# LIFE AFTER FRENCH IMMERSION: EXPECTATIONS, MOTIVATIONS, AND OUTCOMES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAMS IN THE GREATER TORONTO AREA

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**Abstract**

This dissertation investigates the contribution of French immersion (FI) studies to the Canadian linguistic landscape. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study explored French immersion education from three different perspectives: parents enrolling their children into early FI programs; current FI students who have pursued FI to grade 12; and graduates of FI programs in Ontario, and researched how these perspectives aligned with both the history and policy of FI studies.

Data were collected from three sources: parents enrolling in early FI, current grade 12 FI students, and graduates of the FI program in Ontario. The findings of the study reveal that parents of prospective FI students believed their child would become bilingual as a result of their participation in the program and their child would gain cultural and linguistic capital leading to better future employment.

Similarly, current FI students believed that their participation in the program would open up better future job opportunities, despite not being interested in seeking out French-language employment so much as putting FI on their résumé to secure non-French speaking employment. Despite feeling a high sense of pride and privilege from being a FI student, they expressed a low level of willingness to communicate (WTC) in French outside of the classroom environment which could help to explain the disinterest in obtaining French language employment.

Graduates of FI expressed a similar sense of pride as a result of their participation in the program but 67% admitted to not using French at all following graduation. Of the

33% who indicated they still used French on a daily basis, 19% were teaching French in some capacity.

The findings corroborate findings from previous studies (Lyster, 1987; Swain, 1996; Mougeon, Rehner, & Nadasdi, 2005), which indicate that despite curricular changes since the program's inception, FI students continue to struggle with communicative competence outside of the classroom. Additionally, the data reveals a number of disconnects in the political vision and goals of FI in Ontario, motivations of parents enrolling their children in FI studies, and the utilization of French language skills among graduates of FI programs following graduation.

## Dedication

*To Opa, who was always so proud of me.*

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## Table of Contents

Abstract…… ii

Dedication… iv

Acknowledgements v

Table of Contents vii

List of Tables xi

List of Figures xii

Chapter 1 – Introduction 1
1.1. What is bilingual education? 2
1.2. French immersion in Canada in brief 7
1.3. The Problem 9
1.4. Research Questions 10
1.5. My story 11
1.6. Overview of the Dissertation 21

Chapter 2 – Sociopolitical Context 23
2.1. Introduction of the B and B Commission 23
2.2. The Official Languages Act 1969 27
2.3. The Bilingual Districts 28
2.4. The Official Languages Act 1988 31
2.5. Languages in Education 32
2.6. The Introduction of French Immersion 32
2.6.1. The Creation of the Pilot Project 35
2.6.2. Results of the Pilot Classes after grade one 39
2.6.3. Results of the Follow-up classes at the end of grade one 40
2.6.4. The Pilot and Follow-up Classes at grade two 41
2.6.5. The Pilot and Follow-up Classes at grade three 42
2.6.6. The Pilot Class at grade four 42
2.6.7. The growth of French immersion 43
2.6.8. French as a second language education in Canada 44
2.7. Policy: A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12 45
2.8. The French as a second language curriculum at the time of the study 48
2.9. Vision and goals of the new French as a second language curriculum 49
2.10. The cost of French as a Second Language programs in schools 50

2.11. Linguistic Duality ..... 54
2.12. Summary of Chapter 2 ..... 57

Chapter 3 – Theoretical Underpinnings ..... 59
3.1. Second language acquisition ..... 59
3.1.1. Krashen's Monitor Model ..... 60
3.1.2. Long's Interaction Hypothesis ..... 63
3.1.3. Skill Acquisition Theory and focus on form ..... 64
3.2. Pierre Bourdieu on interest, power, and capital ..... 66
3.3. Motivation and second language education ..... 69
3.3.1. The Socio-Educational Model ..... 71
3.3.2. Cognitive theories of motivation ..... 73
3.3.3. Self-determination theory ..... 74
3.4. Willingness to Communicate ..... 76
3.4.1. Layers of the WTC pyramid explained ..... 77
3.5. Outcomes of French immersion education ..... 83
3.5. Summary of Chapter 3 ..... 92

Chapter 4 – Method ..... 94
4.1. Methodology ..... 94
4.2. Ethical considerations ..... 96
4.3. Research design and procedures ..... 97
4.4. Analysis ..... 102
4.5. Description of participants ..... 105
4.5.1. Parents of French immersion students ..... 105
4.5.2. Current French immersion students ..... 105
4.5.3. Graduates of French immersion ..... 106
4.6. Summary of Chapter 4 ..... 108

Chapter 5 – Parental expectations of French immersion enrollment ..... 109
5.1. Description of Participants ..... 109
5.2. Participants' linguistic background ..... 110
5.3. Why put your child in early French immersion? ..... 111
5.4. Accessible recourses for parents ..... 117
5.5. French immersion versus core French ..... 119
5.6. Summary of Chapter 5 ..... 126

Chapter 6 – Current French immersion students' perspectives of French immersion ..... 127
6.1. Linguistic background ..... 128
6.2. French language in the classroom ..... 131
6.3. French language outside of the classroom ..... 135

6.4. French language and the future ..... 140
6.5. Summary of Chapter 6 ..... 146

Chapter 7 – The social and linguistic contribution of French immersion graduates in Canada ..... 148
7.1. Participants' history in French immersion ..... 148
7.1.1. Graduates' parental reasons for French immersion enrollment ..... 149
7.1.2. Graduates' reasons for completion of French immersion program ..... 150
7.2. On Bilingualism ..... 154
7.3. French in their lives ..... 164
7.4. Summary of Chapter 7 ..... 170

Chapter 8 – Thematic Comparisons Amongst Participants and Links to Policy ..... 172
8.1. Beliefs about the program ..... 172
8.2. Better Opportunities ..... 178
8.3. Importance of being bilingual ..... 180
8.4. French usage outside of the program ..... 184
8.5. French and the cultural connection ..... 186
8.6. Motivation and second language learning ..... 188
8.7. Summary of Chapter 8 ..... 194

Chapter 9 – Conclusion ..... 197
9.1. Summary and Discussion ..... 197
9.2. Summary of the study ..... 200
9.3. Summary of the findings and links to research questions ..... 201
9.3.1. Question 1: What are the parents' goals in enrolling their children in early French immersion programs? ..... 202
9.3.2. Question 2: What factors influence French immersion students to remain in the program and how do they view the utility of their French language skills? ..... 203
9.3.3. Question 3: What social or linguistic contribution do secondary school graduates of French immersion programs make to their respective communities? 205
9.4. Conclusions from the findings ..... 207
9.5. Limitations ..... 208
9.6. Recommendations ..... 210
9.7. Directions for further research ..... 213
9.8. Concluding remarks ..... 214

References… ..... 216

Appendix A – Copy of the online questionnaire for parents available online ..... 232

Appendix B – Letter of information for parents of current of prospective French immersion students ..... 235

Appendix C – Letter of information for students under 18 years old ..... 237

Appendix D – Parental consent form for students under 18 years of age ..... 239

Appendix E – Letter of information for students over 18 years of age ..... 240

Appendix F – Consent form for students over the age of 18 ..... 242

Appendix G – Student questionnaire administered by paper copy in person ..... 243

Appendix H – Focus group questions ..... 247

Appendix I – Letter of information for graduates of French immersion available online ..... 248

Appendix J – Questionnaire for graduates of French immersion available online ..... 250

Appendix K – Thematically organized questionnaire responses ..... 253

## List of Tables

Table 1.1. Differences between bilingual education and language education ..... 4
Table 1.2. Strong forms of bilingual education for bilingualism and biliteracy ..... 5
Table 1.3. Students enrolled in French immersion in 2012-2013 ..... 8
Table 2.1. A Framework for FSL, Kindergarten to Grade 12 ..... 45
Table 2.2. Vision and goals of the French as a second language curriculum ..... 49
Table 2.4. The 2013 allocations of funds the Language Grant ..... 52
Table 3.1. Five categories of Self-Determination Theory ..... 74
Table 3.2. A representation of the WTC pyramid ..... 76
Table 3.3. Communicative competence and its components ..... 81
Table 6.1. Focus group participants and their allotted groups. ..... 128

## List of Figures

Figure 4.1. The ages of French immersion graduates ..... 106

Figure 4.2. Participants' entry grade in French immersion ..... 107

Figure 5.1. How many children do you have currently enrolled in the French immersion program? ..... 110

Figure 5.2. Top eight reasons for early French immersion enrollment ..... 111

Figure 5.3. Appealing aspects of the French immersion program ..... 114

Figure 5.4. Parental expectations of the French immersion program ..... 121

Figure 5.5. Presumed benefits of French immersion education ..... 124

Figure 6.2. My parents encourage me to speak French outside of school ..... 129

Figure 6.4. I enjoy learning French ..... 131

Figure 6.6. I made the decision on my own to complete the French immersion program ..... 133

Figure 6.7. I believe I can speak French very well. ..... 134

Figure 6.9. Students who read French books, watch French television, and listen to French music in their spare time. ..... 139

Figure 6.10. I think French is important in my day-to-day life outside of school ..... 140

Figure 6.11. Students who want to learn French to use it for travel within Canada and internationally. ..... 142

Figure 7.1. Graduates' parental reasons for French immersion enrollment. ..... 149

Figure 7.3. Where or when do you speak French in your daily life? ..... 164

Figure 7.4. French input in participants' spare time. ..... 165

Figure 7.6. Has French been an asset to your personal life and how? ..... 168

Figure 8.1. A comparison between parents and graduates of French immersion program benefits. ..... 173

Figure 8.2. Are French immersion studies advantageous for the future: A comparison between participants ..... 178

Figure 8.3. The importance of being labeled *bilingual* to students and graduates. ..... 183

Figure 8.4. A comparison of students and graduates who read French books, watch French television, or listen to French music in their spare time. ..... 185

Figure 8.5. Does being able to speak French and English make one truly Canadian. .... 186

Figure 8.6. Most common responses to why it is important for Canadians to know both official languages? ..... 187

## Chapter 1 – Introduction

The Commissioner for Official Languages in Canada, Graham Fraser says, "language has always been, and remains, at the heart of the Canadian experience" (Fraser, 2006, p. 7). At the crux of this experience are English and French as the official languages of Canada. The Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages explains, "Canada's two official languages are part of our history and our national identity" (Canada, 2013, p. 1). Thus, Canada faces the challenge of bringing together these two solitudes to form a united Canada. Most critical to the success of this challenge is communication. Fraser (2006) explains:

> What is important is the ability to communicate in another language; it is that collective ability of Canadians to communicate with each other in English or in French and to understand each other's societies that is at the core of Canada's linguistic challenge. (p. 9)

In an attempt to overcome this communicative barrier, French as a second language education is mandatory in all of Ontario's publicly funded English medium schools. According to the Ontario Ministry of Education's website, it is mandatory for students in English medium schools to study French as a second language from grades 4-8 and obtain at least one credit in French as a second language at the secondary level in order to successfully achieve the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (Ontario, 2013c).

For those interested in additional language instruction in French, Ontario's publicly funded school boards also offer French immersion education. French immersion education is a type of bilingual education that ensures that at least 50% of instruction at the elementary level is in French and at the secondary level students must complete, at

minimum, 10 credits taught in French to successfully complete the program (Ontario, 2013c).

According to García (2009), "an education that is bilingual is good for the rich and the poor, for the powerful and the lowly, for Indigenous peoples and immigrants, for speakers of official languages and/or national languages, and for those who speak regional languages" (p. 11). This positive perspective on bilingual education is also seen in UNESCO's (2011) stance on languages where multilingualism and linguistic diversity are strongly promoted through their Education Sector which actively supports bilingual education.

### *1.1. What is bilingual education?*

According to Baker (2011), "bilingual education is a simplistic label for a complex phenomenon" (p. 207). Often, bilingual education is used to refer to two distinct scenarios. The first scenario describes bilingual education as "education that uses and promotes two languages" while the second common scenario describes bilingual education as, "relatively monolingual education in a second language, typically for language minority children" (Baker, 2011, p. 207). García (2009) posits, "some students who learn additional languages are already speakers of the majority language(s) used in their society; while sometimes they are immigrants, refugees, Indigenous peoples, members of minoritized groups, or perhaps even members of the majority group, learning a different language, the dominant language, in school" (p. 5). As listed above, bilingual education can refer to a myriad of possibilities with a variety of populations, and as a result, the term is often misunderstood.

Baker (2011) suggests two main types of bilingual education: *transitional* and *maintenance*. He posits that transitional education simply aims for cultural and social assimilation by shifting the learner's home, minority language to that of the majority language. Contrarily, maintenance bilingual education, "attempts to foster the minority language in the child, and the associated culture and identity" (p. 207). Thus maintenance bilingual education would result in a learner being competent in both the minority and majority language.

Adding to the confusion surrounding bilingual education are the aims of different forms of bilingual education. Ferguson, Houghton, and Wells (1977) posit ten examples of the different aims of bilingual education. Baker (2011) summarizes the ten aims as follows:

1. To **assimilate** individuals or groups into the mainstream society; to socialize people for full participation in the community.
2. To **unify** a multilingual society; to bring unity to a multi-ethnic, multi-tribal, or multi-national linguistically diverse state.
3. To enable people to **communicate** with the outside world.
4. To provide language skills which are marketable, aiding **employment** and status.
5. To preserve ethnic and religious **identity**.
6. To **reconcile** and mediate between different linguistic and political communities.
7. To spread the use of a colonial language, socializing an entire population to a **colonial existence.**
8. To strengthen elite groups and preserve their **privileged position** in society.
9. To give equal **status** in law to languages of unequal status in daily life.
10. To deepen an **understanding** of language and culture. [emphases original] (p. 208)

The abovementioned list suggests that bilingual education has a number of conflicting goals and aims. For example, the first goal is to assimilate individuals which suggests a

goal of homogenizing a population, whereas the second goal is to unify a multilingual society which suggests maintaining a heterogeneous population. The conflicting aims of bilingual education as stated above only add to the confusion surrounding the term.

Often getting tangled up in the term bilingual education is the term language education. Bilingual education can be distinguished from language education in several ways. Typically, language education programs focus on teaching a language as a subject while bilingual education programs use the language as the medium of instruction. Bilingual education programs typically educate through a language other than the language spoken at the students' homes; meaning, students would be acquiring a second language (L2) in addition to their first language (L1) García (2009, p. 6) explains an important difference between bilingual education and language education programs, "more than anything else, bilingual education is a way of providing *meaningful and equitable education* [emphasis original], as well as an education that builds tolerance towards other linguistic and cultural groups". García's (2009) summary of the main differences between bilingual education and language education are compiled in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1. Differences between bilingual education and language education

| | *Bilingual Education* | *Foreign or Second-Language Education* |
|---|---|---|
| *Overarching Goal* | Educate meaningfully and some type of bilingualism | Competence in additional language |
| *Academic Goal* | Educate bilingually and be able to function across cultures | Learn an additional language and become familiar with an additional culture |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Language Use* | Languages used as media of instruction | Additional language taught as subject |
| *Instructional Use of Language* | Uses some form of two or more languages | Uses target language mostly |
| *Pedagogical Emphasis* | Integration of language and content | Explicit language instruction |

(Garcia, 2009, p. 7)

While there is notable overlap between the goals, usages, and pedagogical emphasis of the bilingual and language education programs, García (2009) maintains that the large distinguishing characteristic between the two programs lies in the overarching goal of educating meaningfully. She states, "in educating broadly, bilingual education focuses not only on the acquisition of additional languages, but also on helping students become global and responsible citizens as they learn to function across cultures and worlds, that is, beyond the cultural borders in which traditional schooling often operates" (p. 6). As evidenced by the aforementioned statement, bilingual education seeks to do much more than teach a second language, but in educating broadly, it seeks to develop worldly citizens.

There are a variety of bilingual education programs that encompass the "educating broadly" principle discussed above by García (2009). Table 1.2 quotes Baker's typology of strong forms of bilingual education is as follows:

Table 1.2. Strong forms of bilingual education for bilingualism and biliteracy

| Type of Program | Typical Type of Child | Language of the Classroom | Societal and Educational Aim | Aim in Language Outcome |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| IMMERSION | Language Majority | Bilingual with initial emphasis on | Pluralism and Enrichment. Additive | Bilingualism & Biliteracy |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | L2 | | |
| MAINTENANCE/ HERITAGE LANAGUAGE | Language Minority | Bilingual with emphasis on L1 | Maintenance, Pluralism and Enrichment. Additive | Bilingualism & Biliteracy |
| TWO WAY/DUAL LANGUAGE | Mixed Language Minority & Majority | Minority and Majority | Maintenance, Pluralism and Enrichment. Additive | Bilingualism & Biliteracy |
| MAINSTREAM BILINGUAL | Language Majority | Two Majority Languages Pluralism | Maintenance, & Biliteracy and Enrichment. Additive | Bilingualism |

(Baker, 2011, p. 210)

Table 1.2 describes four types of strong bilingual education programs. In mainstream bilingual programs the students belong to one of two majority language groups and are educated through both majority languages with the goal being maintenance of both languages, cultural and educational enrichment and bilingualism in both majority languages. These schools typically exist where most of the population is already bilingual or multilingual, for example, in Luxembourg or Singapore (Baker, 2011, p. 245). In mainstream bilingual programs the languages are learned at no cost to one another. This type of bilingualism is called *additive bilingualism* (Lambert, 1975). In two way or dual language bilingual education programs, students may come from both the minority language populations or majority language populations and both languages are used for learning in the classroom. The goals of this type of school include biliteracy as well as bilingualism, cultural pluralism, language maintenance (typically of the minority language) and enrichment. Again the type of bilingualism in this program is additive.

Maintenance and heritage language bilingual education occurs when students use their minority language in school as the medium of instruction. This program differs from mainstream bilingual education and two-way or dual language programs in that the sole focus is on the first language. However, the overarching goals remain identical to the two-way language program.

Immersion bilingual education programs typically contain students from the majority language group where the language of instruction is the second language. The goals of such programs are social and cultural pluralism and bilingualism and biliteracy. This type of bilingualism is additive in that students are learning the L2 at no cost to their L1.

### *1.2. French immersion in Canada in brief*

Immersion bilingual education was coined in Canada during the 1960s and thus began a new form of bilingual education. Stemming from the concerns of English speaking parents in St. Lambert, Quebec, a program was developed to educate their children in French as a second language. According to Genesee (1998), the primary goals of the St. Lambert program were:

> 1. To provide the participating students with functional competence in both written and spoken aspects of French.
> 2. To promote and maintain normal levels of English-language development.
> 3. To ensure achievement in academic subjects commensurate with the students' ability and grade level.
> 4. To instill in students an understanding and appreciation of French Canadians, their language and culture, without detracting in any way from the students' identity and appreciation for English-Canada culture. (p. 310)

The goals of the St. Lambert project clearly encompass many of the goals of bilingual education and language uses as described by García (2009) above including to educate in some type of bilingualism in order to function cross culturally. The St. Lambert program was successful and spread rapidly throughout Canada.

The Canadian Parents for French (CPF) compile a table of enrollment statistics each year from data retrieved from provincial and territorial ministries of education. While French immersion is available in all ten provinces and two of the three territories, the program is most popular to those living in Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, specifically, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

Table 1.3. Students enrolled in French immersion in 2012-2013[1]

| Province/Territory | % French Immersion | Total in French Immersion | Total Eligible Students |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alberta | 6.7 | 38245 | 571051 |
| British Columbia | 8.5 | 47849 | 559788 |
| Manitoba | 12.0 | 21214 | 176337 |
| New Brunswick | 25.2 | 18111 | 71955 |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 13.6 | 9118 | 67256 |
| Nova Scotia | 13.0 | 15310 | 118212 |
| Northwest Territories | 8.5 | 698 | 8179 |
| Nunavut | French Immersion not offered | | 9648 |
| Ontario | 9.1 | 174895 | 1932498 |
| Prince Edward Island | 22.5 | 4391 | 19577 |
| Quebec[2] | 36.5 | 36489 | 99850 |
| Saskatchewan | 6.9 | 11518 | 166982 |
| Yukon | Data not available | | |

The highest percentage of enrollment is found in Quebec at 36.5%, followed by New

[1] Table adapted from Canadian Parents for French, 2014 found at http://cpf.ca/en/files/2014-Enrolment-Stats.pdf (Retrieved December 4, 2014)

[2] Quebec Ministry of Education statistics not available. Enrolment for 2012-2013 has been projected.

Brunswick with 22.5% enrolled in a French immersion program. This comes as no surprise given that New Brunswick is Canada's only official bilingual province. While all provinces in the Maritimes boast high numbers of enrolment compared to the rest of the country, Alberta has the lowest percentage with 6.7%. For the purposes of this table, French immersion includes early, middle, and late French immersion programs. Early immersion programs typically begin when students are five-six years of age, middle immersion programs typically begin when students are nine-ten years of age, while late immersion programs begin when students are 11-14 years of age.

Currently, there are approximately 377 838 English speaking Canadian children (Canadian Parents for French, 2014) in just over 2000 French immersion programs (Baker, 2011, p. 240). The spread of the French language is not only restricted to French immersion programs but also a number of professional associations have been established which include l'Association Canadienne des Professeurs d'Immersion (since 1976) and Canadian Parents for French (since 1977).

### *1.3. The Problem*

French Immersion in Ontario aims to produce English-French bilingual individuals in order to contribute to maintaining positive relationships with French speaking Canada by helping "Ontario students to understand Canada's history and to develop an appreciation of French culture" (Ontario, 2013c). According to Hayday (2005), "studies of English-speaking children in the French-immersion programs demonstrated that they displayed more favourable disposition to French Canadian culture and expanded rights for the official-language-minority communities than control groups"

(p. 181). The spread of French immersion has made a significant contribution to the English and French language debates. In fact, since 1984, "the country has not been faced with any major or sustained effort to repeal the Official Languages Act…or to cancel the OLEP [Official Languages in Education Program]" (Hayday, 2005, p. 181). On the contrary, the Act was revised and expanded in 1988.

Due to the significant impact French Immersion has had on the English-French bilingual landscape in Ontario, I question what happens to students' knowledge of and use of French once they graduate and are left on their own with their certificates of bilingualism. Do graduates of early immersion continue using French they studied for 12+ years or is secondary school graduation a linguistic finish line of sorts? How does French immersion produce bilingual individuals who actively contribute said bilingualism to their communities and the country as a whole? Ultimately, does immersion education move into life long language learning?

### *1.4. Research Questions*

These queries are of a particular interest to me because I am a proud graduate of the early immersion program who is interested in improving the experiences of French immersion graduates. I believe learning the French language is valuable and the opportunity should not be lost on students.

The intention of the present study is to contribute to the existing work on French immersion by exploring the attitudes of parents who enroll their children in French immersion, as well as French immersion learners and French immersion graduates. My study is unique since there is a lack of literature that discusses the reasons for French

immersion enrollment linked with outcomes of French immersion programs, and ultimately what contribution French immersion graduates make to the Canadian linguistic landscape following their studies. While studies have presented information regarding the cognitive and pedagogical implications of French immersion programs (Bialystok, 2001; Lyster, 2007), none have highlighted the connections and disconnects between parental expectations, student goals and graduates usage of French following secondary school. My study will fill this gap in the research literature by exploring the following questions:

1. What are parents' goals in enrolling their children in early (beginning in Kindergarten or Grade one) French immersion program?

2. What factors influence French immersion secondary school students to remain in the program?

3. What social or linguistic contribution do secondary school graduates of French immersion programs make to their respective communities?

### *1.5. My story*

My interest in what happens to the acquired French learning of secondary school French immersion students stems from my own experience in the French immersion program. I began the French immersion program in grade 1 after completing an interview where I had to answer an interviewer's questions, draw pictures, and read a paragraph. This interview process somehow deemed me eligible to begin the program one year after my peers.

Despite the fact that grade one was my first opportunity to learn a second language, the concept of foreign language learning was not unfamiliar to me. My mother immigrated with her parents, my Oma and Opa (Dutch for grandmother and grandfather),

from Holland when she was young. Consequently, I would often hear my Oma and Opa speak Dutch to one another and I also know that my great aunt and great grandma (who remained in Holland although visited often) did not speak English. Despite Dutch being my mother's first language, she never considered raising my brother and me with Dutch in the home. The fact that I did not speak Dutch did not really impact my life greatly since I knew that mom, Oma, and Opa would always use English when talking to me. I knew that my Opa was once required to learn German, French, and English when he was growing up in the Netherlands but I had never given much thought as to why he was required to learn all of these languages. I just considered it lucky that he knew some English before immigrating to Canada. Interestingly, until I reached graduate school, I never questioned why I was not taught Dutch by my family.

While I was not taught Dutch, I was encouraged to learn other languages which were regarded as more important and more useful for my future. When I was six years old I began my experiences in the French immersion classroom. I remember vividly as all the students began greeting me in this foreign language. "Bonjour" they said. I had not known that the other students in the class had completed senior kindergarten in French Immersion while I had been educated in an English classroom up to this point. I began to cry and I asked my mother why I had to go to this new school where people were not speaking in English. She replied, "Because it is good for you". I accepted this answer and by the end of my first month of school, I could converse with my peers as if I had belonged there all along. I recall enjoying school and I have no bad memories of learning French apart from my first day of school.

In my experience, attending school in the French Immersion Program has a certain stigma attached to it. I say *stigma* because my French immersion class was often the target of bullying from the other students. In the elementary schools I attended (both in the outer suburbs of Toronto), there was only one French Immersion class per grade level. On one particular occasion, in grade three, the bullying from the English classes began as calling us *frogs* and *Quebec lovers* but escalated to fights at recess. The respective teachers of the two groups insisted we participate in a workshop they developed about difference and respect. While the workshop helped, it certainly was not the last time the French Immersion class was a target of name calling and after school violence.

Despite being the target of some bullying, it was clear that the French Immersion program also had a specific reputation. Many times, as the only "French" class in our grade in the school, we felt a sense of privilege; we were treated differently and as a result felt more valuable and entitled than the other students. There were continuous whispers that the immersion kids were more intelligent and needed the enrichment immersion provided. If, by chance, someone left the program, the reason attributed to this fact by my peers (which was also echoed by some parents) was that student must not have been smart enough to continue on in the French program.

I do not think I am alone when I say that I believed that being in French immersion made me stand out from the other kids at the school. The French immersion kids would play together at recess and lunch. The kids who were not in French immersion never permeated our group. The experience was isolating in many ways since

it limited the number of kids I interacted with but the experience also fostered a sense of solidarity among the immersion group. The program provided me with a very close knit group of friends who remained close until secondary school. At this time, my immersion class fed into a large secondary school which accommodated another French immersion elementary school and several non-immersion schools.

I never once felt self-conscious speaking French with my peers at school or with my teachers. It was clear that in general, everyone was at the same level, nobody would criticize anyone on his or her French skills, and if I were ever in doubt, I would simply just switch to English. Despite the best efforts of many teachers, I do not remember speaking very much French with my peers after grade five or six. As English was everyone's first language, it just came out naturally. Now it is clear that I was learning French in a vacuum because there were not opportunities to speak French outside of the classroom and as a result it became something I did only in school. At this stage, I did not think of the French language as a communicative tool outside of the classroom, but rather another skill in which I would be assessed and evaluated, like gym class.

In retrospect, I remember feeling self-conscious about my language skills outside of the classroom early on. My first memories of this occurred when I was in grade eight. I was 13 years old and my teacher had organized an exchange with another grade eight class in Quebec, just outside of Quebec City in hopes of demonstrating how we could use French outside of the classroom. I remember feeling nervous since the French I was learning was deemed to be France French (and this was implied to be the more correct French) and my host family would be (presumably) speaking Quebec French. I never

questioned why I would be learning a French from across an ocean when I could learn the French that was being spoken in the province right next door.

When I met my host family, I realized that I was extremely nervous about conversing in French with people who I knew spoke French as their first language. I became aware that my own comfort with the language was somewhat contingent on the level of the language of the person I was conversing with. Aside from teachers, this opportunity would be the first time I had ever spoken French outside of the classroom with someone who was not an Anglophone. What was more discouraging was that my host family could speak English well and would often practice their English with me rather than have me speak French as was intended. Even my fickle efforts to begin a conversation in French were turned into comfortable English conversations by my host family.

My experience was not unique as several of my friends had similar situations. In the case that the host families did not speak English well many of my friends just did not speak much. In fact, I remember meeting up with my friends during the exchange and feeling a sense of relief that we could communicate with one another since not much communication was going on in our hosts' homes. It is clear now that this experience did not encourage the use of what was supposed to be our second language; in fact, it may have had the opposite effect. In many ways, this experience highlighted many of my linguistic shortcomings I was not aware of in the classroom. For instance, I have clear memories of struggling to do simple tasks such as order something from a menu at a restaurant or asking for directions while on my exchange. I was worried about sounding

impolite or getting the gender of nouns wrong. These types of tasks were not explicitly practiced at school since the classroom did not present many opportunities for social language output.

The expectation from my mother was that I would graduate secondary school as a bilingual (French and English). At the time, that meant having successfully completed the ten credits in French immersion that were required of me to attain this distinction. I took courses in history, geography, and science in order to successfully graduate secondary school with my certificate of bilingualism. I never questioned how these courses would be relevant in my quest for bilingualism; I was just doing what I was told in order to be successful in achieving my certificate of bilingualism from my secondary school. I did feel that achieving this distinction was important. Of course, I did not necessarily have plans to continue on to use French but I kept hearing that knowing French would open doors to many opportunities. Also, part of me just wanted to finish what I had started.

Once I completed secondary school and achieved my certificate of bilingualism, I was convinced that my days as a French student were over. I could not envision using French in the future beyond saying a few words while traveling. This thought alone is ironic given my experiences traveling in France where I was nearly paralyzed by fear about putting my certificate of bilingualism to use. In fact, on more than one occasion I would approach a ticket counter or kiosk and begin speaking in French only to be answered in English. I took this response to mean that my French was obviously sub par. Why else would the shopkeeper or ticket salesman respond to me in English? These

experiences only furthered my discomfort with speaking French. I was always running through verb tenses and the genders of nouns in my head, getting more and more confused the more I thought about it. Getting out a simple sentence was stressful as I was nervous I would get the tense wrong, or I would sound rude since pragmatics were also not explicitly taught in the school I went to. In short, I was worried about being evaluated by speaking the language I was deemed to be bilingual in. I was always thinking about being correct.

Interestingly enough, I do not have the same anxieties when speaking my first language and there is no doubt that I use nonstandard forms and vocabulary items; however, these *errors* do not give rise to the anxieties I feel when I make similar errors in French. I sometimes make conscious errors in English and do not even bother to correct myself because I do not believe that correction is necessary or even important. Why would I have such fears of making errors when speaking in French given that it is my second language? Why would I have the expectation that I should be able to speak freely with few errors? Is this an uncommon concern of an immersion graduate? Perhaps it is because I've been taught to believe that I should know French perfectly since I am deemed to be bilingual. No longer am I characterized as a language learner: I am *bilingual*. The word bilingual certainly has a specific expectation attached to it, and that expectation points to perfection in a second language. Ultimately for me, having graduated from the French immersion program results in a feeling of being expected to speak like and sound like a near native speaker of French. Graduation seems to signify

an end to language learning and the idea that language learning is a continuous process was never taught or even reflected upon in the classroom in my experience.

I could never imagine speaking French in any future employment because I was aware that my French language skills were certainly not native-like. This, despite the fact that the expectation among most parents (including my own) was that being educated in the French immersion program would open doors to better and more fruitful employment, because after all, Canada is a bilingual country.

I left learning French for the first year of my undergraduate degree and found that I missed the sense of privilege I once felt as a French learner. Additionally, I was considering the teaching field and was told I would get a job easily if I had a French as a teaching subject. Once again I found myself in French language classes. Again, these classes were broad and not specifically related to learning how to speak French well but instead included courses such as History of France, Caribbean French Literature, as well as African French Literature. These courses did not provide many opportunities for French output but rather the time was dedicated to French input and use of the passive skills of reading and listening. Similar to my experiences in the French immersion program, I did not hesitate in speaking French with my peers since we found ourselves on the same linguistic level. None of us had expectations regarding the linguistic abilities of the other. Again, we were all speaking our second language.

