

Analytical document

Linguistic Characteristics of Canadians



Language, 2011 Census of Population

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Linguistic Characteristics of Canadians

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Highlights

Linguistic diversity

- More than 200 languages were reported in the 2011 Census of Population as a home language or mother tongue.
- The number of persons who reported speaking Tagalog, a Philippine-based language, most often at home increased the most (+64%) between 2006 and 2011. Nearly 279,000 persons reported speaking this language at home, compared with 170,000 in 2006.
- In 2011, 80% of the population who reported speaking an immigrant language (i.e., a language other than English, French or an Aboriginal language) most often at home lived in one of Canada's six largest census metropolitan areas.

Use of multiple languages at home

- In 2011, 17.5% of the Canadian population, or 5.8 million persons, reported speaking at least two languages at home. In 2006, 14.2% did so (nearly 4.5 million persons).
- In 2011, 11.5% of the population reported speaking both English and a language other than French at home. The corresponding figure in 2006 was 9.1%. This is an increase of 960,000 persons, compared with about 410,000 between 2001 and 2006.

Official languages

- While 20.6% of Canadians (6.8 million people) reported a mother tongue other than English or French, only 6.2% of Canadians spoke a language other than English or French as their sole home language.
- In 2011, 63.5% of the population whose mother tongue was neither English nor French reported speaking English at home.
- Nearly 7 million Canadians reported speaking French most often at home in 2011, compared with 6.7 million in 2006. However, they made up 21.0% of the Canadian population, compared with 21.4% five years earlier.
- In Quebec, the proportion of the population that reported speaking only French at home decreased from 75.1% to 72.8% between 2006 and 2011. In the rest of Canada, the proportion of the population that reported speaking only English at home declined from 77.1% to 74.1% between 2006 and 2011.
- In the Montréal census metropolitan area, the use of French as the only language spoken at home continued the decrease that began in 2001. The same was true for the sole use of English in the Toronto and Vancouver census metropolitan areas.

English-French bilingualism

- Between 2006 and 2011, the number of persons who reported being able to conduct a conversation in both of Canada's official languages increased by nearly 350,000 to 5.8 million. The bilingualism rate of the Canadian population edged up from 17.4% in 2006 to 17.5% in 2011.
- This growth of English-French bilingualism in Canada was mainly due to the increased number of Quebecers who reported being able to conduct a conversation in English and French.

Box

Comparability of language data between censuses of population

For the first time in 2011, three language questions (knowledge of official languages, home language and mother tongue) were included on the census questionnaire that was administered to 100% of the population.

Language data and analysis published for all censuses since 1996 have been based almost exclusively on responses from the long-form census questionnaire administered to 20% of the population.

All trend analyses presented for this release, and its accompanying products, compare 2011 Census data to previous long-form census data.

Evaluation of data on the knowledge of official languages and the first official language spoken indicates that these data are comparable to those of previous censuses.

However, Statistics Canada has observed changes in patterns of response to both the mother tongue and home language questions that appear to have arisen from changes in the placement and context of the language questions on the 2011 Census questionnaire relative to previous censuses. As a result, Canadians appear to have been less inclined than in previous censuses to report languages other than English or French as their only mother tongue, and also more inclined to report multiple languages as their mother tongue and as the language used most often at home.

It is not uncommon in survey research to observe changes in response patterns due to changes to a questionnaire and most particularly due to changes in the context in which the question is embedded.

Data users are advised to exercise caution when evaluating trends related to mother tongue and home language that compare 2011 Census data to that of previous censuses.

In the case of the mother tongue data, comparisons other than those done in the current analysis are possible depending on the needs of the user, given that mother tongue was asked on both the short and long-form questionnaires in previous censuses. Users should take into account the advantages as well as the limitations of each dataset.

Readers will find a complete analysis of factors affecting comparability of language results between the censuses in the forthcoming publication, [Methodological Document on the 2011 Census Language Data](#), Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011051.

The 2011 Census of Population included four questions on the linguistic characteristics of Canadians. The first of these questions was on the ability to conduct a conversation in either or both of Canada's two official languages. The second question asked about the language spoken most often at home, while the third focused on languages spoken on a regular basis, other than those spoken most often at home. The fourth language question asked about mother tongue; that is, the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood at the time of the census. Several different concepts are used in this document. Each refers to a particular language aspect or practice. For definitions of these concepts, readers can refer to the [Census Dictionary](#), Catalogue no. 98-301-X.

Part 1: Canada's linguistic diversity

Canada's linguistic diversity is illustrated by the fact that more than 200 languages were reported as a home language or mother tongue in the 2011 Census of Population.

Nearly 6.6 million persons reported speaking a language other than English or French at home

In Canada, 4.7 million persons (14.2% of the population) reported speaking a language other than English or French most often at home and 1.9 million persons (5.8%) reported speaking such a language on a regular basis as a second language (in addition to their main home language, English or French).¹ In all, 20.0% of Canada's population reported speaking a language other than English or French at home.

For roughly 6.4 million persons, the other language was an immigrant language,² spoken most often or on a regular basis at home, alone or together with English or French whereas for more than 213,000 persons, the other language was an Aboriginal language.³ Finally, the number of people reporting sign languages as the languages spoken at home was nearly 25,000 persons (15,000 most often and 9,800 on a regular basis).

Population speaking Tagalog most often at home shows strongest growth between 2006 and 2011

The population that reported speaking the Philippine-based language Tagalog most often at home increased the most (+64%) between 2006 and 2011 ([Figure 1](#)). Thus, in 2011, nearly 279,000 persons reported speaking this language most often, compared to 170,000 five years earlier. Seven other language groups also saw their numbers grow by more than 30%: those speaking Mandarin (+51%),⁴ Arabic (+47%), Hindi (+44%), Creoles (+42%), Bengali (+40%), Persian (+33%) and Spanish (+32%). The population reporting one of these seven languages as their main home language numbered more than 1.1 million in 2011, compared with more than 810,000 in 2006.

Four languages shown in [Figure 1](#) showed a slight decrease in the number of persons who reported speaking them most often at home during this period. Three of them, namely Italian, Polish and Greek are languages spoken mainly by early immigration groups and their descendants. The decrease in the number of people who reported 'Chinese' (n.o.s. – not otherwise specified) mainly reflects the fact that more people tended to report a specific Chinese language such as Mandarin or Cantonese in 2011.

