peers with respect to English language skills. Often, English language learners find themselves at various stages in the acculturation process. Many of the fields of experience in the FSOL program of studies can help these students learn about various aspects of Canadian culture, because they provide a context for discussing everyday topics. (p. 95)

Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Similar to Alberta, the study of French is optional in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Such optional study may therefore explain the lack of reference to access to core French-language learning opportunities for Allophones in either province's core French or ESOL documents. Manitoba, in *French immersion in Manitoba: A handbook for school leaders* (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007), however, recognizes not only the potential but the benefit for English language learners to be in French immersion:

the number of children who speak a language other than English at home is increasing in Canada. These children may have English as a second skill. Consequently, when they enroll in French immersion, French becomes not a second language, but a third language (L3) or "additional language." Research is starting to be published showing that learning a third language follows similar processes to learning a second language and benefits from similar learning conditions. Furthermore, research is showing that the advantages of learning a third language are analogous to those of learning a second language (Genesee & Cloud, 1998). (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007, p. 8)

Ontario. The English-dominant provinces east of Manitoba, including New Brunswick, include French as a compulsory subject of study in school curriculum: from Grades 4 to 9 in Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, and from Grades 4 to 10 in New Brunswick. Whereas some provinces are beginning to consider how to program for allophone students, in Ontario, limited access to FSOL for allophone students has been evident for many years. The Report of the Royal Commission on Learning (RCOL) (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1994) conveyed concerns about lost opportunities for minorities: "too many of their children are failing, are in special education or non-university streams or are dropping out of school" (Vol. IV, p. 90). The report of the RCOL did not include allophone students in the discussion of official language learning. Indeed, it stated that French was obligatory only for Anglophones, whereas the school system was responsible to help allophone students to learn only one official language (Vol. II, p. 102). Eleven years hence, the Ontario

Position Paper on Second Language Learning (2005) recognizes the importance of the educational system to prepare these students for successful transition into Canadian society but highlights the support for acquisition of one official language, not both:

In response to concerns from school boards and in support of the work of the Canadian Coalition for Immigrant Children and Youth and the Canadian School Boards Association, the Ontario Public School Boards Association (OPSBA) has conducted a review of the issues affecting second language learning (i.e. the acquisition of one of Canada's official languages) in Ontario's public school system. (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2005, p. 3)

Whereas this position paper recognizes that allophone students lag behind in school, it does not suggest/require additional language learning opportunities as a means to help bridge the gaps.

In Ontario, both core FSOL and ESOL policy documents allow provisions that can prevent allophone students from learning FSOL or ESOL. The ESOL document (1999), for example, allows that allophone students be withdrawn from the regular classroom program, including FSOL, for additional and intensive support in English (p. 12). Moreover, this ESOL document provides for granting equivalency credits, which allows an allophone student to graduate without ever taking the "obligatory" FSOL credit in secondary school. The lack of introductory FSOL curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1998) at the secondary level is another impediment to including allophone students into FSOL, which therefore forces allophone students to adopt English as their only official language in a region that obliges anglophone students to study FSOL.

Although exclusion of Allophones from French immersion is not mentioned in the provincial French immersion document in Ontario, handbooks for administrators of one of the largest school boards in Ontario (Wagner, 2003) encourage administrators to prioritize English language learners' need to learn English in that jurisdiction prior to considering their enrolment in French immersion.

New Brunswick. Although an opportunity afforded to all anglophone students in New Brunswick through mandatory study of French, the use of FSOL as a means to enhance allophone students' education is also absent from New Brunswick's French curriculum document, although this document is very dated (New Brunswick Department of Education, 1989). In addition, the following citation from their *Resource Guide for Educators of English Second Language Learners* (1996) recommends the study of subjects other than French:

Current research on school ESOL advocates mainstreaming with regular withdrawal or ESOL for children under the age of 12 (Piper, 1993). When possible, a short period of full-time ESOL is recommended for older children to be followed by enrolment only in courses that require less reading and writing, such as mathematics and science if the child has a background in these subjects, and music, physical education, industrial arts and home economics. (New Brunswick Department of Education, 1996, p. 10)

Newfoundland and Labrador. Where French is an obligatory area of study for Anglophones, Newfoundland and Labrador make no reference to allophone students studying French in their core FSOL documents or in their three ESOL curriculum documents. Yet, the French Immersion document (2005) limits the study of French to Anglophones with the following citation: "The French immersion program is designed for English-speaking students" (Newfoundland and Labrador, 2005, p. 7).

Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia does not yet have an ESOL document, but the core (1998) and immersion (2006) FSOL documents make no mention of allophone students in French-language learning programs.

