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• (1835)

[*English*]

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

[*Translation*]

Welcome to the 19th meeting of the Standing Committee on Science and Research.

[*English*]

As you know, today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format pursuant to the House order of June 23. We have members who 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 our first study of research and scientific publication in French.

I'd like to make a few comments for the benefit of witnesses and members. As you know, for interpretation for those on Zoom, you have a choice at the bottom of your screen of French, English, or floor. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel.

I offer a reminder that all comments should be addressed through the chair. For members in the room, as you know, 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.

I'd now like to welcome our guests. We are so delighted to have you, and we are looking forward to listening to you.

Appearing as an individual, we have Professor Sylvie Lamoureux, full professor and research chair in language management. From Acfas, we have Professor Jean-Pierre Perreault, president; Professor Anne-José Villeneuve, president of the Alberta section; and Laura Pelletier, project manager, Canadian Francophonie.

Each group will have five minutes to present. At the four and a half minute mark, I will hold up this card. It lets you know you have 30 seconds to finish.

[*Translation*]

Prof. Lamoureux, you now have the floor.

Ms. Sylvie Lamoureux (Full Professor, Research Chair in Language Management, As an Individual): Madam Chair, Vice-Chairs, and members of the committee, I would like to thank you

for the invitation to participate in this first meeting in connection with your study on research and scientific publication in French. I congratulate you on your choice of this particular subject.

Protecting and promoting research and scientific publication in French is important, not only for disseminating and mobilizing knowledge, but also for the French language to continue to be promoted and flourish. In the words of author-composer-performer Daniel Lavoie, French is a language that thinks, a beautiful and proud language.

Much ink has been spilled in the last 40 years and more about research and scientific publication in French. The work of colleagues like Vincent Larivière, at the Université de Montréal, and Richard Marcoux, at Laval University, show the urgency of the need to examine this question now.

Like Quebec's chief scientist, Rémi Quirion, I believe we need to do more to promote research in French, learned publications and popular publications for the general public, not only among the scientific committee, but also among the communities affected by research, and francophone communities in general. In so doing, we will raise Canada's profile in the francophone world and beyond.

I was delighted when the Quebec Research Funds launched the Publication en français award. I was even envious, since we have nothing like it in Ontario. It is a wonderful incentive to encourage and promote publication in French.

I am grateful for the various supports offered for Canadian francophone and bilingual journals in the social sciences and humanities and in the fine arts and literature, a majority of which are available in the open access collection on the Érudit platform. The reality, however, is that scientific publications in French and promotion of scientific knowledge in French are declining. The work done by Vincent Larivière confirms a significant drop in the creation of new scientific journals in French in the world in general, but particularly in Canada.

Creation of the *Érudit* platform has certainly been of crucial importance to the recognition of scientific publication in French in Canada and internationally. However, Prof. Richard Marcoux at Laval University has demonstrated the precariousness of the very existence of Canadian scholarly journals, in particular those in French or in both official languages, because of their limited readership. While they do not represent a business opportunity for foreign publishing houses or for the organizations that might fund them, these publications meet a need for information about important Canadian issues that are of interest not just for Canada, but also for the rest of the world.

The work done by Prof. Marcoux on scientific publication in the humanities in Canada shows that francophone researchers draw heavily on research in English, while their anglophone counterparts do not return the favour. This is a genuine problem, since a language is more than words: it is a culture and a way of thinking and seeing the world. If we ignore it, we are putting blinders on.

My experience as a leader at the University of Ottawa has confirmed that some young researchers are worried about the negative effects of publishing in French when the time comes to evaluate their application for tenure or promotion.

Journals in French are generally not indexed. Choosing to publish in French means choosing to be cited less often. Some people consider that choice negatively instead of recognizing the importance of promoting our language and ensuring dissemination of scientific knowledge in our language.

How, then, are we to promote research and publication in French among Canada's emerging researchers, the young and the not so young?

The lack of publications in French presents challenges for me when I am designing university courses in French. I have no choice but to use publications in English in a course given in French, which is particularly problematic for a master's course on language policy and planning in Canada, for example. How can this situation be justified to francophone students coming from outside Canada, or students who expect that all, or at least most, of their lectures will be in French?

My research does not deal directly with this subject, but it does highlight a secondary, not to say perverse, effect of the linguistic homogenization of research: the low number of master's and doctoral theses written in French. That reinforces the stereotype that in order to do science, you have to do it in English.

- (1840)

That creates a vicious circle when it comes time to move from elementary school to secondary school, or choose a field of post-secondary study. At university, some people believe that to succeed and be published, they have to study in English, since that is the language that science is published in.

