

# Community Translation and Interpretation Services in Settlement Agencies: Perspectives from Translators and Interpreters in New Brunswick, Canada

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## ABSTRACT

Smaller Canadian provinces have welcomed record numbers of newcomers in recent years, facing large-scale settlement support challenges. Language is often seen as a barrier as it slows down the integration process. One tool for facilitating communication and access to information is community translation and interpretation (CTI). To date, no data are available regarding CTI services procurement in the province of New Brunswick. In order to provide an overview of CTI services made available to newcomers in New Brunswick settlement agencies, I conducted mixed-method research combining surveys sent to staff and to community translators and interpreters working in various agencies, as well as interviews with newcomers. This article examines the realities and perspectives expressed by the translators and interpreters. The research gives a clearer understanding of who they are and how they offer their services. As a matter of fact, community translators/interpreters are usually volunteers who have little to no training. While relying on non-professionals can cause different challenges, translators and interpreters express an eagerness to receive training. The research, conducted in partnership with the New Brunswick Multicultural Council, is the first step in a broader research project that aims to depict the situation of CTI services in Atlantic Canada.

**Keywords:** community translation and interpretation services, community translators and interpreters, settlement agencies, New Brunswick, Canada

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## 1. Introduction

The research project entitled *Community Translation and Interpretation Services in New Brunswick Settlement Agencies: A Descriptive Study* started in the summer of 2022.

The research project sprang from informal conversations that took place between the author and the New Brunswick Multicultural Council (NBMC) who was realising that settlement agencies were facing challenges with community translation and interpretation (CTI) services. The objective of the research was therefore to collect data to describe the situation and to develop potential recommendations to improve services as the organisation wanted to enhance New Brunswick agencies' capacity to respond to the needs of newcomers who have limited proficiency in English or French, the two official languages in Canada and in New Brunswick (NB).

CTI services are offered to people who need support to communicate within the context of usually, but not exclusively, public services so they have access to crucial information, and can receive services and engage in society like any other individual (Taibi & Ozolins, 2016). The services are offered between a service provider using an official language and "users of community languages who have not sufficiently mastered the official language(s) of the territory" (Córdoba Serrano, 2016, 126).

In this article, I will use the term community translation and interpretation, but terminology varies from one text to another. In other research, terms such as *public service interpreting and translation* (Valero-Garcés, 2019), *cross-cultural communication* (Purnell, 2018), and *dialogue interpreting* (Mason, 1999) are preferred. In Canada, in English, the terms *community translation* and *community interpretation* stand out in the literature (Carr, Roda, Roberts, Dufour & Steyn, 1997; Fiola, 2004; Córdoba Serrano, 2016, Cisneros & De Leon, 2020).

CTI carry some characteristics that differentiate their practise from other types of translation and interpretation, and this is mostly due to the profile of the vulnerable population they serve and the context in which they occur (Taibi & Ozolins, 2016). To date, community interpretation has received more attention than community translation (Taibi & Ozolins, 2016).

In Canada, despite the strong expertise in immigration-related and translation- and interpretation-related services, there is little contemporary research on CTI services procurement, particularly community translation, their availability or quality. In the late 1990s, with for example the Critical Link conferences cycle on community interpreting, there was interest and a momentum for this subfield of Translation Studies (Brunette, Bastin, Hemlin, Clarke, 2003; Carr et al., 1997; Roberts, Carr, Abraham & Dufour, 2000). More recently, scholars have led research on CTI: Cisneros and De Leon (2020) focus on the translation of a newcomers' guide offered in Edmonton (province of Alberta), Beinchet (2022) shares training models for community translation, Abraham and Fiola (2021) show that a paradigm shift seems to be occurring in the healthcare system regarding the relevance of providing community interpretation to patients, while Córdoba Serrano (2016, 2022) and Hébert (2016) concentrate on language policies and multiculturalism issues. Disciplines beyond Translation Studies touch on the challenges of serving or supporting clients who have a limited official language proficiency, for instance in healthcare (Pandey, Maina, Amoyaw, Li, Kamrul, Michaels & Maroof, 2021) or social work (Lamboley, 2022).

