

OPINION ON FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES IN THE WORKPLACE

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF FIRST NATIONS AND INUITS IN QUEBEC
A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUEBEC



FNILMAC

FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT LABOR MARKET ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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As part of its work, the FNILMAC regularly raised issues related to knowledge of the French language in the workplace of the First Nations and Inuit of Quebec. In fact, the majority of jobs require at least the mastery of one of Canada's two official languages, and more particularly of French, which represents a major obstacle to the hiring and retention of a large number of Indigenous workers, particularly in urban areas.

This obstacle is often cited by industry stakeholders as one of the main obstacles to overcome before thinking about entering the labor market. We quote some of them:

According to the Kahnawà: ke's Economic Development Commission (KEDC), lack of fluency in French is partly responsible for the high unemployment rate among young Mohawks living in the community. According to a representative of the KEDC, the lack of French courses in the education of Mohawk students and the preference given to English as a second language are the cause of the low percentage of young Mohawks mastering French within this group. Aboriginal community (Robillard, 2015).

The RCAAQ (Annual Report 2015) also stresses that this second English language can be a barrier to their economic participation. Although a large segment of the Aboriginal population is bilingual (native language and one of two official languages), Aboriginal workers in urban areas are often faced with the need for trilingual (native language as well as the two official languages).

According to the Ivirtivik center, the lack of knowledge of French makes it very difficult to integrate Inuit workers into the Montreal labor market.

1. Portrait of language as a socio-economic characteristic of First Nations and Inuit

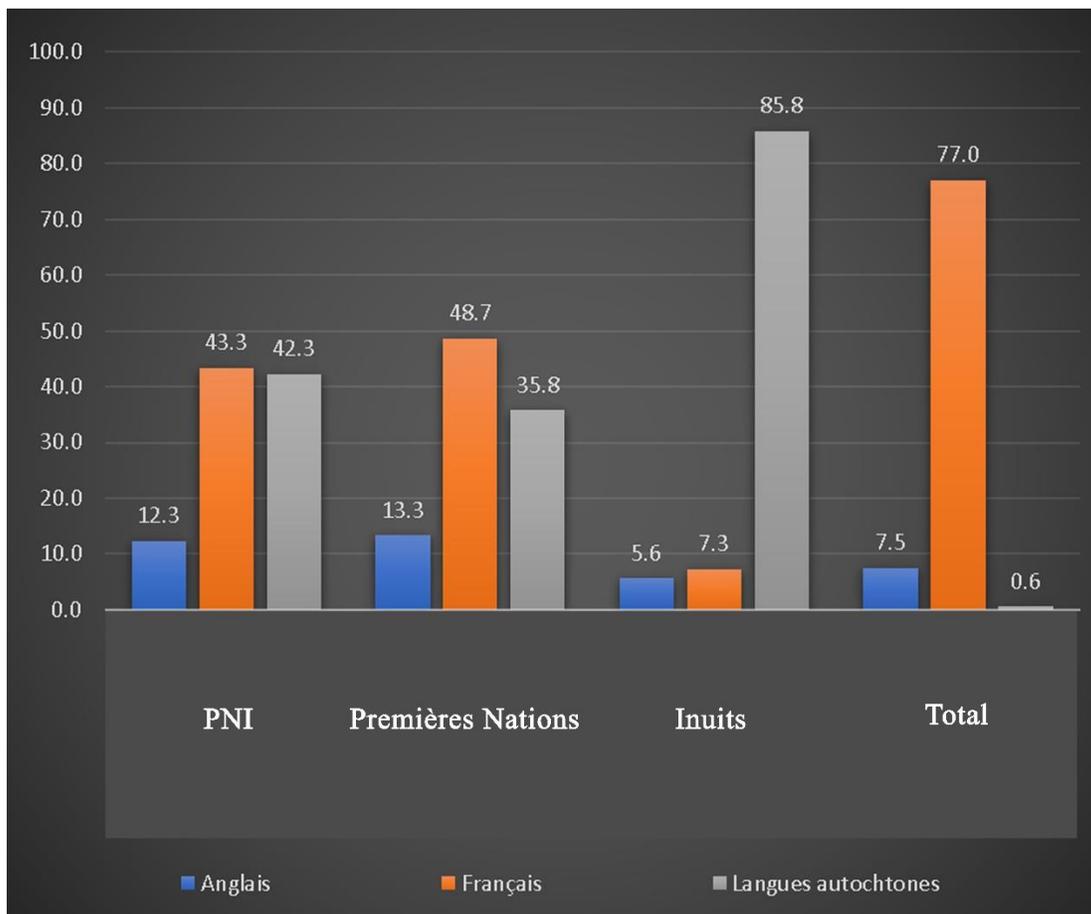
The 2016 Census Profiles series tells us that 12,670 people used an Aboriginal mother tongue in Quebec as their main working language in 2015. In addition, nearly 5,000 people occasionally used one or more Aboriginal languages in the course of their work. It is therefore a fairly marginal phenomenon that means that approximately one in 250 people use an Aboriginal language in the course of their work in Quebec. The Algonquian languages are the most widely spoken, including Cree and Montagnais (8,360), followed by Inuktitut (4,290). The other indigenous languages are therefore very little spoken, at least as the main working languages.