Once I completed my French minor (having completed five courses in French), I thought that my confidence might have grown given that I had completed a university level degree in the subject. I enrolled in a teacher's college program in Ireland with

French as one of my teaching subjects. Again, I struggled with confidence, this time with my peers since many came from French families or grew up in French speaking areas. They knew the nuances in conversation that I did not. They knew how to speak colloquially and conversationally in ways I did not. Consequently, I did not speak French with my peers in my French Methodology course but rather would speak English and avoided answering any questions posed in French.

I was nervous about teaching French but quickly realized that I could teach French to beginners and not worry about how I sounded. Again, my confidence in French was contingent on the French level of who I was conversing with and I knew that my French was more advanced than those I was teaching. Additionally, the French I was teaching was similar to the French that I had been taught in that it did not include using colloquialisms.

It was not until I graduated from teacher's college with a qualification to teach French that I realized that there was a disconnect between my schooling in French and my presumed bilingualism. The thought of teaching an immersion group is very intimidating; however, the thought of teaching a core French group does not induce the feelings of stress and incompetence that the immersion group triggers. Why should I feel these feelings when, on paper, I seem to be a successful graduate of the French immersion program in Ontario? Not only did I finish secondary school with my bilingual certification, but also I graduated university with a French minor and went on to complete teacher's college with the qualification to teach French as a second language. Despite

these qualifications, I still do not utilize my French regularly and I find myself to be very self-conscious when I do.

My feelings of self-consciousness now stem from the feeling that I am out of practice. I do not have opportunities to speak French on a regular basis and finding books and music in French is very difficult in the suburbs. I have the option of streaming CBC Radio Canada at home but often the topics are not interesting for me and a search at my public library contained very few French resources. I have subscribed to the magazine l'Actualité but often get discouraged with the difficulties I have while reading the articles. Again, I come across colloquialisms in writing that I am not familiar with.

Ever since I began my reflections on the French immersion program, my courage has grown. On a recent trip to Quebec I found myself more willing to speak sporadic French and I was not responded to in English but rather in French. This experience certainly was impactful for me. However, I noted that I only spoke French when I was alone or when my company had a lower level of French competence than I did. This experience juxtaposes another experience I had while in the company of French citizens who spoke English. In this situation, they would speak French and I would respond in English. I was self-conscious of my French because I knew that I would make perceivable errors. I question this worry I have whether making errors stems from being evaluated and assessed in school on different grammatical forms of the language.

Despite the fact that I invested more than 12 years into learning French, I do not use it in my community at all. As I noted before, I realize now that I was learning French in a bubble with little to no opportunities to engage in spontaneous speech outside of a

classroom setting whether that be in elementary school, secondary school, or at the university level. Aside from travelling outside of my province, I have never been called on to speak French at all. My experiences have encouraged me to investigate what happens to the French of French immersion graduates and how do French immersion programs produce bilingual individuals who contribute to societal bilingualism in their communities and the country as a whole?

### *1.6. Overview of the Dissertation*

The following chapters seek to answer these questions. Chapter 2 describes the sociopolitical context of the French language in Canada and addresses the introduction of the Bilingualism and Bicultural Commission, the Official Languages Act 1969 & 1988, the creation of the bilingual districts, and the introduction of French language in education.

Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical underpinnings of French as a second language education in schools. Specifically, concepts including second language acquisition theory, Bourdieu's concepts of interest, power, and capital, motivation and second language learning, willingness to communicate, and French immersion pedagogy and the outcomes of French immersion studies will be discussed in order better understand French immersion studies.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology of the study and gives a detailed overview of the research design and procedures as well as a description of the participants involved in all three sections of the study.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to illustrating the perspectives of parents of current French immersion students or parents intending to enroll their children in French immersion programs as soon as they are eligible. This chapter covers the participants' linguistic backgrounds, their reasons for enrolling their children in French immersion education, accessible resources available for parents and their perspectives of French immersion programs versus core French programs.

Chapter 6 discusses the current grade 12 French immersion students' perspectives of their participation in the program and their thoughts on utilizing the French language in their futures.

Chapter 7 explores the thematic similarities between all participants. This chapter compares and contrasts questions of similar meaning and discusses some of the disconnects between the results of the study and the current French as a second language policy in Ontario schools.

Chapter 8 gives a summary of the study, a summary of the findings, and a summary of the answers to the research questions. This chapter also discusses the limitations, directions for further research, and recommendations.

## Chapter 2 – Sociopolitical Context

The official linguistic landscape of Canada is often viewed as a two-sided coin with the English language on one side of the coin and the French language is on the other. What is often lost in this analogy is the historical tensions between these two languages on Canadian soil and the efforts of the Canadian government to mediate the conflict. This chapter will describe some of the key historical events that characterize the English-French binary of Canada and address how this binary has affected education.

### *2.1. Introduction of the B and B Commission*

The linguistic tensions in Canada date back to the British Conquest of 1760. From this date forward, the usage of French language was constantly in question. Initially, its use was severely limited due to the Royal Proclamation of 1763 which confirmed British victory in the French speaking lands, and then gained status through the Quebec Act of 1774 and the Constitutional Act of 1791 (Hayday, 2005, p. 16). The Quebec Act of 1774 is crucial in understanding the history of Canadian language policy. Mackey (2010) explains,

> It [The Quebec Act of 1774] has been interpreted as being essentially an ethnogenic treaty – a pact between peoples- one whose leitmotif would colour the course of Canadian history, since it implicitly seemed to accept the French Canadian population and their descendants as a distinct people (race or nation) – distinct by their origins, religion, land, and language. (p. 33)

The conflicts between the French speaking and English speaking people did not end after the Quebec Act. Even though French speaking Lower Canada and English speaking Upper Canada joined together to form a single province in 1837, the conflicts continued to persist. In fact, the rebellions of 1837-38 caused Lord Durham to conclude that the

fundamental problem in Canada was a conflict of the races that could only be resolved by assimilation. However, this did not rest well with Georges Cartier who vehemently opposed this argument (Mackey, 2010).

The union of Upper and Lower Canada did not result in the assimilation suggested by Lord Durham; however, through further rebellions both Canadas had achieved a representative government. According to Mackey (2010), this union with two representative governments had several challenges including: dual premierships, double two-party systems, as well as rotating capitals (p. 35). A solution to these challenges was to create a federation which occurred in 1867. Of the provinces, Manitoba was first to join the Confederation in 1870, followed by British Columbia in 1871, Prince Edward Island in 1873, and finally Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1905. The result was a large country which stretched between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The constitution of this country remained The British North America Act and was drafted mostly by representatives from French Lower Canada and English Upper Canada. This Act was perceived by the French of Lower Canada as "an assurance of diversity and cooperation" while the English of Upper Canada saw the Act as "an instrument of unity and fusion" (Mackey, 2010, p. 35).

The French had hoped that the Confederation would maximize their position within the larger country since the vision for Canada was two founding peoples (the English and the French) with two equal languages. This vision did not seem to ring true with the English population considering that bilingualism was achieved by the French as

a first language population while the English as a first language population resisted learning French.

Maintaining the French population proved to be a difficult task. The immigration of French speakers from Europe had stalled during the first and second world wars and the birth rate was at an all time low. Additionally, original French speakers outside of Quebec and Acadia were no longer speaking French at home (Mackey, 2010). The decline in spoken French catalyzed a change in Quebec's ideology. The belief that it was time to move away from the idea of bilingualism in Canada to French in Quebec was growing in popularity. In 1959, the changing policy in Quebec was evident in the slogans of the political parties that came to power, *Maître chez nous, Égalité où indépendence, Un Québec souverain*, (Mackey, 2010).

In the 1960s Quebec's Quiet Revolution began, whereby the role of French Canadians in Canada was called into question. Bélanger (2000) illustrates, "demand for change was heard everywhere: for bilingualism, for biculturalism, for the respect of the autonomy of Quebec, for equal status in Confederation" (p. 1). The call for change "ushered in dramatic changes to the political organization of Quebec, with a massive expansion of the role of the provincial government into areas previously controlled by the Church" (Haque, 2012, p. 46). The main concern of the new regime was the survival of the French language in Quebec. In 1961 the French Language Bureau (L'Office de la langue Française) was created which led to Bill 63 (Loi pour promouvoir la langue française au Québec) which was a language-promotion act targeting the immigrant and English speaking population.

Despite the call for change in Quebec, it was not until 1963 when attention to language issues in Canada was given serious consideration. Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson set up the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (henceforth the B and B Commission). Haque (2012) describes, "From the beginning, the B and B Commission was conceived by the government as a way of responding to the national unity crisis triggered by French-Canadian demands for full equality in Confederation" (p. 51). Thus the B and B Commission's goals were to address the long standing linguistic tensions in Quebec and also the long standing tensions between Quebec and the rest of Canada. According to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism 1967, the mandate of the B and B Commission was to:

> …inquire and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution. (p. 25)

Also known as the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission, the commission had three main focuses. The first purpose was to investigate the situation and practice of bilingualism within the federal administration and to make recommendations to facilitate the practice of bilingualism and to promote biculturalism. According to McRae (1998, p. 62), the second focus entails that, "the commission was to report and make recommendations…on the role of 'public and private organizations' including mass media, in promoting bilingualism and better intercultural understanding. Finally, the B and B Commission was to liaise with the provincial governments in order to create opportunities for Canadians to become bilingual in French and English (Hayday, 2005, p. 29).

After consulting a number of international models including South Africa, Switzerland, and Belgium the commissioners decided to craft their model after the one used in Finland which offered governmental services in Swedish for the Swedes living in bilingual districts (Hayday, 2005, p. 38). The first report brought forth by the B and B Commission called for an official languages act and states that the main aims of an official languages act would be:

a) to ensure that Canadian citizens can deal with federal administrative and judicial bodies in the two official languages;
b) to provide for the appointment of a high state official, independent of the government, with responsibility for inquiring into and reporting upon the implementation of the federal Official Languages Act;
c) to give the Governor in Council the necessary authority for negotiating with the provincial and local authorities involved – in the latter case with consent of the province concerned – to widen the opportunities for Canadian citizens to deal with the branches of government in both official languages (Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (RCBB), Report, Book 1, Official Languages, p. 86).

As evidenced by the recommendations, the B and B Commission was crucial in the development and implementation of a language policy in Canada. The commission's efforts gave rise to the reinforcement of linguistic duality since it specified only two official languages (assumed to be English and French) and laid the foundation for the first Official Languages Act of 1969.

### *2.2. The Official Languages Act 1969*

The recommendations of the B and B Commission led directly to the introduction of the policy of bilingualism in 1969, when the federal government under Pierre Elliott Trudeau passed the first Official Languages Act. The Act comprised forty-one articles in ten areas. Mackey (2010) lists the ten areas as follows:

> 1 the status of French and English as official languages in all institutions under federal jurisdictions (art. 2)
> 2 procedures for their use in all official documents (arts. 3-7)
> 3 establishing the validity of texts in French and English (art. 8)
> 4 language obligations of ministries, judicial and quasi-judicial administrative bodies, and Crown corporations (arts. 9-11)
> 5 after every decennial census, with the collaboration of each provincial government, to create bilingual districts in places where the number of speakers of the minority official language (at least 10 per cent) would warrant (arts. 12-18)
> 6 creation of an independent Commissioner of Official Languages with extensive powers and the necessary staff and facilities for an ongoing supervision over the implantation of language laws and compliance thereto, reporting annually to the governor general and directly to Parliament; tenure, seven years (renewable) (arts. 19-34)
> 7 Power of the governor-in-council to issue regulations to ensure compliance with the language laws in the conduct of government Affairs (art. 35)
> 8 basic terms and their meanings – "mother tongue," "official language." "Crown corporationm" and others (arts. 36-8)
> 9 modification of the law of on regulations; must certify with the clerk of the Privy Council copies in both official languages (art. 39)
> 10 implementation: time limits for ministries, government offices, and nominations and promotions of relevant personnel by the Public Service Commission (arts. 40-1) (p. 43)

Overall, the purpose of the act was to establish English and French as the official languages of Canada. Additionally, the act called for all government services in central areas and/or bilingual districts, and federal courts to provide bilingual services. Furthermore, the act spearheaded language training programs for unilingual civil servants and began the process of establishing bilingual districts.

### *2.3. The Bilingual Districts*

The suggestion of the creation of bilingual districts was a recommendation originally suggested by the B and B Commission and then echoed in the first Official Languages Act. The B and B Commission sought to implement flexible language

districts modeled after those that developed under Finland's Language Law of 1922 (McRae, 1998, p. 72). As described by Bourgeois (2006), "the B and B Commission adopted bilingual districts as its cornerstone recommendation…because they were seen as the best means to fuse the three essential elements of a successful sociolinguistic policy: language and culture, private and public, and individual and collective" (p. 28). The hope was that bilingual districts would represent the geolinguistic landscape of the country and that they would guarantee the allocation of federal, provincial, and municipal services thus ensuring individual rights (Bourgeois, 2006). As described by the RCBB, 1967 and interpreted by Bourgeois (2006), "The commission believed that if the allocation of public services in both official languages were restricted to bilingual areas of the country, bilingual districts would be acceptable in both the majority and the minority in each region they were established and throughout the country" (p. 28). In short, the bilingual districts served to accommodate the linguistic needs of the minority in the specified regions; whether, the minority be in English or in French.

Despite the good intentions of the B and B Commission (therefore the Official Languages Act), transplanting the concept of bilingual districts to the Canadian setting proved to be a difficult task. The first problem lies in the fact that Finland is divided into specific municipalities or communes, while Canada at the time had vast unorganized areas. Consequently, the Bilingual Districts Advisory Boards were left with the task of selecting boundaries for the districts which further politicized the action since it was up to their own discretion. Secondly, bilingual services offered from federal regional offices were only mandatory when the office itself was in a bilingual district which limited the

services being offered since the service requests often came from those living in non-bilingual districts. Finland, on the other hand, requires that the resident population of a bilingual district be served in either official language regardless of the location of the office itself (McRae, 1998). Finally, achieving federal-provincial agreements on the bilingual district boundaries proved to be most difficult and the board was constantly in disagreement. The goal was to preserve minorities' linguistic and cultural security as well as to ensure a comprehensive country-wide system. The result, however, was disorderly districts which only revealed the disparity between provincial and federal priorities.

The first Bilingual Districts Advisory Board was appointed in February of 1970 and used census data from 1961 to recommend thirty-seven bilingual districts located in all ten provinces. This was problematic since the census data at the time of recommendations was already nine years out of date. It recommended that Quebec and New Brunswick be bilingual districts despite the fact that the census data pointed to unilingual areas in both provinces. In New Brunswick, the board used the relative size of the linguistic minority as grounds for declaring it a bilingual district. Quebec was declared a bilingual district in part because the province was already considered a bilingual district by the federal government for administrative purposes and because it proved too difficult to split up the province to appease the board's purposes.

The second Bilingual Districts Advisory Board was appointed in 1972 and faced serious problems. It retained bilingual status for the whole of New Brunswick and it recommended bilingual districts in the other predominantly Anglophone provinces. The

board, however, encountered strong opposition from the Quebec government which viewed the imposition of federal language legislation as an infringement of provincial jurisdiction (McRae, 1998) meaning the Quebec government believed the districts (if any) should be established on the provincial rather than federal level. Consequently, the board became divided over how to proceed with Quebec's concerns. Thus on December 23, 1976 the Cabinet decided that:

> The Government not proceed with the establishment of bilingual districts but…reaffirm its policy of providing bilingual services across the country, and, in this connection, indicate its intention to review the adequacy and consistency of existing programs including notification to the public of the availability of such services. (Cabinet minutes, 1976)

Thus, the idea of bilingual districts was abolished and the federal government proclaimed a new commitment to improve future and existing services.

### *2.4. The Official Languages Act 1988*

After many challenges to the Official Languages Act of 1969 (Mackey, 2010; McRae, 1998), and the mounting tension from the introduction and abandonment of bilingual districts, a review was called for. It took two years and resulted in a new Official Languages Act. Despite the fact that the new act incorporated articles from the 1969 document it was more comprehensive, requiring thirty-five pages of bilingual text compared to the twenty-one for the previous act. As described by Mackey (2010), the twelve parts of the act covered the following:

1 language use in parliament
2 public documents, executive directives, treaties, and agreements
3 languages of the courts and of the administration of justice
4 communication with the public
5 language of work in federal institutions

> (Provisions of the foregoing five parts to have precedence over past and future acts of Parliament, with the exception of the Charter of Human Rights.)
> 6 participation in the public service
> 7 role of the Treasury Board in policy implementation (as of 1972)
> 8 role of the Secretariat of State in language promotion: the learning acceptance, and appreciation of French and English in Canada
> 9 duties of the Commissioner of Official Languages (as of 1969)
> 10 language rights
> 11 role of the Public Service Human Resources Agency
> 12 amendments to the Criminal Code stipulating the right to be tried in the official language of one's choice (p. 49)

While both acts establish the legitimacy of the French language in Canada, the most notable differences between the act of 1969 and the act of 1988 are the intentions to develop more powerful language legislation and language promotion.

### *2.5. Languages in Education*

By 1970, the federal government institutionalized bilingualism with the Official Languages in Education Program, which provided financial support for second-language educational programs such as immersion programs (Canadian Heritage, 2003). The program was meant to address official language concerns of the public. Examples of funded programs included French for Francophones outside of Quebec, English for Anglophones in Quebec, and for second official language programs in school meaning core French and French Immersion classes outside of Quebec and English as a second language in Quebec (Burnaby, 2002).

### *2.6. The Introduction of French Immersion*

Immersion education in Canada was originally introduced by a group of English-speaking parents in St. Lambert, Québec who wondered what would happen if their children were to attend kindergarten and elementary school where a second language was

used as the medium of instruction. This query resulted in the creation of a program where their kindergarten aged children would learn French from the first day of school while English would be integrated later on (Roy, 2008).

The idea of educating children in a second language in North America was extremely radical at the time despite the fact that education in a second language was not a new idea abroad. As described by Lambert and Tucker (1972) many monolingual parents responded with confusion and doubt that a child would even be able to follow such a language program. Many parents questioned whether the child would ever learn anything in school other than the target language and they were convinced their children would be behind in their home (or first) language. Additionally, despite the fact that French was an official language of the country, it was often still referred to as a *foreign* language.

Conversely, when the program was described to people from Central and Eastern Europe, from the Middle East, from the Mediterranean area, and from Scandinavia, their reactions were the exact opposite. Lambert and Tucker (1972) describe their responses as, "Why not? Sounds like a good way to promote bilingualism. Many of us followed just such a program and now we can handle two and sometimes three languages equally as well. It never bothered me or held me back in any way. Quite to the contrary" (p. 1). These two contrasting opinions highlight the questions and tensions faced while developing the pilot program of French Immersion.

Given the North American perspective, the question emerges as to why the St. Lambert parents would be interested in developing and enrolling their children into such

a program. Lambert and Tucker (1972) discuss three major influencing factors. The authors explain:

> Although they had many reservations at the start, they were nonetheless concerned about the apparent ineffectiveness of current methods of teaching foreign languages, not only at the secondary school level, but also in the elementary schools where FLES (Foreign Languages in the Elementary Schools) programs and half-hearted attempts at bilingual training seemed to promise much more than was ever actually realized. (p.3)

In addition to displeasure with the current foreign language teaching method, there was growing educational research which supported early foreign language education. Thus the parents were looking for a change in how foreign languages (for example, French) were taught to their children.

Lambert and Tucker (1972) also attribute the current politics to the parents' decision to enroll their children in the program. They describe:

> As residents of Quebec, they were also concerned that political movements were under way to make French the "working language" of the province, meaning that their children would likely encounter strong pressures to learn the language when they finished their schooling. In this sense, these representatives of Canada's majority group were looking a generation ahead with the hope that they could provide their children with a thorough mastery of the present minority group's language. (p. 3)

The St. Lambert parents believed that by enrolling their children into the pilot project, they would be giving them a head start as well as an advantage living in the province of Quebec.

Finally, parents who enrolled their children in the pilot project as well as the school authorities involved in the project realized, "…as residents of a bicultural and bilingual society, they are part of a much larger experiment in democratic coexistence that requires people of different cultures and languages to develop mutual understanding

and respect" (p.3). Consequently, learning the other group's language was believed to be the first step in this democratic coexistence.

### *2.6.1. The Creation of the Pilot Project*

There were two public school systems in Montreal, one Catholic and one non-Catholic. Neither system supported the pilot project 100% and thus the implementation of the pilot project faced many obstacles. The first obstacle came from the school administrators and teachers. Specifically, the French-Canadian educators and administrators were especially concerned about having too many English speaking children in their system. Based on their experience, English was viewed as the language of greater value and utility and seemed to spread in its usage among French speaking children and this was exactly what the French Canadian educators were trying to stop. In fact, at the same time English Canadian parents were attempting to infuse more French into the lives of their children, French Canadian parents were trying to delay the introduction of English into their school system.

In light of the aforementioned concerns, the French Canadian parents were not keen on introducing English monolingual children into their kindergarten classrooms. Additionally, teachers also worried about the climate of the classroom should English monolingual children and French monolingual children be mixed. Both parents and teachers worried that mixing the children would only create additional tensions among the two groups.

Conversely, English Canadian parents were uncomfortable placing their kindergarten-aged children into a French monolingual classroom even if it was possible

from an administrative point of view. Instead, they preferred a program that would allow them to "oversee and monitor the content of the educational program" (Tucker & Lambert 1972). Tucker and Lambert (1972) explain, "[the parents] were willing to place their children in experimental French classes within the English-speaking section of the [non-Catholic] school system, meaning that groups of English-speaking students would enter the new linguistic world of French together, all children starting essentially at the same point" (p. 4). This explanation suggests that parents were more comfortable segregating their English speaking children from the French speaking children.

After consultations among parents, school officials, and members of McGill's Language Research Group, the South Shore Protestant Regional School Board authorized the pilot program to begin in September 1965 on an experimental basis. The over arching goal of the program was to promote functional bilingualism using French as the medium of instruction despite the fact that children entering the program were English monolingual children.

The experimental project would follow two classes of children through kindergarten and at least grade one. The experimental project had two classes. The first class consisted of children all coming from English speaking homes, entering kindergarten in September 1965. This class would be called the Pilot Class. The second class would start kindergarten in September 1966 and would be called the Follow-up Class. Participation in either of the two classes was entirely voluntary and took place in an English-language, Protestant (non-Catholic) elementary school in St. Lambert. (Lambert & Tucker, 1972)

While a number of parents were interested in the program, the sentiments throughout the community varied. For instance, the principals of French Canadian Schools believed that allowing English children into French schooling only encouraged the spread of English. In fact, it was this attitude that led to requests for governmental support regarding protection of the French language in work, industry, commerce, business and advertisements (Tucker & Lambert, 1972). Additionally, the Association of (English-speaking) Catholic Principals of Montreal argued that the average child was unable to cope with two languages at once: one language at school and one language at home. The brief prepared by the Association of (English-speaking) Catholic Principals of Montreal (1969) stated:

> While we favor bilingualism and the effective teaching of the French language from kindergarten to grade XI, we reject the so called bilingual school which attempts to give equal or nearly equal importance to two languages as media of instruction. We are of the opinion that the average child cannot cope with two languages of instruction and to try to do so leads to insecurity, language interference, and academic retardation…We have all met people who in adult life suffer from chronic linguistic confusion… (p. 32ff)

These perspectives illustrate the mixed emotions that the pilot project elicited among members of the community and school associations. According to Tucker and Lambert (1972), "These views…are manifestations of a philosophy of fear that jeopardized the opportunities available in Canada to develop a new Canadian way of life by drawing on the best of many traditions already in North America or still coming from abroad" (p. 6). The conflicting views certainly made developing a "democratic co-existence" difficult since neither side of the debate wanted to compromise.

The researchers at McGill's Language Research Group were asked by the school board and the Provincial Ministry of Education to formally assess and evaluate the program. Despite some discouraging literature concerning the consequences of this type of educational program on cognitive development and academic standing of students taught in a language other than their home language (Davis, 1967; Prator, 1950), the researchers designed a program where students were encouraged to master the new language in a natural fashion through interactions with teachers who, incidentally, were French native speakers.

While the researchers began the study with some reservations, they were encouraged by McGill research on the intellectual and academic performance of bilingual in contrast to monolingual children (Peal & Lambert, 1962; Lambert & Anisfeld, 1969). Tucker and Lambert (1972) describe, "these studies compared the abilities of ten-year-old French Canadian monolinguals and bilinguals from comparable socioeconomic and home backgrounds. The bilinguals had opportunities to develop nativelike skill in English in natural ways at home or in the neighborhood that the monolinguals did not have" (p. 7). The results of this study showed that the bilingual children scored higher than the monolingual children on measures of intelligence, the bilinguals were further ahead in school grade, and their attitudes toward English-speaking Canadians were more sympathetic than their monolingual counterparts. These initial observations and results proved to be very encouraging to both the parents of the students and the researchers.

### *2.6.2. Results of the Pilot Classes after grade one*

A number of evaluations took place following the completion of grade one by the first pilot classes. According to Lambert and Tucker (1972), these evaluations found that the Experimental Class fell below the English Controls on tests of English word knowledge, word discrimination, and reading skill. This difference was expected given the Experimental class had no training in English. Despite this, the Experimental Class was as competent as the Controls in comprehending spoken English, and in English speaking skill.

Furthermore, with regard to speaking skills in French the Experimental Class performed lower than the French Controls in areas of story reconstruction, overall expression, grammatical errors and rhythm and intonation (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). Despite these results, Lambert and Tucker explain:

> …they [Experimental Class] are as efficient as the Controls on tests of French word discrimination, sentence comprehension, and word order. They also appear to be as flexible and creative in these more receptive aspects of French as the native-speaker Controls. The Experimental Class turns out to be even more clever than the Controls in associating the sound and printed form of French words. (p. 43)

The Experimental class was as successful as the French Controls in word discrimination and sentence comprehension, but they were also as successful in non-language subject matter. For example, the Experimental children performed just as well as the French and English Control groups on typical arithmetic tests administered for the grade one level (Lambert and Tucker, 1972). Interestingly, the Experimental children were able to follow the directions and problem solve using either English or French which demonstrated that development in the non-language subject areas was not hindered.

### *2.6.3. Results of the Follow-up classes at the end of grade one*

According to Lambert and Tucker (1972), the results between the Pilot Classes and the Follow-up Classes at the end of grade one were very similar. Tucker and Lambert explain, "drawing on the results from the Pilot and Follow-up Experimental Classes, we see that their reading and word discrimination skills in French are at the same level as those of the French Control group" (p. 67). Conversely, researchers found that the Experimental Classes performed more poorly than the Control group on English reading skills, word knowledge, and word discrimination. However, the researchers allot this finding to the fact that students continued to have no academic training in reading English. Despite their poor performance in reading skills, word knowledge, and word discrimination, the Experimental group still scored between the 20$^{th}$ and 40$^{th}$ percentiles on North American norms for the aforementioned skills. The significance of this finding is interpreted by Lambert and Tucker (1972):

> We interpret this rather amazing skill with the written forms of English as a fascinating instance of transfer of essential skills from French to English, suggesting to us that learning of French for these children may in part take place through English. (p. 67)

The researchers hypothesized that students began learning French by translating the new French terms into English, thus they became quite successful at translating and comparing the two languages. As a result, the Experimental Classes created a foundation for the transfer of concepts and skills from French to English. Overall, the researchers deemed the children in the Experimental Classes to be progressing well linguistically.

### *2.6.4. The Pilot and Follow-up Classes at grade two*

Beginning in grade two the amount of class time conducted in French fell from approximately 90% to 60% percent and the amount of class time conducted in English rose from approximately 10% to 40%. One of the main questions guiding the evaluations of the Pilot and Follow-up classes following grade two was whether kindergarten and the first two years of schooling conducted in a second language would have adverse affects on the development of the child's first language. Lambert and Tucker (1972) believed that aside from trouble with spelling in the English language, there were no signs of adverse affects. In response to the aforementioned question, Lambert and Tucker (1972) responded:

> To the contrary, there are certain indications of a beneficial enrichment of native-language development flowing from the bilingual experience. The Experimental children's word knowledge, word discrimination, reading, and listening, comprehension scores are at the same level as those of the English Controls; although significantly poorer in English spelling, they still score at the 70$^{th}$ percentile on national norms for spelling ability…These extremely favorable outcomes indicate that the mainly French training received by the Experimental Classes has left no symptoms of confusion or retardation in the native language. (p. 103)

Despite being educated in a second language, the Experimental classes still performed as strongly as the Control group. Notwithstanding the perceived difficulty on English spelling, the Experimental group still performed quite well on national evaluations on spelling ability. Overall, the aforementioned results suggest that there were no adverse effects after three years of study through a second language.

### *2.6.5. The Pilot and Follow-up Classes at grade three*

For the 1968-1969 academic year, the children in the Experimental Classes moved from their smaller neighbourhood school to the St. Lambert Elementary school which was a larger English-language Protestant school. One difference was that the St. Lambert Elementary school had a small independent stream of French speaking Protestant children within the school.

Once again, one main concern focused on how the Experimental children fared in their home language (English) compared to the Control children who attended traditional English schooling. Lambert and Tucker (1972) explained, "the answer is that they show no symptoms of retardation or negative transfer, and perform as well as the controls on standard tests of English competence" (p. 138). The Experimental children did exhibit some difficulty with English punctuation, but despite this challenge, Experimental children performed as well as the Controls on tests of word knowledge, word discrimination, language usage, reading ability, and listening comprehension (Lambert & Tucker, 1972).

### *2.6.6. The Pilot Class at grade four*

While the Pilot Experimental Class began grade four in the 1969-1970 school year, the St. Lambert Elementary School expended its academic program to include many classes from kindergarten grade four studying predominantly through French. Lambert and Tucker suggested that a bilingual atmosphere was developing in the school where studying French and speaking French as a second language was accepted.

After a five-year assessment period the researchers were pleased with the progress of the Experimental Class. They explained:

> …the Experimental pupils appear to be able to read, write, speak, understand, and use English as competently as youngsters instructed in the conventional manner via English. During the same period of time and with no apparent personal or academic costs, the children have developed a competence in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding French that English pupils following a traditional French-as-a-Second-Language program for the same number of years could never match. (p. 152)

In addition to their English and French skills, the Experimental children had also been successful in other subject matter including mathematics and have not demonstrated any academic difficulties as a result of participating in the program. Thus the previous concerns of the parents and administration regarding the adverse effects of French as a medium of instruction were proven to be nothing but baseless assumptions.

### *2.6.7. The growth of French immersion*

The immersion program grew rapidly. In the 1985-1986 school year, 180 345 students were enrolled in French immersion programs and 295 350 students were enrolled in 1992 (Rebuffot & Lyster, 1996). According to Baker (2006) one of the reasons for the rapid growth of French immersion in Canada was the fact that it is concerned with bilingualism in two prestigious majority languages, French and English. Additionally, this type of immersion education is classified as additive bilingualism. Lambert (1975) makes the distinction between subtractive versus additive bilingualism. The former refers to a situation when learning a second language actually replaces the first; whereas, the latter refers to when a second language is learned at no cost to the first

language. Thus, French immersion provided additive bilingualism because it allowed first language speakers of English to learn French while learning school subjects.

### *2.6.8. French as a second language education in Canada*

French as a second language education in Canada comes in many forms including core French, French immersion, extended French, and intensive French (Lazaruk, 2007). The main objective of core French is to provide children with an introduction to the French language and a basic level of language skills. Typically, this program is introduced between kindergarten and grade 5 and students spend only 20-40 minutes per day learning French (Lazaruk, 2007). According to MacFarlane (2005), students enrolled in the core French program make up approximately 83% Canadian students enrolled in French as a second language programs.

