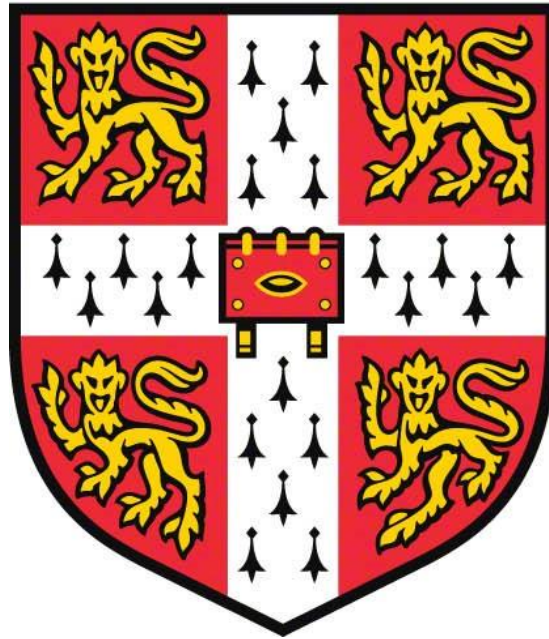


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Who Counts? A Critical Approach to Indigenous Language Demography in the Yukon



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Abstract

Language demography is the practice of counting speakers of different languages. It is a common discourse technique used when discussing Indigenous languages around the world. However, there is much debate and controversy over how language demography should be practiced, to produce accurate numbers of speakers, and to produce data that is relevant and useful to those working in Indigenous language revitalisation. Alongside this debate on language demography, recent years have seen the emergence of the Indigenous Data Governance (IDG) movement. The IDG movement asks researchers to address the historical wrongdoings against Indigenous people for the sake of ‘research’, by ensuring Indigenous people have control over the research they are a part of, and access to the data that comes from that research. Indigenous organisations and researchers working within IDG frameworks argue that giving Indigenous people control of research processes concerning them, and the ability to own and freely access their own data, produces data that is more accurate, relevant, and useful to Indigenous people. The language demography debate and the IDG movement have proceeded entirely separately until this dissertation. This dissertation examines six demographies of First Nations languages in the Yukon through the lens of IDG principles, to discover how IDG influences the data collected in language demographies, within the unique context of the First Nations self-governance movements of the Yukon. It is the first study to examine the intersection of language demography and IDG. A combination of document analysis of the methodology of different language demographies, data analysis of the demographies, and attempts at interviews with language revitalisation experts working in the Yukon are used. It is found that incorporating principles of IDG into the methodology of language demographies from the start changes the nature of the data that they collect; what data is collected (who counts as a speaker?), how it is collected (who counts the speakers?), and how the data is accessed and stewarded. Incorporating IDG into language demographies produces data that is more accurate, relevant, and useful to First Nations communities. This is because IDG empowers communities to collect the data that is most relevant for their priorities, reduces the harmful effects of extractive research, and enables communities to have free access to their own data. However, there also exist significant barriers to the full implementation of IDG in language demographies. The future of language demography in Indigenous communities must work to dismantle those barriers and to incorporate principles of IDG.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---------------|--|
| ALS | Aboriginal Language Services |
| APS | Aboriginal Peoples Survey (Renamed IPS in 2021) |
| CIRNAC | Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada |
| CUREC | Cambridge University Research Ethics Committee |
| CYFN | Council of Yukon First Nations |
| FNIGC | First Nations Information Governance Centre |
| IDG | Indigenous Data Governance |
| IDS | Indigenous Data Sovereignty |
| ILA | Indigenous Languages Act 2019 |
| IPS | Indigenous Peoples Survey |
| L2 | Second language |
| NHS | National Household Survey |
| OCAP® | Ownership, Control, Access, Possession® |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PPP | Partnership, Protection, Participation |
| RCAP | Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples |
| REEES | Regional Early Childhood, Education, and Employment Survey |
| RHS | Regional Health Survey |
| RI | Remoteness Index |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| WAL | World Atlas of Languages |
| YNLC | Yukon Native Language Centre |

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Importance of Indigenous Languages

This dissertation will examine language demography of First Nations languages in the Yukon. It fits into the wider context of the global movement to support, maintain, and revitalise Indigenous languages. The United Nations (UN) recognises that Indigenous languages are of vital importance to Indigenous groups across the world, and that there is an urgent need to support efforts to maintain and revitalise them (UN, 2023). Indigenous languages are not simply ways of speaking. According to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Indigenous languages are ‘complex systems of knowledge that have been developed over thousands of years’, and they ‘represent a unique framework for understanding the world in all its complexity’ (UN, 2019). Indigenous languages are also inextricably linked with Indigenous cultural preservation and wellbeing (Hallett, Chandler and Lalonde, 2007; FNIGC, 2018; Shea *et al.*, 2019). In the decade the UN has declared to be the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, research that contributes to the maintenance and revitalisation of Indigenous languages is vital.

There are around seventy to ninety Indigenous languages spoken today in Canada (Norris, 2010). The term ‘Indigenous languages’ encompasses the languages and varieties spoken by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people, which are the languages that have been spoken in the area now known as Canada for many thousands of years, or are related to or descended from those languages. Table 1, compiled from multiple sources, gives an estimate as to the varieties of Indigenous languages spoken in Canada today, to illustrate the diversity of Canadian Indigenous languages.

Table 1: Indigenous languages spoken in Canada.

| Language family | Language sub-family | Language endonym | Language exonym (if commonly used) | Source(s) |
|---------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Inuit-Yupik-Unangan | Inuit | Inuvialuktun Inuinnaqtun Inuktitut Inuit Uukturausingit | Inuit Sign Language | Statistics Canada 2022e, University of Alaska Fairbanks n.d, Schuit 2015 |
| Algonquian, Indo-European | Michif | Michif Northern Michif Michif French | | Bakker 1997 |
| Algonquian | Plains Algonquian | Siksiká | Blackfoot | Oxford 2019 |
| | Central Algonquian ↳ Cree-Innu-Naskapi | Cree <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nēhiyawēwin • nēhinawēwin • ililīmowin • nihithawiwīn • iyiyiw-ayimiwin • inu ayimun Innu-Naskapi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innu-aimun • Iyuw-Iyimuun Atikamekw | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plains Cree • Swampy Cree • Moose Cree • Woods Cree • Northern East Cree • Southern East Cree • Innu • Naskapi | Oxford 2019, Statistics Canada 2022e Innu Language Project 2023, Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach 2023 |
| | Central Algonquian ↳ Ojibway-Potawatomi | Anicinabemowin Anishiniimowin Anishinaabemowin Daawaamin Nakawēmowin | Algonquin Oji-Cree Chippewa Odawa Saulteaux | Oxford 2019 Valentine 1994 |
| | Eastern Algonquian | Mi'kmaq Wolastoqewi | Malecite | Oxford 2019 |

| | | | | |
|-------------|----------------------|--|--|--|
| Na-Dene | Northern Athabaskan | Dēne Sų́líné Yatié Dene Kəd́ Dene Zhatié Tł́ichq Dene Tha Tsúu T'ína Tahltan Tse'kene Witsuwit'en Dakelh Tsilhqot'in Tsetsaut Gwich'in Hän Dene K'eh Tagish Nee'aaneegn' Dän K'è Dän K'í | Chipewyan North Slavey South Slavey Dogrib Sekani Carrier Chilcotin Kaska Upper Tanana Southern Tutchone Northern Tutchone | Northwest Territories Official Languages Act 1990 Rice and de Reuse 2017 Castillo, Schreyer and Southwick 2020 |
| | Tlingit | Lingít | Tlingit | Castillo, Schreyer and Southwick 2020 |
| Siouan | Dakota | Nakota Nakoda | Assiniboine Stoney | Helmbrecht 2017 |
| Iroquois | Northern Iroquois | Gayogohó:nq' Kanyen'kéha Onʌyotaʔa:ka | Caguya Mohawk Oneida | Mithun 2017 |
| Salishan | Nuxalk | Nuxalk | Bella Coola | Czaykowaka- Higgins and Kinkade 1998 |
| | Central Salish | Comox Shashishalhem Skwxwú7mesh Halkomelem Saanich | Sechelt Squamish Northern Straits Salish | |
| | Interior Salish | Stl'atl'imcets Okanagan Secwepemctsín Nlaka'pamux | Lillooet Shuswap Thompson | |
| Tsimshianic | Coast Tsimshianic | Sm'algyax Sgüüxs | Tsimshian Tsimshian | Peterson 2017 |
| | Interior Tsimshianic | Nisga'a Gitksan | Gitksan | |
| Wakashan | Northern Wakashan | Haisla Heiltsuk Kwak'wala Oowekyala | | Davis and Wojdak 2007 |
| | Southern Wakashan | Nuu-chah-nulth Ditidaht | Nootka | |
| Haida | Haida (isolate) | Haida | | Statistics Canada 2022e |
| Ktunaxa | Ktunaxa (isolate) | Ktunaxa | Kutenai | Statistics Canada 2022e |

1.2 Indigenous Peoples and Languages of the Yukon

This dissertation focuses on Yukon Indigenous languages. The Yukon is a territory in the north-west of Canada, containing the traditional territories of fourteen First Nations, speaking eight languages. The North Slope region of the Yukon is traditional Inuvialuit territory, but as there are no permanent Inuvialuit settlements in the Yukon, this dissertation will focus on First Nations languages. These First Nations are listed in Table 2, along with their language groups. The English name used for a language by the Yukon Native Language Centre (YNLC, 2023) is in bold. Two languages that are recognised Yukon First Nations heritage languages, Tagish and Hän, are now thought to be dormant in the Yukon (Castillo *et. al*, 2020). However, language revitalisation programmes exist for both these languages, so their current state of dormancy reflects neither their long past as important languages in the area, or their possible futures. The traditional territories of Yukon First Nations can be seen in Figure 1.

There are four primary reasons for focusing on the Yukon. Firstly, the status, histories, and present situation of Indigenous languages differs widely between territories and provinces, as does the governance of the Indigenous groups who speak them. The Yukon has a unique history and system of First Nations-led governance, with most First Nations in the territory having signed Self-Government Agreements (see Appendix 1). This has implications for how the Indigenous languages in the region are taught, promoted, governed, and counted. This study will benefit from an in-depth examination of one territory, which will allow consideration of the unique systems of First Nations governance in the Yukon and their effects on language demography. Secondly, the Yukon has a relatively small population, living primarily in remote areas, a context that poses unique challenges for language demography (see section 4.3.1). Thirdly, Yukon First Nations languages are relatively understudied; there are no summaries or reviews of language research in the Yukon. This fits with a general trend of the Yukon being understudied with regards to humanities and social sciences issues, especially in studies of Indigenous people (Ning and Wilson, 2012; Nelson and Wilson, 2017). Compiling existing language demographies in the Yukon can contribute towards filling this research gap. Finally, Yukon First Nations are uniquely situated in the circumpolar context. The Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN), a governing organisation of representatives from each Yukon First Nation, are part of the Arctic Athabaskan Council, an Arctic Council Permanent Participant (Arctic Council, 2023). Therefore, this dissertation can contribute to wider discussions on circumpolar Indigenous languages.

Table 2: Indigenous peoples and languages of the Yukon.

| Language family branch | Language endonym | Language exonym | First Nations speaking that language |
|------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Northern Athabaskan | Gwich'in | | Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation |
| | Hän | | Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in |
| | Dene K'eh | Kaska | Ross River Dena Council Liard First Nation |
| | Nee'aaneegn' | Upper Tanana | White River First Nation |
| | Dän K'í | Northern Tutchone | Na-Cho Nyak Dun First Nation Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation Selkirk First Nation White River First Nation |
| | Dän K'è | Southern Tutchone | Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Kluane First Nation Ta'an Kwächän Council |
| | Tagish | | Carcross/Tagish First Nation Kwanlin Dün First Nation Ta'an Kwächän Council |
| Tlingit | Tlingit | | Carcross/Tagish First Nation Teslin Tlingit Council Kwanlin Dün First Nation Ta'an Kwächän Council |

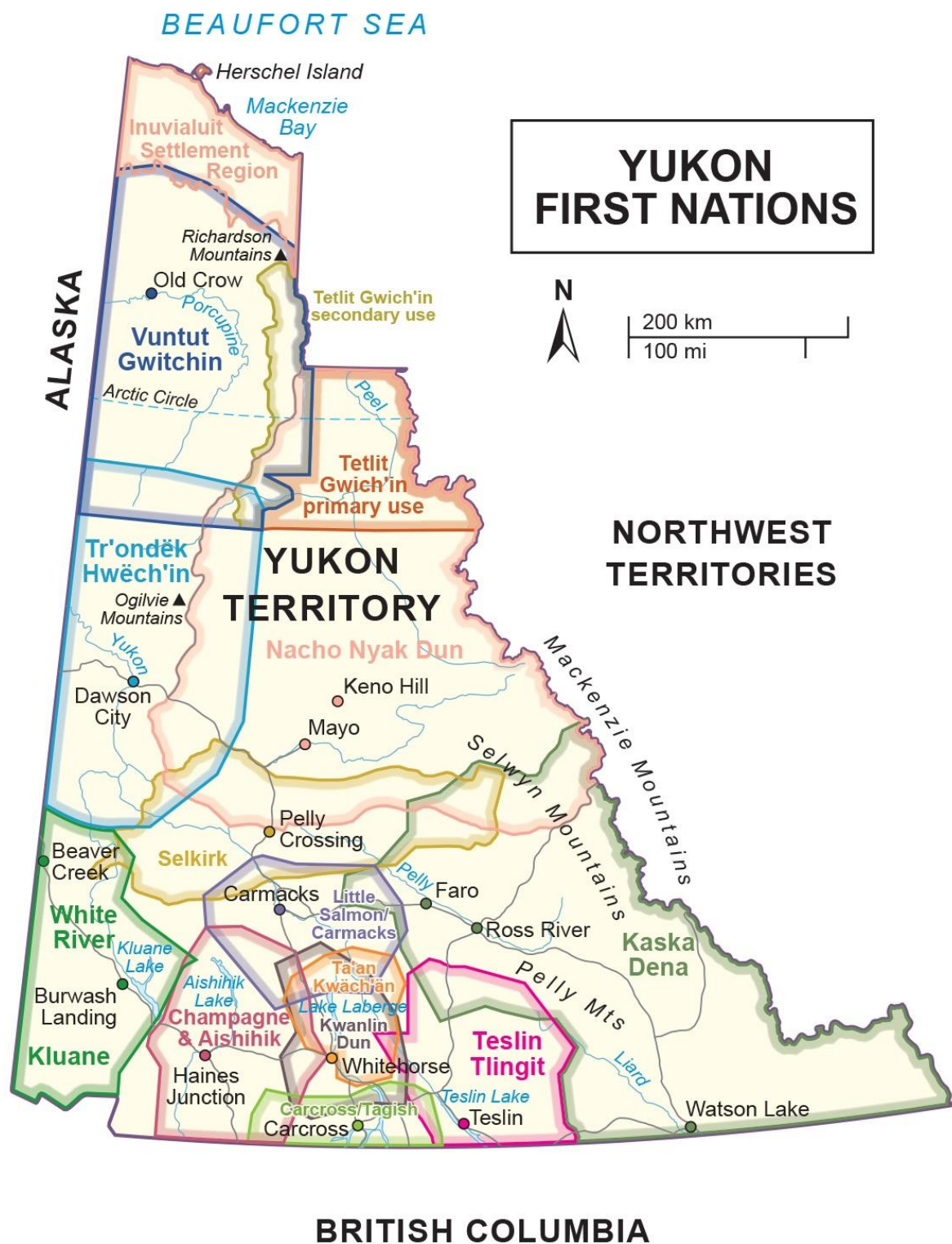


Figure 1: Traditional territories of the Yukon First Nations. © Government of Yukon 2017, modified by Lovell Johns, from Castillo, Schreyer, and Southwick (2020). Note: The Tetlit Gwich'in primarily reside in the Northwest Territories and are not part of the Council of Yukon First Nations. The Kaska Dena region includes both the Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation. White River and Kluane First Nations' traditional territories fully overlap.

1.3 Language, Governance, Colonialism

Pre-colonisation, Indigenous languages had thriving communities of speakers in every part of Canada. However, centuries of policies enacted by the settler colonial Canadian government sought to eliminate the use of Indigenous languages. To understand the current reality of Indigenous languages in Canada, this colonial past must be understood. Before European settlers colonised Canada, each Indigenous group had their own system of governance (Rowe, Bull and Walker, 2021). However, during the nineteenth century, an era of rapid colonial expansion, systems of Indigenous governance were disregarded, disrupted, and forcibly replaced with colonial systems, such as the 1876 *Indian Act*. The *Indian Act* treated First Nations Peoples in racist, sexist, and paternalistic ways, and included sections banning or rendering impossible traditional First Nations modes of governance and cultural ceremonies (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), 1996; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2020). This *Act*, in a modified form, still governs many First Nations in Canada today.

Decades of colonial policies aimed at eliminating Indigenous languages and cultures had a destructive impact on the use of Indigenous languages across Canada. These policies of linguistic oppression were perhaps enacted most obviously and violently through residential schools; a network of schools that First Nations parents were legally required to send their children to under the Indian Act. The first residential school for Yukon First Nations students was established in 1911, and the last closed in the 1970s (Yukon Archives, 2020). A principal task of residential schools was “to rigorously exclude the use of Indian dialects” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a, p615). Residential schools in for First Nations children in the Yukon, as for Indigenous children in the rest of Canada, used violent, abusive methods to force Indigenous children to stop speaking their languages. As a result, generations of Indigenous language speakers were lost. Rose Dorothy Charlie, a Survivor of residential schools in the Yukon, said:

‘They took my language. They took it right out of my mouth. I never spoke it again.’

Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015b, p54.

This experience is one of the many thousands that exist across the Yukon. The impact of residential schools on the use of Yukon First Nations languages is still felt today. Because of the widespread impact of residential schools on the use of Indigenous languages, one Kaska elder stated:

‘If anything, it was through residential school that we lost our language.’

Kaska elder (in Meek, 2022, p231).

The fact that Indigenous languages still survive today with extensive geographical and linguistic diversity is a testament to generations of Indigenous *survivance*, an act of survival and resistance in defiance of colonial oppression (Davis, 2017).

Organised movements of Indigenous resistance across Canada have provoked significant changes in how Indigenous peoples are treated in government policy. In 1973, the Yukon Native Brotherhood, a grassroots movement for First Nations rights in the Yukon, wrote ‘Together Today for our Children Tomorrow’, a document elaborating on the injustices Yukon First Nations Peoples had faced at the hand of the colonial government, and proposing a future where Yukon First Nations regain self-government powers through land rights treaties. This document was presented to the Canadian Prime Minister, marking a historic moment for the movement of Indigenous rights within the Yukon and across Canada (CYFN 2023). Following this, Yukon First Nations constructed and signed the Umbrella Final Agreement in 1990, which laid out the framework upon which each Yukon First Nation could make their own Final Agreements and Self-Government Agreements. The UFA sets out the rights and responsibilities that each Yukon First Nation would have after signing their Final and Self-Government Agreements, while allowing for each Yukon First Nation to adapt their Agreements to their own culture and priorities (Government of Canada, Council for Yukon Indians, and Government of Yukon, 1990). The efforts of the Yukon Indian Brotherhood paved the road for Final Agreements to be settled in the Yukon. Since the 1990s, eleven out of fourteen Yukon First Nations have signed Final and Self-Government agreements (see Appendix 1), meaning they are no longer governed by the Indian Act, and have power to make governance decisions for themselves, their lands, and their citizens. Self-Government Agreements have been signed across Canada, but this high proportion of self-governing First Nations is unique to the Yukon.

In the late 1990s, colonial policies towards Indigenous languages began to change. In 1996, a damning report on the current state of Indigenous rights was published (RCAP, 1996). This Report proposed major changes in the system of Indigenous governance in Canada, to move away from the paternalistic policies of generations previous and towards Indigenous self-governance and promoting Indigenous cultures and Indigenous languages. In response to the RCAP report, the Aboriginal Languages Initiative was founded in 1998. The intention of this Initiative was to provide short-term funding directly to Indigenous groups to support

Indigenous language maintenance and revitalisation projects across Canada. While the Aboriginal Languages Initiative was a vital source of funding for Yukon First Nations language revitalisation programmes, its short-term model meant that it did not fulfil all the goals set out for protecting Indigenous languages in the 1996 RCAP report (Evaluation Services Directorate, 2022). Therefore, in 2019, Canadian national policy towards Indigenous languages changed again with the passing of the *Indigenous Languages Act* (ILA). The motivation behind this act was at least twofold; to reaffirm that the 1982 *Canadian Constitution Act*, that recognised the rights of Indigenous people in Canada, included rights to Indigenous languages, and to change the Canadian government's approach to funding Indigenous language revitalisation projects. Funding models changed from the short-term funding provided through the Aboriginal Languages Initiative to long-term, sustainable funding, to more effectively support Indigenous language revitalisation. Additionally, the ILA sought to establish a new government office for a Commissioner of Indigenous Languages, to help implement the ILA and to support and raise awareness for Indigenous language revitalisation. Since the ILA passed, three Directors of Indigenous Languages have been appointed alongside the Commissioner, one First Nations, one Métis, and one Inuit.

