

Employer Perceptions of English-Speaking Employees



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1 Background and Methodology



Methodology

Context

The Advisory Committee of English-speaking Quebecers (ACESQ) commissioned Léger to carry out a survey of Quebec employers with decision-making power or influence in their functions, in order to study their attitudes towards the recruitment and employment of English-speaking Quebecers.

Method

A Web survey was conducted among 501 Quebec residents, aged 18 and over, who could speak French or English, and who exercise a decision-making role or have influence over hiring in the course of their duties.

Collection dates

Data was collected from November 20 to December 1, 2024.

Margin of error

It is not possible to calculate a margin of error for a sample drawn from a web panel, but for comparison, the maximum margin of error for a sample of 501 respondents is $\pm 4.4\%$, 19 times out of 20.

Weighting

The results were weighted according to region, number of employees and industry sector, to ensure a representative sample of the population.

Significant differences

Numbers in **red** indicate a statistically significant difference **below** the complement, while numbers in **green** indicate a statistically significant difference **above** the complement.

Results showing significant and relevant differences are indicated in a text box next to the presentation of overall results.

DNK/Refusal

The mention “DNK/Refusal” in the report refers to the response option “I don’t know / I prefer not to answer.” For each question, the complement to 100% corresponds to this category.

Data rounding

The data presented have been rounded. As a result, totals may differ slightly from 100% or from the sum of the parts.

2 Key Findings



The Experience with English-Speaking Employees and the Impact of Law 14*

Hiring Profile of English Speakers

45%

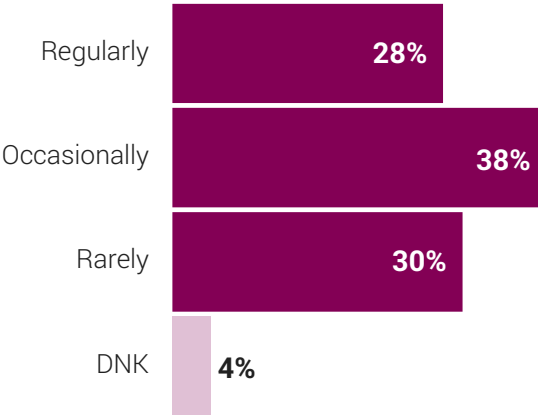


Nearly half of the companies surveyed (45%) have never hired English-speaking employees.

This trend is particularly pronounced among French-speaking companies (52%), as well as in the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of Quebec City (82%) and in regions outside the Greater Montreal and Quebec City areas (56%).

In contrast, hiring English-speaking employees is significantly more common among English-language companies (88%) and bilingual companies (74%), as well as in the Greater Montreal area (70%).

The main reason for hiring English speakers is the need to attract qualified people, regardless of their mother tongue (41%). This outweighs the desire to serve customers or users in English (29%) and the requirement for English proficiency in certain positions (26%).



Among respondents, 28% do so regularly, while 38% do so occasionally and 30% rarely do so.

This trend is particularly marked among companies where French is the main working language, almost half (47%) rarely hire English-speaking staff. Conversely, companies working primarily in English are the most likely to regularly hire English-speaking employees (69%).

The main reasons for not hiring or rarely hiring English-speaking employees are the need for strong proficiency in French due to the nature of the work (38%), few English speakers in the region where the organization operates (26%), and a lack of applications from English-speaking candidates (26%).



Note: On May 24, 2022, the National Assembly of Quebec passed Law 14, *An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec* (formerly known as Bill 96), which came into effect on June 1, 2022. The law strengthened the prominence of the French language in society, government, businesses, and workplaces. Employers are required to comply with certain obligations under this legislation.

The Experience with English-Speaking Employees and the Impact of Law 14*

Benefits and Integration into the Job Market


86%

A strong majority (86%) of employers who have hired English-speaking individuals report a positive experience, with 60% rating it as very positive. Conversely, only a small proportion (2%) characterize their experience as negative.

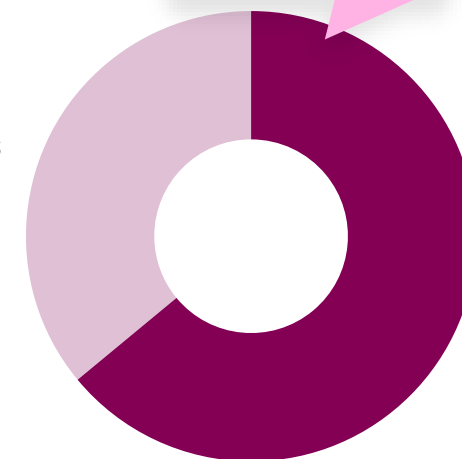
77%

of employers who have hired an English-speaking person claim to have experienced at least one benefit.

Three quarters of employers who have hired English-speaking employees claim to have experienced at least one benefit (77%). The most commonly cited benefits are improved bilingual service (57%), access to a broader talent pool (36%), increased cultural diversity (21%) and access to new markets (20%). Bringing new perspectives and innovation (10%) and improving the organization's reputation (10%) are also among the benefits mentioned.

64%

64% of Quebec employers feel that English-speaking employees are well integrated into Quebec's job market, compared to 16% who feel they are poorly integrated.



To support integration of English speakers into the Quebec job market, improving accessibility to francization programs (30%) is seen as the top priority. This is followed by government incentives for employers (25%), amendments to language laws (21%) and offering industry-specific (21%) and region-specific (18%) language training programs.

Experience with English-Speaking Employees and the Impact of Law 14

Hiring and Integration Challenges

56%

More than half of Quebec employers who hired English-speaking employees (56%) experienced at least one difficulty in the hiring process.

The main difficulties encountered are finding people who are fully bilingual (25%) and a lack of applications from English-speaking candidates (14%).

33%

A third of employers who hired English-speaking employees encountered challenges in integrating English-speaking staff. Employers mainly report language barrier issues, whether with customers (13%) or staff (13%).



Recruitment, Hiring Practices and Language Training Programs

Perception and Impact of Law 14

1/5



One in five Quebec employers (21%) say they are concerned about hiring English-speaking employees as a result of Law 14.

- This proportion is markedly higher among English-speaking employers. Nearly a third (34%) say they are very concerned.
- The main concerns relate to legal compliance issues (35%), linguistic skills of their staff (32%) and the risk of fines or penalties (25%). Uncertainty about legislation (22%) and increased administrative tasks (21%) are also among the major concerns.

32%

Nearly a third of employers (32%) say they have changed their hiring practices for English-speaking candidates, either by being more cautious (14%), reducing hiring (10%) or stopping altogether (8%).

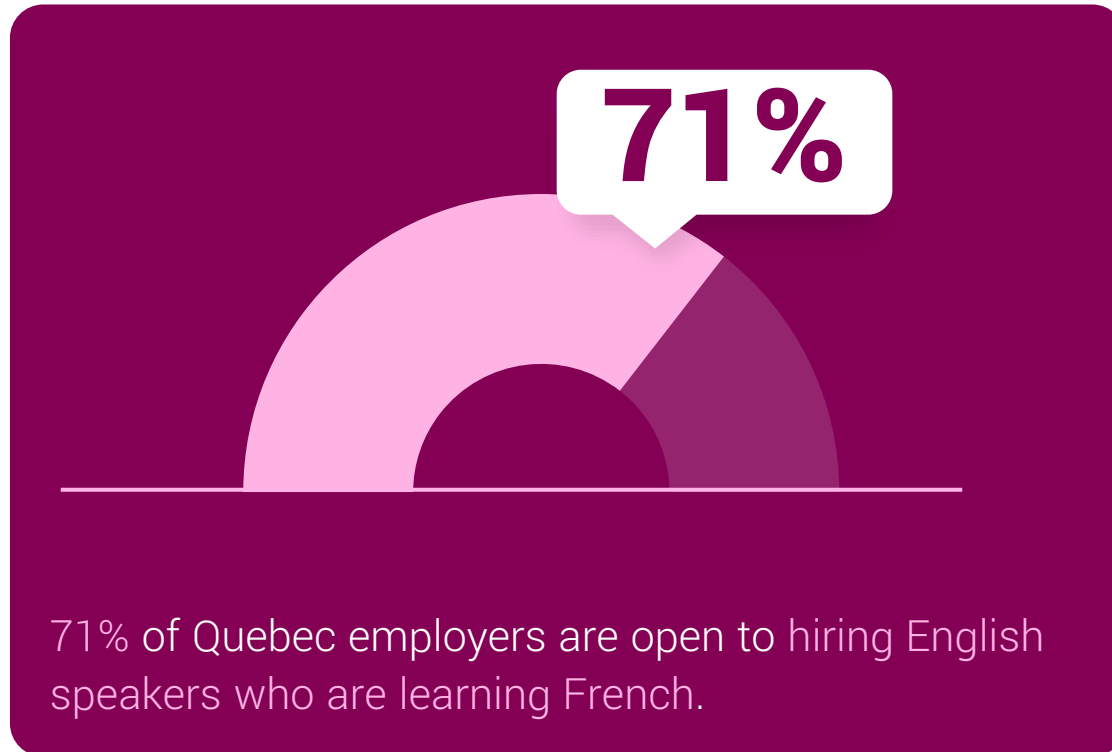
13%

Retention practices have also been impacted by Law 14, with over one in ten employers (13%) reporting changes in how they retain English-speaking employees. These changes include adopting a more cautious approach (10%), or by letting English-speaking employees go as a direct result of Law 14 (4%).



Recruitment, Hiring Practices and Language Training Programs

Importance of Written and Spoken French



- In the primary and industrial sectors, language plays a less central role, with more than 9 out of 10 employers (93%) open to hiring English speakers who are still learning French.
- However, this willingness to hire people who are learning French is tempered by the importance of spoken French proficiency, with nearly 82% of employers finding it very important (41%) or somewhat important (41%). Written French proficiency is also considered important, but to a lesser degree (26% consider it very important and 41% somewhat important).
- These levels of importance are reflected in the willingness of employers to hire English-speaking candidates who are proficient in spoken, but not written French, and vice versa. Nearly 6 in 10 employers (59%) say they would hire a person with strong spoken French but limited written French skills. In contrast, only a third (35%) would do the same for a candidate with strong written French but limited spoken French skills.

Recruitment, Hiring Practices and Language Training Programs

Resources and Francization Programs



19%

19% of Quebec employers are aware of government-funded workplace francization programs or subsidies.

- Among employers aware of available programs, one quarter of them are currently using these programs (25%), and 12% plan to do so.
- One employer in five (20%) has implemented training programs, resources or measures to help their employees learn French. The main measures in place are e-learning platforms (28%), in-house language courses during working hours (24%) or external language courses also during working hours (21%).
- The main challenge in implementing these programs is the cost (40%).

3.1 Detailed Results

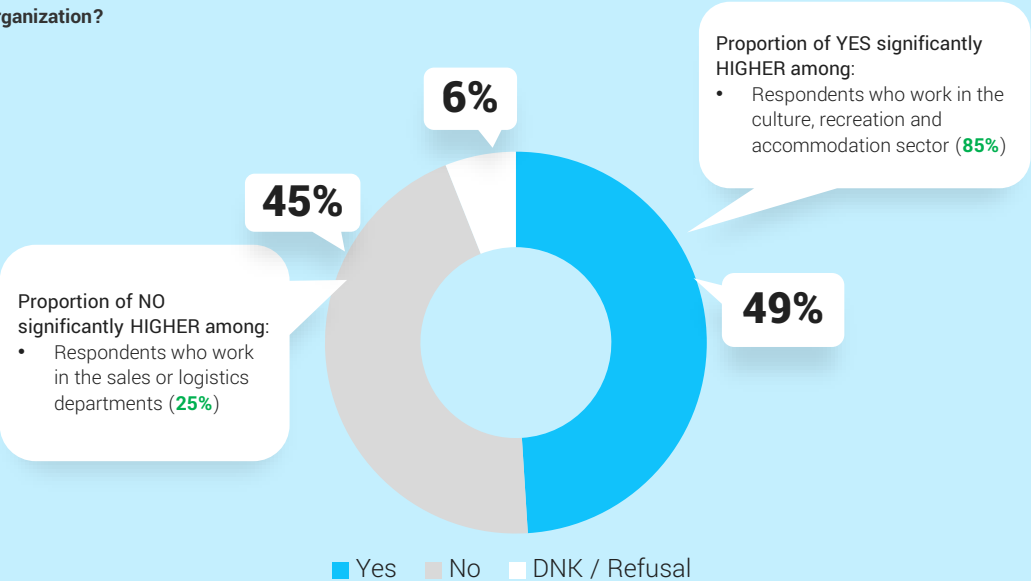
Experiences Hiring English-Speaking Employees



Hiring English Speakers

Question 1. Have you ever employed any English speakers in your organization?

