



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

---

# Standing Committee on Science and Research

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 020**

Monday, October 17, 2022

---

Chair: The Honourable Kirsty Duncan





## Standing Committee on Science and Research

Monday, October 17, 2022

• (1830)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.)):** I will call this meeting to order.

[Translation]

Welcome to the 20th meeting of the Standing Committee on Science and Research.

[English]

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of June 23, 2022. Members are attending in person in the room and remotely using the Zoom application.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(i) and the motion adopted by the committee on Thursday, June 16, we are meeting on the study of research and scientific publication in French.

[Translation]

To ensure an orderly meeting, I would like to outline a few rules for the witnesses and members.

Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. If you are on the videoconference, please click on the microphone icon to unmute yourself. Please mute your mic when you are not speaking.

For interpretation, those participating through Zoom have the choice, at the bottom of their screen, between three channels: floor, English or French. Members attending in person in the room can use their headset after selecting the channel desired.

A reminder that all comments by members and witnesses should be addressed through the chair.

[English]

For members in the room, if you wish to speak, please raise your hand. For members on Zoom, please use the “raise hand” function. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best we can, and we appreciate your patience and understanding in this regard.

[Translation]

I would now like to welcome the witnesses.

First, we have Linda Cardinal, Associate Vice-President of Research, Université de l'Ontario français, and Valérie Lapointe-Gagnon, Associate Professor of History. Both are appearing as individuals.

We also have Éric Forgues, Executive Director of the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities.

[English]

We will now have opening statements.

Each of our three witnesses will have five minutes. At the four and a half minute mark, I will hold up this green card. That will tell you that there are 30 seconds left. We want to be as fair as we can to all our witnesses.

With that, we will start with Professor Cardinal.

The floor is yours. Welcome.

[Translation]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Just before we begin, Madam Chair, would you please confirm for me that the sound checks have been done with all the witnesses and that they were successful?

[English]

**The Chair:** Yes, Monsieur Blanchette-Joncas. We have all our witnesses.

[Translation]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** No, Madam Chair, I'm asking you if the sound checks have been done with all the witnesses and if they were successful.

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.):** I believe Madam Clerk has something to say.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Keelan Buck):** I can confirm that we conducted sound checks when the witnesses arrived today and everything's fine.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

[Translation]

Thank you, Mr. Blanchette-Joncas.

[English]

With that, we will go to our first witness.

Welcome. The floor is yours.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Linda Cardinal (Associate Vice-President of Research, Université de l'Ontario français, As an Individual):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you for inviting me to appear before you to present my thoughts and analyses on the theme of research and publication in French.

I will mainly be presenting a few recommendations, but, first, I would like to say that I have been active in this field for 30 years, since I began my career at the University of Ottawa as a professor and now as associate vice-president of research at the Université de l'Ontario français. As you can understand, this is an everyday commitment for me.

My recent work has revealed that there have been three major moments in the development of a French-language minority research space in Canada since the 1950s. I want to discuss one of those moments with you today. This is the result of a research project that I conducted and recently published in the Bulletin Savoirs of the Association francophone pour le savoir, or Acfas.

The first moment was institutional in nature. Many research centres began to emerge at the universities of the Canadian francophonie starting in the 1950s, particularly at the University of Ottawa, the Université de Moncton and the Université Sainte-Anne.

The second important moment was a fundamental organizational development for the minority communities that occurred when a number of networks were established, including, in 1993, the Regroupement des universités de la francophonie hors Québec, which has now become the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne. A new type of publication, summary works, also appeared at the same time, directed by colleagues from across the country.

The third moment is the one I want to discuss today. It occurred during the Montfort Hospital crisis when a new actor, the federal government, joined in the promotion of research and teaching in the Canadian francophonie.

Some 25 years ago, the federal government funded the Consortium national de formation en santé, whose offices are now located at the Université Saint-Paul. It also supported the founding of the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities, whose executive director will be appearing shortly. Over the years, other research centres have been funded across the country, particularly in Saskatchewan. There is also the Bureau des affaires francophones et francophiles in Vancouver. The funding of these institutions is a major lever for teaching, research and publication in French across all our disciplines.

In the past 25 years, the Canadian government has fostered the creation of a research space, but it still cannot say, "Mission accomplished," because its actions were not really planned.

Today, those actions can now be more effectively structured. I believe your committee has all the levers at its disposal to propose measures for a more sustained structuring of French-language research in the Canadian francophonie.

I have two recommendations for the committee.

First, the Canadian government should establish a specific support program for French-language research in Canada that includes foundational activities.

Second, the committee should support Bill C-13 to modernize the Official Languages Act, in which the Canadian government states that it wants to "support the creation and dissemination of information in French that contributes to the advancement of scientific knowledge in any discipline".

We may return to these recommendations during the period of questions.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that researchers in the Canadian francophonie have exhibited an undeniably dynamic approach since the 1950s. However, we also face significant sociocultural barriers in the course of our work. One of those barriers is the underappreciation of our work, both our work in French and that concerning the Canadian francophonie. This situation undermines the careers of our young researchers, who, according to the work of my colleague François Rocher, now feel it's better to publish in English.

We are at risk of losing a tradition of French-language research that has been built up over the years by researchers who, like me and many others, have devoted their careers to developing the francophonie and demonstrating that it is a subject worthy of study and one that develops skills that must be acquired in order to participate in public life in this country.

You have previously heard from colleagues of mine at Acfas, an association that I consider extraordinary. They have submitted figures on French-language publication in Canada. The work of Vincent Larivière, at the Université de Montréal, speaks volumes on the subject. I hope you'll have a chance to hear from him.

To enable us to overcome the barriers we face, I invite you to review and expand the Canadian government's role in order to achieve substantive equality between anglophones and francophones in the French-language research sector.

I have stayed within the five minutes allotted me.

Thank you very much.

● (1840)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you so much, Professor Cardinal. We appreciate your being here.

We will now go to Professor Lapointe-Gagnon for five minutes.

[Translation]

**Dr. Valérie Lapointe Gagnon (Associate Professor of History, As an Individual):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

First, I would like to greet the members of the committee and to thank them for allowing me to speak today.

Since 2015, when I joined the Campus Saint-Jean, which is located in Edmonton, Alberta, I have had a chance to discover the western francophonie, which is complex and pluralistic, and to work in a francophone research setting that is both vibrant and precarious.

The main point of my remarks today is this: no French-language research is possible without healthy francophone post-secondary institutions. However, that research contributes to an understanding of the complex nature of Canadian society.

As noted in the preface to the report published by Acfas entitled, "Portrait et défis de la recherche en français en contexte minoritaire au Canada", more than 30,000 of us, professors, lecturers teaching and research assistants at the post-secondary level, speak French and work in a minority setting in Canada. However, lacking recognition, financial support, administrative support and access to research assistants, we francophone researchers are all too often invisible and forced to reject our language and identity and dissolve into the anglophone mass. This assimilation has thus become a strategy and the only possible path to access to the same privileges as our anglophone colleagues receive, such as research support, the revision of grant applications and access to funding and prestigious awards.

Research in French, which plays an essential role in the vitality of francophone communities, is not always valued as it should be, by which I mean valued as research that is relevant and written in one of the country's official languages, that often focuses, though not exclusively, on specific issues experienced by the francophone minority communities and that serves as a basis for adopting informed public policies that meet the needs of those communities.

At the moment, this research is severely compromised by the tenuous state in which the colleges and universities of the Canadian francophonie find themselves. It is a condition that I know well because the Campus Saint-Jean has been in crisis for the past few years.

In 2020, when the University of Alberta was forced to respond to unprecedented budget cuts imposed by the provincial government, it undertook an extensive restructuring, in the initial scenarios of which the Campus Saint-Jean was to be shut down. My francophone colleagues and I had to turn to other faculties. It was a major loss for the broader francophone community. The Campus Saint-Jean is central to the francophone community and drives its vitality. Thanks to citizen and political action across the country, the University of Alberta was forced to review its restructuring scenarios and chose to preserve the Campus Saint-Jean in toto.

However, constant resistance is required to achieve a desired result. Unfortunately, the Campus Saint-Jean wasn't the only institution to take a major hit. I'm thinking of Laurentian University, which suffered an enormous loss when its French-language programs were cut; of the Université de Moncton, which has financial problems and had to raise students' tuition fees, which restricted access to postgraduate studies for francophones; of the University of Sudbury, which is striving to become the francophone university that meets the needs of francophones in northern Ontario; and of the Université de l'Ontario français, which experienced hard times when it was established.

These major shocks were caused by the chronic underfunding of post-secondary education and a misunderstanding of the special role those institutions play and of the additional costs necessary to achieve their objectives, which go to the heart of the vitality of the minority communities. These aren't merely institutions that con-

tribute to the transmission of knowledge and learning; they are also cultural pillars that enable life in French to go on. I'm thinking of the Campus Saint-Jean, its theatre and its choir. It truly is a gathering place.

To conduct research in French, researchers must be able to aspire to a certain stability and to project themselves into the future. However, that stability is currently nonexistent. How can we attract students who will train the next generation of researchers at institutions whose very existence is in question?

However, every day as I pursue my career, I see the benefits of this research and the major role it plays, particularly for the next generation, in combating linguistic insecurity, the phenomenon eating away at minority communities.

I am thinking, for example, of the case of one student who drew on her rich francophone family archives to tell the story of her grandmother, who founded the small village of Plamondon. That student was one of the first generation to reconnect with French, after two generations that had been assimilated for lack of access to education in French.

• (1845)

[*English*]

**Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC):** On a point of order, we're not getting translation.

[*Translation*]

**Dr. Valérie Lapointe Gagnon:** That's just one example among many.

I would like to make a few recommendations in closing.

In particular, the government must contribute to funding for post-secondary institutions of the francophonie...

**The Chair:** I apologize for interrupting, Ms. Lapointe-Gagnon.

[*English*]

I need to know when people lose translation.

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab:** It was in the last 30 seconds, I would say. It was very brief.

**The Chair:** Should we have Professor Lapointe-Gagnon repeat that section?

Professor Lapointe-Gagnon, would it be possible to go back about 30 seconds?

[*Translation*]

**Dr. Valérie Lapointe Gagnon:** I was probably about to say that the colleges and universities are also cultural pillars, not merely places where knowledge is passed on. I cited the example of the Campus Saint-Jean, which has a theatre and a choir.

To conduct research and create in French, you have to be able to aspire to a certain stability and have the opportunity to project yourself into the future. However, there is no such stability on the ground right now. How can we attract students to train the next generation of researchers at institutions whose very existence has recently been called into question?

However, every day as a professor, I see the major role that research plays for the next generation. That research helps to address the phenomenon of linguistic insecurity now eroding our communities.

I'm thinking of a student who had access to family archives in French. After her family had experienced assimilation for two decades, she was able to reconnect with French and promote that heritage. That's just one example among many.

I'd like to make three recommendations to promote the dynamic nature of research in French and to contribute to its legitimacy and visibility. Allow me to explain them briefly.

First, the government must make a long-term contribution to the funding of post-secondary institutions in the Canadian francophonie...

**The Chair:** I apologize for interrupting, Ms. Lapointe-Gagnon.  
[English]

Professor Lapointe-Gagnon, I'm sorry that was difficult. I'm hoping that when we go to the questions from our members, they will ask you about the recommendations.

Thank you for being so gracious. It was difficult without the translation.

[Translation]

Thank you.

**Dr. Valérie Lapointe Gagnon:** Not a problem. Thank you.

**The Chair:** We will now continue with Éric Forgues, executive director of the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities.

Mr. Forgues, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Mr. Éric Forgues (Executive Director, Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank the committee for inviting me to appear, and I welcome the fact that the committee is examining research and scientific publication in French.

Given the time allotted to us, I'll get straight to the point.

To intervene in research and publication in French in a foundational manner, it is important to grasp the circumstances in which knowledge as a whole is produced and to have a clear understanding of the institutional framework within which research is conducted in French. Foundational action must be defined in accordance with a strategic vision if we want it to be relevant and effective.

The Canadian government can still support the institutional and university community even though this is an area of provincial jurisdiction. It should provide more support to consolidate the post-secondary sector that provides educational programs in French. It should help universities and colleges develop and expand the range of programs they offer so they can more effectively meet the training needs of Canadian society in both official languages.

It is important to consolidate and develop programs because research develops better in universities that offer master's and doctoral programs.

According to a study conducted by the Sociopol firm for Canadian Heritage, science, technology, engineering, mathematics and information technology programs are provided at francophone universities, and none are available in the provinces west of Ontario. The availability of postgraduate programs is also a major factor in providing an institutional foundation for research. However, the range of postgraduate programs in French is limited and concentrated at certain institutions.

