

# 10

## **Aboriginal Languages within Canada's Friendship Centre Areas: State, Diversity, Prospects, and Implications, 2006 Census**

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### **Introduction**

This chapter explores the state, diversity, and prospects of Aboriginal languages among Aboriginal populations residing within 304 communities across Canada that comprise the catchment areas of 116 existing friendship centres (FCs) and 188 gap, non-reserve areas where a friendship centre is potentially needed. There are considerable variations among friendship centres in terms of their residential and regional characteristics. They are spread across Canada—some are located in small remote, rural areas, others in large, urban, metropolitan areas. Analyses of past and recent censuses have consistently demonstrated significant regional variation in the state, diversity, and prospects of Aboriginal languages. These regional differences are associated with various factors, such as characteristics of linguistic diversity, viability, and endangerment; long-term trends in language use and learning (maintenance, continuity, transmission, and revitalization), geographic factors of remoteness, residence within/outside Aboriginal communities, and urbanization of languages; demographic trends in age-gender patterns of migration, intermarriage, and family formation; and historical impacts of contact and settlement, and practices of prohibition of Aboriginal language use in residential schools (Norris 1998, 2003, 2008, 2009a).

With respect to the effect of urbanization on Aboriginal languages, previous census-based research has demonstrated the significant presence of Aboriginal languages within Canada's urban areas and their resilience even in the face of almost overwhelming odds (Norris and Jantzen 2003). A more recent study of language trends in urban areas between 1996 and 2006 (Norris 2009a) suggests that Aboriginal people continue to be confronted with significant, and possibly growing, challenges in maintaining that presence and revitalizing their traditional languages within Canada's cities. Findings from the same study also reveal that, in cities where language continuity and frequent home use generally tend to be low, second-language learning and at least regular home use of Aboriginal languages become increasingly important components of language survival, maintenance, and revitalization. This is especially important among younger generations

growing up in cities who stand relatively little chance of acquiring an Aboriginal language as a mother tongue.

This study comprises a number of key aspects concerning language outcomes and prospects, with a focus on language learning, maintenance, and revitalization, especially in relation to youth. Discussions cover the extent to which Aboriginal languages within FC catchment areas or communities are being learned, through transmission as a mother tongue or as a second language, and the extent to which they are spoken within the home, as a major language or on a regular basis.

## **Background and Summary Research Findings to Date on Aboriginal Languages**

Previous research has highlighted some key considerations to understanding the state, prospects, and diversity of Aboriginal languages, with respect to various aspects, such as different Aboriginal identities (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis); geography and residential distributions (reserve, rural, and urban) of speakers and their degree of urbanization (small and large cities); demographic characteristics and differences of language learning and home use by age and gender; and inter-generational transmission and second-language learning within families, communities, and cities. The following provides a brief summary of findings based on excerpts from Norris (2009a) on some key aspects of Aboriginal languages. They are not intended to be exhaustive.

### ***Diversity of Aboriginal Languages***

There are numerous Aboriginal languages in Canada. The number of languages varies depending on the system of linguistic classification. For example, there are an estimated 50 different languages based on the classification employed by Statistics Canada (Kinkade 1991; Norris 1998), and 86 languages according to UNESCO's *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* (2009). There are 11 major Aboriginal language families—10 First Nations (including the Métis language of Michif) and Inuit. The range in population size is considerable. In the 2006 census, the three largest families—Algonquian (147,000), Inuktitut (28,000), and Athapaskan (20,000)—represented 92% of persons with an Aboriginal mother tongue. The other 8 language families and isolates account for the remaining 8%, with the 5 smallest language families accounting for only 1% of the total Aboriginal mother-tongue population.

### ***Regional Diversity and Language Viability/Endangerment***

Regionally, there is significant variation in the diversity, viability, and endangerment of Canada's Aboriginal languages. British Columbia has the greatest diversity and number of Aboriginal languages, representing many of the small and endangered languages (e.g., Salish, Tsimshian, Wakashan, Haida, Tlingit, and Kutenai); whereas in some other provinces, languages tend to be much more viable, such as Cree and Montagnais-Naskapi in the remote areas of Quebec.

### ***Urbanization of Aboriginal Languages***

Certainly some languages are more “urbanized” in terms of speaker locations than others; generally, the more viable languages tend to be less urbanized. For example, in 2006 about 15% of the population with a Cree mother tongue resided in cities, whereas the less viable Ojibway was more urbanized with about 22% of speakers residing in cities. Contrast in urbanization is most pronounced between viable languages with young first-language speakers—like Montagnais-Naskapi and Inuktitut (the least urbanized Aboriginal language), with only 7% and 4% respectively of their mother-tongue populations residing in cities—and more endangered languages with aging speakers—like one of the Tsimishian languages, with urban residents accounting for 27% of the mother-tongue population. Given the significant differences in urbanization among Aboriginal languages, the linguistic composition of Aboriginal language speakers residing outside Aboriginal communities/reserves, including the largely urban FC catchment areas, is disproportionate to the overall national picture of language diversity.

### ***First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Languages: Urban and Community Environments***

According to the 2006 census, Registered Indians living on-reserve comprise almost two-thirds (63%) of the total Aboriginal identity population that reported an Aboriginal mother tongue. Relatively high proportions of Inuit (63%) and Registered Indians residing on-reserve (46%) reported an Aboriginal mother tongue compared to the more urbanized non-Status Indian (2.4%) and Métis (2.6%) identity populations. The Aboriginal community and reserve environment of Registered Indians and the northern communities of the Inuit tend to support the maintenance and transmission of Aboriginal languages. In contrast, many of the challenges confronting Aboriginal languages are exacerbated in an urban environment (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996).

### ***Populations of Speakers***

The 2006 census data show that a minority of the Aboriginal population has an Aboriginal language as a mother tongue, with even smaller shares speaking an Aboriginal language at home. On the other hand, there are more Aboriginal people who have knowledge of, or the ability to speak, an Aboriginal language than people with an Aboriginal mother tongue, pointing to second-language learners. Of the 1,172,800 people who identified as Aboriginal in the 2006 census, 219,200 (19%) reported an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue. Significantly fewer reported the use of an Aboriginal language at home in 2006—about 138,000 (12%) said it was the language they used most often at home, while another 5% reported it as a language they used on a regular basis at home. Nevertheless, in 2006, as in previous censuses, more Aboriginal respondents (252,000 or 22%) reported that they could speak and understand an Aboriginal language well enough to conduct a conversation, than reported they had an Aboriginal mother tongue.

***Aboriginal Languages, States, and Prospects:  
Language Continuity and Second-Language Learning***

Two indicators that are relevant to assessing the state of Aboriginal languages are the “continuity index,” in relation to language maintenance, and the “index of second-language acquisition,” in relation to language learning and revitalization. The continuity index indicates the degree to which a language is being transmitted as a first language in the home by comparing the number of people speaking an Aboriginal language most often at home, for every 100 people with the Aboriginal language as a mother tongue. According to the 2006 census, among Canada’s Aboriginal population as a whole, 63 persons speak an Aboriginal language as a major home language for every 100 persons with an Aboriginal mother tongue. The index of second-language acquisition indicates the degree to which a language is being learned as a second language by comparing the number of people able to speak the Aboriginal language for every 100 persons with the Aboriginal language as a mother tongue. Within Canada, the 2006 census indicates that 115 Aboriginal people are able to speak an Aboriginal language for every 100 with an Aboriginal mother tongue.

***Size and Transmission are Critical***

The transmission of a language from one generation to the next and the size of its mother-tongue population are both important considerations in the viability of a language. For viable larger languages, especially the various Inuktitut and Cree languages, and even some smaller languages with only a few thousand speakers (e.g., Attikamek, Montagnais-Naskapi, Micmac, Dene, and Dogrib), indexes of continuity indicate high prospects of being passed on to the next generation as a mother tongue.

The use of an Aboriginal language at home relative to the mother-tongue population is related to stage of life. For example, the decline in home language usage is significant as youth leave home and enter the labour force, marry, start families, or move to a larger urban environment, especially for women. Women are more likely than men to leave their reserves and move to other locations, especially larger urban areas where the chances of linguistic intermarriage are higher, and where the exposure to the dominant language is much greater (Norris 1998, 2009b).

***Intergenerational Transmission in Family and Community***

Both family and community play critical roles in the transmission of language from parent to child. Intergenerational transmission is maximized in Aboriginal communities among families in which both parents have an Aboriginal mother tongue. Outside Aboriginal communities, particularly within large cities, transmission and continuity are significantly reduced, even under the ideal conditions of linguistically endogamous families (i.e., in which both parents speak an Aboriginal mother tongue). Children within exogamous families (i.e., in which

only one of the parents speaks an Aboriginal mother tongue, and the other parent speaks a non-Aboriginal mother tongue), are much less likely, especially in cities, to acquire an Aboriginal mother tongue than children with parents in endogamous marriages (Norris 2003, 2009b).

### ***Second-Language Learning Most Likely among Children in Urban Areas***

Although younger generations, especially in urban areas, may not be learning their indigenous language as a mother tongue, there are nevertheless signs and interest in learning it as a second language (Norris and Jantzen 2003; Norris 1998, 2007, 2008, 2009a). In cities, where language continuity and frequent home use generally tend to be low, second-language learning and at least regular home use of Aboriginal languages become increasingly important components of language survival, maintenance, and revitalization.

### ***Home Language Use: Spoken on a Most Often or Regular Basis***

The distinction between Aboriginal home language use on a most often versus regular basis is especially relevant for speakers of endangered languages and for Aboriginal people living in cities, including FC catchment areas, where they face considerable challenges in maintaining their traditional language as the major home language, but may be able to at least speak it on a regular basis at home. Aboriginal residents, especially in large cities, are much more likely to speak an Aboriginal language on a regular rather than most often basis. In 2006, on reserves, 76% of Aboriginal home language users reported speaking their traditional language on a most often basis in the home, with the other 24% speaking it on a regular basis. Outside of reserves, in cities, the pattern is practically reversed with only 37% of home language users speaking their Aboriginal language most often, and the remaining majority, 63%, speaking it regularly. City residents account for about 5% of the 138,200 Aboriginal persons across Canada speaking an Aboriginal language most often at home, but a significantly higher share, 21%, of the 54,150 regular home language users (Norris 2009a). In the case of larger and more viable languages, the vast majority of home language users speak their language most often in the home, such as 80% of Inuktitut home language speakers, in contrast to a minority for endangered languages, such as a third of Haida home language users.

## **Friendship Centres—National and Regional Profile of Selected Language Characteristics**

The analysis of 2006 census data on Aboriginal languages within friendship centre areas is based on 304 FC catchment areas, including 116 existing FC areas and 188 gap, non-reserve areas, where a friendship centre is potentially needed due to the presence of significant Aboriginal populations.

### ***Overlapping Catchment Areas and Calculations***

The 304 catchment or community areas overlap in terms of geography; that is, they are not mutually exclusive. However, the catchment area itself represents the unit of analysis, corresponding to the concept of a friendship centre “catchment area.” Consequently, Aboriginal language measures and indicators at the Canada level for various FC characteristics, such as average size of the population reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue, are derived as an average of the corresponding measures across the individual existing and gap catchment areas.

### ***Analytical Approaches and Limitations***

It should be noted that within the context of analyzing patterns and levels of Aboriginal language ability and use there are some limitations associated with the use of averages. With respect to reliability in the calculation of indexes of language continuity and second-language acquisition, catchment areas must be selected with a minimum cut-off for the population reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue (set at a minimum of 75 persons in this analysis), although this can be a trade-off with consequently fewer catchment areas weighted in the calculation of averages. Other limitations relate to population size, overlapping geography, and the inability to control for the effects of different variables, since analysis can often be limited to one dimension due to small numbers. For example, analysis along just one dimension, such as size of the FC catchment community population, can mask differences in Aboriginal language viability or regional composition related to their state and prospects across distinct geographies of reserves, rural areas, and large and small urban centres, as well as provinces and territories.

### ***Unique Existing Catchment Areas and Calculations***

A separate set of retrievals developed for the 116 existing FC catchment areas, adjusted for overlapping areas to yield “unique” geographic areas, allow for various measures (e.g., number of speakers) to be summed over the 116 areas without double counting, along with the calculation of corresponding proportions/indexes based on totals at regional and national levels.

