



Office of the
Commissioner of
Official Languages

Commissariat
aux langues
officielles



BUILDING BRIDGES:

Perceptions and realities about the English-speaking communities of Quebec and their relationship with French in Quebec and bilingualism in Canada

REPORT | JUNE 2024



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*Bâtir des ponts : perceptions et réalités à propos des communautés
d'expression anglaise du Québec et leur relation avec le français au Québec
et le bilinguisme au Canada*

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Executive summary

Background and objectives

The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (the Office of the Commissioner) has observed that, in recent years, the English-speaking communities of Quebec (ESCQ) have been the focus of much public discourse and debate in the province. Survey and census data indicate that, overall, the ESCQ are highly bilingual and value Canada’s broader linguistic duality, including the French language. The extent to which the general population is aware of these facets of the ESCQ is not clear, however, and the Office of the Commissioner wished to test the hypothesis that problematic myths may persist.

In light of this context and with the modernization of the *Official Languages Act* by the federal government in 2023, which recognizes the need to “advance the existence of a majority-French society in a Quebec where the future of French is assured,” this research project¹ is an opportunity to shed light on the relationship that the ESCQ have with the French language in Quebec and official bilingualism in Canada as a whole. This is also an opportunity to explore how Quebec’s English-speaking minority can be considered as bridge-builders or even as a potential ally of the promotion of French in Canada as a whole, with a view to developing a more constructive discourse that better acknowledges their contributions and, ultimately, deconstructs certain misperceptions.

This research project aims to achieve the following key research objectives:

- Explore the nature and extent of certain myths and perceptions among the French-speaking majority and among the English-speaking minority in Quebec about the ESCQ and their relationship with the French language in Quebec and bilingualism in Canada, and identify potential solutions.
- Inform and update the Office of the Commissioner’s reflections on the ESCQ.
- Better equip the Office of the Commissioner to help nuance messaging and communications on the ESCQ.
- In as far as possible, help to inform and nuance the perspectives of certain opinion leaders and of certain target populations.

Target audience

The target audience for this research project was the general population in Quebec, 18 years of age and over, segmented into those whose preferred official language is French (Francophones) and those

¹ The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages mandated the study to its Policy and Research Directorate and to Environics Research Group. The project managers were Derek Leebosh from Environics and Robert J. Talbot from the Office of the Commissioner. Other contributors included Philippe Marchand and Brenda Sharpe from Environics, and Clarence Lemay and Charles Taker from the Office of the Commissioner.

whose preferred official language is English (Anglophones²) and also segmented between those in the Montréal and Gatineau areas where there is a larger English presence and those residing in the rest of Quebec, where there is relatively less of an English presence. The method of determining “preferred official language” was the language in which the individual chose to take part in the research.

Methodology

To meet the objectives of this assignment, Environics was retained to conduct both qualitative and quantitative research in collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner.

Qualitative Data Collection

Environics Research conducted a series of six online focus groups in December 2023 in collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner’s Research Team, the objective of which was to explore Quebecers’ perceptions of the English-speaking community in Quebec, its bilingualism and its use of French. The online focus groups were conducted using the Zoom platform. Two sessions were conducted among Francophones in the Greater Montréal and Gatineau areas, where there is a larger Anglophone presence (December 4), and another pair were conducted among Francophones outside of the Greater Montréal and Gatineau areas, where there is less of an Anglophone presence (December 5). A third pair of sessions was conducted in English among Anglophones—one with those living in the Greater Montréal and Gatineau areas and one with those living in other parts of Quebec (December 6).

The 40 people recruited as focus group participants were all 18 years of age or over and included a range of age, education, and ethnic backgrounds. The focus group sessions lasted approximately 90 minutes, and each involved between five and eight participants (out of eight people recruited for each group). Participants were given a \$100 honorarium to thank them for their time commitment.

Statement of limitations: Qualitative research provides insight into the range of opinions held within a population, rather than the weights of the opinions held, as would be measured in a quantitative study. The results of this type of research should be viewed as indicative rather than projectable to the population.

Quantitative Data Collection

Environics conducted a random-probability telephone survey from January 11 to 28, 2024, with 1,005 adult residents of Quebec, using industry-standard random-digit dialing techniques, in

² The terms “Anglophone,” “English-speaking” and “English speakers” are used interchangeably for the purposes of this report. Broadly speaking, “Anglophones” refers to individuals whose preferred Canadian official language is English, including people who may have English as a mother tongue, but also people whose mother tongue(s) may be another language but who consider English to be their preferred official language. An analogous definition for “Francophones” is applied in relation to French. Allophones are considered here as those who have a mother tongue other than English or French. While there are many individuals who might identify variously with one, two or all three groups (for example, someone with French, English, and Italian as mother tongues), for purposes of analysis of the study results, focus group participants and survey respondents who chose to participate in English have been categorized as Anglophones, and those who chose to participate in French are categorized as Francophones.

collaboration with the Research Team of the Office of the Commissioner. The objective of the survey was to determine the persistence of the hypothesized myths and to explore opportunities for greater cross-cultural understanding. A survey of this size will yield results that can be considered accurate to within +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Margins of error are larger for subgroups of the population. The distribution of interviews is presented in the table below.

| Regional distribution | Total | Montréal/Gatineau | Rest of Quebec | French | English |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Number of completed surveys | 1,005 | 565 | 440 | 885 | 120 |
| Percentage of completed surveys | 100% | 56% | 44% | 88% | 12% |
| Margin of error @ 95% CI | ± 3.1 | ± 4.1 | ± 4.6 | ± 3.3 | ± 8.9 |

Contract value

The contract value was \$119,186.75 (HST included).

Report

This report presents an executive summary of the key qualitative and quantitative findings, preceded by information based on an analysis of census and previous survey data conducted by the Office of the Commissioner’s Research Team used to establish potential myths, followed by detailed analyses of the focus group data and the survey data used to explore the nature and the persistence of the hypothesized myths.

Analysis notes

The tables in this report showing the quantitative results show the results for all respondents plus a breakdown by French speakers, referred to as Francophones (that is, respondents who chose to respond to the survey in French) and English speakers, referred to as Anglophones (respondents who chose to respond to the survey in English). Survey language is used rather than mother tongue, as the text of some of the questions varied depending on the official language the respondent chose for the survey.

In this report, quantitative results are expressed as percentages unless otherwise noted. Results may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses. Net results cited in the text may not exactly match individual results shown in the tables due to rounding.

Key findings – Overview

The research results confirm the hypothesis that certain myths and misperceptions about the ESCQ persist among the general population in Quebec. Their nature and the extent to which they persist, however, is not such that the situation cannot be improved. Encouragingly, English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers appear to get along on an individual basis far more than the discourse suggests. Specifically, public understanding could be improved by illustrating constructive examples of ESCQ engagement with French, backed up by factual data, and in particular by fostering more positive in-person interactions between members of the Francophone majority and the English-speaking minority in Quebec, to the benefit of Canada’s linguistic duality more broadly.

Key findings – Background research

- According to available 2021 census data, most English-mother tongue Quebecers can speak French (71% are bilingual), and a majority use it at work, have it as a language of instruction at school, speak it at home or have it as another mother tongue.
- According to public opinion research from 2021–2022, most English-speaking Quebecers consume or engage in cultural products and activities in French, and they are just as supportive as Francophone Quebecers of statements in support of Canada’s linguistic duality. Like Quebecers, Canadians outside Quebec also support the *Official Languages Act*.

Key findings – Qualitative phase

- A number of Anglophone and Francophone participants showed a real openness toward and interest in the other. This view was not shared by all, however, and more pessimistic voices sometimes took over in the discussions.
- There was a wide range of opinions within each group, which appeared to be informed first by individual outlook, second by direct personal experiences with the other group (whether positive, neutral or negative), and third by perceptions of the public discourse. Very few had a direct familiarity with statistical evidence supporting (or contradicting) their views.
- With some notable exceptions, Francophones tended to underestimate English-speaking Quebecers’ ability to speak French, their use of the language, and their interest in French-language cultural products and events. Many were concerned about the long-term future of French both in and outside of Quebec. Some participants from Montréal and Gatineau were especially frustrated at how much English they heard in their day-to-day lives. They were also skeptical of support for the *Official Languages Act* among Anglophones elsewhere in Canada.
- Among Anglophone participants, recent measures restricting English in Quebec were seen as unnecessary and were a major source of disillusionment. Many were frustrated at being criticized for using English, even if only among themselves, and for being made to feel like they don’t belong, despite often trying to use French. Most Anglophone participants said they were happy to use French, but they don’t want to feel *forced* to use it or to be told that their French isn’t good enough. Some also appeared to be skeptical of Francophone Quebecers’ support for Canada’s *Official Languages Act*.
- Despite these frustrations, there was an apparent interest—a desire even—among members of both language groups to be understood, accepted or even “liked” by the other. Even some of the more skeptical participants mentioned positive personal interactions that had nuanced their view.
- Many Francophone participants were encouraged by statistics showing English-speaking Quebecers’ interest in French-language cultural products or in speaking French, and suggested that seeing English-speaking Quebecers more present using French in apolitical contexts in culture and in media would be most helpful. Some suggested that a politically neutral entity should publicize data about English-speaking Quebecers’ use of French.

Francophone participants with more negative views about English-speaking Quebecers were more skeptical of these statistics.

- Some Francophones thought that English-speaking Quebecers can and should be bridge-builders or even “allies” when it comes to informing Anglophones elsewhere in Canada about Quebec and bilingualism. Anglophone participants who had moved to Quebec from elsewhere in Canada were receptive to this idea, citing personal experiences and even pride about explaining Quebec to friends and family “back home” in the province of their birth.

Key findings – Quantitative phase

A. Interactions with speakers of the other official language

- Among Quebecers who have contact with speakers of the other official language (n=909), the vast majority (87%), including 89% of Francophones and 81% of Anglophones, report having positive personal interactions. The rate is particularly high (94%) among Quebecers who interact very often with the other group.
- However, a large majority of Quebecers agree it is a problem that, as a group, English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers have a lot of misconceptions about each other. This sentiment is shared by both language communities, with 61% of Francophones and 67% of Anglophones somewhat or strongly agreeing.