Consequently, it is important to develop a range of university programs in French at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, particularly in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and information technology, as I just mentioned. This requires foundational intervention upstream from research that can have an impact on research development.

Most francophone and bilingual universities are small and lack the research resources and capacity of the major universities. It is important to bear in mind that the federal research granting agencies, such as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and the Canada Foundation for Innovation, are subject to the Official Languages Act and, under part VII of that act, must now take positive measures to support the development of francophone minority communities. Given what they do, which is to fund research, those agencies should intervene more substantially to support the research activities carried on at francophone and bilingual universities.

It is important that political leadership be exercised to encourage the granting agencies to interpret the Official Languages Act generously by establishing action plans that contribute to substantive equality in the research sector. I would note that substantive equality is a clearly expressed wish in Bill C-13, the short title of which is An Act for the Substantive Equality of Canada's Official Languages.

Robust, strategic action is required to protect and promote science in French, starting with support for scholarly publishing in French by the government and research funding agencies. We must support French-language journals.

This must also be done for the francophone public. The francophone population must have access to research findings in accessible French-language formats.

We must develop a strategy, even a language plan for the language of research in French with partners such as Acfas, the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne, the granting agencies and the Canadian government.

In closing, here are a few ideas that merit consideration: support for French-language journals, financial incentives for bilingual journals to increase the percentage of articles in French, support for translation into French and the publication of articles originally written in English, support for French-language and bilingual journals to ease their transition to free access, and support for activities designed to popularize knowledge for the general public and knowledge users.

Thank you.

• (1850)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you to all our witnesses. We really appreciate your time and effort tonight. You have a very interested committee who wants to hear from you and ask you questions.

We'll now begin our six-minute round of questioning. Tonight, we start with Mr. Tochor.

**Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, colleagues.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here tonight.

I'll start with Mr. Normand. What types of services or assistance do researchers need to carry out their work in French?

I'm sorry. My notes are wrong. The first presenter tonight was Ms. Cardinal. I will redirect that, but with the same question.

What types of services or assistance do researchers need to carry out their activities in French, including their research? I'm trying to understand what the issue is, or what services they need assistance with in publishing their work, organizing their scientific events or applying for funding in a different language. I want you to expand on that a bit, please.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Linda Cardinal:** Thank you for your question, Mr. Tochor. It definitely echoes my recommendation that a specific support program be created for research in French.

As we said, and as my colleague Éric Forgues indicated, we work at small universities where the research departments are, in some instances, very limited. We are setting up a research department at my university. I and another person are the only ones working on establishing that department. We don't always have the necessary support or resources to set up this kind of department. In small universities, especially like ours, we have colleagues who also think that research is important. At a large university, such as the University of Ottawa, where I worked for 30 years, conducting research in French is an issue because it's highly underappreciated. For example, we're regularly asked to publish in English, if we want rankings and public recognition. So we need support to encourage publication in French and to promote the development of research departments.

At English-language universities where francophones work, they're entitled, thanks to the research councils, to submit their files

in French, but no one at those institutions can read them. This is a major problem. We have to prepare files in French in order to submit them, but we also have to prepare them in English so they can be read at our universities. When we appear before ethics committees, people can't read our estimates, especially for conducting research in French. These are all examples that illustrate the problem.

Then there's the whole issue of publications. When it comes to developing or working on journals, we're the only ones doing the work. I'm the director of the journal *Enjeux et société*, and we can't count on any other resources. We aren't at universities that provide support in this area. We can't offer our professors any relief because we're short of professors for teaching. We can't ask students to help us prepare review files or even set up files because, in many instances, we don't have the master's or doctoral programs that would enable us to recruit those students.

In other words, there's a general lack of resources at our institutions that prevents us from conducting research in French.

I don't know if that answers your question. I can cite some other examples, but it seems to me the ones I've given speak for themselves.

• (1855)

[English]

**Mr. Corey Tochor:** I have a follow-up question on that one, Madame.

I've been trying to understand this a bit more. If you translate it into English, it's viewed by some as plagiarism. Is that the journal's procedures or policies? Who sets that? Is that something we could get around by publishing more studies in both official languages?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Linda Cardinal:** I don't think translating our work into French constitutes plagiarism if we're applying for funding, for example. If I publish an article in French, I definitely wouldn't have it translated for publication in English.

However, it would be interesting to set quotas for French-language articles published in bilingual journals. For a long time now, I've contributed to the *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, which is my favourite professional journal. I've even written an article on publication in French for that journal. Only one article is published in every one of its issues; all other articles are in English.

So how can we encourage the publication of articles in French in so-called bilingual journals to which virtually no French-language articles are submitted? Many journals don't have translation departments either.

[English]

**Mr. Corey Tochor:** I'm going to run out of time. I'm sorry, Madame.

When you talk about the journals or different reviews out there, would they be receiving any federal funding that you know of?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Linda Cardinal:** Yes, the journals normally receive funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. However, those journals aren't required to be truly bilingual to receive it.

More effort has been made at certain times, but no longer now. That could be changed. For example, a directive could be sent to various so-called bilingual journals encouraging them to publish more articles in French in order to deserve their funding. They could also be asked to show us how to meet the bilingualism requirements of the next Official Languages Act.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Tochor.

Thank you both. We appreciate it.

We will now go to Mr. Collins for six minutes.

**Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.):** Thanks, Madam Chair.

Thanks to the witnesses for presenting here this evening.

I'll start with Professor Lapointe-Gagnon.

You were cut off while providing your recommendations. Could you finish the recommendations you wanted to present to the committee? I'll then open it up to questions for all the witnesses. Take your time if you need to.

• (1900)

[Translation]

**Dr. Valérie Lapointe Gagnon:** Thank you for the opportunity to discuss my recommendations.

First, the government should contribute to the long-term funding of post-secondary institutions in francophone communities across Canada. As my colleague Éric Forgues said, education is a provincial jurisdiction, but the federal government can still intervene, particularly in official languages. In many instances, institutions can secure funding through federal-provincial partnerships. That's the case in Alberta and Ontario. We now find ourselves in situations where provinces are genuinely reluctant to cooperate, and we need to find a way to overcome that reluctance by establishing programs.

The funding received shouldn't be used solely to stamp out fires, but also to project into the future, to hire new professors and to establish the next generation. That's what currently troubles me most. How can we conduct research in French if we don't replace existing positions? How can we conduct research in French if there's no next generation of researchers and the only way to continue in the research sector is to switch to English, which exacerbates assimilation?

Another of my recommendations would be to support the Service d'aide à la recherche en français, or SARF, which Acfas has established. As my colleagues Linda Cardinal and Éric Forgues said, researchers wishing to conduct research in French face many barriers along the way, in particular a lack of access to revision of their applications. Research in French is a highly competitive sector. If, tomorrow morning, I submitted an application in French for a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to my university, the University of Alberta, no one would be there to revise it. On the other hand, if a colleague wants to submit a similar application in English, he'll be surrounded by experts who can assist him and offer him recommendations. So there's a considerable discrepancy between those services.

Lastly, I recommend that we send out a strong message about the legitimacy of research in French, and that can be done in various ways. It starts with the support of Bill C-13. We must also encourage departments to use research in French to gain a clearer understanding of the specific needs of francophone communities. We can also send a strong message by establishing a program of Canadian francophone chairs and by supporting francophone and bilingual scientific journals. We must also support a student exchange program. Our students currently go on exchanges with students from Belgium and France, but they should also have exchanges with students from Acadie and Manitoba. There is a wealth of resources that can be used to understand the francophonie better. Lastly, the major research councils must be made aware of the challenges involved in research in French at francophone minority institutions, which, in many instances, are small institutions where students are not trained in French at the master's or doctoral level. Francophone researchers therefore don't have access to those students, who could act as research assistants, a fact that penalizes them relative to anglophone researchers, who are surrounded by master's and doctoral students who support them in their research.

[English]

**Mr. Chad Collins:** Thank you for the recommendations, Professor.

As a follow-up, can I ask what roles secondary institutions play in ensuring their faculty are supporting publications in French and the French community—those who are studying and publishing in French?

You mentioned investments from both the federal and provincial governments from a jurisdictional perspective. However, what onus falls on the secondary institution to live up to some of these goals and objectives as well?

[Translation]

**Dr. Valérie Lapointe Gagnon:** Are you referring to post-secondary institutions?

[English]

**Mr. Chad Collins:** Yes, that's correct. I mean post-secondary.

[Translation]

**Dr. Valérie Lapointe Gagnon:** They're actually moving away from this role. I'm thinking of the big, mostly anglophone universities. The University of Alberta, for example, advertises its bilingualism, but, when it comes to supporting its researchers and really encouraging that research, it simply doesn't do it.

We don't have access to the same services as our anglophone colleagues. That's the case at many universities, and it's often the case that there aren't a lot of resources for researchers at small francophone institutions where research departments are just starting up, as at the Université de l'Ontario français. Many English-language universities are completely abandoning their role and don't understand the particular role of our institutions, which exist to meet the needs of the community, but also to support the francophonie.

The western Canadian francophonie would be at a great loss without the Campus Saint-Jean in Edmonton. The same is true of the Cité universitaire francophone at the University of Regina. Communities and services are attached to these campuses, and that creates an ecosystem in which the francophonie becomes legitimate and possible. That's what must be encouraged.

[English]

**Mr. Chad Collins:** Thank you, Professor.

I have less than a minute, Professor Cardinal. In your rush to complete your opening remarks in five minutes, you couldn't elaborate or expand on Bill C-13, and all three witnesses have now referenced it.

Do you want to spend the next 40 to 45 seconds on the importance of that, and what you want to elaborate along those lines for Bill C-13?

• (1905)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Linda Cardinal:** Yes, thank you very much.

In 45 seconds, I can only encourage you to vote for Bill C-13 because it will give public servants some flexibility to create a special program for research in French, which doesn't exist at Canadian Heritage, in particular, or at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. Those departments could work together to identify minority research needs and to establish a foundational program to promote research in the minority communities.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you so much.

Thank you, Mr. Collins, and thank you again to all of our witnesses for this really important testimony.

We will now go to Mr. Blanchette-Joncas for six minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Greetings to the witnesses who have joined us this evening for this important study.

My first question is for Professor Cardinal.

You mentioned Bill C-13 in your opening statement. I'll begin with a very simple question. Do you think we have substantive equality between English and French in research and scientific publication in French in Canada in 2022?

**Mrs. Linda Cardinal:** No, there's no substantive equality. This is why Bill C-13 is important: it's based particularly on the principle of substantive equality as the principle for interpreting language rights. Bill C-13 contains a special provision on research in French and acknowledges that French is also a scientific language in all disciplines.

My colleagues Ms. Lapointe-Gagnon and Mr. Forgues have also clearly shown that there's no substantive equality in research. The testimony that you heard last week and that I also listened to confirmed that. It's not by chance that Acfas and the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne play such an important role in promoting research in French in the public space. This is an issue that concerns the entire Canadian francophonie, including Quebec.

As our colleague Vincent Larivière has shown, our colleagues in Quebec published in French 10 or 20 years ago, but those same colleagues, particularly at the Université du Québec à Montréal, now publish in English. Why? Because we're told that we have to do everything in English if we want promotions, if we want to succeed and if we want an international reputation. As a result, we do a lot in English. In my case, part of my career is taking place in English. We aren't rejecting English, but, at the same time, some intellectual traditions in Canada are being lost because we aren't able to work in French or promote the transmission of knowledge in French.

Because there are major traditions of research in French across Canada. I'm trying to document them. Ms. Lapointe-Gagnon is a historian and is working on this. We have knowledge to pass on and are currently unable to do so.

We're now in the same situation as the Scandinavian countries, where national languages are being lost at the universities as a result of programs that are solely in English. Students now prepare theses in English only. Even in our universities, francophone students write theses in English only because they're told they have to do everything in English if they want to have a career.

In addition, since our colleagues no longer publish in French, now we can't even teach using French-language materials.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** I'm going to go back to that, Mrs. Cardinal.

You say that Bill C-13 will help to achieve substantive equality between English and French. Do you think there are any other provisions in the bill that could be improved to achieve substantive equality between English and French in research and scientific publication?

**Mrs. Linda Cardinal:** I hope Bill C-13 is passed. It could definitely use some minor improvements, but, in the present circumstances, the longer we delay passage, the less progress we'll make. By treading water, we're actually going backwards.

I can't wait for this bill to be passed so officials can introduce the necessary tools and means to implement it. That'll make for a more dynamic federal government.