Base: All respondents (n=501).

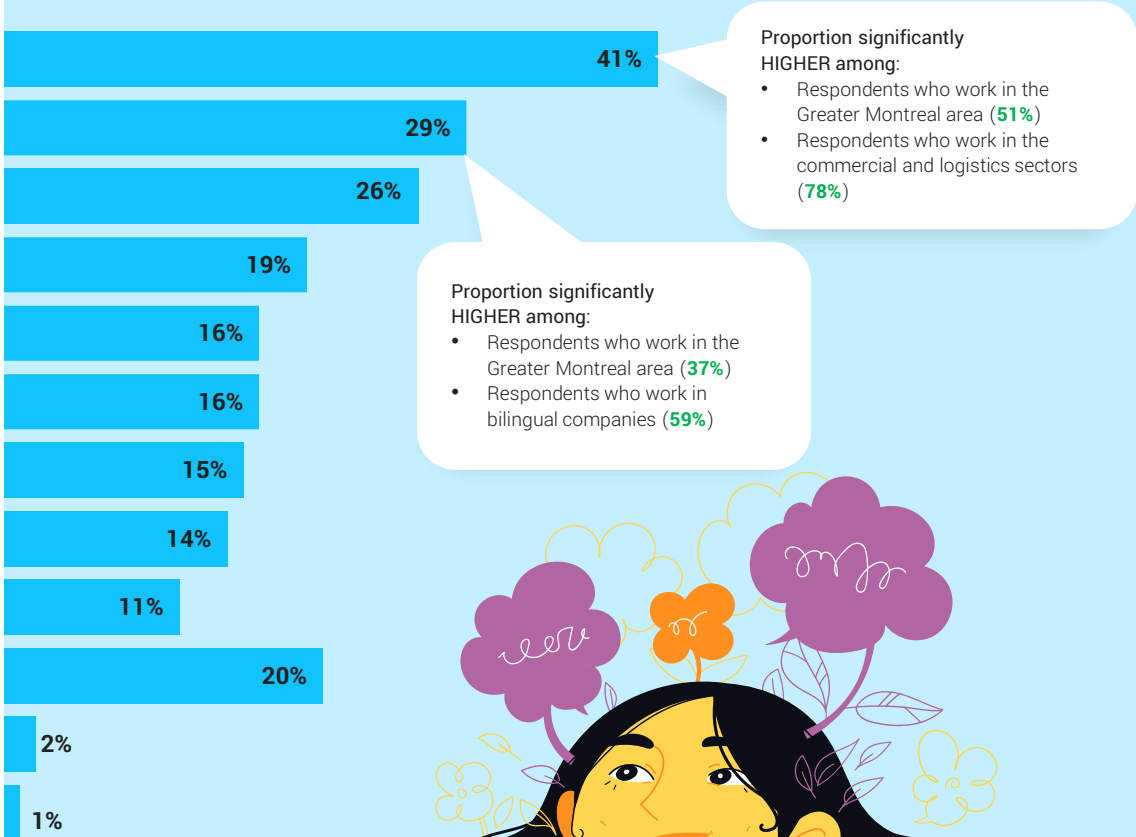


	Total	Region			Company Size				Primary Working Language		
		Mtl CMA	Qc City CMA	Other	Fewer than 100 employees	Between 100 and 499 employees	Between 500 and 1,500 employees	More than 1,500 employees	French	English	Bilingual
n=	501	266	48	187	175	107	64	144	342	83	75
Yes	49%	70%	4%	36%	49%	62%	71%	61%	40%	88%	74%
No	45%	28%	82%	56%	45%	31%	25%	34%	52%	12%	26%
I don't know/I prefer not to answer	6%	2%	14%	9%	6%	7%	4%	5%	7%	0%	0%

Reasons for Hiring English Speakers

Question 1B. What are the primary reasons you have hired English speakers? Select all that apply.
Base: Employers who have hired English speakers before (n=299)/Multiple mentions – The total may exceed 100%.

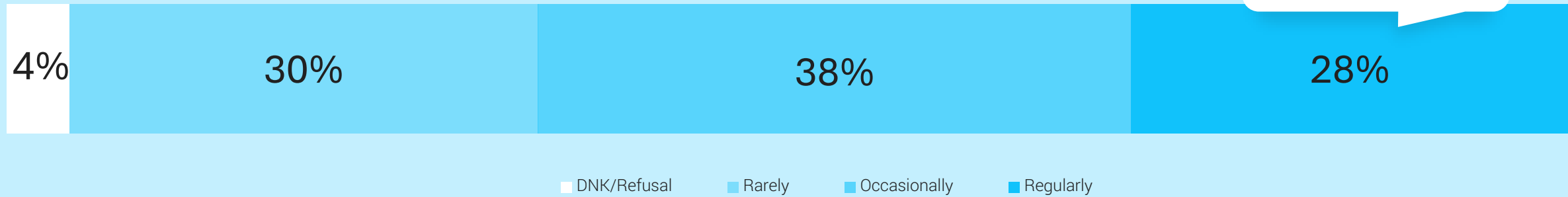
To attract qualified candidates regardless of their first language.	41%
To serve customers or clients who prefer or require service in English.	29%
Certain positions require proficiency in English (e.g., translation, sales, customer service).	26%
To expand into markets where English proficiency is necessary.	19%
To facilitate communication with international partners, suppliers, or clients.	16%
English speakers contribute new ideas and perspectives.	16%
To promote a diverse and inclusive workplace culture.	15%
Hiring based on recommendations from existing staff or networks.	14%
Compliance with regulations that necessitate English proficiency.	11%
No specific reason.	20%
Other.	2%
DNK/Refusal.	1%



Frequency of Hiring English Speakers

Question 2. How frequently does your organization hire English speakers?

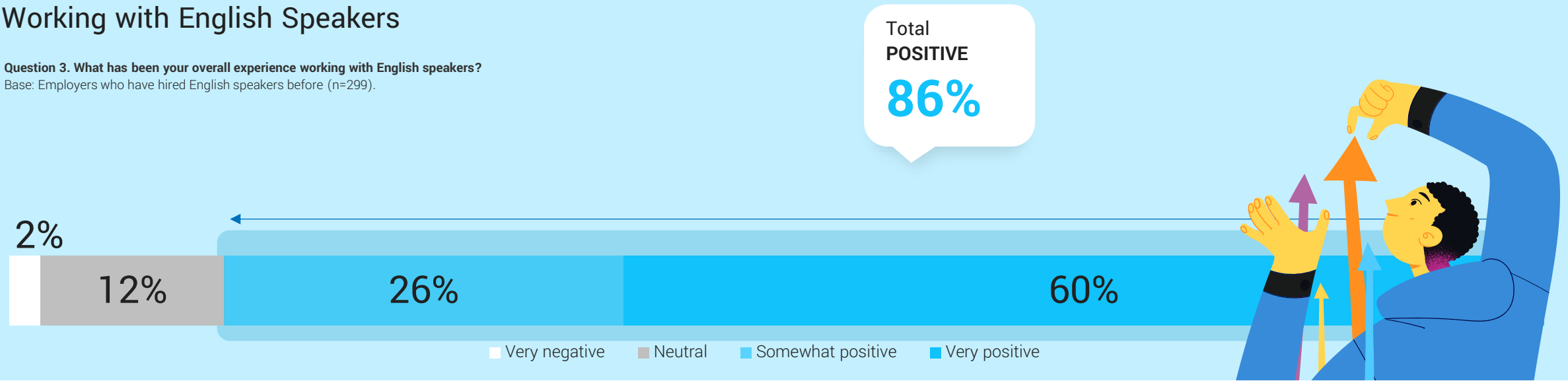
Base: Employers who have hired English speakers before (n=299).



	Total	Company Size				Primary Working Language		
		Fewer than 100 employees	Between 100 and 499 employees	Between 500 and 1,500 employees	More than 1,500 employees	French	English	Bilingual
n=	299	101	66	42	87	162	73	63
Regularly	28%	28%	35%	55%	45%	14%	69%	33%
Occasionally	38%	37%	47%	29%	34%	35%	31%	58%
Rarely	30%	30%	14%	9%	15%	47%	0%	0%
I don't know/I prefer not to answer	4%	5%	4%	7%	7%	5%	0%	9%

Working with English Speakers

Question 3. What has been your overall experience working with English speakers?
Base: Employers who have hired English speakers before (n=299).



	Total	Region			Primary Working Language		
		Mtl CMA	Qc City CMA	Other	French	English	Bilingual
n=	299	189	20	90	162	73	63
Total positive	86%	87%	96%	83%	81%	98%	90%
Very positive	60%	74%	50%	30%	47%	90%	71%
Somewhat positive	26%	13%	46%	53%	34%	8%	19%
Neutral	12%	10%	2%	17%	19%	1%	0%
Total negative	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	10%
Somewhat negative	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Very negative	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%
I don't know/I prefer not to answer	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Reasons for a Positive Experience Hiring English-Speaking Employees

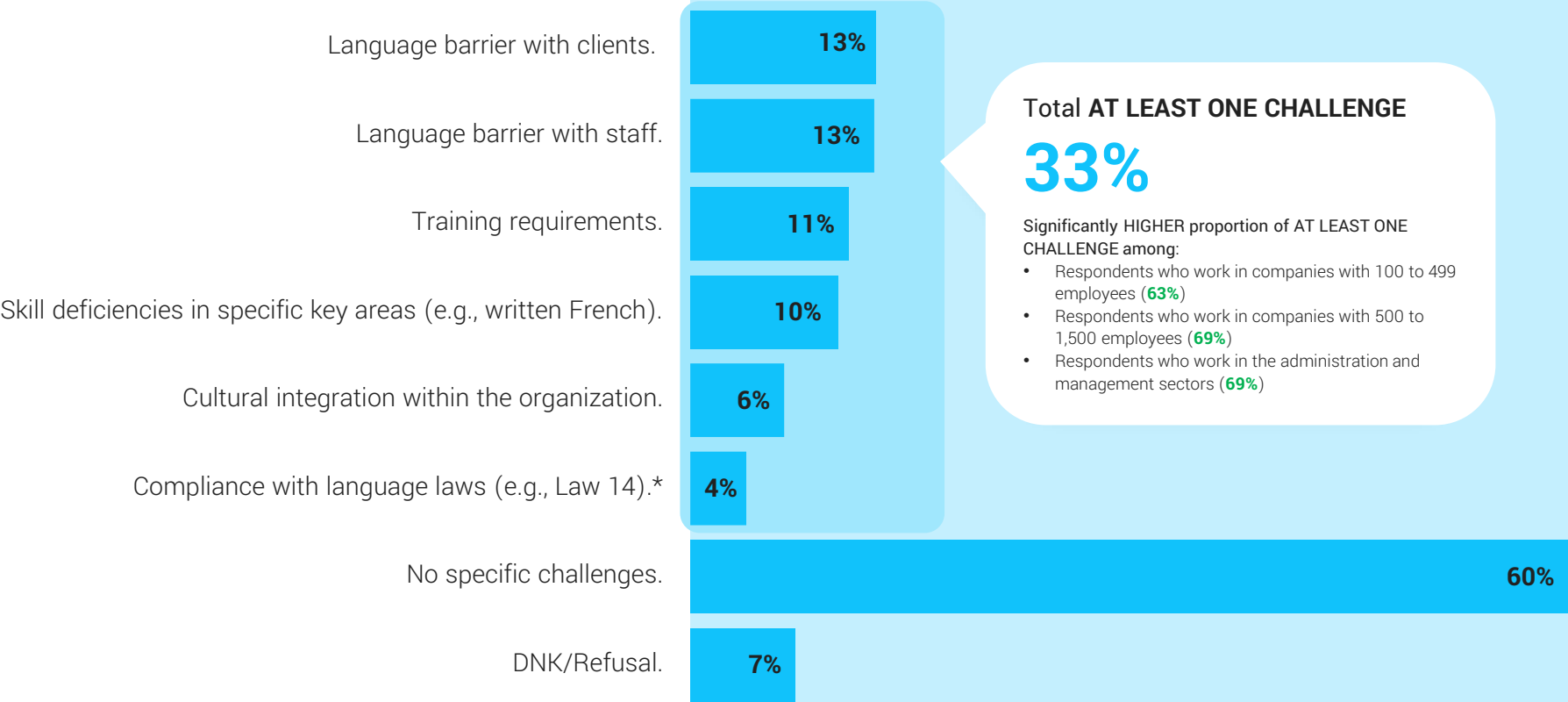
Question 3C. Why has your experience working with English-speaking employees been positive?
Base: Employers who have hired English-speaking employees before and had a positive experience(n=246)/Multiple mentions, unaided
– The total may exceed 100%.



