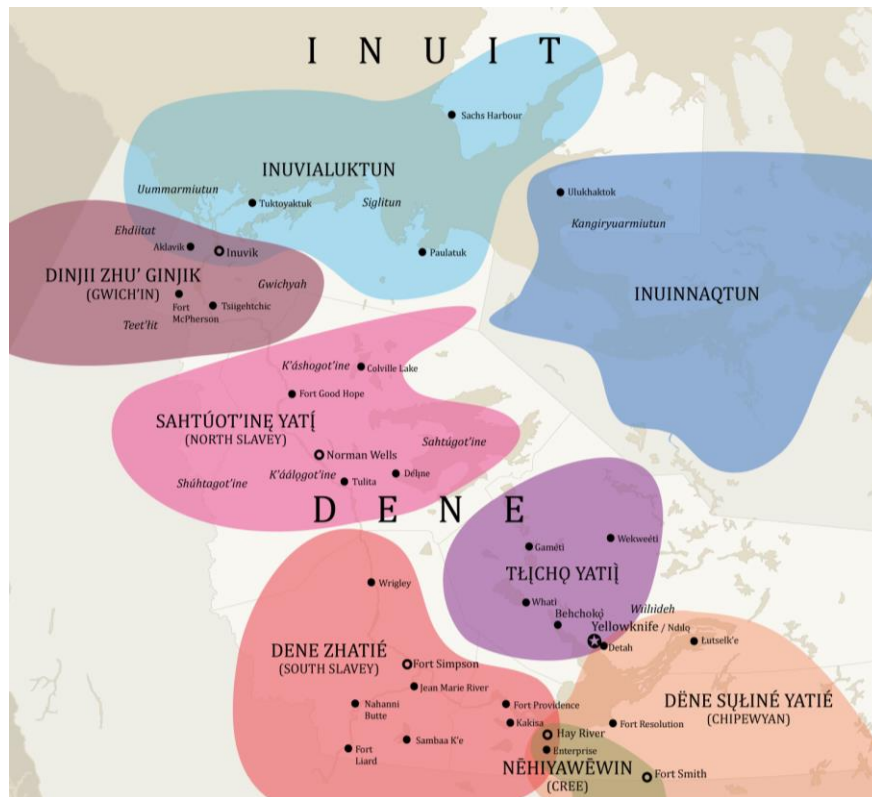


Methodology Report
And
Recommendations from Participants
for the
Environmental Assessment Terminology Workshop
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Review Board
February 11 to 13, 2020

In 1985 and again in 1990 the GNWT amended the *Official Languages Act* to give equal status to nine Indigenous languages in the Northwest Territories. Given that the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (MVEIRB) comes from federal legislation it is not legally required to follow the NWT Act. Nevertheless, Indigenous people in communities throughout the NWT expect to understand issues through the language of their homeland. In the spirit of the Act and in respect for Indigenous people, their traditional lands and their languages in the NWT, MVEIRB does their best to provide translation and/or interpretation as part of their process.

Indigenous people in communities along the Mackenzie Valley speak eight different Indigenous languages.

- Inuvialuktun (Inuvialuktun: Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk, Inuvik, Paulatuk)
- Dinjii Zhuh Ginjik (Gwich'in: Fort McPherson, Tsiigehtchic, Inuvik, Aklavik)
- Sahtúot'ine Yatı́ (North Slavey: Colville Lake, Délı̄ne, Tulita, Fort Good Hope)
- Tı́chq Yatı̀ (Tı́chq: Behchokò, Whatı̀, Gamètı̀, Wekweètı̀, Detah, Ndilo)
- Wı̀lı̄ı̄deh Yatı̀ (Weledeh Tı́chq: Yellowknife, Detah, Ndilo)
- Dene Zhatı́ (South Slavey: Wrigley, Fort Simpson, Jean Marie River, Trout Lake, Nahanni Butte, Fort Liard, Fort Providence, Kakisa, Hay River)
- Dëne Sı́łné Yatı́ (Chipewyan: Fort Resolution, Fort Smith, Ndilo, Detah, Łutselk'e)
- Nēhiyawēwin (Cree: Fort Smith, Fort Resolution, Hay River)



Currently, regional and Mackenzie Valley boards use interpreters to communicate at public hearings. At a minimum MVEIRB provides executive summaries of reports in the official language of the region. MVEIRB is one of the leaders within resource management system working with translators and interpreters to ensure the conceptual understanding of terms is interpreted in a manner that reflects the intent of the speaker.

In the past MVEIRB had multiple language workshops over the years. These workshops focused on terms related to environmental assessment, cultural impact assessment, and rare earth metals.

The 2020 workshop focused on new and technical terminology. In September 2019, MVEIRB staff started to plan and design the workshop.

- Set a goal and objectives.
- Choose terms to translate and/or verify.
- Decide on which languages to discuss and translate.

- Decide which interpreters and translators are most appropriate to participate, given the language focus.