There's also the Action Plan for Official Languages, which should provide for research funding. I'd like us to have a real French-language research program in Canada. The main characteristics of that program could be set forth in the action plan.

Passage of Bill C-13 would send a message to all departments that they also have to look at how programs...

• (1910)

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Mrs. Cardinal, getting back to my question, is anything missing from Bill C-13?

We understand that this is an important bill, but we don't modernize the Official Languages Act every year. Since we're doing it now, I'd like to know if the bill is lacking any essential elements so we can proceed with language planning and achieve substantive equality between the two languages.

**Mrs. Linda Cardinal:** What I would like is for you to pass Bill C-13 as it stands. Some minor changes could always be made. I know that Acfas has proposed a minor amendment to the provision on research, but that's a detail. I think we're at the stage where you have to pass the bill.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Thank you very much.

You talked about what urges people to conduct research and to publish in English. Would you please tell us about the ranking of international systems and how the universities work? What makes people publish in English? How does that undermine the use of French in research and scientific publication?

**Mrs. Linda Cardinal:** Last I heard, French-language publications weren't even ranked. What's considered are publications in English and the journals in which they're published. There are also other criteria, such as awards won.

A list is published in *Maclean's* magazine. There's also the Shanghai ranking, which is one of the most important. According to it, the University of Ottawa is now one of the top 140 universities in the world for research. Everyone's delighted.

However, these rankings don't necessarily improve the situation of French in research because the trend toward publishing in English devalues everything else. That's the way it is for most languages. Studies show that there is English on one side and all the other languages on the other...

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry to interrupt you, Professor Cardinal.

Thank you, Mr. Blanchette-Joncas.

We will now go to Mr. Cannings for six minutes.

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Thank you, and thanks to all the witnesses for being with us this evening.

I'd like to continue on the theme of the last question asked by Mr. Blanchette-Joncas. This is kind of the elephant in the room, or whatever that's driving this difficulty with doing research in French, not just here in Canada but around the world. I just pulled up some data that showed that French researchers in France, in one decade from 1987-97, went from publishing 25% in French to 15%. They lost 10% of publishing in French, and this is in France.

What we are tasked with here, at this committee, is trying to find ways for the federal government to assist French research in Canada. I wanted to ask you, Professor Cardinal, and maybe the other three if we have time, what can the federal government do to turn this big boat around, when you have researchers around the world wanting to publish in English, not just for the awards but for the advancement of their careers? It's all about citations, and it's kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy that if you publish in English, that will work out better because English is the lingua franca of science.

I could go on, but I shouldn't. I want to hear from you. Please go on from where you were speaking before about what the federal government can do to change this.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Linda Cardinal:** Thank you very much for asking me that question and allowing me to complete my remarks.

You're right in saying that this is a global phenomenon. The issue in Canada is similar to that in Switzerland and Belgium in that French is one of the official languages. Since we're in the minority in Canada, even if you include Quebec, we're at a twofold disadvantage.

The federal government can definitely play a role in this regard. As I said in my first recommendation, it should establish a foundational program to promote research in French across Canada.

Ms. Lapointe-Gagnon discussed the Service d'appui à la recherche en français, which Acfas has developed. I think the federal government could offer its support. The project has received the support of the Power Corporation of Canada, the Government of Quebec and the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie. So all that's missing is federal government support. That would be something very solid.

Second, clear directives must be sent to the various scientific research councils. We've told them on many occasions that not enough projects are submitted in French. Projects in French are no longer solicited, and no effort is being made to raise interest in conducting research in French. However, these councils are funded by the federal government.

Since we have quotas for music in French in Canada, we could also set quotas for research conducted in French in certain sectors. That's obviously harder to do with the science sector, but other things could be set up. There are the standard scientific publications, but there are also all kinds of other publications. Awards could be established for research in French and publication in French.

The Fonds de recherche du Québec awards a prize for publication in French. We're fortunate because the chief scientist of Quebec, Rémi Quirion, who is very much in favour of the Canadian francophonie as a whole, has expanded that competition to include the Canadian francophonie. However, we can't simply wait for Quebec to take the lead in this matter. The federal government must also work together with stakeholders to take on its leadership role.

We can also discuss journals. Journals may be provided with funding, but bilingual journals must also publish in French. The titles of their journals can't be the only thing that appears in French; their content must as well.

As Ms. Lapointe-Gagnon said, we have research stays in other countries, but not in Canada. We could have a program of researchers in residence at French-language universities. When I was regional director of the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie, I developed a program with MITACS and Brazil so the Brazilians could join francophone research teams in Canada. However, I can't do the same thing with all Canadian provinces, I find that somewhat surprising.

Acfas has offices in the regions, and the federal government could provide them with more funding. In some cases, they operate on \$3,000 a year. Thus not a lot of money; so it could be increased.

Doctoral and master's-level fellowships could also be established to promote research in French.

I don't know whether you want me to continue.

Ms. Lapointe-Gagnon discussed Canadian francophonie research chairs. I think there's really a...

• (1915)

[*English*]

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** I was hoping to hear from the other witnesses as well—

**Mrs. Linda Cardinal:** I'm sorry.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** —and I don't know if we have any time.

How much time do we have, Madam Chair?

**The Chair:** You have 40 seconds.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** Okay.

You can continue, Professor Cardinal, and I'll ask the others next time.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Linda Cardinal:** I can also turn the floor over to Ms. Lapointe-Gagnon.

Everyone agrees that we need support both in and outside the federal government, that is to say in the institutions of the Canadian francophonie and at Canadian universities, to promote research in French and to demonstrate that French is also a scientific language. That's not a reflection on...

**The Chair:** I apologize for interrupting, Mrs. Cardinal.

[*English*]

It's the worst part of this job.

Thank you, Mr. Cannings.

Now, dear colleagues, we're going to go to the five-minute rounds. It's my understanding that the Conservative Party has ceded its time to Monsieur Blanchette-Joncas.

Monsieur Blanchette-Joncas, the floor is yours for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

My next questions will be for Ms. Lapointe-Gagnon.

In your remarks, you discussed the underappreciation and chronic underfunding of research in French.

I'd like you to outline some other recommendations. More specifically, how can the federal government further promote research and scientific publication in French in Canada?

• (1920)

**Dr. Valérie Lapointe Gagnon:** Francophone researchers and researchers wishing to conduct research in French often do so in English because working in that language definitely affords more opportunities and prestige.

Mrs. Cardinal offered several potential solutions, such as creating awards, awarding grants specific to this field and scholarships for students.

We really need to create a space where research in French is valued in the same way and enjoys the same legitimacy as research in English. As research work has shown, working in English also poses a danger that's inherent in the very nature of research: it becomes less and less specific and the issues expand. All research on community needs should be conducted in the language of the community. However, the very subjects of that research are threatened if research in that language isn't encouraged. The danger inherent in conducting research in English is that detailed and specific knowledge of Canadian complexity, which, in particular, includes the francophone aspect, is lost.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Would you please give us more details on the consequences?

You say that cultural pillars form in francophone minority communities, but linguistic insecurity is beginning to emerge. What are the direct consequences for those communities of the fact that these researchers can't necessarily conduct their research or publish their scientific work in their mother tongue?

**Dr. Valérie Lapointe Gagnon:** The first consequence that we see at home is an exodus of francophone brains. If francophones can't get what they need at the Campus Saint-Jean or the University of Alberta, they'll go to Quebec or elsewhere for their studies, or they'll switch over to English, and then we'll lose people who are very important for our communities.

We saw what happened at Laurentian University in northern Ontario. Students lost their programs and the opportunity to conduct research. It was a disaster for them, one that led them to ponder profound identity issues about the legitimacy of their language and how they viewed their lives. It was all called into question because their programs were terminated, which sent the message that it wasn't important. In many instances, those people will up stakes and leave their home and language, and we'll lose them.

We've lost colleagues and students since the crisis at Campus Saint-Jean. It has been catastrophic for a community that needs local talent to continue projecting itself into the future.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** I want to continue on another topic.

Do you know if we have any data on funding for research in French?

**Dr. Valérie Lapointe Gagnon:** I think my colleague Éric Forgues could provide you with more figures than I can on funding for research in French.

However, I can say, based on the data, that funding for research in French faces obstacles, particularly funding provided by the Canada Institutes for Health Research. In proportional terms, less funding is provided for proposed research in French at the CIHR than for that submitted in English. CIHR is very much aware of this obstacle and wants to reduce it, but that has to happen more quickly.

As for research topics in the humanities and social sciences, where French has legitimacy and should be encouraged, researchers now submit fewer and fewer grant applications in French to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Francophone researchers choose to submit their grant applications in English because they feel that gives them a better chance of securing funding.

Would you like to add to my answer, Mr. Forgues?

**Mr. Éric Forgues:** Actually, further analysis remains to be done on research funding. We haven't really seen any difference in acceptance rates between applications submitted in French and those filed in English with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. However, the amounts awarded should be analyzed. I don't have the figures on that. You should also look at the Sociopol study that I mentioned in my opening statement.

You should also take a look at how the research councils analyze the research funding applications submitted to them. They put all the universities on the same footing, whereas that's simply not the

case. Everyone is assessed on the same criteria. However, some universities have far more resources than others, as has been noted at length, so they have a head start...

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry to interrupt, Professor. Please forgive me.

Thank you, Mr. Blanchette-Joncas.

We will now go to Ms. Diab for five minutes, please.

• (1925)

[Translation]

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thanks to all the witnesses for being with us this evening to discuss this very important topic for all of us.

Ms. Lapointe-Gagnon, we discussed the importance of the Acfas project. Would you please tell us a little more about that?

**Dr. Valérie Lapointe Gagnon:** Yes, definitely. I'd be happy to say more about this service, which supports research in French in Canada.

What we are seeing in our small institutions, whether they are universities or campuses, is a shortage of resources on the ground. As I mentioned, if tomorrow morning I were to decide to send an application to the Natural Sciences and Engineering Council, there would be no one at the University of Alberta research office to help me prepare and review my application in French. These are people with expertise in such projects, who know how to prepare a budget and choose the appropriate terminology so that the researchers can succeed in obtaining funding. Sometimes, all researchers have to do is make some minor adjustments to increase the likelihood of getting a grant. However, we no longer have this French-language expertise at the University of Alberta. And it's not just here, but everywhere, that small institutions are suffering from this shortage of resources on the ground.

We're certainly not expecting to be able to have specialists in this area at each of our institutions and campuses. On the other hand, why not establish a service that all francophone researchers in Canada can access? That's what Acfas would like: an application review service and an ethics review service for the approval of applications. Ms. Cardinal spoke about this. When we conduct research in French, but the ethics office asks us to translate our entire application into English, that's a serious disconnect for researchers.

If a Canada-wide service for ethics compliance were established and accredited by post-secondary institutions, it would support our francophone researchers by not forcing them to work twice as hard, as is currently the case when they are asked to have their applications translated so that they can be understood beyond their university. This support service would be important, because it would share resources and give these researchers access to the review and support they need to do their work. Without it, we get the impression that our research isn't important.

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab:** I have an additional question.

In Canada, as just about everywhere else in the world, there are labour shortages in many fields. Is that one of the reasons why there are no specialists to review our research? Could it also be a matter of money, because most of your post-secondary institutions are somewhat smaller? Is that why establishing a service accessible to everyone across Canada, as you were mentioning, could be a solution to the problem?

**Dr. Valérie Lapointe Gagnon:** Definitely. Skilled workers are available. It's just that there is often a lack of understanding or inclination in the universities.

I'll use the University of Alberta as an example. When I got there, we had access to this service, but the bilingual person who used to help us left, and the university, despite pressure from us, did not see fit to replace that person. That often happens in universities. And yet, there are 30,000 researchers in Canada who could submit applications in French. When a bilingual person happens to be working in a research service, help can be provided. However, when people like these retire or move to another job, they are not replaced because the institution can't see the benefit.

There are all kinds of doctoral students who don't have access to certain research jobs, because they're not renewed, and these students would be very happy to have one of these jobs. These positions are perceived positively and they support all members of the community who want to conduct research in French.

So I'm convinced that the workers are there. What's sometimes missing on the ground is the resolve. If a service of this kind covered all of Canada, that would rationalize...

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab:** Thank you very much, Ms. Lapointe-Gagnon. I don't have much time.

Mr. Forgues, I am keenly interested in the research being done by your institute on linguistic minorities.

What role is performed by producing and disseminating scientific information in French beyond Quebec?

• (1930)

**Mr. Éric Forgues:** The role of our institute...

[English]

**The Chair:** May I interrupt?

Madame Diab, since you don't have time left, perhaps you would like to ask Professor Forgues if he could table his response for you.