Prince Edward Island. Similarly, the Ministry of Education for Prince Edward Island makes no direct reference to allophone students in their French documents, core (2000) or immersion. Yet, suggested use of strategies in the core French document (2000), for example,

limit language comparisons to those between French and English, ignoring possible other dominant languages and their utility in the classroom:

En se servant de stratégies comme les mots-amis (mots qui se ressemblent en français et en anglais), la répétition, les structures simples, les outils visuels, les objets réels, le langage corporel, etc., et en s'assurant souvent que les élèves comprennent, ces périodes d'histoires peuvent devenir d'importantes occasions d'apprentissage pour les étudiants. (Prince Edward Island Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 55)

Table

Provincial and Territorial French Second Language Policies: An Overview

Province or territory	FSOL: Mandatory or optional?	French Immersion (FI) available?	Policies on FSOL and Allophones
British Columbia	Studying a language is required, Grades 5-8 (French is one of six languages)	Early Immersion (EI, usually kindergarten or Grade 1 start) Late Immersion (LI, Grade 4 start)	Exemption policy for FSOL (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1997, 2001)
Yukon	Same as British Columbia	EI, LI	Exemption policy for FSOL (Government of British Columbia, 1997)
Alberta	Optional	EI, LI	FSOL document (Alberta Education, 2008) recognizes FSOL as an opportunity for allophone students to be on par with their Canadian-born, English-speaking peers
Northwest Territory	Same as Alberta	EI, LI	Same as Alberta

Province or territory	FSOL: Mandatory or optional?	French Immersion (FI) available?	Policies on FSOL and Allophones
Nunavut	Same as Alberta	None	Same as Alberta
Saskatchewan	Optional	EI, LI	FSOL policy document does not address inclusion of Allophones in FSOL, no ESOL policy document
Manitoba	Optional	EI, LI	FSOL or ESOL policy documents do not address inclusion of Allophones in FSOL, immersion document informs of potential for Allophones
Ontario	Mandatory, Grades 4-9	EI, LI, Middle immersion (MI)	FSOL and ESOL policy documents allow for withdrawal of Allophones from FSOL (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1998)
Quebec	K-secondaire 5	EI	Programmes d'accueil for immigrants to learn French, after which (when immigrants are mainstreamed) no exemptions from learning English are allowed.*
New Brunswick**	Mandatory, Grades 4-10	EI, LI	FSOL policy document does not address inclusion of Allophones in FSOL, ESOL policy document recommends subjects other than French

Province or territory	FSOL: Mandatory or optional?	French Immersion (FI) available?	Policies on FSOL and Allophones
Nova Scotia	Mandatory, Grades 4-9	EI, LI	FSOL policy document does not address inclusion of Allophones in FSOL, no ESOL policy document
Prince Edward Island	Mandatory, Grades 4-9	EI, LI, MI	Neither FSOL nor ESOL policy documents address inclusion of Allophones in FSOL
Newfoundland and Labrador	Mandatory, Grades 4-9	EI, LI	ESOL policy documents do not address inclusion of Allophones in FSOL, immersion document limits immersion to Anglophones

*Immigrants to Quebec are required to study in French-medium schools as per Bill 101.

**FSOL programming has recently changed in New Brunswick. All students in the province will receive short cultural modules relating to francophone cultures in Grades 1 and 2. It will be possible to begin French Immersion in Grade 3. All students who do not choose French Immersion in Grade 3 will begin FSOL in Grade 5 (in Intensive French) and will continue FSOL instruction until at least Grade 10.

Beyond the curriculum documents themselves, Canadian Parents for French (CPF) (2006), a national network of volunteers dedicated to the promotion and creation of French second official language learning opportunities for young Canadians, evaluated the provincial and territorial action plans for FSOL in provinces across Canada and indicated that a plan for successful integration of allophone students in FSOL was also lacking in the most recent provincial and territorial Action Plans for Official Languages (2005–2009). CPF investigated specifically whether provinces had a policy to make FSOL accessible to allophone students.

Among the CPF branches, only British Columbia's identified the inclusion of allophone students in FSOL as an issue for this province. The BC CPF branch expressed concern that allophone students make up only a small percentage of the students in immersion and core FSOL and also highlighted that immigrants who arrive during their secondary school career have no access to FSOL. In its final assessment of the Action Plans, CPF highlighted the need to address the access to FSOL for allophone students in Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Ontario, and Saskatchewan.

In summary, it is worthy of note that the two English-dominant provinces that receive the majority of immigrants, British Columbia and Ontario, are also the provinces that provide means by which allophone students can be exempt from learning FSOL. This exemption legitimates the belief that these Allophones need to focus principally on learning English. Moreover, the remaining provinces and territories do not have policies that ensure the inclusion of allophone students in FSOL classes.

Although there is no explicit exclusion of allophone students from the immersion program in the provincial/territorial documents, this may be due to the optional nature of French immersion programs. Nevertheless, where multiple points at which students can enter French immersion (e.g., Grades 1, 4, and 7) may offer additional choices to anglophone Canadian-born students, restricting entry points to certain Grades may limit access for Allophones who may arrive at different points in their education.