The link between data on Aboriginal mother tongue and labor market situation, however, is not established by census data. We therefore do not know how those whose mother tongue is Aboriginal fare in the Quebec labor market. We do know, however, that the level of education is closely linked to knowledge of French or English, and that those whose mother tongue is Aboriginal have lower levels of education than other FNIs. Also, according to data extracted from Census Profiles, 45,570 people had an Aboriginal mother tongue in Quebec in 2016, or nearly 25% of the population who identify as Aboriginal. The vast majority spoke an Algonquian language (33,140), followed by Inuktitut (11,895). Given the size of the diverse populations, Inuktitut and Cree are the languages most spoken by members of an Aboriginal nation, with approximately five in six people reporting it as their mother tongue in these two nations.

FNI more often have French as their mother tongue (43.3%), followed closely by an Aboriginal language (42.3%). This is a reversal from the 2006 data which indicated that French was lagging behind Indigenous languages as a mother tongue. On the other hand, this would represent a backward comparison of data from the 2011 NHS which indicated that 44.1% of FNI had French as their mother tongue. However, this difference is probably not statistically significant, especially if one takes into account the rate of non-response often very high. English ranks third with 12.3% of FNI reporting it as a mother tongue.

Most Aboriginal people living on the island of Montreal (57.7%) claimed to speak both official languages in 2010, nearly a third (30.5%) did not speak French and more than one in 10 (11.5%) spoke only English (Conseil jeunesse de Montréal, 2016, 16).

