

Experiences of Official Language Minority Communities Following the 44th General Election

Final Report

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Experiences of Official Language Minority Communities Following the 44th General Election

Draft Report

Prepared for Elections Canada by Sage Research Corporation

February 2022

Elections Canada commissioned Sage Research Corporation to conduct qualitative public opinion research with Canadian electors following the 44th federal general election. The focus of this research was on electors who live in official language minority communities (OLMCs) and whose official language of choice is not the majority language in their province.

Forty-four individual online synchronous interviews were conducted between October 13 and November 29, 2021, with electors from across Canada. The overall objective of the research was to explore the experiences of electors in the 44th federal general election, including any difficulties or barriers electors might have faced related to being served in their official language of choice.

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Executive Summary

Background and Objectives

As part of the 2020–2028 Elections Canada Strategic Plan, Elections Canada is committing to consult on whether its programs and services meet the specific needs and interests of groups that face barriers to electoral participation. This is part of a broader commitment to better understand who the Agency serves and to ensure its programs and services address their needs, wants and abilities.

The 44th federal general election was held on September 20, 2021.

The focus of this qualitative research is on electors who live in official language minority communities (OLMCs). OLMCs are groups of people whose maternal or chosen official language is not the majority language in their province or territory. For the purposes of this project, OLMCs are:

- Anglophones living in Quebec
- Francophones living outside Quebec

The purpose of the research was to explore the experiences of electors in OLMCs associated with voting in the 44th federal general election. This included:

- An overall assessment of how well the elector was served in their preferred official language, including the various types of information received from Elections Canada prior to voting day or advance polls and services offered at polling places.
- An exploration of each component of their voting process—e.g. signage, reception, registration, voting and any other interactions with Elections Canada at the polling place.
- Identification of any difficulties or barriers they might have faced, particularly those related to being served in their preferred official language.

Intended Use of the Research

The results of the research will be used to inform Elections Canada's programs and services as they relate to electors who belong to official language minority communities.

Methodology

Forty-four one-on-one interviews with individuals who voted in-person in the 44th federal general election were conducted using online synchronous platforms: 39 interviews on the itracks Telephone IDI platform and five interviews on Zoom. The interviews were conducted between October 13 and November 29, 2021.

Of the 44 interviews, 30 were with voters living outside of Quebec in French OLMCs, including eight participants who were **completely satisfied** with the official language in which they were served in the 44th federal general election and 22 participants who were **less than completely satisfied** with the language in which they were served. Fourteen interviews were conducted with voters living in English OLMCs in Quebec, including six interviews with participants who were completely satisfied with the language in which they were served and eight with voters who were less than completely satisfied with the language in which they were served.

This research was qualitative in nature, not quantitative. As such, the results provide an indication of participants' views about the topics explored, but cannot be statistically generalized to represent

the full population of OLMC voters in the 44th federal general election. Qualitative research does, however, produce a richness and depth of response not readily available through other methods of research. The insight and direction provided by qualitative research makes it an appropriate tool for exploring participants' experiences and opinions with respect to the service they received in their preferred official language.

Overview of the Findings

Awareness of the Right to Vote in Preferred Official Language of Choice

With the exception of the English OLMC participants who were less than completely satisfied with the language in which they were served in the 44th general election, the large majority of participants were aware that they had the right to be served in their official language of choice.

Among the less than completely satisfied English OLMC participants, half of the participants said they were aware of this right, while the other half either were not aware of this right or were uncertain whether or not this right applied in Quebec, because of the province's language laws.

Importance of Being Served in Preferred Official Language

An important point about the participants in this research is that most of them were bilingual, in the sense that they said they speak both official languages well enough to have a conversation in either one. In practical terms, this meant that many could "get by" in their non-preferred official language when at a poll, if need be. Note that this does **not** mean these participants considered themselves equally fluent in both languages when considering both oral and written communication.

A large majority of the participants said they would prefer to receive election-related services in the minority language—that is, French OLMC participants would prefer to receive service in French, and English OLMC participants would prefer to receive service in English. This was true both among those completely satisfied with the language(s) in which they were served when voting and those who were less than completely satisfied. When asked for a rating of importance, most said this was at least somewhat important. A small minority in each OLMC said either language was acceptable.

Print Communications from Elections Canada Related to Voting

In advance of the 44th general election, Elections Canada mailed out a Voter Information Card (VIC) to all registered voters and a *Guide to the Federal Election* booklet to all households in Canada. All participants recalled receiving the VIC. A large majority said they did not recall receiving the Guide.

With regard to the VIC, some participants only read their preferred language, while some others read both to check that the same information was given in both languages or out of habit. There were no reported problems with understanding the language in either the VIC or the Guide. It should be noted, though, that feedback on the Guide was limited because of the relatively small number who recalled receiving it, and of those who did, most said they either did not read any of the information in the Guide or just skimmed it.

Visiting a Local Elections Canada Office to Ask Questions

None of the participants had gone to their local Elections Canada office to ask questions before they went to vote, primarily because most of them did not have any questions. The few who had questions were able to resolve them using the Elections Canada website.

Voting in Person at an Advance Poll or at a Poll on Election Day

Participants were asked a series of questions about their experiences particularly related to the language(s) in which they were served when they went to vote in person.

Some participants could not recall details about the signage outside the polling place. Of those who could, the majority said it was bilingual (or at least partly bilingual), and a minority said it was unilingual. That said, none of the participants reported difficulty finding where to vote, and overall this did not appear to be a significant driver of dissatisfaction with the language they were served in at the poll.

The large majority of participants felt welcome at the polling place upon arrival. Among the minority who did not feel welcome, most mentioned reasons unrelated to language; only one participant specifically cited language as the reason for feeling unwelcome—a French OLMC participant who was greeted in English only.

Among participants less than completely satisfied with their voting experience, the cause was being spoken to in their non-preferred official language at some point while at the poll.

The detailed report gives the results of participants' experiences at polling places as a function of both type of OLMC and satisfaction with the language in which services were received. Overall, most of the participants said they were bilingual, at least for purposes of spoken conversation. With only a few exceptions, they were or would be able to understand and converse in their non-preferred language in the poll setting. In this context, being spoken to in the non-preferred language did not always lead to dissatisfaction. It depended on the person; that is, even though the large majority of participants said it was at least "somewhat important" to be served in their preferred language at the poll, some nonetheless did not mind being spoken to only in their non-preferred language. For example, there were some completely satisfied participants who had unilingual interactions in their non-preferred language. That said, participants who were less than completely satisfied tended to react more negatively to such interactions.

Participants' Comparisons to Previous Election Experiences

Some participants commented on the pandemic-related changes to voting, but aside from this, the completely satisfied participants were more likely than those less than completely satisfied to say the services received in this election were in line with their expectations, and that their experience with being served in their preferred language was similar to their experience in previous elections. Some of those who were less than completely satisfied commented that they felt service in their preferred language was less available in the current election than in previous elections.

Reaction to Other Services Elections Canada Provides if it Is Not Possible to Have a Bilingual Person at a Polling Place

Some less than completely satisfied participants were asked for their reaction to two options that Elections Canada provides to voters in the event that there is no bilingual person at a polling place, namely a telephone interpretation service and bilingual information cards.

None of the participants were offered either of these services and none seemed to be aware of them. Note that among participants not served in their preferred language, few explicitly requested service in their preferred language, for reasons noted earlier. Also note that according to Elections Canada procedures, these options should be offered proactively by poll workers when they identify that an elector wants to be served in the minority official language, or at the request of the elector. The lack of awareness of these options suggests that perhaps how they are offered or publicized should be reviewed.

There were some positive reactions to these as options to make available in certain circumstances, although personal interest in using them was low because most participants were bilingual and could get by in their non-preferred language.

Perceived Ease or Difficulty for Elections Canada to Provide Service in Preferred Language in Community

Participants in each type of OLMC were asked how difficult or easy they thought it would be for Elections Canada to provide services in the minority language. Overall, about two-thirds of participants believed that it should be easy for Elections Canada to provide service in their preferred language in their community. However, there were variations by subgroup:

- **Completely satisfied French OLMCs:** All felt it should be easy for Elections Canada to provide services in French in their community.
- **Less than completely satisfied French OLMCs:** These participants were split on this question: About half said it should be easy and the other half felt it would be difficult.
- **English OLMCs:** Regardless of their satisfaction level with the language services provided by Elections Canada, about two-thirds of participants believed it should be easy for Elections Canada to provide services in English in their communities.

Future Preference for Method of Voting

At the end of the interview, participants were asked, based on their experience voting in this federal election, if they will use the same method in the next federal election, whenever that election may be. The large majority said they will use the same method. Among the minority who would use a different method, most gave reasons unrelated to language. Only two participants, both less than completely satisfied, cited language as a factor, saying they would shift to voting by mail in order to be able to use their preferred language.

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Political Neutrality Statement

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

Quinta Pollak

Anita Pollak
President, Sage Research Corporation

Detailed Findings

Awareness of the Right to Vote in Preferred Official Language of Choice

At the beginning of the interview, participants were asked if they were aware that each person in Canada has the right to vote in their preferred official language of choice; that is, either English or French.

With the exception of English OLMC participants who were less than completely satisfied with the language in which they were served in the 44th General Election, the large majority of participants were aware that they had the right to be served in their official language of choice.

Among the less than completely satisfied English OLMC participants, half said they were aware of this right, while the other half either were not aware or were uncertain whether or not this right applied in Quebec because of the province's language laws:

Participant Quotes:

"With the language laws and Bill 101, not sure what services we are allowed to actually get in English."

"I don't ever remember reading it anywhere or being explicitly told to me, but just my understanding of Canada and federal services, I figured that it would be the case."

The following summarizes comments, each heard from one or two participants, who were either not aware or uncertain of the right to vote in their preferred language of choice:

- Not aware that Elections Canada is obligated to provide service in both official languages. (less than completely satisfied French OLMC)
- Aware of the right to vote in preferred official language but believes that the choice does not have to be automatically/proactively provided; i.e. it is up to a person to request service in their preferred official language. (completely satisfied English OLMC)
- Were not specifically aware of the right, but assumed that such a right likely exists:
"I've never thought about it before. But upon reflection, yes; being able to vote in French/English should be a given. I would have said yes intuitively." (Translated from French) (completely satisfied French OLMC)

For example, one less than completely satisfied French OLMC participant concluded such a right likely exists, because the print materials they received prior to the General Election were in both official languages. Another less than completely satisfied French OLMC participant came to this conclusion because of their perception that all federal government services are available in both languages all across Canada.