1. Nearly 148,000 persons reported speaking both a language other than English or French most often and a second language other than English or French on a regular basis at home.

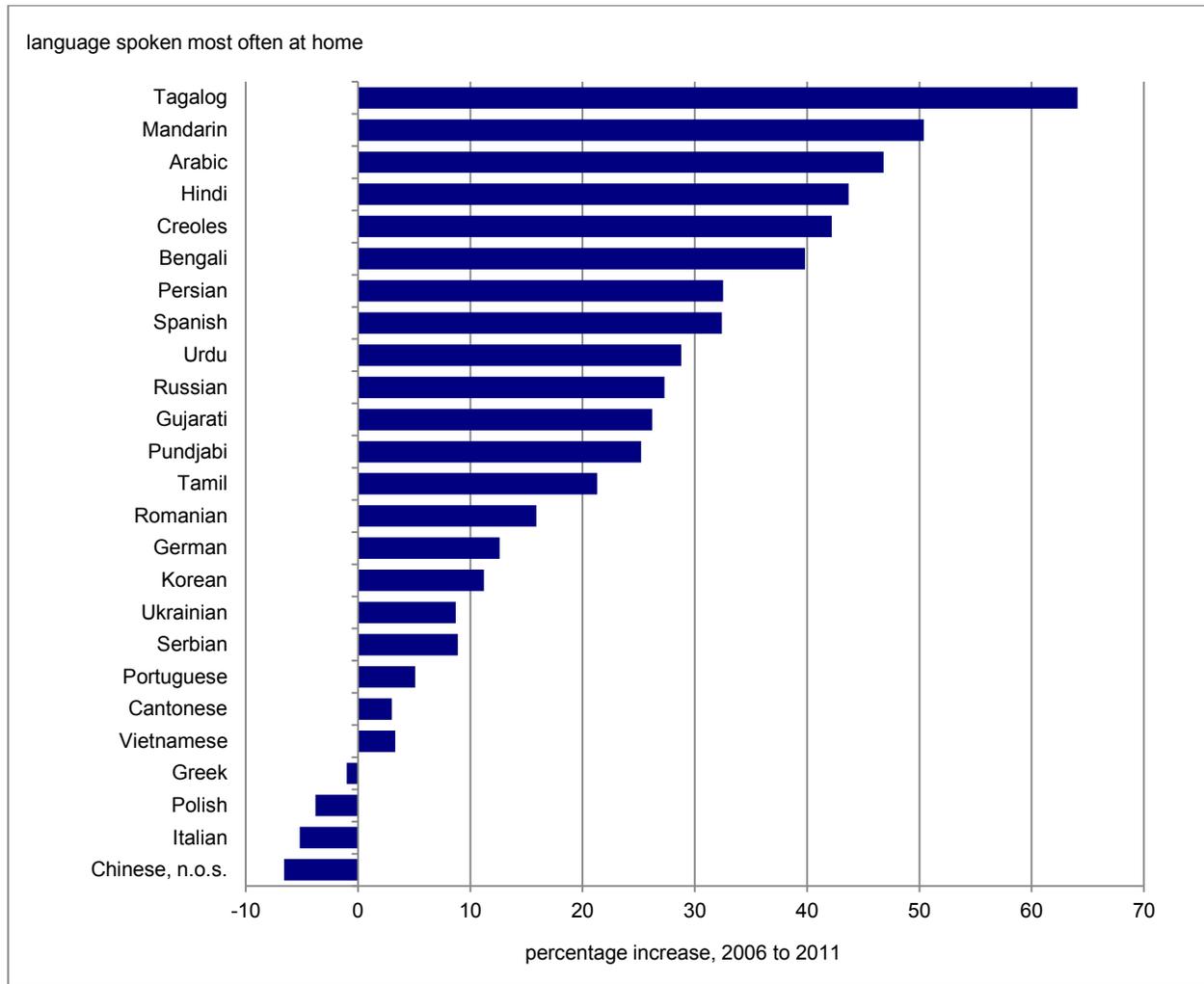
2. The term 'immigrant languages' refers to languages (other than English, French and Aboriginal languages) whose presence in Canada is originally due to immigration.

3. The document entitled [Aboriginal languages in Canada](#), Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011003, in the Census in Brief series, provides more detailed information on this subject.

4. For the first time, Chinese languages are being treated separately in a Census analytical document. For more information on this subject, see the document entitled [Immigrant languages in Canada](#), Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011003, in the Census in Brief series.

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Figure 1 Population growth (in percent) in number of persons who reported speaking one of the top 25 immigrant languages most often at home, Canada, 2006 to 2011



Note: Chinese n.o.s. refers to persons who reported 'Chinese' without specifying further in the question on language spoken most often at home. For more information on this subject, see the document entitled [Immigrant languages in Canada](#), Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011003, in the Census in Brief series.

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

Immigrant languages in the six largest major census metropolitan areas

Roughly 9 in 10 Canadians who reported speaking an immigrant language most often at home reside in a census metropolitan area (CMA). Most of them (80%) lived in the major CMAs of Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Ottawa - Gatineau ([Table 1](#)). When persons living in the CMAs of Hamilton, Winnipeg and Kitchener - Cambridge - Waterloo are included, this proportion increased to 86%.

Toronto: 1.8 million speak an immigrant language most often at home

The census counted roughly 1.8 million persons who reported speaking an immigrant language most often at home in Toronto. In fact, this population is two and a half times larger than the corresponding population in Vancouver, the second-ranking CMA in this regard. Among those speaking an immigrant language at home in Toronto, nearly one-third spoke one of five languages: Cantonese (8.8%), Punjabi (8.0%), Chinese (n.o.s.)⁵ (7.0%), Urdu (5.9%) and Tamil (5.7%).

Montréal: Arabic and Spanish account for nearly one-third of people speaking an immigrant language at home

In Montréal, 626,000 people reported speaking an immigrant language most often at home. Of these, 17% spoke Arabic and 15% spoke Spanish. Among Canada's CMAs, Montréal had the largest population of speakers of these two languages (108,000 and 95,000 respectively).