[Translation]

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab:** Yes.

Mr. Forgues, If you have an answer for us, could you have it sent to the committee, please.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you so much.

Dear colleagues, sadly, we have come to the end of this panel. We now want to thank our excellent witnesses.

We thank you for your expertise. We thank you for being gracious with your time. We hope that you've had a good experience and that you might want to come back.

With that, I say thank you to you all. We will suspend briefly as we prepare for our second panel.

• (1930)

(Pause)

• (1930)

**The Chair:** I call this meeting back to order.

Good evening, everyone. I understand from our clerk that we are ready to go for panel two.

[Translation]

I'll begin by giving some information to the new witnesses.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mic and please mute yourself when you are not speaking.

Interpretation for those on Zoom - you have the choice, at the bottom of your screen, of either floor/off, English or French. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel.

A reminder that all comments should be addressed through the chair.

I would now like to welcome the witnesses.

We will be hearing from Mr. Martin Normand, Director, Strategic Research and International Relations, at the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne.

We also have Mrs. Annie Pilote, Full Professor and Dean, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, at Université Laval, appearing today on behalf of the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Also with us is Mr. Benoit Sévigny, the Director of Communications at Fonds de recherche du Québec.

• (1935)

[English]

Colleagues, we will now go to opening statements. Each of the three groups will have five minutes.

At the four and a half minute mark, I will hold up this green folder. That will let you know that you have 30 seconds left. We do our best to be fair.

With that, I say welcome to you all. Our committee is eager to hear from you.

[Translation]

I'll begin by giving the floor to Mr. Martin Normand for five minutes.

**Mr. Martin Normand (Director, Strategic Research and International Relations, Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to thank the committee for inviting us in connection with such an important study for Canada's francophone post-secondary sector.

I am here today representing the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne, which is made up of the 22 francophone or bilingual post-secondary institutions in francophone minority communities. Our mandate is to represent the interests of our members with a view to enhancing access to post-secondary education in French.

Research and publication in French are two of our priority areas for action. We have ties with federal granting agencies to make them aware of the challenges of research in French outside Quebec. We have made an effort to ensure that research is taken into consideration in the recent Canada-wide consultations on official languages conducted by Canadian Heritage. We also oversee the Réseau de la recherche sur la francophonie canadienne, which organizes an annual symposium and a number of knowledge mobilization activities.

Last year, the ACUFC also organized the summit on post-secondary education in minority francophone communities, a major Canada-wide undertaking that ran from June 2021 to March 2022. The final report will be released on October 27, and a whole chapter of the report is devoted to scientific research and publication in French. I'd like to draw your attention to three points.

Firstly, researchers in our institutions work on the periphery of the major research networks. Teaching loads are heavy, graduate students are few, colleagues who work in French on similar topics are remote and English-speaking colleagues do not always understand the research subject. These factors naturally limit opportunities for scientific collaboration and interaction, even though they would be exceedingly beneficial

Second, English is more than ever becoming the lingua franca in the increasingly international scientific research community. That being the case, faculty members are conducting more and more research activities in English. The lack of familiarity with research issues specific to the francophonie can lead to structural prejudices and unconscious biases that make it harder for researchers from francophone communities to receive funding for their research projects.

Third, the research community and the community sector generally are very closely interrelated in francophone minority settings. Although faculty often want to assume social responsibility for producing data relevant to their environment, they may give in to pressure owing to the fact that this kind of work is not always given

recognition by institutions, and they may not have access to all the resources they need to take on this responsibility.

We would like to make three suggestions.

Firstly, we would ask that the federal government take steps to foster the creation and dissemination of scientific information in French in the next action plan for official languages. They made this commitment in the official languages reform document of February 2021, and in Bill C-13, which is currently under review, and which we hope will soon be adopted. For positive measures that might be considered, we note that the action plan could contain provisions on funding for the research community to enable researchers to draw upon data on official languages from the 2021 census, as well as future data from the Survey on the Official Language Minority Population, or support ways of disseminating and mobilizing scientific knowledge and developing educational materials in French.

We are also asking that the federal government introduce the measures required to encourage Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, as well as the granting agencies, to support and enhance research in French. They could then provide access to funds and programs that better meet the needs and capacities of post-secondary institutions, including colleges. The government should also asked them to review the framework for assessing the excellence of research in French. The granting agencies also need support to avoid furthering unconscious linguistic bias in the development of programs and initiatives. For example, the Dimensions tool, administered by the three councils, whose purpose is to promote equity, diversity and inclusion in the Canadian research ecosystem, does not consider language minorities to be an under-represented group in terms of research.

Lastly, we are requesting that post-secondary sector support programs in official language minority communities allow institutions to apply for long-term support for their activities, including the hiring of full-time professors who could train the next generation of researchers and receive funding from granting agencies or institutional research support.

To conclude, I would remind you that research in French outside Quebec and research on francophone and Acadian minority communities fuel intellectual endeavours that are beneficial to Canadian society as a whole. We will continue to work with our member institutions, the research communities, and partners like Acfas in pursuance of these efforts.

The federal government, given its concern for substantive equality, needs to take significant steps to ensure that conditions for the production and dissemination of knowledge in French are equivalent to the conditions for the anglophone majority.

• (1940)

Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you so very much, Monsieur Normand. We appreciate your testimony.

We will go to Professor Annie Pilote for five minutes.

The floor is yours.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Annie Pilote (Full Professor and Dean, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, Université Laval, Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences):** Good evening.

I'd like to begin by thanking the Honourable Kirsty Duncan, the committee chair, and all members of the committee for having given us the opportunity to discuss and formulate recommendations on research and publication in French in Canada.

This subject is central to our research community and our work at the Federation for the Humanities, which I have the pleasure of representing today as vice-chair of its board of directors.

As the national voice for the humanities, the federation supports a diverse community of 91,000 researchers. We actively support research in French in all of our activities, including the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Canada's largest gathering of academics, which has contributed to the publication of 288 books in French since 2010.

During the cross-Canada official languages consultations held a little earlier this year, we emphasized that the government should address the specific challenges being faced by francophone researchers.

Access to studies in French at the master's and doctoral levels is essential if francophones are to be able to continue their studies in their language to the highest levels.

Having francophone graduate students and postdoctoral fellows is also indispensable for teams wishing to conduct their research work in French at universities in all parts of Canada. The government must support future generations of students conducting research in French, because we need their contributions to ensure a better understanding of the issues being faced by francophone communities, and to lead Canada towards a brighter future.

According to the Acfas report entitled "Portrait et défis de la recherche en français en contexte minoritaire au Canada", research in French is declining. The report gives extremely instructive examples, including the fact that French-language periodicals account for only 8% of scholarly journals created since the 1960s in Canada, and that the percentage of publications in French is steadily declining. The report also points out that researchers in francophone minority communities receive very little support from master's and PhD students in conducting their research in French, given the limited availability of graduate programs in French in their institutions.

The fact is that many francophone students who live outside Quebec are required to make the choice of either moving to continue their education in French at major universities with a broader range of graduate programs, or switching to English to continue their studies closer to home. This has been accentuating the domi-

nance of English as their careers in science progress, and lowering the likelihood of their research objectives meeting the needs of francophone communities.

Enhanced funding would attenuate these inequalities and further support research in French in Canada, particularly in contexts where the vitality of the French language has become more vulnerable.

That being the case, we have two recommendations to make. The first is to increase financial support for graduate studies and postdoctoral fellowships. The second is to invest in open access publishing in French.

We applaud the Standing Committee on Science and Research for recommending an increase in the number of scholarships for graduate studies and postdoctoral fellowships, and increasing their value by 25%, in addition to indexing them to the consumer price index. However, based on our calculations, a considerable increase in the size of these scholarships is required if they are to retain their value, given the inflation rate over the past two decades.

Generally speaking, we also need to think about equity issues in terms of education for the next generation of francophone researchers. As Acfas recommended, we need to ensure that success rates for funding applications are equivalent for francophone and anglophone researchers. Where inequalities persist, additional funds or programs, such as research programs for francophone communities, or support for students who have to move to study in French, might help restore the balance.

Our second recommendation is to encourage the federal government to support open access publishing in French so that research papers can be found, read and disseminated by anyone with Internet access around the world. At the moment, open access research dissemination channels are limited, leading to significant barriers to pursuing a research career, particularly for francophones. For example, the scope and outreach of their knowledge is limited, and their achievements are undervalued by research assessment systems and by their universities' promotion committees.

We therefore propose that a fund be established for open access, in order to lower the costs of publishing open access books and papers, and to broaden their scope.

The fund would include financing for simultaneous publication in both official languages of open access research to attract a wider readership. This would support a dynamic community of francophone researchers and enhance the dissemination of research in French, while allowing for interaction with a broader English-speaking public.

• (1945)

Investment in open access publication would contribute to the dissemination of research in French in Canada and around the world, and also contribute to the vitality of the francophone research community in the digital era. As a bilingual country, Canada should be setting an example.

To conclude, I'd like to point out that humanities researchers publish essential research in French. Investing in talent development and open science will help make them more influential and broaden the scope of their work on behalf of our community.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor Pilote.

[English]

We will now go to Mr. Benoit Sévigny for five minutes, please.

[Translation]

**Mr. Benoit Sévigny (Director of Communications, Fonds de recherche du Québec):** Good evening to the members of the Standing Committee on Science and Research.

I'm here today representing Fonds de recherche du Québec, whose chief executive officer is Quebec's chief scientist. Three government organizations report to the minister responsible for science. There is a fund for each major research sector: social sciences and humanities, health sciences, and natural sciences and engineering. This resembles the structure for federal research councils.

The Fonds' mandates are to support: research groups and projects; education and research, through master's, doctoral and postdoctoral grants; partnerships development, from the local to the international level; and dissemination.

English is now the leading language of science around the world. As the bibliometric data show, the trend towards the anglicization of science has been in evidence for several decades now.

Web of Science, an exceedingly reliable database of world citations, shows that between 1980 and 2020, a 40-year period, the percentage of natural sciences and engineering papers published in French has dropped from approximately 4% to 0.1% worldwide, from 3% to 1% in Canada, and from 14% to 0.25% in Quebec. The results of the work done by Vincent Larivière, the Canada Research Chair in the Transformations of Scholarly Communication at the Université de Montréal, show similar results for scientific publications by Quebec researchers in international health science journals. For social sciences and the humanities, the percentage published in French is somewhat higher, but here too, the trend is towards anglicization.

The internationalization of research has an impact. The percentage of Quebec publications jointly written by at least one scientist from another country went from 35% in 2000 to 60% in 2019. In order of importance, Quebec's three main collaborating countries are the United States, France and Great Britain.

The goal is not so much to try to compete with science in English, but to promote science in French and enhance research and publication in French. Science in French, or in any other language, is just as important as science in English. English may well be the common language, but it rests on linguistic diversity. If language,

which is tied to a region's or a country's culture, shapes our view of the world, then it must be acknowledged that it is in our best interests to promote linguistic diversity to make science richer in terms of perspectives, outcomes and impacts. While science in Quebec may be considered local compared to the rest of the world, its impacts and outcomes are nevertheless important to the people of Quebec, particularly in the social sciences and humanities, where the focus is contextualized in terms of Quebec realities.

Science in French can bank on 300 million francophones on five continents, and this number is expected to grow to 700 million by the year 2050.

As a research fund, we promote science in French through our scholarship and granting programs. As a result of our support, some 40 academic social science and humanities journals have for many years now been published and included on the Érudit journal platform.

To raise awareness of publications in French, we launched a competition in 2021 through which, every month, three French-language publications each receive a prize from us of \$2000. We recently opened the competition to students to encourage the next generation to publish in French.

In 2012, we established the Relève étoile awards, awarded to three students every month, one in each sector, for one of their publications. During the first 24 months of the competition, 17 of the 72 publications that were awarded the prize were in French, whereas over the past 24 months, in 2021 and 2022, only two of the 72 were in French. That's another sign of the decline of French in science.

Quebec's chief scientist is the president of the International Network for Governmental Science Advice, a network of chief scientists and scientific advisors from around the world, in which English is the predominant language of work. That's why, under his direction, the launch of the Réseau francophone international en conseil scientifique will be announced on November 3.

In view of the importance of science in French, we will be organizing a two-day forum in the spring to take stock of the situation and determine the best ways of promoting science in French.

• (1950)

Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you so very much, Director Sévigny.

Thank you to all our witnesses. This is a really important study and we're very glad to have your expertise here.

We are going to go to our first round of questions. We will begin with Mr. Soroka. These are six-minute rounds.

