Exploring municipal translation policies in Canada: The cases of Calgary and Edmonton

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Abstract: This article applies the concept of "translation policy" to two of Canada's most multicultural cities, Calgary and Edmonton. Following Meylaerts (2017), this study adopts a complexity perspective to account for the "chaotic" (Backhaus, 2012) nature of translation policy in a municipal context. The study draws on a close reading of municipal documents, interviews with municipal employees, and an analysis of the websites of each of the two cities. In so doing, the study reveals the hidden complexity of Calgary's and Edmonton's translation policies and questions the relevance of the concept of translation policy in a municipal setting.

Keywords: Translation policy, language policy, cities, complexity theory, Canada

1. Introduction

In her entry on "translation policy," Meylaerts (2011a) offers a critical overview of the various definitions of "translation policy" before venturing to define it herself as: "[...] a set of legal rules that regulate translation in the public domain: in education, in legal affairs, in political institutions, in administration, in the media." (p. 165). For Meylaerts (2011a), translation policy and language policy are closely linked in such a way that "[a]ny language policy presupposes a translation policy" (p. 165). In her view, translation policy plays a decisive yet poorly documented role in implementing citizens' linguistic rights. While acknowledging the conceptual value of Meylaerts' definition, González Núñez (2016a) endeavours to enhance its heuristic value by drawing on Spolsky's (2004) well-known taxonomy of language policy (i.e., "language practices," "language beliefs" and "language management"). According to González Núñez (2016a), this taxonomy offers several methodological advantages, including that it can be applied to various "domains" (Spolsky, 2004, p. 39-41). Following Spolsky (2004), González Núñez (2016a, p. 92) describes translation policy as a continuum that encompasses "translation management," "translation practices" and "translation beliefs."[1] González Núñez's (2016a) definition of translation policy ends up being much broader than Meylaerts', which focuses

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[1] "Translation management" refers "to the decision regarding translation made by the people who have the authority to decide the use or non-use of translation within a domain." "Translation practices" refers to "the actual translation practices of a given community." "Translation beliefs" refers to "beliefs that a member of a community hold about issues such as what the value is, or is not, of offering translation in certain contexts for certain groups or to achieve certain ends." (González Núñez, 2016a, p. 92)

exclusively on management. Another advantage of González Núñez's (2016a) taxonomy is that it can be applied to domains where policies are, if not absent, at least not explicit, as is the case in many Canadian cities, including Calgary and Edmonton, as will be discussed. In their article on the provision of translation and interpreting services in Australia, Hlavac and colleagues (2018) revisit Meylaerts' (2011a) assertion that there is no language policy without a translation policy. Rather than seeing translation policy as an extension of a language policy, Hlavac and colleagues (2018) choose to adopt a "looking sideways" approach that accounts for translation as a "secondary activity" (p. 56), serving various public policy goals. Using this particular lens, they show that, from the mid-1990s onwards in Australia, translation was not so much the object of a policy as *one component* among others of a public and social policy, in this case, multiculturalism. Hence, Hlavac and colleagues (2018) propose to redefine translation policy: "[…] as referring to the practice of other policies that need not see translation as a goal in itself, but which facilitate its provision as means for the achievement of any other policy goals" (p. 83).

With a few exceptions (Meylaerts, 2021; Bouyzourn, et al. 2023; González Nuñez & Fresno, 2023), most studies of translation policies focus on national contexts (see, for instance, González Núñez, 2016b; Hlavac et al., 2018; Howard et al., 2018; Meylaerts, 2017). According to Diarmait Mc Giolla and Huwn (2008), such a trend pervades the very discipline of language policy and planning, which "remains dominated by a concern with language issues in 'national contexts' [...] That is to say that the nation-state is the focal point of the craft of language planning and policy" (pp. 2-3). As one of the first sociolinguists to examine municipal language policies, Backhaus (2012) acknowledges that they "provide a most important interface between state and citizens" (p. 226). However, he notes that they present an epistemological challenge to researchers insofar as "if they exist in some explicit form at all, [they] tend to be chaotic, incongruent and extremely piecemeal" (p. 227). In the wake of Backhaus' pioneer study, a handful of works shed light on municipal translation policies[2]. One of the most notable is Skandries' (2016) study of municipal language policies in several European cities, carried out as part of the LUCIDE (Languages in Urban Communities – Integration and Diversity) project[3]. Unlike most works on cities' management of multilingualism (Cadier & Mar-Molinero, 2012; Extra & Yamur, 2011; Kraus, 2011), Skandries closely examines the provision of translation services as an essential component of municipal language policies. Yet, Skandries (2016) found that for most LUCIDE municipalities, these services are *ad hoc* and do not form part of a structured multilingual policy. On the ground, municipalities often lack multilingual expertise and are guided by ideological (e.g. nationalism) and economic (e.g., budgetary austerity) interests that are not always compatible with the promotion of multilingualism (and, by extension, translation). Just like Backhaus, Skandries (2016) saw a disconnect "[…] between municipal policies recognising, accommodating and supporting urban multilingualism, and national policies and political interventions which are characterised either by a narrow economic appreciation of multilingualism or the defensive rejection of linguistic diversity and the advocacy of integration through monolingual assimilation" (p. 134).

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[2] These include Meylaert's (2018; 2021) articles on Brussels and recent studies focusing on the implementation of translation policies by cities to communicate with multicultural communities during the COVID 19 pandemic (Bouyzourn et al., 2023).
[3] The LUCIDE project (2011-2014) was a consortium of fourteen European universities and city partners specialized in researching multilingualism in cities around the world.