Challenges Encountered with the Integration of English-Speaking Employees

Question 4. Have you faced any challenges when employing English-speaking individuals in terms of their integration within the organization? Select all that apply.

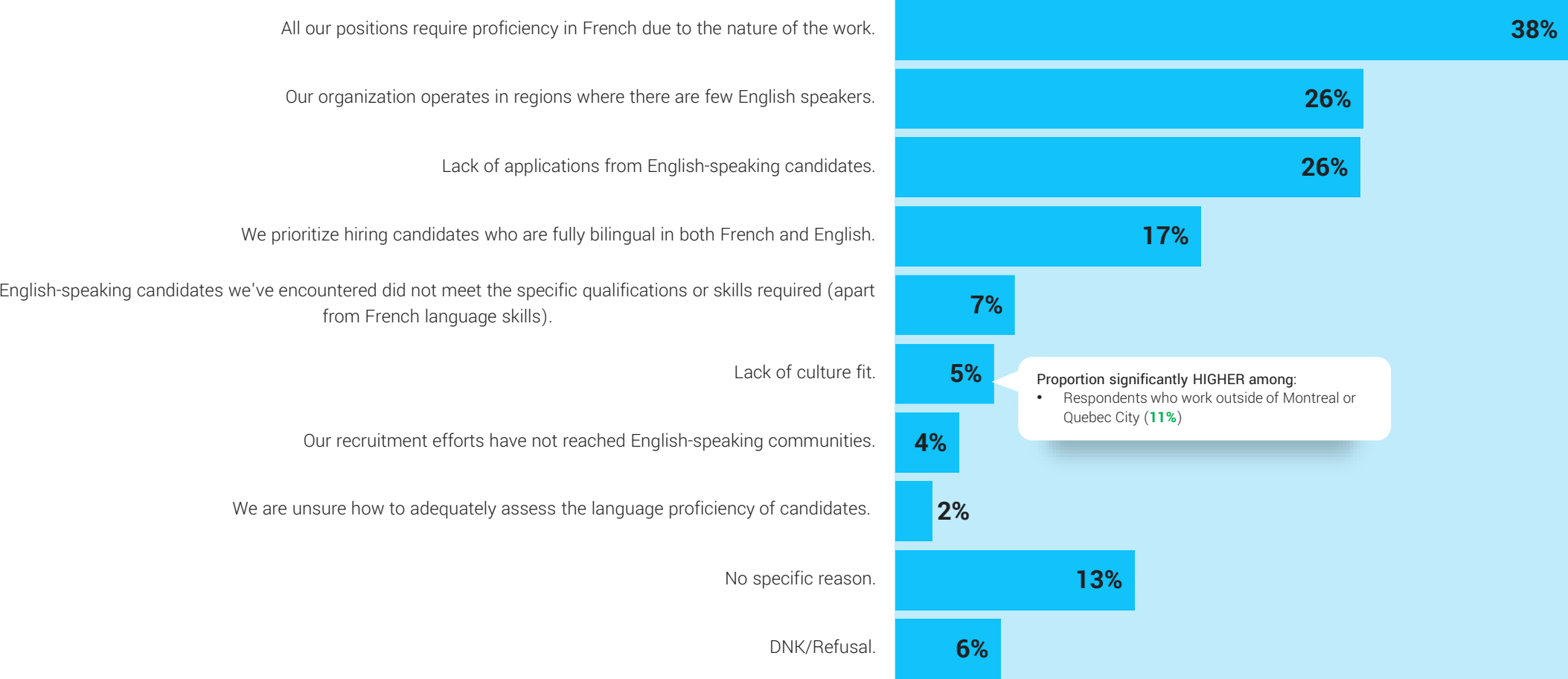
Base: Employers who have hired English speakers before (n=299)/Multiple mentions – The total may exceed 100%.



* Note: Bill 96 refers to Law 14.

Reasons Why English Speakers Are Rarely (If Ever) Hired

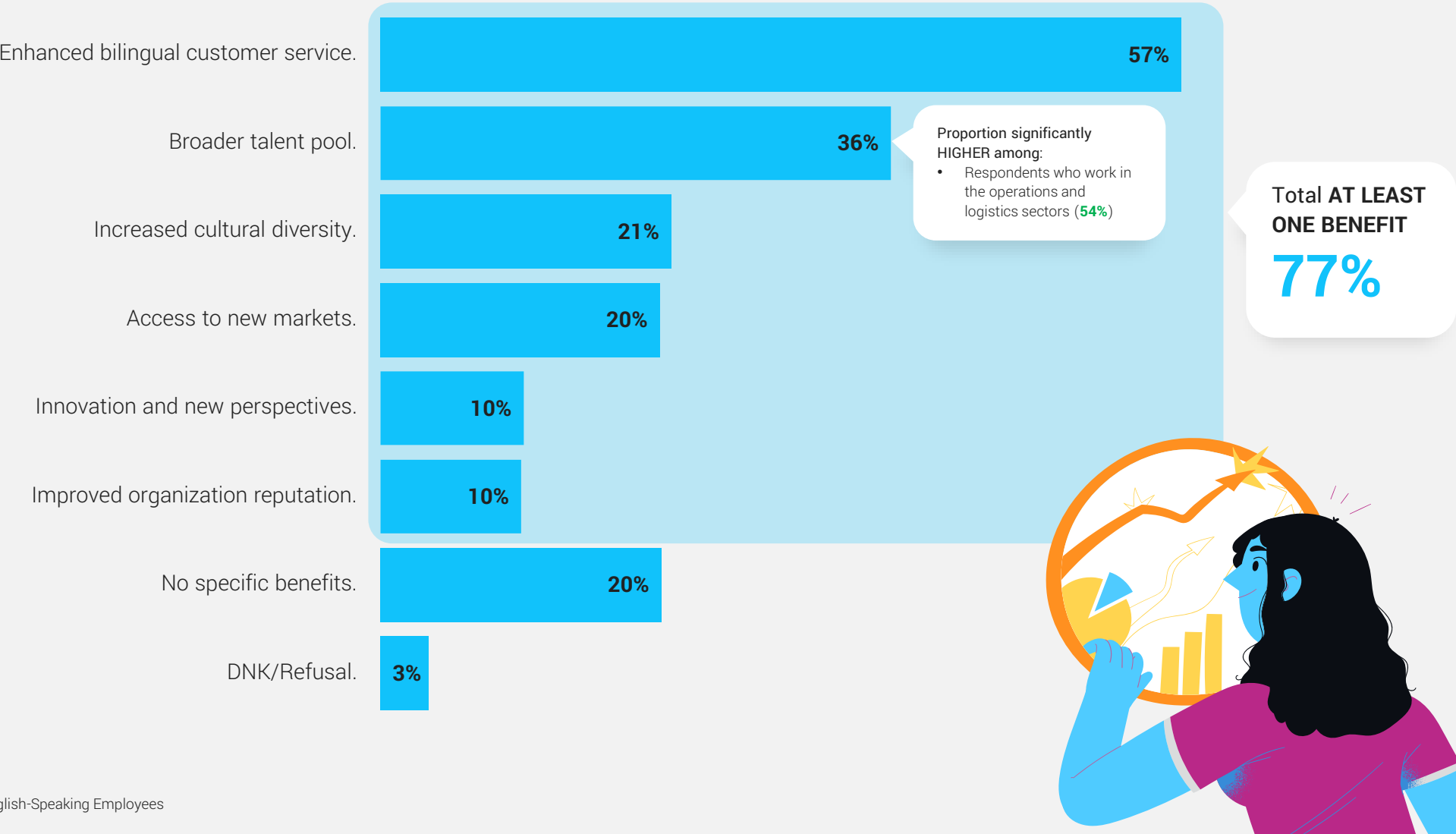
Question 5. For what reason(s) [have you never employed any/do you rarely employ] English speakers in your organization? Select all that apply.
Base: Employers who have never or rarely hired English speakers (n=222)/Multiple mentions – The total may exceed 100%.



Perceived Benefits of Hiring English-Speaking Employees

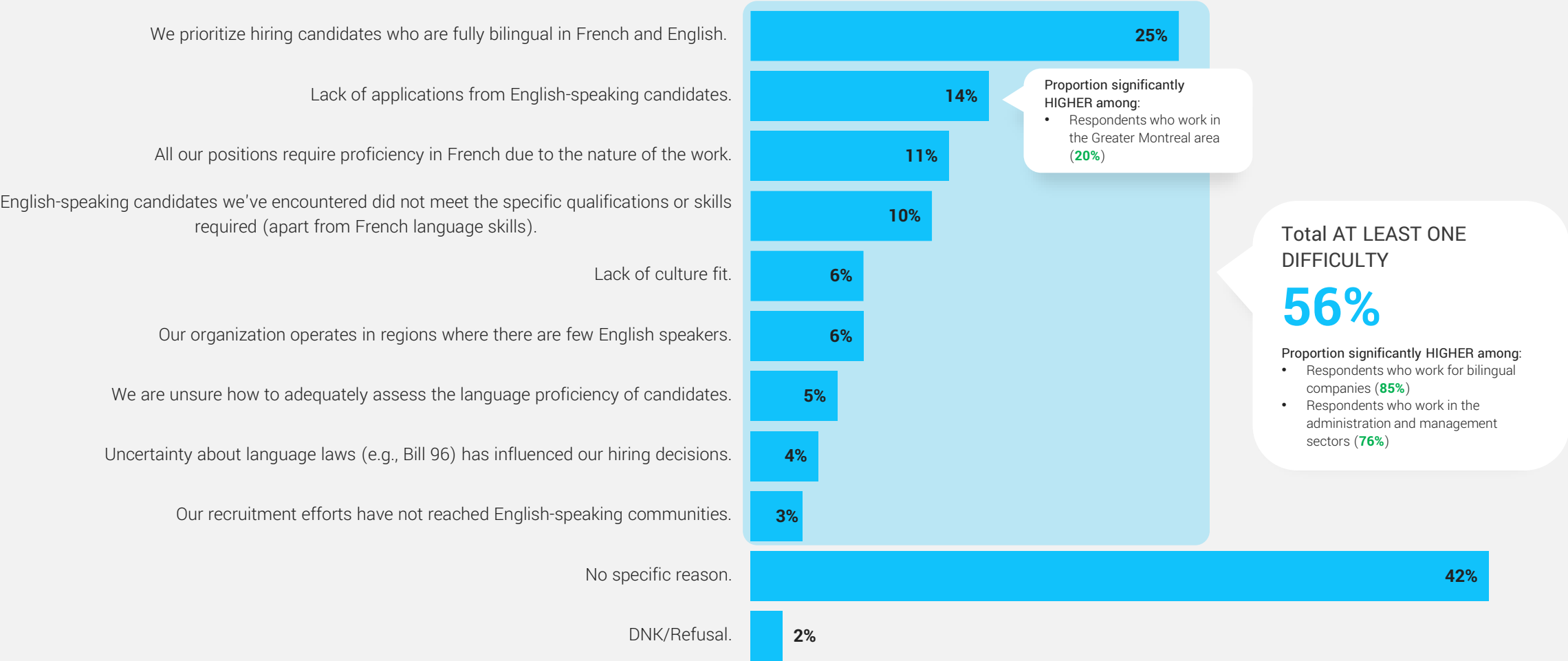
Question 6. According to you, are there any benefits to hiring English-speaking employees? If so, what are they?