### ***Existing (Unique) Friendship Centres: Profile of Language Characteristics***

**Table 10.1a** and **10.1b** (on pages 256 and 257) provide some summary measures and indicators concerning Aboriginal languages in the existing FC catchment areas. First, the population reporting an Aboriginal identity summed across the unique catchment areas of the 116 FCs totals to 592,500, representing about half (51%) of the total Aboriginal identity population in Canada. While the population with an Aboriginal identity represents 3.2% of the total (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) FC population overall, its share varies across regions. Among the provinces, Ontario is the lowest at 1%, while Saskatchewan is the highest at 16%. The largest share, at 34%, is in Northern Canada. About one in five Aboriginal persons in the 116



catchment areas reside in each of Ontario (22%) and Alberta (21%), followed by 17% each in British Columbia and Manitoba, and 13% in Saskatchewan.

Out of the total Aboriginal population in the 116 FC catchment areas, some 56,600 (almost 10%) report an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue; 70,300 (12%) report the ability to speak an Aboriginal language; while 23,000 (4%) indicate an Aboriginal language as a major home language, and another 20,300 (3.4%) speak an Aboriginal language, not as a major language, but on a regular basis in the home. The index of continuity for the FC catchment areas overall indicates that about 41 people speak a major Aboriginal home language for every 100 with an Aboriginal mother tongue; while 124 are able to speak an Aboriginal language for every 100 with an Aboriginal mother tongue. With respect to regional characteristics associated with these unique catchment areas of the 116 FCs, their regional patterns and variations are similar to those observed with the average-based calculations for the total 304 FC catchment areas, as discussed in the next section.

## **Regional State and Diversity of Aboriginal Languages across Communities**

Turning now to the total 304 FC catchment areas or communities, census-based measures and indicators reflect a wide range and variation in the situation of Aboriginal languages within FC communities across the country's different regions. Clearly Aboriginal languages spoken in the FC areas of Canada's North, which include the generally viable languages of the Inuit, are faring considerably better than those spoken in FC communities within British Columbia, where so many are endangered. Among Aboriginal residents in FC communities, an average of 58% in FCs located in Northern Canada report an Aboriginal mother tongue, followed by 27% in Saskatchewan, 21% in Quebec, 13% in Alberta, 11% in Manitoba, 7% in British Columbia, 5% in Atlantic Canada, and 4% in Ontario.

Similarly, prospects of Aboriginal languages being transmitted as a mother tongue vary, with relatively high indexes of continuity, 57 and 53, in Northern Canada and Quebec respectively. While the index is also high for Atlantic Canada, it must be interpreted with caution since it is based on only four FC areas with a mother-tongue population of at least 75 persons (e.g., Cape Breton). In other regions, such as British Columbia and Ontario, language continuity is low with indexes of less than 30. However, it would appear that Aboriginal languages are also being learned in catchment areas as a second language in most regions, especially Ontario, with an average index of second-language acquisition of 145 persons able to speak an Aboriginal language for every 100 persons with an Aboriginal mother tongue. Not surprisingly, the index of second-language acquisition is relatively low in FC areas in Northern Canada, at 118, given the high continuity which results in most speakers learning their Aboriginal language as a first language. This information is presented in **Tables 10.2a** and **10.2b** on pages 258 and 259.

**Table 10.1a: Selected Aboriginal Language Characteristics of Aboriginal Population in Unique Catchment Areas of 116 Existing FCs, Canada and Regions, 2006**

Regions	Total Population		Aboriginal Population Reporting an Aboriginal:				
	Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal Identity	Mother Tongue (MT)	Language Knowledge/Ability (KN)	Home Language Most Often	Home Language Regular	
Atlantic	740,915	14,065	860	1,000	540	145	
Quebec	3,810,245	31,635	5,185	5,760	3,260	1,190	
Ontario	7,893,820	128,710	6,045	8,150	1,940	2,505	
Manitoba	845,115	97,745	7,490	9,615	2,155	3,105	
Saskatchewan	510,855	79,655	15,275	17,890	8,240	4,905	
Alberta	2,458,745	123,040	11,275	14,695	3,555	4,310	
British Columbia	2,285,545	98,460	5,400	6,990	1,165	2,035	
Northern Canada	57,025	19,200	5,055	6,160	2,185	2,100	
Canada (116 FCs)	18,602,265	592,510	56,585	70,260	23,040	20,295	
Canada (Total)	31,074,400	1,169,435	218,645	251,450	137,995	54,040	
% of Canada	59.9	50.7	25.9	27.9	16.7	37.6	



**Table 10.1b: Selected Aboriginal Language Characteristics of Aboriginal Population in Unique Catchment Areas of 116 Existing FCs, Canada and Regions, 2006**

Measures and Indicators	Regional/Aboriginal Identity Population as a Percentage of:		Percentage of Aboriginal Population Reporting Aboriginal:					Continuity (CI) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA)	
	Total Aboriginal FC Canada	Region's Total (Ab + Non-Ab) Population	% MT	% KN	% HL Most	% HL Regular	CI = HL Most/ MT*100	SLA = KN/ MT*100	
<b>Regions</b>									
Atlantic	2.4	1.9	6.1	7.1	3.8	1.0	62.8	116.3	
Quebec	5.3	0.8	16.4	18.2	10.3	3.8	62.9	111.1	
Ontario	21.7	1.6	4.7	6.3	1.5	1.9	32.1	134.8	
Manitoba	16.5	11.6	7.7	9.8	2.2	3.2	28.8	128.4	
Saskatchewan	13.4	15.6	19.2	22.5	10.3	6.2	53.9	117.1	
Alberta	20.8	5.0	9.2	11.9	2.9	3.5	31.5	130.3	
British Columbia	16.6	4.3	5.5	7.1	1.2	2.1	21.6	129.4	
Northern Canada	3.2	33.7	26.3	32.1	11.4	10.9	43.2	121.9	
Canada (116 FCs)	100.0	3.2	9.6	11.9	3.9	3.4	40.7	124.2	

**Table 10.2a: Census-based Aboriginal Language Measures and Indicators, NAFC Average Catchment Values, Canada and Regions, 2006**

Regions with No. of Communities; No. with Minimum MT Pop. of 75	Measures and Indicators		Aboriginal Pop. Reporting an Aboriginal:			
	Total Pop. Aboriginal & Non-Aboriginal	Total Aboriginal Identity Pop.	MT	KN	HL Most Often	HL Regular
Atlantic (N = 21; 4)	69,864	2,626	177	201	125	45
Quebec (N = 22; 17)	269,268	3,572	507	582	314	120
Ontario (N = 80; 36)	390,098	5,011	177	250	57	84
Manitoba (N = 31; 23)	170,233	18,674	1,366	1,729	383	553
Saskatchewan (N = 16; 13)	33,840	5,506	1,147	1,331	645	355
Alberta (N = 54; 45)	209,721	10,261	947	1,200	309	345
BC (N = 44; 35)	109,969	4,038	201	255	57	64
N. Canada (N = 36; 33)	2,462	1,254	663	747	460	179
Canada (N = 304; 206*)	199,571	6,508	571	707	237	201

**Table 10.2b: Census-based Aboriginal Language Measures and Indicators, NAFC Average Catchment Values, Canada and Regions, 2006**

	Indicators Continuity (CI): Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (Where MT GE 75)		Percentage of Population Reporting Aboriginal:				
	Index of:		% with		% of Aboriginal Population		
	CI = HL/ Most/ MT*100	SLA = KN/ MT*100	Identity	MT	KN	HL Most	HL Regular
Atlantic (N = 21; 4)	53.3	113.5	9.6	4.6	5.4	3.0	1.1
Quebec (N = 22; 17)	52.9	127.0	6.0	20.5	23.8	12.9	4.6
Ontario (N = 80; 36)	29.4	145.8	7.4	4.3	6.1	1.4	2.0
Manitoba (N = 31; 23)	35.2	124.0	26.0	10.5	13.5	4.6	3.9
Saskatchewan (N = 16; 13)	46.7	121.1	45.9	26.9	29.2	15.6	7.3
Alberta (N = 54; 45)	34.0	127.9	12.8	12.6	15.7	4.7	4.8
BC (N = 44; 35)	26.8	126.4	10.9	6.8	8.6	2.3	1.9
Northern Canada (N = 36; 33)	56.9	118.4	81.2	57.8	65.6	42.3	13.7
Canada (N = 304; 206)	38.2	128.3	21.6	15.5	18.4	9.0	4.5

**Table 10.3: Average Size of Aboriginal Identity Population in Communities Reporting an Aboriginal Mother Tongue, by Aboriginal Languages, Canada and Regions, 2006**

Region (No. of Communities)	Atlantic (21)	QC (22)	ON (80)	MB (31)	SK (16)	AB (54)	BC (44)	North (36)	Canada (304)	All Canada (n/a)
Aboriginal languages	176	507	177	1,367	1,146	946	201	663	571	218,645
Algonquian languages	169	481	151	1,304	828	776	40	9	407	151,145
Algonquin	0	120	2	0	0	0	0	0	9	2,060
Atikamekw	0	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5,245
Blackfoot	0	0	0	4	1	79	1	0	15	3,285
Cree	1	43	27	497	757	653	33	7	222	83,780
Malecite	7	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	545
Mi'kmaq	138	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	10	7,705
Montagnais-Naskapi	22	265	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	10,680
Ojib-Cree	0	0	7	104	0	0	0	0	12	11,655
Ojibway	0	3	113	677	38	41	5	1	109	25,270
Algonquian lang. n.i.e.	0	0	1	23	31	2	1	1	5	925
Athapaskan languages	0	1	1	12	312	60	59	92	48	20,115
Carrier	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	0	5	1,855
Chilcotin	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	2	1,230
Chipewyan	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	5	2	545
Dene	0	0	0	12	311	32	2	2	24	10,175
Dogrib	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	5	2,090
Kutchin-Gwich'in (Loucheux)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	8	1	400
North Slave (Hare)	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	9	2	1,085

South Slave	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	2	22	6	1,650
Athapaskan lang. n.i.e.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	7	2	1,080
Dakota/Stoux	0	0	0	0	16	5	92	5	19	5,685					
Iroquoian languages	0	2	7	0	0	1	0	0	2	435					
Mohawk	0	3	4	0	0	0	1	0	1	300					
Iroquoian lang. n.i.e.	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	135					
Salish languages	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	43	6	3,590					
Tsimshian languages	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	25	4	2,340					
Wakashan languages	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	2	1,165					
Haida Isolate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	125					
Tlingit Isolate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	95					
Kutenai Isolate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	150					
Inuktitut	6	20	10	27	0	0	10	2	76	32,435					
Aboriginal lang. n.i.e.	1	4	9	8	1	6	11	6	6	1,375					
English	2,161	779	4,372	16,185	4,395	9,244	3,797	596	5,500	865,225					
French	323	2,351	516	1,334	70	231	78	8	521	102,160					

### ***Aboriginal Language Composition of Regions***

The significant regional variations in the linguistic diversity and state of Aboriginal languages are also reflected among Aboriginal language speakers within communities across the country. The distribution of the Aboriginal identity population in FC catchment areas reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue by the different Aboriginal languages across regions demonstrates the regional variety of Aboriginal languages. Some of the larger languages such as Cree are spoken in more than one region, including mainly Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Northern Canada. In some regions, such as Atlantic Canada, relatively few Aboriginal languages are spoken, while in others such as British Columbia, there are a variety of different, but small languages. This information is presented in **Table 10.3** on page 260.

## **Community Profiles: Language State and Diversity of Aboriginal Languages in Selected FC Catchment Areas**

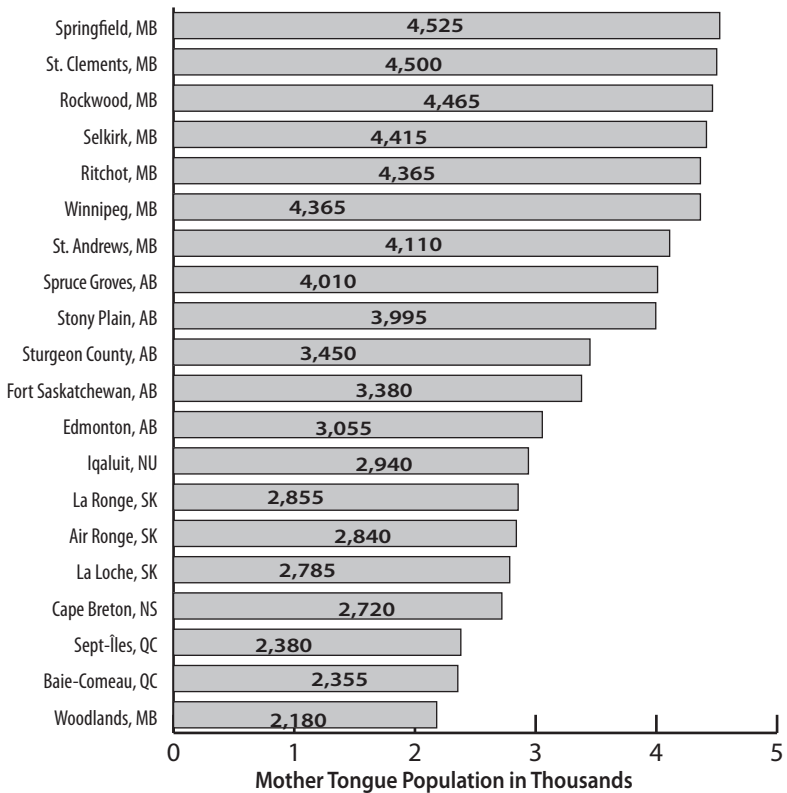
Some further insight into the regional variations in the state and diversity of Aboriginal languages within FC areas can be gained by examining characteristics of selected individual FC areas.