In the Canadian context, there is a handful of studies on municipal translation policies in the Canadian context, most of them focusing on Toronto's multilingual policy (Hébert, 2016; McDonough Dolmaya, 2020). Building on two previous studies (Rao, 2020; Rao et al. 2021), which looked at translation policies in several Canadian cities, this article switches the focus from Eastern to Western Canadian metropolises. After providing a brief overview of language policies in Canada and the province of Alberta, I will examine and compare Calgary's and Edmonton's municipal language policies, which, along with Toronto and Vancouver, are among the most culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Canadian municipalities. Given the covert nature of Calgary's and Edmonton's translation policies, I decided to draw on González Núñez's framework in combination with both Hlavac and colleagues' perspective of "looking sideways" and an ethnographically inspired approach (Buzelin, 2007; Koskinen, 2006). I consulted a range of internal and public municipal documents that mentioned translation (and interpretation), including immigration settlement frameworks, inclusion and accessibility policies, engagement policies, and city plans. Between June 2020 and September 2022, I conducted interviews with six municipal employees in charge of managing translation activities and/or specific translation projects. In addition, I compared Calgary's and Edmonton's websites, which are the preferred channels for posting and disseminating translated documents. I looked in particular at the number and content of translated documents, the choice of target languages in the light of each city's demolinguistic composition, and the visibility and accessibility of translated resources.

2. Canada's language policy in a nutshell

2.1 Federal bilingualism, revitalization of Indigenous languages, and multiculturalism without multilingualism

To understand Calgary's and Edmonton's translation practices and policies, it is useful to situate them in the larger context of Canada's language regime. In the Canadian context, the power to legislate in the area of language is vested in the federal and provincial governments by virtue of their respective legislative jurisdictions. Both the *Official Languages Act* (1969) and *The Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982) provided the constitutional foundation for the French/ English bilingualism that had prevailed for over a century in the Houses of Parliament of Canada and the chambers of the Quebec legislature under section 133 of the *British North America Act* (1867). However, it was not until the new *Official Languages Act* of 1988 that the federal government of Canada gave itself the means to implement bilingualism. The 1988 Act introduced a series of provisions to reinforce equality between English and French, such as the obligation to publish legislative instruments in both official languages, and the right of federal employees to work in the official language of their choice. These measures were subsequently refined and, in some cases, implemented through various regulations, policies, programs, and roadmaps. Bilingualism fuels considerable translation activity usually carried out by the Translation Bureau at the Federal level, whose public service mission was recognized in 1985 with the enactment of the *Translation Bureau Act*. However, as several researchers have noted (Córdoba Serrano, 2022; Hébert, 2016; McDonough Dolmaya, 2020), Canada's bilingual language policy lacks a fully-fledged translation policy.

Indigenous languages[4] – which were on the brink of extinction due to ethnocidal legislation, such as the *Indian Act* (1876) – have been the subject of federal legislation since February 5, 2019. Conceived in the spirit of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007), the *Indigenous Languages Act* aims to "support and [...] promote the use of indigenous languages and revitalize, maintain and strengthen them" and "establish measures to facilitate the provision of adequate, stable and long-term funding" (section 5a), b), d). Indigenous languages are yet far from enjoying a status comparable to that of English and French in Canada.

As for immigrant languages,[5] they are mentioned in the federal multiculturalism policy adopted following the conclusions of the report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. Sections 22 and 27 of the *Charter* (1982) and section 4 of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (1985) recognize the importance of maintaining languages other than English and French and of "facilitating the acquisition and retention of language skills in, and the use of, each of the languages that contribute to the multicultural heritage of Canada" (section 4). However, as Cardinal and Léger point out, "the federal language policy provides minimal guidance for the recognition and accommodation of linguistic diversity" (2018, p. 30). In short, although Canadian federal bilingualism officially accommodates multiculturalism, it makes little room for multilingualism.

2.2 The diversity of provincial language policy: The case of Alberta

Under Canadian federalism, provinces are free to adopt the political system of their choice, which results in a wide diversity of language policies. Of the 13 Canadian provinces and territories, only New Brunswick, Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and Yukon are officially bilingual. Nunavut also recognizes the Inuit language as an official language with equal status with English and French. The other provinces are all unilingual English, except for Quebec, which is officially French speaking. Provinces – even unilingual ones – do grant language accommodations in various areas[6]. Several provinces and territories have put in place pieces of legislation that recognize the historical presence of Francophone communities, such as the *French Policy* in Alberta. As our brief overview of the language policies of Canada's provinces and territories shows, these are far from uniform, even in the case of the unilingual English-speaking provinces.

At the end of the 19th century, the province of Alberta (then part of the Northwest Territories) was bilingual under the *Manitoba Act* (1870) before adopting a unilingual English-language regime enshrined in the *Alberta Act* (1905). This unilingual regime – which also extended to Alberta's municipalities (Aunger, 2005, p. 117-8) – is still in force today. Although the *Language Act* enshrines English as the sole official language of the province, it

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[4] The term "Indigenous" refers to individuals identifying themselves a First Nations people, Métis or Inuit. It is based on the definition provided by Statistics Canada (2022c).

[5] The term "immigrant languages" refers to languages (other than English, French and Indigenous languages) whose presence in Canada is originally due to immigration (Statistics Canada, 2018).

