

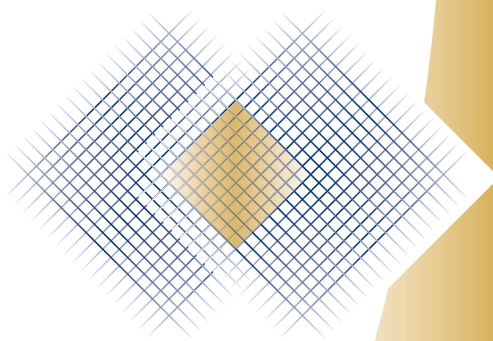


Office of the
Commissioner of
Official Languages

Commissariat
aux langues
officielles

Making it Real

Promoting Respectful Co-existence
of the Two Official Languages at Work



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HIGHLIGHTS

The Commissioner is releasing the second in a series of studies on language of work in bilingual workplaces in the federal Public Service, *Making It Real: Promoting Respectful Co-existence of the Two Official Languages at Work*.

As part of this study, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages conducted two surveys and held nine discussion groups:

- a survey of 2,900 Anglophone and Francophone federal employees working in a bilingual region in Quebec, where Anglophones—who are the majority nationally—constitute the official language minority community. The overall response rate was 44%.
- a survey of 2,200 employees working at the head offices of eight Crown corporations, two located in Montréal and six in the National Capital Region (NCR). The overall response rate was 46%.
- nine discussion groups made up of federal public servants, Anglophones and Francophones, in the NCR and Montréal, in order to expand on certain points and identify practical solutions.

This new information validates the observations made by the Commissioner in her first study on language of work, *Walking the Talk: Language of Work in the Federal Public Service*, released in March 2004, as well as the findings of other related government studies.

Undeniable evidence

- The importance placed on linguistic duality within an institution is a reflection of the leadership shown by senior management, whose behaviour is what very often shapes the organizational culture.
- Because of their position of influence, supervisors play a critical role in the organizational culture of their immediate work environment. They must have superior knowledge of both official languages so that they can supervise their staff effectively in the language of their choice.
- Unilingualism in senior management hinders the establishment of workplaces that are conducive to the effective use of both official languages.
- The Government of Canada must strengthen its accountability mechanisms. It must evaluate senior managers based on the concrete action they have taken to create a workplace that respects the language rights of employees.
- There are still misunderstandings and misconceptions about the rights and obligations of employees with respect to the requirements of the *Official Languages Act*.

Major trends

Equality of the two official languages in the workplace has not yet been achieved and remains a work in progress on several fronts.

- Federal public servants and employees who belong to the linguistic minority community must often adopt the language of the majority in order to advance within the federal institutions.
- In federal government departments located in bilingual regions of Quebec, French is the predominant language of work. The situation of Anglophones working there is very similar to what Francophones experience in the NCR.
- English is predominant in communications between headquarters and federal offices in bilingual regions of Quebec. Regional offices expect headquarters to communicate with them in the official language of their choice, especially since there is a greater pool of bilingual positions in the federal Public Service in the NCR, and it is the region where government policy originates.
- Within the eight Crown corporations surveyed, English is used much more heavily than French, except in Quebec, where the use of the two official languages is more balanced. However, it has been observed that Anglophones mainly use their first official language, whereas Francophones use English and French on a relatively equal basis.
- Within the eight Crown corporations surveyed, Anglophones are more satisfied with the use of their first official language than Francophones. We have observed the opposite situation for Anglophones working in federal government departments located in bilingual regions of Quebec: they would like to make greater use of English at work.

Significant advantages

- The Government of Canada's bilingualism policy enjoys broad support from federal public servants and the employees of Crown corporations. They are proud of their ability to use both official languages at work. They also agree that working in their first official language contributes to their quality of life at work.
- Anglophones in the NCR and Francophones in bilingual regions of Quebec have expressed a willingness to make greater use of their second official language at work.
- In bilingual regions of Quebec, Anglophone public servants are highly bilingual, and a large proportion of Francophones have intermediate to superior second language skills.
- Discussion group participants report that there are indeed workplaces in the federal Public Service where both official languages are equally valued and respected, thanks to the firm commitment of their senior officials toward linguistic duality.

Avenues for change

- Senior management must show leadership and take significant and concrete action to demonstrate the importance it places on linguistic duality by using both official languages regularly.
- To ensure that a workplace is truly conducive to the effective use of both official languages, senior management must make this a priority and develop easily measurable indicators based on concrete results.
- Federal institutions must encourage minority language employees to use their first official language, thereby providing employees from the majority with greater opportunities to maintain and build on their second-language skills.
- Learning a second language is not easy. Learners must make a sustained effort to use their second language at every available opportunity so as to maintain and improve their skills. Consequently, highly bilingual individuals must certainly show greater patience and avoid switching to their co-workers' first official language at the slightest linguistic stumble.
- Managers in Quebec must broaden their recruitment strategies in order to more effectively reach the Anglophone target audience and foster a workplace where the use of both official languages is equally valued.

Recommendations

- This study includes eight recommendations for the Clerk of the Privy Council, the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada, the Canada School of Public Service, Treasury Board, and heads of Crown corporations and other organizations subject to the *Official Languages Act*. Of these recommendations, four were already brought to the attention of the Government of Canada in the report *Walking the Talk*.
- As was mentioned in her report *Walking the Talk*, released in March 2004, the Commissioner pointed out that an effective program for managing official languages is based on three strategic priorities, which require constant and simultaneous effort: leadership, institutional capacity and the personal capacity of employees in their second language. Although progress has been made in recent years with respect to two of these components, namely institutional capacity and personal capacity, effort is still required. However, the key to the solution rests with senior management leadership. Without clear commitment from leaders and senior managers, the spirit of the *Official Languages Act* often goes unheeded.

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INTRODUCTION

Canada's official languages are English and French, which are among the most useful and prestigious languages in the world. This linguistic duality reflects the spirit of co-operation that characterizes the relations between our country's two principal language communities. It is a bridge that links English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians, so that the two groups—each of which is made up of many different cultures—can live together in respect and mutual understanding.

In order for this respect to become fully realized, the Public Service, the driving engine of the Government of Canada, must be its foremost exemplar and standard-bearer. A great deal of progress has been made in this regard over the years; however, there remain a number of challenges to be addressed in order to fully achieve all the objectives of the *Official Languages Act*.

For instance, federal employees who have the right to work in the official language of their choice do not always feel comfortable doing so, whether at meetings or in their dealings with colleagues, supervisors or senior management. This is what was revealed in our most recent study on language of work, *Walking the Talk: Language of Work in the Federal Public Service*,¹ which was released on March 29, 2004. This study underscored the fact that English is the predominant language in the work environments of federal institutions, especially those in the National Capital Region (NCR).

During the second half of 2004, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages carried out additional work as part of its examination. First, OCOL looked at language of work in bilingual regions of Quebec² where Anglophones, who are the majority nationally, constitute the official language minority community. Second, we examined the work environments at the head offices of eight Crown corporations located in bilingual regions. We chose Crown corporations because a larger number of federal employees can be found in Crown corporations and other separate agencies compared with departments. Finally, we brought together several public servants working in the NCR and in the Montréal area to further discuss some of the results of the survey carried out in Quebec and the survey carried out in the NCR in 2003. New findings have revealed that progress regarding language of work varied considerably from one bilingual region to another.

¹ The report *Walking the Talk: Language of Work in the Federal Public Service*, which was released on March 29, 2004, is available on the Web site of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages at http://www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/archives/sst_es/2004/work_travail/work_travail_2004_e.htm.

² The language of work is based on the concept of a "bilingual region". Accordingly, the *Official Languages Act* specifies that English and French are the languages of work and have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in certain regions. The regions designated bilingual include the National Capital Region, parts of northern and eastern Ontario, the Montréal area, parts of the Eastern Townships and the Gaspésie region, as well as New Brunswick. In these regions—as opposed to the other regions of Canada, where one language predominates—the two official languages are routinely used.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

This study is the second in a series of studies³ on the issues surrounding the use of the two official languages in bilingual work environments. Its purpose is twofold: to obtain greater insight into the factors that directly affect the use of the two official languages in the workplace and the nature of the challenges faced by Anglophones and Francophones with careers in the federal administration; and to identify the essential components of a workplace that respects the language rights of its employees, with a view to fostering the harmonious co-existence of both official languages on a daily basis.

³ The first study examined the use of the two official languages in federal institutions located in the National Capital Region (see *Walking the Talk: Language of Work in the Federal Public Service*, March 29, 2004).

Our study consisted of three parts. The first part involved surveying the incumbents of bilingual and either/or positions⁴ working in bilingual regions of Quebec. The second part involved surveying Anglophone and Francophone employees working at the head offices of eight Crown corporations located in bilingual regions. In the third part, we held nine focus groups in the NCR and Montréal.

QUANTITATIVE DATA:

I. Results of the Survey of Federal Public Servants in Quebec

During the summer of 2004, we mailed questionnaires to 2,863 public servants in bilingual or either/or positions working in a bilingual region of Quebec (except the NCR) for one of 36 departments and agencies⁵ for which Treasury Board is the employer. Respondents⁶ were selected at random from the employee database of the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada except for the anglophone population⁷, for which we conducted oversampling. The overall response rate was an acceptable 44%, namely 1,081 Francophones and 184 Anglophones. The linguistic profile of the respondents to the survey is set out in Appendix B.

The questionnaire and the analysis of the data were carried out in conjunction with social psychologist and sociolinguist Richard Y. Bourhis, Director of the Concordia-UQAM (Université du Québec à Montréal) Chair of Ethnic Studies, and Annie Montreuil, from the Department of Psychology at UQAM.

⁴ There are four types of positions in the federal Public Service:

- Bilingual: positions for which the duties require the use of English and French;
- English essential: positions in which the duties are carried out essentially in English;
- French essential: positions in which the duties are carried out essentially in French; and
- Either/or: unilingual positions for which the incumbent is allowed to chose his or her preferred language of work upon commencing employment.

⁵ Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Veterans Affairs Canada; Library and Archives Canada; Transportation Safety Board of Canada; Public Service Commission; Citizenship and Immigration Canada; Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages; Status of Women Canada; Privy Council Office; Tax Court of Canada; Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions; Human Resources and Skills Development Canada; Social Development Canada; National Defence; Canadian Human Rights Commission; Environment Canada; Royal Canadian Mounted Police; Industry Canada; Justice Canada; National Parole Board; Passport Office; Canadian Heritage; Fisheries and Oceans Canada; Canada Industrial Relations Board; Natural Resources Canada; Health Canada; Correctional Service Canada; Statistics Canada; Immigration and Refugee Board; Public Works and Government Services Canada; Transport Canada; Courts Administration Service; Solicitor General; Foreign Affairs Canada; International Trade Canada; Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada.

⁶ There are approximately 1,500 English-speaking (7%) and 18,800 French-speaking (93%) employees in the federal Public Service in Quebec (excluding the NCR).

⁷ Our study focussed on English-speaking public servants in bilingual or either/or positions, identified as working in a bilingual region of Quebec (excluding the NCR), for whom a mailing address was available (one should keep in mind the significant changes that took place within the federal Public Service in the spring of 2004). Of the 609 names extracted from the Agency's database, we selected a sample consisting of over 500 English-speaking public servants, that is, 83% of the available population.

II. Survey of eight Crown corporations

In the fall of 2004, questionnaires were sent out to 2,200 employees working at the head offices of eight Crown corporations located in regions designated bilingual for purposes of language of work. These Crown corporations were selected because their English-speaking and French-speaking workforces were large enough to allow for valid and reliable statistical data. Respondents were chosen at random from a list of employees provided by each Crown Corporation. A total of 1,014 people responded to the survey, namely 518 Anglophones and 496 Francophones, giving a satisfactory response rate of 46%. The ethnolinguistic profile of respondents to this survey is set out in Appendix C.

Six Crown corporations (the Royal Canadian Mint, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the National Arts Centre, the Bank of Canada, the Canadian Museum of Civilization and CBC/Radio-Canada) have head offices located in the NCR, while the Business Development Bank of Canada and VIA Rail⁸ are located in the Montréal area.

In this section, we used weighted data to better reflect the eight Crown corporations' workforce.

The questionnaire and analysis of the data were carried out jointly with The Antima Group, partner of TNS Canadian Facts for public opinion research.

⁸ Among those surveyed were a number of VIA Rail employees working in New Brunswick.

QUALITATIVE DATA:

III Creating a Workplace that Respects the Language Rights of Its Employees (Focus Groups)

We held nine two-hour focus groups in October 2004 in Montréal and the NCR. Participants were selected at random from a list of names of staff members provided by 10 federal departments and agencies⁹ that took part in this phase of the study. Norman Baillie-David, a certified professional in marketing research for The Antima Group, a partner of TNS Canadian Facts, performed the sampling, interpreted the results, and facilitated the focus groups.

Table 1
Focus groups schedule

Bilingual region	Date		Employment level	Language in which discussions were held	Number of participants
National Capital Region	1	Oct. 25	Managers	English	6
	2	Oct. 25	Officers and support staff	English	9
	3	Oct. 27	Managers	French	8
	4	Oct. 27	Officers and support staff	French	9
Montréal	5	Oct. 28	Managers	English	4
	6	Oct. 28	Members of the Quebec Federal Council (or their representatives)	Bilingual	5
	7	Oct. 28	Managers	French	9
	8	Oct. 29	Officers and support staff	English	9
	9	Oct. 29	Officers and support staff	French	9

Note:

Qualitative research in general, and focus groups in particular, are very useful tools for organizations to better understand the needs, attitudes, and opinions of their staff and clients, both current and potential. Qualitative research seeks to explore issues in more depth and is not meant to be treated as statistically significant.