In the Yukon, the 1988 *Yukon Languages Act* 'recognizes the significance' of Yukon First Nations languages, and states a goal to 'preserve, develop, and enhance' them. Also in legislature, all eleven Self-Government Agreements in the Yukon have stated objectives to protect, maintain, revitalise, and teach that First Nations' language. Language revitalisation programmes are conducted both by individual First Nations and Yukon-wide, through the YNLC, a department of the CYFN specialising in language teaching and revitalisation. In sum, due to Indigenous organising against colonial policies, Canadian policy towards Indigenous languages has changed significantly. Where once policies of linguistic genocide supported by residential schooling were active across Canada, the dominant theme in policy now is supporting Indigenous language maintenance and revitalisation; although the outcomes of generations of colonial oppression are still strongly felt in the area of language.

The history and current reality of colonial policies of linguistic oppression means that there are currently far fewer Yukon First Nations people who speak their heritage language (that is, the language of their ancestors) than who speak English (Castillo, Schreyer and Southwick, 2020). Therefore, it becomes necessary to understand the situation of Yukon First Nations languages today, to gain a base understanding of the effects of colonial policies on language, from which those languages can be supported and built in future. With increased global awareness of

Indigenous languages and a growing movement in Canada to support and revitalise them, understanding the situation of Indigenous languages is an immediately relevant issue.

Chapter 2: Practice and Theory of Indigenous Language Research

2.1 Language Demography

2.1.1 Background and practice

One method used to gain this understanding of the situation of Indigenous languages is language demography. Language demography, also called linguistic demography or demolinguistics, is defined by Moore, Pietikäinen and Blommaert (2010) as the practice that produces numerical language data. This is most often done through counting or enumerating the number of speakers of a language, but it can also include other kinds of numerical data, for instance the number of languages in a given area, or the number of people that have a certain fluency level in a language. Language demography began in 1846, when citizens of Belgium were asked to indicate their spoken language on the country's first national census, and quickly spread to countries across Europe, especially those with a mixed ethnic population (Arel, 2001). Language demography has always been a political tool; early instances of language demography in Belgium and Austria were used to divide regions based on language borders (Cornwall, 1994). Similarly, Canada has a historical tradition of census-based language demography, asking questions about language use in the national census since 1901. More recent Canadian censuses, and other studies and surveys, have also counted speakers of Indigenous languages.

2.1.2 Language demography: a controversial endeavour

Language demography has a complex past, as it has been both extensively used and criticised by people working in language revitalisation. Numerical language data and language statistics are almost ubiquitous in discussion of Indigenous languages worldwide. Hill (2002) writes that language statistics:

‘appear in introductions and conclusions, on dust jackets, in publishers’ blurbs, and in media sound bites’.

Hill, 2002, p120

This trend has been noticed with Yukon First Nations languages; Meek (2016) found that Kaska is overwhelmingly represented in the governmental and bureaucratic domains using graphs, charts, and numbers. The main criticisms of language demography come from its role in supporting language endangerment rhetoric, which rose to prominence in the 1990s, when the first editions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation World

Atlas of Languages (UNESCO WAL) categorised languages across the world, especially Indigenous languages, using terminology borrowed from biology such as ‘extinct’ and ‘endangered’. It then broadened to a whole field of rhetoric describing languages as though they were endangered species (Perley, 2012). According to Moore and colleagues (2010), ‘numbers are the language of language endangerment’. Endangerment rhetoric relies heavily on the use of language statistics, especially those that show declining speaker numbers, to paint a sensationalist picture of languages being doomed to extinction.

The use of language statistics in language endangerment rhetoric has been heavily criticised. Davis (2017) argues that using only speaker numbers to understand the situation of Indigenous languages extracts discussion of languages from their lived context, thereby erasing the role of the colonial state and historical trauma in language loss, and causing blame to fall on communities for losing their languages. This contributes to negative perceptions of communities who have suffered language loss. Additionally, Moore (2006) writes that endangerment rhetoric overwhelmingly supports an approach of ‘memorialisation’; that the languages should be recorded, always by outside experts, as historical artefacts for future generations to look back on. This is opposed to an approach of regenerativity, which would support speaker communities to preserve and maintain languages for use in the community now and in the future. Language statistics are often used within wider endangerment rhetoric to construct sensationalist ideas of Indigenous languages and to extract discussion of Indigenous languages from their socio-historical context. This can lead to harmful perceptions of Indigenous language communities, and inspire unproductive research methodologies. This causes some Indigenous language scholars to question whether spending time and resources on conducting language demographics is a useful task at all.

One approach, explored by Morphy (2016), is for Indigenous communities to reject western demographic studies entirely:

‘A radical response would be to resist the hegemony of quantification and reject quantitative social science, and demography in particular, as a ‘way of knowing’—about anything.’

Morphy, 2016, p99.

This radical rejection of the enumerative modality has been explored in the context of language demography by Moore and colleagues (2010). They argue that speakers of Indigenous languages are often partially fluent or understand their language better than they speak it, so do not fit into the black-and-white categories of ‘speaker/non-speaker’ used in language

demographies. Therefore, they conclude that numbers are unsuitable for representing the real, complex situation of Indigenous languages, so ‘we need to give up the comfort of the countability of language’ (p18). In the context of the Yukon, Meek (2022) examined how the enumerative modality of language may not be relevant to how some Kaska people see their language, as they emphasise the continuation of knowledge and legacy, rather than absolute speaker numbers. Overall, some linguists suggest that language demography should be rejected in its entirety, as it is not suitable for properly describing the complex situation of Indigenous languages in a way that is relevant to Indigenous communities.

2.1.3 Language demography: a necessary endeavour

Although the above authors provide strong arguments against endangerment rhetoric being the only rhetoric used when discussing Indigenous languages, they also acknowledge that using endangerment rhetoric, and using language statistics to support this rhetoric, is a vital tool for raising awareness of the situation of Indigenous languages in colonial states today. Davis (2017) writes that numbers can effectively convey the urgent action needed to maintain Indigenous languages, to the wider public, government agencies, and funding bodies. Even Moore and colleagues, who provide the strongest arguments against language demography, concede that numbers should still be used if they ‘provide a strong argument in favour of the preservation of unique cultural heritage’ (p19). Furthermore, in Canada, there are external motivations, both national and international, to continue collecting numerical data on Indigenous languages. The Outcome Document of the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples, signed by Canada, contains a clause committing signed states to gather data through surveys on holistic indicators of well-being (UN, 2014, clause 10); which, according to the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC, 2014), includes Indigenous language use. In the ILA, sections 5, 12, and 24 commit the government to undertake research and studies to assess the status of Indigenous languages. To not collect numerical language data would risk breaking the agreements of the Outcome Document and the ILA, as well as removing a powerful tool Indigenous communities may use to convey in brief the situation of their languages to those outside the community. Language demography is not going away; and it has many reasons not to. The question remains as to how language demography can be practiced to produce data that is accurate, relevant, and useful to Indigenous communities.

2.2 Indigenous Data Governance: Practice and Theory

2.2.1 Data for Indigenous governance

Two terms are commonly used when discussing this topic: Indigenous Data Governance (IDG) and Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS). I follow Rowe, Bull and Walker (2021), where IDG refers to the principles that guide how data on Indigenous peoples should be used and presented, while IDS refers to the practice or end goal when IDG principles are effectively implemented.

The Indigenous-led governance systems now common across the Yukon need data for much the same reasons that states need data: to understand the situation of their citizens, and to effectively design and implement policies. In the context of Indigenous governance systems, Smith (2016) writes:

‘Effective governance, whether for a small group or a large nation, means being capable of leadership and stewardship, future-oriented planning, problem solving, evaluating outcomes, developing strategies and taking remedial action.’

Smith, 2016, p123

These goals can be expedited through having effective data. In fact, according to Rowe, Bull, and Walker (2021) having data is especially important for Indigenous governance, as Indigenous nations need to understand what effect generations of colonisation has had on the health and wellbeing of their citizens. Official statistics from government organisations and data from respected scientific institutions are portrayed as accurate, objective, and scientific. However, statistics created by the colonial government may not be suitable for Indigenous governance. Alonso and Starr (1987) examined the role that social forces play in producing statistics that are presented as ‘objective’ and ‘scientific’, in the context of the 1980 US census. Their critiques highlight the ways that prejudice and bias work their way into official statistics:

‘Official statistics do not merely hold a mirror to reality. They reflect presuppositions and theories about the nature of society. They are products of social, political and economic interests that are often in conflict with each other.’

Alonso and Starr, 1987, p1.

Official statistics are not an objective measure of naturally pre-existing groups in society. Their collection, publication, interpretation, and use are all influenced by social, political, and economic forces. The groups that they measure are imposed upon the complex social world,

and therefore organise and structure society so that it can be measured, rather than measuring society as it is.

Walter and Andersen (2013) elaborate on this idea in the context of data pertaining to Indigenous groups. Firstly, colonial statistical regimes presuppose that Indigenous people want to be counted and governed by the colonial government, whereas many Indigenous people consider themselves to be part of nations that operate separately from settler-colonial states. Also, they argue that if data is collected, published, and interpreted by colonial organisations, then the categories they impose are colonial categories, and the data they produce are colonial data. Williamson and colleagues (2021) found that these colonial statistics are used to portray an overwhelmingly negative, deficit-based image of Indigenous groups. They argue that Indigenous demographic data collected, interpreted, and disseminated by colonial governments consistently represents Indigenous people as an ‘Other’, an Other that is disadvantaged and deprived compared to the ‘ideal’ non-Indigenous population, that needs intervention from the colonial government to ‘improve’ their lives. Official statistics are collected, interpreted and disseminated to serve the needs of colonial governments, not the needs of Indigenous people (Kukutai and Taylor, 2016). This results in a situation where Indigenous-led governments need data, but data from the colonial government is not structured according to their needs. Not every scholar working with Indigenous people agrees that official statistics are inherently detrimental to Indigenous people. For instance, Rowse (2009) argues for the importance of census statistics for campaigning for social justice in Indigenous communities in Australia and New Zealand. The positives to using official statistics of Indigenous languages will also be discussed here, in section 7.2. However, while official data may suffice for outward campaigns involving colonial structures, arguments by Walter and Andersen and Kukutai and Taylor emphasise the importance of a different approach to data collection for data needs of Indigenous groups.

The systematic mistreatment of Canadian Indigenous people by academic institutions further contributed to the rise of the IDG movement. These institutions took an extractive approach, taking data from Indigenous communities, often without their permission, and keeping the data in a way that Indigenous communities had no access to. This is illustrated by cases such as the Nuuchah-Nulth First Nation, who had blood samples taken from them and used for a wide range of studies without their permission in the 1980s (FNIGC, 2014). There was also the case of the legal battle of Maliseet First Nation to regain the rights to their own oral traditions after they were claimed by an outside researcher (Bear-Nicholas, 2017; Seidler, 2020). Overall, the

history of trauma, erasure, and deficit-based othering associated with traditional methods of research by governments and academic institutions has led to calls for Indigenous people to reclaim processes of data collection and ownership (FNIGC, 2014).

2.2.2 The IDG movement

Indigenous peoples have always had their own methods of research and data collection to understand their societies and share knowledge, even if these do not align with western paradigms of data collection and research. For example, Pool (2016) explores how totem poles in Aotearoa can be interpreted as a form of data gathering and storage, and how intricate systems of Whakapapa (genealogy) were forms of research and data systems for Māori people. Schnarch (2004) gives examples of how Indigenous research paradigms are practiced in Canada today, and how practicing research through Indigenous methodologies often produces much more useful results for Indigenous communities than research conducted by outsiders. This is the idea at the heart of IDG: that giving Indigenous people control over their own data, from developing research questions and methodology to implementing studies to physically storing the data and controlling who has access to it, will produce data that is more accurate, more relevant, and more useful to the communities than external, extractive practices of research. According to Walter and Russo Carroll, research governed by IDG principles represents a ‘paradigm shift’ in the way data about Indigenous peoples is collected. There exist many examples of IDG in practice: Schnarch (2004), Baydala and colleagues (2006), Yap and Yu (2016), and Walter and Andersen (2013) contain examples of studies that produced accurate, relevant, and useful data, due to their implementation of IDG principles.

2.2.3 OCAP® and PPP

Spearheading the IDG movement in Canada is the FNIGC. The FNIGC was established in 1996, following the decision by Statistics Canada to exclude on-reserve and northern Indigenous communities from many of its surveys, including key health surveys (FNIGC, 2014), to devise a First Nations-led survey targeted at First Nations people living on reserve. As well as conducting these First Nations-led, First Nations-focused surveys, the FNIGC has made a successful attempt at codifying IDG into four principles; the OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access, Possession) principles. These principles were formulated in 1998 as a direct response to the history of colonial data collection methods used with Indigenous peoples, and are based on the idea of data privacy at a community level as well as at an individual level. They describe a framework through which First Nations in Canada can gain full control over

their own data. In brief terms, *Ownership* is the principle that First Nations should have ownership of their community data and how it is used, similarly to how individuals have ownership and rights over their individual data. *Control* is the principle that First Nations should have full control over surveys and studies of them, including having control in research design processes, methodology, what is researched, and how the data is published, from the start to the end of the research process. *Access* is the principle that First Nations people should have access to all data and information produced that concerns them, while also controlling who else has access to sensitive data. *Possession* is a mechanism by which control can be implemented, by assuring that First Nations people have stewardship over their data and store the data within their own systems rather than in external, inaccessible databases. These principles should be practiced at the level of the First Nation, not treating all Indigenous people as a homogenous whole. However, the principles of OCAP® are not restricted to brief definitions of each word in the acronym, as they seek to reflect the values of First Nations Peoples with regards to jurisdiction and sovereignty over their own data; more complete explanations of the concepts of OCAP® can be found in FNIGC (2014). The IDS movement has been spearheaded in Canada by the FNIGC and the OCAP® principles it upholds.

The FNIGC (2014, p4) states that ‘OCAP® is not a doctrine or prescription’. OCAP® values are not designed to apply to every First Nations community across Canada in exactly the same way. They are one ethical framework for research with First Nations partners; a framework that is widely practiced, and often highly regarded as a means to ensure best practice in research with First Nations people (Harvard, 2006; Mashford-Pringle and Pavagadhi, 2020). However, as the cultures, histories, needs, and priorities of First Nations and other Indigenous communities differ across Canada, some have adapted OCAP® principles or designed their own principles to use instead of or alongside OCAP® to guide ethical research in their communities (Hayward *et al.*, 2021). In the Yukon, the Yukon Research Centre (2013) published a document outlining three principles for researchers conducting research with Yukon First Nations; Partnership, Protection, and Participation (PPP). The *Partnership* principle emphasises the importance of forming a collaborative relationship between Yukon First Nations and researchers. It is the principle that Yukon First Nations Peoples should be equal research partners in research that concerns them, assisting in the development of methodologies and research directions, and that researchers should focus on the sharing of skills and perspectives with Yukon First Nations. *Protection* is the principle that Yukon First Nations Peoples should be protected against any negative outcome that may arise from

releasing the results of sensitive research to the public. This includes the power of Yukon First Nations to prevent sensitive data about their citizens from being released to the public. *Participation* is the principle that Yukon First Nations should be able to freely participate in any research about them, as well as gain the benefits from that research. These principles serve as guides as to how IDS can be realised in the context of Yukon First Nations.

2.3 Data Gaps and Research Questions

One important gap in the literature is that no study has yet examined IDG in the context of language demography. Most studies of IDG focus on health data (Schnarch, 2004; Baydala *et al.*, 2006; Smylie and Anderson, 2006; Minore, Katt and Hill, 2009; Yap and Yu, 2016; Hayward *et al.*, 2021; Rowe, Bull and Walker, 2021) or more general population data and demographic characteristics (Walter and Andersen, 2013; Feir and Hancock, 2016; Kukutai and Taylor, 2016; Smith, 2016; Steffler, 2016). There have been studies involving the incorporation of OCAP® principles with Indigenous language research in Canada. Ingram and colleagues (2019) undertook a mapping project mapping place names in Kanyen'kéha, detailing in their methodology how they incorporated OCAP® principles throughout. Junker and Owen (2020) explored how OCAP® principles were incorporated into creating an Algonquian linguistic atlas. Turin (2022) and Collister (2022) mention OCAP® principles and how they can be practiced to ethically collect and store language data. These studies have two factors in common. Firstly, they do not directly involve Yukon First Nations languages, or the Yukon-specific PPP principles. Secondly, they deal with typical linguistic data; words, phrases, and recordings of speakers, rather than language demographic data like numbers of speakers. Finally, there are no studies that attempt to compile all language demographics conducted in the Yukon. Some articles review and compile national data sources on Indigenous people in Canada (Feir and Hancock, 2016; Steffler, 2016), but these focus on general population demography, not language demography, and Canada national-level data, not the Yukon. Therefore, an initial goal of this dissertation is to compile a record of as many Indigenous language demographics conducted in the Yukon as possible.

At a time when Indigenous languages are at the forefront of global discussions, much research is being conducted into analysing their contemporary situations. Meanwhile, Indigenous organisations across Canada are campaigning for governance over their data and research within their communities, to produce data that is maximally beneficial to their needs and priorities (Hayward *et al.*, 2021). At the intersection of these two contemporary strands of

research, there is a distinct gap in the literature around how IDG can apply to language demography. There is a possibility that following IDG principles in language demography may cause a substantial shift in the kind of data produced by these demographies, as following IDG principles does in other types of research. If future language research in the Yukon is to be aligned with the Yukon's uniquely First Nation-led governance systems, this intersection of IDG and language demography must be examined.

The research questions in this dissertation are:

- How is IDG being practiced in First Nations language demographies in the Yukon today?
- Does following IDG principles cause a substantial shift in the data produced by demographies of Yukon First Nations languages?

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Demographics and Documentation

For this dissertation I used qualitative research methods, primarily document discourse analysis of language demographics conducted in the Yukon. This was supplemented with an interview with a language revitalisation expert working in the Yukon who had experience working with language statistics. This methodology received ethical approval from the Cambridge University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) for the Department of Geography.

The document analysis was undertaken for two primary reasons. Firstly, funding and time constraints meant I could not travel to the Yukon myself. Secondly, IDG is exercised through research design and methodology. To analyse demographics through the lens of IDG, a thorough understanding of their methodology and design is vital. This understanding can come through close discourse analysis of methodological documents. I first undertook a systematic search to discover language demographics undertaken in the Yukon, and methodological documents associated with these demographics. Throughout this search, I used inclusion criteria, to exclude from further analysis irrelevant studies, or those that could not be examined through the lens of IDG due to a lack of information about their methodology available online. Demographics included in this dissertation fulfilled all the following criteria:

1. Sampled First Nations people living in the Yukon;
2. Had at least Canadian national-level data and information on methodology available to analyse;
3. Had Yukon-level, language-level or community-level data available, even if it was not freely available online;
4. Disaggregated this data to allow viewing of data for Indigenous peoples only;
5. Sampled adults and children or just adults;
6. Involved collecting data on the language use of individuals; and
7. Allowed for disaggregation of specifically First Nations language data.

To find studies that fulfilled these criteria, I firstly analysed review articles that compiled national-level censuses or surveys involving Indigenous participants across Canada (Feir and Hancock, 2016; Steffler, 2016; OECD, 2020). Through these review articles I identified the Canadian census and Indigenous Peoples Survey (IPS) by Statistics Canada, and the Regional

Health Survey (RHS) and Regional Early Childhood Education and Employment Survey (REEES) by FNIGC as candidates for further analysis.

