

Research Note

The Languages of the 2022 Provincial Election in Quebec

Marc Pomerleau^a, and Esmaeil Kalantari^{a b}

^a Université de Montréal ^b Université TÉLUQ

Abstract

Political parties in Quebec face dilemmas when it comes to language and translation policy: French is the province's only official language and the mother tongue of the vast majority of the population. However, a significant percentage of the population, between 10 per cent and 15 per cent depending on the criteria, is considered English-speaking. In this context, and because every vote matters, parties translate some material into English, but what they translate and to what extent varies from one party to another. This contribution examines the languages of seven communication tools used by Quebec political parties during the 2022 provincial election, that is, their name, logo, slogan, website, program, social media accounts and election signs. The results show that there is a link between language and translation practices, on the one hand, and each party's policy position with respect to languages and the political status of Quebec within Canada, on the other.

Résumé

Les partis politiques québécois font face à un dilemme au moment d'adopter une politique linguistique et de traduction. Bien que le français soit la seule langue officielle du Québec et la langue maternelle de la grande majorité de la population, un pourcentage relativement important de la population est de langue anglaise, soit de 10 % à 15 % selon le critère choisi. Dans ce contexte, et parce que chaque vote compte, les partis politiques traduisent du matériel en anglais, mais ce qu'ils traduisent et à quel point ils traduisent varie d'un parti à l'autre. Le présent article pose un regard sur sept outils de communication utilisés par les partis politiques au cours de la campagne électorale provinciale de 2022 : nom du parti, logo, slogan, site web, programme, réseaux sociaux et affiches électorales. Les résultats font état d'un lien entre, d'une part, les pratiques linguistiques et de traduction des partis politiques, et, d'autre part, le positionnement des partis politiques en matière de langues et de statut du Québec au sein du Canada.

Keywords: Quebec; bilingualism; communication; election; language; translation

Mots-clés : Québec; bilinguisme; communication; élection; langue; traduction

Introduction

When discussing elections, we usually refer to results, turnout statistics, promises, mistakes or blunders and so forth. In some jurisdictions, especially at the Federal level, as well as in Quebec and New Brunswick, the language issue is also part of the conversation. In general, discussions about this topic deal with linguistic rights and legislation, language use and statistics, bilingualism and so on. Very seldom do we discuss the languages used during election campaigns, except maybe for live television debates (we have all felt sorry for candidates struggling when using their second official language on TV). Nevertheless, language is ubiquitous during election campaigns: signs, flyers, websites, programs, posts on social media and so forth. In the following pages, we will examine the languages used by political parties during

Contact Marc Pomerleau: marc.pomerleau@umontreal.ca

the 2022 Quebec provincial election and see how this choice relates to ideology and may have played a role in the outcome. Our hypothesis is that the use of English by political parties in Quebec is linked to their policy position concerning the status of French and English in the province and the status of Quebec within Canada, i.e. the “national question”. Moreover, translation (or not) into English is most likely an effect of clientelism, as political parties need to speak to their base and show them where they stand on the question of language. After all, as Bélanger et al. (2022: 58) and many more have stated, language remains one of the most significant divides in Quebec politics.

The idea behind this study comes from research (Pomerleau and Kalantari, 2022a; 2022b) on the perception of Quebec voters regarding the languages used on election signs. To contextualize the research conducted in 2020-2021, at the time, we presented, an overview of election sign translation practices in Quebec. Our original observations were that few candidates and political parties use English or other languages on their election signs in the province. This being said, after an extensive study (Pomerleau and Kalantari, 2024), we found that translation practices fluctuated over time, depending on the sociopolitical context in Quebec.

Historical Overview

Before the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s-1970s, bilingual or English-only signs were relatively frequent in the province, representing up to a quarter of the total signs identified from the 1950s (Pomerleau and Kalantari, 2024). Such signs were common among most political parties, including the major ones at the time, that is, the Quebec Liberal Party and the Union nationale. English slowly faded away in the decades following the onset of the Quiet Revolution, representing only 2 per cent of the total signs found from the 1970s to the 2000s. This period saw the emergence of various nationalist and sovereigntist movements and political parties in Quebec, including the Parti Québécois, which was founded in 1968 and formed the government in 1976. This period was also characterized by the enactment of different language laws, including the Official Language Act (Bill 22), which made French the sole official language of Quebec in 1974, and the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101) in 1977.

One might assume that election signs in Quebec are almost only in French from that point on because of the Charter of the French Language. In fact, the Charter states that public signage may be “both in French and in another language provided that French is markedly predominant.”¹ Moreover, Section 59 of the Charter exempts messages of a political nature from the provisions relating to predominantly French public signs. This means that political parties and candidates in Quebec could produce and post their election signs and other documents in both English and French, or in any other language, even without a French version. The fact that provincial election signs are almost exclusively in French in Quebec is therefore not a legal issue, but a political choice.