Base: All respondents (n=501)/Multiple mentions – The total may exceed 100%.



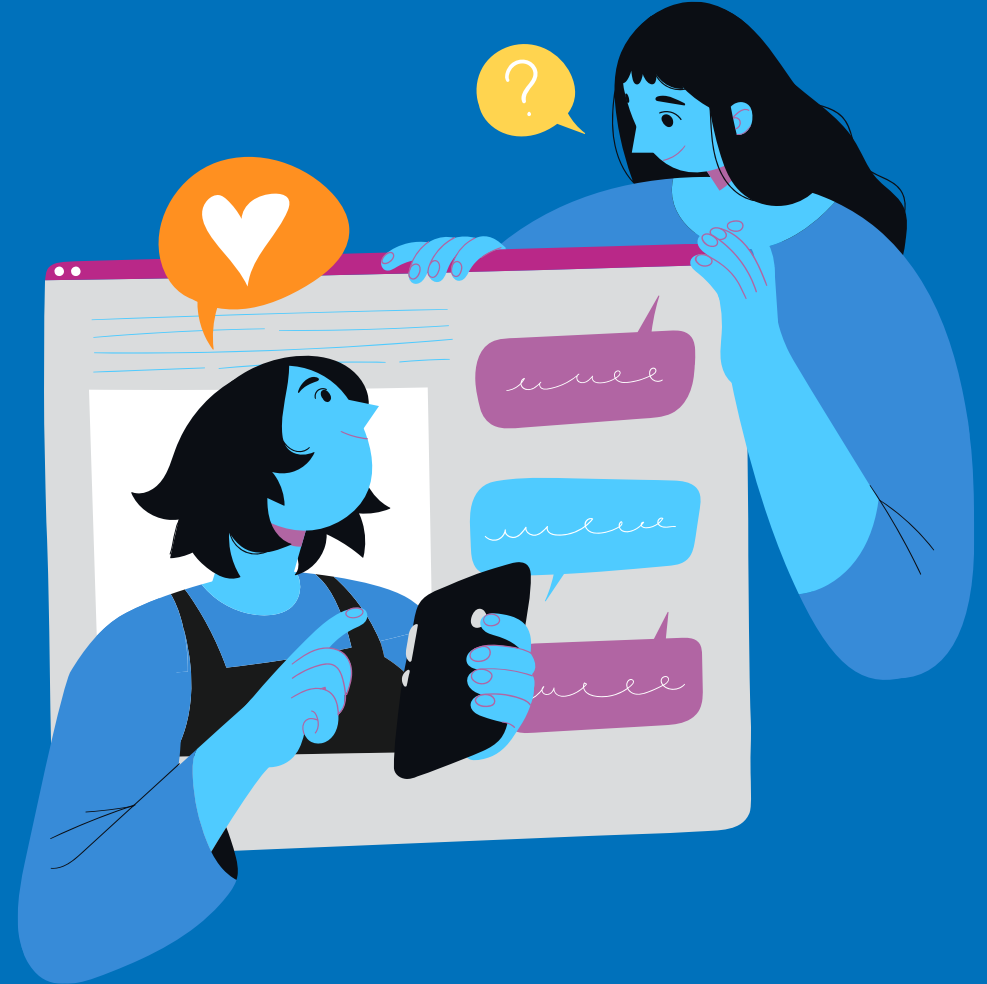
Difficulties Encountered When Hiring English-Speaking Candidates

Question 9. Have you faced any difficulties in the hiring process of English-speaking candidates? Select all that apply.
Base: Employers who have hired English speakers before (n=299)/Multiple mentions – The total may exceed 100%.



3.2 Detailed Results

Importance of Spoken and
Written Proficiency in French



Willingness to Hire English-Speaking Candidates Who Are Learning French

Question 10. How willing are you to hire English-speaking candidates who are still learning French?

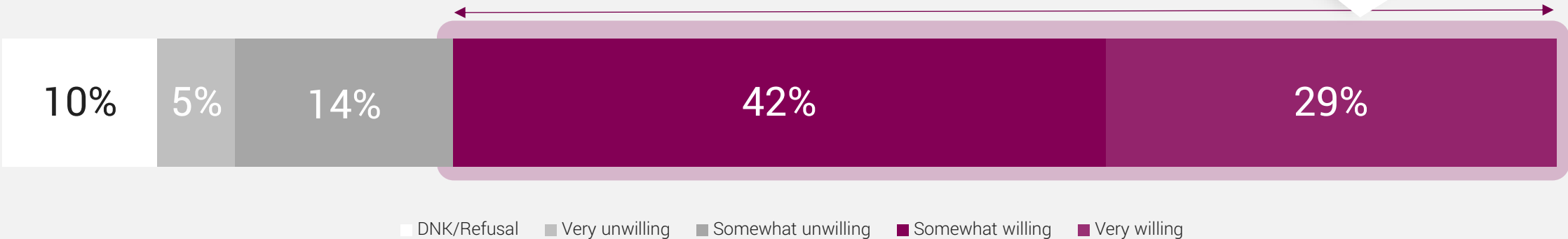
Base: All respondents (n=501).

Total WILLING

71%

Proportion significantly HIGHER among:

- Respondents who work in an English-language company (93%)
- Respondents who work in the primary and industrial sectors (93%)
- Respondents who work for companies with 1,500 employees or more (83%)

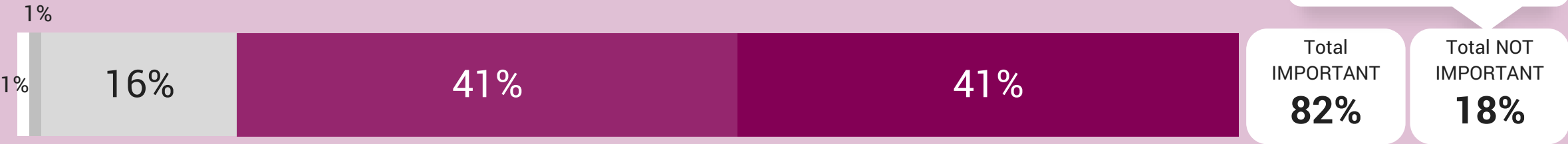


Level of Importance of Spoken and Written French within the Organization

Question 11. How important are strong spoken and written French proficiency for roles in your organization?

Base: All respondents (n=501).

Strong spoken French proficiency



Strong written French proficiency

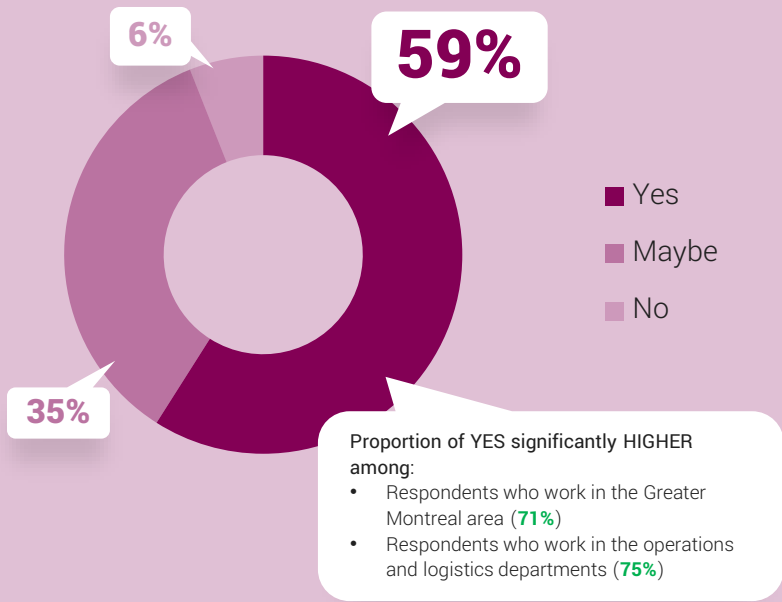


☐ DNK/Refusal ☐ Not important at all ☐ Not very important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Very important

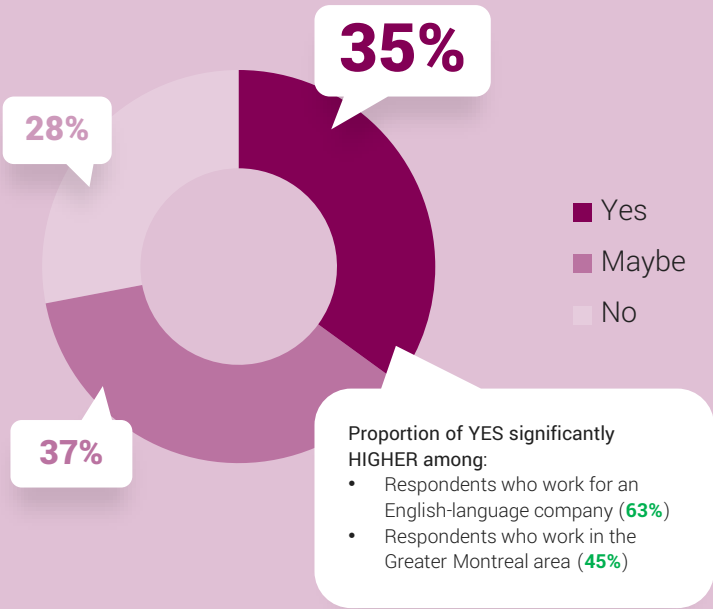
Willingness to Hire English-Speaking Candidates Based on French Skills

Question 12. Would you consider hiring an English-speaking candidate with...
Base: All respondents (n=501).

Strong spoken French but limited written French skills



Strong written French but limited spoken French skills



3.3 Detailed Results

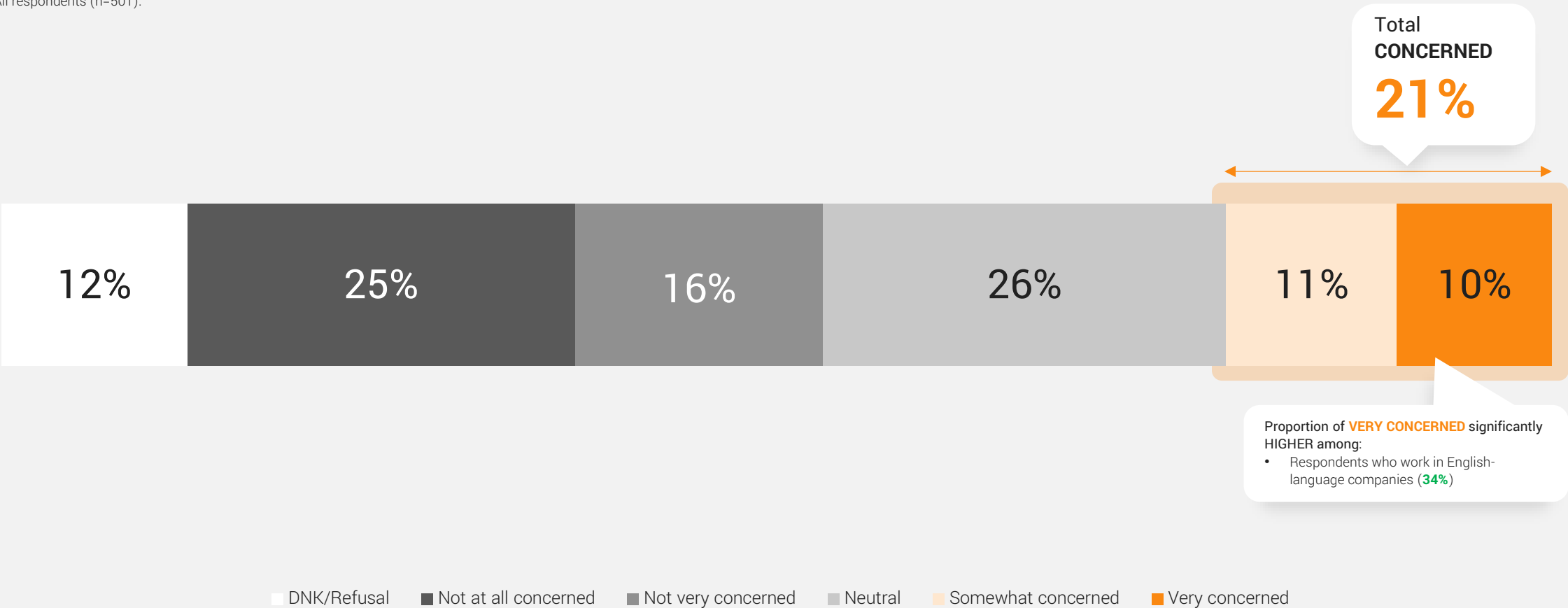
Perceptions and Concerns
Regarding Law 14