That is what I feel personally when I do my research, when I hear young people tell me why they left French-language secondary school, why they enrolled in a program in English, or why they chose to do their thesis in English even though they are enrolled in a program in French.

In Ontario, French-language secondary schools first came into being in about 1969...

The Chair: I'm sorry to interrupt you, Prof. Lamoureux, but your speaking time is up.

[*English*]

I hope that when our colleagues begin to ask questions, you will be able to finish your material.

Thank you so very much.

[*Translation*]

I will now give the floor to the representatives of Acfas for five minutes.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault (President, Acfas): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good evening, members of the committee. Thank you for having us here.

I am Jean-Pierre Perreault, president of Acfas and Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies, at the Université de Sherbrooke.

Our century-old association, Acfas, brings together French-speaking researchers in Canada. Our study entitled "Portrait et défis de la recherche en français en contexte minoritaire au Canada" reveals that French-speaking researchers represent 21 per cent of the research community in Canada, but that only half of them make their grant applications to the federal granting councils in French.

In my own discipline, biochemistry and RNA, I would not even dare to think I would be successful if I submitted an application in French. There are three main reasons for that.

First, the granting councils have often had a poor reputation when it comes to how they treat applications in French. The evaluators assess their own level of bilingualism, and some of them do not completely understand the francophone application they are reading, and so some francophone researchers have received comments from certain granting councils, explaining the denial of funding for their project, that made no sense.

The success rate for applications submitted in French is lower than for applications submitted in English. This entire situation has led to distrust on the part of French-speaking researchers. There is therefore work to be done at the federal granting councils to reverse the trend and regain these researchers' confidence.

Second, in minority situations, many francophone researchers work at anglophone universities, where it is simply not possible to submit an application in French, because the university would not be able to understand it. One of the reasons why Acfas wants to create a new service to assist research in French in Canada is to get through this blockade.

Third, along with those reasons, there is obviously the international context of research, where English is the common language.

From the perspective of learned publications and presentations in French, the data from our study show a clear and definite decline. Our respondents, who are all from Canadian francophone minority communities, say that they publish in English to reach a broader audience, to be cited more often, to have better chances of getting grants, and to advance their career. English is also the language of a majority of prestigious scholarly journals, and this carries considerable weight in a researcher's curriculum vitae.

It is essential to have a common language in research. That being said, we must not forget the local situation. There is knowledge to be transmitted to our community and a francophone vocabulary to be developed for disseminating this research. Francophone scholarly journals also play a crucial role in developing that vocabulary.

We cannot just place the blame on the international research environment to explain the decline we are experiencing. As I said earlier, there is a lack of confidence in the granting councils in Canada. There is also a lack of financing for scholarly journals, scientific activities in French and groups that provide leadership in these communities. And last, there is a lack of recognition.

We need to expand the criteria based on which a researcher is valued in Canada. And we need to acknowledge that there are a number of profiles of professor/researchers and they are all as excellent as one another. Some researchers use their experience not only to advance knowledge, but also to advance their society, for example by advising community groups or having local study subjects to respond to specific concerns in their community, for example. In my opinion, valuing them less simply because their research has no international impact makes no sense.

Before concluding, I would like to note that what we are calling for is part of an international movement for multilingualism in research brought about by the Helsinki Initiative.

I would point out that I am accompanied by Prof. Anne-José Villeneuve, from Alberta, who manages two scholarly journals, one francophone and the other bilingual, and Laura Pelletier, project manager at Acfas.

We will be pleased to answer your questions. Thank you for your attention.

• (1845)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Perreault.

[English]

I'd like to thank all our witnesses for joining us, and I'd also like to recognize that tonight we're joined by members Monsieur Boulerville and Ms. Thompson.

Welcome to the committee as well.

We thank our witnesses and colleagues. We will now go to our first round of questions. Our members will be very interested in hearing your advice tonight. This is a six-minute round.

We will begin with Mr. Williams, please.

[Translation]

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses for coming to the committee today.

I'm sorry: I am learning French, but I am going to ask my questions in English today.

[English]

Monsieur Perreault, in your 2021 summary report, you mention that this situation got the attention of the official languages commission in 2008 and SSHRC in 2011. What were the recommendations of the symposiums held in 2008 and 2011, and were their recommendations ever acted upon?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault: I am going to let Ms. Pelletier answer your question. She specializes in this subject and she is responsible for the aspects relating to Canadian francophone at Acfas.

Ms. Laura Pelletier (Project Manager, Canadian Francophonie, Acfas): Thank you for your question, Mr. Williams.

In the literature review that appears in the long version of the report, you will find a precise summary of the recommendations that came out of the symposiums that were held. However, the findings are more or less the same as the findings we made in the study: the need to promote scientific activity in French and the actors who support it, and to encourage the study of these subjects, that is, the study of Canadian francophonie itself.