French immersion programs utilize French as the primary medium of instruction. Immersion programs do vary in terms of the starting grade and total accumulated hours of French instruction. Early French immersion begins in kindergarten or grade 1 and uses French as the medium of instruction 50-100% of the time in the initial grades and then tapers off to 50% of the time around grade 5. Middle French immersion begins in grade 4 or 5 and uses French as the medium of instruction 50-80% of the time and tapers off to 50% around grade 7. Finally, late French immersion begins in grade 6,7, or 8 and uses French as the medium of instruction 50-80% of the time (Lazaruk, 2007). According to Turnbull, Lapkin, and Hart (1998), by the end of grade 8, students in early French immersion will have accumulated approximately 6000 hours of French instruction, while

those in middle French immersion will have garnered 2000 hours of French instruction, and those in late French immersion will have accumulated 1200 of French instruction.

Extended French programs are available only in Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia. According to Lazaruk (2007), "[this program] provides [core French] students with additional exposure to French by using French as the language of instruction for one or two core subjects in addition to French Language Arts" (p. 607). This unique program is available from Grade 4 through secondary school.

Intensive French was first piloted in Newfoundland and Labrador between 1998-2001 and has since spread into six provinces from Nova Scotia to British Columbia as well as the Northwest Territories. This program supplements the core French program by including an intensive French period of instruction usually for one half of the school year where students spend approximately 70% of their day learning French (Lazaruk, 2007).

### *2.7. Policy: A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12*

In 2013, *A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12* was developed as a support document for school boards and schools in Ontario. According to the document, the framework consists of four main components: vision, goals, guiding principles and strategic focus areas. Table 2.1. illustrates the four main components of the framework.

Table 2.1. A Framework for FSL, Kindergarten to Grade 12

| | |
|---|---|
| Vision | • Students in English-language school boards have the confidence and ability to use French effectively in their daily lives. |
| Goals | • Increase student confidence, proficiency, and achievement in FSL. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • Increase the percentage of students studying FSL until graduation.<br>• Increase student, educator, parents, and community engagement in FSL. |
| Guiding Principles | • FSL programs are for all students.<br>• Teaching and learning French as one of Canada's two official languages, is recognized and valued as an integral component of Ontario's education system.<br>• FSL education serves as a bridge between languages and cultures.<br>• Learning FSL strengthens literacy skills as well as cognitive and metacognitive development.<br>• Research informs decision making by all stakeholders.<br>• Learning FSL is a lifelong journey. |
| Strategic Focus Areas | • Heightening awareness of FSL programs and benefits.<br>• Enhancing leadership and accountability.<br>• Strengthening programming to improve achievement in FSL.<br>• Supporting all students.<br>• Implementing effective practices in planning, teaching, and assessment.<br>• Expanding student learning opportunities and heightening engagement. |

(Adapted from Ontario, 2013a)

In order for the vision to succeed, the framework suggests that ongoing support from three main sources: educators, school administrators, and schools and school boards is required. According to *A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12*, "educators must be connected and supported through increased opportunities to participate in professional learning communities" (Ontario 2013a, p. 8) while "school administrators must demonstrate knowledge, skills, and passion as leaders of their FSL [French as a second language] programs" (Ontario 2013a, p. 8). Finally, "schools and school boards must find ways of increasing student, parents, and community engagement and confidence in FSL programs" (Ontario 2013a, p. 8).

Thus, the vision requires the commitment and participation of those at various levels within the education sector to ensure the goals of the framework are realized.

The guiding principles of FSL insist that FSL programs are suitable for all students including English language learners and students with special education needs. According to the Ontario, Ministry of Education, 2011, FSL educators aim to meet the needs of all students through the use of differentiated instruction techniques and will provide accommodations and/or modifications as required.

The framework explains that all students in Ontario's English-language schools are made aware of the benefits of FSL education whether at the core French, extended French, or French immersion level. Included in these benefits are heightened literacy skills, cognitive skills, and metacognitive development. The framework insists that these benefits serve students well in academic and cognitive tasks (Ontario 2013a, p. 11).

Research is an integral part of the guiding principles for FSL and the ministry and stakeholders express an interest to remain up to date with current FSL research and encourage all levels of the education sector to share their knowledge of research findings. Finally, the framework posits that learning FSL is a lifelong journey and encourage students to pursue FSL post secondary opportunities in the future.

According to the framework, the strategic focus areas have been divided into the aforementioned six focus areas and are listed not as a checklist of actions to complete but rather as a springboard for discussion among the stakeholders. The goal of the development of the focus areas are for the respective school boards to create their own

action plans to improve FSL programming in their respective schools (Ontario 2013a, p. 13).

### *2.8. The French as a second language curriculum at the time of the study*

At the time of writing this dissertation, the current French as a second language curriculum being taught in Ontario secondary schools was the version released in 1999. In this document, the Ministry of Education states the study of French is important not just because French is one of the two Canadian official languages but also because French is widely used around the world (Ontario, 1999). According to the ministry, the benefits of learning a second language include: strengthened first-language skills, enhanced critical and creative thinking abilities, increased tolerance and respect for other cultures, and a unique advantage in the job marketplace both in Canada and abroad. Explicitly, the goal of French as a second language education is:

> The aim of the new French as a second language (FSL) curriculum is to prepare students to perform effectively in the challenging world they will face by providing them with the skills they will need to communicate in a second language. To make the curriculum relevant to students' lives, knowledge and skills are taught in contexts that reflect their interests and experiences. Students will be able to choose from courses that lead to study at the postsecondary level or to the workplace, depending on their individual interests, strengths, and aspirations. (Ontario, 1999)

Through this statement, the ministry illustrates the focus on communication in a second language as a main tenant of their goal. Additionally, this description also suggests that studying French at the secondary level serves as a pathway to continued French exposure either at the postsecondary level or in the workplace.

### *2.9. Vision and goals of the new French as a second language curriculum*

In 2013, the Ministry of Education in Ontario released a long awaited updated French a second language curriculum for grades 1– 8 which was followed in 2014 by the updated French as a second language curriculum for grades 9 – 12. The introduction to both documents explains the vision and goals of the French as a second language curriculum for both the elementary and secondary levels. Table 2.2. summarizes the vision and goals of the program.

Table 2.2. Vision and goals of the French as a second language curriculum

| | |
|---|---|
| Vision: | • Students will communicate and interact with growing confidence in French, one of Canada's official languages, while developing the knowledge, skills, and perspectives they need to participate fully as citizens in Canada and in the world. |
| Goals: | • Use French to communicate and interact effectively in a variety of social settings<br>• Learn about Canada, its two official languages, and other cultures<br>• Appreciate and acknowledge the interconnectedness and interdependence of the global community<br>• Be responsible for their own learning, as they work independently and in groups<br>• Use effective language strategies<br>• Become lifelong language learners for personal growth and for active participation as world citizens |

(Adapted from Ontario, 2013d, p. 6)

In order to achieve these goals, the Ministry of Education believes students must "acquire a strong oral foundation in the French language and focus on communicating in French" (Ontario, 2013d, p. 6). Thus communication is paramount in the curriculum. Additionally, students must "understand the value of learning another language" (Ontario, 2013d, p. 6). While this concept is not specifically addressed, the document eludes to the development of cultural understanding, an appreciation of history, and a

competitive advantage in the workforce as potential values in learning another language. Finally, students need to:

> Develop the skills needed to strengthen traits of resilience and to secure a sense of self, through opportunities to learn adaptive management, and coping skills, to practise communication skills, to build relationships and interact positively with others, and to use critical and creative thinking processes. (Ontario, 2013d, p. 6)

Thus students need to develop self-confidence that allows them to face the challenges of learning a second language without this hindering their sense of self. The communication skills they learn should be put to building positive relationships and critical thinking skills.

While the new curriculum incorporates some of the original ideas from the former version, for example, the emphasis on communication, the Canadian cultural connections of the French language, and the notion of use of the French language following secondary school, the new curriculum expands on these basic ideas in detail and adds in elements of learning strategies and global citizenship.

### *2.10. The cost of French as a Second Language programs in schools*

As the number of French immersion students in Ontario rises, so does the amount of funding it takes for the school boards to offer the program. The next section briefly describes educational funding in Ontario and explores the allocation of funds to French as a Second Language programs in Ontario.

The Ontario Ministry of Education uses specific criteria and formulae to calculate the Grants for Student Needs (GSN), which allocates funding to individual school boards for the purposes of financial reporting and budgeting (Ontario 2013b, p.5). According to the Ontario Ministry of Education, the funding to school boards through the GSN for the

2013-2014 school year is $20.80 billion (Ontario 2013b, p.5). The Educational funding of 2013-2014 is made up of: Pupil Foundation Grant, School Foundation Grant, twelve special purpose grants and Debt Service.

The ministry describes, "the Pupil Foundation Grant is a per-pupil allocation that supports the elements of a classroom education that are required by, and generally common to, all students" (Ontario 2013b, p. 12). The Pupil Foundation Grant provides funding for everything found in the school from classroom teachers, education assistants, and library and guidance services to textbooks, supplies, and computers.

While the School Foundation Grant covers administrative affairs including principals and vice-principals, school secretaries and office supplies. The twelve special purpose grants allocate specific funds to various boards of education, "which respond to the varying circumstances of boards and students. Special purpose grants recognize the different levels of support required by boards and students related to location, student and school needs, and a board's demographic profile" (Ministry of Education, p. 25). The twelve special purpose grants are as follows: Special Education Grant; Language Grant; First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Supplement; Geographic Circumstances Grant; Learning Opportunities Grant; Safe Schools Supplement; Continuing Education and Other Programs Grant; Cost Adjustment and Teacher Qualifications and Experience Grant; Student Transportation Grant; Declining Enrolment Adjustment; School Board Administration and Governance Grant; and School Facility Operations and Renewal Grant.

According to the ministry, "the Language Grant provides funding to meet the school boards' cost for language instruction" (Ontario 2013b, p. 39). The grant has five specific allocations: English as a Second Language/English Literacy Development Allocation, French as a First Language (FFL) Allocation, French as a Second Language (FSL) Allocation, Actualisation linguistique en français (ALF) Allocation, and Programme d'appui aux nouveau arrivants (PANA) allocation. Table 2.2 illustrates the allocation of funds to the five allocations in order from highest to lowest allocation.

Table 2.4. The 2013 allocations of funds the Language Grant

| | |
|---|---|
| French as a Second Language (FSL) Allocation | $240.4 million |
| English as Second Language/English Literacy Development (ESL/ELD) Allocation | $226.5 million |
| Actualisation linguistique en français (ALF) Allocation | $98.4 million |
| French as a First Language (FFL) Allocation | $74.4 million |
| Programme d'appui aux nouveaux arrivants (PANA) Allocation | $6.4 million |

(Adapted from Ontario 2013b, p. 39)

The table illustrates that the FSL allocation is the largest allocation, even higher than the ESL/ELD allocation which provides funding to pupils who have recently immigrated who were born in countries other than Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand.

French as a Second Language (FSL) funding is available only to the English language boards since it is intended to cover the additional costs of providing core French, extended French, and French immersion programs to students. The funding provided varies depending on whether the pupils are in the elementary or secondary

divisions as well as whether the pupils are studying at the core, extended, or immersion level.

FSL funding at the elementary level for core and extended French is provided for Grade 4 to 8 and is based on enrolment; whereas, boards who offer French immersion programs are funded based on enrolment for JK to Grade 8. The ministry is projecting the FSL funding allocation to be $240.4 million (Ontario 2013b, p. 41).

As previously stated, the allocation of funds depends both on the grade level and the type of FSL program in which the student is registered. The ministry states that in core French for grades 4 to 8, the average daily length of French studies is between 20 – 59 minutes and the allocation per pupil enrolled in the program is $288.85. In contrast, those pupils enrolled in extended French from grades 4 to 8, where the average daily length of the program is 60 – 149 minutes, the allocation per pupil is $329.10. The costs incurred per pupil rise dramatically when the students are enrolled in the French immersion program. For those in immersion, enrolled in JK and SK, where the average daily length of the program is 75 minutes or more and for those immersion students enrolled in grades 1 to 8, where the daily average of the program is 150 minutes or more, the allocation per pupil enrolled in the program rises to $368.16.

Those pupils enrolled in secondary school the allocation of funding differs depending on grade level and whether the pupil is enrolled in a French as a subject credit or subjects other than French taught in French. For instance, those pupils enrolled in grade 9 and 10 are allocated $74.09 for French as a subject but $121.89 for subjects other than French taught in French. Those pupils enrolled in grade 11 and 12 the per pupil

credit allocated French as a subject is $97.99 but the allocation per pupil credit for subjects other than French taught in French rises to $190.01 for those in grade 11 or 12.

Of the twelve special purpose grants, the Language Grant is allotted more funding than the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Supplement, Geographic Circumstances Grant, Learning Opportunities Grant, Safe Schools Supplement, Continuing Education and Other Programs Grant, Declining Enrolment Adjustment, and the School Board Administration and Governance Grant which illustrates both its prestige and importance. Additionally, the fact that FSL garners the most funding from this grant further illustrates the support and popularity of the program.

### *2.11. Linguistic Duality*

Linguistic duality is a characteristic often associated with the linguistic landscape of Canada (despite the presence of a plethora of aboriginal and immigrant languages) and French immersion institutions are thought to play a large role in achieving this duality. According to the Government of Canada's report entitled, *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the future*, "Canadians' support for bilingualism is progressing and has reached a level of 80 percent, as shown by many surveys. More than two-thirds of Canadian adults believe that linguistic duality is a characteristic of the country and a source of cultural enrichment" (Canada 2008, p.8). While Canadians' *support* for bilingualism may be progressing, this support is evident only in survey data collection. As noted above, linguistic duality is a feature often associated with the linguistic landscape of Canada, however, this feature is not necessarily a feature of the

individuals who live in this nation but rather a feature merely projected into its language policies by the Canadian government.

Linguistic duality is a defining feature of Canadian public policy (Conrick, 2007) and very much embedded in government educational targets. Specifically, one aim of the Government of Canada's report entitled, *Action Plan: Education, Community Development and the Public Service* reads, "Within 10 years, the proportion of eligible students who attend French-language educational institutions will rise from 68% to 80%[…] the proportion of high-school graduates with a command of both our official languages will rise from 24% to 50%" (Canada 2003, p. 61). According to the Roadmap for Canada's Official languages 2013-2018, "More than 2.4 million young people are learning English or French as a second language" and "between 2006–2007 and 2010–2011 enrolment in French-immersion classes increased by 12 percent" (p. 2). While it is clear that there is an increase in participation in second language education, it is not clear if the government attained its goals as stated in the *Action Plan: Education: Education, Community Development and the Public Service*.

This goal is clearly ambitious since Census data for the category of Knowledge of Official Languages in 2001 states the percentage of bilinguals as 17.7%. Most interesting is that the greatest incidence of bilingualism is in Quebec with a figure of 40.8%. If Quebec is omitted from the Census data, the incidence of bilingualism in Canada drops from 17.7% to 10.3% (Conrick, 2007, p. 35). These figures suggest that bilingualism more characterizes the Francophone population more than the Anglophone population. According to Conrick (2007), "nationally the proportion of bilingual Francophones is

43.4 per cent, while the proportion of bilingual Anglophones is only 9 per cent" (p. 35). What is highlighted by this figure is the fact that linguistic duality may be a defining characteristic of Canadian public policy but not a defining characteristic of the Canadian population.

According to Statistics Canada (2011), 68.1% of Canadians identified themselves as English-only speakers while only 17.5% identified themselves as bilingual (English and French) speakers. Interestingly, while linguistic duality is not a characteristic of Canada, it is a characteristic of those living in Quebec. Statistics Canada (2011) reports that while 51.8% of the population identified themselves as French-only speakers, 42.6% identified themselves as bilingual (English and French) speakers (http://bit.ly/ZVOxpU)[3]. This percentage is significantly higher than that reported by the rest of Canada.

While most of the focus on linguistic dualism is focused on Quebec, it is so at the expense and isolation of the other French speaking groups in Canada, specifically Acadia. Acadia is divided between the provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. According to Larrivée (2007), "This isolation is brought by Quebecois promoting an identity of their own which excludes the other French-speaking communities which were included in the traditional French-Canadian identity" (p. 88). As evidence of their isolation and separateness, the two communities form Nations. Each Nation has its own flag, national hymns, and National holiday. Quebec is a nation of 7 million citizens of which 82% have French as their mother tongue while Acadia is a

[3] Link shortened from http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/hlt-fst/lang/Pages/highlight.cfm?TabID=1&Lang=E&Asc=1&PRCode=01&OrderBy=999&View=2&Age=1&tableID=402&queryID=1

nation of 300 000 people where 86% are found in Officially bilingual New Brunswick where Acadians make up only 33% of the population. The main difference between the two nations is that French speakers in Quebec are not currently characterized by their economic underdevelopment which is the case in Acadia (Larrivée, 2007, p. 89). Consequently, many Acadians are assimilating to English, which is certainly damaging to the façade of linguistic duality projected by the Canadian government. Where linguistic duality seems to be thriving is localized in the province of Quebec rather than across the nation as a whole.

### *2.12. Summary of Chapter 2*

Chapter 2 gives a brief history of the French language in Canada and discusses the policy practices that ultimately led to French immersion education. While French immersion education initially began as an experiment pioneered by English-speaking parents in Quebec, the project grew and is now an extremely coveted and popular language learning program in all of Canada.

In 2013, the Ontario Ministry of Education produced two salient documents in relation to French as a second language education in Ontario. *A Framework for French as a second language in Ontario schools* outlines policy of French as a second language education in Ontario from the government's perspective, while, the *Ontario curriculum for French as a second language, grades 1-8* specifically address the expectations and goals of French as a second language education at the classroom level.

The Ontario Ministry of Education allots a considerable amount of funding into the program each year. With increased enrollment year after year, it should only be

expected that the funding would increase as well. This funding is meant to promote linguistic duality. While linguistic duality is a priority according to the government of Canada (Canada, 2008), further investigation of the research points to a bilingual Quebec, rather than a bilingual Canada (Conrick, 2007) which indicates that while bilingualism is supported in Canada, it is not necessarily a characteristic of Canada's people.

## Chapter 3 – Theoretical Underpinnings

In order to fully understand a discussion on French immersion education, a number of theoretical topics need to be discussed. Chapter 3 begins with a discussion of three second language acquisition (SLA) theories. The theories selected were those that present themselves in traditional French immersion classrooms and were based on my observations both as a French immersion student and French immersion teacher. The discussion of SLA theories is followed by a discussion on Bourdieu's concepts of interest, power, and capital, followed by an investigation on motivation in second language learning and the concept of willingness to communicate. The chapter closes with a look at the outcomes of French immersion education.

### *3.1. Second language acquisition*

Ortega (2009) states the study of SLA began in the late 1960's as an interdisciplinary discipline which included studies from the fields of linguistics, psychology, and language teaching. Ellis (1997) simply describes second language acquisition as "the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom" (p. 3). However, this definition does not include the many layers that accompany SLA. Gass and Selinker (2001) explain:

> [SLA] is the study of how learners create a new language system with only limited exposure to a second language. It is the study of what is learned of a second language and what is not learned; it is the study of why most second language learners do not achieve the same degree of proficiency in a second language as they do in their native language; it is also the study of why only some learners appear to achieve native-like proficiency in more than one language. (p. 1)

Thus the field of SLA does not just describe how a second language is learned but it also explores the complexities within the language learning process and the outcomes of second language learning.

For the purposes of this chapter keeping in mind French immersion education, the following section describes four theories that have a strong influence on pedagogies in the French immersion classroom. According to Pica (2009), one of the fundamentals to SLA theory is the notion that second language learners "need access [to] comprehensible, meaningful input for their learning" (p. 476). Simply put, students need access to appropriate resources in the target language to facilitate their learning.

### *3.1.1. Krashen's Monitor Model*

To help explain how a learner acquires language Krashen (1978) developed the Monitor Model which is a collection of five hypotheses: the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis; the Natural Order Hypothesis; the Monitor Hypothesis; the Input Hypothesis; and, the Affective Filter Hypothesis.

The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis refers to a distinction between the terms 'acquisition' and 'learning'. Krashen (1982) explains:

> Language acquisition is a subconscious process; language acquirers are not actually aware of the fact that they are acquiring language, but they are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication. The result of language acquisition, acquired competence, is also subconscious. We are generally not consciously aware of the rules of the languages we have acquired. Instead, we have a "feel" for correctness. (p. 10)

Conversely, language *learning* refers to a conscious process. Krashen (1982) describes, "learning is 'knowing about' a language known to most people as 'grammar', or 'rules'. Some synonyms include formal knowledge of a language or explicit learning" (p.10).

The Natural Order Hypothesis refers to the idea that we acquire "the rules of a language in a predictable order" (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 45). The Monitor Hypothesis relates to the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis in that the learned system acts as a monitor to alter or make changes to the acquired (unconscious) language system. Krashen (1982) describes the input hypothesis as follows, "a necessary (but not sufficient) condition to move from stage i to stage i + 1 is that the acquirer understand input that contains i + 1, where 'understand' means that the acquirer is focused on the meaning and not the form of the message"(p. 21). Stage i refers to the current stage of the language learner while stage i + 1 refers to the stage one level more advanced than the current stage. To simplify, he states, "We acquire…only when we understand language that contains structure that is "a little beyond" where we are now" (Krashen, 1982, p. 21). Thus learners acquire language mainly through listening to oral messages directed towards them or through reading written texts such as books, advertisements, and letters.

Through processing this type of input, Krashen believes that learners will naturally acquire grammar because they are innately able to do so. In proposing this role for input, Krashen is assuming that the processes of L2 learning are similar to the processes for L1 learning which is that children need only be exposed to language to create meaning (Ortega, 2009). Similar to Krashen's idea is Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD is defined as, "the distance between what a learner can do in the L2 if assisted by others…versus what she or he can accomplish alone" (Ortega, 2009, p. 224). One difference between Vygotsky's theory and Krashen's i+1 model is that the ZPD "is a metaphorical location or 'site' in which learners co-

construct knowledge in collaboration with an interlocutor" (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 118).

Krashen (1982) also posits that learners must have positive feelings towards learning the second language for them to be susceptible to the input. He calls this The Affective Filter hypothesis. He explains:

> The Affective Filter hypothesis captures the relationship between affective variables and the process of second language acquisition by positing that acquirers vary with respect to the strength or level of their Affective Filters. Those whose attitudes are not optimal for second language acquisition will not only tend to seek less input, but they will also have high or strong Affective Filter-even if they understand the message, the input will not read that part of the brain responsible for language acquisition…Those with attitudes more conducive second language acquisition will not only seek and obtain more input, they will also have a lower or weaker filter. (p. 31)

Despite the popularity of Krashen's work, there have been noted problems with this nativist approach to Krashen's theory. Schmidt (1983) conducted a study with a 33-year old native speaker of Japanese called "Wes" and found that despite ample comprehensible input in English, there was still minimal grammatical development. Additionally, Swain (1991) found that French immersion students were unable to achieve grammatical accuracy despite years of exposure under favourable conditions. This result was corroborated by Sato (1990) who conducted a study which included two Vietnamese boys and a native English speaker at an English school. She found that despite native English speaker input and natural interaction, the boys did not exhibit increased language proficiency. In light of these findings, input, though necessary, is not sufficient on its own.

### *3.1.2. Long's Interaction Hypothesis*

In an attempt to extend Krashen's theory and to include a more interactionist approach, Long (1996) suggested that conversational interaction in second language learning forms the basis for acquisition rather than just being a form of language practice. Long (1996) explains this idea in what he calls the Interaction Hypothesis, "negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the NS [native speakers] or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways" (p. 451-452). More simply put, language acquisition is a complex process that cannot be fully explained by prescribing to a solely innate (internal) or a solely environmental (external) perspective (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2009). Long (1996) further explains:

> It is proposed that environmental contributions to acquisition are mediated by selective attention and the learners' developing L2 processing capacity, and that these resources are brought together most usefully, although not exclusively, during negotiation for meaning. Negative feedback obtained during negotiation work or elsewhere may be facilitative of L2 development at least for vocabulary, morphology, and language-specific syntax, and essential for learning certain specifiable L1-L2 contrasts. (p. 414)

Negotiation for meaning can take many forms and include clarification requests, confirmation checks, and comprehension checks. Ortega (2009) suggests that clarification requests stem from when the interlocutor is unsure if he/she has understood the message correctly and says things such as, what do you mean or pardon me? Confirmation checks occur when one interlocutor is not sure if he/she has understood the message correctly and seeks further clarification by asking additional questions such as, you mean X right? Finally, comprehension checks occur when one interlocutor verifies

that the other interlocutor has understood by asking questions, for example, do you understand or do you know what I mean? (Ortega, 2009, p. 61) Thus, paramount in Long's theory is a negotiation of meaning between two interlocutors.

Negotiation of meaning can have some obstacles, one of which comes in the form of interlanguage. The term *interlanguage* was first coined by Selinker (1972) and refers to the systematic language knowledge that falls between a speaker's native language and their second language. According to Gass and Selinker (2008), "this system is composed of numerous elements, not the least of which are elements from the NL [native language] and the TL [target language]" (p. 14). Central to the concept of interlanguage is fossilization which "refers to the cessation of learning or halting of progress towards the acquisition of the L2 [second language] grammar" (Siegel, 2009, p. 584). The development of interlanguage and subsequent fossilization in the discourse of second language learners can certainly contribute to difficulties in negotiation of meaning.

### *3.1.3. Skill Acquisition Theory and focus on form*

Ortega (2009) describes skill acquisition theory as "the gradual transformation of performance from controlled to automatic. This transformation happens through relevant practice over many trials, which enables controlled processes gradually to be withdrawn during performance and automatic processes take over the same performance" (p. 84). The process involves moving from declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge. DeKeyser (1998) describes how declarative knowledge is factual knowledge whereas procedural knowledge occurs without having to think about it. Ortega (2009, p. 84) describes this process as moving from explicit knowledge or 'knowledge that' to implicit

knowledge or 'knowledge how'. The underlying assumption in this theory is that all skills begin in the declarative phase. In the second language learning context, L2 learners are presented with information about language forms or rules from their teacher or a textbook and through practice this information converts into an automatic ability for use.

Practice in this context is defined as "specific activities in the second language engaged in systematically, deliberately, with the goal of developing knowledge of and skills in the second language" (DeKeyser, 2007, p. 8). Therefore, practice is not restricted to isolated drills that do not facilitate second language acquisition. For example, functional grammar instruction coined by Harley (1989) is also form focused in that students practice specific forms "by engaging in a range of classroom experiences, including role plays, class projects, problem solving grammar tasks, and board, card, and picture games" (Pica, 2009, p. 481). Thus, there are a variety of practice methods designed to catalyze second language knowledge.

According to Spada (1997), form focused instruction refers to "any pedagogical effort which is used to draw the learners' attention to language form either implicitly or explicitly. This can include the direct teaching of language (e.g., through grammatical rules) and/or reactions to learners' errors (e.g., corrective feedback)" (p.73). Lyster (2007) suggests, "form-focused instructional options are generally considered most effective when implemented in communicative contexts, to ensure that learners will be able to transfer what they learn in the classroom to communicative interaction outside the classroom" (p. 43). This type of transferable input is also meaningful in that it allows

students to make connections between what they are practicing and their ability to use this practice to communicate in real situations.

Despite the focus on content rich input and the focus on form, specific shortcomings in the classroom remain which have a negative impact on the linguistic development of French immersion students and the linguistic outcomes of French immersion graduates.

### *3.2. Pierre Bourdieu on interest, power, and capital*

To clarify the interest in French immersion studies, it's helpful to turn to the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu (1994) describes the term interest as:

> The notion of interest – I always speak of specific interest – was conceived as an instrument of rupture intended to bring the materialist mode of questioning to bear on realms from which it was absent and into the sphere of cultural production in particular. (p. 106f)

In other words, interest is "used to draw attention to social practices as a kind of game, and an economic game at that" (Grenfell, 2012, p. 152). Bourdieu suggests that economic interest includes not only economic goods such as material objects but also, non-economic goods and services such as symbolic objects and actions (Swartz, 1997). He explains that economic interest includes "all goods, material as symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation" (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 178).

Similar to economic and non-economic interests are Bourdieu's (1977b) notions of economic power and symbolic power. Swartz (1997) explains, "Bourdieu…believes that even in the advanced societies the principal mode of domination has shifted from overt coercion and the threat of physical violence to forms of symbolic manipulation" (p.

82). Thus there need not be any act of force in order to manipulate. According to Bourdieu (1977) symbolic power "is defined in and by a determinate relationship between those who exercise this power and those who undergo it – that is to say, in the very structure of the field in which belief is produced and reproduced" (p. 117). This belief explains Bourdieu's interest in education where "…education, by imposing meanings, ways of thinking, and particular forms of expression, acts as a carrier for the culture of the dominant classes" (Grenfell, 2012, p. 157). In this regard, education serves as a gateway to social symbolic manipulation since it "…therefore operates to perpetuate specific power relations as they unfold and are expressed in the dynamic of social evolution" (Grenfell, 2012, p. 157).

A consequence of symbolic power is symbolic violence. According to Krais (1993), "symbolic violence is a subtle, euphemized, invisible mode of domination that prevents domination from being recognized as such and, therefore, as misrecognized domination, is socially recognized" (p. 172). In this dynamic, there is always a dominant person or group and a dominated person or group that legitimizes the domination by accepting it. Bourdieu explains:

> Every power to exert symbolic violence, i.e. every power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing power relations which are the basis of its force, adds its own specifically symbolic force to those power relations. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 4)

Schools have the capacity to exert symbolic violence since they teach students particular subjects, in particular ways, at particular times. These subjects and the ways in which they are taught and when are deliberate. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) explain, "pedagogical action is objectivity a symbolic violence to the extent to which it is an

imposition of a cultural arbitrary power" (p. 18). In this dynamic, school is the cultural arbitrary power, the dominant, and the students are the dominated class.

Extending the concept of symbolic power in the form of noneconomic goods is cultural capital. According to Swartz (1997), "…cultural capital covers a wide variety of resources including such things as verbal facility, general cultural awareness, aesthetic preferences, information about the school system, and educational credentials" (p. 75). Educational credentials are an example of cultural capital in an institutionalized form. Swartz (1997) explains:

> Since educational credentials increasingly have become necessary for gaining access to desirable positions in the job market, it becomes essential for parents to invest in a good education for their children so they can reap the "profit" on the job market. (p. 76)

Thus education is an important element of acquiring educational credentials, more specifically, cultural capital. With an educational credential comes a "certificate of cultural competence which confers on its hold a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248). Thus, the cultural capital remains static even with the passing of time.

Similar to cultural capital, one can accrue linguistic capital. Bourdieu (1977b) explains, "linguistic competence (like any other cultural competence) functions as linguistic capital in relationship with a certain market" (p. 651). As described by Collins (1993), "linguistic markets are defined as social domains within which language use is valued; they determine the specific value of that "capital" at a given time and place" (p. 118). Thus knowledge of difference languages is beneficial in particular contexts. According to Bourdieu (1977b), "language is not only an instrument of communication

or even of knowledge, but also an instrument of power" (p. 648). This power is exercised when one language is dominant over another. Languages can be legitimized in specific contexts, for example, schools. Bourdieu (1977b) explains:

> The educational system is a crucial object of struggle because it has a monopoly over the production of the pass of producers and consumers, and hence over the reproduction of the market on which the value of linguistic competence depends, in other words its capacity to function as linguistic capital. (p. 652)

The educational system has the power to legitimize language and language use given its dominance in society. In short, it is the education system that yields an influence over which languages hold value. Bourdieu (1977b) illustrates:

> Social value of linguistic products is only placed on them in their relationship to the market, *i.e.* in and by the objective relationship of competition opposing them to all other products (and not only those with which they are directly compared in the concrete transaction), in which their *distinctive value* is determined. (p. 654)

In short, languages only hold symbolic power on a social scale if there is value attached to them, relative to other languages, in a particular market. In the Canadian context, English and French are valued languages insofar as they are the official languages of the country. In Ontario, they are further legitimized since English is the principal language of schooling and French is prioritized as the second language that must be learned to a specific degree under the Ministry of Education guidelines.

