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# The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

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From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development  
Report: #2022-INFO-80  
Date: September 29, 2022

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**Subject:**

2021 Census of Population – Language (Release 4), File: D01-03

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**Recommendation:**

Receive for information

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**Report:**

**1. Purpose**

1.1 This report presents an overview of Statistics Canada’s fourth release of the 2021 Census of Population data, highlighting Durham Region’s statistics on language. Attachment 1 summarizes key statistics in Durham Region, the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), and Ontario.

**2. Background**

2.1 On August 17, 2022, Statistics Canada released the fourth dataset in a series of 2021 Census of Population statistics for municipalities across Canada. This release focused on language, including first official language spoken; mother tongue; languages spoken at home; and knowledge of languages. The Census is conducted in Canada every five years.

**3. Previous Reports and Decisions**

3.1 2022-INFO-79 – 2021 Census of Population – Families, Households, Marital Status, and Income (Release 3)

3.2 2022-INFO-77 – 2021 Census of Population – Age, Gender, and Dwelling Type (Release 2)

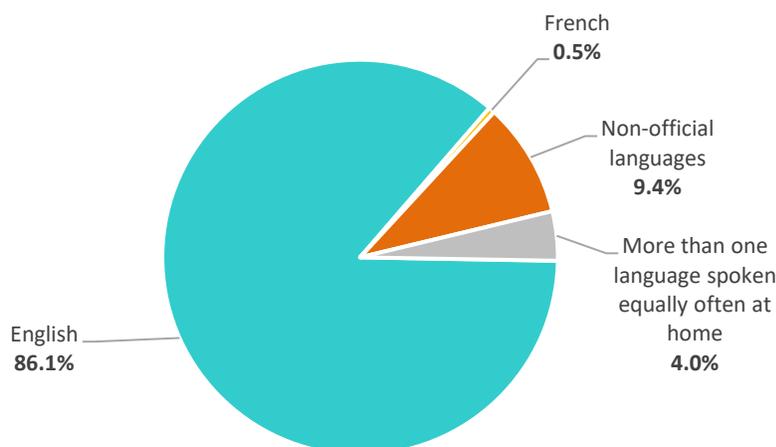
3.3 2022-INFO-31 – 2021 Census of Population – Population and Dwelling Counts (Release 1)

#### 4. Language

4.1 In 2021, the knowledge of English or the ability to have a conversation in English was claimed by 98.8% of Durham's residents, slightly lower than in 2016 (99.1%).

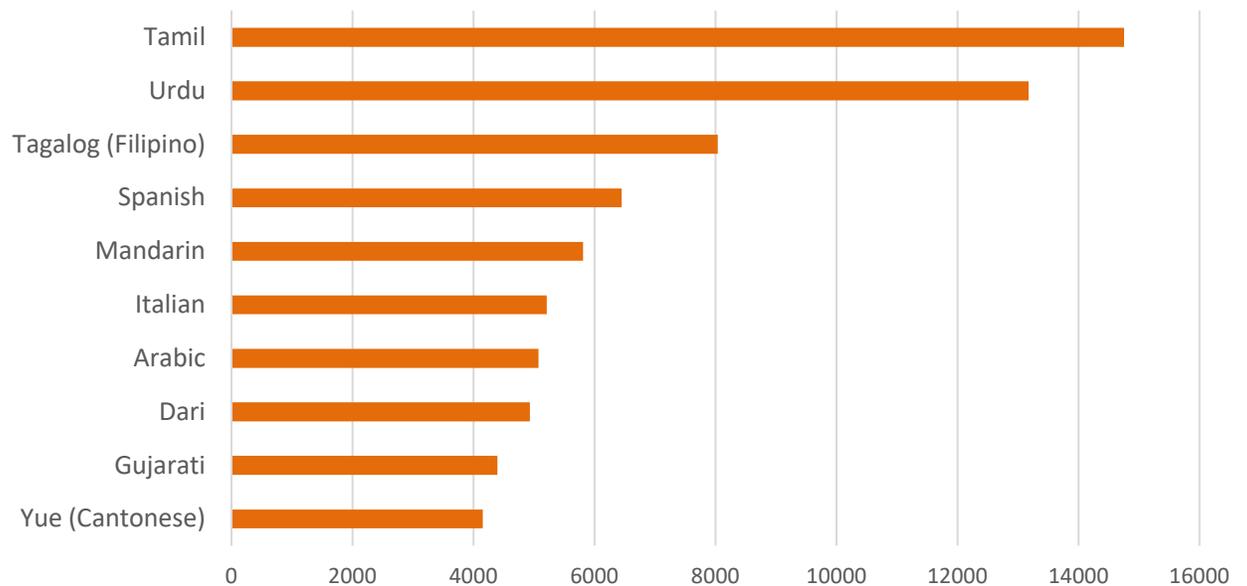
4.2 Approximately 97.2% of respondents reported English as their **first official language spoken**, followed by French (1.3%).