Other immigrant languages spoken most often at home include Italian (51,000), Chinese (n.o.s.) (35,000) and a Creole language (34,000). In all, these five languages accounted for more than 50% of persons speaking an immigrant language as their main home language.

Vancouver: Punjabi is the most frequently reported immigrant home language

In Vancouver, 712,000 people reported speaking an immigrant language most often at home. Of these, nearly 18% spoke Punjabi, Cantonese, Chinese (n.o.s.) or Mandarin had the next highest proportions of people who spoke an immigrant language most often at home. These three languages accounted for 40% of the population of Vancouver having an immigrant language as a main home language. Thus, Vancouver stands out from the other major CMAs in that the four leading immigrant home languages accounted for more than half (57.7%) of the overall population speaking an immigrant language most often at home.

Calgary: Punjabi and Tagalog are the top immigrant home languages

In the Calgary CMA, 228,000 people reported speaking an immigrant language most often at home. Of these, Punjabi (27,000 persons) and Tagalog (nearly 24,000) were the languages most often reported, followed by Chinese (n.o.s.) at nearly 21,000.

Edmonton: Tagalog and Punjabi are the most reported immigrant home languages

Although it had a smaller population speaking an immigrant language most often at home (166,000), Edmonton was fairly similar to Calgary in regards to the main immigrant languages that were spoken there. While the order of the languages differed, the five leading immigrant home languages were the same in the two CMAs. Punjabi, Tagalog, Chinese (n.o.s.), Spanish and Cantonese accounted for 47% of persons speaking an immigrant language in Calgary, compared with 45% in Edmonton.

5. Chinese (n.o.s.) refers to persons who reported 'Chinese' without further specifying in their response to the question on language spoken most often at home. For more information on this subject, see the document entitled [Immigrant languages in Canada](#), Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011003, in the Census in Brief series.

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Ottawa - Gatineau: Arabic and Spanish are the most frequently reported immigrant home languages

In the Ottawa - Gatineau CMA, almost 141,000 persons reported speaking an immigrant language most often at home. The vast majority of this population (87%) lived in the Ontario portion of the CMA and 13% (approximately 18,000 persons) lived in the Quebec portion. On the Ontario side, Arabic, Chinese (n.o.s.), Spanish and Mandarin were the leading immigrant home languages. On the Quebec side, Arabic once again led, followed by Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese (n.o.s.).

For more information on this subject, readers may consult the document entitled [Immigrant languages in Canada](#), Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011003, in the Census in Brief series.

Table 1 Size and percentage of population that reported speaking one of the top 12 immigrant languages most often at home in the six largest census metropolitan areas, 2011

Toronto			Montréal		
Language spoken most often	Number	Percentage	Language spoken most often	Number	Percentage
Cantonese	156,425	8.8	Arabic	107,910	17.2
Punjabi	142,345	8.0	Spanish	95,020	15.2
Chinese n.o.s.	124,960	7.0	Italian	50,500	8.1
Urdu	105,545	5.9	Chinese n.o.s.	35,440	5.7
Tamil	102,700	5.7	Creole	34,015	5.4
Tagalog	99,980	5.6	Greek	25,235	4.0
Spanish	94,315	5.3	Romanian	24,725	3.9
Mandarin	91,670	5.1	Vietnamese	22,375	3.6
Italian	81,390	4.6	Russian	20,335	3.2
Persian (Farsi)	69,570	3.9	Portuguese	17,995	2.9
Portuguese	65,810	3.7	Persian (Farsi)	15,530	2.5
Russian	64,700	3.6	Tamil	13,730	2.2
Other immigrant languages	587,590	32.9	Other immigrant languages	163,215	26.1
Total	1,786,995	100.0	Total	626,045	100.0

(continued on next page)

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Table 1 Size and percentage of population that reported speaking one of the top 12 immigrant languages most often at home in the six largest census metropolitan areas, 2011 (continued)

Vancouver			Calgary		
Language spoken most often	Number	Percentage	Language spoken most often	Number	Percentage
Punjabi	126,100	17.7	Punjabi	27,435	12.1
Cantonese	113,610	16.0	Tagalog	23,710	10.4
Chinese n.o.s.	86,580	12.2	Chinese n.o.s.	20,835	9.2
Mandarin	83,825	11.8	Spanish	17,900	7.9
Tagalog	47,640	6.7	Cantonese	16,920	7.4
Korean	38,870	5.5	Urdu	12,320	5.4
Persian (Farsi)	28,970	4.1	Arabic	11,625	5.1
Spanish	22,505	3.2	Vietnamese	10,800	4.7
Hindi	18,355	2.6	Mandarin	9,900	4.4
Vietnamese	18,225	2.6	Korean	6,565	2.9
Russian	11,765	1.7	Russian	5,755	2.5
Japanese	9,920	1.4	Persian (Farsi)	5,495	2.4
Other immigrant languages	105,140	14.8	Other immigrant languages	58,255	25.6
Total	711,515	100.0	Total	227,515	100.0

Edmonton			Ottawa - Gatineau		
Language spoken most often	Number	Percentage	Language spoken most often	Number	Percentage
Tagalog	19,645	11.8	Arabic	28,665	20.4
Punjabi	18,165	10.9	Spanish	11,325	8.1
Chinese n.o.s.	14,810	8.9	Chinese n.o.s.	10,490	7.5
Cantonese	11,260	6.8	Mandarin	6,205	4.4
Spanish	10,865	6.5	Somali	5,405	3.8
Arabic	9,755	5.9	Persian (Farsi)	5,225	3.7
Vietnamese	6,650	4.0	Vietnamese	5,210	3.7
Mandarin	6,425	3.9	Cantonese	4,790	3.4
Hindi	5,460	3.3	Russian	4,550	3.2
Urdu	5,460	3.3	Italian	4,110	2.9
Polish	5,205	3.1	Tagalog	3,735	2.7
German	3,770	2.3	Portuguese	3,570	2.5
Other immigrant languages	48,680	29.3	Other immigrant languages	47,395	33.7
Total	166,145	100.0	Total	140,675	100.0

Note: Chinese n.o.s. refers to persons who reported 'Chinese' without specifying further in the question on language spoken most often at home. For more information on this subject, see the document entitled [Immigrant languages in Canada](#), Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011003, in the Census in Brief series.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2011.

