



Office of the
Commissioner of
Official Languages

Commissariat
aux langues
officielles



Walking the Talk

Language of Work
in the Federal
Public Service

HIGHLIGHTS

French remains underused as a language of work within bilingual regions. These are the conclusions that emerge from recent studies from the Treasury Board Secretariat and from numerous complaints addressed to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Faced with this fact, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages carried out a sociolinguistic analysis in the summer of 2003 in the National Capital Region to gain a better understanding of the range of personal and organizational factors that influence the choice of language in various work situations. During the summer of 2003, more than 2,000 questionnaires were distributed to public servants working in the National Capital Region. A total of 1,221 completed questionnaires were returned, for an overall response rate of 60.9%. The results show the following.

- ◆ In the National Capital Region, the organizational culture remains predominantly English.
- ◆ Senior management plays an essential role in defining the importance given to linguistic duality in the workplace. It is, very often, managers who set the example.
- ◆ The perception that senior managers are unilingual is a major obstacle to the use of both official languages. Although the majority of senior managers in the EX category meet the language requirements of their positions, a good number of them do not use French.
- ◆ The lack of confidence in work performed in French encourages Anglophones to resort to English. For Francophones, on the other hand, a better knowledge of English seems to confirm an already existing tendency towards greater use of English. The habit of working in English becomes all the more evident when one observes that Francophones sometimes use English when speaking to each other.
- ◆ Francophones showed a tendency to favour use of their supervisor's language to the detriment of their own first official language. A large number said they preferred to work in English so that their performance is more fully recognized and appreciated. Moreover, English is recognized as the language that offers the best chance of professional advancement.
- ◆ The frequent recourse to English by Francophones tends to discourage many Anglophones.
- ◆ In general, respondents work in an environment where 98% of the staff can communicate in English and where 28% of Anglophones are unilingual. Anglophones are therefore rarely faced with the need to interact with unilingual Francophone colleagues.

- ◆ Anglophones and Francophones are both in favour of the increased use of French in the workplace. Meetings are the one setting where the unequal status of the two languages is most strongly felt.
- ◆ To be good leaders, supervisors have to understand and take into account the unequal status of the two official languages. Because it is underused, the French language requires special measures if it is to achieve a balance with English in the workplace.

The sociolinguistic analysis provides the terms for a management framework for official languages in the workplace. The framework includes three strategic priorities, the foundation of which is an organizational culture that is genuinely respectful of the linguistic rights of employees: leadership, personal capacity and institutional capacity. These three strategic priorities are interdependent and they must be constantly and simultaneously cultivated. The management framework gives deputy heads concrete measures for creating such an organizational culture.

In addition to the management framework for deputy heads, this study proposes ten recommendations specifically for federal institutions, the Clerk of the Privy Council, the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency and the School of the Public Service.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I	INTRODUCTION	2
II	CONTEXT	4
III	METHODOLOGY	6
IV	ETHNOLINGUISTIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS	7
V	A PICTURE OF THE FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION	8
VI	MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR OFFICIAL LANGUAGES	10
VII	A CULTURE . . . STILL AWAITING CHANGE: RESULTS OF THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS	13
	A. LEADERSHIP – MATCHING ACTIONS TO WORDS	13
	B. SECOND-LANGUAGE USE – ARE THE EXPECTATIONS REALISTIC?	18
	C. A WORKPLACE STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY THE PRESENCE OF UNILINGUALS	23
	D. A REAL PREFERENCE OR ADAPTING TO CIRCUMSTANCES?	24
	E. A WORK ENVIRONMENT STILL BELOW STANDARD	26
VIII	SUPERFICIAL MONITORING	28
IX	SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	30
X	CONCLUSION	32
	APPENDIX A	
	LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ROUNDTABLE OF THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT	33
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	36

INTRODUCTION

For many years, the federal government has been implementing measures to promote linguistic duality as a fundamental Canadian value. However, economic, social and administrative priorities have at times relegated this imperative to a secondary position. To the extent that the value of bilingualism has not been fully absorbed into the culture of federal organizations, official languages continue to be an artificial add-on to the functions of government. After more than 30 years, it remains that federal institutions do not give French equal status with English. Indeed, very often the federal government still functions in English.

The *Official Languages Act*, however, establishes equality between English and French in federal institutions. In practice, it means that, in designated bilingual regions,¹ federal institutions must ensure that the workplace is conducive to the use of both official languages. They must also ensure that their employees can exercise the right to use either language, subject only to their obligations to serve the public and other employees. For example, federal institutions must respect certain minimal obligations:

- ◆ to provide internal services (such as compensation, training, professional development, administration and information technology services) in both official languages;
- ◆ to make sure their employees are provided with standard and commonly used work tools in both official languages (such as manuals, policies and directives and software);
- ◆ to ensure supervision of employees performing functions requiring use of both official languages (bilingual position) or functions requiring the use of either language (either/or position),² in the official language chosen by the subordinate; and
- ◆ to see to it that senior management of the organization is able to function in both official languages.

In other words, under the *Official Languages Act*, persons who express themselves in English or in French should be considered on an equal footing and receive the same consideration and respect.

1. The language of work is based on the concept of a “bilingual region.” Accordingly, the *Official Languages Act* specifies certain regions where, on the basis of population factors, English and French are languages of work and enjoy equal status and privileges. Designated regions include the National Capital Region, certain parts of Northern and Eastern Ontario, the Montréal region, some parts of the Eastern Townships, Western Quebec and of the Gaspé area, as well as New Brunswick. In designated regions, both official languages are commonly used, as opposed to other parts of Canada where a single language is predominant.

2. In the federal administration, there are four types of positions:

- ◆ bilingual: a position with functions that require the use of English and French;
- ◆ English essential: a position with functions that must be performed essentially in English;
- ◆ French essential: a position with functions that must be performed essentially in French; and
- ◆ either/or: a position where the incumbent can choose the language of work on appointment.

In light of complaints³ addressed to the Office of the Commissioner and the fact that recent studies⁴ show that French is noticeably underused as a language of work, the Commissioner of Official Languages has initiated a complete re-examination of the problems surrounding the use of both official languages in the workplace. This study seeks to better understand the sociolinguistic environment and the intercultural dynamics that characterize a bilingual workplace and to make recommendations to the government for actions that would contribute to the respectful coexistence of English and French within federal institutions.



3

3. According to the *2002-2003 Annual Report* of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, more than half of the complaints dealing with the language of work were made by employees of the National Capital Region. The majority were made by Francophones.

4. In 2002, the Treasury Board Secretariat published two studies on official languages in the workplace: *Attitudes Towards the Use of Both Official Languages Within the Public Service of Canada* and the *2002 Public Service Employee Survey*.

CONTEXT

In 2002, the Treasury Board Secretariat published two important reports on the use of official languages in the workplace: *Attitudes Towards the Use of Both Official Languages Within the Public Service of Canada* and the *2002 Public Service Employee Survey*. The findings reported in these two studies give us a clear picture of the issues involved in the debate over bilingualism in the workplace.

The study on attitudes towards the use of both official languages was carried out with the cooperation of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs and Communication Canada. More than 5,000 employees were consulted to measure the degree of support within the public service for official languages policies. The study was also designed to propose ways of changing attitudes, where necessary.

The study confirms a high degree of commitment to the basic principles of the official languages program. As well, it reveals that, in bilingual regions overall, most Anglophones and Francophones who speak both languages are satisfied with the extent to which English and French are used at work. However, in the National Capital Region, bilingual Anglophones would like to speak French three times more often than they currently do (that is, 39% of the time instead of 13%).

The *2002 Public Service Employee Survey* was conducted over the entire federal public service. Its main purpose was to allow federal institutions to measure their respective work environments and to gauge employee satisfaction with overall working conditions. It was intended to help managers and their employees to create a healthy, congenial and stimulating workplace. For the first time, the 2002 survey included six questions on official languages in the workplace.

The survey allows us to better understand the opinions of employees concerning the use of both official languages at work. It reveals that, in bilingual regions overall, 88% of public servants say they can communicate with their supervisor in the official language of their choice: 92% of Anglophones and 84% of Francophones said so. The survey shows that 80% of public servants say they can use the official language of their choice during meetings: 86% of Anglophones and 74% of Francophones confirmed that. Analysis of the figures based on the first official language of the incumbent and the linguistic designation of the position indicates that in the National Capital Region those percentages are about 95% and 68% respectively.