While the Canadian federal government places a large emphasis on language training for newcomers who do not speak an official language, there do not seem to be systematic CTI services to support those who cannot communicate efficiently enough to access public and community services. Such language services, however, would facilitate the integration process (Esses, Hamilton, Aslam & Barros, 2023).

The project was led in partnership with the NBMC, which is an umbrella not-for-profit organisation created in 1983. The NBMC's role is to support its 20 members consisting of NB settlement agencies serving immigrants in the province, as well as multicultural and ethnocultural associations. The NBMC also encourages the development of settlement services in areas lacking such services, supports the well-being of newcomers and contributes to educating New Brunswickers on the economic, social and cultural values of diversity.

Following informal conversations with the NBMC, with local provincial parties involved in settlement, and with CTI end-users, the assumption was that CTI services currently offered did not provide the best possible support to settlement agencies' clients who did not speak an official language, and that there were service discrepancies across the province of New Brunswick.

To confirm or refute these hypotheses, the research team formed three objectives. First, the team members meant to take a snapshot of community translation and interpretation services in NB settlement agencies, second, they needed to draw a profile of community translators and interpreters working with settlement agencies, and third, the team wanted to understand newcomers' perspectives on community translation and interpretation services. The team wished to develop recommendations for improving community translation and interpretation services within settlement agencies

throughout the province and eventually support initiatives meant to improve service procurement throughout NB, following the needs expressed in the field by the different agents.

Because the data is so extensive, this article focuses on the second objective, i.e., the profile of community translators and interpreters; an article on staff and newcomers' perspectives is under review. The work is divided into four parts. First, the context surrounding immigration and language services in New Brunswick will be described. Then, the methodology, the research findings and finally the discussion will be presented.

## **2. Aims and methodology**

### **2.1. Immigration and language in New Brunswick**

#### **2.1.1. Immigration in New Brunswick**

Canada relies significantly on immigration to cope with its demographic issues (ageing population combined with a record-low fertility rate). In 2023, a record-breaking number of more than 7.4 million applications were processed by Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada [IRCC], 2024). In addition, in 2023, 471,771 permanent residents were admitted, 804,901 non-permanent residents, and international migration accounted for 97.6% of Canada's population growth (Statistics Canada, 2024a).

In 2022, New Brunswick admitted 10,233 permanent residents (IRCC, 2023). The province used to have one of the lowest immigrant retention rates in Canada with, for example, a 52% 5-year retention rate for immigrants who arrived in 2010 (McDonald & Miah, 2021; Public Policy Forum, 2018). It has gradually been improving, and was 56% for immigrants admitted in 2016, a record for the province (Statistics Canada, 2024b).

The provincial government puts in place efforts towards retention. It is in fact Opportunities NB 2022-2027 strategic plan's second priority (Opportunity NB is the province's lead economic development agency). Out of the 40,000 newcomers expected to settle in NB between 2022 and 2027, the organisation aims for a 75% retention rate over 3 years (Opportunities NB, 2022). As a comparison, between 2005 and 2018, the retention rate after 3 years was 65% (McDonald & Miah, 2021). No more recent data could be found for the 3-year retention rate. However, it is important to note that the short-term retention rate (1 year) of skilled workers and skilled trades categories seems to be on the rise in Atlantic Canada, including in New Brunswick where it increased by 22% in the last 4 years: 50% in 2016 versus 71.5% in 2019 (Statistics Canada, 2024b).

In addition, NB offers specifically designed immigration pilot programmes, such as the New Brunswick Critical Worker Pilot, a five-year pilot programme that aims to attract skilled workers to occupations difficult to fill (Government of New Brunswick, n.d.).