### ***Communities with Aboriginal Mother-Tongue Populations of at Least 200***

With respect to the 304 individual FC catchment areas in this study, 150 had at least 200 Aboriginal residents reporting an Aboriginal language as a mother tongue. **Figure 10.1** on page 263 provides the top 20 FC communities with the largest Aboriginal mother-tongue populations of at least 200, with their counts ranging from a low of about 2,100 to a high of 4,500, with an average mother-tongue population of about 3,500

### ***Selected Communities with Continuity Indexes of 50 or More, or of 30 or Less***

**Table 10.4** on page 264 provides a listing of selected FC communities (the top 7 based on indexes) with Aboriginal language continuity indexes of 50 or more, or of 30 or less, respectively. Altogether, 39 (or about 13%) of the 304 FC catchments have relatively high continuity indexes of 50 or more, suggesting that prospects of intergenerational language transmission are greatest among Aboriginal residents in these FC communities. These high-continuity communities are mainly located in Nunavut and Quebec. There are 53 low-continuity communities with indexes of 30 or less, or about 17% of the FC areas. Prospects of learning an Aboriginal language as a mother tongue are lowest within these communities, most of which located in British Columbia and Ontario.

**Figure 10.1: Top 20 Communities with an Aboriginal Mother Tongue Population of at Least 200, Ranked, Canada**

### ***Selected Communities with Second-Language Acquisition Indexes of 135 or More, or of 110 or Less***

**Table 10.5** (on page 266) provides a listing of selected FC communities with second-language indexes of 135 or more, or of 110 or less respectively. Overall, 33 or about 13% of the 304 catchment areas have high second-language indexes of 135 or more. These FC communities in which second-language learning is relatively high among speakers, are located in a number of different provinces, from Ontario westward, with few in Northern Canada, apart from exceptions in Hay River and Inuvik in the Northwest Territories where some Inuit languages are endangered. With respect to communities where second-language learning is relatively minimal, 39 or about 13% of the 304 FC areas, have second-language indexes of 30 or less. Unlike areas of high second-language learning, more tend to be located within Nunavut and Quebec—regions where Aboriginal language continuity and intergenerational transmission as a mother tongue is high.



**Table 10.4: Selected Communities with 2006 Aboriginal Language Continuity Indexes, by Existing and Gap FC Catchment Areas, of (a) 50 or More and (b) 30 or Less**

Top 7 Communities by NAFC Status	Province/Territory	Aboriginal Mother Tongue Pop. (at Least 200)	Percentage of Aboriginal Pop. with Aboriginal Language Characteristic:				Continuity (CI) Second Lang. Acquisition (SLA)	
			Mother Tongue	Knowl./Ability to Speak	Home Lang. Use - Most	Home Lang. Use - Regular	CI	SLA
<b>a. High Continuity: Continuity Indexes of 50 or More</b>								
Existing FCs		No.	%	%	%	%	Index	Index
La Loche	SK	2,785	82.5	85.8	76.0	5.9	92.1	103.9
Happy Valley-Goose Bay	NL	510	14.5	15.8	12.5	1.4	86.3	108.8
Sept-Îles	QC	2,380	58.5	63.3	49.8	8.5	85.1	108.2
Smithers	BC	295	14.9	15.9	11.4	2.3	76.3	106.8
Chibougamau	QC	535	72.3	79.1	54.7	12.2	75.7	109.3
La Ronge	SK	2,855	56.5	57.9	38.2	11.8	67.6	102.5
Rankin Inlet	NU	1,585	81.5	92.8	53.0	35.7	65.0	113.9
<b>Gap FCs</b>								
Qikiqtarjuaq	NU	435	97.8	98.9	97.8	0.0	100.0	101.1
Iqloolik	NU	1,425	99.0	99.7	97.2	2.1	98.2	100.7
Clyde River	NU	780	98.1	100.6	96.2	2.5	98.1	102.6
Sanikiluaq	NU	695	98.6	99.3	96.5	2.8	97.8	100.7
Pangnirtung	NU	1,230	99.2	100.4	95.6	4.4	96.3	101.2
Arviat	NU	1,880	98.2	99.2	94.5	3.1	96.3	101.1
Arctic Bay	NU	625	97.7	99.2	93.8	4.7	96.0	101.6

<b>b. Low Continuity: Continuity Indexes of 30 or Less</b>										
Existing FCs	No.	%	%	%	%	%	%	Index	Index	Index
Val-d'Or	1,185	49.2	52.3	14.1	19.5	28.7	106.3			
Brandon	245	5.7	7.7	1.6	2.0	28.6	134.7			
Slave Lake	330	11.0	14.4	3.0	2.7	27.3	130.3			
Saskatoon	2,145	10.6	13.8	2.9	4.9	27.0	130.5			
Kamloops	420	5.6	9.4	1.5	4.0	26.2	167.9			
Fort Simpson	270	30.3	42.7	7.9	12.9	25.9	140.7			
<b>Gap FCs</b>										
Timy	230	4.2	4.5	1.3	1.0	30.4	108.7			
Gjoa Haven	465	46.7	79.4	14.1	54.8	30.1	169.9			
Parkland County	1,930	9.0	11.0	2.7	3.1	30.1	122.5			
Grande Prairie County No. 1	360	5.7	8.5	1.7	1.3	29.2	150.0			
Cambridge Bay	445	36.6	49.0	10.3	16.0	28.1	133.7			
Mississauga	520	2.6	3.4	0.7	0.9	27.9	131.7			
Peace River	240	8.9	11.4	2.4	3.5	27.1	127.1			

**Table 10.5: Selected Communities with 2006 Indexes of Second Language Acquisition, by Existing and Gap FC Catchment Areas, of (a) 135 or More and (b) 110 or Less**

Top 7 Communities by NAFC Status	Province/Territory	Aboriginal Mother Tongue Pop. (at Least 200)	Percentage of Aboriginal Pop. with Aboriginal Language Characteristic:				Continuity (CI) Second Lang. Acquisition (SLA)	
			Mother Tongue	Knowl./Ability to Speak	Home Lang. Use - Most	Home Lang. Use - Regular	CI	SLA
<b>a. High Second Language: Second Language Acquisition Indexes of 135 or More</b>								
<b>Existing FCs</b>		<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Index</b>	<b>Index</b>
Sault Ste. Marie	ON	255	3.1	5.5	1.4	1.9	47.1	180.4
Rocky Mountain House	AB	275	13.9	25.1	7.8	11.9	56.4	180.0
Kamloops	BC	420	5.6	9.4	1.5	4.0	26.2	167.9
Sudbury	ON	295	2.8	4.5	0.2	1.4	8.5	159.3
Wood Buffalo-Fort McMurray	AB	280	6.3	9.9	0.5	1.9	7.1	157.1
Grande Prairie	AB	270	4.6	7.1	1.1	0.7	24.1	155.6
Hay River	NT	245	12.8	19.8	4.4	4.4	34.7	155.1
<b>Gap FCs</b>								
Maniwaki	QC	265	11.5	19.7	4.3	5.2	37.7	171.7
Gjoa Haven	NU	465	46.7	79.4	14.1	54.8	30.1	169.9
Déleage	QC	280	7.6	12.5	2.9	3.3	37.5	164.3
Burns Lake	BC	440	23.0	36.6	11.3	7.6	48.9	159.1
Kugluktuk	NU	400	33.5	51.9	10.9	22.6	32.5	155.0
Mountain (North)	MB	295	12.4	19.2	7.8	3.8	62.7	154.2
Grande Prairie County No. 1	AB	360	5.7	8.5	1.7	1.3	29.2	150.0

b. Low Second Language: Second Language Acquisition Indexes of 110 or Less									
Existing FCs	No.	%	%	%	%	%	%	Index	Index
Chibougamau	535	72.3	79.1	54.7	12.2	75.7	109.3		
Happy Valley-Goose Bay	510	14.5	15.8	12.5	1.4	86.3	108.8		
Sept-Îles	2,380	58.5	63.3	49.8	8.5	85.1	108.2		
The Pas	1,135	20.9	22.4	8.6	7.0	41.0	107.0		
Prince George	430	4.9	5.3	0.5	2.3	9.3	107.0		
Smithers	295	14.9	15.9	11.4	2.3	76.3	106.8		
<b>Gap FCs</b>									
St. Paul County No. 19	1,150	24.8	27.3	11.5	7.4	46.5	110.0		
Division No. 18, Unorganized	740	37.5	41.0	22.0	12.7	58.8	109.5		
Tiny	230	4.2	4.5	1.3	1.0	30.4	108.7		
Iqaluit	2,940	81.0	87.9	49.2	31.4	60.7	108.5		
Kitimat	340	21.7	23.2	11.5	2.2	52.9	107.4		
Kelsey	1,165	20.9	22.2	8.7	6.8	41.6	106.0		
Smoky Lake County	1,200	25.4	26.9	8.8	6.8	34.6	105.8		

### ***Mother-Tongue Composition of Selected Communities***

Just as regions vary in the composition and diversity of their Aboriginal languages, so do cities and individual FC catchment areas. Research based on 1996 and 2006 census data for Aboriginal populations in general reveals that some cities are more homogenous in their linguistic composition than others (Norris and Jantzen 2003; Norris 2009a). For example, just two Aboriginal languages, mainly Cree and some Dene, account for 90% of the population with an Aboriginal mother tongue in Prince Albert, whereas in Vancouver, where many different Aboriginal languages are represented, the two largest languages of Cree and Ojibway account for only 35% of the area's Aboriginal mother-tongue population (Norris 2009a). Distinctions in linguistic diversity between different areas, cities, and FC catchments in general have important implications for the challenges of language maintenance, especially in the face of such diversity, as in Vancouver, where many different Aboriginal languages are spoken.

**Figure 10.2** on the following page compares the makeup of different Aboriginal languages spoken within selected FC areas with significant Aboriginal mother-tongue populations. These comparisons provide some idea of the differences in the composition and diversity of Aboriginal languages across FC catchments. In some communities, only one or two Aboriginal languages are spoken. For example, in La Loche, Dene is practically the only language spoken, while in other areas, like Winnipeg and Selkirk, at least three major Aboriginal languages (Cree, Ojibway, and Oji-Cree) are spoken. The FC community of Vancouver, where Aboriginal residents speak several Aboriginal languages, has significantly greater linguistic diversity than other FC communities.

