

# **In pursuit of societal harmony**

**Reviewing the experiences and  
approaches in officially monolingual  
and officially multilingual countries**

**Conference  
Proceedings**

**EDITORS**

**Ludmilla A'Beckett  
Theodorus du Plessis**

# In pursuit of societal harmony

**Reviewing the experiences and approaches in officially  
monolingual and officially multilingual countries**

A selection of papers on language legislation presented at the  
International Conference on Language Policy in Multicultural and  
Multilingual Settings, Mandalay, Myanmar, February 8-11, 2016



**Ludmilla A'Beckett  
Theodorus du Plessis**

EDITORS





*In pursuit of societal harmony: Reviewing the experiences and approaches in officially monolingual and officially multilingual countries* contains a selection of papers on language legislation that were presented at the International Conference on Language Policy in Multicultural and Multilingual Settings, Mandalay, Myanmar, 8-11 February 2016.

The editors, both members of the International Academy of Language Law / Académie internationale de droit linguistique, brought together presentations that deal with language legislation and practices in Europe, Asia, Africa and North America.

The contributions show that the post-communist trend in language policy has been vastly represented by attempts to eliminate the language, and even the cultural legacy, of the formerly hegemonic nation/s in countries emerging after the collapse of the system. In doing so officials in these countries tend to link the harmonisation of a diverse society with the idea of homogenising its population, and prioritising the cultural legacy of the titular nation. In contrast, some post-colonial countries are more tolerant of the language of their colonisers but consequently do not sufficiently promote the institutionalisation of their indigenous languages. Furthermore, the absence of visible efforts to follow any legal pattern in this regard often result in a communication gap between government and the various communities.

*In pursuit of societal harmony* therefore challenges from different perspectives the populist notion of 'one nation-one language', revealing the inherent shortcomings of attempting to establish unity through something as abstract as language without constructively addressing the actual, and mostly gross, inequalities and resulting divisions in many societies. The contributions to this Proceedings suggest that by pursuing social harmony through an alleged common language many countries unwittingly emphasise social inequalities and division and even cultivate the basis for resistance. Scholars that work in the field of language legislation and the sociology of language and readers interested in comparative studies will find the collection of papers presented in this Proceedings an interesting read.



Department of Language  
Management and  
Language Practice



INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF LINGUISTIC LAW  
ACADÉMIE INTERNATIONALE DE DROIT LINGUISTIQUE



9 781928 424123 >

Conference  
Proceedings



# LANGUAGE POLICIES AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND SERVICES: COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ONTARIO (CANADA) AND BURKINA FASO (WEST AFRICA)

**Amelie Hien**

Université Laurentienne Sudbury

ahien@laurentienne.ca

ahien@laurentian.ca

**Abou Napon**

Université de Ouagadougou

napon\_abou@yahoo.fr

## Abstract

Burkina Faso is a country located in West Africa, and is a former colony of France. French is its official language, although spoken by barely 22% of the population of about 18 million in 2016. This language, which is consecrated by the country's constitution as the official language, is alongside approximately sixty different national<sup>1</sup> languages which have a very limited use in official spheres.

In Ontario, Canada, French is also spoken by a minority, approximately 4.8% of the total population of about 14 million. However, and even though this province is mainly an Anglophone province, French has acquired some rights and the francophone community is provided, for example, access to government services in that language, under the French Language Services Act.

This paper will be based on a comparative study of the language policies, and the use of French, in these two regions. It will also analyse, in both regions, the status and the importance given to French, particularly in the areas of education, administration, communication and access to services. The study will also try to shed light on the degree of interaction between French and the contacted languages in the two study areas.

<sup>1</sup> We use 'national languages' in respect to the languages of indigenous population in the country

Finally and, in the light of information to be uncovered, this study will try to advocate for better management of the education system, conscious that access to services, whatever they are, is very strongly influenced by the level of education and information. In this advocacy, particular attention will be paid to the situation in Burkina Faso, where the enrollment rate of 63,2% (2008-2011), and the literacy rate of 28,7% (2008-2012), are very low.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Burkina Faso, former colony of France in West Africa, has a population of more than 18 million, but very low school enrollment and literacy rates; respectively 63,2% (2008-2011) and 28,7% (2008-2012) (UNICEF, 2017). With about sixty different languages in its territory, its official language is French, even though only 22% of its population (according to the highest estimate) speak this language (OIF, 2014). As for Ontario, it's predominantly an English-speaking province, but it has a Francophone minority group, which constitutes less than 5% of the population (OAF et Fondation Trillium 2015).