This being said, our research shows a slight resurgence of English on election signs in the 2010s. This resurgence coincides with the indifference that many experts observe today regarding the national question, which is closely linked to the French

language. According to Bélanger et al. (2022: 16), the fruits borne by the Quiet Revolution have made such issues far less important today. One of the consequences of this change is the rise of political parties that are not, or are less, rooted in the federalism/sovereignty duality, such as Québec solidaire (founded in 2006) and Coalition Avenir Québec (founded in 2011). The latter's rise to power in 2018 is yet another step in that direction.

Thus, the translation practices of Quebec political parties reflect the state of Quebec society over time. This is in line with one of the main findings resulting from the "Sociological Turn" in Translation Studies (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1990) and which is summarized by Wolf (2012: 132) when she states that "translations always reflect the historical and cultural conditions under which they have been produced."

2022 Provincial Election

Amid a resurgence of the language issue in the province during the months prior to the 2022 provincial election, we wanted to find out whether the translation practices of political parties would change again. Two factors contributed to the revival of the language issue in 2022: First, the adoption of Bill 96, *An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec*, by the National Assembly. This Act reinforces the status of French in the province by making several amendments to the Charter of the French language. For example, amendments were made relating to French as the language of work (National Assembly of Québec, 2022). Second, the publication of the 2021 Census statistics on official languages in Canada, which show a decline of French across the country, including in Quebec (Statistics Canada, 2022).

This context, coupled with each party's policy position with respect to languages, may have influenced the different political parties' decision to conduct a bilingual campaign or not, and if so, to what extent. In the above-mentioned context, bilingual or English-only signs and other documents could be perceived as demonstrating that French is indeed losing ground in the province. On the one hand, parties producing them could be accused of being out of touch by not acknowledging this issue, and even contributing to anglicization. On the other, by producing French-only documentation, parties would show that they are aware of the issue and that they are doing something about it, or at least that they are not contributing to it. Conversely, by not producing any documentation in English, parties could also alienate the English-speaking community, which already feels somewhat left out of provincial politics (Carpenter, 2022).

Political Parties, Names and Logos

To find out what linguistic choices political parties were actually making during the 2022 provincial election in Quebec, we examined the language and translation practices of the province's six main political parties: Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ), Parti libéral du Québec/Quebec Liberal Party (PLQ), Québec solidaire (QS), Parti Québécois (PQ), Parti conservateur du Québec (PCQ) and Parti vert du Québec/Green Party of Québec (PVQ). This list already provides an indication of where parties stand on the language question: Two of the six parties, that is, the Quebec Liberal Party and the Green Party of Québec, have an official English version of their name. The CAQ,

the PQ and QS's names are in French only and never translated, whereas the PCQ sometimes uses Quebec Conservative Party or Conservative Party of Quebec in English. For example, this was the case on the party's 2022 platform, despite its official name being in French only.

Beyond the six main parties, we also looked at two parties founded in 2022 as a specific response to Bill 96, that is, the Parti canadien du Québec/Canadian Party of Québec (PCaQ) and Bloc Montréal (BM). The former has a bilingual name while the latter only has a French one, which is surprising for a party that claims to defend bilingualism and English-speaking Quebecers. Therefore, of the eight Quebec provincial parties surveyed, three have a bilingual name: Quebec Liberal Party, Green Party of Québec and Canadian Party of Québec.² This being said, the Canadian Party of Québec is the only one using both its French and English names on its logo, as shown in Figure 1. This party is the one that most visibly embraces its official bilingualism.

Figure 1. Logos of Quebec political parties that have an official name in both French and English



While the parties' official name and logo can give us an idea of where they stand on the language issue, we must address the official language policy position of each party. Moreover, if the name and logo are the most visible written communication tools, there are many more instances of written communication to explore. Therefore, after stating the official language policy position of the eight parties surveyed, we will discuss the language(s) they used in their slogan, website, program, Facebook and Twitter social media accounts and election signs during the 2022 campaign.

Language Policy Position

All major Quebec political parties “are in favour of defending and preserving the French language in Quebec” (Bélanger et al., 2018, 50). This being said, their official position regarding the status of French and English, as well as Indigenous languages, varies. The Canadian Party of Québec and Bloc Montréal, two parties that lobby against Quebec's language laws, are the only ones advocating for official bilingualism. The Green Party of Québec supports the idea of French as the only official language, but it is in favour of bilingual instruction, a position similar to that of the Quebec Conservative Party that advocates for freedom of choice when it comes to education, without explicitly addressing the question of language.

All other major parties, that is, Coalition Avenir Québec, the Quebec Liberal Party, Québec solidaire and the Parti Québécois, reaffirm on their platform that French is the official language of Quebec and that it must be protected. The Liberal Party even recalls that it was them, in 1974, “that endowed the French language with its official

status as Quebec's official language." (PLQ 2022, 90). This being said, the Liberal Party and the Parti Québécois also state that the rights of English-speaking Quebecers must be guaranteed, a topic that neither Québec solidaire nor Coalition Avenir Québec address. They also advocate for the protection of Indigenous languages, a stance shared by most parties.