⁹ Fisheries and Oceans Canada; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Environment Canada; Human Resources and Skills Development Canada; Industry Canada; Passport Office; Citizenship and Immigration Canada; Correctional Service Canada; Royal Canadian Mounted Police; Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions.

L LANGUAGE RIGHTS OF FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVANTS

The *Official Languages Act*, adopted in 1988, provides for equality of English and French as the languages of work within the institutions¹⁰ subject to it. Thus, in regions designated bilingual, institutions subject to the Act must ensure that their work environments are conducive to the effective use of both official languages and accommodate the use of either official language by their officers and employees, subject to the obligations relating to service to the public and to other employees. For example, institutions must comply with certain minimal obligations:

- make available in both official languages services that are provided to officers and employees, including services that are provided to them as individuals and services that are centrally provided by the institution to support them in the performance of their duties; (such as payroll, training, professional development, administrative services and computer services);
- make regularly and widely used documents and work instruments (including manuals, policies, directives, and software) available to officers and employees in both official languages;
- ensure that supervisors are able to communicate in both official languages with officers and employees in carrying out their supervisory responsibility; and
- ensure that any management group that is responsible for the general direction of the institution as a whole has the capacity to function in both official languages.

In order to meet these obligations, institutions must develop an organizational culture that fully respects the language rights of their employees, whether these employees are English- or French-speaking. In other words, all public servants must have access to their work instruments and receive internal services in their preferred official language, without having to wait any longer than their colleagues who belong to the other language group, and without having to request these instruments and services. This also means that employees must feel comfortable speaking in their preferred official language at meetings and in dealings with their colleagues, their supervisors, senior management and head offices.

¹⁰ As defined in section 3 of the *Official Languages Act*, the term “federal institutions” includes federal departments, boards and Crown corporations. Federal institutions that have been privatized, such as Air Canada, may also be required to meet certain obligations with regard to official languages.

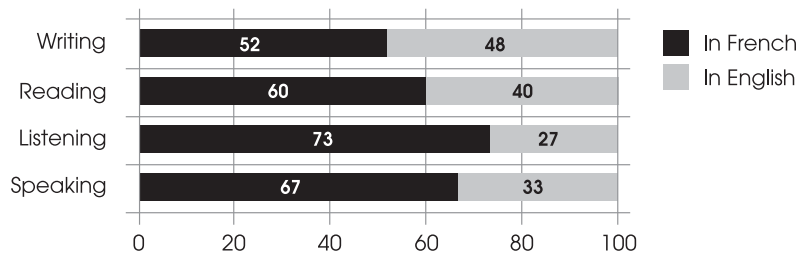
RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVANTS IN QUEBEC

The following sections give the results of a survey of 2,863 public servants, in bilingual or either/or positions, working in a bilingual region of Quebec. A total of 1,265 persons completed the survey, namely 1,081 Francophones and 184 Anglophones, giving a satisfactory response rate of 44%. (The linguistic profile of respondents to this survey can be found in Appendix B.) The results illustrate the influence of Quebec’s sociolinguistic context on the use of official languages in federal workplaces in Quebec. The situation for Anglophones¹¹ is similar to that of Francophones working in the NCR¹². They have often adopted the language of the linguistic majority. Francophones, meanwhile, must often use English when they interact with public servants in the NCR, where English predominates as the language of work.

A. A Francophone Organizational Culture

In Quebec, French often predominates in the organizational culture. As figures 1 and 2 show, Anglophones use their second official language for work more than their first, while Francophones primarily use French.

Figure 1 - Use of both official languages by Anglophone respondents (%)

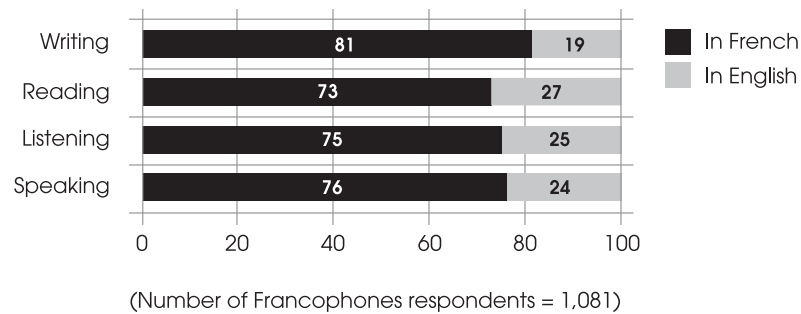


(Number of Anglophone respondents = 184)

¹¹ We asked respondents to indicate, in the questionnaire, their first official language; that is, the language with which they have a primary personal identification, regardless of their ethnic origin or native language.

¹² The study *Walking the Talk: Language of Work in the Federal Public Service* examines the linguistic environment of federal institutions located in the NCR. The findings of this study indicate that the language of the majority, English, predominates in the organizational culture and is considered the language of professional advancement.

Figure 2 - Use of both official languages by Francophones respondents (%)



When we combine the four areas of language use (writing, reading, listening and speaking), Anglophones generally use French at work twice as often (63%) as English. Francophones benefit from the influence of the organizational culture and use their first official language three-quarters of the time.

In addition to using more French than English at work, Anglophones tend to use their second language more often when communicating with their Francophone colleagues (80%), compared with Francophones, who use English with their Anglophone colleagues half the time.

The widespread use of French at work has a positive impact on the maintenance of language skills for Anglophones. Whereas Anglophone public servants in the NCR have difficulty maintaining their French language skills upon returning from language training, 78% of Anglophone respondents in Quebec said that their second language skills had improved somewhat or greatly since they joined the federal Public Service. It should also be pointed out, however, that up to 14% of Anglophones felt that their skills in their first official language had deteriorated somewhat. As was observed in 2003 for Francophones in the NCR, progress in the second language for the linguistic minority is often obtained to the detriment of the first official language.

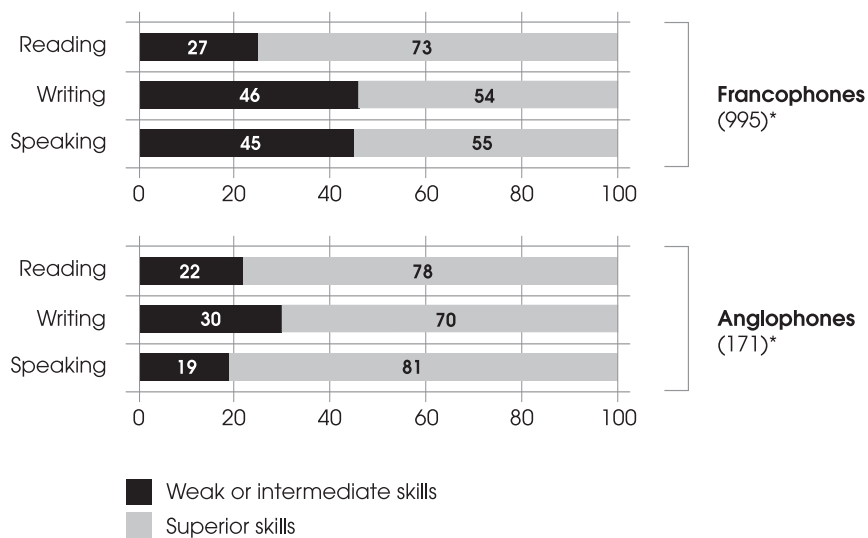
Possible solution

The creation of practical training periods in Quebec for Anglophone managers from other regions of the country would allow them to consolidate their French language skills and promote more equitable use of the two official languages at work in bilingual regions.

Although French predominates in the bilingual regions of Quebec, two-thirds of Francophones said that their English language skills had improved somewhat or greatly since they joined the federal Public Service; the reverse was true for 3% of Francophones, who felt that their French language skills had deteriorated somewhat. Because they frequently communicate with public servants in other regions, some Francophone public servants in Quebec must often resort to English as the language of work.

To gain a clear picture of the level of bilingualism of public servants working in Quebec, we asked respondents to give their most recent results on the second language evaluations conducted by the Public Service Commission (PSC). We then divided them into two separate groups: (1) public servants with weak or intermediate second language skills¹³ and (2) public servants with superior skills. As shown in Figure 3, the Anglophone respondents are much more bilingual than the Francophone respondents. A proportion of 8 out of 10 Anglophones have superior second language skills, compared with just over half of Francophones.

Figure 3 - Results of second language testing (%)



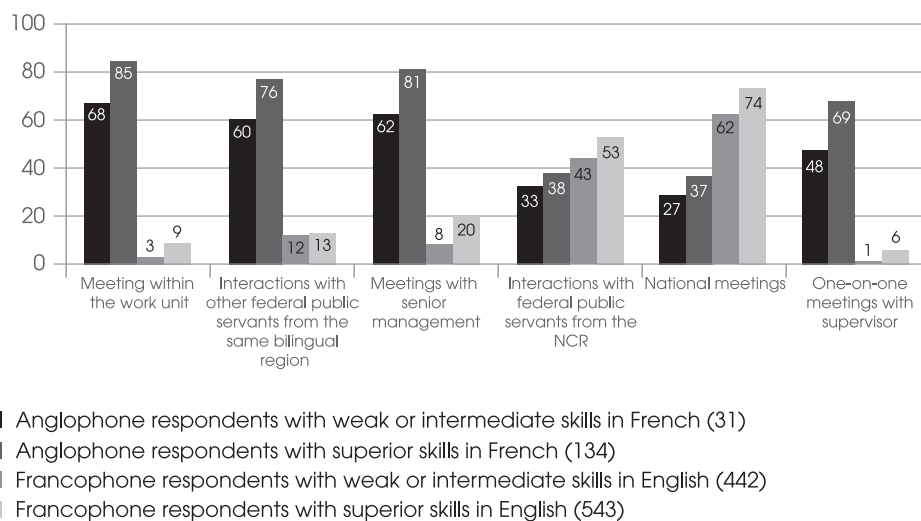
* The number of responses for each skill vary slightly; the percentage has therefore been adjusted.

¹³ Respondents were grouped as follows: weak skills – Level A on PSC exams; intermediate skills – Level B; superior skills – Level C, P or E.

We also asked respondents to assess their own ability to use and understand the other official language. By comparing the results of the PSC evaluations and the respondents' self-assessments, we found that respondents feel generally at ease in their second language. Whereas just over half of Francophone respondents obtained C, P or E on the PSC's oral interaction evaluation, 72% of them felt that they spoke English easily or fluently. Among Anglophones, three-quarters obtained level C, P or E in French and 86% of them felt that they spoke French easily or fluently. This confirms the predominance of French.

As Figure 4 illustrates, there is a marked imbalance in the use of the two official languages in bilingual regions of Quebec, particularly during meetings. This discrepancy can be explained by the perception among federal public servants that Quebec is the only province where they feel completely comfortable speaking French. This perception was repeated on various occasions during the focus groups in Montréal. However, once federal public servants in Quebec interact with public servants in the NCR, English clearly predominates in communications. Quebec is the only province where we note this atypical situation: public servants switch from the linguistic majority to the minority depending on whom they are dealing with. For example, a Francophone will communicate in French during meetings in Quebec, regardless of whether Quebec Anglophone colleagues are present; as soon as the same Francophone communicates with Anglophones from the NCR, however, English takes precedence, regardless of either side's second language skills. In contrast, Anglophones from the NCR tend to keep using English, whether they are communicating with Francophones from the NCR or from the bilingual regions of Quebec.

Figure 4 - Rate of use of second language according to language skills of respondents (%)



Possible solution

Managers must build on the bilingual capacity of Francophone public servants in the bilingual regions of Quebec by inviting Anglophones to use their first official language more frequently and by enhancing the status of bilingualism during meetings.

Although Anglophones working in the bilingual regions of Quebec generally have superior second language skills and resort to French most of the time, senior management should ensure that their rights are fully respected. Some Anglophone respondents reported that they did not always have access to work instruments, training and professional development, and e-mail and computer services in the official language of their choice.

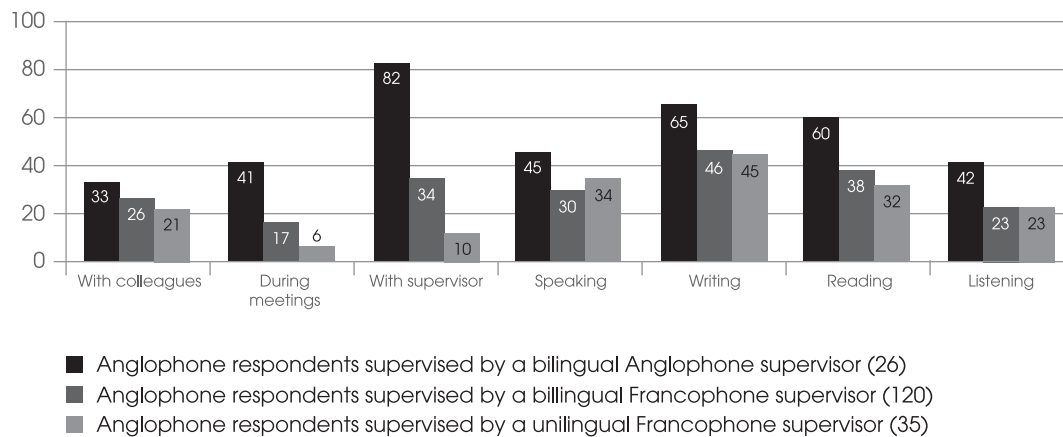
Among the organizational barriers that respondents were asked to comment on, the lack of access to training and professional development in their first official language is the most commonly identified obstacle mentioned by Anglophone respondents. As well, they agree that making widely and regularly used work instruments available in both official languages at the same time is an effective way of improving the use of both official languages at work.