Our objective, through this paper, is to conduct a comparative study between these two regions: one in Africa, Burkina Faso, and the other one in North America, Ontario. First, we will focus on the status of French as well as the interaction between French and other languages in these two regions. Then we will analyze the use of these languages in the spheres of education, administration, communication and access to services. Finally, and in the light of information to be uncovered, this study will try to advocate for better management of the education system, particularly in Burkina Faso.

In order to achieve the above objectives, we will analyse the language policies and the regulations that exist and guide actions in these different spheres, in Burkina Faso and in Ontario.

## 2. SETTING THE CONTEXT

Burkina Faso is a landlocked, multilingual country, situated in West Africa. Its neighboring countries are: Mali to the North and West, Niger to the East, Benin to the Southeast, Togo and Ghana to the South, and Côte d'Ivoire to the Southwest. It has a population of about 18 million people on an area of 274,220 km<sup>2</sup>. Its official language is French, but it has approximately sixty national languages. These identified national languages are spoken by about 13.5 million people, living in 8,200 communities, mainly in rural areas (85%).



The national languages of Burkina Faso belong to these three families:

- The Gur or Voltaic group (over 60% of the languages)
- The West-Atlantic group (one representative: Fulfulde);
- The Mande group (20%).

In addition to these three language families, there are also: the Hamito-semitique family with Berber and Chadic subfamilies where are languages like Tamasey, Hausa and Dogon. These different languages, carrying a variety of cultures, have been marginalised during the colonial period and continue to be marginalised today.

As for Canada, the population is one of nearly 36 million people (35,985,800 in October 2015; Statistique Canada, 2016). It is a bilingual country, with English and French as official languages. At the 2011 census, which established that the Canadian population stood at 33,121,175, data concerning knowledge of languages are as follows: 22,564,665 for English alone, 4,165,015 for French alone, 5,795,575 for English and French and; 595,920 who know neither English nor French (Statistique Canada, 2011a).

Aside from the two official languages, and approximately sixty Aboriginal languages (Algonquian, Inuit, Athabaskan, siouennes and Iroquoian language families, etc.), there are nearly 200 immigrant languages (mother tongues<sup>2</sup> or languages of home use, from international migration waves) that are listed on Canadian territory. These immigrant languages constitute 23 major language families. Three of them, Roman languages, Indo-Iranian languages and Chinese languages, have more than one million speakers. For example, in the Roman family, Italian and Spanish, together, gather over 400,000 speakers. In the Indo-Iranian family, Persian totals about 177,000 people, Punjabi (the largest immigrant language in Canada) 460,000, Urdu has 194,000, while Hindi and Gujarati each have a little more than 100 000 speakers (Statistique Canada, 2011).

If English and French are the two official languages, they have differentiated use throughout the ten provinces and the three territories of Canada. Thus, there is only one entirely officially bilingual province, New Brunswick, about constitutional point of view, and one French-speaking province, Quebec, about provincial point of view. However, in Quebec, French and English are the languages of legislation and of the courts. The other eight provinces are mainly English speaking ones. So, outside of federal jurisdiction, the provinces which are mainly unilingual have laws and language policies that guide the use of the second official language at a provincial level. The 3 territories are bilingual (Yukon and Northwest Territories) or trilingual (Nunavut).

2 The first language learned in childhood and still understood at the time of the census.



Canadian bilingualism is, therefore, an institutional bilingualism, a bilingualism of the federal institutions. As part of this work, we will focus the dynamic of languages in the province of Ontario only.

Mainly Anglophone, Ontario is the most populous province in Canada, with nearly 14 million (13,850,090 in December 2015, Statistique Canada, 2016). This population, slightly lower than that of Burkina Faso, is spread over a much larger area: 1,076,395 km<sup>2</sup>.