Number of persons who reported speaking more than one language at home on the rise in Canada

In 2011, 17.5% of the population, or 5.8 million persons, reported speaking at least two languages at home in Canada.⁶ In 2006, just under 4.5 million (14.2%) did so.

Generally, the use of two languages at home is more widespread in provinces where a higher proportion of immigrants live or where there are areas of contact between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups or between Anglophones and Francophones. In Canada as a whole, Nunavut had the largest proportion reporting that they speak at least two languages at home with 47%, followed by Ontario with 21%.

Two-thirds of the population speaking a non-official language at home did so in combination with English or French

In 2011, among people who reported speaking a language other than English or French at home, 31.7% spoke that 'other' language exclusively ([Table 2](#)). That language was also spoken most often at home in combination with the use of English on a regular basis by more than 1.3 million people in Canada (19.8%).

Conversely, English was reported as the language spoken most often at home by more than 2.5 million people who also spoke a language other than French at home on a regular basis. As for the use of French in combination with a language other than English, 286,000 persons (4.2%) reported speaking it most often, while nearly 144,000 (2.1%) reported speaking an 'other' language most often and French on a regular basis.

Table 2 Size and percentage of the population that reported speaking a language other than English or French at home, alone or in combination with English or French, by type of use of these languages, Canada, 2011

Language(s) spoken at home	Number	Percentage
A language 'other' than English or French only ¹	2,145,250	32.4
An 'other' language most often with English spoken on a regular basis	1,342,860	20.3
An 'other' language most often with French spoken on a regular basis	143,990	2.2
English most often with or without an 'other' language than French (equally or on a regular basis)	2,515,935	37.9
French most often with or without an 'other' language than English (equally or on a regular basis)	276,740	4.2
Other combinations ²	205,620	3.1
Total	6,630,395	100.0

Notes:

1. The category 'Language other than English or French only' also includes persons speaking another language most often and those speaking it on a regular basis (less than 5% combined).

2. The category 'Other combinations' mainly comprises cases where three languages or more are spoken at home.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2011.

6. See box entitled [Comparability of language data between censuses of population](#) and the forthcoming document entitled [Methodological Document on the 2011 Census Language Data](#), Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011051.

Part 2: Linguistic duality: English and French in Canadian society

While Canada is increasingly diversified linguistically, its two official languages—French and, to a greater extent, English—exert a strong pull as languages of convergence and integration into Canadian society, especially as languages of work, education and the provision of government services to the public.

Canada's linguistic duality is reflected in the fact that 98% of its population reported that it was able to conduct a conversation in either English or French. Similarly, either English or French are spoken at least on a regular basis at home in Canada by 94% of the population. These two languages are used most often at home by 89% of the population. The same situation was observed in the 2006 Census of Population.

In 2011, French was the first official language spoken⁷ of 7.7 million Canadians, or 23.2% of the population, while English was the first official language spoken of 24.8 million, or 75.0%. The rest of the population (1.8% or just under 600,000 Canadians) was essentially comprised of persons who could not conduct a conversation in either English or French.

In 2011, English was the mother tongue of nearly 58% of the population of Canada (or 19.1 million persons), and French was that of nearly 22% (or 7.2 million persons). As for the language most often spoken at home, English was spoken by 66% of the population and French by 21%.⁸

The two official languages exert an influence on the language(s) spoken at home. In 2011, while 20.6% of the population reported a mother tongue other than English or French,⁹ most of them reported also speaking English or French at home. In fact, only 6.2% of the population reported speaking a language other than English or French as their only home language.

Given that the language spoken most often at home is most likely to be passed on to children, the widespread use of English or French at home by parents influences the first language a child will learn at home. For example, in 2011, among children aged 17 and under with both parents having neither English nor French as their mother tongue, 37% had English (33%) or French (4%) as a mother tongue.¹⁰

Mother tongue

The change between 2006 and 2011 in the numbers and proportions of the English, French and 'other' mother tongue groups is affected by changes in the reporting patterns to the mother tongue question in

7. Since English and French are Canada's two official languages, 2011 Census data are used by the Canadian government to estimate the potential demand for government services in one or the other of these languages. Accordingly, the first official language spoken is derived successively from responses to the questions on knowledge of official languages, mother tongue and main home language.

8. By comparison, the largest language group in Canada after English and French is 'Chinese languages': 3.4% of the population of Canada reports a Chinese language as a mother tongue and 2.7% speaks one of these languages most often or on a regular basis at home. These proportions are even smaller if, among Chinese languages, the focus is on persons speaking, say, Mandarin or Cantonese.

9. Single responses only.

10. Alone or in combination with a non-official language. 'Children' refers to children aged 17 and under enumerated in couple families.

the 2011 Census. See the box entitled [Comparability of language data between censuses of population](#) in the Highlights section.¹¹

Proportion with English as a mother tongue remains unchanged

The population reporting English as a mother tongue remained unchanged at 57.8% in 2011. The share of the population reporting a mother tongue other than English or French increased from 20.1% in 2006 to 20.6% in 2011 ([Table 3](#)).

Slight decrease in proportion reporting French as a mother tongue

The proportion of the population reporting French as a mother tongue in Canada declined between 2006 and 2011 from 22.1% to 21.7%. However, this decrease is smaller than what would have been expected given the volume and composition of international immigration during the period 2006 to 2011, in particular immigrants with a mother tongue other than English or French.

In Quebec: slight decrease for French mother tongue and slight increase for English mother tongue

In Quebec, 78.9% of the population reported having French as a mother tongue in 2011, compared with 79.6% in 2006. This decrease was smaller than what would have been expected, for the reasons already cited.¹² However, the population reporting English as a mother tongue grew by more than 40,000, going from 8.2% in 2006 to 8.3% in 2011, an increase due in part to an increase in the reporting of multiple languages responses in the 2011 Census.

The proportion reporting a mother tongue other than English or French was 12.8% in 2011, compared with 12.3% in 2006.

Outside Quebec: English, French and 'other' mother tongues remain stable

Outside Quebec, the share of the population with English as mother tongue remained relatively unchanged, going from 73.3% in 2006 to 73.1% in 2011. The same is true for people who reported French as mother tongue. Their proportion was 4.0% in 2011, compared with 4.1% in 2006. Their number increased by 32,400 persons between 2006 and 2011, a result attributable in part to the increase in multiple responses.¹³ Those reporting 'other' mother tongues represented 23% of the population living outside of Quebec in 2011, compared with 22.6% in 2006.

