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The French Language in Ontario, 2001 to 2016: Facts and Figures

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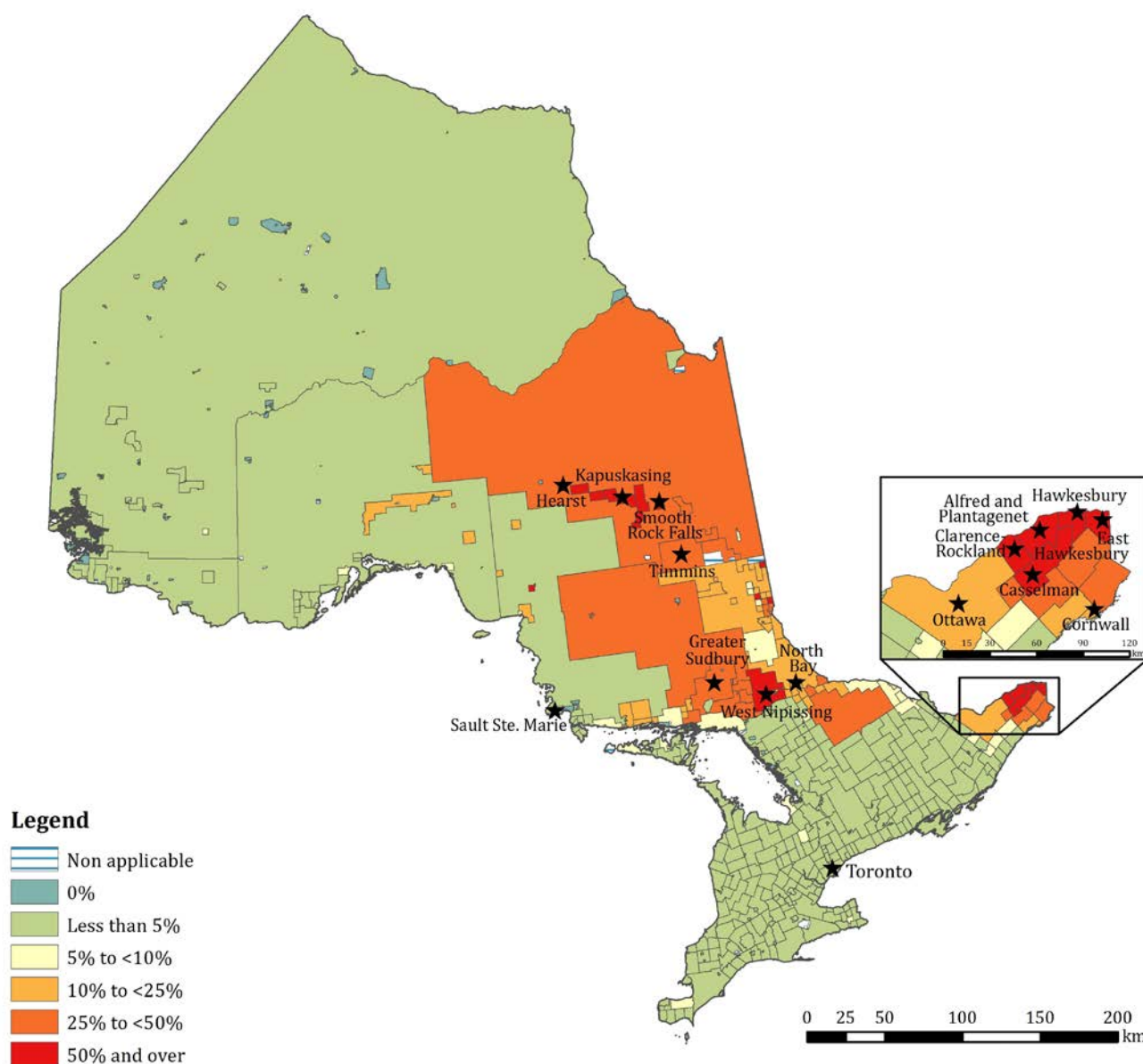
The French Language in Ontario, 2001 to 2016: Facts and Figures

by Alejandro A. Páez Silva

The purpose of this document is to present an overview of the prevailing trends observed between 2001 and 2016¹ for the French language in Ontario. To this end, the document provides census-based information on the population² who have French as a first official language spoken, mother tongue, language spoken at home or language used at work as well as on the population who reported speaking French well enough to conduct a conversation.