Francophones in the province (Franco-Ontarians), numbering 611,500 (OAF et Fondation Trillium, 2015), is a minority group (Roy, 2006). However, even if this number represents a small proportion (4.8%) of the total population of Ontario, it is the largest official language minority community in the country, and the second largest francophone community in Canada, after Quebec (bearing in mind that Quebec is the only officially francophone province). The Francophone population of Ontario is very diverse, because the province has the largest number of Francophone immigrants in minority language situation, in the country (Houle, Pareira *et* Corbeil 2010).

## 2.1 Small history of the French in Burkina Faso and Ontario

In Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta), during the colonial period, the use of a language other than French was forbidden in school. To this must be added that the ordinances declaring illegitimate indigenous cultural practices. Thus, there has been a cultural oppression and repression, in order to “prepare the natives to enter the world of modern civilization”, as De Bel Gisler (1981:131) states:

Dans cette œuvre de salubrité et de sécurité publique, l'école jouera un grand rôle. S'il est question de faire connaître, d'imposer la langue et la culture de la classe dominante, il fallait obligatoirement instruire les masses de leur infériorité, les dépouiller de leur parole, les contraindre au respect du noble et du beau langage.<sup>3</sup>

The consequences of such a policy have been severe for different states, after the independence. In the case of Burkina Faso, the colonial action had created a linguistic vacuum around the French. French had the privilege of exclusivity, when it came to written languages. As for Burkina Faso languages, they were confined to the ghetto of

3 Personal translation: In this work of wholesomeness and public safety, the school will play a big role. If it is question of awareness, to impose the language and culture of the ruling class, it was necessary to educate the masses of their inferiority, strip them of their speech, and force them to respect the noble and the beautiful language.



- Recognition of French as co-official language of the Ontario courts in 1984;
- Adoption of the 1986 French Language Services Act, that guarantees the provision of administrative services in French by the Ontario government in designated areas;
- Opening of the first French college of applied arts and technology in 1990 (*La Cité collégiale* in Ottawa), followed by the creation of two other establishments in 1995 (*Collège Boréal* and *Collège des Grands Lacs*).

### 3. OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGE POLICIES IN BURKINA FASO AND ONTARIO

In Burkina Faso, there is no explicit document on language policy for languages in the country. In the Constitution, it is only stipulated that French is the official language of the country and that law establishes the promotion and the formalisation terms for national languages. Regarding the situation of French, everything is clear; what is not clear is what concerns national languages. Nothing was said about the functional distribution and the use of national languages. The few actions, related to national language promotion, are observed in the bilingual schools and adult literacy centers in which learners are taught in national languages. Some of the national languages are also used in television and radio to relate news from time to time.

In Canada, and the state of Ontario, various laws exist and govern the statutes and usages of English and French. Section 2 of the Official Languages Act of 1969, Section entitled “Declaration of status of languages, says”:

English and French are the official languages for all purposes of the Parliament and Government of Canada, and possess and enjoy equality of status, as well as equal rights and privileges pertaining to their use in all the institutions of the Parliament and Government of Canada.

The 1969 Official Languages Act is no longer in effect today. It was repealed and replaced in 1988 by the new Official Languages Act that reaffirms the status of Canada’s official languages as French and English, in the preamble to its chapter 38, which concerns the status and use of these languages in these terms:

WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada provides that English and French are the official languages of Canada and have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and government of Canada;



AND WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada provides for full and equal access to Parliament, to the laws of Canada and to courts established by Parliament in both official languages;

AND WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada also provides for guarantees relating to the right of any member of the public to communicate with, and to receive available services from, any institution of the Parliament or government of Canada in either official language;

AND WHEREAS officers and employees of institutions of the Parliament or government of Canada should have equal opportunities to use the official language of their choice while working together in pursuing the goals of those institutions;

(...) (Government of Canada 2016)

Furthermore, Section 16 of the Constitution Act of 1982 also recalls the Canadian institutional bilingualism that we mentioned above: “English and French are the official languages of Canada and have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and government of Canada” (Canada 2016).