In Canada, there are agencies that help newcomers settle, adapt to life in Canada and navigate services that are essential to their integration. The Government of New Brunswick lists 17 such settlement agencies on its website.

Compared to metropolitan cities across Canada (such as Toronto, Montréal or Vancouver), smaller urban centres (such as Saint-John, Fredericton, or Moncton in the province of New Brunswick) offer more opportunities to create meaningful social networks. In these smaller centres, local settlement agencies can offer a more in-depth social support for newcomers (Kelly and Nguyen, 2023). However, language remains a critical barrier when it comes to accessing these services. Because of the lack of CTI services, allophone newcomers often have to rely on informal networks in the community (Abood, Woodward, Polonsky, Green, Tadjoeddin, & Renzaho, 2021).

Depending on the immigration category of newcomers, the immigration journeys are not without their share of challenges, and for allophones, these challenges are significantly amplified.

#### **2.1.2 Snapshot of New Brunswick's language situation**

##### **2.1.2.1 General context and official bilingualism**

New Brunswick is an officially bilingual province in an officially bilingual country. Official bilingualism dates back to 1969 with the first New Brunswick Official Languages Act. Section 16.1, added in 1993 to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, guarantees equal rights for the English-speaking and French-speaking communities of NB. Today, the New Brunswick Official Languages Act of 2002, reviewed in 2023, is in force.

In 1988, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act was passed. It promotes diversity, equality and inclusion. The Act exists within the bilingual framework dictated by the Official Languages Act of 1969. According to Li (1999), this is a symbolic recognition of cultural diversity. The laws do not assert language rights for non-official languages, and there appears to be no mechanism for modifying language policies in response to the country's evolving demolinguistic situation to meet the needs of its changing linguistic population (Hébert, 2016). As a result, there is no obligation on

governments or public entities to produce information in languages other than the official ones, except for some legal and medical contexts. For example, section 14 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms anchored in the Canadian Constitution (1982) confers the right to the assistance of an interpreter to a party or witness who does not understand or speak the language chosen for the proceedings. For the medical context, no law demands interpretation or translation services in non-official languages, but in some provinces, such as British Columbia, healthcare providers must ensure patients understand the information given to them before obtaining consent, and this might involve translation or interpretation services.

Because there are no systematic established mechanisms supporting access to information in languages other than the official ones, non-official language speakers face communication challenges.

### 2.1.2.2 Language as a barrier for allophones

Most immigrants arriving in Canada fall into the economic category, but others fall into either the family reunification or the refugee and protected person categories. In the case of the former, proficiency in one of the official languages is a selection criterion for the principal applicant. In 2020, they represented around 58% of all permanent resident admissions, rising to 62% in 2021. Family members of economic applicants, on the other hand, do not need to demonstrate proficiency in either English or French. Some of them are likely to speak none of the official languages. For the family reunification or the refugee and protected person categories, language is not a criterion. Therefore, applicants might not be able to communicate in the official languages. In fact, according to the IRCC's 2023 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration (IRCC, 2023), approximately 17% of people granted permanent residence in 2022 spoke none of the official languages, all immigration categories combined. This percentage excludes permanent residents and non-permanent residents who do not speak French or English but are already settled. These different facts explain the presence of allophones in Canada.

According to the last Canadian census in 2021, there are currently 689,730 people who speak neither French nor English in Canada, including 1,900 in NB (Statistics Canada, 2022). Those numbers are probably underestimates as allophones might not be well represented in the census. Census material and a telephone line were available in several languages, but one had to go through several other steps available in French or English only before accessing these multilingual resources. For the last census, according to census data collected via email communication with a consulting analyst from the Statistical Information Service of Statistics Canada, the Internal Census Division received 959 call-back requests in a non-official language and 759 requests for questionnaires in an alternative language (Statistics Canada, personal email communication, January 30, 2024). Minorities, immigrants, and refugees usually underparticipate or are underrepresented in surveys (Simon, Lopatin, Oliveri, González-Ferrer, & Fortunato, 2019; Kappelhof, 2017). It is a section of the population that is not easy to reach.

