

LANGUAGE ATTITUDES IN A MULTILINGUAL NORTHERN COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT/RESUME

Questions of language and culture are increasingly important in economic, political and educational spheres of life in northern communities. The authors surveyed Anglophone, Francophone, and Inuit residents of a community in Nouveau Quebec, to ascertain language attitudes, intergroup attitudes, and threats to Inuit language and culture.

Les questions de langue et de culture sont de plus en plus importantes pour les communautés du nord dans les domaines économiques, politiques et pédagogiques. Les auteurs font une étude des habitants anglophones, francophones et Inuit d'une communauté au Nouveau Québec, afin de vérifier l'attitude linguistique, l'attitude parmi les groupes, et les menaces pour la langue et la culture des Inuit.

In communities all across northern Canada a fundamental debate rages over questions of language and culture. Where Native peoples, Anglophones, and in the case of Nouveau Quebec, Francophones, must accommodate to and be accommodated by one another, a new social order is evolving. In the process of forging this new order the most salient issues are economic development, political organization, technology and educational policy. However, underlying each of these highly controversial subjects is the more fundamental issue of language and culture.¹

Differences in opinion over the appropriate strategy for economic development in the north, for example, must be understood in terms of its impact on Native language and culture. The economic debate focuses on who holds the rights to both renewable and non-renewable resources, revenue sharing of developmental projects, the need for improved northern air and marine transportation and the repeated request for affirmative action in regards to employment and increased job training for the Inuit (Arctic Policy Conference, 1988). What binds these issues together is their call for economic policies that will strengthen the Inuit culture in the face of what has been in the past, and still is perceived to be, an intrusive White culture.

In the political domain, demands for self-government have been continually made by the Inuit, with the need for appropriate management training being an additional issue (Inuit Circumpolar Conference, 1986). Increased political control would, however, be in direct conflict with the interest of business and so issues of self-government have been long-standing (Dorais, 1981; 1989). Other problems that have taken on political overtones concern improved communication within the north. Not only would the Inuit like to see increases in communication to outside areas, enabling accurate information on Inuit positions to be dispersed to the south, but as well, an increase in the media produced in their Native language (Arctic Policy Conference, 1988). Again the underlying issues of language and cultural preservation arise in the context of every debate at the political level.

Finally, discussions regarding an appropriate educational policy for the north reflect a fundamental concern for language and culture. Where the Inuit have had a means of direct input into the curriculum, as in Arctic Quebec, policies have expressed a desire for young Inuit to acquire the skills needed to adapt to modern society on the one hand, while at the same time retaining their language and culture (Souaid, 1988). In most communities under the Kativik School Board, for example, the first three years have been taught in Inuttitut since 1975 (Stairs, 1985).

Matters of language and culture then lie at the heart of most debates about economics, politics and education in the north. The pivotal question then is what role the Inuit language and culture will play in the North of the future? Two profoundly different ideologies provide the framework for addressing this question (see Taylor, 1990). Proponents of these opposing ideologies genuinely believe that their orientation is in the best interest of northern communities

and the Inuit people. On the one hand, assimilationists believe that, if the Inuit are to benefit from, and participate in, society, they must abandon Inuit ways and adopt the mainstream southern culture and language. At the opposite pole are those who argue for the maintenance of the heritage culture and language to the exclusion of non-Native society. Serious proponents of assimilation or heritage culture maintenance, of course, do not adopt the extremes of either position but rather seek a balance that tips toward either assimilation or heritage culture maintenance (Berry, Kalin and Taylor, 1977; Moghaddam and Taylor, 1987; Moghaddam, Taylor and Lalonde, 1987).

How do we reconcile these competing positions and how do we develop an understanding of how culture effects human relations between groups in the new and changing North?

One of the most effective ways to study both culture and inter-group relations is to focus on *language* (see Dorais, 1988; Giles, 1977). For a long time it was believed that language was simply a cognitive skill that people used as a vehicle for communication. We now know that language is much more (Taylor, 1987; Taylor, Meynard and Rheault, 1977; Taylor and Simard, 1975). First, language is a symbol of cultural identity. As Saint-Jacques and Giles note "Language is not merely a medium of communication — however important that medium is — but the unifying factor of a particular culture and often a prerequisite for its survival. No other factor is as powerful as language in maintaining *by itself* the genuine and lasting distinctiveness of an ethnic group" (1979:ix).

So, each time a person in the community speaks Inuttitut, English or French, that person is sending an important message about who he or she is, and the degree of respect he or she has for the other person in the conversation.

Second, language is a resource that can be used to entrench the power of one group over another (see Bourhis, 1984). For example, if one language is always used at important meetings, that language gains prestige and status over other available languages (see Dorais, 1989). For these reasons the study of language is not merely important for what it reveals about language attitudes *per se*. It can be vital in terms of policy implications for accommodation process generally and specifically their impact on participation in major institutions, including education, employment, media and government.

Given the importance of language, both directly and as a measure of other underlying processes, a number of fundamental questions arise. What languages are used in the North? by whom? for what purposes? And what does the pattern of language ability and use suggest about relations between Inuit, Anglophones and Francophones? Is the Inuttitut language being lost? Are younger Inuit as interested as their elders in maintaining Inuttitut as a primary language of the North?

In order to investigate these questions the present research

focused on three fundamental and interrelated themes. The first theme was that of **Language Attitudes** and involved the direct measure of languages and responsibility for language education. Four specific questions were addressed in the domain of **Language Attitudes**:

1. To what extent are Inuit, Francophones and Anglophones fluent and literate in Inuttitut, French and English?
2. Where do people use each of the three languages?
3. What importance is accorded the Inuttitut, French and English languages?
4. What role should the home, community and school play in the teaching of language?

The second theme, that of **Intergroup Attitudes**, involved two direct questions:

1. How well do each of the three community groups get along with each other?
2. What is the extent of contact among the three community groups?

The third theme, **Threats To Inuit Language And Culture**, was comprised of three basic questions:

1. Are Inuit children losing interest in their heritage language and culture?
2. What role should the school play in terms of the heritage language?
3. What are the community's views on bilingualism?

Method

Participants and Community Context

The community that served as the focus for this study is located in the arctic region known as Nouveau Quebec. Within this region lie 14 settlements whose populations range from 100 to 1100 people. The study was conducted in the largest of these communities, one

whose population is made up of approximately 75% Inuit, 15% Francophones, and 10% Anglophones. This then is the community that confronts the greatest challenge in accommodating the three major groups in the North.

Inuttitut is the mother tongue of the Inuit from Nouveau Quebec and it is one of the most vibrant indigenous languages in the world. Over 90% of the Inuit from this region claim Inuttitut as their first language. Foster (1984), in surveying Canada's 53 indigenous languages, judges Inuttitut to be one of the very few for which survival seems assured. Bolstering the maintenance of Inuit language and culture in Nouveau Quebec is the historic James Bay and Northern Quebec agreement of 1975. This agreement involves a unique legal land claims settlement for the Inuit who gain some degree of political, economic and educational control over their own destiny.

Despite the optimistic claims for the survival of Inuit language and culture, there remain fundamental questions about the extent to which non-Native Anglophones and Francophones exert economic and political control in the North. An important barometer of economic and political power is language dominance. Thus the community of interest in the present study, with its significant numbers of non-Native Anglophones and Francophones, provides an ideal context for a study of language attitudes.

Materials

The orientation adopted by an institution, community, region or nation is often based upon the pressures brought to bear by especially vocal members of a community, those with personal vested interests, and leaders who purport to represent a segment of the community. Lost in the important debate over language and culture are the people themselves, those, be they Inuit or non-Native, who daily confront the reality of multilingualism and multiculturalism, and who must in a practical and realistic manner negotiate the hurdles of getting ahead. Thus, the present study was designed to focus on the attitudes of a broad cross-section of Inuit, Anglophone and Francophone residents of a northern community.

In addition, the research instrument had a number of characteristics to ensure that everyone in the community could voice their opinion equally, and in as unbiased a manner as possible. First, questions about language ability, use, and importance, intergroup attitudes, as well as questions focusing on contact and language learning were posed in a simple and straight-forward manner; no attempt was made to disguise the purpose of the questionnaire. Second, questions were translated into the three languages using a back-translation method, and respondents could complete the questionnaire in the language or languages of their choice. Third, all questions were answered by the respondent using a standard response format. For this purpose an eleven-point Likert scale was used. The points of the scale were labeled at the extremes with such