These two studies also highlight the fact that French is underused as a language of work. For example, the study on attitudes towards the use of both official languages reveals a clearly uneven use of the two official languages: in the National Capital Region, bilingual

Anglophones use French 13% of the time; bilingual Francophones on the other hand use English 54% of the time. Moreover, in the case of work documents of bilingual respondents, 78% were prepared in English, compared to 22% in French. The survey revealed that 34% of Francophone incumbents of bilingual positions in the National Capital Region, compared to 5% for Anglophones, did not feel free to prepare documents in the official language of their choice.

During the summer of 2003, the Canadian Centre for Management Development also published a study on the use of both official languages in the workplace. The study was the outcome of a roundtable of senior public servants and specialists from within and outside the public service. Entitled *French to Follow? Revitalizing Official Languages in the Workplace*,⁵ it highlights many obstacles to the use of French as a language of work. Among the barriers identified are a lack of knowledge among employees of their rights and obligations with respect to the official languages; information sessions and meetings that take place in one language only; the unilingualism of supervisors and senior managers; and lack of leadership. (The list of recommendations made by the roundtable is attached as Appendix A, for information.)

5

The studies' conclusions make it clear that solid support for linguistic duality does not necessarily entail increased use of French at work. Moreover, while public servants feel they can communicate in the official language of their choice, a good number hesitate to exercise that choice. Despite the progress achieved since the *Official Languages Act* was first adopted in 1969, there has been much less progress in terms of language of work compared to language of service to the public. Serious problems continue to impede the use of both official languages in the workplace, particularly the use of French.

In light of this, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages initiated a sociolinguistic analysis of the situation to better understand the range of personal and organizational factors that influence the choice of language in various work situations. The analysis also seeks to measure the real satisfaction of public servants regarding the use of both official languages at work.

5. At the suggestion of the Commissioner, the Canadian Centre for Management Development formed a roundtable to consider the concrete actions that government and managers could take to increase the use of both official languages in the workplace. The report is available at the following Web site: http://www.cmdccg.gc.ca/Research/publications/pdfs/OL_e.pdf.

METHODOLOGY

This study is the first in a series of studies dealing with the question of the use of official languages in bilingual workplaces. It is expected to continue for at least two more years. The Office of the Commissioner began by looking at organizations located within the National Capital Region that are subject to Treasury Board language policies. The National Capital Region contains the largest pool of bilingual positions.

During a later phase, the Office of the Commissioner will broaden its examination to other bilingual regions of the country; the sociolinguistic context of Montréal is possibly different from that of the National Capital Region or of New Brunswick. In the same way, the work environment within a Crown corporation may prove quite different from that of a government department, because a Crown corporation is not subject to Treasury Board policies and directives but only required to follow their spirit. Thus, while the *Official Languages Act* applies equally to both, the rules can differ.

During the summer of 2003, more than 2,000 questionnaires⁶ were distributed to public servants working in the National Capital Region. Respondents were chosen at random from the Treasury Board Secretariat's database of bilingual positions. A total of 1,221 completed questionnaires were returned, for an overall response rate of 60.9%.



6. The questionnaire and data analysis were done in collaboration with Professor Richard Y. Bourhis, a specialist in social psychology and in sociolinguistics, who is also Director of the Concordia-UQAM (Université du Québec à Montréal) Chair in ethnic studies.

ETHNOLINGUISTIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

- ◆ A total of 16.6% of respondents belong to the EX group; 34.6% are middle managers; 27.5% are at the officer level, and 17.5% are support staff. (Nearly 4% did not identify their employee level.)
- ◆ More than 56% of respondents identified English as their first official language,⁷ compared to 44% for French.
- ◆ Of those who said English was their first official language, 80% said English was their mother tongue, 8% said it was French, and 12% said their mother tongue was neither English nor French.
- ◆ Of those who said French was their first official language, 1% said English was their mother tongue, 96% said it was French, and 3% said their mother tongue was neither official language.
- ◆ A total of 9% of Anglophones responded to the questions in French, compared to 13% of Francophones who chose to respond in English.

7

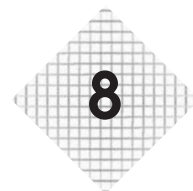
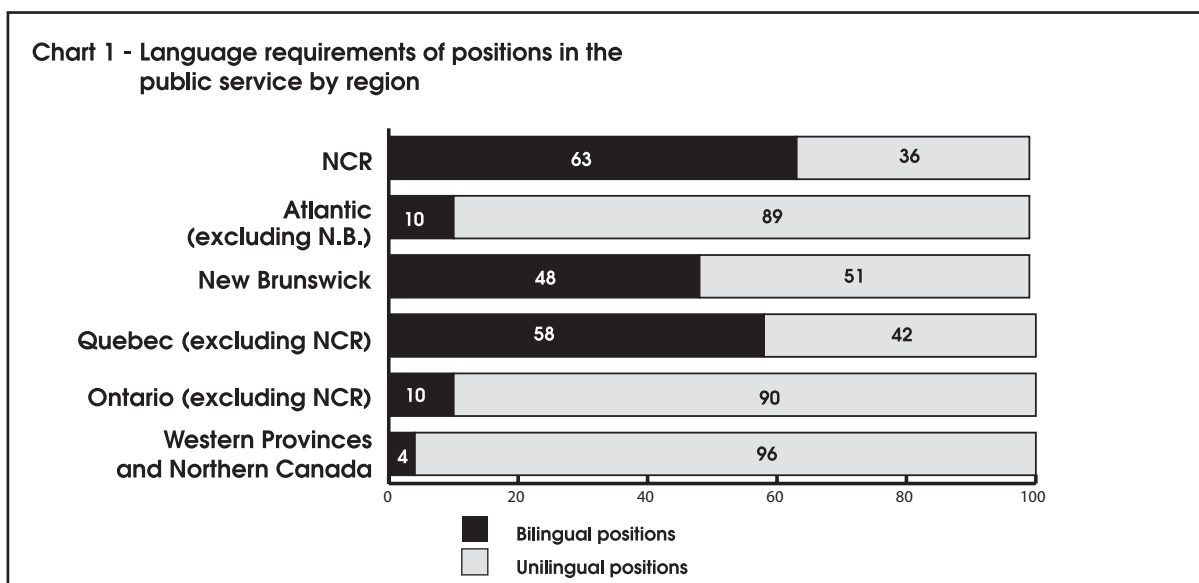
The last three elements in this list point to a certain predominance of English as the language of work within the federal public service.

7. The first official language of a person is the language—English or French—with which that person most identifies and in which he or she feels the most competent, regardless of ethnic origin or the first language learned.

A PICTURE OF THE FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

There are 67,008 positions in the National Capital Region (NCR), of which 63% are designated bilingual. Of the total number of bilingual positions, one-third require the highest level⁸ of second-language knowledge, and two-thirds require an intermediate level.⁹

- ◆ Nearly 80% of supervisors meet the language requirements of their positions.
- ◆ More than 85% of those who hold bilingual positions, and who are responsible for providing internal services, meet the language requirements of their positions.

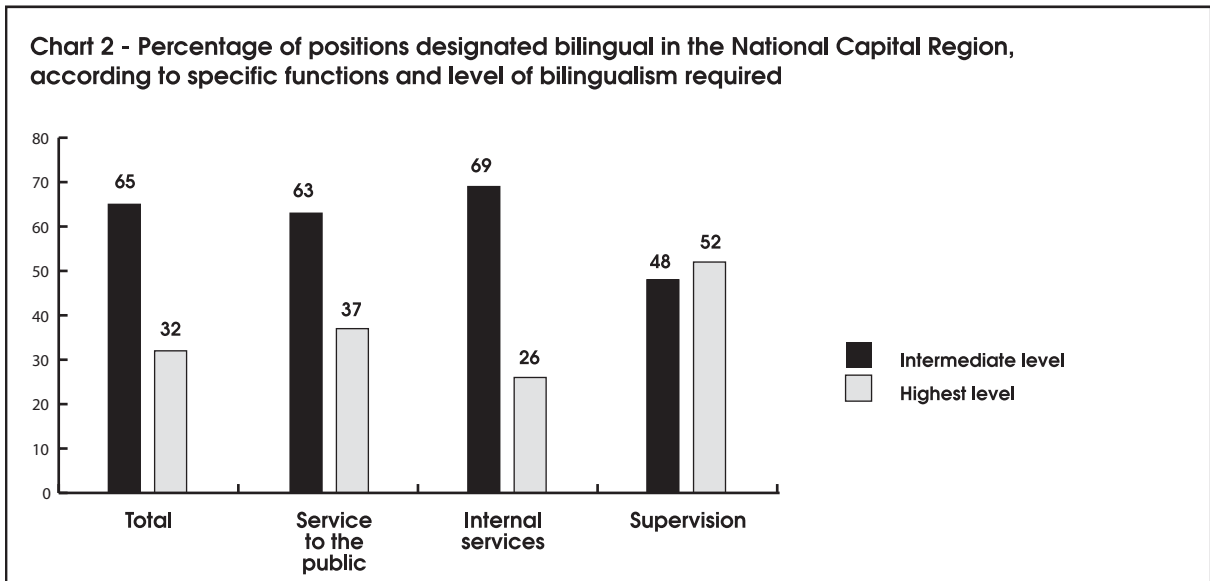


Source: *Annual Report on Official Languages 2002-2003*, Treasury Board, October 2003.