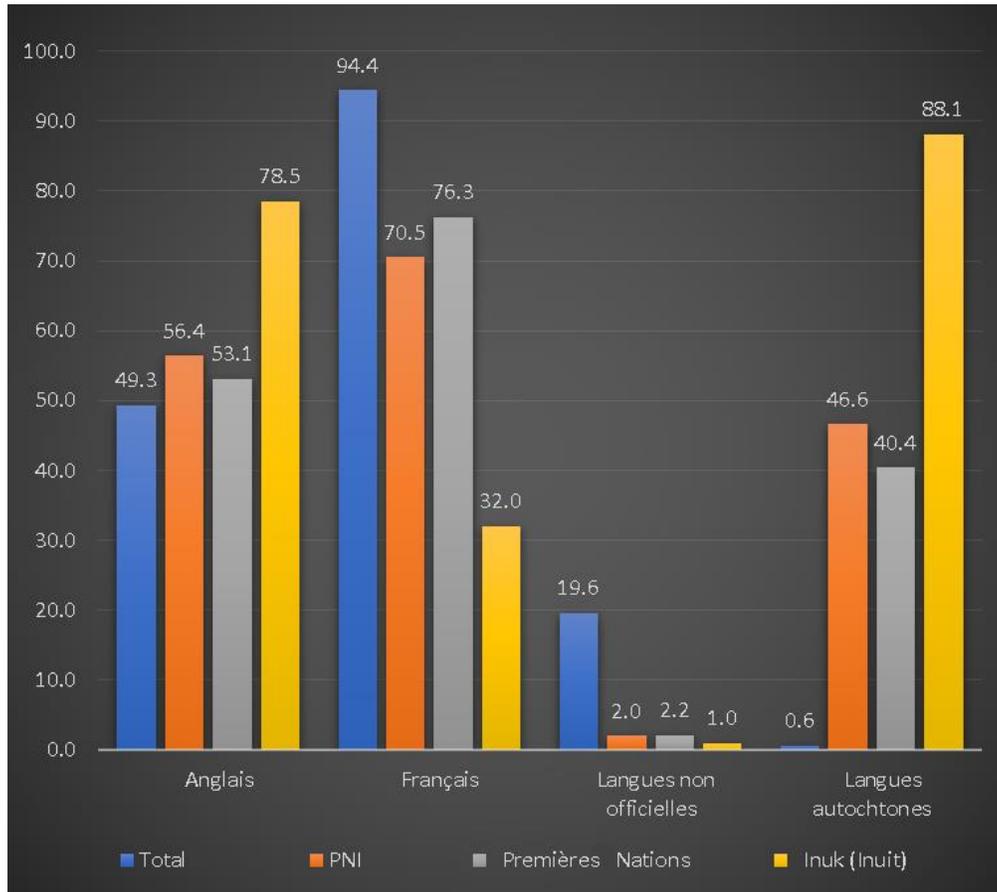
Figure 13 Distribution of the FNI, First Nations and Inuit populations and the entire population by mother tongue, Quebec, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 census.

The Inuit are again distinguished by the fact that the Aboriginal language is not only the mother tongue of the vast majority of them, but also the dominant language of use.

Figure 14 Distribution of the FNI, First Nations and Inuit populations and the general population by knowledge of languages, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 census.

Since French is not widely used among the Inuit, less than a third speak it (32%), this lack of knowledge is an obstacle to access to education, and possibly to the job market. A strategy specific to northern communities is required in this regard.

Source: The First Nations and Inuit labor market in Quebec 2019 FNILMAC- Normand Roy Economist-consultant <http://www.ccpnmt-fnilmac.com/publica/le-marche-du-travail-des-premieres-nations-et-des-inuits-du-quebec2019.pdf>

2. Language as a determining factor with regard to the FNI labor market

Fluency in French, English or both languages represent a challenge and an additional obstacle for FNIs who have a different mother tongue. This requires them to become bilingual or even trilingual in order to integrate into the labor market and into society in

general, while their fellow citizens can remain unilingual in many cases without too many problems.

Virtually all FNI over 15 know French (30,505) or English (13,645) only, or both (25,740), which means that just over 500 of them do not have neither French nor English. A proportion of them know only English (19.4%), which is a definite disadvantage in Quebec. Among the Inuit, French is marginal: 575 know only this language and 2,605 are bilingual in French and English, resulting in fluency in French in just over a third of them (34.8%). As a result, fewer than 500 Inuit over the age of 15 do not know English or French.

Among the youngest, few are those who do not master either French or English. For example, among FNI aged 25 to 34, there are only 20 in this situation. The same goes for the Inuit. This is obviously data rounded to the nearest five units. Lack of knowledge of French and English is concentrated among the least educated, regardless of age group. However, the census does not provide information on the respondents' degree of proficiency in French or English. It may be thought that it is lower on average among FNI than in the general population. From this point of view, FNIs whose mother tongue is Aboriginal have a similarity with immigrants whose mother tongue is other than French or English. They must master one or two languages different from theirs, which represents a major investment, in order to be able to function effectively with the majority population or the English-speaking minority.

The examination found that knowledge of French is probably not widespread enough, and perhaps not extensive enough, in several FNI communities and groups with a view to full participation in Quebec society and the labor market. This is also true to some extent with regard to knowledge of English, given the current importance of this language, especially in the world of the labor market and the economy.