Language is a central component of settlement and integration (Esses et al., 2023). The Canadian government provides opportunities for newcomers to learn an official language through language courses called Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC). These LINC classes focus on language, life and employability skills to help immigrants integrate into Canadian society. While it is crucial for newcomers to learn an official language in order to become independent, reaching a level that facilitates easy communication in an official language in all circumstances is a lengthy process (Hamm, Bragdon, McLoughlin, Massfeller, & Hamm, 2021). Also, depending on their immigration status, not all newcomers have access to LINC as they arrive, which could slow down social integration or postpone access to the labour market. When navigating public services such as legal processes, healthcare, education, social services, language is key. Individuals who cannot communicate in an official language can be subject to significant challenges when accessing these services.

Language as a barrier in the healthcare system comes to appear in many forms and is well documented (probably the most documented field for CTI). It adds complexities when making an appointment, identifying and understanding services, or sharing medical history (Pandey et al., 2021; Abood et al., 2021). Language barriers can cause the patient to misunderstand information critical to their care (i.e. prescribed medication, medical instructions) and cause difficulties in building a therapeutic alliance with health care professionals (Pandey et al., 2021; Abood et al., 2021). Language barriers in healthcare can result in poorer health outcomes for newcomers (Pandey et al., 2021; Rasi, 2020; Salami, Mason, Salma, Yohani, Amin, Okeke-Ihejirika, & Ladha, 2020; Seale, Reaume, & Batista, 2022).

The NB health system is in crisis: long waiting lists to access a physician, ageing health professionals, shortages of nurses, employees' sick leave, an obsolete model of care, and much more (Government of New Brunswick, 2021). To overcome these challenges, the province has a strategic plan that aims to improve the connectedness of the healthcare system, access to primary health care, to surgery, to addiction and mental health services, and lastly, to support seniors to age in place. However, this strategic plan does not consider access to health care and the linguistic barriers faced by

newcomers (Government of New Brunswick, 2021). This gap can be alarming considering that the ability to access healthcare services can be directly related to the skills and level of proficiency in the official language.

Although settlement agencies often encounter situations where CTI services become essential to support allophone newcomers, very few agencies have the capacity to offer these services professionally (Liu and Guo, 2023). When these services are not available through settlement agencies, newcomers often rely on family members, volunteers, community networks, or automatic translators to access information (Pandey et al. 2022).

Understanding the context of immigration and language in NB allows to frame translation and interpretation services for newcomers who do not speak the official languages in the context of NB and shows the relevance of conducting research. It supports the aims of the research, which is to describe CTI services in order to eventually improve the offer.

### **3. Methodology**

I conducted a mixed-method research project. Data collection included two surveys and interviews. The research ran from the summer of 2022 to the spring of 2024. All survey material was available in French and English. This study received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Board of Université de Moncton and funding from the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research of Université de Moncton. Funding was dedicated to hiring research assistants and covering the translation and interpretation costs, and compensating newcomers for the time they dedicated to the interview.

Data collection was conducted in three stages. The recruitment of survey participants was done through NBMC, the research partner. The organisation used its monthly newsletter to circulate the surveys and made direct contacts to reach agencies with a low participation rate. The research team prepared an introductory descriptive message that included a link and a QR code leading to the surveys. The research team also collected survey answers during a presentation event organised by the NBMC in March 2023. Later, paper versions of the survey were also distributed in some settlement agencies in the Moncton area. Finally, another set of data was collected in June 2024, in the second largest settlement agency of the province, as no translator/interpreter had answered the questionnaire in the first round.

Once the surveys were circulating, interviews with newcomers were launched. Again, NBMC supported the research team by soliciting settlement agents to identify newcomers matching the participation criteria and willing to share their experience. Once the participants were identified, the research assistants coordinated the translation of documents and scheduled the interpretation for the interview.