Slogans

Slogans are short and catchy phrases used to promote a product or an idea. In political campaigns, a slogan conveys the beliefs of a party and is used to attract voters (Colin, 2004: 228). It is, according to Hofman (2010: 257), "the simplest phrase that says it all". We could add that for Quebec political parties, making the decision to translate their slogan or not also "says it all", that is, it instantly tells potential voters where the party stands on the language issue.

Of the eight provincial political parties surveyed, six had an English version of their 2022 slogan: PLQ: *Votez vrai./Vote for real.*³; QS: *Changer d'ère/Let's clear the air*; PCQ: *Libres chez nous/Freedom to choose*; PVQ: *Le Nouveau Plan Vert pour le Québec/The New Green Plan for Quebec*; PCaQ: *Votez pour le respect/Vote for respect*; and BM: *Unis pour notre ville/United for our city*. Some parties used the English version along with the French one on their bilingual election signs (PLQ, PCQ and PCaQ), while others only used the English version on their website or program (QS, PVQ, BM). In this regard, one would argue that parties that post their English slogan only on their website or program are timidly bilingual, whereas those that use them on their election signs affirm their bilingualism more publicly, especially when they post numerous bilingual signs (the PCQ posted bilingual signs in a single riding, as we will see below).

Finally, two parties had a French-only slogan in 2022: The CAQ did not have a translation of its official slogan *Continuons*, but used *Now. Our record* in English, a translation of the secondary slogan *Maintenant. Notre bilan*. The PQ did not translate its slogan *Le Québec qui s'assume. Pour vrai.*⁴ Just as in the case of the PCaQ that openly shows its ideology by always using its bilingual logo, the PQ's French-only slogan and the actual message conveyed by it show where the party stands on the language issue, in accordance with its policy position regarding language, which is similar to that of the CAQ.

Websites and Programs

When it comes to websites, seven of the eight parties surveyed had an English version of their site during the campaign, but this version was not always a complete mirror of the French site: The CAQ and QS decided to translate only parts of their site into English. On the CAQ's website, all the menu items are translated into English, but clicking on them sometimes sends you to a French page. Clicking on "Get Involved", for example, takes you to the French form "Devenez bénévole". The English version of the CAQ's website is easily accessible through a tab in the main menu bar. As for QS, the English version is almost hidden, accessible in the right-hand corner at the bottom of the page, as shown in Figure 2.⁵ This party, which is in favour of French as the only official language of Quebec, also claims to celebrate diversity; this

strategically placed access to the English version of the site—whether it was done consciously or not—seems like a good compromise in favour of inclusion while reaffirming the prevalence of French.

Figure 2. Access to the English version of Québec solidaire’s website



Again, the Parti Québécois goes it alone as the only party with no English-language content on its website. Moreover, all parties except the PQ offered an English version of their program on their website. The CAQ’s program, however, is not readily available online, as it is indicated—in French—that it is available upon request, as shown in Figure 3. The PQ and the CAQ are firmly in line with their policy position regarding languages in the province.

Figure 3. Access to the English version of Coalition Avenir Québec’s website and program



Social media accounts

Quebec political parties used mostly French on Facebook and Twitter during the 2022 campaign. The CAQ, PLQ, QS, PQ and PCQ used only French, whereas the PVQ and the PCaQ used both languages in similar proportions. Bloc Montréal communicated in English on Facebook and mostly in English on Twitter. Thus, it is the only party to use primarily English on those social media platforms, a choice the party and its leader Balarama Holness were openly criticized for in the French-language press (Latour 2022). The fact that most parties and all the major ones do not use English on Facebook and Twitter is surprising at first glance. This being said, when digging into

the matter, we found that some individual candidates, especially in ridings with a large English-speaking population, did communicate in a bilingual fashion with voters. For example, Jennifer Maccarone, the Liberal candidate in Westmount–Saint-Louis, posted mostly bilingual messages on Facebook.

Figure 4. Bilingual post on Liberal candidate Jennifer Maccarone’s Facebook page

Vote sur les campus
Voting on campus

Réélisez/Re-elect Jennifer Maccarone
Westmount–Saint-Louis

27 et 28 septembre de 9h30 à 20h
29 septembre de 9h30 à 14h
September 27th & 28th from 9:30 am to 8 pm
September 29th from 9:30 am to 2 pm

Université McGill 680, rue Sherbrooke Ouest Montréal, QC, H3A2M7	École de Technologie Supérieure 1100, rue Notre-Dame Ouest Montréal, QC, H3C1K3
Université Concordia 1400, boulevard De Maisonneuve Ouest Montréal, QC, H3G2V8	UQAM 1430, rue Saint-Denis, D-R 200 Montréal, QC, H2X3J8
Collège Lasalle 2000, rue Sainte-Catherine Ouest Montréal, QC, H3H2T2	Collège des Arts Numérique, Animation & Design 1501, rue De Bleury, 7E ETAGE Montréal, QC, H3A0H3
Collège Dawson 4001, boulevard De Maisonneuve Ouest Westmount, QC, H3Z3G4	