[English]

Mr. Ryan Williams: Okay. I was wondering if you could give us some numbers.

Say, for example, that you have two equal researchers in the same field, one anglophone and one francophone. If they wanted to publish their findings in a scholarly journal, how many journals would be available to each researcher in their mother tongue?

[Translation]

Ms. Laura Pelletier: I don't have the exact figure in my head, but you will find a table in the report that shows the number of francophone publications in each province. Certainly, in the provinces other than Quebec, there are a lot more journals in English where a researcher can publish. You will also see that some provinces have only one francophone journal. I think that will give you a good idea of the situation.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault: We also have to remember that scholarly journals in French are found primarily in the humanities and social sciences. Myself, I am a health researcher, and as in the case of my colleagues in the natural sciences and engineering, there are virtually no journals in French in our disciplines.

[English]

Mr. Ryan Williams: Does a lack of publishing opportunities hold back innovative discoveries by francophone researchers? If so, can you give us some examples?

[Translation]

Ms. Anne-José Villeneuve (President, Alberta, Acfas): Thank you for your question.

When you publish in the humanities and social sciences, it is often easier to disseminate your work in the majority language, English, than to do it in French. Obviously, it depends on the research subjects. When you are working on the francophonie, you can publish your work in French more easily. However, when you work in political science, sociology or anthropology, for example, you have a much broader choice of scientific journals, a large majority of which are in English.

The journals recognized as being in French often deal with humanities and social sciences in general or, even more often, with the francophonie. When you do research on that subject or on language in general, the number of French or bilingual scientific journals is obviously higher than when you do research on another subject.

• (1850)

Ms. Laura Pelletier: I would like to add one clarification. The question is not just the number of journals published in French. There is also the fact that some of those journals lack support. The goal is therefore not to have a huge expansion in the number of journals; rather, it is to make sure that a researcher is able to publish in the language of their choice in every field. We also have to make sure that the existing journals have the resources they need to secure their future.

[English]

Mr. Ryan Williams: Are those journals not translated into French? Are they only available in English?

Ms. Anne-José Villeneuve: If I may, I'll make my response bilingual for the purpose of tonight's discussion.

Usually, a researcher who publishes in one language is discouraged from publishing the same article in the other language. It would essentially be considered self-plagiarism.

[Translation]

That means that if you publish an article in French on a specific subject in a particular journal, the article might not be published in English. There is no mechanism that systematically translates an article into another language.

[English]

Mr. Ryan Williams: My last question, Madam Chair, is this. Should they be, yes or no?

The Chair: Perhaps, Mr. Williams, you might want to ask for a written answer, because you're out of time.

Mr. Ryan Williams: But "yes or no" would be quick, though.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Williams.

[Translation]

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

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Perreault and Ms. Lamoureux.

Ms. Lamoureux, you piqued my curiosity when you talked about the work done by Vincent Larivière. When I read one of his publications dating from 2018, I learned that there were fewer and fewer scientific journals in French in Canada. It said that between 1940 and the end of the 1980s, the share held by English was relatively stable, at around 80 per cent, while the share held by French was about 10 per cent. However, starting with the turn of the 21st century, there has been a decline in French.

How do you explain this major decline starting in the 2000s, when before that, there was a balance between the language of publication and the number of researchers?

Ms. Sylvie Lamoureux: The number of researchers is not the only factor. In the 1940s, at the doctoral level, the obligation to learn a language other than the language a person was studying in was standard.

Around the end of the 1990s and at the turn of the 21st century, universities started eliminating that obligation to learn either a foreign language or the other Canadian official language, even for doctoral students in Canadian history, difficult as it may be to imagine studying the history of this country without being able to read one part of it.

The largest number of journals were started in the 1980s, but since then we have observed a decline. That phenomenon echoes globalization and the growing homogenization toward English.

Starting a new journal is not everything, however. There also have to be people to manage and fund it. If the readership is not very large, the business is much more difficult. In fact, several years ago there was even a pretty significant drop in funding for journals coming out of Quebec.

So a few factors, like globalization and a loss of multilingualism among the academic intelligentsia, contribute to explaining the present situation.

• (1855)

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: Could one of those solutions be to work with the universities and somehow go back to the former way of doing things, by making it mandatory to include both official languages in their programs, in order to promote French more?

Ms. Sylvie Lamoureux: I am 56 years old, and life expectancy is very high in my family. However, while it may be a fine dream, I think it will not be achieved during my lifetime, because of academic freedom, university curricula, and the internationalization of those curricula. We must not forget that this practice would apply not only to bilingual and francophone universities, but also to anglophone universities.