Importance of Being Served in Preferred Official Language

Using a four-point importance scale (very important, somewhat important, not that important, not at all important), participants were asked how important it was to them to be served in their preferred official language when voting.

By way of background to this question, as part of the screening, participants were asked which official language(s) they speak well enough to have a conversation. With the exception of two participants in the French OLMCs and two participants in the English OLMCs, everyone said they were able to converse in both English and French.

During the interview, participants were asked which official language they would prefer to use in conversations with people working at the polls.¹ In French OLMCs, the large majority of participants said they would prefer to converse in French. Only two participants said it did not matter if the interaction at the polling station was in French or in English. The same pattern was true for English OLMC participants—the large majority said they would prefer to converse in English and only one participant said the language did not matter.

Therefore, regardless of their stated ability to converse in both languages, the large majority of participants indicated a clear preference to receive services at the poll in French among those in OLMCs outside Quebec and in English among those living in OLMCs in Quebec. This was true both among those completely satisfied with the language(s) in which they were served when voting and those who were less than completely satisfied.

With regard to the rated importance of being served in their preferred language, most French OLMC participants said it was at least somewhat important to be served in French and the majority said it was very important. Only two participants said it was not important. Most English OLMC participants said it was important for them to be served in English, but slightly more said it was somewhat important than very important. Only one participant said it was not important.

Participants were asked why they gave the rating that they did. Regardless of their rating or whether they were completely or less than completely satisfied with the language in which they were served at the polling station, the reasons given by those who said it was very important and somewhat important to be served in their official language of choice were very similar. These reasons are summarized below.

French OLMCs

The main reasons given for stating that it is important to them to be served in French were as follows, in descending order of mentions:

- Canada is officially a bilingual country and people have the right to speak in either language.

¹ This question was also asked in the online screening questionnaire. The results were largely consistent with what people said in the interview, but there were some participants who said “no preference” in the online screening questionnaire but stated a preferred language in the interview. The focus here is on what participants said in the interview, since it allowed them to explain their views in their own words.

- It is important to protect the French culture, which includes preserving the language outside of Quebec where Francophones are in the minority:

“It’s very important in a way—and not just in terms of the elections, but generally speaking. It’s a matter of culture for me, and I personally believe that culture and language go hand in hand. If the language is not allowed to persist, then the culture won’t persist either. I am a Franco-Ontarian, and that’s important to me.” (Translated from French) (less than completely satisfied)

“If, for convenience’s sake, we spoke English, like everyone else, it would mean the loss of a culture, and that would be much worse. So, generally speaking, there are many organizations and people who are fighting to promote the importance of the French language in Canada. So, to honour their efforts and honour their love for my language, I think it’s important to do that and to speak the language.” (Translated from French) (completely satisfied)

- The participants understand and are more comfortable in French than in English. In this context, participants mentioned both comprehension and expression:
 - French is their mother tongue, and even though they are bilingual, they find it easier to understand the nuances of conversation and written materials in French.
 - Although they speak and understand English, they are more comfortable expressing themselves and communicating in French.
- It is especially important to be served in French on important matters, and this includes voting, to make sure there are no misunderstandings or mistakes and people clearly understand what is going on.
- For federal elections, both official languages should be offered, just as with other federal services.
- There was a concern that the federal government will not provide services in French outside of Quebec if people don’t ask for and maintain the French language.
- Out of respect, it’s important to be spoken to in the language that one prefers:

“Around here [B.C.], it’s not really enforced, so I force the issue a bit; whenever I walk into a business involved with the government, I always speak French as a test.” (Translated from French) (less than completely satisfied)

As noted above, a few participants said they could accept being served in either French or English. Two of these participants said they were fully bilingual and felt comfortable in either English or French. One of these participants also said they will speak whichever language the other person seems more comfortable in.

Another two participants said they would like to be given the option of speaking in either language, and one of these participants said they would choose French over English if given the choice, since they are more comfortable in their mother tongue:

“It’s my mother tongue. Even if I feel very comfortable using English, French is still my mother tongue. It’s the language I’m the most comfortable using to chat, express myself and have things explained to me. If I had the choice, I would prefer to always be served in

French because I don't need to instantly translate everything in my little head as much.”
(Translated from French) (less than completely satisfied)

English OLMCs

The main reasons given for stating that it is important to be served in English were as follows, in descending order of mentions:

- It is important to be served in English on important matters, which include elections or anything that is of a legal nature, even if one speaks both official languages. This is to make sure that people clearly understand what is going on:
“I think with something like voting, which is a very important right that we all have, that we need to be able to exercise it fully understanding what we're doing. It's so key and so integral that we need to be completely sure you're doing the right thing, following the right steps, so our votes get counted.” (less than completely satisfied)
“If it's something that's for very important matters, such as an election and electing the next governing body, I think it's important that citizens are served in the language that they understand exactly what's going on and to improve their service. It is something on the federal level and the official languages should be both respected in my opinion. It's about clarity ultimately. It has to be clear.” (less than completely satisfied)
- The participants understand English better than French or find it easier to express themselves in English than in French. A few also differentiated between written materials and speaking French—while they are comfortable conversing in French, they have some difficulty understanding written materials in French:
“If I do not know something, if there's something I don't understand or if the process has changed, then I would very much like to have that communication in English.” (less than completely satisfied)
- A few participants said that while they are fully bilingual, they would still prefer to have services offered in English. Two of the participants considered the rights of other people who were not comfortable in French:
“It's not really for me personally because I'm fully bilingual. But if someone isn't, then they should be served in a language they're most comfortable in.” (completely satisfied)
- The following reasons were each mentioned by one participant:
 - The importance of protecting the rights of Anglophones in Quebec to be served in English.
 - Out of respect, it's important to be spoken to in the language that one prefers.

Print Communications from Elections Canada

During the election period for the 44th General Election, Elections Canada mailed out a Voter Information Card (VIC) to all registered electors and a *Guide to the Federal Election* booklet to all households in Canada.

Participants were asked a series of questions about each of these print materials, which are summarized below separately for the VIC and for the Guide. Importantly, none of the participants who recalled these materials said there was anything confusing or hard to understand in either of these print communications. A few participants during the interview spontaneously commented on the high quality of the official languages in the print materials produced by Elections Canada.

Voter Information Card

Receipt of VIC: Everyone recalled receiving the card; however, one person received it after election day because they had moved a week before the election.

Name and address on VIC: With only three exceptions, the participant's name and address on the VIC was correct. In one case, the last name was incorrect and in two instances, the address was incorrect. All three participants lived in French OLMCs and fell into the less than completely satisfied group.

These three participants were asked how they went about correcting the information to be able to vote and about their perception of how easy or difficult it was to make the correction. All three were able to resolve their issues. Notably, none of these participants indicated there was a language barrier with poll workers when trying to sort out these situations.

Other information looked at on VIC: With only four exceptions, participants said they looked at some information on the VIC in addition to their name and address. Most checked their polling station location and the dates for voting. A few also recalled reading about what ID is required to vote and about other options for voting—namely, advance polls or by mail.

The following were each mentioned by one participant as other information they read on the VIC:

- reminder to bring the VIC to the polling station
- COVID-related reference that masks are mandatory at polling stations
- website address for Elections Canada
- information on where to go to correct any mistakes

Language read: There were some differences among participants in which language they read on the VIC:

- **Completely satisfied French OLMCs:** Among those who were completely satisfied with the official language in which they were served during this election, it was about an equal split between those who looked only at the information in French and those who read the information in both French and English. The main reason given for reading both languages was habit, and one participant said they did so to make sure the same information was presented in both languages.
- **Less than completely satisfied French OLMCs:** Among those who were less than completely satisfied with the official language in which they were served during this election, the majority looked at the information in both languages. One participant read the information in English only because it appeared first on the left-hand side; three read the information in French only; and two participants could not recall the languages in which they read the information. One

participant who read the French only said that they would have looked at the English if they thought there was a translation error in the French text.

The main reason given for looking at the information in both languages was to make sure the information in both languages was the same and that nothing was lost in translation from one language to the other. A few said they looked at both languages out of habit. Other reasons each mentioned by one or two participants were:

- There is limited exposure to the French language outside of Quebec, and they wanted to take the opportunity to also read the information in French.
- Given the error in the participant's address, they wanted to make sure the English and French had the same information.
- **English OLMCs:** The majority only read the information on the VIC in English. A few looked at both English and French, mostly out of habit, and in one case to make sure the information was the same in both languages.

Guide to the Federal Election

Receipt of the Guide: With the exception of English OLMC participants who were completely satisfied with the language in which they were served, the large majority said they did not recall receiving the Guide. Most of the completely satisfied English OLMC participants said they received the Guide.

Information looked at in the Guide: Among the few participants who recalled receiving the Guide, most said they either did not read any of the information in the Guide or just skimmed it. The few who read any part of the Guide in either or both languages said the information in the Guide was straightforward and easy to understand.

Visiting a Local Elections Canada Office to Ask Questions

Participants were asked if they had gone to their local Elections Canada office to talk to someone about any questions they might have had before going to vote.

None of the participants had gone to their local Elections Canada office, primarily because they did not have any questions. Only two participants said they needed more information, and in both cases they went to the Elections Canada website. In both cases, they found the information they were looking for:

- One participant was hospitalized following major surgery and wanted to know what their options were for voting if they were unable to vote in person and had missed the deadline for voting by mail.
- One participant whose last name was incorrect on the VIC went to the website to find out how to correct the information. While this individual found the information they were looking for, they were unhappy with the fact that the correction could not be made online.

Voting in Person at an Advance Poll or at a Poll on Election Day

Participants were asked a series of questions about their experiences particularly related to the language(s) in which they were served when they went to vote:

- Signage outside the polling place
- Whether or not they felt welcome at the polling station
- Greeting at the polling station: whether or not they were greeted and how satisfied they were with the official language in which they were greeted by an Elections Canada official
- Service in the preferred official language at reception, when they received their ballot, and in any other interactions they may have had at the polling station

To put these results in context, the interviews took place between October 13 and November 29, roughly one to two months after the 44th General Election. Given the time lag, some participants were unable to recall some aspects of their voting experience.

For reference:

- Most participants were bilingual. With only four exceptions (two participants in the French OLMCs and two in the English OLMCs), everyone said they were able to speak both English and French well enough to have a conversation.
- A large majority of French OLMC participants indicated a preference for receiving services at the poll in French. Similarly, a large majority of English OLMC participants indicated a preference to be served in English. This was true both among those completely satisfied with the language(s) in which they were served when voting and those who were less than completely satisfied.