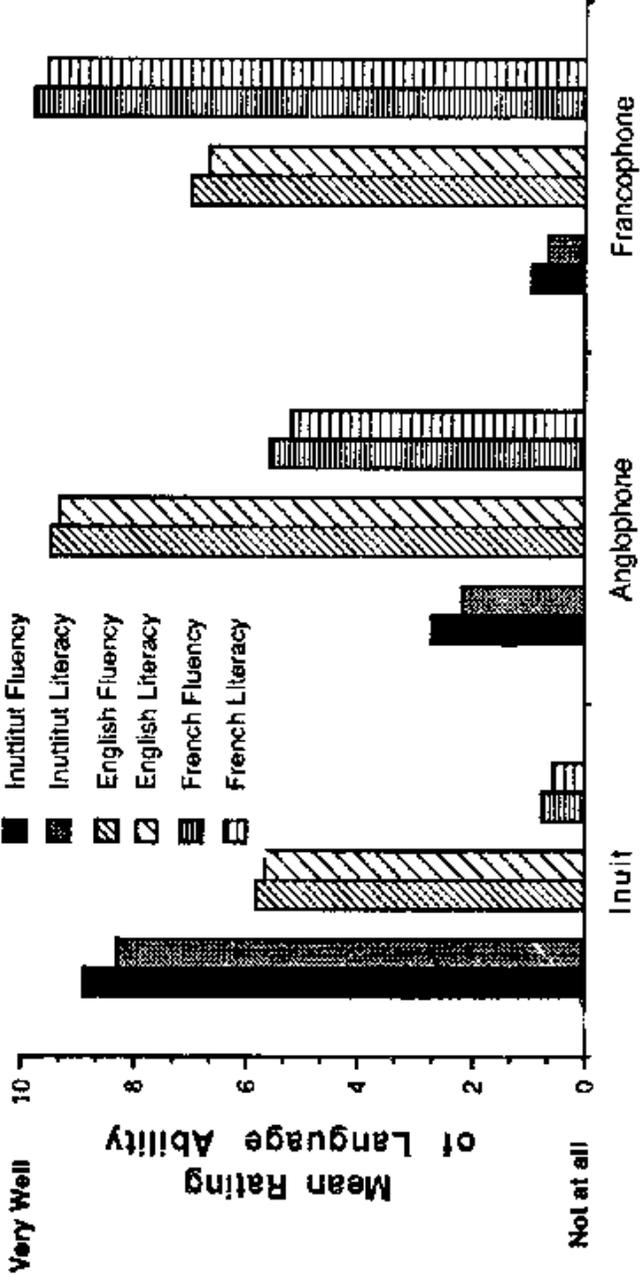


FIGURE 1A: Mean estimation of both fluency and literacy in each of three languages.

phrases as “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree”, and the intermediate points on the scale were also labeled as a guide for respondents. Respondents then circled a number to express their opinion.

This format served three important functions. First, it allowed all respondents to answer in a standard manner ensuring that the responses for each respondent were given equal weight. Second, the eleven-point scale allowed respondents to express shades of opinion, and finally, the use of an eleven-point scale allowed for the application of powerful inferential statistics in order to capture the subtleties of respondents' opinions.

Procedure

Questionnaires were distributed to all members of the community who were above the age of fourteen and who, having lived in the community for at least six months, considered themselves to be “long-term” residents. Complete written instructions accompanied the questionnaire and these were repeated often in the three languages using the FM radio station that serves the community. Finally, trained interviewers representing each of the three language communities were made available to answer questions or help respondents complete the questionnaire. All questionnaires were completed in a two week period beginning in March, 1988.

The final sample comprised 248 Inuit, 35 Anglophones, and 81 Francophones. A broad cross-section of the population responded to the questionnaire, with 55% of the sample being male and 45% female. Of those questioned, 31% were 24 years of age or younger, 29% were between 25 and 34, 19% were between 35 and 44, 10% were between 45 and 55, and 11% were 55 years of age or older.

Results

The presentation of results is organized around the three fundamental themes and the specific questions that served as the basis for each theme. All analyses involved an initial analysis of variance, followed by subsequent post hoc pairwise comparisons of means using the Tukey hsd procedure.

In order to investigate the possibility that one particular group tended to consistently make higher or lower ratings on the eleven-point Likert scale, an initial multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed using responses on all the Likert scales as dependent measures. No significant effects for heritage group, language of questionnaire, or age group was found. The results of this analysis suggest that heritage group differences in ratings are due to genuine differences in attitude rather than any systematic response bias on the Likert scale.

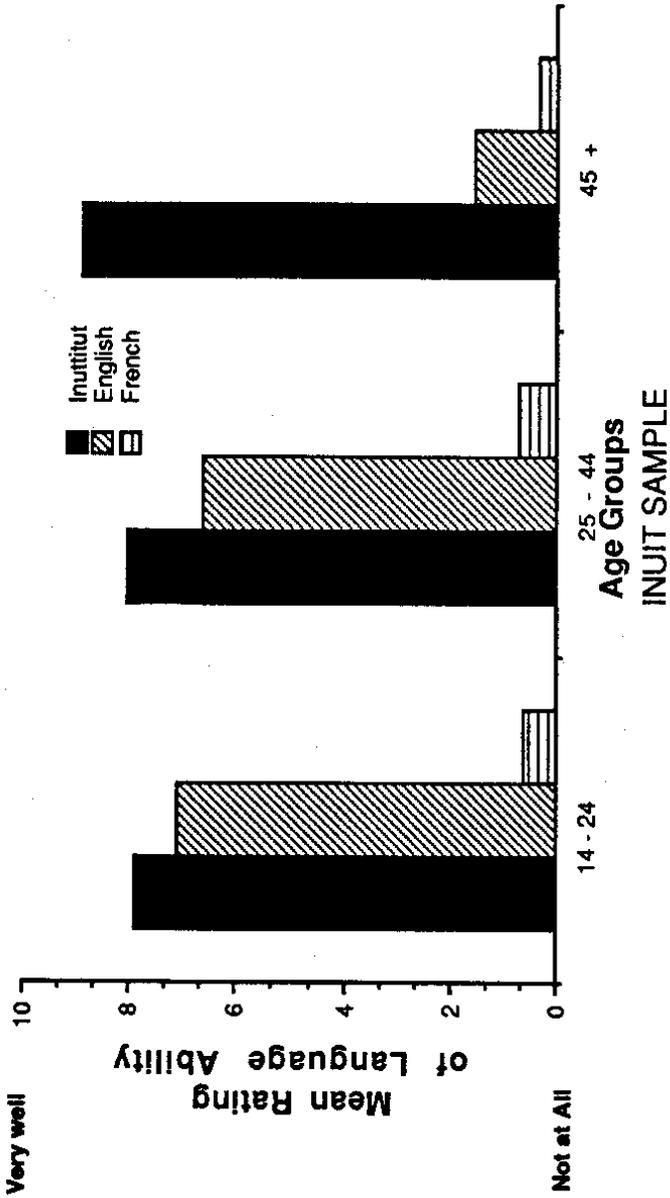


FIGURE 1B: Mean ratings of language ability by each of three age groups of Inuit people.

Language Attitudes

The discussion of this theme will focus on four questions: language ability, language use, language importance, and responsibility for teaching language.

1) To what extent are Inuit, Francophones and Anglophones fluent and literate in Inuttitut, French and English?

The first analysis focused on respondents' perceptions of their fluency and literacy in each of the three languages. The formal analysis involved a 3 x 3 x 2 analysis of variance (ANOVA) with repeated measures on the last two factors. The independent variables included ethnic group of respondent (Inuit, Anglophone, Francophone), language (Inuttitut, English, French) and language form (*fluency*; understanding, speaking), (*literacy*; reading, writing).

Two significant main effects and two, two-way interactions emerged, but these are subsumed under the significant three-way interaction that is presented in Figure 1A, $F(4,646)=3.18, p<.05$.

There are several features of this interaction that are noteworthy. One important theme is the number of indicators that point to the strength of the heritage language in this community. For example, post hoc simple effects tests showed no significant differences between the three heritage groups on fluency and literacy in their Native languages ($p>.05$). In other words, Inuit respondents are as fluent and literate in Inuttitut as Anglophones and Francophones are in English and French respectively. This supports the conclusion that has been made by many observers of the North (Dorais, 1989; Foster, 1984); among the Inuit of northern Quebec the Inuttitut language is intact and vibrant both in its verbal and written form.

Respondents' differential ability to speak and understand the three languages (fluency) as opposed to read and write these same languages (literacy) offers a more complete profile of language ability. In all cases fluency is rated higher than literacy, just as would be expected. It is important to note that Inuit respondents display the same pattern of skills in their own language as the Anglophones and Francophones do in their mother tongues. Thus, the literacy forms of Inuttitut are not rated as high as the fluency forms, but the lower ratings for literacy are precisely what would be expected for any language. The literacy-fluency gap is significantly wider for the speaker of Inuttitut than for Anglophones and Francophones. However, this slight depression of literacy in Inuttitut no doubt reflects the more limited opportunity to write and read Inuttitut that arise from the relative preponderance of materials in English and French and the role of these two languages in education and business. Though slightly depressed, this Inuttitut literacy rating for Inuit respondents is nevertheless high, approximately eight on a Likert scale with an upper-bound of ten.