27, 28 et 29 septembre de 9h30 à 18h
September 27th, 28th & 29th from 9:30 am to 6 pm

Collège Marianopolis 4873, avenue Westmount Westmount, QC, H3Y1X9	
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Jennifer Maccarone, députée
de/MNA for Westmount-Saint-Louis
26 septembre 2022 · 🌐

RAPPEL IMPORTANT 📢

Le vote sur les campus commence DEMAIN, le 27 septembre et se poursuit jusqu'à jeudi, le 29 septembre.

🔴 Vous n'avez pas besoin de votre carton de vote pour aller voter. Il suffit de présenter une pièce d'identité avec preuve d'adresse.

//
IMPORTANT REMINDER 📢

Voting on campus starts TOMORROW, September 27th and goes until Thursday, September 29th.

🔴 You do not need your voting card to vote. All you have to do is present a valid ID with proof of address.

Pour nous rejoindre / To contact us
📍 1984, Sherbrooke Ouest
☎ (438) 538-7530
✉ jennifer.maccarone@plq.org

#JM4WSL #WSL

Election signs

Signs are possibly the most emblematic manifestation of elections. They pop up in the weeks leading up to the election and are literally impossible to ignore. Journalists and fans of the object are prone to analyze them and let people know whether they like them or not. Comments usually focus on the style of the signs, the images or photos, the colours and so forth. When it comes to language, they discuss the slogan and point out spelling and other mistakes. During the 2022 Quebec campaign, for example, journalists pointed out different spelling mistakes, including in the names of ridings: Conservative signs read *René-Lévèsque* for René-Lévesque and *Renpentigny* for Repentigny (Bossé 2022), whereas PQ signs read *Wesmount* for Westmount (QMI 2022). When it comes to the presence of English, bilingual signs have not spurred a lot of attention in Quebec, but English-only signs have been strongly criticized. This being said, very few English-only signs have ever been posted for provincial elections in Quebec, especially recently. The English-only signs that were criticized, including one of Justin Trudeau in 2015, were all posted for municipal or federal elections (Poirier, 2015; see also Pomerleau and Kalantari, 2022a).

For the purpose of our study, we collected as many signs as possible that were posted during the 2022 provincial election campaign in Quebec. Signs were obtained online on the different parties' website as well as on parties' and candidates' social media accounts (candidates love to take selfies with their signs). Some signs were found on news outlet websites (Radio-Canada, *Le Devoir* and so forth), and we took photos of signs in the public space. A total of 882 election signs were found, including signs in all 125 ridings for the five major parties (CAQ, PLQ, QS, PQ and PCQ), with

very few exceptions. The research team also found the majority of the signs posted by the other parties discussed herein (PVQ, PCaQ and BM)—none of which had candidates in all ridings.

A total of 38 bilingual French-English signs were found, representing 4 per cent of the total 882 election signs identified. Bilingual signs were posted by four of the eight parties surveyed: the Quebec Liberal Party (PLQ), the Quebec Conservative Party (PCQ), the Green Party of Québec (PVQ) and the Canadian Party of Québec (PCaQ). For two of these parties, bilingual signs were the exception: The PCQ posted bilingual signs in one riding, that is, D’Arcy-McGee in Montreal, whereas the PVQ posted partly bilingual signs in two ridings, D’Arcy-McGee and Laurier-Dorion, also in Montreal. Unsurprisingly, the PLQ posted bilingual signs in many ridings, representing some 15 per cent of the total Liberal signs identified. The PLQ is also the only party to have posted signs featuring an Indigenous language, a first in the province, according to our findings⁶. Finally, all of the signs posted by the PCaQ that we inventoried were bilingual. As mentioned above, this party is in favour of official bilingualism in Quebec, so the posting of systematic bilingual signs is in line with the party’s ideology. Surprisingly, the team did not find any Bloc Montréal signs featuring English, despite this party’s ideology being similar to that of the PCaQ. The percentage of signs by language and party is shown in Figure 5. Examples of French-English bilingual signs are presented in Figure 6.