Map 1

Proportion of the population with French as a first official language spoken, census subdivisions, Ontario, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016.

1. See the document entitled *Methodological Document on the 2011 Census Language Data* (Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011051) for notes on the comparability of the 2011 Census language data to that of prior census years.
2. Refers to all persons excluding institutional residents. Users should note that in the 2001 and 2006 censuses, institutional residents did not receive the long form questionnaire from which most language data were collected.

- In 2016, there were 550,600 persons who had French as a first official language spoken representing 4.1% of Ontario's total population.
 - Between 2001 and 2016, the number of persons with French as a first official language spoken increased by 4.3% (+22,885 persons) while simultaneously decreasing as a proportion of the total population by 0.5 percentage points.

Table 1
Selected French language indicators, Ontario, 2001 to 2016

	2001		2006		2011		2016		2001 to 2016 growth
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	percent
Total population¹	11,285,545	100.0	12,028,895	100.0	12,722,065	100.0	13,312,865	100.0	18.0
French as first official language spoken ²	527,715	4.7	537,600	4.5	542,390	4.3	550,600	4.1	4.3
Knowledge of French ³	1,362,025	12.1	1,426,540	11.9	1,438,790	11.3	1,530,435	11.5	12.4
Knowledge of French only	42,310	0.4	49,210	0.4	42,980	0.3	40,045	0.3	-5.4
Knowledge of English and French	1,319,715	11.7	1,377,330	11.5	1,395,810	11.0	1,490,390	11.2	12.9
French as mother tongue ³	533,970	4.7	532,855	4.4	561,165	4.4	568,345	4.3	6.4
French spoken at home ⁴	528,640	4.7	544,020	4.5	595,915	4.7	617,265	4.6	16.8
French spoken most often at home ⁵	326,020	2.9	321,540	2.7	340,290	2.7	348,285	2.6	6.8
Only French spoken at home ⁶	164,550	1.5	162,155	1.3	151,125	1.2	142,185	1.1	-13.6
Mostly French spoken at home ⁷	124,980	1.1	126,875	1.1	132,990	1.0	134,860	1.0	7.9
French spoken equally often with another language at home ⁸	36,490	0.3	32,510	0.3	56,175	0.4	71,240	0.5	95.2
French spoken regularly at home (in addition to the main language)	202,620	1.8	222,480	1.8	255,625	2.0	268,980	2.0	32.8

1. Refers to all persons excluding institutional residents.

2. Following method I in part IV of the *Official Languages Act*, the 'English-French' multiple response is equally redistributed among the 'English' and 'French' single responses.

3. Includes both single and multiple responses.

4. Includes both single and multiple responses to both part A and part B of the question.

5. Refers to French spoken most often at home with or without additional languages spoken regularly.

6. Includes persons who reported only French in Part A of the language spoken at home question (spoken most often) and did not report a language to Part B (spoken regularly).

7. Includes persons who reported French to Part A of the language spoken at home question (spoken most often) and reported at least one other language to Part B (spoken regularly).