At present, we have to consider not only the question of publications in French, but also the matter of promoting research about the francophonie. If I want to publish an article in English about my studies in French Ontario, that is not very sexy. I get lovely rejection letters saying:

[English]

“Our readership is not interested in this topic. Please try a francophone journal.”

[Translation]

However, if I really want to communicate and show the links between what I am doing and what is being done in Wales, I lose that opportunity. These are two subjects.

So how do we make people aware of this? We could always ask the Commissioner of Official Languages to work with the universities.

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: Why not?

Ms. Sylvie Lamoureux: Getting back to multilingualism at the national and international level is a fine dream that we can try to achieve, in my opinion.

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: Mr. Perreault or Ms. Lamoureux, could you tell us the scientific disciplines where the share held by francophone publications has declined the most?

Ms. Sylvie Lamoureux: I will let Mr. Perreault answer that question.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault: The decline affects health sciences, natural sciences and engineering. In fact, it affects health sciences the most, because there is virtually nothing in that field. In natural sciences and engineering, there are still a few bilingual journals, but that is all. It is really in those fields that there has been a major loss.

I think you raised an interesting point when you mentioned the revision of the Official Languages Act. That may be an opportunity to insist that research have strong roots and take its rightful place.

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: Ms. Lamoureux, do you agree with what Mr. Perreault just said?

Ms. Sylvie Lamoureux: Yes. Without a doubt, it is easier to publish in the fields of education or language policy. Nonetheless, I think the discussions around the revision of the Official Languages Act give us an opportunity to initiate a dialogue. Acfas and the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne have a role to play.

That being said, how can we present this as a topical issue? We have been talking about it for 40 years. Are we going to wait another 40 years to find solutions? I think it is genuinely urgent that these questions be raised in the political arena.

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: As one possible avenue, I have proposed that we get back to basics a bit.

I have barely 20 seconds left. Mr. Perreault, you said that the federal government can have some influence, through the universities and the Official Languages Act. In concrete terms, what can it do to help you in this regard?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault: This has to be incorporated into the Act and then the resources that are needed have to be provided. We talked about better...

[English]

The Chair: Professor Perreault, I am sorry to interrupt.

Mr. Lauzon, I'm afraid the time is over. Perhaps you would like to ask Professor Perreault to table a written response.

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: Yes, I would like to have a written response on this one because it's a major issue.

Thank you.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lauzon.

I am now going to give Mr. Blanchette-Joncas the floor for six minutes.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to welcome the witnesses who are with us this evening and are participating in this important study.

I am going to yield my speaking time to Mr. Perreault so he can conclude his presentation.

• (1900)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault: Thank you very much. That is kind of you.

It was noted earlier, and I said it at the start of my presentation: funding for scholarly journals enables them to exist, to flourish and to engage in promotion; that is one thing. However, we also have to think about doing more to support scientific activities in French and the organizations that initiate them. Obviously, there has been a breakdown in the last 10 or 20 years, during which we have seen a gradual decrease in funding. The combination of rising costs and decreased funding brings us to the situation we are now in.

We therefore have to adopt very concrete measures to correct the situation. As I said, it is one thing to incorporate research as a fundamental element in the revision of the Official Languages Act, but we still need to take the necessary measures to fully achieve the objectives of the Act.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you very much for that additional information, Mr. Perreault.

Your report entitled "Portrait and challenges of research in French in the minority context in Canada," dating from the summer of 2021, speaks volumes. One of its recommendations is to create a service to assist research in French, with the aim of disseminating knowledge in French.

In November 2021, the Quebec government granted funding to Acfas to create that service to assist research in French.

What about on the federal side?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault: I am going to begin answering the question and then let Ms. Pelletier finish.

The purpose of the service to assist research in French, or SARF, is to offer services to the research community in minority language environments. For example, a researcher at an anglophone institution who is doing a study of French and the use of that language in their region has to have the questionnaires and the research proposal translated in order for their institution to be able to submit them to one of the three granting councils. The SARF will offer that kind of support service to the research community.

The SARF is so important to us that Acfas started it up with the help of the government of Quebec, which provided its initial funding. We are currently seeking financial support from the federal government to support this service, which will be offered from coast to coast. We really think the Canadian government has everything to gain by supporting us financially so this service can be offered to the entire academic community.

Ms. Laura Pelletier: I would add that we have the support of the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie and of partners in the private sector.

We really want to obtain federal government funding, but our efforts have not worked so far. We think, for example, that the granting councils have a role to play, given that we will be helping them meet their official languages obligations. At present, they do not receive as many applications in French as they would like, because some researchers would like to submit applications in French but can't do so because they are in an anglophone university. We will therefore certainly need funding from the federal government for this service to be able to support all francophone researchers in minority language environments.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault: I would like to point out that we are not talking just about small institutions, since what we are describing also applies to a researcher at the University of Toronto who teaches in the French Studies Department.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you.