B. Perceptions about English-speaking Quebecers

- Whereas Anglophones tend to be aware of the use of French by the English-speaking population, Francophones tend to underestimate it; however, a significant minority of Francophones are aware of the extent to which many English-speaking Quebecers can and do use French in an important area of their lives.
- Anglophones are twice as likely (58%) as Francophones (29%) to be aware that most English mother-tongue Quebecers can speak conversational French.
- A majority of Francophones (54%) think it’s false that most English mother-tongue Quebecers regularly use French in their daily lives. They are evenly split as to whether it’s true that most English mother-tongue schoolchildren in Quebec are either in French-language schools or French immersion programs (44% think this is true, 47% think it’s false). In contrast, large majorities of Anglophones (over 70%) correctly believe each of these statements to be true.
- Anglophones are notably more likely than Francophones to be aware that it is false that most working English mother-tongue Quebecers work solely in English (62% vs. 33%). They are also more likely to know that it is false that, when a Quebecer whose mother tongue is French and a Quebecer whose mother tongue is English have children, most of those children end up with English as their mother tongue instead of French (54% false vs. 35%).
- Most Francophones (56%, vs. 46% of Anglophones) believe it is rare for English-speaking Quebecers to take an interest in French-language culture, and most (73%, vs. 44% of

Anglophones) also believe that Canada's official bilingualism is more valued by French-speaking Quebecers than by their English-speaking counterparts. Half of Francophone Quebecers (51%, vs. 35% of Anglophones) think that English-speaking Quebecers mainly keep to their own community and do not interact much with Francophones.

- Whereas most Anglophone Quebecers (64%) are aware that a vast majority of Canadians outside Quebec support Canada's *Official Languages Act*, Francophone Quebecers are more split on the issue (44% believe this to be true, 50% believe it to be false).

C. Looking ahead to the future

- Large majorities of Quebecers agree that using statistics, anecdotes and culturally engaged spokespeople to showcase English-speaking Quebecers' bilingualism would help a little or a lot to improve relations between English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers.
- By far the strongest support among all groups, however, was for encouraging more positive social interactions between Anglophones and Francophones through activities like youth exchange programs, social clubs, music, sports or other special interests.
- Most Anglophones (77%) and Francophones (71%) agree that English-speaking Quebecers can play an important role as a bridge between French-speaking Quebecers and English-speaking Canadians outside Quebec.

Political neutrality statement and contact information

I hereby certify as senior officer of Environics that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the *Policy on Communications and Federal Identity* of the Government of Canada, and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

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I. Introduction

Overview

In recent years, the English-speaking communities of Quebec (ESCQ) have been the focus of much public discourse and debate. A number of developments have sparked strong reactions and rekindled negative perceptions among the province’s French-speaking majority about the English-speaking minority.³ Despite the fact that data from certain public opinion polls⁴ and from the most recent census indicate that, overall, the ESCQ are highly bilingual and value linguistic duality, certain indicators suggest that myths about them persist within Quebec’s Francophone population.⁵ All of this has come at a time when many Francophones are concerned about the long-term future of French in Canada as a whole, including in Quebec.

With the modernization of the *Official Languages Act* by the federal government in 2023, which recognizes the fragility of French in Canada as a whole, including Quebec, but which also affirms obligations toward official language minority communities (including the ESCQ), it is important to shed light on the relationship that the ESCQ have with the French language in Quebec and official bilingualism in Canada as a whole. More specifically, there is an opportunity to explore how Quebec’s English-speaking minority can be perceived as bridge-builders or as an ally of the promotion of French in Canada as a whole, with a view to develop a more constructive discourse that better acknowledges their contributions and, ultimately, deconstructs certain misperceptions.⁶

This topic has recently begun to be broached by a number of researchers, notably the Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN).⁷ The publication of Statistics Canada’s major post-census survey of official language minority communities (OLMCs) (anticipated late-2024) may also shed light on this subject. The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (the Office of the Commissioner) recognized an opportunity to broach a subject of interest for these communities and to contribute to the larger societal conversation that is already under way.

³ See Olivier Bossé, “Mike Rousseau, une manifestation du ‘privilège Anglophone’, juge le PQ,” *Le Soleil*, November 4, 2021.

⁴ See Canadian Heritage, [Study on the Appreciation and Perception of Canada’s Official Languages](#), prepared by Environics Research Group, 2022, 49 p.

⁵ See Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, [Official Languages Tracking Survey 2021 – Final Report](#), 2022, prepared by Environics Research Group, 2022, p. 23.

⁶ Commissioner Thériault broached the subject during a speech delivered in 2018, “[Notes for an address at the Minority Community Vitality Through Education Forum](#),” Montréal, October 28, 2018.

⁷ Lorraine O’Donnell and Patrick Donovan, *Vers une politique linguistique inclusive : Les Québécois d’expression anglaise et l’avenir de la langue française*, QUESCREN brief to Quebec’s Minister of the French Language, Jean-François Roberge, during the Consultation pour alimenter la réflexion sur l’avenir de la langue française (consultation to inform discussions on the future of the French language), 15 p. Other recent studies include: Jean-Pierre Corbeil, Richard Marcoux and Victor Piché, eds., *Le français en déclin? Repenser la francophonie québécoise*, 2023, 459 p. and Office québécois de la langue française, *Langue de l’espace public au Québec*, 2024, 52 p.

The Office of the Commissioner was interested in exploring the extent to which several specific myths and facts about the ESCQ are regarded by both English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers. Although some of the myths may have had their origin in reality, especially prior to the 1960s and 1970s, they no longer reflect the reality of the ESCQ and their overall embrace of bilingualism in the 21st century.

The Office of the Commissioner commissioned Environics Research to conduct this qualitative and quantitative research project in collaboration with its Research Team, with the aim of achieving the following objectives:

- Explore the nature and extent of certain myths and perceptions among the French-speaking majority and among the English-speaking minority in Quebec about the ESCQ and their relationship with the French language in Quebec and bilingualism in Canada, and identify potential solutions.
- Inform and update the Office of the Commissioner’s reflections on the ESCQ.
- Better equip the Office of the Commissioner to help nuance messaging and communications on the ESCQ.
- In as far as possible, help to inform and nuance the perspectives of certain opinion leaders and of certain target populations.

Background research

The first phase of the project involved research conducted by the Office of the Commissioner to establish the veracity of hypothesized myths about the ESCQ based on the themes of socio-economic equality, the future of French (including language comprehension, ability and usage), and social cohesion (including interactions with, interest in, and shared values with the “other”). The Office of the Commissioner’s Research Team applied the latest census data where possible, as well as previous survey data and secondary literature, and vetted the information with researchers from outside the organization. The perceptions and attitudes of focus group participants and survey respondents would subsequently be tested against this information.

The preliminary research established the following:

- **The ESCQ are not necessarily more socio-economically privileged.** According to research based on the 2021 Census, English-speaking Quebecers faced a higher rate of unemployment, had a lower median income and were more likely to experience poverty compared to their French-speaking counterparts. According to a 2021 survey, however, one in two Francophones (48%) believed that English-speaking Quebecers were more socio-economically privileged.⁸
- **Most English-speaking Quebecers can understand French.** According to a 2022 survey, the vast majority of Anglophone respondents from Quebec (92%) indicated having at least a basic

⁸ Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT), [Census 2021 Update: A brief review of the latest data on employment among Québec’s English speakers](#), 2023 (“English-speaking Quebecers” is defined in the socio-economic research as those individuals having English as their first official language spoken (FOLS) derived from the 2021 Census, including half of

understanding of French. By contrast, only 2% of Anglophone respondents from Quebec indicated having no understanding of French.⁹

- **Most English-mother tongue Quebecers can speak French.** According to the 2021 Census, 71% of people in Quebec who have English as a mother tongue can speak both English and French. Although they make up only 2% of Canada’s population, they represent 9% of all bilingual Canadians and 27% of all bilingual Canadians who have English as a mother tongue.¹⁰
- **Most English-mother tongue Quebecers use French.** According to calculations based on the 2021 Census data, most people in Quebec who have English as a mother tongue regularly use French—they speak it at home, use it at work, have it as a language of instruction at school or have it as another mother tongue. (Other forms of use, such as with friends, at college/university, at the store or elsewhere in the community, are not captured by the Census.)¹¹
- **Most English-mother tongue workers in Quebec use French at work.** According to the 2021 Census, most workers (65%) in Quebec who have English as a mother tongue regularly use French at work.¹²
- **Most English-mother tongue schoolchildren in Quebec use French at school.** According to calculations based on 2021 Census data and administrative data, most school-aged children in Quebec who have English as a mother tongue have French as a language of instruction at school, meaning a language that is used to teach a variety of subjects, such as science, history, geography, etc.¹³

individuals having both English and French as FOLS). See also Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, [Official Languages Tracking Survey 2021 – Final Report](#), 2022.

⁹ Canadian Heritage, [Study on the Appreciation and Perception of Canada’s Official Languages](#), 2023.

¹⁰ Referring to English-French bilingualism among those who have English as a mother tongue (alone or with another language). Statistics Canada, 2021 Census, [Table 98-10-0170-01 Mother tongue by first official language spoken and knowledge of official languages: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions](#).

¹¹ A majority (at least 53%) among those who have English as a mother tongue (alone or with another language), including all individuals who have French as an additional mother tongue, or as a language spoken at home, or as a language used at work or, among school-aged children who could speak French, had never attended a regular English-language school. The actual figure may be higher, considering that children using French at school in an immersion program but not in another sphere recorded by the Census were excluded from the count. Data provided by Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population (2A-L).

¹² This proportion is for the employed labour force, among those who have English as a mother tongue (alone or with another language). Data provided by Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population (2A-L).