Figure 5. Language(s) on election signs by political party in 2022⁷

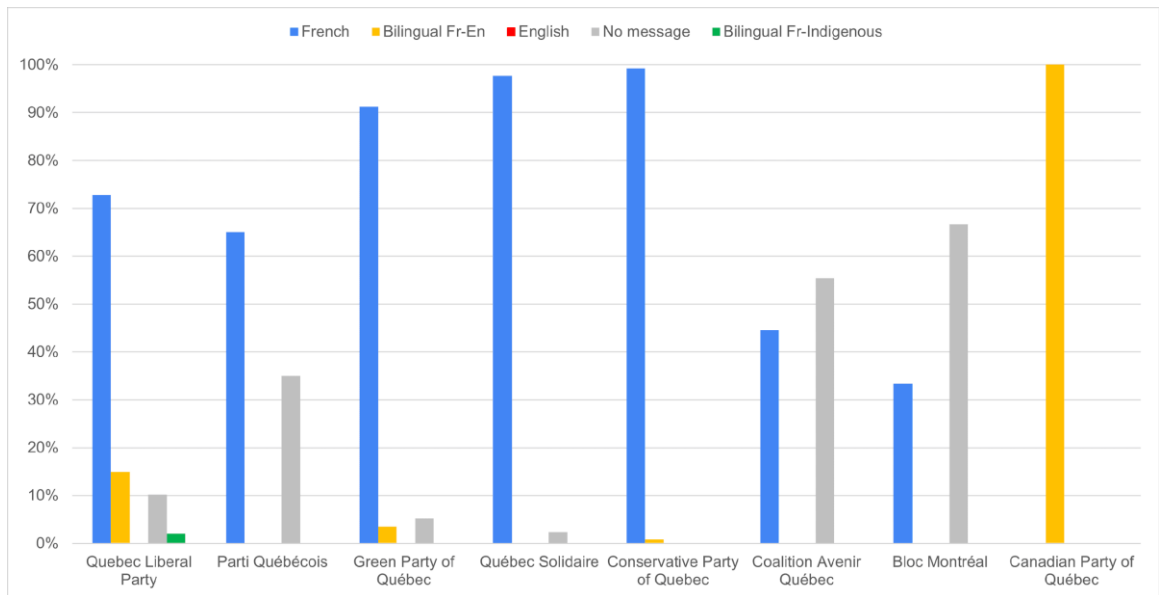
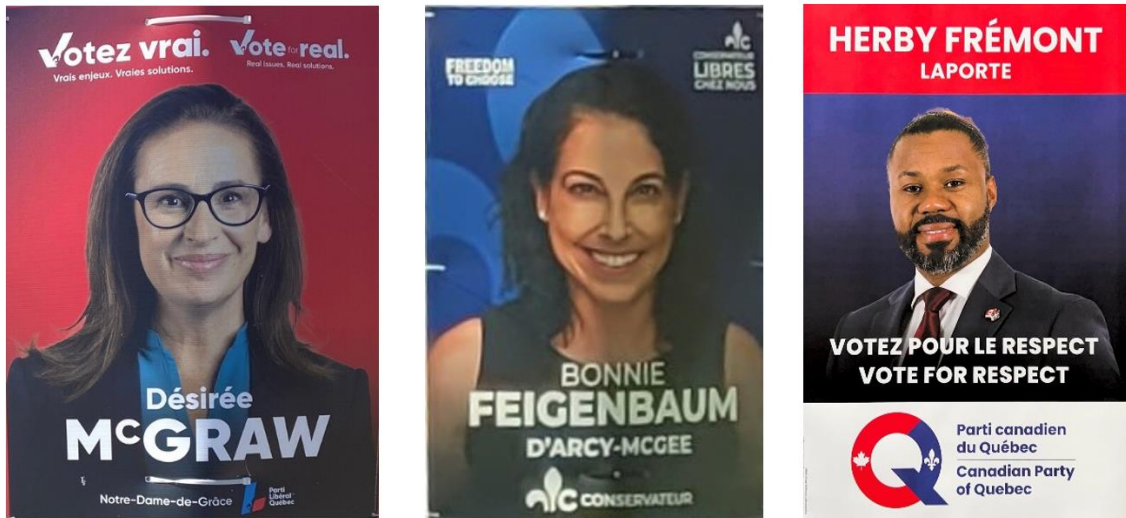
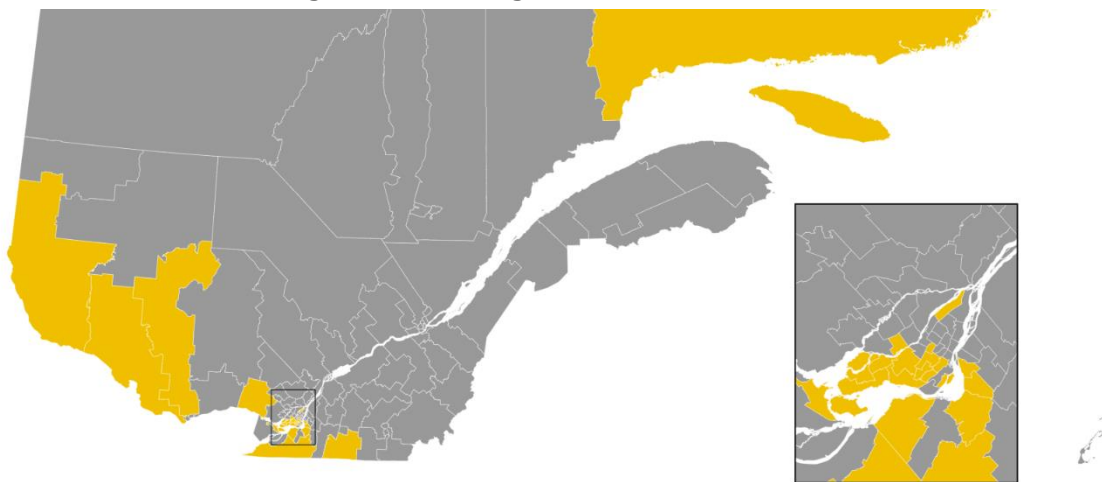