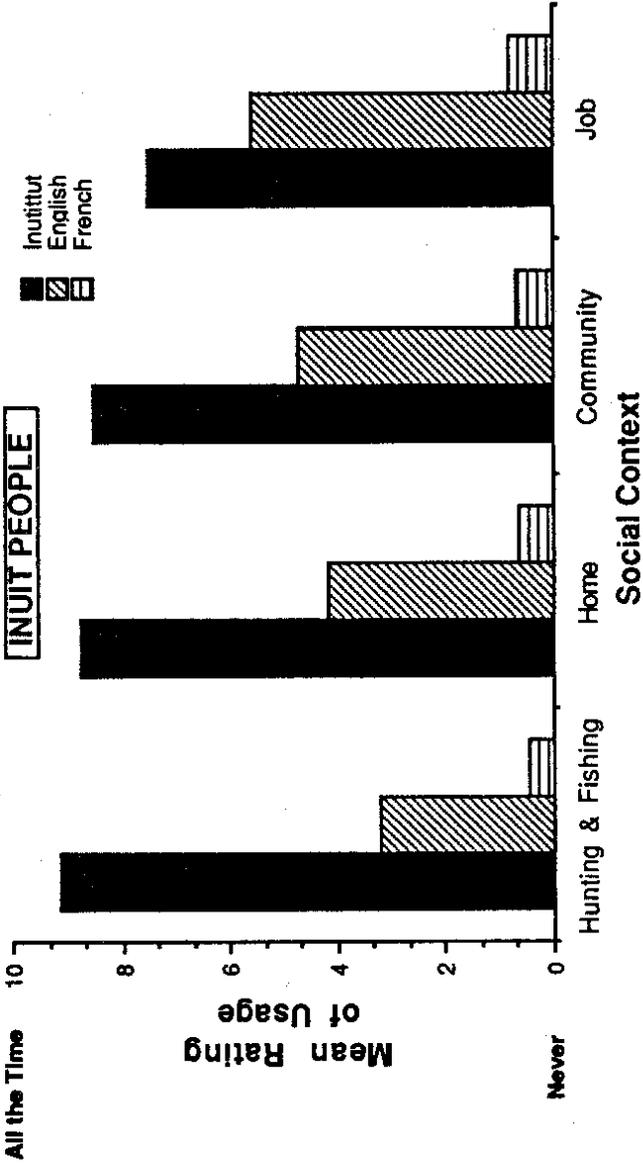


FIGURE 2A: Mean rating by Inuit sample, of usage of each language in each of four social contexts.

A second feature of the results for language ability is the pivotal position of the English language. From Figure 1A it is clear that neither Anglophone nor Francophone respondents are at all fluent in Inuttitut, even though they have moderately good skills in each others' language. This inability is important. For a language to be the language of exchange in a multilingual setting, there must be some level of fluency in that language among all groups involved in the functioning of the community. Therefore, in the present community it is English that dominates and holds the position of the lingua franca. English, then, is the mother tongue of Anglophones and is the preferred second language for both Inuit and Francophones, a reality that places the English language in a central position in this northern community. Moreover, Anglophones as a group come to occupy a pivotal position of centrality, in that Inuit respondents know very little French and Francophone respondents know no Inuttitut; both, however, are well versed in English.

In summary, the pattern of language ability in the community leads to two basic conclusions. First, the heritage language, Inuttitut, is vibrant and functional among the Inuit population, but it is not sufficiently predominant among Anglophones and Francophones to make it a lingua franca. Secondly, English occupies a position of power and centrality; it is the one language spoken by members of all three language groups.

In order to more fully assess the vibrancy of the Inuttitut language it was necessary to examine in more detail the language abilities of the Inuit respondents in our sample. Specifically, our focus is on how older members of the community differ from their younger counterparts. Is Inuttitut being lost among the younger generation? Are the English and French languages becoming more predominant among younger Inuit?

In order to answer these questions the Inuit sample was divided into three age groups, 1) those between 14-24 years of age; 2) those between 25-44 years; and 3) those 45 years of age or older. The three age groups were then compared in terms of their ability to function in Inuttitut, English and French. A 3 x 3 ANOVA involving the three groups and the three languages was performed. The significant two-way interaction, $F(4,428)=76.56, p<.001$, is presented in Figure 1B.

Three important patterns emerge from these results. First, it is clear that Inuit of all ages function well in their heritage language, Inuttitut. However, as might be expected, older Inuit are even more skilled in Inuttitut. The 45 and over age group reported significantly higher ability in Inuttitut than the 25-44 age group ($p<.05$). This finding alone does not suggest an alarming loss in Inuttitut among young people. However, the two younger groups of Inuit (those up to the age of 45) also show fairly strong ability in English. The English scores for these two younger age groups differ significantly from those of Inuit 45 and older who show weak skills in English ($p<.05$). It should not be concluded that an increase in a second language

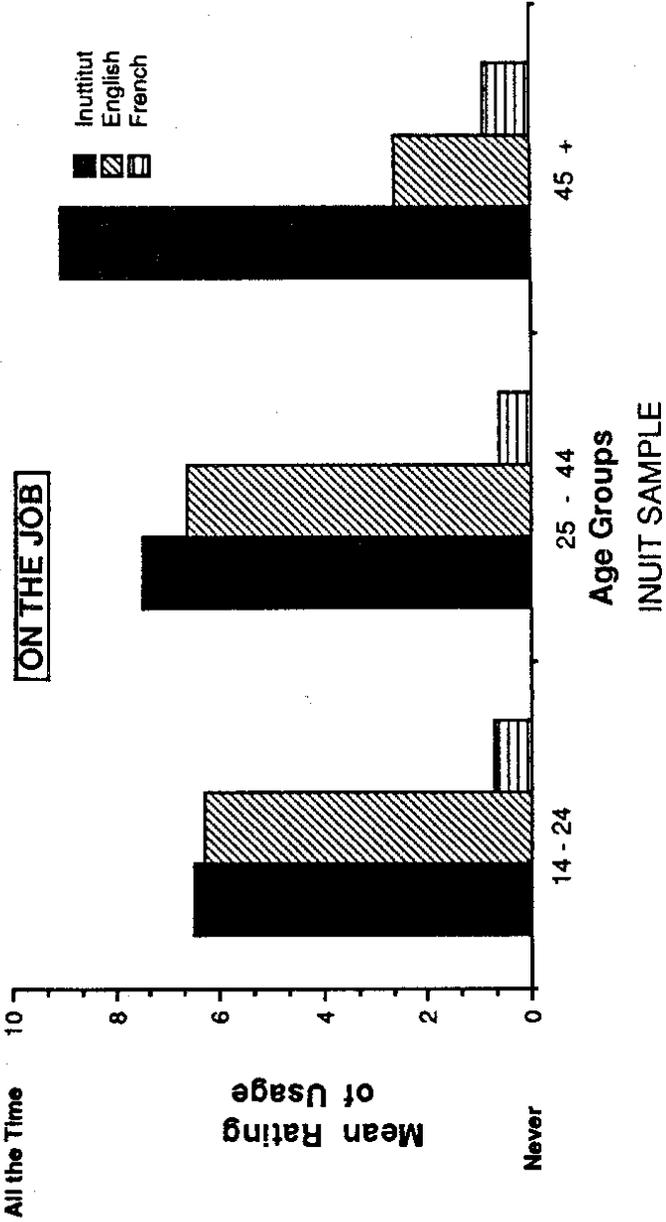


FIGURE 2B: Mean rating of use of each of the three languages on the job by three age groups of Inuit people.

ability necessitates a drop in first language ability. However, given the position of English as the lingua franca in this community, the present finding may suggest that with time, increased fluency in English might be at the expense of the heritage language. In addition, it should be noted that the influence of English is a relatively recent phenomenon for the Inuit. Those over 45 speak very little English, but, in a relatively short period of time English has become a second language of substantial force among younger Inuit. Finally, it is clear that the Inuit community does not make any use of the French language. It is especially important that even the younger Inuit are not capable of functioning in French.

2) Where do people use each of the three languages?

In this section we focus on the three groups in terms of their language use in different social contexts. Three separate 3 X 4 ANOVA's were performed; one for each of the three heritage groups. The aim was to determine the extent to which members of each group use Inuttitut, English and French in four different contexts: 1) while engaged in traditional activities (hunting, fishing, camping); 2) in the home; 3) in the community; and 4) on the job.

Our first analysis focused on the Inuit respondents. A significant language use by social context interaction was found, $F(6,1194)=61.60, p<.001$. The results are presented in Figure 2A, where three important trends emerge. First, Inuit respondents use Inuttitut significantly more than English and French in all four contexts ($p<.01$). This is to be expected given the high level of fluency and literacy in Inuttitut among Inuit people. However, the one place where Inuttitut use does drop off is on the job. Inuit people reported using significantly less Inuttitut on the job than in the home, or while hunting and fishing ($p<.05$).

This drop in use of Inuttitut on the job is even more striking when attention is focused on the use of English. Inuit people seldom use English when hunting, fishing and camping, but there is an increasing trend towards the use of English as they move from the home into the community and especially on the job. Significantly greater use of English was reported in the job context than in the home or while engaging in traditional activities of hunting and fishing ($p<.01$).