Signage Outside the Polling Place

Participants were asked the following question: **Polling locations usually have some signs outside that identify it as a place where people can vote and to help people know where to go in the building. Were there any such signs where you went to vote? Were all the signs bilingual or in your preferred language?**

The following summarizes the results by language community in terms of satisfaction with the services received from Elections Canada at the polls. Importantly, although some participants recalled the language of the signage at the polling place while others did not, none of the participants said they had any problem finding where to vote.

Completely satisfied French OLMCs

About two-thirds of participants said the polling place signage was bilingual and the remainder could not recall the signage, other than one participant who said there were only arrows pointing out where to go.

Less than completely satisfied French OLMCs

Among this group of participants, a large majority recalled some signage at the polling place and the remainder could not recall any specific signage.

- The majority recalled that the signage was either all bilingual or that at least some was bilingual. In the latter case, participants said that while some signs were bilingual, others were in English only. Also, one participant said they did remember signage in English and French but could not recall if these were bilingual signs.
- Some participants said the signage was in English only. One participant said there were also signs in Mandarin and Cantonese at the polling station, but none in French.

Completely satisfied English OLMCs

All but one participant said the polling place signage was bilingual. That one participant said they did not recall any signage other than some arrows pointing to the entrance of the building.

Less than completely satisfied English OLMCs

Among this group, some could not recall any signage, some said all signage was in French, and some said the signage was bilingual:

- Just over a third of participants could not recall any specific signage other than some arrows directing people to the entrance to the building. None of these participants indicated any problem finding where to vote.
- Roughly another third of participants said all signs were in unilingual French. None of the participants said they had difficulty finding where to vote. One participant noted that most signs were arrows with the word “election”. This participant made the following comment:
“I guess maybe they wrote elections in the French way, because it's written the same way in English. So maybe they figured they didn't have to write it twice. Except the accent. It wasn't something that was confusing and honestly I'm not one to cause a ruckus over something so minute as this.”
Another participant suggested that while they are bilingual, for the benefit of people in their community who are not, it would have been better to have bilingual signage:
“I am bilingual but it would have been nice if it was in both languages. I'm talking about maybe for other people in the area, because it's an English community.”
- The remaining participants said all signage outside the polling place was bilingual.

Feeling Welcome at the Poll

Participants were asked the following question: **When you arrived at the poll, did you generally feel welcome or not really?**

The large majority of participants felt welcome at the polling place. This included everyone who said they were completely satisfied with the services they received from Elections Canada and the large majority of those who said they were less than completely satisfied.

Among those who did not feel welcome, the following reasons were given by one or two participants each:

- One participant said she felt unwelcome because she was greeted in English only. (French OLMC)
- Poll workers looked bored or were preoccupied with their phones rather than interacting with people. (English and French OLMC)
- Poll workers seemed to be more concerned about communicating COVID measures to people than about explaining the steps to follow to vote. (French OLMC)
- It wasn't perceived to be a friendly atmosphere: "It was robot-like and I felt herded through the process." (English OLMC)
- A participant who had difficulty with registration (because of a name change) said she felt rushed because there were a lot of people at the polling station. (French OLMC)
- A newcomer to Canada who was voting for only the second time in a federal general election felt it was a less pleasant and warm environment than what they had experienced in the previous election. (French OLMC)

Greeting at the Polling Place

Participants were asked the following main questions:

Were you greeted by an Elections Canada official when you arrived to vote?

Were you completely satisfied or less than completely satisfied with the official language or languages in which you were greeted?

Participants could not always clearly recall at what stage in the voting process they were initially greeted by an Elections Canada official. To some extent this may be attributable to the time lag between the election and the interviews.

- Some participants said they were greeted on arrival before they got to the reception desk, while others referred to the greeting they received at the reception desk.
- Some participants could not recall if someone greeted them at the entry to the polling place, and some went directly to the reception desk.

All participants said they were greeted either when they arrived or at the reception desk.

The following details the official language in which people were greeted, grouped by OLMC and satisfaction level with the services offered by Elections Canada officials:

Completely satisfied French OLMCs

All the participants were satisfied with the language in which they were greeted. The majority of participants were greeted in unilingual French. Two were greeted bilingually and one was greeted in English only. The latter participant did not ask to be served in French because they said given that they live in Alberta, they would not have expected to be addressed in French or bilingually, and did not expect there would be any French-speaking poll workers.

One participant suggested that in the future, Elections Canada officials should actively ask people what language they would prefer to be served in, rather than assuming their preference based on an accent or response to a bilingual greeting. This participant also pointed out that if the conversation starts in English, people may feel obligated to continue in English out of politeness or lack of knowledge that services can also be provided in French.

Less than completely satisfied French OLMCs

The majority of participants reported being greeted in English only; about one-third said they were greeted bilingually, and the remaining participants were greeted in French only, but in one instance the participant said that the French spoken by the poll worker was not good, but understandable.

Among those who were greeted in English only, everyone said they were dissatisfied with the unilingual greeting. They would have preferred a bilingual greeting, even though the English greeting did not present a problem for most of them because they are bilingual. Some said if there had been a verbal offer to continue in French, i.e. a bilingual greeting signaling they could have a conversation in French, they would have responded in French. Several participants also said they looked for but did not find anyone wearing a badge to indicate bilingual services were available at the poll.

“If they say, ‘Hello! Bonjour! Sorry I don’t speak French, I can find you someone,’ that’s already a good start; it’s saying the official language isn’t just English, but French too. And there might be someone else who can help. That would have been nice. It would have been ‘the least they could do,’ and I didn’t even get that.” (Translated from French)

The following comments were each made by several participants:

- Elections Canada should always give the option to be served in either language right at the outset. Otherwise, if greeted in English only, the assumption is that there is no option to be served in French.
- The participants continued in English out of respect for the poll worker. In one case, the participant said they addressed the poll worker in French but the poll worker responded in English, and so the participant continued in English.

One participant stated that services provided by Elections Canada as a federal agency should be in both languages:

“So, to me, working in the federal government and not speaking both languages is unacceptable. If you work in the federal government, you have to be bilingual.” (Translated from French)

Only two participants requested to be served in French, and in both cases they were told that there was no one at the polling place who spoke French:

“I asked to be spoken to in French. I’m know I’m a pain in the butt... But the thing is, if no one asks, nothing will change. The two ladies said, ‘Hello!’ ‘Do you speak French?’ ‘Sorry, not today/sorry, too bad!’ It’s the story of my life, really, and it ended right there.” (Translated from French)

As noted, most of the participants were bilingual and at this stage did not request to be served in French despite their preference for service in French. Several also stated that since they are bilingual and they did not see any indication (e.g. a badge) that bilingual services were available, they did not ask for service in French. One participant said that given where they live in Canada, they thought it unlikely that there was anyone at the poll who could speak French:

“The poll workers only ever approach you in English, especially in a city like Calgary. Given that I’m a Francophone, it’s far from the first time that I’ve had to ask for service in French, but, after a while, you start to realize that they aren’t able to speak French so you say to yourself, ‘I’ll just do it in English.’ So, unfortunately, my whole voting process had to be done in English.” (Translated from French)

Among the minority of French OLMC participants who were greeted bilingually, all but two were satisfied with the greeting. Neither of those participants felt that it was a true offer of service in either language—it was their impression that the poll worker did not really speak French based on their accent and hesitation. In one case, the poll worker immediately switched to English after the bilingual greeting.

The small number of participants who were greeted in French were satisfied with the greeting, although one participant noted that the French spoken by the poll worker was obviously not their mother tongue, but understandable.

Participants made a number of suggestions for what Elections Canada should do in future elections in terms of how people are greeted at the poll. This is important because the greeting is the first point of contact in the voting process and sets the tone and expectations for the availability of service in one’s preferred official language.

The following are suggestions were made by two or more participants, in descending order of mention:

- The greeting should be bilingual to signal that service is available in either official language:
“That it was required by law to be able to be served in French. I think that it’s important that they greet you in French just as nicely as they do in English; when you’re only greeted in English, you don’t think to ask for service in French. So you don’t get it. To me, the most important thing is that they greet you in an explicitly bilingual manner.” (Translated from French)
“I think that the best way for me to have known whether a bilingual person was available would have been to make sure that it was the first person I saw when I came into the polling station (e.g. if the first person I saw had spoken to me in both languages, I would have been able to reply in French and ask them if there was anyone there that could help me vote in French. But since I was greeted in English from the start, it was somewhat implied that the process would be done primarily in English.)” (Translated from French)
- There should be a sign or poster prominently displayed to tell people that service is available in both official languages.

- Poll workers who can offer bilingual services should wear a badge to identify themselves as able to provide service in French.
- Hire poll workers who can actually speak French beyond being able to say a superficial bilingual greeting.

One participant suggested that there should be a separate line that says “For service in French, go to that line,” because this would not hold up the main line and would speed things up. Another suggested that if service is requested in French, then the poll worker should direct the voter to someone who can provide service in French.

Completely satisfied English OLMCs

None of the participants reported being greeted bilingually. The majority were greeted in French only and the rest were greeted in English only, the latter being the language they preferred. In one case, the participant was greeted in French but, because the poll worker had an accent, the participant switched to English for the rest of the conversation.

All the participants said they were satisfied with how they were greeted, including those who were greeted in French; that is, being greeted in French only did not really matter to them because they were bilingual.

Two participants who were greeted in French were asked what they think would have happened if they had at that point requested to be served in English. Both participants said they did not think this would have been an option—it was their impression that no one at the polling place spoke English. One participant also said that the poll worker heard them speaking in English while they were in line, but they were never offered service in English.

Less than completely satisfied English OLMCs

Only one participant reported being greeted bilingually; all the other participants said they were greeted in French only. While this did not present a problem for participants, as they are bilingual, they nonetheless would have preferred a bilingual greeting.

None of the participants who were greeted in French only asked the poll worker to speak to them in English. They did not want to make a fuss on election day, hold up people in the line behind them or be disrespectful to poll workers. Out of respect, they responded to the poll worker in the language in which they were addressed:

“She spoke to me in French, it isn’t the end of the world, I continued in French, but would have liked to be greeted in French and English, like, you know how the government today makes you do it when you’re answering a phone call at a business or whatever? Am I going to cause problems? No.”

“It’s not time on an election day that you want to start making any problems.”

“I didn’t know. I assumed I could, but I didn’t push the issue because of maybe... I don’t know, backlash or just try to make the best of it and speed up the process. So I didn’t know that I could ask to be serviced in English.”

Two participants said that if they had been greeted bilingually, they would have responded in English, and another participant pointed out that it should have been obvious that French was not his first language—he had an accent in French but was also speaking to his partner in English while in the line-up at the polling place.