¹³ According to the 2021 Census, nearly 150,000 school-aged children had English as a mother tongue. According to available administrative data, however, less than half that number of children were enrolled in programs where English was the sole language of instruction. In 2021, 147,780 school-aged children in Quebec had English as a mother tongue, alone or with another mother tongue (Census data provided by Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population, 2A-L). According to administrative data from 2020–2021, 97,140 children (all mother tongues) were enrolled in English-language public and private schools in Quebec, but 26,734 of them in the English public schools alone were enrolled in French immersion that year (Statistics Canada, [Table 37-10-0009-01 Number of students in official languages programs](#),

- **Most Quebecers with both French and English as mother tongues use French at home.** According to the 2021 Census, 87% of people in Quebec who have both English and French as their mother tongues regularly speak French at home.¹⁴
- **Most children in mixed English-French households in Quebec have French as a mother tongue.** According to the 2021 Census, in male-female couple households in Quebec where one adult has English as their mother tongue and the other has French as their mother tongue, most children (69%) have French as a mother tongue.¹⁵
- **Most English-speaking Quebecers have regular contact with French-speaking Quebecers.** According to a 2022 survey, most Anglophone respondents in Quebec (77%) had contact with multiple Francophones on a daily basis, including friends, neighbours, relatives and co-workers.¹⁶
- **Most English-speaking Quebecers engage with French-language culture.** According to a 2022 survey, most Anglophone respondents from Quebec (55%) were interested in French-language cultural products, such as books, music, film or television, and most (58%) had attended artistic and cultural events in French over the past year, such as shows, festivals and exhibitions.¹⁷
- **English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers both value Canada’s linguistic duality.** According to a 2022 survey, at least four out of five Anglophone and Francophone respondents from Quebec agreed with each of the following:
 - Language rights are as important as any other right guaranteed by the Constitution of Canada.
 - Learning both official languages contributes to better understanding among Canadians.
 - The Government of Canada should continue to invest in exchange programs as a way to encourage understanding between the country’s Anglophones and Francophones.
 - All high school graduates should have a working knowledge of English and French.

[public elementary and secondary schools, by program type, grade and sex](#), 2022; Statistics Canada, [Table 37-10-0175-01 Number of students in official languages programs, private or independent elementary and secondary schools, by program type, grade and sex](#), 2022; and data on immersion from the Ministère de l’Éducation du Québec obtained by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages from Statistics Canada, 2023).

¹⁴ Referring to individuals who have both English and French as a mother tongue and who do not have another mother tongue. Data provided by Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population (2A-L).

¹⁵ Referring to parents who had English only or French only as their mother tongue (single responses only), and to children who had French as a mother tongue, alone or with another language (Statistics Canada, 2021 Census, [Table 98-10-0213-01 Mother tongue by language spoken most often at home for children in different-gender couple families: Canada, provinces and territories and census metropolitan areas with parts](#)).

¹⁶ Canadian Heritage, [Study on the Appreciation and Perception of Canada’s Official Languages](#), 2023.

¹⁷ Canadian Heritage, [Study on the Appreciation and Perception of Canada’s Official Languages](#), 2023.

- Linguistic duality in Canada is, for you, a source of cultural enrichment.
- [It is important] for your child, or the children in your community, to have the opportunity to learn [French/English] as a second language.¹⁸
- **Most Canadians outside Quebec also support Canada's *Official Languages Act*, and many who can speak and who use French outside Quebec have English as a mother tongue.** According to a 2021 survey, roughly 85% of Canadians outside Quebec supported the aims of the *Official Languages Act*. According to available 2021 Census data, in Canada outside Quebec, approximately half of people who can speak French (2.8 million) and one third of those who regularly use it (1.9 million) have English, but not French, as a mother tongue.¹⁹

¹⁸ Canadian Heritage, [Study on the Appreciation and Perception of Canada's Official Languages](#), 2023.

¹⁹ Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, [Official Languages Tracking Survey 2021 – Final Report](#), 2022. French-language use refers here to those individuals in Canada outside Quebec having English but not French as a mother tongue (alone or with another mother tongue) and who have French as a language spoken at home, or as a language used at work or, among school-aged children who could speak French, had attended a regular French-language school or French immersion program. Other forms of use, such as using a language with friends, at college or university, at the store or elsewhere in the community, were not counted in the Census. Data provided by Statistics Canada from the 2021 Census, 2A-L.

II. Detailed findings – Qualitative phase

A. Introductory observations

Over the course of the six online focus groups, we explored general impressions toward English-speaking Quebecers, the sources of those beliefs, and perceptions of relations between the English-speaking and French-speaking communities in Quebec. We also discussed the prevalence of some myths or misconceptions about English-speaking Quebecers and gauged reaction to facts that may contradict those beliefs. Finally, we explored potential solutions to build bridges and reconcile the two language communities in Quebec. A few questions touched upon the broader, pan-Canadian context as well. Note that in this report, unless specified otherwise, members of the ESCQ are referred to as “Anglophones” or “English speaking” and members of the majority linguistic population in Quebec are referred to as “Francophones” or “French-speaking.” Throughout the discussions, participants demonstrated a clear understanding of who “Anglophones” and “Francophones” are, and none questioned the use of these terms or the distinctions made in the data presented, but participants in all groups often referred to “Québécois” implicitly as “Francophones.”

It should be noted that in the French-language focus groups, we explored how participants felt about English-speaking Quebecers, and what they believe about Anglophones’ attitudes toward the French language. In the English language sessions, the focus was more on how English-speaking Quebecers felt they are viewed by the Francophone majority.

There was a wide range of opinions within each group, with views varying from positive to more neutral to negative. The opinions expressed were often passionate and emotional for participants from both communities.

Participants’ views appeared to be informed first by their own direct personal experiences with the other community—whether these experiences had been generally positive or neutral, or if they had involved one or more negative experiences, such as bullying or denial. Their views were also informed by what they perceived in the public discourse—through news reports, social media, or politicians. Very few were directly familiar with statistical evidence supporting or contradicting their views.

Many Anglophone and Francophone participants showed a genuine openness and interest in the other group, despite more negative voices sometimes dominating the discussion. In the latter case, participants with more positive or optimistic viewpoints sometimes appeared hesitant or apologetic in sharing them.

B. General attitudes toward English-speaking Quebecers

At the start of each session participants were asked about their general impressions of relations between Anglophones and Francophones in Quebec, and about attitudes toward English-speaking Quebecers.

Francophone perspectives

The participants in the four French-language focus groups were first asked to describe the relations between the English- and French-speaking communities in Quebec. The first general impression shared by Francophone participants was a combination of positive and negative comments. There was an acknowledgement of current tensions around language issues but also some sense that relations had

perhaps improved compared to the past. There was acknowledgment of a history of political tensions, but at the same time many noted that, on an individual level, relations were usually quite cordial. To the extent that there were tensions, many of the Francophone participants blamed them on extremists on both sides or felt that it was caused by the resistance of some English-speaking Quebecers to using French. Examples of these sentiments were as follows:

“Relations can sometimes be distant and tense due to certain historical and social tensions between the language groups.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“In my opinion, relations are not very good, especially coming from Anglophones.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“I’d say relations are often marked by misunderstanding, rigidity and a lack of open-mindedness on both sides.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“I think relations are rather friendly but somewhat reserved.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“I think relationships are better than they were 50 years ago.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“It depends where—relations are better in cities like Montréal compared to rural areas.” [Translation] – Francophone participant from Montréal

“Relations are quite cordial, but as soon as Francophones demand a little more about our rights (for example, to be served in French in stores), it leads to tension.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“Relations are generally good, there’s respect. But there are also a lot of extremists.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

When asked to elaborate, participants from Montréal and Gatineau—where there is a larger English-speaking population—tended to express more negative views of English-speaking Quebecers, while participants in the rest of Quebec tended to have more neutral to positive views of Anglophones. Quebecers who were raised in both French and English or who have close friends or family members who are Anglophone also had more positive perceptions.

There was a perception among Francophone participants that some English-speaking Quebecers do not make enough effort to speak French. This view tended to be driven by some negative personal interactions, especially in the downtown and western areas of Montréal and in Gatineau, notably in stores (with employees or other customers), during online conversations, from childhood experiences, or in their work environment. Interestingly, “l’ouest de Montréal” or “Westmount” was often invoked as an example, including by some participants who did not live there.

“It’s always up to us to make the effort to speak English. We want to be served in French when we’re in Quebec. When I travel, I make an effort to speak the local language.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

Several Francophone participants reported experiences where they had switched to English to accommodate an Anglophone. While some said that it is well-intended and that both communities need to make more of an effort, others expressed frustration, saying that the opposite situation—an English speaker switching to French—happens far less often. A couple of participants said that they make a point of refusing to speak English because the French language is at risk of being replaced by English over time, and they blamed Francophones for switching to English too easily to accommodate Anglophones. They said that Francophones should hold their ground and insist on speaking French to protect the language. Other participants pointed out that switching to English when speaking with an Anglophone can discourage those who are genuinely trying to speak French and who are perhaps dealing with linguistic insecurity.

“My boyfriend is an Anglophone and his French isn’t that good. But when he makes the effort to speak French, he’s often answered in English, supposedly to accommodate him.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“Francophones often have the bad habit of responding in English to Anglophones trying to practice their French. You have to be patient and let them practice. It’s appreciated and can also improve relationships.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

Many participants said that they felt relations between the two communities are more respectful now than they were in past generations. They noted that millennials and Gen Z are more bilingual than ever. Some are celebrating this new reality, saying the youngest generation of English-speaking Quebecers are now more aware of the importance of the French language in Quebec and that mutual understanding is desirable. Others worry that, in the long term, the presence of English will grow at the expense of French.

“I notice that young people speak mostly in English wherever we go to Montréal. I hear English being spoken more than ever before. The French language is losing ground.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

The challenge of learning French—usually because of the complex grammar and gendered nouns—especially at an older age, was brought up in all of the French-language focus groups. One person whose partner is learning French commented that the current system of francization classes in Quebec is disorganized and can be discouraging for English speakers.

Anglophone perspectives

In the two English language focus groups, participants were also asked to share the first words that come to mind about how they think French-speaking Quebecers view their English-speaking counterparts. A majority of participants from Montréal and Gatineau used positive words such as “fluid” and “cordial,” with notable exceptions. The words used by participants outside of Montréal and Gatineau had mostly negative connotations, such as “strained,” “terrible” and “complicated,” again with some important exceptions.

Anglophones from the Montréal and Gatineau areas shared mostly positive experiences, saying that there is an easiness to life in these cities, speaking and switching from one language to another. On the other hand, Anglophones living outside of Montréal and Gatineau shared more negative experiences of what they perceived as Francophones’ aggressive behaviours against English-speaking people,

sometimes from customers, other times from employees refusing to accommodate them in English when they are shopping.

One participant said she had never felt any strain when speaking French with Francophones at an individual level, but that social media, the news and some politicians are creating a hype around isolated incidents between Francophones and Anglophones, polarizing and politicizing an otherwise generally cordial relationship.

Some Anglophone participants who were less fluent in French shared the experience of having been brushed off by Francophones when they tried to use French, or who did not want to make any effort to speak English. The negative experiences they faced, combined with comments in the public sphere, make some of them hesitate about wanting to use or to learn more French because the sentiment of being pointed at is not encouraging them to try to speak French.