Mr. Soroka, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Gerald Soroka:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses, especially to the two who are here in person. It's great to see some people for a change, as opposed to seeing everybody on Zoom.

As we're going through this study, I'm not opposed to anything we're doing. We're trying to find out how we can create better French research in Canada. One of my concerns, though, is that it sounds like, because science and research are done internationally a lot of times....

What are other countries doing to promote the French language? As Mr. Cannings said, in France, they're even changing significantly toward English. That's what I'm concerned about. What are other countries doing?

I'm sure that what we're doing here in Canada will assist, but are the researchers still going to publish in French when, internationally, they might not get the same kinds of awards or recognition?

My first question would be to Mr. Normand and Ms. Pilote. What's your opinion on that?

That's for whichever of you would like to start off first.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Normand:** Thank you for the question.

I'll be brief.

I would say that Canada doesn't have to lag behind other countries. Every country whose national language is not English is looking for ways of keeping research alive in their national language. As our colleagues in the previous group of witnesses were saying, when research is carried out in English with a view to universality, the specific contexts covered by research in the national language are lost.

Other countries are looking for approaches. Canada needs to find one too. It needs to demonstrate leadership, including in the international Francophonie, in which it is a major player. It must confirm and reaffirm that French is an international language, a scientific language, and a language that can also be used in scientific diplomacy.

● (1955)

**Mrs. Annie Pilote:** Thank you for the question.

It's clearly a strong trend, and we won't be able to counter it completely. On the other hand, the comparison with France is flawed. France is a country where French is of course used by the majority. All its researchers are subject to the same imperatives.

The situation is different in Canada. There are two groups of researchers within the Canadian research community, and they are not subject to the same imperatives or conditions. The ground rules promote one group at the expense of the other. There is an equity issue in research produced in Canada. Francophone researchers and future generations of francophones must be able to pursue a career in research.

This means that researchers need appropriate conditions if they are to develop and learn how to help build a body of significant knowledge for their environment. They also need opportunities to disseminate their research, but not exclusively in French. They re-

quire favourable conditions for a broad dissemination of their efforts, and they should not be responsible for shouldering these tasks.

That's why we suggested encouragement for open publication, with free access in both languages. Researchers shouldn't be communicating with one another in a vacuum. We want their research findings to be widely disseminated.

With the forms of communications available to us today, it's clearly possible to disseminate research results in both languages at the same time. Researchers doing their work in French, however, can of course avail themselves of translation services. They shouldn't have to produce papers in both languages on their own.

[*English*]

**Mr. Gerald Soroka:** Thank you for that.

That's what I was concerned about. With our technology today, you wouldn't think this would be such a barrier, and we would be able to be a lot better at integrating researchers with one another, regardless of the languages they speak. I'm surprised that we're having this debate, to some degree.

I'm glad that Bill C-13 will probably take care of a lot of concerns. It seems like the other people who were asked that question don't need to see any real changes to Bill C-13, so that's good to hear as well. I'm sure you probably agree that it should be passed as soon as possible.

Mr. Sévigny, you mentioned that you also have a francophone research group that's working with other countries. Could you elaborate on how that will assist us here in Canada to get more francophone or French research papers published, not only here in Canada but worldwide, and with better recognition?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Benoit Sévigny:** Are you alluding to an international group?

I'm not sure I understand your question.

[*English*]

**Mr. Gerald Soroka:** You mentioned that you were part of an international francophone group and that you were doing a seminar. Is that correct, or did I misunderstand that?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Benoit Sévigny:** I had mentioned that Quebec's chief scientist was the president of the International Network for Governmental Science Advice. For several years now, he has been pointing out that most discussions are in English, and that this network is more prominent in Anglo-Saxon circles.

He is convinced that talking about science, and advising elected representatives, in a specific language, incorporates certain values. That's why he decided to establish a francophone network for scientific advice. Its purpose is to provide better advice to governments, in French for example, for francophone countries.

[*English*]

**Mr. Gerald Soroka:** Okay. That's what I was talking about.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Soroka.

Now we will go to Monsieur Lauzon for six minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.):** Good evening.

I'd like to thank Mr. Normand, Ms. Pilote and Mr. Sévigny for their testimony.

Mr. Normand, you sparked my interest when you mentioned content disseminated outside Canada. Your emphasis was on the quality of translation from French to English.

Can you comment on the quality of translation into English of research work carried out in French for dissemination in other countries?

• (2000)

**Mr. Martin Normand:** I'd like to mention two points in connection with that.

The problem isn't particularly the translation from French to English. It's rather that when researchers decide to work in English in order to publish findings in major scholarly journals, they choose to work on more universal research topics of interest to a broader public, rather than on more specific research areas that might resonate more specifically in certain communities.

It is in fact possible to measure the extent of English-language scientific publications in major scientific journals. However, although they are very influential, they are neither read nor cited all that often. On the other hand, French papers published in local journals, and which have local relevance, are often more widely read, more frequently used, and more often cited. That's why it's important not to lose sight of the specific nature of the research subjects discussed in French.

In connection with translation into English, I'd like to point out that in some disciplines, even when francophone researchers publish in English, their anglophone colleagues don't cite them or read them. We have very accurate data on this.

As Ms. Pilote was saying, research communities operate in silos. There may also be unconscious bias based on the fact that publications by francophone researchers are often on more specific and less universal subjects, making them less widely relevant.

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** I can understand that.

Mr. Sévigny, you said that Fonds de recherche du Québec wanted to do a better job of promoting and enhancing publications in French. However, you never mentioned the Official Languages Act or Bill C-13.

Are you in favour of Bill C-13?

Do you feel that this legislation might help to promote and enhance publication in French?

**Mr. Benoît Sévigny:** I'm not very familiar with Bill C-13. I think it might, however, help to promote science in French.

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Okay.

You also caught my attention when you spoke about the Relève étoile awards. Many witnesses have mentioned the importance of acknowledging research carried out in French. You said that each award was accompanied by a grant of \$2,000.

Speak to us about funding and how it would benefit researchers?

Do you think it would be possible to improve this funding program?

**Mr. Benoît Sévigny:** The purpose of the Relève étoile awards, established some 10 years ago by the chief scientist, is to promote the publications and careers of the next generation of researchers. Each award is assigned on the basis of a single publication. The competition has been functioning extremely well, and three awards are granted each month. We have noted, however, that more publications submitted to our evaluation committees are written in English than in French. This is indicative of a shift towards English.

In connection with publications in French, the chief scientist last year introduced an award for researchers who publish in French. This year, the competition was extended to include students in order to encourage them to write and publish in French. It is open not only to students, but also researchers within the francophone across Canada.

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Right. Thank you very much.

Ms. Pilote, according to my research, four companies account for over 40% of the academic journals publication market. These are Elsevier, Springer Nature, Wiley-Blackwell and Taylor & Francis.

According to you, what impact does this concentration of publishing companies have on francophone scholarly literature in Canada?

• (2005)

**Mrs. Annie Pilote:** Our proposal aims specifically at distancing ourselves from this scholarly publication business to further encourage open publication. We are convinced that in future, research in French and the dissemination of knowledge in French will have to be accomplished by means of open science.

The only obstacle is the shortage of funding. Financial support is needed to enable researchers to publish their research findings so that members of the general public can have access to them, no matter where they are, even if they don't have access to university libraries.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry to interrupt, Professor Pilote.

Thank you very much, Monsieur Lauzon.

With that, we will go to Monsieur Blanchette-Joncas for six minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to welcome the witnesses who are joining us for the second hour of the committee meeting.

Ms. Pilote, one of the things I found interesting is your idea of funding for open access publishing. Nevertheless, I'd like to look at any potential downside.

The committee heard earlier from Professor Sylvie Lamoureux, the Canada Research Chair in Language Management at the OLB, the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute. Among other things, she told us that the creation of the *Érudit* platform was a major step forward and that it was absolutely essential if we are to gain recognition for scholarly publications in French, both in Canada and internationally.

She felt, however, that the platform had some limitations, not only because of the precarious status of Canadian scholarly journals, but also because of their limited readership.

I'd like to know whether, even with the introduction of this open access platform to allow free access to publications in French and English, these limitations would arise in your area.

The professor told us that language was more than just words, but also culture and a way of thinking.

How can we arrange to obtain this open access publishing tool, which could assist and improve scientific research and publication in French in Canada?

**Mrs. Annie Pilote:** I don't have all the answers on what form the open access publication process might take for research work. What we do know is that we need to look into solutions that become available to make research findings available.

However, you are altogether right when you say that it's not simply a matter of translation; hence the importance of being able to promote contacts between these intellectual areas which, all too often, remain in silos. Sometimes, concepts are very badly translated from one language to another. That's something else that puts francophone researchers at a disadvantage when the time comes to submit things like research proposals in French to obtain funding. They find themselves criticized for not citing the right authors or not using the proper concepts, because others are considered authorities in their particular scientific and intellectual spheres.

Ideas go well beyond the issue of translation. Ways have to be found to convey these intellectual domains. I believe it's possible to do so through more communication in both languages and more areas where communities can intersect, even though they currently don't speak much to one another.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Thank you, Ms. Pilote.

Can you give us more details about how language affects research?

**Mrs. Annie Pilote:** I am not aware of what Professor Sylvie Lamoureux said in her testimony to your committee, but language is certainly what is used to convey ideas. That's why people talk about equity. Some francophone researchers have to work under conditions that require them to think, write and produce in an intellectual space that is not their own. This hinders creativity and, to some degree, determines what research subjects they choose.

It's very important, particularly in the training of future generations, to enable young francophone researchers to learn about the important schools of thought in their discipline, in their own language, without however limiting themselves to these scholarly approaches.

As I was saying, the problem goes well beyond words. What we're talking about is theories, and ways of viewing the world that are conveyed within these linguistic spheres.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Thank you very much.

Apart from creating a fund for the self-service you alluded to earlier, what specific measures could the federal government take to help humanities researchers work in their own language, including francophone researchers?

● (2010)

**Mrs. Annie Pilote:** Funding is very important, beginning with university graduate work. Researchers need help to publish the findings of their research. That's because if the existing funding programs do not allow researchers to report on their research work, there will be nothing to communicate.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** I have a correction to make. I used the words self-service earlier, but I meant to say open access.

Mr. Normand, what could the federal government do to provide better support and mentoring for francophone researchers in Quebec and Canada?

**Mr. Martin Normand:** Ms. Pilote was putting you on the right track. It's absolutely essential to work with the granting councils.

There is indeed the matter of funding, but more needs to be done about the equitable assessment of grant applications submitted to the councils.

Over the past few months, we've been working with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the CIHR, to design training modules on unconscious bias in the assessment of grant applications. Can assessors, owing to their position, introduce bias into how they perceive and understand research projects submitted to them?

We're trying to look at the content of these tools and how we might prevent bias in terms of language and the research topics chosen by francophone researchers.

These tools should be used well beyond the CIHR. All the granting councils should have access to them.

Let's take the obvious example of simultaneous interpretation at the peer assessment committee meetings, where the language skills of the assessors are self-declared.

Assessors who consider themselves to have a high enough level of proficiency in French to read and understand a French-language application may be misled when comments are poorly translated or when the references cited are misunderstood. This could lead to a researcher's application being negatively assessed when that same application might have been accepted by another committee with someone more proficient in French.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Thank you very much.

You spoke about the crux of the matter, which is funding.

Have you considered the possibility of having quotas, as does Telefilm Canada in the audiovisual world, and the Canada Council for literature?

Have we got to the point where we should be thinking about that here in Canada, in 2022?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Monsieur Blanchette-Joncas, I'm sorry. It's been six minutes. Perhaps you could ask if someone would like to table an answer for you.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** I'll take note of that question, Madam Chair.

We will certainly have an opportunity to continue this discussion later.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you so much, Monsieur Blanchette-Joncas.

With that, we will now go to Mr. Cannings for six minutes, please.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** Thank you.

Thanks again to the witnesses for being here with us.

I want to turn to Mr. Sévigny to get back to this question of publishing in the lingua franca of English and all that flows from that. It seems to be one of the underlying issues here.

First of all, Monsieur Sévigny, could you just repeat the data you have for the 40-year trends in publication in French and English from France and Canada? I was trying to rapidly write that down and I got bogged down.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Benoit Sévigny:** This was the Web of Science, where it was demonstrated that over the past 40 years, from 1980 to 2020, the percentage of papers published in French in the natural sciences and engineering around the world dropped from approximately 4%

to one-tenth of 1%. In Canada, this percentage dropped from 3% to 1% and in Quebec, from 14% to one-quarter of 1%.

[*English*]

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** Okay. Thank you.