When questions of maintaining the use and prestige of the heritage language arise, it is clear that attention must focus on the public arena and particularly on the world of work. In northern communities, where employment is of considerable concern, the language of work may hold increased prestige. It might be that the concern for employment could lead individuals to give preferential concern to the language spoken at work, at the expense of the heritage language. Significantly more English is used on the job than in other social contexts and it is in this context that the use of Inuttitut drops off. It would therefore be important for future research to

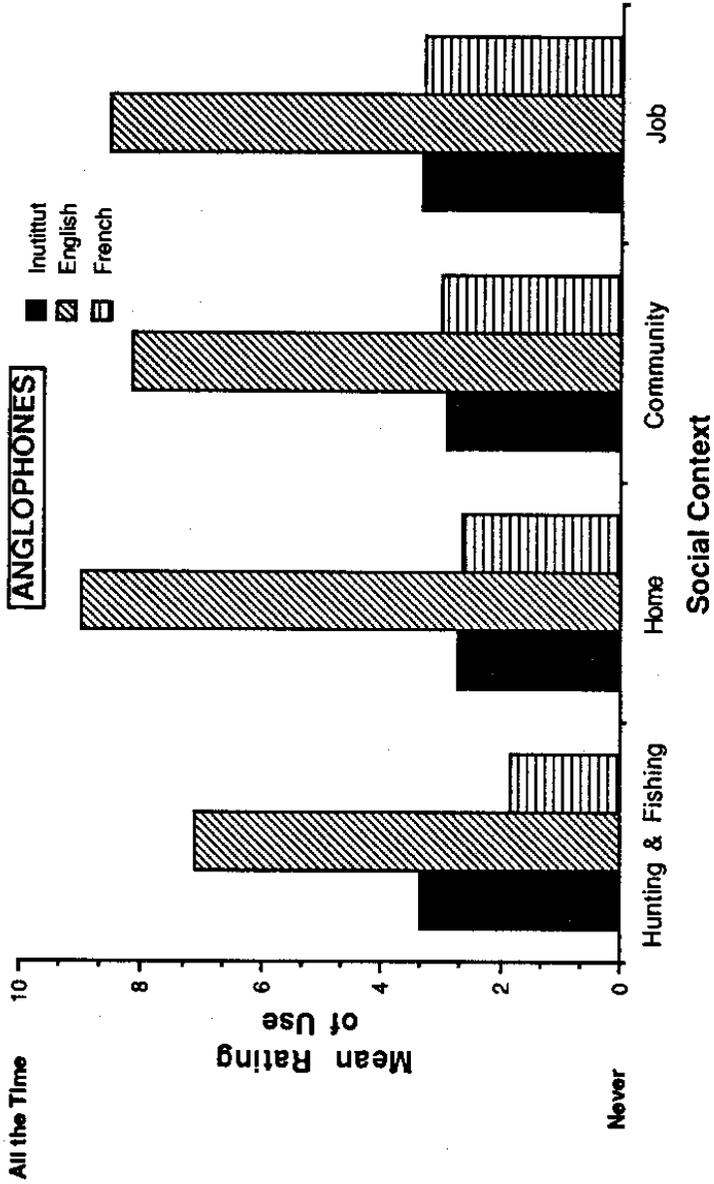


FIGURE 2C: Mean rating by anglophone sample, of usage of each language in each of four social contexts.

investigate more completely language use in the job context. For example, if all important matters on the job are conducted in English, while Inuttitut is used only for casual or informal conversations on the job, then the results hinting at a growing English influence in Figure 2A would be reinforced.

The theme of a growing English influence receives further support from data showing the patterns of language use among Inuit of different ages on the job. A 3 x 3 ANOVA including the variables of age and language used in the job context yielded a significant two-way interaction, $F(4,404)=33.42, p<.001$. These results are presented in Figure 2B, where the trend toward English is especially noticeable among young people. The two younger groups of Inuit respondents use significantly less Inuttitut than do those over the age of 45 ($p<.05$). At the same time, these two younger groups use significantly more English than the older sample ($p<.05$). In fact, for those between 14-24 years of age and 25-44 years of age there is no significant difference between the amount of English and Inuttitut used in the job context ($p<.05$). It is only for those over the age of 45 that Inuttitut truly dominates.

Taken together these results would suggest that if Inuttitut is going to be threatened as the functional language of the Inuit community, it is going to arise among the younger Inuit and in the work place. If the heritage language is relegated only to the home and traditional activities, with English viewed as the "official" language of the community and the work place, the relative importance and thus maintenance of these two languages may come to reflect this difference in prestige (Dorais, 1989). At this point English does not dominate totally, but there appears to be the beginnings of a trend in this direction.

We turn our attention now to the languages used by Anglophones and Francophones. The 3 x 4 (language by social context) ANOVA for the Anglophone sample resulted in a significant two-way interaction. $F(6,126)=2.84, p<.05$. However, the more conservative post hoc analysis confirmed only the most obvious findings, that Anglophones use significantly more English than either of the two languages in all contexts ($p<.01$). The pattern of results is presented in Figure 2C, where no significant differences were found in the use of Inuttitut or French ($p>.05$).

The pattern of results for the Francophone sample is presented in Figure 2D. The 3 x 4 ANOVA performed on this data yielded a two-way interaction, $F(6,204)=30.22, p<.001$. French is clearly the language of choice while camping or in the home ($p<.01$). However, in the public arenas of the community and on the job the differential use of English and French was not statistically significant ($p>.05$). Thus, the results for both the Inuit and Francophone respondents converge to suggest that English is the lingua franca in the community.

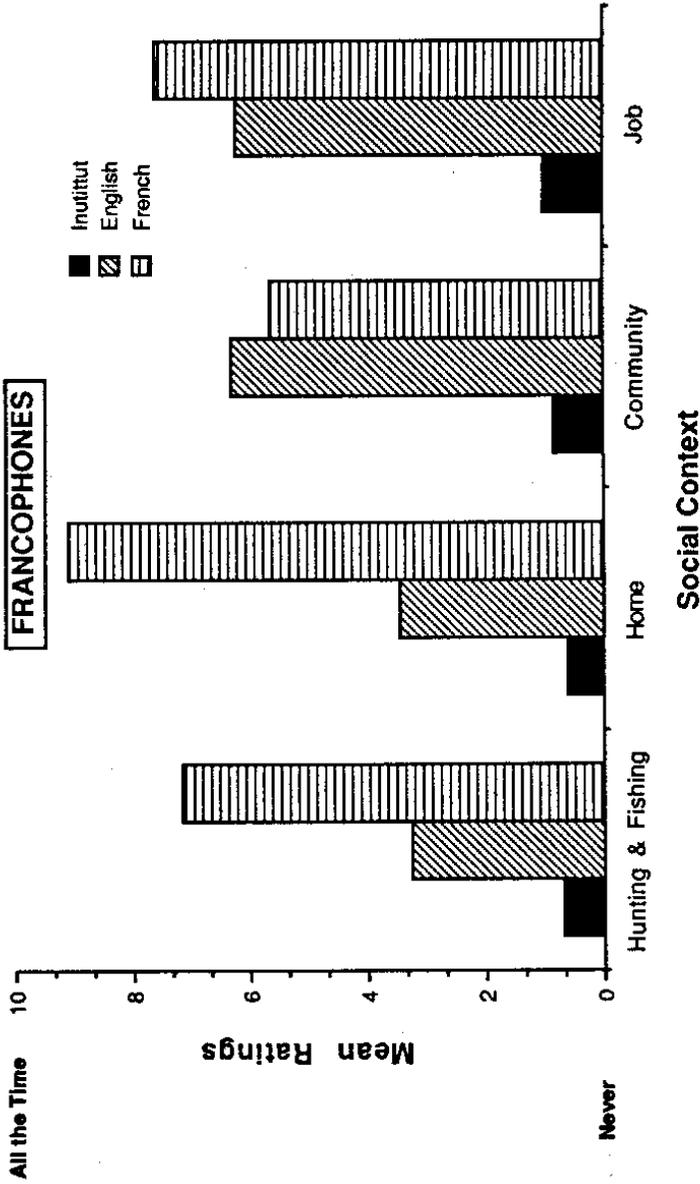


FIGURE 2D: Mean rating by francophone sample, of usage of each language in each of four social contexts.

3) What importance is accorded the Inuttitut, English, and French language?

Respondents answered a series of questions about the importance of the three languages including; "importance for getting a job", "importance for self-esteem", "importance for children", and "importance for the future". The pattern of responses was virtually identical for all these questions and, thus, a global "importance" score was computed for each respondent. A 3 x 3 analysis of variance was then performed with the independent variables including ethnic group of respondent (Inuit, Anglophone, Francophone) and the repeated measure of language (Inuttitut, English, French). The analysis yielded a significant two-way interaction, $F(4,636)=81.89, p<.001$, which is presented in Figure 3.

Inuit and Anglophone respondents both feel that Inuttitut is an extremely important language. Francophone respondents, on the other hand, tended to downplay the importance of Inuttitut, rating its importance significantly lower than did the Inuit and Anglophone groups ($p<.01$). The French language was deemed important by Francophones and also received relatively high ratings from Anglophone respondents. Inuit respondents tended to downplay the importance of french, rating it significantly lower than the Francophone respondents ($p<.01$). English received high ratings from all three groups of respondents, indeed both Francophones and Inuit ratings of English did not differ significantly from their ratings for their own Native languages ($p>.05$). Clearly, the central position of English is reflected in respondents' consistently high ratings of its importance.

In summary, both Francophone and Inuit respondents downplay the importance of each other's language, whereas Anglophones judge all three to be important. Again the Anglophone community, through the importance accorded the English language, emerges as central in this community. Given the similarity of the results on the specific questions concerning future importance of the languages, respondents from all three heritage groups appear to feel that this centrality will continue into the future.

4) What role should the home, community, and school play in the teaching of languages?

This apparently straight forward question has important implications for educational policy in the North. Some might believe that languages should be learned in the home, and so it is mainly the responsibility of the family. Others might believe that in addition to the family, the community and the school must play a central role. Still others may believe that for the mother tongue it is the family who should take the responsibility, but when it comes to other languages, it is the school that should take the major responsibility.