B. The Supervisor: A Significant Factor

Like the second language skills of public servants, the first official language of supervisors¹⁴ has a direct impact on the linguistic behaviour of members of the minority language group. Anglophones seem to feel more comfortable using English at work when their supervisor belongs to the same language group as they do. For example, as Figure 5 shows, Anglophone respondents tend to use their first official language more often with their co-workers and at meetings if their supervisor is Anglophone than if the supervisor is a bilingual Francophone.

¹⁴ Survey respondents had to identify the language group to which they thought their supervisor belonged: a bilingual Francophone (with good knowledge of English), a unilingual Francophone, a bilingual Anglophone (with good knowledge of French) or a unilingual Anglophone. It should be noted that the respondents identified very few supervisors as unilingual Anglophones; as a result, this group is not included in the analysis.

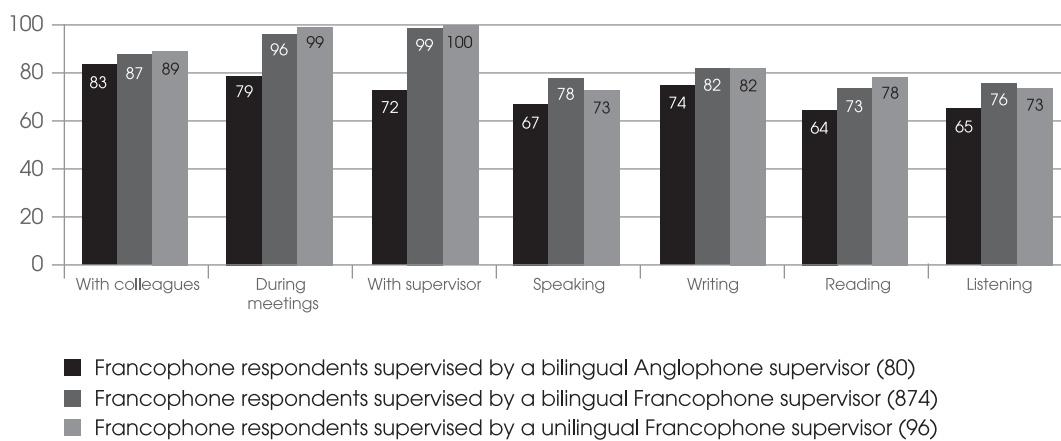
Figure 5 - Rate of use of English by Anglophones according to language skills of supervisor (%)



This figure also shows that when the supervisor is Francophone, his or her language skills generally have little impact on the language chosen by Anglophones. There is almost no difference in the time spent speaking, writing, reading or listening depending on whether the supervisor is a bilingual Francophone or a unilingual Francophone, since Anglophones in Quebec are very bilingual. However, the supervisor's language skills do have an influence on the use of English by Anglophones at meetings or during one-on-one discussions. In our opinion, creating a climate in which Anglophones feel more comfortable using their first official language will require extra effort by Francophone supervisors. They should use English more often with their Anglophone employees in order to promote use of both official languages at work.

According to Figure 6, the supervisor's first official language also affects the language chosen by Francophone respondents. Despite an organizational culture in which French dominates, Francophones use their first official language to a lesser extent if their supervisor is Anglophone rather than Francophone.

Figure 6 - Rate of use of French by Francophones according to language skills of supervisor (%)



Possible solution

Regardless of the language group to which supervisors belong, they must create a working environment in which members of both language groups feel respected and comfortable using their first official language by using themselves both official languages in communicating with their staff.

This is especially important, since many Anglophones report that they do not feel comfortable using English at work on a routine basis and prefer to work in French so that they will receive due recognition for their work. It should be remembered that the respondents work in an environment where 97.5% of the staff can communicate in French and one-quarter of Francophones are unilingual. Francophones rarely need to interact with unilingual English co-workers (2.5%), except when they are dealing with the NCR. Quebec is one place where Francophones feel completely comfortable using French at work and speak it gladly as a result.

Possible solution

Deputy heads must evaluate the performance of managers by developing assessment criteria based on the actual use of both official languages and the respect of the language rights of both linguistic groups.

C. Preferred Official Language: Satisfaction Increases with Use

Since there are many bilingual positions¹⁵ in the federal Public Service in Quebec, public servants working there should be able to use their preferred official language most of the time (except when providing service to the public or other public servants). We therefore asked them to rate their true satisfaction with respect to the use of either official language.

As shown in tables 2 and 3, Anglophones would clearly like to see increased use of English at work, except in the case of interactions with public servants in the NCR or national meetings (where English already predominates). A higher proportion of Anglophone respondents said that there were more barriers to the use of English than French in their immediate work environment. Francophones are generally satisfied with their use of their first official language within their region and, in some cases, would like to make greater use of their second language at meetings with co-workers. In interactions with the NCR and other regions, Francophones would like to use French more.

Meetings are where the unequal status of the two official languages is most noticeable and usually reflect the organizational culture. Since French predominates in the organizational culture in Quebec, it is not surprising that Anglophones would like to feel more comfortable using more English during meetings and with senior management. When asked to comment on a series of statements, respondents said that meetings held primarily in only one language and the presence of unilingual co-workers who are unable to at least read or understand their second official language were significant impediments.

¹⁵ According to the *2003–2004 Annual Report on Official Languages* submitted to Parliament by the Public Service Human Resource Management Agency of Canada, 60% of positions in Quebec (outside the NCR) are designated bilingual.

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

	Anglophones (184)			
	Rate of use of English		Rate of use of French	
	Current	Desired	Current	Desired
During meetings within the work unit	18%	43%	82%	57%
With the supervisor	36%	57%	64%	43%
With senior management	22%	49%	78%	51%
With federal public servants from the same bilingual region	27%	47%	73%	53%
With federal public servants from the NCR	62%	65%	38%	35%
During national meetings	65%	68%	35%	32%

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

	Francophones (1,081)			
	Rate of use of English		Rate of use of French	
	Current	Desired	Current	Desired
During meetings within the work unit	6%	9%	94%	91%
With the supervisor	4%	6%	96%	94%
With senior management	15%	14%	85%	86%
With federal public servants from the same bilingual region	13%	17%	87%	83%
With federal public servants from the NCR	48%	36%	52%	64%
During national meetings	68%	41%	32%	59%

Among the solutions likely to improve the use of the two official languages, Anglophone respondents said that all senior managers should always be proficient in both official languages and all employees should be able to at least read and understand their second official language so that everyone could speak and be understood in their first language. These solutions were also supported by respondents in our study of language of work in the NCR.¹⁶

Possible solution

Managers should encourage the acquisition of receptive knowledge¹⁷ of the second language among unilingual employees to allow more balanced use of the two official languages.

¹⁶ See *Walking the Talk*.

¹⁷ “Receptive bilingualism” implies understanding and reading one’s second language, while speaking it poorly or not at all.

D. Communications with Headquarters: The Influence of the Predominance of English in the NCR

“When an Anglophone [from headquarters] comes here, we bend over backwards. When we go to Ottawa, we know what it is like to be in the minority. They never make the effort.”

—(translation) Francophone officer/support staff, Montréal

“When it comes out of Montréal, it is bilingual. What we get [from the NCR] is unilingual.”

—(translation) Francophone officer/support staff, Montréal

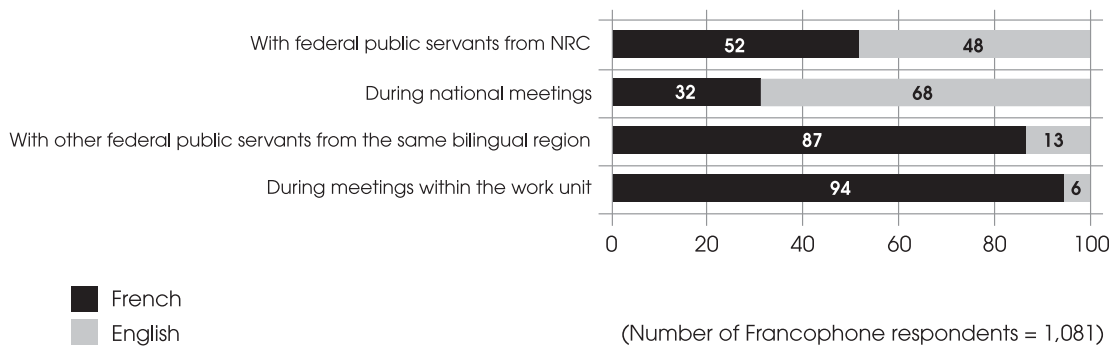
“When we send a question to Ottawa by e-mail in French, the answer often comes back in English.”—(translation) Francophone manager, Montréal

“If you speak French, they stop taking notes or ask you to repeat yourself.”

—(translation) Francophone manager, Montréal

As mentioned above and shown by Figure 7, language of work for federal public servants in Quebec is strongly influenced by the mandate of the office and whether that mandate involves providing services at the local or national level. We have included a number of comments from participants in the focus groups in Montréal to give a better idea of the frustration felt by public servants working in Quebec with respect to their interaction with headquarters in the NCR.

Figure 7 - Rate of use of English and French by Francophone respondents (%)



While French dominates local and regional communications, whenever public servants interact with the NCR, the pressure exerted by English is strongly felt. For example, while Francophones communicate in French during meetings within their work unit more than 9 times out of 10, they use French to communicate during national meetings less than one-third of the time.

Even though French predominates as the language of work in Quebec, Francophones still face significant barriers in using their first official language. The impediments mentioned most often by Francophone respondents are: national meetings or meetings with NCR public servants are conducted mainly in English; work instruments (manuals, directives, software) are available initially in English only; and e-mail between Francophones and Anglophones is exchanged primarily in English. As mentioned in the study *Walking the Talk*, the organizational culture of the NCR favours the use of English. Since linguistic duality is not an integral part of that culture, many documents, training sessions and work instruments are not available in French until afterwards, and the French versions are sometimes of lesser quality.

Possible solution

Deputy heads must put in place strict monitoring mechanisms that will allow them to ensure that the language rights of public servants working in their regional offices in Quebec are fully respected.

There is no doubt that the predominance of English as the language of work in the NCR has a strong impact on exchanges between headquarters and the regional offices in Quebec. The regional offices are, however, entitled to expect their head office to communicate with them in the official language of their choice, especially since the NCR has the largest number of bilingual positions in the federal Public Service and it is the region where government policy originates.

“Ottawa is the national capital. Ottawa is where the equality of French and English is supposed to be demonstrated. That is not the reality with the occasional catch-up to reach out and do part of the meeting in French.”

—Anglophone manager, Montréal

This is a significant source of frustration for Francophones, as was clearly expressed during the focus groups. In Part III of this report, we look more closely at the negative impact of the failure to respect language rights at work.

Possible solution

Senior management and public servants in the NCR should be the first to put language policies and directives into practice by respecting the language preferences of their colleagues in the regional offices.

E. The Official Bilingualism Policy of the Government of Canada: Strong Support

Respondents were also given the opportunity to express their opinions on the Government of Canada's bilingualism policy. More than 9 out of 10 respondents agree that bilingualism is an asset for Canadian society as a whole and that the use of both official languages at work demonstrates respect for others. The majority of respondents (72%) said that they were proud to be able to use English as a language of work, and more than 9 out of 10 were proud to be able to use French as a language of work. As well, they agree that working in their first official language contributes positively to their job satisfaction.

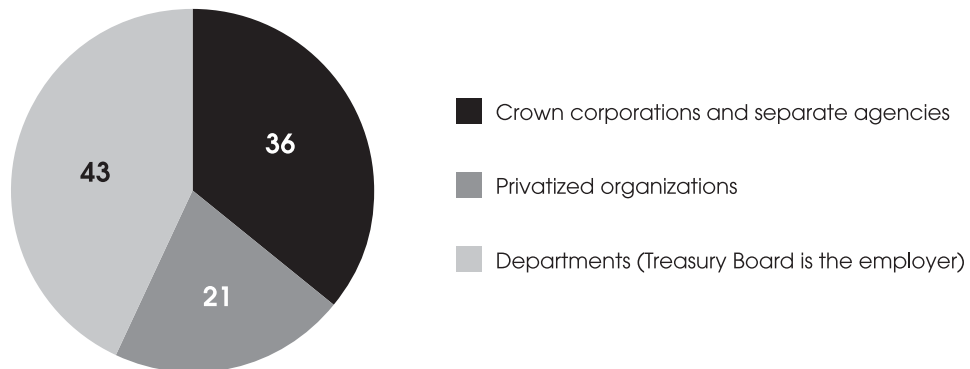
Fewer than 1 respondent out of 10 said that it was inefficient to use two official languages at work and that too many positions are designated bilingual. In contrast, 6 out of 10 respondents said that all bilingual positions should be staffed by people who are already bilingual when they assume the position, so that the right of employees to work in the official language of their choice can be respected. Some respondents consider the bilingualism policy too strict (29%) and a small minority (15%) feel that it has had a negative impact on relations among public servants. Nearly half of the respondents feel that official bilingualism has contributed to equality of opportunity for Anglophone and Francophone employees of the federal Public Service.

In closing, we can state that linguistic duality enjoys strong support among Anglophone and Francophone respondents. They are proud to be able to use both official languages at work.