However, these review articles were not up-to-date, and were not specific to language or the Yukon. For language studies conducted at the level of the Yukon, no such review articles existed. I instead undertook a systematic analysis of reference lists in literature on the topic of Yukon First Nations languages. Wherever there were numbers of speakers given, I checked the reference lists to identify new sources for these figures. This search led me to identify the ‘We Are Our Language: Profile of First Nation Languages’ report from 2004 by Aboriginal Language Services (ALS), a former Canadian government department, in conjunction with CYFN and individual Yukon First Nations. I then examined various websites, including YNLC (2023), Government of Yukon (2023b), and the websites of individual First Nations. I searched the collections of the Scott Polar Research Institute library, and both physical and online archival collections, through the Internet Archive (Internet Archive, nd.), the Government of Canada Publications online archive (Government of Canada, 2023), and the Cambridge University Library Rare Books collection (see Appendix 2). Using the Internet Archive, I searched through archived webpages of the CYFN, YNLC, Government of Yukon, and individual First Nations, to find demographics that were published online but were removed or lost when websites were updated. During this search, I retrieved the ‘We Are Our Language’ Profile through an archived Government of Yukon webpage, as it was not published on any current websites. Finally, I reached out to language or heritage co-ordinators for each Yukon First Nation (see section 3.2). Through this, I was given access to a language demography of Yukon and Alaskan Tlingit speakers conducted by Professor X’unei Lance Twitchell through personal communication with Tim Hall. Appendix 2 contains studies identified during the search phase that collected some Indigenous language data but were not analysed in the final dissertation.

The Tlingit language demography and the ‘We Are Our Language’ Profile did not have any available extraneous documentary material, as their data and methodologies were contained within the same documents. Documentation related to the RHS and REEES was sourced from FNIGC (2023), alongside an independent review of the RHS (Harvard, 2006). The Statistics Canada studies had much more extraneous material associated with them, in the form of reference guides, data products, consultations, and methodological documents. I searched websites including Statistics Canada (2023a) and Government of Canada (2023) for any relevant documentation associated with the collection of Indigenous language data in the

census or IPS. This search returned a large quantity of documentation, so I focused my analysis on censuses conducted since 1991. This is because 1991 marked a turning point towards how census language questions are structured today, due to the introduction of a new question on knowledge of non-official languages (Statistics Canada, 2011). Finally, I analysed some popular sources on Indigenous languages, including Wikipedia articles, the *Ethnologue* online global language database (Ethnologue, 2023), and the UNESCO WAL, to discover how statistics from these sources are used to portray Indigenous languages to a wider audience.

The systematic design of the search was well-suited for compiling Yukon First Nations language demographics, as it allowed me to access studies published online, whether currently available online or available online in the past, as well as any physical material available within the extensive collections of the Scott Polar Research Institute and Cambridge University library. One limitation is that this search did not include language demographics that may exist and be used within First Nations communities, but have never been published online or shared through personal communication. However, the six language demographics I identified were conducted by different organisations, use varying methodologies, and count speakers on many levels; the national whole-population level, the national Indigenous level, the territorial level, and the specific language group level. So, even if not every Yukon language democracy is included, I examined a sufficient range of demographics from different sources and with different methodologies to draw effective conclusions. Additionally, as will be examined at length in this dissertation, First Nations groups have a right to keep their data within their community. Any demographics that were not shared out of concern for data privacy are a way of implementing respectful boundaries. Still, bearing in mind this limitation, this collection should not be seen as an exhaustive list of all language demographics in the Yukon, but rather as a first effort to compile Yukon First Nations language demographics, that can be expanded on by future research.

The diagram below summarises the language demographics that are analysed in this dissertation. They are the Canadian census, the IPS, RHS, REEES, the 2004 ‘We Are Our Language’ Profile, and the Tlingit community democracy.

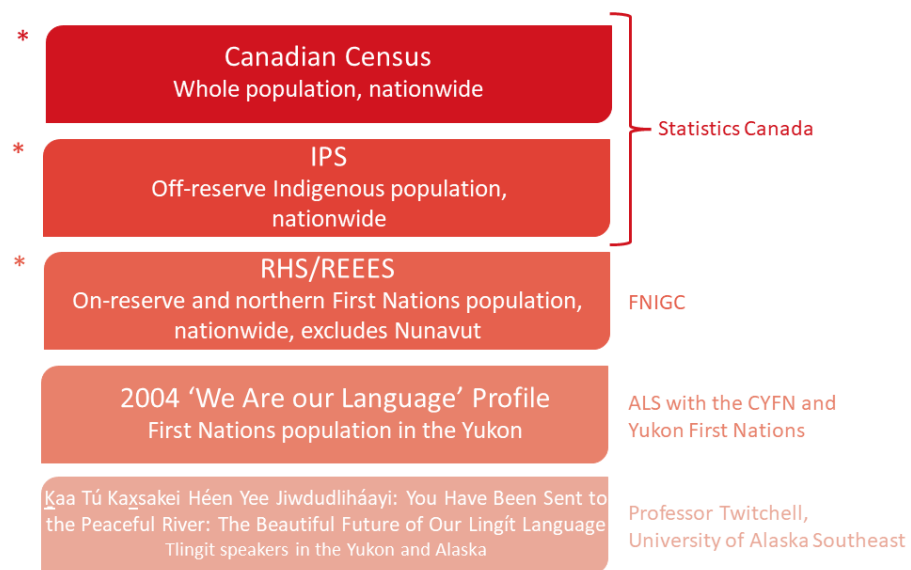


Figure 2: Language demographics included in this dissertation. * indicates that study is based on a sample (The Canadian census long form is based on a 25% sample). The body or individual in charge of running the study is on the right. They are in approximate order of largest population sample to smallest.

3.2 Interviews

3.2.1 Outreach and the interview process

I intended to supplement the document analysis portion of this dissertation with interviews with language revitalisation experts working in Yukon First Nations. These were intended to incorporate perspectives of what the use of language statistics is like for those working in language revitalisation today, rather than what it is portrayed as in official publications. Also, as this dissertation is centred on the theme of IDG, entirely desk-based research would not have been sufficient, as it would not have given the First Nations communities I wrote about any opportunity to control the research direction. The aim of the interviews was firstly to collect supplemental data on perspectives on language statistics, but also to structure my research around community priorities. To further follow IDG principles in my dissertation, all participants were given the opportunity to access the completed dissertation, to make use of any useful results to benefit them.

For my outreach process, I contacted each Yukon First Nation, the YNLC, and some academics who had a close involvement with working in language revitalisation in Yukon First Nation

communities, via email. For the First Nations, I contacted staff members listed on the First Nation websites as language revitalisation co-ordinators or heritage co-ordinators, or general contact email addresses where specific contacts were not available. Reminder emails were sent to those who did not reply, as well as emails to multiple addresses where feasible, such as in cases where there were multiple relevant email addresses. In these reminder emails, I also attached a link to a survey designed using Qualtrics, containing many of the same questions that would be asked in the interview, which was an alternative option to scheduling an interview. The survey format was not as flexible to incorporating alternative perspectives and priorities, but allowed participants to answer questions in their own time. The survey did not receive any responses.

This outreach process resulted in an interview with Tim Hall, Language Co-Ordinator for Teslin Tlingit Council, which was conducted via Zoom then transcribed. To fulfil the aim of incorporating different perspectives and priorities into my research, I chose a semi-structured interview format. This format allowed me to ask questions specific to my area of research, and gave some structure and guidance to the discussion, while also having the flexibility to incorporate any perspectives or priorities brought by the interviewee. This flexible format was especially necessary due to my position as an outsider to First Nations communities, as I could not pre-empt entirely what the priorities and perspectives of my interviewees would be, or what direction they would turn the conversation in that would be the most relevant to their experiences. I analysed the interview using a process of categorisation by theme inspired by Tervo, Laukkanen and Kuosmanen (2022). I first examined the actual expressions of the text, and labelled key expressions by subthemes, before grouping the subthemes into main themes, which are discussed in this dissertation.

3.2.2 Barriers to participation

According to Goodman and colleagues (2019, p4) ‘Conventions in academia present formidable challenges to effective community engagement’. This was certainly the case for engaging participants in this dissertation. In attempting an interview methodology, I experienced some of the barriers that prevent IDG from being practiced in academic research. These barriers were evident in situations where my initial email did not result in an interview, for which there were many reasons. I received some replies to my emails declining the opportunity. The reasons for declining included having no-one currently employed in a relevant position, and not having any personal experience using language statistics. From other

addresses, I either did not receive replies, or received initial replies that did not result in an interview being conducted. Factors that likely influenced this include the time constraints of the dissertation. People working for First Nations, especially in language revitalisation, are extremely busy with their own work and lives. It is very possible that people would not have time for an interview for this study in the months between my initial email and the dissertation deadlines. Also, research fatigue is a well-documented phenomenon in First Nations communities (FNIGC, 2018). First Nations people might receive many requests for similar interviews, and reserve the right to participate only in studies that have the most impact to them. This may have been compounded by my status as an outsider to Yukon First Nations communities. I had no prior connection with these communities before starting my dissertation, and only a very short time frame in which to build up these connections to reach the level of trust required to conduct interviews. These factors resulted in one interview being conducted for this study.

In one instance, one contact was interested in the project, however external constraints meant I could not conduct this interview. These external constraints were my own time and institutional procedure. Due to the very short time frame in which an MPhil dissertation takes place, there was, in this instance, not time for me to complete ethical review processes required by that First Nation, which were their means of exercising IDG. By this time, I had gone through an extensive ethical review process through CUREC; however this process was not sufficient for me to be able to undertake research with First Nations communities, as it did not incorporate ethics specific to having Indigenous research participants. This disparity between the university system and the system of the First Nations I was working with was a consistent barrier to effective participation throughout my study. Additionally, research protocol in one First Nation involved reviewing drafts of research before it is submitted, to ensure fair representation and to exercise control over how they are represented and protection from any harmful results being freely published; a vital method for implementing IDG. However, constraints within the university regarding who can see and comment on assessed work before it is submitted meant this request was difficult to implement in practice. These factors combined meant that I was not able to conduct this interview. It must be noted that the fault here is not with the community, but rather with the conventions of the research process for not having sufficient flexibility to follow community protocols. With further time, more of these hurdles may be overcome, but they provide a pressing example of the ongoing difficulties in reconciling Indigenous and 'western' research agendas and practices.

3.2.3 Successes and reflections

Overall, the interview methodology was successful as it allowed me to incorporate new priorities and directions into my research; priorities that would not have been identified using only desk-based research. The principal instance of this was, after conducting the interview, I moved my focus from discussing solely the role of official language statistics from the census and IPS, as they were seen as less relevant and very rarely used in the Tlingit speaker community. Instead, I moved towards incorporating community-driven language demographics, such as the Tlingit demography, as these were seen as the preferred source for speaker numbers. As these community-driven sources are often not discussed in the literature, but are a priority for the Tlingit speaker community, the interviews allowed me to incorporate new perspectives that otherwise would not have been possible. Additionally, the difficulties faced in finding participants, and the barriers to effective participation I encountered throughout the process, prompted me to reflect on barriers to IDG in research. This resulted in a more nuanced discussion of the barriers to implementing IDG in language demographics, explored more in section 7.2.

The main limitation of the interview segment of my research was only being able to secure one full interview, together with other conversations. This limits the applicability of my findings to other Yukon First Nations, who did not have their perspectives incorporated into this dissertation. To address this limitation, all statements used from the interview are accompanied by a discussion of the literature, to show instances where themes from the interview apply outside of the interview's scope. Additionally, the document analysis section is supported by further independent research including some statistical analyses of census data, to provide more evidence for faults and flaws in language demographic methodology that is not purely from document analysis or the interview. Finally, it must be noted that this dissertation has boundaries in scope due to my perspective as an outside researcher, which is especially important to state due to the lack of varying First Nations perspectives discussed here. This dissertation is explicitly not intended to prescribe how language demography must be practiced, or how Indigenous groups should use language statistics from different sources. Rather, the intention is to describe and critically analyse First Nations language demographics that exist in the Yukon, in the context of the growing literature on IDG, to contribute positively towards how First Nations language demographics may be practiced in the future.

Chapter 4: Language Demography of the Canadian Census

4.1. Census Methodology

A short description of census methodology is necessary here to illustrate the following analysis. Regular censuses began in Canada in 1871, with a short questionnaire sent to every household every 10 years, and since 1956, the standard short-form Canadian census has been sent to every Canadian household every 5 years. (Statistics Canada, 2015d). Since 1941, a longer census questionnaire containing all the short-form census questions, plus some additional questions, has been sent to a randomly selected sample of households. Responding to the Canadian census has always been mandated by law, except in 2011, when the long-form census was replaced with the non-mandatory National Household Survey (NHS) for the only time. From 1991 to 2021, a different census questionnaire has been used to enumerate residents of remote, northern, and Indigenous communities. This questionnaire is the same as the long-form questionnaire except it contains some questions that are slightly altered to be more relevant to Indigenous respondents. The most recent census from 2021 had a standard short-form questionnaire, a long-form questionnaire, and a remote questionnaire. Today, most census questionnaires are completed online (Statistics Canada, 2022g), with few completed on physical questionnaires or by interviews.

The first question on language appeared in the Canadian census in 1901. For a complete summary of every language question asked on every Canadian census since 1901, complete with what percentage of the population was asked each question and how each question was phrased and structured in each year, see Appendix 4. Table 3 contains a summary of language questions included on each census questionnaire in 2021. The most important questions for this dissertation are the mother tongue question, asking for the first language a respondent learned that they still understand, and the knowledge of non-official languages question, asking for languages a respondent speaks other than English or French (Canada's official languages).

Census data is available at the Canadian national level, at the territorial or provincial level, and at the sub-territorial or sub-provincial level (Statistics Canada, 2022g). At the sub-territorial or sub-provincial level, the main geographies relevant for this dissertation are census subdivisions. The Yukon is split into 35 subdivisions, which are approximately equivalent to communities (Statistics Canada, 2022k). The Yukon, Unorganised subdivision is not equivalent to a community, as it is all regions of the Yukon that are not organised into other subdivisions, mostly the very remote parts of the territory. Other census geographical areas include census

metropolitan areas and census agglomerations, based on population centres with a population over 10,000. However, as the Yukon is sparsely populated with only one major population centre, Whitehorse, these are less relevant for this dissertation. Table 4 contains all census subdivisions (‘communities’) in the Yukon with their subdivision type; a label applied by Statistics Canada to categorise different kinds of populated areas. Since 1991, census data has been freely available online in data tables, as well as through publications and infographics aimed at a general audience.

Table 3: Census questions involving language in the 2021 Canadian Census (Statistics Canada 2020a).

| Questionnaire | Question | Answer options |
|--|---|--|
| 2021 standard census questionnaire | Can this person speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation? Mark “x” one circle only. | English only French only Both English and French Neither English nor French |
| | What language(s) does this person speak on a regular basis at home? | English French Other language(s) – specify: |
| | Of these languages, which one does this person speak most often at home? Indicate more than one language only if they are spoken equally at home. | English French Other language – specify: |
| | What is the language that this person first learned at home in childhood and still understands ? If this person no longer understands the first language learned, indicate the second language learned. | English French Other language – specify: |
| 2021 long-form census questionnaire (25% sample) | <i>All the 2021 standard census questionnaire questions plus...</i> | |
| | What language(s), other than English or French , can this person speak well enough to conduct a conversation? | None or Other language(s) – specify: |
| | In this job, what language(s) did this person use on a regular basis ? | English French Other language(s) – specify: |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | Of these languages, which one did this person use most often in this job? Indicate more than one language only if they were used equally at work. | English French Other language – specify: |
| 2021 remote census questionnaire (all remote, northern and Indigenous communities) | <i>All the 2021 standard census questionnaire questions plus...</i> | |
| | What language(s), other than English or French , can this person speak well enough to conduct a conversation? Examples of Indigenous languages: Montagnais (Innu), Plains Cree, Mi'kmaq, Severn Ojibway, Denesuline, Inuktitut, Mohawk, Michif, Shuswap, Stoney, Gitksan, Kwakiutl, etc. | None or Other language(s) – specify: |
| | In this job, what language(s) did this person use on a regular basis ? | English French Other language(s) – specify: |
| | Of these languages, which one did this person use most often in this job? Indicate more than one language only if they were used equally at work. | English French Other language – specify: |

4.2 The Status and Uses of Census-based Language Demography

Language data from the Canadian census has a special place in the area of language demography, as undoubtedly the most widely-used source of Canadian Indigenous language data outside of Indigenous communities. It is used in popular international reference sources of languages, such as *Ethnologue* and the UNESCO WAL, as a way of calculating levels of language endangerment (Norris, 2010, p113; *Ethnologue*, 2023; UNESCO, 2023), and on Wikipedia pages for every Yukon First Nations language, either through citing the census directly or through citing *Ethnologue* (see n.a. 2022, 2023a-f). Both the Canadian government and First Nation governments use census data for evaluation of First Nation language-related programmes (Assembly of First Nations, 2022; Evaluation Services Directorate, 2022). The 2016 Census Consultation also identifies census data as being used by some Indigenous groups to assist with language revitalisation activities (Statistics Canada, 2015c). This is not surprising; an international comparison by Extra (2010) found that the Canadian census had the most extensive language data collection of the 21 censuses surveyed, and the regular nature

of the census and small levels of geography with disaggregated data allow for comparison, across Canada, and across time. If, as Moore and colleagues (2010) state, ‘numbers have become a powerful discourse of truth on languages’, numbers from the Canadian census are the most powerful discourse of all. It is important to examine census data here because of its ubiquitousness and the trust in its accuracy that is implicit in countless discussions of Yukon First Nations languages.

Table 4: Census subdivisions in the Yukon with their subdivision types (Statistics Canada, 2023b).

| Name | Type |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Beaver Creek | Settlement |
| Burwash Landing | Settlement |
| Carcross | Settlement |
| Carcross 4 | Self-government |
| Carmacks | Village |
| Champagne Landing 10 | Indian settlement |
| Dawson | Town |
| Destruction Bay | Settlement |
| Faro | Town |
| Haines Junction | Village |
| Ibex Valley | Hamlet |
| Johnsons Crossing | Settlement |
| Keno Hill | Settlement |
| Kloo Lake | Indian settlement |
| Lake Laberge 1 | Self-government |
| Macpherson-Grizzly Valley | Unorganized |
| Marsh Lake | Unorganized |
| Mayo | Village |
| Moosehide Creek 2 | Self-government |
| Mt Lorne | Hamlet |
| North Slope | Unorganized |
| Old Crow | Settlement |
| Pelly Crossing | Settlement |
| Ross River | Settlement |
| Stewart Crossing | Settlement |
| Swift River | Settlement |
| Tagish | Settlement |
| Teslin (TL) | Teslin land |
| Teslin (VL) | Village |
| Teslin Post 13 | Self-government |
| Upper Liard | Settlement |
| Watson Lake | Town |
| Whitehorse | City |
| Whitehorse Unorganised | Unorganized |
| Yukon Unorganized | Unorganized |

4.3 Census Critiques

4.3.1 The census and IDG

This popular representation of trustworthy census data is far from the end of the story. The census's disregard for principles of IDG has a direct detrimental impact on the accuracy, relevance, and usefulness of census data. Indigenous people are not treated as equal partners in the creation of the census. This goes against the principles of Control and Partnership, both of which emphasise the vital importance of including Indigenous people as equal partners from the earliest stages of any research involving Indigenous participants. Statistics Canada engages in consultations with Indigenous groups as part of the census development process. However, Indigenous groups are given no more say in what the census includes than any other census stakeholders, which includes academics and interested members of the public (Statistics Canada, 2019b). Indigenous groups do not have a central or deciding role in what data is collected, or how it is collected and presented. Additionally, the recent census consultation documents do not make clear which Yukon First Nations are consulted; if any at all (Statistics Canada, 2019b). Where Indigenous people are explicitly consulted, it tends to be on matters such as terminology (Statistics Canada, 2019a), rather than any fundamental changes to the census design process. There is also no opportunity for individual First Nations to have a real impact on altering or adding questions according to their own data needs. This is an unchangeable fact, deeply embedded in the reality of the census. Even though the census involves Indigenous people, there is no opportunity for true Indigenous governance over the census as it is created by an outside government to serve the needs of that government. As Walter and Russo Carroll (2021) argue:

‘What is required is essentially a paradigm shift; a complete resetting of the Indigenous data/policy relationship, not a tinkering around the edges or small concessions to Indigenous data demands.’

Walter and Russo Carroll, 2021, p15.

The census consultations exemplify ‘tinkering around the edges’. The nature of the census as a study by a non-Indigenous agency to meet the needs of many non-Indigenous groups means that IDS cannot, by nature, be achieved over it.