Workshop goal and objectives

The primary goal of the workshop was to discuss and translate environmental assessment terms that needed updating, and to add them to language glossaries.

The objectives were to:

- Have interpreters and translators representing each Dene language in the Mackenzie Valley.
- Successfully translate terms and verify with back translation.
- Discuss future collaboration to fulfill MVEIRB's need for interpreters and translators to act as advisors and resource personnel.

Choosing the terms

MVEIRB staff chose terms based on three factors:

- Obvious inconsistencies in the public's understanding of the concept
- Interpreters' difficulties and challenges in translating new technical terms during past public hearings
- Terms they knew would come up in future public hearings.

MVEIRB collaborated to finalize a list of terms that included new terms and translated terms that needed further verification. Before the workshop they passed a plain language definition for each term to the facilitators for comment.

They chose 56 terms used in environmental assessment.

Choosing the language focus

MVEIRB decided to continue focusing on the Dene Languages that were worked on in previous years, therefore representatives speaking Dinjii Zhuh Ginjik (Gwich'in), Sahtúot'ıne Yatı́ (North Slavey), Tı́chq Yatı̀ (Tı́chq), Wulı̀ideh Yatı́ (Weledeh Tı́chq), Dene Zhatı̀e (South Slavey), and Dene Sı́ıne Yatı́e (Chipewyan) participated in the workshop; this allowed interpreters and

translators to focus and find consistency between languages so MVEIRB's process would have similar and consistent information.

In the future, MVEIRB still needs to develop a Cree glossary. The Nunavut Impact Review Board has done terminology work in Inuvialuktun and MVEIRB will be exploring the possibility of sharing this work.

Choosing Interpreters and Translators

MVEIRB chose interpreters and translators based on recommendations from regional language coordinators. The coordinators were asked to consider the following criteria:

- Well-trained professionals
- Ability to understand technical terms through discussion and questioning of plain language explanation.
- Ability to interpret and translate terminology
- Ability to discuss and agree on consistent back translation among and between the participants from all Dene languages.
- Ability to write their language in Dene fonts

As well, MVEIRB thought it important that participants had worked on previous terminology glossaries and as interpreters/translators for the Board during environmental assessment community meetings and public hearings.

Due to variation in trained, available interpreters, different regions had different numbers of participants. Groups had between two to four participants.

Workshop Agenda

After they finalized the list of terms, MVEIRB met with the two facilitators to agree on the agenda and to consider any changes due to the needs of the interpreters and translators. One facilitator was to lead the large group. The other was to ensure the new and verified Dene terms were documented in a table, with the back translation and English terms.

During the first morning, the Executive Director explained the mandate of MVEIRB. Each morning MVEIRB staff people explained 15 terms. Then participants broke into small groups to discuss and work with the terms to clarify meanings. An MVEIRB staff person sat with each small group to facilitate the discussion.

MVEIRB provided lunch to ensure the workshop started on time each afternoon. We assigned 30 minutes at the end of each day for wrap-up comments and discussion.

Workshop Success

Along the way, the workshop morphed slightly for various reasons. The facilitators discussed each change with the Executive Director, who finalized the changes.

- The three Wulìideh and the two Ṭḥcḥo translator groups joined together, as their languages have more dialectic differences than language differences.
- Participants took breaks based on when their thinking became difficult and they needed a rest, as opposed to timed breaks.
- The Executive Director decided that participants present translations and back translation in the afternoons, to ensure consistency, when group-to-group discussions could occur.
- All groups translated and verified 40 terms. They often adjusted the translation in small groups and in the afternoon large group.

Workshop General Evaluation

Participants noted several positive features about the workshop.

- Including prayers as well as learning and struggling to create new terms in their own language.
- MVEIRB staff person to help clarify terms being translated.
- The interaction and sharing in the large group while doing back translations and the resulting discussion.
- Combination of small and large group work.

- Hearing other languages and hearing how terms were translated and back translated.
- Relaxed and friendly atmosphere, with helpful staff and facilitators.

Next Steps

1. Send each translator and interpreter a package with the 40 translated terms. They agreed to work with elders and other language sensitive community people to verify the translation written at the end of the workshop. They will document each community person that helps verify the translations.
2. Plan the next workshop for the end of April or May.¹ Participants agreed it should happen as soon as possible
3. Encourage interpreters and translators to think about how they could act as advisors and resource personnel for MVEIRB. They will discuss this at the next workshop.

Recommendations from Interpreters and Translators

All participants liked the sharing that occurred. Some preferred to work for longer periods of time in small groups on their own language. Others felt that the larger group discussions were more helpful to translate the terms. That discussion with other Dene language speakers gave them a clearer perspective.

The following recommendations come from evaluation forms and some last thoughts at the end of the workshop.

Recommendations re Before the Workshop

- Consult more with participants before the workshop takes place so we can more strictly follow the agenda.
- Provide more information about the environmental review process so participants can grapple with concepts more efficiently.
- Provide terms and other information a few weeks ahead of time so participants can prepare and think about terms, especially if elders come.