SURVEY OF EIGHT CROWN CORPORATIONS

In this section, we take a look at the results¹⁸ of a survey of 2,200 employees of eight Crown corporations working in a bilingual region.¹⁹ Crown corporations and other separate agencies employ a large number of federal employees. Because they are subject to the *Official Languages Act*, they must provide for its full implementation.

Figure 8 - Distribution of all organizations subject to the Act (%)



Source: 2003—2004 Annual Report on Official Languages submitted to Parliament by the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada

As part of the mission conferred upon it by the *Official Languages Act*, the Treasury Board must monitor and audit the observation by federal institutions of the official languages policies, directives and regulations—its own, as well as those put forth by the Governor in Council. Because Crown corporations do not necessarily have official languages management systems similar to those of departments, it is not clear how Treasury Board can evaluate the efficiency of the implementation of programs and policies related to the Act. For example, the Treasury Board's annual reports to Parliament on official languages do not provide any data on the level of bilingualism within Crown corporations. It is thus very difficult to evaluate the delivery of services to the public, internal services and the supervision of employees. The only data available are on the equitable participation of both language groups. Parliament does not possess a clear picture of the situation in these institutions. Although independent, Crown corporations are public institutions and must therefore be accountable to the government. The Office of the Commissioner will examine this issue in greater depth in the coming months.

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which the employees of Crown corporations feel comfortable communicating and working in the official language of their choice in bilingual regions. A total of 1,014 persons completed the survey, namely

¹⁸ In this section, we use weighted data to better reflect the workforce of the eight Crown corporations that were the subject of this study.

¹⁹ Regions of work: 74% of respondents work in the NCR, 24% in the Montréal region and less than 1% in New Brunswick.

496 Francophones²⁰ and 518 Anglophones. We noted that the organizational culture is predominantly English. (A detailed profile of the respondents is found in Appendix C.)

The majority of employees indicated that their organization had developed policies to ensure an equitable use of both official languages. Anglophones were much more optimistic: three-quarters of them agreed with this statement, compared with 68% of Francophones. As well, 14% of employees stated that the implementation of these policies was not complete, and 15% did not know if there was a policy in their organization. Only 3% of employees said their workplace had not developed any policies in these areas. Close to one-third of employees claimed that they were not familiar with their rights regarding language of work.

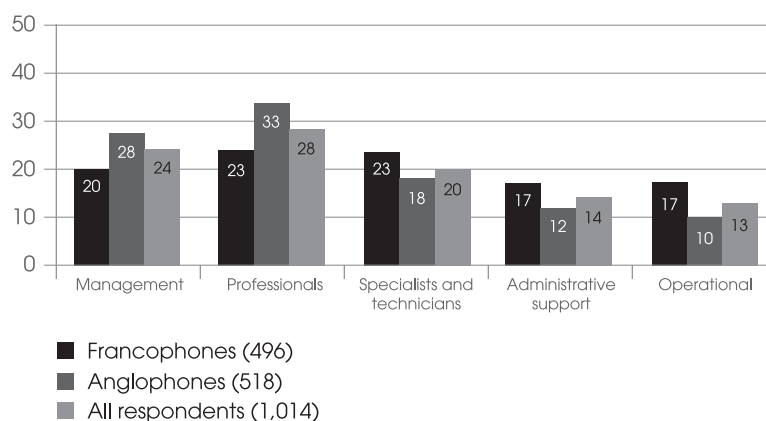
A. A Predominantly English Work Environment

Sixty percent of employees said that their functions must be carried out in English and in French.²¹ Francophones are twice as likely as Anglophones to perform bilingual functions. Moreover, there are more unilingual Anglophones (15%) with supervisory functions than unilingual Francophones (2%).

Figure 9 also shows an imbalance in terms of occupational categories. Anglophones tend to occupy professional or management positions while Francophones are more likely to work as specialists or technicians, or in administrative support or operational positions.

Although a large majority indicated that they report to a bilingual supervisor (84%), English

Figure 9 - Distribution of employees by occupational categories (%)

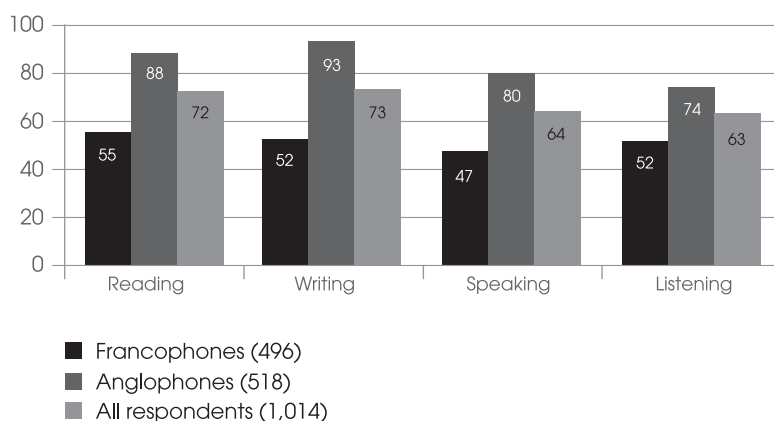


²⁰ We asked respondents to indicate, in the questionnaire, their first official language; that is, the language with which they have a primary personal identification, regardless of their ethnic origin or native language.

²¹ Management systems for official languages programs sometimes differ from one Crown corporation to another. Some have designated “bilingual positions”, as departments do, while others do not. We therefore asked respondents to indicate whether their job functions were carried out in one or both official languages.

is the primary language of work in these Crown corporations. Employees stated that they speak and write mostly in English, as Figure 10 demonstrates. Anglophones mainly use their first official language, while Francophones use English and French relatively equally.

Figure 10 - Rate of use of English at work (%)



As Table 4 shows, the level of use of the two official languages in Montréal is almost equal, in contrast with the NCR. We note, however, that these data also show that English predominates in documentation and written communication.

**Table 4
Use of official languages in various situations**

Place of work	Reading		Writing		Speaking		Listening	
	French	English	French	English	French	English	French	English
NCR (623)	19%	81%	18%	82%	28%	72%	29%	71%
Montréal (351)	45%	55%	44%	56%	52%	48%	51%	49%
All respondents (1,014)	28%	72%	27%	73%	36%	64%	37%	63%

Up until now, we have examined only the rates of use of French and English at work. We will now examine the data according to the proportion of Anglophones and Francophones who use one or the other official language at work.

Table 5 below shows that more Anglophones than Francophones communicate in their first official language always or most of the time at work. Although supervisors are required to communicate with subordinates in their preferred official language, Francophones have a little more difficulty in this regard.

Table 5
Proportion of employees who use their first official language most of the time or always in various work situations (speaking)

Situation	Francophones (496)	Anglophones (518)	All respondents (1,014)
With the supervisor	68%	88%	78%
With colleagues	64%	75%	70%
With subordinates	62%	70%	67%
During meetings with colleagues	45%	73%	59%
During large-scale meetings	28%	75%	53%
During meetings with management	30%	80%	56%
With Francophone members of the public	88%	32%	61%
With Anglophone members of the public	11%	93%	51%

When dealing with the public, Francophones are more likely to use the first official language of the member of the public. Nearly 9 out of 10 Francophones say they use English with Anglophone members of the public, while slightly less than 7 out of 10 Anglophones speak in French with Francophone members of the public. These data may indicate that personnel do not make an active offer or that there are still misconceptions about their linguistic obligations. According to the *Official Languages Act*, members of the public are entitled to communicate with and receive services from federal institutions in the official language of their choice.

Possible solution

Senior management and supervisors at all levels should promote bilingualism and encourage employees from both language groups to use the official language of their choice.

The inequality of the two languages is particularly evident in meetings. It is therefore not surprising that, of the choices given in the questionnaire, respondents identified meetings held mostly in one language, insufficient knowledge of the second language on the part of supervisors and too many unilingual individuals holding positions of authority as the main impediments to using the official language of their choice in the workplace. To overcome these obstacles, the respondents suggested making language training available to everyone, filling all supervisory positions with bilingual candidates and ensuring that those chairing meetings facilitate everyone's use of their first official language.

The imbalance in the status of the two official languages is also reflected in written communications, as shown by Table 6 below. Anglophones write in their first official language more often than their Francophone co-workers, even when these communications are intended for the Francophone public. According to the respondents, there are not enough employees who can at least read and understand their second language. This is an impediment to using their first official language at work. Not all Francophones have the opportunity to write in French always or most of the time when they communicate with management, senior management or supervisors. However, a large majority of Anglophones write in their first official language always or most of the time when communicating with management, senior management or supervisors.

Table 6
Proportion of employees who use their first official language most of the time or always in various work situations (writing)

Situation	Francophones (496)	Anglophones (518)	All respondents (1,014)
With the supervisor	55%	92%	74%
With colleagues	48%	86%	68%
With subordinates	50%	79%	66%
With management or senior management	39%	68%	66%
With Francophone members of the public	83%	39%	63%
With Anglophone members of the public	14%	93%	53%

Possible solution

People conducting meetings should ensure that the participants feel comfortable using the official language of their choice by using both languages themselves and briefly summarizing discussions for unilingual employees.

With respect to electronic communications, three-quarters of employees said that they always or most of the time take the recipient's first official language into consideration when sending e-mail. However, Francophones (87%) are more likely to respect the recipient's first official language than Anglophones (65%).

Overall, Anglophones said that they have ready access to work instruments and internal services in their first official language. Francophones, in contrast, have more difficulty in this regard. Just under half of Francophones said that training and professional development courses are always offered in French, a proportion that falls to two out of five in the case of work instruments. However, most internal services are offered in both English and French.

B. Confidence in Language Skills: An Important Indicator of Second Language Use

The better an employee's second language skills, the greater the chances that the employee will use that language regularly at work. As these figures 11 and 12 illustrate, Francophones are more bilingual than Anglophones.

Figure 11 - Proportion of employees who rated their skills in their second language as superior (%)

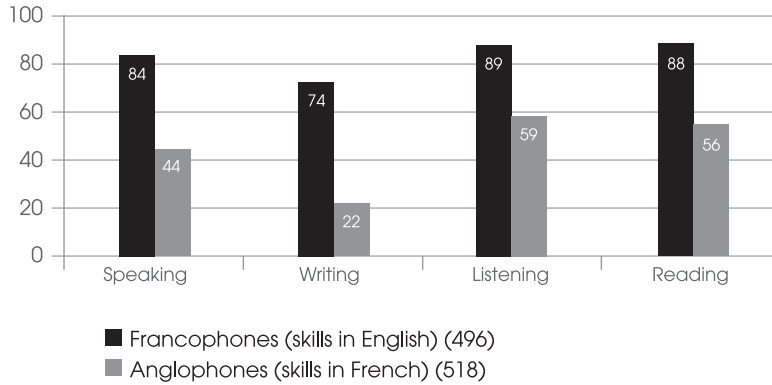
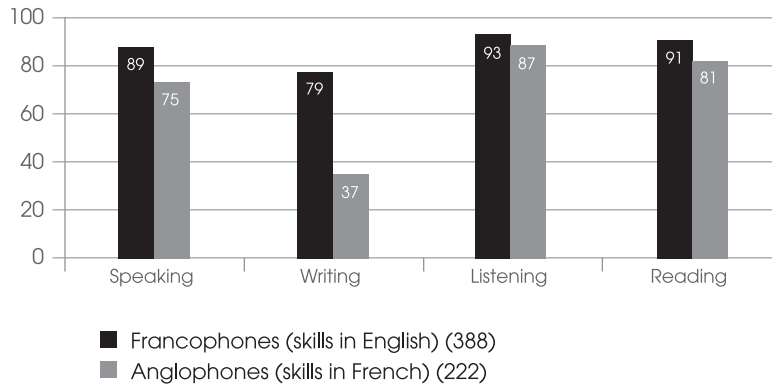


Figure 12 - Proportion of employees with bilingual functions who rated their skills in their second language as superior (%)

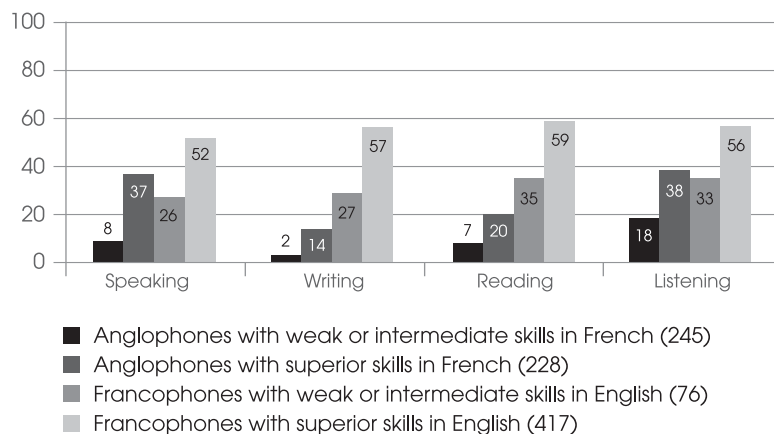


Although a relatively high number of Anglophones whose functions must be carried out in English and in French have superior²² French language skills, they reported that they lack confidence in their language abilities. When we asked respondents to indicate the three greatest personal impediments to the use of the two official languages in their workplace, Anglophones stated that they have little confidence in the work they do in French, do not feel comfortable using French in their workplace and are accustomed to working in English. Francophones said that they prefer using their supervisor’s language, prefer to work in English so they would receive due recognition for their work and are accustomed to working in English.

On the one hand, lack of confidence in French on the part of Anglophones and the fact that Francophones are accustomed to working in English favour the use of English. In our study on the language of work of public servants working in federal departments in the NCR,²³ we came to the same conclusion: since Francophones are much more bilingual than Anglophones, English tends to be used more often.