It is, nevertheless, important to note that only the areas of federal jurisdiction are covered by these laws. Within provinces and territories, only the institutions belonging to the federal government are subject to bilingualism. Ontario is mainly an English speaking province, and the use of French in areas of provincial jurisdiction will be guided by various provincial laws. We will mention some of them, in the following sections, namely the French Language Services Act (FLSA) which is *la Loi sur les services en français*, and language policies in the field of education, called *les politiques d'aménagement linguistique (PAL) en éducation*.

#### 4. THE STATUS OF LANGUAGES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

In Burkina Faso, taking a position for the exclusivity of French also had the motivation that only this language could allow Burkina Faso to open up to the outside world and, therefore, to Western civilization. With this, the leaders of the education system encouraged the teaching of French. This teaching, therefore, will keep the content and methods of colonial education, while using teachers from Burkina Faso. This type of education was based on an incorrect assessment of student needs. On this subject, Dumont (1989:84) points out that:



[En Afrique, aucune méthode de français, fût-ce de français langue étrangère, ne parviendra jamais à combler le fossé qui sépare l'école de la vie parce que le seul moyen de réconcilier l'élève africain et son milieu social, ce n'est pas de lui apprendre une langue étrangère mais bien de lui enseigner à lire et à écrire dans sa langue maternelle.]<sup>4</sup>

This rejection of the national languages is one of the bases of the low enrollment rates in the country. Gross enrollment ratio in primary school was 63.2% between 2008 and 2011 (UNICEF, 2017). As children have difficulties to master the French language, very few are able to reach the sixth grade. In this regard, Naba (1994:11) argues:

[Des 12,9 % d'enfants qui ont eu la chance de passer une journée de leur vie dans une salle de classe, 55,74 % redoublent entre la première et la sixième année scolaire ... 11,77 % sont admis à l'entrée en sixième ... 88,33 % sont remis à leurs parents, selon la formule consacrée.]<sup>5</sup>

How many students failed the exams, meaning the end of primary school for having obtained a zero for dictation? For psychologists, these failures are related to the fact that native language is discouraged early in childhood, which is harmful to the development of cognitive activities. Indeed, by removing from them the possibility of using their familiar languages, and by imposing on them a redundant communication tool with which to start school, they fall into a situation where it becomes impossible to properly understand, and express their feelings and/or interests.

The instruction given by way of the French language is acculturating, insofar as it encourages students to reject their crops in favor of French culture, abandonment of traditional rites, rejection of traditional and community-orientated ways of life for new behaviors and new habits, etc. In short, school, in its current form, shapes hybrid men straddling two cultures: French culture and national culture. From the first crop, citizens of Burkina Faso only have some reference elements, and from the second, it remains at almost nothing. In order to improve the situation, bilingual schools, which use French and one of the many national languages, according to the localities, have been proposed. The first series of experiments with bilingual schools was carried out from 1979 to

4 Personal translation: In Africa, no method of teaching French, even French as a foreign language, will never succeed in bridging the gap between school and life because the only means of reconciling African student and his social environment, is not for him to learn a foreign language but to teach him to read and write in his mother tongue.

5 Personal translation: From the 12.9% of children who have had the chance to spend a day in their life in a classroom, 55.74% repeat a school year between the first and sixth grades ... 11.77% succeed to the exam which will take them to the next grade (first grade of the secondary school) ... 88.33% are returned to their parents, as the saying goes.



1984. Some others followed afterwards. Then, in 2002, a circular allowed parents and communities to ask if they wanted bilingual schools instead of their standard schools. Despite this openness, there was no real plan for a systematic integration of national languages into the formal education system (Nikéma and Kaboré-Paré 2010). Then, an Orientation Law in 2007 (Burkina Faso, 2007) stipulated, in its Section 10, that, "The languages of instruction used in Burkina Faso are French and national languages in both pedagogical practice and assessment." But, how does one make a choice between all the languages? How does one make arrangements to equip languages, in order to make them suitable for teaching? How does one train teachers in these different languages? Let us bear in mind that Burkina Faso has about sixty different national languages.

