



Original Article

CANADA'S NEW POLICY TO STRENGTHEN THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT - FOCUSED ON THE BILL C-13 -

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ABSTRACT

Canada became a bilingual country that spoke both English and French through the Official Languages Act enacted in 1969. The Official Languages Act, which has continued to this day after revisions in 1988 and 2005, has greatly contributed to narrowing the social and economic gap that existed between English and French speakers in Canada. However, despite the implementation of the Official Languages Act, French still exists as a minority language among official languages in Canada today and is not guaranteed equal status and rights to English. There have been several attempts to revise the Official Languages Act, but it has not come to fruition. Canada's official language committee minister and the Canadian government proposed a revision to the official language law called Bill C-13 in March 2022, which was eventually enacted after approval from the House of Representatives, the Senate of Canada, and the royal family in June 2023. This study examines the problems of the Official Languages Act through the enactment of Bill C-13 while examining the impact of this law on Canadian society in the future.

Keywords: The Official Languages Act in Canada, Bill C-13, Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs), Anglophones in Canada, Francophones in Canada

1. INTRODUCTION

Canada is a bilingual country that recognizes English and French as its official languages, and the ability to maintain this bilingualism is primarily due to the Official Languages Act. The Official Languages Act is a policy that was established in 1969, reflecting Canada's national values of acknowledging the coexistence of English and French speakers in the country while simultaneously protecting their rights. The enactment of the law had a great influence on Canadians' lives, and since then, Canadians have not only had the right to work and receive services in the official language of their choice at federal agencies located in certain areas designated by the law but also served as an important tool to support and further promote the use of English and French¹. However, although Canada is known as a country that recognizes the equal rights and privileges of English and French both legally, the reality is that the English-speaking population still accounts for an overwhelming proportion, and only 18% of the total population speaks both English and French (data from the Canadian National Statistical Office in 2021)². In addition, there is indeed a considerable gap between the original purpose and reality of the bilingual policy that guarantees equal rights between the two languages, with French speakers living outside Quebec still experiencing inconvenience in receiving services in French even at government offices. This reality can be seen as disproving that Canada's Official Languages Act does not meet expectations in its effectiveness. To address these issues, there have been several discussions and attempts to modernize and amend the Official Languages Act over the years, but they did not bear fruit. However, in March 2022, the Minister of Official Languages, Ginette Petitpas Taylor, proposed a revised bill named Bill C-13, with the support of the Canadian government, to restore the status of French as an official language and protect the substantive rights of French-language users. This bill was eventually passed into law on June 20, 2023, after receiving approval from both the Canadian House of Commons and the Senate, as well as the Royal assent from the United Kingdom. This study aims to examine Canada's Official Languages Act, particularly considering the recently amended Bill C-13, and to assess the issues that the Official Languages Act has faced historically. It also seeks to explore the proposed improvements within Bill C-13 and how it intends to address these issues. Furthermore, this study aims to examine the potential impact and implications of such revisions to the Official Languages Act on Canadian society. To this end, this study first outlines the historical process of Canada's Official Languages Act to this day. Next, compared to the existing Official

1 The official site of the Canadian government.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/news/2023/06/backgrounder—details-on-the-modernization-of-the-official-languages-act.html> (Search Date: 2023. 05. 30).

2 The official site of the Statistics Canada data.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2022052-fra.htm> (Search Date: 2023. 05. 23).

Languages Act, we will look at what Bill C-13 wants to revise, and what the impact and implications of these amendments will have on Canadian society.

2. THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

Canada's Official Languages Act, first introduced in 1969, has greatly transformed Canadian society over the past 50 years. The introduction of the Official Languages Act contributed to narrowing the social and economic gap between English and French speakers and served as a driving force to advance respect for rights as Canadian citizens and the realization of democratization in Canadian society. However, despite the long-term implementation of the Official Languages Act, French speakers in Canadian society still belong to the official language minority community³, indeed the pressure and need felt by French speakers for English use are much greater than the need for English speakers to use French. Through this section, we would like to examine the background and purpose of the introduction of this law and the process of revision to help understand Canada's Official Languages Act.

Canada's recognition of the use of English and French dates to 1867 when Canada became a federal state. In 1867, Canada recognized the use of English and French in Congress and federal courts through the Constitution Act of 1867, originally known as the British North America Act. However, this was a time when the concept of "official language" or "common language" had not yet been introduced.

