The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the impacts of linguistic enclaves on the economic integration of immigrants to Canada. A linguistic enclave is defined as a work site in which one or more languages (other than English and/or French) is used. A five category classification of major types of linguistic enclaves is produced, using responses to two questions on the Canadian 2001 census of population: language most often used on the job and language(s) regularly used at work. My proposed analysis of the 2001 Canadian census of population, housed at the Research Data Centres answers the following four major questions: 1) what are the labour market characteristics of various linguistic enclaves? 2) What factors influence the likelihood of employment in linguistic enclaves? 3) What are the impacts of working in linguistic enclaves on earnings and does the gradient of returns to education and experience vary by the type of linguistic enclave? 4) Is the well known association between host country language proficiency and earnings due to a heretofore unmeasured variable, notably working in linguistic enclaves?

Analysis presented in this paper addresses the second and third questions, with emphasis on the immigrant population who live in Canada’s largest cities and whose mother tongue is neither English nor French. Preliminary research shows that personal characteristics such as educational attainments, recent arrival, and gender are factors influencing immigrant employment in linguistic enclaves. As might be expected levels of proficiency in English and/or French are strongly associated with the linguistic characteristics of the workplace. As well, contextual factors such as place of residence and the relative size of the mother-tongue language group in a given locale influence propensities to work in different types of linguistic enclaves. Preliminary analysis also confirms that employment in linguistic enclaves conditions weekly earnings; immigrants who work where no English or French is used have the lowest earnings of all, net of other variables known to influence wages.