On the other hand, the better their French language skills get, the more likely Anglophones are to use their second official language in various work situations. See figures 13 and 14.

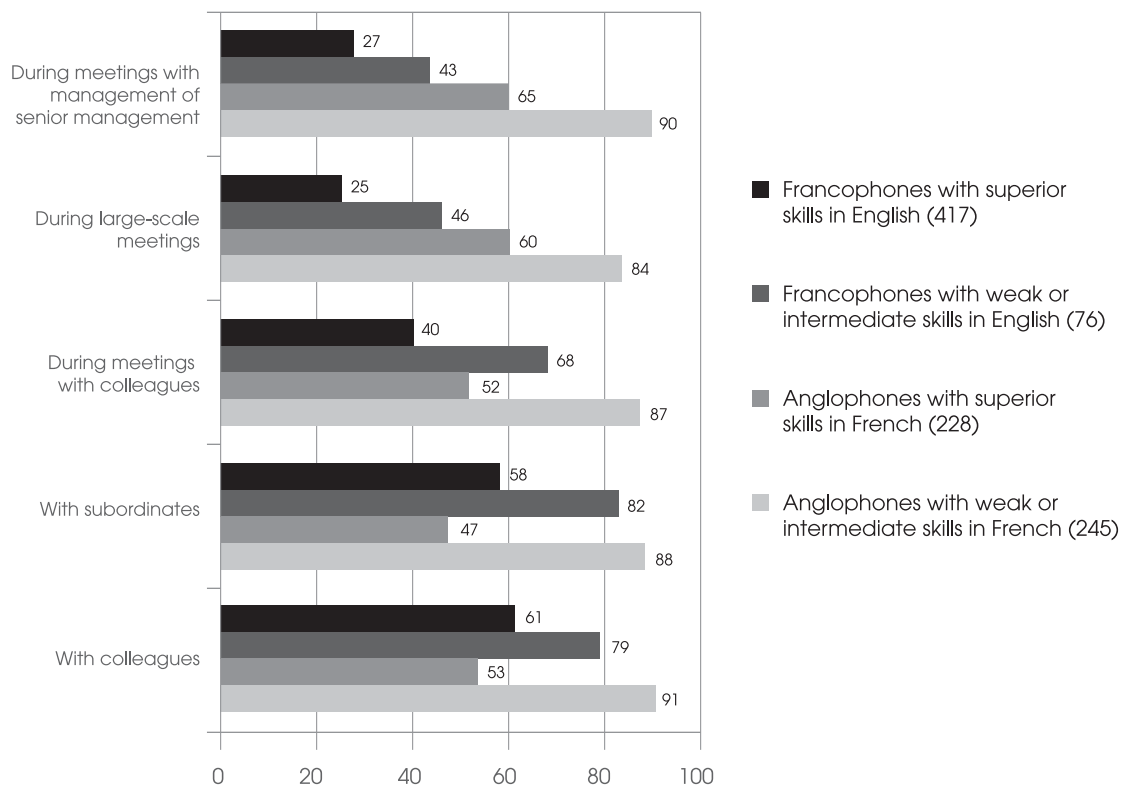
Figure 13 - Rate of use of second language according to language skills of employees (%)



²² We asked respondents to assess their own second language skills. We then divided them into two categories: (1) low to intermediate skills (respondents who answered “with difficulty or moderately well”); and (2) superior skills (respondents who answered “quite well or fluently”).

²³ See *Walking the Talk*.

Figure 14 - Proportion of employees who use their first official language most of the time or always (%)

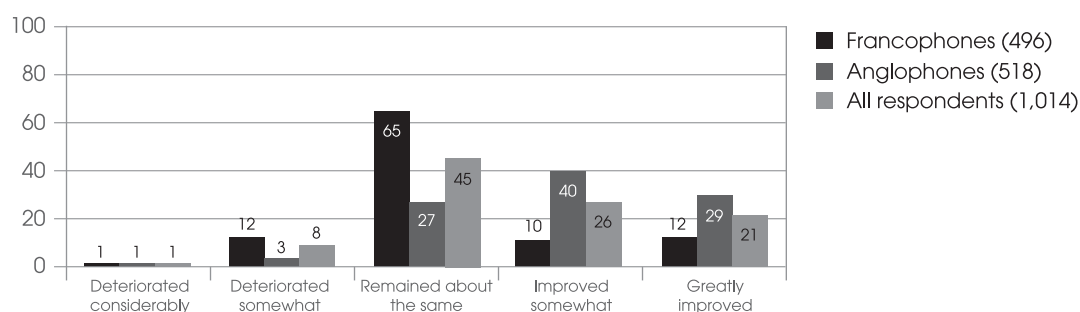


Possible solution

Anglophones should take advantage of every opportunity to speak French in order to maintain and improve their second language skills.

Creating a bilingual environment has a positive impact on the acquisition and maintenance of second language skills. Two-thirds of Anglophones say that their French language skills have somewhat or greatly improved since becoming a federal employee. The same proportion of Francophones say that their English language skills have somewhat or greatly improved. In contrast, 12% of Francophones say that their French language skills have deteriorated somewhat. This suggests the gradual assimilation of Francophones into the predominantly English organizational culture. Figure 15 illustrates these results.

Figure 15 - Proportion of employees whose French language skills have changed (%)



The majority of employees from both language groups say that their language skills in their second official language has improved since they have been working for the federal government.

C. Supervisors: The Role of Catalyst

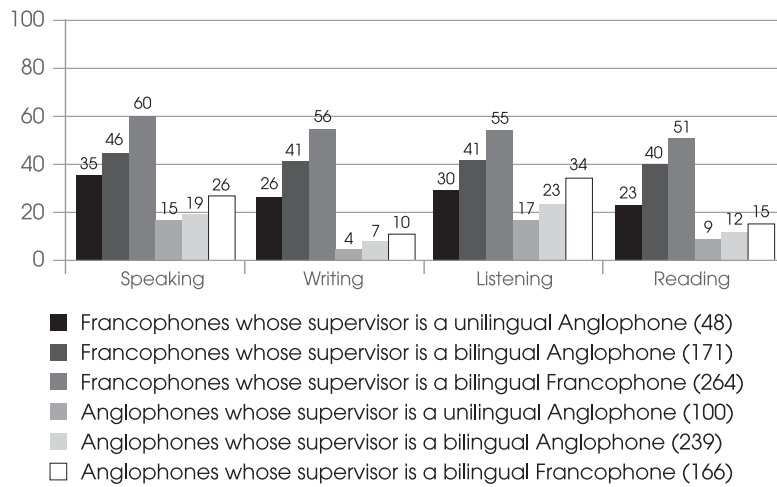
There can be no doubt that supervisors²⁴ play the role of catalyst in promoting a work environment in which employees from both language groups feel comfortable communicating in either official language. As we stated in our studies of employees in the NCR and in the bilingual regions of Quebec, because of their position of authority, their behaviour has a direct influence on the organizational culture of the immediate working environment. One-third of respondents say that they prefer to use their supervisor's official language at work. When the supervisor regularly uses both official languages, subordinates feel much more comfortable using the official language of their choice.

The supervisor's language skills have an impact on the use of French by Francophone employees. Francophones speak French 35% of the time when their supervisor is a unilingual

²⁴ Respondents were asked to identify the language group that, in their judgement, 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; this group is not included in the analysis as a result.

Anglophone; this proportion rises to 46% when the supervisor is bilingual. When the supervisor is a bilingual Francophone, use of French increases even more, since Francophones use French 60% of the time.

Figure 16 - Rate of use of French according to the language skills of supervisor (%)



Possible solution

Given the catalyst role played by supervisors, supervisory positions must be staffed by candidates with superior second language skills. In addition, the institution must offer training to managers and supervisors so that they can better understand the effects of the unequal status of the official languages in work environments, and put the necessary measures in place to bring about a work environment that is respectful of employees' language rights.

D. Use of the Official Language of Choice: Real Satisfaction?

In general, Anglophones are more satisfied with the use of their first official language in the workplace than Francophones. As might be expected, since Francophones use their first official language less than Anglophones at meetings, a considerably larger proportion of Francophones would like to use their first language more often in these situations. The situation is comparable with respect to writing.

Table 7
Proportion of employees who would prefer using their first official language at work (speaking)

Situation	Francophones (496)		Anglophones (518)	
	More often	Less often	More often	Less often
With the supervisor	28%	1%	10%	6%
With colleagues	29%	2%	11%	14%
With subordinates	31%	1%	10%	12%
During meetings with colleagues	41%	2%	12%	15%
During large-scale meetings	51%	2%	13%	13%
During meetings with management or senior management	47%	3%	11%	10%

Table 8
Proportion of employees who would prefer using their first official language at work (writing)

Situation	Francophones (496)		Anglophones (518)	
	More often	Less often	More often	Less often
With the supervisor	26%	1%	8%	7%
With colleagues	29%	1%	8%	12%
With subordinates	19%	1%	7%	6%
With management or senior management	35%	2%	5%	8%

Respondents from both language groups confirm that there are more impediments to the use of French than to the use of English in their workplace. To rectify this situation, respondents feel that all employees should be able to understand and read their second language so that all employees may express themselves in their first official language and be understood.

Possible solution

Crown corporations should offer more extensive language training opportunities to all employees in order to increase receptive bilingualism.

Employees' satisfaction with their work is closely linked to the language of work that they use. Over three-quarters of employees say that working in their first official language contributes positively to their job satisfaction. Similarly, nearly half of employees indicate that working in their second official language contributes positively to their job satisfaction.

E. Bilingualism in the Government of Canada: Undisputed Support

Respondents also gave their opinions on various statements regarding linguistic duality. In general, they support the objectives of the *Official Languages Act*. Virtually all respondents say that communicating in both official languages is an asset and that it is important to be able to serve the public in both official languages. In addition, 80% of respondents agree that employees working in a region that is designated bilingual should be allowed to work in the official language of their choice, a view shared equally by Anglophones and Francophones. However, a minority—more specifically, Anglophones—consider that using both languages at work is sometimes inefficient (28%) and that it has damaged relations between Anglophone and Francophone employees (30%). The vast majority of employees (80%) are proud to be able to use their first official language as a language of work, and nearly 7 out of 10 are proud to be able to use their second official language as a language of work.

Four out of five employees say that linguistic duality is an asset for Canadian society as a whole. However, Francophones (75%) are more likely than Anglophones (34%) to say that the Government of Canada should increase its efforts to make the Canadian population more bilingual.

We noted that respondents tended to have different opinions on certain statements depending on the language group to which they belong. While the respondents indisputably support the objectives of the Act, Francophones in general have a more favourable view of the implementation of its objectives. Among Anglophones, 44% believe that there are too many positions requiring knowledge of both official languages in their organization, compared with 14% of Francophones. In contrast, 27% of Francophones and 12% of Anglophones

believe that there is an insufficient number of bilingual positions in their organization to allow employees to work in the official language of their choice. Nearly 6 out of 10 Anglophones say that the bilingualism policy will never be fully respected as it is too demanding, while just over 3 out of 10 Francophones share that opinion. Finally, just over half of Francophones consider that official bilingualism has contributed to equality of opportunity for Anglophone and Francophone employees, compared with nearly one-third of Anglophones.

In conclusion, linguistic duality enjoys the undisputed support of respondents. They agree that the use of both languages shows respect for others. However, Francophones are more supportive of the measures implemented to achieve the objectives of the *Official Languages Act*.

CREATING A WORKPLACE THAT RESPECTS THE LANGUAGE RIGHTS OF ITS EMPLOYEES

What are the essential characteristics of a workplace that respects the language rights of its employees? This is the question that the focus group participants tried to answer. Can such an objective be attained? The answer is simple: yes. According to some focus group participants, such workplaces already exist within the Government of Canada, thanks to a clear commitment to linguistic duality on the part of their senior management.

Unfortunately, this state of affairs is not the reality for all public servants. Despite progress, many managers still fail to understand what is really expected of them or have difficulty implementing the necessary measures. It is rarely a case of bad faith, but rather a lack of understanding of the objectives of the *Official Languages Act*.

In this section, we examine what features are, according to participants, essential to a workplace that respects language rights. We also report on certain obstacles identified in the workplace, as well as suggested solutions.

Although the focus groups were made up of public servants employed by federal departments, managers from Crown corporations and other organizations subject to the *Official Languages Act* may adopt the framework developed by the participants. An analysis of our surveys on language of work demonstrates that federal employees in minority language situations face very similar challenges, regardless of the organization that employs them or the bilingual region in which they work.

A. The Essential Characteristics of a Respectful Workplace

Regardless of region or preferred official language, the public servants who participated in the focus groups identified the same basic series of characteristics required to create a workplace that respects language rights:

- Freedom to speak one's preferred official language;
- Ability to understand and be understood;
- Freedom to make mistakes when learning a second language, without being judged;
- Comparable opportunities for advancement;
- Supervision in the official language of one's choice; and
- An organization that values one's language.

1. Freedom to speak one's preferred official language

Feeling fully respected means being comfortable using whichever official language you choose. It also means being confident that those listening can fully understand your message.

One of the fundamental objectives of the *Official Languages Act* is to ensure that both official languages have equal status in federal institutions. To achieve this equality, employees in regions that are designated bilingual must feel comfortable using their first official language. This is not always the case for people belonging to the minority language group (Anglophones in Quebec and Francophones elsewhere in the country). As we observed in analysing the results of our surveys on language of work, the unequal status of the two official languages is particularly evident in meetings, which is where public servants wish to use their first official language more. This was the subject of many comments during the focus group discussions.