“[Francophone Quebecers] almost don’t want you to learn French, and they don’t want to see the benefits of knowing more than one language.” – Anglophone participant

There was a perception that Francophone Quebecers are afraid of losing their identity if English has too much space. Some would like to see Francophones celebrating bilingualism instead of often seeing English speakers as a threat.

While some Anglophone participants said that they speak and use French on a regular basis, others said that they used French much less and had very limited contact with Francophones in their day-to-day lives.

C. Personal interactions

Participants were asked to what extent they ever interact personally with Quebecers from the other language community (i.e., Anglophone or Francophone) in Quebec, whether at work, at school, socially, etc.

Several Anglophone and Francophone participants reported having personal contact with the other community at work and said that some of these conversations are in French, but most of them are in English.

Some participants also reported having personal interactions with friends from the other community, as well as a partner or family members. Some participants mentioned being married to or being in a relationship with someone from the other community. Otherwise, interactions with people from the other language community often take place in retail or customer service settings.

It was also notable that some participants described having a lot of cross-linguistic interaction through other communities they belong to. For example, one Francophone participant mentioned being part of the 2SLGBTQI+ community and described how, within that community, there is much more mixing between Anglophones and Francophones, especially in Montréal. Others spoke of having a lot of interaction across the language divide because of a hobby or activity, such as taking part in a sport and competing with people who speak both languages or connecting through Quebec cultural activities such as music, comedy, live shows, television and movies. With some notable exceptions, these contacts tended to be more positive and to create common ground.

D. English speakers and the use of French in Quebec

We explored how Francophone participants view their relationship with English-speaking Quebecers and how they would characterize the latter's attitudes toward the French language. In the English language focus groups, we explored how Anglophone participants think Francophones see them as English-speaking Quebecers.

Francophone perspectives

Francophone participants shared mixed views of English-speaking Quebecers' attitudes toward the use of French. Some said the English speakers they interact with do speak French, some said they do not.

"Most Anglophones are very accommodating, even fond of speaking or trying to speak French."
[Translation] – Francophone participant

"Looking around in my neighborhood, I'm surrounded by lots of Anglophones who speak French very well." [Translation] – Francophone participant

"There are Anglophones who like to speak French, but unfortunately this is not the majority, so we don't see them very often." [Translation] – Francophone participant

It was widely acknowledged that English-speaking Quebecers are much more adept at and willing to speak French today than was the case in past generations. Several participants noted that the more established and older English-speaking Quebecers tended to speak less French compared to the generations following them. In other words, there was an impression that more and more English-speaking Quebecers have started speaking French over the years. On one hand, some thought many younger English-speaking Quebecers are now well aware of the importance of speaking French in Quebec and grew up with a different mentality than did their parents. On the other hand, some shared concerns that we are seeing the first signs of a backward trend, with younger English-speaking Quebecers starting to turn their backs on the French language and culture. There were also comments about the impact of immigration and how so many recent immigrants seem to assimilate into the English-speaking community and do not always understand the French fact in Quebec.

In general, Francophone participants in Montréal and Gatineau were somewhat more likely than those living elsewhere to express negative views about the attitudes of English-speaking Quebecers toward the French language. Some participants were frustrated with how much English they hear in their day-to-day lives and with having people address them in English first without even trying to use French.

In comparison, the attitude of English-speaking Quebecers living in the rest of the province was viewed positively by Francophones who either live in or visit these regions.

"I spent two weeks in Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean and didn't hear a single Anglophone speak English." [Translation] – Francophone participant

Some participants from Gatineau noted a recent post-pandemic move of unilingual English speakers from Ottawa across the river in search of more affordable housing. They added that this influx of "nouveaux"—as they are referred to—is talked about in the region and causes some tensions because

they are perceived as not speaking or even trying to speak French. Furthermore, they appear to expect to be served in English.

“I’ve seen a lot of newcomers moving to the Outaouais who clearly don’t speak or make the effort to speak French.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

The perception that English-speaking Quebecers take it for granted that Francophones will accommodate them by switching to English is one of the main sources of frustration among Francophones toward Anglophones. This perceived expectation that Francophones should accommodate Anglophones—some participants used the word “entitlement” to describe their perception—plays an important role in how some Francophones perceive English-speaking Quebecers. As mentioned earlier, some participants believed that Francophones also contribute to this situation because they do not insist enough on speaking French with Quebec Anglophones.

“I get the impression that in Quebec, Anglophones take it for granted that Francophones will adapt to them.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“When a Francophone meets an Anglophone, they’ll adapt and speak in English. The opposite doesn’t happen. An Anglophone won’t make the effort to speak French.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“In an English-speaking group, even if there’s one Francophone, there won’t be a switch to French.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“On my son’s sports team, everything is in English because two or three players don’t speak French. It’s supposedly easier; you’re more part of the ‘cool’ gang if you speak English.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

While some participants considered having to make these accommodations to be an irritant, others said they do not mind switching from French to English with Anglophones, and that adjusting to someone else’s language is a sign of respect and consideration.

Some Francophones said most of the English-speaking Quebecers they interact with daily—as customers, clients, coworkers, family, or friends—do speak to them mostly in French.

“I always see Anglophone friends, colleagues and customers making an effort to speak French, and they’re doing great. We understand each other in French without any problem.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“Perhaps I was more fortunate than others. In my case, it often happened in a meeting with six or seven Francophones at work that the only Anglophone would speak French.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

There was a widespread belief among the Francophone participants that French-speaking Quebecers are more likely to be bilingual than English-speaking Quebecers because it is a necessity for them if they want to travel or for work opportunities. They think this is particularly true for the younger generations. Several also observed that there seems to be an attitude in society that it is more

important for a Francophone to speak English than it is for an Anglophone to speak French in Quebec, and that the burden of being bilingual falls on Francophones.

“The media pushes a lot that if you just speak French, you’re not open to the world, lazy, xenophobic, stuck in your corner. Whereas if you speak English, there’s this perception that it’s ‘cool’ and that you’re open to the world.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“Bilingualism is often seen as a Francophone’s duty.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“It’s more useful for a Francophone to be bilingual than it is for an Anglophone to be bilingual.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“In the Anglophone community, French is seen as a useless sub-language in comparison with English, the world’s dominant language.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

Perhaps as a result of these sentiments, Francophone participants tended to underestimate Anglophones’ ability to speak and use French. Many of them were under the impression a lot of Anglophones can probably speak at least some French but are refusing to do so, either because they don’t want to learn, are not interested, don’t care, or find it too hard to learn.

“Perhaps there are a lot of Anglophones who are indeed bilingual, but they often don’t use their French, and that’s why we don’t hear it.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“For many Anglophones, bilingualism is an inconvenience. They’d rather have services in English and speak English every day.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

Some Francophone participants see more institutions and services available in Quebec for the ESCQ, particularly in Montréal and Gatineau, than for any Francophone minority community in other provinces. As a result, they feel it is more comfortable, if not too comfortable, for Anglophones to live primarily in English in Quebec.

“Anglophones in Quebec have everything they need to study and live in English from sunrise to sunset. Francophones in the rest of the country don’t have access to the same resources.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“Many Anglophones spend their entire days without speaking French.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“Living in English 365 days a year in Quebec is very possible and very common from what I can see.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“I’m not against the English language, I can speak English. I’m against too much English.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

Anglophone perspectives

When Anglophone participants were asked how they think Francophones view their attitude toward the French language and to comment on their views about their relationships with Francophones, they often noted that they feel there is a perception that the English language is a threat to the French

language. Many participants did not see this as a serious concern, saying increased bilingualism does not have to mean less French. Only a few acknowledged the fact that many Francophones may genuinely feel that their language is threatened and that there is thus a need to protect it.

“There’s a strong tie to language in the French culture that doesn’t exist the same way for us. For Anglophones, we don’t feel we have to defend our language in the same way.” – Anglophone participant

Several Anglophone participants expressed a desire for Francophones to be less judgmental and not to presume that most English-speaking Quebecers do not speak French or do not respect the language. They noted that these stereotypes and misconceptions feed into a linguistic insecurity that may not be warranted. Most of the Anglophone participants reported that they spoke French quite well, and only a few described their French ability as very limited. Some expressed frustration at experiences of Francophones switching to English when they tried to start a conversation in French and felt that their French would never be considered “good enough.”

“I’ve been told by people at the store ‘thanks for the effort.’ Then you get other people that are like, ‘Well, it’s not good enough.’” – Anglophone participant

“You try to speak French, but then they hear an accent and just immediately go ‘Oh, no, we’ll speak English.’ It gets really frustrating, since people put in the effort. But it’s just not being recognized. They just take it upon themselves to decide to speak English to you, instead of speaking French.” – Anglophone participant

Anglophone participants also thought it was unrealistic to expect newcomers to Quebec to be very fluent over a short period of time, considering the effort involved and the need to prioritize work and family life. One participant described how they moved from another province to Quebec specifically to give their children a “Québécois” education and a better future, but they now have two jobs to make ends meet, which has slowed the process of improving their French. This participant spoke of feeling looked down upon when they try to speak French in public, even though they moved to Quebec because they have an appreciation for Francophone culture and wanted to pass that along to their children.

Several participants were frustrated with being criticized for using English, even if only among themselves, and for being made to feel like they don’t belong, no matter how well or how often they speak French. Most said that they are happy to use French or to try to use it, but they don’t want to feel forced to use it, and they want to feel welcomed when using English.

“If someone forces me to do something, I’ll do the exact opposite.” – Anglophone participant

“Forcing people to learn a language is not a solution.” – Anglophone participant

Recent government measures restricting English in Quebec were a major source of disillusionment and driver of tensions according to Anglophone participants, and there was a perception that this isolates Francophones. There was great skepticism as to the necessity, or even the validity, of such measures, which were seen to be doing a disservice to both language communities. Some described a backlash among English-speaking Quebecers as a result of government measures that were seen as draconian

and felt that this is causing some resistance to speaking French when it is seen as something people are being forced to do.

“The political viewpoint of preserving French at all costs and doing these extreme measures is just creating a bigger divide.” – Anglophone participant

Despite this politicized context and some news stories fuelling discord, most Anglophone participants tended to believe that English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers should be able to get along reasonably well in everyday life. There was also optimism that younger Anglophones and Francophones are more bilingual and are building more bridges between the two communities.