Figure 6. Examples of bilingual election signs posted in 2022



Bilingual signs were scattered in 25 of Quebec’s 125 ridings, 18 of which are located in the greater Montreal area. Others were found in the Basses-Laurentides region (Argenteuil), the Montérégie (Huntingdon), the Eastern Townships (Brome-Missisquoi), the Lower North Shore (Duplessis) as well as in the western part of the province, along the border with Ontario (Gatineau, Pontiac and Rouyn-Noranda-Témiscamingue), as shown on the following map⁸. All of these ridings have a significant English-speaking population, usually above the provincial average, with a few exceptions (Élections Québec, 2022). This means that political parties posting bilingual signs are well aware of the linguistic reality of the ridings they target with such signs.

Figure 7. Location of bilingual election signs in 2022



Source: Own work. Created using the [2022 Québec General Election Map](#) by Talleyrand6 (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Of the four parties that posted bilingual signs, the PLQ is the only one to have won any seats in those ridings, winning 14 of them (the Party won 21 seats overall). The remaining seats among the 25 “bilingual-sign ridings” were won by the CAQ (9 seats) and QS (2 seats). Six of the 14 bilingual-sign ridings won by the PLQ are the only ones with an English-speaking majority population in the province (Élections Québec, 2022). They are all located in the western half of the island of Montreal (D’Arcy-McGee, Jacques-Cartier, Nelligan, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Robert-Baldwin and Westmount–Saint-Louis). The other eight bilingual-sign ridings won by the PLQ all boast at least 25 per cent of anglophones. Four other ridings are on the island of Montreal (LaFontaine, Marquette, Mont-Royal–Outremont and Saint-Laurent), one is just west of the island (Vaudreuil), one is in Laval (Chomedey), one is on the South Shore (La Pinière) and the last is the Pontiac riding in the Outaouais region. The latter is the only riding won by the PLQ outside of the greater Montreal area.

Figure 8. Seats won by the Quebec Liberal Party in 2022



Source: Own work. Created using the [2022 Québec General Election Map](#) by Talleyrand6 (CC BY-SA 4.0)








Thus, in 2022, Quebec political parties logically posted bilingual signs in ridings with a significant English-speaking population, most of which traditionally support the PLQ. The above maps show that this is especially true in the greater Montreal area, with the exception of the Pontiac riding in the Outaouais region (far left on the map), where 38 per cent of the population is anglophone.

Summary

In this section, we summarize our findings regarding the language practices of Quebec political parties during the 2022 provincial election. The practice of bilingualism was analyzed with a focus on seven communication tools used by the political parties surveyed: their name, logo, slogan, website, program, Facebook and Twitter social media accounts and election signs. Table 1 shows the whole spectrum of bilingualism practised during the election campaign, with a presence-of-English score ranging from 0/7 to 7/7 (1 point was awarded to a full language version; 0.5 to a partial version).

Whereas the Parti Québécois (0/7) and Canadian Party of Québec (7/7) are at opposite ends of the spectrum, other parties fall between these two extremes, with scores ranging from 1.5/7 to 5.5/7. It is worthwhile noting that translation into English is sometimes partial (such as on websites), as mentioned above.

Table 1. Summary of language practices by party

Party	Name	Logo	Slogan	Website	Program	Social media	Signs	Presence of English
 CAQ	FR	FR	FR-en	FR-en	FR-en	FR	FR	1.5/7
 PLQ	FR-EN	FR	FR-EN	FR-EN	FR-EN	FR	FR-EN	5/7
 QS	FR	FR	FR-EN	FR-en	FR-EN	FR	FR	2.5/7
 PQ	FR	FR	FR	FR	FR	FR	FR	0/7
 PCQ	FR	FR	FR-EN	FR-EN	FR-EN	FR	FR-en	3.5/7
 PVQ	FR-EN	FR	FR-EN	FR-EN	FR-EN	FR-EN	FR-en	5.5/7
 PCaQ	FR-EN	FR-EN	FR-EN	FR-EN	FR-EN	FR-EN	FR-EN	7/7
 BM	FR	FR	FR-EN	FR-EN	FR-EN	fr-EN	FR	4/7
Total English	3/8	1/8	6.5/8	6/8	6.5/8	3/8	3/8	

Lower case indicates that said linguistic version is partial or incomplete: translation of secondary slogan only; partial translation of website; program version available upon request; only a few posts in the language; only a few bilingual signs posted.