[6] In the realm of education, for example, all provinces and territories have complied with Section 23 of the Charter, which gives parents the right to have their children educated in the minority language where numbers warrant. In the area of justice, the provinces and territories must comply with the requirements of section 530 of the Criminal Code, which guarantees each Canadian the right to have a criminal trial in the official language of his or her choice, even if not all provinces and territories do so in practice.

nevertheless shows a certain openness towards French, which can be used in the Assembly[7] (section 5(1)). The *Language Act* also stipulates that French may be used in certain courts, such as the Alberta Court of Appeal and the Alberta Court of King's Bench (Section 3).[8] In Aunger's words (2005), "For more than a century, Alberta's legislators imposed the use of English in a wide variety of domains including government, justice, education, business and commerce. Their goal was to suppress minority languages and to build a homogeneous English-speaking province [...]" (p. 129).

Francophones – whose presence in Alberta dates back to the 18th century (Hart, 1980) and faced assimilation – found in the *Official Languages Act* and the *Charter* a constitutional basis for asserting their linguistic rights. Putting an end to nearly seven years of legal proceedings, the *Mahé decision* (1990) enabled them to manage their schools, while paving the way for the establishment of French-language school boards in 1993. The Francophone Secretariat was created in 1999 to "act as a liaison between the federal government and Alberta's Francophonie" (Government of Alberta, 2023b). Among other responsibilities, the Secretariat oversees the implementation of the *French Policy* (*Politique en matière de francophonie albertaine),* whose objective is to improve the provision of public services in the French medium without seeking to make the province bilingual (p. 5).

Like many provinces, Alberta has responded to the call of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by embarking on a consultation process with Indigenous communities in several areas. With respect to language and culture, the province has taken several initiatives, such as the creation in 2019 of the Indigenous Languages Resource Centre (ILRC) at the Calgary Public Library.

In the wake of Pierre Elliott Trudeau's multicultural policy, Alberta was one of the first jurisdictions in the early 1970s to allow the use of languages other than English and French in the classroom (Canadian Association of Education, 1991). Although the *School Act* makes English the official language of instruction, section 11(1) states that a board of parents may authorize that French or another language also be used as the language of instruction. Today, the province offers bilingual programs and language and culture courses in nine languages.

In short, Canadian Federalism has resulted in a wide variety of provincial language policies. Although French is one of the two official languages, it does not enjoy the same status in all provinces. In Alberta, English has prevailed historically and legally to the detriment of other languages, particularly French. However, the latter has managed to carve out a modest place for itself within the province, thanks to the *Official Languages Act* and the *Charter*, as well as the efforts of local French-speaking minorities. In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's final report (2015), the province has taken actions that have helped enhance the visibility of Indigenous languages. As far as immigrant languages are concerned, those with international prestige (such as German, Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese) and/or belonging to heritage communities (e.g., Ukrainians and Polish) are taught in specialized programs and schools.

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[7] Ironically, the Language Act was intended to counteract the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in the Mercure case (February 25, 1988), which held that section 110 of the North-West Territory Act was still in force in Saskatchewan and, by extension, Alberta.

[8] In provincial courts, plaintiffs - whatever their language - can call on the services of an interpreter under section 14 of the Charter for lack of standing a trial in French.

3. Autonomy and multilingualism: The cases of Calgary and Edmonton

3.1 A context of increased municipal autonomy

Although Canadian cities are "creatures of provincial statutes" based on the *British North America Act* (1867), their autonomy has increased significantly, so that they now act more as partners of provincial and federal government in practice, especially in the area of immigration[9] (Abu-Laban, 1997; Poirier, 2006; Tossuti, 2012). This is the result of circumstantial factors, such as lobbying by multicultural associations; political action by local elected officials; the devolution of social services from the federal or provincial level to the municipal level; and awareness campaigns held by pan-municipal organizations such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities on the role of cities in fostering inclusivity (Poirier, 2006). The competition for skilled labour is another factor explaining the emphasis put by cities on strategies for welcoming and retaining non-English-speaking background (NESB) immigrants. International initiatives, such as the creation in 2007 under UNESCO's auspices, of the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (CIM), have also helped to raise awareness of challenges faced by immigrants in cities. Launched in Calgary, the CIM seeks to "eliminate all forms of discrimination with a view to building open and inclusive societies" (UNESCO, 2017). It currently brings together 118 Canadian municipalities, including Calgary and Edmonton. In 2019, the CIM published a toolkit entitled *Welcoming Immigrants and Refugees to Canada: The Role of Municipalities*, which highlights language as the second most significant barrier faced by immigrants in the first 4 years of settling in Canada.

Major cities, such as Calgary and Edmonton, are no longer mere "creatures" of the provinces. They now have the leeway they need to act as partners of the provincial and federal governments and develop innovative policies, particularly in the field of immigration. These policies are generally the product of consultation with a variety of partners.

> "[…] the strength of municipal governments is their capacity to bring the full range of social actors to the table to act together. Public action at the local level therefore involves many organizations (civil, private, and public), and it is the convenor and networking capacity of local governments that determines their policy capacity" (Poirier, 2006, p. 205)

This also applies to language/translation policies, as will be discussed later in the article.