### *3.3. Motivation and second language education*

In order to put forth the effort to acquire a second language, a certain amount of motivation must be present. The study of motivation in second language or foreign language learning has spanned over 4 decades. The intricate nature of the topic has resulted from contributions from all fields of research including sociology and psychology. Dörnyei (2003) contends that despite all the research and theorizing on

motivation, "it is surprising how uneven and inconsistent our knowledge is" (p. 1). He believes the lack of consistent knowledge has two main explanations. The first is because the research is embedded in why humans act the way they do and there is no one theory that provides an explanation into human behaviour. The second is, "…humans are social beings and human action is always embedded in a number of physical and psychological contexts which considerable affect a person's cognition, behaviour, and achievement" (p. 1). Given the numerous reactions one can have in any particular social situation, there are a number of possible influences on our behaviour.

In light of the fact that the factors affecting motivation are many and difficult to document, Oxford and Shearin (1994) suggest that there are four main obstacles in fully understanding students' motivation for second language (L2) learning: "1) the absence of a consensus on a definition of L2 learning motivation; 2) confusion surrounding motivation in second vs. foreign language situations; 3) L2 research's omission of some key motivational and developmental theories taken from many areas of psychology; and 4) teachers' lack of knowledge about their student's real reasons for learning a language" (p. 13).

The study of second language motivation began in Canada due to its unique linguistic situation comprising two official languages of English and French. The first summary of second language motivation research was pioneered by Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert (1972), who viewed second languages as a bridge between various ethnolinguistic communities.

According to Dörnyei (1994), "motivation is one of the main determinants of second/foreign language achievement" (p. 273). Because of this fact, there has been a considerable amount of research done in this field. Much of this research has been pioneered by Robert Gardner. Skehan (1989) praises Garner's work as being the most important work done in L2 learning motivation research. Prior to Gardner's work, motivation was scarcely investigated in respect to L2 learning because the focus was primarily on aptitude.

### *3.3.1. The Socio-Educational Model*

In 1972, Gardner and Smythe created the Language Research Group at the University of Western Ontario and work on the socio-educational model of second language acquisition began (Gardner, 2010). The impetus for this stemmed from a desire to determine what variables contributed to second language learning. Gardner (2010) explains:

> We [Gardner and Smythe] were interested in understanding the process that resulted in some individuals learning enough of the language to actually adopt it as a means of communications while others seemed to treat it simply as a course in school to be more or less forgotten once classes were over. (p. 78)

The environment Gardner and Smythe are referring to is an environment where many students study French in Ontario schools for up to 13 years and upon graduation seem to have differing opinions regarding whether they could actually use the language outside of the classroom walls or not. Despite the fact that this research took place over 40 years ago, these questions still remain at the forefront today.

The original socio-educational model which was based on research conducted in London, Ontario, Canada during 1972-1973 and what began as a classification of

variables was revised many times to help explain the motivation behind second language acquisition. Gardner (1985) posits that the Socio-Educational Model comprises two main components, integrative and instrumental motivations. Integrative motivation refers to a positive regard towards a second language group and the desire to become a member of that community. Gardner (1968) clarifies this concept of integrative orientation by suggesting that successful L2 learning depends on the desire to become part of the other language community. Gardner (2010) explains:

> In the extreme this [integrativeness] might involve complete identification with and membership in the other community (and possibly even withdrawal from one's original group), but in less extreme form it might simply reflect a willingness to incorporate behavioural patterns in the form of the language from the other group. (p. 88)

Integrative orientation is also referred to as integrativeness and the integrative motive and are used in all three forms in Gardner's (1985) work. Gardner (2001) says the term 'integrative' "is used frequently in the literature, though close inspection will reveal that it has slightly different meanings to many different individuals" (p.1). Instrumental motivation refers to the pragmatic gains of learning a second language such as obtaining a job or a higher salary. Although Gardner's construct surged in popularity, Dörnyei (1994) states, "…investigations have shown that these dimensions cannot be regarded as straightforward universals, but rather as broad tendencies-or subsystems-comprising context-specific clusters of loosely related components" (p. 274). This observation explains the impetus for the investigation of second language learning motivation that took place thereafter.

### *3.3.2. Cognitive theories of motivation*

While Gardner (1985) looked at the social psychological approach to motivation, the concept of cognitive components of motivation is popular in motivational research in educational psychology. Weiner (1992) lists three major cognitive theories of motivation: attribution theory, learned-helplessness, and self-efficacy theory. The thread that runs through each of these theories is that all three focus on the learner's self-appraisal of what he or she can and cannot do.

Attribution theories focus on the way people attribute causes to events. Past failures and successes affect future goal expectancies. For example, students who believed they performed poorly due to ability or task difficulty expect to perform in a similar fashion on future tasks. In a study done by Dörnyei (1990) regarding Hungarian students learning English, he "identified an independent 'attributions about past failures' component to L2 motivation and argued that such attributions are particularly significant in foreign language learning…" (1994, p. 276). Learned helplessness describes a pessimistic, helpless state that develops when an individual wants to success but feels that success is unattainable. An individual will exhibit learned helpless when a goal does not seem achievable despite any action or effort. Finally, self-efficacy "refers to an individual's judgment of his or her ability to perform a specific action" (Dörnyei, 1994, p. 277). Aspects of past achievements play a crucial role in developing self-efficacy but efficacy is also developed by observational experiences, reinforcement, and evaluation by others, specifically those in authoritative roles, including, parents, teachers, guardians, coaches, and other trusted adults. Linked to self-efficacy is self-confidence, the belief

that one can achieve goals, and perform well, and need for achievement. Individuals with a high need for achievement are interested in performing well for its own sake.

### *3.3.3. Self-determination theory*

One of the most influential constructs in motivational psychology is Deci and Ryan's (1985; 2002) self-determination theory. This theory is based on the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational behaviours. The former is described by Noels, Clement, and Pelletier (1999) as, "…motivation to perform an activity simply for the pleasure and satisfaction that accompany the action" (p. 24). This motivation is rooted in performing a particular behaviour for its own sake. In contrast, the latter is described by Noels et al. as, "…those behaviours that are performed not because of inherent interest in the activity, but in order to arrive at some instrumental end, such that the source of regulation is external to the activity per se" (p. 24). This motivation is rooted in an extrinsic reward or desired end result of a particular behaviour. As the theory has been elaborated, extrinsic motivation has been divided into four types along a continuum ranging from self-determined and controlled forms of motivation with intrinsic motivation on one side of the continuum and extrinsic, or external regulation at the other side. The theory posits five distinct categories between intrinsic and extrinsic forms of motivations. Table 3.1 presents the five categories in the continuum.

Table 3.1. Five categories of Self-Determination Theory

| | |
|---|---|
| *External Regulation* | Motivation which stems entirely from external sources such as rewards or punishments. |
| *Introjected Regulation* | Motivation which stems from rules enforced by external sources. |
| *Identified Regulation* | Motivation which stems from an individual's perceived value and usefulness of a behaviour. |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Integrated Regulation* | Motivation which stems from an individual's needs, values, and identity. |
| *Intrinsic Regulation* | Motivation which stems from performing a behaviour for its own sake. |

Deci and Ryan (2002) explain, "external regulation is the least autonomous form of extrinsic motivation and includes the classic instance of being motivated to obtain rewards or avoid punishments" (p. 17). This type of regulation is often contrasted with intrinsic regulation.

Introjected regulation stems from rules prescribed external sources and although somewhat internalized by the subject, it is not part of the authentic self. The authors describe, "introjection-based behaviors are performed to avoid guilt and shame or to attain ego enhancements and feelings of worth" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 17).

Identified regulation "…is a more self-determined form of extrinsic motivation, for it involves conscious valuing of a behavioral goal or regulation, an acceptance of the behavior as personally important" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 17). This type of motivation stems from whether a particular individual sees value in a behaviour and requires a high degree of autonomy.

Deci and Ryan (2002) explain, "integrated regulation provides the basis for the most autonomous form of extrinsically motivated behavior. It results when identifications have been evaluated and brought into congruence with the personally induced values, goals, and needs that are already part of the self" (p. 18). While the integrated regulation shares characteristics with the intrinsic regulation, integrated regulation is still "…considered extrinsic because they [the actions] are done to attain

personally important outcomes rather than for their inherent interest and enjoyment" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 18).

Learning a second language will often contain a combination of the aforementioned categories. Noels (2001), believes that applying the intrinsic/extrinsic continuum is helpful when organizing language learning goals systematically.

### *3.4. Willingness to Communicate*

As noted by Lyster (1987) and Warden, Lapkin, Swain and Hart (1995), French immersion students often have difficulties when speaking French with native French speakers. A result of this difficulty is a decrease in French immersion students' willingness to communicate (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, Donovan, 2003). McCroskey and Baer (1985) first described the term willingness to communicate (WTC) as the act of engaging in communication when the opportunity arises. There are many influences that contribute to one's WTC including: the relationship between the interlocutors, the topic being discussed, the number of people involved in the discussion, and the language being spoken. MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1998) proposed a model to illustrate individual differences in the decision to engage in or to not engage in second language communication. Table 3.2 depicts an adaptation of the model originally designed by MacIntyre et al., 1998.

Table 3.2. A representation of the WTC pyramid

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Layer I | Communication behaviour | • L2 Use |
| Layer II | Behaviour intention | • Willingness to communicate |
| Layer III | Situated antecedents | • Desire to communicate with a specific person<br>• State communicate self-confidence |
| Layer IV | Motivational propensities | • Interpersonal motivation |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | • Intergroup motivation<br>• L2 self confidence |
| Layer V | Affective-cognitive context | • Intergroup attitudes<br>• Social situation<br>• Communicative competence |
| Layer VI | Social and individual context | • Intergroup climate<br>• Personality |

MacIntyre, Baker, Clément and Conrod (2001) explain, "The model refers to situations in which there is a specific person with whom to communicate, and both the desire and self confidence to speak with him or her" (p. 371). Layers I-III are described as situational specific influences of WTC, while layers IV-VI represent enduring influences on WTC. Layer I, the actual use of the second language is influenced by immediate situational factors (such as the desire to speak with a particular person), as well as more enduring factors (for example, the personality of the learner), both of which are explained through the layers of the table.

### *3.4.1. Layers of the WTC pyramid explained*

Layer I of the construct is communication behaviour, which is ultimately the actual use of the second language. Use of the second language can range from reading texts in the second language, watching television in the second language to speaking the language at work or even at school.

Layer II, the behaviour intention is the intention or willingness to communicate. MacIntyre et al. (1998), define the intention of willingness to communicate as, "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2 [second language]" (p. 547). The intention to communicate is the important factor in this scenario because it implies that the speaker wants to speak and thus has a

heightened willingness to communicate. For example, if a teacher poses a question in class and several students raise their hands to answer, all of those students have an intention to speak, thus they displayed a willingness to communicate. This definition includes students who raise their hand with the intention to speak and do not get called upon.

Layer III refers to the situated antecedents of communication which include both the desire or need to communicate with a designated person and the communicative self-confidence of that individual. MacIntyre et al. (1998) discuss that communication in a second language is more likely to occur if an individual feels affiliation with a particular individual. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), affiliation "often occurs with persons who are physically nearby, persons who are encountered frequently, physically attractive persons, and those who are similar to us in a variety of ways" (p. 548-549). According to the above explanation, it would come to no surprise that French immersion students would feel a strong desire to communicate with each other since they are of close proximity, encountered frequently, and they have a lot in common with each other.

The second situated antecedent is state communicative self-confidence. This feeling of self-confidence is influenced by two factors: state perceived confidence and state anxiety. State perceived competence is described by the authors as "…the feeling that one has the capacity to communicate effectively at a particular moment" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 549). One would feel most capable of communicating effectively in situations one has encountered previously. Therefore, a speaker's state communicative self confidence could be elevated in unfamiliar situations which could result in a decrease

in willingness to communicate. State anxiety is an emotional response consisting of tense feelings and apprehension coupled with an autonomic nervous system arousal (Spielberger, 1983). MacIntyre et al. (1998), believe, "state anxiety varies in intensity and fluctuates over time, and anything that increases state anxiety will reduce one's self confidence and, therefore one's WTC" (p. 549). MacIntyre et al. (1998), believe that the desire to communicate with a specific individual and the state self-confidence factors to be the most influential determinants of WTC.

Beginning the enduring influences on the WTC process is Layer IV. Layer IV specifically refers to motivational propensities which include motivational factors within a specific individual (interpersonal motivation) or within a group (intergroup motivation), as well as second language self-confidence.

Interpersonal motivation refers to the specific characteristics of an individual and the individual's relationship with the interlocutors of the second language. Interpersonal motivation shares characteristics with intrinsic motivation since the motivation comes from within the speaker.

In contrast, intergroup motivation refers to the characteristics derived from being a part of a specific group rather than the individual characteristics of the group members which points to an integrative source of motivation.

Both interpersonal motivation and intergroup motivation are influenced by affiliation and control motives. The former refers to motives that "are directed towards persons who are attractive in some way or frequently encountered, such as one's friends"

(MacIntyre et al, 2001, p. 371). The latter refers to "any situation in which people seek to influence each other's behavior" (MacIntyre et al., 2001, p. 371).

Finally, second language self-confidence refers to the relationship between the individual and the second language (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The second language self confidence in this Layer differs from the situated antecedents in Layer III in that state communicative self confidence refers to self-confidence *at a particular moment* while second language self confidence refers to "the overall belief in being able to communicate in the L2 [second language] in an adaptive and efficient manner" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 551).

The second language self confidence in this layer is influenced by both perceived competence in the second language and also the experience an individual has in communicating using a second language. Perceived competence refers to how one evaluates his or her ability to communicate effectively in a particular situation (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, Donovan, 2003) while the experience an individual has will vary considerably from person to person.

Layer V refers to the affective-cognitive contexts which vary from individual to individual and are influenced by broad attitudes and motives of a speaker. Intergroup attitudes are influenced by integrativeness, fear of assimilation, and motives of the speaker to learn the second language. Echoing Gardner (1985), integrativeness refers to an individual's need to learn the language to fit in with a target language community. In contrast, fear of assimilation refers to a fear that contact with a second language community will result in the loss of identification with the first language community

(MacIntyre et al., 1998). Thus if learners of a second language believe that their second language acquisition threatens their first language, they will have a decreased willingness to communicate. Finally, the motives in learning a second language, if positive may influence an individual to put forth a constant and thorough effort to acquiring the second language. This positive effort could render more positive experiences which in turn, could influence one's WTC.

Social situation refers to the way in which speakers may exhibit different comfort levels depending on the social context. For example, French immersion students may find it easy to communicate in French in the classroom but may struggle using French when placing an order in French over the telephone.

Also affecting the WTC is communicative competence. Communicative competence for the purposes of this explanation, refers to communicative competence and encompasses linguistic competence, discourse competence, actional competence, sociocultural competence and strategic competence (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurell, 1995). Table 3.3 condenses the various competences that comprise communicative competence as per Celce-Murcia et al., (1995).

Table 3.3. Communicative competence and its components

| | |
|---|---|
| *Linguistic Competence* | Involves knowledge of the rules of a particular language including syntactic and morphological rules, phonological and orthographic systems. |
| *Discourse Competence* | Involves the series of selecting and linking ideas, arranging words and sentences to create meaning. |
| *Actional Competence* | Involves selecting appropriate linguistic form to match communicative intent. |
| *Sociocultural Competence* | Involves selecting appropriate pragmatics in relation to the social and cultural context. |
| *Strategic Competence* | Involves knowledge of communication strategies (both verbal |

| | |
|---|---|
| | and non-verbal) required to compensate for deficiencies in the other competencies. |

While communicative competence certainly has an influence on WTC, research done by McCroskey and Richmond (1991) indicates that many individuals with low competence still demonstrate high WTC while many individuals with high competence still demonstrate low WTC. This research suggests that while communicative competence influences one's WTC, it is not a determinant.

Layer VI refers to the social and individual context of WTC. Intergroup climate is primarily influenced by the structural characteristics of the community and their perceptual and affective correlates (Gardner & Clément, 1990). The structural characteristics of a community involve the demographic representations of two or more language communities in terms of ethnolinguistic vitality. Ethnolinguistic vitality refers to the representation of two communities in regards to their socioeconomic power and to the extent they are represented in influential social institutions such as government, education, legislation and church (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977). The community with high ethnolinguistic vitality is believed to be more prestigious which attracts more speakers and thus is the language most frequently spoken. While the intergroup climate has less of an influence on one's WTC in a second language classroom, it does influence one's WTC in language communities where more than one language is spoken.

Finally, one's personality determines their willingness to communicate. MacIntyre et al. 1998, caution that there may not be a particular profile of the good language learner, but that personality may help facilitate the context in which language learning occurs. As such, the personality of the learner sets the stage for language

acquisition but is less directly involved with determining a learner's WTC at any particular point in time (p. 558).

Present in the variables influencing WTC are factors relating to SLA including the relationships with the interlocutors; but more-so present are the influences from the field of second language motivation. The WTC model exhibits elements from the socio-educational model, self-determination theory, and individual differences that affect L2 communication.

### *3.5. Outcomes of French immersion education*

Studies have indicated that French immersion graduates obtain high levels of proficiency in French by the end of secondary school. According to a study by the Public Service Commission of Canada (PSCC, 2005), conducted in Alberta in 2003-2004, 76.6% of the 540 participating grade 12 students obtained a grade of B (intermediate level) or better for reading, writing and oral interaction skills assessed in French. This result is significant because a minimum requirement for bilingual positions to work in the public service is a B level score. Thus, the majority of French immersion graduates have acquired a significant advantage when it comes to applying for and accessing work in the public service.

French language skills are often regarded as a resource for competing in the job market in Canada. In a study done by Roy and Galiev (2011), the researchers found that French represented access to better and more promising employment. Roy and Galiev interviewed parents whose children were currently enrolled in French immersion

programs and many parents felt that French immersion provided certain employment benefits. One such parent interviewed by Roy and Galiev named Susan further explains:

> We thought we wanted to move back to Ottawa. So that was what made us decide French immersion would be a good idea, because we may be back in Ontario – Ottawa – again. And we need to have that second language….And my husband thinks that the more language – and I do too – the more…a second language would give so much more opportunity. (p. 362)

The benefits of French immersion extend beyond the parameters of where French is spoken (for example, Ottawa). The researchers further asked Susan if she felt that French was an important resource for those living in Alberta where French is not as common as in Eastern Canada or Ottawa. Susan explains:

> I think it's a great idea. I think anything we can offer as an advantage to …I think that life is becoming so much more competitive and you need so much more to do anything anymore. It used to be that a bachelor's degree in anything was a major event. And now it's not enough to be a grocery clerk. So you need advantages that we can offer. And I think even if second language is part of an English curriculum, that they're exposed to another culture, that's in their country, and their world…it can't do anybody any harm. (p. 362)

Susan highlights the belief that French education and not just French immersion education is advantageous to all those living in Canada. The underlying assumption is that students in French immersion education obtain high levels of French language skills, which then make them more competitive in the job market following graduation.

Despite the high levels of French language skills, the English proficiency of early French immersion students is often discussed as a point of concern for parents. Swain's (1974) study of early French immersion students in grade two suggests that the students' spelling and reading skills were not as advanced in comparison to children who received formal instruction in English. However, it is important to note, that once formal English

instruction was integrated into the early French immersion curriculum, early French immersion students make great advancements in their English reading and writing skills. Lazaruk (2007) states that "although early French immersion programs devote just 20% of instructional time to English Language Arts from Grade 4 through 8, by the end of elementary school [early French immersion] students typically develop English skills that match or surpass those of their peers in the English program" (p. 613-614). These favourable early French immersion results are echoed in a study done by Turnbull, Hart, and Lapkin (2001) who similar to Lapkin's (1974) study found that despite the fact that students had difficulties in English literacy on Ontario provincial tests in grade 3, that by grade 6 early French immersion students perform significantly higher than those students in English language programs.

The strong performance in English proficiency is also evident in other core academic subjects. Swain (1974) found that students of early French immersion scored just as well or higher on tests of computational and problem solving arithmetic as those in comparable English programs. Similarly, Turnbull et al.'s (2001) study on immersion students' performance on Ontario English-language provincial math tests demonstrated that grade 6 early French immersion students scored better than their peers in the English programs.

In addition to performing well academically, early French immersion students experience particular cognitive benefits due to the fact that they are developing competences in two languages. Bialystok (2001) concluded that flexibility and creative thinking often observed in bilingual children indicates enhanced metalinguistic

awareness. Lazaruk (2007) explains, "metalinguistic awareness can be understood as an ability to direct attention to, and reflect on, the systematic features of language" (p. 618). According to Baker (2011), "researchers who find cognitive advantages mostly focus on balanced bilinguals" (p. 16). However, the term *balanced bilinguals* is contested by García (2009) who believes that this type of bilingualism does not exist. Thus while there are likely to be individual differences related to the cognitive advantages, these advantages can to be applicable to early immersion children. Bialystok (2004) explains:

> Sometimes bilingual children excel in specific tasks that measure their progress in coming to understand the structure of language and in learning how to read but there is little evidence that their overall achievement in these skills is significantly different from that of monolinguals. Instead, their advantages make it easier to master these skills by giving them more refined cognitive process with which to approach them, and the possibility of transferring the effortful learning of these abilities from one language to the other. (p. 597-598)

This observation is significant because it draws upon the idea that bilingualism in and of itself is not the sole determinant in heightened achievement but rather that there needs to be scaffolding (understanding the structures of language) that is built upon in order to attain academic achievement (García, 2009).

Research conducted on word awareness of bilingual children (Ben-Zeev, 1977; Cummins 1978) found that bilingual children demonstrate heightened understanding of the relation between words and their meanings. These early results are verified by Bialystok (2001) who explains how bilingual students are more willing to accept that "the meaning of a word is more convention than necessity" (p. 136). Thus, in Ben-Zeev's (1977) research, bilingual participants performed better when asked to replace the word *we* with the word *spaghetti*. Bialystok (2001) suggests that this tolerance for non-sensical

phrases may contribute to a heightened capacity in understanding the arbitrariness of numbers.

Additionally, bilingual children demonstrate heightened communicative sensitivity. In a study done by Ben-Zeev (1977), he observed that Hebrew-English children picked up listener's hints and cues and were also more likely to correct errors based on feedback than monolingual children of a similar age. These heightened communicative skills were also observed by Genesee, Tucker, and Lambert (1975) who asked children ages 5 to 8 to explain a board game to a second child who was blind-folded. The immersion children provided significantly more information (including the pieces of the game as well as the rules), than the monolingual children.

Despite the aforementioned benefits to French immersion students, they rarely attain native-like proficiency in French. According to Genesee (1987), while early French immersion students develop native-like receptive skills by age 11, he reported linguistic errors in grammar, vocabulary, and phonology. These observations are corroborated by Cummins (2001) who found that early French immersion students develop native-like listening comprehension and reading skills by the end of elementary school. He posits, however, that French immersion students are easy to distinguish from native speakers in their speaking and writing skills. Swain (1996) states that speaking is the weakest skill for immersion students and like Genesee (1987) found that students were weak in grammatical competence. Further to this finding, Lyster (2004) suggests that French immersion students reach a developmental plateau in regards to their grammatical abilities. Lyster (2007) explains, "it seems highly probable that a correlation

exists between immersion teachers' tendency to use random implicit feedback and immersion students' tendency to reach a development plateau in their communicative ability" (p. 92). Meaning, French immersion teachers tend to only provide minimal feedback which results in students internalizing un-corrected errors that eventually cause difficulties with their ability to communicate. These plateaus parallel the concept of fossilization since these errors continue to exist despite further exposure to French.

In addition to weak grammatical competence, Mougeon, Rehner, & Nadasdi (2005) suggest "current research continues to demonstrate that immersion students' sociolinguistic competence is lacking in that they rarely or never use vernacular and informal variants and overuse formal or hyperformal forms" (p. 399). The authors conducted a study which compared the use of vernacular, informal, formal, and hyper-formal variants of speech of Canadian francophones and Grade 9 and 12 students enrolled in a French immersion program. According to Nadasdi et al. (2005) an example of a vernacular variant includes using the expression of *rien que* versus *juste, seulement*. For example, il mange *rien que* des légumes (He only eats vegetables) (p. 548). Another example is using *m'as* as in, *je m'as t'expliquer* (I'm gonna explain it to you) versus using *je vais*. The authors conclude that French immersion students rarely, if at all use the previously described vernacular variants. Lyster (2007) suggests that one reason for this occurrence could be because "immersion students show a clear preference for verbs whose syntactic frames are more similar to verbs in English" (p. 33) and thus are more comfortable using these forms.

Additionally, Nadasdi et al. (2005) found that French immersion students almost never use the informal variants of *ça fait que*, *rester* (to mean living in), or the deletion of the sound indicated by the letter 'l' in personal and impersonal subject pronouns. For example, *i'veut pas* versus *il ne veut pas* (p. 549-50). Conversely, French immersion students use formal variants (for example, using the word *travail* versus *emploie, ouvrage, or job*) twice as much as those who speak French as a first language and also use hyper-variants (such as using *ne* to negate a sentence) on a regular basis compared to those with French as a first language who rarely if ever use hyper-variant forms.

The aforementioned study illustrates that while French immersion students are learning French, they are learning a formalized version of the French language and thus are weak in native-like communicative competence. According to Canale and Swain (1980), "communicative competence minimally includes three main competencies: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence" (p. 28). Thus to be communicatively competent, one must have competencies in all three categories. Grammatical competence refers to "knowledge of the lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology" (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 29). Sociolinguistic competence consists of two rules: "sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse" (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 30). Sociocultural rules refer to the way in which utterances are produced and understood appropriately within any given sociocultural context (Hymes, 1968). The rules of discourse refer to "the extent to which appropriate attitude and register or style are conveyed by a particular grammatical form within a given sociolinguistic context (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 30). According to

Canale and Swain (1980), strategic competence refers to verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that an interlocutor uses when there is a breakdown in communication due to insufficient competence. Canale & Swain's (1980) guiding principals of communicative competence are very influential and have been used as a base to explain individual difference in the willingness to communicate.

Research done by Auger (2002) and Tarone and Swain (1995), suggests that immersion students learn an academic variant of the French language but fail to acquire colloquial forms of language which would equate into more native-like speech and thus may facilitate more authentic communication amongst peers as well as native French speakers. In fact, Tarone and Swain further suggest that immersion classrooms are diglossic settings where the second language (French) is the formal language while the student's first language is the vernacular language. As they age from pre-adolescence through adolescence, the tendency is for French immersion students to use the vernacular language to communicate since it is most familiar to them. French then becomes the language of academic discourse and not for social interaction.

In a study conducted by Peguret (in press), she found that while university students who had completed immersion programs rated themselves highly in self-efficacy when it came to both learning and using French, they relied heavily on compensation strategies such as paraphrasing when faced with communicative difficulties. This result points to a gap between learning the language in an immersion classroom and actually using the language in real situations. Peguret goes on to suggest that the high ratings in

self-efficacy may be susceptible to change if and when these students come face to face with linguistic obstacles such as using French and being understood outside of classroom.

This observation echoes Genesee's (1987) assertion that immersion students believe that they become more and more socially distant to native speakers of French as they progress through the immersion program. This social distance often results in difficulties communicating with native speakers of the French language. Lyster (1987) found that students in immersion understood the language in school, but struggled when they were outside the classroom setting. Warden, Lapkin, Swain and Hart (1995) conducted a study that investigated the experiences of French immersion students on a three-month exchange to a French speaking country. The authors found that when French immersion students have the opportunity to speak with native French speakers, they frequently have difficulties in making themselves understood.

Lyster (1987) questions the social value of immersion students' tendency for "speaking immersion". Speaking immersion refers to the way in which French immersion students are generally understood by one another and their teacher; however, are not acquiring the aforementioned native-like variants of speech. Nadasdi et al. (2005), posit that this result… "…is not in keeping with either the goals of provincial ministries of education or the desires of the French immersion students themselves" (p. 558). In fact, one of the main visions for French as a Second language in Ontario schools is for English-language students to have both the confidence and ability to use French outside of the classroom and in their daily lives (Ontario, 2013a, p. 8).

### *3.5. Summary of Chapter 3*

Chapter 3 discusses theoretical underpinnings which are important to understanding the present study. Beginning with Second Language Acquisition Theory, The Monitor Model presents the theory of language learning through comprehensible input that is slightly more advanced than where the learner is presently. This theory is followed by The Interaction Hypothesis which posits that language acquisition is most benefited through negotiation of meaning. Finally, Skill Acquisition Theory which describes how knowledge moves from declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge through practice and a focus on forms. All three theories have had lasting influences on second language education.

In an effort to understand the interest in French as a second language studies, Bourdieu's work is examined. Specifically, his concepts of interest, symbolic power, symbolic violence, and finally, cultural and linguistic capital are described. Bourdieu's notion of interest described how attention is paid to specific social structures which are seen as rare or coveted. The concept of symbolic power is particularly pertinent since it explains the power dynamics between the dominant and the dominated in society. Symbolic violence illustrated how the dominant class legitimizes this symbolic power with the consent of the dominated. Cultural and linguistic capital explained how particular cultural resources or languages are valuable within the constructs of society.

A discussion on motivation and second language learning followed and focused on the predominant theories in the field which include: the Socio-Educational Model which focuses mainly on the integrative and instrumental orientations, Cognitive theory

of motivation which touches upon attribution theory, learned-helplessness, and self-efficacy theory, and, finally Self-Determination theory which stems from the idea of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation but builds on these ideas by adding additional regulations.

The construct of Willingness to Communicate was discussed and brought together some of the concepts presented in second language acquisition theory and second language motivation. Finally, the outcomes of French immersion education are discussed and include the potential positive outcomes such as the proficiency in French language, cognitive benefits, and presumed employment benefits; however, the unfavourable outcomes such as the fact that students rarely attain native-like French upon completing the program, the frequently occurring language difficulties with grammar, and also, the difficulties with communicating outside of the classroom are also presented.

The following chapter will describe the methodology, the three groups of participants, the research design, and will give a comprehensive description of the procedures taken in the data collection portion of this study.

## Chapter 4 – Method

The following chapter gives an overview of the methodology of the study, the participants, and discusses the research design, procedures taken when collecting and analyzing the data for this study.

### *4.1. Methodology*

This present study adopts a mixed method approach. According to Tashakkori and Creswell (2007), mixed methods is "research in which the investigator collects analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry" (p.4). Due to the nature of the study, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Mackey and Gass (2005) describe qualitative research as "…research that is based on descriptive data that does not make (regular) use of statistical procedures" (p. 162); whereas, quantitative research tends to contain numeric data and statistical analysis (Creswell, 2012).

The types of data collection used in this study are questionnaires and focus group interviews. Brown (2001) defines questionnaires as, "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answer or selecting them among existing answers" (p.6). Two types of questionnaires were administered in this study. The first was a web-based questionnaire. According to Creswell (2012), "a web-based questionnaire is a survey instrument for collecting data that is available on the computer" (p. 383). The web-based questionnaires were available for parents of current or prospective French immersion students as well as graduates of the program. The web-based questionnaire was chosen

to gain access to respondents in order to promote the response rate. I requested permission from two boards of education to gain access to parents of prospective French immersion students by attending a board French immersion information session but the request to conduct research in this fashion was denied. Thus, the web-based questionnaire granted access to a population that was difficult to reach. The second type of questionnaire was a paper questionnaire which was administered in person to current students of French immersion. The paper questionnaire was administered in person since strict consent procedures needed to be followed in order to have access to this population.