Service in the Preferred Official Language at Reception and When Receiving a Ballot at the Voting Station

Participants were also asked two other questions related to the service they received at the polling place:

Overall, thinking about the types of services you received from Elections Canada at all stages during this recent election, was it in line with the services you expected? If not: How was it different from what you expected?

Overall, would you say your experience voting in this federal election when it comes to services being available in your preferred official language was better, the same or worse than in previous federal elections?

Completely satisfied French OLMCs

The majority of participants were greeted in unilingual French, and two others were greeted bilingually (these participants were in New Brunswick or Ontario). Only one participant received service in English only throughout the voting process, but they said it didn't matter because they were bilingual. Another participant was served in French at reception but in English at the voting station.

The large majority did not have to ask to be served in French:

- Two participants were asked by poll workers which language they preferred.
- Another two participants said the poll worker heard them speaking French in line to vote and automatically spoke to them in French.
- Another participant was greeted bilingually, responded to the poll worker in French, and the rest of the conversation was in French.

The participant who was served in French at reception and then in English at the voting station said they addressed the poll worker at the voting station in French but were answered in English. The participant did not ask the poll worker to speak in French and continued in English. They described the poll worker as flustered and judged that they were more comfortable in English than French.

None of the participants who were served in French reported a problem with the quality of the French spoken by the poll workers.

With only one exception, all the French OLMC participants who were completely satisfied said the services they received from Elections Canada during the 44th general election were in line with

their expectations, and the majority also said their experience was the same in this election in terms of services being available in French. The exceptions were:

- The one participant who was served in English at the voting station said that services in this election were not as expected. They said they live in a predominantly French neighbourhood, and their expectation was that they would be served in French by the person with whom they would have the most interaction, namely at the voting station.
- Two participants said their experience was better in this election than in previous elections because it seemed to them that Elections Canada made more of an effort to provide services in French.

Less than completely satisfied French OLMCs

The majority of participants reported being greeted in English only; about one-third said they were greeted bilingually, and the remaining participants were greeted in French only.

With regard to the service they received, a large majority of participants were served in English only and did not request service in French, for varying reasons. Participants fell into one of the following four categories:

- Served in English only; did not ask to be served in French
- Served in English only, but had the option to be served in French
- Served in English only, even though there was some indication that bilingual services were available
- Served in English only, even though they requested French

Served in English only; did not ask to be served in French: This was the largest group, with about half of the participants saying they were served in English only and that they did not ask to be served in French. They gave varying reasons for not doing so:

- Most said that based on their past experience, they were unlikely to find any poll workers who spoke French, and most also said that there was no indication at the polling place that bilingual services were available. That is, there was neither a verbal offer of service in either language nor any signage indicating an option for service in French.

Related to this point, one participant ran into a problem at the voting station where they were served in English only. This participant was new to voting in Canada and had some trouble understanding the instructions on how to vote. However, the participant said they were embarrassed and did not want to create a fuss, so they continued in English.

- Some participants judged that, based on the quality of the French spoken by the poll worker greeting them, the individual really did not speak French, and so they opted to continue in English. One participant spoke to the poll worker in French but the person responded in English, so the participant continued in English because they did not want to embarrass the poll worker.
- Most participants said they did not want to create a fuss by asking to be served in French. For example, one participant did not ask to be served in French because it was already taking a long time to vote. The participant's impression was that the poll workers seemed to be

inexperienced and extra time was required to ensure everything was being done in accordance with both COVID-related restrictions and requirements for voting.

- One participant said that they did not have any problem with being served in English only, but they had a friend with them who was not as comfortable in English and would have preferred French.

Served in English only but had the option to be served in French: Three participants said that they had the option to be served in French but for different reasons opted to be served in English.

- One participant said that Elections Canada had set up a separate line for those who wished to be served in French. There was a line-up and the participant decided not to get in the queue because she had a young child with her.
- One participant said that while there was a sign on the table saying English/French, the poll worker spoke to the participant in English only and never made a verbal offer to speak in French. The participant said they concluded there was really no option to be served in French. Also, this participant described herself as a visible minority and, as such, she was concerned that it would cause a problem if she insisted on service in French:
“It was best not to insist or it would have caused a diplomatic incident, and I didn’t want to cause a diplomatic incident. So it was only to keep up appearances.” (Translated from French)
- One participant was greeted bilingually at the voting station, and not only was the poll worker wearing a button that said they were bilingual, but they also verbally asked the participant if she would prefer to converse in French. As much as the participant said they wanted to continue in French, she felt the poll worker would be more comfortable in English. Since the participant described herself as fluently bilingual, she chose to continue in English out of respect for the poll worker.

Served in English only, even though there was some indication that bilingual services were available: Two participants fell into this category. They were both greeted bilingually at the voting station, and in both cases there was a sign on the table offering bilingual services.

- One participant responded to the poll worker’s bilingual greeting in French but then switched to English because she said she could tell that the poll worker couldn’t speak French beyond “bonjour.”
- The other participant also responded to the poll worker’s bilingual greeting in French. The poll worker then told the participant that the greeting was all they knew in French and the conversation at the voting station was then all in English.

Neither of these participants went on to request service in French. One participant summed up his reason: “I live in B.C. and I’m used to letting it go and not demanding service in French.” This participant also went on to say that it would have been better to have had no signage offering bilingual services, so as not to raise people’s expectations if the service was not being offered.

Served in English only, even though they requested French: Two participants said they explicitly asked to be served in French but were instead served in English only. Both participants said the poll worker they talked to said they didn’t understand French and were apologetic about this. Neither of the participants wanted to make a scene or make the poll worker uncomfortable and, out of

respect, conversed with the poll worker in English. However, they were not satisfied with this situation:

“I was not satisfied. They should have known when they greeted me that I spoke French. They should have found a French speaker or told their supervisor that someone spoke French. Election Canada employees should be able to do that (e.g. if you hear a voter speak French, so-and-so is the person who can speak both languages). It should be part of their training; every Canadian has the right to expect service in either language.” (Translated from French)

When asked to compare their experience this election to previous elections, half of the French OLMC participants who were less than completely satisfied said the services they received from Elections Canada this election were in line with their expectations, and a large majority of these participants also said their experience was the same in this election as in previous elections in terms of services not being available in French. Some participants attributed the lack of availability of services in French to the fact that their province or city does not have a large Francophone population, so Elections Canada may have difficulty finding bilingual or French-speaking poll workers.

The other half of the French OLMC participants who were less than completely satisfied said their experience at the polls in terms of services being available in French was not what they expected. The majority of these participants also said their experience with services not being available in French was worse in this election than in previous elections. Some had lived in other parts of Canada where they had been served in French or had the option to converse in French with poll workers. A few other participants felt the COVID-related protocols added another level of difficulty to the voting process that was not present in previous elections.

Completely satisfied English OLMCs

As discussed in the previous section, the majority of participants were greeted in French only and the rest were greeted in English only. At reception and the voting station, the reverse was true—the majority were served in English and the remainder were served in French.

None of the participants who were served in English had to ask to be served in English. Two participants said the poll worker automatically responded in English when the participants addressed them in English. One participant said the poll worker detected they had an accent in French and switched to English.

Among those served in French, none of the participants requested service in English—either because they acknowledged that most people in their community are unilingual French or because they are bilingual and it did not present a problem for them to vote.

None of the participants reported a problem with the quality of the English spoken by the poll workers.

With only two exceptions, all the completely satisfied English OLMC participants said the services they received from Elections Canada during the 44th general election were in line with their expectations, and the majority also said their experience was the same in this election in terms of services being available in English. The exceptions were:

- One participant who said that services in this election were not as expected and worse than in previous elections, because they had been offered bilingual services in previous elections and not French only, as in this election.
- One participant who said their experience was worse in this election had moved from a large city in Quebec where they had received services in English to a rural French unilingual community and was served in French only at the polling place.

Less than completely satisfied English OLMCs

All but one participant said they were greeted in French only. The other participant was greeted bilingually. None of the participants greeted in French only asked the poll worker to speak to them in English.

With regard to service received at reception and the voting station, only one participant said they were served in English without having to ask, both at reception and at the voting station. The participant said the poll worker was obviously bilingual and spoke English very well, albeit with a slight accent:

“What happened was when I went there, I gave her my card. And I said hi. So obviously, she knew right away I was English. So she answered me in English, which was very nice.”

One participant was served in French only, their preferred language. However, they were less than completely satisfied because their family members who speak English only would have had difficulty voting on their own, as there was no one at the polling place who spoke English.

Of the remainder, the majority ran into some language problems, but only one participant specifically requested service in English:

- One participant was asked to sign something that he did not understand. This was resolved by the poll worker, who the participant said gave him an explanation in “broken” English. The participant was otherwise never offered service in English and he did not request service in English out of concern that there would be some backlash:
“I didn't ask the poll worker to speak in English. I don't like confrontation and I'm used to it here. I was guaranteed confrontation. Yeah. I'm in Quebec. If I ask to be served in English, I will find myself at the back of lines or not served at all.”
- One participant ran into a problem in the line-up for the voting station. The poll worker gave him some instructions in French that he didn't understand, but he was helped out by his wife, who is a Francophone. After his wife left to vote, the poll worker gave him some additional instructions in French, which once again he didn't understand. He requested English and the poll worker then tried to explain the instructions in broken English. He said between the poll worker's limited English and his limited French, he was able to understand the instructions:

“It’s par for the course in Quebec. It’s default French and then you have to ask for English.”

- One participant had the option to be served in English but opted to be served in French. He then ran into a problem in the line-up for the voting station. Initially, his partner helped him out and afterwards the poll worker spontaneously switched to English when they realized the participant was having difficulties understanding instructions in French:
“I want to be able to speak the language of where I live. I don’t want to have other people make accommodation for me based on where I live. And so my intention going into this interaction was to complete the process entirely in French; that was my goal. But, you know, there was a small hiccup. I didn’t say, let’s switch this interaction now. Mostly because I figured I could perform the process, because I’ve done it before. Basically after my partner intervened and the poll worker became aware that I wasn’t understanding him, then the final process was done in English.”
- One participant had difficulty at both the registration desk and at the voting station related to proving his identity—at registration, where the poll worker had difficulty finding his “ethnic” name on the list, and at the voting station, because long instructions were given in rapid French and he was concerned about missing something important. He did not ask to be served in English, but it was his view that had there been any English-speaking poll workers, the issue at the registration desk would have been easily resolved and he would have felt more comfortable that he understood the poll worker’s instructions at the voting station.