#### **3.1. Data collection tools**

There were two surveys. One was sent to frontline staff in settlement agencies in New Brunswick, and the other was sent to translators and interpreters working with settlement agencies in New Brunswick.

The objective of the survey for translators and interpreters (volunteer and paid contributors) was to create a profile of the participants. The questions were also intended to provide information on their training needs and expectations, since one of the general objectives of the research was to consider ways of improving the standard of services. The survey consisted of 43 questions (closed or multiple choice) and three open questions that allowed participants to express anything they wanted to share regarding CTI services and potential improvement options. In total, 42 participants accessed the survey.

The second survey was aimed at the agencies' staff. The research team wanted to understand the frequency of use of translation or interpretation services within the agencies.

The final element of this mixed-method research was the collection of newcomers' testimonials.

Results of these last two tools are presented in an article soon to be published.

#### **3.2. Challenges encountered during data collection for translators and interpreters**

No research is flawless. Data collection took longer than expected. It was difficult to gather participants from all New Brunswick agencies for the surveys. We circulated the survey once from November 2022 to May 2023 and then in June 2024 to have a stronger response rate.

The duration of data collection does not alter the validity of the results; however, we acknowledge that the number of respondents for the translators and interpreters survey affects the representativeness of the data. While generalisations cannot be made, they remain relevant testimonies, particularly because they corroborate with comments expressed informally by the employees of settlements agencies during the initial phase of the project, as well as data collected in the survey for agency staff within the same research project.

Regarding the recent literature, there is little data on CTI services procurement in Canada besides the ones mentioned in the *Introduction* section. With this research, I hope to complement the existing literature related to CTI in Canada, focusing on mapping the field and service procurement.

#### 4. Findings

As mentioned previously, the data presented in this section was collected among community translators and interpreters collaborating with settlement agencies in New Brunswick and allows us to elaborate their profile.

In total, 42 individuals entered the survey, 4 in French and 38 in English. Several questionnaires remained very partially answered, which led to 11 participants being discarded; the results presented in this article emanate from 31 participants. This participation rate seems rather low, but no data regarding the exact number of translators and interpreters working with settlement agencies in the province were available. According to an employee from the Greater Moncton area's largest settlement agency, there are, in the agency, approximately 50 volunteer translators/interpreters, 90% of whom are newcomers receiving services from the agency. Again, while the data collected gives an idea of the trend, no generalisation can be made. Translators and interpreters collaborating with the Multicultural Association of Greater Moncton Area were the ones who participated the most in the survey (39% of the respondents), followed by the ones working with the Multicultural Association of Fredericton (26%), then the YMCA St John (13%) and the Chipman's settlement agency (10%).

##### 4.1. Demographic and language profiles

The age range of the participants was between 25 and 69 with the majority being between 30 and 49 (68%), and 90% had an immigration background. Regarding their status in Canada, 45% were permanent residents, 39% were Canadian citizens, 6% were temporary workers, 6% were international students, and 3% were refugees.

Among the participants, 35% spoke their native language plus one Canadian official language. Some respondents spoke their mother tongue plus 2 languages (32%), 3 languages (19%) or 4 languages (13%).

##### *Training received in translation and interpretation*

Respondents were asked about their past training in translation and interpretation. Numbers only slightly differ between translation and interpretation: 32% of the participants have received a training in the former, they are 42% for interpretation. Those who have studied translation and/or interpretation mostly received certificates. One person had a university degree. Participants mostly participated in trainings where English was part of the language combinations (90% for translation and 92% in interpretation). Training usually took place in Canada (60% for translation and 92% for interpretation). Most participants with training received their course from settlement agencies. The Multicultural Association of Fredericton and the YMCA St John are the agencies mentioned. One participant referred to MCIS' trainings. MCIS is a Toronto-based social enterprise with extensive experience in community translation and interpretation services and training. They offer a 120-hour core training to those who wish to start as an interpreter or a translator.