Focus group interviews were used to further probe the questions of the paper questionnaire. Patton further explains, "interviews yield direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge…observations consist of detailed descriptions of people's activities, behaviours, actions, and the full range of interpersonal interactions and organizational processes that are part of observable human experience" (p. 4).

In following with traditional qualitative data collection, my data will stem from fieldwork. As Patton (2002) describes, "during fieldwork, the researcher spends time in the setting under study – a program, an organization, a community, or wherever situations of importance to a study can be observed, people interviewed, and documents analyzed" (p.4). The fieldwork portion of this study was in a French immersion classroom where I had the opportunity to observe the interactions between the French immersion students and their teacher.

The purpose of this type of qualitative data collection is for program evaluation. According to Patton (2002), "program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming" (p. 10). Critical to evaluative research is "capturing and communicating the participants' stories" (Patton, 2002, p. 10). This is fundamental because, "understanding the program's and participants' stories is useful to the extent that they illuminate the processes and outcomes of the program for those who must make decisions about the program" (Patton, 2002, p. 10).

The purpose of using a mixed methods approach in my research is to shed light on how parents view the French immersion program and consequently why they enroll their children in the program; to capture how current French immersion students view the program; and finally, to assess if and how graduates contribute their French language knowledge to society.

### *4.2. Ethical considerations*

Prior to beginning my study, an ethics approval was required from both the university and the school board. Following approval from the university, I was able to collect data on both the parents of French immersion students and the graduates of French immersion studies. Ethics approval from a school board was a separate procedure. An ethics package was submitted to two school boards each fulfilling the board's specific procedures for application. One school board rejected the application stating they receive a surplus of applications and are not able to accommodate all requests. Despite numerous

attempts to solicit feedback none was given. The second school board readily accepted the application and it was at this stage I was able to invite schools to participate in my study. All participants were given a letter of informed consent which detailed the particulars of the study and outlined their rights and responsibilities as participants. Participants under the age of 18 were given a letter of informed consent to take home for their parents to sign. Participants were advised in writing and in person (when applicable) that they would remain anonymous and they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

### *4.3. Research design and procedures*

In order to investigate my research questions, I designed a study which would address three specific stages during French immersion studies: enrollment in French immersion, completing the final credit requirement in grade 12, and post-graduation. In order to touch upon all three stages, I communicated with parents who had children enrolled in early French immersion or who were enrolling their child (children) as soon as possible by inviting them to participate in a web-based questionnaire; I had the opportunity to visit a grade 12 French immersion classroom where I spoke with students by administering a paper questionnaire and then furthermore by creating focus group interview questions based off of those responses; and I communicated with secondary school French immersion graduates, again through a web-based questionnaire.

To address my first question: *What are parents' goals in enrolling their children in an early French immersion program?* I designed a questionnaire using the online survey tool Survey Monkey. I made the questionnaire available via social media using

both Facebook a three-month period (see Appendix A questionnaire). Before beginning the questionnaire participants were directed to the letter of information regarding the study (see Appendix B). Participants were unable to complete the questionnaire without first giving their consent. The questionnaire comprised 16 questions. All of the questions were open-ended and asked for information regarding parents' linguistic backgrounds, their thoughts and impressions of the French immersion program, and their hopes and goals for their child in the French immersion program. I posted the live link on various Facebook groups relating to parents of French immersion students in Ontario and also on my personal Facebook page. Participants were able to access the link at their own discretion and were also able to share the link with other parents. Since participants are able to identify and invite others to participate in the study, this type of sampling is often referred to as snowball sampling (Patton, 2002).

To answer my second question: *What factors influence French immersion secondary school students to remain in the program?* I designed a questionnaire and prepared focus group questions. In order to be a candidate to participate in the study, the schools had to offer French immersion studies, and the school had to have at minimum, one grade 12 French immersion class currently running. To begin, I emailed all secondary schools in the board that offered French immersion studies. In the email I explained the purpose of my research and invited principals to contact the grade 12 French immersion teachers at their school. I also called all available schools and left voice mails for all of the principals. All schools that were currently running a grade 12

French immersion course, (FIF 4U) were invited to participate. Of the ten schools that fit my criteria, only one school consented to participate in the study.

At the time I was collecting data, two French immersion classes were being taught at the school. The principal forwarded my email to the teacher teaching both classes and she contacted me by email with interest in participating in the study. We communicated by email for over one month and decided on a day when I would come and administer the questionnaires to both of her classes. As a team, she and I decided to distribute letters of information for students under the age of 18 (see Appendix C), parental consent forms (see Appendix D), letters of information (see Appendix E), and consent forms (Appendix G) for those students over the age of 18, two weeks before I would administer the questionnaire (see Appendix G), which would allow the students enough time to return the form and thus increase student participation. All students but one required parental consent. Of the 43 students eligible to participate, only 25 returned their consent forms by the designated date despite many reminders from the classroom teacher. Of the 25 students that consented to participate, 11 agreed to participate in the focus group interview portion of the study which would take place after the questionnaire at lunch time. The questionnaire and focus group interviews all took place in December 2013. The questionnaire took place one week before the focus group interviews to accommodate a class trip and the classroom teacher's planned absence.

I used a questionnaire to gain basic information about the students' backgrounds and perspectives regarding their participation and experiences in the French immersion program, and from these questionnaires formed two focus groups to further discuss

emerging themes. Mackey and Gass (2005) state, “questionnaires allow researchers to gather information that learners are able to report about themselves, such as their beliefs and motivations about learning…” (p. 93). The questionnaire I administered has 37 questions. The questionnaire was piloted to ensure the wording of the questionnaire was age appropriate. One volunteer, with guardian permission, who was not part of the target research group but who was of similar age, read through and commented on the questionnaire. Following the pilot study one question was changed and reworded for clarity.

Aside from biographical questions such as age and sex, the questionnaires used only closed-ended questions. Mackey and Gass (2005) describe, “A closed-item question in one for which the researcher determines the possible answers… ”. The questionnaire was written in a likert scale format and students were asked to circle the response that best matched their opinion which included the options: strongly agree, slightly agree, neutral, slightly disagree and strongly agree. From this data, I was able to get an idea of the students’ opinions and perspectives regarding their feelings towards learning French and the utility of the French immersion program from their point of view.

The focus group interviews took place in the school at lunch hour on two different dates within the same week, at the convenience of the principal, students, and teacher. Students were provided pizza, pop, and snacks as an incentive to participate in the focus group portion. Focus group 1 consisted of six participants focus group 2 consisted of five participants. I selected students for each group and in doing so tried to balance both the total number of participants and the amount of boys and girls in each group. Both focus

group interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by me. Questions were framed using lead-ins (see Appendix H for sample focus group questions), for example, can you tell me about a time you used French outside of school?

Finally, to answer my third question: *What social or linguistic contribution do secondary school graduates of French immersion programs make to their respective communities?* graduates of the French immersion program in Ontario were invited to complete a questionnaire using social media, specifically Facebook and email. As a French immersion graduate myself, I emailed several peers who had graduated with me, inviting them to participate in the study. Participants were requested to complete a questionnaire online through the internet survey provider, Survey Monkey, which addressed their experiences and thoughts regarding the French immersion program and the French language in Canada. Before completing the online questionnaire, participants were directed to the letter of information (see Appendix I). Participants were unable to complete the questionnaire unless they consented to the study. The questionnaire asked specific questions regarding the backgrounds of the graduates and asked open-ended questions discussing their use of the French language following graduation (see Appendix J). There were 32 questions asked in the questionnaire. Many questions allowed participants to comment freely on their experiences and thoughts without parameters of a scale or a multiple-choice selection.

The survey was piloted to ensure clarity and ease of completion. The pilot study was completed by three volunteers who were not part of the target research group.

Following the completion of the pilot study, the wording of three questions was changed to facilitate clearer understanding.

The survey link went live on February 5th, 2013 and was available for completion until September 5th, 2013. The survey was shared via email and social media and was posted to a number of group webpages including education and non-education related groups.

### *4.4. Analysis*

According to Glesne (2011), "qualitative researchers use many techniques (such as coding, data displays, and computer programs) to help organize, classify, and find themes in their data…"(p. 208). Similar techniques were used in the present study to analyze the data. Specifically, data needed to be coded in order to find the re-occurring themes. Patton (2002) suggests "document analysis includes studying excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from organizational, clinical, or program records; memoranda and correspondence, official publications and reports; personal diaries; and open ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys" (p. 4). He further notes, "research and evaluation studies employing multiple methods, including combinations of qualitative and quantitative data are common…a questionnaire or interview that asks both fixed-choice (closed) questions and open-ended questions is an example of how quantitative measurement and qualitative data are often combined" (p.4).

Following the collection of the online questionnaire responses for graduates, I booked an appointment with the Statistical Consulting Service - Institute for Social Research (ISR) at York University in May 2013 to inquire the best way to analyze my

data. The first step that was to import my data from Survey Monkey into the statistical analysis program SPSS Version 20. Once the data was imported from Survey Monkey, I was taught that the questions I posed became *variables* while the responses became known as *cases*. My first step was to separate any two-part questions into distinct variable columns. For example, question 17, "Do you consider yourself bilingual? How do you make that decision?" was divided into to two variables: the first being the question, "do you consider yourself bilingual" and the second variable being the question, "how do you make that decision?" Once all of the two-part questions were divided up into two variables I could begin the coding.

The advice from the ISR was to numerically code my data by assigning numbers to the answers to my questions. In order to do this I manually went through each variable and wrote down key words that re-occurred. This process is similar to inductive data analysis. As Mackey and Gass (2005) describe, "inductive data analysis is determined by multiple examinations and interpretations of the data in the light of the research objectives, with the categories induced from the data" (p. 179). Thus the key words found in the data became the categories that were assigned a numerical value. Once the data was assigned an initial numerical value, those values were re-examined. In a number of cases the categories were almost identical and in these instances, the data was re-coded a second time and all numerical values were transformed into different values. Any variable that only had a yes or no response was assigned a number one (1) for *yes* and number two (2) for *no*. Missing data was coded with the number 99 to avoid any confusion while assigning numbers to the cases. I created frequency tables for each

variable to summarize the number of responses in each category. The frequency tables allowed me to easily create bar graphs and pie charts for data representation. The same process was followed once the collection of the data from the parents of current French immersion students was complete.

The data from the questionnaire for the current French immersion students was also coded using SPSS; however, the process was much simpler. Since the questionnaire used a Likert scale, the options on the scale were assigned a number. Strongly agree was assigned a number one (1), slightly agree a number two (2), neutral a number three (3), slightly disagree a number four (4) and strongly disagree a number five (5). All variables were then analyzed by producing frequency tables for each variable.

In order to analyze data across the three sources, the ISR suggested I look at questions of similar meaning. They advised me that the wording of the questions did not need to be identical in order to compare the data. For example, graduates were asked if they believed being bilingual was advantageous to one's life, while current students were asked to respond to the statement, *I think knowing the French language will benefit me in my future*. These questions share a commonality in that they both address the French language in the future and thus could be compared. Questions that were deemed of similar meaning were then recoded using SPSS to produce frequency tables used for comparison.

### *4.5. Description of participants*

#### *4.5.1. Parents of French immersion students*

Participants were recruited via social media. In total, 41 participants responded to the survey which was made available online for a three month period. Of the 41 participants, only one participant identified as male. All parents either had at least one child enrolled in early French immersion, or had intentions on enrolling their child in early French immersion as soon as possible. All participants but two indicated that English was their first language. One participant identified French as her first language, and the other participant identified Dutch as her first language. According to parents, including those whose first language was not English, French would be the second language for their children.

#### *4.5.2. Current French immersion students*

Current French immersion students were recruited first by inviting secondary school principals to participate in the study and next by gaining permission from grade 12 French immersion teachers (FIF 4U) to invite their students to participate in the study.

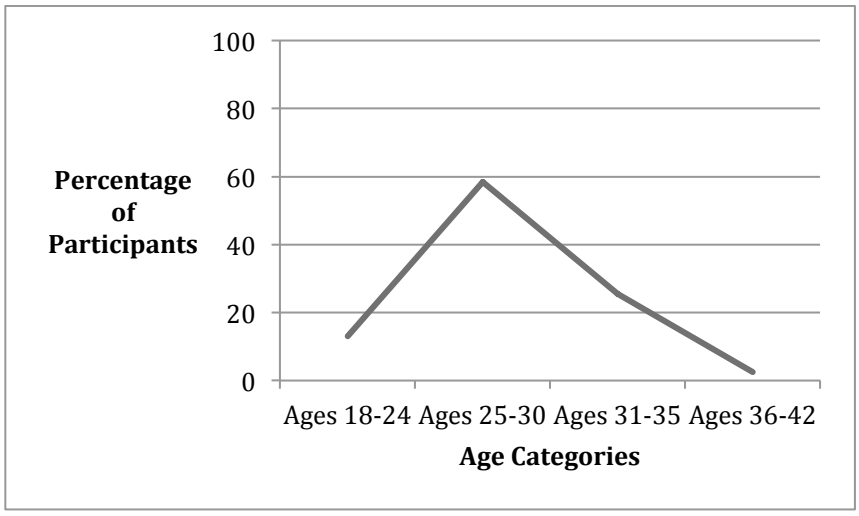
In total 25 students were eligible to participate in the study. Nine males and 16 females participated in the questionnaire portion of the study while 11 students, six girls and five boys participated in the focus group interview portion of the study. The ages of the participants varied from 16 to 18 years old with 80% of the students indicating they were 17 years old at the time the questionnaire was administered. All of the students began French immersion in the early French immersion program in either kindergarten or

grade one and were all on track to completing the requirements to achieve the Certificate of Bilingualism at graduation.

### *4.5.3. Graduates of French immersion*

Participants were recruited via social media and direct email. In total, 123 participants responded to the survey which was available online from February 5 2013 – September 5 2013. Participants ranged in age from 18 years old to 42 years old and all participants had graduated secondary school from a French immersion program in Ontario. While a variety of age ranges were represented, the mean age of participants was 29.08 years old. Figure 4.1 depicts the various ages of the participants.

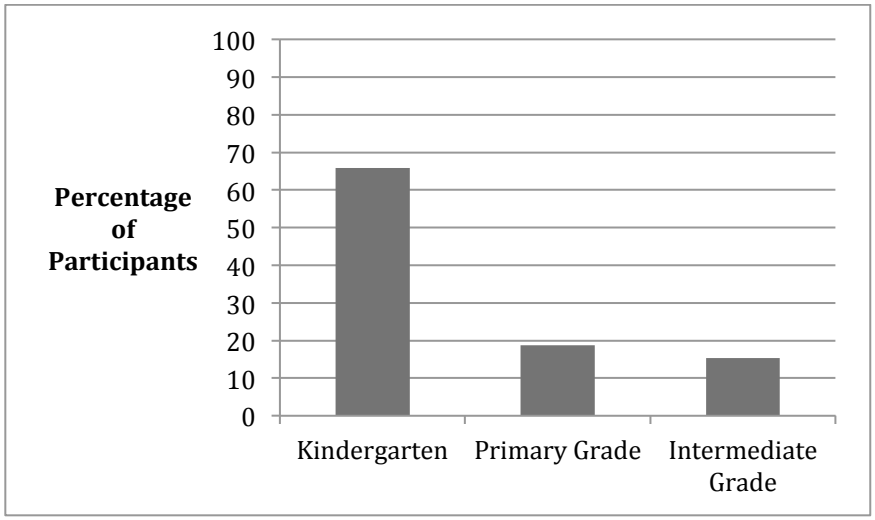
Figure 4.1. The ages of French immersion graduates




The youngest participant was a recent graduate and was 18 years old at the time of data collection while the oldest participant was 42 years old and had graduated from the French immersion program in 1989. Women far outnumbered men and made up 82.9% of respondents with men making up the remaining 17.1%.

While all participants were required to have graduated secondary school from a French immersion program in Ontario, the entry level grade for participants varied from junior kindergarten to grade 9 with 65.6% of respondents entering the French immersion program in kindergarten (either junior or senior kindergarten), 18.7% of respondents entered the French immersion program in a primary grade (grades 1-6), while 15.4% of respondents entered the program in an intermediate grade (grades 7-9). Table 4.2 depicts the entry points of the graduates.

Figure 4.2. Participants' entry grade in French immersion




The majority of participants entered the French immersion program in kindergarten or a primary grade which indicates these participants were in early French immersion while a few entered in the intermediate grades which points to middle or late immersion programs.

The participants' graduation dates varied from 1989-2012, with the majority graduating in 2002. In fact, those who graduated from a French immersion program

between 1998-2004 totaled 66.7% of respondents, followed by those who graduated between 2005-2012 with 22.8%, and finally those who graduated between 1989-1997 making up 8.9% (1.6 percent negated to complete this question).

Respondents represent a variety of school boards across Ontario. In total, 32 school boards out of the possible 60 (31 English public schools and 29 English catholic schools) are represented. Respondents who attended a public school account for 75.6% of respondents, while 21.1% indicated they attended at catholic school with only 1.6% indicating they attended a private school, while another 1.6% attended a combination of schools throughout their French immersion education.

### *4.6. Summary of Chapter 4*

In total, 189 participants contributed to the research. Parents of prospective or current early French immersion students filled out an online questionnaire that was available for a three-month duration. Current French immersion students filled out a paper questionnaire and had the opportunity to participate in a 30-minute focus group interview. Of the current students participating in the study, only eleven students participated in the focus group interview portion. Finally, French immersion graduates completed an online questionnaire over the course of six months. Data collection took just over one year to complete (February 2013 – March 2014). Following the direction of the ISR, data was imported into SPSS and coded by identifying themes and assigning these themes numerical figures. The following chapter explores the results of the questionnaire administered to the parents of current early French immersion students or parents of prospective French immersion students.

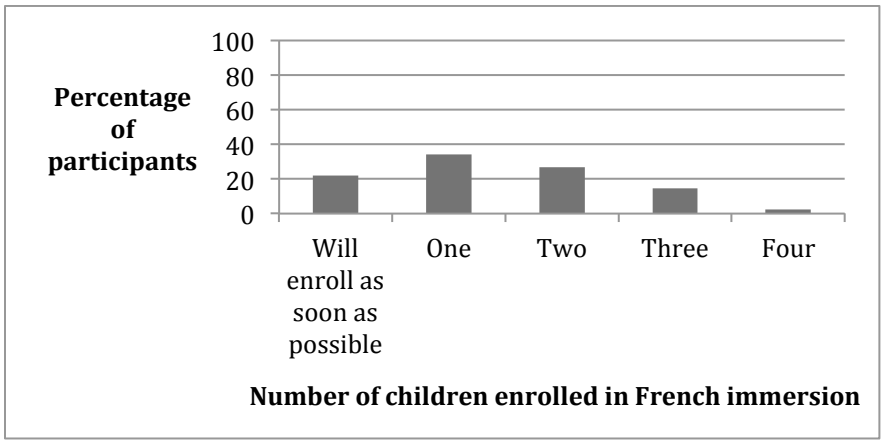
## Chapter 5 – Parental expectations of French immersion enrollment

Chapter 5 gives an overview of the results of the questionnaire administered to parents who have elementary school children in the French immersion program or those who will be enrolling their children in French immersion as soon as possible. Parents who did not have children currently enrolled in the French immersion program had intentions on doing so before 2016. Parents were recruited via social media using both Facebook and email. The questionnaire was created using the online tool, Survey Monkey and was available to those with access to the live link. The participants accessed the questionnaire via social media over a three-month period, January 2013 – March 2013. In the following data, all respondents were assigned a number based on the order in which they completed the questionnaire. In order to preserve anonymity, parents will be identified with the prefix 'P' followed by their number, for example respondent 14 will be referred to as P-14.

### *5.1. Description of Participants*

In total, 41 parents responded to the online questionnaire. Of those who participated only one identified as male and the other 40 identified as female. All parents had at least one child currently enrolled in the French immersion program between kindergarten and grade 4 or intended to pursue enrollment as soon as possible. Figure 5.1. depicts the number of children each respondent had enrolled in the French immersion program at the time of the questionnaire January 2014 – March 2014.

Figure 5.1. How many children do you have currently enrolled in the French immersion program?




The majority of parents (34.1%) had one child enrolled in the French immersion program, followed by 26.8% who had two children currently enrolled in the program. This result was followed by 22% who had intentions on enrolling their children in the program as soon as they were age eligible. Those parents with three children currently enrolled in French immersion totaled 14.6% percent while 2.4% had four children enrolled.

### *5.2. Participants' linguistic background*

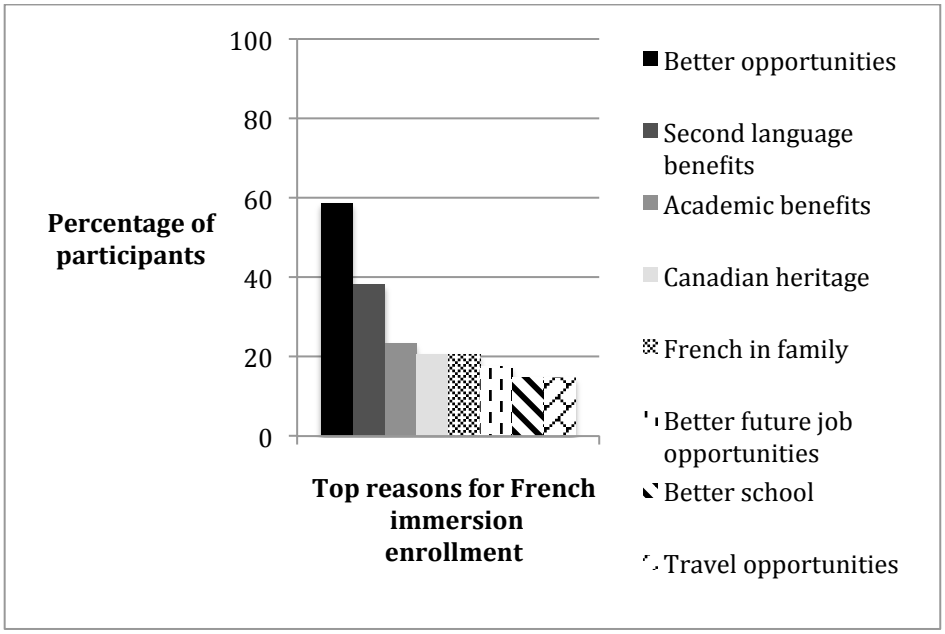
There was some variance in the languages spoken in the home. All of the respondents indicated that English was spoken in the home. Thirty-eight of 41 respondents indicated that English was exclusively spoken in the home, while one respondent said a mixture of English, French, and Dutch was spoken at home, another said a mixture of English, French, and German was spoken at home, and finally one respondent said a mixture of English and Italian was spoken at home. Given their interest in the French immersion program, it was surprising to see that only 15% of the

respondents were French immersion graduates themselves and the remaining 85% did not attend the French immersion program in their childhood. Finally, the respondents indicated that French would be the second language for all of the participants' children.

### *5.3. Why put your child in early French immersion?*

Parents were asked why they decided to enroll their children in early French immersion and in most cases, they had a variety of reasons for their decision. Reasons varied from having a French background in their families to the assumed academic challenge of French immersion to linguistic benefits during travel. Figure 5.2. illustrates the top eight answers for why parents chose to enroll their child in early French immersion over the traditional English stream with core French offerings in later grades.

Figure 5.2. Top eight reasons for early French immersion enrollment




The categories emerged from the data from reviewing the language parents used to describe their reasoning. The first category, *better opportunities*, refers to instances when

parents said they felt the French immersion provided their child or children with better general opportunities but did not provide specifics or examples. The second category, *second language benefits*, is a precise phrase parents used to describe the reason for French immersion enrollment, but again, they did not elaborate. The *academic benefits* category arose from where parents would describe how their children would be more challenged in school and/or the felt the curriculum was more rigorous. The *Canadian heritage* category stems from any mention were parents indicated they thought enrollment in the French immersion program would make their children more bonded to the English and French Canadian history. *French in family* refers to any mention that there are French relatives in the student's family. The *better future job* category while similar to the *better opportunities* category, was derived from specific mention of better future employment as a result of early French immersion enrollment. Some parents specifically mentioned that the French immersion school nearest to them was a better school than the school not offering French immersion and thus arose the *better school* category. Finally, the *travel opportunities* category was created because parents explicitly stated they felt that early French immersion studies would afford their child/children the ability to travel more widely since they will be able to speak another language.

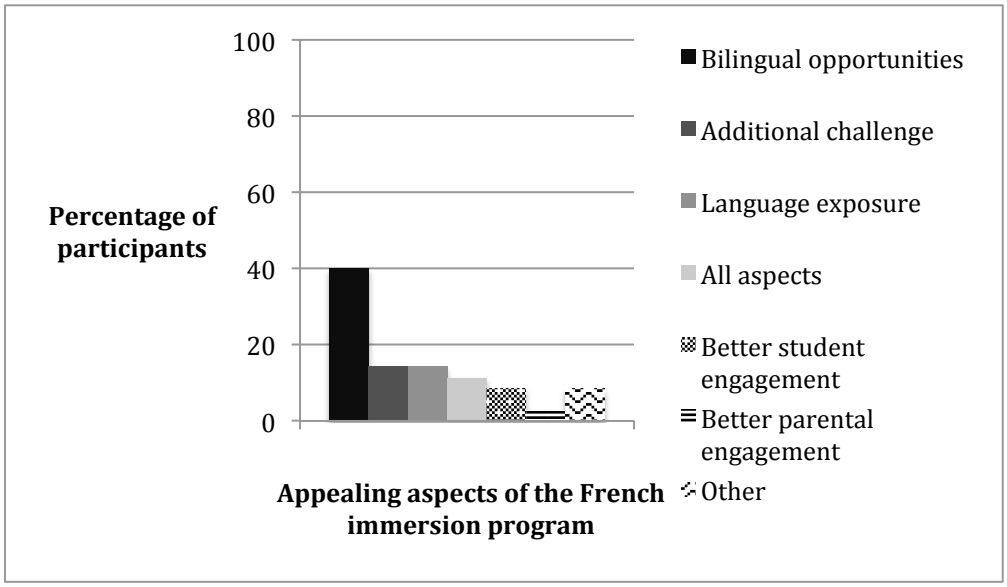
Most parents listed more than one of the aforementioned reasons. For example, P-21 explained, "we believe that having a second language offers tremendous benefits, from greater opportunities in terms of where to work, live and study to increased mental agility. Studies have shown that young children who speak more than one language

improve their cognitive skills." As previously discussed, bilingual children do experience many cognitive advantages such as metalinguistic awareness, divergent thinking, communicative sensibility and ability to learn multiple languages (Bialystok, 2001). Like P-21, many parents referenced the future when discussing their reasons for enrolling their child in early French immersion. The variety of reasons is echoed in P-28's comments:

> In the future, if she remains in French Immersion, hopefully she will have more post secondary education opportunities. We will encourage her to travel. Learning a second language will help her communicate worldwide. We are a bilingual country. We hope this will help her respect this part of our Canadian history. Despite the French Immersion, the school that she is enrolled in has a great reputation (sic).

Better general opportunities were most commonly mentioned in the responses. In fact, the opportunities being bilingual offers was also the most reported answer when asked which aspects of the French immersion program were most appealing to parents. Figure 5.3. illustrates the most common answers to the question, what aspects of the French immersion program are most appealing to you?

Figure 5.3. Appealing aspects of the French immersion program




The most appealing aspect of the French immersion program is the *bilingual opportunities* the parents believe the program provides. This category stems from when parents spoke generally about opportunities and did not specify which ones they had in mind. P-37 explains, "the opportunities it provides her by being exposed to it a large part of her day" is the most appealing aspect of the French immersion program.

The second most popular response was the *additional challenge* that parents believe the program provides. P-3 states the most appealing aspect of French immersion is the "additional challenge". P-24 was more specific and said the most appealing aspect was, "that he will learn two languages and that he is learning at a high level".

The category *language exposure* stems from those parents who spoke more generally about the French language exposure. For example, P-15 says the most appealing aspect of French immersion education is, "that my children are developing a respect and awareness for other languages. They now ask about Spanish". P-27 further

explains, “the early exposure to another language. I thought the earlier, the better. Just the early exposure was the most appealing (vs. later- when its more difficult to learn a new language)”.

Some parents could not focus on one aspect they found most appealing and thus named several aspects. These parents form the category *all aspects*. P-41 explains, “I honestly like every aspect. The reading, writing and oral skills, mixed with some cultural background is all positive enrichment that I don't feel can be duplicated outside of the school environment for a first language English family”.

Engagement immerged as one of the most appealing aspects of the program but was broken down into two parts: *better student engagement* versus *better parental engagement.* P-14 says the most appealing aspect of the program is the student engagement she witnesses. She says, “both my kids have been fully engaged with learning French and I love the way that they take pride in what they have learned that day…” While parents of young children enrolled in French immersion, found their children to be fully engaged, it remains to be seen if that engagement remains constant until secondary school graduation. Makropoulos (2010a) conducted a study regarding student engagement with the French immersion curriculum at an Ottawa high school and found that the curriculum “…was designed for university oriented students interested in acquiring English-French educational capital, and contributed to the marginalization of students who were not pursuing that goal” (p. 10). Thus those who did not share the aspirations of a university education and/or acquiring linguistic capital were marginalized and otherwise disengaged. While other parents believe that parents of French immersion

students are more engaged in the school. P-1 explains “engagement of the school's parents in their children's schooling - makes for a richer education environment”.

Finally, the *other* category contains responses which did not fit into the previous categories. For example, P-8 indicated that the more appealing aspect of the French immersion program is, “they [the students] have to learn to juggle things a little more”, while P-34 said, “nothing in particular, but I have to admit that our school is 60-40 and I like that one of the subjects taught in English is Math”.

The responses from both Figure 5.2. and Figure 5.3. suggest that parents have high hopes that the French immersion program will provide increased general opportunities accruing to acquiring a second language. For example, P-13 said, “Being able to speak another language and to think in other languages gives my children more opportunities” which is echoed by another parent who noted that the most appealing aspects of the French immersion program were, “The long term benefits and better opportunities” (P-33). The consensus from the parents was that the French immersion program had better long-term opportunities than other options including the English stream with core French education program.

Parents had a positive impression of the French immersion from the onset. While, the question of where the parents were getting their information from was not asked, there are several easily accessible sources of information available to prospective French immersion parents.

### *5.4. Accessible recourses for parents*

A first source is the French immersion information night for parents which is hosted by the individual boards of education for parents who are considering French immersion education for their children. I attended this information night on two occasions with two different boards located in southern Ontario to take field notes on the information being presented to interested parents. These information nights took place in February and April 2013, in the second half of the academic school year. In both of the information sessions I attended, the room was full with over 50 families present and on one occasion there was standing room only available. Both boards offered presentations of a similar structure: the presentations were hosted by principals of French immersion elementary schools in the area and both had student ambassadors in either grade 1 or grade 2 along with their teacher. The ambassadors brought along some written work they had produced in class and as an introduction, read this work to the audience. It was clear from the beginning that the parents were extremely impressed with the French being spoken by the ambassadors.

The presentations (conducted using power point) discussed the background of the French immersion program within that particular board, how many elementary schools offer the program and how many secondary schools offer the program, and the goal of the French immersion program within the board, which in both cases were "to achieve a high level of bilingualism" by program completion. Principals in both boards also discussed the inclusive nature of the French immersion program and emphasized the support methods offered for students who require accommodations and modifications in their

current studies. It was made very clear that the French immersion program focused on the transferable skills of reading and writing to ensure there was not any delay in English skill development.

Both presentations also discussed a myriad of benefits to the French immersion which included but were not limited to: strengthened first language skills, enhanced reasoning, better program solving, and substantially better creative thinking skills. Information from studies conducted by various groups, such as Canadian Parents for French during the 1990's and quotes from the Ministry of Education were also included in both board's presentations. Neither presentation made reference to the new curriculum or the French as a second language framework for Ontario schools.