“Certain French-Canadians think Anglophones are stubborn because they don’t learn French. Certain Anglophones think French-speaking Quebecers are stubborn because they don’t want to speak English. So, there are these extremes who think that about each other. When you live in the mix, you don’t sense it.” – Anglophone participant

“There’s a bit of a generation gap. More and more people are bilingual. Younger people are much more fluid in terms of speaking French. So, I’d like to think in general that people are getting to be more cordial and understanding of one another.” – Anglophone participant

E. Views of pan-Canadian bilingualism

Participants were then asked to share their perceptions of bilingualism in Canada as a whole.

Francophone perspectives

Several Francophone participants noted that it was important to speak English to understand the Anglophone majority in Canada, engage in conversation, travel, make international connections, open up to other cultures, and create more opportunities. Many said they were pleased that the younger generations are more bilingual, and talked about unilingual English-speaking or bilingual parents who are sending their children to school in French or are speaking to them in both languages.

“I think speaking English is a good thing because it’s the international language.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“I also see unilingual Anglophone parents around me insisting that their children speak French. They see bilingualism as an opportunity for their children to access senior positions, better paid than unilingual positions—for example, in the federal government. It gives their children opportunities they didn’t have as Anglophone parents with a very limited ability in French.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“I think young parents are increasingly speaking to their children in both languages, and I think that’s great.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

When asked, Francophone participants supported the principle of official bilingualism in Canada, despite some skepticism about support for the *Official Languages Act* from English-speaking Canadians

outside Quebec. They nonetheless recognized that English-speaking Quebecers are more aware of the importance of French than English speakers in the rest of Canada.

*“Quebec Anglophones value bilingualism more than Anglophones in the rest of Canada.”
[Translation] – Francophone participant*

“The vision of Canadian bilingualism is not the same. If you’re a Francophone, you know that Canadian bilingualism applies to Francophones only—it’s up to Francophones to learn English and adapt. And yet, Anglophones in Quebec are treated better than Francophones in the rest of the country.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

An allophone participant in one of the French-language focus groups talked about how learning French helped her find a job in Quebec.

“As an immigrant, speaking French is how I found my career.” [Translation] – Allophone participant

During the discussions, a distinction was made between individual and institutional bilingualism. Although the ability of Canadians to communicate in English and French is valued, a number of Francophone participants voiced doubts about the effectiveness or even the threat posed by institutional bilingualism, believing that, once institutional bilingualism is applied, experience proved that English eventually takes over to the detriment of French.

“Institutional bilingualism doesn’t work. When you have English and French, French is gradually pushed aside to make room for English. I see it in the federal public service, where French is hardly used at all, even though the majority of employees are Francophones.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“If Quebec were to become an officially bilingual province instead of a Francophone one, for example, the English language would gradually take over, and that would be the end of French within 50 years.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

Anglophone perspectives

When asked about the attitudes of English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers toward bilingualism in Canada, Anglophone participants believed that Francophones don’t see bilingualism as an asset but rather see the English language as a threat to the French language. Their views about attitudes toward pan-Canadian bilingualism were coloured by their experience in Quebec, where provincial government policies encourage French only.

Most Anglophone participants expressed the view that English-French bilingualism was a “necessity” and often took pride in the fact that Canada is a bilingual country, pointing out that people all around the world are speaking several languages and it is not as politically charged. Many also believed that generational change is happening and that Canada’s bilingualism is more valued now.

“I think it’s great and would love to see Quebec think the same.” – Anglophone participant

“For better success, it’s better to speak more languages. I want my kids to speak more languages.” – Anglophone participant

One participant expressed sympathy for the view of Francophone Quebecers who might see Canada as foreign, and stated that official Canadian bilingualism is meaningless to the extent that most people outside Quebec and outside French communities across the country may support bilingualism on paper but are unable to speak French themselves.

Overall, however, Anglophone participants tended to be unsurprised about the high level of support among Canadians outside Quebec for official bilingualism.

F. Myths, misconceptions, and facts about Anglophones

The focus groups provided an opportunity to explore various myths about Anglophones regarding the French language.

“The English-speaking minority in Quebec is more socio-economically privileged than the French-speaking majority.”

One of the stereotypes about English-speaking Quebecers mentioned by some Francophone participants was that they are richer and more privileged. Some expressed the view that there are more work opportunities in Quebec for a unilingual English speaker than a unilingual French speaker. The wealthier and (more English-speaking) western parts of Montréal (e.g., Westmount, Town of Mount Royal) were often cited as an example of this image of Anglophone wealth. Francophone participants also said that English language universities are well funded and that English-speaking Quebecers have access to English language hospitals and other institutions, more than what Francophone minorities have access to in their language in other provinces in Canada. The five-year struggle (1997–2002) to preserve Ottawa’s Montfort Hospital was cited as an example.

“In Quebec, if you only speak English, you have lots of opportunities. If you only speak French, you have many fewer opportunities.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

Other Francophone participants thought that this may have been true in the past but is no longer the case today. They believe it is more difficult for unilingual English speakers to find work in Quebec. One participant from Gatineau cited the Pontiac region in the Outaouais as having a reputation for being poorer and predominantly English-speaking. Some said that wealth and poverty were probably similar in both communities nowadays.

“There are just as many poor and rich Anglophones and as there are Francophones in Québec City and Montréal.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

When informed of the fact that English-speaking Quebecers have higher rates of unemployment, are more likely to experience poverty, and have a lower median income than Francophone Quebecers, many of the Francophone participants expressed surprise. Some expressed doubt as to the validity of the information and wondered whether this reflected the allophone and immigrant presence within the broader English-speaking community. Some once again mentioned the western parts of Montréal to prove the gap between wealthy Anglophones and poorer Francophones.

“It’s hard not to see the difference between Montréal’s west and east ends. The expensive boutiques of the Rockland Centre don’t exist in the east. The richer clientele is in the west.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“Most English-speaking Quebecers can’t understand and speak French.”

As mentioned earlier, Francophone participants tended to underestimate the ability of Anglophones to speak French. When they were informed of the fact that many English-speaking Quebecers are bilingual, those who tended to have more positive views toward the community were happily surprised. Those who shared more negative views toward the ESCQ questioned the validity of the statistics and did not change their perception that Francophone Quebecers are more bilingual than their English-speaking counterparts. These participants argued that just because people say they can speak French doesn’t mean they are fluent or are regularly using it.

“You can make statistics say whatever you want. An Anglophone who claims to speak French may only have said ‘bonjour’ once a day. I find these statistics hard to believe.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“What’s their level of French? Basic, or are they able to have a conversation?” [Translation] – Francophone participant

Most Anglophone participants believed that English-speaking Quebecers are more likely to be bilingual than their French-speaking counterparts and were therefore not surprised by evidence supporting their views. They also tended to think that Francophones often underestimate how many Anglophones can speak French.

“Francophones would be surprised to know most Anglophones can actually speak French.” – Anglophone participant

“It would be very hard to be a unilingual Anglophone in Quebec.” – Anglophone participant

“Many French Quebecers cannot understand English well and assume Anglophones also can’t speak French.” – Anglophone participant

“In Quebec, most people who have English as a mother tongue don’t use French in their daily lives.”

When asked whether they think English-mother tongue Quebecers are using French in their daily lives, Francophone participants tended to think not unless they are forced to, such as when interacting with a unilingual Francophone. Some noted that an English-speaking Quebecer in Montréal can easily live their life completely in English, but that it may be different for those living in other, more Francophone parts of the province.

“They don’t have much choice but to use French.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

“If Anglophones don’t live in Montréal then yes, they might speak French on a daily basis. But if they live in Montréal, they will speak mostly in English.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

Anglophone participants were not surprised to learn that many English-speaking Quebecers use French regularly. Some participants also pointed out that some individuals from both communities are refusing to speak each other’s language, but this is something they believe is changing from one generation to another and that younger Quebecers are more bilingual.

“My mom would refuse to speak French, both because she doesn’t understand (it), and also because she grew up in a time when English and French were really pitted against each other.

*She has her 'right to speak English.' This attitude is kind of dying out. I think it's a sh*tty attitude on both sides. I've experienced it from older French people refusing to speak English and from older English people refusing to speak French. It's not good. I'd like to think it's kind of dying out because more and more you'd think logically that a French person needs to learn English—it's the main language everywhere in the world. I mean, (if) you go to Italy you can speak English and they're not insulted by it. English people in Quebec know they have to learn French if they want to stay here and live and work, and French people recognize more and more that they need English. And it's not rude or an anti-Nationalist political gesture. The English language is not the enemy.” – Anglophone participant*

“In Quebec, most English speakers generally keep to their own communities and don’t interact much with Francophones.”

When participants were informed that over three quarters of English-speaking Quebecers say they interact with Francophones on a regular basis, Francophone participants were surprised and thought it was less than that. Some participants outside of Montréal and Gatineau said it wasn’t surprising since most people in Quebec are Francophone, so it would make sense that English-speaking Quebecers would have to interact with Francophones on a regular basis.

Anglophone participants were not at all surprised by this fact, since it reflected their own lived experience of interacting with Francophones on a daily basis.

“There’s definitely a lot of interaction.” – Anglophone participant

“My immediate circle of friends and family is English, but almost all of them are pretty fluently bilingual. They might have a preference for English, but they work in French, they can speak French. My sister married a Francophone, it benefits the future generation of kids who grow up in both languages.” – Anglophone participant

“Most English-speaking Quebecers generally aren’t interested in French-language culture.”

Participants were asked whether they think most Anglophones are interested in French-language culture or attend many cultural events in French.

Francophone participants generally believed that English-speaking Quebecers likely take part in many cultural events such as visiting museums, joining celebrations such as the Fête nationale du Québec, and attending events like Pride, sporting events, shows or festivals (e.g., Festival International de Jazz de Montréal, Cirque du Soleil, Osheaga, Nuits d’Afrique). In these cases, the potential language barrier is overcome because the activities are bilingual, because they involve something they enjoy, or because identity or a sense of belonging takes precedence.

Francophone participants also tended to believe, however, that English-speaking Quebecers likely have little interest in French-language music, books, television, theatre or cinema, where the language barrier is a greater obstacle. Interestingly, some Anglophone participants noted that they had enjoyed Québécois sports movies or shows such as *Lance et Compte* and *Les Boys*, or the films *Bon Cop, Bad Cop* and *C.R.A.Z.Y.*, the latter of which was reportedly appreciated by both Francophone and Anglophone members of the 2SLGBTQI+ community. As mentioned earlier in this report, it was

suggested in the focus groups that English-speaking Quebecers' attitude within the 2SLGBTQI+ community is particularly supportive of the French language and that the relationship between the two language groups is positive, meaning that language is not a barrier.