When looking at the characteristics of the training received, the data shows that they were mainly short courses. Training duration in translation and interpreting varied from 2 h to 6 months. The most frequent duration was 1 day (30% for translation and 42% for interpretation). In translation, participants also refer to 6 months (3 persons), 60 hours (1 person) and 3 sessions of training, or 2 hours. As far as interpretation is concerned, the training respondents mentioned durations such as 60 hours, 3 months, 2 months, 3 sessions or 2 sessions of training.

##### 4.2. Experience with newcomers

Most participants have been offering services for 1 year (33%) or 4 years (25%). The languages most represented in the survey were Arabic (32%), Spanish (16%), Portuguese and Russian (13% each). The other languages mentioned were Afghan, Bengali, Dari, Pashto, Persian, Somali, Swahili, Turkish, Ukrainian and Vietnamese. In most cases, the official language used in the language combination is English (90%). French is the official language in 4% of the language services offered and 6% of the respondents work with English or French and another language.

Regarding service frequency, 48% of the respondents offered their services every month (usually 3 to 6 times, except for employees who serve as translators/interpreters and as such act 20 times a month or more). Other participants gave estimates per year. They offered their services from 1 to 10 times a year. Translation is the main occupation of 17% of the participants, and interpreting is the main profession of 15% of them.

Participants were asked about the compensation conditions for their services. Data shows that, for translation, 71% act mostly as volunteers and for interpreting, 70% are volunteers.

Participants had to express whether they were satisfied with the level of service they offered. Answers to that question led to the impression that translators/interpreters were indeed satisfied (93% agreed or somewhat agreed that they were satisfied). A few comments corroborate the figure: “I am very satisfied with the translation or interpretation services that I provide”, “100%”, “90%”, “the client was satisfied”, “I am committed to continuous learning and improvement”, “I am highly satisfied as I have been graduated in English Literature and Language back in my country”. However, many comments showed some level of dissatisfaction as participants referred to their lack of expertise and expressed a strong interest in future training. “I don’t feel qualified to help with interpretation/translation as I do not have training specific to that. However, I am happy to assist in any way I can.”; “seem to be doing a good job and getting the point across. However, I am not a professional translator and have not received any training in this area. Therefore, I believe I could improve.”, “From one to ten I would like to say I’m 6”, “I need more experiences in time”. Translators and interpreters acknowledge their lack of training and skills.

### **4.3. Translators and interpreters’ training aspirations**

As one of the objectives of the research was to understand the situation of community translation and interpreting services in settlement agencies to eventually identify areas for improvement, it was relevant to investigate not only training levels but also willingness to train. To understand the translators and interpreters’ readiness for training, and potentially give indications regarding the training options in which the translators and interpreters would be most likely to enrol, they were asked to give workshop organisation preferences. Most of the respondents expressed that they would like as much training as possible. Indeed, 90% of the respondents would like to receive training (6% were not sure). Participants were asked how many workshops they would be ready to take: 16% preferred 1 workshop, 16% 2 workshops, 28% 4 workshops (they could not choose more than 4), and 36% were not sure. Regarding the preferred length for workshops, 31% chose 2 hours, 21% chose 1 day, and another 21% chose 1 weekend. The remainder were undecided or chose half a day.

### **4.4. Potential improvements according to the translators and interpreters**

Participants were asked how they thought the CTI services offered to newcomers could be improved. Two themes were raised repeatedly.

On several occasions, respondents referred to written material that they believe agencies should have translated, available in newcomers’ languages. Indeed, participants found that they had to repeat the same information multiple times: “we are constantly receiving new families, and information is often repeated. Therefore, putting it in writing can be helpful and save some time,” “Translate information pamphlet”, “Translate information that we have to repeat with every newcomer”.