"The speaker should have the choice of language and the listener should understand what I say."
—(translation) Francophone officer/administrative staff, NCR

"You speak your language, and you accept that the other person speaks in his language."
—(translation) Francophone managers, Montréal

Holding bilingual meetings is a considerable challenge in bilingual workplaces. During the focus group discussions, it was soon apparent that not all public servants have the same definition

"Just saying hello and thank you to me at the end is insulting."

—(translation) Francophones, various groups

"Don't try to tell us that it's bilingual when it's just a few words at the beginning and the end."

—(translation) Francophone officer/administrative staff, Montréal

"Everybody's bilingual, so it comes down to ease or comfort. For the most part, everybody respects each other."

—Anglophone manager, Montréal

"During meetings, most of the time it's French because some higher-ups are Francophones and their preferred language is French... and they're the ones conducting the meetings."

—Anglophone manager, Montréal

of a truly bilingual meeting. Some feel that it is sufficient to discuss some items in the minority language and to answer questions in the language in which they were asked. Others believe that the meeting should be held in only one language but be accompanied by bilingual documents and visual materials. Still others feel that both languages should be used in turn or according to each participant's preference. There are therefore different approaches, depending on the circumstances. The important thing is to ensure that the feelings and needs of participants from both language groups are taken into consideration. Unfortunately, in the name of "efficiency" or because they

are not confident of their language skills, those chairing meetings lead discussions in only one language, without regard for the language preferences of the participants.

Participants in all the focus groups indicated that it is up to the person chairing the meeting to create a climate in which all participants are comfortable using the official language of their choice. It is also up to the chair to ensure that all employees can understand what is being said.

“They can say ‘Listen, I don’t speak French, but I do understand French. So, I want everybody to be at ease to speak the language of their choice.’”

—Suggestion from an Anglophone manager in Montréal

At present, public servants continue to face situations where managers are unilingual or do not feel comfortable speaking their second language.

Possible solution

Unilingual people conducting meetings can still hold meetings in both official languages by ensuring that all documentation is bilingual and enlisting the help of a bilingual colleague to summarize comments made in the other official language.

2. Ability to understand and be understood

Feeling fully respected means being able to understand what is said around you and what is expected of you.

At first glance, it seems obvious. However, this represents one of the main problem areas for managers. On one hand, public servants want to feel comfortable speaking their first official language. On the other, unilingual employees say that they do not feel respected in their workplace, because they cannot understand everything that is being said at bilingual meetings where the participants switch from one language to another, or during group discussions. Caught between the two, managers admit that they do not have the tools to rectify the situation. More often than not, the language used for discussions quickly becomes the official language spoken by the majority of the group.

“My needs to receive the message in the language of my choice are often overlooked because of reality, and because of time.”

—Anglophone manager, NCR

“If a Francophone wants to get a very, very subtle point across, they’re going to say it in English. Maybe the person won’t be able to understand the subtleties if I speak to him in French.”

—(translation) Francophone manager, NCR

In an ideal world, if federal public servants working in bilingual regions had at least a receptive knowledge of their second language, in the long term, this problem would easily be eliminated. That is why the *Action Plan for Official Languages* is so important. In the Action Plan, the Government of Canada has established, among other objectives, the goals of doubling the proportion of high

school graduates with a working knowledge of their second official language and increasing the bilingual capacity of the Public Service.

In some cases, organizations choose to invest the necessary resources and use simultaneous interpretation services for important meetings. However, the most common solution is to depend on the person conducting the meeting. As mentioned above, this person is responsible for ensuring that unilingual participants can understand what is being said by summarizing the important points in their language.

Possible solution

Managers must encourage and promote the acquisition of second language skills, even among unilingual employees.

3. Freedom to make mistakes when learning a second language without being judged

Feeling fully respected means knowing that the other language group accepts that you make mistakes, without criticizing you or switching to your first language at the slightest hesitation.

Learning a second language is not easy and takes effort and patience from both language groups. During the focus group discussions, Anglophones from the NCR expressed their frustration with the way Francophones react when they make the effort to speak French.

“I’ll extend the offer of French, and I’ll get English back; English back... that’s disrespectful.”

—Anglophone manager, NCR

“We’ve all had that experience: we start in French, and they reply in English, and we think... is my French so bad?”

—Anglophone manager, NCR

“It’s hard to hear ‘Oh [name], just speak English!’ And it took a long time before I tried again.”

—Anglophone officer/administrative staff, NCR

“When we left the meeting, the French people had comments about the person’s lack of proper use... and that sticks in your head. He was doing really well as far as I’m concerned.”

—Anglophone officer/administrative staff, NCR

When told about the feelings of their Anglophone colleagues, Francophones admitted that in many cases they react by switching to English right away. This is usually a habit that has been developed over the years and is meant as a courtesy to the speaker. For others, it is a matter of being effective or ensuring the message is clearly understood.

Anglophones in Montréal are in the same situation as their Francophone colleagues in the NCR. The following comment clearly illustrates the dilemma faced by members of the minority language group, who are, more often than not, highly bilingual. There also seems to be an unwritten convention that the language used in communications is the one that all the speakers understand better.

“Here is the issue. When a Francophone speaks English and is heavily accented and not grammatically correct, what do you do? I can say ‘He spoke to me in English, I am responding to him in English’. And therefore, he will sweat through the entire conversation. Is that showing him respect or is that showing disrespect? If I then respond to him in his preferred language, French, is that showing him respect or is that saying very effectively ‘Please, give it up!’?”

—Anglophone manager, Montréal

Possible solution

On one hand, there is no doubt that bilingual people must show more patience and avoid switching to their colleague’s first official language at the slightest linguistic difficulty. On the other hand, second language learners must be persistent and use their second language whenever the opportunity arises in order to maintain and improve their skills.

4. Comparable opportunities for advancement

Feeling fully respected means having the same career opportunities as your colleagues in the other language group. It also means having access to good training and professional development courses in the official language of your choice.

To enhance respect for the language rights of federal public servants and all Canadians, the Government of Canada has made significant improvements to its language of work and human resources management policies. Since April 1, 2004, imperative staffing has become the norm for bilingual positions, with certain exceptions. At the senior management level (the EX group), non-imperative staffing is still possible for entry-level positions (EX-01) and managers in job categories other than EX. Imperative staffing is being phased in, however, as follows:

- EX-04 and -05, since April 1, 2004;
- EX-03, since April 1, 2005; and
- EX-02, effective April 1, 2007.

Many unilingual public servants believe that the introduction of these new policies on imperative staffing presents an obstacle to their professional advancement. This perception is exacerbated by lack of access to language training or the failure of federal institutions to allocate resources for language learning. This issue was raised on several occasions during the focus groups, but also in the “Comments” section on the surveys.

The Government of Canada is currently conducting an in-depth study of language training and second language evaluation to find delivery models that are more efficient and more suitable to today’s reality. In many cases, this negative perception is also the result of not understanding the objectives of the *Official Languages Act* and the perpetuation of myths stemming from isolated cases.

“The only way I can get English language training is to go to Kingston. My boss doesn’t want to send me for that long. It’s too expensive.”

—Anglophone officer/administrative staff, Montréal

“I would love to get that ‘E’, but... first of all, money. Second of all, I don’t think they can spare employees going off on courses left and right, and they don’t deem it necessary because you have the level required by your job.”

—Anglophone manager, Montréal

“If someone doesn’t sufficiently master their second language, it’s not necessarily by choice. I think you have to give everyone an equal chance to acquire their second language through training.”
—(translation) Francophone respondent, Quebec 2004 Survey

The government must offer language training to all employees, even incumbents of unilingual positions who wish to acquire skills to progress in their careers. Although the Government of Canada’s new directive on language training will support this, the infrastructure needs to be strengthened nation-wide.

Training and professional development are another source of considerable frustration for members of both language communities. Training and professional development courses are not always equivalent in quality, or worse, are offered in only one language, regardless of the needs of the minority language community. Federal institutions should ensure that they offer training and professional development courses of comparable quality in both official languages.

Possible solution

Managers must facilitate access to training and professional development to public servants in their first official language, even when these courses are available outside their region of work.

5. Supervision in the official language of one’s choice

Feeling fully respected means being able to interact with your supervisor and do your day-to-day work in the official language of your choice, without fear of negative consequences for performance appraisals and career advancement.

Regardless of language group or region, everyone agrees that supervisors should deal with their employees in the official language of the employee’s choice. Supervisors should also have the language skills required to provide supervision of equivalent quality in either official language. This is not always the case.

Possible solution

All supervisory positions must have superior second language skills in order for employees to be adequately supervised in their preferred official language.

As well, because of their position of authority within the organizational structure, supervisors at all levels play a key role in creating a working environment in which employees feel comfortable using the official language of their choice during meetings and as a language of work. As our analysis of the data from the language of work surveys shows, the immediate environment is generally shaped by the behaviour of the supervisor.

6. An organization that values one's language

Feeling fully respected means feeling that both official languages are equally valued and made the most of. It also means having access to work instruments and internal services in the official language of your choice, without having to wait longer than

“Both languages have to be considered equal. My impression is that English is the working language. Requests are in English, and the replies are expected to be in English.”

—(translation) Francophone manager, NCR

“Everybody is bilingual, so it comes down to ease or comfort. For the most part, everybody respects each other.”—Anglophone manager, Montréal

“It doesn't really bother me [a 100% French working environment]; if I want to say something in English, I can.”—Anglophone manager, Montréal

“Here [in Montréal], if you want to respond in English, you can do so. There is more respect for the individual person.”—Anglophone manager, Montréal

Possible solution

Federal institutions must adopt an evaluation framework that includes easily measured indicators based on concrete results, and allocate the required resources to attain these results.

your colleagues in the other language group and without having to insist.

An organization that values both official languages provides its staff with widely and regularly used work instruments and internal services in both official languages at the same time. It ensures the quality of documentation in both official languages. It puts in place the necessary measures to allow employees to feel comfortable communicating in the official language of their choice with senior management, during meetings and while doing their day-to-day work.

B. Underlying Issues to Achieving a Workplace that Respects Language Rights

As well as defining the essential characteristics of a workplace that respects language rights, participants in the focus groups examined the underlying issues that lead to management's lack of respect for members of either language group. The following are the main reasons provided by the different focus groups:

- Senior management's lack of willingness and commitment to creating a workplace in which both official languages receive equal consideration;
- Time pressures and tight deadlines;
- Lack of resources for translation and simultaneous interpretation;
- Lack of second language skills on the part of managers in bilingual positions; and
- Inadequate representation of both language communities.

1. "Senior management must walk the talk"

This phrase was the most commonly used phrase in all of the focus groups conducted. To create a workplace that is truly conducive to the effective use of both official languages, senior management must make it a priority, as they are the ones who very often set the tone.

Participants recognize that senior managers do not always understand the impact that their behaviour and that of their managers has on the working environment. In fact, if senior managers were aware of the destructive effects that the lack of respect for language rights is having on their staff's morale and well-being, there is no doubt that they would take the necessary corrective action to bring about a true change of culture.

"You can't have bilingualism without the commitment of upper management. You have to create an environment where both languages are equally respected. If you don't have senior management on-side, you have nothing."

—(translation) Francophone manager, NCR

"In Ottawa, you have this unique so-called courtesy where the senior manager is obligated to say a couple of words at the beginning [of meetings] in French, and sometimes at the end as well. It just goes to show that it's only lip-service, and there's no real desire [among senior management] to respect French. If I were a francophone in Ottawa, I would have a chip on my shoulder as well."

– Anglophone manager, Montréal

Possible solution

Senior management must show leadership and demonstrate through significant concrete actions the importance they give to linguistic duality by regularly using both official languages while ensuring that the institution respects the language rights of staff from both linguistic groups.

2. Integrating linguistic duality into project planning

Who has not been told more than once that because of tight deadlines, a version in the other language will follow? How many documents are translated at the last minute and then

“Deadlines are a false excuse. It’s a question of good planning. You have to take translation into account when planning deadlines. I don’t accept any documents in one language only.”
—(translation) member of the Quebec Federal Council

distributed without checking the quality of the translation? Far too many. This is a flagrant lack of respect for the language group in question.

Focus group participants agreed that lack of time and insufficient resources are not always valid excuses, but simply attempts to camouflage poor planning.

Fortunately, in some departments, this approach to project management is not accepted by senior management. Employees have learned to plan sufficient time for quality translation into the other official language.

Possible solution

Project managers should incorporate linguistic duality into their operational planning by allocating the resources and time needed to produce quality documents in both official languages.

3. Acquiring sufficient language skills to manage and supervise employees effectively in both official languages

As mentioned above, the behaviour of supervisors has a direct influence on the use of both official languages in their immediate work environment. Participants in all focus groups, regardless of preferred official language or region of work, indicated that many managers who occupy bilingual positions are not capable of working in both official languages or are not willing to do so. Consequently, they create an organizational culture in which subordinates feel obliged to use the manager’s preferred official language. This behaviour results in meetings being conducted and documents being distributed primarily in one official language.

“When people who are in the jobs are really bilingual, there’s no more problem. Everyone can switch back and forth from one language to another. Everyone feels comfortable in either language. It’s really the ideal situation. The problem is, it’s not the case.”

—(translation) Francophone manager, NCR

“I get the bilingual bonus, and people think my command of the language is much better than it really is, so they think I’m disrespectful if I can’t communicate with them in their language of choice.”

—Anglophone manager, NCR

“If an employee, or manager, is paid a bilingual bonus, then they should be able and willing to accept a document in either language... but that is certainly not the case.”