The presentations were short and ended before the 30-minute mark including the small talks given by the young ambassadors. Parents then had the opportunity to pose questions. Most questions were not program related but logistical issues school bus availability and school boundaries. The parents who had program questions wondered about how their child could transfer out of the program if they did not like it and how much they would be expected to assist with homework. For those parents with questions about homework, both boards suggested the website: (www.fslhomeworktoolbox.ca).

Online resources are another accessible source of information for parents interested in enrolling their children in French immersion programs. Both board presentations suggested using their board websites as a resource along with the Canadian Parents for French website. The Canadian Parents for French is a volunteer organization committed to the promotion and development of French as a second language learning

opportunities for Canadians. Their website offers activities, French as a Second Language resources for parents, students, and educators, media releases, research database (for members only), media releases issued by the Canadian Parents for French and research published specifically by the Canadian Parents for French.

General French immersion internet searches yield many results depicting both the benefits of French immersion and the expansion of the program due to high enrollment. The top results point to the many benefits of French immersion education along with many newspaper stories on the subject which discuss again the high enrollment rate and how boards of education are accommodating the demand. Finally, internet searches often yield government publications also painting the French immersion program in a more than positive light. In order to find any critical pieces on French immersion, one must scroll down several pages and most of the critiques come from blogs and comments on newspaper article testimonials.

Overall, the information available to parents from the information nights, websites, and newspaper articles available on the internet paint a very positive picture of French immersion studies which can explain why parents are enthusiastic about the program and where they are getting their information from.

### *5.5. French immersion versus core French*

In comparing French immersion and core French opportunities, over a third of respondents suggested that core French was not sufficient to become bilingual and that participants in this second language program learned little French. P-41 explained, “I didn't feel English stream with core French was enough. Based on friends/family who

took this stream, their knowledge of the French language is quite limited". As evidenced by this explanation, parents have a pre-set idea of the level of French they expect their child to acquire through participation in the program. P-41 used the word "enough" above which suggests she has a specific goal on how much French she expects her child to learn through his/her participation in the program. Also, the underlying assumption made by P-41 is that French immersion studies will be "enough" to satisfy her particular idea of language acquisition.

Most parents seemed influenced by their own experiences in the core French program. P-4 said, "we both did the traditional core French--it doesn't work! I think it is pretty clear by research that language learning at a young age is best…" While there is a long standing belief that early language learning is better for bilingualism (Birdsong, 1999; Genesee, 1978), García (2009) states, "there seem to be no age-related differences in the process of language learning" (p. 66). In fact, she posits that it may be the educational environment, pedagogical practices, and individual student factors that influence language learning. Meñoz and Singleton (2011) corroborate García's (2009) line of thinking and suggest that language input, contextual factors, socio-affective factors and cognitive factors need also be considered. García (2009) states:

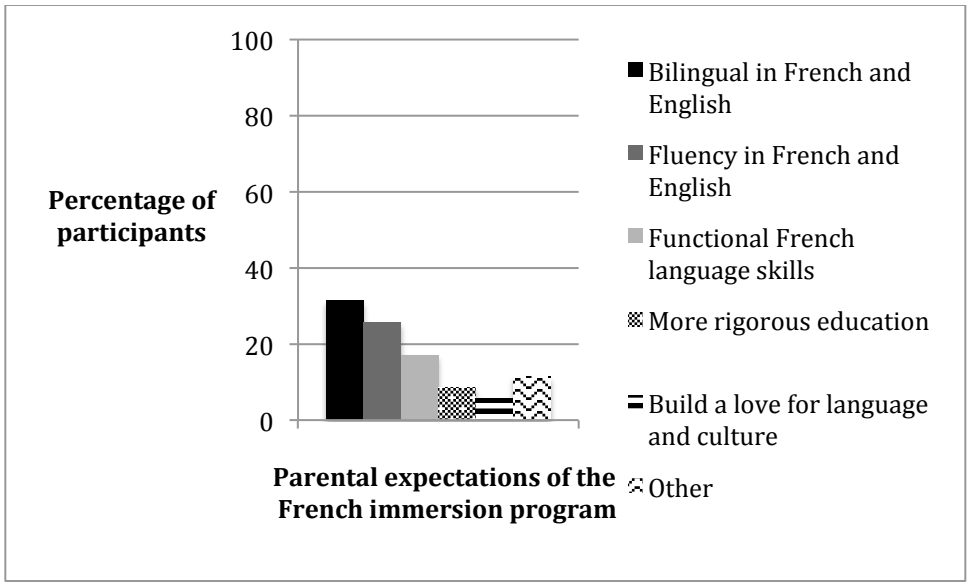
> Because children have more time to practice and develop their bilingual competence, and because often the social and educational settings in which they participate are more conducive to authentic practice, it turns out they often appear to be more successful in developing bilingualism. Yet, in formal educational settings, adults, able to use their metalinguistic skills in a first language more efficiently, learn more quickly than younger learners. (p. 67)

According to García (2009), context has an important impact on the development of language skills. Thus parents seemed to be misinformed regarding the earlier is better rule to achieving bilingualism.

Many parents felt that French immersion was necessary in order to gain a solid handle on the language. P-21 explained, "we believe that in order to become fluent, immersion is necessary. I studied French via the traditional method and find my French speaking skills to be frustratingly poor". Personal experience was not the only factor when parents opted for French immersion over core French, but the reputation of the school was also a deciding factor. P-1 stated, "best school in the city - this is how their program was administered" while another parent remarked, "I think of it as a private school education, without the cost" (P-19).

Given that most parents felt that the core French stream would not sufficiently educate their child in French, it comes as no surprise that over a third of parents expected their children to become bilingual by the end of the program. Figure 5.4. illustrates the answers to the question, what are your expectations of the French immersion program?

Figure 5.4. Parental expectations of the French immersion program




At the very least half of the parents expected bilingualism or fluent French language skills by the end of secondary school. For example, P- 28 said, "I hope that she will be almost completely bilingual by the end of grade 12", which was echoed by P-7 who said her expectations were, "for my child to become bilingual at an early age". How participants viewed bilingualism and fluency was not clear; however, many seemed to use the terms interchangeably. For example, R-25 stated her expectation of the French immersion program was "for our children to learn fluent French so that they can hopefully maximize their future opportunities". This goal of children developing fluent French or "complete bilingualism" is very difficult. Hermanto, Moreno, and Bialystok (2012) conducted a study in which they examined linguistic and metalinguistic ability in English and French with Anglophone children in Grades 2 and 5 and found "the children in this immersion school are not becoming native speakers of French…"(p. 142); however, the students did have "patterns of linguistic development typically found for fully bilingual children" (p. 142). Hermanto et al., (2012) suggest that with continued

formal instruction and exposure to French, the children may become bilingual. Many parents viewed grade 12 as the ending point for language learning; García (2009) describes, "language learning is a continuous developmental process that occurs throughout a lifetime and is recursive and circular" (p. 59). This idea of an ending point proves later on to be detrimental to the level of bilingualism achieved by French immersion students.

While many parents spoke vaguely about the increased general opportunities they felt came with enrolling their child in French immersion, other parents specifically pointed out that they hoped the French immersion program would increase their child's job prospects. P- 34 explained,

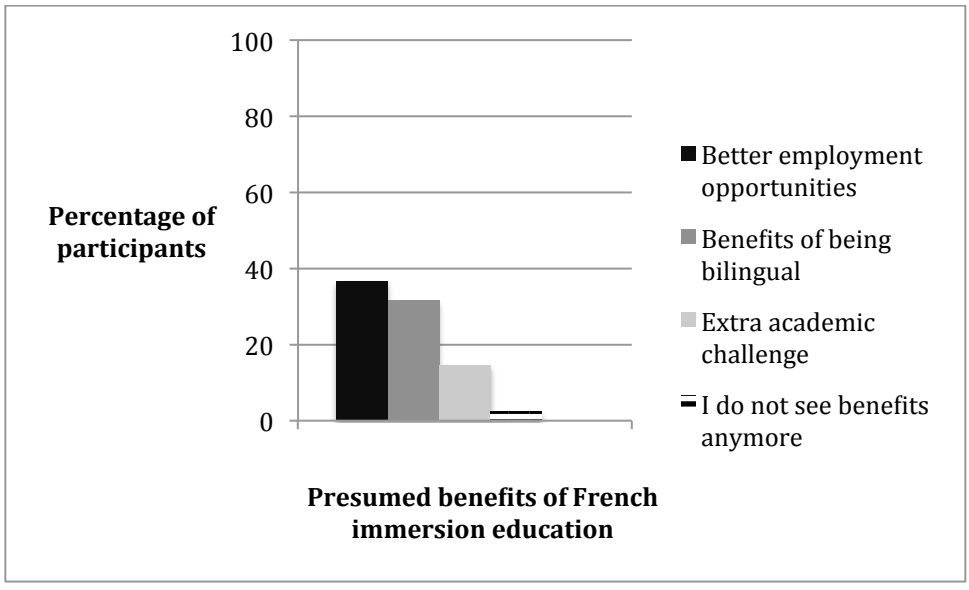
> In order to open all possible doors to her in the Future (sic). We are a bilingual Country (sic) and since she has the opportunity it would be irresponsible of me as her parent to close a door on her even before she has had the chance to see if she wants to go through it - career wise that is!

P-34's statement corroborates research done by Makropoulos (2010b) who found that non-francophone parents believed that their children would be better prepared for the job market if they starting becoming bilingual while they were young. This idea of presumed better career opportunities was echoed by P- 39 who stated, "The job market is getting more and more difficult and we felt that this was one more advantage we could give our child (soon children)". These statements suggest that parents view their child's linguistic competence as linguistic capital. Bourdieu (1977b) states, "linguistic competence (like any other cultural competence) functions as linguistic capital in relationship with a certain market" (p. 651). The market being referenced by the parents would be the bilingual English/French marketplace. The parents of the current or prospective students

are assuming that a knowledge of French will give them an economic advantage; however, research suggests that second official language knowledge yields significant results in Quebec and insignificant results in the rest of Canada (Christofides & Swidinsky, 2010).

Despite the fact that only 17.6% explicitly stated that increased future job opportunities was one of the main reasons they enrolled their child in early French immersion, when asked how they thought their child would benefit from French immersion 40% stated they believed their child would have increased employment opportunities. Figure 5.5. illustrates how parents responded to the question, how do you think your child will benefit from French immersion education?

Figure 5.5. Presumed benefits of French immersion education




Increased employment opportunities was the leading benefit parents saw in French immersion studies. These results suggest that parents equate French immersion studies

with economic gains in that graduates will have opportunities that are presumably not afforded to graduates of core French programs. P-25 explains, "if they stick with the French immersion education, I feel it will benefit them when they are adults and looking for a job. Corporations, Governments, etc. are always looking for bilingual candidates (sic)". This statement corroborates research done by Roy and Galiev (2011) who found that parents in their study equated French immersion students with better employment prospects. This result also suggests that parents are more extrinsically motivated to enroll their children in French immersion in hopes that there is some external pay off at the end.

Following closely being *employment opportunities* is *benefits of being bilingual*. This category encompasses parents who spoke generally about opportunities but did not specify. For example, P-38 says, "being bilingual offers a lot of benefits - some of which are small, some of which are large" or for example, P-30 describes, "it will provide opportunities others will not have. A great sense of community in a FI classroom". Thus parents did not identify specific benefits as a result of participating in the program but suggested there were inherent opportunities gained through French immersion education.

At this stage of the questionnaire, no parents mentioned any cognitive or cultural benefits from attending the French immersion program despite having made passing references to these topics earlier, and furthermore, developing a more rigorous cultural understanding was also not mentioned. This deviates from one of the tenets of bilingual education as described by García (2009), which is to be able to function across cultures as a result of being educated bilingually (p. 7). Moreover, parents have also ignored one of the main goals of French immersion education in Canada which is "to instill in students

an understanding and appreciation of French Canadians, their language and culture, without detracting in any way from the students' identity and appreciation for English-Canada culture" (Genesee, 1998, p. 130). Lost is the cultural connection French immersion was meant to provide and in its place is hopeful economic gains.

### *5.6. Summary of Chapter 5*

The preceding chapter illustrates the motivating factors and goals that parents have for enrolling their children in early-French immersion programs. The questionnaire results reveal that parents believe that traditional core French programs are not successful at teaching French to students and that their children would develop French skills that will result in bilingualism.

Additionally, they view the French immersion program as superior to the traditional program and suggest that the curriculum is more rigorous and would further challenge their children. Similarly, parents equate the French immersion program with better schools. Parents have relied mostly on personal experience and the media when coming to this conclusion. Overall, the hopes of parents enrolling their children in early French immersion studies are that the program will ultimately lead to bilingualism and increased job opportunities for their children.

## Chapter 6 – Current French immersion students' perspectives of French immersion

Chapter 6 gives an overview of the results of the questionnaire administered to students who are currently in grade 12 of the French immersion program in Ontario and the two focus group interviews with 11 consenting participants. Participants for this portion of the study were recruited from a French immersion secondary school located in southern Ontario. All participants were in their final year of French immersion studies, on track to achieving their Certificate of Bilingualism from their school. The Certificate of Bilingualism is awarded to students who have completed a minimum of 10 French immersion credits over the course of their secondary school careers.

The questionnaire was designed to explore student attitudes about French within the confines of their school, their attitudes about using French outside of the school, and their plans to utilize their French language skills in the future. Thus, the questionnaire asked a variety of questions relating to French in school and French outside of school. When the questionnaire was administered, it was not divided thematically and questions were mixed as to not lead participants in particular directions whilst they were completing the questionnaire. The responses to the questionnaire were divided into thematic sections: French background, French in the classroom, French outside the classroom and French utility in the future (see Appendix K for the thematically organized questionnaire).

The focus group interviews took place the following week after the questionnaire and the questions for the interviews were created following the questionnaire and meant to probe the themes further and to clarify some of the responses. While one limitation of

focus group interviews is the tendency for one or two individuals to dominate the conversation (Creswell, 2012), this was not the case during this particular study. Focus Group 1 consisted of six participants while Focus Group 2 consisted of five participants. All students chose a pseudonym to protect their identities. Table 6.1. lists the focus group participants.

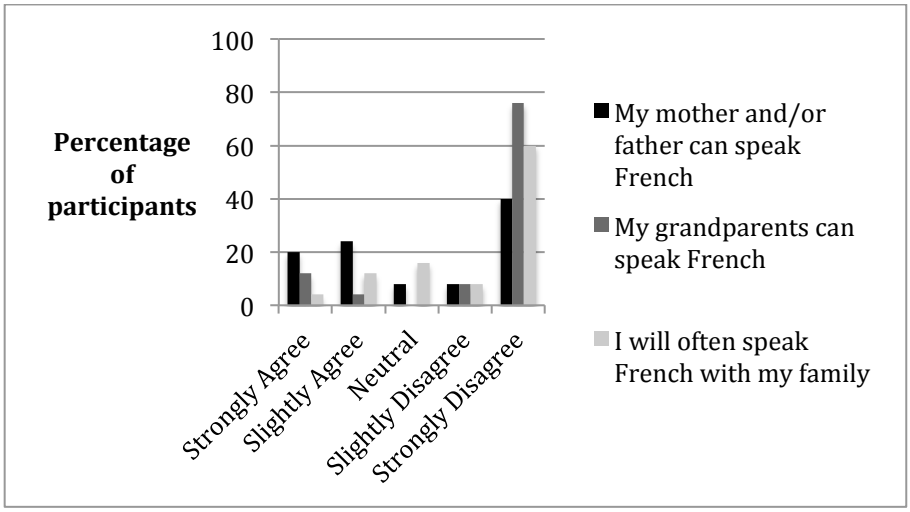
Table 6.1. Focus group participants and their allotted groups.

| **Focus Group 1** | **Focus Group 2** |
|---|---|
| Sergio | Cynthia |
| Jacob | Lucas |
| Tara | James |
| Michael | Cally |
| Tina | Jennifer |
| Lily | |

### *6.1. Linguistic background*

Part 1 of the questionnaire reveals that while there is some French in the students' linguistic background, very few speak French with their families. Figure 6.1. illustrates how often students speak French with their immediate family members.

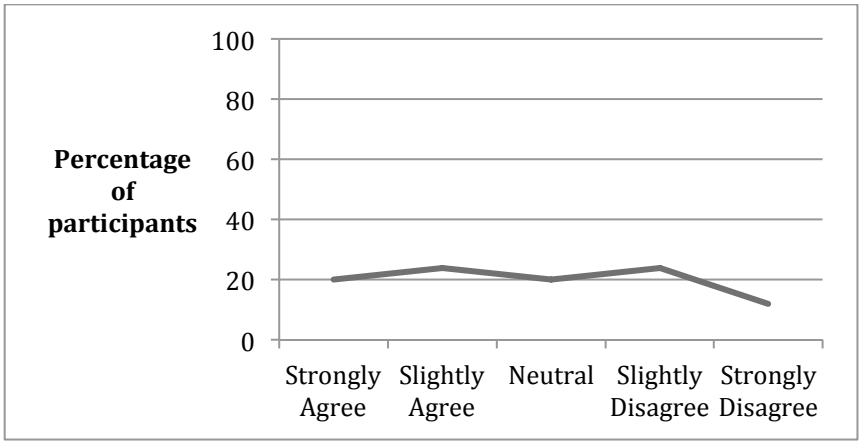
Figure 6.1. Percentage of students who speak French with their immediate family



While the students indicated that 16% of their grandparents can speak French and 44% of their parents can speak French, it is not clear how well. Of those who indicated their parents did speak French, the level of French was not quantified. Sergio from Focus Group 1 explains, "my mom speaks secondary school French from 20 years ago. She can understand words but not form a sentence". The focus groups revealed that students counted their parents own secondary school French education as French knowledge regardless of their skill level. The lack of French knowledge within the families helps explain why 68% of students indicated they do not often speak French with their families. Despite the fact that 44% of students indicated their parents speak French, only 1% said they speak French often with their parents.

At this stage of their immersion education, parents do not appear to play an active role in encouraging language use. Figure 6.2. illustrates the student responses to the statement: *my parents encourage me to speak French outside of school*.

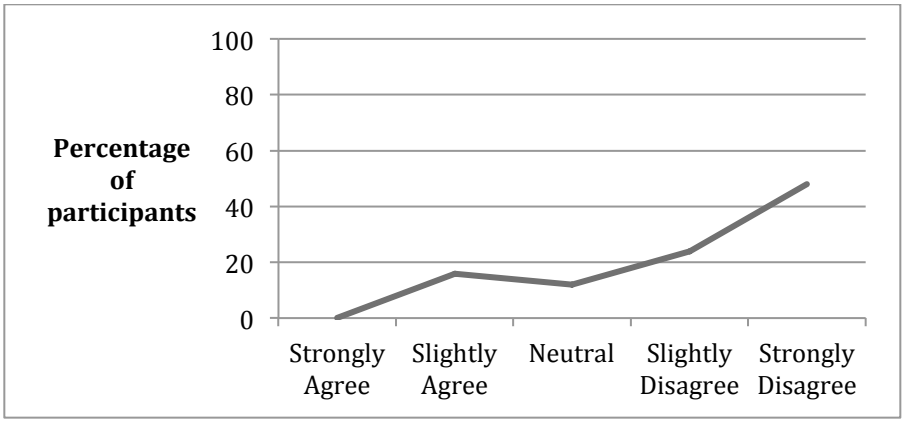
Figure 6.2. My parents encourage me to speak French outside of school



There is little difference between those who indicated their parents encouraged them to use French outside of school and those whose parents did not encourage them to use French outside of school. This response coupled with the fact that there is little French being used at home indicates that the French language learning is something that is not being reinforced in the home.

In fact, when asked when students spoke French, Jacob in Focus Group 1 responded, "Class. Never outside of class. Never at home". Jennifer for Focus Group 2 agreed when she said, "French is something I use for class. I don't have to use it anywhere else". This response was corroborated by the other Focus Group 2 participants who verbally expressed their agreement. These responses illustrate how, for these students, the French language is not thought of as a communicative tool outside of the classroom. Figure 6.3. depicts the frequency of students who will often speak French with their friends outside of school.

Figure 6.3. I will often speak French with my friends outside of school.



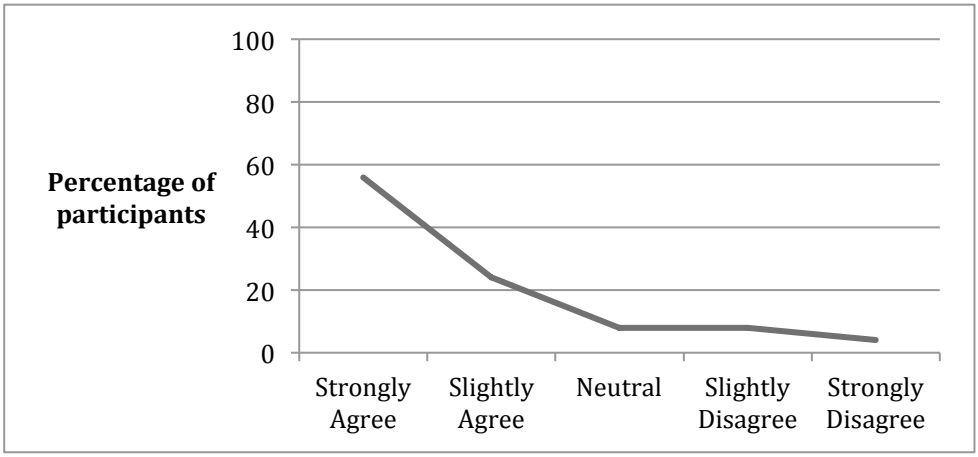

Of those students surveyed, 68% disagreed with the aforementioned statement. When asked to elaborate on whether they speak French socially with their friends, Cynthia from

Focus Group 2 explains, “I sometimes will speak French with a friend so my mom doesn’t understand what I am saying but I don’t just speak French whenever”. Cynthia’s comment highlights the linguistic boundaries she places on utilizing the French language.

### *6.2. French language in the classroom*

Students revealed a high level of satisfaction and comfort regarding their French language skills and usage in the classroom. Figure 6.4. illustrates the answers given to the statement: *I enjoy learning French*.

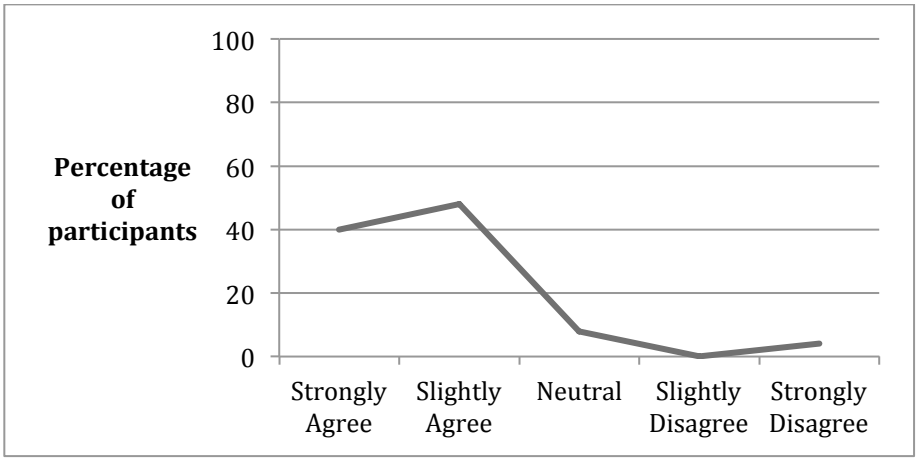
Figure 6.4. I enjoy learning French




The table shows that majority of students either strongly agree or slightly agree with the statement and thus have positive feelings regarding French language learning in the classroom. In fact 80% of students either strongly agreed or slightly agreed with the statement above.

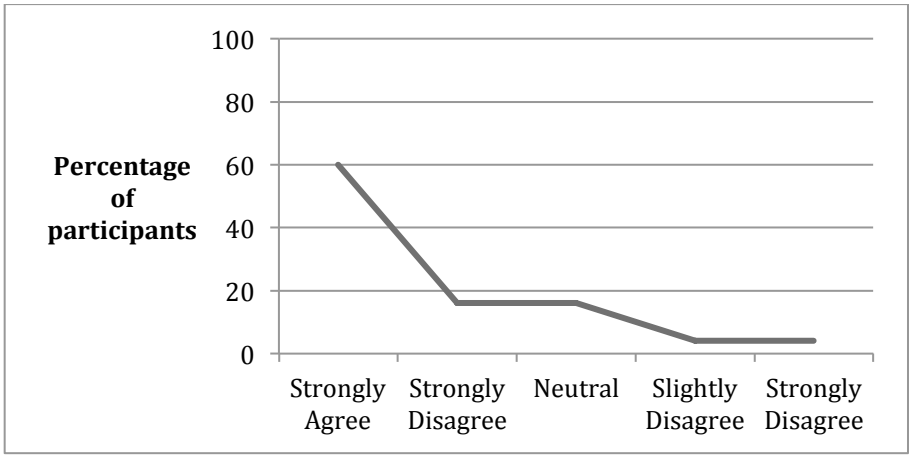
The positive regard for French studies is again apparent when the students were asked about the importance of learning French. Figure 6.5. depicts the results to the statement: *I think it is important to learn French in school*.

Figure 6.5. I think it is important to learn French in school.




Students have a positive relationship with learning French in school which is exemplified not only in their enjoyment of learning the language but also in the value they place on learning the language in school. This group of students also indicated that while they were encouraged to remain in the program, they ultimately made the decision to complete the program on their own. Figure 6.6. illustrates how students responded to the statement: *I made the decision on my own to complete the French immersion program*.

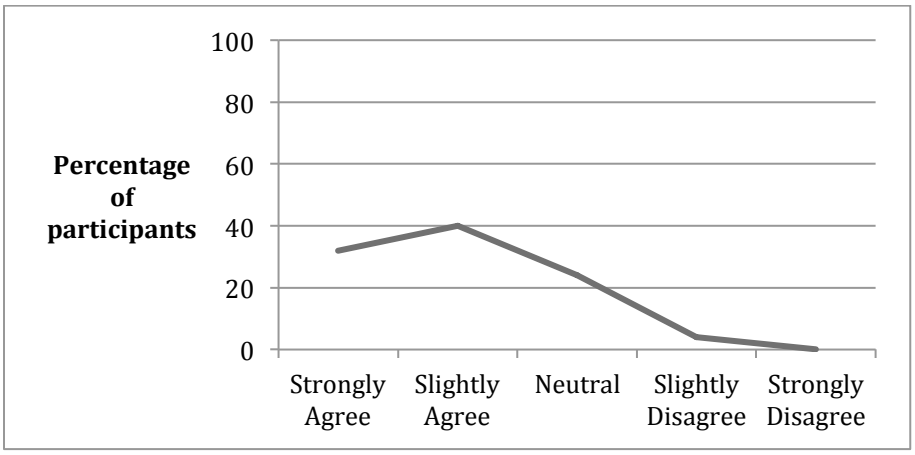
Figure 6.6. I made the decision on my own to complete the French immersion program




As evidenced by Figure 6.6, students expressed that it was primarily their decision to complete the French immersion program. The minority who expressed that it was not their own decision likely makeup the minority who disagreed with the statements, *I enjoy learning French* and *I think it is important to learn French in school* (Figures 6.4. and 6.5.). Tara from Focus Group 1 explains, "my parents wouldn't force me to stay, I could have dropped out at any time but I like learning languages…" and Lucas agreed, "yeah…but we've made it this far!" These examples demonstrate that the focus groups reinforced what the questionnaire suggested which is that learning French certainly was important for the students.

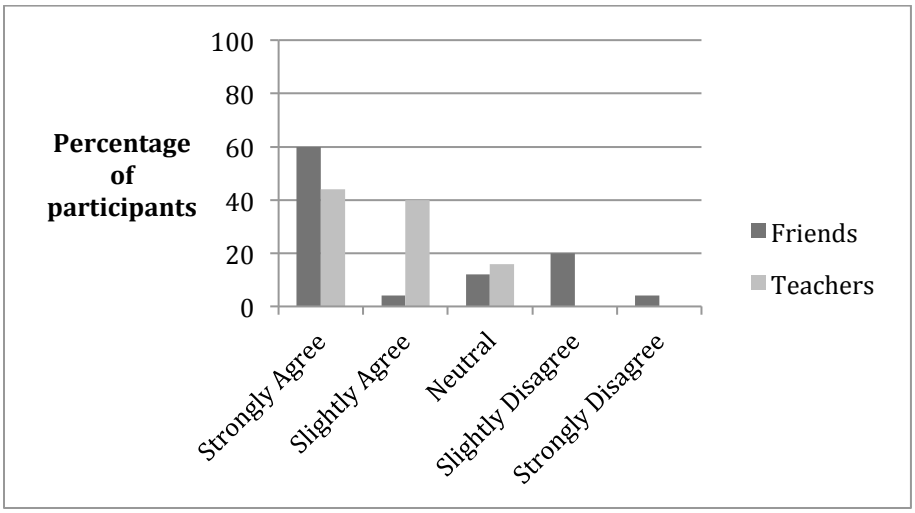
Students also revealed they have a high level of comfort speaking and using the language. When presented with the statement, "I believe I can speak French very well", most students agreed. Figure 6.7. represents the students' opinions to the aforementioned statement.

Figure 6.7. I believe I can speak French very well.




While the overwhelming majority of students agreed they could speak French very well, their comfort level varied depending on to whom they were speaking to. In fact, many students expressed a higher comfort level speaking with their friends than with their teachers. This willingness to communicate with their peers reinforces Layer III of the WTC model which suggests that positive affiliation can result in heightened WTC. Since the students and their peers are in close proximity to one another, encountered frequently, and are similar in age, a positive affiliation is likely and therefore, a heightened WTC is also likely. Figure 6.8. below illustrates how students responded to the statements: *I feel comfortable speaking French with my friends* and *I feel comfortable speaking French with my teachers*.

Figure 6.8. Students' comfort level speaking French with their friends and teachers.




Students express a comfort level speaking French within the classroom as evidenced by the aforementioned results. This data corroborates MacIntyre, Burns, and Jessome's (2011) findings where they found, "Students reported that the situation in which they feel most willing to communicate in French is in the immersion classroom setting, or with fellow immersion students…" (p. 86). This willingness likely stems from a sense of security that French immersion students have with each other and their teacher. This sense of security stems from the social situation in which communication takes place. For these students, their French language communication occurs in a familiar setting (school) with familiar interlocutors (peers and teacher).

### *6.3. French language outside of the classroom*

The students in this particular study expressed apprehension when it came to speaking French outside of the confines of the classroom. In fact, the students admitted to speaking very little French outside of the school and only one of 25 students had completed a French language exchange program. Students in the focus groups were

asked about their comfort level speaking French outside of the classroom. Tara from Focus Group 1 explained her sentiments, "I feel better in the classroom because the people in Montreal speak it all the time but here, it is pretty much only in French class". Tara's comment illustrates how the use of the French language is generally limited to school hours. In fact, students expressed great apprehension when they tried to speak French outside of the classroom. Michael from Focus Group One described his experiences:

> I went to Tremblant and I tried to speak it [French]. Every time I tried to order something like food or whatever I tried to speak French and then I messed it up so bad that I just said forget it and I ordered in English.They [French Canadians] speak so fast, it is so hard. I am just really really not skilled at speaking French with French people.

Michael's sentiments of being unable to communicate in French outside of the classroom in a French speaking environment were common amongst the other focus group participants. Focus Group One participant Tara agreed and said, "it is so hard speaking French with French people". The difficulty being expressed by the students likely stems from an insecurity. Kang (2005) found that participants felt unwilling to communicate and insecure when they feared making mistakes (p. 282).