Two participants were served in French only and did not have a language problem. They would have preferred service in English but did not ask for it. One of these participants did not know they could ask for service in English, and the other did not want to create a fuss.

The majority of the English OLMC participants who were less than completely satisfied said the services they received from Elections Canada this election were in line with their expectations and that their experience was the same in this election as in previous elections in terms of services not being available in English. Most of the remaining participants said the services received this election were not as expected and were worse compared to their experience in previous elections. In previous elections, bilingual services had been available and they had been served in English, and they had expected the same explicit offer of English in this election.

One participant said that the services he received this election were better than expected but worse than in previous elections. Specifically, it was better than expected because there was at least some attempt by the poll worker to speak English to the participant when he did not understand the instructions being given to him in French. However, it was worse than previous elections because the participant felt that right from the beginning of the voting process, “poll workers [in previous elections] were more sensitive to the language of the voter and there was a more fluid transition from French to English when required.”

Reaction to Other Services Elections Canada Provides if it Is Not Possible to Have a Bilingual Person at a Polling Place

Later in the interview process, participants who were less than completely satisfied with the language in which they were served in this election were asked for their reaction to two options Elections Canada provides to voters in the event that there is no bilingual person at a polling place:

Telephone Interpretation Service

“Elections Canada prefers to have a bilingual person at all polling places, but this isn’t always possible. An alternative that the poll worker could offer to use if there is nobody able to offer services in both official languages is a telephone interpretation service. This could be used if you have cell phone with you. The poll worker would call Election Canada’s interpretation service, and then also call you to join in the call. The interpreter is bilingual and would translate what each of you say. Would this be acceptable to you if there is not a bilingual staff person on site? Would you use it? [If applicable:] Was this option offered to you?”

Bilingual Information Cards

“Another alternative that poll workers can offer is bilingual information cards. There is one bilingual card that tells you what information you should provide in order to get a ballot, and then what the process is to mark and return the ballot. Would this be acceptable to you if there is not a bilingual staff person on site? Would you use it? [If applicable:] Was this option offered to you?”

Because these questions were added after a number of interviews had already been completed, they were asked of only three of the eight English OLMC participants who were less than completely satisfied and 11 of the 22 French OLMC participants who were less than completely satisfied.

It is our understanding that both of these options were available to voters in this election. However, none of the participants were offered either of these services and none seemed to be aware of them. Among participants not served in their preferred language, few explicitly requested service in their preferred language, for reasons noted earlier. According to Elections Canada’s procedures, these options should be offered proactively by poll workers when they identify that an elector wants to be served in the minority official language, or at the request of the elector. The lack of awareness of these options suggests that perhaps how they are offered or publicized should be reviewed.

Less than completely satisfied French OLMCs

French OLMCs who were less than completely satisfied did not feel either of these services would be personally useful to them, and that is because without exception they were bilingual. While they might prefer to be served in French, they would switch to English rather than use either the telephone interpretation service or the bilingual information cards.

Telephone Interpretation Service

As stated above, participants said that they themselves would not use the telephone interpretation service—they are bilingual and would switch to English. Related to this, one participant said that if he had to wait five minutes, he would switch to English rather than wait to get an interpreter on the line.

Other reasons given for not using the service included:

- One participant said they would prefer face-to-face interaction.
- One participant disagreed on principle with replacing people at the poll with a telephone interpretation service:

“No. I find it hard to believe that they won’t use bilingual people from our community and would rather save money by using a telephone service.” (Translated from French)

Although none of the participants would personally use the telephone interpretation service, some did have positive comments about such a service being available:

- Two participants said that while this is not an ideal solution or a replacement for having bilingual poll workers on site, it was better than having no choice at all.
- Two participants preferred it to the bilingual information cards, as they felt it would be faster to talk to the interpreter than to read a card and they would be able to have all their questions answered at one time.
- One participant whose parent speaks only French said this might be a useful service for him, but also pointed out that his father was not into technology.

Bilingual Information Cards

Participants also said that they personally would not find the bilingual information cards useful, mostly for the same reason as they gave for not finding the telephone interpretation service useful—they are bilingual and would switch to English rather than reading a card. Two participants felt that cards cannot replace human interaction or address specific questions a voter may have. For one of the participants, it was about fairness: that is, the right to be served by a person in their mother tongue:

“No, my expectations are that, in a bilingual country, I should have access to people with whom I can speak to in my mother tongue. To me, being given a card in my language versus being offered in-person service is a matter of fairness.” (Translated from French)

The following are positive comments about the availability of bilingual information cards, each made by one participant:

- The cards might be useful for their parent, but only if there wasn’t another voter at the poll to translate for them.
- The cards might be useful for a younger person who has never voted before.
- This is a flexible approach for some people who are having difficulty understanding the instructions in English.
- If Elections Canada switches to voting by machine (e.g. as in municipal elections), then the cards could help people follow the instructions on how to deal with their ballots.

Less than completely satisfied English OLMCs

Telephone Interpretation Service

All three participants said the telephone interpretation service may be a good alternative, although each participant qualified their answer:

- One participant was positive about this service because he said it showed that Elections Canada was making an effort and taking the right to be served in English seriously. However, he felt that the interpretation service would not work for some older people who do not have cell phones, and felt it was inappropriate for Elections Canada to require a person to provide their own technology in order to get the full service they are entitled to receive. In line with this, he suggested that the polling station should arrange for a conference call using a speaker phone, provide a cell phone or, even better, consider using a translation app that does not require a cell phone.
- One participant said he might use the interpretation service if he had a problem understanding something and felt it would work for older people like his parents who do not speak any French.
- One participant said he might use the service, but only if he was voting at an advance poll. His rationale was that usually there are fewer people at an advance poll, so he would not be holding up the line. However, the participant also said that he would feel embarrassed about being singled out for this special treatment.

The interviewer asked the participant if he would use this service if the call took place at a separate table, so that he would not be holding up the line. His response was “maybe”:

“I still might feel a bit of anxiety for being singled out as the individual who can't speak French, but I wouldn't feel bad for holding people up.”

In our view, it is unlikely that any of these participants would use the telephone interpretation service for themselves because they are bilingual, and while they might not like that service is not available in English, they would likely switch to French rather than use the service.

Bilingual Information Cards

All three participants reacted positively to the bilingual information cards, but one of the participants said it would be fine only in circumstances where it would be extremely difficult to find someone who speaks English. He preferred the telephone interpretation service, not only because he would rather speak to a person than read a card, but also because the cards might not answer the questions a voter might have.

The other two participants liked the idea of bilingual information cards and preferred it over the telephone interpretation service—they viewed the latter as a useful backup if someone really got stuck at the polling place (e.g. problems with ID or address). Both participants assumed the cards would cover 90 percent of the required information.

One of these participants also said the card would be easier because you can read it independently while waiting in line and that this would be a good alternative for people with hearing impairment.

The other participant felt it would be a good reminder of the voting process, because there are typically long gaps between elections or if there is a change to the voting process.

Perceived Ease or Difficulty for Elections Canada to Provide Service in Preferred Language in Community

Participants in each type of OLMC were asked how difficult or easy they thought it would be for Elections Canada to provide services in the minority language—that is, in French in the French OLMCs and in English in the English OLMCs.

About two-thirds of participants believed it should be easy for Elections Canada to provide service in their preferred language in their community. There were, however, some differences between the two OLMCs and also within the French OLMCs in terms of how satisfied participants were with the language in which they were served in this election.

Completely satisfied French OLMCs

For reference, the large majority of these participants were served in unilingual French or a combination of bilingually, in English only or in French only during the voting process. Only one participant was served in unilingual English.

All the participants who said they were completely satisfied with the language in which they were served at the poll in this election felt it should be easy for Elections Canada to provide services in French in their community. All but one of these participants lived in either Ontario or New Brunswick, the two provinces with the largest Francophone populations outside of Quebec.

With the exception of one participant, they estimated that between 30% and 90% of the population in their community was French-speaking. The other participant estimated that less than 5% of the population in their area are Francophones, but said there are communities within a 30-minute drive where they estimate 20% are French-speaking. As such, they felt it should be easy for Elections Canada to recruit people from nearby communities to work at the polls.

Less than completely satisfied French OLMCs

Among less than completely satisfied French OLMC participants, no one was served in unilingual French. About one-third received services in both languages; that is, some services were bilingual, in English only or in French only during the voting process. The remainder were served in unilingual English.

The participants who said they were less than completely satisfied with the language in which they were served at the poll in this election were split on whether or not they believed it should be easy for Elections Canada to provide services in French in their community—half of them said it should be easy and the other half felt it would be difficult. By province:

- Participants in New Brunswick all felt it should be easy.

- Those in Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia were almost equally split in their assessment of how easy or difficult it should be for Elections Canada to provide services in French in their communities.
- Participants in Alberta and Saskatchewan all felt it would be difficult.

Among those who felt it should be easy for Elections Canada to provide services in French at the polls, the participants estimated that between 17% and 70% of the population in their community are French-speaking. One participant estimated that about 3% of the population in their immediate area are Francophones, but added there are French-language schools in their community from which Elections Canada could source volunteers to work at polling places. Two participants reinforced their view that since we live in an officially bilingual country, it should be easy for Elections Canada to find people who speak both languages, so as to be able to provide services in whichever language a voter prefers.

Among those who felt it would be difficult for Elections Canada to provide services in French at the polls, the majority estimated that between 5% and 35% of their community is French-speaking. The remainder estimated that the French-speaking population in their community is under 5%. One participant from Alberta acknowledged that it is generally hard to find volunteers for elections, but that given the sizeable Francophone community in that province, Elections Canada should be able to find one for each polling place. Another participant from British Columbia suggested that being able to provide services in French is less about the availability of volunteers who are able to speak French and more about how well an Anglophone hiring temporary volunteers is capable of assessing the language capability of these volunteers.

English OLMCs

Among English OLMCs, only one participant (who was completely satisfied) was served in unilingual English. About half the participants were served in unilingual French and the other half received some services bilingually, in English only or in French only during the voting process.

Regardless of their satisfaction level with the language services provided by Elections Canada, about two-thirds of participants believed it should be easy for Elections Canada to provide services in English in their communities. Estimates of the percentage of English-speaking people in their community ranged from 10% to 90%. The following are additional comments, each made by one participant:

- It may be easy for Elections Canada to hire volunteers who can offer services in either official language and give them instructions to greet people bilingually and offer service in either language. However, volunteers may not do so because of their own beliefs about the language controversy in Quebec.
- Recruiting poll workers who can meet the official language requirements should not be difficult: “It should be easy because they only need to learn a couple of sentences to be able to guide people around a polling station.” (less than completely satisfied)
- Given that retail operations in their communities can serve customers in either official language in predominantly French-speaking areas, Elections Canada should also be able to do so:

“If the staff at the Quickie Mart can answer my questions in English, I don’t think it’s very difficult for a federal government organization to find someone who can.” (less than completely satisfied)

Among the minority of participants who felt it would be difficult for Elections Canada to provide services in English, two estimated that between 10% and 50% of their community are English-speaking. The other two did not provide estimates but commented that they live in predominantly French communities, with one stating that in the small rural community where they live, only four or five families speak English and the rest of the community is unilingual French.