While most Francophone participants did not think English-speaking Quebecers showed much interest in Quebec's Francophone culture, a participant originally from France shared that it was mainly an Anglophone friend who had introduced them to Quebec music. Les Cowboys Fringants was cited as an example.

Francophone participants were mostly concerned about a potential decline of interest in French-language culture among the younger generation of Francophones in Quebec. Although they encouraged bilingualism among young English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers, they felt that this is happening to the detriment of Francophone culture.

“Anglophones are not very interested in French culture. They don't know much about it and don't seem very interested—especially young people. I find this attitude rather close-minded.”
[Translation] – Francophone participant

“Both of my children watch television in English. For them, French films and culture aren't very good. It makes me sad.” [Translation] – Francophone participant

Many Anglophone participants tended to think that most of their fellow English-speaking Quebecers took only a limited interest in French-language culture and likely did not attend certain kinds of cultural events in French. Some said they have English-speaking friends who are more into Quebec French-language culture than they are. However, the difficulty of understanding a comedy show or a play in French was cited. A few people said that they personally did not like French-language music. Some said they like to watch movies in the original language, regardless of whether they are in English or French. And some mentioned going to French-language sugar shack events in the spring.

When we informed participants that, according to a recent survey, most English-speaking Quebecers are interested in French-language cultural products (such as books, music, film or television) and that most had attended artistic and cultural events in French over the past year (such as shows, festivals and exhibitions), the Francophones appeared pleasantly surprised, although some questioned what exactly Anglophones said they were interested in. Anglophone participants were also surprised by the statistical evidence presented.

It would therefore seem that this myth is the only one where, for most participants in both language groups, Francophone and Anglophone, the statistical evidence contradicted their own perceptions or experiences.

“Most Canadians outside Quebec don't support the *Official Languages Act*, and few French speakers outside Quebec are Anglophones.”

Francophone participants tended to underestimate support for Canada's *Official Languages Act* among English-speaking Canadians outside Quebec. Some were pleasantly surprised when informed of survey data that shows otherwise, whereas others were skeptical or even incredulous about the validity of such statistics. The latter held the view that being bilingual is a prerequisite of supporting official bilingualism and assumed that very few Canadians from outside Quebec who can speak French speakers in Canada outside Quebec are mother-tongue Anglophones.

In contrast, Anglophone participants tended not to be surprised about the support for official bilingualism among Canadians outside Quebec. They felt that it was some Francophone Quebecers who did not really support it (although the survey data does in fact show very high support in Quebec, as well).

It appears that participants from both groups may underestimate the other language group's support for Canada's official bilingualism. This question could benefit from further study.

G. Improving relations between English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers

To conclude the discussions, participants were asked whether they believe English-speaking Quebecers in any way influence the opinion of English-speaking Canadians outside Quebec when it comes to Canada's official bilingualism and how to build bridges between the two language groups in Quebec.

Building bridges across Canada

Some Francophone participants believed that English-speaking Quebecers can be useful allies when it comes to educating English-speaking Canadians from elsewhere about Quebec, bilingualism and the French language. They noted that there are varying attitudes between English-speaking Quebecers who embrace Francophone culture and enjoy speaking French, and those who speak French only out of necessity. Based on personal interactions, some said that English-speaking Canadians outside Quebec who have learned French could actually be better allies. Some expressed concerns that some English-speaking Quebecers might criticize Quebec to people in other provinces.

"I meet nicer people from British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba or Nova Scotia who make the effort to speak to me in French, unlike Anglo-Quebecers or people from Ottawa who are actually closer to us Francophones. I don't know why." [Translation] – Francophone participant

"I often see English speakers from Quebec ranting about the province to Anglophones in the rest of Canada." [Translation] – Francophone participant

Anglophone participants from Montréal and Gatineau mostly talked about their own experience of living in Quebec. Some said they are proud to be part of the Quebec community as a whole and shared that people from other provinces are often not aware of the tension between English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers.

Anglophone participants living elsewhere in Quebec tended to have more mixed views. Participants who had moved to Quebec from other provinces were receptive to the idea of being bridge-builders, citing personal experiences and even pride about explaining Quebec to friends and family "back home" in other parts of Canada. Some of them shared how they now have a better appreciation for many aspects of Quebec, such as the unique culture and the more laid back, less materialistic and more affordable lifestyle.

Some others with deeper roots in Quebec said that they do not feel always connected to Quebec's Francophone culture and the French language because of what they perceive as the endless language wars in Quebec and the most recent provincial government measures. They believe that some Francophone Quebecers do not support Canada's official bilingualism because what they are really seeking is French unilingualism in Quebec. The Anglophone participants with more negative views about their experiences in Quebec were more skeptical about the need for English-speaking Quebecers

to be bridge-builders with English-speaking Canadians outside Quebec because, in their view, the latter already support official bilingualism, whereas it is more that some Francophone Quebecers do not.

Building bridges among Quebecers

We asked participants what it would take to “set the record straight” on stereotypes and myths and to change attitudes toward one another in order to foster better relations between English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers.

Most participants from both language communities called for more openness and were optimistic that relations would improve, taking into account the impact of greater bilingualism among young Quebecers and more mixed marriages between English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers. Participants said both sides have something to gain.

“I guess we believe what we want to believe about each other. But I think the issue with having pre-existing prejudices and biases about Francophones or Anglophones or Allophones, it just doesn’t help anything. Relationships don’t get better if we just continue to believe any prejudices.” – Anglophone participant

Some Anglophone participants voiced concerns about the stereotypes and misconceptions that affect them as policy decisions are made, and lamented about how the media are politicizing situations that are never all black or all white. They also reiterated that Francophones should not assume that all English-speaking Quebecers are avoiding Francophones and their culture. In fact, most want to be part of the broader Quebec community.

Although the facts and statistical evidence provided throughout the focus group sessions did not appear to immediately change the minds of participants who initially had more negative views, when combined with the positive experiences shared by other participants, they seemed to have a greater impact in softening some initially negative stereotypes and beliefs by offering an alternative point of view or narrative. A few participants stated that it would be very useful for a more neutral, apolitical entity to publicize these kinds of statistics, and several stated that it would be most helpful to see English-speaking Quebecers more present in the French-language discourse, in cultural events and in apolitical contexts.

“They need better spokespeople. In the past, we saw more of these people” [Translation] – Francophone participant.

Participants mentioned high-profile English-speaking personalities, including Ontario singer TALK (from mixed Anglophone and Francophone parentage) and Montréal comedian Sugar Sammy, whose bilingual shows poke fun at both language communities. They also listed English-speaking Quebec artists who were more visible in the past, such as Rufus Wainwright, Judi Richards and the late Leonard Cohen.

Some wondered whether the number of hours of French classes for English-speaking Quebecers was sufficient. Others suggested that the number of hours devoted to learning the other language should be equivalent in both the English- and French-language school systems.

It was also suggested that more language immersion programs, student exchanges and participation in associations should be encouraged to bridge the language barriers between Anglophones and

Francophones. This reflected the experiences of many participants who said that they had made positive connections through direct personal interactions in “third places”—meaning places where people meet in person that are away from both home and work—and during other social activities where people connect as members of a group, team or activity that is neither Anglophone nor Francophone by definition.

III. Detailed findings – Quantitative phase

A. Interactions with speakers of the other official language

1. Frequency of interactions with speakers of the other official language

Three quarters of English-speaking Quebecers and half of French-speaking Quebecers say they interact with people who speak the other official language at least weekly.

Because personal exposure to people who speak the other official language is likely to play a role in forming impressions about them, Quebecers were asked to indicate how often they interact with those who speak the other official language. Anglophone residents are more likely (76%) than Francophones (51%) to interact once a week or more often with people who speak the other official language. Two in ten Francophones do this rarely (compared to 10% of Anglophones), and three in ten (29%) are very rarely or never in contact with the other group (compared to 12% of Anglophones).

Frequency of interactions with speakers of the other official language

| Frequency | Total (n=1,005) % | French (n=885) % | English (n=120) % |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Net: More often | 55 | 51 | 76 |
| Very often (at least daily) | 28 | 24 | 50 |
| Occasionally (at least once a week) | 27 | 27 | 26 |
| Rarely (at least once a month) | 19 | 20 | 10 |
| Net: Very rarely / never | 27 | 29 | 12 |
| Very rarely (a few times a year) | 18 | 19 | 10 |
| Never | 9 | 10 | 2 |
| Not sure | <1 | - | 1 |

Q3 In your day-to-day life, how often do you interact with (French respondent: Anglophones) / (English respondents: Francophones) [INTERVIEWER NOTE, IF ASKED: that is, people who are mostly English/French speaking]?

Interacting at least weekly with those who speak the other language is higher among younger Quebecers (63% of Francophones aged 18–34 and 55% aged 35–54, vs. 39% aged 55 and over), and this increases as household income increases (from 49% with household incomes under \$60,000, up to 60% with \$100,000 and over). It is also higher among the following groups:

- Born in Canada outside of Quebec (70%) or in another country (62%)
- Racialized Quebecers (67%)
- Those fluent in the other official language (81%)
- Live in Montréal or Gatineau (65%, vs. 42% living elsewhere in Quebec)

2. Assessment of personal interactions with speakers of the other official language

A strong majority of close to nine in ten say their interactions with those who speak the other official language are positive.

Those who interact even infrequently with people who speak the other official language were asked how they would describe their own personal interactions with them. The vast majority report at least mostly positive interactions (89% of Francophones, 81% of Anglophones), with three in ten reporting such interactions as *very positive*.

Assessment of personal interactions with speakers of the other official language

| Assessment | Total (n=909) % | French (n=791) % | English (n=118) % |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Net: Positive | 87 | 89 | 81 |
| Very positive | 31 | 31 | 31 |
| Mostly positive | 57 | 58 | 50 |
| Neutral / even mix of positive and negative | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Net: Negative | 8 | 7 | 16 |
| Mostly negative | 6 | 4 | 12 |
| Very negative | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Not sure | 1 | 1 | - |

Q4 How would you describe your own personal interactions with Quebec (French respondent: Anglophones) / (English respondents: Francophones)?
Have they been...