I'm just wondering. I've heard various suggestions here on how we might turn that around with open access, simultaneous translation or having various countries of la Francophonie I guess co-operate in promoting this. But if it seems that, for instance, publication of scientific articles in France has essentially gone to zero in French, and it's all in English, I'm just wondering whether we should be concentrating on the other aspects of this in terms of finding ways of funding programs in French and supporting those French programs.

Perhaps I can ask you one more question, Mr. Sévigny, because you're sort of associated with the funding councils. How should we be assessing the strength or power of the science behind the various applicants if...? I assume that traditionally it's largely done through the publication record. Part of that record is citations, and citations are all about who's reading your work and who's citing it. That seems to be circling around English now.

Are there other ways we should be looking at that? Are there discussions on how to change that? Somebody talked about unconscious bias or subconscious bias. This is even conscious bias, I think, if we're talking about citations of English articles, basically.

• (2015)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Benoit Sévigny:** The Fonds de recherche du Québec contributed to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment, the idea being to establish how much weight should be attributed to highly influential journals in assessing grant applications. This is something that has been heavily challenged in terms of assessing applications, and young scientists have been sending us exactly the same message.

Something else besides a researcher's education and career need to be factored in. Dissemination to the general public needs to be taken more seriously, and highly influential journals should perhaps be assigned slightly less weight. That is perhaps where there might be suggestions for further encouraging publication in French and for giving more recognition to all journals.

[*English*]

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** Perhaps I'll turn to Professor Pilote and Monsieur Normand to comment on that.

Should we be looking at the publication records so much, if that seems to have gone so much to English throughout the Francophonie and not just in Canada? In fact, in my Google searches I've come across comments on the web that say if you want to find scientific articles in French, the best place to look for them is in Canadian journals. We do more of it than France does.

I'm wondering if you could comment on that. Should we be concentrating on the publication side?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Annie Pilote:** Thank you for the question.

Is there enough time for me to answer, Madam Chair?

[English]

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Annie Pilote:** I'm going to expand upon Mr. Sévigny's proposal. The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment suggests many potential avenues for dealing with this issue.

Canada's research culture needs to be changed. That's not just applicable to research in French, but changes would definitely contribute if we could broaden the criteria for assessing the quality of research work and assign more weight to all the different benefits of research.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor Pilote and Mr. Cannings.

We will now go to the five-minute rounds. It's a very collegial committee. I understand that the Conservatives have been very gracious and have given their five minutes to Monsieur Blanchette-Joncas.

You have five minutes, please.

[Translation]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Sévigny, I have several questions. Please answer as briefly as possible.

Last November, the Government of Quebec announced the introduction of an assistance service for research in French, something that had been proposed by Acfas in its 2021 report.

Can you tell us why this program is important?

**Mr. Benoit Sévigny:** I'm sorry, but I don't know much about that program.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Okay.

Let's move on to another topic.

For research in French in Quebec, can you tell me more about how significant English is at the moment in Quebec research, even though the province is mainly francophone?

• (2020)

**Mr. Benoit Sévigny:** Given that we administer a research fund, we naturally acknowledge two language communities, one anglophone and one francophone, at McGill University and Concordia University.

For natural sciences, as well as in engineering and health sciences, very few journals are published in French. There are many more in social sciences and the humanities, on the other hand, and we support approximately 40 of them.

We at Fonds de recherche du Québec have also noted that quite a few of the research grant applications are written in English. That doesn't just happen at the federal level; it's also the case in Quebec. It's allowed, of course. We require that the abstract and the title be

in French, but people are free to submit their applications in French or English.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Thank you, Mr. Sévigny.

Are you currently seeing a decline in French-language research in Quebec?

**Mr. Benoit Sévigny:** We have in fact noted a decline in research publication in French.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Thank you.

Can you tell us whether any measures have been taken by Fonds de recherche du Québec to promote research and publication in French?

**Mr. Benoit Sévigny:** That's more or less what we did when we created the Prix Publication en français. After learning about the data and the trends, we wanted to encourage the scientific community to do more writing and publishing in journals in French. So that's one of the measures that were taken.

In addition, we will be organizing a two-day forum in the spring that will allow participants to hold discussions with partners in order to see how we can do more to promote science in French.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** One of the things you talked about was the decrease in the number of funding applications submitted in French.

In Canada, 5% to 12% of funding applications are submitted in French, and francophone researchers account for approximately 21% of the entire researcher population.

Does that picture resemble what you've found at Fonds de recherche du Québec?

**Mr. Benoit Sévigny:** I couldn't tell you. We are now documenting the grant applications. I would add, however, that Quebec ranks highly in federal government competitions. Year after year, it succeeds in getting 27% of the grants, even though it accounts for only 23% of the population.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Thank you very much, Mr. Sévigny.

Mr. Normand, I'll let you finish your answer from earlier about the possibility of setting quotas for granting agencies and federal funding for publication and research in French in Canada.

**Mr. Martin Normand:** Without taking quotas into consideration, I would point out that a number of measures have made it possible to come up with programs focused specifically on research in French in francophone minority communities. Researchers had been able to obtain funds to work on specific research topics. When these funds were no longer available, researchers had trouble finding funding for their research through the regular competitions. That measure ought to have continued.

The CIHR recently adopted a measure to require that the success rate of applications in French submitted to regular competitions be equivalent to the overall rate for French-language applications in all competitions. It's only a small step, but the measure is there and its purpose is to encourage researchers to submit their applications in French.

The fact remains that the success rate for applications submitted in French is much lower than for the other categories assessed by the CIHR. Of course, there are also some researchers who require more support. I'm thinking, for example, of new researchers, researchers from indigenous communities, women and other categories.

The CIHR has introduced all sorts of measures. The statistical data showed that in every competition, applications in French are less successful than those in all the other categories. Nevertheless, it's a first step towards achieving equivalent success rates.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Thank you, Mr. Normand.

Among other things, you mentioned...

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you so much, Monsieur Blanchette-Joncas.

I'm sorry, but that's the end. We are at six minutes.

Before we go to Ms. Bradford, I just want to say to our witnesses how grateful we are. As you can see, you have a very interested committee.

We will now go to Ms. Bradford, for five minutes, please.

• (2025)

**Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.):** Thank you, and thank you to our witnesses on this very important topic.

Director Sévigny, in the spring of 2021 the Canadian Institutes of Health Research reported an average grant amount for applications submitted in French to be \$394,559, while the overall average grant size was \$770,000.

Are you aware of any further data related to potential differences in the sizes of grants and awards between English and French research?

[Translation]

**Mr. Benoit Sévigny:** I don't have data for the Fonds de recherche du Québec to show whether grants for applications submitted in English are more successful than applications in French. Of course, there are many applications in French. I can speak on behalf of the Fonds de recherche du Québec, but not for the federal granting councils.

[English]

**Ms. Valerie Bradford:** Apart from the language of submission, are there any other differences between the types of proposals submitted in French and those submitted in English, such as the area of research, duration, researcher qualifications, experience or the amount requested? Are some of these things impacting the substantial difference?

[Translation]

**Mr. Benoit Sévigny:** I have to admit that I can't answer your question. I couldn't say whether the research topics for the applications submitted in French are more contextualized than for those in English.

In natural sciences, engineering and health sciences, the research areas are much more universal than they are in the social sciences and the humanities.

However, I couldn't say whether there is a distinction to be made in terms of language when the applications submitted to the Fonds de recherche du Québec are being assessed.

[English]

**Ms. Valerie Bradford:** Thank you.

Professor Pilote, in your institution, are there specific resources dedicated to supporting research in French?

[Translation]

**Ms. Annie Pilote:** Are you talking about the university or the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences?

[English]

**Ms. Valerie Bradford:** I mean the university.

[Translation]

**Ms. Annie Pilote:** I'm a professor at Université Laval. Of course, the university values research in French immensely. It's the oldest francophone university, and it attaches a great deal of importance to that research commitment.

Like at all other universities, there's a lot of pressure to publish in English at Université Laval, and our institution recognizes the importance of impact factors in evaluating scientific careers and faculty promotions. This is a strong trend, despite the university's desire to encourage and value more research in French.

[English]

**Ms. Valerie Bradford:** Director Normand, under part VII of the Official Languages Act, federal institutions have a duty to ensure that positive measures are taken with a view to enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities and supporting their development in fostering a full recognition of the use of both English and French.

What measures have the granting councils put in place to promote scientific research publications in French under the OLA?

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Normand:** In recent years, we've seen the opposite occurring—the granting councils are moving away from positive measures.

In the early 2010s, a CIHR program for researchers in francophone minority communities was cancelled. It took about a decade before any semblance of an equivalent measure was established within CIHRs. Moreover, programs at the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council have been phased out over time.

In the wake of the review of the Official Languages Act and the Action Plan for Official Languages, we feel we should ask that the granting councils bring back the positive measures. This would help ensure stable and fair funding of research in French, not to mention the applied research done at colleges. The programs are tailored for this type of research. It's not the same as university research.

Beyond the granting councils, we also call on other federal agencies. There's a need for evidence in all francophone minority communities and within federal agencies. Federal agencies must take positive measures to support community development. Without this evidence, the communities cannot make sufficiently specific requests, and government organizations are not properly equipped to make appropriate decisions.

• (2030)

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Normand.

[*English*]

The worst part of this job is interrupting. I'm really sorry.

Dear colleagues and to our wonderful witnesses, we have come to the end of our time together.

I want to really say thank you to all of you for presenting. This is an important study for this committee. We are grateful for your time and expertise. We hope it was a good experience for you, and that you may come back in the future.

With that, colleagues, we say thank you to our witnesses. We will briefly suspend because we have one more panel tonight.

Thank you all.

• (2030)

(Pause)

• (2030)

**The Chair:** Dear colleagues, I call this meeting back to order.

• (2035)

[*Translation*]

I'd like to make a few remarks for the new panel.

Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. If you're on the videoconference, please click on the microphone icon to unmute yourself. When you're not speaking, your mike should be on mute.

Interpretation is available for those of you joining us on Zoom. You have the choice at the bottom of your screen of floor, English or French audio. For those in the room you can use your earpiece and channel.

As a reminder, all comments should be addressed through the chair.

[*English*]

I would now like to welcome all our witnesses. We are so delighted to have you.

Appearing as an individual, we have Professor Chérif Matta from Mount Saint Vincent University; and from the Natural Sciences and

Engineering Research Council, we have Dr. Marc Fortin, vice-president, research grants and scholarships directorate.

We will hear from each of our witnesses for five minutes. At the four and a half minute mark, I will put up this green card. It will let you know that you have 30 seconds left.

Again, we would like to welcome our witnesses. Thank you for joining us on this important study.

We will begin with Professor Matta for five minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Chérif F. Matta (Professor, Mount Saint Vincent University, As an Individual):** Honourable members of the Standing Committee on Science and Research, I thank you for inviting me to testify on research and publishing in French in Canada.

First, let me sum up my experience in a few words, on the basis of which I will testify today. My research is in theoretical physical chemistry. I'm a full professor and head of the department of chemistry and physics at Mount Saint Vincent University in Nova Scotia. I've just completed a four-year term as a member and the outgoing chair of the Interdisciplinary Adjudication Committee of the Canada Research Chairs. I'm a member of the board of directors of the Chemical Institute of Canada. I'm a member of Acfas-Acadie as the regional representative for Nova Scotia, under the leadership of our committee chair Dr. Selma Zaiane-Ghalia. Having said that, let me be clear: In this testimony, I'm not invoking the authority of any institution or organization. I'm testifying as an individual, in my own name.

Centuries ago, the *lingua franca* of science was Latin, the linguistic ancestor of French and all Romance languages. Sir Isaac Newton himself chose Latin over his native English when he wrote his *Philosophiæ naturalis principia mathematica*, which deals with the mathematical principles of natural philosophy. Today, English is the *lingua franca* of science, but this is relatively recent. It began when the United States emerged as a superpower after World War II.

In the past, it was common to publish in other languages. For example, Albert Einstein's four articles from 1905 were published in German. The same was true of the papers by Schrödinger and Max Planck, which laid the foundation for quantum mechanics as we know it today. Louis Pasteur, Henri Poincaré, Marie Curie and many others published in French.

A few years ago, I came across a fine paper by Dr. Alain Aspect, who has just been named co-laureate of the 2022 Nobel Prize in Physics for his work on quantum entanglement, the phenomenon underlying all modern advanced quantum information technologies. He published this paper in the prestigious, but not well-cited *Bulletin de l'Union des physiciens*, or BUP, a French-only publication based in Paris. However, this is not an isolated case. The BUP has published a great number of articles by French and francophone physicists and chemists, including several Nobel laureates, among them the legendary Louis de Broglie.