It was in 1969 that English and French were legally recognized as Canada's official languages when Canada was undergoing a major transformation. Canada in the 1960s, when Quebec's Quiet Revolution began, was a time of heightened nationalism among French-speaking Canadians. It was a time when awareness and dissatisfaction with the authority and social inequality of the church, especially the social and economic inequality that existed between English and French speakers, were amplified. In the end, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, who sensed the crisis of national unity caused by the division between English and French speakers, established the Royal Commission in 1963 to investigate bilingualism and biculturalism.⁴ According to a final report published in 1969, French speakers in Canada do

3 In Canada, there is a concept of "OLMCs (Official Language Minority Communities)," which refers to a group of people whose native language or official language of their choice is not a language used by many in their provinces or territories. For example, This includes English speakers in Quebec and French speakers outside Quebec.

Source: the official site of the Canadian Parliament

<https://canadacouncil.ca/glossary/official-language-minority-communities>, (Search date: 2023. 05. 14)

4 The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, created in 1963 under the direction of Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, was created when Canada was linguistically divided and on the verge of national unity. In response, it was tasked with investigating the bilingual situation in Canada and the situation of French speakers. According to a report on the results of the survey, French speakers in Canada had fewer opportunities to participate than English speakers in the country's political and business sectors, and their income was also low. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism has made sweeping changes to federal and local language policies. The committee's findings led to changes in French education nationwide, leading to the creation of a federal department of the official languages.

Source: Canadian Encyclopedia

not rank higher than English speakers in political and economic activities and they have fewer educational opportunities than English speakers. It was also revealed that federal agencies did not work in French or receive proper services in French. When the Royal Commission's final report was published, Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, then Prime Minister of the Liberal Party, introduced the Official Languages Act in 1969, and soon after, an official languages committee was established to monitor the application of the law. As a result, agencies belonging to the federal government are obligated to provide their services in English and French.

Meanwhile, in 1982, the Canadian government adopted the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which included many items that guaranteed and strengthened Canadian language rights. In other words, Congress, federal public institutions, and federal courts guaranteed the right to use the official language of their choice and required documents from archives, congressional reports, and minutes to be printed in two official languages so that each version had the same legal effect. In addition, according to the Charter, parents with official language minorities protect their children's right to be educated in public educational institutions in their language.⁵

However, the Official Languages Act of 1969 was abolished with the introduction of a new official language law in 1988. The newly introduced Second Official Languages Act was introduced to promote the rights of minority languages, reflecting the Canadian government's willingness to promote the vitality of the official language minority community, support their development, and promote the full use of English and French in Canadian society. The Official Languages Act, revised in 1988, went through another revision process in 2005, which was revised to promote the development of minority communities in official languages and clarify the obligations of federal agencies to promote bilingual development. And the Official Languages Act that went through this process of revision led to the official language known to us today.

However, even today, more than 50 years after the law was first implemented, French is still struggling as a minority language among official languages, although Canada maintains its reputation as a bilingual country that uses English and French as official languages. Therefore, to guarantee the equal status and rights of the two official languages more practically, the revision of the Official Languages Act became inevitable, and voices calling

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/royal-commission-on-bilingualism-and-biculturalism>, (Search Date: 2023. 05. 07).

⁵ The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was firmly established in 1982 which defines the basic freedoms and rights of Canadians, such as freedom of expression while referring to the rights of Canadians related to official languages through many sections of the Charter. The Charter, in particular, solidifies the right of Congress and Canadian government agencies to use bilinguals and educate minority languages, paving the way for stronger cooperation between the federal and state governments for the development of Canada's English and French communities.

Source: Canadian Official Languages Commission Site

https://www.clo-ocol.gc.ca/html/charter_charte_e.php, (Search date: 2023. 05. 09)

for its modernization increased. The Official Languages Act, which has been the subject of discussion several times in the Canadian National Assembly since 2017, took steps to revise French use and other related laws in federally regulated private companies in March 2022 when Ginette Petitpas Taylor, the Minister of Official Languages, proposed Bill C-13. Federally regulated private companies include banks, airlines and air transportation, port services, maritime transportation, ferries, pipelines (petroleum and gas) across international or state boundaries, postal and courier services, railway, or road transportation businesses (including trucks and buses) across states or borders, as well as communication businesses such as telephone, Internet, and cable systems (excluding broadcasting). Employees working for companies covered by this law have the right to perform their duties in French and receive supervision in French. And despite strong resistance from English speakers across Canada, including Quebec, the bill was finally adopted into law in June 2023 after review by the House of Commons and Senate of Canada and Royal Assent. In connection with the revision of Canada's Official Languages Act, which will be recorded as a very important event in history, Ginette Petitpas Taylor, the Minister of Official Languages, expressed her feelings as follows.