8. Highest level in the second language equals Level C.

9. Intermediate level in the second language equals Level B.

- ◆ At least 6% of supervisors are exempt from language requirements of their positions, under the *Public Service Official Languages Appointment Order*.
- ◆ On the other hand, 10% of supervisors must meet their language requirements within two years of their appointment.



Source: Treasury Board Secretariat, March 31, 2003. Figures have been rounded to the nearest percentage point.

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The results of the studies previously mentioned,¹⁰ along with the sociolinguistic analysis conducted by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages during the summer of 2003 and the complaints concerning the use of both official languages in the workplace demonstrate very clearly that a change of culture within institutions has still not taken place. French still does not have equal status with English. The creation of an organizational culture that is genuinely respectful of the linguistic rights of employees is based on three strategic priority: leadership, institutional capacity and personal capacity. These three strate-

... The official languages program has been losing steam for the last decade or so, while the country and the public service focused on taming the deficit. Now, official languages must regain their place at the core of the mandates of affected institutions. Lasting change, including better service to the public and wider use of both official languages in the workplace, will not be possible unless the culture of the entire public service changes with regards to language.

The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality, Action Plan for Official Languages, Government of Canada, 2003.

gic priorities are interdependent and they must be constantly and simultaneously cultivated. The management framework below provides deputy heads with concrete measures for the creation of an organizational culture that is respectful of linguistic rights.

The Government of Canada defines **leadership** as an aptitude for producing change. Leadership implies sharing

a vision with all parties involved, with the result that the vision is understood and believed. Leadership also creates an environment that inspires and motivates people to overcome obstacles that may be encountered along the way.

Institutional capacity is defined by the means with which an organization has equipped itself in order to achieve results—policies and directives, procedures, designation of positions, training, professional development, work tools, support measures, accountability framework, and so on—and to effectively evaluate the results obtained.

Personal capacity is defined as the achievement and maintenance of skills, their use, and individual attitudes, perceptions and behaviour.

It is important that we, as senior public servants, model the government's commitment to the equality of status and use of both official languages, and respect employees' rights to work in the language of their choice. Not only must we show that we take the government's obligation seriously, but moreover that it can work.

Alex Himelfarb, APEX Symposium 2002, June 5, 2002, Ottawa.

10. *Attitudes Towards the Use of Both Official Languages Within the Public Service of Canada; 2002 Public Service Employee Survey; French to Follow? Revitalizing Official Languages in the Workplace.*

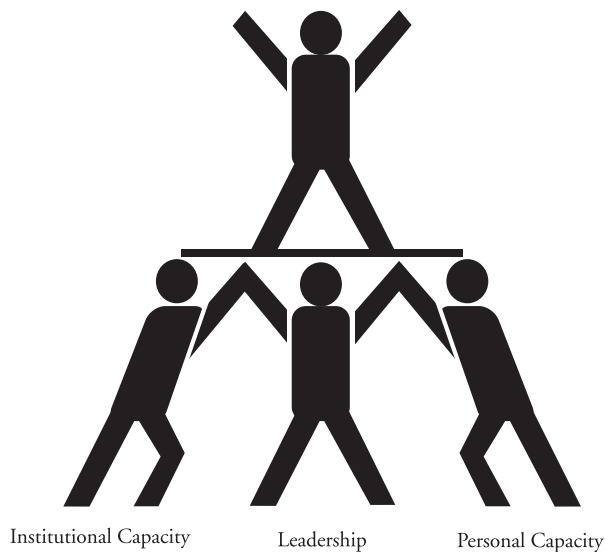
Without effective leadership at all levels of an organization, it is difficult to imagine how the efforts made to strengthen institutional and personal capacities will be reflected in an environment that is respectful of its employees' language rights, where the knowledge of employees is valued and put to good use, and that offers opportunities for growth. The absence of leadership results in an often superficial institutional bilingualism. In addition, despite visible leadership, a lack of organizational support necessarily produces a lowering of personal capacity. This, in turn, leads to a rapid decline in the use of official languages in the workplace.

Finding no. 1: These three priority areas are interdependent and they must be constantly and simultaneously cultivated if the desired results are to be achieved.

Since the *Official Languages Act* was first adopted, the federal government has concentrated most of its efforts on building “institutional capacity.” In the beginning, it was necessary to build the structural foundation of the program. While the situation is still not ideal, important progress has been made in this area. As well, significant resources have been invested to increase “personal capacity.” Without real incentives and as a result of “sporadic leadership,” benefits achieved at this level are likely to disappear quickly.

Strategic Priorities For Deputy Heads

A culture that respects the linguistic rights of employees



12

Institutional Capacity

- ◆ Strengthen the official languages management program within the institution— advice, evaluation, training, awareness, etc.
- ◆ Prepare a management framework that is results-oriented, including indicators based on the actual use of both official languages.
- ◆ Communicate the results achieved to all staff members once a year.
- ◆ Facilitate staff access to language training.
- ◆ Make tools available for staff members to maintain learned language.

Leadership

- ◆ Establish an organizational culture centred on the respect of linguistic rights.
- ◆ Share the vision with all staff members so they understand and believe in it.
- ◆ Become a model of bilingualism.
- ◆ Respect the linguistic rights of staff at all times, with respect to internal services, work tools and supervision.
- ◆ Allocate the resources needed to achieve results.

Personal Capacity

- ◆ Acquire second language skills.
- ◆ Maintain skills by using both official languages regularly.
- ◆ Learn about one's linguistic rights and communicate in the official language of one's choice.
- ◆ Respect the linguistic rights of colleagues and subordinates

RESULTS OF THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

A. Leadership—matching actions to words

“The duties and opportunities of public service leadership present themselves at all levels. It remains true that they are the greatest at the most senior levels, and the failure to meet them has there its most fateful consequences, effects that are felt, like ripples on a lake, to the outmost edges of the public service.”¹¹

Many respondents reported that they felt obliged, for the sake of efficiency or expediency, to adopt the language favoured by senior management. Nearly one-quarter of Francophone respondents and about 10% of Anglophone respondents state that, in their work units,

We do not learn about the good from abstractions but rather from encountering it in real life, in the flesh and blood of a real community, and real people. Values are sustained by a community that believes in them and sees them acted out daily, in both concrete and symbolic actions. This points to the importance of leadership and of role models.

A Strong Foundation, Report of the Task Force on Public Service Values and Ethics, Canadian Centre for Management Development, 2000.

managers require that work be performed in one official language rather than the other.

The *Act* states that senior management must be able to work in both official languages so their subordinates can communicate in the official language of their choice. It is because the federal government recognizes the

influence that senior management exercises on the organizational culture of institutions that it decided in 1998 to raise language requirements for senior managers to the highest level in oral interaction and comprehension. Paradoxically, these requirements are limited to the EX category. In the *Directive on the Staffing of Bilingual Positions* that will take effect April 1, 2004, staffing must be on an imperative basis for positions or functions at the following levels in a designated bilingual region:

- ◆ effective April 1, 2004, all positions or functions at level EX 04 and 05;
- ◆ effective April 1, 2005, all positions or functions at level EX 03; and
- ◆ effective April 1, 2007, all positions or functions at level EX 02.

Senior managers in job categories equivalent to EX also have an important role to play in creating a work environment that is respectful of the language rights of their employees. In fact, the pool of EX-equivalents is as important as the pool of EX employees. Regardless of the job category to which they belong, senior managers should be subject to the second-language requirements (CBC) and the timetable set by government. This

11. *A Strong Foundation, Report of the Task Force on Public Service Values and Ethics*, Canadian Centre for Management Development, 2000.

would represent an important step towards creating a working environment where members of both language groups feel at ease in using the official language of their choice. It is unfortunate that the Treasury Board Secretariat (now the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada) has limited the requirements of the policy and its rigorous monitoring of senior managers to the EX category.