Source: The First Nations and Inuit labor market in Quebec 2019 FNILMAC- Normand Roy Economist-consultant <http://www.ccpnimt-fnilmac.com/publica/le-marche-du-travail-des-premieres-nations-et-des-inuits-du-quebec2019.pdf>

3. Barriers of working languages among FN and Inuit of Quebec

3.1 Insufficient essential skills (reading, writing and oral communication)

Due to a lack of equitable access and lack of historical investment in education, an important segment of the Aboriginal workforce has no formal skills that industry may require. (oral)

The low linguistic capacity (French and / or English) of several First Nations and Inuit constitutes a major barrier to access to training, internship and employment integration activities. Even though the use of French is predominant in many workplaces, it should also be considered that more and more employers require oral and written fluency in French and English (Bourgeault-Côté 2017; Oti, 2017).

Fluency in French, English or both languages represent a challenge and an additional obstacle for FNIs who have a different mother tongue. This requires them to become bilingual or even trilingual in order to integrate into the labor market and into society in general, while their fellow citizens can remain unilingual in many cases without too many problems.

For Indigenous communities, the challenge is twofold: on the one hand, they must protect, promote and enhance the value of Indigenous languages and, on the other, meet the demands of a competitive labor market where bilingualism is a sought-after skill.

Source: The state of the labor market in Quebec for the First Nations and Inuit 2016

<http://www.ccpnmt-fnilmac.com/publica/fr6.pdf>

3.2 Access to francization, employment and training programs

Rather than facilitating access to MTESS and CPMT programs and measures, it is increasingly difficult to access them. In fact, some organizations must now present a francization certificate in order to obtain funding. This is a problem for indigenous businesses outside communities that are not covered by the legislation of the Office de la langue française (reference Annex 1)

Despite the efforts of the government of Quebec to simplify it, which has grouped together all francization services in one place on the web... improvements remain to be made since this site is available in **French only**.

<https://www.quebec.ca/education/apprendre-le-francais/>

Information on the labor market and on employment programs and measures is only available in French. **A link to English is apparent but the translation is rarely found there. How to reach English-speaking First Nations and Inuit communities if the information is only available in French?**

It is necessary to remember that these language barriers add to the sometimes very stubborn prejudices of Quebec employers while increasing the gap between Aboriginal labor supply and the profile of workers sought by companies.

Source: Promote the active participation of indigenous workers in Quebec literature review conducted by labor market Aextra | Alliance of Employment Services 2019

<https://axtra.ca/publication/nika-revue-de-litterature/>

4. Limited participation of English-speaking First Nations and Inuit members in the CPMT consultation structure

We welcome the fact that bilingual joint committees have been set up in several regions. However, the operational and consultative structure of the CPMT does not favor the participation of English-speaking First Nations and Inuit organizations and communities.

Currently, it is impossible for a bilingual Aboriginal / English language administrator to adequately follow the work of the FNILMAC or its CRPMT, nor to become actively involved with them. It will be essential in the near future to resolve these situations in order to promote and include the various regional and local First Nations and Inuit actors in the various committees. This will promote networking, better knowledge of each other's issues and increased collaboration between the parties.

The FNILMAC receives a translation allowance but this is not sufficient to ensure close participation of certain members since the translations in progress and the preparation of opinions are not translated. However, we should note that the current situation requiring us to hold meetings by videoconference has allowed the use of simultaneous translation.

5. Recommendations

- 1. That the MTESS and the ministries or agencies concerned integrate knowledge of the French language into training and labor market integration strategies, including on-the-job training for FNI workers.**
- 2. That the MTESS and the departments or agencies concerned promote current French learning services by offering information in English and by encouraging Aboriginal organizations to actively use them.**
- 3. That the MTESS and the ministries or organizations concerned fund the development of French language programs in order to; acquire the level of literacy skills required to enter the labor market and adapt the offer of functional French courses in the workplace so that they are culturally safe and sensitive to the preservation and enhancement of languages indigenous.**
- 4. That the MTESS offer simultaneous translation when required throughout the structure of the CPMT as much at the level of the FNILMAC.**
- 5. That the MTESS offer or finance the English translation of employment and training programs and measures as well as the documents necessary for understanding the issues, analyzes and information including the labor market that will allow the involvement and inclusion of English-speaking First Nations and Inuit.**