The second suggestion has to do with training. Translators and interpreters were very explicit about training needs: “Prioritise translator training”, “There should be regular online training opportunities”, “Translation and interpretation training”, “Learning more about the interpretation and translation”, “I am ready to take any training or degree to improve my quality for working as an interpreter and translator in future to support my community”, “I need more training”, “Prioritise translator training”, “I would like to attend training to check if I am doing it right”, “cultural competences workshop”, “enhanced training and certification”. The request for training from the translators and interpreters working with New Brunswick settlement agencies is quite strong.

This piece of data brings the presentation of the research findings to a close. Figures and comments allow us to develop a profile of the translators and interpreters collaborating with settlement agencies in New Brunswick. This shows that translators and interpreters themselves have a history of immigration (90%), and that they have not been in Canada for a long time. Indeed, most of them have been in the country for 1 year (29%) or 4 years (25%); on average, they have been in Canada for 5.3 years. Often, they speak at least one official language and more than one non-official language (77%). Translators and interpreters collaborating with settlement agencies in New Brunswick are mostly volunteers with no training and would be keen to receive adequate training to improve the quality of their contributions. These findings bring to light the consequences of preconceived ideas on translation/interpretation (mere

knowledge of several languages is not enough to offer a professional translation services), the need for training and professionalisation, and the fact that more efforts could be made towards retention, all of which will be discussed in the next section.

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

### 5.1. Discussion

This profile revealed by the findings is concordant with what has been described in the literature in other parts of the world (Taibi & Ozolins, 2016; Lai & Gonzalez, 2023). Solutions to the challenges identified would help improve the quality of CTI services and therefore support retention efforts central to immigration strategies in the province.

#### *Good intentions are not enough*

While there is a strong belief among the public that being bilingual gives one sufficient skill to be a translator or interpreter, it is demonstrated in the professional world and in the literature that translation competence is not an innate skill (Pym, 2003), bilingualism being a necessary condition, but not in itself guaranteeing solid translation competence (Presas, 2000). Survey answers indicate that most participants claimed they were satisfied with the service they offered, but their comment revealed that even though they knew several languages, they found out that they did not have the translation/interpretation skills necessary to offer the highest quality service. This awareness is the first step towards improvement. The purpose of CTI confers the tasks with singular characteristics that distinguish them from other types of translation and interpretation (Teng & Crezee, 2022). These specificities need to be taught. Good intentions are not enough (Hunt & de Voogd, 2007). Untrained translators/interpreters might make unethical choices due to lack of training (Taibi & Ozolins, 2016). For these reasons, it would be relevant and useful to create a quality measure tool.

#### *Training*

Community translators and interpreters were asked to share information regarding their readiness to receive training in translation and interpretation. They very clearly expressed interest in receiving training (90% of the participants). Such interest is an advantage for agencies looking to improve services as they could use this momentum to offer training. While community translators and interpreters want to receive trainings, they are looking for short, flexible options.

There are currently no specialised courses in New Brunswick, but there are multiple ways to access training. At the moment, across Canada, a regular bachelor's degree in translation is offered for both official languages (French and English). In addition, Glendon College in the province of Ontario offers a 27-credit certificate in Spanish < > English translation (for students who have already completed a minimum of one year at the university level). Another example are the certificates in translation offered at the University of Toronto's School of Continuing Studies (they include 4 courses and are available in Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese and Spanish). Accessing trainings outside universities would give more flexibility.

Outside university degrees or certificates, several training formats already exist. Settlement agencies could, for instance, choose to work with one of the largest Canadian organisations specialising in CTI training, such as MCIS Language Solutions or CISOC, both based in Toronto, or to collaborate with other settlement agencies who already have the capacity to train in CTI. In the Atlantic region, the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia, based in Halifax, has an in-house language department and CTI training expertise. Indeed, they have already facilitated a few workshops in the past in New Brunswick.