In addition, non-imperative staffing is still being used to hire managers at the entry level (EX 01). This shortfall must be corrected since incumbents of these positions make up about half of all senior managers of the EX category.

From among 13 organizational obstacles listed in the questionnaire, respondents were asked to choose the three statements that best reflected what they felt were the obstacles to the use of both official languages in the workplace. The unilingualism of senior management is seen as a major obstacle to the use of both official languages. For this reason, senior managers must have a superior knowledge of both official languages.

Finding no. 2: Senior management has an essential role to play in defining the importance that is given to linguistic duality. If English continues to dominate as the language of the workplace, then management shares a large share of the responsibility. It is very often managers who set the example.



14

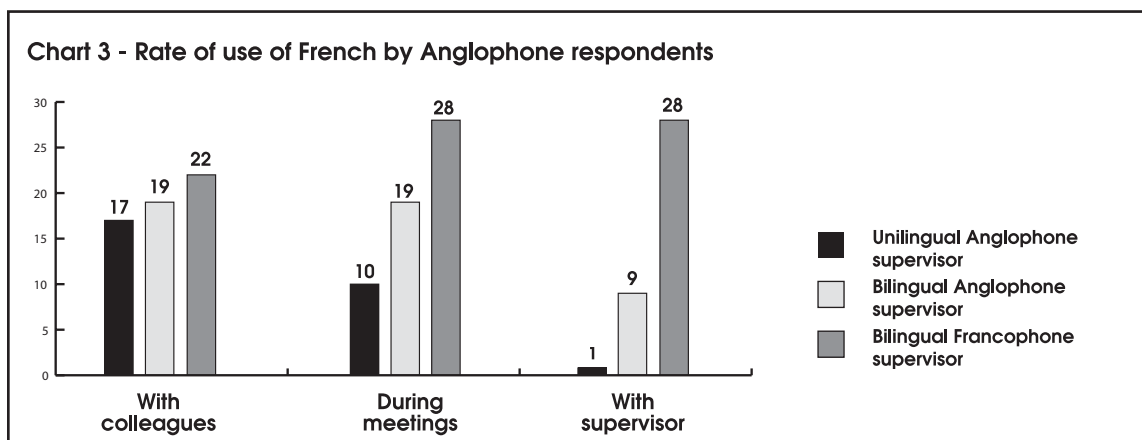
Like senior management, supervisors play a key role in creating a working environment that respects the equal status of both official languages—regardless of where or at what level these supervisors are within the public service. Because of their position of authority, supervisors' behaviour has a direct influence on the organizational culture of the workplace.

A fuller analysis of data from the *2002 Public Service Employee Survey* produced more complete information. According to the survey, a sizeable number of Francophones in bilingual positions in the National Capital Region said they do not feel free to use the official language of their choice in dealing with their immediate supervisor.

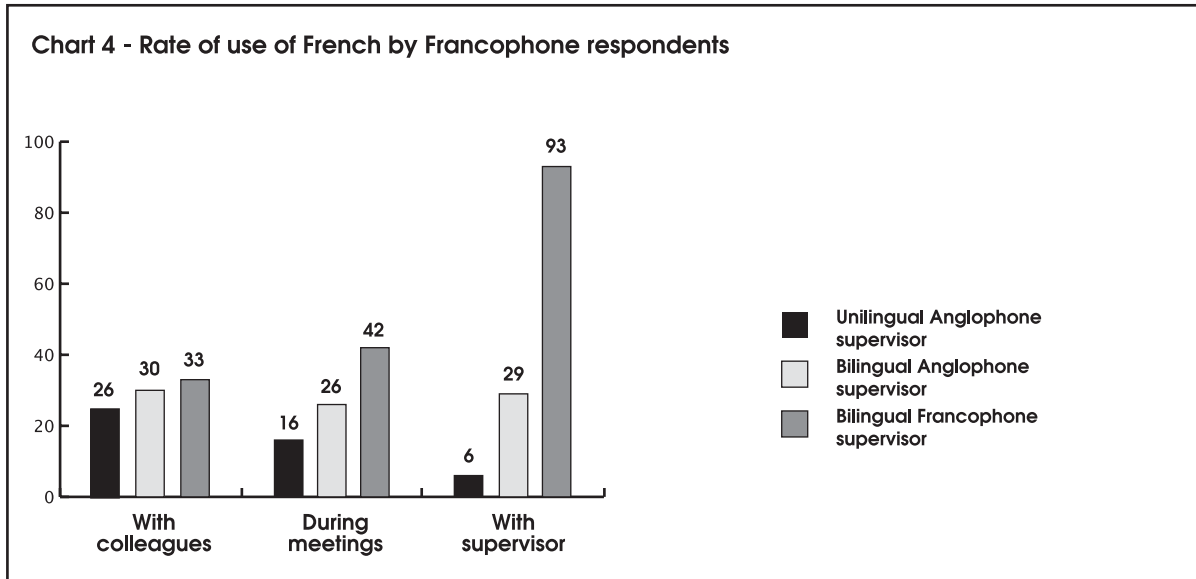
Table 1 – 2002 Public Service Employee Survey, in-depth analysis of the results according to the first official language of incumbents of bilingual positions in the National Capital Region

Survey questions	Response	Francophones	Anglophones
3. When I prepare written materials, including electronic mail, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	Mostly disagree/ strongly disagree	34%	5%
23. When I communicate with my immediate supervisor, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	Mostly disagree/ strongly disagree	19%	2%
38. During meetings in my work unit, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	Mostly disagree/ strongly disagree	30%	4%

The sociolinguistic analysis carried out by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages reveals some interesting details that shed more light on the influence of supervisors. Bilingual supervisors¹² are more inclined to encourage the use of French as the language of work than unilingual supervisors. As the following chart indicates, Anglophone respondents generally use French more often with their colleagues and during meetings when their supervisor is bilingual than when the supervisor is unilingual (chart 3). Francophone respondents described a similar tendency (chart 4).



12. Respondents were asked to identify the language group, which in their judgment, most closely described their supervisor: bilingual Francophone (with good knowledge of English), unilingual Francophone, bilingual Anglophone (with good knowledge of French), or unilingual Anglophone. It should be noted that respondents identified a very small number of unilingual Francophone supervisors.



However, it is the bilingual Francophone supervisors who play the role of catalyst in promoting a work environment that encourages the use of French. Both Anglophone and Francophone respondents said they speak French more often when their supervisor is a Francophone. Use of French declines when the supervisor is a bilingual or unilingual Anglophone. This tendency is maintained in different communication situations in the work environment. For example, as chart 5 indicates, Anglophone respondents speak French 38% of the time when their supervisor is a bilingual Francophone, compared to 23% when the supervisor is a bilingual Anglophone. Francophone respondents (chart 6) said they spoke French more than half the time when their supervisor is a bilingual Francophone, compared to 40% when the supervisor is a bilingual Anglophone, and 33% for a unilingual Anglophone.