Future Preference for Method of Voting

At the end of the interview, participants were asked, based on their experience voting in this federal election, if they will use the same method again (i.e. advance poll, the poll on election day, or some other method) in the next federal election, whenever that election may be.

In this election, the majority of French OLMC participants said they voted on election day, although a sizeable group voted at an advance poll. The majority of English OLMC participants voted at an advance poll and the remainder on election day. None of the participants who qualified and agreed to participate in the study voted by mail or at an Elections Canada office.

With the exception of French OLMC participants who were less than completely satisfied, a large majority said they will use the same voting method in the next election—that is, participants who voted at an advance poll said they would vote in the same way and those who voted on election day will do so again.

Among French OLMC participants who were less than completely satisfied, there were some shifts and indecision about what method they would use to vote in the next election. The majority would either change to voting at an advance poll or by mail (because of COVID) or were undecided about which in-person voting method they would use, depending on their schedule at the time of the next election. A minority said they will continue to vote on election day.

Among all the participants who said they would/might change their method of voting, most gave reasons unrelated to language. Only two participants (one English OLMC and one French OLMC) cited language as a factor. Both were less than completely satisfied with their experience in the September 20 general election, and both said that since service at the polling place was not available to them in their preferred language, they would vote by mail next time in order to be able to vote using their preferred language.

Appendix A: Methodology

Number, Location and Composition of Interviews

The research consisted of 44 individual interviews 25 to 50 minutes in length conducted between October 13 and November 29, 2021. Of the 44 interviews, 30 were with voters living outside of Quebec in French OLMCs, including eight participants who were completely satisfied with the official language in which they were served in the 44th federal general election and 22 participants who were less than completely satisfied with the language in which they were served. Fourteen interviews were conducted with voters living in English OLMCs in Quebec, including six interviews with voters who were completely satisfied with the language in which they were served and eight with voters who were less than completely satisfied with the language in which they were served.

Thirty-nine of the interviews were conducted on the itracks Telephone IDI platform and five interviews were conducted on Zoom.

The target was to complete 40 interviews. The following were the quotas set based on recruiting 50 participants to yield the target of 40 completed interviews. The over-recruiting relative to the target sample was to compensate for any no-shows.

Participants less than completely satisfied with the official language in which they were served

Because of the very low incidence of less than completely satisfied OLMC electors, there were largely no quotas on composition.

- **French OLMCs:** At least three from any of B.C., the Prairies, N.B., N.S. or N.L.
- **English OLMCs:** No quotas

Participants completely satisfied with the official language in which they were served

Because of the higher incidence, some quotas were set, although these were limited because some flexibility was still needed.

French OLMCs—satisfied:

- Gender:
 - Men: At least three
 - Women: At least three
- Age:
 - 18–34: At least two
 - 35–54: At least two
 - 55+: At least two
- Community size (participant self-classification based on a screening question):
 - Large city/suburb: At least two
 - Small city/town: At least two
 - Rural: At least one
- Region:
 - Atlantic: At least one
 - Ontario: At least one

- Prairies: At least one
- B.C.: At least one

English OLMCs—satisfied

- Gender:
 - Men: At least two
 - Women: At least two
- Age:
 - 18–34: At least one
 - 35–54: At least one
 - 55+: At least one
- Community size (participant self-classification based on a screening question):
 - Large city/suburb: At least one
 - Small city/town: At least one
 - Rural: At least one

The following summarizes the number of participants along several dimensions:

	<i>Total</i>	French OLMCs		English OLMCs	
		<i>Completely satisfied</i>	<i>Less than completely satisfied</i>	<i>Completely satisfied</i>	<i>Less than completely satisfied</i>
Total participants	44	8	22	6	8
Gender					
Woman	23	3	16	2	2
Man	21	5	6	4	6

	<i>Total</i>	French OLMCs		English OLMCs	
		<i>Completely satisfied</i>	<i>Less than completely satisfied</i>	<i>Completely satisfied</i>	<i>Less than completely satisfied</i>
Age					
18–34 years	4	--	4	--	--
35–54 years	25	6	12	2	5
55 years or older	15	2	6	4	3
Province					
British Columbia	9	--	9		
Alberta	3	1	2		
Saskatchewan	1	--	1		
Manitoba	4	--	4		
Ontario	7	4	3		
Quebec	14			6	8
New Brunswick	6	3	3		
Nova Scotia	0	--	--		
Prince Edward Island	0	--	--		
Newfoundland & Labrador	0	--	--		
Yukon	0	--	--		
Northwest Territories	0	--	--		
Nunavut	0	--	--		
Total participants	44	8	22	6	8
Region					
B.C.	9	--	9		
Prairies	8	1	7		
Ontario	7	4	3		
Quebec	14			6	8
Atlantic	8	3	3		
Community Size					
Large city/suburb	33	5	21	3	4
Small city/town	9	2	1	2	4
Rural area	2	1	--	1	--

	<i>Total</i>	French OLMCs		English OLMCs	
		<i>Completely satisfied</i>	<i>Less than completely satisfied</i>	<i>Completely satisfied</i>	<i>Less than completely satisfied</i>
How they voted					
Poll on election day	26	4	16	4	2
Advance poll	18	4	6	2	6
Mail	0				
Elections Canada office	0				
Language(s) they speak well enough for conversation					
English only	2			1	1
French only	2	1	1		
Both English & French	40	7	21	5	7
Official language preference with Elections Canada officials					
English	13			6	7
French	28	7	21		
Doesn't matter, either English or French	3	1	1	--	1
Language served when voted					
English	11	1	9	1	0
French	11	5	0	2	4
Both English and French	22	2	13	3	4

Importance of Being Served in Preferred Language (Among Those Who Have a Preferred Language)

- French OLMCs who prefer to be served in French (28 out of 30)

<i>Base: FOLMCs who prefer to be served in French</i>	Total	French OLMCs	
		Completely satisfied	Less than completely satisfied
Total participants	28	7	21
Importance			
Very important	19	5	14
Somewhat important	7	2	5
Not that/Not at all important	2	0	2

- English OLMCs who prefer to be served in English (13 out of 14)

<i>Base: EOLMCs who prefer to be served in English</i>	Total	English OLMCs	
		Completely satisfied	Less than completely satisfied
Total participants	13	6	7
Importance			
Very important	5	2	3
Somewhat important	7	3	4
Not that/Not at all important	1	1	0

Qualified Participants

Qualified participants for the interviews met the following qualifications:

- Is a Canadian resident, 18 years of age or older.
- Voted in the 44th federal general election in person, either at an advance poll, on election day or at a local Elections Canada office.
- Speaks the language of the OLMC well enough to have or conduct a conversation. Those in French OLMCs had to select French or both French and English and those in English OLMCs had to select English or both English and French.
- When registering or voting, preferred official language for conversations with Elections Canada officials at the poll: Those in French OLMCs had to select French or both French and English, and those in English OLMCs had to select English or both English and French.
- Were either completely satisfied or less than completely satisfied with the official language in which they were served. Note: quota targets by OLMC were set for this qualification.

The following occupation exclusions applied:

- Neither the participant nor anyone in their immediate household worked for Elections Canada or any other government department or agency involved in elections at any level of government.
- Neither the participant nor anyone in their immediate household worked for a radio or television station, newspaper or magazine, or online media outlet.
- The participant did not work at the polls in either the 44th federal general election or in the previous federal general election that took place in 2019.

NOTE: Because of the low incidence of qualified participants, especially those who were less than completely satisfied with the official language in which they were served, no other standard occupation exclusions or past participation exclusions were applied.

Study Procedure

Recruiting Process and Sample Source

Three firms were involved in recruiting for the study: Advanis, INOWE Canada Marketing and Synchro Marketing Research Ltd.

- **Advanis:** Advanis purchased sample from Lucid, a firm that aggregates samples from various panels. The sample provided by Lucid included information on preferred language, gender, age and region. The recruiting process from this sample was as follows:

Step 1: Lucid sent invitations to a sample of OLMC panelists to complete a brief online survey, where in this context OLMC means:

- French OLMC: The panelist lives outside Quebec and their preferred language for dealing with the panel is French.
- English OLMC: The panelist lives in Quebec, and their preferred language for dealing with the panel is English.

The invitation contained a link to an online recruiting questionnaire hosted on Advanis servers in Canada.

Step 2: The person completed an online survey questionnaire to determine their eligibility and to set up a time and date for the interview if they chose to participate in an interview.

Step 3: Advanis sent an email confirming the date and time and any information required for participating in the interview.

Step 4: The day before the interview, Advanis made a telephone reminder call.

This process yielded 20 recruits, of whom 15 participants showed up for an interview.

Elections Canada and Sage Research identified 21 Facebook pages relevant to French OLMCs. Advanis attempted to place a recruitment ad on 15 of the Facebook pages, and eight allowed Advanis to post the ad. The ad included a link to the online questionnaire on the Advanis site. The intent was to follow the same procedure as outlined in steps two to four above. However, only two people clicked on the link to the online questionnaire, and neither of these people qualified to participate in an interview.

- **INOWE Canada Marketing and Synchro Marketing Research Ltd.:** The sample source was INOWE's and Synchro's opt-in databases of people who have indicated an interest and willingness to be contacted for possible inclusion in a qualitative research study. The database contains information on various demographic characteristics, including preferred language for communication with the respective recruiting firm, languages spoken, age, gender, and province. The following describes the recruiting process used by INOWE and Synchro:

Step 1: An email blast was sent to panelists in the respective OLMCs based on the languages spoken to determine their interest in participating in an interview on their experience voting in the 44th federal general election.

Step 2: The screening questionnaire was then administered by telephone to those who responded to the email to determine their eligibility and confirm their interest in participating in the interview.

Step 3: INOWE/Synchro sent an email confirming the date and time and any information required for participating in the interview

Step 4: Three days before and the day before the interview, telephone reminder calls were made to participants.

This process yielded 29 recruits, all of whom showed up for an interview.