In Ontario, the situation of education for the Francophone minority is different. First, there is a federal law that protects the education of the Francophone minority in their language. Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982), enshrined in the Constitution Act of 1982, deals with education in the language of the official language minority. It guarantees minority language education rights to French-speaking communities outside Quebec, and also in Ontario. This Section 23 obliges all Canadian provinces, and Ontario therefore, to give instruction in the minority language, while specifying the conditions of application:

(1) Citizens of Canada

- (a) whose first language learned and still understood is that of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province in which they reside, or
- (b) who have received their primary school instruction in Canada, in English or French, and reside in a province where the language in which they received that instruction is the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province, have the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction, in that language, in that province.

- (2) Citizens of Canada of whom any child has received or is receiving primary or secondary school instruction, in English or French in Canada, have the right to have all their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the same language (Canada 2016).

In other words, every citizen, with French as his/her mother tongue, has the right to enroll his/her children in an Ontario French-language school, as long as he/she has received primary education in French, or if any of his/her children has received or is



receiving primary or secondary school instruction in French. Children whose parents have the status of “French-language rights-holders”, according to Section 23 of the Charter, can benefit from education in French in Ontario. However, the applicability of this law is framed, as it is also written that the right “applies wherever in the province the number of children of citizens who have such a right is sufficient to warrant the provision to them out of public funds of minority language instruction (...)”

However, if there is a French school system, even if one does not meet the conditions listed above, one can submit an application to the coveted school board. In Ontario, public funds finance four school systems, two in French (the French-language public system and the French Catholic system) and two in English (Ministère de l’éducation de l’Ontario, 2016).

To allow the French language school to fulfill its mission, language planning policies *Les politiques d’aménagement linguistique (PAL)*, have been developed; early for elementary and secondary education (2004) and then to post-secondary education and Training (2011).

The language planning policy for post-secondary education and training in French language (2011) aims, among others:

to enhance the sustainability of francophone culture<sup>1</sup> within Ontario’s pluralistic francophone milieu. Because of the central role language plays in culture, the policy framework focuses on strategies for enabling French-language and bilingual institutions to promote and expand the use and knowledge of French and ensure the provision of services in French

In both language planning policies (2004 and 2011), the will to protect and promote the vitality of French language and culture in minority communities, in Ontario, clearly appears next to the training to be provided. Indeed, among the main objectives, these policies aim to:

- Provide in French schools, a quality education adapted to the minority setting.
- Train young francophones to be responsible, competent and proud of their linguistic and cultural identity.
- Increase the capacity of the learning community to support the linguistic and cultural development of the community.



- Expand and enrich the francophone environment through solid partnerships among school, family and the community.
- Increase the vitality of ontarian educational institutions by promoting, among others, the recruitment and retention of students in French-language schools and thus contribute to sustainable development of the Francophone community. (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities 2016).

## 5. LANGUAGES IN ADMINISTRATION, COMMUNICATION AND SERVICES

In Burkina Faso, given its status of official language, French is omnipresent in the political, economic and social life of the country. Therefore, it has a certain prestige among both literates and illiterates.

French is the language of social promotion and employment. Being able to speak French, even poorly, or having a degree, is the key to social promotion. French also makes the law of the labor market. For example, between two people seeking a manual job in administration, the one who can speak French, even moderately, will be given the position.

In relation to this, we say that the illiterate are gnawed at by the desire to obtain instruction in French. Consequently, it is common to hear the following words from the illiterates "you have to speak French to be respected." Even worse, people who cannot read or write in French are often considered ignorant or uneducated; which is not true, as one can obtain a good education without having formal instruction in a school. Thus, the Burkinabe society is stratified in two ways: on the one hand, the ones with formal education, who represent the modern world and modernity, the "light", and on the other hand, the illiterates and peasantry attached to tradition, synonymous to "darkness".

In this context, there is a latent conflict between social classes in Burkinabe society. The first category, which represents about 22% (OIF, 2014), gives the right to decide for the other members (78%) of the population. All of this occurs as if everything that is good for intellectuals is good for the illiterate peasantry. In this context, unfortunately, all citizens cannot participate actively in the debates related to the life of the nation.

Indeed, there are some actions for the protection of linguistic and cultural heritage. For some time, we see that some municipalities and, most recently, the Ministry of Literacy and Non-Formal Education are trying to establish the mapping of national languages.