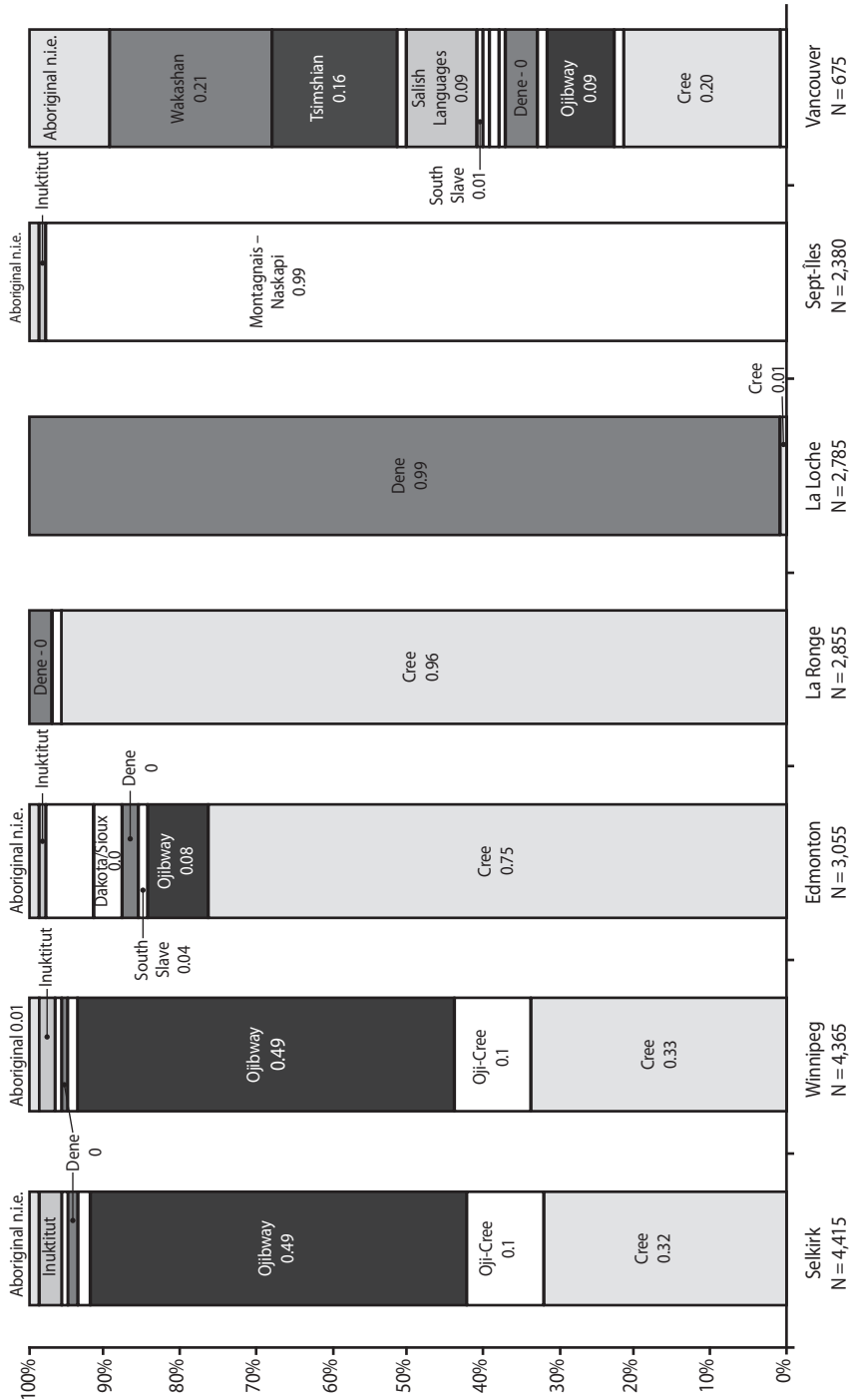
### **Urbanization and Catchment Population Size of Friendship Centres**

The size of the total population (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal combined) in catchment areas is an important dimension in the state of Aboriginal languages. Analyses of current and earlier censuses have consistently demonstrated that the state and prospects of Aboriginal languages vary by reserve, rural, and urban areas, and by small and large cities, and as the findings of this study demonstrate, they also tend to vary with the population size of the catchment area. In the following analysis, the classification of each of the 304 different catchment or community areas by the size of their total (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal combined) population provides a proxy for assessing the relationship between residence in urban areas and the state of Aboriginal languages.

#### ***Catchment Population Size Categories: Aboriginal Population Characteristics***

**Figure 10.3** on page 270 provides the distribution of the 304 catchment areas classified by total (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) population size of catchment or

**Figure 10.2: Distribution of Aboriginal Mother-Tongue Population within Selected Community Catchment Areas by Aboriginal Languages, 2006**

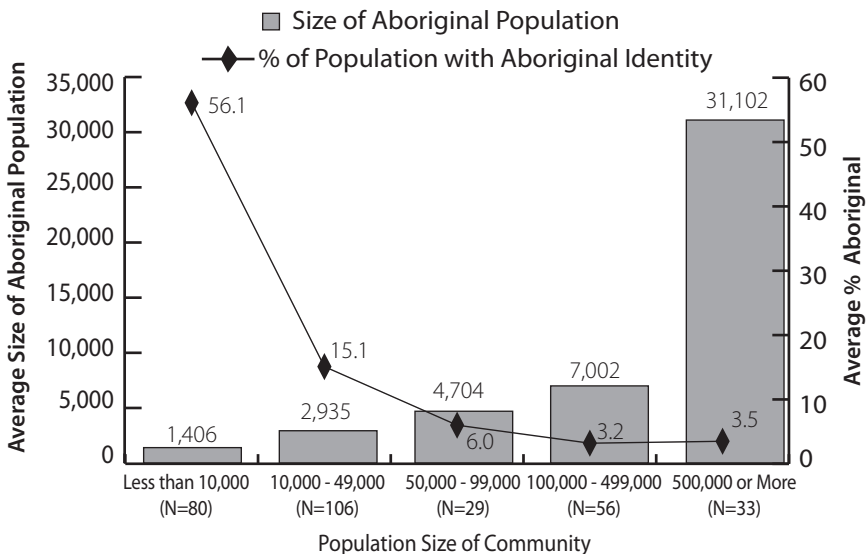


community areas, into five size categories with populations of: less than 10,000; 10,000 to less than 50,000; 50,000 to less than 100,000; 100,000 to less than 500,000; and 500,000 or more. Just over a third (35% or 106) of the 304 FC areas have catchment areas with total populations between 10,000 and 49,999. The next largest number of communities, 80, have catchment populations of less than 10,000, followed by 56 with a population range of between 100,000 and 500,000, 29 between 50,000 and 100,000, and 33 in large urban areas with catchment populations of 500,000 or more.

**Larger Aboriginal Populations but Smaller Aboriginal Shares with Increasing Catchment Size**

The average size of Aboriginal populations within the 304 FCs rises significantly with increasing total population size of the community catchment area, from an average of 1400 Aboriginal residents in catchment areas with total populations of less than 10,000 to an average of 31,100 Aboriginal residents in community or catchment areas with total populations of at least 500,000. However, the average proportion of the total community population reporting an Aboriginal identity decreases with increasing catchment size. On average, 56% of residents in catchment areas with total populations of fewer than 10,000 reported an Aboriginal identity; however, that percentage dropped sharply to 15% in the next size category of 10,000 to 49,999, declining steadily to 6% in the 50,000 to 99,999 category, and reaching a low of about 3% in catchment areas with populations of 100,000 or more.

**Figure 10.3: Average Size and Percentage of Catchment Population Reporting an Aboriginal Identity, by Population Size of Community Areas, Canada, 2006**





## ***Aboriginal Language Characteristics by Catchment Population Size***

### ***Percentage of Aboriginal People Reporting an Aboriginal Mother Tongue, Language Knowledge, or Home Language Use***

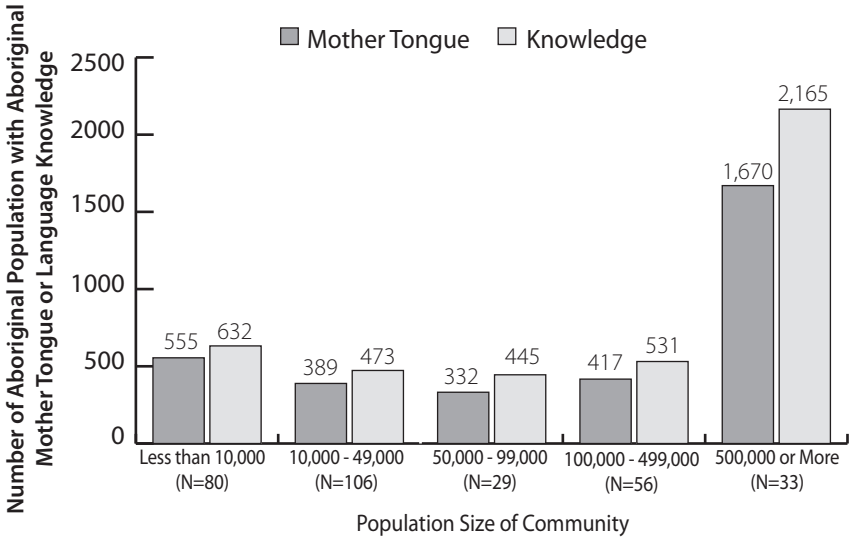
First, regardless of community size, on average, Aboriginal languages (based on the Aboriginal populations across the 304 catchment areas) yield lower proportions reporting Aboriginal languages compared to Canada as whole. This is not surprising given that areas outside of FC catchments include Aboriginal communities such as Indian reserves and Inuit settlements, in which Aboriginal languages are more predominant. On average, among Aboriginal residents within the 304 FC areas overall, 15.5% of Aboriginal residents reported an Aboriginal language as a mother tongue, while a higher proportion of 18.4%, indicated they had the knowledge of, or ability to speak, an Aboriginal language. A smaller proportion of about 9% reported an Aboriginal language as one they spoke most often at home, and another 4.5% reported it as a language they used on a regular basis at home (see **Table 10.2b** on page 259). Corresponding proportions for Canada as a whole are 21%, 22%, 12%, and 5% respectively. While on most measures of language characteristics, the proportions reporting an Aboriginal language are higher for Canada overall, the proportions of Aboriginal people reporting regular home language use are similar between Canada, at 4.6%, and FC areas, at 4.5%. This is not surprising from the viewpoint that the use of an Aboriginal language in the home on a regular rather than a “most frequent” basis is more likely to occur outside of Aboriginal communities, such as in FC catchment areas.

Numbers of speakers of Aboriginal languages are highest in the largest catchment populations, but the proportion of Aboriginal residents is highest in smallest catchment populations. The number of Aboriginal residents reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue or language ability is highest, on average, in the largest catchment areas with total populations of 500,000 or more, whereas the number is lower in other catchment areas, ranging from about a fifth to a third. For example, within the smallest population catchment areas of less than 10,000, 555 Aboriginal persons reported an Aboriginal mother tongue, slightly higher than the corresponding count of 332 in the larger community areas in of 50,000 to 99,999. In sharp contrast, in FC catchment areas of 500,000 or more, the number of mother tongue or first-language speakers was significantly higher, at an average 1,670 (see **Figure 10.4** on page 272).

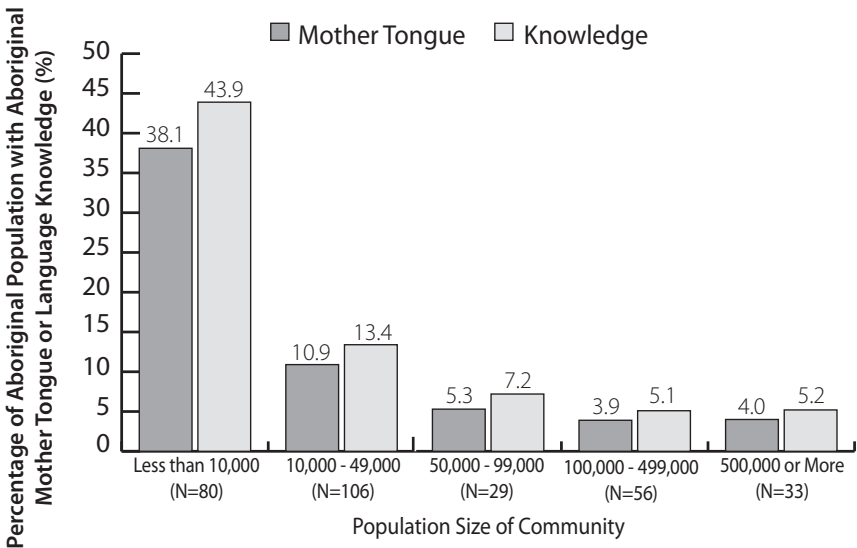
Unlike the pattern of speaker numbers, the proportion of Aboriginal residents with an Aboriginal mother tongue or language ability decreases sharply with larger population areas, declining from 38% and 44% respectively, within areas of less than 10,000, to just 11% and 13% respectively in catchment populations of between 10,000 to 49,999. The numbers decrease further to lows of 4% and 5% respectively for communities of 100,000 or more (see **Figure 10.5** on page 272).

The numbers of Aboriginal home language users vary by catchment size more so for home language spoken on a most often rather than regular basis.