Agencies could also decide to organise their own training. Again, there are multiple ways of designing the programme. Translators/interpreters revealed in the surveys that they were ready to attend four or more workshops lasting at least one day each. This information could be a starting point for deciding on a programme structure. Each agency could organise its own training, or they could offer joint training, facilitated by a CTI training specialist, organised throughout the province and open to any translator/interpreter working with a settlement agency in New Brunswick. Such a collaborative organisation, province-wide, would in fact allow for the standardisation of service quality across the province and support rural areas, which usually have more difficulty accessing translators/interpreters.

Training, regardless of its form, would contribute to improve the quality of services offered and reduce translators/interpreters' level of discontent.

#### *Database of translated basic information*

Translators and interpreters feel that they constantly have to interpret the same information from one newcomer to another. They propose translating basic information. It could in fact be efficient to establish a database of translated

documents, which would have several benefits. It would lighten the translators/interpreters' workload and allow newcomers to access the information as many times as they wanted, on their own, at their pace, and in their language, which, in return, would encourage autonomy and empowerment.

Documents could be related to the first steps in settlement, procedures, rights and responsibilities, any information that is only seldom changed. Instead of every agency having to go to such efforts, the database could be accessible to all New Brunswick settlement agencies who could access a multilingual database consisting of basic settlement information. The New Brunswick Multicultural Council could be involved with the management of the database. With such potential positive impacts for the entire province, the government of New Brunswick should get involved and financially support the project.

### *CTI as a retention effort*

As mentioned in the context section, one of the New Brunswick government's challenges is the retention of immigrants. Small and mid-sized cities adopt policies and strategies to attract newcomers, but many newcomers still show more interest in larger cities (Kelly & Nguyen, 2023). Several factors contribute to retaining immigrants including "employment opportunities, the presence of amenities, personalised settlement services, and social relationships with local community members or a diasporic community" (Kelly & Nguyen, 2023). CTI services could contribute to going a step further on several of these aspects such as the personalisation of settlement services and the facilitation of access to amenities.

The key to the retention of newcomers is creating a welcoming environment (Esses & al., 2023). Esses and her team developed a toolkit for creating such welcoming communities, they emphasise the importance of the "availability of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals" for the development categories they suggested, for example workers' rights, health care services, settlement services (2023). In fact, immigrants who do not understand the official languages are more likely to relocate (Haan, Li, & Finlay, 2023). Once again, CTI appears to be a tool to support retention efforts and facilitate communication while newcomers reach autonomy through proficiency in an official language.

## **5.2. Conclusion**

This article examined the profile of community translators and interpreters collaborating with New Brunswick settlement agencies.

Data provides an astute description of the situation, identifying the shortfalls and needs. It is a reliable baseline for reflecting on CTI services procurement in settlement agencies in New Brunswick. The lack of professionalisation is the clearest observation from the findings, and the translators/interpreters are both aware of and realistic about their skills.

Settlement agencies support newcomers with limited official language proficiency who have to communicate with public service providers, but there is a lack of funding allotted to CTI from the provincial and federal governments. Settlement agencies must therefore run their services as best they can, mostly with volunteers.

As far as newcomers' capacity to communicate is concerned, the Canadian government seems to rely on language training in an official language. While learning an official language is a decisive factor in newcomers' integration, it cannot be denied that learning is neither immediate nor easy for all. Failing to address language barriers has a moral and ethical cost as it could hinder the ability to guarantee human rights (Hunt & de Voogd, 2007). Governments have the moral responsibility to support communication challenges. Training models exist, ideas for reducing translators/interpreters' workloads exist, it is the governments' will that is lacking. I hope this article contributes to raising awareness on CTI services, which are often unacknowledged but are so crucial to the integration process of allophones.

It would be interesting to conduct further research on the quality of translation and interpretation services from untrained individuals and measure the consequences on settlement services. It will also be relevant to understanding staff and newcomers' perspectives on CTI services in New Brunswick settlement agencies to gain a broader understanding of the situation, based on all involved parties' experience.

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