To put things in perspective, if I understand correctly, it is currently the government of Quebec that is engaged in promoting the development of scientific research in minority language environments in the rest of Canada. Is that right?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault: That's right.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Perfect.

Prof. Villeneuve, my next question is for you. I know that you direct scientific research, particularly in western Canada. You are also in charge of two scientific journals, one francophone and the other bilingual.

Can you tell us about your experience in more detail?

Ms. Anne-José Villeneuve: Thank you for the question.

The first of the two journals I edit is called *Arborescences*. Its home base is the French Studies Department at the University of Toronto. In fact, I co-edit it with a professor at the university. It is a journal of French-language literary, linguistic and pedagogical studies that focuses specifically on French and francophone studies. Most of the articles in the journal are in French and each issue has a theme.

At this time, we have the capacity to publish only one issue a year. Editing, managing and operating a scientific journal requires volunteer work on the part of researchers. They are the people who receive the papers, evaluate the submissions, make recommendations, and handle the entire publication process. It is an extremely big job. As long as that research is not valued, fewer people are going to volunteer to do the work.

The second journal I co-edit is the *Canadian Journal of Linguistics*, a bilingual publication of the Canadian Linguistic Association. That journal focuses on the scientific study of languages. We publish four issues a year. There are four co-editors, two women and two men, and one assistant...

• (1905)

The Chair: I'm sorry to interrupt you, Prof. Villeneuve.

[*English*]

I just want to say to our witnesses that we so appreciate your being here. We appreciate your testimony. It's just that I notice a hand keeps going up, but our members will say who they want to speak to, so please don't feel that people are being rude. We are very welcoming and we are very grateful to have you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Chair, I would like to ask Ms. Villeneuve whether she would send us an answer in writing, particularly regarding the challenges she referred to on the subject of the francophone and bilingual scientific journals.

Thank you.

The Chair: Very good.

[*English*]

Now we will go to Mr. Boulérice—we're so pleased to have you join us—for six minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulérice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would also like to thank the witnesses and the experts who are with us today to discuss this very important issue.

Several years ago, I was a social sciences student in university. At that time, it was already impossible for a student who was not able to read English to do a bachelor's degree. We are talking about social sciences, not biochemistry or health sciences, a field that Mr. Perreault mentioned. The figures the witnesses have presented to us do not give the impression that the situation has improved.

Ms. Lamoureux, earlier, you used a word that I didn't much like. You talked about researchers being "afraid" to publish in French, since they have the feeling, or even the certainty, that their publications in that language will be disseminated less and be cited less, and will have less importance. For those reasons, they tend to publish in English.

How can we reverse that trend and climb back up that slippery slope?

We can't invent new journals. In fact, the universities and research centres can do that, but not the federal government, whether here or abroad. How can we support these researchers so they publish in French when their career, from what I understand, might suffer?

Ms. Sylvie Lamoureux: Ten years ago, there were bigger opportunities than today in some francophone and bilingual institutions outside Quebec. People are aware of the challenges since the study done by Acfas really created spaces for discussion within the committees responsible for promotions and tenure.

Researchers who study the francophonie and want to publish in French but do not have the privilege of being in a francophone or bilingual institution have to argue the importance of that research, and of publishing it in French, to scientists in general, and that is a major awareness-raising task. The fact that a publication does not have the same citation index as *Nature* does not mean that the research published in it lacks credibility or relevance.

I have personally had experiences with the funding bodies that Mr. Perreault referred to. I submitted an application in French and in the comments I received in response, someone went so far as to question whether I had my doctorate! The next year, I translated my application before submitting it, and it was ranked among my committee's best applications. As a Franco-Ontarian, I find it very difficult to accept that situation. The important thing, however, is that I got my grant.

Regarding my choice of publications, because I am a full professor, I don't experience the same stress, but I can be a model. If the importance of research and publishing in French is not promoted among non-francophones, it will be virtually impossible to dispel these fears and creating a feeling of security that will enable a researcher to take on their identity as a francophone researcher or a researcher studying the francophonie.

• (1910)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Thank you, Ms. Lamoureux. I am now going to address another subject with you and Mr. Perreault.

Mention has been made of francophone and anglophone universities, research centres, and grant applications. What I am going to say may be completely off the wall.

Francophones represent two per cent of the population of North America, but there are hundreds of millions of francophones in the world. No one has yet spoken about the international francophonie. Could collaboration and support efforts be undertaken, more broadly, with our French, Swiss, Belgian and African friends? In many African countries French is the common language or the language used for research.