**Figure 10.4: Average Size of Aboriginal Populations Reporting an Aboriginal Mother Tongue and Knowledge of an Aboriginal Language, by Population Size of Community Areas, Canada, 2006**



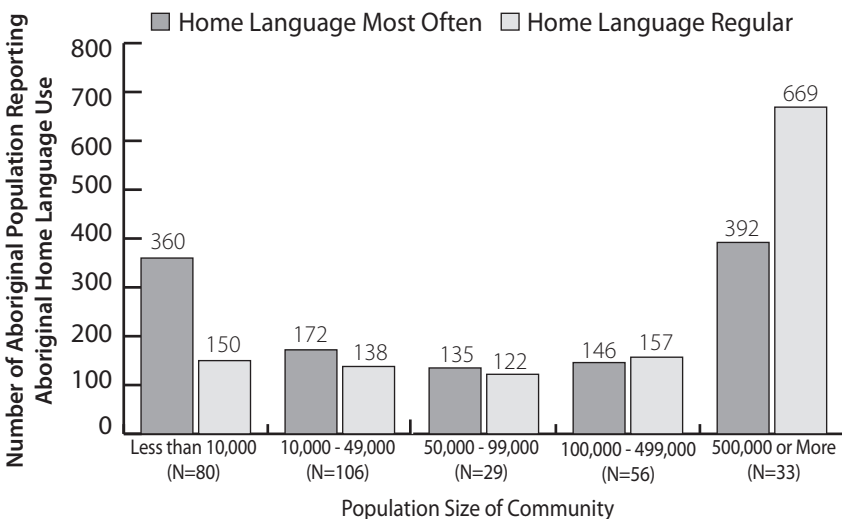
**Figure 10.5: Average Percentage of Aboriginal Population with an Aboriginal Mother Tongue and Language Knowledge, by Population Size of Community Areas, Canada, 2006**



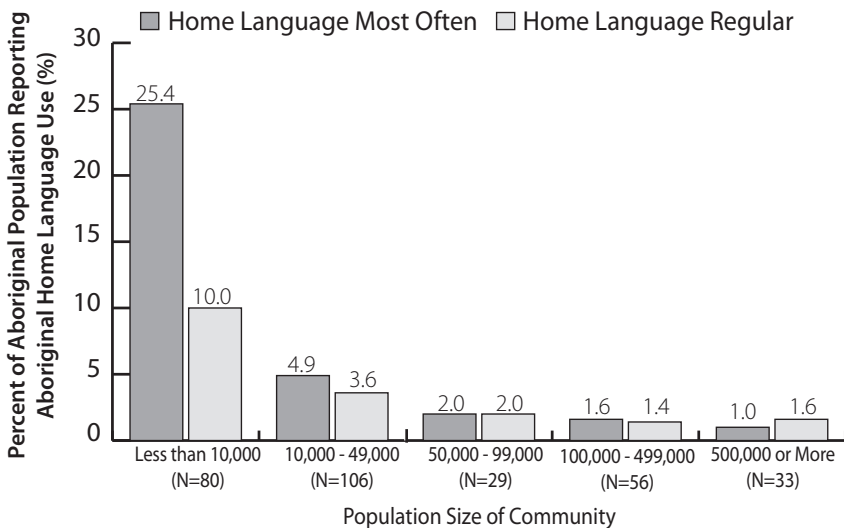
Within catchment populations of 500,000 plus, almost six times as many Aboriginal people speak an Aboriginal home language on a “regular basis” compared to those in catchment populations of between 50,000 and 99,999. In the case of Aboriginal languages spoken as the major home language, the corresponding comparison yields three times the number of speakers. The largest number of Aboriginal people speaking an Aboriginal language on a regular basis occurred in the largest (500,000 plus) population communities where, on average, 670 Aboriginal residents report speaking an Aboriginal language in the home on a regular basis, twice the number speaking an Aboriginal language most often (see **Figure 10.6**, below).

The propensity to speak an Aboriginal language at home, whether on a most often or regular basis declines with the increasing size of the total catchment or community population (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal). It is highest in the smallest catchment areas where, on average, 25% and 10% of Aboriginal residents report speaking their Aboriginal language on a most often or regular basis respectively. Numbers are lowest in the largest catchment populations, at only 1% and 2% respectively. The propensity to speak an Aboriginal language at home is associated with catchment population size more so for “major” than for regular home use. One in four Aboriginal residents living in the smallest population communities of less than 10,000 speak an Aboriginal language most often at home, in sharp contrast to just 1% in the largest catchment areas of 500,000 plus. The contrast is much less pronounced for regular home use with corresponding proportions of 10% and 1.6% respectively (see **Figure 10.7** on page 274).

**Figure 10.6: Average Size of Aboriginal Populations Reporting an Aboriginal Home Language, on a Most Often or Regular Basis, by Population Size of Community Areas, Canada, 2006**



**Figure 10.7: Average Percentage of Aboriginal Population Reporting an Aboriginal Home Language, on a Most Often or Regular Basis, by Population Size of Community Areas, Canada, 2006**

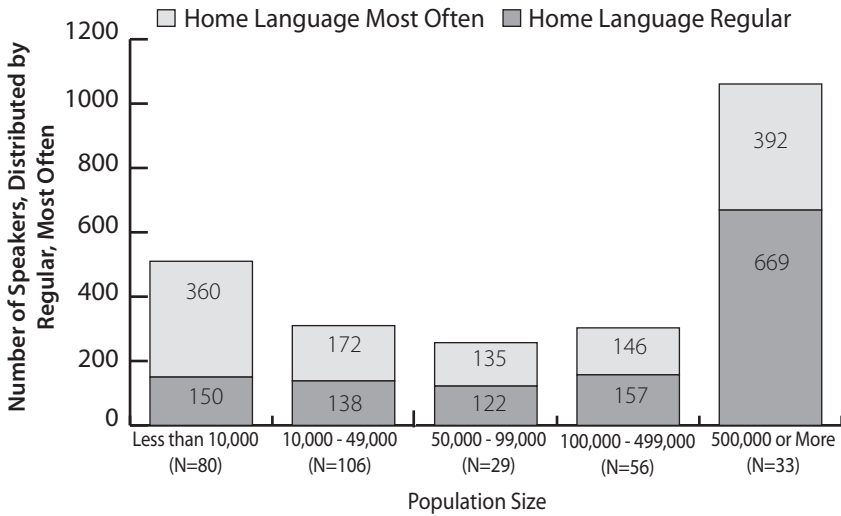


The likelihood of speaking an Aboriginal home language on a regular rather than on a most often basis increases with the total population size of the community. In the case of small communities with total populations of less than 10,000, out of an average 510 Aboriginal residents who speak an Aboriginal language at home (see **Figure 10.8** on the following page), only a minority (29%) of speakers use their traditional language just on a regular basis, with the vast majority, 360 or 71% (see **Figure 10.9** on the following page), speaking it as their major home language. In fact, the proportion of home language users speaking their traditional language on a regular rather than a most often basis steadily rises with increasing community population size: from 29% in the smallest communities, to just over half in communities of 100,000 or more, reaching a majority of 63% in the largest catchment areas with populations of 500,000 plus, where out of an average 1,060 Aboriginal home language speakers, 669 spoke their language on just a regular basis.

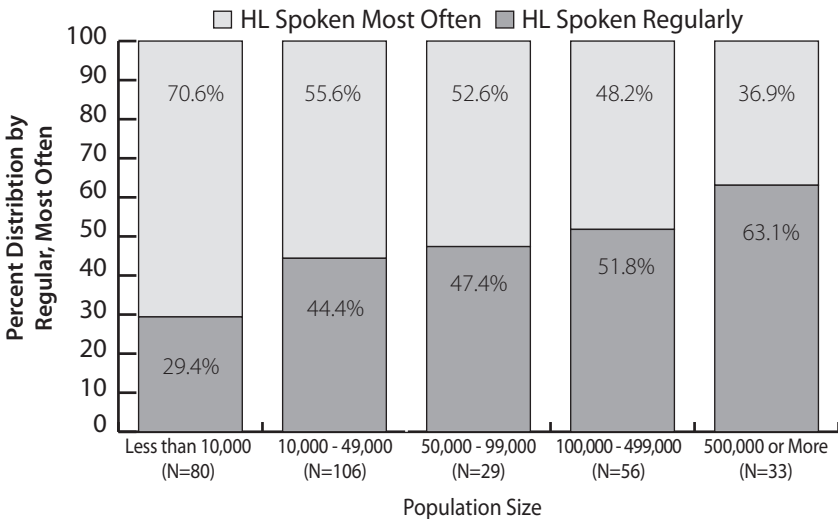
## Measures of Language Continuity and Second-Language Learning

Research (Norris 1998, 2003, 2007, 2008, 2009a; Norris and Jantzen 2003) shows that Aboriginal people who reside in cities, compared to those living in Aboriginal communities and on reserves, are much less likely to have learned their traditional language as a mother tongue; and, consistent with their lowered likelihood of acquiring an Aboriginal mother tongue, they are more likely to have acquired it as

**Figure 10.8: Distribution of Average Aboriginal Populations Speaking an Aboriginal Home Language Regularly or Most Often by Population Size of Community Area, Canada, 2006**



**Figure 10.9: Percent Distribution of Average Aboriginal Populations Speaking an Aboriginal Home Language Regularly or Most Often by Population Size of Community Area, Canada, 2006**



a second language. In 2006, in Canada's urban areas, only 24 per 100 persons with an Aboriginal mother tongue spoke an Aboriginal language at home, compared to 69 home language speakers among Registered Indians on-reserve. For every 100 persons in cities who reported an Aboriginal mother tongue, 137 persons indicated they were able to speak an Aboriginal language, compared to much lower second-language indexes of 112 among residents living outside of cities, and especially of close to 100 among Registered Indians on reserves overall, where the number able to speak an Aboriginal language is almost the same as the number with an Aboriginal mother tongue; that is, where practically all speakers have learned their language as their mother tongue (Norris 2008, 2009a).

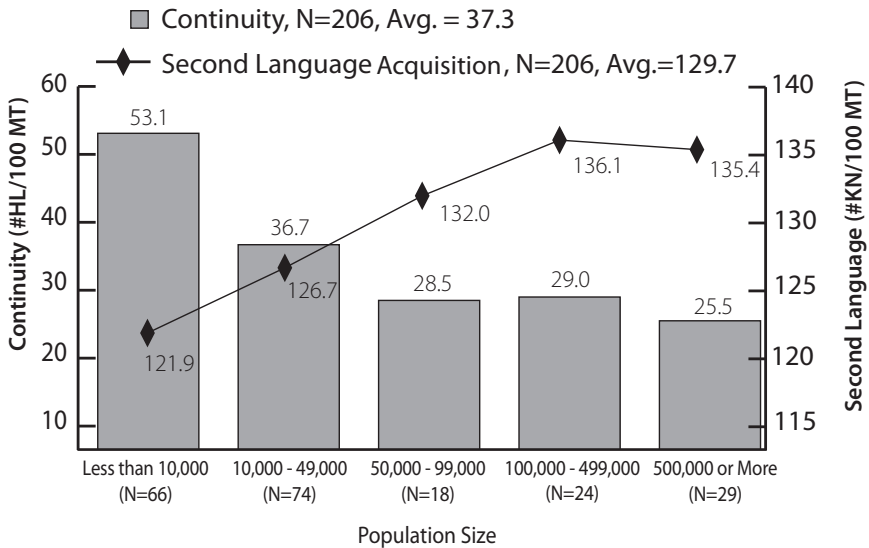
### ***Continuity and Second-Language Learning by Population Size of Catchment Area***

On average, among the 304 communities, for every 100 Aboriginal residents with an Aboriginal mother tongue, about 37 persons reported an Aboriginal major home language and 130 reported the ability to speak an Aboriginal language. To some extent, variations in the indexes of language continuity and second-language acquisition across catchment population size reflect the impact of urban areas. The index of Aboriginal language continuity tends to be highest in the smallest catchment populations of less than 10,000, with an index of 53, decreasing to an index of about 29 in the larger catchment populations of between 50,000 and 500,000. It reaches its lowest value, 26, in the largest community populations of 500,000 or more, which is fairly similar to the continuity index of 24 (Norris 2009a) for cities in Canada overall. Corresponding to declining continuity with increasing catchment population size is the rise in the index of second-language acquisition. It increases from an index of 122 Aboriginal residents able to speak an Aboriginal language for every 100 with an Aboriginal mother tongue to about 136 in catchment populations of at least a 100,000. The latter corresponds very closely to the value of 137 observed for cities in Canada overall (see **Figure 10.10** on the following page).