3.2 Calgary and Edmonton: Two linguistically diverse metropolises

In 2021, 9 out of 10 new immigrants to Canada settled in one of 41 metropolitan areas with populations of over 100,000 (Statistics Canada, 2022b). Of all these municipalities, Calgary and Edmonton, along with Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa, and Abbotsford-Mission, attracted the most immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2022a). The proportion of immigrants per capita in Calgary (31.5%) and Edmonton (26.0%) is significantly higher than the national average of 23.0% (Statistics Canada, 2022a). After the massive wave of immigration resulting from the oil and gas boom of the early 2000s, and the periods of fluctuating net migration that followed, Alberta's population experienced a record growth rate of 3.8% in 2022, due mainly to international immigration (Government of Alberta, 2023b). In 2022, Edmonton, the provincial capital of

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[9] According to the Constitutional Act (1867), immigration is a shared prerogative between the federal and provincial governments.

Alberta, had a population of around 1.1 million, slightly less than Calgary's 1.4 million. Edmonton and Calgary are home to more than half of Alberta's total population. Given the population growth in these two cities, 4 out of 5 Albertans are expected to live in the Edmonton/Calgary corridor by 2046 (Government of Alberta, 2023b).

Canada requires economic immigrants to be proficient in at least one of the two official languages. This proficiency is assessed through a formal examination based on the *Canadian Language Benchmarks*. However, the requirements are different for refugees admitted to Canada, whose numbers have been rising steadily to reach a record 130,125 in 2021, representing a 19.5% increase over 2020 (Statistics Canada, 2022a).[10] To facilitate the acquisition of one or both official languages, the Canadian government funds language courses through programs such as LINCS (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada). While English is by far the most widely spoken official language in Edmonton and Calgary, it coexists with French, Indigenous languages and over a hundred and fifty additional languages.

The proportion of Calgarians and Edmontonians with a non-official mother tongue (excluding Indigenous languages) accounted for 29.5% and 30.3%, respectively, in 2021. While the vast majority have some knowledge of English (90.8% in Calgary and 95.5% in Edmonton), a very small proportion (2.4% in Calgary and 2.2% in Edmonton) do not know any of the official or Indigenous languages. The table below shows the top 11 non-official mother tongues most spoken at home in Calgary and Edmonton in 2021, and the corresponding proportion of speakers in the population.

Table 1: 11 Most spoken languages at home and corresponding percentage of speakers in Calgary and Edmonton – single responses (based on Statistics Canada, 2023)

	Calgary				Edmonton		
1	Punjabi	36,445	2.97%	1	Punjabi	30,595	3.25%
2	Tagalog	27,210	2.22%	2	Tagalog	22,875	2.43%
3	Cantonese	23,495	1.92%	3	Mandarin	14,405	1.53%
4	Mandarin	21,510	1.75%	4	Cantonese	14,030	1.49%
5	Spanish	18,095	1.47%	5	Arabic	12,325	1.31%
6	Arabic	12,395	1.01%	6	Spanish	10,525	1.12%
7	Urdu	12,250	1.00%	7	French	7,055	0.75 %
8	Vietnamese	8,840	0.72%	8	Vietnamese	5,805	0.62%
9	Korean	7,740	0.63%	9	Urdu	5,640	0.60%
10	Russian	6,055	0.49%	10	Hindi	5,610	0.59%
11	French	5,820	0.47%	11	Korean	4,535	0.48%

4. Comparison between Calgary's translation policy and Edmonton's

4.1 Translation management and beliefs
4.1.1 Calgary: From multilingual communications and engagement strategy to social wellbeing policy
The city of Calgary established the *Welcoming Community Policy* in 2011 as it grew aware of the key role of immigration as a driver for social and economic

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[10] The origin of these refugees has varied over time. Between 2016 and 2021, they were mainly born in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan (Statistics Canada, 2022a).

development. The policy was intended to facilitate the integration of immigrants by fostering an inclusive community. It included five key areas, namely "social and economic integration," "intergovernmental relations," "service access and equity," "advocacy, communication, public awareness and education" and "vulnerable segments of the immigrant population" (p. 2). However, none of these areas - even "Service Access and Equity" – mentioned translation or raised the possibility of developing a municipal language/translation framework like the one implemented by Toronto. As Tossuti (2012) observes, Calgary had no "corporate-wide policy on multilingual translations" (p. 624). However, at the time the City did offer a telephone information service available in over a hundred languages, which is still in use today.

In 2017, the City of Calgary designed a *Multicultural Strategy* to better identify the needs of immigrants and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and how to address them. To do so, it launched consultations with speakers of the five non-official language communities most represented in Calgary[11]. Each of these communities committed to producing a report (City of Calgary, 2018a) to help the city develop appropriate communication strategies and marketing tools.[12] In May 2018, the city surveyed its departments on how they interacted with culturally and linguistically diverse communities and immigrants and what their translation needs were. A month earlier, Calgary had signed a memorandum of understanding with the Alberta government aimed at improving communication with culturally and linguistically diverse communities while minimizing costs and duplication. As part of this agreement, the province committed to:

> assist the City of Calgary in creating products in need of translation, the Government of Alberta will translate up to three products a year for the City to make more efficient use of this resource (Government of Alberta, 2018).