Ms. Sylvie Lamoureux: People in the international francophonie also belong to international networks. We note the participation of foreign researchers in Acfas and I also travel regularly to Belgium, for example.

The contribution of the Quebec Research Funds and of another association will be making an event about the francophonie and

about promoting research possible. I don't recall whether it will be in November or next March. Mr. Perreault probably knows a lot more about that than I do. I will therefore give him the floor.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault: Mobilizing the international francophonie must absolutely be part of the strategy, yes. That is a way of creating a much larger community that has French as a shared language. In fact, we are very skilled when it comes to collaborating.

As Ms. Lamoureux said, there will very probably be an event in Quebec next April that will be about the production and promotion of research in French. It will be organized by the chief scientist and the Quebec Research Funds.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Ms. Pelletier and Prof. Villeneuve, do you have any comments to add on this subject?

Ms. Anne-José Villeneuve: I would simply like to add that having a shared language does not necessarily mean that we have a common culture and common concerns. It is really important to get to collaborate within the international francophonie.

However, we must not forget that social, identity and cultural challenges are also important, and we cannot simply let the entire burden fall on the international francophonie. Nor can we forget the duty of the federal government in respect of bilingualism, not only in terms of language, but also...

The Chair: I'm sorry to interrupt you, Ms. Villeneuve, but time is up. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Boulerice.

[*English*]

Now, dear colleagues, we will go to the five-minute rounds.

We begin with Ms. Gladu.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank all the witnesses for being here this evening.

I want to talk about the situation elsewhere in the world. I understand that in Germany, research studies are done in German. The same is true for France.

How many research studies are produced in French in the world? Is it possible to communicate that information better?

I will start with Ms. Lamoureux.

Ms. Sylvie Lamoureux: Unfortunately, I do not have any figures to give you.

I was a visiting professor in Germany for six months as part of a Canadian studies program, to raise the visibility of Canadian francophonie in minority language environments. Initially, the program was created with financial support from the government of Quebec.

In India, over 300 universities offer Canadian studies programs, mainly in English. On the other hand, they are also interested in Canadian francophonie. It encourages multilingualism on the part of the students when they know that studies are often published in French.

On the question of the impact of English on publications in other national languages, very important studies done some 15 years ago show that there is strong pressure on state universities in countries that have a different majority language to increase the programs they offer in English and publications in English.

Canada has the good fortune to be part of the international francophonie. French is a language that goes beyond the borders of our country, but the very very big problem of seeing how to disseminate publications in French remains.

• (1915)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Perreault, do you have any figures to give us or experiences to share?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault: We do not have figures to give you on that point, unfortunately.

However, I really do want to stress the fact that the convergence toward English is happening in a lot of countries and the difficulties in publishing in a language other than English do not just exist in Canada. There are virtually no more journals published in Italian, in Spanish, in German or in Japanese. The exception is China, because a lot more scientific research is being done there than 25 years ago. Otherwise, a decline can be seen in all languages.

As I said in my opening remarks, what we are calling for is really based on the Helsinki Initiative, which seeks to promote multilingualism in research.

Ms. Anne-José Villeneuve: Mr. Perreault, do you mind if I add a comment?

I am going to take the example of the Netherlands, where representation is important. If a majority of teaching is done in English, that sends the message to students that research and scientific activity happen in English. That is not the right message to send to Dutch speakers who are studying in English.

In my opinion, it should start at the base. There should be courses in French and in English, professors who are able to teach in both languages, and learning a language other than English should be promoted in the university curriculum. That is where it all starts. Then, at the master's and doctoral levels, and in academic life, we will be able to have this added value.

Otherwise, the message being sent, starting at the bachelor's level, is that French or languages other than English are not important in academic life.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Right. But does the government of Canada have the ability to put rules in place for publications to be produced in both of the country's official languages? Does the government have that power? Would it be a good idea?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault: The government could certainly do a better job of supporting the journals financially, ensuring that they publish several issues, promoting them, and thus creating a dynam-

ic community in French. I think that is part of the duty of the government of Canada.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Thank you.

Ms. Anne-José Villeneuve: I would like to add that the government could also offer incentives for courses to be given in both official languages and for professors who are able to teach and supervise students' work in both official languages to do so. At present, when you are a francophone or bilingual student, the burden...

[*English*]

The Chair: Professor Villeneuve, I'm sorry.

[*Translation*]

Time is up.

Thank you, Ms. Gladu.

[*English*]

Now we will go to Chad Collins for five minutes, please.

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

Thank you to the witnesses for appearing this evening.

I want to start with the whole issue of post-secondary institutions in terms of what they're doing. I think we've heard some evidence tonight in terms of what the provinces are doing. In some instances examples have been given outside of the province of Quebec. We've heard some challenges in terms of the universities—and probably the colleges as well—with regard to the granting agencies.