11. Readers can also refer to the forthcoming publication, [Methodological Document on the 2011 Census Language Data](#), Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011051.

12. An examination of how the different demographic components (births, deaths, international and interprovincial migration) evolved between 2006 and 2011 suggests that the proportion of the French-mother-tongue population in Quebec was expected to have decreased more in 2011.

13. In table 3, multiple responses to the question on 'first language learned at home in childhood and still understood at the time of the census' (mother tongue) were allocated equally among the 'French,' 'English' and 'Other' categories. An increase in multiple responses will thus have an impact on the numbers in these categories.

Table 4 Language spoken most often at home, Canada, Quebec, Canada outside Quebec, 2006 and 2011

Region	Year	French		English		Other		Total	
		number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage
Canada	2006	6,690,130	21.4	20,840,560	66.7	3,710,330	11.9	31,241,030	100.0
	2011	6,963,760	21.0	21,975,690	66.3	4,181,730	12.6	33,121,175	100.0
Quebec	2006	6,085,150	81.8	787,885	10.6	562,860	7.6	7,435,900	100.0
	2011	6,344,795	81.2	834,950	10.7	636,220	8.1	7,815,955	100.0
Canada outside Quebec	2006	604,980	2.5	20,052,670	84.2	3,147,470	13.2	23,805,130	100.0
	2011	618,965	2.4	21,140,735	83.5	3,545,515	14.0	25,305,220	100.0

Note: Multiple responses to the question on language spoken most often at home were allocated equally among the language groups.

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

Increased use of multiple languages at home

The redistribution of multiple responses (among the main language groups) to the census question on the language spoken most often at home (as shown in [Table 4](#)) provides a simplified picture of the predominant use of languages at home.

Grouping the data in other ways—especially a grouping that includes the main and secondary use of languages—casts a different light on the changes observed between 2006 and 2011 ([Table 5](#)).¹⁶ It also shows that the number and proportion of persons who reported speaking French or English at home in combination with another language increased more between 2006 and 2011 than during the previous five-year period.

Between 2006 and 2011, the proportion of the population that reported speaking only French at home decreased from 19.1% to 18.2%, a decrease similar to the one observed for the period 2001 to 2006 (from 19.8% to 19.1%) ([Table 5](#)).

Persons who reported speaking English only at home represented 58.0% of the population in 2011, down from 60.3% in 2006 and 61.6% in 2001.

The proportion of people who reported speaking only a language other than English or French at home remained stable at 6.5% between 2006 and 2011, while it had increased from 5.5% to 6.5% between 2001 and 2006.

The population that reported speaking English or French in addition with an 'other' language, showed a larger increase between 2006 and 2011 than between 2001 and 2006. While 9.1% of the population

16. The grouping provided in [Table 5](#) reflects the fact that there was a strong increase in multiple responses of the type 'English-other' and 'French-other' as languages spoken **equally most often at home** between 2006 and 2011, and of responses of the type 'English most often and other on a regular basis.' Moreover, data from the 2001 and 2006 Census show that in Quebec, the presence of English or French at home is a very good indicator of the use of these languages in the workplace, no matter the frequency of use. For example, in 2006, 80% of people with a mother tongue other than English or French who worked in the Montréal census metropolitan area (CMA) used mostly French at work whether (a) French is the only language spoken at home; (b) French is spoken most often at home in combination with a language other than English spoken regularly; or (c) a language other than English or French is spoken most often at home in combination with French spoken regularly as a secondary language. The same phenomenon is observed with regards to English, although with a proportion of 70%.

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reported using English and a language other than French at home in 2006, this proportion was 11.5% in 2011, representing an increase of 960,000 persons. Between 2001 and 2006, the increase had been approximately 410,000.¹⁷

Table 5 Language(s) spoken at home, Canada, 2001, 2006 and 2011

Language(s) spoken at home	2001		2006		2011	
	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage
French only	5,861,135	19.8	5,953,155	19.1	6,043,305	18.2
English only	18,267,825	61.6	18,853,915	60.3	19,224,945	58.0
Other only	1,693,120	5.7	2,045,080	6.5	2,145,250	6.5
French and other ¹	220,290	0.7	298,245	1.0	417,990	1.3
English and other ²	2,447,675	8.3	2,857,455	9.1	3,816,980	11.5
English and French ³	1,015,920	3.4	1,090,325	3.5	1,222,530	3.7
Other combinations	133,080	0.4	142,840	0.5	250,175	0.8
Total	29,639,045	100.0	31,241,015	100.0	33,121,175	100.0

Notes:

1. Includes responses 'French and other' equally, 'French most often and other on a regular basis' and 'other most often and French on a regular basis.'
2. Includes responses 'English and other' equally, 'English most often and other on a regular basis' and 'other most often and English on a regular basis.'
3. Includes responses 'English and French' equally, 'French most often and English on a regular basis' and 'English most often and French on a regular basis.'

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

In Quebec, increased reporting of French in combination with a language other than English at home

As in Canada as a whole, there was an increase in the number of Quebecers who reported speaking more than one language at home. The group that reported speaking French and a language other than English showed the largest gain, increasing from 3.8% in 2006 to 5.0% in 2011 of the Quebec population. Between 2001 and 2006, the share of this group had gone from 2.9% to 3.8% ([Table 6](#)).

In Quebec, the proportion of the population that reported speaking only French at home declined from 75.1% to 72.8% between 2006 and 2011. This decrease is quite similar to the one recorded between 2001 and 2006.

The proportion of the Quebec population that reported speaking only English declined from 6.6% to 6.2% between 2006 and 2011, whereas it had changed little between 2001 and 2006.

The proportion of the population that reported speaking only a language other than English or French remained unchanged at 4% between 2006 and 2011, whereas it had increased slightly between 2001 and 2006.

17. The greater propensity to report more than one mother tongue or home language in the 2011 Census as compared with the 2006 Census is one of the main factors affecting comparability between these two censuses. See box entitled [Comparability of language data between censuses of population](#) and the forthcoming document entitled [Methodological Document on the 2011 Census Language Data](#), Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011051.