Strong majorities across all subgroups report having positive interactions with those who speak the other official language. The following groups are the most likely to report such interactions as being *very positive*:

- Aged 18 to 34 (37%)
- Those fluent in the other language (49%)
- People who have such interactions *very often* (51%)

3. Perceived proportion of English-mother tongue Quebecers who can speak French

Anglophones are twice as likely as Francophones to think that all or most English mother-tongue Quebecers can speak French.

Quebecers were asked what proportion of people in the province who have English as a mother tongue can speak French well enough to conduct a conversation. There was a major difference in the response to this question by language: Anglophones are twice as likely (58%) as Francophones (29%) to think that most or all English mother-tongue Quebecers can speak conversational French. Just over four in ten (43%) Francophones think that about half of English mother-tongue Quebecers can speak basic French, compared to three in ten (31%) Anglophones, and one quarter (25%) of Francophones think that only a minority or none are able to speak French (only one in ten Anglophones think this). These findings indicate that many Francophone Quebecers may underestimate the extent to which Anglophone Quebecers can speak French.

Perceived proportion of English-mother tongue Quebecers who can speak French

| Impression | Total (n=1,005) % | French (n=885) % | English (n=120) % |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Net: All/most | 33 | 29 | 58 |
| Almost all of them | 7 | 6 | 12 |
| Most of them | 26 | 22 | 46 |
| Half of them | 41 | 43 | 31 |
| Net: Minority / almost none | 23 | 25 | 9 |
| A significant minority of them | 19 | 21 | 7 |
| Almost none of them | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| Not sure | 3 | 4 | 3 |

Q5 What proportion of Quebecers who have English as a mother-tongue do you think can speak French well enough to conduct a conversation? Would you say it's...

Thinking all or most English-mother tongue Quebecers can speak at least conversational French is a minority view across most subgroups (other than Anglophones), but it is somewhat higher among the following groups:

- Born outside Canada (42%) and Allophones (44%)
- Those fluent in the other official language (42%)
- Those who interact very often with people who speak the other official language (46%)
- People living in Montréal or Gatineau (37%, vs. 28% in the rest of Quebec)

B. Perceptions about English-speaking Quebecers

1. Prevalence of myths and misconceptions about English-mother tongue Quebecers

Many Francophones have misconceptions about English-mother tongue Quebecers, particularly when it comes to the extent to which they think some of them use or don't use French in their lives.

Quebecers were asked to judge the veracity of four statements (two true and two false) about French-language use and transmission among English-mother tongue Quebecers, as a means to test the extent to which some myths and misconceptions may prevail in broader society. These statements were based directly on the information gathered in the preliminary research phase (see "Background research" in section I). A majority of Francophones have misconceptions in two cases and are almost evenly split about the other two potential myths.

Francophones are almost evenly split as to whether it is true or false that "most school kids in Quebec with English as a mother tongue are either in French schools or are in French immersion programs." And most Francophones think it is false that "most Quebecers with English as a mother tongue regularly use French in their daily lives." In fact, both statements are true. In contrast, large majorities of Anglophones (over seven in ten) correctly believe each of these statements to be true.

Assessment of true statements about Quebecers with English as a mother tongue

| <i>Most school kids in Quebec with English as a mother tongue are either in French schools or are in French immersion programs (TRUE)</i> | Total (n=1,005) % | French (n=885) % | English (n=120) % |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Net: True | 49 | 44 | 79 |
| Totally true | 7 | 5 | 20 |
| Mostly true | 41 | 38 | 59 |
| Net: False | 42 | 47 | 13 |
| Mostly false | 33 | 36 | 13 |
| Totally false | 10 | 11 | 1 |
| Not sure | 9 | 9 | 7 |

| <i>Most Quebecers with English as a mother tongue regularly use French in their daily lives [IF ASKED: This may include speaking French at home, using it at work or language of instruction at school, or having it as another mother tongue in addition to English.] (TRUE)</i> | Total (n=1,005) % | French (n=885) % | English (n=120) % |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Net: True | 47 | 42 | 73 |
| Totally true | 10 | 9 | 16 |
| Mostly true | 37 | 33 | 57 |
| Net: False | 50 | 54 | 23 |
| Mostly false | 37 | 40 | 18 |
| Totally false | 13 | 14 | 5 |
| Not sure | 4 | 3 | 4 |

Q6 *I am going to read you a series of statements about Quebecers with English as a mother-tongue. Please tell me if you think each statement is totally true, mostly true, mostly false, or totally false.*

A similar pattern is seen for the two false statements: Anglophones are notably more likely than Francophones to believe it is false that “most working Quebecers with English as a mother tongue work in English only, and do not regularly use French at work” or that “when a Quebecer whose mother tongue is French and a Quebecer whose mother tongue is English have kids, most of those kids end up with English as their mother tongue instead of French.” Majorities of Francophones believe each of these statements to be true, although in fact they are both false.

Assessment of false statements about Quebecers with English as a mother tongue

| <i>Most working Quebecers with English as a mother tongue work in English only, and do not regularly use French at work (FALSE)</i> | Total (n=1,005) % | French (n=885) % | English (n=120) % |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Net: False | 37 | 33 | 62 |
| Totally false | 7 | 5 | 17 |
| Mostly false | 30 | 28 | 46 |
| Net: True | 59 | 64 | 33 |
| Mostly true | 48 | 51 | 32 |
| Totally true | 11 | 12 | 1 |
| Not sure | 4 | 4 | 4 |

| <i>When a Quebecer whose mother tongue is French and a Quebecer whose mother tongue is English have kids, most of those kids end up with English as their mother tongue instead of French (FALSE)</i> | Total (n=1,005) % | French (n=885) % | English (n=120) % |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Net: False | 37 | 35 | 54 |
| Totally false | 8 | 8 | 11 |
| Mostly false | 30 | 27 | 43 |
| Net: True | 55 | 58 | 39 |
| Mostly true | 44 | 46 | 32 |
| Totally true | 11 | 12 | 7 |
| Not sure | 7 | 7 | 7 |

Q6 *I am going to read you a series of statements about Quebecers with English as a mother-tongue. Please tell me if you think each statement is totally true, mostly true, mostly false, or totally false.*

Those most likely to correctly believe that the two true statements are at least mostly true and that the two false statements are mostly or totally false included the following groups:

- Mother tongue is English or a non-official language
- Interact very often with persons speaking the other official language
- Born outside of Canada

It is also notable that older Francophones (55 years of age and over) are significantly more likely than younger Francophones (aged 18–34) to have misconceptions about the extent to which English-mother tongue Quebecers use French. They are more likely to believe that it is true that most English-mother tongue Quebecers do *not* use French at work (72% vs. 53%) and also more likely to erroneously believe that it is false that most English mother-tongue Quebecers regularly use French in their daily lives (61% vs. 41%).

2. Prevalence of myths and misconceptions about Anglophones more generally

Most Francophones believe that it is rare for English-speaking Quebecers to take an interest in French-language culture and that Canada’s official bilingualism is more valued by Francophones than by Anglophones in Quebec. Half think that English-speaking Quebecers mainly keep to their own community.

Quebecers were asked to judge the veracity of three false statements about English-speaking Quebecers (not just those with English as a mother tongue) and one true statement about Canadians outside Quebec. As with the preceding questions, these statements were designed to test the prevalence of potential misconceptions and were based directly on the information gathered in the preliminary research phase (see “Background research” in section I).

Francophones are divided as to whether it is true or false that “Anglophone Quebecers generally keep to their own community and don’t interact much with Francophones.” In contrast, a solid majority of

Anglophones believe this to be false. Large majorities of Francophones believe that it is true that “it is rare for Anglophone Quebecers to take an interest in French-language cultural products and events” and that “Canada’s official bilingualism is more valued by Francophones than by Anglophones in Quebec.” Anglophones are more divided in their opinions on these two statements.

Assessment of false statements about English-speaking Quebecers

| | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Anglophone Quebecers generally keep to their own community and don’t interact much with Francophones (FALSE)</i> | Total (n=1,005) % | French (n=885) % | English (n=120) % |
| Net: False | 48 | 45 | 62 |
| Totally false | 13 | 12 | 20 |
| Mostly false | 35 | 34 | 42 |
| Net: True | 49 | 51 | 35 |
| Mostly true | 41 | 43 | 34 |
| Totally true | 8 | 9 | 2 |
| Not sure | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| <i>It is rare for Anglophone Quebecers to take an interest in French-language cultural products and events. (FALSE)</i> | Total (n=1,005) % | French (n=885) % | English (n=120) % |
| Net: False | 41 | 39 | 51 |
| Totally false | 10 | 10 | 12 |
| Mostly false | 30 | 29 | 39 |
| Net: True | 54 | 56 | 46 |
| Mostly true | 41 | 41 | 37 |
| Totally true | 14 | 14 | 10 |
| Not sure | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| <i>Canada’s official bilingualism is more valued by Francophones than by Anglophones in Quebec. (FALSE)</i> | Total (n=1,005) % | French (n=885) % | English (n=120) % |
| Net: False | 26 | 22 | 48 |
| Totally false | 10 | 9 | 19 |
| Mostly false | 16 | 13 | 29 |
| Net: True | 69 | 73 | 44 |
| Mostly true | 40 | 42 | 28 |
| Totally true | 30 | 32 | 16 |
| Not sure | 5 | 4 | 8 |

Q7 I am going to read you another series of statements about Anglophones more broadly, I’d like you to tell me if you think each is totally true, mostly true, mostly false, or totally false.

Results are generally similar across many subgroups. It is notable that there are differences by age cohort in terms of the extent to which Francophones have misconceptions about these statements. Older Francophones (55 years of age and over) are significantly more likely than younger Francophones (aged 18–34) to believe that it is rare for English-speaking Quebecers to take an interest in French-language culture (60% vs. 48%) and to believe that English-speaking Quebecers keep to themselves and do not interact much with Francophones (60% vs. 49%).

It is also notable that Francophones from the Montréal and Gatineau areas are more likely than those from the rest of Quebec to think that it is rare for English-speaking Quebecers to take an interest in French-language culture (61% vs. 51%).

Francophone Quebecers are divided as to whether Canadians outside of Quebec support the *Official Languages Act*, while a large majority of Anglophone Quebecers believe that the vast majority support it.

Half of Francophone Quebecers think that it is mostly or totally false that “the vast majority of Canadians outside of Quebec support Canada’s *Official Languages Act*,” while over four in ten say this is mostly or totally true. In contrast, almost two thirds of Anglophone Quebecers say this is true to some extent, and only three in ten think it is false.