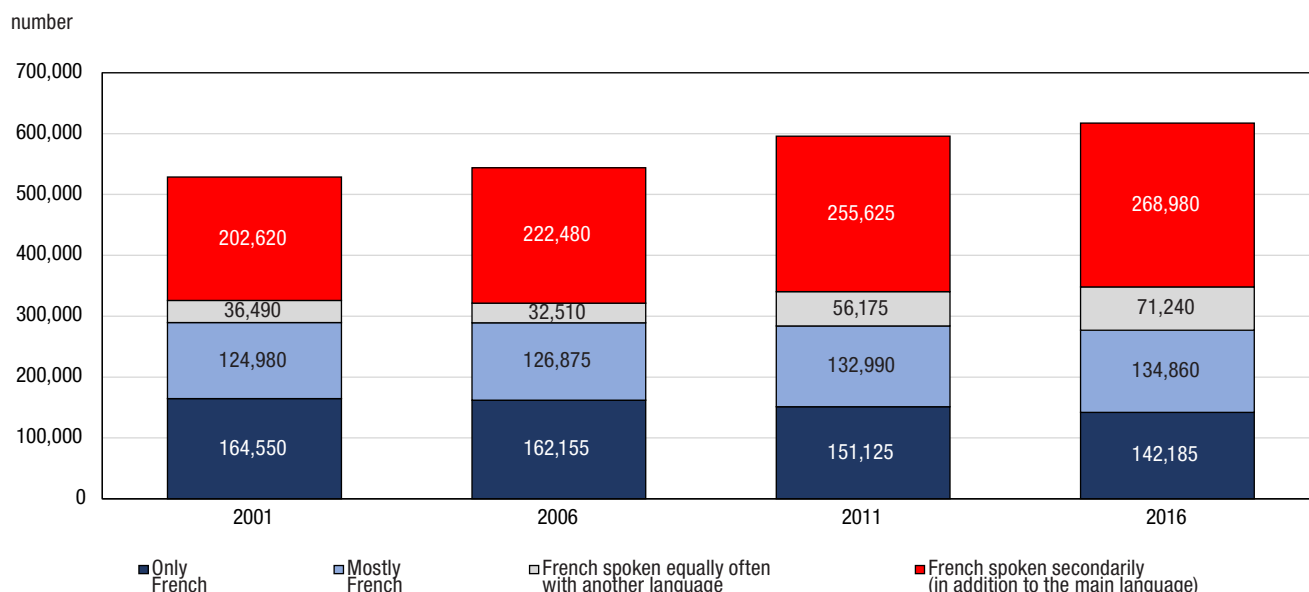
8. Includes persons who reported French and another language to Part A of the language spoken at home question (spoken most often).

Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016.

- In 2016, 1,530,435 persons reported being able to sustain a conversation in French, either exclusively or in combination with other languages. They represented 11.5% of Ontario's total population that year, down 0.6 percentage points compared to 2001.
 - Between 2001 and 2016, the number of persons able to conduct a conversation in French whether exclusively or in combination with another language increased by 12.4% which amounts to an increase of 168,410 persons over a 15 year period.
- As of 2016, English-French bilingualism stood at 1,490,390 persons who collectively represented a bilingualism rate of 11.2% in the province that year.
 - In the 2001 to 2016 period, the number of persons able to conduct a conversation in English and French increased by 12.9% (+170,675 persons) while decreasing as a proportion of the overall population by 0.5 percentage points. During that period, Ontario's total population grew by 18.0%.
 - As of 2016, Ontario's English-French bilingual population ranked as the second most numerous from among all provinces and territories, second only to Quebec and followed by British Columbia in third place.
- In 2016, 568,345 persons reported having French as a mother tongue,³ either exclusively or along with other languages. They represented 4.3% of Ontario's total population.
 - Between 2001 and 2016, the number of persons with French as their mother tongue has increased by 6.4% (+34,375 persons) while simultaneously decreasing as a proportion by 0.5 percentage points.

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

Chart 1
French spoken at home, Ontario, 2001 to 2016¹



1. See the document entitled *Methodological Document on the 2011 Census Language Data* Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011051 for notes on the comparability of the 2011 Census language data to that of prior census years.

Sources : Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016.