6. Courses of action:

1. The CSMO Textile has integrated a basic skill francization component (120 hours) into their PAMT programs. This addition could be integrated into all PAMTs as well as the PAIPNI program. (R¹ 1)
2. Des programmes tels que le PPE accorde des périodes de 6 mois (780hrs) aux clients PNI défavorisés au niveau de l'emploi pour intégrer le marché du travail. Ceci est insuffisant pour acquérir différentes compétences essentielles nécessitant en premier lieu l'acquisition de la compétence en littéracie. L'intégration linguistique (hors milieu de travail) financé par le MIFI aux immigrants est de 2,000 heures soit 88 semaines de formation. Nous proposons que le MTESS intègre et finance l'équivalent de ce programme dans le cadre du PPE ou d'autres programmes adaptés comme le PAIPNI.
3. (R 1- 3) Quebec Local Services Quebec offices should ensure that they provide services in English or simultaneous interpretation to Anglophone FNI clients. (R 2)
4. Significant improvements in simultaneous translation have been achieved within the framework of the activities of FNILMAC and MTESS in certain regions. It is important to continue on this path and to provide simultaneous translation services when required in order to promote the inclusion of Anglophone FNI leaders. (R 4)
5. A partir de la trousse d'outils de francisation disponible au MIFI, nous proposons d'identifier ceux qui seraient transférables à l'apprentissage du français pour les autochtones en les adaptant et en les bonifiant afin de les rendre culturellement sécurisante. (R 3)
6. Despite the fact that education services offer French courses to the general population, these are not culturally reassuring. Very few FNI clients enroll and the vast majority of these drop out after one or two classes. The (69) FNI service centers should be mandated to offer the French language learning service in order to ensure cultural security and promote perseverance and success. This request is in line with the Notice of relevance for the development of a ministerial strategy for the social and professional integration of First Nations and Inuit filed in June 2013.

¹ R = recommendation

One of the framework principles of the Notice points out that the mandate of developing the workforce and FNI labor market remains that of Aboriginal governments and organizations involved. (R 3)

7. It is currently very difficult to find one's way in the quantity of programs that offer funding for learning French. We hope that the reduction in the number of CPMT programs that will be announced soon will simplify the task for various stakeholders and employers. (R 2 - 4)

8. Despite the centralization of information on francization and / or learning French under quebec.ca, it is difficult to find your way around the different programs. It would be advantageous to simplify its use by taking into account the literacy level of the clients. The MIFI programs all seem to be translated into English but this is not always the case with the MTESS programs or for example the PAIPNI program is still not available in English. Labor market information is also rarely translated which prevents stakeholders from using it. (R 2 - 5)



8. References

The First Nations and Inuit labor market in Quebec 2019 FNILMAC- Normand Roy Consulting Economist <http://www.ccpnimt-fnilmac.com/publica/le-marche-du-travail-des-premieres-nations-et-des-inuits-du-quebec2019.pdf>

The State of the Quebec Labor Market for First Nations and Inuit 2016 Réjean Chamard Consulting Economist
<http://www.ccpnimt-fnilmac.com/publica/fr6.pdf>

Government website dedicated to francization. All of the government's francization services are now grouped together here.
<https://www.quebec.ca/education/apprendre-le-francais/>

Foster the active participation of Aboriginal workers in the Quebec labor market Literature review produced by AXTRA | Alliance of Employment Advice Centers 2019
<https://axtra.ca/publication/nika-revue-de-litterature/>

The capsules of the Agent Network are intended only for departments and agencies that are subject to the Government Policy on the Use and Quality of the French Language in the Administration (PLG).

Capsule 6

Administration communications with Indigenous people and organizations

What the Charter of the French language provides

With regard to Aboriginal communities, the preamble to the Charter of the French language mentions that the National Assembly recognizes the Amerindians, Amerindians, Inuit and Inuit of Quebec, descendants and descendants of the original inhabitants of the country, the right that they have to maintain and develop their original language and culture.

This recognition is reflected in Articles 95, 96 and 97 of the Charter. Indeed, people eligible for the benefits of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, organizations created under it as well as organizations for which a majority of whose members are made up of eligible people (for example, a business) are not subject to the application of the Charter and have the right to use their language in the territories covered by the Convention. This also applies to the Naskapi and the Naskapi of Schefferville.