4.3 English was the **language most frequently spoken at home** for 86.1% of Durham's population in 2021, as identified in Figure 1. This percentage compares to Ontario at 77.4% and GTHA at 68.5%.

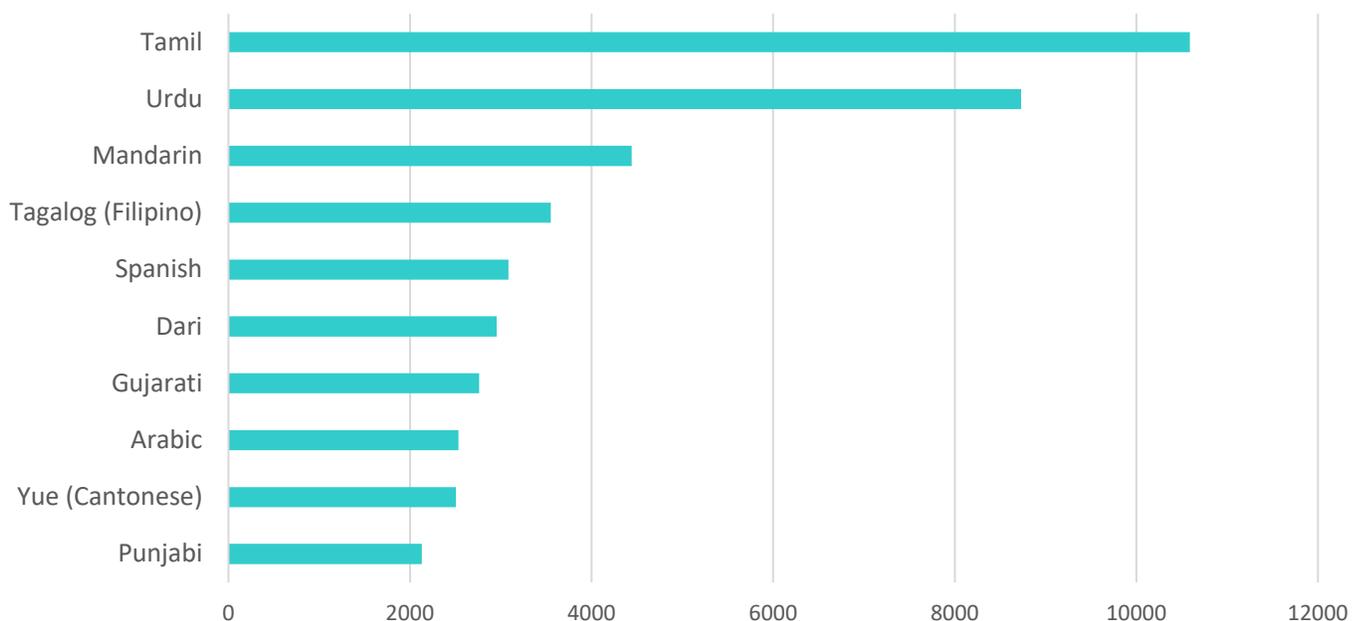


4.4 Similarly, English was the **mother tongue** for the majority of people in Durham (76.6%), Ontario (65.1%) and the GTHA (53.8%), all slight decreases from 2016.

4.5 Approximately 18.3% of Durham residents reported having one or more languages as mother tongue that are different than either of Canada's two official languages in 2021 (up from 15.3% in 2016). The most prevalent non-official languages reported as mother tongue in Durham include (in rank order): Tamil, Urdu, Tagalog (Filipino), Spanish, Mandarin, Italian, Arabic, Dari, Gujarati, and Yue (Cantonese), as illustrated in Figure 2.

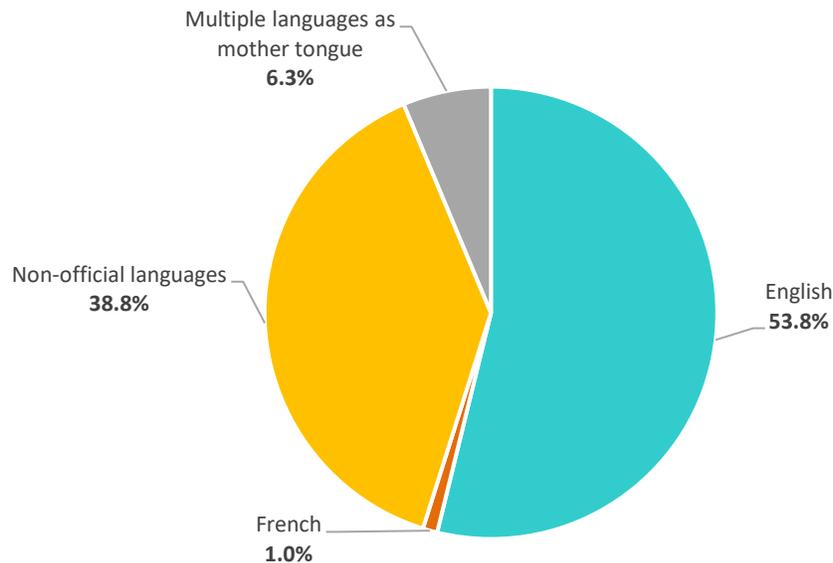
**Figure 2 | Top 10 non-official languages reported as mother tongue**