By looking at the table, one could think that Quebec political parties use English more than one would expect in light of the official monolingualism of the province. However, the political parties’ most visible communication tools, that is, their name, logo, slogan and election signs, are generally in French, even when an English version exists. English is more likely to be present on the Internet (website and program) than posted in the public space such as on election signs. And, as mentioned above, bilingual signs were almost exclusively posted in ridings with an English-speaking population above the provincial average. Even non-nationalist parties such as the PLQ and the PVQ use their French name and logo on bilingual signs. Thus, there are many shades of grey in translation practices. For example, on the PLQ’s bilingual election signs, as pictured below, the French slogan is predominant, a practice that is in line with the Charter of the French Language, even though political messages are legally exempted from such a requirement, as mentioned before.

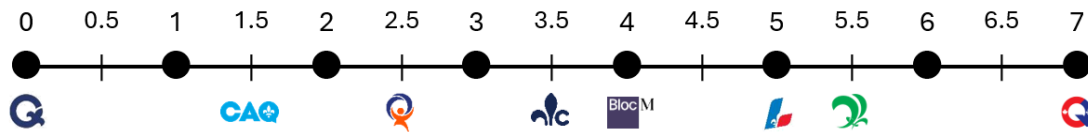
Figure 9. Bilingual slogan of the Quebec Liberal Party in 2022



The overall results are generally in line with the political parties’ policy position with respect to languages in Quebec and the intrinsically related national question. At one

end of the scale, with a total absence of English, we have the PQ (0/7), firmly nationalistic, pro-independence and in favour of institutional French monolingualism. We then find the CAQ (1.5/7), which is nationalistic but not pro-independence and is in favour of institutional French monolingualism, and QS (2.5/7), a party that is pro-independence and pro-French but that does not make those issues a priority. Next is the PCQ (3.5/7), a party that puts individual rights and freedoms at the centre of its program, promoting a “voluntarist policy” when it comes to the development of French.⁹

Figure 10. Political parties’ bilingualism practice scale



The PLQ (5/7), fundamentally federalist, has always practised some kind of bilingualism. This is not surprising as it has historically been the first choice among non-francophones in the province. For example, according to a study conducted by Bélanger et al. (2022: 60), 80.9 per cent of anglophones and 69.8 per cent of allophones voted for the Quebec Liberal Party in 2018. While this party reaffirmed on its platform that French is the official language of Quebec, it has also taken a more ambiguous position on protecting the French language, and, according to Bélanger et al. (2018, 52), does “not appear as deeply committed to this issue as others”.

The PVQ’s position on the scale (5.5/7) might come as a surprise, but let’s remember that this party’s electoral base is concentrated in the Montreal area and less francophone than that of QS (Bélanger et al. 2009, 108). Moreover, the party is against Bill 96, in favour of bilingual instruction, and sees itself as an alternative to the sovereigntist left-wing QS party, claiming to be the “federalist left”, a slogan used on election signs in 2017 and in many documents since (PVQ, 2022).

At the other end of the scale, we find the PCaQ (7/7), a party in favour of official bilingualism and firmly against Quebec language laws. Notably divergent, BM, a party with an ideology similar to that of the PCaQ, finds itself in the middle of the scale (4/7). Both parties were founded in 2022 as alternatives to the PLQ for anglophones “looking for a new champion” (Andrew-Gee 2022), as well as for allophones (Carpenter, 2022).

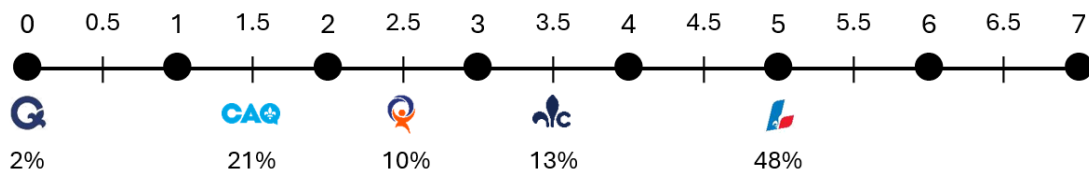
Conclusion

Two observations emerge from our study of the linguistic practices of Quebec political parties during the 2022 electoral campaign—and beyond, to a certain extent. First, despite Quebec having French as its sole official language, the vast majority of provincial political parties use English to some degree in their communication strategy. Practices vary enormously, but are generally in line with the parties’ policy position regarding the status of French and English in Quebec and the political status of Quebec within Canada. The greater the party’s inclination toward institutional French monolingualism and the more nationalistic it is, the less English it uses in its communication with voters. Conversely, the greater the party’s inclination toward

bilingualism and the more federalist it is, the more it uses English. While it is true that such parties might have more English-speaking staff at hand to help with day-to-day English-language needs, it is unlikely that translation practices in general are linked to the staff's level of expertise in English as translation is usually done externally by professional translators. The same applies to financial resources: Translating every one of the party's documents could be costly but translating a few documents such as election signs and flyers, a program and parts of a website, for example, would only cost a few thousand dollars. This represents a drop in the bucket of an election campaign budget. Here, the decision of whether to translate is not a question of resources but an ideological one.