Despite their best efforts, the students in the Focus Groups who tried to speak French outside of class were often met with confusion and miscommunication. Michael from Focus Group 1 describes, "like I tried my French but they didn't get it so it was easier to switch to English because they did" and Tara agreed. The difficulties the students described in being understood could stem from them learning to speak immersion (Lyster, 2007). Ferguson (1994) describes:

> A communication situation that recurs regularly in a society (in terms of participants, setting, communicative function, and so forth) will tend over time to develop identifying markers of language structure and language use, different from the language of other communication situations. (p.20)

Thus, due to the fact that students regularly communicate in the classroom with each other and their teacher, they develop different language structures and language use which may not be common or understood outside of the classroom. In a study conducted by Lamoureux (2011), she investigated the transitions of two students from French as a first language secondary schools to university. She found that even a student who considered herself bilingual from an English-dominant community struggled with communicating with students from French-dominant backgrounds. Some reasons attributed to this were differences in accent and variants in colloquial language (Lamoureux, 2011).

Despite the difficulty many students had when speaking French outside of the classroom, all of the students believed they spoke good French; however, when asked to compare themselves to native French speakers the focus group participants rated themselves much lower. In fact, all of the participants agreed they were less than fluent compared to people the same age who had French as a first language. Focus Group Two participant Cynthia explained, "my French is good in French class but I don't get a chance to use it with French people so it isn't as good when I talk with French people in Quebec". Cynthia's reservations and insecurities regarding speaking French with Francophones are not uncommon. In a study done Makropoulos (2005), she found that even a French immersion student who worked part-time and volunteered in bilingual

environments which required communication in both French and English, felt uncomfortable speaking French with Francophones.

This limited amount of interactions with native French speakers is a re-occurring theme amongst French immersion students. Lamoureux (2013) conducted a study following the transition of secondary students who registered in the French immersion program at the University of Ottawa. While students came from a variety of French language backgrounds including: core French, enriched French, and, French immersion, 61% of participants came from a French immersion program in secondary school (Lamoureux, 2013, p. 113). Participating students in the focus group (7 students) said that they felt that there were not enough opportunities to converse in French and even less opportunities to engage in conversation with native French speakers.

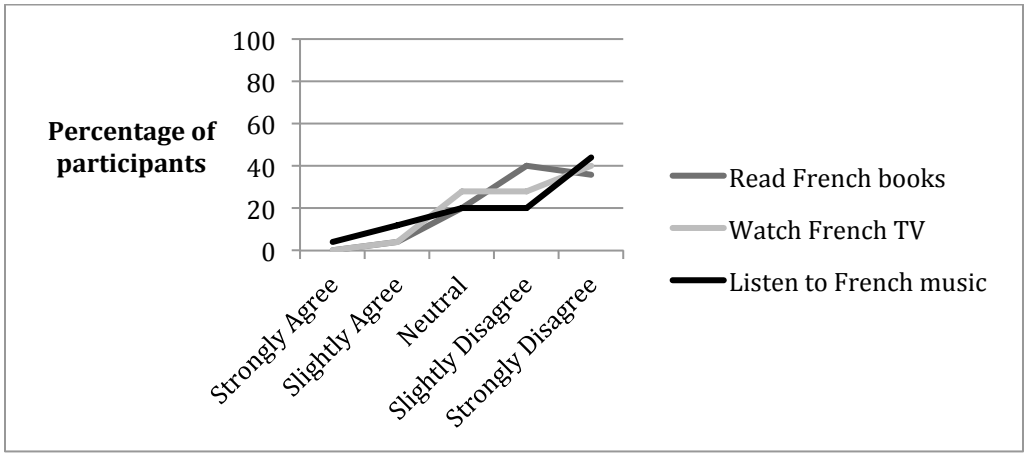
Although many focus group participants in the present study shared negative experiences speaking French outside of the classroom, surprisingly most students had not even attempted to speak French outside of class. In fact, 72% percent of participants admitted to not speaking French with their friends outside of the classroom at all.

Despite this fact, the majority of students stated they would feel comfortable speaking French with someone they did not know. Jennifer from Focus Group 2 explained, “sure I would try but if they didn’t get it then hopefully I could just speak English like in class”. Jennifer’s statement reveals that she has no problem trying to speak French as long as she can resort to her first language. In this case, English acts as a safety net for students when they have difficulties making themselves understood. This sentiment occurs similarly in a study done by Lamoureux (2011), who found that when

faced with communicative difficulties in French with Francophone peers, the participant in her case study resorted to befriending the Anglophone students.

The students' French usage seems to be limited to class time and very few students take in French input outside of the classroom. Figure 6.9. illustrates the percentage of students who read French, listen to French music, and watch French television in their spare time.

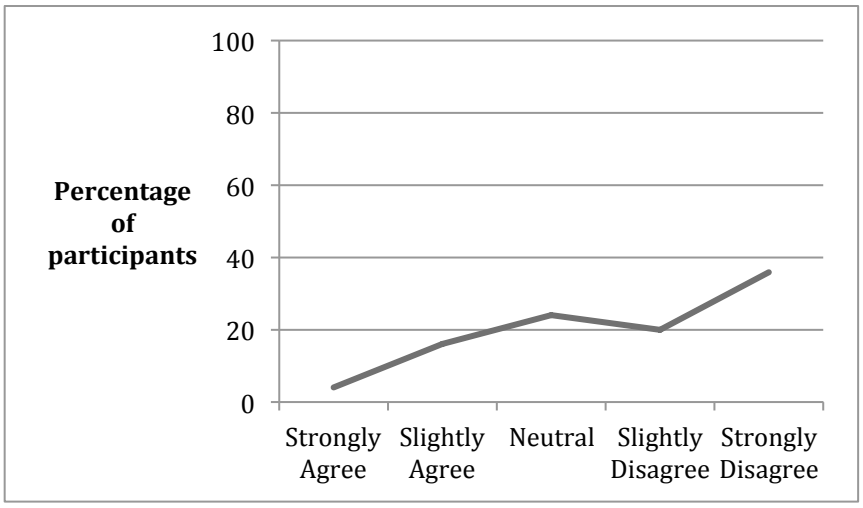
Figure 6.9. Students who read French books, watch French television, and listen to French music in their spare time.




As evidenced by Figure 6.9., very few students take in French media outside of the classroom. Of the three sources of input, students are less inclined to read books in their spare time than listen to music. This result is surprising given that students described a text-laden curriculum in their final year. Lucas from Focus Group 2 explains, "we do so much reading in French. Long novels and these plays. It is just books in French. English ones are bad enough but when they're French they're worse". These findings only support the notion that the French language for these immersion students is a

classroom bound language and not one they use outside of the classroom. In fact, 56% of students stated that French was not important in their day-to-day lives outside of school. Figure 6.10. depicts the responses the students gave to the statement: *I think French is important in my day-to-day life outside of school*.

Figure 6.10. I think French is important in my day-to-day life outside of school




As evidenced by Figure 6.10. 20% of students either strongly agree or slightly agree with the aforementioned statement, while the remainder of the students did not relate to the statement. This sentiment was corroborated by all of the focus group participants in groups one and two who unanimously agreed that they only used French inside of the classroom.

### *6.4. French language and the future*

Despite the fact that the students admit to using French only in the classroom, all of the students indicated they felt that knowing the French language would be a benefit to them in the future. The students believed that graduating from the French immersion program would open doors to their future and they also agreed that their parents felt the

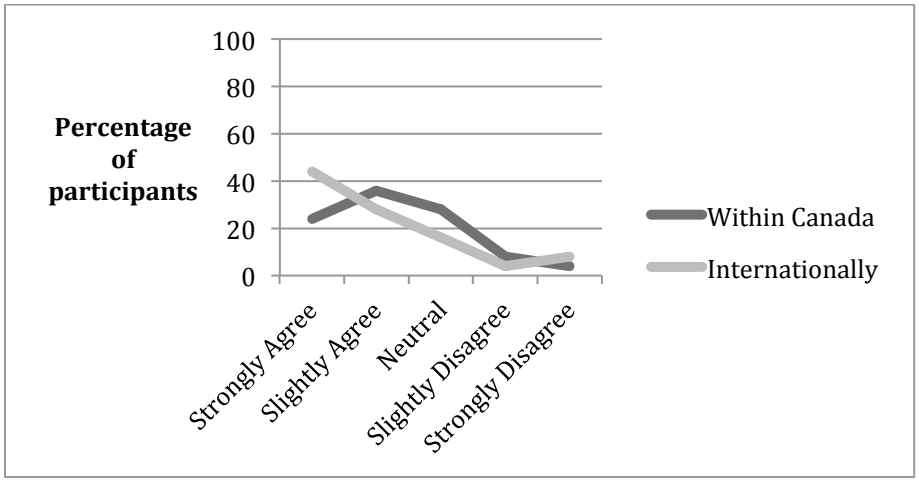
same way. In fact, 24 of the 25 students indicated they made the decision to remain in the French immersion program to better their future.

Interestingly, most students indicated that one benefit of French immersion students would be to secure a job in the future. Ninety-two percent of students believed that knowing French would help them get a job in the future; however, none of the focus group participants in groups one or two planned on using it in their future careers. Cynthia from Group Two explained, "I want to be a doctor after university but in English not in French". Interestingly, the students in both focus groups indicated that they all listed their French skills on their résumé. Tina from Focus Group One explains, "my mom and teachers told me it looks good on a résumé so I put it on there when I apply for jobs, oh, and also my university statements. It is good to put French there too". Jennifer from Focus Group Two agreed, "French is something that is good to have but I don't think I will have to use it. Everybody here speaks English." This seemingly display of French language skills suggests that French for these students is a commodity and not a usable skill.

Overall, students in this cohort gave some consideration to obtaining a job that requires them to know French. While none of the students who participated in the focus groups had considered employment which required French language skills, 60% of students indicated that they planned on getting a job which required them to know French. In an effort to explain this contradiction, the focus group revealed that students simply believe that *knowing* the French language was sufficient to obtain employment but they did not explicitly discuss *using* the French language in the workplace.

Travel was a big motivator for French language education amongst the students. Students indicated they wanted to learn French to use it for when they travel to French speaking areas within Canada and internationally. Figure 6.11. depicts the results to the statements, I want to learn French to use it when I travel to French speaking areas within Canada, and, I want to learn French to use it when I travel to French speaking areas outside of Canada.

Figure 6.11. Students who want to learn French to use it for travel within Canada and internationally.

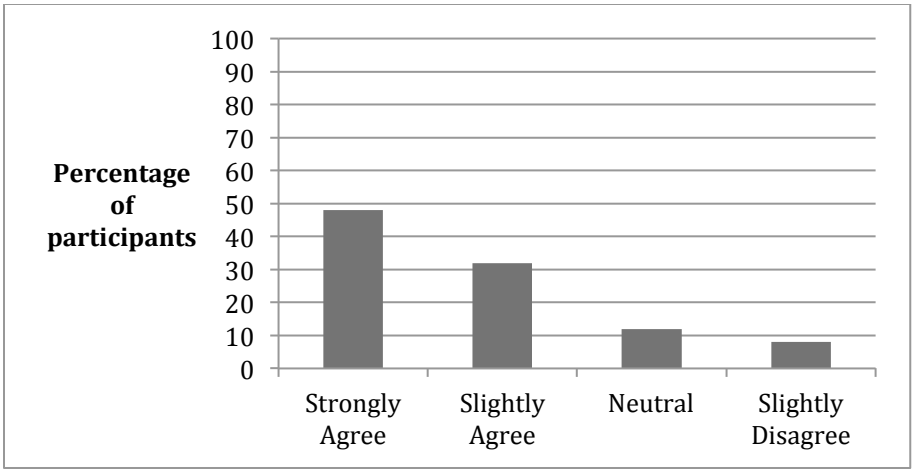



As evidenced by Figure 6.11., many students expressed interest in learning French for the purpose of travel. Given the struggles students described when they attempted to use their French outside of the classroom, this eagerness to learn French for travel purposes is a surprising result. Overall, students indicated they wanted to learn French to use it for international travel more than they wanted to use it domestically. That being said only 1 student indicated they had completed a French language exchange program to a French-

speaking district. Interestingly, more students (72%) want to learn French for use during international travel than students who plan on obtaining French employment (60%).

Students indicated they feel a sense of privilege and pride as a result of their French immersion studies. This result corroborates Bourdieu's (1977b) view that "a person speaks not only to be understood but also to be believed, obeyed, respected, distinguished" (p. 648). The students in the focus groups relate to this statement since they expressed that being able to speak French afforded them respect and distinguishability. James in Focus Group 2 explained, "you know you were special if you were a French kid. We were the smart ones at our school". Lily from Focus Group 1 agreed, "in elementary school there was a clear distinction between the French immersion and English kids and we felt better". These statements directly contradict the board presentations that went to great lengths to ensure parents that French immersion studies were for everyone. Given that students feel a sense of privilege, it comes as no surprise that being labeled bilingual was important to them. Figure 6.12. depicts how students responded to the statement: *Being labeled 'bilingual' is important to me*.

Figure 6.12. Being labeled 'bilingual' is important to me.




Given the results above, students place value on the idea of bilingualism and presenting themselves as bilingual individuals. None of the students strongly disagreed with the statement. Cally from Focus Group 2 explained, "being bilingual or able to speak French just makes you unique. It is a cool thing to say you can do. It is not like, oh I'm good at math but it's like, I know another language. It makes you better so yeah, I like it when people are like, oh, are you bilingual? And I can say yeah." Cally's explanation again points to French more as a commodity rather than a usable skill for these students. Sergio presented a different view on being able to call oneself bilingual. He said, "…I tell girls I'm bilingual and they are always pretty impressed". Sergio's viewpoint illustrates how just calling oneself bilingual is seen as a way to distinguish oneself from others. Lucas from Focus Group 2 agreed, "when people say you are bilingual and you agree with them, it gives you an edge and makes you seem better in a way". While students feel privileged, unique, and appreciated, missing from all of the students' explanations is any cultural link between their language learning and French Canada or abroad.

While students felt pride about their language learning, many in the focus groups expressed that they wished they knew more and were stronger in the communicative skills. Jacob from Focus Group 1 explained, "you'd think by grade 12 you'd know everything well but then you get here [to grade 12] and you don't and you can continue it at university. I thought I would be able to speak on par with France or Montreal and then you go there and you are like aw crap". Like Jacob, many felt that the focus was not where it should be, on their oral skills. Michael from Focus Group 1 explains, "I think French class should be less focused on like French history and writing about wars. When you go to English class it doesn't have the history part. More focus on the language and less on the country and World War 2". Again, the deficiency in learning how to communicate is emphasized and corroborated by the students in Lamoureux's (2013) study who indicated that the lack in communicative practice in French continues into university.

When asked if they had any suggestions on how they would change their immersion experience, all focus group students expressed that they would focus less on the historical components and more on the technical components of grammar and oral fluency. Tara from Focus Group 1 said, "…we need to work more on the grammar even though it is boring and it is annoying". Jacob summarized the sentiments of both focus groups when he said, "I think we should do more oral work instead of written work in opinion. It makes our verbal better, increases our strength in verbal department. To be able to write well you should be able to speak well. Once we are able to speak better we can write better". The aforementioned comments, do not come as a surprise given the

difficulties students expressed with speaking French outside the confines of the classroom and school. Students are concerned about their verbal abilities when they are not conversing with other FSL students and FSL teachers. Their comfort level is drastically diminished and their confidence shook.

### *6.5. Summary of Chapter 6*

Chapter 6 describes the results of the questionnaire and two focus group interviews given at a French immersion secondary school in southern Ontario. Results from the questionnaire revealed that students place a high level of importance on their French immersion education and consequently have decided to complete the program on their own will.

Participants in this study express comfort with speaking French within the school but struggle to apply their skills and knowledge outside of the school. The small amount of students who had attempted to use French outside of the classroom felt very discouraged as though their skills were sub par and quickly switched to using English. In comparing themselves to one another and native French speakers, these immersion students felt that their French was good when compared with their peers but was far below that of a native speaker. As a result, students displayed a higher willingness to communicate within the confines of the classroom and with their peers and teachers, in other words, people with whom they were familiar.

While the students all felt that knowing French was an important skill to have, they did not consider its utility outside of school following graduation. For these students, they described how the French knowledge they had served more as cosmetic

feature of their identities in that they would include it on their résumés but had no intention on pursuing careers which required them to use the French language. They did not view themselves as life long language learners but rather as skilled as they were going to get. This result is surprising given that despite their fluency level at this stage, students expressed that they felt they should be even more fluent and they did not express any desire to continue taking French education beyond the secondary school level. The Certificate of Bilingualism is a termination point for French language learning for these students. These students did recognize that their French language skills could be useful during travel but interestingly, more students believe French will be useful when travelling internationally rather than within Canada.

Given their disinterest in continuing their French language studies one can only assume that despite the importance they place of the French language in their lives at this stage, they will not continue to learn and will rarely utilize the language following secondary school.

## Chapter 7 – The social and linguistic contribution of French immersion graduates in Canada

The following chapter gives an overview of the results of the questionnaire administered to graduates of the French immersion program in Ontario. The participants accessed the questionnaire via social media over a five-month period from February 2013 – June 2013. The questionnaire was developed using Survey Monkey and the link was advertised via social media using Facebook and email. Participants were able to share the link with whomever they chose at any time. In the following chapter, all respondents were assigned a number based on the order in which they completed the questionnaire. In order to preserve anonymity graduates will be identified with the prefix 'G' followed by their number, for example respondent 14 will be referred to as G-14.

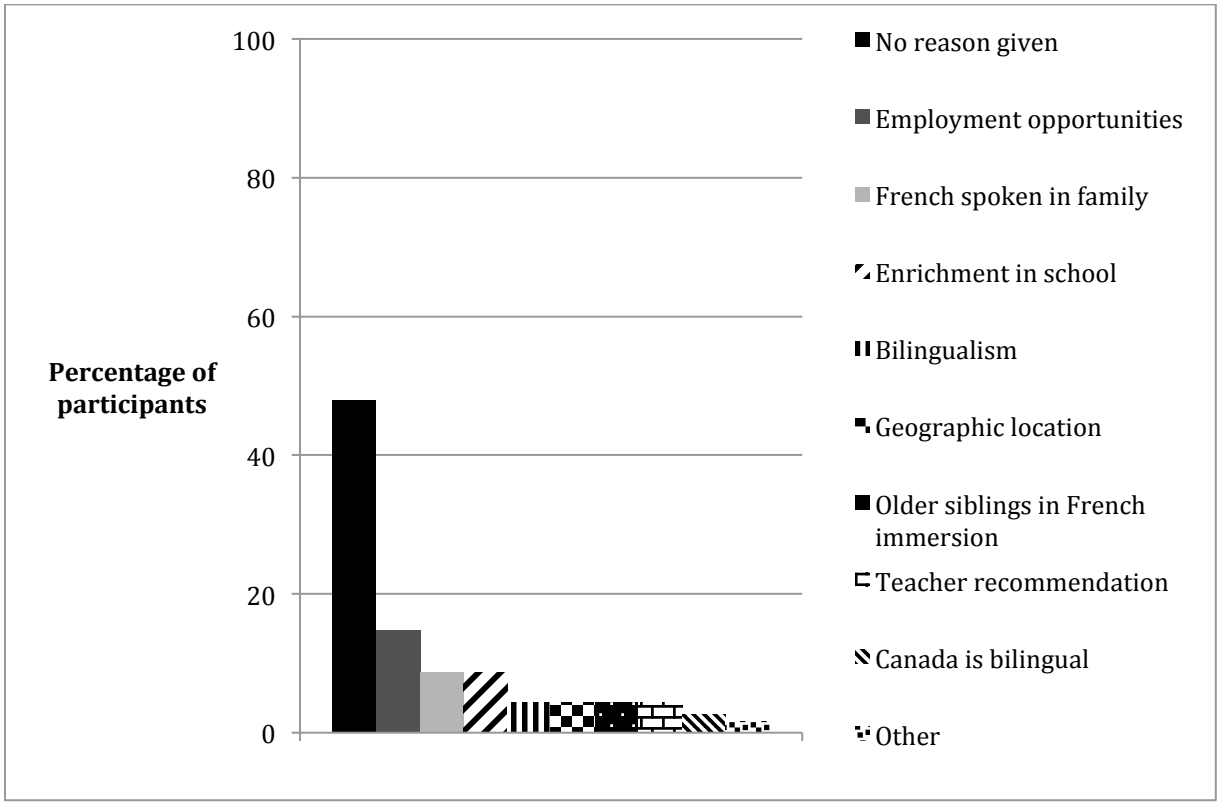
### *7.1. Participants' history in French immersion*

Participants were recruited via social media and email and accessed the link to the survey between February 2013 and September 2013. In total, 123 participants responded to the survey. All participants were Ontario secondary school French immersion graduates. The graduates represented a large age continuum from 18 years old to 42 years old. Of the 123 participants, 102 were women compared to 21 men. Graduates needed not to have entered the French immersion program at the onset of schooling but rather had to be a successful graduate of secondary school French immersion. As such, participants ranged in entry grade level with the majority having entered in kindergarten or grade 1.

### *7.1.1. Graduates' parental reasons for French immersion enrollment*

Participants were asked about their personal experiences in French immersion. Ninety-five percent indicated that it was their parent(s)' decision to enroll them in the French immersion program. Forty-eight percent of respondents did not provide any reason for how they ended up studying French immersion; however, for those who provided reasons, their answers varied from French being spoken in their immediate family to their geographical location. Figure 7.1. displays the reasons participants gave for their French immersion enrollment.

Figure 7.1. Graduates' parental reasons for French immersion enrollment.



Forty eight percent of respondents stated that it was exclusively their parent(s)'s choice to enroll them in the program and no further reasons were given. Interestingly, 14.8% said that while it was exclusively their parent(s) choice to enroll them in the program, their parent(s) did so for perceived employment opportunities and advantages in the future. Furthermore, 8.7% said their parents made the choice because they felt that French immersion education offered more enrichment than traditional schooling programs. The same number of parents (8.7%) enrolled their children because French was a language spoken in their immediate or extended family.

### *7.1.2. Graduates' reasons for completion of French immersion program*

Despite the large percentage of respondents who stated that it was their parent(s) choice to enroll them in the French immersion program, 61% stated that it was their own decision to complete the program through secondary school. Overall, 50% of participants agreed that learning French in school through the French immersion program was a positive and worthwhile experience. One respondent said, "I was happy about it and enjoyed it. It was a good place to meet friends…" (G-51) and another felt, "I loved being in the program. It gave me more opportunities throughout secondary school and definitely after" (G-65). Moreover, only 14.8% of respondents felt that learning French through the French immersion program made them better educated than those in the traditional core French programs. G-61 said, "I felt privileged and enriched about the fact that I learned French in school". This sense of privilege and enrichment is echoed throughout many responses. For example, G-22 described, "I felt that we did better and we were better educated than the other students in the school. More was expected of us

and so we performed better". This sentiment is echoed by G-72 who said, "I felt that it was integral as all the students who were in my class were higher achieving and performed better in secondary school than non-immersion kids". This notion of academic superiority compared to English streamed students is discussed by Lazaruk (2007), who found that students who were taught their subject material through French often outperformed their English-taught counterparts in English-language mathematics, science, and history tests.

Despite half of the participants having positive recollections of their experiences learning French through French immersion, 13% were ambivalent. For example, G-101 stated, "ambivalent. Understood its potential use but it was difficult to keep going with it". Another respondent stated, "neutral. It was how I was taught from kindergarden [sic] so to me it was just what school was" (G-50). In contrast to the overwhelming positive memories, over 10% had negative or frustrating experiences with the program. One respondent spoke candidly:

> I feel tha[t] French immersion was a waste of time for me. Yes I speak some French, I am unable and have always been to secure a position using my French. I am a teacher and was told by the board that my French was insufficient to teach at the primary level even core French (G-138)

G-138 links her time in French immersion with linguistic capital. Due to the struggles she had obtaining an employment in French, she sees her participation in the French immersion program as a failure. This sentiment is not uncommon among French as a second language graduates. Byrd Clark (2008) conducted a study where she interviewed four prospective French as a second language teachers who all graduated from French as a second language programs and found that of the four, three believed their oral French

was not strong enough. Regardless of the negative memories of the French immersion program, 93.9% of respondents stated that if they could go back in time, they would choose to enter the French immersion program. There are various reasons for why the majority of respondents would choose to re-enter. The most prominent reason was that respondents felt that French immersion study is beneficial for employment purposes. G-47 claims, "I would enter FI as my current employment is based on my success in the program" while G-24 says, "yes, its a very valuable skill to have and provides a 'leg up' on the competition for many careers". This sentiment is echoed by 37% of participants who indicate they have obtained employment due in part to their French immersion backgrounds, for example, "yes, [I would enter FI if I could go back in time] because now French is one of my teachables as a secondary school teacher" (G-78). Research done by Christofides and Swidinsky (2010) explored the economic returns to the knowledge and use of a second official language (in this case, French) and they found "that language has an effect not so much on wages within industry and occupation as on the choice of industry and occupation" (p. 145). This statement corroborates the idea that many graduates felt that knowing the French language gave them an advantage in the workforce; however, while knowledge of French may provide more choices, it does not necessarily provide monetary gains (Christofides & Swidinsky, 2010).

Others stated they would choose to enter French immersion studies because they believed their experiences in the program provided increased general opportunities and benefits. G-58 stated:

> The program made me learn to see things from more than one perspective at an early age. I had to think in two languages, and in learning to do so, I learned to

> always approach a situation from more than one view point. As well, having a French background has made it easier to understand other Latin based languages that I encounter daily.

This notion of increased benefits is touched upon by G-50 who states, "…I feel that being in the French program taught me adaptability and gave me confidence. I feel that it gave me greater problem solving skills" which is further explained by G-83 who says, "…[French immersion education] develops a different set of skills in individuals that I believe can be attributed to better sociability and better rounded individuals". Lazaruk (2007) explains that students in French immersion programs display signs of mental flexibility, creative thinking, metalinguistic awareness and communicative sensibility which can help explain the different sets of skills the graduates feel they acquired from the program.

Additionally, the feeling of being better socialized and more well rounded can be specifically attributed to the heightened communicative sensibility found in bilingual children's sociolinguistic competence. G-52 encapsulates a myriad of reasons as to why one would choose to enter the French immersion program: "…I think knowing a second language is great for different employment opportunities as well as being able to have an appreciation of another culture. I was also able to communicate more easily when traveling to other countries where the predominant language was French".

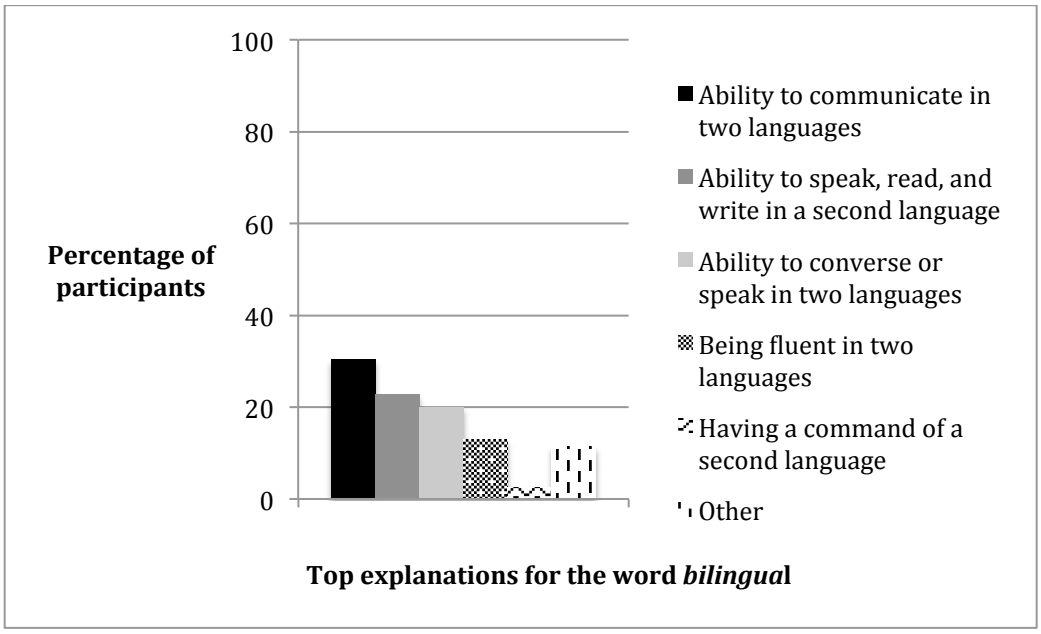
As previously stated, travel was another reason as to why if respondents believed they would enter French immersion if they could go back in time. In fact, 14% mentioned travel as one of their motivators. For example, "Yes, because periodically I go to Quebec or France or meet French people and I understand it very well when spoken

to me, so it helps a lot…" (G-107). Many participants cited the importance of simply knowing a second language as their main reason for stating they would choose to enter the French immersion program if they could go back in time.

### *7.2. On Bilingualism*

Participants were asked what the word *bilingual* meant to them and this question received a wide variety of answers stemming from merely having a knowledge of a second language to the more detailed response of being able to read, speak, and write in a second language. Figure 7.2. displays the six most reported responses.

Figure 7.2. What does the word 'bilingual' mean to you?




More than a quarter of participants believed that *bilingual* meant being able to communicate in a second language and omitted the receptive skills of listening and reading and the productive skill of writing in their responses and did not elaborate on the specifics or depth of communication. One participant G-2 stated, "[The word bilingual

means] the ability to communicate in one way or another in a second language", while G-22 stated, "[The word bilingual means] being able to communicate with people in two languages". The depth of this communication is not fully elaborated or discussed by the participants. In fact, 20% specifically stated that the word bilingual simply meant being able to converse in a second language. As stated by one participant, the word *bilingual* means being "Conversationally functional" (G-23). One participant believed the word bilingual meant, "[being] able to have a casual conversation in two languages" (G-8), and another described the word bilingual as follows: "It means if I travel to a French speaking area I can carry on a conversation, but in the GTA it means nothing" (G-56). To participant G-56, bilingualism is exclusively linked to the French language and not the myriad of other languages spoken in the GTA. This type of communication is described by Baker (2011) as surface fluency which he describes as "the ability to hold a simple conversation in the shop or street and may be acquired fairly quickly (e.g. in two or three years) by second language learning" (p.13). Considering nearly all of the graduates spent 12 years in the French immersion program, the idea that their idea of bilingualism could be achieved in three years minimizes their efforts over years of schooling.

Those who believed the word bilingual did encompass all the productive skills of speaking and writing and the receptive skills of listening and reading represented 22.6% of respondents. The scale in which participants chose to describe bilingualism ranged from the ability to communicate to being completely fluent. G-62 described the word *bilingual* as follows, "The ability to communicate clearly and fluently in both French and English - spoken production, spoken interaction, reading and writing. Being able to live

and work confidently and readily in both official languages." This sentiment was echoed by G-72 who stated, "To me, the word 'bilingual' means that someone is able to converse, write, and read in a language. Everyday words come easily, and the person is able to communicate effectively, and without hesitation, with someone whose native language is that particular language". The word "fluent" arose when describing what the word *bilingual* meant. Thirteen percent associated the word *bilingual* with some degree of fluency. For example, G-20 described the word *bilingual* as: "the ability to fluently speak and comprehend two languages" while G-61 described, "bilingual for me means to be fully fluent in 2 languages to the same extent of native speakers of the 2 languages". Fluency in the aforementioned instances suggests that many view bilingualism as a near-native ability to speak, read, write and understand the language. Near-native ability suggests that these graduates believe that to be considered bilingual, one would have to have the same capabilities in both their English and French language skills.

This concept of bilingual individuals possessing the same capabilities in both of their languages (in this case English and French) stems from the dominant view that a bilingual person is actually two monolinguals combined with identical language competencies in both languages (Grosjean, 1989). Grosjean (1985) suggests that this monolingual or fractional view of bilingualism has a number of negative consequences. The first is bilinguals "…have usually been described and evaluated in terms of the fluency and balance they have in their two languages. The "real" bilingual is seen as the person who is equally and fully fluent in two languages…" (Grosjean, 1989, p. 4). Thus those who are not *equally* fluent in both languages are not true or balanced bilinguals.