Chart 5 - Rate of use of French by Anglophone respondents

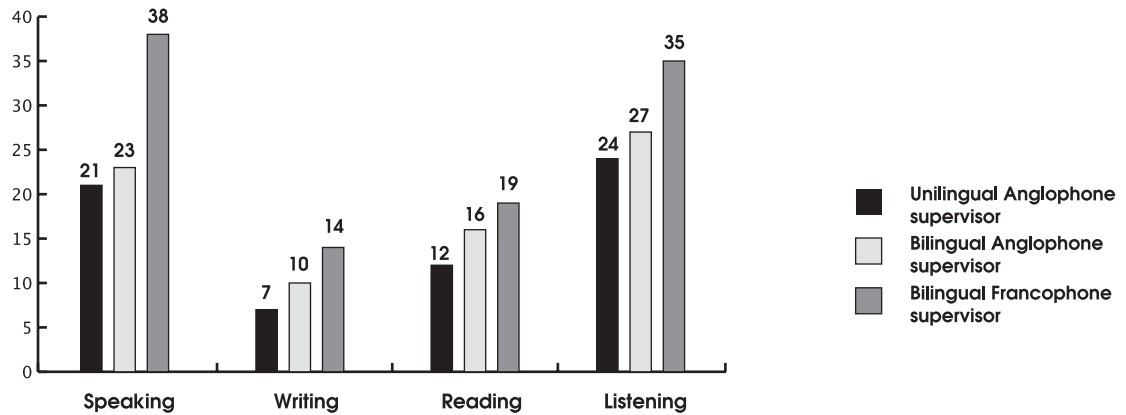
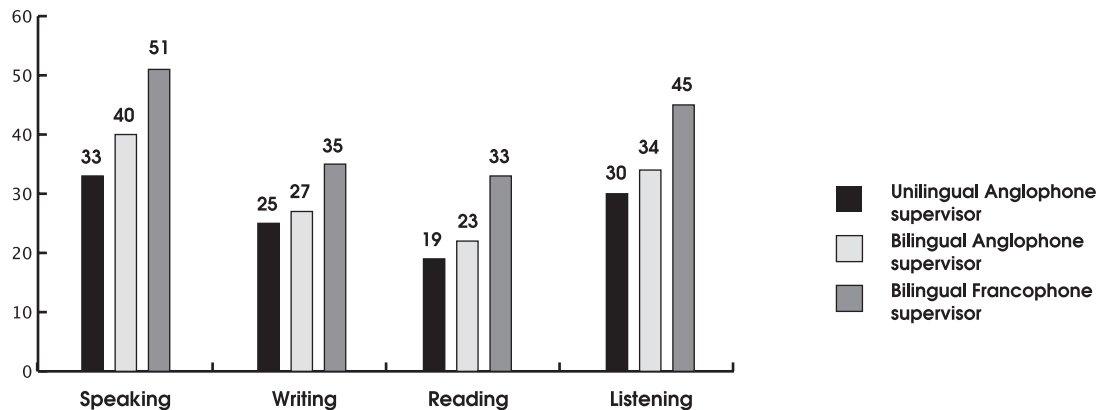


Chart 6 - Rate of use of French by Francophone respondents

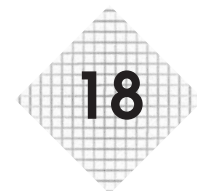


Francophones reported a tendency to use the language of their supervisor to the detriment of their own first language. Many Francophones said they preferred to work in English to ensure that their performance is more fully recognized and appreciated. Moreover, English seems to be recognized as the language of professional advancement.

If one assumes that Anglophone and Francophone supervisors have equal abilities in both official languages, why do bilingual Francophone supervisors appear to elicit a preponderant use of French? According to experts in social psychology, the explanation is as follows: “People normally adapt in order to improve the efficiency of communication or where there is a conscious or unconscious need for social approval or to be identified with the person with whom they are speaking. Adapting to the language of the other person (English or French) is an excellent way to gain sympathy and thus to facilitate intercultural exchanges.”¹³ If one accepts this premise, it is normal and natural that Francophones and Anglophones would use French more often in their daily work if their supervisor is a Francophone. Creating an atmosphere where French is used freely thus requires more effort on the part of an Anglophone supervisor.

Francophones also have a role to play at this level. Anglophone respondents described a lack of support from Francophones. The frequent recourse to English by Francophones discourages many Anglophones.

To be good leaders, supervisors have to understand and take into account the unequal status of the two official languages. Because it is underused, the French language requires special measures if it is to achieve a balance with English in the workplace.



Finding no. 3: Senior management and supervisors do not demonstrate, through concrete actions, the importance they give to linguistic duality, in order to promote work environments in which both official languages have equal status.

B. Second-language use—Are the expectations realistic?

About 63% of positions in the National Capital Region are designated bilingual. As of March 31, 2003, almost 85% of incumbents of bilingual positions met the language requirements of their position. The success rate for executives who had to meet the language requirements (CBC) by the deadline of March 31, 2003, was 94.7%.¹⁴ It is therefore perfectly normal to expect that employees have access to internal services, documentation and work tools, and that they be able to participate in meetings and be supervised in the official language of their choice.

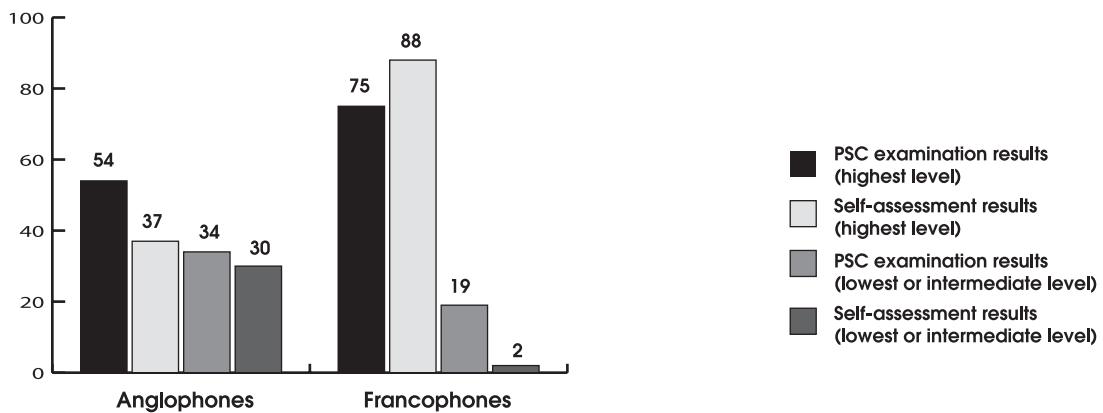
13. Bourhis, Richard Y., Dominique Lepicq and Itesh Sachdev: *La psychologie sociale de la communication multilingue*, article published in *DiversCité Langues*, Volume V, 2000.

14. *Annual Report on Official Languages 2002-2003*, Treasury Board Secretariat, October 2003.

The fact that French is noticeably underused in the workplace raises a number of questions. How effective are the measures now in place? Of the total number of bilingual positions, one-third require the highest level of knowledge, and two-thirds require an intermediate level. Are employees able to meet these second-language expectations? The results of soci-olinguistic analysis allow us to view this problem from a different angle.

In addition to providing their results in the second-language evaluation examinations of the Public Service Commission, respondents assessed their knowledge of both official languages. A comparison of the official results and the respondents' self-assessments shows how little confidence Anglophones have in their own language skills, especially in written French (see charts 7 and 8). Even though more than half of all Anglophones achieved the highest level in writing, only slightly more than a third felt they write easily or fluently in French. In oral communication, the results are more positive: half of all Anglophones achieved the highest level in French, and 58% said they speak French easily and fluently.

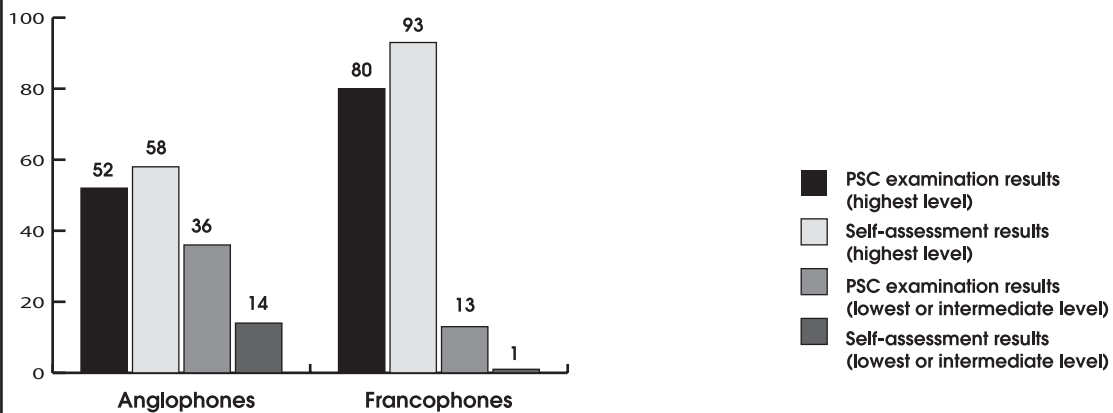
Chart 7 - Written expression - comparison between Public Service Commission examination results and respondents' self-assessment results



The situation is quite different for Francophone public servants. They reported that their level of bilingualism is much higher than their official evaluations. Although just 80% of Francophone respondents achieved the highest second-language level, 93% of them said

they speak English fluently. In terms of writing, 75% achieved the highest level, but 88% said they write in English easily or fluently.

Chart 8 - Oral interaction - comparison between Public Service Commission examination results and respondents' self-assessment results



As might be expected, Anglophones who have a better knowledge of French tend to address French colleagues (58%) and their Francophone subordinates (62%) in French more often than Anglophones who have a lesser knowledge of French. Anglophones in that group address Francophone colleagues (26%) and subordinates (28%) in French a great deal less frequently. As chart 11 indicates, in the workplace, Anglophones who have achieved the highest level in French spend more time speaking (34%) and writing (14%) in French than Anglophones with lesser knowledge of French (16% and 9% respectively).