This little example demonstrates that leading scientists publish in French. Why do they do it? More generally, why publish in French? In my opinion, as a vehicle of thought, language modulates how we think. We're influenced by the cultural heritage associated with our language, as well as its nuances and ways of thinking. Do you really need to understand the lyrics to recognize a Cuban salsa, an Argentine tango, or Greek or Russian folk music? Musical phraseology emerges from the linguistic culture in which it's embedded. The same is true in other areas of the intellectual universe. The limits of our language are the limits of our world, as Ludwig Wittgenstein often argued in his *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*.

I will conclude with some practical suggestions—I can't think they are entirely original—for enriching francophone scholarship in Canada.

First, there should be an adequate budget quota for submissions in French to Canada's three granting councils.

• (2040)

Secondly, the shortcomings of evaluation committees that do not have members with a sufficient command of both French and the technical subject matter of a proposal should be addressed by replacing them with external members who can be recruited from a global database of French-speaking reviewers.

Third, I propose to establish a leading multidisciplinary general scientific journal in Canada in the French language.

Fourth, high visibility scientific conferences in the French language, such as the *Conférence de chimie théorique et numérique*, or QUITEL, should be encouraged and funded. I will be able to say more about this during the question period.

Fifth, I suggest that students be allowed to...

**The Chair:** Professor Matta, I'm sorry.

[English]

I'm sorry to interrupt. It's the worst part of this job, but I know our colleagues will be keen to ask you questions. Thank you so much for your presentation.

Now we will go to Mr. Marc Fortin for five minutes, please.

The floor is yours.

[Translation]

**Dr. Marc Fortin (Vice-President, Research Grants and Scholarships Directorate, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ladies and gentlemen of the committee, good evening.

I am the vice-president of the Research Grants and Scholarships Directorate at the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, or NSERC.

NSERC is a federal research funding agency. It supports 11,000 of Canada's best researchers each year and also provides scholarships and fellowships to students and postdoctoral fellows. Each year, NSERC invests close to \$1 billion in research and in the next generation of innovators.

• (2045)

[English]

At NSERC, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, we support research and talent in both official languages. Applicants choose the language they want to use with us.

NSERC has the capability to assess applications in both English and French. Ninety-nine per cent of our personnel meet the language requirements of their positions. One hundred per cent of our literature, instructions and guides are published in both languages.

NSERC also recruits external scientific experts to assess the scientific excellence of the grant applications that are submitted to us. They provide NSERC with advice on the excellence of the research grant applications. Every evaluation committee we form has the ability to assess applications in French and in English. Over 10 years of data from our selection committees shows that 26% of the membership of those expert committees are francophones, and 45% of the membership are bilingual.

Madam Chair, NSERC has the people, the expertise and the processes to fairly assess the merit of grant applications regardless of the language they are written in. Despite having those capabilities at NSERC, only 10% of the applications we receive, on average, are submitted in French. Some have suggested that researchers may not submit their grant applications in French because they fear the granting councils may not process them fairly. The data does not support that view.

For example, grant applications submitted in French from McGill University or the University of Ottawa have, on average, a higher success rate compared to applications submitted by the same universities in English. Applications from other universities show different trends and sometimes the opposite of what I just mentioned here.

The success rate is influenced by many factors, likely more closely linked to the demographic context of the institution and also the support provided by the institution for French-language grant applications, amongst other factors.

[Translation]

English, as mentioned earlier, is the dominant language in research around the world. In Canada and at NSERC, however, we need to maintain our current ways of doing business, which allow us to evaluate applications for funding in both languages and avoid bias in the evaluation of applications in any language.

NSERC is also very proactive — I emphasize that word — in promoting the importance of science to francophones in Canada. We have two annual science promotion campaigns, Odyssey of Science and Science Literacy Week, in which francophones are actively involved. Our partners in Quebec have offered over 450 science promotion activities in French.

In addition, NSERC provided funding to nearly 30 francophone organizations to organize science promotion activities in French.

In summary, NSERC is able to evaluate applications for funding in both official languages, and it finds no striking pattern of systemic discrimination in the evaluation of applications, whether submitted in French or English.

We want to work with universities to combat the perception that it is more difficult to get NSERC funding if the application is submitted in French. We can work together to support researchers who want to do research in French.

Madam Chair, members of the committee, thank you for your attention.

[English]

**The Chair:** Dr. Fortin, we are so pleased to have you and Professor Matta throughout this third panel tonight. We welcome you, and we thank you for joining us.

I should have welcomed earlier the guest members who are with us tonight, Ben Lobb and Sonia Sidhu. We welcome both of them.

I understand that Mr. Lobb will begin the round of questioning.

Mr. Lobb, the floor is yours for six minutes.

**Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC):** Thank you, Ms. Duncan. Long time no see. Unfortunately for you, I guess I'm going to be a permanent member of this committee, so you're stuck with me.

Kirsty and I go way back, many Parliaments ago, when we sat together on the veterans affairs committee. Those were the good old days, maybe.

Mr. Fortin, thank you for appearing, and Mr. Matta, the same. You've heard much testimony over the last two hours from different people with their different points of view. I don't think they were really attacking NSERC or the granting councils that fall under NSERC, but what is the...?

I'm not going to say that everybody runs in the same circles, but the university and academic bunch does kind of run in the same circles. You would know a lot of them through the years. Where's the disconnect here? It seems to me that you guys meet at conferences. You could talk in a room and get this all figured out in a day. Where's the disconnect such that we have to do a study on this—is there one?

Mr. Fortin, go ahead, please.

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** Is there a disconnect? I think we're all seeing the same data. The data speaks for itself. There is a decrease of publications in French. I can only speak for NSERC here. I cannot speak for the social sciences and the health sciences granting councils. For NSERC, we see, as I mentioned, only 10% of the grant applications being submitted to us in French. I think there is a consensus that there's a decrease in the presence of French in the research world.

There are many things we can do, as I mentioned in my remarks, collectively. One of the other witnesses earlier today mentioned the San Francisco declaration, the DORA declaration. To demystify this, this is an approach that decreases the emphasis put on the impact factor of journals. Typically, English-language journals have much higher impact factors. NSERC has adopted the DORA principles, and we're in the process of putting that in place, where research grant applications will be assessed with a different lens from the traditional impact factor kind of lens.

This is one action. We need to continue our work in promoting science in French. As I said, we are doing activities. We could do more. We need more funds to do that. With the data I presented to you tonight, which was a very small slice of data, we can continue to demystify the notion that the success rates are different at NSERC when grant applications are submitted in French or in English.

• (2050)

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] because these people who are applying for these grants should be very confident. They're very smart. They're very accomplished to have made it through their undergrad or their master's degree or their Ph.D. or multiple degrees. It would seem to me that they would not be intimidated into doing it in English if their mother tongue was French. It must be their own personal preference.

Is that what I'm to take from this, that they are choosing to submit or publish in English versus French? It seems to me that it would be a conscious choice, not one of fear. Am I right or wrong there?

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** Perhaps I can relate my own personal experience. Before joining the public service, I spent most of my career as a professor at McGill University. I'm obviously a francophone. I was doing work in molecular genetics. I submitted my grant applications in English, because I did not have the support from my institution to translate my grant applications into French.

The reason I was writing them in English was simply that all of the products that were coming out of my research lab and my research group—by products I mean publications and theses—were in English. I would copy and paste and assemble the grant application because the products were available to me, and I did not have support from my institution to operate differently.

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** McGill is a very bilingual university. Is that still the case today, or have times changed? I'm guessing you probably graduated in 2000 or something, so do you know if times have changed?

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** I don't think I can answer that question. I left McGill 17 years ago.

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** Okay, I was close then.

The other point that struck me is that Ottawa U is a bilingual university, and the University of Moncton, I think, is considered a bilingual university. I think the one presenter was from the University of Alberta. What are the expectations at bilingual universities where there are very bilingual communities? I know there are French communities in Alberta, but what should the expectation be of the government, of the taxpayer, to try to provide a similar structure in Alberta versus Montreal, Ottawa or Moncton, New Brunswick?

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** We will of course welcome applications in either language, French or English. Again, it goes back to institutional support for researchers. That varies greatly, and this is what the data tells us at NSERC. Different institutions have different success rates in French and in English, so that seems to be an important factor.

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** I have one last quick question.

**The Chair:** Thank you so much, Mr. Lobb and Dr. Fortin.

We're going to be glad to have you back, Mr. Lobb.

I owe an apology to Mr. Mazier, who I understand is also joining us tonight.

We will now go to Ms. Diab for six minutes. The floor is yours.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I welcome the witnesses who are with us tonight.

Welcome to Ottawa, Mr. Matta. You represent Mount Saint Vincent University in Nova Scotia, which is in the riding I represent.

My question is twofold. You co-hosted a major conference in 2019, the 2019 Quitel Conference. It was the 45th edition.

Could you tell us about it?

I'm going to ask you my second question right now, since we don't have much time.

You said earlier that you are co-organizing a conference for 2025 under the umbrella of Acfas, an organization that we have heard a lot about tonight. The theme of this symposium will be transdisciplinarity.

Can you give us some details about each of these conferences?

• (2055)

**Mr. Chérif F. Matta:** Thank you, Ms. Diab.

The Conférence de chimie théorique et numérique is also called QUITEL or CHITEL. This acronym basically refers to a conference bringing together chemists and theorists from Latin languages, be it Romanian, Spanish, Italian or French. It is a large conference with some international prestige and is held annually, except during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For this conference, the entire Latin world was convened until 2019, except for Canada. Two of my colleagues and I had organized this conference in Montreal. All presentations, both oral and poster, were in two Latin languages, French and Spanish. Of course, presentations in English were welcome. There is no discrimination with regard to languages, but the vast majority of presentations were made in French and Spanish, the two dominant languages of this conference. Indeed, both languages have strong roots in South and Central America and Spain.

From what I heard, this conference was a great success and generated considerable linguistic interest. Many French-speaking Canadians, who are not from typically bilingual universities or provinces, such as Saskatchewan, attended this conference. One student, from the University of Saskatchewan, I think, won an award for the best presentation.

In any case, this conference emphasized the importance of expressing cutting-edge science in Latin languages. You will be surprised to learn that the participants of this conference were attending presentations in Romanian, even if they more or less understood what the presenter was saying. So this was the QUITEL, or CHITEL, conference of 2019.

Talks are underway for a conference in 2025. This will be a conference on transdisciplinarity. Why address this topic in French? It is because the main philosopher who invented this field of philosophy of science is a researcher of Romanian origin at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique français, Basarab Nicolescu. This philosopher pushed this field of study, where researchers try to find out what the different disciplines have in common, instead of just trying to put the different disciplines together to tackle the same problem. So it's a transgression from top to bottom of the discipline. This conference brings together artists, poets, particle physics researchers, mathematicians and mathematician-artists, who are going to make art out of mathematics.

I'll give you one last example because I think my six minutes are almost up.

The mathematics that is used in stock market forecasting is very similar to the mathematics that physicists use in statistical physics, which is the basis of thermodynamics. They predict the laws of thermodynamics based on the underlying atomic and molecular laws. This is the same mathematical background that is used in banking and in physics.

• (2100)

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab:** Mr. Matta, excuse me for interrupting, but I only have a few seconds of speaking time left.

You have given us some practical suggestions.

Could you now talk to us about equity, diversity and inclusion, or EDI, in the way French is treated?

**Mr. Chérif F. Matta:** Yes.

Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Diab, I'm sorry to interrupt you. That is your six minutes.

Perhaps you would like to ask Professor Matta to table his answer.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab:** All right.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Diab.

Now we will go to Monsieur Blanchette-Joncas for six minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Dr. Fortin, you mentioned in your opening remarks that only 10% of the applications you receive at NSERC are written in French, yet we know that the proportion of francophones is much higher in Canada.

Why does your funding agency receive so few applications in French?

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** There's no single answer to this question.

As I mentioned, at NSERC, we work very hard to ensure that the evaluation of grant applications is fair. I say that humbly.

Since there are variations among academic institutions, it's unlikely that success rates will vary because of NSERC processes, because the same processes are applied to all universities.

Variations in success rates for English or French applications by institution appear to be due to several factors.

So there's not just one factor at play. For example, careers at the graduate level, both master's and doctoral, must be encouraged in French. We need to stimulate French-language publishing and support universities. As I said earlier, we need to demystify the issue of success rates.

Success rates in French and English vary between NSERC, SSHRC in the humanities and CIHR in the health sciences. So we shouldn't generalize. There's still work to be done to demystify things in this regard.