I'm hoping to get recommendations that focus on a strategy where all of those stakeholders address the same issue with a strategy that will address the problems that have been identified by all of the witnesses.

Professor Lamoureux, can I start with you first? What needs to happen in the post-secondary institution area? Of course, that involves the provinces and then, with the federal government, how do we jell all of those together with a strategy that starts to tackle some of the trust issues that have been identified by Mr. Perreault and some of the other issues that the witnesses have raised here this evening?

• (1920)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Lamoureux: Thank you.

[*English*]

My brain's switching to English for this one. It's not because you asked it in English; it's just jumped that way.

Although the universities are under provincial control, the important funding for research—at least outside of Quebec, because Quebec has the Fonds de recherche du Québec that I'm so envious of—is through the funding agencies, which are under federal control. If there's a way of coupling that with something in the Official Languages Act and perhaps in the languages and education funding that is shared between the provinces and the federal government—which for a long time only addressed elementary and secondary education, but have increasingly added the post-secondary sector—then I think we might have a strategy. Until there is an actual value proposition around research in French and research on la francophonie to guide that, I think it'll be difficult.

What you didn't hear in my last 30 seconds that I couldn't say is that there's a cautionary tale. If we don't have it at the post-secondary level, why then should children register in elementary and secondary schools in French? For me, it's not just a question about science. It's a question of the vitality of the French language communities, particularly in a minority context. The spillover effect is much greater than just publications, because people see this.

Why do I choose to study in French for post-secondary? It's because I hope to be able to apply the language. If we're not fixing that problem, then why am I doing my undergraduate in French or my high school in French? You hear kids say, "I have enough French in grade eight because I know I need to study in English to be successful in neuroscience."

[Translation]

That is my answer to your question.

[English]

Mr. Chad Collins: Thank you.

Mr. Perreault, can I ask you the same question in terms of a strategy? Instead of having the silos that have been identified here this evening in some of the testimony, how do we get a strategy where all of those who have a stake in the issues we're debating come forward with something that actually works?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault: I would say that my colleague's answer really points to an important element of the solution. There has to be a real commitment throughout the educational program. It was mentioned earlier: French thinks differently and has its own vocabulary, so people need to have access to knowledge in French, regardless of the field. That is an important starting point.

Second, we have to seat all the actors around the table and create the necessary environment. For example, the three granting research councils have to make a commitment to better fund the research being done in French at all levels. There again, this calls for a major commitment, that would support the academic community from one end of the country to the other and make it possible to create this great francophone environment where research could be done in our language, based on the authors' choices.

Ms. Laura Pelletier: The continuum in education goes from early childhood to the postsecondary level, and research is done primarily in the universities. Supporting that continuum and raising awareness on the part of the various actors, so they will fund

projects that are going to contribute to the vitality of the language, is therefore an integrated strategy.

Ms. Anne-José Villeneuve: I am going to add to my colleagues' remarks and dare to be bold: why not extend the scope of section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to the post-secondary level? That would be a start.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Collins, I'm sorry to say your time is up. Perhaps you might want to ask Professor Villeneuve if she would like to table a response for you.

Mr. Chad Collins: I'll do that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Monsieur Blanchette-Joncas, go ahead for two and a half minutes, please.

[Translation]

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

I am going to go address Mr. Perreault and Ms. Pelletier, from Acfas, again. I want to go back to the funding granted by the government of Quebec to assist research in French.

Mr. Perreault, that is still part of the recommendations in the report released by Acfas in 2021, which speaks volumes. Could you tell us more about the importance of creating a national service to assist research in French? What do you expect of the federal government, in concrete terms, in connection with that structure?

• (1925)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault: Earlier, I gave an example of the kind of support the service to assist research in French will offer. That service is a kind of single window that the entire community, and researchers who want to do research in French, will be able to use.

For Acfas, this service is an absolute priority, to the point that we decided to launch it before the government of Quebec offered us our first grant. One person will not be enough. There will have to be a team to process funding applications that will come from the four corners of the country, in every field. This group will not necessarily have to be physically present in Quebec. Its members could be spread throughout Canada, to take the regional aspect into account, while remaining connected with one another.

The federal government has to give the project its full support, because that will make it possible for French to be sustainable as a language of research in Canada.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you.

Prof. Villeneuve, you talked about the federal government's responsibility regarding bilingualism, and in particular for promoting French as a language of communication and scientific publication. Since 2012, the federal government has abandoned the symposiums that did research on the official languages, among other things. Before that, it had created the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities.

Can you give me your opinion concerning the government's responsibilities in this regard, and do you have other recommendations to make?