Interviewing Methodology

Participants were offered three online synchronous choices for the interview: telephone, Zoom, or text chat. Thirty-nine of the interviews were conducted by telephone using the itracks Telephone IDI platform and five participants opted for a Zoom interview. None of the participants chose to do a text chat interview.

Participant Honoraria

The honorarium for all participants was \$75.

Interviewers

Anita Pollak conducted the English OLMC interviews and Nadia Papineau-Couture conducted the French OLMC Interviews.

Appendix B: Screener

Experiences of OLMCs -- Screener --

This is a research project for Elections Canada. It's about getting a better understanding of people's experiences with trying to register and vote during the most recent federal general election, which ended on September 20, 2021. The results of the research will be used to improve the programs and services offered by Election Canada.

If you qualify for this project, you would take part in a 25–30 minute telephone interview and you would receive a cash honorarium as a thank-you for your time.

Please take approximately 3 minutes to answer some questions to see if you qualify. Your responses will be treated in confidence.

- 1a) Which **one** of the following best describes what you did in the most recent federal general election that ended on September 20 of this year? **(Accept one answer only)**

You did not vote in this election	1	Thank you for your cooperation! Based on the information you have provided, unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in this project
You tried to vote, but you ended up not voting because service was not available in your preferred official language	2	Go to Q.1b
You voted in this election	3	Skip to Q.2a

- 1b) Are you a citizen of Canada?

Yes, I am a citizen	1	Assign to "Dissatisfied" quota
No, I am not a citizen	2	Thank you for your cooperation! Based on the information you have provided, unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in this project

- 2a) Which **one** of the following methods did you use to vote? Was it...? **(Accept one answer only)**

By mail	1	Go to Q.2b
At an advance poll	2	Skip to Q.3
At a poll on election day, September 20	3	
At a local Elections Canada office	4	

- 2b) Did you go to your local Elections Canada office in order to speak with someone about questions you had?

Yes, went to an Elections Canada office	1	
No, did not go to an Elections Canada office	2	Thank you for your cooperation! Based on the information you have provided, unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in this project

- 3) Which of the following languages do you speak well enough to have or to conduct a conversation?

English only	1
French only	2
Both English and French	3

FRENCH OLMCS: MUST ANSWER CODE 2 OR 3; OTHERWISE Thank you for your cooperation! Based on the information you have provided, unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in this project.

ENGLISH OLMCS: MUST ANSWER CODE 1 OR 3; OTHERWISE Thank you for your cooperation! Based on the information you have provided, unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in this project.

- 4) When registering or voting, you may interact with election officials. For example, a person may call Elections Canada with questions about how to register to vote or how to vote, or a person who votes in-person will speak with a poll worker. What would be your *preferred official language* for these types of conversations with election officials? **(Accept one answer only)**

English	1
French	2
It does not matter to you, that is you will use either English or French	3

FRENCH OLMCS: MUST ANSWER CODE 2 OR 3; OTHERWISE Thank you for your cooperation! Based on the information you have provided, unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in this project.

ENGLISH OLMCS: MUST ANSWER CODE 1 OR 3; OTHERWISE Thank you for your cooperation! Based on the information you have provided, unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in this project.

- 5) And in this election, in what language were you served in your conversations with Election Canada officials? **(Accept one answer only)**

English	1
French	2
OR, both English and French	3

- 6) Thinking about your voting experience including registration and voting, were you completely satisfied with the **official language** in which you were served, or were you less than completely satisfied?

Completely satisfied	1	Qualifies for 'Satisfied' quota
Less than completely satisfied	2	Qualifies for 'Dissatisfied' quota

- 7) We would like to include people in this research from different types of communities across Canada. Which **one** of the following best describes the community you live in? (**Accept one answer only**)

A large city or a suburb near a large city	1
A small city or town	2
A rural area	3

Invitation

Thank you. Just a few more questions to see if you qualify for an interview.

- 8) Do you describe yourself as a man, a woman or in some other way? (**Accept one answer only**)

Man	1
Woman	2
OR , in some other way	3

- 9) In what province or territory do you currently live? (**Accept one answer only**)

Alberta	1
British Columbia	2
Manitoba	3
New Brunswick	4
Newfoundland & Labrador	5
Nova Scotia	6
Northwest Territories	7
Nunavut	8
Ontario	9
Prince Edward Island	10
Quebec	11
Saskatchewan	12
Yukon	13

10) What is your age? Are you? **Accept one answer only)**

Under 18 years of age	1	Thank you for your cooperation! Based on the information you have provided, unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in this project
18 to 34 years of age	2	
35 to 54 years of age	3	
55 years of age or older	4	

11a) Do you or does anyone in your immediate household work for Elections Canada or any other government department or agency involved in elections at any level of government?

Yes	1	Thank you for your cooperation! Based on the information you have provided, unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in this project.
No	2	

11b) Do you or does anyone in your immediate household work for a radio or television station, newspaper or magazine, or an online media outlet?

Yes	1	Thank you for your cooperation! Based on the information you have provided, unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in this project.
No	2	

11c) Did you work at the polls in either the most recent federal general election that ended on September 20 of this year or in the federal general election that took place in 2019?

Yes	1	Thank you for your cooperation! Based on the information you have provided, unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in this project.
No	2	

12) In the interview you will be asked some questions about your experiences with Elections Canada officials during the recent federal election that ended on September 20. We will not be asking any questions about which candidate or party you voted for.

The interview will last 25 to 30 minutes, and following your participation we will send you an honorarium of \$75. The interview would be conducted by telephone or via Zoom, whichever you prefer.

There may be some people from Elections Canada who have been involved in this project listening in on the interview. However, they will not take part in the interview in any way, and they will not be given your name. Is this acceptable to you?

Yes	1	
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No	2	Thank you for your cooperation! Based on the information you have provided, unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in this project.
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- 13) The interview will be recorded. These recordings are used to help with analyzing the findings and writing the report. Your name will not appear in the research report. Is this acceptable to you?

Yes	1	
No	2	Thank you for your cooperation! Based on the information you have provided, unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in this project.

- 14) Thank you. Please select a date and time for the interview from the schedule below.
SCHEDULE TO BE INSERTED

- 15) The plan is to do the interview by telephone, but there are two other options. Which do you prefer?

Phone	1
Zoom	2
Text-only chat	3

- 16) Please provide the telephone number where we can reach you.

Telephone number: _____

- 17) We'll send you an email confirming the date and time, and who will be interviewing you. Please give me the email address to use for this purpose.

Email: _____

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study!

Record Language of Interview: French [] English []

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Voting in the 44th General Federal Election Interview Guide

Introduction

- a) **Introduce self:** Anita Pollak of Sage Research, an independent market research company. As you know, we are doing these interviews on behalf of Elections Canada.

These interviews are about getting a better understanding of people's experiences registering and voting during the most recent federal general election, which ended on September 20, 2021. The results of the research will be used to improve the programs and services offered by Election Canada.

- b) **Review procedures:**

- Role of interviewer: I have a set of questions to ask you about your experience. We'll go through the questions and I'll be interested to hear what you have to say. If there are any questions you prefer not to answer, that's fine – just let me know.
- Confidentiality: The material we sent you outlined the privacy and confidentiality measures we're taking, and I won't go through all of these again. A key point is that your name will not appear in the report. Do you have any questions about the privacy and confidentiality measures?
- Recording: With your permission, I'd like to record this interview. The recording is for my use only to help in preparing the report on this research, and it will not be provided to Elections Canada. After the report is completed, the recording will be destroyed. Are you OK with recording our interview?
- **[If applicable]** Presence of observer(s) from Elections Canada – they are here to observe me as the interviewer, basically to make sure that the interview guide I'm using gets the information they need.

- c) **Any questions?**

Starting Point

- My understanding is that you voted (tried to vote) in this general federal election that just ended on September 20. I would like to go through the voting process with you and ask you some questions about your experience and the information and services you received at each step of the process.
- Before we do that though, I would like to ask you a question. Were you aware that each person in Canada has the right to vote in their preferred official language of choice, that is either in English or French, or did you not know of this before now?
- In any conversations with Elections Canada officials or people working at polling stations, how important is it to you to be served in your preferred official language? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, not that important, or not at all important? **Probe:** Reasons why

- Please tell me how you voted (tried to vote). Was it at an advance poll, at a poll on Election Day, at a local Elections Canada office, or was it by mail?

Pre-Election/Registration This applies to everyone regardless of how voted

- Prior to voting day or advance polls being opened up, people may receive various types of information from Elections Canada. One of these is the Voter Information Card. Did you receive a Voter Information card in the mail?

If received: Was your name and address correct on the Voter Information Card?

If correct:

- Other than your name and address, do you recall reading any of the other information on the front or back of the Voter Information Card? **[If no, go to next section]**
- Was there anything confusing or hard to understand on the Voter Information Card?
- I'm interested in the quality of the writing on the Card. The Voter Information Card is bilingual.
Did you read the English text on the Card, the French text or both the English and the French?
- [If read the English]** How was the quality of the English text? **[If also read the French text]** What was your reason for also reading the French text?

If not correct:

- What steps did you take to correct the information?
Note to Moderator: The information could be corrected online (elections.ca), by calling a 1-800 #; by going to an Elections Canada office or when they go to vote
- Overall how easy or difficult was it to correct the information? *If difficult:* What was the difficulty?
Do you any suggestions for how the process could be improved?
- In the process of correcting the information, were you able to get information and/or service in your preferred official language? And what was your preferred language?
If yes: **[if preferred English]** How was the quality of the English? (as appropriate, probe both written and oral)
If not: What happened?
Probe: As appropriate, quality of the French/English

If not received: How did you go about registering to vote?

Note to Moderator: A person can register online (elections.ca), by calling a 1-800 #; by going to an Elections Canada office or when they go to vote

- Were you able to get information and/or service in your official language of preference? And what was your preferred language?

If yes: **[if preferred English]** How was the quality of the English? (as appropriate, probe both written and oral)

If not: What happened?

Probe: As appropriate, quality of the French/English

b) Were you successful registering to vote?

If not successful: What was the difficulty? (**Note – this would pertain to all recruits who tried but were unable to vote**)

Probe for the role of service in their preferred official language

Do you have any suggestions for how this could have been better handled?

Ask questions on bilingual information booklet and then conclude the interview

If successful: Overall was it easy or was it difficult to register to vote? *If difficult:* What was the difficulty?