Thus, in the municipality of Loumbila, for example, and in some other services, there are signs with indications in Moore, Dioula and Fulfulde for: “National Assembly”, “Ombudsman of Faso”, “Economic and Social Council”, etc.

The goal of such an action is to encourage the promotion of an environment of literacy in the national languages of Burkina Faso. In addition to this, they want to allow neo-literates to use their learning achievements, and encourage those who are educated in French to be interested in national languages. But these punctual actions have no significant effect, to the extent that the main language of advertising is French. So, we note that some timid actions are carried out to safeguard the linguistic and cultural heritage, vis-à-vis globalisation, but nothing is done, specifically in order to bring citizens to accept and promote the linguistic and cultural diversity in politics and public administration. Yet, is the acceptance of others, despite their differences, not a guarantee of social harmony?

Regarding access to information and services, Burkina Faso, like most French-speaking countries in Africa, has embarked on the path of democracy from 1990. However, the main support for public debate is still in the official language, namely French. But this language is spoken by only a small fraction of the population – about 22%. To communicate with the population, few politicians make use of local languages. It is understandable, in these circumstances, that messages in French cannot reach the majority of the population. We are, therefore, in a situation of non-transparency and inaccessibility to information. This situation is, unfortunately, exploited for other purposes by some politicians, in their so-called democratic game. Indeed, aware that people are unable to read and understand the political programs offered to them in French, some leaders will resort to demagoguery and deceit, in order to solicit the vote of the electorate. Thus, they act as though everything that is good for French speakers is good for speakers of national languages, who are, in fact, excluded from discussions concerning the life of the nation.

## 5.1 Canada / Federal level

Through the Official Languages Act of 1969, Canada recognises English and French as having equal status in the federal government. Also, Section 20 of the Constitution Act of 1982 (Canada, 2016), and Section 2 of the Official Languages Act, are designed to enforce the use of both official languages in federal institutions. For instance, Section 20 of the Constitution Act of 1982 explains the use of languages in obtaining services or information in government institutions.



20. (1) Any member of the public in Canada has the right to communicate with, and to receive available services from, any head or central office of an institution of the Parliament or government of Canada in English or French, and has the same right with respect to any other office of any such institution where

- (a) there is a significant demand for communications with and services from that office in such language; or
- (b) due to the nature of the office, it is reasonable that communications with and services from that office be available in both English and French.

(Canada, 2016).

Section 2 of the Official Languages Act also aims to enforce the use of both official languages in federal institutions, namely regarding their “use in parliamentary proceedings, in legislative and other instruments, in the administration of justice, in communicating with or providing services to the public and in carrying out the work of federal institutions” (Government of Canada, 2016).

## 5.2 Canada / Provincial level in Ontario

Since the aforementioned Acts are not mandatory, neither for the provinces nor the municipalities in the areas within their own competence, Ontario will have other laws to guide the use of French at a provincial level. We will only mention, here, the Ontario French Language Services Act (FLSA), enacted in 1986 and implemented in 1989.

The French Language Services Act is part of a set of legal provisions, which serve to guarantee and preserve the linguistic rights of Franco-Ontarians. More concretely, the FLSA ensures that Franco-Ontarians are entitled to receive various services in French (driving license, birth certificates, information, etc.) within government departments and agencies in Ontario, within areas designated for this purpose. There are currently 26 designated areas under the FLSA across the province. Any area of the province may apply for designation under the FLSA as long as at least 10 percent of its population have French as their native language, or if it's an urban center of at least 5,000 Francophones. Besides government institutions, an organisation, based in a designated area of the province, can also apply to become a French services provider.

Regarding the Ontarian municipalities, they have no obligation to offer services in French because they are not subject to this Act, unless they are related by a special agreement with the province, to deliver services on behalf of the latter.



On July 1, 2011, Ontario Regulation 284/11, “entitled Provision of French language services on behalf of government agencies”, entered into force to compel third parties providing services on behalf of the provincial government to respect the FLSA (FLSA, 2016).