Overall, across most of Canada, allophone students' access to FSOL opportunities is limited. Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island make no reference to the needs of allophone learners in second official language contexts. Where the needs of allophone students are considered, there is discrepancy. While British Columbia, Yukon

Territory, Ontario, and New Brunswick have official policies for allophone students that allow for exemption from studying French, Alberta, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Manitoba recognize the potential opportunity for Allophones to study FSOL. Where allophone students are struggling to succeed in other subject areas within the Canadian school system, it could prove advantageous to consider French as an opportunity for allophone students to meet with some success at school.

Implementation of Policy: What is the reality in practice?

A limited amount of research into the implementation of provincial policies has revealed a variety of practices regarding the inclusion of allophones students in the study of French. Taaffe, Maguire, and Pringle (1996) and Mady (2006), for example, provide evidence that, even though French is a compulsory subject in Ontario, allophone students are often excluded from FSOL programs. In their 3-year longitudinal study of additional language education for minority children, Taaffe et al. (1996) unveiled a variety of practices regarding the inclusion of allophone students in the study of French within English primary schools in Ottawa and Montreal school boards. The practices ranged from withdrawal of allophone students from French to an insistence that all students attend FSOL classes. When allophone students did participate in the core French program, Taaffe et al. found that these students performed as well as their anglophone peers. Likewise, Mady (2006), in a survey of principals and guidance department heads of a large urban school board in Ontario, found that none of the secondary schools that offered ESOL courses provided FSOL for all of their allophone students. A majority of the participants (54%) reported that they never allowed allophone students to study FSOL whereas the remaining 46% stated that allophone students would sometimes be included in the FSOL program. Where allophone

students were included in FSOL, the administrators recognized that they performed at least as well as their Canadian-born peers. These research results provide further evidence that exclusion is practised even in areas where French is an “obligatory” subject of study. Such exclusionary practices are contrary to allophone students’ demonstrated ability in FSOL (Calman & Daniel, 1989; Carr, 2009; Mady, 2006) and desire (Dagenais & Berron, 2001; Mady, 2003) to learn their second official language.

*Discussion.*² Given that French *and* English are part of what it means to be Canadian as defined by the federal government and that being proficient in both official languages comes with certain social and economic advantages, Canadian leaders, federally and provincially, have a moral and ethical responsibility to ensure that ALL Canadians have equitable access to learning both of Canada’s official languages. Denying Allophones’ access to FSOL programming, in some provinces, can deny them important capital (Norton, 2000) for achieving success in Canadian schools and in our society. To increase Allophones access to FSOL programming, and in doing so, support Canadian government initiatives and goals related to linguistic duality and official bilingualism, federal and provincial/territorial policies need to adopt a position that is grounded in multilingual research which supports official language bilingualism for Allophones as an opportunity, rather than a challenge or obstacle.

Research shows that it can be beneficial for allophone students to have access to FLS learning opportunities. First and foremost, access to second official language training responds to the immigrant communities’ own desires to become bilingual in both official languages (Dagenais & Berron, 2000; Mady, 2003; Mady & Turnbull, 2007; Parkin & Turcotte, 2003). In addition, such occasions allow Allophones to profit from official language bilingualism in

² Parts of the discussion section are part of a paper, Mady (2008), previously commissioned by Canadian Parents for French and used with their permission.

Canada, providing Allophones the right and ability to participate fully in society. In addition to future opportunities, research shows that Allophones can meet with success in FSOL programs where they may have difficulty in other areas of the school curriculum (Mady, 2007). The success allophone students have in learning French, which is not dependent on English, may therefore provide a means for the school communities to address the failure of minority students to succeed academically (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1994). Not only do allophone students meet with success in studying French, it has been shown that intensive exposure to French can also enhance their English skill development (Carr, 2007). Lastly, access to FSOL learning also provides allophone students with access to second language teachers who understand and are prepared to meet the needs of language learners. Simons and Connelly (2000) claim that the failure of many allophone students is in part due to classroom teachers who do not understand second language development and are therefore not prepared to meet the needs of language learners.

In addition to being of potential benefit to the students, including allophone students in second official language learning can also support federal government policy and initiatives: (a) providing Allophones with opportunities to learn both of their second official language supports the federal government's obligation and desire to enhance the use of French and English in Canada; (b) providing second official language learning opportunities for Allophones also upholds the federal government's commitment to promote linguistic duality. *The Action Plan for Official Languages in Canada* (2003) (and the subsequent *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013* (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2008)), for example, recognize that education is one way to make the two official languages available to all Canadians.

The current state of research related to educational policy and FSOL for Allophones is in its infancy. Moreover, most of the research that has been conducted thus far has occurred in large urban centres where many Allophones live in concentrated urban areas. Yet, immigration patterns are shifting in Canada. Less densely populated areas of the country are also facing challenges in significantly different contexts. Additional research is necessary to provide evidence to certain stakeholders that a convergence of linguistic duality with cultural diversity is beneficial to all Canadians. Information needs to be disseminated in order to dispel common myths associated with learning additional languages so that decisions to include or exclude Allophones from learning French can be based on well-grounded evidence.

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