Chart 9 - Rate of use of French by Anglophone respondents, according to level of language ability

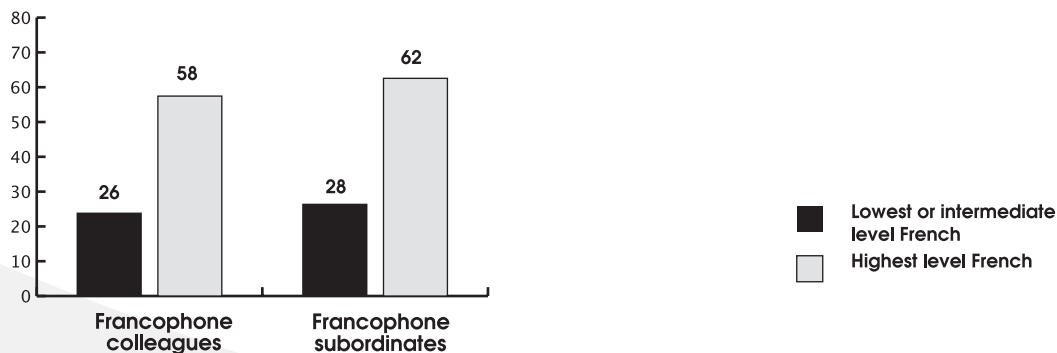


Chart 10 - Rate of use of English by Francophone respondents, according to level of language ability

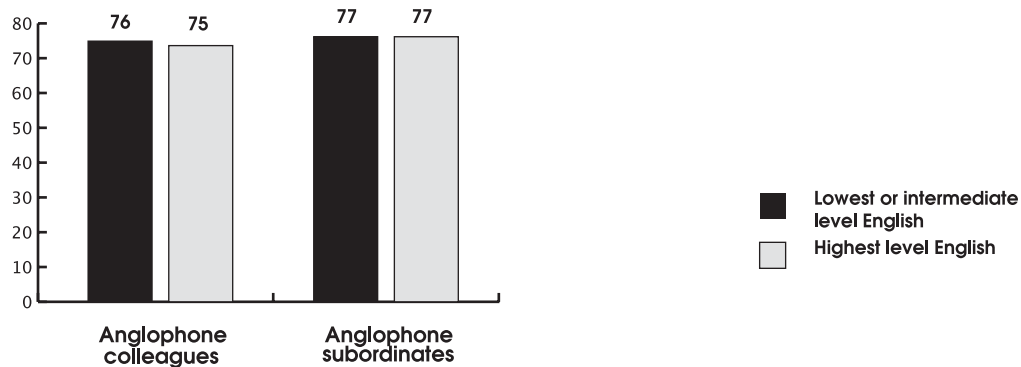
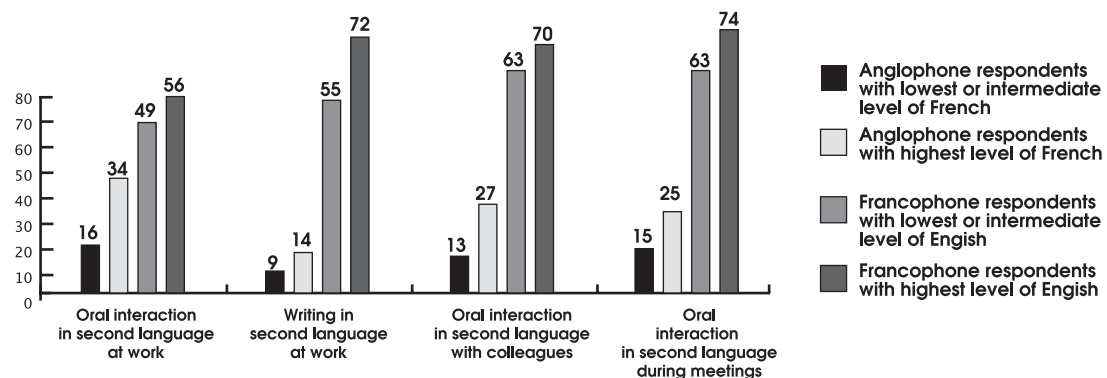


Chart 11 - Rate of use of second language according to language ability of respondents



The extent to which an employee feels at ease in using his or her second language has important impacts on the use of the language. Yet, more than half of designated bilingual supervisory positions require only an intermediate level in the second language. The federal government can hardly expect that supervisors trained to the intermediate level will feel sufficiently confident in their ability to provide equal quality of supervision in both official languages. More often than not, the supervisor's lack of French will result in a Francophone subordinate resorting to the use of English.

“Level (B) is the minimum level of second-language ability in oral interaction that should be identified for positions that involve departure from routine or repetitive use of the second language. A person at this level can sustain a conversation on concrete topics, report on actions taken, give straightforward instructions to employees, and provide factual descriptions and explanations. While many errors and deficiencies in grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency may occur, these do not seriously interfere with communication. However, a person at this level should not be expected to cope with situations that are sensitive or that require the understanding or expression of subtle or abstract ideas. The ability to deal with situations involving hypothetical ideas and the use of persuasion is also limited.”

Determining the Linguistic Profile for Bilingual Positions, Public Service Commission,
http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/ppc/sle_pg_06_e.htm.

The second-language ability level of Anglophones remains the prime indicator of the use of French as a language of work. Among the 12 personal-level obstacles that employees were asked to rank, three stood out as the most significant obstacles to the use of both official languages in the workplace. A great many Anglophones consider that not feeling at ease using French in the workplace is a great obstacle. Indeed, the lack of confidence in work done in French and the habit of working in English are the root causes of the difficulties that Anglophones experience.

Generally, respondents agree that the government should offer language training to all interested employees, even to those who do not occupy bilingual positions. The government should also make learning tools available so that employees can maintain their language skills. Anglophones should benefit from the linguistic profile of the National Capital Region. Sociolinguistic analysis shows that Anglophones who immerse themselves in the Francophone culture (newspapers, books, television, radio, and so on) are more apt to use French at work and are more successful at maintaining their language skills.

It is our collective responsibility to ensure we have a public service that respects the linguistic rights and obligations of its employees. Finally, it is the responsibility of each of us as individuals to exercise the right to use the official language of our choice at work in bilingual regions.

The honourable Lucienne Robillard,
New Brunswick Federal Council - Symposium on Language of Work, November 6, 2002, Dieppe

Among Francophones, on the other hand, a better knowledge of English seems to reinforce the existing tendency towards greater use of English. The habit of working in English becomes all the more evident when one observes that Francophones sometimes use English when speaking to each other.

Sociolinguistic analysis also reveals that, in the case of Francophone public servants, progress in English has sometimes been achieved to the detriment of their first official language. Although 77% of Anglophones and 83% of Francophones stated that their second-language ability has slightly or greatly improved since their entry into the federal public service, up to 20% of Francophones said that their facility in French has been somewhat or greatly diminished. Only 2% of Anglophones made the same statement about their abilities in English. These results are hardly surprising when we recognize that Francophones increasingly use English as their language of work.

Finding no. 4: An intermediate knowledge of the second language is insufficient for properly carrying out most supervisory tasks. Anglophones therefore do not have the possibility of acquiring the skills they need to fulfill all their job functions in both official languages.

C. A workplace strongly influenced by the presence of unilinguals

Survey respondents were asked to identify the linguistic composition of their work unit.¹⁵ Analysis of the data leads to the conclusion that, in general, respondents worked in an environment where 98% of employees could communicate in English and where 28% of Anglophones are unilingual. Anglophones are rarely faced with the need to interact with unilingual Francophone colleagues.

The use of French as a language of work increases as the number of Francophones in a given work unit increases.

- ◆ Anglophones tend to use French more frequently (51% of the time) in a workplace where there is a strong Francophone presence (more than 75%).
- ◆ Anglophones tend to use French less (38% of the time) when there are few Francophones in the workplace (between 0% and 25%).
- ◆ However, there is a higher level of communication in French between Francophone colleagues when there is a strong Francophone presence in the workplace.

15. A work unit includes a supervisor, colleagues and subordinates with whom the respondent deals regularly. Respondents were also asked to identify the language group to which, in their judgment, these people belonged: bilingual Francophone (with good knowledge of English), unilingual Francophone, bilingual Anglophone (good knowledge of French) or unilingual Anglophone.