This inherent lack of IDG in the census has major effects on census Indigenous language data that may make those data significantly less accurate, relevant, and useful than is often

presumed. This is first evident through which Indigenous languages are counted in the census. There is no universally defined system for distinguishing whether two language varieties are different languages or dialects of the same language, as language varieties often do not have distinct, clear boundaries that can be neatly labelled as different languages (Haugen, 1966). Therefore, language categories of any kind must be constituted; either by their speakers, or by outsiders. This is not inherently a problematic process. Groups of speakers may self-define their language based on who they can understand, their social groups, and their history. The issue arises when external organisations, including Statistics Canada, impose language categorisations onto complex linguistic situations that do not align with how Indigenous groups define their own languages. The comprehensive list of all Indigenous languages categorised in every Canadian census since 1901 can be found in Appendix 3. As established, there is no real opportunity for IDG principles to be applied during the census methodological process. Therefore, First Nations groups cannot decide which languages they want to count in the census. Instead, Statistics Canada decides this, based at least somewhat on the number of people who report speaking each language in the previous census. This is the reason why Kaska and Tutchone were counted in the 1986 census, but not in the 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006 or 2011 censuses (Statistics Canada, 1992a), and it may be the reason why three Yukon First Nations languages have never been counted in the Canadian census; Tagish, Hän, and Upper Tanana. In fact, only two Yukon First Nations languages have had any kind of consistent counting in the census; Tlingit (since 1981) and Gwich'in (since 1986). In practice, this translates to an erasure of the most endangered languages, or the languages with the least external support for their existence. By discounting languages with small speaker numbers from being counted, their total erasure in the public eye is immediate, and they are rendered invisible. As established in section 4.2, census language statistics are a powerful and almost ubiquitous tool, and their choice to not count the languages that may need the most support is a sweeping action that renders their dormancy inevitable and defies all community efforts to keep those languages. By not counting a language, to the thousands of people who see and interact with census language data, the language may as well have never existed; an effect particularly damning to languages with already very small communities of speakers. From a national level organisation, it may not be possible to count every language with very few speakers in every part of such a large country like Canada; especially when counting immigrant languages as well. However, this is no reason to accept that languages with small speaker numbers should not be counted. It is more of a reason to focus on supporting Indigenous governed language demographics, where Indigenous communities can decide for themselves which languages should be counted. As

Tagish, Hän, and Upper Tanana were counted in the 'We Are Our Language' Profile, of which the CYFN were developmental partners, it is possible that, by following the IDG principles of Partnership and Control, the language categorisations in the Canadian census for the Yukon would be, or at least would have been, vastly different. Overall, a lack of partnership between Indigenous people and Statistics Canada results in the Indigenous language data from the census being notably deficient, as Indigenous groups cannot decide what data to collect to fulfil their needs, which results, practically, in issues such as languages being left uncategorised and uncounted.

Data access is a second key issue with census language data, which, again, comes from the lack of incorporation of IDG principles into the census methodological framework. Census data is overwhelmingly freely available online, therefore not respecting the principle of Protection, as data is released without the consent of Yukon First Nations. The principle of Protection certainly applies to language demographic data. This was a key theme in the interview with Tim Hall:

'I'd emphasise as well that this is super sensitive data, it's really emotional for people, and it's really easy for it to seem judgemental [...] and so you have to be careful in how you present this stuff to people, especially if they're from the community.'

Hall, interview.

Davis (2017) also writes that employing language statistics in isolation shifts the blame of language loss to the community, by entirely erasing the context of the colonial policies that sought to eliminate Indigenous languages. This is how Indigenous language statistics from the Canadian census are often presented; isolated numbers in tables, showing the outcome of generations of colonial linguistic genocide with no context, free for any outsider to adopt a judgemental view of the community they refer to. There is no way to protect communities from the negative perception that may come with having census language data be freely available. Census language data is often freely published online by Statistics Canada, not respecting the Protection principle, and therefore is free to do harm to the perception of Indigenous language communities.

Census data is either completely freely accessible, with the problematic elements that entails, or completely inaccessible. Data on population characteristics, including language, are suppressed for census subdivisions with a small population, to meet the confidentiality agreements in Canada's 1985 *Statistics Act*. This suppression of data for areas with small

populations disproportionately affects the Yukon, which has the highest percentage of subdivisions with suppressed data out of all territories and provinces, at 34.3% (Statistics Canada, 2022g, Table 10.3). In these cases, the data is gatekept by Statistics Canada, so no one can access it. First Nations with citizens in those areas have no way of getting access to community-level data on language use. Overall, by its nature as a study run by an external government agency, the Canadian census does not respect vital principles of IDG, including the OCAP® principles, and the Yukon-specific PPP. This has major knock-on effects that make the data significantly less useful than is often presumed for counting the speakers of Indigenous languages, including, but not limited to, giving the same questions to all First Nations regardless of their differing data needs, having no language data for over a third of communities in the Yukon, and leaving three out of eight Yukon First Nations languages from being counted entirely.

Further issues arise when one considers that lack of Yukon First Nations governance means that census language demography is conducted from the perspective of Statistics Canada, based in Ottawa. Carson and colleagues (2011) identify multiplex issues that can arise when demographic studies in regions like Canada are conducted from a southern ‘central’ hub of information and planning, and look out to northern, remote regions, such as the Yukon. This leads to specific flaws in how demographic data is collected and disseminated, as, according to Carson and colleagues, standard practices of demography are less useful in the context of remote regions. Their critiques certainly apply to language demography in the remote Yukon territory. Statistics Canada’s (2023b) Remoteness Index (RI) scale assigns each census subdivision in Canada a RI between 0 (not remote at all) and 1 (extremely remote). The average RI of a subdivision in the Yukon is 0.59, compared to an average remoteness of 0.357 for every subdivision in Canada. Also, 19.89% of the Yukon’s population lives in a subdivision with an RI of 0.5 or more (see table 5). By both measures, the Yukon is the third most remote territory or province in Canada. Also in the Yukon, there is a moderate correlation between a subdivision’s RI and the percentage of that subdivision’s population that have an Indigenous language mother tongue ($r=.55$), and between a subdivision’s RI and the percentage of that subdivision’s population who can speak an Indigenous language ($r=.51$), according to census counts (see table 6). Therefore, Carson and colleagues’ critiques of remote demography are especially relevant when discussing Yukon First Nations languages, since Yukon First Nations language speakers are likely to live in remote communities.

Table 5: Remoteness comparison of provinces and territories in Canada. Calculated from RI and raw population data for every census subdivision in Statistics Canada (2023b).

| Province or territory | Average Remoteness Index | % of population living a subdivision where the RI is >0.5 |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Nunavut | 0.816 | 79.8 |
| Northwest Territories | 0.717 | 49.3 |
| Yukon | 0.590 | 19.9 |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 0.496 | 17.2 |
| Manitoba | 0.418 | 4.57 |
| Saskatchewan | 0.4 | 4.31 |
| British Columbia | 0.375 | 1.26 |
| New Brunswick | 0.366 | 0 |
| Prince Edward Island | 0.361 | 0 |
| Nova Scotia | 0.351 | 1.22 |
| Alberta | 0.325 | 1.09 |
| Ontario | 0.311 | 0.56 |
| Quebec | 0.266 | 1.25 |
| CANADA TOTAL | 0.357 | 1.52 |

Carson and colleagues describe demography conducted in remote regions as being Detailed and Diverse. Detailed means that seemingly small changes to demographic data in remote areas have a disproportionately large impact on the overall picture formed by the data. A family moving out, or more births than usual in a year, for instance, could significantly increase or decrease the population of a remote area; so remote demography should take into account how these changes, that would be small elsewhere, may have a major impact on how demographic conditions of remote areas are perceived. It is possible to apply this idea to how census language data on Yukon First Nations languages is presented. Statistics Canada uses random rounding when presenting all census data on population characteristics (Statistics Canada, 2022c). Figures are randomly rounded to the multiple of five above or below. So, a count of 411 Indigenous language speakers could be presented in data tables as 415 or 410. These seemingly small changes have a disproportionate impact on census data of Yukon First Nations languages. Communities with very small numbers of speakers could have the actual number of speakers nearly doubled or halved due to random rounding, leading to an inaccurate figure that by no means represents the reality of Indigenous language speakers on the ground.

Table 6: Correlations between RI and the percentage of the population that are Indigenous language speakers for subdivisions in the Yukon. Note: Destruction Bay is excluded from the knowledge of Indigenous languages correlation, as this question was asked on the long-form census and Destruction Bay has long-form census data suppressed. Census counts were used as they are the only source allowing for comparison between subdivisions.

| Subdivisions (only those with language data available) | RI | % population with an Indigenous language mother tongue, 2021 census data, Table 98-10-0180-01 | % population knowing how to speak an Indigenous language, 2021 census data, Table 98-10-0216-01 |
|--|----------|---|---|
| Beaver Creek | 0.893501 | 12.8 | 12.8 |
| Burwash Landing | 0.586561 | 15.6 | 15.6 |
| Carcross | 0.499729 | 3.15 | 3.15 |
| Carmacks | 0.554701 | 7.65 | 10.2 |
| Dawson | 0.609316 | 0.63 | 2.22 |
| Destruction Bay | 0.581683 | 12.5 | X |
| Faro | 0.605003 | 2.27 | 3.41 |
| Haines Junction | 0.544052 | 1.45 | 5.83 |
| Ibex Valley | 0.453006 | 4.78 | 2.87 |
| Macpherson-Grizzly Valley | 0.390673 | 0 | 0 |
| Marsh Lake | 0.48742 | 0 | 0 |
| Mayo | 0.793552 | 5.31 | 5.32 |
| Mt. Lorne | 0.453748 | 0 | 0 |
| Old Crow | 0.826241 | 16.9 | 21.2 |
| Pelly Crossing | 0.799702 | 7.91 | 15.8 |
| Ross River | 0.614519 | 14.1 | 25.4 |
| Tagish | 0.521984 | 1.61 | 0 |
| Teslin | 0.559696 | 0 | 14.6 |
| Upper Liard | 0.619506 | 7.69 | 23.1 |
| Watson Lake | 0.621457 | 3.09 | 6.18 |
| Yukon, Unorganized | 0.79377 | 1.34 | 0 |
| Whitehorse, Unorganized | 0.425702 | 0 | 2.34 |
| Whitehorse | 0.390673 | 0.57 | 0.74 |
| <i>r</i> | | .54789 | .511895 |
| <i>p</i> | | <.01 | <.02 |

Secondly, remote demography is Diverse, meaning that remote populations have much geographic, socio-economic, and cultural diversity, and benefit from demographic methods that can capture diversity in small populations. This connects to the IDG principle that the many First Nations in Canada should not be homogenised and treated as though they have identical cultures, histories, and data needs, as they are a greatly diverse group (FNIGC, 2014; Midzain-

Gobin, 2022). The FNIGC stresses that Control should be exercised at the level of the First Nation, rather than ‘Indigenous people’ as an undefined whole. The census does not respect this principle, so it engages in homogenising of Indigenous language data. Since 2006, a list of Indigenous languages has been included as suggested responses to the knowledge of non-official languages question, with the same example languages listed across Canada (see Appendix 4). Yukon First Nations people are faced with a list of geographically and linguistically distant languages, most of which are not even in the Na-Dene family. This homogenises First Nations across Canada, not considering the diversity of their cultures and data needs. With true IDG, First Nations would be able to Control which languages to include as suggested responses; the most spoken ones across Canada, or languages spoken in their region. To summarise, standard demographic methodology being used in remote areas like the Yukon can make Indigenous language census data less accurate, relevant, and useful. These critiques of remote demography arise from the fact that demography in remote regions is conducted by far-away outsiders looking in, who uniformly apply methods that work in their own, more urban and populated regions to the remote regions. If Ownership and Partnership principle of IDG were upheld, and Indigenous people living in remote areas conducted demographies for themselves, they would be free to innovate and apply new methods to gather data in a way that is different, but more appropriate, than the methodologies used in densely-populated areas. It is notable, for instance, that neither the ‘We Are Our Language’ Profile nor the Tlingit community demography use random rounding or standard cross-Canadian language lists.

4.3.2 Themes from the interview

Several additional critiques of the use of census data to enumerate First Nations languages arose in the interview with Tim Hall. Hall’s primary expertise is with Tlingit, therefore, these critiques may not apply in the context of all Yukon First Nations. The first critique is that censuses use self-reports of language skill, rather than an expert assessing speakers’ fluency. The primary reason that Hall would not use census statistics of Tlingit was because no-one from the community had the chance to assess them:

‘It’s easy to ask questions, but then it’s hard to know how to assess the quality of the answers that you’re getting.’

Hall, interview.

He expressed particular issue with how the census does not try to assess different levels of fluency:

‘For someone from a government census [...] I have no idea how they would be able to assess between different levels of fluency’.

Hall, interview.

Hall expressed that self-reports of language fluency often result in unreliable figures; an idea well-grounded in linguistic literature. Simpson and colleagues (2018) critiqued Indigenous language data from the Australian census. They proposed that some people may say on censuses that they can speak a language because they are learning the language, use some words of it in conversations, have a strong association with the language, or an aspiration to use it more. For instance, the Wiradjuri language currently has very few speakers, but is in the process of being revitalised through immersion programmes. More people than expected wrote that they could speak Wiradjuri in the 2016 Australian census, which Simpson and colleagues concluded was possibly because they identified strongly with the language and used some words of it in conversation, while still speaking primarily English. The tendency for people to over-report proficiency in a language if they feel a strong identity with it has also been found in studies of speakers of non-Indigenous languages, such as Gibbons and Ramirez (2004) for Hispanic people and Kang and Kim (2011) for Korean-American adults. Overall, many language experts are sceptical about the usefulness of self-reported data for measuring the true situation of Indigenous languages.

Furthermore, there is evidence that self-reporting sacrifices the accuracy of language data, as self-reports of mother tongue can change depending on questionnaire structure. Statistics Canada (2011) found that reports of a mother tongue other than English and French are significantly lower in responses to the short-form census questionnaire than the long-form. People who responded to the short-form questionnaire one year and the long-form another were significantly more likely to report having a non-official-language mother tongue in the year they answered the long-form questionnaire. This was found to be caused by differing structures of the language questions within each questionnaire. As respondents self-report their answers to the census, these answers can be significantly altered by external factors like questionnaire structuring, an issue that would not occur with objective fluency assessments. A change in census methodology to involve specialist linguists to assess the actual or objective fluency of all respondents would be unfeasible for a Canada-wide quinquennial study. This problem of lack of expert assessment runs to the heart of the census methodology; that First Nations have

no governance over the process, so no opportunity to choose the methods that are the most appropriate for their data needs.

A second critique from the interview was the lack of information on fluency levels. Census respondents must report that they are either able or unable to speak a language. However, according to Moore and colleagues:

‘in communities where an ‘endangered’ or ‘minority’ variety is spoken, being a ‘speaker’ is almost always a matter of degree’

Moore *et al.*, 2010, p11.

The imposition of one category of ‘speaker’ is problematic as it ignores the degrees of speakerhood that exist in Indigenous language communities. This may not be an inherently problematic categorisation for all First Nations; for instance, the Assembly of First Nations, a national association of First Nations governments in Canada, suggests conducting language assessments by counting ‘speakers’ (Assembly of First Nations, 2020, p40). However, according to Hall, this one category of ‘speaker’ may make the data essentially useless to those working in language revitalisation, as different types of speakers may be included in language revitalisation programmes in different ways. Firstly, black-and-white speaker/non-speaker categories dismiss silent speakers; those who were raised with an Indigenous mother tongue, and still have a good understanding of their language, but do not speak it. This is often due to traumatic experiences at residential schools. Hall stressed that it is essential to include silent speakers at language-related events in a respected role, because it is easy to appear judgemental towards those who have lost their language without having a proper understanding of the trauma they have been through. It is also important to acknowledge the fact that many of these people still keep the language, despite not speaking it:

‘They have a ton of knowledge about the culture and ... the spirituality and philosophy in the language.’

Hall, interview.

Dismissing and discounting silent speakers entirely would not be acceptable, despite their lower fluency levels. In the terms of Smith (2016), this is an exercise of the ‘tyranny of the measurable’; meaning, in this context, that only the speakers who are counted have any kind of power or legitimacy, and those who are not counted are abandoned with no recognition; very possibly against the wishes of their community.

Secondly, the black-and-white categories put all people able to hold a conversation into the same category of ‘speaker’, when, according to Hall, it is more productive to consider graded levels of fluency. Intermediate and advanced speakers are able to converse in Indigenous languages and even teach them, but may not have a full understanding of the most complex and rare structures of the language. The most advanced or ‘superior’ speakers with fluent speech and understanding can inform documentation of the more complex and lesser-used grammatical aspects of their language, as well as speak eloquently and poetically, such as at public events. It is vital for language revitalisation programmes to distinguish between different categories of speakers in a non-judgemental manner. The use of one category of ‘conversational’ in the census may erase too much of the complex situation of speakerhood for its data to be truly useful to language revitalisation programmes. Again, the fact that the Canadian census does not report graded fluency levels, making its data essentially useless in the eyes of some Indigenous language experts, is because Indigenous communities had no governance over the process to decide what kind of data to collect that would be most useful to them.

4.3.3 The Indigenous undercount

This chapter identified key problems that emerge in census language data because principles of IDG are not followed in its collection. These problems, from lack of access to data to lack of relevant categorisations of speakers, contribute to a key issue that drives the IDG movement; data malaise. Many First Nations people express exhaustion at being constantly asked (or, in the case of the census, required) to participate in studies that produce data that is not accessible or useful to them (FNIGC, 2016). Hubner (2007) proposes that this malaise causes a large-scale undercount of Indigenous people in the Canadian census. Similar conclusions have been drawn in studies of Aboriginal attitudes to the Australian census (Taylor, 2009; Andrews, 2018; Williamson *et al.*, 2021). This undercount then further reduces the accuracy of data on Indigenous people and languages. There have yet been no studies of the extent of undercounting of Indigenous people in the 2021 Canadian census. However, Rotondi and colleagues (2017) examined Indigenous undercounting in Toronto in the 2011 NHS. In this study, 908 Indigenous people living in urban Toronto completed a questionnaire, indicating whether they had completed the 2011 NHS. Based on the proportion of Indigenous participants who reported in this study that they did not complete the 2011 NHS, the authors estimated a non-response rate of Indigenous people in Toronto to the NHS of between 73.96% and 64.97%. This is much higher than the estimated non-response rate for the general population for the

same year of 31.4% (Statistics Canada, 2015e). The authors believed this low response rate to be due to systematic differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups.

The non-response rate identified in Rotondi and colleagues (2017) may be higher than other years, as in 2011 the NHS was voluntary, as opposed to the census which has always been mandatory. However, there is some evidence to suggest that Indigenous people also have a higher rate of non-response to the mandatory census. For Indigenous people in the Yukon, in census year 2021, this can be observed through Total Non-Response (TNR) rates. The TNR rate is used by Statistics Canada to estimate percentages of the population that did not respond to the census. It is calculated based on households that were sent a census, but either did not respond entirely, or only responded to very few questions (Statistics Canada, 2022a). There are TNR rates given for each subdivision for the long-form and short-form censuses. In the Yukon, communities with a higher proportion of Indigenous-identifying people have a higher TNR rate to the long-form census than communities with a lower proportion of Indigenous-identifying people ($r = .67$, see Table 7). This suggests that, in the Yukon, people in areas with a high Indigenous population are moderately less likely to respond to the long-form census, leading to an undercount of Indigenous people. The long-form census contains the knowledge of non-official languages question, a key question for identifying second language (L2) speakers of Indigenous languages. Therefore, since non-response to the long-form census is higher in predominantly Indigenous areas, there is a risk of undercounting L2 speakers of Indigenous languages. Additionally, the non-response rate per census question shows what percentage of people did not respond to a certain question on the census, if they completed the other census questions (Statistics Canada, 2022a). The non-response rate for language questions in the Yukon was higher than the average Canadian non-response rate for every language question (Table 8). This suggests that languages in the Yukon are especially likely to be undercounted due to non-response to language questions. Combining the undercount of languages with the undercount Indigenous people in the long-form census in the Yukon suggests that Indigenous languages in the Yukon are very likely to be undercounted in the census.