¹ This is now unlikely due to the Covid19 pandemic.

- Prepare a ‘map’ or other visual(s) of the environmental process, with the terms, so participants can see the bigger picture.

Recommendations re During Future Workshops

Most of the following comments were made more than once. The list includes all comments, as often it is one person that comes up with the best idea.

- Do not use acronyms, “please.”
- Continue having participants from all the Dene languages.
- Prefer small group work.
- Involve Dene people in writing the plain language definitions. Easier to interpret if Dene work with MVEIRB staff.
- Need to think of something besides flip charts – perhaps directly into computers.
- Need more time in general and to discuss terms.
- Add another day (four days); a few happy with three days; one participant suggested a week. Use the first (extra) day for a refresher Dene writing course, using the Dene font. The next three days will go faster.
- Properly compensate the person in the small group that inputs the Dene words into the glossary table on their computer.
- Provide a Dene-type feast when the work is finished, according to Dene tradition. Interpreters and translators are important, as is their work.
- Do more language work on the land based terms, since this is about environmental assessment.
- Have community workshops with elders.
- Need better visualization for different concepts. Words like benchmark and threshold need more words so we can understand the concept
- Include more land-based Dene words in the process, so translators have an easier time finding the English way of saying Dene terms associated with the land.
- Hold workshops more often.

- Need recording devices when talking to elders in communities later. But better to have elders at workshop, to keep people calm and help them use Dene terms.
- Provide each small group a recorder to put information in the computer.
- Encourage each language group to better share their ways of translating terms, so others can improve their skills.
- Encourage all groups to share more in large groups.
- Keep large groups. It was informative to hear what other Dene groups were saying. As one person said, “We have all different ways to say things but need to work together for consistency.”
 - One person said it would be best to work just in large groups. Another mentioned, “time was wasted reviewing the literal translation of each language” and that it was easier and more efficient to work in small group with other translators and staff resource person.
- Divide word lists equally among the three days. This gives participants a goal to accomplish each day.
- Provide more traditional food, more veggies and fruit, and fewer sweets. Foods like bannock, dry meat and fish, moose stew etc.
- Move the venue away from a hotel.
- Provide better pictures with explanations of terms.

Recommendations for facilitators (small and large groups)

- Ensure everyone in the group is heard.
- Limit side talks.
- Ensure all participants share and participate.

Recommendations re Elders’ Participation

Probably the most common comment was that elders need to participate. Participants noted that elders at these gathering keep us calm and help us find words. But the exact way to include elders varied.

- Have elders throughout the workshop. If they understand why we use old words for new ways, they will understand and can help us because they have a gift to foresee in this way.

- Need elders especially in the small groups.
- Need terms ahead of time if elders participate.
- Include elders on second and third days, or just the third day to verify the work.
- Take translations to the community and have elders confirm or improve on them.

Recommendations re Verification of Translated Terms and Booklet

- Give enough space to add changes to the table of terms, as well as different dialects of same language
- Proofread the document before publishing any booklets.
- Do verification with elders, with an interpreter and translator; so written Dene sounds are correct and readable.
- Provide funds to verify translations and for elders to assist us.

Recommendations re Final Resource Booklet

- Have Dene interpreters help with next resource booklet, not just MVEIRB staff. Interpreters need quick reference books.
- Provide back translation in the resource booklet.
- Format small booklets so they are easy to carry and use during community meeting and public hearings.
- Give translators who know how to read and write Dene, a contract to finalize resource booklets.
- Have regional workshops so elders and youth can listen which will enable them to experience and what is being done.
- Need workshops on biology, chemistry, and physics.

Recommendations re Sharing Booklets with Dene Terms

- Share the final booklets with the public, especially Dene. Share in schools so children have knowledge to care for land in the future. Share on the radio so public becomes familiar with the terms and concepts.
- Share with industry, government, communities, and within a workshop forum.

- Make a recording so the public can listen, rather than reading. Create CDs, memory sticks, or phone apps so people can listen to translations in communities.
- Create a webpage with final Dene translations.
- Use social media.
- Create an internet database so public can have access, especially interpreters and translators.
- Share with community language programs, especially through language courses, even beginner courses at school.
- Share with MV Land and Water Board.
- Share with all NWT regions.

Other recommendations – some advocacy

- Offer more training for freelance interpreters and translators. MVEIRB needs to advocate with the GNWT. This is important for interpreters to keep up with current needs.
- Meet with interpreters ahead of community meetings and public hearing to go over terms and important concepts.
- Encourage Aurora College to start interpreting and translation courses again
- Have workshops more often.
- Invite government officials to listen

Conclusion

Overall, the interpreters and translators thought the workshop format was appropriate. They wanted more time to discuss terms and wanted elders to be present to help them think of appropriate Dene terms to use in the translations. They would also like to have workshops more often to ensure they keep working towards the public's understanding during community meetings and Public Hearings.