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French in Nova Scotia, 2001 to 2016

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French in Nova Scotia, 2001 to 2016

by **Alejandro A. Páez Silva** and **Émilie Lavoie**

The purpose of this document is to present an overview of the trends observed between 2001 and 2016 for the French language and the official language minority population¹ in Nova Scotia. To this end, it provides census-based information on the population who reported having French as their mother tongue, French spoken at home or used at work, French as their first official language spoken as well as for those who speak French well enough to sustain a conversation.

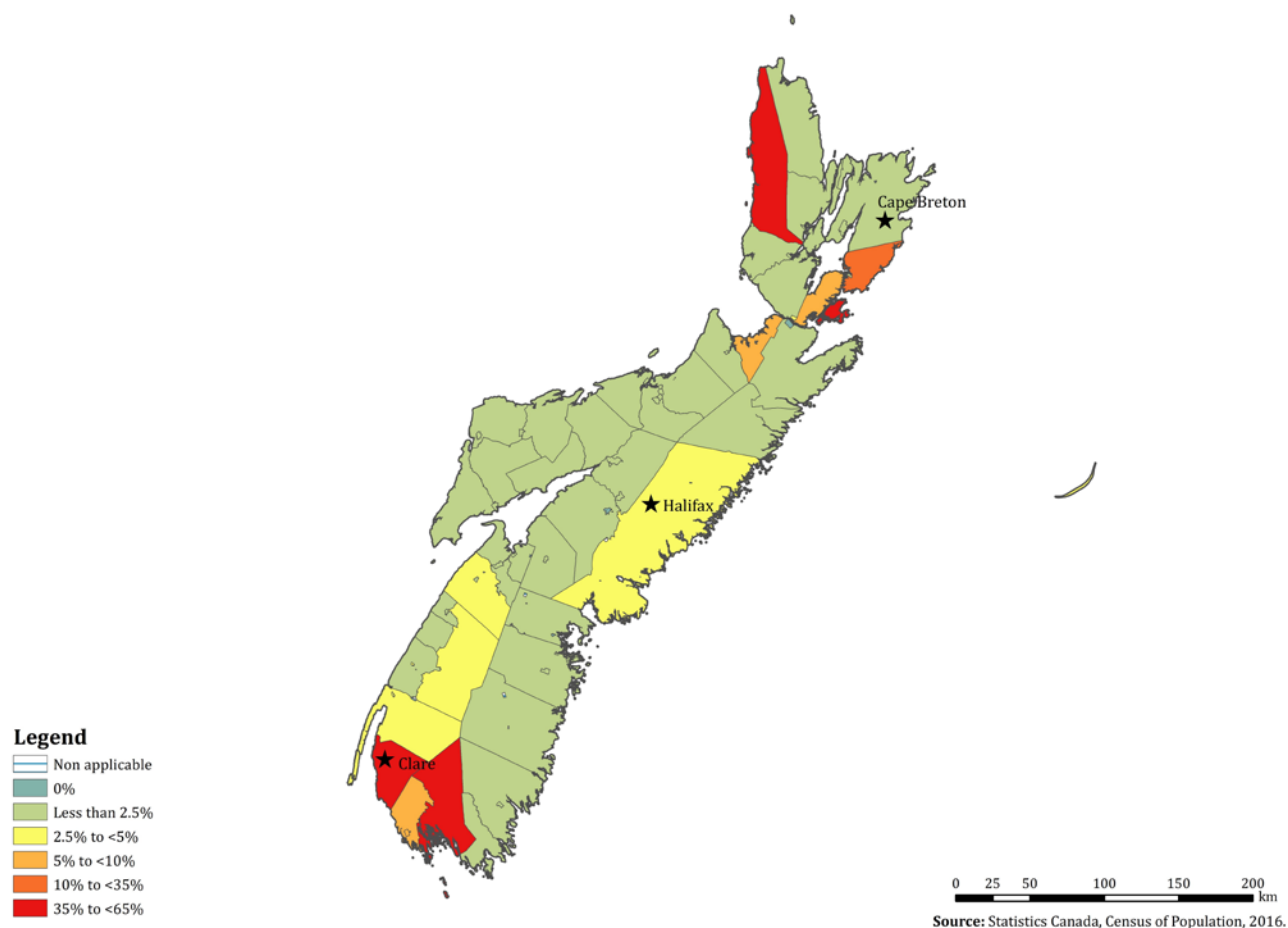
Table 1
Knowledge of English and French, Nova Scotia, 2001 to 2016

	2001		2006		2011		2016		2001 to 2016 growth
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	percent
Total population	895,305	100.0	899,755	100.0	906,175	100.0	908,340	100.0	1.5
Official language minority population	33,575	3.8	31,975	3.6	29,865	3.3	28,620	3.2	-14.8
English-French bilingualism	32,795	97.7	30,980	96.9	29,130	97.5	27,935	97.6	-14.8
Rest of the population	861,735	96.3	867,780	96.4	876,310	96.7	879,710	96.8	2.1
English-French bilingualism	57,005	6.6	63,465	7.3	64,985	7.4	67,120	7.6	17.7

Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001, 2006, 2016; 2011 National Household Survey.