The opinions of our Inuit, Anglophone and Francophone re-

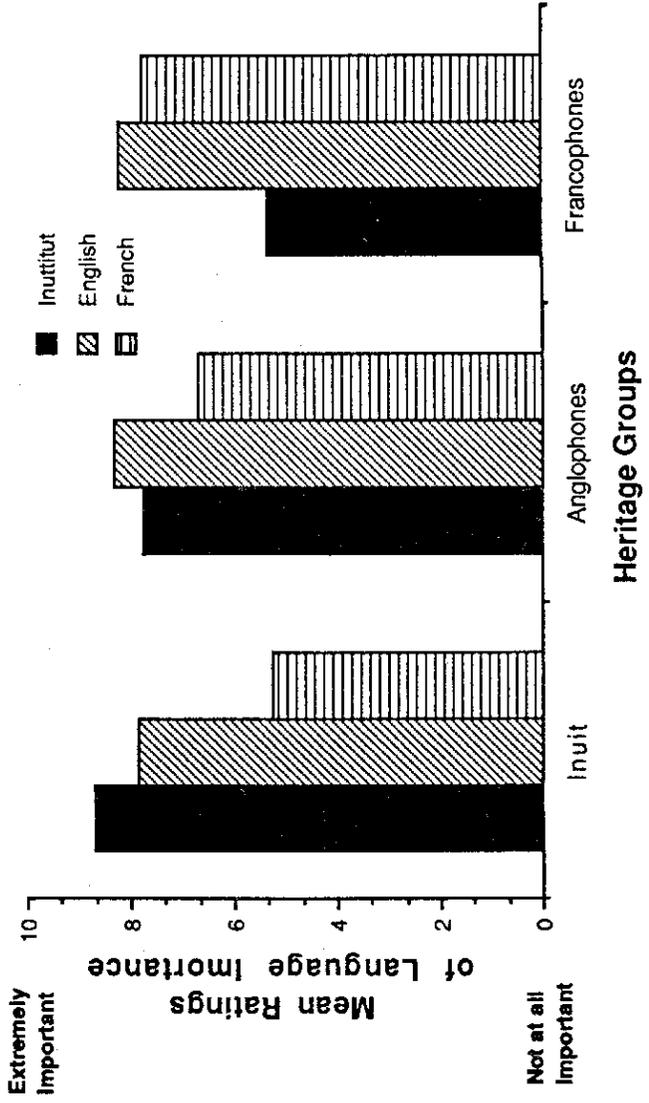


FIGURE 3: Mean estimation of importance of each of three languages

spondents were analyzed by means of a 3 x 3 x 3 ANOVA, where the independent variables were ethnic group of respondent (Inuit, Anglophone, Francophone), language (Inuttitut, English, French) and responsibility (family, community, school). In this analysis a statistically significant three way interaction emerged, $F(8,1272)=5.37, p<.001$, and subsequent 3 x 3 ANOVA's were performed on each of the three responsibility areas (family, community, school).

The important results here are those associated with what responsibility the school should have for the teaching of languages. A significant heritage group by language interaction emerged, $F(4,664)=21.84, p<.001$. These results are presented in Figure 4 and indicate clearly that everybody in the community believes that the school has a major responsibility for teaching languages. The notion that English and French are "school" languages and Inuttitut should be taught only in the home is *not* reflected in this community. Inuit respondents believe that the school is responsible for teaching all three languages, although their ratings are significantly lower for French than for the other two languages ($p<.01$). This difference probably reflects their attitudes about the relative importance of the French language compared to English and Inuttitut.

Anglophones as well are committed to the idea that Inuttitut should be taught in the school, and they accord Inuttitut the same status as they do their own language, English. Francophones feel that the school has a major responsibility for teaching French and English. Their ratings for Inuttitut are slightly lower, but this difference is not statistically significant ($p>.05$).

In summary, despite minor variations, there is a high degree of consensus in the community about the role the school should play in the teaching of languages. Basically, the entire community sees the school as having a major responsibility, and this responsibility includes all three languages, Inuttitut, English and French.

Summary and Conclusions

The results for the questions on **Language Attitudes** lead to two broad conclusions. First, there is support for the conclusion that the Inuttitut language remains strong and vibrant. Ability in the Inuttitut language remains high in the Inuit population and among the Inuit, Inuttitut is the language of choice in the home and to a lesser extent in the community. Inuit respondents indicate strong support for the importance of the Inuttitut language both now and into the future, and this feeling is shared by Anglophone respondents. The school is seen as sharing with the family and the community, the responsibility for ensuring the learning of the Inuttitut language. This sentiment is shared by Anglophones and Francophones as well.

The second conclusion focuses on the importance of English as the lingua franca in the community. Despite the fact that Anglophones make up less than 10% of the population, English is the

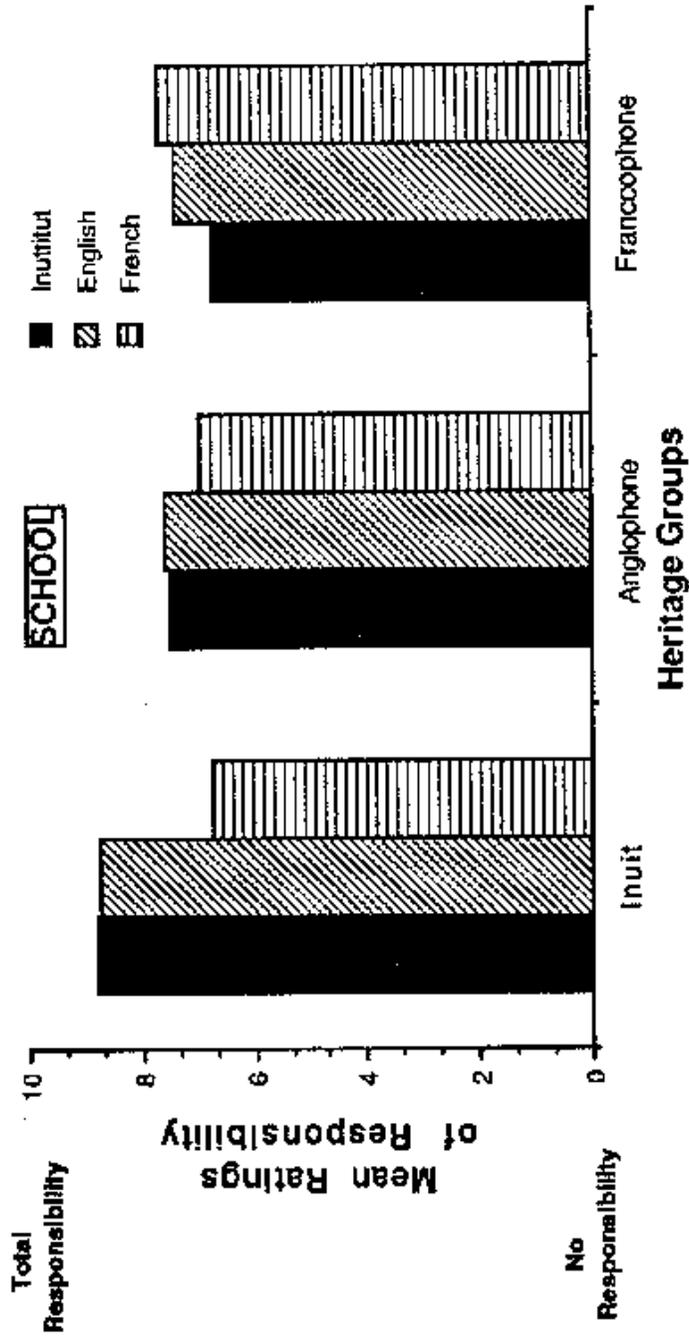


FIGURE 4: Mean Rating of responsibility of the school for teaching each of the three languages

preferred second language of both the Inuit and Francophones. Moreover, English is viewed as highly important to life in the community by all three language groups. Of primary interest is the dominance of English in the work context and the resulting elevation of prestige attained because of this.

Intergroup Attitudes

In the present study two questions about **Intergroup Attitudes** were posed. The first asked each respondent to indicate how Inuit, Anglophones and Francophones get along with one another, and the second focused on the amount of contact members of the different groups have with each other in the community.

1) How well do each of the three language groups get along?

This question was analyzed using a 3 x 3 analysis of variance where the independent variables were the ethnic group of the respondent and the repeated measure of the ethnic group being judged. The analysis yielded the significant two-way interaction, $F(4,616)=83.96, p<.001$, which is presented in Figure 5.

The first noteworthy feature of the results is that each of the three groups has a positive self-image. Inuit, Anglophone and Francophone respondents all rated their own group highly or positively. This is an important finding in light of much empirical research which shows that minority groups often have a negative self-image and suffer from low self esteem (Brown, 1986; Cummins, 1989; Lambert, 1984). Such is not the case, in general, with respect to the three groups who reside in this northern community.

Social distance arises mostly between Francophones and the other two groups. Inuit people indicated significantly less liking for the members of the Francophone group than they did for both their own group and for Anglophones ($p<.01$). Ratings by the Anglophones coincide with this. They too indicated significantly less liking for Francophones than for Inuit and members of their own group ($p<.01$). The ratings of Francophone respondents mirrored this social distance, as they indicated significantly below their ratings for their own group ($p<.01$). It should, however, be pointed out that the central point on the present scale was labeled "Like somewhat". Thus, the mutual attitudes of the Inuit and Anglophone groups, and the Francophone group are by no means negative.