- 4.6 In 2021, 9.4% of Durham's population (65,440 people) reported speaking one or more non-official languages on a regular basis at home, compared to 6.5% (41,975 people) in 2016. Of those in Durham Region who speak a non-official language most often or on a regular basis at home, the most prevalent include: Tamil, Urdu, Mandarin, Tagalog (Filipino), Spanish, Dari, Gujarati, Arabic, Yue (Cantonese), and Punjabi.

**Figure 3 | Top 10 languages spoken most often at home, other than English and French**

- 4.7 The GTHA has a considerably higher share of residents who first learned a non-official language as their mother tongue (38.8%) compared to Durham (18.1%), as illustrated in Figure 4.

**Figure 4 | Languages reported as mother tongue in the GTHA**



- 4.8 The GTHA, as a whole, also has a higher share of residents who use a non-official language spoken most often or on a regular basis at home (23.8% or 1.7 million people) than Durham (9.4%). The most prevalent include: Mandarin, Yue (Cantonese), Punjabi, Urdu, Tamil, Spanish, Tagalog (Filipino), Arabic, Portuguese, and Russian.

## 5. Potential Impacts of global events

- 5.1 Global events, including the COVID-19 pandemic, have significantly impacted population and demographic growth trends across the globe. They have also influenced growth patterns in the GTHA as indicated in previous data releases noted in section 3. One key impact is the changes in immigration patterns which enhance and diversify the languages spoken within Durham's communities, as identified in this report. Future data releases of the 2021 Census and beyond will provide further insight into the shifts, the longevity of their impacts, and whether they represent long-term trends.

## **6. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

6.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

- a. Goal 5.3 – Demonstrate commitment to continuous quality improvement and communicating results

## **7. Conclusion**

7.1 The Census is an essential source of data on the demographic characteristics over time.

7.2 Statistics Canada has noted the following release schedule for additional data this year:

- September 21 – Indigenous peoples and Housing;
- October 26 – Immigration, place of birth, and citizenship; ethnocultural and religious diversity; and mobility and migration;
- November 30 – Education, labour, language of work, commuting, and instruction in the minority official language.

7.3 Following the completion of the seven major releases, there will be further releases (dates to be determined) that will highlight additional themes and key findings in the data, data tables, updates to data products, and further analyses.

7.4 The 2021 Census information will be used as input to various Regional projects, including the update to the Regional Official Plan through the Municipal Comprehensive Review (Envision Durham), infrastructure master planning, annual infrastructure capital budgets and forecasts, the annual Business Plan and Budgeting process, Development Charges Studies, and the Durham Region Profile.

7.5 A copy of this report will be forwarded to the area municipalities and be made available on the Region's website.

## **8. Attachments**

Attachment #1: Statistics Canada 2021 Census of Population, Fourth Release (language)

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP  
Commissioner of Planning and  
Economic Development

Table 1  
 Knowledge of Official Languages by Municipality in Durham

Official Languages	Ajax	Brock	Clarington	Oshawa	Pickering	Scugog	Uxbridge	Whitby	Durham
Total population by knowledge of official languages	126,415	12,335	100,950	174,390	98,760	21,520	21,480	137,135	692,975
English only	114,445	11,730	92,865	161,340	90,255	20,030	19,760	123,965	634,385
French only	100	0	70	235	60	0	5	110	580
English and French	9,420	560	7,565	11,200	7,130	1,440	1,640	11,425	50,385
Neither English nor French	2,450	40	450	1,615	1,315	50	70	1,635	7,630

Note: Excludes institutional residents.

Table 2  
Knowledge of Official Languages in the GTHA

Official Languages	Durham	Halton	Peel	Toronto	York	Hamilton	GTHA	Ontario
Total population by knowledge of official languages	692,975	591,845	1,441,775	2,772,630	1,167,855	563,820	7,230,9	14,099,79
English only	634,385	527,860	1,300,645	2,409,655	1,024,110	520,350	6,417,0	12,196,57
French only	580	360	1,005	2,555	470	410	5,380	39,310
English and French	50,385	54,205	81,965	236,915	74,625	32,630	530,725	1,519,365
Neither English nor French	7,630	9,420	58,160	123,505	68,645	10,435	277,795	344,545

Note: Excludes institutional residents.