- In 2016, 95,740 people reported being able to conduct a conversation in French, either exclusively or together with English, representing 10.5% of Nova Scotia's population.
 - ▶ Since 2001, the number of persons who report being able to conduct a conversation in French, either exclusively or together with English has increased by 5.7%.
- In 2016, 95,055 people in Nova Scotia reported being able to conduct a conversation in both English and French, up 5.8% since 2001. For the 2016 year, the English-French bilingualism rate stood at 10.5%, up 0.5 percentage points since 2001.
 - ▶ In 2016, the English-French bilingualism rate for the official language minority population stood at 97.6% whereas this proportion stood at 7.6% for the rest of the population.
 - ▶ Over the 2001 to 2016 period, English-French bilingualism among the official language minority population decreased by 0.1 percentage points which amounts to 4,860 fewer persons since 2001. By contrast, this figure increased among the rest of the population by 1.0 percentage point which translates into an additional 10,115 persons over the same period.

1. In this document, the official language minority population is defined according to the criterion of the first official language spoken. The 'English-French' category is equally redistributed between the 'French' and 'English' categories.

Map 1**Official language minority population, census subdivisions, Nova Scotia, 2016**

- In 2016, the official language minority population in Nova Scotia reached 28,620 persons in number which represents 3.2% of the province's total population. In fact, these are the lowest levels the province has seen since at least 2001 both in absolute and relative terms.
 - In the 15 years since 2001, the official language minority population decreased in number by 14.8%, or by 4,955 fewer persons.
 - In 2016, Nova Scotia's official language minority population ranked as the sixth largest in relative terms (3.2%) from among all provinces and territories matching Manitoba (3.2%).

Table 2
Selected French language indicators, Nova Scotia, 2001 to 2016

	2001		2006		2011		2016		2001 to 2016 growth
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	percent
Total population	895,305	100.0	899,755	100.0	906,175	100.0	908,340	100.0	1.5
Official language minority population ¹	33,575	3.8	31,975	3.6	29,865	3.3	28,620	3.2	-14.8
Knowledge of French ²	90,585	10.1	95,440	10.6	94,850	10.5	95,740	10.5	5.7
French as mother tongue ²	36,520	4.1	34,650	3.9	31,830	3.5	32,650	3.6	-10.6
French spoken at home ²	33,505	3.7	33,270	3.7	33,060	3.6	33,110	3.6	-1.2
French primarily spoken ³	18,885	2.1	17,020	1.9	16,170	1.8	14,105	1.6	-25.3
Working population ⁴	485,595	100.0	515,655	100.0	520,820	100.0	514,080	100.0	5.9
French used at work ²	22,430	4.6	23,605	4.6	21,825	4.2	22,115	4.3	-1.4
French primarily used ³	7,350	1.5	6,995	1.4	6,660	1.3	6,130	1.2	-16.6

1. The official language minority population is defined according to the first official language spoken. The 'English-French' category is equally redistributed.