Table 7: Correlation between Indigenous population and TNR rate for subdivisions in the Yukon.

| Subdivision | Percentage Indigenous identifying population, 2021 census data, Table 98-10-0266-01 | TNR rate (see Statistics Canada 2022a) | |
|---------------------------|---|--|-----------|
| | | Short form | Long form |
| Beaver Creek | 42.857% | 19 | 20 |
| Burwash Landing | 84.615% | 2.3 | 31.8 |
| Carcross | 52.381% | 11.8 | 12.5 |
| Carmacks | 72.174% | 11.7 | 12.2 |
| Dawson | 31.313% | 2.7 | 16.6 |
| Faro | 23.864% | 10.4 | 11 |
| Haines Junction | 42.647% | 7.6 | 20.9 |
| Ibex Valley | 29.008% | 8 | 10.7 |
| Macpherson-Grizzly Valley | 16.340% | 3.2 | 16.2 |
| Marsh Lake | 4.730% | 8.5 | 14.6 |
| Mayo | 54.054% | 9.4 | 5.5 |
| Mt Lorne | 16.667% | 2.7 | 8.5 |
| Old Crow | 85.106% | 0.9 | 62.9 |
| Pelly Crossing | 79.032% | 3.5 | 45.3 |
| Ross River | 87.324% | 25 | 27.5 |
| Tagish | 25.807% | 3.6 | 3.7 |
| Teslin | 54.348% | 11.7 | 28.6 |
| Upper Liard | 84.615% | 5.4 | 32.7 |
| Watson Lake | 40.625% | 15.5 | 29.7 |
| Whitehorse | 16.339% | 2.7 | 6.4 |
| Whitehorse, Unorganized | 5.085% | 4.4 | 15.4 |
| Yukon, Unorganized | 31.333% | 9.1 | 18.1 |
| <i>r</i> | | .21 | .67 |
| <i>p</i> | | >0.1 | <0.01 |

Table 8: Non-response rate for language questions in the 2021 census. From Statistics Canada (2022j).

| Question | Non-response rate Canada | Non-response rate Yukon |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Knowledge of official languages | 4.5 | 7.5 |
| All languages spoken at home | 4.3 | 7.3 |
| Languages spoken most often at home | 4.2 | 7.1 |
| Mother tongue | 4.6 | 7.8 |
| All languages used at work | 2.9 | 5.9 |
| Languages used most often at work | 2.8 | 5.8 |

4.4 Summary

This section has examined several wide-ranging problems with Canadian census data on Yukon First Nations languages. Sensitive data is published freely online, which can possibly result in harmful attitudes towards First Nations language groups, while some First Nations cannot access suppressed data from their own communities. The data needs of each First Nation in Canada are treated as if they are the exact same. Demographic methods are used that may not be suitable for remote areas, such as the areas where Indigenous language speakers in the Yukon often live. Indigenous language speakers are sorted into black-and-white categories when gradient categories may be significantly more useful. These problems produce data that is significantly less useful to First Nations, which in turn leads to low Indigenous engagement with the census, feeding the problem of census data being inaccurate. These problems stem from the fact that principles of IDG are not respected in the census, as it is conducted by an external government organisation without Indigenous people as equal partners. This section was not intended to prescribe against First Nations using census language data; in fact, there are many reasons why they might, explored in section 7.2. Instead, it illustrated that census data on Indigenous languages is far from the perfect source it is often presented as, and demonstrated the extent of the impact on data when principles of IDG are not respected. The next section will examine the IPS, to determine whether similar problems exist in a study focused entirely on Indigenous people.

Chapter 5: Language Demography of the Indigenous Peoples Survey

5.1 IPS Methodology

The Indigenous Peoples' Survey (called the Aboriginal Peoples' Survey (APS) before 2021) began in 1992 as a comprehensive survey with questions related to Indigenous issues, including questions about traditional activities, housing, health, and knowledge of Indigenous languages. While it is not as ubiquitous in discussions of Yukon First Nations languages as census data, it is still a popular source for language data. Meek (2016) writes that, during her fieldwork in Kaska-speaking regions of the Yukon, data and charts from the APS were used to portray Kaska in posters in government offices. APS speaker numbers are also used in local and national news reports on First Nations languages (Last, 2021; Ritchie, 2021). Since its figures are regularly used to portray First Nations languages to a general audience, the IPS deserves close methodological analysis.

The IPS is sent to a sample of people who, in the previous census, indicated that they have Indigenous ancestry, or that they are registered as a Status Indian under the Indian Act, or both (Costa, 1992). People counted in the IPS must also identify with at least one Indigenous group. Therefore, IPS respondents both self-report having Indigenous ancestry, and identify as Indigenous. The IPS has been conducted in 1991, 2001, 2006, 2012, 2017, and 2022. Since 2006, the IPS has only sampled off-reserve Indigenous populations (Statistics Canada, 2006). Respondents answer the IPS online by self-reporting. Some territory-level IPS data is freely available online, and more finely disaggregated data is available either to order online, or, for the most disaggregated data, available at Statistics Canada's Data Centres (Statistics Canada, 2018a). The IPS has always asked extensive questions on the use of Indigenous languages: far more than the census. All questions involving Indigenous languages from each IPS can be found in Appendix 5. In the 2022 IPS, respondents were asked to rate how well they speak, understand, read, and write in their Indigenous language, on a scale from very well to not at all, alongside questions about how they learned their Indigenous language, and about their use of their Indigenous language in different domains. Overall, the IPS is a survey sent to those who indicate having Indigenous ancestry in the census, containing extensive questions about Indigenous languages.

5.2 *The IPS: an Indigenous-Focused Source?*

Upon first examination, the IPS appears to be a significantly better source for Indigenous language data than the census. It focuses solely on Indigenous people, rather than the general population, and it could be argued that this gives the survey more scope to focus on the data needs of Indigenous people. The data gap in the Canadian census of the lack of fluency levels is filled by IPS questions. Additionally, the IPS has separate questions for how well a person speaks versus understands a language, so the category of silent speakers can be included in IPS counts. Overall, the focus of the IPS on solely the Indigenous population leaves room for some of the data gaps left by the Canadian census to be filled.

Despite this, the IPS is still far from an ideal source for data on Yukon First Nations languages. Even though it is a survey targeting only Indigenous people, the extent to which Yukon First Nations groups have tangible control over the content and data of the IPS is unclear. Statistics Canada (2006) explains that Indigenous organisations were included ‘in all aspects of design and implementation’ of the IPS by participating on a committee. However, Midzain-Gobin (2022) argues that treating Indigenous groups as stakeholders to be consulted in the process of developing the IPS does not effectively respect the principles of Control or Partnership. Indigenous groups are just another stakeholder or interested party to be consulted by the core developmental committee at Statistics Canada, rather than being treated as equal partners in the developmental process and rightful data owners. Furthermore, the 2017 APS Concepts and Methods Guide (Statistics Canada, 2018a) makes no mention of consulting Indigenous groups during the IPS design process; rather, the design of the 2017 APS ‘drew on many key indicators from previous cycles’. If the needs of Indigenous groups had changed, then they had no way of incorporating them into the new IPS. Indigenous groups may have had input during the process of creating earlier IPSs, but not control over the full and continued process; which is the very heart of the Control principle. In this way, the IPS does not respect the principles of Control or Partnership; because First Nations groups from the Yukon were treated as consultants at one stage of IPS development, rather than as equal partners at every stage.

Furthermore, according to Midzain-Gobin (2022), Indigenous people are treated as a homogenous whole in the designing of the IPS, similarly to the census, and therefore the varied data needs of First Nations are not met. The IPS does have a supplementary questionnaire used in Nunavut, including questions that Inuit groups have decided are specifically relevant to their priorities. However, it is not clear whether the option to add supplementary questions is

available to individual First Nations, and if it is available, it is not used, as no such changes or supplements are made for First Nations. Consideration of the varied data needs of different First Nations groups is not explicit in any IPS documents. If the supplementary questionnaire option is unavailable or inaccessible to First Nations, this is an act of homogenising; presuming that all First Nations across Canada are so similar they all benefit from one survey asking the same questions of all Indigenous peoples. Midzain-Gobin expands on this idea, emphasising how Statistics Canada focuses on cross-comparability of IPS responses across Canada and over time above considering different needs and priorities of different First Nations, and how they may have changed. In this way, the data produced may be useful for those within governments making decisions at the national level; but it is significantly less respectful of local priorities, and consequently less useful for local decision making.

The core reason why the IPS does not meet First Nations data needs is because the IPS is not designed for that purpose. The 2017 IPS was explicitly designed to meet the needs of the Canadian Treasury Board, and the government departments funding the IPS; not First Nations data needs (Statistics Canada, 2018a). Overall, while the IPS samples only Indigenous people, it is not designed to meet First Nations data needs, and Indigenous groups do not have enough control over its design or implementation to fulfil the IDG principles of Control or Partnership. The next section will examine the implications this has for IPS language data.

5.3 The IPS: A Flawed Source

5.3.1 Who counts? Problematic sampling in the IPS

This lack of application of IDG principles in the IPS means that Indigenous communities do not have control over who is sampled. This critical decision leads to a significant underestimation of the number of speakers of Indigenous languages; an underestimation that disproportionately affects the Yukon. The IPS is a post-censal survey; it is sent to a sample of people who indicate that they are Indigenous in the Canadian census. Therefore, all the critiques of Indigenous undercounting in the census apply to the IPS. This problem of sampling becomes more severe when considering the IPS's reserve-based sampling. In 2022, 2017, and 2012, the survey did not sample First Nations people living on-reserve and in certain First Nations communities in the Yukon (Cloutier and Langlet, 2014; Statistics Canada, 2018a, 2022i). Table 9 lists all communities (census subdivisions) in the Yukon excluded from the IPS in 2012 and 2017.

Table 9: Subdivisions in the Yukon excluded from the APS in 2012 and 2017. Adapted from lists of subdivisions included in the IPS in Statistics Canada (2018a) and Cloutier and Langlet (2014). The list of First Nations subdivisions excluded from the 2022 IPS is not available at time of writing.

| 2012 | 2017 |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Beaver Creek | Beaver Creek |
| Burwash Landing | Burwash Landing |
| Carcross | Carcross |
| Carcross 4 | Carcross 4 |
| Carmacks | Carmacks |
| Champagne Landing 10 | Champagne Landing 10 |
| Haines Junction | Haines Junction |
| Johnsons Crossing | Johnsons Crossing |
| Kloo Lake | Kloo Lake |
| Lake Laberge 1 | Lake Laberge 1 |
| Marsh Lake | Marsh Lake |
| Mayo | Mayo |
| Moosehide Creek 2 | Moosehide Creek 2 |
| Old Crow | Old Crow |
| Pelly Crossing | Pelly Crossing |
| Ross River | Ross River |
| Tagish | Tagish |
| Teslin (TL) | Teslin |
| Teslin (VL) | Teslin |
| Teslin Post 13 | Teslin Post 13 |
| Upper Liard | Upper Liard |
| Two and One-Half Mile Village | Two Mile and Two and One-Half Mile Village |
| Two Mile Village | Klukshu |
| Klukshu | |

In the provinces, the IPS samples the Indigenous population living off-reserve. However, the Yukon has not had Indigenous reserves since land claim and self-government agreements were signed in the 1990s and 2000s (Finnegan, 2012; Castillo *et al.*, 2020). In fact, the system of reserves in the Yukon never worked like in other provinces and territories, where Indigenous people were forcibly relocated to reserves (Castillo *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, it is difficult to parse why these Yukon communities are excluded from the IPS. One reason given by Statistics Canada (2022i) for excluding these communities is so sampling areas from the IPS do not overlap with sampling areas from the RHS. However, the founding purpose of the RHS was to fill the data gaps left by Statistics Canada's decision not to sample on-reserve and First Nation communities in some key surveys; so the exclusion of these communities by Statistics Canada existed before the RHS existed to fill the gaps (FNIGC, 2014). Statistics Canada (2022d)

follows another government department, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), in applying the label ‘on-reserve’ to these Yukon communities. CIRNAC gives the ‘on-reserve’ category to communities in the Yukon where there were historical ‘reserves’, and ‘where the resident population is predominantly aboriginal’ (Statistics Canada, 2022d). The communities classed as ‘on-reserve’ are agreed on by ‘territorial authorities’ (Statistics Canada, 2022f), but it is not clear whether this includes the agreement of Indigenous groups. Finnegan (2012) argues that Statistics Canada imposes the category of ‘reserve’ onto the Yukon for the purpose of statistical analysis. The excluded communities have no actual difference in their governance or status; the only thing that is different about them is that they are given a different category, which has no relevance to the lives of community members. Following Midzain-Gobin (2022), it can be argued that imposing the statistical category of ‘reserve’ onto Yukon communities with diverse governing systems homogenises those communities with other predominantly First Nations communities across Canada, and ignores the agency and unique system of non-reserve-based First Nations governance in the Yukon.

This sampling tactic has major implications for IPS language data in the Yukon. Many Indigenous language speakers are excluded from the IPS by imposition of this ‘reserve’ category. In 2017, according to census data, excluding the communities in Table 9 excluded 375 people with an Indigenous language mother tongue from being counted in the APS, over half of the total 660 people with an Indigenous language mother tongue in the Yukon (Table 10). This exclusionary effect disproportionately effects certain language communities, as 66% of the total number of people with Northern Tutchone as a mother tongue and 75% of people with Kaska as a mother tongue were excluded from the 2017 APS (Table 11). If the same communities as 2017 and 2012 are excluded from the 2022 IPS, which is likely as the phrasing of the IPS excluding ‘some First Nations communities’ remains the same in 2022 (Statistics Canada 2022i), 245 of the total 485 people with an Indigenous language mother tongue from the Yukon will be automatically excluded from sampling (Table 12).

Table 10: Indigenous language speakers excluded from the 2017 APS, by subdivision. X indicates that language data is suppressed for that subdivision.

| Census subdivisions <i>excluded</i> from the 2017 APS | Number of Indigenous language mother tongue speakers in that subdivision, 2016 census data, adapted from Table 98-400-X2016060 |
|---|--|
| Beaver Creek | 0 |
| Burwash Landing | 10 |
| Carcross | 20 |
| Carcross 4 | X |
| Carmacks | 40 |
| Champagne Landing 10 | X |
| Haines Junction | 10 |
| Johnsons Crossing | X |
| Kloo Lake | X |
| Lake Laberge 1 | X |
| Marsh Lake | 5 |
| Mayo | 15 |
| Moosehide Creek 2 | X |
| Old Crow | 30 |
| Pelly Crossing | 95 |
| Ross River | 50 |
| Tagish | 10 |
| Teslin (TL) | 0 |
| Teslin (VL) | 0 |
| Teslin Post 13 | 15 |
| Upper Liard | 30 |
| Two Mile and Two and One-Half Mile Village | 45 |
| Klukshu | X |
| TOTAL= | 375 |

Table 11: Indigenous language speakers excluded from the 2017 APS, by language.

| Language | Number of people with this language as a mother tongue living in subdivisions <i>excluded</i> from the 2017 APS, 2016 census data, Table 98-400-X2016060 | Total number of people with this language as a mother tongue in the Yukon, 2016 census data, Table 98-400-X2016060 | Percentage of people with this language as a mother tongue in the Yukon living in subdivisions <i>excluded</i> from the 2017 APS |
|-------------------|--|--|--|
| Tlingit | 35 | 50 | 70% |
| Southern Tutchone | 15 | 60 | 25% |
| Northern Tutchone | 140 | 210 | 66.67% |
| Gwich'in | 30 | 70 | 42.86% |
| Kaska | 120 | 160 | 75% |

Table 12: Indigenous language speakers possibly excluded from the 2022 IPS, by subdivision. X indicates that language data is suppressed for that subdivision.

| Census subdivisions <i>possibly excluded</i> from the 2022 APS | Number of Indigenous language <i>mother tongue</i> speakers in that subdivision, 2021 census data, adapted from Table 98-10-0180-01 | Number of people with <i>knowledge</i> of an Indigenous language in that subdivision, 2021 census data, adapted from Table 98-10-0216-01 |
|--|---|---|
| Beaver Creek | 10 | 10 |
| Burwash Landing | 10 | 10 |
| Carcross | 10 | 10 |
| Carcross 4 | X | X |
| Carmacks | 45 | 60 |
| Champagne Landing 10 | X | X |
| Haines Junction | 10 | 40 |
| Johnsons Crossing | X | X |
| Kloo Lake | X | X |
| Lake Laberge 1 | X | X |
| Marsh Lake | X | X |
| Mayo | 10 | 10 |
| Moosehide Creek 2 | X | X |
| Old Crow | 40 | 50 |
| Pelly Crossing | 25 | 50 |
| Ross River | 50 | 90 |
| Tagish | X | X |
| Teslin (TL) | 25 | 35 |
| Teslin (VL) | X | X |
| Teslin Post 13 | X | X |
| Upper Liard | 10 | 30 |
| TOTAL EXCLUDED = | 245 | 395 |

This action stems from a lack of respect for IDG principles, and results in less accurate and useful data. The principle of Participation is not respected, as a significant number of First Nations people are excluded from participation in the IPS, seemingly without consideration of their governance systems. This results in IPS data only giving a partial picture of Indigenous languages in the Yukon. If Yukon First Nations communities rather than a non-Indigenous statistical organisation had Ownership of the IPS and full Participation in it, they would have the freedom to decide which communities would participate in the study and which to include and exclude from the analysis, rather than being faced with data that automatically eliminates communities assigned a different label by a statistical agency with little acknowledgement of the Yukon's unique Indigenous governance system. As there is no real difference in governance

of communities labelled ‘on-reserve’ and ‘off-reserve’ by Statistics Canada in the Yukon, the distinction between the categories is essentially arbitrary, so the data determined by these categories excludes some speakers in an arbitrary way, which likely results in less useful data for those working in language revitalisation. Furthermore, in the news articles quoting IPS language data referenced above, no clarification is made that the survey excludes some First Nations communities in the Yukon. The fact that the IPS excludes many First Nations communities (and therefore First Nations language speakers) is seemingly little-publicised outside of Statistics Canada documentation. This may lead to misleading representations of Yukon First Nations languages as having fewer speakers than the reality.

5.3.2 Who sees the counts? Data access and the IPS

The IPS is run by Statistics Canada and all IPS data is owned by Statistics Canada, not First Nations. The ‘core results’ of the IPS, defined by Statistics Canada (2018a), are freely available online. In the 2017 IPS, ‘core’ language data is territory-level data on:

1. A respondent’s ability to speak and understand an Aboriginal language by age and sex.
2. Primary Aboriginal language spoken (Cree, Mi’kmaq, Ojibway, Dene, Inuktitut, ‘other’).
3. The importance of speaking an Aboriginal language.

Statistics Canada acts as the data gatekeeper. According to Statistics Canada (2018a), non-‘core’ IPS data is made available to researchers according to assessments by Statistics Canada, and Statistics Canada also presents this data to national-level Indigenous organisations, as well as non-Indigenous stakeholders such as researchers. This does not respect the principle of Protection as Yukon First Nation groups have no control as to what gets freely published online, or as to who else has access to non-‘core’ data. Statistics Canada also acts as a barrier for First Nations seeking to access their own data. For non-‘core’ data, including any sub-territorial data, or data on any Yukon First Nations languages, special requests and data access agreements have to be made. Currently, only Inuit groups have made access agreements with Statistics Canada to gain some stewardship over their data. If First Nations groups from the Yukon wanted to access IPS data without such an access agreement, they would have to be approved by Statistics Canada, therefore having Indigenous data controlled by western review boards, a problematic and in many cases unhelpful process (Schnarch, 2004). Even upon approval, Yukon First Nations representatives without access to sufficient resources to access the data securely and quickly in their hometowns would have to travel to one of Statistics Canada’s

Research Data Centres, where their data is stored; of which there are none in the Yukon. All data from the IPS is completely in the stewardship and possession of Statistics Canada. Due to the lack of respect for principles of Access, Protection, and Participation, Statistics Canada acts as the gatekeeper of IPS data, deciding which data is ‘core’ data, who has access to other data, and keeping the data stored far from the Yukon First Nations. The physical distance and bureaucratic limitations make it unnecessarily difficult for Yukon First Nations to access and benefit from their data.

5.4 Summary

In sum, neither the Canadian census nor the IPS comes close to respecting the IDG principles of OCAP® or PPP. This does not mean that their data is entirely useless; in fact, there are many reasons why Indigenous groups might want to use census or IPS data (see section 7.2). Also, Statistics Canada is currently in the process of developing an initiative to train Indigenous groups in conducting their own data collection and analysis; a programme that could contribute towards future implementation of IDG, by creating in-community expertise (Statistics Canada, 2018a). However, it is important to note that the lack of respect for IDG principles in studies by Statistics Canada today has a significant impact on the kinds of language data Statistics Canada collects; primarily that there is little to no flexibility for individual First Nations to consider their own unique language data needs, or to have free and unimpeded access to the data they need about their communities. This may have a significant impact on the accuracy, relevance, and usefulness of that data for Yukon First Nations.

Chapter 6: First Nations-led Language Demographics

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, it was established that language demographics run by the Canadian government have significant gaps and faults in the data they collect. This has left Indigenous groups across Canada and the Yukon with the need to collect language data that is truly accurate, relevant, and useful to them. This is what Walter and Russo Carroll (2021, p2) call ‘the Indigenous response to nation state data/policy intransigence’; that is, the ways that Indigenous organisations are exercising IDS in conducting their own language demographics. The demographics in this section have been conducted in response to the lack of usable data from the Canadian government’s statistical programmes. While they may be less ubiquitous in the discussion of First Nations languages than census or IPS data, they are possibly more extensively used by First Nations communities, and they give an insight as to how language demography can be conducted by and for First Nations communities. In this section, I analyse these four demographics through the lens of IDG, establish how they operationalise IDG, and the effect that IDG has on their data and methods.

