



The Study of French:
New Frontiers in the Age of Globalization

What is the role of the French language in the context of globalization?

The narrative...

- **pre-1980's:** unique status of French as preferred foreign language taught in American schools.
- **1980-2010:** Spanish overtakes French as preferred foreign language in American schools.
- **2010 and beyond:** increased emphasis on foreign languages as useful skills in the age of globalization. Other languages (e.g., Mandarin) see increased interest. Immersion programs and dual-language programs increase. Links between foreign language education and business and engineering increase.
- **Foreign Language requirement:** no longer an «Either/Or» choice for students (French or Spanish). Other language offerings.. The narrative has changed which leads to misperceptions and misconceptions among the public.
- **The decline of French as an important foreign language to study?**

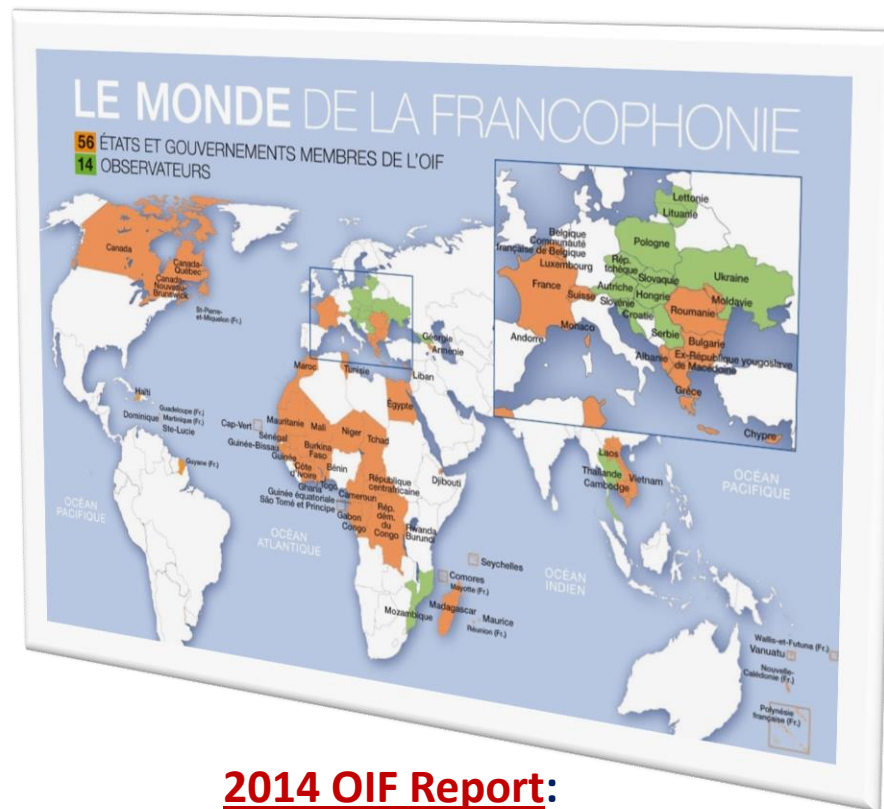
*Despite what we teachers hear,
the language of Moliere is actually in fine health around the world !*

French: a global language

- *A language spoken on the five (5) continents*
- *A presence in education systems the world over*
- *A working language in European and international forums*
- *A language boosted by the dynamism of French-speaking countries*

WE teachers already know and teach this!