—Anglophone manager, NCR

Possible solution

Supervisors must use both official languages frequently at work so that their employees feel at ease to communicate and be supervised in the official language of their choice.

4. Increasing the representation of both language groups in the workplace

In recent years, the Anglophone community of Quebec has been concerned about its rate of participation in the federal Public Service. The Quebec Federal Council has been examining this issue over the past few years. As stated in the *Annual Report on Official Languages 2003–2004*, as of March 31, 2004, Anglophones make up 7.4% of all federal public service employees working in Quebec (outside the NCR). If data for Crown corporations and other agencies are included, however, the percentage of Anglophones rises to 13.5%. Anglophones make up 12.9% of the population of Quebec.

It is true that the Anglophone workforce in some federal Public Service organizations in Quebec is small, and that this naturally gives French predominance as a language of work. However, even if an organization has few employees belonging to the linguistic minority, these employees have the same language rights as the majority. Respect is not a question of numbers, but a value that must be upheld in every workplace.

We asked the Anglophone participants why, in their opinion, the federal Public Service fails to attract them to careers within its ranks. The following are some perceptions that exist within the Anglophone population and to which managers must pay close attention:

- Since French is the official language of Quebec (at the provincial and municipal levels, and in the private sector), Anglophones have the perception that their French skills, both written and oral, must be superior in order to be considered for a job;
- Workplaces are perceived as French only, which require additional efforts for Anglophone personnel.

For Anglophones, it is up to senior management to create a working environment in which they feel comfortable working in the official language of their choice. Senior management must also demonstrate clearly that both official languages are equally valued. Anglophones see this change of culture, combined with increased recruitment of Anglophones, as the only long-term solution.

Possible solution

Managers in Quebec should work on two fronts: modifying their recruitment strategies to target Anglophones, while establishing a workplace in which Anglophones will feel comfortable using English.

C. Everyone Must Contribute to Achieving Results

Working in a second language is not always easy and may be discouraging without the support and understanding of co-workers. Out of fear of repercussions or concern for efficiency, whether well founded or not, public servants in the minority language group avoid using their first official language at work. This fact clearly emerged from the Anglophone focus groups in Montréal.

“Our department works in French... that’s it, that’s all!”

“To stay efficient, that’s what I did. I stay in French.”

“You get together, even with your colleagues, and you don’t feel comfortable speaking your language.”

“You have the choice. We feel that there will be consequences. If I speak to my boss in English, she won’t respect me. It’s just the attitude.”

—Anglophone officer/administrative staff, Montréal

When told how their Anglophone colleagues feel, most Francophones seem surprised, while others (a minority) had difficulty understanding their views. One explanation for these reactions is that their own language rights are often not respected when they communicate with public servants in the NCR.

After they thought about it, Francophone participants recognized that respect must be both ways and that they must make more effort in this matter.

“We bend over backwards when someone from headquarters visits our office. We speak English to them, but we speak French with our Anglophone colleagues here because they all know French. If I was in their shoes, yes, I can understand it’s frustrating.”

“It’s a matter of simple respect to send it out in both languages.”

—(translation) Francophone officer/administrative staff, Montréal

CONCLUSION

Our study on language of work²⁵ has shed additional light on the factors that directly impact the use of the two official languages and the nature of the challenges faced by managers, as well as English- and French-speaking staff members, working in bilingual work environments. Despite the progress made, the equality of our official languages has yet to be fully realized and remains an unfinished project.

Our study on the language of work in Crown corporations allowed us to identify an important gap in the official languages management systems of these corporations. Because these systems differ from one Crown corporation to another, it is difficult for Parliament to evaluate the extent to which they conform to the *Official Languages Act*. This is a significant problem when it comes to accountability. The Office of the Commissioner will examine this issue in depth in the coming months.

We have seen very similar results from surveys and focus groups with regard to organizational culture, leadership on the part of senior management and supervisors, the language capacity of the majority group, or dealings between headquarters and regional offices in Quebec. Participants in the focus groups confirmed that workplaces where both official languages share equal status and are equally respected do exist within the federal system, thanks to the firm commitment of senior management.

Building on Strengths

In addition to these challenges, our study has identified significant strengths on which institutions should build in order to enhance their capacity. Bilingualism enjoys strong support among both English-speaking and French-speaking federal public servants. A large majority of respondents shared the view that bilingualism is an asset for Canadian society as a whole and stated that they are proud to have the opportunity to work in a bilingual workplace. At the end of the day, bilingualism provides for better delivery of services to Canadians.

In addition, Anglophones in the NCR and Francophones in bilingual regions of Quebec would like to use their second language more often at work. The government must build on this willingness by encouraging employees from the linguistic minority to speak their first official language; this will boost opportunities for members of the majority group to maintain and increase their second language knowledge.

²⁵ In this context, the term “study” covers the results of the survey contained in the report *Walking the Talk*, as well as the results of the surveys and focus group discussions that are part of this report.

Achieving Results

The study on language of work allowed us to obtain a detailed picture of the experience of federal employees working in Quebec and the NCR. The purpose of this study was to speed up the much-needed change in culture within federal institutions. First and foremost, employees want concrete changes to be effected immediately in their workplaces. Although there has been some progress in this regard, they want to feel comfortable speaking and working in their first official language without being perceived as demanding. This is, of course, not always the case.

Federal institutions must therefore develop a framework for supporting and enhancing official languages, predicated on actual use of the two official languages, with easily measured performance indicators. This framework must be based on three strategic priorities that, given their interdependence, need to be the focus of constant and simultaneous efforts to bring about the expected results. These three strategic priorities are leadership, institutional capacity, and personal capacity. More information on the framework for enhancing official languages can be found in the study *Walking the Talk*. Crown corporations and other separate agencies should become familiar with this study in order to take to heart the recommendations set forth in it; at a later stage, we expect to closely examine the official languages mechanisms and management systems of these federal institutions.

Once again, there is no doubt that senior managers play a primary role in ensuring that the Government of Canada fully respects the requirements of the *Official Languages Act*. They are often the ones who set the tone. The organizational culture of their institution models itself on their behaviour. For a workplace to be truly conducive to the actual use of both official languages, senior management must make it a priority. Without this commitment, the spirit of the Act is often forgotten.

Making the Most of, and Strengthening, Bilingual Capacity

Following the example of senior management, supervisors at all levels also play a key role, since they directly affect the organizational culture of their immediate work environment. A large proportion of supervisors have a good working knowledge of their second official language, but, because of lack of awareness, self-consciousness or the surrounding environment, they do not practise this language sufficiently.

Since English is the predominant language of the organizational culture in the NCR, Anglophones have greater difficulty maintaining their language skills in their second official language. More often than not, they lack confidence in their language skills and avoid speaking French. As a result, they end up losing much of these skills. Most of them, however, have a good receptive knowledge of their second language. Federal institutions should make the most of, and strengthen, this linguistic capacity. It should be noted that Anglophones report wanting to make greater use of French in the workplace. Federal institutions should encourage

Francophones to use their first official language as much as they can. In this way, Anglophones would have more opportunities to practise their French; this will give them greater confidence and eventually result in greater use of the two official languages.

In federal departments in Quebec, the situation is quite different. Because French is the principal language of work, Anglophones are very much bilingual, and many report that their language skills in French have improved since they started working in the federal Public Service. In contrast, they are the ones who must more often adopt the majority language, French. Francophone managers must create an environment in which Anglophones feel more comfortable using their first official language.

Addressing Inequalities

In the NCR, English is the predominant language in the organizational culture of both federal departments and Crown corporations. English is used much more extensively than French. In departments, the predominance of English is felt most clearly when public servants from Quebec interact with their counterparts from the NCR. This is a problem that has persisted for many years.

We noted that the opposite is true of federal offices in the bilingual regions of Quebec. In fact, in federal departments, French predominates. In contrast, in Crown corporations located in Montréal, use of the two official languages is more balanced, although the data show that English predominates in documentation and in written communications.

No matter which region, the unequal status of the two official languages is most evident at meetings, where members of the official language minority group do not feel comfortable speaking in their first official language. Senior management plays a crucial role in this regard, since in most cases it sets the tone for institutions' organizational culture. Staff will often submit to the management's preferred official language for purposes of efficiency or speed.

In some cases, respondents indicated that they did not have access to work tools in their preferred official language or to training or professional development courses of acceptable quality in their preferred official language. Both federal departments and Crown corporations must work to correct the inequalities uncovered by our study.

R ECOMMENDATIONS

In her report of March 2004, *Walking the Talk: Language of Work in the Federal Public Service*, the Commissioner made specific recommendations to the Government of Canada with a view to accelerating the progress made on language of work. Of these recommendations, four are reiterated below (1, 2, 4 and 6). In its response to the Commissioner last August (extracts below), the Government of Canada demonstrated half-hearted leadership. Nevertheless, the findings of both the 2004 study and the present study confirm the findings of other recent studies on language of work: *Attitudes Towards the Use of Both Official Languages Within the Public Service of Canada*; the results of the *2002 Public Service Employee Survey* by the Treasury Board; *French to follow?: Revitalizing Official Languages in the Workplace* by the Canadian Centre for Management Development; and the *Report on the 2003 Consultations of APEX Members on the Official Languages Policy Review* by APEX. A comparative table of the main findings of these studies can be found in Appendix A.

Leadership of Deputy Heads

Government's response: The Government of Canada mentions that it ensures the bilingual capacity of deputy heads by using the pool of assistant deputy ministers, a large proportion of whom are bilingual, as the main source of appointments.

Commissioner's comments: A certain number of deputy heads, however, come directly from the private sector and so do not necessarily have second language knowledge. The government must offer them the necessary language training before they assume their duties. APEX also pointed out the importance of bilingualism for deputy ministers, associate deputy ministers and agency heads in creating a workplace conducive to the use of both official languages in its *Report on the 2003 Consultations of APEX Members on the Official Languages Policy Review* (spring 2004) and during an appearance before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages on February 3, 2005.

For this reason, the Commissioner urges the **Clerk of the Privy Council** to follow up on her recommendation:

1. to require deputy ministers, associate deputy ministers and their equivalents in Crown corporations and other agencies subject to the *Official Languages Act*, to have superior second language knowledge.

Second Language Skills of Supervisors

Government's response: Many positions at this level in bilingual regions for language of work purposes are already designated at the CBC level. The Agency monitors this situation and reports on the linguistic requirements of supervisory positions in bilingual regions each year in its annual report to Parliament. In accordance with the requirements of section 91 of the *Official Languages Act*, the language requirements of positions are reviewed individually when they are staffed to ensure that they are objectively required to perform the functions

for which the staffing action is undertaken. These requirements are clearly set out in the *Directive on the Linguistic Identification of Positions and Functions*, which became effective on April 1, 2004.

This said, closer attention will be paid in 2004–2005 to the positions in question as the Agency agrees that the levels set do not adequately reflect the requirements in terms of supervision.

Commissioner's comments: According to the *Annual Report on Official Languages 2003–2004*, nearly half of supervisory positions are still designated level B. We feel that a level B for supervisory positions is not sufficient. Pending the adoption of a new policy that increases the level of bilingualism for supervisory positions to a CBC level, the Government of Canada should increase the linguistic requirements as new staffing actions are taken.

The Commissioner urges the **Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada** to follow up on her recommendation:

2. to 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.

The Commissioner recommends to **heads of Crown corporations and other separate agencies:**

3. to require those with supervisory functions in both official languages in bilingual regions to have superior skills in their second official language.

Concrete and Measurable Results

Government's response: The government mentions that it uses at least three means to ensure that deputy heads take concrete measures to meet their commitment to Canada's linguistic duality. The first is the Performance Management Program for Governor in Council appointees. Their performance is evaluated based on ongoing commitments or objectives, which do not usually change from one year to the next, and key commitments that reflect government objectives and corporate priorities issued by the Clerk. Secondly, the government's *Action Plan for Official Languages* reflects government strategic priorities on official languages. The government is closely monitoring the implementation of this plan in federal institutions, including initiatives related to respect for the language of work rights of employees, through an Accounting and Co-ordination Framework provided in the Action Plan. Finally, the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada also monitors the performance of federal institutions in implementing the Official Languages Program by analysing annual reviews. The Agency says it will follow up on this recommendation when examining institutions' annual reviews and when developing guidelines for the 2004–2005 reviews.

Commissioner's comments: Although the creation of a workplace conducive to the use of both official languages has been one of the ongoing commitments of the Performance Management Program for a few years, English continues to be dominant in the organizational culture of institutions. Even though there are a large number of executives who have satisfied the second language CBC requirements, deputy ministers, associate deputy ministers, chief executive officers of Crown corporations and heads of other agencies subject to the Act are not evaluated in terms of the actions they have taken to promote an organizational culture where staff from both linguistic groups feel comfortable using the official language of their choice. They need to set the tone, and their performance must be evaluated accordingly. What is more, the *Annual Report on Official Languages 2003–2004*, presented to Parliament by the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada, suggests that the importance ascribed to official languages is not what it should be. There is no question that the Government of Canada needs to strengthen its accountability mechanisms.

Three audits were conducted in the past few years by the Agency. Only one included an audit on language of work, that is, the audit of compliance with the language requirements of positions for members of the EX group.

The Commissioner urges the **Clerk of the Privy Council** to follow up on her recommendation:

4. to establish, as part of the Performance Management Program for deputy ministers, associate deputy ministers, chief executive officers of Crown corporations and heads of other agencies subject to the *Official Languages Act*, easily measured performance indicators, based on actual use of both official languages and concrete actions taken with a view to creating a work environment that is respectful of the language rights of employees, and to make these a prerequisite for determining performance bonuses.