6.2 The RHS and REEES

6.2.1 Methodology

The RHS and REEES are run by the FNIGC, an independent First Nations-led statistical organisation. They sample on-reserve communities and some other primarily First Nations communities. The REEES was a one-off study conducted in 2014. The RHS began with a pilot study in 1997, then three phases of the RHS were conducted in 2002, 2008, and 2015. The Yukon has been included in each phase of the RHS except the pilot study. Canada-level data from the RHS and REEES is published online (FNIGC, 2023).

Language data was collected in the REEES, and in every phase of the RHS. The REEES and the 2015 RHS asked about respondents’ skill in speaking, understanding, reading, and writing in their First Nations language. Respondents could rate how they performed in each skill on a scale from not at all to very well (FNIGC 2016, 2018). The REEES also contained a separate question asking for a respondent’s mother tongue, and additional questions, such as asking caregivers how important it is to pass their language on to their children.

6.2.2 *The RHS, REEES, and IDG*

The RHS and REEES are run by the FNIGC, the same organisation that first formulated the OCAP® principles. Therefore, they are run explicitly according to OCAP®, and follow the principles closely in their entire research design. This is evident not just from methodological documents produced by FNIGC itself, but by an independent review of the RHS in 2006 that found it closely follows OCAP® principles and sets a precedent for what OCAP®-abiding research can achieve (Harvard, 2006).

The Access and Possession principles are explicitly followed by the RHS and REEES methodologies, and they also abide by the Protection principle. While the studies are run by the FNIGC, the data produced is owned by the communities it refers to. The FNIGC has a protocol for how data is returned to First Nations communities, and analysis of regional data is in the hands of regional partners to the FNIGC, not outsiders (Harvard, 2006, section V). Where First Nations do not have the capacity to store their own data securely, the FNIGC centre or regional centres will store the data in their stead, but First Nations will still have control over it and full access to it (Harvard, 2006). Giving First Nations stewardship over their own data is the workings of IDG in action.

This has positive impacts with regards to how the data is used. Results at the national level are presented freely online, but since First Nations have full ownership of their own data, choices about what to do with sub-national data are completely up to the First Nations to decide. Some groups of First Nations decide to publish their regional data freely online, such as the First Nations in British Columbia (First Nations Health Authority, 2019). Other First Nations have access to their data but decide to keep it within their communities. For instance, the CYFN published a Wellness Report based on data from the RHS, detailing future goals for community wellness programmes (CYFN, 2015), but RHS data specifically for the Yukon is not freely available online. This is a result of the RHS respecting the principles of Participation and Protection; the CYFN has enjoyed the benefits of RHS data but has protected its members from any negative effects by not publishing the data freely online. First Nations act as gatekeepers to their own data; they have access to it, and they can choose who else gets access to it, and different First Nations manifest this choice in different ways.

First Nations-led organisations are the main designers and implementers of the RHS and REEES. These groups are treated as equal partners, and have the opportunity to give input to every phase of the RHS, including the CYFN, who are listed as a partner in the RHS report.

Thanks to their status as equal partners, First Nations values and perspectives are explicitly included in the research design. The RHS and REEES are based on a theoretical framework of wellness designed by First Nations people and incorporating First Nations ideas of wellness. Basing the studies on this First Nations framework has major impacts on what data is collected. For instance, language is seen as an integral part of the First Nations wellness framework formulated by the FNIGC. Language may not have been included as a part of health and wellbeing had a First Nations wellness framework not been used. The Canadian Community Health Survey, which is based on a western framework of health and wellness, for instance, only enquires about participants' use of English and French, and no language questions are incorporated into the Survey's overall idea of health and wellbeing. First Nations Control over the RHS and REEES manifested in the design and incorporation of a First Nations wellness framework, which results in significantly more detailed language data being collected.

The RHS and REEES also avoid homogenising, as there is no assumption that every First Nation benefits from the same questions being asked. The questions in the core of the survey were developed based on common themes from partnership with First Nations, but individual First Nations had the opportunity to add questions in their region to address issues specific to their area. According to FNIGC (2018), this option was used in many regions, unlike in the IPS when this option was only used for Nunavut as a whole. The RHS and REEES closely abide by the principles of Control and Partnership, giving First Nations including the CYFN extensive involvement as partners in the research design process. This respect for First Nations Control and Partnership has wide-reaching effects, from the creation of a First Nations wellness framework, to the focus on flexibility and respecting the priorities of different First Nations groups, resulting in the collection of more detailed language data that is much more likely to be relevant and useful to individual First Nations.

6.2.3 The RHS and REEES: On-reserve sampling

The primary issue of the RHS and REEES in the context of the Yukon is the one decision about the surveys that is made at a national level; that is, the sampling. Communities can opt out of the RHS and REEES, however, the basic sample of the studies is the national 'on-reserve' First Nations population. In the Yukon, they sample from essentially the opposite set of communities to the IPS (Statistics Canada, 2022i). As established in section 5.3.1, in the Yukon, this is an imposed category not reflecting governance systems. All the critiques of the IPS unilaterally excluding many First Nations language speakers based on this reserve definition also apply to

the RHS and REEES. These issues essentially stem from not following the Participation principle, as Yukon First Nations could not choose to have communities classed as ‘on-reserve’ sampled in the survey. The choice of sampling only on-reserve populations is one of the only decisions made in the RHS and REEES at a national level that First Nations do not have Control over. Therefore, making this decision align with the rest of the methodology and giving Yukon First Nations governance over deciding who is included in these surveys, rather than relying on external definitions, would be a step towards making their data even more useful.

6.2.4 Summary

Overall, the RHS and REEES studies abide extremely closely to IDG principles, which makes their data more accessible and controllable to Yukon First Nations communities, as well as including an explicitly First Nations research methodology, which contributes to the collection of more language data. The only time when IDG principles are not respected, in the choice of sampling design, has the negative effect of excluding some communities from analysis where there is no real difference between these and the included communities. This is a demonstration of how respecting IDG principles is a determining factor for how relevant and useful language demographic data can be.

6.3 The ‘We Are Our Language’ Profile

6.3.1 Methodology

The ‘We Are Our Language’ Profile was produced by the ALS in partnership with the CYFN and individual Yukon First Nations in 2004, based on the methodology of an earlier profile from 1989. To construct the Profile, territory-wide data collection was conducted in 2002 through surveys and in-person interviews with First Nations interviewers. An objective fluency assessment was conducted with language experts in the community, however data from this was never released, so the final Profile contains participants self-reports (ALS, 2004, p8). Survey respondents rated their skills in speaking, understanding, reading, and writing their First Nations language on a scale from not at all to good/excellent. Data was available for each Yukon First Nations language as well as for the dialects of each language, separated into mother tongue and L2 speakers. Participants in the study were chosen by community language experts, with the goal of counting every Yukon First Nations language speaker.

6.3.2 *'We Are Our Language' and IDG*

The methodology and implementation of the Profile was designed by representatives from Yukon First Nations, with assistance from linguists and members of ALS, and strongly respected the OCAP® and PPP principles of IDG. This was driven by an explicit goal to meet the data needs of Yukon First Nations (ALS, 2004, p6). First Nations were more than stakeholders or consulted parties; they were partners in building the project from the ground up. Due to the key role of First Nations in designing and implementing the study, and their effective partnerships with external researchers, this study is an excellent example of the principle of Partnership in practice. Yukon First Nations also had Control over the methodology used in the study, and the data it produced, designing some parts of the methodology (such as the fluency assessment), and having consistent opportunities to review and approve or disapprove methodology used by ALS (ALS, 2004, p6). This respect of the Partnership and Control principles had major impacts on the type of data collected, and how it was collected. Elders and fluent speakers from each First Nation were involved as experts, rather than only community outsiders being treated as experts; a unique factor of the four Indigenous-governed demographies explored here (ALS, 2004, p5). Also, representatives from First Nations were able to choose for themselves what language data was the most relevant to collect. For instance, statistics were created for every Yukon First Nations language, including Hän, Tagish, and Upper Tanana, which are considered too small or insignificant by Statistics Canada to count in the national census. The study also collected information on dialects and potential teachers of each language, data unique to this study that was made possible by First Nations choosing research priorities for themselves. Finally, Control over the data analysis stage meant that the Yukon First Nations were not treated as a homogenous whole. Rather, in keeping with the wishes of community experts, no total territory-wide figures were presented, and no generalisations about the general state of Yukon First Nations languages were made; another unique factor of this demography (ALS, 2004, p4). Overall, following the principles of Participation and Control led to this demography producing unique data that was explicitly relevant to the First Nations language experts who were partners in designing the study.

Individual First Nations had complete Ownership over their language data. They had the opportunity to review the data at every stage and decide that was done with it, so each community had the chance to exercise their right to Protection from data being published (ALS, 2004, p6). The data for each Yukon First Nations language was made freely available in the published Profile, but this was done with the explicit wishes of each First Nation. Each First

Nation also had full Access to their own data throughout the study, and the data was always physically stored either by First Nations in their own community or the Yukon Bureau of Statistics in Whitehorse (p7), keeping the data close to the First Nations that owned it, in keeping with the Possession principle. This explicit respect for the right of Yukon First Nations people to access, control access to, and store their own data meant that the data was always accessible to the First Nations, to be used for any purpose.

6.3.3 Summary

The ‘We Are Our Language’ Profile strongly respected the principles of IDG. Each First Nation was not homogenised or treated as part of a whole; they were respected as different Nations with their own histories and priorities. The data to collect was determined by, gathered by, and remained under the ownership of, Yukon First Nations communities. The Profile was an exercise in full IDS, producing data that had more relevance to the expressed needs of First Nations communities, and could be accessed and used by them easily.

6.4 The Tlingit Community Demography

6.4.1 Methodology

The Tlingit community demography is an ongoing project to count the speakers of Tlingit by Professor X’unei Lance Twitchell, a Tlingit academic and fluent Tlingit speaker. It is based on objective assessments of fluency by Professor Twitchell. Speakers are sorted into four categories; novice, intermediate, advanced, or superior, with intermediate and advanced having three subcategories; low, mid, and high. It is a continual ongoing assessment updated whenever elder speakers pass away or when L2 learners become more fluent.

6.4.2 Tlingit demography and IDG

The application of IDG principles to this demography is quite different to the other studies as this is a continual effort by an individual to document the speakers in his community, rather than a one-time effort by a collective of individuals and organisations. Additionally, just because an Indigenous researcher leads a study, this does not mean that the research design of the study inherently incorporates IDG principles (Walter and Andersen, 2013). However, the principles of IDG are strongly respected in this study. Firstly, the data is acquired and presented according to what will be the most useful for people involved in language revitalisation in the Tlingit community. In the research interview with Tim Hall, Hall stressed the importance of understanding what levels of fluency people in the community have for his work in Tlingit

revitalisation. Another theme from the interview was the importance of having objective assessment of fluency levels to gain a realistic understanding of the situation of Tlingit as reviewed by an expert. Both of these methods are used in this study. The research priorities are chosen and guided by the Tlingit language revitalisation community, and through this, the data becomes relevant, and useful. This is the result of IDG being followed from the start.

IDG is also practiced in how the data is kept and presented, through respecting the principles of Access, Participation and Protection. This data is not available freely online; rather, it is kept by Professor Twitchell. According to my interview with Tim Hall, the data is not gatekept from people working in Tlingit revitalisation, so they can use the data for purposes such as applying for funding grants for their programmes. At the same time, the sensitive data is kept private, with access controlled by a trusted representative of the community. The data presentation is also designed to be respectful of the speakers who are counted and to incorporate Tlingit culture into the study. The numbers are part of a presentation containing quotes from Tlingit elders and speakers; grounding the data in its context rather than extracting and decontextualising it. In this way, community members are shielded from negative effects that could come with having their sensitive data freely available, while also having the data available when it is needed. Although it is not spelled out through a formal process of consultation with stakeholder groups, the Tlingit demography is IDS in practice. The data collected is the most important data for those involved in Tlingit language revitalisation, and it is stored so that those working in language revitalisation can use it, while the community is shielded from any negative effects that could come from its open release. The data is collected and governed by and for Tlingit people.

6.5 Summary

This section has examined four First Nations-led demographies of Yukon First Nations languages. All these demographies incorporate principles of IDG in different ways; implicitly into the research design by upholding the idea of First Nations priorities and sovereignty over their data, in the Tlingit community demography and the ‘We Are Our Language’ Profile, or explicitly by considering each of the OCAP® principles in the methodology, like the RHS and REEES. Their incorporation of these principles of governance means that they produce significantly different kinds of data to the Statistics Canada studies, such as collecting language demographic data in health studies, precise fluency levels, and data on potential language teachers and dialects. Furthermore, this data is owned and controlled by Yukon First Nations.

Therefore, data from these demographics is likely to be more accurate, relevant, and useful to those working in language revitalisation in the Yukon.

Chapter 7: Discussion

7.1 Synthesising six demographics

This dissertation has examined six demographics of Yukon First Nations languages, to discover what effect following principles of IDG has on these language demographics. This was the first study to synthesise and review language demographic research conducted in the Yukon. Although it is likely that some demographics, especially community-level demographics, were excluded from this overview due to their data not being widely available online or in published works, these six demographics form the start of a comprehensive list of language demographics in the Yukon. Table 13 summarises the methodology and data availability of all six studies, discussed in more detail above. Each of these demographics has major differences in their methodology, the data they collect, and to what extent they respect IDG principles. Compiling these demographics contributes to future research on the number of speakers of Yukon First Nations languages, and into future reviews of Indigenous language research in Canada.

7.2 IDG: What Difference Does It Make to Language Demography?

Following IDG principles causes a substantial shift in data collected in language demographics; a shift towards the figures being more accurate, more relevant, and more useful. Respecting IDG results in more accurate speaker numbers as it lowers the barriers to First Nations participation in demographics, meaning that every First Nations person in the Yukon can have their language skills counted, rather than remaining uncounted because of imposed categories of ‘on-reserve’ versus ‘off-reserve’. IDG also allows First Nations to choose to gather data that more accurately captures the complex situations of their languages, such as counting languages with small speaker communities and silent speakers. Finally, trauma associated with old cycles of extractive, exploitative research contributes to a high Indigenous non-response rate, and therefore undercounting of Indigenous languages, in studies that do not reflect IDG principles, such as the Canadian census. By breaking down these old cycles, IDG principles contribute to more community engagement in research. Overall, language data becomes more accurate when it is collected according to IDG principles, making it more useful for getting a general picture of the situation of First Nations languages.

Table 13: Comparison of First Nations language demographics in the Yukon

| | Census | IPS | RHS |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Fluency grading | No fluency levels, counts speakers who are 'conversational' | Levels introduced in 2001: Very well Relatively well With effort Only a few words Not at all | Not at all Only a few words Basic Intermediate Fluent |
| Mother tongue versus second language | Question on mother tongue asked since 1901, question on other languages a person is conversational in asked since 1991 | Separate questions on mother tongue and second language learning | Not separated, respondents are just asked for what language they speak |
| Language or dialect level | Language level | Language level | Language level |
| Language skills | Speaking only | Speaking, understanding, reading, writing | Speaking, understanding, reading, writing |
| Region | National, territorial, census division, census subdivision (community), census metropolitan areas, census agglomerations | National, territorial, census division, census subdivision (community) | National, territorial, regional |
| How speakers are counted | Self-report | Self-report | Self-report |
| Years available | 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1941, 1951, 1961, 1971, 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021 | 1991, 2001, 2006, 2012, 2017, 2022 | 1997 (pilot, not the Yukon), 2002, 2008, 2015 |
| Run by | Statistics Canada | Statistics Canada | FNIGC |
| Data accessible via | 1991-present: online through the Statistics Canada website 1901-1986: through official government publications | Online through the Statistics Canada website | National level data: online Sub-national data: possessed by First Nations communities |

Table 13 continued

| | REEES | We Are Our Language | Tlingit demography |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Fluency grading | Not at all Only a few words With effort (basic) Relatively well (intermediate) Very well (fluent) | Good / Excellent Fair Poor Not at all | Novice or unknown Intermediate (Low, Mid, High) Advanced (Low, Mid, High) Superior |
| Mother tongue versus second language | Separate question identifying mother tongue | Examined separately throughout the profile | Examined separately throughout. |
| Language or dialect level | Language | Language and dialect level | Language level |
| Language skills | Speaking, understanding, reading, writing | Speaking, understanding, reading, writing | Speaking, understanding |
| Region | National, territorial, regional | Data available for each of the 8 Yukon First Nations Languages | Tlingit speakers in Alaska and the Yukon |
| How speakers are counted | Self-report | Self-report (objective assessment was attempted but figures never released) | Objective expert fluency assessment |
| Years available | 2015 | 2004, includes some data from an earlier 1989 profile | Continual ongoing assessment |
| Run by | FNIGC | ALS, CYFN, Yukon First Nations | Professor X'unei Lance Twitchell |
| Data accessible via | National level data: online Sub-national data: possessed by First Nations communities | Online via Internet Archive | Private communication |

Language demographic data collected by studies that respect IDG principles may also be more relevant to the experiences of Yukon First Nations people. When IDG is respected, Indigenous groups across Canada are not taken as a homogenous whole, but can conduct research for their unique data needs and priorities. This leads, for example, to the Tlingit demography where numerical data is assessed by a community expert to increase trust and speakers are sorted into precise fluency levels, the RHS where language is counted as a part of wellbeing, and the 'We Are Our Language' Profile with data on dialects of Yukon First Nations languages. This added relevance makes the data from studies respecting IDG more useful to those working in

language revitalisation in the Yukon today. Not only is this because the data collected is more tailored towards their needs, but it is also because the data is more accessible. Rather than being stored in far-away Data Centres and gatekept by government organisations, demographics that respect IDG have data accessible within the community. The governance of this data being within the community also means that the community can decide whether, and how, to release sensitive data, to reduce the risk of harm and a negative perception towards the community. Following IDG principles result in a substantial shift in the type of language demographic data that is collected from communities, the accuracy of that data, and how relevant and useful it is to Yukon First Nations communities.

Despite this, there are many barriers to realising IDS in language demography. Kukutai and Taylor (2016) and OECD (2020) acknowledge that a lack of data processing infrastructure, both in terms of storage space and community expertise, is a barrier to implementing IDS. Not all First Nations will have an ongoing, up-to-date, community-based language demography like the Tlingit demography. In fact, in the interview, Hall stated that Tlingit is likely to be an outlier in having such thorough documentation. Even the highly organised, government funded ‘We Are Our Language’ Profile still could not release its fluency assessment figures due to lack of time and training to conduct large-scale, consistent fluency assessments. First Nations may not have the funding, capacity, or infrastructure to conduct their own statistical programmes.

If a First Nation chooses to partner with outside academics to co-conduct a language demography, as with the ‘We Are Our Language’ Profile, there are extensive barriers to Indigenous participation in academic research. Held (2020), Anang and colleagues (2021), and Nadeau and colleagues (2022) all recount attempts to conduct participatory research with Inuit communities, where researchers were informed of IDG principles and planned to implement them, but faced barriers due to the institutional structures the researchers were a part of. Common barriers identified between these authors include expectations of other academics to prioritise publications and deadlines over forming community connections, reckoning with different priorities and perspectives within communities, and the strict timeframe and institutional processes that academic research is bound by. Such a strict timeframe was a barrier that prevented some possible participants from being involved in this study, and a principal reason why some data from the ‘We Are Our Language’ Profile was never released. The practice of implementing IDS is constrained by these participation barriers. If IDS is ever to be achieved in studies with Indigenous and academic partners, there must be more than an

awareness of IDG principles by researchers; the practical barriers towards its implementation that are deeply embedded in the academic research framework must be addressed.

There are also many reasons why First Nations might choose to use language data collected by Statistics Canada. Census data offers unparalleled comparability at the community level across Canada and over time, with data available from many communities every five years. This is the reason why the Assembly of First Nations (2022) used census data to analyse the vitality of First Nations languages across Canada, and in the interview, Hall expressed that comparability with other Indigenous languages is one of the only reasons he would consider using census data. Additionally, as examined in section 4.2, census data and other data from Statistics Canada is well respected and trusted. If a First Nation wants figures that outsiders will trust with little thought, the census programme is an excellent source for those figures. Given all the barriers to IDS explored here, the freely accessible and well-respected census and IPS data can give indications of speaker numbers and how they have changed over time almost instantly. Therefore, this dissertation was not intended to prescribe against the use of Statistics Canada language data by Indigenous organisations. However, it is also important to acknowledge that neither the census nor IPS respect the OCAP® or PPP principles, which may have a significant impact on the usefulness of that data for Yukon First Nations. They are far from the perfect sources that they are often presented and uncritically used as.