2014 OIF Report:

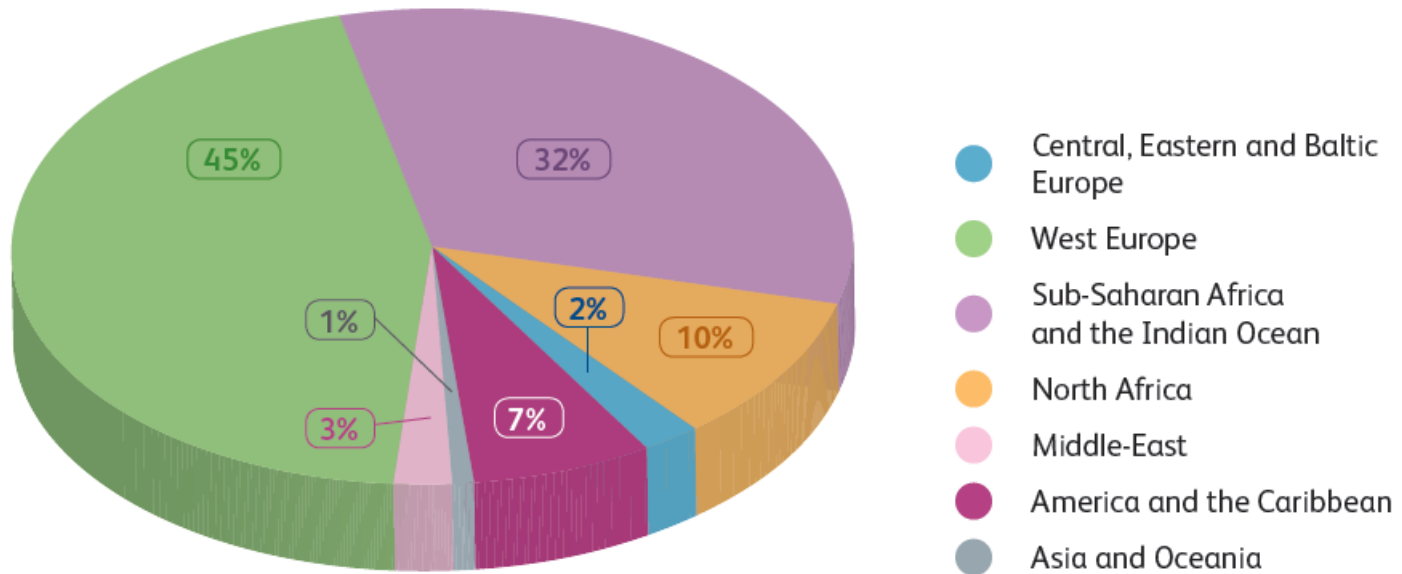
Spoken by **274 million people** (102 countries and territories): **+7%** more French speakers (13 million) between 2010 and 2014

3rd most widely spoken language in the world after English and Spanish.

Projections of growth most notably in Francophone Africa:

by **2050** French will have become the **2nd most widely spoken language** in the world with an estimate of a half ($\frac{1}{2}$) billion people.

▶▶ The Global breakdown of French speakers in 2015





Demographic growth in **sub-Saharan Africa** where French is the language of instruction has enabled many countries of the continent to increase numbers of French speakers by **up to 30%** since 2010.

The future vitality of French as a «global language» will be played out in Francophone Africa. Is Francophone Africa the «new» China???

Since 2010 the numbers of those learning French as a foreign language is:

- +6% on average around the world
- +7% in North Africa and the Middle-East
- **+44% in sub-Saharan Africa**
- -8% in Europe
- +4% in Asia and Oceania
- +2% in America and the Caribbean

FRENCH, A LANGUAGE FOR TOMORROW

- The arrival of a new, multipolar world, under the influence of emerging countries, is shaping a new cultural and linguistic pluralism.
- The *OIF* and the **French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs** has made promoting the French language a priority.
- **La Francophonie:**
 - 14% of world population.
 - 14% of global gross income.
 - 20% of world trade.

Trends

- **4th** most used language on the **Internet**
- **3rd** in **business** (Bloomberg)
- **2nd** in **international information and the media**
- **2nd** working language of most **international organisations**
- **2nd most learned language in the world**, an asset for those who can speak it well.

BLOOMBERG RANKINGS

THE LANGUAGES OF BUSINESS

Which languages -- other than English -- are most useful for conducting business around the world?