2. Includes all persons who reported French whether with or without additional languages.

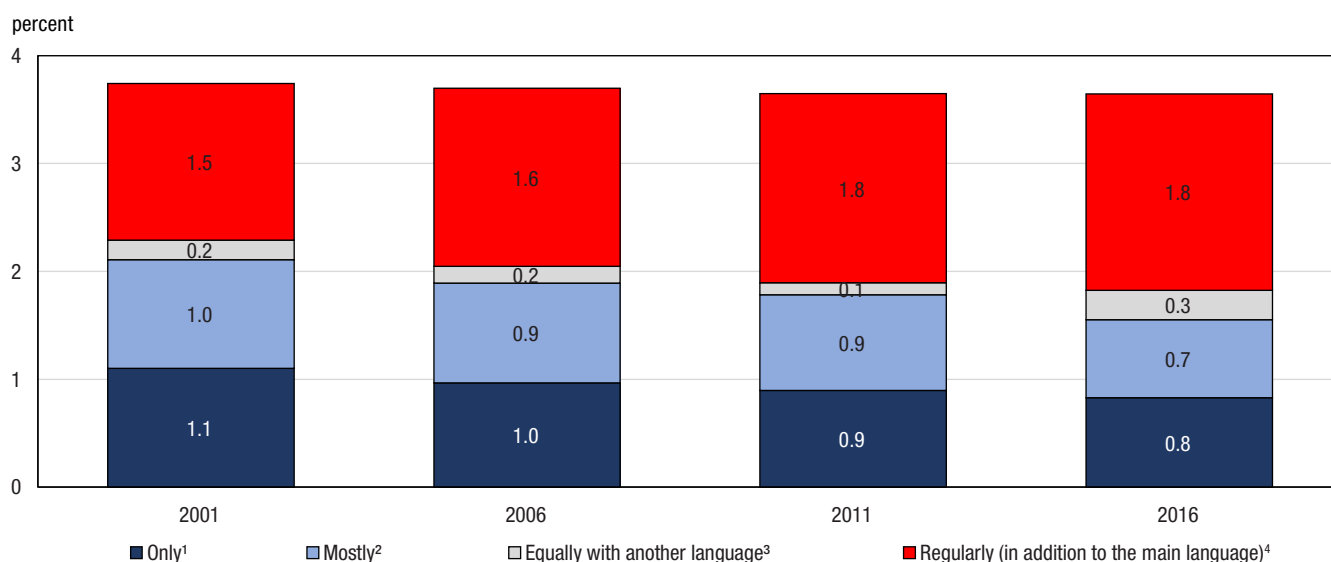
3. Refers to Part A of the language spoken at home and language used at work questions, the language spoken or used most often.

4. Refers to those aged 15 years and over who worked at least once between January 1st, 2015 and Census Day.

Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001, 2006, 2016; 2011 National Household Survey.

- In 2016, 32,650 people reported having French as their mother tongue², either exclusively or together with another language. Collectively, they represented 3.6% of Nova Scotia's total population.
 - The number of persons with French as their mother tongue, either exclusively or together with another language, has decreased by 10.6% since 2001, that is, by 3,870 fewer persons.

Chart 1
French spoken at home, Nova Scotia, 2001 to 2016



1. Includes persons who only speak French most often and no other language regularly.

2. Includes persons who speak French most often and at least one other language regularly.

3. Includes persons who speak French most often equally with another language.

4. Includes persons who speak French regularly in addition to the main language.

Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001, 2006, 2016; 2011 National Household Survey.

2. In some cases, the number of respondents whose mother tongue is French is higher than the number given for the official language minority population. As part of the logic used to derive the official language minority population based on the first official language spoken variable, those who may have French as their mother tongue but can no longer speak it well enough to hold a conversation are not included. Similarly, for those who can hold a conversation in English and French and have these languages as their mother tongue but speak English most often at home are likewise excluded from the French-language population.

- In 2016, 33,110 people reported speaking French at home at least regularly (most often or as a secondary language) which constitutes 3.6% of Nova Scotia's total population.
 - Over the 2001-2016 period, the number of persons who reported speaking French at home at least regularly (most often or as a secondary language) fell by 1.2%, that is, by 395 fewer persons.
 - During the 2001-2016 period, the number of persons who report speaking primarily³ French at home went down from 18,885 in 2001 to 14,105 in 2016, a 25.3% decrease.
 - By contrast, over the same period, the number of persons who reported speaking French regularly as a secondary language in addition to the main language at home grew from 13,000 in 2001 to 16,525 in 2016, an increase of 27.1%. In addition, the number of persons who reported speaking French equally with another language most often at home⁴ rose from 1,620 in 2001 to 2,480 in 2016, a 53.1% increase since 2001.
- In 2016, 22,115 people reported using French at work at least regularly (most often or as a secondary language). Collectively, they represented 4.3% of Nova Scotia's working population.
 - In the 15 years since 2001, the number of workers who report using French at work at least regularly (most often or as a secondary language) has decreased by 1.4%, or by 315 fewer workers.
 - The number of workers who primarily⁵ use French at work decreased from 7,350 in 2001 to 6,130 in 2016, down 16.6% over that period.
 - By contrast, over the same period, the number of workers who report using French regularly as a secondary language in addition to the main language at work grew from 12,945 in 2001 to 13,650 in 2016, a 5.4% increase. Further, the number of workers who use French equally with another language most often at work⁶ rose from 2,135 in 2001 to 2,335 in 2016, a 9.4% increase.

3. Primary use of French at home refers to French spoken exclusively or most often.

4. Includes persons who reported speaking French equally with another language at home with or without additional languages spoken regularly as secondary languages.

5. Primary use of French at work refers to French used exclusively or most often.

6. Includes persons who reported speaking French equally with another language at work with or without additional languages spoken regularly as secondary languages.