The solution to this problem brings us back to the quote from Walter and Russo Carroll. The census and IPS can never fully respect IDG principles by their design as studies conducted by the government for the needs of the government and other external stakeholders. The future of language demography should not be ‘tinkering around the edges’ of census data; the future is in the implementation of full IDS, so First Nations can conduct their own studies that have the availability and trust of Statistics Canada studies, but that are tailored towards the unique context and data needs of each community. Support for Indigenous language community assessments is already enshrined in policy in the ILA; now is the time for action.

7.3 Conclusions

This was the first study to review First Nations language demographies conducted in the Yukon, and to examine the practice of language demography in the context of IDG. It was found that there are major underlying differences in how principles of IDG are respected in different Yukon First Nations language demographies. Despite their representation as trustworthy sources for language data, the census and IPS do not respect IDG principles, which has major

negative effects on the usefulness of their data for First Nations communities. In their place, alternative language demographics run according to OCAP® and PPP principles represent grassroots efforts to collect language data according to the needs of Yukon First Nations communities. Following IDG principles causes a substantial shift in the data produced by Yukon First Nations language demographics; a shift towards data that is much more accurate, relevant, and useful to First Nations, as IDG principles give First Nations control over what data is collected, how it is collected, and how it is presented.

Future research could attempt to identify more community-based language demographics to expand the list of language demographic research conducted in the Yukon. More research working closely with all Yukon First Nations is needed to uncover what their needs are with regards to language demography in their communities, so these needs can be addressed through new language demographics incorporating principles of IDG.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/9810018001-eng>.

Statistics Canada. [Table 98-10-0216-01 Knowledge of languages by age and gender: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions.](#)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/9810021601-eng>.

Statistics Canada. [Table 98-10-0266-01 Indigenous identity by Registered or Treaty Indian status: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions.](#)

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Yukon First Nations and land claims

The fourteen Yukon First Nations are:

- Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
- Ross River Dena Council
- Liard First Nation
- White River First Nation
- Na-Cho Nyak Dun First Nation
- Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation
- Selkirk First Nation
- Champagne and Aishihik First Nations
- Kluane First Nation
- Ta'an Kwächän Council
- Carcross/Tagish First Nation
- Kwanlin Dün First Nation
- Carcross/Tagish First Nation
- Teslin Tlingit Council

Eleven Yukon First Nations have signed Final Agreements and Self-Government Agreements. Final Agreements define the rights First Nations have to manage resources on their Settlement Land, where that land is, and also how First Nation governments can interact with the Canadian government and other First Nations. Self-Government Agreements define what the powers that First Nations governments have to govern their own citizens, such as powers to make laws and control certain programmes like education (Government of Yukon 2023a).

The three Yukon First Nations that have not signed Final or Self-Government Agreements are Ross River Dena Council, Liard First Nation, and White River First Nation. These First Nations are still working towards self-determination, but according to Castillo and colleagues (2020, chapter 5) they are 'following a different path' towards this goal and have distinct reasons for not engaging in legal agreements with the Canadian government.

Appendix 2: Sources excluded from analysis in this dissertation

The studies in the following table were identified in the search for Indigenous language demographics, and collected some Indigenous language data, but were excluded from this dissertation. The ‘criteria’ in the right-hand column are the inclusion criteria from chapter 3, as follows:

1. Sampled Indigenous people living in the Yukon;
2. Had at least Canadian national-level data and information on methodology available to analyse;
3. Had Yukon-level, language-level or community-level data available, even if it was not accessible to me;
4. Disaggregated this data to allow viewing of data for Indigenous peoples only;
5. Sampled adults as well as children or just adults;
6. Involved collecting data on the language use of individuals; and
7. Allowed for disaggregation of specifically Indigenous language data, rather than just English and French.

The Indian and Inuit Affairs Programme language reports were published from 1970-1980. I accessed the initial report from 1970, containing the methodological details then used in the rest of the reports, from the Cambridge University Library Rare Books Collection. They can tentatively be described as language demographics. These reports sorted the Registered Indian population into groups based on their language family, and showed what languages were associated with each band. They also gave speaker numbers of many Indigenous languages in communities across Canada. However, these speaker numbers were taken from band registry numbers, rather than any additional study of language use within bands. They classed every person who was a member of an Indian band as speaking that band’s heritage language. Therefore, people within the band who did not speak the heritage language were not accounted for, and neither were non-Status Indians who spoke the language. As this only partially fulfilled criteria 6, these reports were not included any further as part of this study.

The demography of Selkirk First Nation language use does exist as it was referenced in Consilium (2003), but there is not enough information about its methodology or findings available online or in published sources currently, or in archived webpages from the time it was conducted, for me to analyse it further. Sikorski (2008) contains a demography of Gwich’in, but only speakers living in Alaska. Kwanlin Dün First Nation conducted a survey of community

language use in autumn 2022, however no information about this survey was available to analyse.

Table: Sources excluded from analysis in this dissertation

| Sourced from | Study name | Conducted by | Reason excluded |
|-------------------------|--|--|--------------------------|
| Steffler 2016 | Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies | OECD | Did not meet criteria 8. |
| Steffler 2016 | 2006 Aboriginal Children's Survey | Statistics Canada | Did not meet criteria 5. |
| Steffler 2016 | First Nations Community Survey | FNIGC | Did not meet criteria 6 |
| Feir and Hancock 2016 | Labour Force Survey | Statistics Canada | Did not meet criteria 7. |
| Feir and Hancock 2016 | Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study | University of Winnipeg | Did not meet criteria 1. |
| Feir and Hancock 2016 | Canadian Community Health Survey | Statistics Canada | Did not meet criteria 7. |
| Feir and Hancock 2016 | The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth | Statistics Canada | Did not meet criteria 5. |
| OECD 2020 | Aboriginal Business Survey | Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business | Did not meet criteria 6. |
| OECD 2020 | Canadian Income Survey | Statistics Canada | Did not meet criteria 6. |
| OECD 2020 | National Apprenticeship Survey | Statistics Canada | Did not meet criteria 6. |
| OECD 2020 | National Graduates Survey | Statistics Canada | Did not meet criteria 4. |
| Statistics Canada 2023a | General Social Survey | Statistics Canada | Did not meet criteria 1. |
| Statistics Canada 2023a | Elementary-Secondary Education Survey | Statistics Canada | Did not meet criteria 6. |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|------------------------------------|
| Statistics Canada 2023a | Canadian Survey on the Provision of Child-care services | Statistics Canada | Did not meet criteria 6. |
| Cambridge University Library Rare Books Collection (1970), Government of Canada publications website (1973-84) | ‘Registered Indian Population by Band District, Region, Language or Dialect and Linguistic Group’ reports, 1970, 1973-77, 1978-82, 1979-83, and 1980-84. | Indian and Inuit Affairs Programme | Only partially fulfils criteria 6. |
| Sikorski (2008) | Demography of speakers of Alaskan Gwich’in | Sikorski, with input from experts in each Alaskan Gwich’in community | Did not meet criteria 1. |
| Consilium (2003) | Community-based demography of Indigenous language use in Selkirk First Nation | Selkirk First Nation | Did not meet criteria 2. |
| Kwanlin Dün First Nation (2023) | Kwanlin Dün First Nation Community Language Survey | Kwanlin Dün First Nation | Did not meet criteria 2. |

Appendix 3: Indigenous language categorisations in the Canadian census since 1901

The table below shows how language categorisations in the Canadian census have changed since the first language questions were introduced in 1901. The table is colour-coded. The colours indicate:

- White: no change from the year previous
- Grey: different name/spelling for a variety or group from the previous year
- Darker grey: new variety or group for that year that was not in the previous year
- Red: Yukon First Nations Language
- Grey and italics: a variety that was counted the previous year, but not that year
- X: no language question asked that year

| Year | Languages |
|------|--|
| 1901 | Language data not available |
| 1911 | Language data not available |
| 1921 | Languages other than English and French not classified |
| 1931 | Included in 'other' |
| 1941 | Indian and Eskimo |
| 1951 | Indian and Eskimo |
| 1956 | X |
| 1961 | Indian and Eskimo |
| 1966 | X |
| 1971 | Native Indian and Eskimo |
| 1976 | Inuit (Eskimo) Native Indian |
| 1981 | 'Amerindian Languages' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inuktituk • Algonkian languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cree ○ Ojibway ○ Algonkian languages n.e.s • Tlingit languages • Siouan languages • Athapaskan languages • Salishan languages • Kootenayan languages • Haida languages • Tsimshian languages • Iroquoian languages • Wakashan languages • Indian, n.o.s |

| | |
|------|---|
| 1986 | <p>‘Aboriginal Languages’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algonquian languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cree ○ Ojibway ○ Blackfoot ○ Malecite ○ Micmac ○ Montagnais-Naskapi ○ Algonquian languages n.i.e • Athapaskan languages (Déné) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Carrier ○ Chilcotin ○ Chipewyan ○ Dogrib ○ Hare ○ Kutchin (Loucheux) ○ Kaska (Nahani) ○ Slave ○ Tahltan ○ Tutchone ○ Yellowknife ○ Athapaskan languages, n.i.e • Haida • Iroquoian languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mohawk ○ Iroquoian languages, n.i.e • Kutenai • Salish languages • Dakota • Tlingit • Tsimshian • Wakashan • Inuktitut • Aboriginal, n.i.e |
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| 1991 | <p>‘Aboriginal Languages’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algonquian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Blackfoot ○ Cree ○ Malecite ○ Micmac ○ Montagnais-Naskapi ○ Ojibway ○ Algonquian, n.i.e • Athapaskan (Dene) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Carrier ○ Chilcotin ○ Chipewyan ○ Dogrib ○ Kutchin-Gwich’in (Loucheux) ○ North Slave (Hare) ○ South Slave ○ Athapaskan, n.i.e • Haida • Iroquoian languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mohawk ○ Iroquoian, n.i.e • Kutenai • Salish • Dakota • Tlingit • Tsimshian • Wakashan • Inuktitut • Aboriginal, n.i.e <p><i>Kaska</i> <i>Tutchone</i> <i>Tahltan</i> <i>Yellowknife</i></p> |
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| 1996 | <p>‘Aboriginal languages’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algonquian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Algonquin ○ Attikamek ○ Oji-Cree ○ Blackfoot ○ Cree ○ Malecite ○ Micmac ○ Montagnais-Naskapi ○ Ojibway ○ Algonquian, n.i.e • Athapaskan (Dene) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Carrier ○ Chilcotin ○ Chipewyan ○ Dene ○ Dogrib ○ Kutchin-Gwich’in (Loucheux) ○ North Slave (Hare) ○ South Slave ○ Athapaskan, n.i.e • Haida • Iroquoian languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mohawk ○ Iroquoian, n.i.e • Kutenai • Salish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shuswap ○ Thompson (Ntlakapamux) ○ Salish, n.i.e • Siouan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dakota/Sioux • Tlingit • Tsimshian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gitksan ○ Nishga ○ Tsimshian • Wakashan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nootka ○ Wakashan, n.i.e • Inuktitut (Eskimo) <p>Aboriginal, n.i.e</p> |
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| 2001 | <p>‘Aboriginal languages’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algonquian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Algonquin ○ Attikamekw ○ Oji-Cree ○ Blackfoot ○ Cree ○ Malecite ○ Micmac ○ Montagnais-Naskapi ○ Ojibway ○ Algonquian, n.i.e • Athapaskan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Carrier ○ Chilcotin ○ Chipewyan ○ Dene ○ Dogrib ○ Kutchin-Gwich’in (Loucheux) ○ North Slave (Hare) ○ South Slave ○ Athapaskan, n.i.e • Haida • Iroquoian languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mohawk ○ Iroquoian, n.i.e • Kutenai • Salish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shuswap ○ Thompson (Ntlakapamux) ○ Salish, n.i.e • Siouan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dakota/Sioux • Tlingit • Tsimshian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gitksan ○ Nishga ○ Tsimshian • Wakashan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nootka ○ Wakashan, n.i.e • Inuktitut (Eskimo) <p>Aboriginal, n.i.e</p> |
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| 2006 | <p>‘Aboriginal languages’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algonquian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Algonquin ○ Atikamekw ○ Oji-Cree ○ Blackfoot ○ Cree ○ Malecite ○ Mi'kmaq ○ Montagnais-Naskapi ○ Ojibway ○ Algonquian, n.i.e • Athapaskan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Carrier ○ Chilcotin ○ Chipewyan ○ Dene ○ Dogrib ○ Kutchin-Gwich'in (Loucheux) ○ North Slave (Hare) ○ South Slave ○ Athapaskan, n.i.e • Haida • Iroquoian languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mohawk ○ Iroquoian, n.i.e • Kutenai • Salish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shuswap ○ Thompson (Ntlakapamux) ○ Salish, n.i.e • Siouan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dakota/Sioux • Tlingit • Tsimshian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gitksan ○ Nisga'a ○ Tsimshian • Wakashan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nootka ○ Wakashan, n.i.e • Inuktitut <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inuinnaqtun ○ Inuktitut, n.i.e <p>Aboriginal, n.i.e</p> |
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| 2011 | <p>‘Aboriginal languages’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algonquian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Algonquin ○ Atikamekw ○ Oji-Cree ○ Blackfoot ○ Cree languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cree, n.o.s ▪ Swampy Cree ▪ Plains Cree ▪ Woods Cree ▪ Cree, n.i.e ○ Malecite ○ Mi'kmaq ○ Innu/Montagnais ○ Naskapi ○ Ojibway ○ Algonquian, n.i.e • Athapaskan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beaver ○ Carrier ○ Chilcotin ○ Chipewyan ○ Dene ○ Kaska (Nahani) ○ Tlicho (Dogrib) ○ Gwich'in ○ North Slavey (Hare) ○ South Slavey ○ Sarcee ○ Sekani ○ Tahltan ○ Northern Tutchone ○ Southern Tutchone ○ Tutchone, n.o.s ○ Wet'suwet'en ○ Athapaskan, n.i.e • Haida • Iroquoian languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mohawk ○ Cayuga ○ Oneida ○ Iroquoian, n.i.e • Kutenai • Salish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shuswap (Secwepemctsin) ○ Halkomelem ○ Lillooet ○ Okanagan ○ Squamish ○ Straits ○ Thompson (Ntlakapamux) ○ Salish, n.i.e • Siouan |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dakota ○ Stoney ● Tlingit ● Tsimshian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gitksan ○ Nisga'a ○ Tsimshian ● Wakashan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nootka ○ Haisla ○ Heiltsuk ○ Kwakiutl (Kwak'wala) ○ Wakashan, n.i.e ● Inuit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inuktitut ○ Inuinnaqtun ○ Inuvialuktun ○ Inuit, n.i.e ● Michif <p>Aboriginal, n.o.s</p> |
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| 2016 | <p>‘Aboriginal languages’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algonquian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Blackfoot ○ Cree-Montagnais languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Atikamekw ▪ Montagnais (Innu) ▪ Moose Cree ▪ Naskapi ▪ Northern East Cree ▪ Southern East Cree ▪ Swampy Cree ▪ Plains Cree ▪ Woods Cree ▪ Cree, n.o.s ○ Eastern Algonquian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Malecite ▪ Mi’kmaq ○ Ojibway-Potawatomi languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Algonquin ▪ Ojibway ▪ Oji-Cree ▪ Ottawa (Odawa) ○ Algonquian, n.i.e • Athabaskan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Northern Athabaskan languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beaver ▪ Carrier ▪ Chilcotin ▪ Chipewyan ▪ Dene ▪ Tlicho (Dogrib) ▪ Gwich’in ▪ Sarcee ▪ Sekani ▪ Babine (Wet’suwet’en) ▪ Tahltan Languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaska (Nahani) • Tahltan ▪ Slavey-Hare languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Slavey (Hare) • South Slavey • Slavey, n.o.s ▪ Tutchone Languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Tutchone • Southern Tutchone ○ Athabaskan, n.i.e • Haida • Iroquoian languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mohawk ○ Cayuga ○ Oneida ○ Iroquoian, n.i.e • Kutenai • Salish |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shuswap (Secwepemetsin) ○ Halkomelem ○ Lillooet ○ Okanagan ○ Squamish ○ Straits ○ Thompson (Ntlakapamux) ○ Comox ○ Salish, n.i.e • Siouan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dakota ○ Stoney • Tlingit • Tsimshian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gixsan (Gitksan) ○ Nisga'a ○ Tsimshian • Wakashan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nuuchahnulth (Nootka) ○ Haisla ○ Heiltsuk ○ Kwakiutl (Kwak'wala) ○ Wakashan, n.i.e • Inuit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inuktitut ○ Inuinnaqtun (Inuvialuktun) ○ Inuit, n.i.e • Michif <p>Aboriginal languages, n.o.s</p> |
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| 2021 | <p>‘Indigenous languages’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algonquian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Blackfoot ○ Cree-Innu languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Atikamekw ▪ Innu (Montagnais) ▪ Naskapi ▪ Cree languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iyiyiw-Ayimiwin (Northern East Cree) • Inu Ayimun (Southern East Cree) • Nehinawewin (Swampy Cree) • Nehiyawewin (Plains Cree) • Nihithawiwin (Woods Cree) • Ililimowin (Moose Cree) • Cree, n.o.s ○ Eastern Algonquian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wolastoqewi (Malecite) ▪ Mi'kmaq ○ Ojibway-Potawatomi languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anicinabemowin (Algonquin) ▪ Oji-Cree ▪ Ojibway languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anishinaabemowin (Chippewa) • Daawaamwin (Odawa) • Saulteau (Western Ojibway) • Ojibway n.o.s ○ Algonquian, n.i.e • Athabaskan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Northern Athabaskan languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dane-zaa (Beaver) ▪ Dakelh (Carrier) ▪ Tsilhqot'in (Chilcotin) ▪ Dene, n.o.s ▪ Tlicho (Dogrib) ▪ Gwich'in ▪ Tse'khene (Sekani) ▪ Wet'suwet'en-Babine ▪ Tsuu T'ina (Sarsi) ▪ Tahltan Languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaska (Nahani) • Tahltan ▪ Slavey-Hare languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satuotine Yati (North Slavey) • Deh Gah Ghotie Zhatie (South Slavey) • Slavey, n.o.s ▪ Tutchone Languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Tutchone • Southern Tutchone • Tutchone, n.o.s ○ Tlingit ○ Athabaskan, n.i.e • Haida • Iroquoian languages |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mohawk ○ Cayuga ○ Oneida ○ Iroquoian, n.i.e • Ktunaxa (Kutenai) • Salish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Secwepemetsin (Shuswap) ○ Halkomelem ○ Lillooett ○ Syilx (Okanagan) ○ Squamish ○ Straits ○ Ntlakapamux (Thompson) ○ Salish, n.i.e • Siouan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assiniboine ○ Dakota ○ Stoney ○ Siouan, n.i.e • Tsimshian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gixsan (Gitksan) ○ Nisga'a ○ Tsimshian • Wakashan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nuuchah-nulth (Nootka) ○ Haisla ○ Heiltsuk ○ Kwak'waka (Kwakiutl) ○ Wakashan, n.i.e • Inuktitut (Inuit) languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inuinnaqtun (Inuvialuktun) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inuinnaqtun ▪ Inuvialuktun ○ Inuktitut ○ Inuktitut (Inuit), n.i.e • Michif <p>Indigenous languages, n.o.s Indigenous languages, n.i.e</p> <p><i>Comox</i></p> |
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Sources for the languages for each year:

1921: Dominion Bureau of Statistics (1925) p494, data table.

1931: Dominion Bureau of Statistics (1936) p1445, census questionnaire.

1941: Dominion Bureau of Statistics (1941) p929, census questionnaire.

1951: Dominion Bureau of Statistics (1953) Appendix D, census questionnaire.

1956: N/A, no language question asked that year.

1961: Dominion Bureau of Statistics (1969b) Appendix A, census questionnaire.

1966: N/A, no language question asked that year.

1971: Statistics Canada (1976) p13, profile of language data from the census (data table).

1976: Statistics Canada (1978) Table 1, profile of language data from the census (data table).

1981: Statistics Canada (1982) p114, data dictionary.

1986: Statistics Canada (1992a) Appendix C, data dictionary.

1991: Statistics Canada (1992a) Appendix C, data dictionary.

1996: Statistics Canada (1999) Appendix G, data dictionary.

2001: Statistics Canada (2004) Appendix G, data dictionary.

2006: Statistics Canada (2007), data dictionary.

2011: Statistics Canada (2015b), data dictionary.

2016: Statistics Canada (2017a), data dictionary.

2021: Statistics Canada (2022d), data dictionary.