LANGUAGE	SCORE*	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WHERE LANGUAGE IS OFFICIAL	NUMBER OF SPEAKERS, MILLIONS	POPULATION IN COUNTRIES WHERE OFFICIAL, MILLIONS	2011 GDP, USD, BILLIONS	GDP GROWTH % 2011-2016	EXPORTS + IMPORTS AS % GDP	SCHOOL LIFE EXPECTANCY, YEARS	WEIGHTED AVERAGE LITERACY RATE FOR ALL COUNTRIES WHERE LANGUAGE IS OFFICIAL	NUMBER OF INTERNET USERS, MILLIONS	INTERNET PENETRATION, % OF SPEAKERS	GEOGRAPHIC CONTINUITY (KM ² , MILLIONS)	TOURISM RECEIPTS AS % OF GDP
Mandarin	57.0	1.0	845.0	1,331.5	6,515.9	57.4	49.1	11.6	94.0	444.9	52.7	-	0.8
French	51.7	27.0	67.8	341.5	4,115.9	11.1	70.0	10.1	65.3	59.8	88.2	9.5	2.1
Arabic	50.1	23.0	221.0	361.7	2,662.5	25.7	91.3	10.5	71.5	65.4	29.6	13.9	2.9
Spanish	49.2	20.0	329.0	410.4	4,558.6	16.5	50.9	14.1	92.9	153.3	46.6	11.8	2.3
Russian	44.6	4.0	144.0	172.7	2,134.9	23.9	52.9	14.2	99.6	59.7	41.5	20.2	0.8
Portuguese	37.7	8.0	178.0	249.2	2,783.1	21.8	30.6	13.2	85.1	82.5	46.4	-	0.8
Japanese	34.1	1.0	122.0	127.6	5,821.9	8.0	24.8	15.1	99.0	99.1	81.3	-	0.2
German	24.0	6.0	90.3	109.3	5,079.5	9.2	89.1	15.9	98.9	75.2	83.2	0.5	1.7
Italian	19.6	4.0	61.7	68.4	2,784.6	7.6	56.9	16.2	98.8	36.7	59.5	0.3	2.1
Korean	16.0	1.0	48.8	48.7	1,126.5	22.2	95.9	16.9	97.9	39.4	80.8	-	1.1
Turkish	13.7	1.0	50.8	75.7	822.6	22.1	49.7	11.8	90.9	30.1	59.3	-	3.7

Sources: World Bank, IMF, Ethnologue, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), CIA, International Telecommunications Union, UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

As of: August 5, 2011

*Languages were awarded points from 0 to 100 based on position relative to each other. Points were summed to rank each language.

METHODOLOGY: To create this ranking, we first identified the 25 languages with the greatest number of native speakers, then narrowed the list to the 11 that are official languages of G20 countries. (Countries where English is the official language, or one of multiple official languages, were excluded.) We then compiled statistics from countries where each language is official. In countries with multiple official languages, statistics were included for each language. For example, Switzerland's data were included for its three official languages: German, French and Italian.

Trends

+7% more French speakers between 2010 and 2014 (13 million)

+15% more in Sub-Saharan Africa.

+ 30% more in Benin, Burkina, Faso, Burundi, Cameroun, Congo, Gabon, and Senegal.

Based on **UN long term demographic forecasts**, the population in countries where French is an official language will overtake that of countries where other common official languages are spoken: German, Portuguese, Spanish and even Arabic.

Changing the narrative...

- Along with the help of the **National AATF** and its **francophone partners** (e.g., Consul de France, Délégation du Québec, etc.), **WE TEACHERS** must help in changing the narrative of the teaching of French in the USA.
- The RI chapter is at your disposal for any advocacy necessary.
- Merci!

Sources

International Organization of the Francophonie:
The French Language Worldwide (2014)

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French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/enjeux-internationaux/langue-francaise-francophonie-et/