A witness earlier talked about training to eliminate unconscious bias. We already offer this type of training. There's still work to be done on that, and we could do better, but there's a collective effort to be made. I don't believe that all of these variations stem from a single cause or factor.

We do a lot in terms of promoting science in French, and I mentioned several hundred activities. We could do more, of course.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** I'm trying to get a clear understanding of what you're saying, Dr. Fortin.

You say that in your organization, there is no systemic bias against French-language applications. This would be due to external factors, and that's why your organization receives only 10% of grant applications in French right now.

Is that correct?

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** I would say that this is a multifaceted problem, and no one organization can be held responsible for it.

We're seeing it a little bit internationally as well, aren't we?

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Let's focus on NSERC.

Do you have any data on the success rate of applications submitted in French, compared to those submitted in English?

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** Of course.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Do you have them with you? Can you share them with us?

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** I have some.

Of course, we have—

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** I'll give you a pretty stark example. The success rate at the Canadian Institutes of Health Research is 10% lower for French-language applications than for English-language applications.

We're wondering if this is widespread across Canada's funding agencies.

Is this the case?

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** I'll give you with some 10-year data from 2009 to 2018, on average, for all NSERC programs. In fact, if we dig deeper, we see that the data varies by program.

If we group all programs together, we see an average French success rate of 73%, compared to the average success rate of 66% for all NSERC applications.

Some programs will sometimes show opposite trends. However, we are close to an equivalent success rate. It's slightly higher for applications submitted to NSERC in French.

• (2105)

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** The success rate is slightly higher, but slightly lower overall, compared to the demographic representation.

The president of the Acfas, Dr. Perreault, testified at the committee's first meeting. He said there was a fear, a distrust on the part of French-speaking researchers.

In your opinion, isn't there still work to be done with the federal granting councils to dispel this fear and, in particular, to increase the submission of applications in French?

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** That's exactly what I was saying earlier. We need to dispel the myth that the success rate is lower for applications written in French.

At NSERC, numbers show the opposite trend. In fact, the rate is slightly higher for requests in French across all programs.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Is NSERC taking concrete steps to break down this belief and increase the number of applications submitted in French?

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** There's still work to be done in this regard. Our data is public, and we're always happy to work with stakeholders to demystify it. Still, I'm convinced that more could be done.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** To your knowledge, have the federal government, your organization, or funding agencies addressed this issue?

Have they thought about and tried to understand the causes of this belief and complete imbalance? Our demographic representation is still over 10%, which is significant.

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** Yes, the gap is large.

I don't know if any research has been done, but I can tell you that this is very frequently discussed. At NSERC, every time we put together an initiative or a program, we ask ourselves this question to make sure there's no unconscious bias.

We don't have a monopoly on the truth, but this discussion and efforts in this regard are ongoing.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Do you think—

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you so much, Monsieur Blanchette-Joncas.

Thank you to all our witnesses. We're very grateful for everyone being here.

Now we will go to Mr. Cannings for six minutes, please.

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** Thank you.

I'll continue with Dr. Fortin.

We've heard of some of the biases. We've heard of perhaps a bias around the impact scores. You mentioned DORA, the Declaration on Research Assessment—the San Francisco declaration—which I believe is about 10 years old, but perhaps it is only being imple-

mented now in various institutions around the world. You said that NSERC was changing its methods along those lines.

I just wonder how long you have been doing this. Has there been a change in what you've seen in terms of how different programs score?

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** NSERC and the other two granting agencies, SSHRC and CIHR, signed on to DORA two or three years ago, I think. Don't quote me, but it's something like this. It's fairly recent.

Two elements are important for the implementation of DORA. One, which may seem trivial, is that we need to change our IT systems to be able to receive curricula vitae from researchers in a very different format. That seems trivial. That's something we're working on.

Most importantly, there's a conversation to be had with the research community. If we change what we reward and what we value at NSERC and, hence, who gets grants, it actually has an impact on tenure and promotion in institutions and in universities across the country. We must collectively evolve that culture, which was previously focused on impact factors. When we focus on impact factors, there is a bias—I don't know if it's an unconscious bias—towards English-language journals. We must change that conversation and allow narratives—not just lists of publications but narratives—where the applicant can put forward his or her career path, which may be a different career path. It may be a career path in French. That narrative space may allow the applicant to explain why he or she has chosen to publish in French, which may impact the impact factor.

We're in the process of changing the curricula vitae, but it's a systemic culture change that needs to happen. Culture doesn't change overnight. We all know this. It's going to take some time before we have a significant impact on those.

I'm hopeful. When I look at what we've achieved in the EDI discussions, we haven't solved it, but I believe we've made some progress. The conversations are not the same today as they were five years ago, so I hope that five years from now we can have conversations about careers in French that will be different from what we have today.

• (2110)

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** In short, you're still working on that process, so we don't have any data from the changes because they haven't really occurred. It's good to hear that's happening.

We've also heard some discussions around open access publications and how that might influence French research. When I think of open access scientific publications, to me it means that I can access them free of charge, that I can read them without having a subscription or a library card at a university.

Maybe you or Dr. Matta could also comment on how open access could affect us.

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** In NSERC, the question of open access is a challenging one. There is a whole business enterprise around scientific publications. An earlier witness talked about the big publishers, the Elseviers and Springers of the world.

It's changing a paradigm from that system that has been in place for decades, maybe half a century—I don't know—to a different paradigm of open access. There are still debates about who will incur the cost of this, because it's open access for the reader, but it's not free for people who want to publish. There's still quite a bit of debate around who's going to pay for this and how we will support it.

At the end of the day, again, it's linked to this culture change conversation about recognizing different forms of publications and different forms of achievements, not just scientific publications and journals but achievements. We were talking about the science promotion activities that we support. We want to recognize this when we assess researchers, so that if they have been active in promoting science in French, this becomes a significant contribution that is valued and rewarded in our system, and that's—

**The Chair:** Thank you so much, Mr. Cannings.

Thank you, Dr. Fortin. I'm sorry to interrupt.

As I said, it's a collegial committee. It's my understanding that our Conservative colleagues have ceded their time to Monsieur Blanchette-Joncas for five minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Dr. Fortin, you said earlier that the success rate for applications submitted in French was even higher than the average.

Do you have any data on the value of the grants awarded?

For example, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research found that, based on 2021 data, the average value of grants awarded to French-language applications was about 50% lower than for grants awarded to English-language applications.

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** I don't have the data with me, unfortunately, but I would be happy to provide it to the committee. I highly doubt that it's 50%.

• (2115)

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Thank you.

Do you think there are any other problems or characteristics specific to the areas covered by NSERC that may explain the fact that francophone researchers prefer to use English?

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** This may be due to people's perception of the ability of review committees to evaluate applications submitted in

French. It may also be a matter of personal choice. I mentioned my own experience. University support is another criterion to consider.

Ultimately, it depends on the individual researcher.

At NSERC, we will always be pleased to work with universities and researchers to highlight the figures I mentioned earlier and explain how we handle French submissions.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Mr. Fortin, has NSERC thought about establishing quotas? Telefilm Canada and the Canada Council for the Arts have both done so. That would open the door to true demographic representation, something that doesn't exist at the moment, since Canada's French speakers are not adequately represented.

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** You would have to ask the researchers, because we will always accept all applications, whether they are in French or English. You would have to ask the researchers whether they were amenable to the idea of quotas.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** You represent a granting agency. Do you know whether the academic community has given that any thought?

You spoke of positive measures, as well as the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion, or EDI. Other federal organizations have looked into that approach as well.

As far as you know, have there been any discussions around that possibility, or is it something your organization has considered?

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** The EDI dimension is an interesting one because the support NSERC provided went to educational institutions, not to researchers strictly speaking. The idea was to build institutional capacity to increase EDI.

I want to be clear that I don't think any one measure is enough; a joint effort is needed. If that tool was one of many, we would gladly continue working with the community to support French-language research.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** You say a number of initiatives exist, but researchers have told us that, if they don't publish in English, it's the end of the road. If they don't publish in English, their research grant application is more likely to be rejected.

The result is a real decline in the publication rate for French-language research in many scientific fields. I'm trying to figure out what NSERC can do to reverse that trend.

The government recognizes that French is in decline. This came up earlier. The French-language application rate is nearly 50% lower than the demographic weight of francophones.

The situation is serious, wouldn't you say?

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** Yes, you're absolutely right.

We don't take it lightly. As I said, it's something we consider carefully in every program we administer and every action we take. We endeavour to identify unconscious bias.

We are keeping up our efforts to promote science in French-speaking communities.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Only 10% of francophone researchers submit their NSERC funding applications in French.

Has your organization examined that imbalance?

**Dr. Marc Fortin:** For every funding program, we examine the data every year, whether through a language-, region- or EDI-based lens. We scrutinize every program through each of those lenses.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Fortin.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Madam Chair, I would like to let Mr. Fortin know that, if there's anything he wants to add, he can send the information in writing to the committee—data, recommendations, reports, analysis or anything at all.

• (2120)

[English]

**The Chair:** Monsieur Blanchette-Joncas, if you have a question, you can table it, but your time is up. We have to be fair to everyone.

With that, we will go to Monsieur Lauzon for five minutes. The floor is yours.

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Matta and Mr. Fortin. Your remarks have been quite informative.

Mr. Matta, thank you for the history lesson on French-language research. We've learned a lot today.

You mentioned the emergence of the United States as a superpower.

What impact does that superpower have on Canada when it comes to the publication of research in French?

How does that superpower influence our researchers? When they want to gain visibility in the United States and around the world, they feel compelled to publish their work in English.

Can you comment on that?

**Mr. Chérif F. Matta:** I'm going to come at it from a different angle, if you don't mind.

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Very well.

• (2125)

**Mr. Chérif F. Matta:** As a counterbalance, I think it's important to join forces culturally and scientifically with all the French-speaking countries, but mainly France, Belgium, Switzerland and the francophone countries in Africa.

As someone in the previous panel mentioned, the world is home to hundreds of millions of French speakers. I don't know the exact number, but there is a critical mass of French speakers that can

counterbalance the critical mass of the English-speaking population. It's not about comparing the two or pitting them against one another; it's about complementing one another.

Why not join forces with our counterparts in France, Africa and Europe to create a top-tier French-language journal equivalent to *Science*, *Nature* and other such academic journals in the English-speaking world?

The articles could come with an English-language abstract, something longer than usual, to make the research more accessible to the English-speaking world.

I'm not sure whether that answers your question adequately, but thank you for asking.

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Yes, it does.

You mentioned your relationship with the Académie africaine des sciences. You know the organization quite well.

Can you share some of the challenges the researchers there encounter as far as the decline of French-language publications in Africa is concerned? I'm talking about issues that would be comparable to ours.

Does Africa have the same problems we do? Are their data similar to ours?

**Mr. Chérif F. Matta:** I don't have any figures or data I can give you.

I can tell you that I was on one of the academy's selection committees this year, and we interviewed the 90 finalists in a pan-African competition for research funding.

A good chunk of the funding applications were submitted in French by Africans, whether in northern Africa, the Maghreb region or sub-Saharan Africa. I don't recall the exact number, but I would say a third or a quarter of the applications were written in French.

I think the success rate was comparable to that for English-language funding applications. The Académie africaine des sciences is a good example of development potential.

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Very good.

Now I want to turn to the role of regional universities in promoting the French language.

Keep in mind that, historically, Nova Scotia was home to an Acadian population, and it disappeared over time. What role could a regional university play in supporting the francophone community?

Nova Scotia has just one French-language university, Université Sainte-Anne.

How might that university play a key role in reviving the publication of research in French?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Mr. Lauzon, in the interest of fairness I have to be fair with you. I have to be fair with Mr. Blanchette-Joncas. Your time is up. Might you ask the witness if he could table an answer for you?

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** I would like that.

**The Chair:** Thank you so very much.

Dear colleagues, and to our witnesses, we thank you for being here tonight. We've come to the end of our time together. We thank you for your time and your expertise. We will have to say goodbye to our witnesses now. We thank you. We hope you've had a good experience and you will want to come back.

To our parliamentary colleagues, I need two minutes of your time, please.

Again, thank you to our witnesses.

Dear colleagues, if I could have your attention for one final item before our meeting comes to a close, last week we circulated a proposed budget in the amount of \$7,550 for the study on research and scientific publication in French. Is there a motion to adopt this study budget?

**Mr. Chad Collins:** I'll move that, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Is it agreed?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** With that, thank you to everyone and everyone who joined the committee, all our witnesses.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 24, at 6:30. I'll see you all then.

Thank you so much. The meeting is adjourned.

---





Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :  
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>