"This is a great day for our Canadian culture, identity, and values. We are loudly and clearly affirming our commitment to an inclusive, bilingual society, where everyone can flourish in the official language of their choice. This is a historic day for minority language communities across the country, whose language rights will be better protected and strengthened. I am honored to be part of this achievement, which will make a real difference in the lives of Canadians."

This study aims to examine the historical event of the amendment to Canada's Official Languages Act and explore the content that the newly adopted "Bill C-13" seeks to amend within the Official Languages Act. Additionally, it seeks to investigate the changes that this law is expected to bring about in Canadian society.

3. BILL C-13 AND AMENDMENTS TO THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

There have been several calls for the need to modernize and strengthen Canada's Official Languages Act, and it has also been one of the Liberal Party's 2021 presidential election pledges led by Prime Minister Pierre-Eliot Trudeau. On March 1, 2022, the Minister of Official Languages, Ginette Petitpas Taylor, introduced Bill C-13, and with the support of the Canadian government, the process of modernizing the Official Languages Act began. Despite

concerns and opposition from English-speaking communities in Quebec and English-speaking Canadians outside Quebec, this bill was adopted into law in June 2023.⁶

The main purpose of Bill C-13, which has the subtitle “An Act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts”, is to modernize Canada's Official Languages Act, which was adopted in 1969 and has continued without major revisions since its revision in 1988 and 2005. It also acknowledges that French is the only official language threatened in Canada and the only official language in the federal workplace that needs protection and improving it.

In this section, we will first introduce the purpose and structure of the Official Languages Act, explaining why it was created and its components. Next, we will use tables to examine the changes introduced through Bill C-13 in comparison to the previous Official Languages Act. Finally, we will summarize the key modifications to the Official Languages Act brought about by Bill C-13.

First, according to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, the purpose and intent of the Official Languages Act are to ensure respect, equal status and rights for English and French, as well as to guarantee privileges for their use within federal institutions.

In addition, the law supports the development of English and French minority communities and promotes equal status and use of English and French. Such content of the existing Official Languages Act remains unchanged in the newly revised Official Languages Act, but it also includes newly added items and contents strengthened in the existing Official Languages Act. The following <Table 1> provides a brief overview of how the existing Official Languages Act is structured in terms of its sections, and <Table 2> compares and summarizes how the key contents of the (former) Official Languages Act have been revised in the amended Official Languages Act.

Table 1.

Main Components of Official Languages Acts⁷

| Part | Subject |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| Part I | Proceedings of Parliament |
| Part II | Legislative and Other Instruments |

⁶ The C-13 bill was unanimously passed in the House of Commons, except for a single dissenting vote. The only lawmaker to vote against it is known as Anthony Housefather of the Montreal Liberal Party. He expressed concern about the impact of the bill on English speakers, a minority language in Quebec.

Source: La Presse Official Homepage May 15.

<https://www.ledevoir.com/politique/canada/791099/un-seul-depute-vote-contre-la-reforme-federale-de-la-loi-sur-les-langues-officielles> (search date: 2023. 05. 25).

⁷ The Canadian Ministry of Justice site for this table.

<https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/O-3.01/page-1.html#docCont> (Search date: 2023. 05. 12)

| | |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Part III | Administration of Justice |
| Part IV | Communications with and Services to the Public |
| Part V | Language of Work |
| Part VI | Participation of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians |
| Part VII | Advancement of Equality of Status and Use of English and French |
| Part VIII | Responsibilities and Duties of the Treasury Board about the Official Languages of Canada |
| Part IX | Commissioner of Official Languages |
| Part X | Court Remedy |
| Section 41 | Government policies, Duty of federal institutes and Regulations |

Table 2.