Educating and Raising Awareness Among Employees and Managers

The results of the study *Attitudes Towards the Use of Both Official Languages Within the Public Service of Canada*—prepared on behalf of the Treasury Board Secretariat, in collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs and Communication Canada—draw attention to the existence of misunderstandings and erroneous perceptions about the rights and obligations of public servants. The report highlights the importance of better information sharing. It proposes that the Government of Canada should take action on three fronts: defining the “ideal” work setting with respect to bilingualism; correcting misconceptions about the scope and requirements of policies; and strengthening the leadership of managers in bilingual regions to promote use of both languages in the work environment. In 2003, the Treasury Board Secretariat undertook the follow-up to this report; the responsibility for this now rests with the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada.

Government's response: The Canada School of Public Service offers a number of courses for managers and supervisors covering themes related to official languages (for example, legislation, policy, linguistic duality, service to the public, language of work) to a greater or lesser degree. Generally, this is done as part of a broader discussion (on diversity, for example) rather than as a distinct course module. Courses designed for functional communities and specialists include official languages content where appropriate, and the School offers an orientation to official languages course aimed at employees working in this area or for those who may be asked to provide advice or services to managers.

As part of its curriculum review and planning initiative, the School is reviewing all its learning products against the core knowledge library being developed by the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada, which includes components on official languages in the workplace. This review is intended to align the School's learning products and curricula with core Public Service learning needs and to determine what other roles the School might play in serving emerging common learning needs. The conclusions of this review should result in a more consistent approach to the treatment of official languages in the School's learning products for managers and supervisors. Other than statutory language training, the School does not currently provide mandatory training for managers and supervisors in other areas. Over the coming months, discussions will ensue with the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada and the Treasury Board Secretariat to determine what should constitute core learning for managers and supervisors, whether such learning should be mandatory, and, if so, how it would be funded and supported. The school recognizes the importance of ensuring that both official languages have equal status in the workplace and will seek every opportunity, within its mandate, to play its part in addressing the full continuum of managers' and supervisors' learning needs.

Commissioner's comments: In her study on language of work, the Commissioner demonstrated that managers and supervisors at various levels have difficulty in developing and implementing the necessary measures to create work environments conducive to the effective use of both official languages because they either do not understand or are unaware of the consequences their actions have on the organizational culture of their work environment.

The Commissioner urges the **Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada:**

5. to undertake an awareness and education program for employees working in bilingual regions to eliminate misunderstandings and misconceptions about the rights and obligations of public servants regarding the *Official Languages Act*.

The Commissioner reiterates her recommendation to the **Canada School of Public Service**:

6. to offer mandatory training courses for managers and supervisors to make them aware of the impact the unequal status of the two official languages has in the work environment and enable them to put in place the necessary measures to attain a work environment that respects employees' language rights.

The Commissioner recommends to **heads of Crown corporations and other separate agencies**:

7. to offer mandatory training courses for managers and supervisors to make them aware of the impact the unequal status of the two official languages has in bilingual work environments and enable them to put in place the necessary measures to attain a work environment that respects employees' language rights.

Dedicating Resources to Reach Objectives

It is important that the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada and the Canada School of Public Service have the necessary resources to conduct such an awareness and education program, which is proving to be essential in ensuring complete respect for the *Official Languages Act*.

The Commissioner recommends to the **Treasury Board**:

8. to ensure, as soon as possible, that the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada and the Canada School of Public Service have the necessary funds to carry out an awareness and education program across government on the rights and obligations of federal employees and institutions subject to the Act.

APPENDIX A

Comparative table of previous studies' main findings

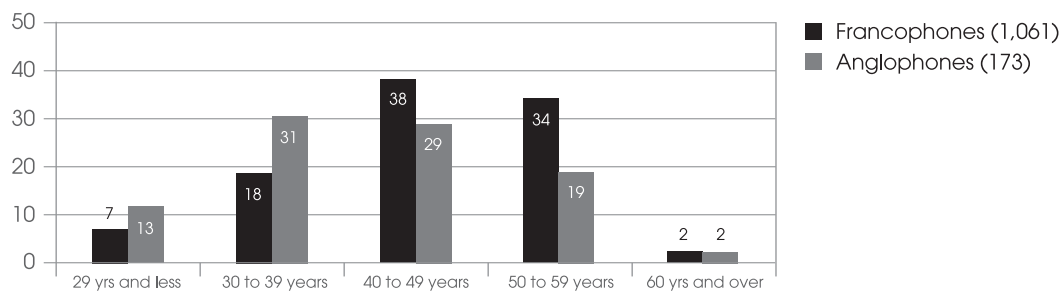
Main findings	CCMD Roundtable	Attitudes	2002 Survey	APEX	OCOL
In the National Capital Region, English is often predominant in organizational culture.	•	•	•		•
Senior management plays a crucial role in the promotion of linguistic duality. The perception that senior management is unilingual creates a major obstacle.	•	•		•	•
Unilingual deputy heads impede progress towards a bilingual workplace.				•	•
Even if public servants feel they can communicate in the official language of their choice, many of them hesitate to use that right.	•	•	•		•
Many employees tend to favour the language of their supervisor so that their performance will be fully recognized.	•				•
Francophones generally have better knowledge of their second language than their Anglophone colleagues, and therefore tend to speak English with them.		•			•
In many cases, the language requirements for supervisory positions are not high enough.	•				•
Meeting the linguistic profile for a bilingual position does not necessarily mean increased use of the second language.	•				•
In some cases, Francophones do not have access to quality work instruments or to training and professional development courses in French.	•		•		•
Public servants do not always have an opportunity to speak the official language of their choice during meetings.	•	•	•		•
In the National Capital Region, both Anglophones and Francophones favour increased use of French at work.		•			•
There is not enough awareness and understanding of language rights and obligations.	•	•			
The government must ensure better access to language training.	•		•	•	•

- NFO CF Group Inc., *Attitudes Towards the Use of Both Official Languages Within the Public Service of Canada*, study presented to Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Communications Canada and Canadian Heritage, August 2002.
- Treasury Board Secretariat, *2002 Public Service Employee Survey*, 2002.
- Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD), *French to Follow? Revitalizing Official Languages in the Workplace, action-research roundtable of the CCMD on official languages in the workplace*, 2003.
- Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada, *Report on the 2003 Consultations of APEX Members on the Official Languages Policy Review*, spring 2004.
- Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, *Walking the Talk: Language of Work in the Federal Public Service*, March 2004.

Linguistic Profile of Respondents to the Survey of Federal Public Servants in Bilingual Regions of Quebec

Of the 2,863 questionnaires distributed, we received 1,265 responses, namely from 1,081 Francophones and 184 Anglophones giving a response rate of 44%. The Francophone response rate was higher than the Anglophone response rate (46% of Francophones surveyed compared with 36% of Anglophones). As the following figure shows, Francophone respondents tended to be older than Anglophone respondents.

Figure 17 - Proportion of respondents by age category (%)



A total of 85% of respondents identified French as their first official language.²⁶ Of these, 93% also said that French was their mother tongue, 1% said it was English, and 6% said their mother tongue was neither English nor French. Only 1% of Francophones in the bilingual regions of Quebec chose to respond to the questionnaire in English.

Of those who identified English as their first official language, 65% also said that English was their mother tongue, 5% said it was French and 30% listed a language other than English or French. This shows a preference for English as the first official language among allophones in Quebec. Of the respondents who said English was their first official language, 4% answered the questionnaire in French, in contrast to Francophone respondents in the NCR, 13% of whom chose to answer the English questionnaire²⁷ (illustrating the fact that Francophones are used to working in English).

²⁶ A person's first official language is the official language—English or French—with which the person has a primary personal identification and in which the person is generally more proficient, regardless of ethnic origin and first language learned.

²⁷ See *Walking the Talk: Language of Work in the Federal Public Service*, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, March 29, 2004.

APPENDIX C

Linguistic Profile of Respondents to the Survey of Eight Crown Corporations²⁸

Of the 2,200 questionnaires distributed, 1,014 employees responded to the survey, namely 518 Anglophones and 496 Francophones, for a response rate of 46%. Since six of the eight Crown corporations participating were primarily located in the National Capital Region (NCR), it is not surprising that 74% of the respondents indicated that they worked in the NCR, while 24% said that they worked in the Montréal region and less than 1% in New Brunswick. The other two Crown corporations were primarily located in the Montréal region.

Overall 51% of respondents identified French as their first official language, compared with 49% for English. Of those who said that French was their first official language, 1% had English as their mother tongue and 2% said it was a language other than English or French. Of respondents who said that English was their first official language, 8% said that French was their mother tongue and 9% identified a language other than English or French.

Figure 18 - First official language by place of work (%)

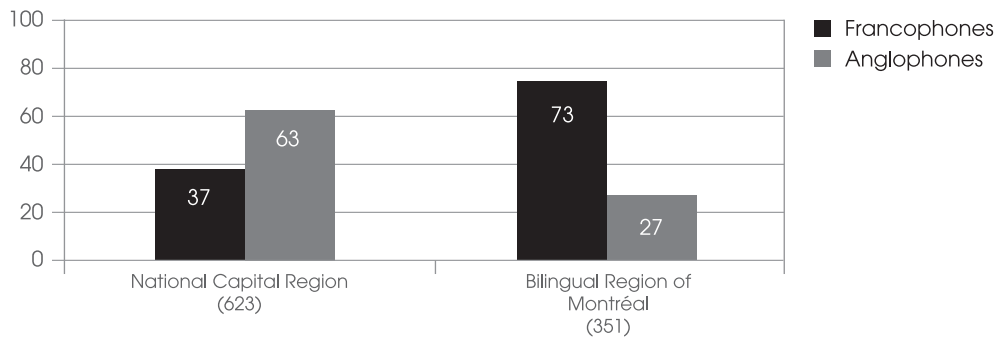
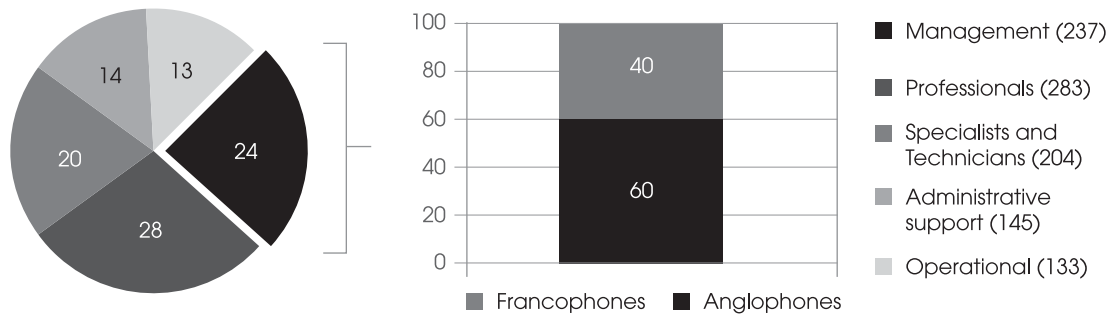


Figure 19 indicates the distribution of employees by occupational category. Almost one-quarter of employees indicated that they were part of the management group; 40% of them said that French was their first official language and 60% said it was English.

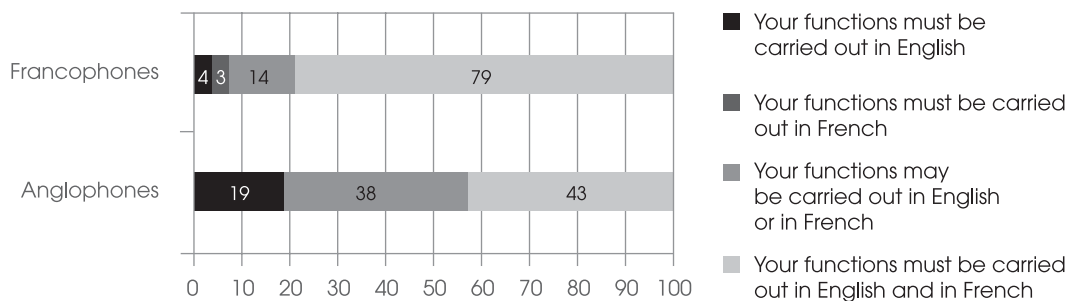
²⁸ The data compiled from the Crown corporations survey are presented as weighted data to better reflect the eight Crown corporations' workforce.

Figure 19 - Proportion of employees according to occupational category (%)



Overall, 60% of employees indicated that their functions must be carried out in English and in French within their Crown corporation. More specifically, 79% of Francophones said that they perform bilingual functions, compared with 43% of Anglophones. Francophones are about twice as likely to work in both official languages as Anglophones, as the following figure illustrates.

Figure 20 - Proportion of Francophone and Anglophone respondents according to the language requirement of their position (%)



The vast majority of Francophones said that they received their primary education in French. However, the data indicates that they were more likely to receive their formal education in English as they advanced through the school system. Of Francophone employees, 32% received their post-graduate instruction in English. The trend goes the other way for Anglophones; while 75% of Anglophones received their primary education in English, 90% did their

post-graduate education in English. The data also shows that more Anglophones than Francophones had completed a university degree. In total, 60% of Anglophones said that they had attended university and 23% had received post-graduate schooling, while 44% of their Francophone colleagues had attended university and 12% had gone on to post-graduate studies.

While 20% of Anglophones had received their primary education in French, 35% had chosen to educate their children in French. This seems to indicate the popularity of immersion programs.

Figure 21 - Proportion of schooling in first official language (%)