The Chief Financial Officer's report, dated December 5, 2018, provided some practical recommendations regarding Calgary's *Multilingual Strategy*. This included using plain language for communications to be translated and setting a threshold in terms of the number of target-language speakers for the provision of translation services. It also involved prioritizing the use of translation and interpretation services offered by the Customer Service and Communications (CSC) branch to ensure consistent quality and competitive cost (p. 3). Interestingly, the report associates terms like "tactics" and "strategy" with translation (and interpreting). For instance, the report advises that the City "utilize tactics such as translation and interpretation to better reach first-generation immigrants" (p. 5). It also warns against considering "the translation of broad-based communication messages […] sufficient to reach multicultural communities, rather than considering culturally appropriate strategies, channels, messages and tactics" (p. 5). Calgary's *Multilingual Communications and Engagement Strategy* (MCES) is operationalized within the *MCES Implementation framework*. The framework recommends using translation and interpretation "for key City projects that align with strategic objectives," "expand[ing] the corporate translation bank," and "procur[ing] corporate translation services" so that "Employees have an effective and efficient way to

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[11] That is the Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin speakers), East Indians, Filipinos, Spanish speakers, and Arab speakers.
[12] For this initiative, the City of Calgary was awarded the prestigious International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Gold Quill Award of Excellence in the "Communication Research" category (City of Calgary, 2018a).

access accurately and consistently translated information for the top five groups who speak a language other than English most often at home" (2019c, p. 1).

The subsequent report dated June 12, 2019, presented a comprehensive assessment of the results achieved under MCES. For instance, the report mentions the translation of over 300 municipal communications into simplified Chinese, Punjabi, Tagalog, Spanish, and Arabic, which were made available to City employees along with a virtual translation bank. The report also mentions the implementation of interim processes to support the city's translation and interpretation needs pending the creation of a long-term corporate service.[13] One of the report's key administrative recommendations is not to make MCES a stand-alone policy but rather "to use the existing Social Wellbeing Principles and Policy to guide the delivery of equitable communication and engagement" (2019b, p. 4). The *Social Wellbeing Policy –*
 which was introduced in 2019 – aims to "provide guidance on how the City can reduce barriers and continually improve the delivery of Services to all Calgarians, considering aspects of diversity including but not exclusive to age, disability, family status, gender, gender identity/expression, marital status, Indigenous heritage/identity, level of income, place of origin, place of residence, race, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation" (p. 2). The policy's originality lies in its "intersectional" approach, whereby language and culture are viewed as two of many dimensions of a holistic concept of identity. The City Standing Committee provides the following rationale for making MCES part of the *Social Wellbeing Policy* (as opposed to a council or an administrative stand-alone policy)[14]:

> This approach to communication and engagement will allow The City to take a broader, intersectional approach to removing barriers to communication and engagement for all Calgarians (e.g., people with disabilities) that can go beyond the translation and interpretation of information. The approach is efficient as it removes the administrative requirements of developing and maintaining a separate policy while providing effective accountability for the delivery of equitable communication and engagement. It will also allow The City's communications and engagement practices to remain agile in response to Calgary's evolving multicultural demographics. (p. 4)

As a complement to the MCES, the *Standards for Equitable Communications and Engagement* – which also aligns with the *Social Wellbeing Policy* – sets out accommodation standards for offering citizens translation services for public communication.[15] As for specific criteria applying to the translation of public-facing documents, they are not publicly available.[16] Based on our interview, we know that these standards comply with the MCES requirements stated above and address matters such as the percentage of speakers per ward at which recourse to translation is justified, and the relevance of topics to multicultural communities (LL, personal communication, April 9, 2021).

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[13] In 2020, the City of Calgary hired the Ontarian translation service provider MCIS Languages Solutions for a 4-year period following an open call for tender (LL, personal communication, April 9, 2021).

[14] A Council policy is a written policy adopted by the City Council that provides general guidance whereas an Administration policy is a policy statement approved by the Executive Leadership Team that deals with internal City matters.

[15] For instance, the Fleish-Kincade readability score for source texts should be grade 4. This standard complies with the City's Plain Language Policy.

[16] Cities like Toronto and Vancouver make those criteria publicly available as part of their multilingual or accessibility policy (McDonough Dolmaya, 2020).

4.1.2 Comparison between Calgary's and Edmonton's translation management and beliefs: From multilingualism to social accommodation

Due to space constraints, I will not discuss Edmonton's translation policy extensively, to which I already devoted an article ([anonymous], 2021). Instead, I will limit myself to outlining its main features and contrast these with Calgary's most notable ones.

In a context where Alberta's population is aging and labour is becoming scarcer, immigration represents a major challenge to ensure Alberta's present and future economic competitiveness. In 2019, nearly a quarter of the province's working-age population consisted of immigrants (Government of Alberta, 2021a, p. 7). These immigrants made up 24.3% of the workforce and played an essential role in several key areas of the economy, such as healthcare, trade, accommodation and food services, and industry (p. 16). Projections show that immigration will continue to play a crucial role in the province's development. It is forecast that by 2046, international immigration will account for 54% of population growth (Government of Alberta, 2021b, p. 1) compared to just 29% for natural growth, while the birth rate will continue to decline and Alberta's population will continue to age. The Edmonton-Calgary corridor alone accounts for 77% of the provincial population (Government of Alberta, 2021b, p. 8).