Comparison of Existing and New Official Languages Act⁸

| | Existing Official Languages Act | An Act for the Substantive Equality of Canada's Official Languages |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Objective | •Protects the language rights of Canadians and promotes the equality of English and French | •Adds strengthening measures to protect the French language in Canada |
| Scope | •Applies to the entire Canadian territory | •Continues to apply to the entire Canadian territory |
| Official languages | •Recognizes English and French as Canada's two official languages | •Continues to recognize English and French as Canada's two official languages •Recognizes the different linguistic realities of the provinces and territories, as well as the minority status of the French language in North America |
| Language promotion | •Supports the promotion of the use of English and French in Canadian society | •Reinforces the promotion of the use of English and French in Canadian society by enhancing the vitality and supporting the |

⁸ The Canadian government site for this table.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/news/2023/06/backgrounder--details-on-the-modernization-of-the-official-languages-act.html>
(Search date: 2023. 05. 27)

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | development of official language minority communities |
| Language rights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Guarantees the public the right to receive government services in the official language of their choice in certain regions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Continues to guarantee the public the right to receive government services in the official language of their choice in certain regions •Strengthens the linguistic rights of English and French speakers, particularly in the areas of justice and public administration |
| Federal institutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Promotes bilingualism within federal institutions and encourages the provision of bilingual services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reinforces the bilingualism obligations of federal institutions and aims to increase the availability of services in French. •Specifies obligations related to positive measures to be taken by federal institutions Imposes measures to ensure that deputy ministers and associate deputy ministers take language training so they can speak and understand both official languages clearly •Also strengthens the Treasury Board's oversight role and the powers of the Commissioner of Official Languages |
| Language learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Promotes minority language instruction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reinforces the implementation of the right to minority language education by creating a requirement for the federal government to contribute to statistical data on the children of rights holders |
| Francophone immigration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Makes no reference to Francophone immigration to counter the decline of the French language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Sets out the obligation to implement a federal Francophone immigration policy to help maintain and increase the demographic weight of Francophone minority communities |
| Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Establishes the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages as an independent agency responsible for overseeing the application of the Act | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Strengthens the powers of the Commissioner of Official Languages, including new powers to enter into compliance agreements, issue orders, and impose administrative monetary penalties (the latter applying to the transportation sector) |

| | | |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Access to justice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Promotes the publication of judicial decisions in both official languages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Creates an obligation to be heard in the official language of one's choice at the Supreme Court Strengthens the provisions on federal court decisions to obtain immediate translation of more judicial decisions coming from federal courts |
| Federally regulated private businesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Does not establish any language rights and obligations for federally regulated private businesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Creates new legislation, the <i>Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act</i>, which confers rights and obligations about language of service to consumers and employees of these entities in Quebec and regions with a strong Francophone presence |

Bill C-13 identifies the parts where revisions are needed and proposes amendments as presented in <Table 2>. Based on the content of <Table 1> and <Table 2>, the key amendments in Bill C-13 can be examined as follows.

3.1 Strengthening support for official language minority communities

Bill C-13 intends to strengthen Part VII of the Official Languages Act. Part VII is related to the Canadian government's active intervention to promote the full awareness and use of French and English in Canadian society by promoting the vitality of Canada's official language minority community and supporting their development.⁹

In particular, the amendment mentions active support for immigration, education, health, culture, and legal issues, which are essential support sectors for the vitality of the official language minority community. It also suggests protecting and activating institutions that provide services to minority communities and further strengthening measures to encourage them to learn and accept the two official languages in Canada.

3.2 Strengthening the powers of the commissioner of official languages and the treasury board

Bill C-13 proposes to grant new powers to the Commissioner of Official Languages to ensure the thorough implementation of the Official Languages Act. These powers include the

⁹ The official Canadian government site.
<https://www.canada.ca/fr/secretariat-conseil-tresor/services/valeurs-ethique/langues-officielles/loi-langues-officielles-et-vous.html>
 (Search date: 2023. 05. 09)

authority to sign agreements with federal institutions for compliance with the law and, in specific cases, to issue orders to them. Bill C-13 also proposes to assign new responsibilities to the Treasury Board, which are related to enhancing the monitoring and adjustment of Part IV related to communication and services with the public, Part V related to language in the workplace, Part VI concerning the participation of English and French users in Canada, and Part VII related to the development of English and French within the framework of the Official Languages Act. It also includes strengthening the Treasury Board's responsibilities, which are set out in Part VIII. In effect, it turns the most of the Treasury Board's discretionary powers (what it may do) into duties (what it must do). Finally, Bill C-13 is urging the thorough implementation of the Official Languages Act by proposing to create a new administrative fine system to ensure Part IV compliance with public communication and services.

