

LIBERAL ARTS

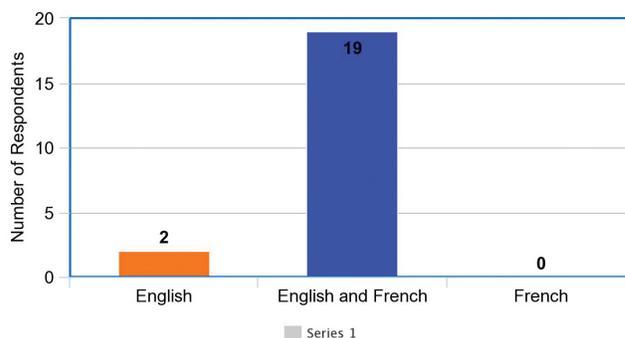
The French-English Bilingual Mind

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The bilingual mind has been a subject of dichotomous thought and controversy in recent years. While the bilingual mind was originally assumed to be similar in structure to a monolingual mind, studies conducted by some linguists have not only shown this assumption to be incorrect but have also demonstrated the depth of the bilingual's mind. Based on these studies, I examined how the bilingual mind processes two languages, French and English. My research hypothesis states that bilingual speakers can incorporate both languages at the same time by giving separate daily activities to each language, such as socializing and computing math problems, to differentiate the context of language use. To test this hypothesis, I distributed a survey among French-English bilinguals within Purdue University's staff to examine their language use and preferences.

The data identified three general trends. First, the participants preferred to exclusively use their native tongue around immediate family members as well as strangers in everyday environments but most often used a combination of both languages when speaking with their non-immediate relatives, coworkers, friends, and acquaintances. Second, the participants favored English when dealing with numbers but used both languages with dreams, emotions, and creative/written works. Third, most participants found that words of both anger and affection carried the most weight in their native tongue. These trends show that bilingual speakers can incorporate both languages at the same time by differentiating language use via situational context. However, more information provided by future studies is needed to clarify these findings.

Research advisor Maria O. Yakushkina writes: "It was a pleasure to work with Quinlan on this project! Multilingualism is a phenomenon highly present in society nowadays, which still requires scholarly attention. With her project, Quinlan made a valuable contribution to the field that adds to the academic discussion of bilingualism and moves the study forward."



Reported language preferences at work or school among French-English bilinguals (n = 21).