Conversely, there is mutual attraction between the Inuit and Anglophones. Both groups indicated ratings of liking for the members of the other group which do not differ significantly from their rating of liking for members of their own group ($p>.05$). But, as we have seen from the earlier analyses on language, this "mutual admiration" may not be equal in the sense that Anglophones occupy a position of power and centrality. It might be reasonable then to

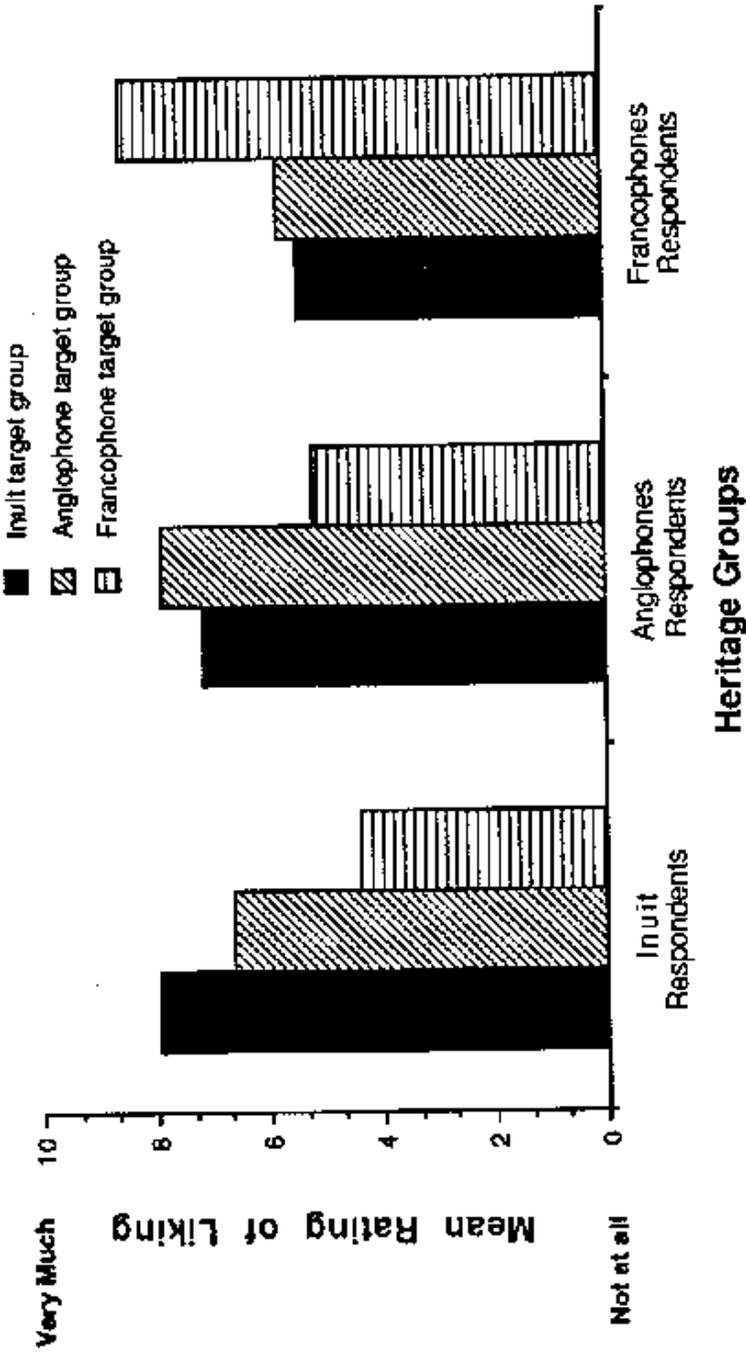


FIGURE 5: Mean ratings of Intergroup attitudes

describe intergroup attitudes in the community as reflecting an uneven mutual attraction between Inuit and Anglophones, with Francophones experiencing some degree of social isolation.

2) What is the extent of contact among the three language groups?

The analysis of contact among members of the three groups was similar to their attraction for each other, although the amount of contact is, of course, influenced by the differential population sizes of the three groups in the community.

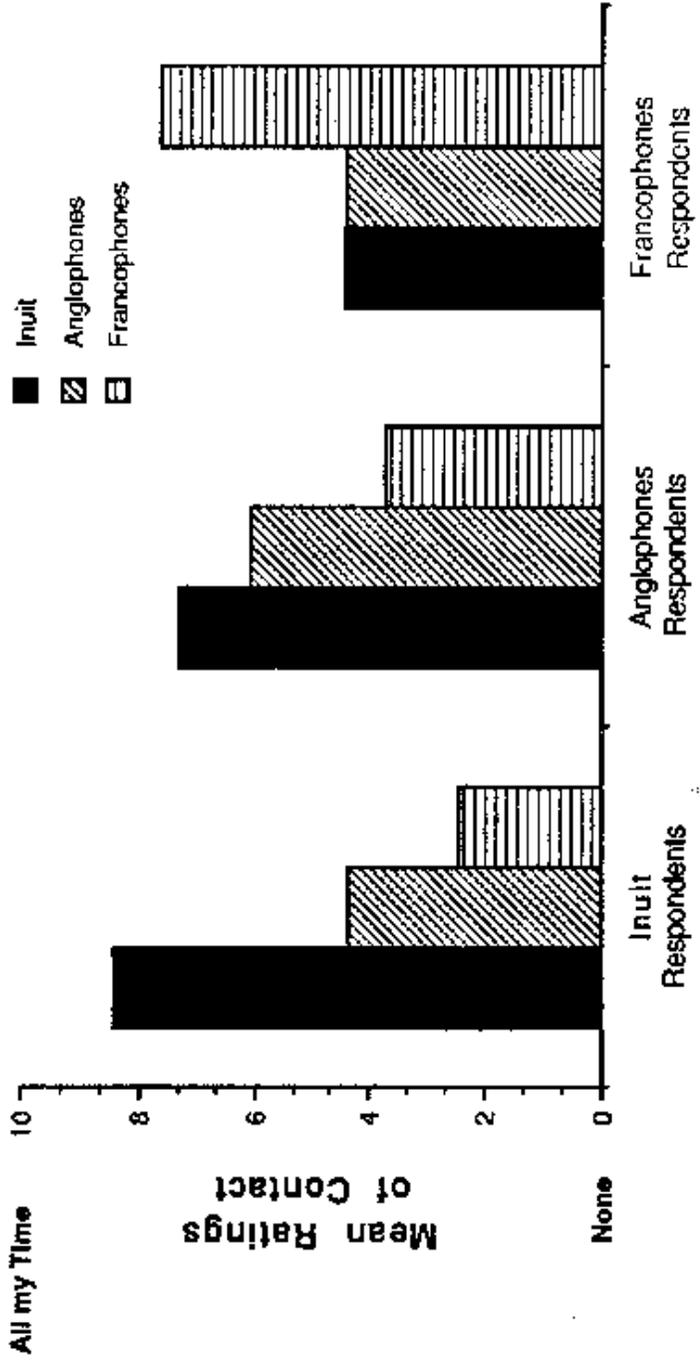
The 3 x 3 analysis of variance involving the three heritage groups, and the repeated measures of contact with each group, resulted in a significant interaction, $F(4, 656)=125.65, p<.001$, shown in Figure 6. It is important to bear in mind that the Inuit population is by far the largest, and the Anglophone the smallest, group in the community. Consistent with the results for the question about how well the three groups get along, we note that Inuit and Anglophones have significantly more contact with each other than they do with Francophones ($p<.01$). Anglophones even report significantly greater contact with Inuit than with members of their own group ($p<.01$). Given the large size of the Inuit population this is not especially surprising, however, it does point to the extent of the Francophone respondents' isolation from the Inuit than with members of their own group ($p<.01$). This difference is much larger than would be expected, given the size of the Inuit group in the community. Indeed, Francophones reported interacting as much with Anglophones, who make up only 10% of the community, as they do with Inuit, who represent 75% of the population.

Summary and Conclusions

In summary, the dominant finding for the **Intergroup Attitudes** theme is a pattern consistent with the findings for the first theme, **Language Attitudes**; Anglophones occupy a central position. This centrality is associated with mutual attraction between Inuit and Anglophones with Francophones experiencing some degree of isolation. The isolation of the Francophones appears to be the result of limited contact between themselves and the other community groups. This lack of contact, in combination with the Francophones' status as the most recently arrived group, likely leads to the Inuit and Anglophones having more ambivalent feelings about them.

Threats To Inuit Language And Culture

In this section we examine responses to three important questions about threats to the Inuit way of life.



Heritage Groups

FIGURE 6: Mean ratings of intergroup contact.

1) Have Inuit children lost interest in the Inuit language and culture?

The responses to this question are presented in Figure 7A. The results appear to indicate a good deal of uncertainty, with all three heritage groups responding near the neutral point on the scale. People in the community are not convinced that children have lost interest, but nor are they confident that interest in the Inuit way of life is high. Clearly, there is some disquiet about the children's level of interest in Inuit language and culture, especially among Inuit people themselves, and among Francophones. A one-way analysis of variance indicated a significant effect of heritage group, $F(2,328)=3.55, p<.05$, and subsequent post hoc tests showed that Anglophones indicated significantly greater confidence that Inuit children have not lost interest in their heritage language and culture ($p<.05$).

What may account for the Anglophone perception that children are not losing interest in Inuit culture? Some of the Anglophone respondents have Inuit spouses and from the data presented in Figure 6 it is clear that Anglophones have a good deal of contact with Inuit people. But Anglophones are not very fluent in Inuttitut. Thus, Anglophones may often be in a situation where they must struggle to comprehend conversations in Inuttitut; this in turn could create the impression that Inuit language and culture is pervasive and not in the process of being lost.

In general, however, there is a moderate level of concern in the community that young people may be less interested in Inuit language and culture. This modest disquiet can be appreciated by examining the responses of the Inuit sample in greater detail (see Figure 7B). A one-way ANOVA indicates significant differences among the three age groups, $F(2,219)=6.38, p<.05$. The one group that is particularly worried that young people may be losing interest in Inuit language and culture is the older members of the community. This older group indicated significantly more concern than the other two groups ($p<.05$). They, of course, are the most fluent in Inuttitut and hence their standards are important benchmarks for judging whether the Inuit language and culture is being maintained.