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There were also increases in the group that reported speaking English and a language other than French at home and the group that reported speaking French and English. In 2011 nearly 600,000 persons reported speaking both French and English at home, representing 7.6% of the Quebec population. In 2006, that proportion was 7.1%.¹⁸

Table 6 Language(s) spoken at home, Quebec, 2001, 2006 and 2011

Language(s) spoken at home	2001		2006		2011	
	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage
French only	5,484,280	77.0	5,583,220	75.1	5,687,005	72.8
English only	480,040	6.7	490,840	6.6	481,675	6.2
Other only	245,090	3.4	296,255	4.0	309,895	4.0
French and other¹	204,780	2.9	280,550	3.8	389,100	5.0
English and other²	163,470	2.3	182,735	2.5	220,655	2.8
English and French³	477,960	6.7	525,145	7.1	597,700	7.6
Other combinations	69,980	1.0	77,165	1.0	129,915	1.7
Total	7,125,600	100.0	7,435,910	100.0	7,815,945	100.0

Notes:

1. Includes responses 'French and other' equally, 'French most often and other on a regular basis' and 'other most often and French on a regular basis.'
2. Includes responses 'English and other' equally, 'English most often and other on a regular basis' and 'other most often and English on a regular basis.'
3. Includes responses 'French and English' equally, 'French most often and English on a regular basis' and 'English most often and French on a regular basis.'

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

Increased use of French at home among Quebecers with a mother tongue other than French or English

In Quebec, the proportion of the population with a mother tongue 'other' than French or English that reported speaking only an 'other' language at home has declined since 2001 ([Figure 2](#)), from 32.8% in 2001 to 32.1% in 2006 and then to 30.5% in 2011.

During the same period, the proportion of the population that reported speaking French most often at home (alone or in combination with a language other than English) increased successively from 20.4% to 22.9% and then to 24.1%. Similarly, the number of persons who reported speaking French regularly as a second home language (alone or in combination with a language other than English) increased from 14.3% in 2001 to 15.7% in 2006 and 15.9% in 2011.

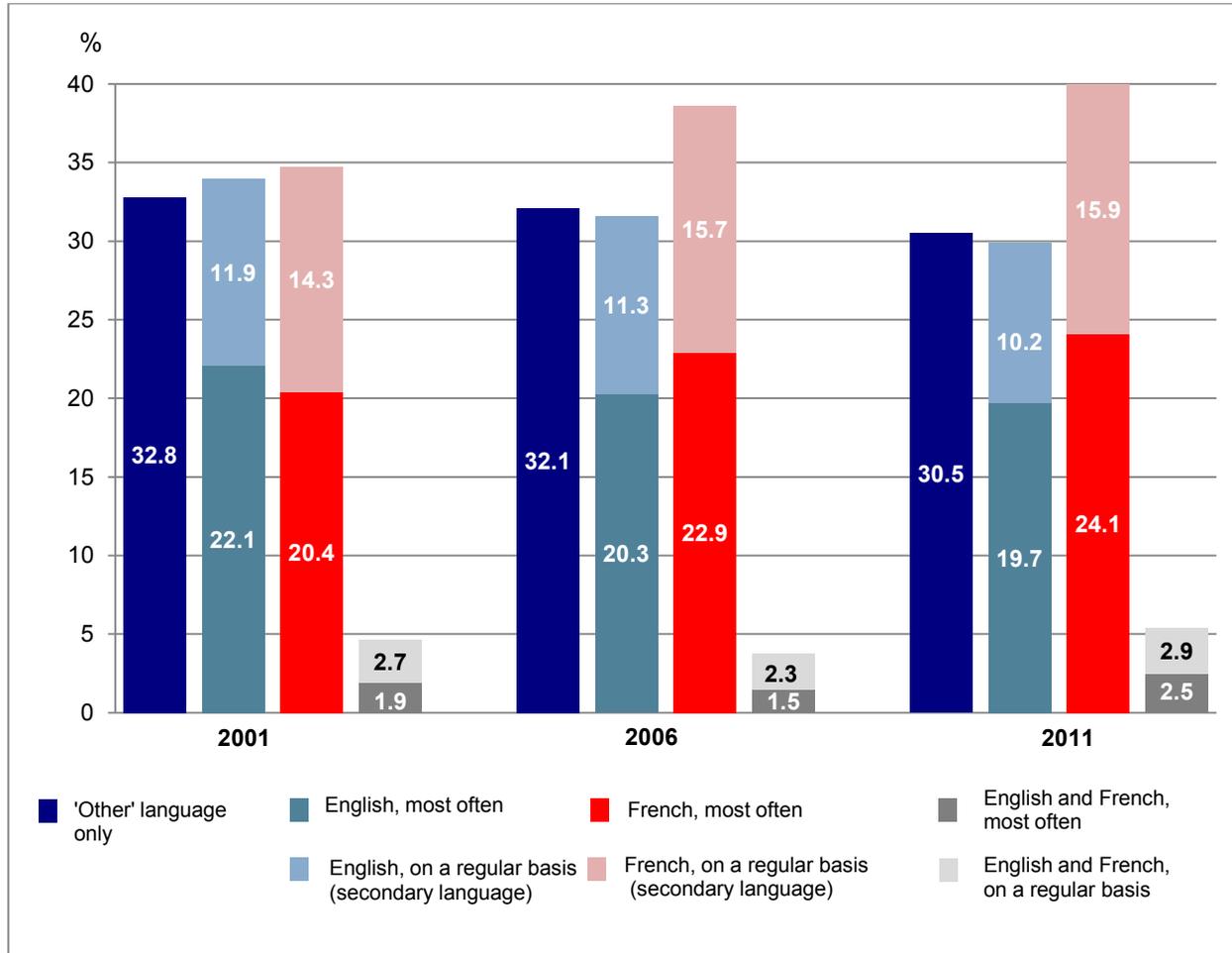
The share of the Quebec population whose mother tongue was neither English nor French and who reported speaking English most often at home (alone or in combination with a language other than French) in 2011 was 19.7%, compared with 20.3% in 2006 and 22.1% in 2001. Those who reported speaking English on a regular basis as a second language in the home represented 10.2% of that population in 2011, compared with 11.3% in 2006 and 11.9% in 2001. Finally, during the same period, the

18. The greater propensity to report more than one mother tongue or home language in the 2011 Census as compared with the 2006 Census is one of the main factors affecting comparability between these two censuses. See box entitled [Comparability of language data between censuses of population](#) and the forthcoming document entitled [Methodological Document on the 2011 Census Language Data](#), Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011051.