Assessment of support for the *Official Languages Act* outside Quebec

| <i>The vast majority of Canadians outside of Quebec support Canada’s Official Languages Act (TRUE)</i> <i>[INTERVIEWER NOTE, IF ASKED: which recognizes the equal status of English and French, and the right to federal services in both official languages]</i> | Total (n=1,005) % | French (n=885) % | English (n=120) % |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Net: True | 46 | 44 | 64 |
| Totally true | 12 | 12 | 17 |
| Mostly true | 34 | 32 | 47 |
| Net: False | 47 | 50 | 30 |
| Mostly false | 30 | 31 | 20 |
| Totally false | 17 | 18 | 10 |
| Not sure | 7 | 7 | 6 |

Q7 I am going to read you another series of statements about Anglophones more broadly, I’d like you to tell me if you think each is totally true, mostly true, mostly false, or totally false.

Reactions to this statement are generally similar across most subgroups. The belief that it is true that the vast majority of Canadians outside of Quebec support Canada’s *Official Languages Act* is highest among those who interact very often with speakers of the other official language (54%), 18- to 34-year-olds (55%) and those with high school or less education (57%).

C. Looking ahead to the future

1. Are the misconceptions that English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers have about each other a problem?

Six in ten Quebecers agree that the misconceptions English speakers and French speakers in the province have about each other are a problem.

Quebecers were told that “some people say that Francophones and Anglophones in Quebec have a lot of misconceptions about each other” and asked whether they agreed or disagreed that this is a problem. A large majority of all Quebecers somewhat or strongly agree that this is a problem. This sentiment is shared by both language communities, with 61% of Francophones and 67% of Anglophones somewhat or strongly agreeing. It is notable that Anglophones are more likely than Francophones to strongly agree (29% vs. 18%). Over a third of Francophones and three in ten Anglophones disagree to some extent that this is a problem.

Whether misconceptions between English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers are a problem

| Level of agreement | Total (n=1,005) % | French (n=885) % | English (n=120) % |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Net: Agree | 62 | 61 | 67 |
| Strongly agree | 20 | 18 | 29 |
| Somewhat agree | 42 | 43 | 37 |
| Net: Disagree | 35 | 36 | 30 |
| Somewhat disagree | 26 | 27 | 17 |
| Strongly disagree | 9 | 8 | 13 |
| Not sure / Prefer not to answer | 4 | 4 | 3 |

Q8 Some people say that Francophones and Anglophones in Quebec have a lot of misconceptions about each other. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree that this is a problem?

Overall agreement with this statement is the majority view across all subgroups, with very little variation. Strong agreement is also somewhat higher among Allophones (29%). It is notable that the majority sentiment that there is a problem with English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers having misconceptions about each other is consistent regardless of the extent to which people interact with the other language community or can speak the other official language.

2. How to improve relations between English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers

Most Quebecers think that a variety of measures would help improve relations between English speakers and French speakers in the province, especially encouraging more positive social interactions through activities like youth exchange programs, social clubs, music, sports or other special interests.

Quebecers were told about four possible measures to improve relations between English speakers and French speakers in the province and asked how much they think each would help, if at all. Close to nine in ten think it would help at least a little (including over half who think it would help a lot) to encourage more positive social interactions between Anglophones and Francophones through activities like youth exchange programs, social clubs, music, sports or other special interests. Around eight in ten think it would help at least a little if English-speaking Quebecers could be seen showing a greater interest in French-language culture and were more present in French-language media. The same proportion say this about publicizing more personal stories highlighting English-speaking Quebecers who embrace the French language and speak it fluently. Just under eight in ten say it would help at least a little to publicize more statistics showing that many English-speaking Quebecers actually can and do speak French (most Anglophones thought this would help a lot). Francophones and Anglophones generally feel the same about the effectiveness of each of these measures.

Whether specific measures could help improve relations between English-speaking and French-speaking Quebecers

| <i>Encouraging more positive social interactions between Francophones and Anglophones through activities like youth exchange programs, social clubs, music, sports, or other special interests</i> | Total (n=1,005) % | French (n=885) % | English (n=120) % |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Net: Would help | 88 | 89 | 83 |
| Help a lot | 55 | 55 | 59 |
| Help a little bit | 33 | 35 | 24 |
| Make no difference | 9 | 9 | 13 |
| Not sure / Prefer not to answer | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| <i>If Anglophone Quebecers could be seen showing a greater interest in French-language culture and were more present in French-language media in Quebec</i> | Total (n=1,005) % | French (n=885) % | English (n=120) % |
| Net: Would help | 81 | 82 | 75 |
| Help a lot | 40 | 41 | 29 |
| Help a little bit | 42 | 41 | 46 |
| Make no difference | 16 | 15 | 21 |
| Not sure / Prefer not to answer | 3 | 3 | 4 |

| <i>Publicizing more personal stories highlighting Anglophone Quebecers who embrace the French language and speak it fluently</i> | Total (n=1,005) % | French (n=885) % | English (n=120) % |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Net: Would help | 80 | 81 | 76 |
| Help a lot | 40 | 39 | 46 |
| Help a little bit | 40 | 42 | 30 |
| Make no difference | 17 | 16 | 19 |
| Not sure / Prefer not to answer | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| <i>Publicizing more statistics showing that many Anglophone Quebecers actually can and do speak French</i> | Total (n=1,005) % | French (n=885) % | English (n=120) % |
| Net: Would help | 78 | 78 | 83 |
| Help a lot | 38 | 36 | 52 |
| Help a little bit | 40 | 42 | 30 |
| Make no difference | 19 | 19 | 14 |
| Not sure / Prefer not to answer | 3 | 3 | 3 |

Q9 Do you think each of the following things could help improve relations between Anglophones and Francophones in Quebec a lot, a little bit or would make no difference?

In general, reaction to the potential effectiveness of these measures is quite consistent across demographic groupings. There are some notable observations in terms of who is most likely to think that some of these measures would help a lot.

- Older Quebecers (aged 55 and over) and those with household incomes under \$100,000 are the most likely to think that it would help a lot to publicize more personal stories highlighting English-speaking Quebecers who embrace the French language and speak it fluently.
- Younger Francophones (aged 18–34), racialized people and university graduates are more likely to think that it would help a lot to encourage more positive social interactions.

3. English-speaking Quebecers as a bridge between French-speaking Quebecers and Anglophone Canadians outside Quebec

Seven in ten Quebecers agree that English-speaking Quebecers can be a bridge between French-speaking Quebecers and Anglophone Canadians outside Quebec.

Something Anglophone and Francophone Quebecers agree on in basically equal measure is that “Anglophone Quebecers can play an important role as a bridge between Francophone Quebecers and Anglophones in the rest of Canada, explaining the Quebec context to other Canadians and helping to encourage greater bilingualism.” Around seven in ten Anglophones (77%) and Francophones (71%) at least somewhat agree with this. One quarter of Francophones and just under one fifth of Anglophones disagree that English-speaking Quebecers can play this role, and 5% are unsure.

English-speaking Quebecers can be a bridge between French-speaking Quebecers and Anglophone Canadians outside Quebec

| Level of agreement | Total (n=1,005) % | French (n=885) % | English (n=120) % |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Net: Agree | 71 | 71 | 77 |
| Strongly agree | 19 | 18 | 26 |
| Somewhat agree | 52 | 53 | 50 |
| Net: Disagree | 24 | 25 | 18 |
| Somewhat disagree | 17 | 19 | 10 |
| Strongly disagree | 7 | 6 | 8 |
| Not sure / Prefer not to answer | 5 | 4 | 5 |

Q10 Some people say that Anglophone Quebecers can play an important role as a bridge between Francophone Quebecers and Anglophones in the rest of Canada, explaining the Quebec context to other Canadians and helping to encourage greater bilingualism. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?

That English-speaking Quebecers could be a bridge between French-speaking Quebecers and Anglophone Canadians outside Quebec is the majority view across subgroups, with little variation noted. Agreeing with this to some degree is highest among those who interact only rarely with people who speak the other official language and among Allophones (78%), and lowest among Quebecers aged 55 and over (66%).

D. Linguistic profile of respondents

The following table presents the weighted distribution of survey participants by linguistic profile.

| Variable | Total % | French % | English % |
|---|------------|-------------|--------------|
| Survey language | | | |
| French | 86 | 100 | - |
| English | 14 | - | 100 |
| Mother tongue | | | |
| French | 77 | 89 | 6 |
| English | 11 | 3 | 55 |
| Other language(s) | 15 | 10 | 44 |
| Fluency in other official language | | | |
| Fluent | 29 | 29 | 24 |
| Pretty good | 31 | 31 | 28 |
| Just so-so | 25 | 25 | 24 |
| Poor | 9 | 8 | 16 |
| Do not speak at all | 7 | 7 | 7 |

IV. Respondent profile

The following table presents the weighted distribution of survey participants by key demographic and other variables.

| Variable | Total % | French % | English % |
|--------------------------------------|---------|----------|-----------|
| Age | | | |
| 18-34 | 27 | 27 | 30 |
| 35-54 | 34 | 35 | 27 |
| 55+ | 39 | 38 | 44 |
| Gender | | | |
| Woman | 51 | 48 | 50 |
| Man | 49 | 48 | 51 |
| Self-identifying as another gender | <1% | <1 | 1 |
| Education | | | |
| High school or less | 23 | 23 | 22 |
| Apprentice/college/some university | 37 | 38 | 33 |
| University graduate/post-graduate | 38 | 38 | 42 |
| Total annual household income | | | |
| Under \$20,000 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| \$20,000 – <\$40,000 | 13 | 14 | 13 |
| \$40,000 – <\$60,000 | 14 | 15 | 10 |
| \$60,000 – <\$80,000 | 10 | 10 | 12 |
| \$80,000 – <\$100,000 | 12 | 13 | 9 |
| \$100,000 – <\$150,000 | 16 | 16 | 17 |
| \$150,000 or more | 17 | 17 | 16 |
| Prefer not to say | 11 | 10 | 17 |
| Place of birth | | | |
| Quebec | 72 | 79 | 33 |
| In Canada outside Quebec | 6 | 4 | 16 |
| Outside Canada | 22 | 17 | 51 |
| Disability | | | |
| Yes | 6 | 5 | 11 |
| No | 94 | 95 | 89 |
| Not sure / Prefer not to say | <1 | <1 | 1 |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| White/Canadian/Québécois | 79 | 83 | 54 |
| Racialized | 22 | 18 | 43 |