To ensure the compliance and enforcement of the FLSA, mechanisms are set in place. For example, the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario was created in 2007, and acts as an ombudsman for the purposes of the FLSA. He/she receives citizen complaints, conducts investigations and makes the necessary recommendations, not only to ensure the availability of services in French, but also to ensure compliance with the criteria of the active offer of these services (availability, accessibility, visibility and advertising of services in French). This means that the mere existence of the FLSA is no longer sufficient. Therefore, the French Language Services Commissioner, in a Special Report, “recommends that the Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs propose an amendment to the French Language Services Act to include a provision or provisions relating to the obligation of active offer, including a definition of the concept.” (OFLSC, 2016: 9). There is, thus, always a critical look taken at the laws in place, in order to improve them.

Other provincial legislations, such as the Law on Services for Children and Family, the Law on the Integration of the Local Health System, to mention only a few, guarantee rights of access to services in French, in Ontario.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

This paper aimed, first, to compare the status and the use of French in Ontario (Canada) and Burkina Faso (West Africa) and, second, to grasp the realities and the consequences of language policies on the ground, in access to services in different domains.

In Burkina Faso, the language policy, for what exists, does not take into account the views of the citizens. This is not the case in Ontario, where the language policies are more democratic, and take into account the concerns of different populations.

The consequence of these policies is that, in Burkina Faso, we are witnessing the gradual death of the national languages, spoken by nearly 85% of the population, and the supremacy of French, which is spoken by less than approximately 22% of the population. In contrast to this, in Ontario, there is the promotion and defense of French in an English-dominant environment, while Francophones are less than 5% of the population. Also in Ontario, language, culture and Franco-Ontarian identity are preserved. Therefore, we



deem it an urgent and important matter, and that Burkina Faso should formulate a real language policy for safeguarding its linguistic and cultural heritage.

In Ontario, language policies in education, next to the training to be provided, the will to protect and promote the vitality of the language and French culture in minority communities in the province appears clearly.

In Burkina Faso, national languages should be included in formal education. Thus, people will learn about national languages and their culture. First, they will be introduced to the transcription of national languages and, secondly, receive information on the habits and customs of the country. Additionally, they will obtain better services in their native languages. And if the information is accessible in local languages, that would allow all citizens to participate in public debates. That will enable them, at the same time, to break down the barrier between the intellectual world (defender of Western cultures) and the rural world (defender of national culture), while promoting national languages and cultures. However, a number of choices should be made, as it is impossible, with the country's scanty resources, to equip and effectively use 60 languages while giving them the same status in all areas.

## 7. REFERENCES

### BURKINA FASO.

2007. *DECRET N° 2007-540/PRES du 05 septembre 2007 promulguant la loi n° 013-2007/AN du 30 juillet portant loi d'orientation de l'éducation*. En ligne sur: [http://www.legiburkina.bf/m/Sommaires\\_JO/D%C3%A9cret\\_PRES\\_2007\\_00540.htm](http://www.legiburkina.bf/m/Sommaires_JO/D%C3%A9cret_PRES_2007_00540.htm) [Retrieved 10 April 2017].

### CANADA.

2016. Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982. <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-15.html#h-46> (*La Constitution canadienne. Dispositions linguistiques*. En ligne sur : <http://www.axl.cefan.ulaval.ca/amnord/cndconst.htm>) [Retrieved 10 April 2017].

### CANADIAN GOVERNMENT.

n.d. Ontario's French-Language School and Francophone Community. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/linguistique/policyguide.pdf>  
L'éducation en langue française en Ontario: *La politique d'aménagement linguistique*. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/amenagement/mandate.html> [Retrieved 10 April 2017].

### FLSA.

2016. Provision of French Language Services on behalf of Government Agencies. French Language Services Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. F.32. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110284> [Retrieved 10 April 2017].



GOVERNMENT OF CANADA / GOUVERNEMENT DU CANADA.

2016. Official Languages Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. 31 (4th Supp.)) <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/o-3.01/FullText.html> [Retrieved 10 April 2017].

HIEN A & REGUIGUI A.

In press. *Droits, lois et aménagement linguistique de l'Ontario*. Histoire, réalités et illusions.

HOULE R, PAREIRA D & CORBEIL JP.