- ◆ On the other hand, Francophones tend to quickly resort to English when dealing with Anglophone colleagues, regardless of the number of Francophones in the work unit.

Respondents nevertheless felt that courses focused on reading and oral comprehension skills in the second official language would contribute to promoting greater use of French, especially during meetings and in written communication. Such training should be available to all employees, including those holding unilingual positions.

Finding no. 5: The influence exerted by the presence of unilingual Anglophones is very strong and results in a high level of use of English as the language of work.

D. A real preference or adapting to circumstances?

The study on attitudes towards use of both official languages in the public service reveals that, in bilingual regions overall, most Anglophones and Francophones who speak both languages say they are satisfied with the use of English and French at work. Are respondents expressing a genuine satisfaction or a compromise position that points to the predominance of English? Until now, there was no evidence to confirm either view.

Sociolinguistic analysis by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages makes it possible to evaluate the accuracy of this expressed satisfaction. In the survey questionnaire, respondents were asked:

- ◆ to specify, in percentages, the current rate of use of English and French with the different people they deal with in their immediate work unit; and
- ◆ to specify, in percentages, the rate of use of English and French that they would consider ideal.

The results demonstrate a clear preference, equally strong among Anglophones and Francophones, for greater use of French at work.

Table 2 – Preference of Anglophone respondents on the rate of use of both official languages

	Anglophones			
	Rate of use of English		Rate of use of French	
	current	desired	current	desired
During meetings	78%	64%	22%	36%
Dealing with senior management	81%	69%	19%	31%
Dealing with supervisor	85%	82%	15%	18%
With Francophone colleagues	57%	42%	43%	58%

Table 3 – Preference of Francophone respondents on the rate of use of both official languages

	Francophones			
	Rate of use of English		Rate of use of French	
	current	desired	current	desired
During meetings	72%	45%	28%	55%
Dealing with senior management	67%	44%	33%	56%
Dealing with supervisor	44%	29%	56%	71%
With Anglophone colleagues	73%	60%	27%	40%

Meetings are the place where the unequal status of the two languages is most strongly felt. They reflect the prevailing organizational culture. Respondents from both language groups agree that when Anglophones and Francophones participate in the same meeting, the person conducting the meeting must always encourage each person to use his or her first official language.

E – A work environment still below standard

Each year, the Commissioner of Official Languages receives and investigates many complaints¹⁶ describing the lack of equality of the two official languages. Complaints are a useful tool for any ombudsman because they point to important shortcomings and sometimes to systemic problems. It should be pointed out that federal institutions are often content to implement superficial or stop-gap solutions. Despite repeated recommendations by the Commissioner of Official Languages, problems persist.

For example, federal employees in bilingual positions in designated bilingual regions complain that they cannot work in the language of their choice. Most complaints deal with a lack in one official language or the other of internal services, written material or professional training. Other complaints have to do with the unilingual character of meetings or the general work environment.

Even today, the Office of the Commissioner receives complaints about the lack of bilingual keyboards (non-conformance to Treasury Board standard 5) and the lack of French software on individual workstations.

The majority of complaints (about two-thirds) come from public servants working in the National Capital Region; most are made by Francophones. Complaints regarding the use of both official languages in the workplace rank second in frequency; the most frequent complaints deal with service to the public.

According to the study on attitudes regarding the use of both official languages in the public service, a large amount of work documentation is available only in English (62%), even in regions of Quebec where French is the only language of work (22% of documentation in such regions is only available in English).

This is confirmed by an analysis of the *2002 Public Service Employee Survey*. The results describe work environments where English still predominates. A significant number of employees in designated bilingual positions still express dissatisfaction with regard to respect for their language rights. Erasing old habits is not easy. Unfortunately, spontaneous use of French as a language of work is still not part of the public service culture.

16. See the various annual reports of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Table 4 – 2002 Public Service Employee Survey, in-depth analysis of the results by first official language of incumbents of bilingual positions in the National Capital Region

Survey questions	Response	Francophones	Anglophones
2. The material and tools provided for my work, including software and other automated tools, are available in the official language of my choice.	Mostly disagree/ strongly disagree	15%	1%
17. The training offered by my department is available in the official language of my choice.	Sometimes/ rarely or never	15%	3%
53B. To what extent, if at all, has lack of access to language training adversely affected your career progress in the public service over the last three years?	Moderately/ significantly	10%	20%

The results above demonstrate a gap in equality of the two official languages. For Francophones, the gap occurs in work tools and professional training. For Anglophones, the gap is in access to language training: 20% of respondents said lack of access to language training had a moderate or significant adverse affect on their career advancement.

Although significant progress has been made over the years in terms of the capacity of federal institutions, the situation is still not perfect. Sociolinguistic analysis confirms the survey data from federal public servants. About one-quarter of Francophone respondents said the quality of training and professional development is not comparable in the two official languages. Yet these are essential elements for equipping employees to give their best effort at work. There is a significant gap in the availability of training in the language of choice for Anglophone (3%) and Francophone respondents (15%).

According to the same sociolinguistic analysis, one-quarter of Anglophone respondents and half of Francophone respondents agree that the availability of work tools (manuals, directives and software) in only one official language, followed by a version in the second language at some later date, is a serious obstacle that must be corrected.

Finding no. 6: Given the absence of quality tools, training and professional development in French, resorting to English is sometimes the only option for Francophones.

SUPERFICIAL MONITORING

As previously mentioned, the federal government has concentrated so far on building up its institutional capacity and the language capacity of its employees. Follow-up has focused largely on achieving these objectives. The annual report of the President of the Treasury Board each year details the number of positions designated bilingual, the language requirements of those positions and the number of incumbents who meet the requirements.

Although these figures provide an idea of the capacity of institutions, sociolinguistic analysis clearly shows that meeting a linguistic profile does not necessarily translate into the use of a second language. Even if employees meet the linguistic requirements of the position after their completion of language training, only a few of them use their language skills when they return to work. Many quickly forget them. The prevailing organizational culture continues to favour the use of English.

Finding no. 7: Meeting a linguistic profile does not necessarily entail that the second language will be used. Monitoring carried out by the Treasury Board Secretariat does not allow us to draw any conclusions about the actual use of the two official languages.

Deputy ministers must ensure that linguistic duality is a basic value that is accepted, respected and made real in their respective departments. All senior managers should be held accountable for this responsibility. The degree to which they fulfill this role should be one of the criteria for performance evaluation and promotion.

Survey respondents agree that supervisors in a bilingual position should be evaluated on the concrete measures taken to create a work environment conducive to the use of both official languages, and not simply on meeting the linguistic profile of their positions. Institutions should therefore develop indicators based on the actual use of both official languages and report their findings annually.

Moreover, the Commissioner finds it unacceptable that the government has not taken greater advantage of the tools available to it for strengthening its official languages monitoring role and for establishing a framework for dialogue between senior managers and the staff they direct. Making the survey results of federal government employees available to federal institutions—based on the first official language, the linguistic designation of a position and the type of region (bilingual/unilingual)—would allow those institutions to do their own performance evaluation. Surveys of federal public servants can be a valuable self-assessment tool that can help identify obstacles and allow the setting of objectives suited to the nature of the institution and to specific work environments. The survey results should evaluate the workplace not on the basis of employee satisfaction but by comparing the real use of the two official languages with the desired degree of use.

The 2002 *Public Service Employee Survey* did not allow federal institutions to analyze in depth the results on official languages. The following example will underline that fact. According to the 2002 survey results, 17% of incumbents in bilingual positions stated that they do not feel at ease using the official language of their choice during meetings. Analysis of that same question, according to first official language, reveals that only 3% of Anglophones, compared to 22% of Francophones, do not feel at ease using the official language of their choice. One therefore has to conclude that, in terms of bilingual positions, it is Francophone employees who are dissatisfied.

The 2002 survey does not allow senior managers to identify problem areas in terms of official languages within their respective institutions. Official language issues should be among the main questions examined in future surveys of federal public servants. The government should do a more detailed analysis of survey results so that federal institutions can assess themselves; set objectives appropriate to their organization; and report on the achievement of these objectives to all of their employees.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As the sociolinguistics analysis shows, senior management has a fundamental role to play regarding the importance given to linguistic duality in the workplace. The perception that senior managers are unilingual tends to create a workplace in which English dominates. Managers and supervisors at every level must therefore communicate regularly in both official languages and demonstrate concretely the importance they give to linguistic duality. It is only by becoming models of bilingualism themselves that managers will be able to foster work environments in which both official languages have equal status.