Level of Concern Related to Law 14 When Hiring English-Speaking Employees

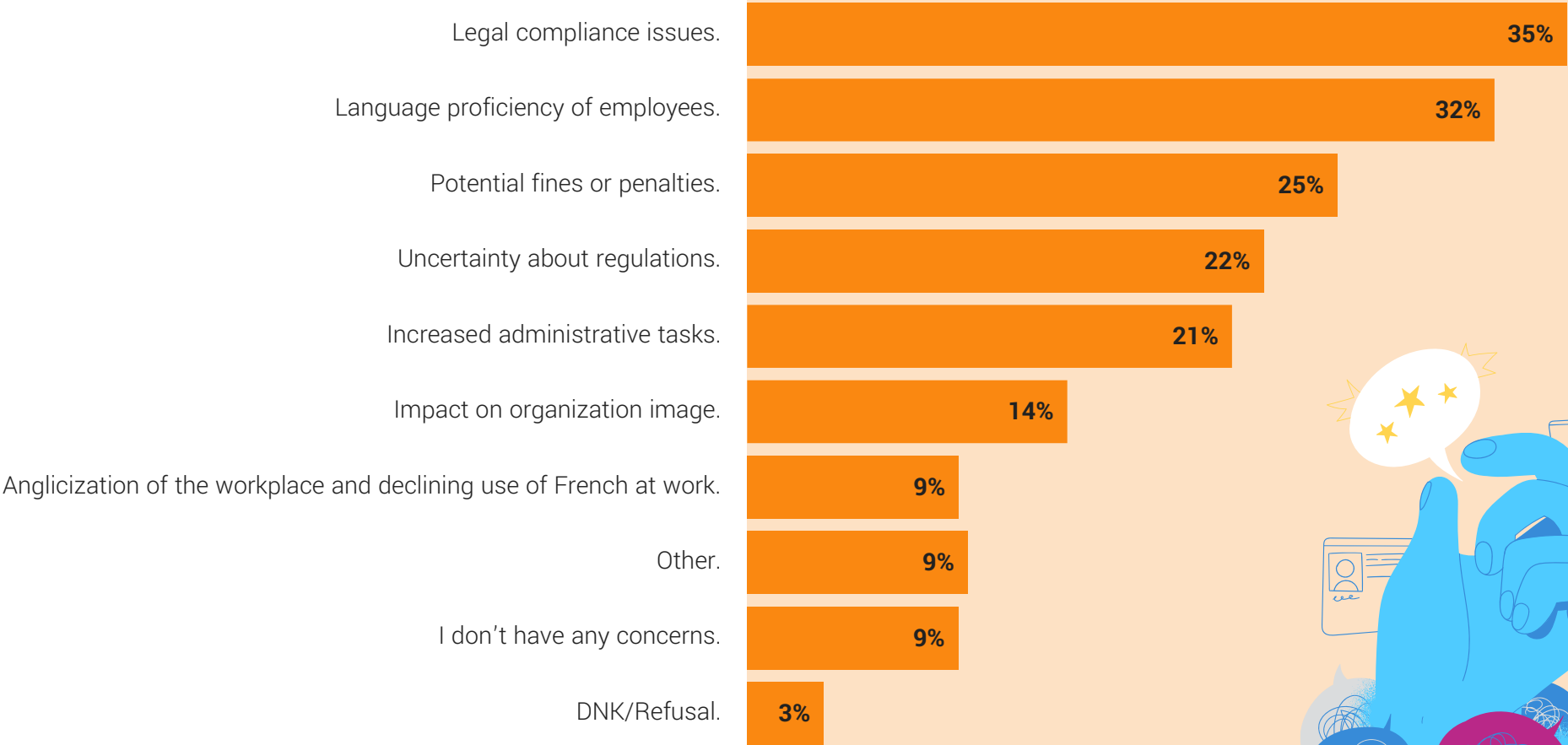
Question 7. Are you concerned about hiring English-speaking employees following the implementation of Bill 96?

Base: All respondents (n=501).



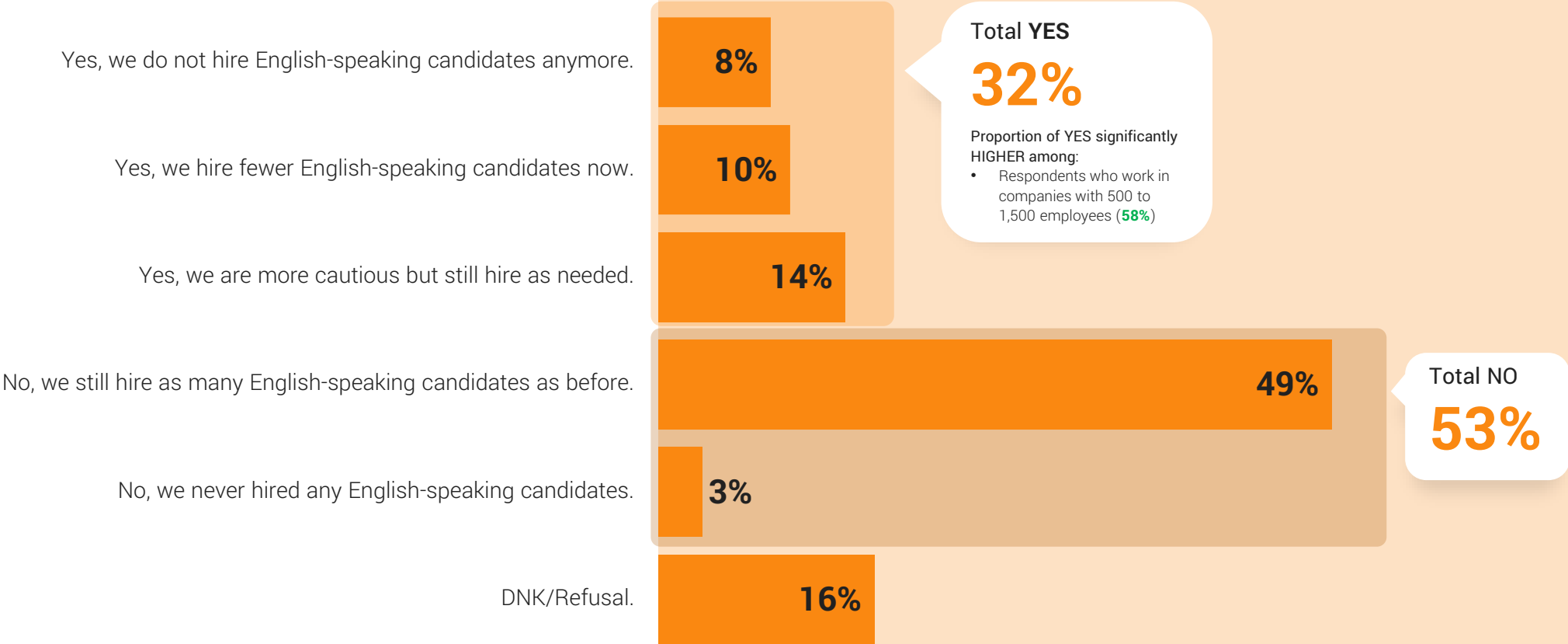
Main Concerns About Law 14

Question 7B. What are your main concerns about hiring English-speaking employees?
Select all that apply. Base: Respondents who are very or somewhat concerned about Bill 96 (n=131)/Multiple mentions – The total may exceed 100%.



Influence of Law 14 on Hiring English-Speaking Candidates

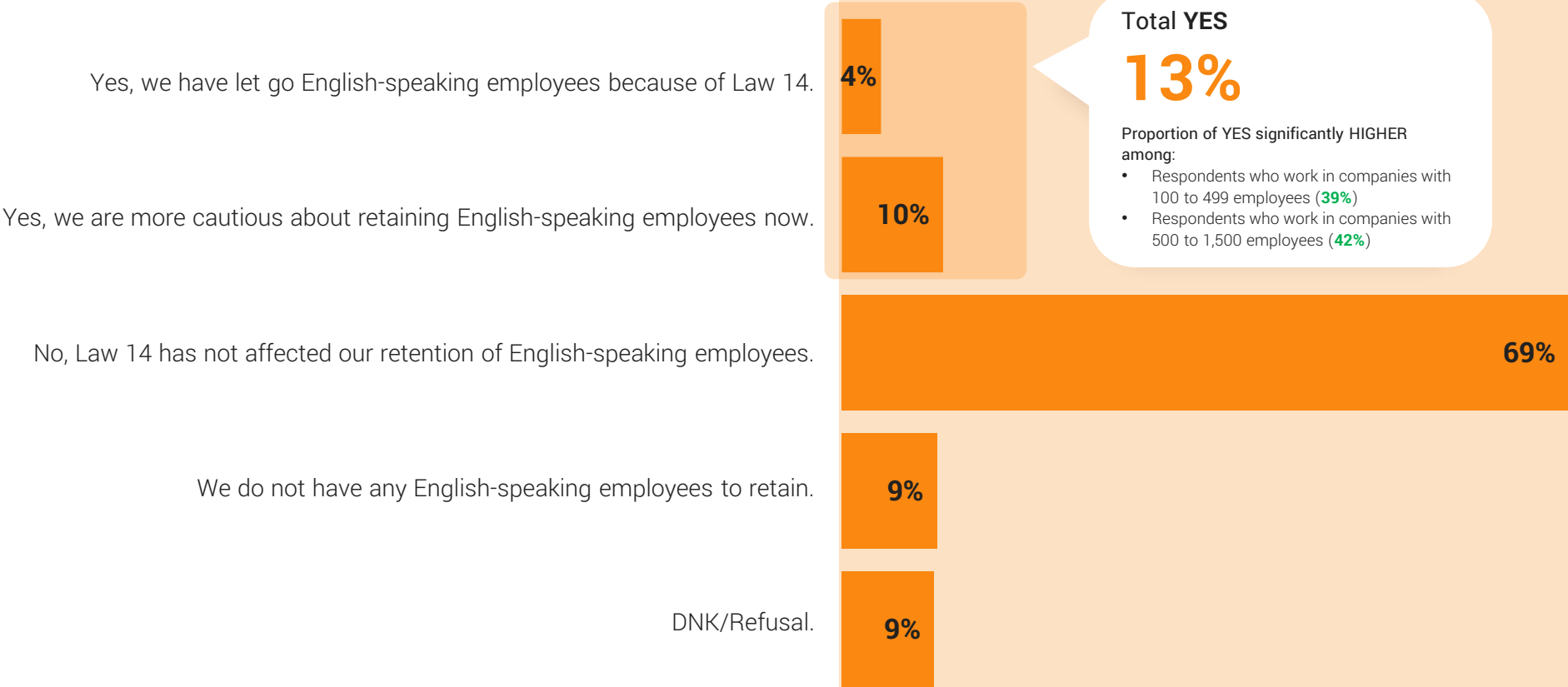
Question 8. Has Bill 96 influenced your hiring practices regarding English-speaking candidates?
Base: Employers who have hired English speakers before (n=299).