Appendix 4: Language questions in the Canadian census since 1901

For 2021 questions, see Table 3. All questions sent to a sample were asked as well as the questions sent to 100% of the population that year, not instead of them. An X indicates that no language questions were asked that year. Where ‘this job’ is indicated, a respondent will have already answered a question enquiring as to their place of work. Where ‘Write-in’ or ‘specify’ is indicated, space was given to write the name of any language.

| Year | Sample | Question | Answer options |
|------|--------|--------------------------|--|
| 1901 | 100% | Can you speak English? | Yes No |
| | | Can you speak French? | Yes No |
| | | Mother tongue | Write-in |
| 1911 | 100% | Language commonly spoken | E = English F = French E and F = English and French |
| | | Mother tongue | If English or French: just E or F is recorded If not English or French, but English and/or French have been learned, the mother tongue is written out below a line, such as: <div style="text-align: center;">E ----- Russian</div> If not English or French, and neither English nor French has been learned, just the mother tongue is written out. |
| 1921 | 100% | Can you speak English? | Yes No |
| | | Can you speak French? | Yes No |
| | | Mother tongue | Write-in |

| | | | |
|------|------|---|--|
| 1931 | 100% | Can you speak English? | Yes No |
| | | Can you speak French? | Yes No |
| | | Mother tongue | Write-in |
| 1941 | 100% | Do you speak English? | Yes No |
| | | Do you speak French? | Yes No |
| | | Mother tongue | Write-in |
| 1951 | 100% | Can this person speak English? French? | Speaks both English and French Speaks English but not French Speaks French but not English Unable to speak English or French |
| | | Mother tongue | English French Gaelic German Indian or Eskimo Italian Japanese Magyar Netherlands Norwegian Polish Russian Slovak Swedish Ukrainian Yiddish Write-in |
| 1956 | X | X | X |

| | | | |
|------|------|--|---|
| 1961 | 100% | What language did you first learn in childhood and still understand? | English French Danish Finnish German Indian or Eskimo Italian Magyar Netherlands Norwegian Polish Russian Slovak Swedish Ukrainian Yiddish Write-in |
| | | Can you speak English? French? | English only French only Both English and French Neither English nor French |
| 1966 | X | X | X |

| | | | |
|------|------|---|---|
| 1971 | 100% | Can you speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation? | English only French only Both English and French Neither English nor French |
| | | MOTHER TONGUE: language first learned and still understood. (If not, next language learned and still understood.) | English French German Italian Write-in |
| | | What language do you MOST OFTEN speak at home now? | English French German Indian Italian Magyar Netherlands Polish Ukrainian Yiddish Write-in |
| 1976 | 100% | MOTHER TONGUE: Language FIRST spoken and STILL UNDERSTOOD | English French German Italian Ukrainian Write-in |

| | | | |
|------|------|---|--|
| 1981 | 100% | What is the language you first learned in childhood and still understand? | English French German Italian Ukrainian Other language; specify |
| | 20% | Can you speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation? | English only French only Both English and French Neither English nor French |
| | | What language do you yourself speak most often at home now? | English French German Italian Ukrainian Other (specify) |
| 1986 | 100% | What is the language you first learned in childhood and still understand? | English French German Italian Ukrainian Other (specify) |
| | 20% | Can you speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation? | English only French only Both English and French Neither English nor French |
| | | What language do you yourself speak at home now? (If more than one language, which language do you speak most often?) | English French Italian Chinese German Other (specify) |
| 1991 | 100% | What is the language this person first learned at home in childhood and still understands? | English French Other language; specify |

| | | | |
|------|------|--|--|
| | 20% | Can this person speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation? | English only French only Both English and French Neither English nor French |
| | | What language does this person speak most often at home? | English French Write-in |
| | | What language(s), other than English or French, can this person speak well enough to conduct a conversation? | None Specify other language(s) |
| 1996 | 100% | What is the language that this person first learned at home in childhood and still understands? | English French Other language; specify |
| | 20% | Can this person speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation? | English only French only Both English and French Neither English nor French |
| | | What language does this person speak most often at home? | English French Write-in |
| | | What language(s), other than English or French, can this person speak well enough to conduct a conversation? | None Specify other language(s) |

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|------|------|--|--|
| 2001 | 100% | What is the language that this person first learned at home in childhood and still understands? | English French Other language; specify |
| | 20% | Can this person speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation? | English only French only Both English and French Neither English nor French |
| | | What language does this person speak most often at home? | English French Write-in |
| | | Does this person speak any other languages on a regular basis at home? | No Yes, English Yes, French Yes, other language: specify |
| | | What language(s), other than English or French, can this person speak well enough to conduct a conversation? | None Specify other language(s) |
| | | In this job, what language did this person use most often? | English French Other - specify |
| | | Did this person use any other languages on a regular basis in this job? | No Yes, English Yes, French Yes, other - specify |

| | | | |
|------|---|--|--|
| 2006 | 100% | What is the language that this person first learned at home in childhood and still understands? | English French Other language; specify |
| | 20% | Can this person speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation? | English only French only Both English and French Neither English nor French |
| | | What language does this person speak most often at home? | English French Write-in |
| | | Does this person speak any other languages on a regular basis at home? | No Yes, English Yes, French Yes, other language - specify |
| | | What language(s), other than English or French, can this person speak well enough to conduct a conversation? | None Specify other language(s) |
| | | In this job, what language did this person use most often? | English French Other - specify |
| | | Did this person use any other languages on a regular basis in this job? | No Yes, English Yes, French Yes, other - specify |
| | All households in the northern territories and Aboriginal communities and settlements | <i>Same as 25% sample except...</i> | |
| | | What language(s), other than English or French, can this person speak well enough to conduct a conversation? Examples of Aboriginal languages: Cree, Inuktitut, Ojibway, Montagnais-Naskapi, Mi'kmaq (Micmac), Dakota, Dene, etc. | None Specify other language(s) |

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| 2011 | 100% | Can this person speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation? | English only French only Both English and French Neither English nor French |
| | | What language does this person speak most often at home? | English French Write-in |
| | | Does this person speak any other languages on a regular basis at home? | No Yes, English Yes, French Yes, other language: specify |
| | | What is the language that this person first learned at home in childhood and still understands? | English French Other language; specify |
| | 30% (NHS) | In this job, what language did this person use most often? | English French Other (specify) |
| | | Did this person use any other languages on a regular basis in this job? | No Yes, English Yes, French Yes, other (specify) |
| | Rural, northern, and Aboriginal form of NHS | <i>Same as NHS except...</i> | |
| | | What language(s), other than English or French, can this person speak well enough to conduct a conversation? <i>Examples of Aboriginal languages: Cree, Inuktitut, Ojibway, Innu, Mi'kmaq, Dakota, Dene, Michif, etc.</i> | None Specify other languages |

| | | | |
|------|---|--|--|
| 2016 | 100% | Can this person speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation? | English only French only Both English and French Neither English nor French |
| | | What language does this person speak most often at home? | English French Write-in |
| | | Does this person speak any other languages on a regular basis at home? | No Yes, English Yes, French Yes, other language: specify |
| | | What is the language that this person first learned at home in childhood and still understands? | English French Other language; specify |
| | 25% | What language(s), other than English or French, can this person speak well enough to conduct a conversation? | None Other language(s) – specify: |
| | | In this job, what language did this person use most often? | English French Other language – specify: |
| | | Did this person use any other languages on a regular basis in this job? | No Yes, English Yes, French Yes, other language – specify: |
| | Rural (all households in enumerator or canvasser areas) | <i>Same as 25% sample except...</i> | |
| | | What language(s), other than English or French, can this person speak well enough to conduct a conversation? <i>Examples of Aboriginal languages: Plains Cree, Inuktitut, Ojibway, Innu/Montagnais, Mi'kmaq, Dakota, Dene, Michif, etc.</i> | None Other language(s) – specify: |

Sources of the questions for each year:

1901: Census Office (1901) p16
1911: Census Office (1911) p37
1921: Dominion Bureau of Statistics (1921) p26
1931: Dominion Bureau of Statistics (1936) p1445
1941: Dominion Bureau of Statistics (1950) p929
1951: Dominion Bureau of Statistics (1953) Appendix D
1956: Dominion Bureau of Statistics (1958) Appendix D
1961: Dominion Bureau of Statistics (1969b) p148
1966: Dominion Bureau of Statistics (1969a) pxxx
1971: Statistics Canada (1976) p8
1976: Statistics Canada (1979) p19
1981: Statistics Canada (1981)
1986: Statistics Canada (1990) p155
1991: Statistics Canada (1992a p271, 1992b p16)
1996: Statistics Canada (2012)
2001: Statistics Canada (2018b)
2006: Statistics Canada (2015a)
2011: Statistics Canada (2020b)
2011 NHS: Statistics Canada (2015f)
2016: Statistics Canada (2017b)
2021: Statistics Canada (2020a)

Appendix 5: Language questions in the IPS since 1991

Questions are presented in separate tables for each year. Only questions from the standard questionnaire are included here, so any questions on the Nunavut, child, or other supplementary questionnaires are not included. Where ‘write in’ is indicated, respondents had space to write the name of any language.

1991 (Statistics Canada 1993)

| Number | Question | Answer options |
|--------|--|---|
| B1 | Do you speak an Aboriginal language well enough to carry on a conversation? | Yes |
| | | No, I can't speak it, but I can understand it |
| | | No, I can't speak it, nor understand it |
| | 1a Who taught you to speak this language (these languages)? Was it... i. Your parents? ii. Your grandparents? iii. Elders? School teachers? Someone else? | <i>For each:</i> Yes No Don't remember |
| | 1b What Aboriginal language(s) do you speak? | Write-in |
| | 1c How much of the time do you speak an Aboriginal language... i) At home? ii) At school? iii) At work? iv) At other places? | <i>For each:</i> All the time (speak neither English nor French at {...}) Most of the time Some of the time Not at all Don't go to school/work |
| B2 | Can you read in an Aboriginal language? | Yes No No, it's not a written language |
| | 2a Who taught you to read in an Aboriginal language? Was it... i. Your parents? ii. Your grandparents? iii. Elders? iv. School teachers? v. Someone else? | <i>For each:</i> Yes No Don't remember |
| | 2b What Aboriginal language(s) can you read? | |
| | 2c Do you read newspapers, newsletters or magazines that are written in an Aboriginal language? i. Newspapers? | <i>For each:</i> Yes No None available |
| | | |

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| | | ii. Newsletters? iii. Magazines? | |
| B3 | | Can you write in an Aboriginal language? | Yes No |
| | 3a | Who taught you to write in an Aboriginal language? Was it... i. Your parents? ii. Your grandparents? iii. Elders? iv. School teachers? v. Someone else? | <i>For each:</i> Yes No Don't remember |
| | 3b | What Aboriginal language(s) can you write? | Write-in |
| B4 | | Do you listen to radio programs or recordings or watch television programs or videos that are offered in an Aboriginal language? i. Radio? ii. Recordings? iii. Television? iv. Videos? | <i>For each:</i> Yes No None available |
| B5 | | Within the last two years, have you used the services of health professionals, legal professionals or social or welfare workers? | Yes No |
| | 5a | Did they speak to you in your Aboriginal language? | Yes, all of the time Yes, most of the time Yes, some of the time No, not at all |
| | 5b | Did <u>not speaking</u> to you in your Aboriginal language cause problems for you? | Yes No |
| | 5c | What problems did it cause? | Write-in |
| B6 | | Did you ever speak an Aboriginal language? | Yes No |
| | 6a | Why do you no longer speak it? | Write-in |
| B7 | | Would you like to learn to speak an Aboriginal language, if you had the chance? | Yes No |
| F3 | 3e | What languages did your teachers use in the classroom during the school years from Kindergarten to Grade 8? | English French Aboriginal language Other |
| F5 | 5e | What languages did your teachers use in the classroom during your secondary school or high school years? | English French Aboriginal language Other |

2001 (Statistics Canada 2003)

| Question number | Question | Answer options |
|-----------------|---|---|
| A8 | Do any of your teachers or teachers' aides teach in an Aboriginal language? <i>(note: question A16: same in past tense for those not currently in school)</i> | Yes No Don't know |
| A9 | Are you being taught an Aboriginal language at elementary or high school? <i>(note: question A17: same in past tense for those not currently in school)</i> | Yes No Don't know |
| B1 | Do you understand or speak an Aboriginal language? | Yes No |
| B2 | What Aboriginal language or languages do you understand or speak? | Write-in |
| B3 | How would you rate your ability to understand your primary Aboriginal language? By primary we mean the language that you use the most often or that you are most comfortable using. Would you say you can... | Understand very well? Understand relatively well? Understand with effort? Understand a few words? |
| B4 | How would you rate your ability to speak your primary Aboriginal language? Would you say you can... | Speak very well? Speak relatively well? Speak with effort? Speak a few words? |
| B5 | How would you rate your ability to read in your primary Aboriginal language? Would you say you can... | Read very well? Read relatively well? Read with effort? Read a few words? Not read in your primary Aboriginal language? Not applicable (it is not a written language)? |
| B6 | How well would you rate your ability to write in your primary Aboriginal language? Would you say you can... | Write very well? Write relatively well? Write with effort? Write a few words? Not write in your primary Aboriginal language? |
| B7 | How much of the time do you currently use your primary Aboriginal language... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your household? • At work? • At school? • At other places? | <i>For each:</i> All the time Most of the time Some of the time Very seldom Not at all Not applicable |

| | | |
|-----|--|--|
| B8 | <p>Are any of the following services within your community available in your primary Aboriginal language?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health services • Justice/legal/policing services • Education services • Employment/career counselling services • Social services (for example housing, social assistance) • Financial services (for example banking) • Other community services | <p><i>For each:</i></p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Don't know</p> |
| B9 | Did you ever understand or speak an Aboriginal language? | <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> |
| B10 | What Aboriginal language did you understand or speak? | Write-in |
| B11 | How important is it that you keep, learn, or re-learn your Aboriginal language? Is it... | <p>Very important?</p> <p>Somewhat important?</p> <p>Not very important?</p> <p>Not important?</p> <p>No opinion</p> |
| B12 | What is the language that you first learned at home in childhood and still understand? | Write-in |

2006

Unfortunately, there is no record of the 2006 APS questionnaire online. However, from the concepts and methods guide (Statistics Canada 2013), it is possible to conclude that the 2006 APS contained questions in the following areas:

- Aboriginal languages in schooling
- Aboriginal languages spoken
- Ability to understand, speak, read and write Aboriginal languages
- Extent of use in the home, at work, in school, at other places
- Services available in Aboriginal languages
- Importance of keeping, learning or re-learning Aboriginal languages
- Mother tongue

2012 (Statistics Canada 2014)

| Question | Answer options |
|---|--|
| Has ... ever been taught an Aboriginal language in classes at school? <i>Note: question is repeated for self-respondents/people still in school</i> | Yes No Don't know |
| Has ... ever been taught other subjects in an Aboriginal language for two or more hours per day? <i>Note: question is repeated for self-respondents/people still in school</i> | Yes No Don't know |
| If yes, in which grades? | (Grade choices: differ depending on area) Don't know |
| Do you speak an Aboriginal language, if only a few words? | Yes No Don't know |
| What Aboriginal language or languages do you speak? | Write-in |
| Among those Aboriginal languages that you speak, which one do you speak the best? | Write-in |
| How would you rate your ability to speak this Aboriginal language? Would you say you can speak... | Very well Relatively well With effort Only a few words |
| Do you understand an Aboriginal language, even if only a few words? | Yes No |
| What Aboriginal language or languages do you understand? | Write-in |
| Among those Aboriginal languages that you understand, which one do you understand the best? | Write-in |
| How would you rate your ability to understand this Aboriginal language? Would you say you can understand... | Very well Relatively well With effort Only a few words |
| How important is it to you that you speak and understand an Aboriginal language? Is it... | Very important Somewhat important Not very important Not important No opinion |
| How often are you exposed to an Aboriginal language: At home? Outside the home? | More than once a day Once a day More than once a week Once a week Less than once a week Never |
| What is that language you first learned at home in childhood? | Write-in |

2017 (Statistics Canada 2022b)

| Question number | Question | Answer |
|-----------------|---|---|
| LAN_Q05 | Do you understand or speak an Aboriginal language, even if only a few words? | Yes No |
| Q15 | Among those languages, which is your primary Aboriginal language? By "primary", I mean the language that you use most often or that you are most comfortable using | Write-in |
| Q20 | How would you rate your ability to speak this language? Would you say you can speak it... ? | Very well Relatively well With effort Only a few words Does not speak |
| Q25 | How would you rate your ability to understand this language? Would you say you can understand it... ? | Very well Relatively well With effort Only a few words Does not speak |
| Q30 | How important is it to you that you speak and understand an Aboriginal language? Is it... ? | Very important Somewhat important Not very important No opinion |
| Q35 | Within your home, how often are you exposed to an Aboriginal language? | Every day A few times a week Once a week Less than once a week Never |
| Q40 | Outside the home, how often are you exposed to an Aboriginal language? | Every day A few times a week Once a week Less than once a week Never |
| Q50 | How did you learn your [primary] Aboriginal language? Was it... At home? At elementary or high school? In the community, such as through contact with Elders or other community members? Through Aboriginal organisations? On your own, using books, software or the Internet? In some other way? | <i>For each:</i> Yes No |

2022 (Statistics Canada 2022h)

| Question number | Question | Answer options |
|-----------------|--|---|
| CHC_Q60 | What language is spoken most often at this main childcare arrangement? | English French Other: specify (choose from language options) |
| CHC_Q65 | Are any other languages spoken on a regular basis at this main childcare arrangement? | Yes No |
| CHC_Q65A | What are the other languages spoken? | |
| EDC_Q070 | Has the child ever been taught an Indigenous language in classes at school? | Yes No |
| EDC_Q075 | In which grades was the child taught an Indigenous language in classes? | <i>Grade choices: differ depending on area</i> |
| LAN1_Q05 | Do you understand or speak an Indigenous language, even if only a few words? | Yes No |
| LAN1_Q10 | What Indigenous language or languages do you understand or speak? | Choose from language options |
| LAN1_Q15 | Among those languages, which is your primary Indigenous language? By "primary", I mean the language that you use most often or that you are most comfortable using | Choose from language options |
| LAN1_Q20 | How would you rate your ability to speak this language? | Very well Relatively well With effort Only a few words Does not speak |
| LAN1_Q25 | How would you rate your ability to understand this language? | Very well Relatively well With effort Only a few words Does not understand |
| LAN1_Q30 | How would you rate your ability to read and write this language? | Very well Relatively well With effort Only a few words Does not read or write Not applicable or not a written language |
| LAN1_Q35 | How important is it to you that you speak and understand an Indigenous language? | Very important Somewhat important Not very important No opinion |
| LAN1_Q40 | At home, how often are you exposed to an Indigenous language? | Every day A few times a week Once a week Less than once a week Never |
| LAN1_Q45 | Outside the home, how often are you exposed to an Indigenous language? | Every day A few times a week Once a week Less than once a week |

| | | |
|----------|--|--|
| | | Never |
| LAN1_Q50 | What is the language you first learned at home in childhood? | English French Choose from language options |
| LAN1_Q55 | How did you learn your primary Indigenous language? | At home At elementary or high school In the community, such as through contact with Elders or other community members Through Indigenous organisations On your own, using books, software or the Internet In some other way |

Language options: These are the languages counted in the 2021 IPS.

- 01: English*
- 02: French*
- 03: Algonquin
- 04: Atikamekw
- 05: Blackfoot
- 06: Cree languages
- 07: Malecite
- 08: Mi'kmaq
- 09: Innu/Montagnais
- 10: Naskapi
- 11: Ojibway
- 12: Oji-Cree
- 13: Michif
- 14: Carrier
- 15: Wetsuweten
- 16: Chilcotin
- 17: Dene
- 18: Tlicho (Dogrib)
- 19: Gwich'in
- 20: North Slavey (Hare)
- 21: South Slavey
- 22: Sarcee
- 23: Beaver
- 24: Sekani
- 25: Kaska (Nahani)
- 26: Tahltan

- 27: Northern Tutchone
- 28: Southern Tutchone
- 29: Haida
- 30: Mohawk
- 31: Cayuga
- 32: Oneida
- 33: Kutenai
- 34: Shuswap (Secwepemetsin)
- 35: Thompson (Ntlakapamux)
- 36: Halkomelem
- 37: Lillooet
- 38: Okanagan
- 39: Squamish
- 40: Straits
- 41: Dakota
- 42: Stoney
- 43: Tlingit
- 44: Gitksan
- 45: Nisga'a
- 46: Tsimshian
- 47: Nootka (Nuu-chah-nulth)
- 48: Haisla
- 49: Heiltsuk
- 50: Kwakiutl (Kwak'wala)
- 51: Inuktitut
- 52: Inuinnaqtun
- 53: Inuvialuktun
- 54: Non-verbal languages*
- 55: American sign language*
- 56: Quebec Sign Language*
- 57: Sign languages*
- 59: Other (Indigenous*) languages

*= not included in questions only about Indigenous languages.