In the early 2000s, Calgary and Edmonton began to question their strategies for attracting immigrants in the face of growing competition from other major Canadian and international municipalities. In a 2003 report commissioned by the City of Calgary on the policy implications of attracting and retaining immigrants to Calgary, the authors pointed out that language was one of the most frequent barriers experienced by newcomers, given that "[t]oo often interpretation services are ad-hoc, utilizing untrained, underpaid and/or unofficial interpreters and translators" (p. 12). In 2005, Edmonton's Mayor Steven Mandel – who was well aware of the economic potential of immigration – commissioned a team of researchers to conduct a similar study on his city. In the preamble, they make the following observation:

> Calgary is fast becoming a city that will be able to attract immigrants in the same way that Toronto and Vancouver do, without actually trying, but Edmonton is not a city of destination for many. In fact, over the last fifteen years, Edmonton has gradually been losing out in this competition, while Calgary has been pulling ahead. At one time, both cities attracted the same numbers of newcomers annually, but in 2004, 56.5% of all immigrants to the province went to Calgary, while only 29.2% came to Edmonton. This puts the capital city at a distinct disadvantage for growth. (p. 11)

This observation is still valid today, even if the gap between the two cities has narrowed. In 2020, Calgary welcomed 19,899 immigrants (all categories combined) compared to 17,701 for Edmonton (Calgary Demographics, 2023). As for Edmonton, it enjoyed in 2019 the third-highest immigrant retention rate after 5 years, behind Vancouver and Toronto but ahead of Calgary (Statistics Canada, 2021). One of the topics discussed in the report is information accessibility in light of a comparative analysis of several Canadian cities' and provinces' websites, including Toronto, Vancouver, and Manitoba. Among the 27 recommendations put forward by the authors, several related to translation. For example, it is suggested that the City's website "should have promotional material in the languages of the largest immigrant communities […]" (p. 16).

Toward Greater Diversity (2010) – which provided guidelines to implement Edmonton's new immigration and settlement policy – recommends several strategic actions to reduce language barriers. These include the implementation "of 3-1-1 telephone-based language interpretation services to

communicate with callers in their first language", the publication "of a newcomer's guide in various languages under the supervision of the Deputy City Manager's Office" and "The development and implementation of administrative procedures that provide direction for determining the translation of City of Edmonton information resources and the effective use of telephone-based language interpretation services" (p. 9). Unlike the first two actions, the third one was never implemented. Subsequent municipal documents, such as the 2013 *Diversity and Inclusion Framework and Implementation Plan* and the report *Understanding Voters' Needs. What We Heard. Public Engagement Findings* (2016) both recognize the importance of translation for communicating and engaging with immigrant and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The 2019 document *Art of Inclusion: Our Diversity and Inclusion Framework* shifts perspectives from multiculturalism/ multilingualism to diversity by making language and culture two aspects of diversity on par with gender expression, ethnicity, mental health, religion, and many others. That being said, Edmonton has yet to develop a sustainable multilingual framework.

By choosing not to make MCES a stand-alone policy, Calgary has taken a different path than cities like Toronto and Vancouver[17]. Framing translation through the intersectional lens of the *Social Wellbeing Policy* has had its advantages. Firstly, translation standards can be easily reviewed "without having to [...] take them to a council meeting and have them all reapproved, which could take a year or more" (LL, personal communication, April 9, 2021). Secondly, the lack of knowledge of English is put on an equal footing with having a disability in terms of access issues. In other words, translation is recognized as a remediative practice enabling non-English speakers to benefit from the same municipal services as other citizens. Finally, the "intersectional" approach adopted by the City of Calgary opens up new prospects. For instance, resources on Indigenous cultures could be translated for NESB so that they can familiarize themselves with the reconciliation process as soon as they arrive in Canada. Similarly, translations of municipal documents into gendered languages such as Arabic, Spanish, Hindi, and French could be said to comply with the rules of inclusive writing. On the other hand, the lack of a formal policy may make municipal employees less inclined to apply standards for translations (especially internal ones). Yet, as LL[18] notes, ultimately, it is all a question of balance:

> Yes. It's a balance between being flexible to accommodate changes to the community needs and our own improvements based on what we learn and then trying to be clear and firm enough to make it easy for staff to use the Standards to make decisions and not have too many ways of disregarding the best practices. (LL, personal communication, April 9, 2021).

4.2 Translation practices and city websites
The Cities of Calgary and Edmonton translate a variety of documents, from social media messages to municipal reports and brochures, dealing with a wide range of topics (e.g., ranging from general safety and health to gardening). For the purposes of this article, I will focus on the cities' websites and the translated resources in immigrant languages[19].

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[17] In 2023, the City of Vancouver adopted a *Language Access Policy* that includes a set of criteria for the translation of public-facing documents.

[18] The Calgary city employee did not want to have their identity publicly disclosed.

[19] It should be noted that both city websites include translated resources in French and Indigenous languages (e.g., Cree and Blackfoot).

Before proceeding with my analysis, it is worth mentioning that the City of Calgary's website includes an embedded machine translation tool (namely, *Google Translate*) located at the bottom of the menu page. It provides translations into over a hundred languages, including the 10 most spoken at home in Calgary.[20] The website also features a "translation disclaimer" warning that "no automated translation is perfect nor is it intended to replace human translators." At the top right-hand corner of some City of Calgary webpages instances, a short paragraph in the target language[21] informs users to scroll to the bottom to access the *Google Translate* feature. As for the City of Edmonton website, it includes no such feature, which is surprising since this feature is commonly found on many major Canadian cities' websites (e.g., Abbotsford-Mission, Toronto, and Vancouver).

Unfortunately, none of the City sites makes it easy to locate translated content, forcing the researcher to resort to an indirect approach. The methodology applied by McDonough Dolmaya (2020) to scan the City of Toronto website proved particularly effective. The website search bar was used to enter generic keywords, such as "translation" and "translated" and query the native and English names of the top 20 immigrant and top 5 Indigenous languages most commonly spoken at home based on the 2021 Statistics Canada census. The research was expanded to include the most often reported mother tongues to see whether this would make a difference in the case of Edmonton. Additional search queries were made when a translated resource in a specific target language (e.g., Oromo) not on the list was found. As McDonough Dolmaya (2020) points out, this methodology, however unsystematic, replicates the real-life process a typical resident would go through to find translated material. The collection was completed on June 20, 2023, and provides a snapshot of the situation.