2) Will Inuit children lose their Inuttitut language if they are only taught in English and French at school?

This second question on the theme of **Threats To Inuit Language And Culture** focuses directly on the role of the school. The results are presented in Figure 7A, and show that Inuit, Anglophone and Francophone respondents agree that Inuttitut might be lost if it is not taught in school. Inuttitut is presently taught in the school and this may have contributed to the community's support for the role of the school in teaching the heritage language. However, future re-

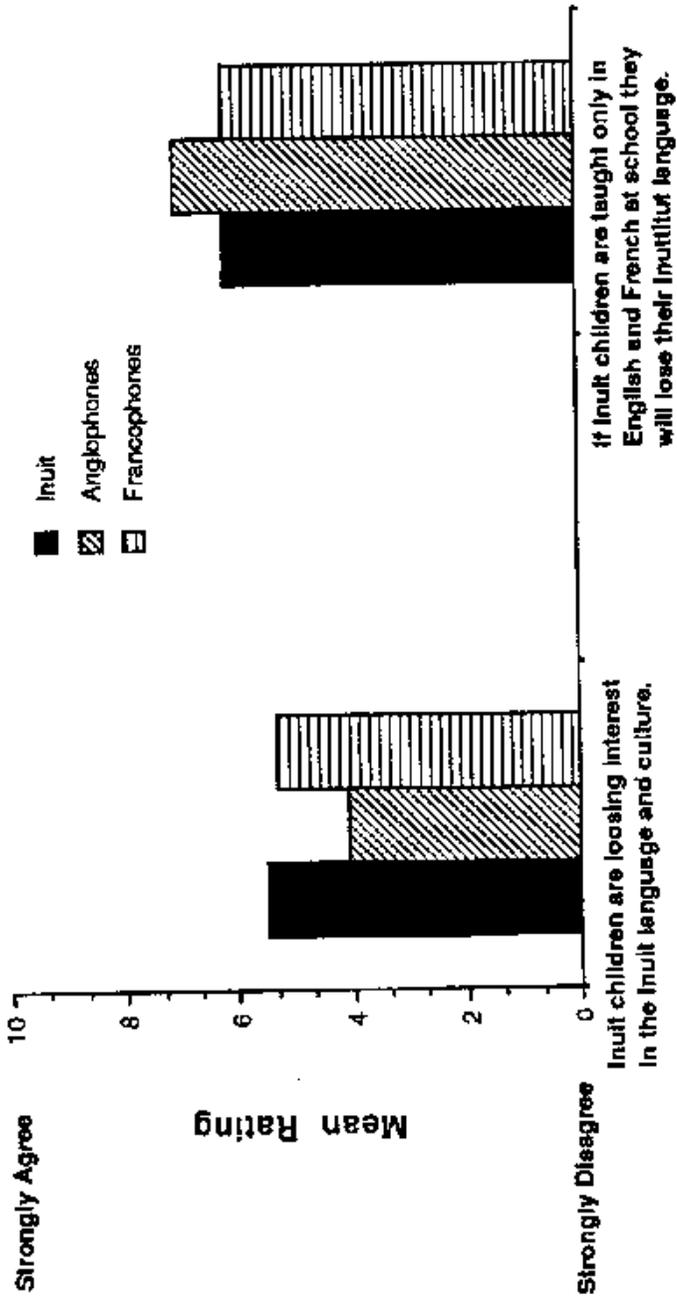


FIGURE 7A: Mean Ratings of agreement with two statements concerning threats to the Inuktitut language and Inuit culture.

search might attempt to investigate the community's perceptions of how much instruction should be done in the heritage language and the relative importance of heritage language education compared to teaching of and by the second and third languages.

It is interesting to note that among the Inuit there is a significant effect of age group on endorsement of this question $F(2,222)=6.03, p<.01$ (see Figure 7B). The younger members of the Inuit sample, those between the age of 14 and 25, are significantly more convinced that Inuttitut will be lost if it is not used in the school ($p<.05$).

3) What is the community's views on bilingualism?

In order to answer this final question three questions were posed. The responses for each of these three questions appear in Figure 8A. The first question asked directly "is it possible for a child to be completely fluent in two languages?" Figure 8A shows that the community has a clear attitude; children definitely can be perfectly bilingual. This is a finding with important social implications. For a long time social scientists and lay people alike believed that the introduction of a second language would only confuse a child and make them fall behind in content subjects like math and science at school. The general belief was that the more a child learns a second language, the more their first language suffers (Bethell, 1979).

Research has shown consistently over the past twenty-five years that this is not the case: children can be perfectly bilingual, they need not suffer in other school subjects, and indeed the evidence indicates that strength in a second language need not detract from, but, under the right circumstances, can enhance abilities in the heritage language (Cummins, 1989; Lambert and Tucker, 1972; Lambert and Taylor, 1988; Taylor, 1987).

A significant effect of heritage group, $F(2,331)=5.27, p<.01$, indicated that Anglophones are significantly more convinced that bilingualism is possible than are the Inuit ($p<.05$). However, the very high endorsement of this bilingualism question by all three groups indicates that Inuit, Anglophones and Francophones in this community are clearly aware of the reality that fluency in a second language need not result in a deficit in one's first language.

A one-way ANOVA resulted in a significant main effect of age group within the Inuit sample for their response to this question, $F(2,221)=21.756, p<.001$ (see Figure 8B). Although all three groups gave strong endorsement to the concept of complete bilingualism, it is interesting to note that, among the Inuit respondents, the group that is significantly less convinced that bilingualism is possible is the younger group ($p<.01$). Of course, these are precisely the youngsters who are currently struggling to learn a second or even a third language. Perhaps, their lack of complete confidence can be appreciated.

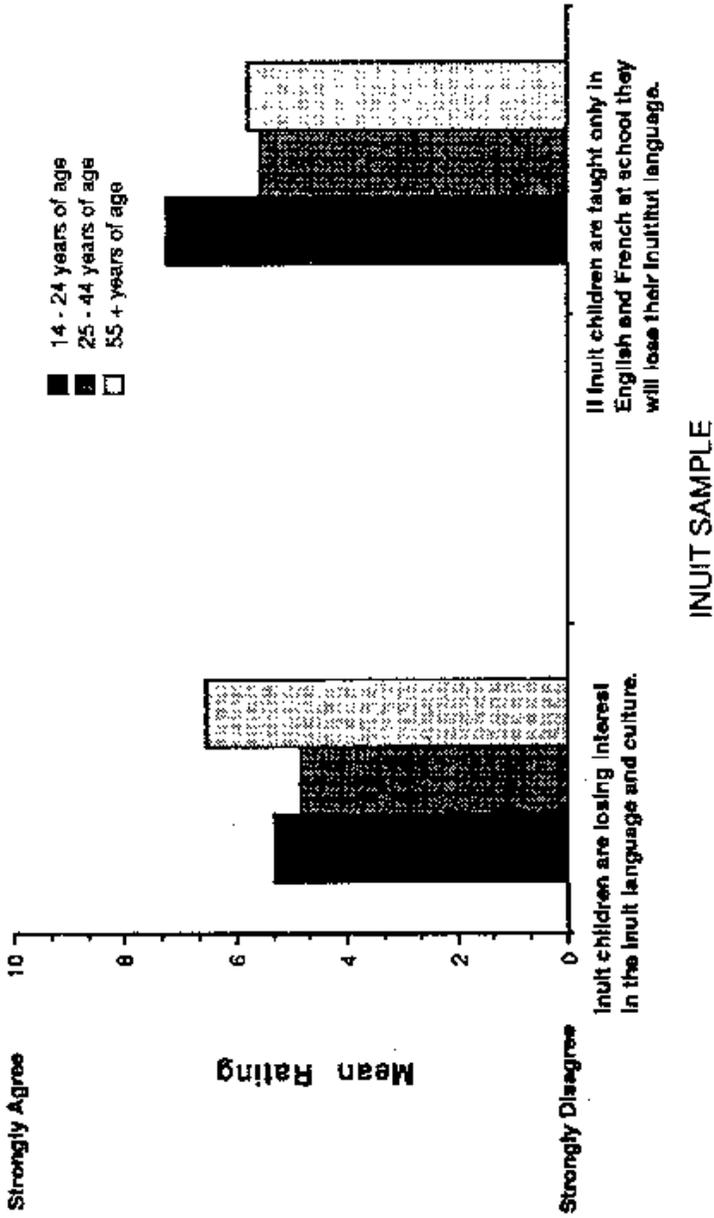


FIGURE 7B: Mean ratings, by three age groups of Inuit people, of agreement with two statements concerning threats to the Inuit language and the Inuit culture.

The second question dealt indirectly with bilingualism and asked, "Will children do better in school if taught in their own language for the first few years"? The answer to this question by all members of the community is a qualified "Yes"? (see Figure 8A). All three heritage groups agree that children should begin school by being taught in their own language. However, a one-way ANOVA showed a significant effect of heritage group, $F(2,333)=3.72, p<.05$, and subsequent Tukey tests indicated that Inuit respondents gave significantly greater support to this idea than did the Francophone respondents ($p<.05$).