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proportion of those who reported speaking English and French equally most often at home went from 1.9% in 2001, to 1.5% in 2006 and 2.5% in 2011. These two languages were also spoken equally on a regular basis (in addition to an 'other' language spoken most often) by 2.9% of this population in 2011 compared with 2.3% in 2006 and 2.7% in 2001.

Figure 2 Proportion of the population with a mother tongue other than English or French by languages spoken at home, 2001, 2006 and 2011



Notes: While 30.5% of the population with a mother tongue other than French or English in Quebec spoke neither French nor English at home in 2011, 65.0% of that population spoke another language most often, alone or in combination with French or English.

Only single responses to mother tongue are considered, whereas all responses (single and multiple) are considered for home languages. The category 'English' also includes the category 'English and other,' the category 'French' also includes the category 'French and other' whereas the category 'English and French' also includes the category 'English-French and other.'

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

In the Montréal CMA, the use of only French or English at home declines

In the Montréal census metropolitan area, the share of the population reporting that it spoke only French at home continued the decline that began in 2001. Whereas this proportion was 62.4% in 2001 and 59.8% in 2006, it was 56.5% in 2011 ([Table 7](#)).¹⁹

19. The 2001 and 2006 Census data for the census metropolitan areas are based on the 2011 geographic boundaries.

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As for the population reporting that it spoke only English at home, its relative share dropped from 10.8% to 9.9% between 2006 and 2011, while the population that reported speaking only a language other than French or English remained unchanged at 7% during this period.

However, the proportion of the Montréal population that reported speaking French in combination with a language other than English at home grew. In 2001 and 2006, 5.2% and 6.7% respectively of the Montréal population had reported doing so. In 2011, this was the case with 8.7% of the population. Between 2006 and 2011, the number of persons reporting this language behaviour went from 239,000 to more than 329,000.²⁰

Table 7 Language(s) spoken at home, Montréal census metropolitan area (CMA), 2001, 2006 and 2011

Language(s) spoken at home	Montréal CMA					
	2001		2006		2011	
	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage
French only	2,126,265	62.4	2,147,705	59.8	2,140,840	56.5
English only	376,785	11.1	388,640	10.8	375,370	9.9
Other only	214,515	6.3	251,690	7.0	265,070	7.0
French and other¹	175,840	5.2	239,425	6.7	329,210	8.7
English and other²	149,590	4.4	163,945	4.6	198,090	5.2
English and French³	298,180	8.8	327,170	9.1	361,535	9.5
Other combinations⁴	63,820	1.9	69,950	1.9	115,800	3.1
Total	3,405,000	100.0	3,588,520	100.0	3,785,915	100.0

Notes:

1. Includes responses 'French and other' equally, 'French most often and other on a regular basis' and 'other most often and French on a regular basis.'
2. Includes responses 'English and other' equally, 'English most often and other on a regular basis' and 'other most often and English on a regular basis.'
3. Includes responses 'French and English' equally, 'French most often and English on a regular basis' and 'English most often and French on a regular basis.'
4. More than 80% of this category comprises cases of 'trilingualism' including 'French, English and another language.'

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

20. The largest increase in this regard was among persons who, as their language most often spoken, reported speaking French and a language other than English equally. The size of this population went from 43,500 to nearly 80,500 between 2006 and 2011.

In Toronto and Vancouver, the use of only English at home shows steady decline

In the Toronto and Vancouver metropolitan areas, the proportion of the population that reported speaking only English at home continued the decline recorded between 2001 and 2006 (Tables 8 and 9).

In Toronto, 55.0% of the population reported speaking only English at home in 2011, compared with 59.1% in 2006 and 62.5% in 2001. In Vancouver, the corresponding proportions were 58.0%, 62.0% and 65.3%.

Whereas the population that reported speaking only a language other than English or French at home had grown between 2001 and 2006, these proportions declined in 2011 (14.3% in Toronto and 15.4% in Vancouver).

This decrease in the use of 'English only' or the use of an 'other' language only was offset by a sizable increase in the number of persons reporting speaking both English and an 'other' language at home. The increase was especially marked in the number reporting that they spoke both English and an 'other' language equally. In Toronto, 20.7% in 2001 and 23.0% in 2006 of the population had reported such language behaviour. That proportion was 27.6% in 2011. In Vancouver, these proportions were 17.8%, 19.7% and 24.0% respectively.²¹

Table 8 Language(s) spoken at home, Toronto census metropolitan area (CMA), 2001, 2006 and 2011

Language(s) spoken at home	Toronto CMA					
	2001		2006		2011	
	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage
French only	9,875	0.2	11,040	0.2	10,560	0.2
English only	2,902,975	62.5	2,996,010	59.1	3,045,505	55.0
Other only	693,025	14.9	812,160	16.0	835,120	15.1
French and other ¹	4,570	0.1	5,225	0.1	7,980	0.1
English and other ²	962,630	20.7	1,167,170	23.0	1,530,670	27.6
English and French ³	49,545	1.1	54,340	1.1	64,800	1.2
Other combinations ⁴	25,340	0.5	26,130	0.5	47,245	0.9
Total	4,647,955	100.0	5,072,075	100.0	5,541,880	100.0

Notes:

- Includes responses 'French and other' equally, 'French most often and other on a regular basis' and 'other most often and French on a regular basis.'
- Includes responses 'English and other' equally, 'English most often and other on a regular basis' and 'other most often and English on a regular basis.'
- Includes responses 'English and French' equally, 'French most often and English on a regular basis' and 'English most often and French on a regular basis.'
- A very large proportion of this category comprises persons speaking at least two non-official languages with or without English or French.

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

21. Between 2006 and 2011, the number of persons in Toronto who, as their language most often spoken at home, reported speaking English and a language other than French equally went from 173,340 to 368,475. In Vancouver, the number went from 59,415 to 124,250 during the same period.

