

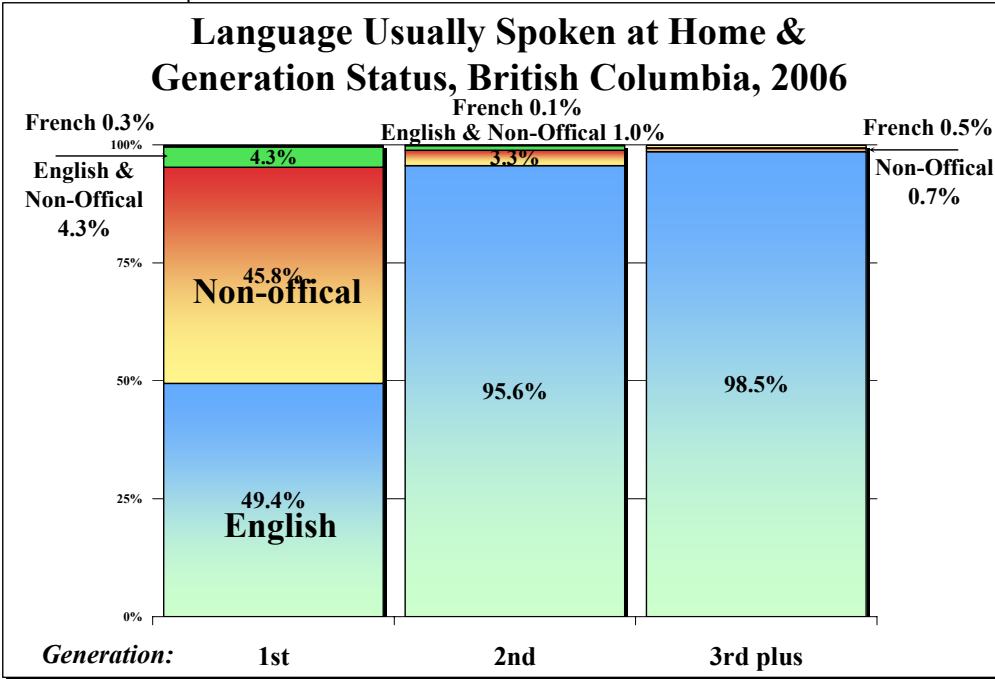
# Dimensions of Diversity: 2006 Census Snapshot

## Diversity in Language: Generation Status and Language Spoken at Home

The likelihood that English will be the language usually spoken in a person's home is directly, and strongly, correlated with increasing distance from their immigration experience. This is shown in the data on mother tongue for the 3,395,000 people in British Columbia 15 years of age and older as reported in the 2006 Census.

The first generation immigrant population, defined by Statistics Canada as residents who were born outside of Canada, accounts for one third (1,121,545) of the province's 15 plus population. Amongst the first generation immigrant population 49.4 percent spoke English at home, slightly more than the 45.8 percent who reported a non-official language as their home language preference. An additional 4.3 percent of the first generation population reports that English and a language other than French (i.e., a non-official language) are shared as the language they most usually speak at home.

Figure 1



The second generation population is defined as those people who were born in Canada but who had at least one parent, and perhaps both, born outside of Canada. This generation, accounting for 22 percent (754,820) of the province's 15 plus population, overwhelmingly uses English as their language most commonly spoken at home: 95.6 percent reported English as the language of choice at home. An additional one percent of the second generation population reported English and a non-official language as the language that they most commonly speak at home. Only 3.3 percent of the

second generation population report a non-official language as the language they most commonly speak at home, considerably below the 45.8 percent seen for the first generation population.

The third plus generations, defined by Statistics Canada as those who are born in Canada to parents who were both born in Canada, comprises the single largest component of the province's population over the age of 15 (1,518,540 people, 45 percent). These residents almost entirely (98.5 percent) use English as the most commonly spoken language at home. Only 0.7 percent of third plus generation Canadians report a non-official language as what they most commonly speak at home, and 0.5 percent reporting French. Note that a certain portion of the 548,975 third plus generation population speaking non-official languages would be Canadian First Nations. A more detailed tabulation of this specific group would provide more information on the First Nations languages most commonly spoken at home.

Considered collectively, the significant weighting of the third plus generation in the province's 15 and older population results in English overwhelmingly being the language most commonly spoken at home in BC, with 81.7 percent of the population 15 and over most commonly speaking English at home. Only 16.2 percent most commonly spoke a non-official language at home, with an additional 1.7 percent commonly speaking a combination of English and a non-official language at home. French is the language most commonly spoken at home for 0.4 percent of the 15 plus population in the province, with English and French accounting for an additional 0.1 percent of this population.

Having noted the general pattern of an increasing propensity for English to be the language most commonly used at home with increasing generation status, it would be interesting (when more detailed data are available) to consider the language preferences within each of these generations. Particularly within the first generation, it would be interesting to consider the period of immigration to Canada along with the language most commonly spoken at home.

Table 1

<b>Language Spoken Most Often at Home &amp; Generation Status, BC, 2006</b>								
	English	Non-official	English & non-official	French	English & French	French & non-official	English, French & non-official	Total
<b>1st Generation</b>	554,520	513,525	48,590	3,400	880	365	265	1,121,545
<b>2nd Generation</b>	721,480	24,715	7,225	940	380	10	70	754,820
<b>3rd plus</b>	1,496,185	10,735	1,825	8,235	1,535	15	10	1,518,540
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,772,185</b>	<b>548,975</b>	<b>57,640</b>	<b>12,575</b>	<b>2,795</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>3,394,905</b>
<b>Shares</b>								
<b>1st Generation</b>	49.4%	45.8%	4.3%	0.3%	0.1%	0.03%	0.02%	100%
<b>2nd Generation</b>	95.6%	3.3%	1.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.001%	0.01%	100%
<b>3rd plus</b>	98.5%	0.7%	0.1%	0.5%	0.1%	0.001%	0.001%	100%

#### Statistics Canada Data Definitions:

**1. Generation Status** – Reported for population 15 years of age and older excluding institutional residents. Generation status includes three response categories, which are defined as follows:

**1st generation** - Persons born outside Canada. For the most part, these are people who are now, or have ever been, landed immigrants in Canada. Also included in the first generation are a small number of people born outside Canada to parents who are Canadian citizens by birth. In addition, the first generation includes people who are non-permanent residents (defined as people from another country in Canada on Work or Study Permits or as refugee claimants, and any family members living with them in Canada).

**2nd generation** - Persons born inside Canada with at least one parent born outside Canada. This includes (a) persons born in Canada with both parents born outside Canada and (b) persons born in Canada with one parent born in Canada and one parent born outside Canada (these persons may have grandparents born inside or outside Canada as well).

**3rd generation or more** - Persons born inside Canada with both parents born inside Canada (these persons may have grandparents born inside or outside Canada as well).

#### 2. Language

**Official Language** – Official language refers to the ability of a person to conduct a conversation in English only, in French only, in both English and French or in neither English nor French.

**Non-official Language** - Non-official language (international) refers to the language(s) spoken by a person (other than English or French) well enough to conduct a conversation

**Language Spoken at Home** - World language spoken at home refers to the language a person speaks most often at home.