### **Age Patterns**

The average age of those who have an Aboriginal mother tongue indicates the extent to which the language has been transmitted to the younger generation. For Canada in general, the population reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue is older, with an average age of 34 years in 2006, compared to the Aboriginal population overall with an average age of just 29 years. As well, children and youth (under the age of 25) account for only 39% of Canada's population with an Aboriginal mother tongue even though they represent 48% of the total Aboriginal population. About a third of those 65 years and over and a quarter of those aged 45 to 64, are much more likely to have an Aboriginal mother tongue, compared to only 15% of children and youth (Norris 2008, 2009b).

**Figure 10.10: Index of Aboriginal Language Continuity and Second Language Acquisition by Population Size of Community Areas, Canada, 2006**



### ***Age Composition of Populations in FC Communities with Aboriginal Identity and Aboriginal Languages***

There are disproportionately low shares of children and youth among speakers of Aboriginal languages in FC community areas. Children and youth also comprise much lower proportions of the populations reporting Aboriginal language characteristics within FC community catchment areas. For example, while children and youth represent, on average, practically half (49%) of the catchment populations reporting an Aboriginal identity, they account for just less than a quarter (23%) of the population reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue, 28% of the population who can speak an Aboriginal language, 31% of “major,” and 28% of regular home language speakers (see **Figure 10.11** on page 278).

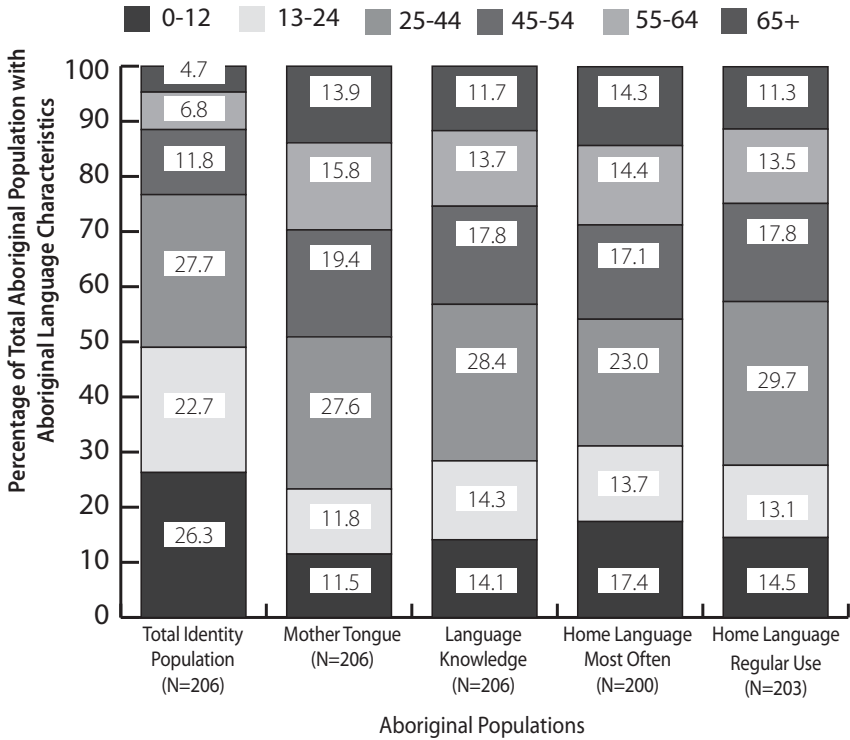
### ***Age Patterns of Language Continuity and Second-Language Learning in FC Catchment Areas***

#### ***Age-specific Measures of Language Continuity***

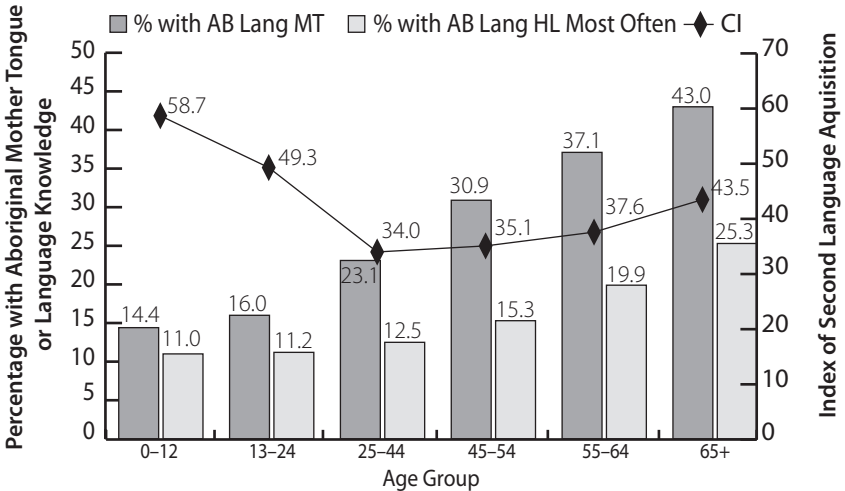
Within FC catchment areas, Aboriginal youth are much less likely to have an Aboriginal language as a mother tongue or major home language compared to older generations/elders. Certainly, among the Aboriginal population in FC catchment areas, there is a clear pattern of lower proportions with an Aboriginal mother tongue with increasingly younger generations, as this cross-section of age-specific measures shows. For example, about 43% of people aged 65 and over reported an Aboriginal mother tongue compared to just 14% of children



**Figure 10.11: Average Age Composition of Populations with Aboriginal Identity, Mother Tongue, Language Knowledge and Home Language across Friendship Centre Catchment Areas, Canada, 2006**



**Figure 10.12: Average Proportion and Language Continuity Index of Aboriginal Populations with an Aboriginal Mother Tongue or Home Language (Most Often) by Age Group, Catchment Areas, Canada, 2006**



and 16% of young adults (13 to 24 years old). In terms of language continuity, index levels are highest among children and youth, at 59 and 49 respectively, as is to be expected since a mother tongue is generally transmitted through home language use. However, among adults aged 25 to 44, continuity levels are lower, at an average 34 major home language speakers for every 100 with an Aboriginal mother tongue, reflecting the earlier effects on this cohort of the transition from youth into adulthood. The corresponding indexes are higher in the older cohorts aged 65 and up, at about 44 per 100 (see **Figure 10.12** on page 278). It is important to remember that when comparing across age groups, we are seeing the outcomes of different cohorts over time.

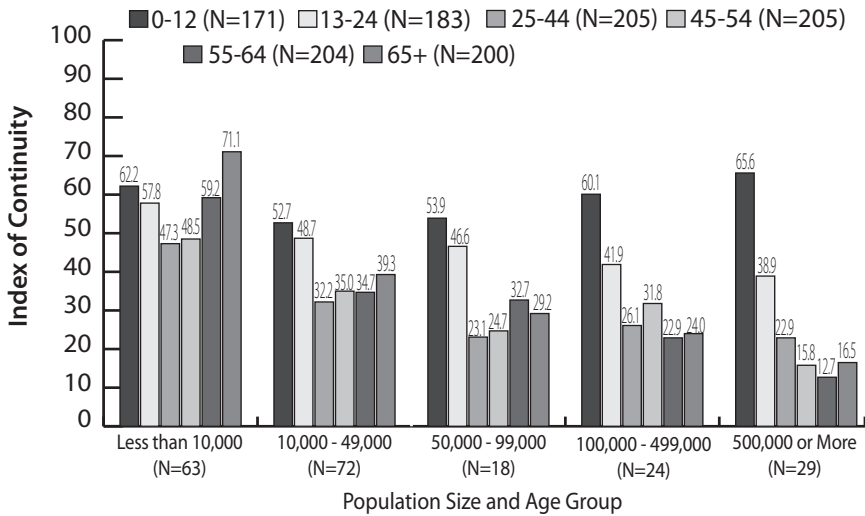
Age-specific patterns of language continuity are similar among catchment populations of less than 100,000, but in larger populations, the higher continuity of older adults is less pronounced. The age-specific patterns of Aboriginal language continuity that were observed for Aboriginal populations within catchment areas overall tend to be evident among smaller catchment populations of less than 10,000 to 100,000. For example, it appears that children in both the smallest and largest catchment populations experience similar levels of continuity, with indexes of between 60 and 65. However, age patterns of continuity by catchment population size for youth (who experience the highest continuity), at 58 home language speakers per 100 mother-tongue population in smallest FC populations, decline steadily with increasing population, to a low index of 39 in the largest populations (see **Figure 10.13** on page 280). These findings for youth are more consistent than those for children compared to previous research (Norris 2009a) on age- and residential-related patterns of language learning, which indicated that in 2006 Aboriginal children and youth living in large urban areas experienced the lowest levels of language continuity, whereas those living in rural areas (as well as on-reserve) posted the highest levels. Also, in the larger catchment populations of 100,000 or more, the generally higher continuity of older adults does not appear, such that language continuity is as low as that observed for working-age adults (see **Figure 10.13**).

To some extent, these differences may reflect the challenges of maintaining an Aboriginal mother tongue as a major home language for all adults, young and old, in larger catchment populations.

### ***Age-specific Measures of Second-Language Acquisition***

Within FC catchment areas, Aboriginal youth are much more likely to have learned an Aboriginal language as a second language compared to older generations/elders. Among the Aboriginal population in FC catchment areas, while the proportion of the population able to speak an Aboriginal language is higher than the proportion of the population with an Aboriginal mother tongue across all generations, differentials are more pronounced among younger age groups of 0 to 12 and 13 to 24 years, as evidenced by their second-language indexes of 171 and 161 respectively, which decline steadily to an index of 109 for the population

**Figure 10.13: Average Index of Continuity (CI), by Age Group, by Population Size of Friendship Centre Catchment Area, Canada, 2006, MT GE 75**

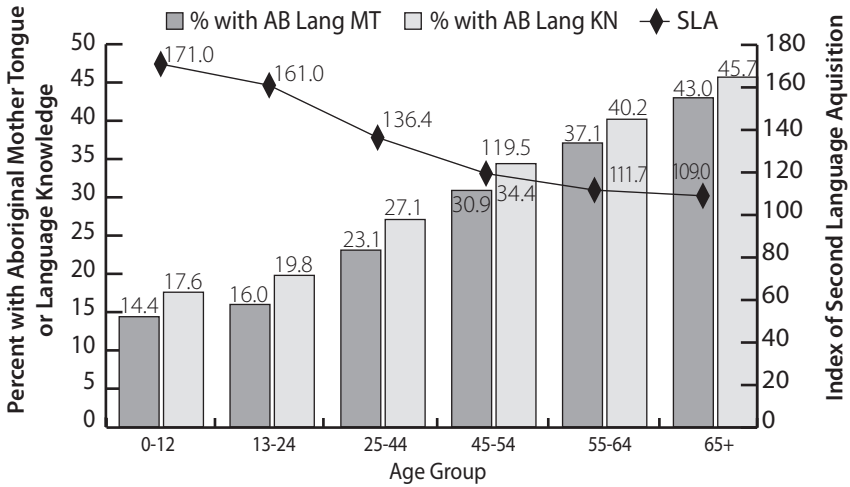


aged 65 and over (see **Figure 10.14** on page 281). In other words, the propensity to learn an Aboriginal language as a second language is highest among youth and children, and lowest among older adults—a pattern that is similar to that observed for the Aboriginal population in general (Norris 2007, 2009b).