As a rule, all translated documents are posted as PDF documents with titles indicative of the target languages. Whereas translations are mostly located at the top right-hand corner of the City of Calgary webpages, translations on the City of Edmonton website are often found at the bottom of webpages, requiring users to scroll down. In some instances, translated resources on both websites are grouped under a section titled "Translations" and "Translated documents." Even though translations are easier to locate on the City of Calgary website, none of the cities seems to use a standard layout.

Based on the comparison of the two municipal websites, the following observations can be made. Firstly, the number of target languages on the City of Calgary site amounts to 22 compared to 18 on the City of Edmonton website. In the case of Calgary, the languages with the highest number of translations are, in descending order, simplified and traditional Chinese (60 translations in total), Punjabi (41 translations),[22] Arabic (36 translations), Spanish (20 translations) and Urdu (18 translations). This finding is relatively consistent with MCES criteria of the top 5 languages most spoken at home, except that there are only 13 translations in Tagalog, the second most widely spoken language in Calgary. As for the City of Edmonton website, the 5 most frequent target languages are simplified and traditional Chinese (19 translations), Punjabi (8 translations), French and Vietnamese (7 translations each), and

[20] Like Toronto's *Multilingual Information Provisions Policy* (McDonough Dolmaya, 2020), Calgary's MCES takes into account the languages most spoken at home to prioritize target languages. As for Edmonton, there are no explicit criteria.
[21] The target languages are the ones in which the PDF documents posted on the same webpage are translated into, which demonstrates a concern for consistency.
[22] Following consultations with the East Indian community, the City of Calgary decided to adopt Gurmukhi writing (LL, personal communication, April 9, 2021).

Arabic (6 translations). As discussed earlier, the City of Edmonton does not have established criteria when it comes to selecting target languages. That said, the 5 most translated target languages are found in the top 10 most spoken at-home languages and the top 10 most reported mother tongues. It is worth noting that the City of Edmonton site features only 2 documents translated into Tagalog,[23] 3 into Hindi, and none into Urdu, even though these languages are among the 10 most widely spoken at home (and reported mother tongues) in Edmonton. By way of comparison, the City of Calgary website features 13 Tagalog, 18 Hindi, and 18 Urdu translations.

Table 2: 10 Most translated target languages based on the number of translated resources in Calgary and Edmonton

	Calgary	Edmonton
1	Simplified Chinese (43)	Simplified Chinese (12)
2	Punjabi (41)	Traditional Chinese (8)
3	Arabic (36)	Punjabi (8)
4	Traditional Chinese (27)	French (7)
5	Spanish (20)	Vietnamese (7)
6	Hindi (18)	Arabic (6)
7	Urdu (18)	Spanish (5)
8	Tagalog/Filipino (13)	Amharic (4)
9	French (8)	Hindi (3)
10	Persian/Farsi (4)	Italian (2) & Tagalog/Filipino (2)

Secondly, Dari, Oromo, Pashto and Tigrinya are among the target languages found only on the City of Calgary website. Dari and Pashto – which are the official languages of Afghanistan – are spoken at home by 4,430 and 2,930 people, respectively in Calgary (Statistics Canada, 2023). As for Oromo and Tigrinya, the former is spoken in Ethiopia, and the latter is one of Eritrea's 9 official languages. These languages have a significantly lower demolinguistic weight than those mentioned above: 1,710 Calgarians speak Dari at home, 1,215 Pashto, 3,765 Tigrinya, and 995 Oromo. The choice to translate into these lesser-spoken languages can be explained by the need to target populations (in this case, Ethiopians, Eritreans, and Afghans) that make up a significant proportion of refugees (Schwartz, 2015) admitted to Canada. The City of Edmonton website offers less diversity in terms of target languages. Amharic is well represented with 4 translations, almost as many as Spanish. As for translations into German, Polish, Italian, and Ukrainian, they concern two specific documents, namely the "Aquatic safety cards" and the "Boyle Street and McCauley Neighborhood Renewal" project. In the latter case, the construction area is home to Edmonton's "Little Italy," as well as several Ukrainian cultural and religious centers (e.g., St. Josaphat's Cathedral and Edmonton's Ukrainian Eparchy).[24]

Thirdly, the data discussed above also shed some light on the target languages chosen to translate Edmonton's and Calgary's newcomers guides. While the former is available in Amharic, Arabic, simplified Chinese, French, Punjabi, Somali, and Spanish, the latter is available in Arabic, Punjabi, Spanish, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Ukrainian, Pashto, and Dari. Unlike

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[23] The reason might lie in the fact that the majority of Filipinos are fluent in English, which is one of the country's official languages.

[24] The area also includes Edmonton's Chinatown, which explains the Chinese translations (simplified and traditional).

Edmonton, Calgary has no version of the guide in Amharic and/or Tigrinya, even though it offers several resources translated into these languages. Together, these two languages have close to 5,000 home speakers, which is more than the combined number of speakers of Dari and Pashto (Statistics Canada, 2023b). As for the Ukrainian version of the guide, it was most likely issued in response to the recent arrival of the war refugees. In the case of the *Newcomers' Guide to Edmonton* (NGE), the selection of target languages was made in consultation with community partners (Cisneros & De León, 2021). It was on their recommendation that the *Guide* be translated into Amharic and Somali.[25] Practically speaking, the NGE, with its 64-page format, is much more expensive to translate than Calgary's 4-page guide. No new translation of the NGE was issued after 2016, which may explain the lack of Ukrainian and Pashto versions.