Influence of Law 14 on Retention Practices for English-Speaking Employees

Question 8B. Has Bill 96 influenced your retention practices regarding English-speaking employees?

Base: Employers who have hired English speakers before (n=299).



3.4 Detailed Results

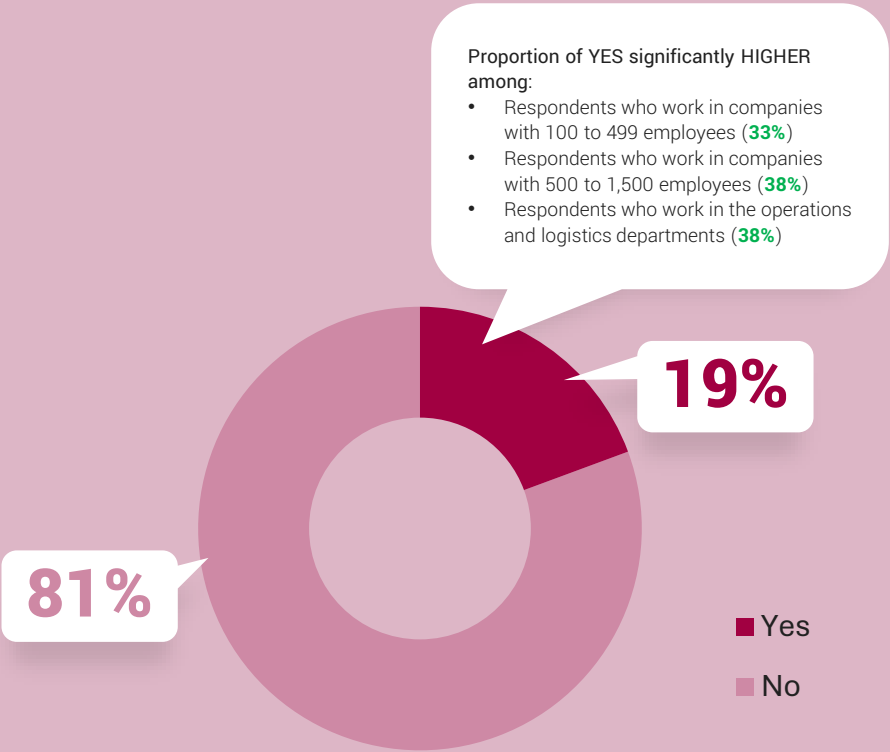
Language Training Programs



Knowledge and Use of Government-Funded Francization Programs and Subsidies

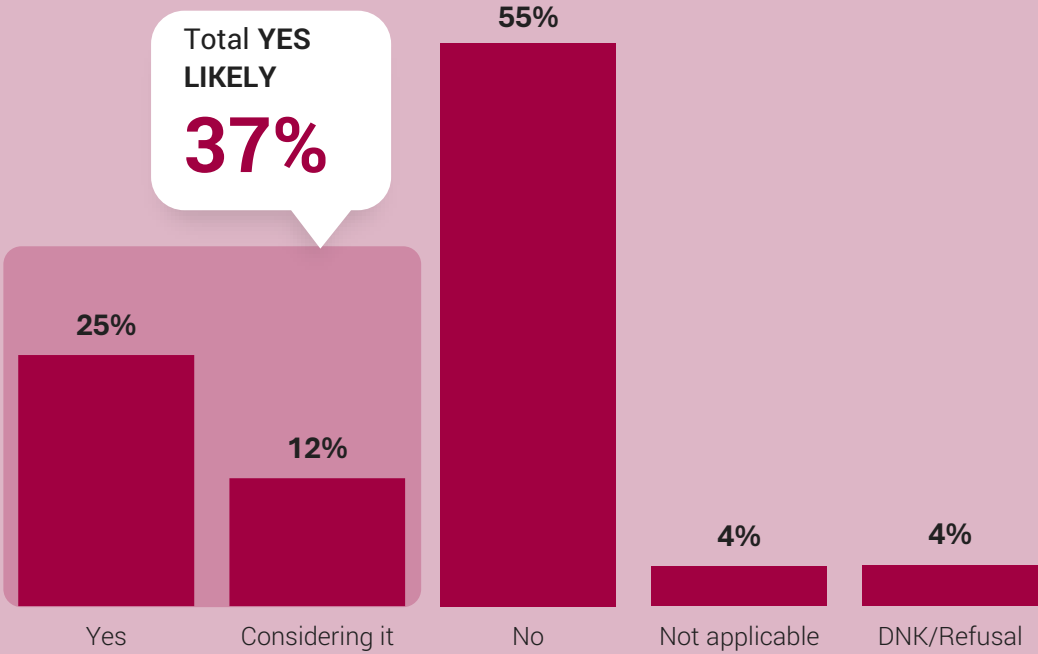
Question 13. Are you aware of government-funded workplace francization programs or subsidies?

Base: All respondents (n=501).



Question 14. Have you utilized any government-funded programs or received any subsidies to support French-language training in your organization?

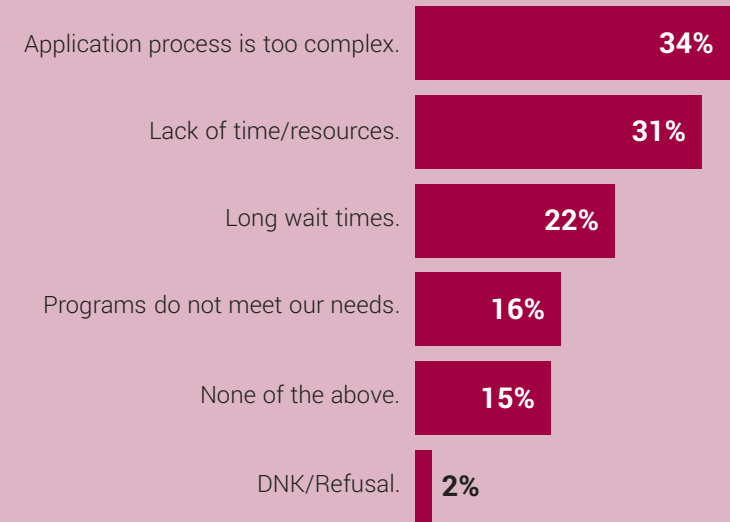
Base: Respondents who are aware of subsidy programs (n=145).



Difficulties and Reasons Related to Francization Programs

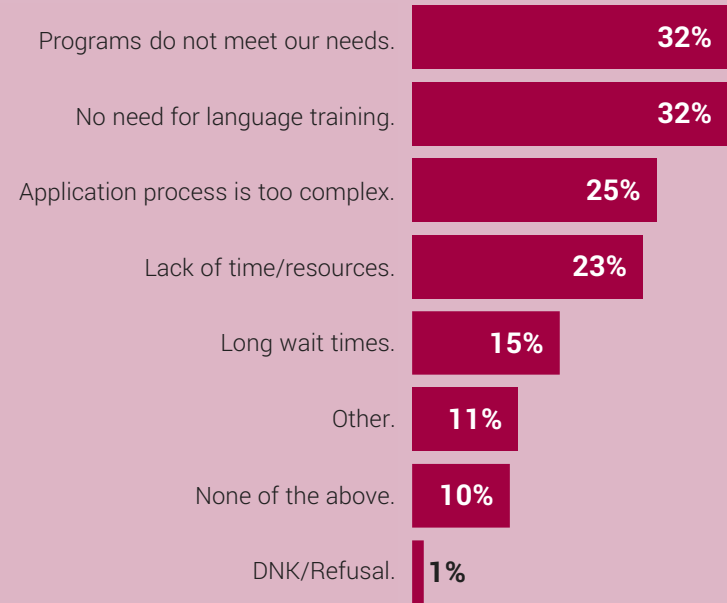
Question 14B. Have you faced any difficulties in utilizing government-funded programs or receiving subsidies to support French-language training in your organization? (Select all that apply)*

Base: Respondents who used government-funded programs or subsidies (n=43).



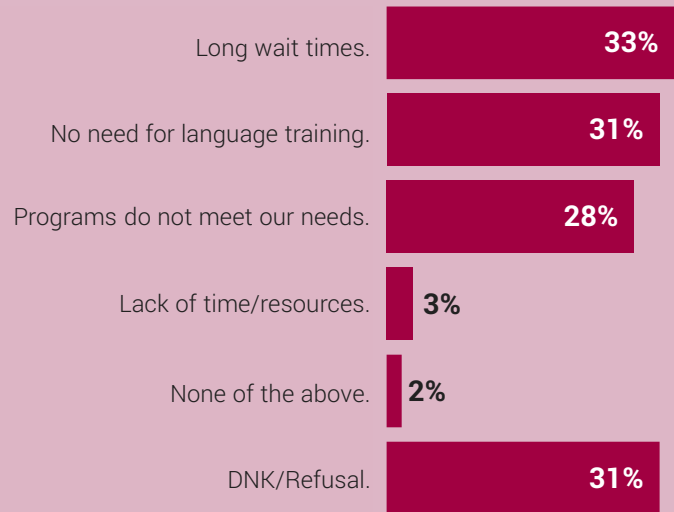
Question 14C. Why have you not utilized any government-funded programs or received any government subsidies or financial help to support French-language training in your organization?

Base: Respondents who did not use government-funded programs or subsidies (n=75).



Question 14D. Why have you not yet utilized any government-funded programs or received any government subsidies or financial help to support French-language training in your organization? (Select all that apply)*

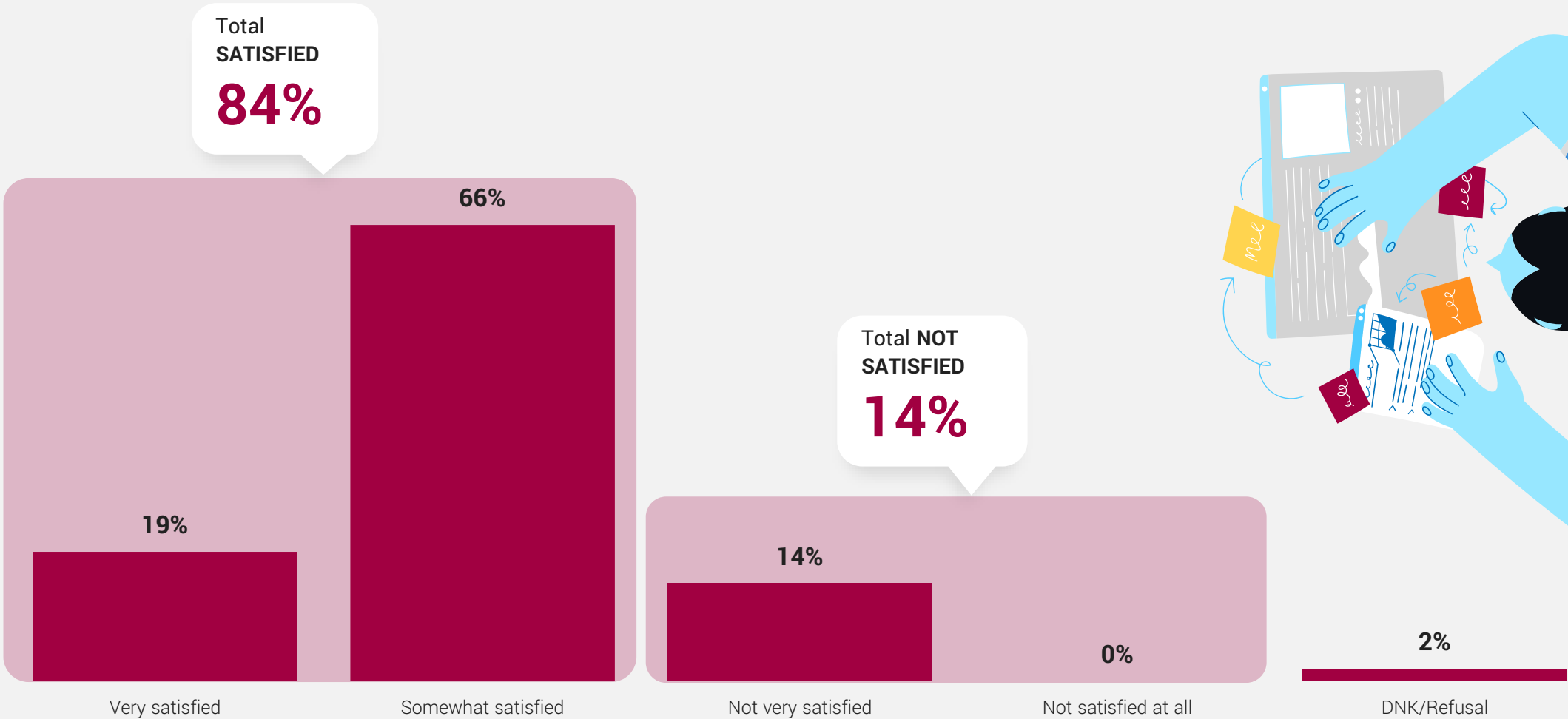
Base: Respondents who plan to use government-funded programs or subsidies (n=20**).