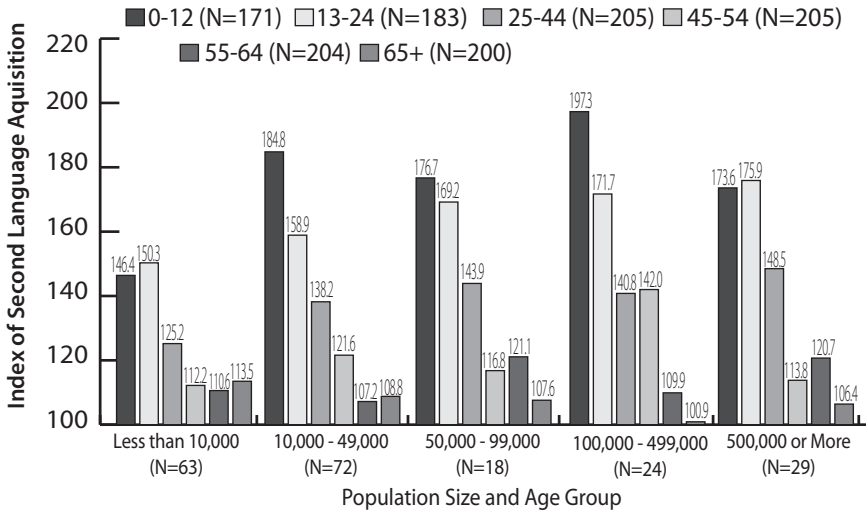
### ***Age-Specific Measures of Second-Language Acquisition by Catchment Population Size***

Age-specific patterns of second-language learning are similar among catchment populations, though prospects of second-language learning are lowest in populations of less than 10,000, and highest in larger populations between 100,000 and 500,000. Although prospects of second-language learning are clearly lowest in the smallest catchment populations for all ages among Aboriginal residents within FC catchment areas, it appears that youth, aged 13 to 24, are more affected than children (0 to 12 years) by catchment population size in relation to their prospects of learning an Aboriginal language as a second language. The index of second language for youth indicates that the likelihood of acquiring their traditional language as a second language is greater in larger catchment populations, rising steadily from an index of 150 in populations of less than 10,000 to a high of 176 in catchment populations of at least 500,000. Older adults' prospects of learning an Aboriginal language as a second language are much less affected by catchment population size (see **Figure 10.15** on page 281).

**Figure 10.14: Average Proportion and Second Language Index of Aboriginal Populations in FC Catchment Areas with an Aboriginal Mother Tongue or Language Knowledge, by Broad Age Groups, Canada, 2006**



**Figure 10.15: Average Index of Aboriginal Second Language Acquisition (SLA), by Age Group, by Population Size of FC Catchment Area, Canada, 2006**



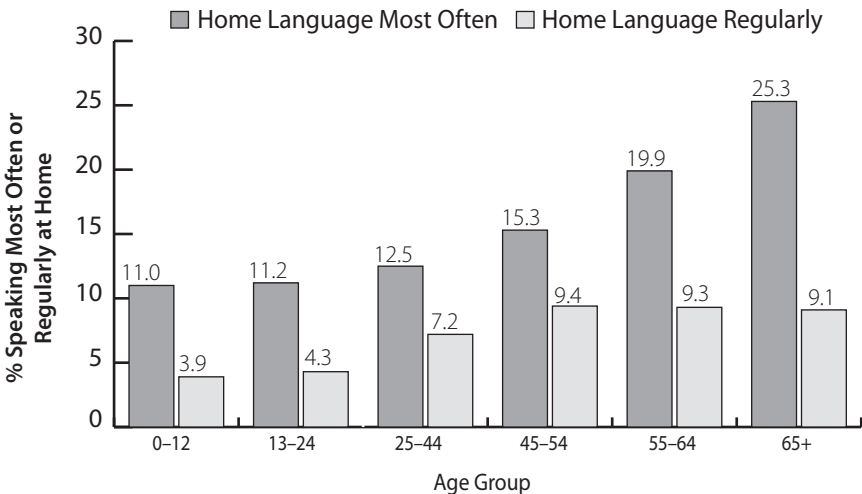
### ***Age-specific Patterns of Home Language Use: Most Often and Regular***

Among Aboriginal residents in FC areas speaking an Aboriginal language at home, working-age (25 to 64) adults are more likely than younger generations and older adults to be speak their Aboriginal language on a regular rather than a most often basis.

The use of an Aboriginal language as a major home language varies by age to a greater extent than the use of an Aboriginal language on a regular basis. Among Aboriginal residents in FC community areas, the proportion of the population speaking an Aboriginal home language most often steadily increases over the generations, from 11% of both children and youth, to 25% of older adults aged 65 plus. However, the age pattern of regular home use increases from 4% of children and youth, to just 7% of the 25 to 44 age group, reaching a high of 9% for the population aged 65 and over (see **Figure 10.16**, below).

These patterns of age differentials between major and regular home use suggest that a relatively higher proportion of working-age adults speak an Aboriginal language on a regular, rather than most often, basis compared to younger and older speakers. For example, higher proportions of Aboriginal home language speakers—37% of adults aged 25 to 44, and, similarly, 38% of those aged 45 to 64—spoke their home language on a regular basis, compared to 26% of both the oldest and youngest speakers (aged 65 and over, and 0 to 12 years), and 28% of young adults. Young adult parents may be somewhat more likely than older adults to speak their home language on a most often basis, as may children and youth,

**Figure 10.16: Average Percentage of Population Speaking an Aboriginal Language Most Often and Regularly at Home, by Age Group, Canada, 2006**



if they are speaking a language at home within the family context of parent-child transmission. These findings are consistent with previous research for Canada overall (Norris 2009a). Contrasts in the patterns between major and regular use of Aboriginal home languages by catchment population size appear to be most pronounced in working age groups.

As **Figures 10.17** and **10.18** (on page 284) illustrate, patterns of home language use by catchment population size within age groups vary significantly between most often and regular usage. Generally, the range in the proportion speaking an Aboriginal home language most often (see **Figure 10.17**) is much greater than that for home language spoken on a regular basis (see **Figure 10.18**). For example, 28% and 29% of children and youth in the smallest catchment populations speak an Aboriginal language most often in the home, compared to just 1% in the 500,000 or more populations; whereas in the case of regular home use, the corresponding proportions are 8% and 9% respectively in the smallest populations versus 1% in the largest.

A second observation is that the contrasts in major home language use between the smallest and largest catchment populations widen with increasing age, whereas the corresponding contrast for regular home use tends to diminish with increasing age. A third difference is that regular home language usage tends to be highest among working-age adults, whereas “most frequent” major home language usage is highest among older adults. Among Aboriginal residents in FC community areas, adults aged 65 and up residing in catchment areas of less than 10,000 people report the highest proportion of major home language users at 58%, while the highest proportion of regular home language speakers at 17%, are adults (45 to 54) also residing in the smallest catchment populations (see **Figures 10.17** and **10.18**).

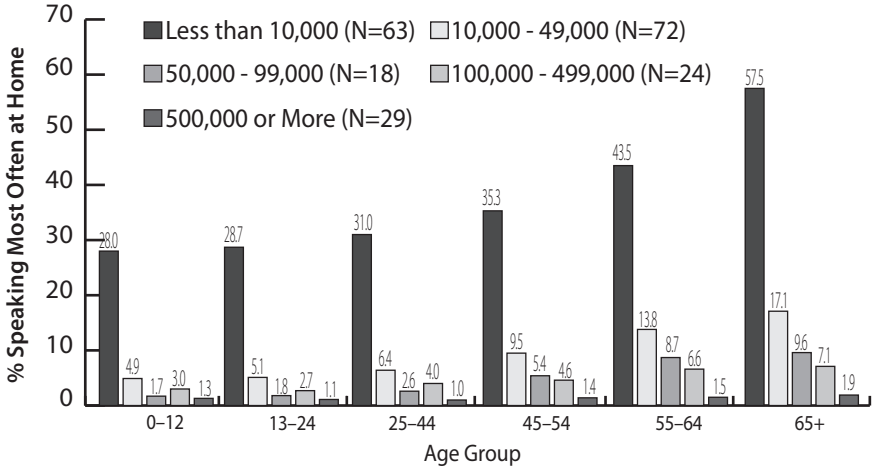
## **Gender-Specific Measures of Selected Language Characteristics and Indicators**

The literature and census-based research suggests that Aboriginal men and women differ in their patterns of language maintenance, shift, and revitalization. Since at least 1981, women have tended to experience less language maintenance, or continuity, in speaking their mother tongue at home (Burnaby and Beaujot 1986; Norris 1998, 2003, 2009b). This lower continuity of women, especially during the child-bearing years, may be associated with higher female rates of out-marriage and out-migration from communities/reserves, especially to urban areas (Norris 1998, 2003).

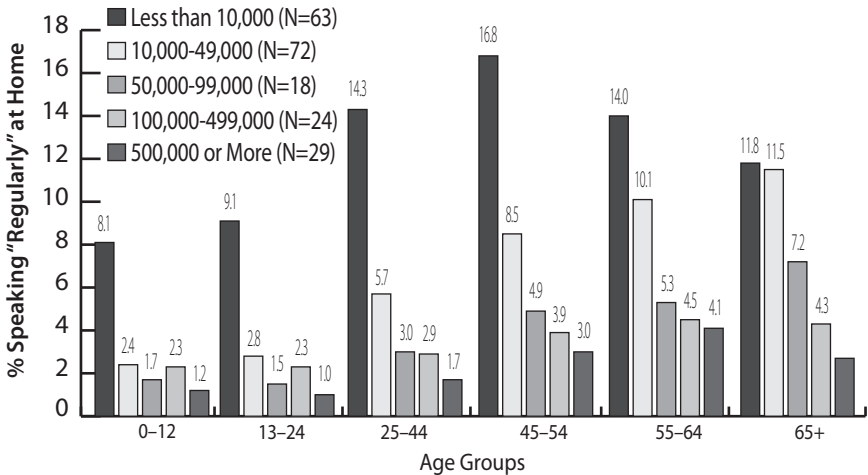
### ***Gender Differentials in Language Characteristics in FC Community Catchment Areas***

Gender differentials in the language characteristics of Aboriginal populations living in FC catchment areas have been shaped by other demographic differences

**Figure 10.17: Average Percentage of Population Speaking an Aboriginal Language Most Often at Home, by Age Group, by Population Size of Catchment Area, Canada, 2006**



**Figure 10.18: Average Percentage of Population Speaking an Aboriginal Language “Regularly” at Home, by Age Group, by Population Size of Catchment Area, Canada, 2006**



in the higher rates for women of Aboriginal community/reserve out-migration, linguistic intermarriage, lone-parenthood, and life expectancy (Norris 2009b). While it is not possible to isolate the various contributions of these different factors to gender patterns of FC catchment populations, they nevertheless underlie and offer some explanation in language patterns observed by gender.

Among Aboriginal populations within FC areas, gender differentials are more pronounced than for the Aboriginal population overall, with higher numbers and proportions of females than males reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue, language knowledge, and home language.

Overall, within FC catchment areas, females tend to outnumber males, on average, in both the numbers and proportions reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue or language knowledge, and home language use. Gender differences are most pronounced with respect to an Aboriginal language being reported as a mother tongue and being spoken on a regular basis within the home. In 2006, on average, within communities, a lower proportion of males (14.7%) than females (16.2%) reported an Aboriginal mother tongue, yielding a male to female ratio of 0.912. By comparison, gender differentials are less pronounced for the Aboriginal population in Canada overall, with more similar male and female mother tongue proportions at 18.5% and 18.8% respectively, and a corresponding ratio of 0.984; similar comparisons are also observed for home language use most often and regularly (see **Table 10.6** on page 287).

### ***Gender Differentials by Population Size of Catchment Areas***

Gender differentials in Aboriginal language characteristics are greater in larger populations. Gender differences in language characteristics tend to increase with the population size of community catchment areas. Within the smallest population catchment areas of less than 10,000, the proportions of males (37%) and females (39%) reporting an Aboriginal mother tongue are most similar, as evidenced by a male/female ratio of 0.951. Both mother-tongue proportions and gender ratios decline with increasing catchment size, to 3.3% of males and 4.6% of females, with a ratio of 0.712 for communities with populations of 500,000 or more. Similarly, male-female differentials in the ability to speak an Aboriginal language are also greater in larger-size catchment populations. Yet, among the Aboriginal population within Canada, proportions of males and females do not differ in their ability to speak an Aboriginal language, with both at 21.5% (see **Table 10.6**). This suggests that gender differences in large, urban areas may reflect the compositional effects of higher out-migration of females, who are more likely to have an Aboriginal mother tongue, from Aboriginal communities/reserves.

Gender differentials in speaking an Aboriginal language at home are most pronounced in the largest catchment populations of 500,000 plus, and, even more so with regular home use.

Previous research (Norris 2003, 2007, 2009a) indicates that use of an Aboriginal home language most often at home within families is related to family type,



intermarriage, parenting, and residency. Aboriginal women are more likely to live in urban areas, be either lone parents, or be married/parenting in linguistically exogamous families—all factors which, while not possible to control for in this study, nevertheless contribute to observed gender differences in the likelihood of speaking traditional languages as major home languages within communities. Lower proportions of males than females speak an Aboriginal home language on both a major and regular basis. These proportions are lowest in the largest-size FC catchment populations, with male/female ratios of 0.866 and 0.742 respectively. Ratios suggest a steady widening between Aboriginal men and women in their propensity to speak an Aboriginal home language on a regular basis with increasing catchment population size (although proportions of home language use are extremely small in larger areas—close to 1%—suggesting that it is necessary to use caution when interpreting). With respect to major home use, though, gender differentials vary by catchment size, such that while male proportions are lower in the smaller (less than 50,000) and largest (500,000 and over) populations, proportions of speakers are higher than those of females in large populations of between 50,000 and 100,000.