Again, in the Inuit sample the highest support for the idea that children should begin school in their Native language comes from the oldest age group (see Figure 8B). A significant main effect of age group $F(2,224)=3.66, p<.05$, and subsequent Tukey tests indicated that the support for this idea indicated by the 45 and older age group was significantly higher than the support indicated by the 14 to 24 age group ($p<.05$). This finding reinforces the earlier finding showing that it is the older members of the Inuit community who are most concerned about the loss of interest in Inuit language and culture.

Finally, respondents were asked if Anglophone and Francophone children should learn Inuttitut. This is an important question since the results on language ability and use indicate that Anglophones and Francophones are not fluent in the language of the majority group in the community — Inuttitut. Surprisingly, all three groups in the community believe that Inuttitut should be learned by everyone (see Figure 8A), and an analysis of variance indicated no significant differences among the three heritage groups in their support for this idea ($p>.05$). Thus, there is some endorsement for promoting Inuttitut as the link language in the community: at least everyone says they should learn Inuttitut.

Summary and Conclusions

It appears that there is some concern in the community about the potential threats to the Inuit language and culture. Respondents from all three groups indicated that they are unsure whether children are maintaining interest in the Inuit language and way of life. In addition, all groups felt that the school must play a role in language maintenance. The community, however, has a very clear view of bilingualism. Everyone agrees that bilingualism is possible and there is substantial support for the idea that Anglophone and Francophone children should try to become fluent in Inuttitut as well as their mother tongue. The question of early education in the child's mother tongue as a means to ensure future success received considerable support.

Conclusion

Our examination of language attitudes, intergroup relations, and threats to Inuit culture and language in this Northern community

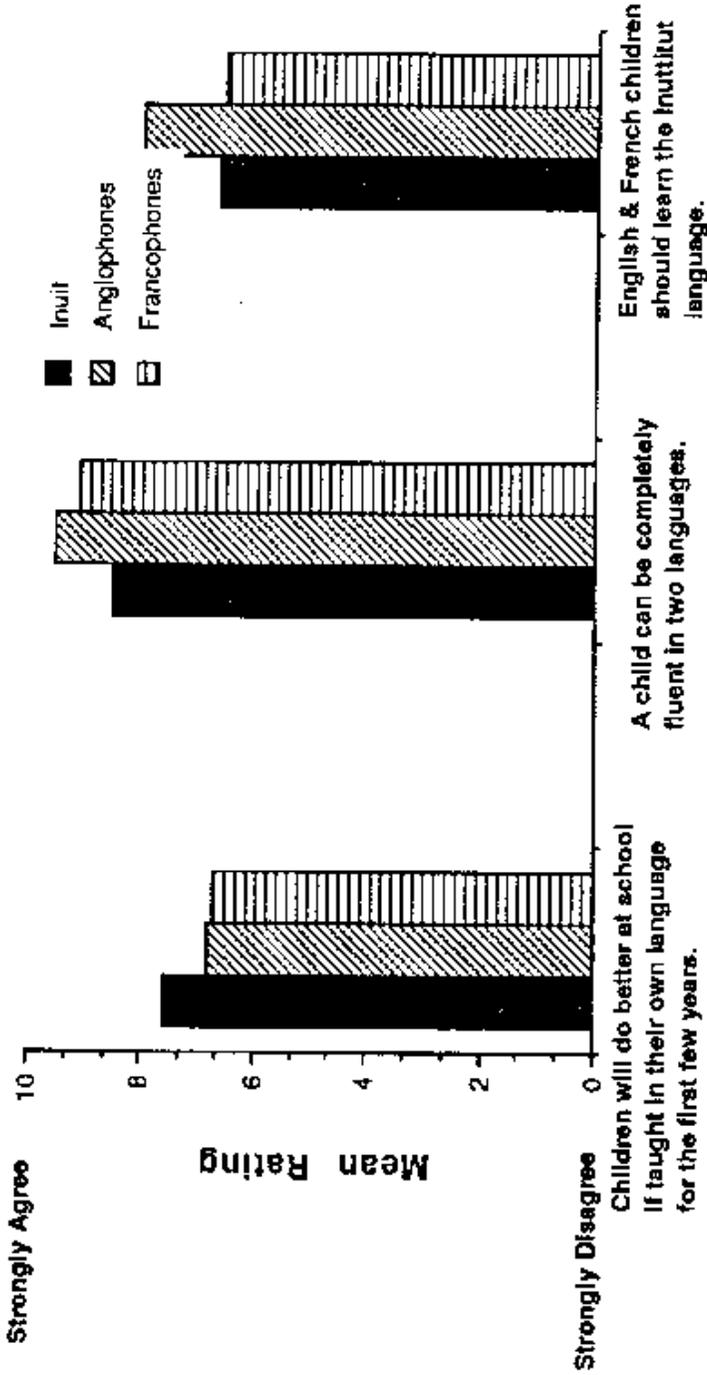


FIGURE 8A: Mean rating of agreement with three questions concerning bilingualism.

point to one overall conclusion; there exists in the community feelings of *ambivalence* arising out of simultaneous feelings of *optimism* and *disquiet*. Optimism arises because of the inherent strength of the Inuit language, the good relations that exist between Inuit and Anglophones, the support of all groups for the role of the school in heritage language education, the belief that children can be bilingual, and the belief that learning through their Native language in the first years of school may be effective.

Disquiet surfaces because of the central position occupied by the Anglophone community and the English language, despite their representing only 10% of the population. English has taken a strong hold on two important domains, among the young people and in the job context. As well, while relations with the Francophone community are not antagonistic or negative, Francophones appear to be isolated. This isolation makes their ultimate role in the community somewhat unclear. Finally, there is uncertainty about the interest of Inuit children in their traditional language and culture, and some concern, especially among older Inuit, that the heritage language and culture may be eroded.

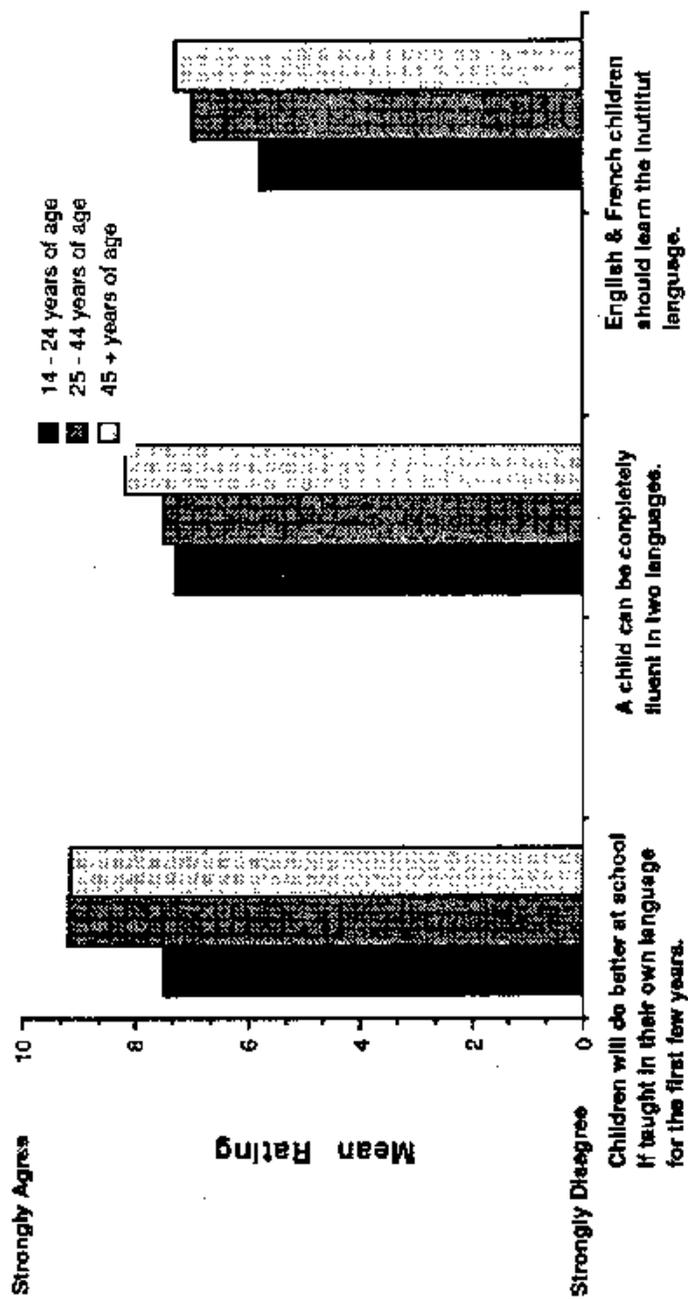
The ambivalence that emerges as the overriding theme suggests that *now* is the time for community leaders to define the goals for the future. However these goals are defined, there exists in the community the optimism and feelings of good will necessary to maximize the chances that these goals can be achieved. At the same time, there is sufficient disquiet in the community to motivate people to take action.

NOTE

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First, our thanks to the community and all its residents who took the time to fill out a questionnaire. The level of participation in the study was remarkable. Our thanks to David Forrest, Gaston Coté and especially Betsy Gordon Berthe for their assistance in the distribution of the surveys and their involvement with the community on our behalf. Our thanks, as well, to Michael Barrett, Lorne Whitely, their troop of Boy Scouts and Cubs, and the students who distributed and collected the surveys.

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INUIT SAMPLE

FIGURE 8B: Mean rating, by Inuit people of three age groups, of agreement with three questions concerning bilingualism.

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