- Elections Canada mailed out a bilingual information booklet, Guide to the Federal Election to households in Canada. Do you recall receiving this booklet? **[If no, go to next section]**
If received: Did you read any of the booklet, or not really? **[If not, go to next section]**
If read some of the booklet:
 - a) Overall was it easy or was it difficult to understand the information in the booklet?
Was there anything confusing or hard to understand in the booklet?
If anything confusing/difficult to understand: What was confusing or difficult to understand?
 - b) I'm interested in the quality of the writing in the bilingual information booklet.
Did you read the English text, the French text or both the English and the French?
 - c) **[if read the English]** How was the quality of the English text? **[If also read the French text]**
What was your reason for also reading the French text?
- Sometimes people who have questions before going to vote will first go to their local Elections Canada office to talk to someone about their questions. Before voting, did you go to your local Elections Canada office to talk to someone about some questions you had? **[If no, go to next section]**

If talked to someone at local Elections Canada office:

What type of questions did you have?

Which official language did you want to use when talking to someone at your local Elections Canada office?

Were all the signs in the office bilingual? **[If no:]** What types of signs were in only one language?

When you arrived at your local Elections Office, did you generally feel welcome or not really? **If not really:** What happened?

Were you able to talk to someone at the Elections Canada office in your preferred language?

If yes:

How did that come about? Did someone offer to talk to you in that language, or did you have to ask for this?

Did you have any problems finding someone to speak to you in that language?

How was the quality of their French/English?

Overall, how easy or difficult do you think it is for the local Elections Canada office to provide service in French/English in your community? Why do you say that?

Was the level and quality of the service you received in French/English about what you expected, better than what you expected, or worse than what you expected? Why do you say that?

If no:

How did people at the Elections Canada office handle the situation?

What did you do?

Were you satisfied with how the situation was handled, or not really? What are your reasons?

Overall, how easy or difficult do you think it is for the local Elections Canada office to provide service in French/English in your community? Why do you say that?

Was the level and quality of the service you received in French/English about what you expected, better than what you expected, or worse than what you expected? Why do you say that?

Were you able to get answers to all your questions?

If no: What do you think were the reasons why you could not get an answer?

If tried to vote by mail (Note – only in the sample because they talked to EC), otherwise go to next section

- Overall, thinking about the types of services you received from Elections Canada at all stages during this recent election, was it in line with the services you expected? **If not:** How was it different from what you expected?
- **Comparison to experiences in previous elections:** Overall, would you say your experience voting in this federal election when it comes to services being available in your preferred official language was better, the same or worse than in previous federal elections?
 - If better:** In what ways was it a better experience than in past federal elections?
 - If worse:** In what ways was it a worse experience than in past federal elections?
- **Future voting preference for method of voting:** Based on your experience this federal election, do you think you will vote using the same method in the next federal election, whenever that might be? That is, do you think you will again vote by mail, or do you think you will vote using some other method?
 - If different method:** What method and why is that?
 - If same method:** Why is that?

This concludes the interview. Thank you very much for your help.

Voting in person at an advance poll or at a poll on Election Day

Let's now talk about your experience when you voted at (an advance poll/the poll on Election Day). I'm particularly interested in whether you were served in your preferred official language, and the quality of this service. What language did you prefer to use when you went to vote?

- **Outside the polling location:** Polling locations usually have some signs outside that identify it as a place where people can vote, and to help people know where to go in the building. Were there any such signs where you went to vote? **[If no, go to next section]**

Were all of the signs bilingual or in your preferred language? *Note to Moderator: Signage would have been bilingual*

If no: Which signs were not in your preferred language? How did you handle this?

Thinking of the signs that were in (preferred language): Were you completely satisfied with the signs in terms of being clear and easy to read? If not, what were you not satisfied with?

- When you arrived at the poll, did you generally feel welcome or not really? **If not really:** What happened?
- **Greeting at the polling station:** Were you greeted by an Elections Canada official when you arrived to vote?

If yes: Were you completely satisfied or less than completely satisfied with the official language or languages in which you were greeted?

If completely satisfied: Is there anything that could have been done to improve how you were greeted? *If yes:* What would you suggest?

If less than completely satisfied: What was about the greeting that made you less than completely satisfied and what suggestions do you have for how it could be improved?

If no: Did you have any difficulty finding where to register to vote and receive your ballot? How did you know where to go to register and receive your ballot?

Probe: If relied on signs or asking poll workers: In preferred language? Quality of written/spoken preferred language? Suggestions for improvement?

- **Speaking to poll worker to register and receive ballot:** When you went to register to vote and received your ballot, did the poll worker initially speak to you in the official language you prefer or did you have to ask them to speak to you in that language?

Were you able to talk to the person in your preferred language?

If yes:

How did that come about? Did they offer to talk to you in that language, or did you have to ask for this?

Did you have any problems finding someone to speak to you in that language?

How was the quality of their French/English?

If no:

How did the people at the polling station handle the situation?

What did you do?

Were you satisfied with how the situation was handled, or not really? What are your reasons?

- **Any other interactions at polling station:** Besides what we have talked about, did you have any other interaction with poll workers when you voted, that is any other information you needed?

If yes:

a) What information did you ask for?

b) Were you able to get the information in your official language of preference? *If not:* What happened?

- Overall, how easy or difficult do you think it is for Elections Canada office to provide service in French/English in your community? Why do you say that?
Was the level and quality of the service you received in French/English about what you expected, better than what you expected, or worse than what you expected? Why do you say that?
- Overall, thinking about the types of services you received from Elections Canada at all stages during this recent election, was it in line with the services you expected? **If not:** How was it different from what you expected?
- **Comparison to experiences in previous elections:** Overall, would you say your experience voting in this federal election when it comes to services being available in your preferred official language was better, the same or worse than in previous federal elections?
If better: In what ways was it a better experience than in past federal elections?
If worse: In what ways was it a worse experience than in past federal elections?
- **Future voting preference for method of voting:** Based on your experience this federal election, do you think you will vote using the same method in the next federal election, whenever that might be? That is, do you think you will again vote (at an advance poll/poll on Election Day), or do you think you will vote using some other method?
If different method: What method and why is that?
If same method: Why is that?

This concludes the interview. Thank you very much for your help

Voting in person at an Elections Canada Office

If went to local Elections Canada office to ask questions:

- When you went to your local Elections Canada office for answers to some questions you had, did you also vote at the same time? **[If no, go to next section]**

Voted at Elections Canada on same visit went there to ask questions:

- **Voting process:** When you went through the process of voting at the local Elections Canada office, did the Elections Canada staff speak to you in the official language you prefer or did you have to ask them to speak to you in that language?

During the voting process, were you able to talk to the staff in your preferred language?

If yes:

How did that come about? Did they offer to talk to you in that language, or did you have to ask for this?

Did you have any problems finding someone to speak to you in that language?

How was the quality of their French/English?

If no:

How did the people at the polling station handle the situation?

What did you do?

Were you satisfied with how the situation was handled, or not really? What are your reasons?

- Overall, thinking about the types of services you received from Elections Canada at all stages during this recent election, was it in line with the services you expected? **If not:** How was it different from what you expected?
- **Comparison to experiences in previous elections:** Overall, would you say your experience voting in this federal election when it comes to services being available in your preferred official language was better, the same or worse than in previous federal elections?
 - If better:** In what ways was it a better experience than in past federal elections?
 - If worse:** In what ways was it a worse experience than in past federal elections?
- **Future voting preference for method of voting:** Based on your experience this federal election, do you think you will vote using the same method in the next federal election, whenever that might be? That is, do you think you will again vote at an Elections Canada office, or do you think you will vote using some other method?
 - If different method:** What method and why is that?
 - If same method:** Why is that?
- Are there any other comments you would like to make about anything we have discussed?

This concludes the interview. Thank you very much for your help

If voted at Elections Canada office (separate from any previous visit to ask questions):

Let's now talk about your experience when you voted at your local Elections Canada office.

I'm particularly interested in whether you were served in your preferred official language, and the quality of this service. What language did you prefer to use when you went to vote?

- **Signage related to voting:** Were all the signs in the office related to voting in this election bilingual? **[If no:]** What types of signs were in only one language?
- When you arrived at your local Elections Office, did you generally feel welcome or not really? **If not really:** What happened?
- **Greeting at the Elections Canada office:** Were you able to talk to someone in the Elections Canada in your preferred language when you arrived to vote?

If yes:

How did that come about? Did someone offer to talk to you in that language, or did you have to ask for this?

Did you have any problems finding someone to speak to you in that language?

How was the quality of their French/English?

If no:

How did the people at the polling station handle the situation?

What did you do?

Were you satisfied with how the situation was handled, or not really? What are your reasons?

- **Speaking to Elections Canada staff to register and receive ballot:** When you went to register to vote and received your ballot, did the person at the Elections Canada office initially speak to you in the official language you prefer or did you have to ask them to speak to you in that language?

Were you able to talk to the person in your preferred language?

If yes:

How did that come about? Did they offer to talk to you in that language, or did you have to ask for this?

Did you have any problems finding someone to speak to you in that language?

How was the quality of their French/English?

If no:

How did the people at the Elections Canada office handle the situation?

What did you do?

Were you satisfied with how the situation was handled, or not really? What are your reasons?

- **[If not already asked]:** Overall, how easy or difficult do you think it is for the local Elections Canada office to provide service in French/English in your community? Why do you say that? Was the level and quality of the service you received in French/English about what you expected, better than what you expected, or worse than what you expected? Why do you say that?
- Overall, thinking about the types of services you received from Elections Canada at all stages during this recent election, was it in line with the services you expected? **If not:** How was it different from what you expected?
- **Comparison to experiences in previous elections:** Overall, would you say your experience voting in this federal election when it comes to services being available in your preferred official language was better, the same or worse than in previous federal elections?
 - If better:** In what ways was it a better experience than in past federal elections?
 - If worse:** In what ways was it a worse experience than in past federal elections?
- **Future voting preference for method of voting:** Based on your experience this federal election, do you think you will vote using the same method in the next federal election, whenever that might be? That is, do you think will again vote at an Elections Canada office, or do you think you will vote using some other method?
 - If different method:** What method and why is that?
 - If same method:** Why is that?
- Are there any other comments you would like to make about anything we have discussed?

This concludes the interview. Thank you very much for your help.

I would like to send you the \$75 honorarium as a thank you for your participation. I can send this to you either via Interac e-transfer or mail you a cheque. Which would you prefer?

IF INTERAC: I'LL USE THE SAME EMAIL ADDRESS AS WE HAVE ON RECORD. You'll receive the \$75 in the next few days.

IF CHEQUE: I WILL NEED YOUR FULL ADDRESS:

STREET: _____ **APT. #:** _____
CITY: _____ **POSTAL CODE:** _____

We'll mail the cheque out to you in the next few days.

Thank you again!