### ***Gender Differentials in Language Continuity and Second-Language Acquisition in FC Areas***

The general long-term pattern of lower Aboriginal language continuity among women than men also occurs, and appears to be more pronounced, among Aboriginal speakers in FC areas.

Gender differentials in Aboriginal language continuity observed over the long-term for the Aboriginal population in Canada also appear among Aboriginal populations living in FC community areas, though they are more pronounced since the overall population tends to reflect the language situation within Aboriginal communities (where some 80% of speakers reside), rather than in urban areas. The average indexes of continuity for males and females in the 304 FC communities of 40.6 and 37.2 respectively, are lower than those observed for Canada overall, at 65.6 and 60.8. As well, the gender differential is more pronounced in the communities, at 1.093, compared to 1.080 for Canada overall (see **Table 10.6**). This may indicate that Aboriginal women, perhaps due to higher rates of linguistic out-marriage, are experiencing more difficulty than men in maintaining their traditional language as a major home language.

Within FC catchment areas, males are more likely than females to have learned an Aboriginal language as a second language, though this pattern is related less to gender differences in language learning, and more to compositional differences owing to other factors (e.g., migration).

Gender differentials in second-language acquisition are evident among Aboriginal populations within FC catchment areas: male residents are much more likely than females to have learned an Aboriginal language as a second language, with second-language indexes of 135.2 and 124.7 respectively,

Table 10.6: Census-based Aboriginal Language Measures and Indicators by Gender: Canada NAFC Averages and All Canada, 2006

Aboriginal Language Measures and Indicators: NAFC Averages of Individual Existing and Gap Catchment Areas													
Canada-level Averages	Aboriginal Pop. Reporting an Aboriginal Language (N = 304 Communities):				Average Percentages of Aboriginal Identity Pop. Reporting an Aboriginal Language:				Continuity & Second Language Acquisition (N = 206):				
	Identity Pop.	MT	KN	HL Most	HL Regular	MT	KN	HL Most	HL Regular	CI = (HL Most/MT) * 100	SLA = (KN/MT) * 100		
<b>Both Sexes</b>	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	%	%	%	%	%			
	6,508	571	706	237	200	15.5	18.3	9.0	4.4	38.2			128.3
<b>Males</b>	3,115	251	316	114	88	14.7	17.8	8.8	4.2	40.6			135.2
<b>Females</b>	3,394	320	390	122	112	16.2	18.9	9.1	4.7	37.2			124.7
<b>M/F Ratio</b>	0.918	0.785	0.809	0.934	0.793	0.912	0.942	0.972	0.902	1.093			1.084
Aboriginal Language Measures and Indicators: Total All Canada (Independent of NAFC Measures)													
<b>Both Sexes</b>	1,169,435	218,645	251,450	137,990	54,045	18.7	21.5	11.8	4.6	63.1			115.0
<b>Males</b>	570,055	105,740	122,440	69,400	25,480	18.5	21.5	12.2	4.5	65.6			115.8
<b>Females</b>	599,380	112,910	129,010	68,595	28,560	18.8	21.5	11.4	4.8	60.8			114.3
<b>M/F Ratio</b>	0.951	0.936	0.949	1.012	0.892	0.985	0.998	1.064	0.938	1.080			1.013

yielding a male/female ratio of 1.084. However, this finding contrasts with that for Canada as a whole, which shows virtually no difference between Aboriginal males and females—with a male/female ratio of 1.013—in their propensity to learn their Aboriginal language as a second language (see **Table 10.6** on page 287). This suggests that gender differences within communities reflect the outcome of compositional differences more than any actual difference between men and women in second-language learning. Gender differentials in out-migration, residency, and life expectancy can contribute to a higher proportion of women with an Aboriginal mother tongue, and hence lower the index of second-language acquisition for females (since a higher proportion of female residents in urban areas have an Aboriginal mother tongue compared to males).

Gender differentials in language continuity and second-language acquisition by catchment population size are more pronounced in larger populations, and less pronounced in smaller populations.

The index of Aboriginal language continuity tends to generally decline with increased population size of communities. It is generally highest in the smallest catchment populations of less than 10,000, and lowest in the largest with populations of 500,000 or more. This same pattern tends to apply for both males and females; however, gender differentials in continuity are more pronounced in larger areas and least pronounced in the smallest FC communities (see **Figure 10.19** on the following page).

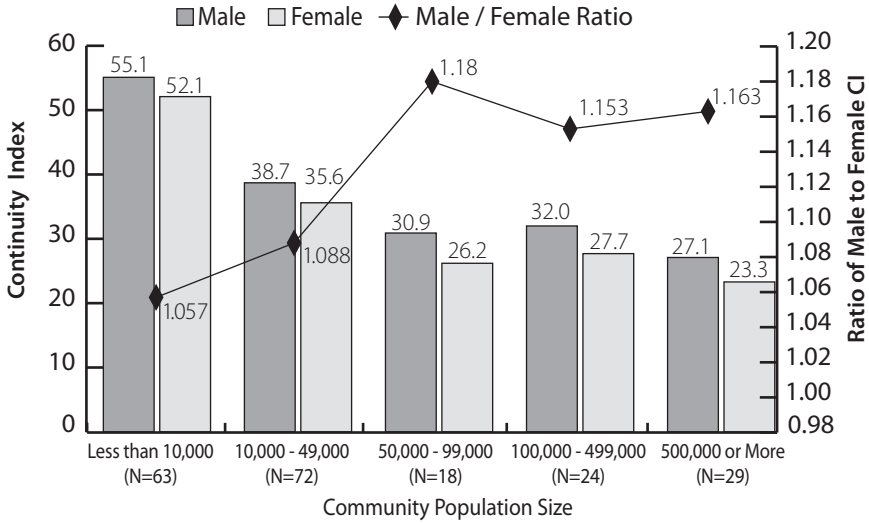
### ***Gender-Specific Measures of Second-Language Acquisition in FC Catchment Areas***

As observed earlier, the index of Aboriginal second-language learning indicates that among the Aboriginal population in urban areas, the likelihood of learning an Aboriginal language as a second language appears to be highest in the larger catchment populations of at least 100,000, and lowest in the smallest populations of less than 10,000. Gender differentials, least evident in the smallest population areas, are most pronounced in areas with populations between 100,000 and 500,000 (see **Figure 10.20** on the following page).

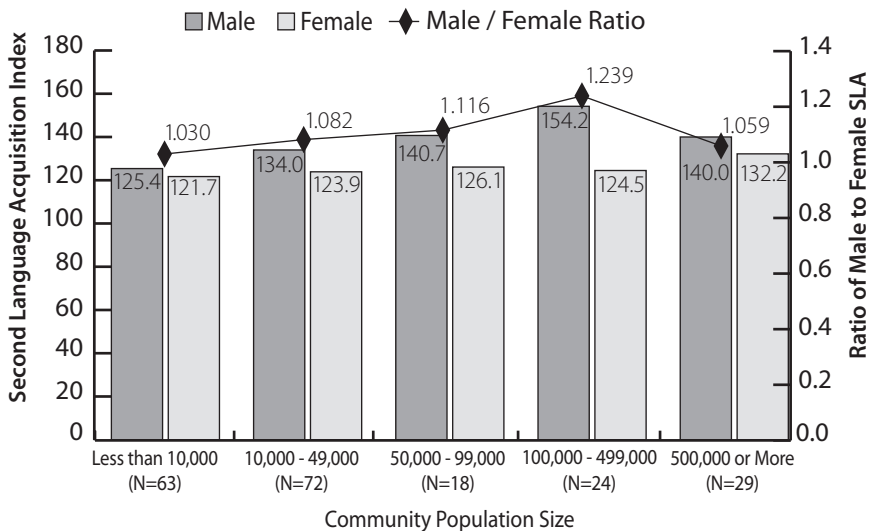
## **Implications and Conclusion**

The preceding analysis demonstrates the considerable variations across communities in the state, diversity, and prospects for Aboriginal languages. Regional variations reflect the diversity and range in the viability and endangerment of the many different Aboriginal languages. For example, Aboriginal residents living in the community catchment areas of FCs in British Columbia are much more likely to be speaking one of the endangered Aboriginal languages, such as Salish, than Aboriginal speakers living in FC community areas in Quebec or Northern Canada, who are more likely to speak one of the larger and more viable languages such as Cree or Inuktitut. Similarly, prospects for Aboriginal language continuity

**Figure 10.19: Index and Male/Female Ratio of Aboriginal Language Continuity of Aboriginal Population in Community Catchment Areas, By Population Size, Canada, 2006**



**Figure 10.20: Index and Male/Female Ratio of Second Language Acquisition of Aboriginal Population in Community Catchment Areas, By Population Size, Canada, 2006**



and transmission as a mother tongue are greater in those FC community areas where more viable languages are spoken, and particularly in those environments (often small rural or remote areas) where Aboriginal languages are spoken as a major home language. As a consequence, the outlook for Aboriginal children and youth in such areas in learning their traditional languages as a mother tongue is relatively good.

The regional locations and traditional languages of a community catchment area are not the only considerations in the situation and outlook for Aboriginal languages. As the findings of this study demonstrate, the degree of urbanization of an FC catchment area, approximated by the size of its total (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) population, is significantly associated with the state and prospects of Aboriginal languages within the community. Results by catchment population size indicate that the likelihood of Aboriginal residents reporting an Aboriginal language as a mother tongue or as a major home language are significantly greater within FC catchment areas with populations of fewer than 10,000, and least likely in larger urban areas, especially those FCs with the largest catchment populations of 500,000 or more. Similarly, prospects for intergenerational transmission are consequently greater in smaller catchment populations, and much lower in urban areas, being practically close to nil in the largest catchment populations. Gender differentials in Aboriginal language characteristics between males and females are also most pronounced in the larger catchment populations. This is likely related to different patterns of migration to urban areas and linguistic intermarriage.

Even though the natural transmission and maintenance of Aboriginal languages are limited in large urban areas, results also point to the efforts of Aboriginal people living in these areas to maintain, learn, and use their traditional languages. Second-language learning of Aboriginal languages is most pronounced in larger urban areas, and especially among Aboriginal youth aged 13 to 24, whose prospects of learning an Aboriginal language vary most strongly by catchment population size, compared to those of older adults.

In addition to language learning efforts, there are also significant signs of efforts in home language use, even if not as a major language in large urban areas. Research has consistently demonstrated the challenges of sustaining a major Aboriginal home language in urban areas. However, home language use of an Aboriginal language on a “regular basis”—even if not as a major language—appears to be a phenomenon that is occurring among Aboriginal language speakers residing in urban areas, as well as among those of endangered language heritage. Most telling is the fact that among Aboriginal residents in catchment areas speaking an Aboriginal home language, the likelihood of using their traditional language on a regular basis within the home increases with the size of the total population community, such that those in the largest catchment populations of 500,000 or more, are considerably more likely to speak their Aboriginal language on a regular rather than most frequent basis, in sharp contrast to those in smaller community areas. In general, working-age adults (25 to 64 years

old) within FC areas are more likely than those younger and older to speak their Aboriginal language on a regular rather than a most often basis. As such, these findings are encouraging from the viewpoint that despite the challenges of Aboriginal language use in urban environments, Aboriginal people, especially youth, in FC catchment/community areas are learning their traditional languages at least as second languages. Working-age adults are speaking their traditional languages at home, at least on a regular basis rather than not at all.

In conclusion, these findings clearly demonstrate that Aboriginal populations in friendship centres vary in their state, needs, and prospects concerning the transmission, learning, and use of Aboriginal languages. The different needs and prospects of FC catchment areas depend very much on their environments—whether remote, rural, urban, small, or large catchment populations—and the differing linguistic composition, diversity, and viability of the Aboriginal languages spoken in the area and region (e.g., significant contrasts in language situation of Vancouver and Winnipeg). The types of language needs and prospects for Aboriginal youth, working-age adults, women and men, for example, in the largest FC community populations differ sharply from those in the more remote and smallest rural FC areas. However, differences aside, findings also demonstrate the strong interest Aboriginal people share in maintaining, learning, and speaking their traditional languages within friendship centre areas across Canada.

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