Table 9 Language(s) spoken at home, Vancouver census metropolitan area (CMA), 2001, 2006 and 2011

Language(s) spoken at home	Vancouver CMA					
	2001		2006		2011	
	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage
French only	3,325	0.2	3,555	0.2	3,415	0.1
English only	1,285,000	65.3	1,300,620	62.0	1,328,780	58.0
Other only	299,340	15.2	349,405	16.7	369,350	16.1
French and other ¹	1,495	0.1	1,155	0.1	1,670	0.1
English and other ²	350,500	17.8	413,715	19.7	549,950	24.0
English and French ³	18,960	1.0	20,770	1.0	23,950	1.0
Other combinations ⁴	8,855	0.5	8,750	0.4	15,005	0.7
Total	1,967,475	100.0	2,097,970	100.0	2,292,120	100.0

Notes:

1. Includes responses 'French and other' equally, 'French most often and other on a regular basis' and 'other most often and French on a regular basis.'
2. Includes responses 'English and other' equally, 'English most often and other on a regular basis' and 'other most often and English on a regular basis.'
3. Includes responses 'English and French' equally, 'French most often and English on a regular basis' and 'English most often and French on a regular basis.'
4. A very large proportion of this category comprises persons speaking at least two non-official languages with or without English or French.

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

English-French bilingualism in Canada

Between 2006 and 2011, the number of persons who reported that they were able to conduct a conversation in both of Canada's official languages increased by 350,000 to 5.8 million. The English-French bilingualism rate within the overall population went from 17.4% to 17.5%.

The growth of English-French bilingualism in Canada was mainly due to the increased number of Quebecers reporting that they were able to conduct a conversation in French and English. Quebec accounted for 90% of the net increase in the number of bilingual persons between 2006 and 2011. In fact, 71% of the net increase in English-French bilingualism in Canada is attributable to the population with French as a mother tongue²² in Quebec, in particular to the population aged 15 to 49.

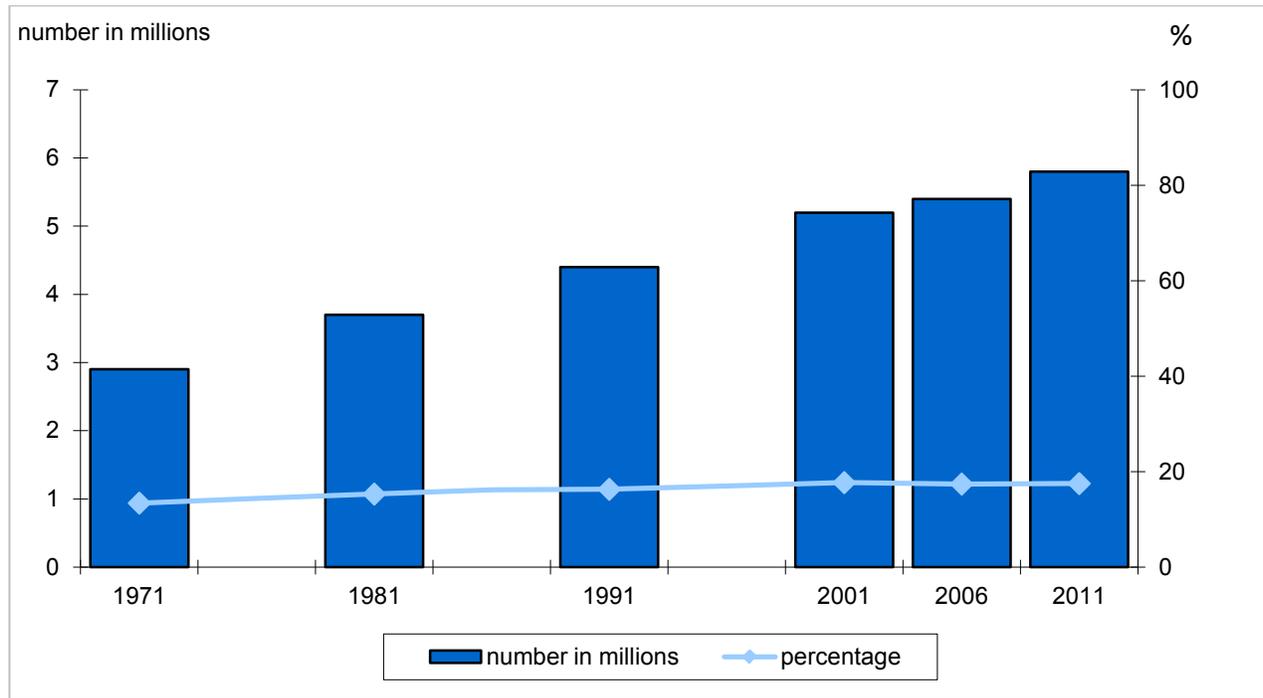
In Quebec, the English-French bilingualism rate increased from 40.6% in 2006 to 42.6% in 2011. In the other provinces, bilingualism declined slightly. The largest decreases were recorded in Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia, where in each case, the bilingualism rate decreased by half a percentage point.²³

22. With equal redistribution of multiple responses for mother tongue.

23. See [Highlight tables](#), Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011002, for more data on English-French bilingualism.

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Figure 3 Number and proportion of Canadians who reported being able to conduct a conversation in both official languages, Canada, 1971 to 2011



Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1971 to 2011.

Additional information

Additional information on language at various levels of geography can be found in the [Highlight tables](#), Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011002, [Topic-based tabulations](#), Catalogue nos. 98-314-X2011016 through 98-314-X2011045, and nos. 98-314-X2011048 through 98-314-X2011050, the [Census Profile](#), Catalogue no. 98-316-X as well as in the new census product [Focus on Geography Series](#), Catalogue no. 98-310-X2011004.

Note to readers

Random rounding and percentage distributions: To ensure the confidentiality of responses collected for the 2011 Census while maintaining the quality of the results, a random rounding process is used to alter the values reported in individual cells. As a result, when these data are summed or grouped, the total value may not match the sum of the individual values, since the total and subtotals are independently rounded. Similarly, percentage distributions, which are calculated on rounded data, may not necessarily add up to 100%.

Due to random rounding, counts and percentages may vary slightly between different census products, such as the analytical documents, highlight tables, and topic-based tabulations.

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