Ms. Anne-José Villeneuve: In my opinion, there are two important elements. The first is research on linguistic minorities. The second is holding events in person or online and promoting and supporting publications, two things that contribute to the vitality of research in French.

We are focusing on research. Obviously, for there to be a next generation of researchers, there must be students. So I again come back to Ms. Lamoureux's remarks. The message being sent, if we rely...

[English]

The Chair: Professor Villeneuve, I am sorry.

It's such a short time. It's the worst part of this job. I hope you forgive me.

We'll go to Monsieur Boulerice for two and a half minutes.

Go ahead, please.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Prof. Villeneuve, this is the second time you have not been able to finish expressing your idea about incentives for students. I want to know how the story ends, please.

Ms. Anne-José Villeneuve: How the story ends is that it takes professor/researchers who are able to promote academic research in French to their students. If there are no professors who can teach or supervise students' work in French, the message we are sending is not spoken, it is lived.

Why not include a language incentive when filling out a grant application that wants to know what is going to be done with the money, what is going to be published, and which student or post-doctoral researcher is going to be supervised? That way, a person could say they are going to use the grant to supervise 20 students, but they are going to encourage 10 students who are able to do research in French to do so. The number is important, yes, but quality is too.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: That is perfect, thank you.

Prof. Perreault, you talked about the decline in publications in Italian, in Spanish, and in various national languages. Has there been any reaction to this decline from the scientific community or the research community, particularly in Europe, or is everyone getting behind English?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault: The answer to that question is simple: yes, absolutely.

All societies are asking themselves the same question. I think the transformation that is going to take place in the next few years in terms of methods of dissemination may be going to create new opportunities for reviving activities in various languages, like French.

If I engage in a bit of futurology, I have to say that I am not sure that existing publication methods are the ones that will be recommended in the future. There may be an opportunity there to be more

dynamic, and it may be francophones who should be dictating the future course to take when it comes to dissemination of knowledge.

• (1930)

Ms. Laura Pelletier: I would like to add that research shows that publishing only in major journals, to pad someone's record, leads to abandonment of more local research subjects. That has a direct impact on the way you, as MPs, shape policy. If you want to have data on which to rely in developing policies and offering services...

[English]

The Chair: Ms. Pelletier, I'm sorry. The hardest part of this is keeping time. I hate to interrupt all of you.

We started a couple of minutes late, so I'm going to give Mr. Blanchette-Joncas one question, and then one question will go to Ms. Diab as well.

We'll have short questions and short answers.

[Translation]

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

My question is for the people from Acfas.

In your report entitled "A portrait of the challenges of French-language research in a minority context in Canada," you report that the success rate for applications in English was higher in the case of certain granting bodies, including the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. It talks about a success rate of 38.5 per cent in English versus 29.2 per cent in French.

How do you explain that discrepancy? Are francophone researchers less intelligent than anglophone researchers?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault: As I said a little earlier, applying for a grant in French puts an applicant at a disadvantage from the start, since the application is not as well regarded.

Also, since the evaluator at the granting council sometimes overestimates their own level of bilingualism, they can have trouble grasping the subtleties of French and understanding the description of the research project properly.

The problem is therefore not the intelligence of the francophone researchers, but the person evaluating the application, unfortunately.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you to you both.

Now we'll go to Ms. Diab for a short question and a short answer, please.

[Translation]

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to sincerely thank all the witnesses.

Canada has adopted a target for francophone immigration, a goal that I wholeheartedly support and that we are working very hard to achieve. We all want to attract brilliant researchers or international students to our institutions.

How can we make Canada a destination of choice for franco-phone researchers and postsecondary students?

Mr. Jean-Pierre Perreault: I am going to start answering and then let Ms. Villeneuve finish.

I think we have to begin by reviewing our immigration services to ensure a certain level of speed in processing applications. At present, in the academic world, the delays are infinitely long when it comes to the administrative red tape associated with international students, and this regularly prompts people to go and study elsewhere.

Nonetheless, Canada is a country of choice and I believe in its value. We have dynamic, top quality research environments. There is therefore no reason why people would not want to come here.

Ms. Anne-José Villeneuve: I would add that Canada is already a destination of choice for international students. When a student

from the Saint-Jean campus of the University of Alberta begins their studies in French, they quickly realize that English has a very strong pull. The idea is therefore not to attract these students, but to retain them in the francophonie.

[*English*]

The Chair: On behalf of the committee, let me say thank you for your time, your expertise, your experience and your ideas. We are all very grateful.

With that, we will say good night to our excellent witnesses.

To our colleagues here, this completes the public portion of our meeting. We will suspend briefly in order to go to in camera proceedings.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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