Fourthly, whereas the City of Calgary site hosts 262 translated resources (including 6 ASL videos), the City of Edmonton has only 70. The gap is due not so much to the range of topics covered but to the number of documents translated dealing with emergency planning and environmental issues. These two categories alone account for 185 resources,[26] including 48 subtitled videos on *YouTube*, and make up for 70% of all translations. The City of Calgary website even hosts a "Yardsmart translation library" accessible from a menu on the left-hand side of the screen. Another notable difference is that 98% of the documents posted on the City of Calgary website are translated into 5 target languages or more compared to only one-third on the City of Edmonton website.

Although neither city has a fully localized website or even a webpage or navigation menu in another language, the City of Calgary website stands out in that it features automated translation, provides greater visibility to translations, and hosts far more translated resources aimed at a more diversified audience. The website reflects the City's efforts to standardize translation requirements in accordance with the *Social Wellbeing Policy* and MCES framework.

5. Conclusion

The language and translation policies of many Canadian metropolises, such as Calgary and Edmonton, may seem "chaotic, incongruent and extremely piecemeal" (Backhaus, 2012, p. 227), especially when compared to Toronto's *Multilingual Information Provisions Policy*. Given the lack of an explicit "set of rules" on which to rely to describe Calgary's and Edmonton's translation policies, researchers have no choice but to go out "into the field" to document translation practices and look sideways for related municipal policies.

In the Canadian context, municipal language/translation policies are much more than a mere reflection of national language/translation policies. In fact, only a few Canadian municipalities, like Ottawa, are officially bilingual. In a context of increased autonomy, major cities like Edmonton and Calgary[27] are in a position to develop innovative language/translation policies in consultation with a variety of parties, such as the federal government, the province, municipal authorities, NGOs working with immigrants and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and researchers. In the case of Calgary case, culturally and linguistically diverse communities can even be invited to review

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[25] Besides, Edmonton has over 10,000 Somali speakers, more than four times as many as Calgary does (Statistics Canada, 2023b).

[26] ASL versions were factored in.

[27] The same can be said of other major cities like Vancouver and Toronto (Rao et al., 2021).

translated material (LL, personal communication, April 9, 2021), thereby taking an active part in their own inclusion.[28] As Hlavac and colleagues (2018) point out with reference to Kingdon's *Multiple Streams Framework*, this consultation can only succeed if the "policy window" is favourable. The regional competition between Calgary and Edmonton in the early 2000s to attract and retain skilled immigrants created a context for raising awareness of the role of translation (and interpreting). Conceived as a means to communicate with newcomers in their own language to facilitate retention, translation became gradually part of a broader conception of diversity, in which language and culture are as much a part of (municipal) identity as gender and race.

As two of Canada's most culturally and linguistically diverse municipalities, Calgary and Edmonton share some common challenges, including the need to welcome large numbers of immigrants who do not always speak the official languages. Although Edmonton expressed an interest in developing administrative procedures for translating public-facing documents earlier than Calgary, this never materialized. That said, Edmonton has produced several documents that recognize the central role of translation in communicating and engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. One of the city's most significant achievements is the translation into 7 languages of the sizeable newcomers' guide. This translation project and others have been carried out despite the absence of an explicit framework and not without challenges in practice, as city employees acknowledge (Rao et al., 2021). Developed in 2017 by the city of Calgary in collaboration with various partners, the MCES brings a framework to municipal translation activity that was previously lacking. In line with this framework, the city decided to hire a single professional translation provider (LL, personal communication, April 9, 2021) and to adopt a set of criteria for translating municipal documents.

Rather than making the MCES a stand-alone policy, Calgary has chosen to subsume translation requirements under the *Social Wellbeing Policy* in the form of the *Standards for Equitable Communications and Engagement*. In this context, translation is no longer considered within the "narrow" framework of a multilingual policy but from an "intersectional" perspective, where it stands as a practice that achieves equitable communication in the same way as the use of Braille and sign language. From a linguistic justice point of view, this complicates de Schutter's "dual theory," (2017) which distinguishes between "identity" and "instrumentalist" conceptions of translation. In the case of Calgary, translation is neither an "eternal" practice based on the institutional recognition of an official community language (such as French at the federal level) nor a "temporary" practice (p. 29) until new migrants become fluent in English. From the standpoint of the *Social Wellbeing policy*, the use of translation is rooted in a social principle of equity,[29] according to which all citizens must have equal access to municipal services. In this context, translation becomes a built-in sustainable practice. In the case of the MCES, the provision of translation, however equitable, remains subordinate to practical and statistical considerations (e.g., based on languages most commonly spoken at home). Municipal translation policies are a largely unchartered territory. In

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[28] This practice aligns with the *Guidelines for Community Review Panels* created by The Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) and the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA).

[29] The concept of translation as a means of overcoming disability overlaps to some extent with the notion of people with "limited English proficiency" mentioned in the U.S. Executive Order 13166 (*Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*) (Córdoba Serrano, 2016, p. 13), which equates lack of language proficiency with disability.

the Canadian context, these policies are a laboratory for the development of multilingual policies that coexist with federal bilingualism and monolingual provincial policies. Municipal policies have become crucial not only as a sustainable framework to address the systemic language barriers encountered by NES but also as part of a multilingual crisis management instrument to respond to extreme events such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Bouyzourn et al., 2023).

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