3.3 Strengthening bilingualism in judicial administration

Bill C-13 requires all judges appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada to be bilingual to improve access to justice and prevent future governments from changing their policies. The bill also calls for the deletion of exceptions to subsection 16 (1) of Part III of the Official Languages Act related to the Supreme Court of Canada about judicial administration. According to the clause, if English or French is the language chosen by the litigants, all judges or other officials should be able to understand the languages without the help of interpreters during the proceedings, which are subject to all federal courts except the Supreme Court of Canada¹⁰. Bill C-13 deleted these exceptions, and it suggested that the Supreme Court of Canada, like all other federal courts, allow all judges hearing a specific case to directly understand the litigants without the help of an interpreter.

In addition, in the reform proposal in February 2021, the federal government admitted that access to federal court decisions in both official languages was not guaranteed in part due to the time it took to translate¹¹. Bill C-13 proposes to further strengthen subsection 20 (1) of Part III of the Official Language Act, requiring that final decisions, orders, or judgments of federal courts with priority value be translated into both official languages at the same time. In addition, it is expected that this will increase the number of judgments translated into two official languages.

3.4 Specific legal proposals regarding immigration for French language users

¹⁰ The Canadian Ministry of Justice site.

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/O-3.01/page-1.html#h-384230> (Search date: May 18, 2023)

¹¹ The strengthening of the Official Languages Act was the Liberal Party's presidential election pledge in 2021. The party proposed a new version of the amendment in 2021, which did not pass. However, in March 2022, they reintroduced the amendment through Bill C-13.

Bill C-13 requires, for the first time, that Official Language Act include clauses related to immigration. In other words, Bill C-13 requires the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to adopt immigration policies for French-speaking immigrants to strengthen the vitality of Canada's French minority community. In addition, the policy states that immigration should include a statement that the federal government acknowledges that immigration is one of the factors contributing to maintaining or increasing the demographic weight of Canada's French minority community.¹²

In this regard, Ginette Petitpas Taylor, the Minister of the Official Languages, said, "We are talking about the implementation of immigration policies with indicators and goals to reverse the decline of French through the modernization of Official Language Act through Bill C-13."¹³ The Liberal Party's government also noted that it believes such a policy will help promote French-language childcare, education, and healthcare services across Canada, which is suffering from a shortage of bilingual workers¹⁴.

3.5 Introduction of French-speaking legislation for federally regulated private companies

Bill C-13 is subtitled "An act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts." As can be seen from the subtitle of this law, the revised the Official Languages Act places great importance on strengthening the use of French by federally regulated private companies. The clauses of the law containing this content are newly added provisions, and the purpose of this is to protect French as the language of the workplace and service language.

First, Bill C-13 will be applied to areas that are not currently subject to the Official Languages Act or Quebec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, although there are a significant number of French speakers who operate or have businesses in Quebec or outside Quebec, except in the broadcasting sector. Regarding the language of work, the law guarantees new rights, such as (i) the right to perform work in French and be supervised in French, (ii) the right to receive all communication and documents in French, and (iii) the right to use regularly widely used work tools and computer systems in French for employees with certain positions at work in Quebec or areas with a significant number of French speakers. In addition, concerning service languages, the law guarantees the right to communicate in French and receive services in French when handling business with federally regulated private

¹² The Official Languages Council Official Site:

<https://www.clo-ocol.gc.ca/en/publications/other/2022/bill-c13-amend-ola> (Search date: 2023. 05. 23)

¹³ CTV News Official Channel

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/house-passes-official-languages-bill-to-enshrine-francophone-immigration-in-law-1.6399386> (Search Date: May 15, 2023).

¹⁴ The Canadian Press.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/9699823/canada-official-languages-bill-house/> (Search Date: 2023. 06.05).

companies operating in Quebec or areas with a significant number of French speakers. This obligation applies to both written and oral communication.

Finally, Bill C-13 prohibits employers from treating employees unfavorably because they do not have sufficient knowledge of languages other than French, have exercised their rights under this new law, and have complained to official language commissioners. However, the law stipulates that demanding knowledge of languages other than French does not constitute disadvantageous treatment if related businesses can prove that it is objectively necessary due to the nature of the work that employees have to perform¹⁵.