- There were 617,265 persons who reported speaking French at home at least regularly in 2016. Collectively, they represented 4.6% of Ontario's total population.
 - Since 2001, the number of persons who report speaking French at home at least regularly has increased by 16.8% (+88,625 persons) while remaining unchanged as a proportion of Ontario's total population.
- Among those who reported speaking French at home at least regularly in 2016, 348,285 persons reported speaking French most often⁴ while 268,980 reported speaking French as their secondary language (in addition to the main language). Respectively, they represented 2.6% and 2.0% of the province's total population.
 - Between 2001 and 2016, the number of persons who reported speaking French most often at home⁴ rose by 6.8% (+22,265). In the same period, those who reported speaking French as a secondary language at home in addition to the main language rose by 32.8% (+66,360).
 - Both French spoken at home most often⁴ (-0.3 percentage points) and French spoken as a secondary language at home (+0.2 percentage points) remained relatively stable as a proportion of Ontario's total population.
 - Among those who reported speaking French most often at home⁴ in the 2001 to 2016 period, the only decreases observed were among those who speak exclusively French at home. In fact, the number of persons who only speak French at home decreased by 13.6% (-22,365 persons) in that period.

4. Includes French spoken equally often with another language at home.

Table 2
French used at work, Ontario, 2001 to 2016

	2001		2006		2011		2016		2001 to 2016 growth
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	percent
Working population¹	6,512,560	100.0	7,054,270	100.0	7,251,570	100.0	7,579,085	100.0	16.4
French used at work ²	381,325	5.9	411,365	5.8	398,095	5.5	426,720	5.6	11.9
French used most often at work ³	138,485	2.1	142,705	2.0	150,505	2.1	160,325	2.1	15.8
Only French used at work ⁴	31,935	0.5	33,360	0.5	36,345	0.5	31,525	0.4	-1.3
Mostly French used at work ⁵	56,790	0.9	64,605	0.9	58,125	0.8	62,620	0.8	10.3
French used equally often with another language at work ⁶	49,760	0.8	44,740	0.6	56,035	0.8	66,180	0.9	33.0
French used regularly at work (in addition to the main language)	242,840	3.7	268,660	3.8	247,590	3.4	266,395	3.5	9.7

1. Refers to persons aged 15 years and over who worked at least once in the reference period.

2. Includes both single and multiple responses to both part A and part B of the question.

3. Refers to French used most often at work with or without additional languages used regularly.

4. Includes persons who reported only French to Part A of the language used at work question (used most often) and did not report a language to Part B (used regularly).

5. Includes persons who reported French to Part A of the language used at work question (used most often) and reported at least one other language to Part B (used regularly).

6. Includes persons who reported French and another language to Part A of the language used at work question (used most often).

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

- In 2016, 426,720 workers in Ontario reported using French at work at least regularly. Collectively, they represented 5.6% of Ontario's working population that year.
 - Between 2001 and 2016, those who reported using French at work at least regularly rose by 11.9% (+45,395 workers) while remaining relatively unchanged as a proportion of Ontario's total working population (-0.2 percentage points).
- Among those who reported using French at least regularly at work in 2016, the number of persons who used French most often⁵ stood at 160,325 while 266,395 reported using French as a secondary language in addition to the main language. Respectively, they represented 2.1% and 3.5% of Ontario's working population.
 - Since 2001, the number of workers using French most often⁵ at work has increased by 21,840, up 15.8%. By comparison, the secondary use of French at work has increased by an additional 23,555 workers or 9.7% over the same period.
 - In the 2001 to 2016 period, both those using French most often⁵ at work and those using it as a secondary language in addition to the main language at work remained relatively unchanged as a proportion of the total working population.
 - Among those using French most often⁵ at work in the 2001 to 2016 period, only those who reported using exclusively French at work experienced a decrease (-410 workers).

5. Includes French used equally often with another language at work.