Second, there is a correlation between political parties' linguistic practices and the support they get from voters belonging to different language groups. It is hard to tell whether this correlation is causal or not. If there is a link, causality can only be partial as there are many causal factors in political choices, and language is only one of them. This being said, communicating in the voter's language seems to have some incidence on their allegiance: Parties that communicate the least in English generally receive the least support from anglophone and allophone voters in the province. According to Leger's final survey (2022a)¹⁰, only 2 per cent of non-francophones intended to vote for the PQ, compared to 19 per cent of francophones. Intention to vote for QS and the CAQ was also lower among non-francophones than among francophones: Ten per cent of non-francophones intended to vote for QS compared to 17 per cent of francophones, whereas 21 per cent of non-francophones intended to vote for the CAQ compared to 44 per cent of francophones. The PLQ, a party that practises bilingualism more than any other major party, was still the "champion" among non-francophones with 48 per cent of voting intentions, as shown in Figure 11, compared to only 6 per cent among francophones. Thus, among the major political parties, the PQ and PLQ represent the two extremes on the bilingualism practice scale and in voting intentions weighted according to mother tongue. This is in line with Bélanger et al. (2022, 67) when they state that the "language effect" is only statistically significant for the "old parties".

Figure 11. Major political parties' bilingualism practice scale and voting intentions among non-francophones



Moreover, according to Leger's post-election survey (2022b), the language/culture issue is by far the one that had the greatest influence on the vote among non-francophones. Nevertheless, it is impossible to establish whether the parties' language practices have a direct impact on the results of an election. We can't tell, for example, whether English-speaking Quebecers vote massively for the PLQ because this party is the one, among the major parties, that uses English the most, or if this party uses English because it knows that its base largely speaks English. One thing that seems clear, however, is that if you don't address someone in their preferred

language, chances are that they won't support you, even if they understand the language that you use.

End Notes

- ¹ Charte de la langue française, 1977, c. 5, a. 58 ; 1983, c. 56, a. 12 ; 1988, c. 54, a. 1 ; 1993, c. 40, a. 18.
- ² In English, the Liberal Party spells Quebec without the accent on the first 'e', whereas the other two use Québec. This may be because the Liberal Party is "old"; nowadays, it is common to keep the accent in Québec in English, at least for official purposes. As for the Canadian Party of Québec, the accent in Québec in English disappears on the logo, and sometimes on its website
- ³ A longer *Votez vrai. Vrais enjeux. Vraies solutions./Vote for Real. Real issues. Real solutions.* version was also used.
- ⁴ One of the disadvantages of not having an official translation is that anyone can provide their own. The party therefore has no control over the "other version" of the slogan, which can lead to bad translations or even ideologically driven ones. *Le Québec qui s'assume. Pour vrai.* was translated *A Quebec that accepts itself. For real.* by The Canadian Press and *The Quebec that takes it on. For real.* in the Wikipedia 2022 Quebec general election article. As for the CAQ's *Continuons*, it was either translated as *Let's keep going* (The Canadian Press, CBC, Wikipedia) or *Let's continue* (The Canadian Press, Bloomberg).
- ⁵ Red box added by the authors for clarity.
- ⁶ French-Inuktitut in Ungava; French-Innu in Roberval and French-Algonquin in the three Abitibi-Témiscamingue ridings (combined on one sign). We did not find any other signs featuring an Indigenous language during this study that enabled us to collect 1271 signs used from 1905 to 2022. While it is not impossible that such signs have been produced at some point in the last century, it is unlikely that there were more than a just a few.
- ⁷ The "No message" category on the graph refers to signs without a slogan or message other than the name of the party, candidate and/or riding.
- ⁸ For a complete map with riding locations and names, see Élections Québec's 2022 electoral division map at <https://www.electionsquebec.qc.ca/en/electoral-maps/provincial-electoral-divisions>.
- ⁹ PCQ. 2022. Langue, culture et immigration. Parti conservateur du Québec, https://www.conservateur.quebec/langue_culture_et_immigration.
- ¹⁰ The survey only allowed respondents to choose between the five major parties (CAQ, PLQ, QS, PQ and PCQ). All other parties were grouped under the label "Other".

About the authors

Marc Pomerleau is a lecturer in Université de Montréal's Department of Linguistics and Translation and a Research Associate in jurilinguistics at McGill University. He is also a certified translator.

Esmaeil Kalantari is an interdisciplinary scholar working as a Research Assistant in in Université de Montréal's Department of Linguistics and Translation and Université TÉLUQ's Department of Human Sciences, Arts and Communication.

ORCID

Marc Pomerleau: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2042-2713>

Esmaeil Kalantari: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2223-1171>

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