Furthermore, the organizations mentioned in Article 95 have the duty to introduce the use of French in their administration in order, in particular, to communicate in this language with their citizens who are not beneficiaries of the Convention and with the rest of Quebec.

Finally, Indian reserves are not subject to the application of the Charter within their territory.

The obligations of the Administration

The Charter of the French language does not require the Administration to use only French with the above-mentioned persons and organizations. Indeed, the Administration may use other languages in addition to French in its written communications (Articles 16, 89 and 91 of the Charter). It can also use a language other than French with natural persons who request it (Articles 15, 89 and 91 of the Charter).

So how the Administration should communicate with these individuals and organizations, considering that the government policy on employment and the quality of the French language in the Administration (PLG) establishes the principle that favors French unilingual in its activities?

Provisions of the government policy on employment and the quality of the French language in the Administration

In accordance with section 5 of the PLG, when a department or agency provides services to Aboriginal communities, its language policy may specify which language practices are

appropriate. Thus, it could provide that the documents produced for the Native communities be drafted both in French and in the language of the community concerned (for example, Cree) or in another language that its members say they can understand (e.g., English), provided that a preference is expressed in this direction.

Where applicable, documents drafted in a language other than French are presented on a separate medium and the mention Original text in French in the target language is added (article 8 of the PLG).

In addition, the Administration may require legal persons and Aboriginal businesses to provide it with documents in French, all the more so in the case of documents that are part of a file established with a view to the obtaining a subsidy, contract, permit, all other forms of authorization or, more generally, with a view to complying with an obligation arising from a law or a regulation (article 21 of the PLG).

Agreements

The agreements with Aboriginal communities may be concluded in both French and Aboriginal language concerned, both versions being authentic. If the Administration finds it necessary to use a third language, at the request of the indigenous community, the official character of French must be ensured.

In conclusion, the preferred approach in communications with Aboriginal must consider that the Charter provides for them and thus demonstrate openness and respect for their language and culture of origin. The Office's francization advisers can guide you if specific situations arise in your organization.

95. Have the right to use Cree and Inuktitut and are exempt from the application of this Act with the exception of sections 87, 88 and 96, the following persons and organizations:

- a) the persons eligible for the benefits of the Agreement referred to in Article 1 of the Act approving the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (chapter C-67), in the territories referred to in the said Agreement;
- b) organizations whose creation is provided for in the Convention and in the territories covered by the Convention;
- c) bodies the majority of whose members are made up of persons referred to in paragraph a, in the territories referred to in the said Convention.

With the necessary modifications, this article applies to the Naskapi of Schefferville.

1977, c. 5, a. 95; 1983, c. 56, a. 51.



96. The organizations referred to in section 95 must introduce the use of French in their administration in order, on the one hand, to communicate in French with the rest of Quebec and those of their constituents who are not referred to in paragraph a of said section, and on the other hand, to ensure their services in French to them.

During a transitional period, whose duration is determined by the government after consultation with interested parties, Articles 16 and 17 of this Act do not apply to the

administration of communications with the bodies referred to in Article 95. With the necessary modifications, this article applies to the Naskapi of Schefferville.

1977, c. 5, a. 96.



97. Indian reserves are not subject to this Act.

The Government shall fix by regulation the cases, conditions and circumstances in which a body mentioned in the Schedule is authorized to derogate from the application of one or more provisions of this Act with respect to a person who resides, or has resided on a reserve, in an establishment where an Aboriginal community lives or on Category I and Category IN lands within the meaning of the Act respecting the land regime in the James Bay and New Quebec territories (chapter R-13.1).

1977, c. 5, a. 97; 1983, c. 56, a. 23; 1993, c. 40, a. 39.

Date of last update: 2020-08-14

1977, c. 5, a. 97; 1983, c. 56, a. 23; 1993, c. 40, a. 39.

Source: Office québécois de la langue française

https://www.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca/francisation/admin_publ/capsules-mandataires/201712_capsule6.html



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