2010. *Portrait statistique de la population immigrante de langue française à l'extérieur du Québec (1991 à 2006)*. Ottawa: Statistiques Canada.

KEDREBÉOGO G.

1998. *Francophonie et développement nationale: mythe et réalité?* Ouagadougou: Cahiers des Sciences et techniques, CNRST, 12-24.

MINISTRY OF TRAINING, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

2016. *Aménagement linguistique*. A Policy for OAF (Office des affaires francophones) et la Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario. Profil de la Communauté francophone de l'Ontario. [http://www.ontario.ca/fr/communities/franco-phones/profile/ONT05\\_024295.html](http://www.ontario.ca/fr/communities/franco-phones/profile/ONT05_024295.html) [Retrieved 10 April 2017].

NACRO I.

1982. *Politique d'intégration des langues nationales dans le système éducatif*. Rapport de DEA, Paris: Université de Paris.

NGALASSO M. (ED).

1996. *Démocratie, le pouvoir des mots*. Paris: Kathala.

NIKIÉMA N.

1993. *Les langues nationales et les intérêts de classe au Burkina Faso*, dans les actes du colloque: Langues nationales dans les système éducatifs, 131-144. Ouagadougou: Université de Ouagadougou.

NIKIÉMA N. & Kaboré-Paré A.

2010. *Langues de scolarisation dans l'enseignement fondamental en Afrique subsaharienne francophone (LASCOLAF)*. *Cas du Burkina Faso*. [http://www.elanafrique.org/sites/default/files/fichiers\\_attaches/rapport\\_lascolaf\\_cas\\_burkina\\_faso.pdf](http://www.elanafrique.org/sites/default/files/fichiers_attaches/rapport_lascolaf_cas_burkina_faso.pdf) [Retrieved 10 April 2017].

NYAMBA A.

2001. *Les relations de plaisanteries au Burkina Faso: un mode de communication pour la paix sociale*, dans les Cahiers du CERLESHS, n° 18, 57-83. Ouagadougou: Université de Ouagadougou.

ONTARIO.

2016. *Politique d'aménagement linguistique (PAL)*. A policy Framework for French-Language Postsecondary Education and Training in Ontario. [http://tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/publications/PAL\\_Eng\\_Web.pdf](http://tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/publications/PAL_Eng_Web.pdf) [Retrieved 10 April 2017].



OFLSC (OFFICE OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO).

2016. *Special Report. Active Offer of Services in French: the Cornerstone for Achieving the Objectives of Ontario's French Language Services Act*. [http://csfontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/OFLSC-257785-Special-Report\\_October-2016\\_ENG.pdf](http://csfontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/OFLSC-257785-Special-Report_October-2016_ENG.pdf) [Retrieved 10 April 2017].

OIF (ORGANISATION INTERGOUVERNEMENTALE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE).

2014. *La langue française dans le monde*. Paris: Nathan.

PATRIMOINE CANADIEN.

2016. Article 23 – *Droits à l'instruction dans la langue de la minorité*. <http://www.pch.gc.ca/fra/1356640308088/1356640399461> [Retrieved 10 April 2017].

ROY I.

2006. *Vers un droit de participation des minorités à la vie de l'État?* Montréal: Wilson & Lafleur.

STATISTIQUE CANADA.

2011a. *Recensement de la population de 2011*. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/102/cst01/demo15-fra.htm> [Retrieved 10 April 2017].

STATISTIQUE CANADA.

2011b. *Recensement de la population de 2011*. [https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/censusrecensement/2011/as-sa/98-314-x/98-314-x2011003\\_2-fra.cfm](https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/censusrecensement/2011/as-sa/98-314-x/98-314-x2011003_2-fra.cfm) [Retrieved 10 April 2017].

STATISTIQUE CANADA.

2016. *Estimations de la population du Canada, troisième trimestre de 2015*. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/151216/dq151216e-fra.htm> [Retrieved 10 April 2017].

UNICEF.

2017. Burkina Faso. *Statistiques. Indicateurs de base*. [https://www.unicef.org/french/infobycountry/burkinafaso\\_statistics.html](https://www.unicef.org/french/infobycountry/burkinafaso_statistics.html) [Retrieved 10 April 2017].