*Multiple mentions – The total may exceed 100%./**Given the limited number of respondents (n<30), the data are presented for informational purposes only.

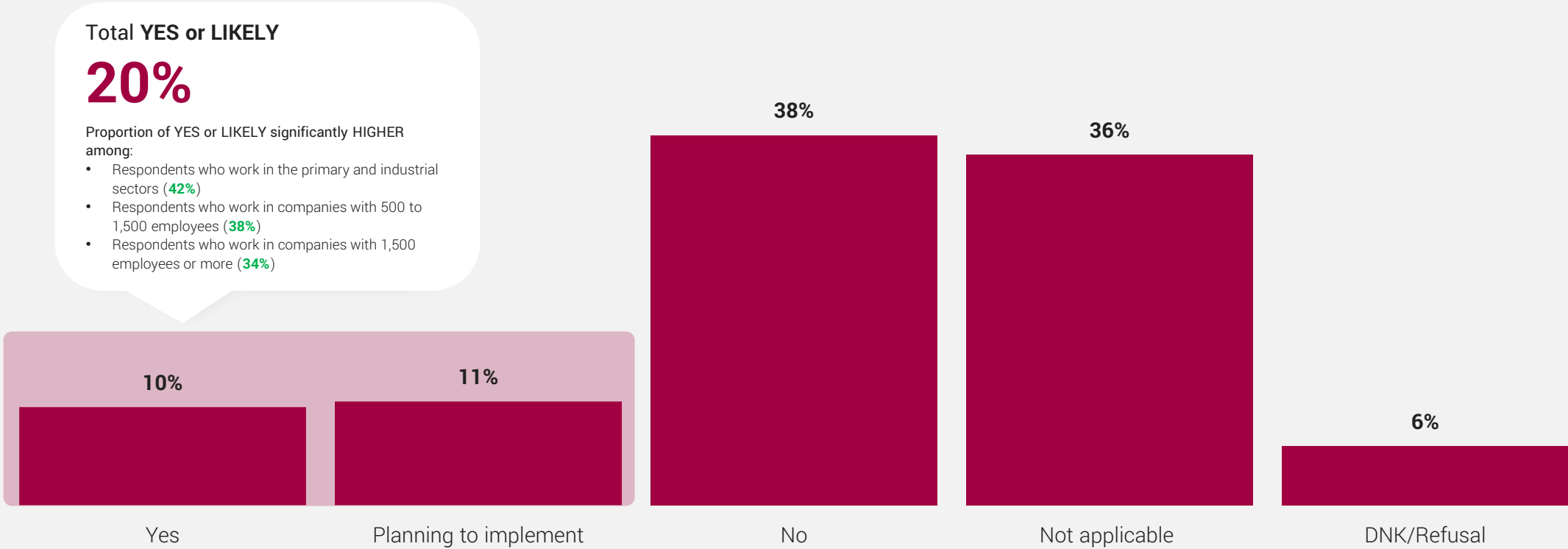
Satisfaction with Francization Programs

Question 15. To what extent are you satisfied with the government-funded programs or the subsidies/financial help that you have received to support French-language training in your organization?
Base: Respondents who used a francization program/subsidy (n=43).



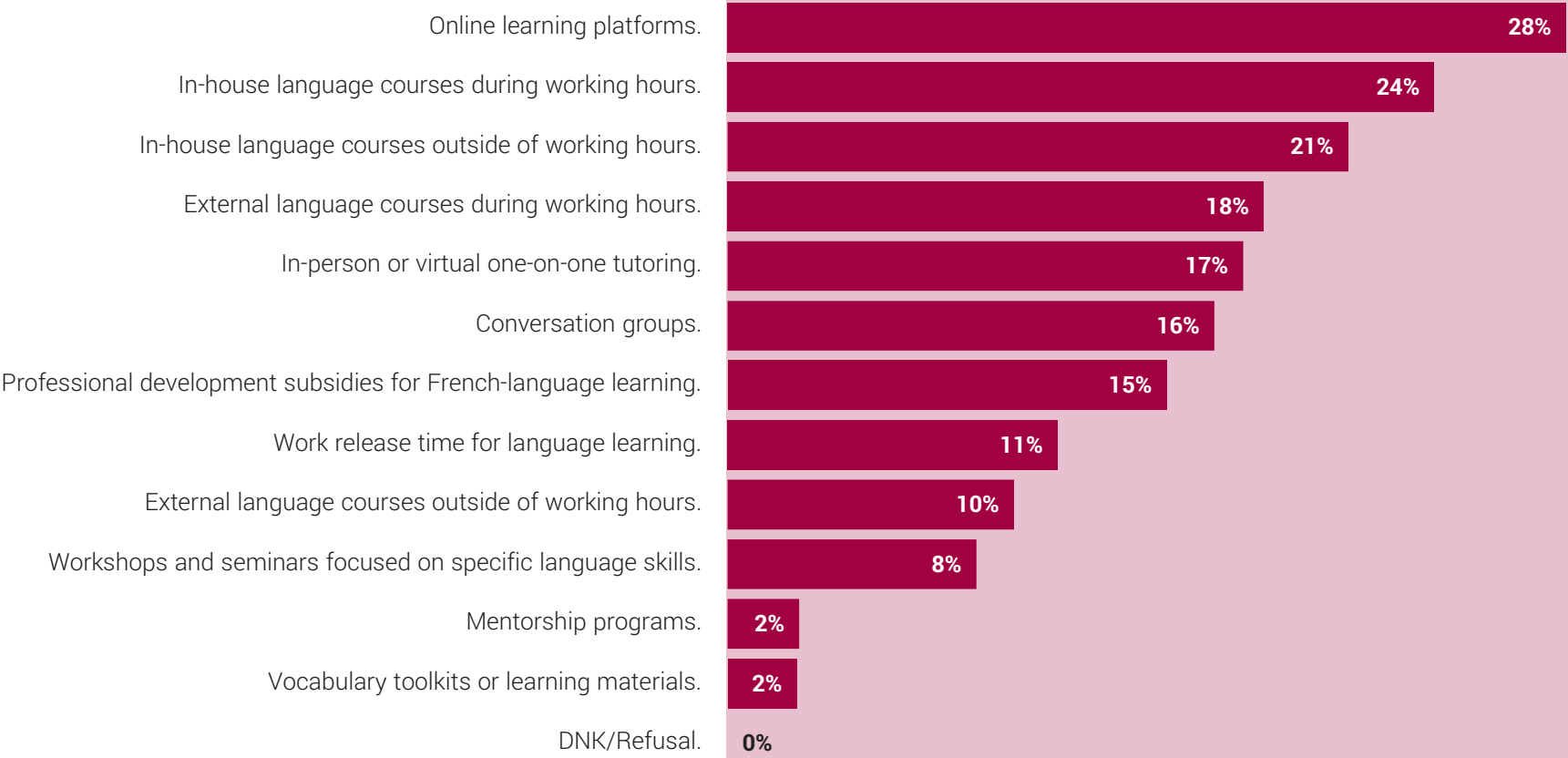
Implementation of Measures to Help English-Speaking Employees Learn French.

Question 16. Have you implemented any training programs, resources, or measures to encourage or help your English-speaking employees learn French?
Base: All respondents (n=501).



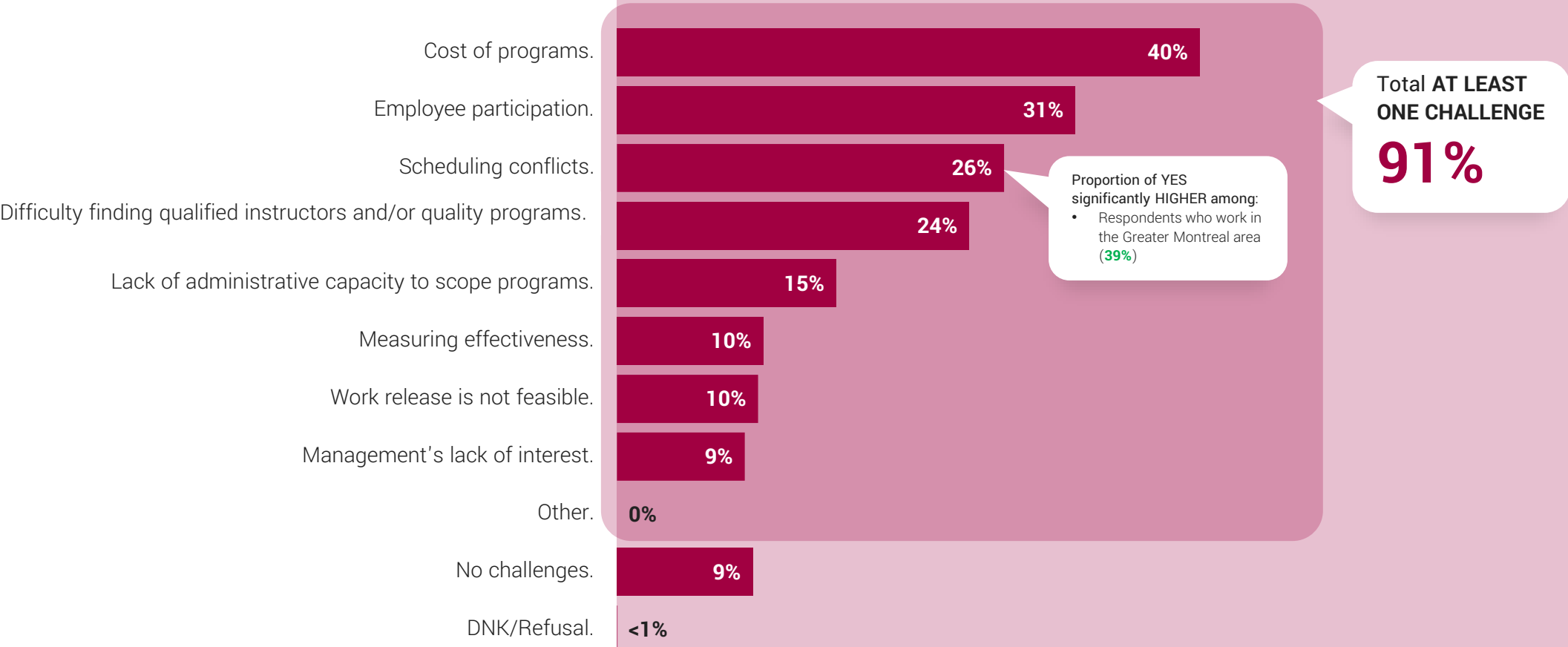
Types of French-Language Training Programs Implemented

Question 17. What type(s) of French-language training program(s) or resources have you implemented for your English-speaking staff? Select all that apply.
Base: Respondents who have implemented francization resources for English-speaking employees (n=96)/Multiple mentions – The total may exceed 100%.



Challenges in Implementing Francization Programs

Question 18. Have you faced any challenges in implementing these programs? Select all that apply.
Base: Respondents who have implemented francization resources for English-speaking employees (n=96)/Multiple mentions – The total may exceed 100%.