Furthermore, more than half of all supervisory positions only require an intermediate or B-level knowledge of the second language. Anglophone supervisors therefore cannot acquire the linguistic skills they need to carry out their work adequately in both official languages. This lack of support often results in the recourse to English.

In some cases, Francophones do not have access to quality work tools or professional development or training courses in French. The recourse to English is often the only choice for Francophones who want to advance within the federal public service.

These conclusions allow us to develop 10 recommendations for deputy heads and central agencies. The goal is to strengthen the leadership and the institutional capacity of the federal government and thereby foster an organizational culture that respects the linguistic rights of its employees.

The Commissioner recommends that deputy heads:

1. demonstrate by concrete measures their commitment to Canada's linguistic duality by developing a management framework for official languages, which reflects strategic priorities and which includes indicators based on the actual use of both official languages; and
2. respect at all times the language rights of their employees in terms of work instruments, internal services and professional training.

The Commissioner recommends that the Clerk of the Privy Council:

3. require deputy heads to have the same level of bilingualism as that required for other EXs in the public service and implement a formal language evaluation system; and

4. evaluate deputy heads on their ability to create a work environment that respects the linguistic rights of all employees and that this factor be a prerequisite in determining performance bonuses.

The Commissioner recommends that the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada:

5. conduct a rigorous review of **all** senior managers—including managers whose positions or functions are EX-equivalents—to ensure they meet the minimal bilingualism requirement CBC;
6. eliminate, effective April 1, 2007, non-imperative staffing for all EX 01 level positions (including EX-equivalents) in designated bilingual regions or in unilingual regions, when the functions of the position involve supervision of employees in bilingual or either/or positions;
7. raise to at least CBC, by April 1, 2007, the linguistic profile for all supervisory positions in bilingual regions, when the incumbent is required to supervise employees in bilingual or either/or positions; and
8. include official languages among the main questions examined in future surveys of federal public servants, and do a more detailed analysis of survey results so that federal institutions can assess themselves.

The Commissioner recommends that the Canada School of the Public Service:

9. offer mandatory training courses, starting in autumn 2004, for senior managers and supervisors to make them aware of the impact the unequal status of both official languages has in work environments and enable them to put in place the measures necessary to attain a work environment that respects employees' linguistic rights; and
10. make available, as soon as possible, second-language training courses, focused on reading and oral comprehension skills, to promote receptive bilingualism for unilingual employees.

CONCLUSION

The creation of an organizational culture that respects the language rights of its employees represents a challenge that must be met. The conclusions of recent studies and sociolinguistic analysis have made it possible to identify three interrelated priority areas for action: leadership, institutional capacity and personal capacity.

Beyond the learning of second-language skills, the questions of use and retention are of prime importance. Senior managers, supervisors at all levels and employees of both language groups all have a role to play in creating an organizational climate in which every person is respected and valued.

This report also contains recommendations for deputy heads, the Clerk of the Privy Council, the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency and the School of the Public Service, to help them strengthen the federal government's official languages program. It also proposes a management framework of targeted actions designed to fully integrate Canada's linguistic duality into the organizational culture of government and, in doing so, to contribute to a genuine co-existence of respect for English and French in the workplace. It is now up to deputy heads to adapt this framework to the nature and mandate of their respective institutions.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT ROUNDTABLE

Recommendations concerning the linguistic capacity of Public Service employees

Participation rate

1. The Public Service must pursue efforts to maintain equitable participation by French-speakers in job categories related to the institutional mandate of organizations and remedy the overrepresentation of French-speakers in job categories in which they provide administrative services to other public servants.
2. The Public Service must implement a recruitment strategy to remedy the under-representation of English-speakers in the federal Public Service in Québec.

Attainment of the linguistic profile and the bilingualism bonus

3. The government must maintain its commitment to ensuring that all managers at the EX level attain the relevant language requirements.
4. The Public Service must invest more extensively in language training for middle managers working in bilingual regions and make such managers proficient to the C-B-C level when their duties warrant doing so.
5. The Public Service must review the linguistic requirements pertaining to certain middle management and supervisory positions in unilingual regions in order to foster the establishment of bilingual work relations in conjunction with horizontal initiatives between unilingual and bilingual regions.
6. The government and the unions must reassess the effectiveness of the bilingualism bonus in conjunction with the review of the Official Languages Program and the modernization of human resources and examine the possibility of reinvesting funding for the bonus in employee training and skills upgrading.

Staffing of bilingual positions

7. The Treasury Board must review the policy governing the staffing of bilingual positions in order to clarify the attribution of linguistic requirements to the positions to be filled. Bilingual imperative staffing should become the norm and exemptions to the attainment of the linguistic profile for employees in designated bilingual positions should require the approval of deputy heads.

8. The Public Service must play close attention to the needs of the middle managers who must play a broader role in staffing bilingual positions and the development of employee language skills in conjunction with the modernization of human resources management.

Recruitment, career development and personnel retention

9. Recruitment strategies must focus, in particular, on bilingual candidates to fill bilingual positions.
10. Recruitment strategies must enhance the attractiveness of bilingualism among English-speakers, French-speakers and members of the visible minorities and should clearly specify that newly hired employees will receive the necessary language training.
11. The Public Service must satisfy the pressing language training needs of its middle managers to foster personnel retention and ensure the availability of bilingual replacement managers for positions at the executive level.
12. The Public Service must satisfy the pressing language training needs of members of the visible minorities in order to facilitate their career advancement in the Public Service and to foster personnel retention.

Training and language evaluation

13. The Public Service must regard language training as a key component of learning and career development plans and indicate to employees that their language skills will affect their careers.
14. The Public Service Commission and government departments must invest the appropriate resources to anchor language skills at the beginning of employees' careers and establish a language training program for newly hired employees that includes an assignment or immersion in the second language.
15. The Public Service Commission and government departments must invest in follow-up to language training to foster the maintenance of the language skills acquired, i.e. develop skills upgrading programs and flexible educational tools adapted to the employees' learning styles.

16. The Public Service Commission must invest additional funds with respect to the evaluation of employees' language skills to increase the frequency of oral interaction tests and eliminate test exemptions.
17. The Public Service Commission must satisfy the specific educational needs of certain members of the visible minorities by developing the appropriate language training program and support measures.

Recommendations concerning the use of the official languages in the workplace

18. Senior and middle managers must set an example with respect to bilingualism in the workplace in conjunction with hierarchical communications and during meetings.
19. French-speakers have an important role to play in promoting the use of French and, with the support of their managers, they must take advantage of their right to express themselves in the language of their choice.
20. Contractual rules governing professional services must be tightened in order to ensure that consultants work in both official languages.
21. Departments and managers must rely on existing good practices and tools with regard to the language of work and test them in order to foster the effective use of both official languages in the workplace.
22. Deputy heads must take advantage of the support of public servants for bilingualism in order to revitalize efforts centred on the language of work.
23. Departments and agencies must promote the rights and obligations of employees and managers with respect to the language of work and remedy erroneous perceptions concerning the scope of the requirements of the official languages policy.
24. Departments and agencies must rely on employee perceptions and attitudes to create a culture in which linguistic duality is recognized as an integral, positive part of a workplace centred on the core values of respect and inclusion.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bourhis, Richard Y., *Organizational and Sociolinguistic Determinants of Official Languages Use in the Canadian Public Service*, study produced for the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, January 2004.

Bourhis, Richard Y., Dominique Lepicq and Itesh Sachdev, *La psychologie sociale de la communication multilingue*, article published in *DiversCité Langues*, Volume V, 2000.

Canadian Centre for Management Development, *French to Follow? Revitalizing Official Languages in the Workplace*, report of the Action-Research Roundtable on Official Languages in the Workplace, 2003.

Canadian Centre for Management Development, *A Strong Foundation*, report of the Task Force on Public Service Values and Ethics, 2000.

NFO CFgroup, *Attitudes Toward Both Official Languages in the Public Service of Canada*, study presented to the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Communications Canada and Canadian Heritage, August 2002.

Privy Council Office, *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality – The Action Plan for Official Languages*, 2003.

Public Service Commission of Canada, *Determining the Linguistic Profile of Bilingual Positions*, available online.

Statistics Canada, *Additional Data – 2002 Public Service Employee Survey's Results*.

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, *2002-2003 Official Languages Annual Report*, October 2003.

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, *Backgrounder: Release of Government-Wide Results of the 2002 Public Service Employee Survey*, Treasury Board Secretariat, December 2, 2002.