As we have seen so far, the newly revised Bill C-13 has clarified the obligation of federal institutions to take appropriate measures to strengthen support for those in the official language minority community, such as English speakers in Quebec and French speakers outside Quebec, and to protect the interests of the official language minority community. In addition to this, previously, there was a lack of appropriate legal mechanisms to regulate violations of the Official Languages Act. However, the new Official Languages Act strengthened the authority of the Treasury Board and the Commissioner of Official Languages to thoroughly supervise the management of federal agencies about the implementation of the Official Languages Act, preparing strong measures to make the Official Languages Act effective. The revised Official Languages Act contains very important changes, which are related to the acceptance of French-speaking immigrants and the use of French in federal regulatory business agencies. These two provisions are newly added and can be said to be clauses that can exert great influence on Canadian society in the future. First, the immigration of French speakers can be a very important factor in the maintenance and growth of the population ratio of French speakers, Canada's official language minority community. However, the previous Official Languages Act did not include such provisions. The new addition of a clause to encourage French speakers to immigrate is the result of sympathy and awareness that French is on the decline as the only official minority language in Canada, and that the population decline of French speakers is increasing significantly.

On the other hand, during the process of this amendment, the biggest issue and the source that caused great opposition from English speakers in Canada was the provision related to the use of French by federal regulatory business agencies. The law applies to regions with a significant Quebec and French-speaking population, aiming to ensure that employees of federally regulated private companies have the right to work in French. It also prohibits unfair treatment towards employees exercising their rights as prescribed by the Official Languages Act concerning pension plans, employment, and promotions, and notice of termination, or those who have lodged complaints with the Official Languages Commission. This law does

¹⁵ The Department of Justice Canada
https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/pl/charter-charte/c13_2.html (Search date: May 21, 2023)

not apply only to employees of federally regulated companies but also stipulates that customers dealing with these companies have the right to use French verbally or in writing. It also included the right to receive all communication and documents in French and the right to use work tools or computer systems in French.

As we have considered so far, the newly revised Official Languages Act, Bill C-13, contains new clauses, such as strengthening the existing Official Languages Act, promoting immigration to French speakers, and strengthening federally regulated companies' obligation to speak French. It is thought that the Official Languages Act can expect practical authority and role to protect French in Canada and prevent its decline. In addition to that, Bill C-13 is expected to have greater effectiveness by strengthening the authority of the Commissioner of Official Languages and the Treasury Board to monitor and regulate the implementation of the law.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examines the historical context of the amendment of the Official Languages Act in Canada, tracing its development from its inception to the present day. Examining the proposed amendments in Bill C-13 sheds light on the shortcomings of the existing Official Languages Act and the reasons for their lack of effectiveness. Among the reasons for its ineffectiveness is the practical reality that, in a globalized world, English is the most widely used language both online and offline. However, it is essential to note that when this law was first enacted, its intent was not to make all of Canadians bilingual. Instead, the federal government created this law to unite the country in response to divisions between English and French speakers and to integrate all provinces, including Quebec, into the Canadian federal system. And this might provide reasons for why the Official Languages Act has perhaps not been effective up until now.

Bill C-13 is expected to have significant repercussions on Canadian society. The revised content through Bill C-13 is primarily related to French strengthening policies, potentially causing various difficulties for English speakers inside and outside Quebec. Janice Naymark, the law consultant, said in the newspaper *Gazette* on 13 June 2023 that federal agencies regulated by the government may prefer hiring French speakers over English speakers in the future. Additionally, the Quebec Community Groups Network, representing over 40 English-speaking groups in Quebec, criticizes the federal government for sacrificing the language rights of Quebec's English speakers while granting new rights specifically applicable to French speakers. However, from another perspective, the strengthened Official Languages Act is anticipated to broaden opportunities for French education for many Canadians and to contribute to the balanced development of English and French within Canadian society.

Over the past 50 years, the implementation of the Official Languages Act has significantly reduced disparities in Canadian Society between the English-speaking and French-speaking communities in terms of social, economic, and educational aspects. However, the primary role of the Official Languages Act is to provide citizens with the right to receive services in either official language from federally regulated institutions and to ensure that various administrative forms, documents, and communications are made available in both English and French. As revealed by the amendments proposed in Bill C-13, the existing Official Languages Act had limitations in terms of the effectiveness of legal regulation.

For Canada's Official Languages Act to be more effective, it will be necessary to pursue practical equality that considers equity in the official language minority community and the majority community, not superficial equality. In addition, the Official Languages Act should prevent the decline of French through stronger legal regulations and contribute to preventing French speakers belonging to the official language minority community from experiencing discrimination and inconvenience throughout Canada. From this point of view, it is expected that the revision of Bill C-13 will serve as a steppingstone for Canada to leap into a more mature multicultural and multilingual society.

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