3.5 Detailed Results

Integrating English Speakers into the
Job Market



Level of Integration of English-Speaking Workers in the Job Market

Question 19. How would you describe the integration of English-speaking workers into the Quebec job market?

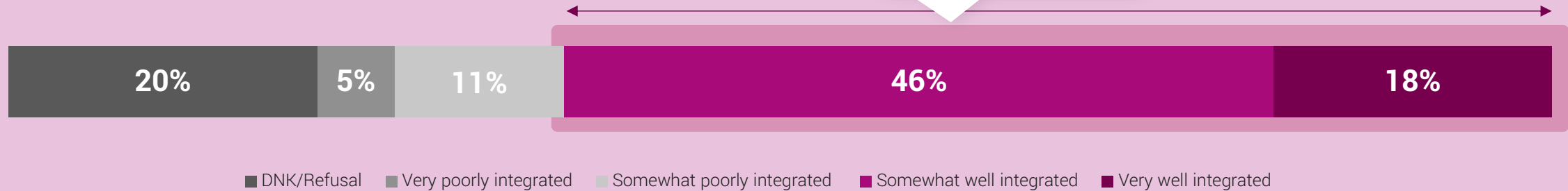
Base: All respondents (n=501).

Total WELL INTEGRATED

64%

Proportion of TOTAL WELL INTEGRATED significantly HIGHER among:

- Respondents in the primary and industrial sectors (**83%**)

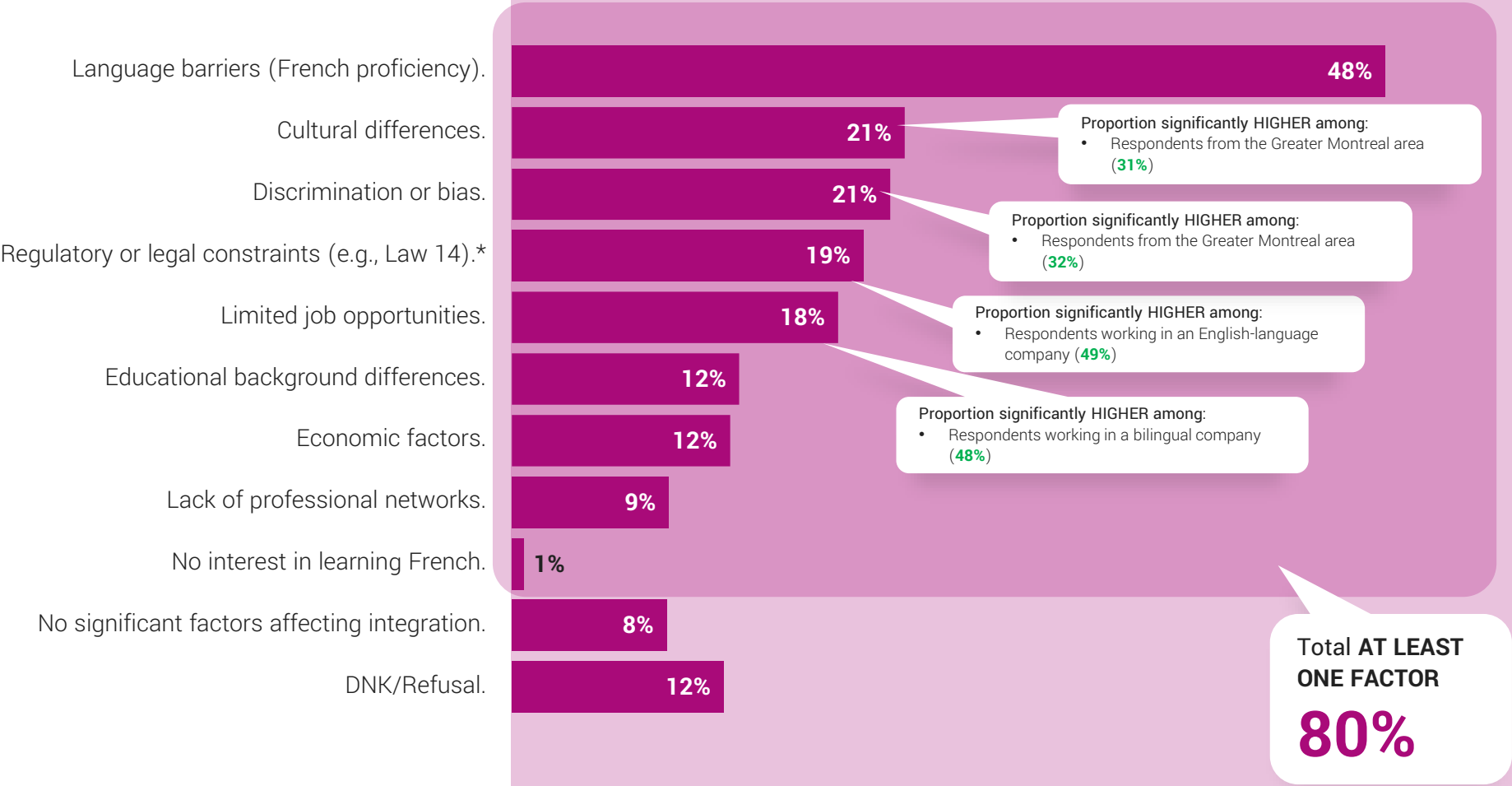


	Total	Region			Company Size			
		Mtl CMA	Qc City CMA	Other	Fewer than 100 employees	Between 100 and 499 employees	Between 500 and 1,500 employees	More than 1,500 employees
n=	501	266	48	187	175	107	64	144
Total WELL INTEGRATED	64%	70%	57%	59%	64%	56%	61%	56%
Very well integrated	18%	26%	13%	10%	18%	19%	13%	17%
Somewhat well integrated	46%	44%	44%	49%	46%	37%	48%	38%
Total POORLY INTEGRATED	16%	10%	16%	23%	16%	27%	23%	29%
Somewhat poorly integrated	11%	9%	1%	14%	11%	20%	18%	21%
Very poorly integrated	5%	0%	15%	9%	5%	7%	5%	8%
I don't know/I prefer not to answer	20%	20%	27%	18%	20%	17%	16%	16%

Factors Influencing the Integration of English-Speaking Employees into the Job Market

Question 20. In your opinion, what are the main factors affecting the integration of English-speaking employees into the Quebec job market? Select all that apply.

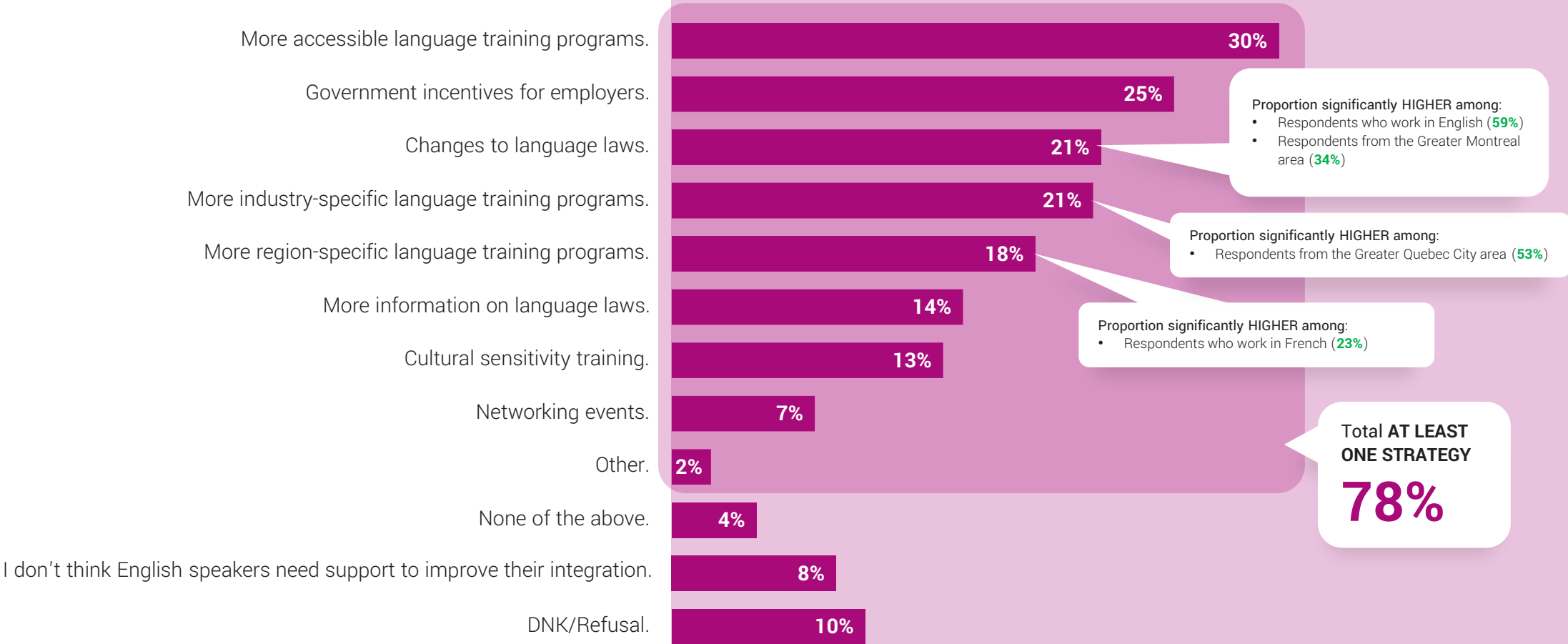
Base: All respondents (n=501)/Multiple mentions – The total may exceed 100%.



* Note: Note: Bill 96 refers to Law 14.

Strategies to Improve the Integration of English Speakers into the Labour Market

Question 21. What strategies do you think could improve the integration of English speakers into the Quebec labour market? Select all that apply.
Base: All respondents (n=501)/Multiple mentions – The total may exceed 100%.



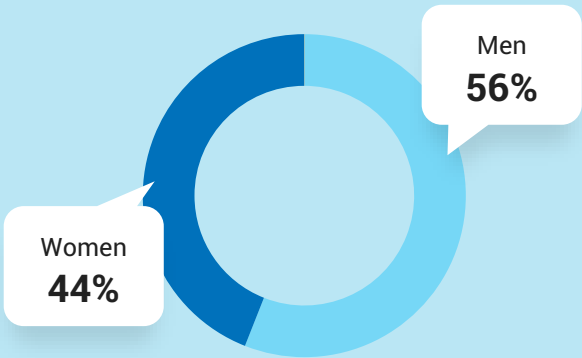
4 Respondent Profiles



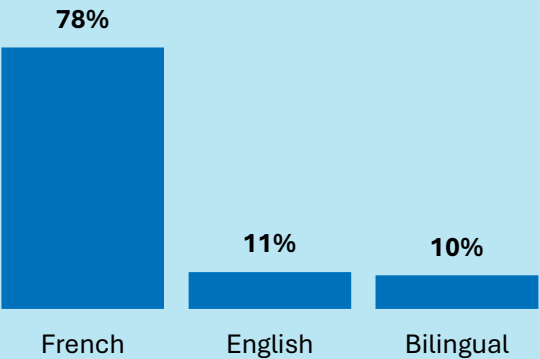
Respondent Profiles

Base n=501.

Gender



Primary Language of the Workplace



Location of the Organization's Main Place of Business

Montreal CMA	47%
Quebec City CMA	9%
Eastern Quebec	5%
Central Quebec	26%
Western Quebec	14%

Age

18 to 24	6%
25 to 34	32%
35 to 44	25%
45 to 54	23%
55 to 64	9%
65 to 74	4%
75 or over	1%

Level of Education

Elementary/high school	20%
College	32%
University	48%

Industry Sector

Primary and industrial	21%
Commercial and logistics	19%
Corporate and financial	16%
Public, social and educational	21%
Culture, recreation and accommodation	13%

Number of Employees

Fewer than 100 employees	98%
Between 100 and 499 employees	2%
Between 500 and 1,500 employees	0%
More than 1,500 employees	0%

Note: This page shows the weighted distribution of respondents by variable. For each profile category, the complement to 100% corresponds to "Don't know" and "Refusal."

5 Our Team



Our Team

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