The second negative consequence Grosjean (1989) describes is, "…the monolingual view is that language skills in bilinguals have almost always been appraised in terms of monolingual standards. The tests used with bilinguals are often quite simply the tests employed with the monolinguals of the two corresponding language groups…" (p. 5). Thus the tests do not take into account the different sociological and communicative needs of the speaker.

A third negative consequence of the monolingual view is that due to the separate nature of the two languages in a bilingual (assuming that a bilingual person is actually two monolinguals), any code-switching or language borrowing are explained by assuming the speaker is being careless in their communication (Grosjean, 1989, p. 5).

Finally, Grosjean (1989) describes, "a final effect is that bilinguals rarely evaluate their language competencies as adequate" (p.5). This gap in adequacy stems from the view that bilingual individuals should have equal competencies in both language despite their communicative and/or social contact with either language.

Baker (2011) states, "someone who is approximately equally fluent in two languages across various contexts has been termed an equilingual or ambilingual, or more commonly a balanced bilingual" (p. 8). However, Baker does posit that balanced bilinguals are extremely rare since most bilinguals use their two languages in different situations and circumstances. He rejects the concept of native-like competency altogether and deems it too extreme and maximalist (Baker, 2011, p. 8).

As evidenced in the aforementioned discussion on the word bilingual, defining the term in a fashion that suits everyone is not possible. As Baker (2011) suggests, it may be

helpful, "…to locate important distinctions and dimensions surrounding the term 'bilingualism' that help refine our thinking" (p. 15). For example, Baker (2011) defines four language abilities as being broken down into the receptive skills of listening and reading and productive skills of speaking and writing. Not forsaking the four aforementioned communicative skills, Lotherington (2004) suggests that there are a number of digital literacies we engage in on a daily basis through email, text messaging, and other forms of online communication. As noted above, many graduates believe that a large portion of being bilingual means speaking in the second language. Baker (2011) refers to this as "an individual's use of their bilingual ability (functional bilingualism)" (p. 5). No graduates mentioned when, where, and with whom the communication would take place and no graduates mentioned communicating in French digitally in their responses.

Given that many expect a high level of fluency when asked to describe the word bilingual, it comes as a surprise that many of the graduates would identify themselves as bilingual. When participants were asked if they identified as being bilingual individuals 66% stated that in fact they did identify as bilingual while 22% did not identify as being bilingual and 12% considered themselves somewhat bilingual. When asked to elaborate on their response, almost a third of respondents stated that they considered themselves bilingual because they could converse, speak, or communicate in French. For example, G-97 described, "yes [I consider myself bilingual], I can understand French and speak it. As long as you are able to communicate in another language I consider it bilingual". This sentiment is echoed by G-68 who stated, "…I am able to carry a conversation in two

languages". Again, these descriptions of bilingualism are reminiscent of the surface bilingualism which only requires a few years of education to acquire (Baker, 2011).

Many participants identified as bilingual despite some difficulties they had with the language. For example, G-50 described, "[I consider myself bilingual because]…I am able to communicate in French and English so I consider myself bilingual. My reading and writing are rough because I have not had the opportunity to use them since completion of secondary school" while G-58 admits, "I do, however I would not consider myself fluent. If I am in a situation which requires me to speak in French, it takes me awhile to be able to find the right words in French, or quickly translate words or sentences. However, when I am reading in French, I find things easy to understand." Additionally, G-95 stated, "yes [I consider myself bilingual], but I wish I had practiced more as I often feel I struggle when trying to speak French. Reading, writing and thinking is easy but the process of thought to speech is difficult". These responses illustrate that the criteria for identifying oneself as a bilingual does not align with how participants would describe the term 'bilingual. The responses suggest that participants view themselves as bilingual despite the fact that many of them struggle with the language now that they do not speak it regularly. This definition contradicts Grosjean's (2010) definition of bilingualism which is, "bilinguals are those who use two or more languages (or dialects) in their everyday lives" (p. 4). These graduates seem to identify as bilinguals due to their past experiences learning using the language and not how they currently use or learn the language. These results suggest that bilingualism can become entrenched in their identities, even as they move away from utilizing French in their lives.

Those who did not identify as bilingual individuals despite their education backgrounds had a variety of reasons for responding in this way. G-81 explained that time has influenced ability, "[I do not consider myself bilingual]…at this time, I feel out of practice since completing school 10 years ago" and G-94 stated, "no [I do not consider myself bilingual] - I have lost a lot of what I learned by not using french [sic] regularly". The feeling of being out of practice due to time is a reoccurring theme for those who did not consider themselves bilingual. G-101 who graduated in 2003 said, "no, my French skills have deteriorated after I left secondary school to the point where I'm not fluent" and G-118 who graduated in 2002 stated, "no - I think at one point I was close to fluent, but have not used French on a regular basis for a long time". The previous statements highlight the fact that many participants only used French while in school, thus once they finished their education, French was no longer a part of their lives and consequently, was not spoken.

Those who consider themselves somewhat bilingual have a large range of reasons for answering as such. When asked if they considered themselves bilingual, one respondent responded, "only on job applications. I know enough to be able to perform in an interview but I wouldn't consider myself bilingual outside of that" (G-33). The fact that respondent G-33 specifies that she believes she is bilingual only for a job application points to French as a commodity used for economic advancement. While G-35 said, "partially, my French would need to be brushed up before I would classify myself as fully bilingual. I do not use French on a daily basis".

Interestingly, one respondent admitted to being proficient in French but yet did not consider himself bilingual. He explained, "no, not fully. Although fully proficient in French, I do not speak flawlessly. Hence, the occasional imperfections in my French do not satisfy my criterion for being able to speak to the same extent as a native speaker" (G-61). G-61 is unique since he is one of three participants who identified they are currently residing in France. His response could reflect the fact that while living in a French environment, one becomes more aware of the errors and challenges with speech.

The disparity in responses illustrates the various contrasting views on bilingualism. G-33 believes that knowing enough French in order to perform for an interview qualifies herself as bilingual, while G-35 believes that with some remedial work, she would be bilingual, whereas G-61 believes that he must become a native speaker in order to be bilingual.

The differences in the definition of the word *bilingual* account for the large variance in answers. As noted above, there are large discrepancies, amongst respondents as to what constitutes being bilingual and based on those definitions, whether one considers themselves bilingual or not.

Despite the variance in responses as to whether they considered themselves bilingual or not, the majority of participants agreed that being labeled bilingual was important to them. In fact, 52% stated that being labeled was important and 6.4% agreed that being labeled was somewhat important. Many respondents felt that being labeled bilingual was a reward for the hard work they dedicated to learning a second language rather than the skills they developed studying the language. For example, G-27 stated,

"yes [being labeled bilingual is important to me], I worked hard to graduate from F.I in secondary school so I want to be recognized for that accomplishment", while G-88 echoed, "I think it's important [to be labeled bilingual]. I worked really hard all throughout grade school and secondary school to learn a different language. I think it's nice to have a word to describe all my hard work and dedication". In contrast, G-65 felt the label of being bilingual reflected her ongoing efforts. She explained, "yes. I worked hard to achieve my level of competency in both languages and I continue to expand my abilities". Whether participants felt that being labeled bilingual was important or not, 54% indicated that graduating from a French immersion program had a lasting effect on their identities.

Echoing Bourdieu (1977b), many feel that being labeled bilingual is a qualifying characteristic that makes them unique. G-18 explained, "Yes [being labeled bilingual is important to me], because it is a skill that I acquired and it sets me apart from others", and G-99 agrees, "Yes [being labeled bilingual is important to me]. I feel that it shows my commitment to learning more than one language, and distinguishes me from others. Being labeled bilingual also set some respondents apart from other prospective candidates when applying for jobs. G-80 explained, "…it is an asset on résumés, people are intrigued and ask you about the languages you speak…" while G-16 simply stated, "[the label bilingual] helps with getting a job". Interestingly, neither participant works in an employment which requires them to know any level of French.

Overall, participants agreed that knowing the French language is a valuable tool in one's life. Nearly 85% responded affirmatively and said French was definitively a

valuable tool in one's life with 10.7% saying it was somewhat important, and less than 5% stating that it was not a valuable tool in one's life.

Generally, participants felt that it was important for Canadians to know both official languages (French and English). Sixty-two percent responded affirmatively. Many believed that knowing French and English is important for Canadians because the two languages are a part of culture and history. G-42 explained, "I think that it is important for Canadians to know both official languages. It is a part of our history and to maintain that cultural identity more efforts should be made to develop programs that are accessible and free to all Canadians." This sentiment is echoed by G-80 who said: "I do, simply because it is part of our culture as Canadians. When people from other nations describe Canada, they associate us with the French language. It reflects well on us if we know both OFFICIAL languages of our country, and we should be proud of them (original emphasis)".

Many also feel that knowing both French and English connects or unifies the country. For example, "I do believe that it connects us as a country and facilitates communication between people. I think it is important for Canadians to be able to live, work and have access to services in both official languages" (G-62). One respondent believed that Canadians should know both official languages to help maintain Canada's diversity. She explained, "yes. Despite some conflicts between franco-canadians [sic] and anglo-canadians [sic], there are francophones in every province, and doing business and embracing diversity dictates mutual efforts at reaching common ground, NOT reducing that diversity or eliminating languages" (G-109).

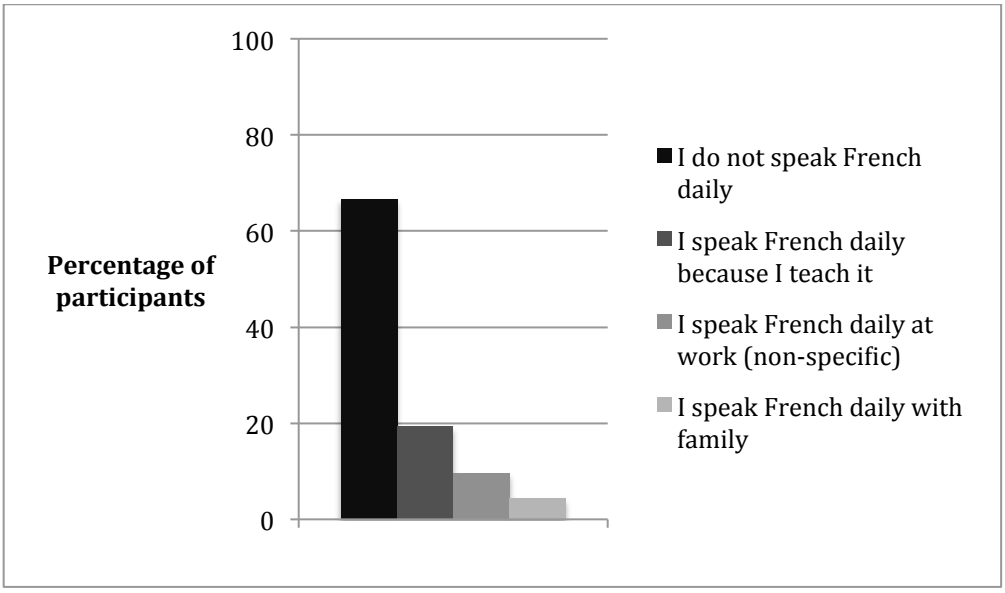
### *7.3. French in their lives*

Despite the importance many of the participants place on being bilingual and their positive attitudes towards French, 67% of respondents admitted to not using French in their daily lives at all. G-88 described:

> No I barely speak French at all. There are very few circumstances where I'm ever required to speak French. Even if I'm at work and someone is speaking French I can somewhat understand what they are saying, but I'm too nervous to try and communicate with them in French. A lot of the time I feel like we're speaking two different languages because they use slang or expressions that I am simply not familiar with.

Many respondents responded that they did not speak French in their daily lives simply because their work and living circumstances did not require them to do so. Figure 7.3. illustrates where respondents speak French in their daily lives.

Figure 7.3. Where or when do you speak French in your daily life?

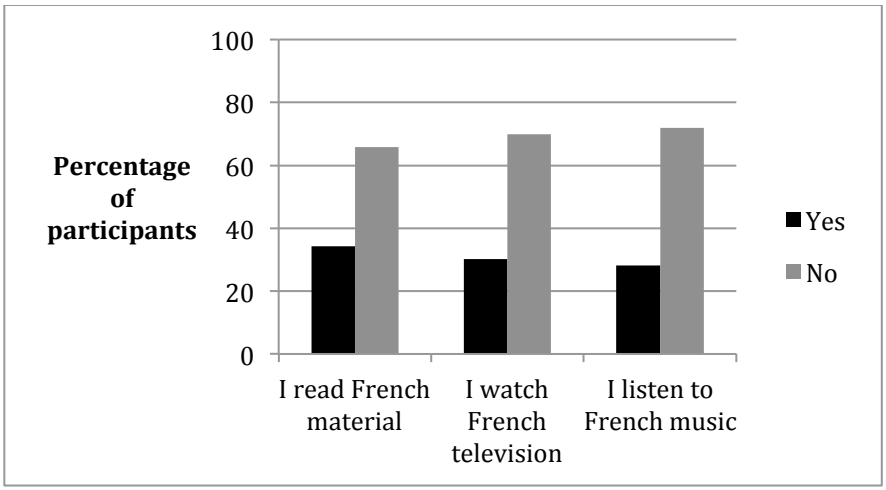



Interestingly, of the 33% who did indicate that they used French in their daily lives, nearly 19% specifically indicated that they taught the language either in core French or

French immersion programs and they considered this as speaking French in their daily lives. Moreover, 92% indicated that they did not live in a community where French is spoken and 96% of respondents admitted that they did not need to be able to speak French to function well in their communities. Additionally, 75% admit to not speaking French socially in their communities. These numbers indicated an absence of French exposure notwithstanding the high numbers of respondents who indicated that they did, in fact, use French everyday.

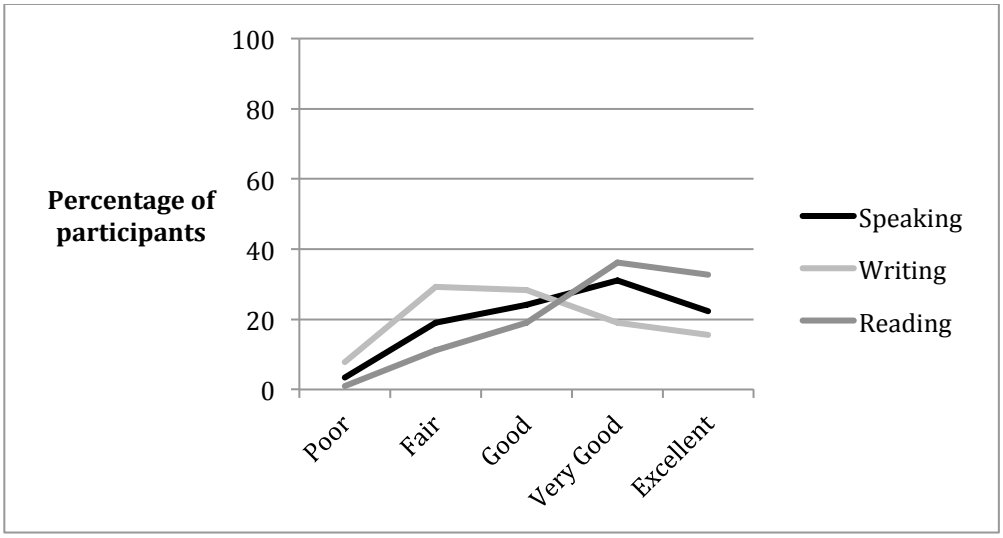
Furthermore, over 50% also admitted to not seeking out opportunities to maintain their knowledge of French. Of those who indicated they did seek out opportunities to maintain their French, 12% said they did so through a variety of means including French radio, while 8% indicated they did so by speaking with colleagues. Other methods indicated included, travelling to French speaking countries for holidays, reading to young children, and reading the French side of package labels. Figure 7.4. illustrates the number of participants who do and who do not read French materials in their spare time, watch French television in their spare time, and listen to French music in their spare time.

Figure 7.4. French input in participants' spare time.




Approximately a third (34%) of participants indicated they read French magazines, books, and/or novels in their spare time but 66% indicated they did not read French magazines, books, and/or novels in their spare time. In fact, 70% indicated that not only did they not read in French, but they did not watch French television or listen to French music in their spare time. Overall, less than a third of participants indicated they watch French television or listen to French music in their spare time. These results are surprising given that when asked to rate their French abilities, the respondents rated themselves quite favourably. Figure 7.5. illustrates how participants rate their French speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Figure 7.5. Participants' self-assessment on French speaking, reading, and writing skills.



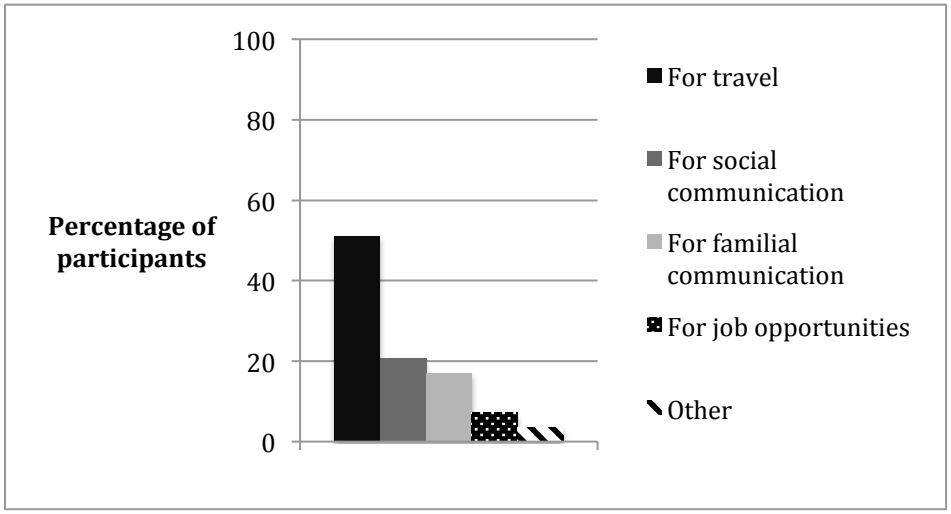

Very few participants rated their skills as poor, with the majority rating themselves from good to excellent categories. Interestingly, most respondents believe their strongest skill to be reading, despite the fact that two-thirds admitted to not doing any French reading in their spare time. Reading is followed by strong ratings in speaking, notwithstanding again the fact that two-thirds of respondents indicated they did not speak French in their daily lives, nor did they live in communities where French was spoken. Writing is the most poorly rated skill among participants which is not surprising since even of those who indicated they did seek out opportunities to maintain their French, only 2.4% indicated they did so through course based work which included writing exercises.

The favourable ratings in skill assessment helps explain the fact that nearly 62% of respondents indicated that given their command of the French language, they would feel comfortable relocating to a French speaking community, while only 19.5% indicated they would not be comfortable. Fewer than 10% indicated they might be comfortable moving to a French speaking community. G-65 explained, "yes and no. Yes because my

French skills would come back more quickly and expand easily but no, because I would need some more practice before being totally comfortable." The aforementioned results are curious given that while 62% would relocate to a French speaking community, only 47.2% of respondents indicated they would be comfortable applying for employment which required them to predominantly speak in French.

When asked if knowing the French language had been as asset to their personal lives nearly 72% indicated that it had. The most common reason for why French had been an asset personally was for travel purposes. Figure 7.6. depicts if and how French had been an asset to the personal lives of the respondents.

Figure 7.6. Has French been an asset to your personal life and how?




Over half of those respondents indicated that knowing French had been an asset to their personal lives for communicating while travelling in countries where French is spoken. Fifteen percent of those who stated that knowing French as an asset to the personal life indicated that they liked being able to communicate in French socially. When asked if knowing the French language had been an asset professionally nearly 74% indicated that

it had. Nearly a third of respondents indicated that knowing French had helped them secure a teaching job, while 20% indicated it helped them secure employment that was not teaching related. Employments mentioned included, working in hotel management, nursing in northern Ontario, government posts and marketing and sales.

Despite the fact that nearly three-quarters of respondents indicated that knowing French had been positive professionally, over half of respondents indicated that their place of employment did not require them to read, write, or speak French. While 35% of respondents indicated that their place of employment did require them to read, write, or speak French, over half (53%) of these respondents indicated that it was a requirement because they taught French in school. This result is not surprising given that in Christofides and Swidinsky (2010) found that 49% of English speaking women who are bilingual in French who participated in their study were "…employed in the (semi-public) education sector, almost exclusively as teachers" (p. 146). This discovery corroborates the data in the current study since the majority of participants are women, and many of them identified themselves as French teachers in both the immersion and core streams.

From the aforementioned results, graduates of French immersion programs may be afforded opportunities to contribute socially and linguistically with the skills they have acquired, but many do not. Socially, despite the high numbers of those who identified themselves as bilingual, very few participants speak and use French on a regular basis. Even though participants admitted to having limited interactions in French and little practice in reading, writing, and speaking, they rated themselves as more than proficient

in the language and were generally confidant that despite of a lack of practice they could still easily converse comfortably in the French language. This confidence in their social competence in French was surprising given that very few graduates speak French in their daily lives or at work and even less are required to speak French to function well in their communities. Despite the favourable opinions regarding the French immersion program and second language learning in Canada, many failed to continue with the language following graduation and only attempt to use French in limited social situations often outside of Canada, such as during travel to international French speaking nations.

### *7.4. Summary of Chapter 7*

The previous chapter illustrates the perspectives of Ontario French immersion graduates. While 50% of the participants have favourable views of both their experiences in the French immersion program and the French language, 67% did not continue to use the language following school. Of the 33% who stated they currently use French, 19% are French teachers. The degree to which the others use their French language skills varies and includes: travelling to French speaking countries, reading to their infant children, and also reading the French side of package labels.

While 66% viewed themselves as bilingual, all participants did not view bilingualism the same way. Responses varied from bilingualism being the ability to *communicate* in two languages to being *fluent* in two languages. Despite some reported difficulties with communication, only 22% said they do not consider themselves bilingual. Even though only 29% speak French at their place of employment, 4% live in a French speaking community and 70% admitted to not listening to French music, reading

French books or watching French television, 52% agreed that being labeled bilingual was important to them. This desire to be labeled bilingual points to French as a cosmetic use of French rather than a practical use. In addition to being cosmetic, the importance graduates place being labeled bilingual also points to how French immersion studies becomes part of one's identity. Fifty four percent of participants indicated that graduating from French immersion had some impact on their identity. Whether they are proud of their hard work or they want to be recognized for their skills (even if they currently struggle with the language), this label has a lasting effect on their identities.

Due to the absence of social interactions and input in French, those French immersion graduates who are making active contributions either socially or linguistically to their communities are those who use the language at work. Twenty percent of the 29% who still utilize their French skills regularly are those who teach either in the core French or French immersion programs and thus are making both a linguistic contribution and social contribution. These results corroborate Christofides and Swidinsky's (2010) findings that nearly 50% of bilingual women worked in the education sector.

Chapter 8 connects the findings between the three groups of participants by drawing out similarities and differences between them and by highlighting how these findings correspond to current French immersion policy and pedagogy. Additionally, Chapter 8 will use these findings to answer the three research questions posed at the beginning of this dissertation.

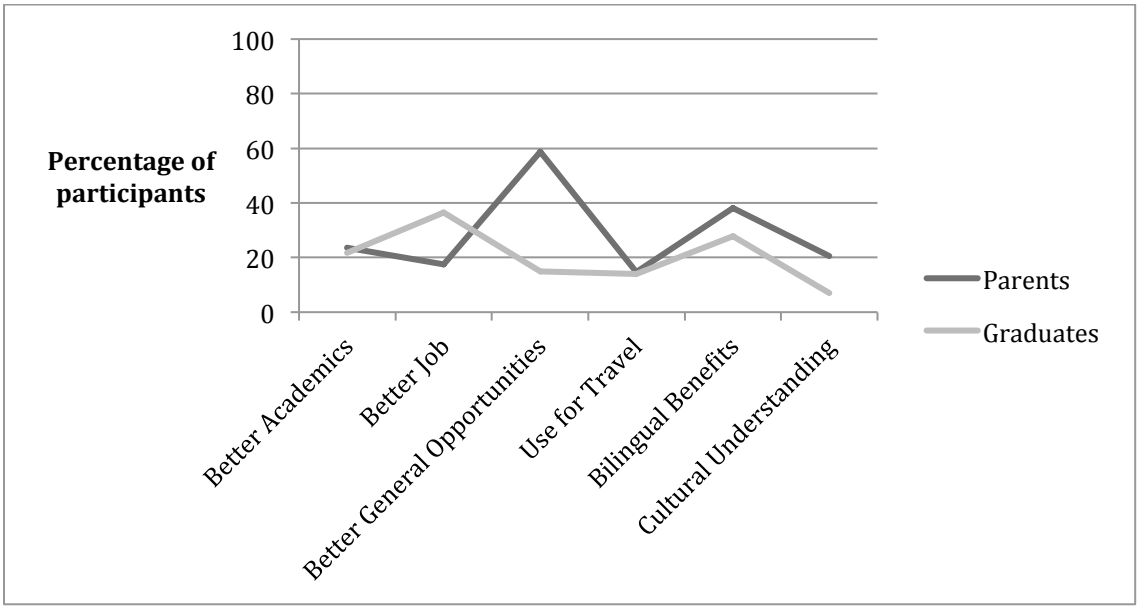
## Chapter 8 – Thematic Comparisons Amongst Participants and Links to Policy

This chapter aims to illustrate the links among the responses of the three participant groups on questions of similar meaning. Questions that were deemed to be of similar meaning were recoded for consistency purposes to facilitate comparisons between the groups. This chapter also highlights the consistencies of the outcomes of French immersion with previous studies and this study, and illustrates the disconnects between the results of the study and the current Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools document produced by the Ministry of Education in 2013.

### *8.1. Beliefs about the program*

Parents were asked for their specific reasons for enrolling their children in French immersion programs while graduates were asked if they would re-enter the French immersion program if they could go back in time and why. Those graduates who indicated they would re-enter the program if they could go back in time produced similar reasons as the parents. Figure 8.1. illustrates the common responses between both groups.

Figure 8.1. A comparison between parents and graduates of French immersion program benefits.




As displayed by Figure 8.1. both parents and graduates believe the French immersion program affords students many benefits including: better academics than traditional English stream schools, better jobs, better general opportunities, increased skills for use during travel, bilingual benefits, and a greater cultural understanding. The similarities in responses indicate that while the French immersion program may have undergone changes since its inception, the beliefs about the program remain consistent.

While second language education has been proven to have many benefits including high levels of proficiency in French, strong performance in other academic subjects (Swain, 1974; Turnbull, Hart, and Lapkin 2001), enhanced metalinguistic awareness (Bialystok, 2001) and communicative sensibility (Ben-Zeev, 1977), there is no research to support that the schools offering French immersion programs offer better

academic programs. In fact, the Ontario Ministry of Education now promotes French as a second language programs for all students in all programs (including the French immersion program), so they are designed to meet the needs of all students including those with special education needs and English language learners (Ontario 2013a). This notion is lost on parents and graduates who believe that the program offers better academics than the traditional English stream program.

One of the main impetuses for the pilot project in French immersion was the concern that French was becoming the "working language" of Quebec and the parents in the St. Lambert project wanted to ensure their children would have access to employment in the future (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). According to Bourdieu (1977b), "linguistic competence…functions as linguistic capital in relationship with a certain market" (p. 651). For the St. Lambert project parents and the current parents and graduates, French language competence represents linguistic capital in the form of employment. Despite the fact that the St. Lambert parents were in a minority language context and this study involved parents in a majority language context, the employment related benefits still resonate with parents and graduates since both groups identified access to better future employment as a benefit of French immersion studies.

According to the Ontario Ministry of Education, French language skills are an asset in a variety of occupations (Ontario, 2013a). Roy and Galiev (2011) found that studying French represented access to better and more promising employment. However, according to the present study of French immersion graduates, only 36% percent indicated their place of employment required them to know French and of those, 53%

indicated they were teachers who taught either core French or French immersion programs. This is a total of 19% of French immersion graduates who have moved on to teach French as a second language. These results indicate that despite their participation in the program, only one third of participants hold employment where they are required to utilize their French skills and of those over half are French language teachers. These results corroborate the results of the study done by Christofides and Swidinsky (2010) who found that of the 2954 women sampled, 49% are employed in the field of education and almost all are teachers. Given that the majority of the participants in the current study were women, it comes as no surprise that over half self-identified as teachers. While participants in the study did not expand on their notions of what constituted better future job other than government or corporations, no parents specifically mentioned teaching as a goal for their child.

The assumption that French immersion studies leads to better employment is reminiscent of Bourdieu's (1986) notions of institutionalized cultural capital. Cultural capital "…covers a wide variety of resources including such things as verbal facility, general cultural awareness, aesthetic preferences, information about the school system, and educational credentials" (Swartz, 1997, p. 75). French immersion is an educational credential and "…educational credentials increasingly have become necessary for gaining access to desirable positions in the job market, it becomes essential for parents to invest in a good education for their children so they can reap the "profit" of the job market" (Swartz, 1997, p. 76). Thus completion of the French immersion program is a pathway for parents and graduates to profit from their participation in the program.

The current French immersion students did not echo an enthusiasm for French language use in employment. In fact, the *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013* states, "through second-language education, the Government offers young Canadians a boost toward wider professional horizons and a key to the international stage," suggesting that second language education should lead to increased interest in employment in the French language both domestically and abroad. Of the six graduates who indicated they lived abroad, only one specified that French was required for their place of employment. This amounts to less than 1% of French immersion graduates surveyed in total who indicated that French was required for their employment abroad.

Despite the fact that 60% of students surveyed said they would consider a job where they needed to know French, of the 11 students who participated in the focus group interviews, no students expressed interest in obtaining French employment. All 11 did, however, indicate that they believed that having French on their résumé would be beneficial to obtaining employment even if they did not have any intentions of using their French language skills. This response indicates that the current students see their French language skills as more of a commodity than anything else. Students are relying on the fact of their language knowledge rather than on their use of it being sufficient to gain future employment. Similarly, graduates of French immersion also suggested that they saw French as a commodity that would serve them well on a résumé or as a listed skill but not if they actually had to use French. In this case graduation from the French immersion program is cultural capital in the form of educational credentials that can be exchanged for employment opportunities whether they actually use the language or not.

Christofides and Swidinsky (2010, p. 150) found that the earnings of Anglophone bilingual men who work exclusively in English in English-speaking Canada were 3.8 percentage points higher than monolingual English-speaking men; however, the earnings of bilingual men who frequently use French at work are 5.4 percent points higher. Despite this result, the authors caution, "the difference between these two premiums, which reflects the market value of using French over and above being fluent in it, is not significantly different from zero" (p. 150). Thus using French and being fluent or bilingual in French did not yield different economic outcomes amongst the male participants in the study. The results for the Anglophone women in English-speaking Canada were similar. The authors posit, "…the economic effect of French second-language skills is contained essentially in language *knowledge* rather than language *use* in market-related activities" (p. 151). This suggestion further displays the idea of French language skills being a commodity since one need not use French to gain a small economic advantage. Christofides and Swidinsky (2010) suggest that the reason for this phenomenon is the limited demand for French in the Anglophone marketplace.

Conversely, due to the difference in demand for English in the Francophone marketplace, the economic advantage is reserved for those who actually use English rather than for those who have knowledge of the language (Christofides & Swidinsky, 2010). The heightened job expectations expressed by the parents of French immersion students suggests that they are unaware of the limited demand for French in the Anglophone marketplace as described by Christofides and Swidinsky (2010) but rather,

have assumed that there is a high demand for French speaking Anglophones when in reality there is a demand for English speaking Francophones.

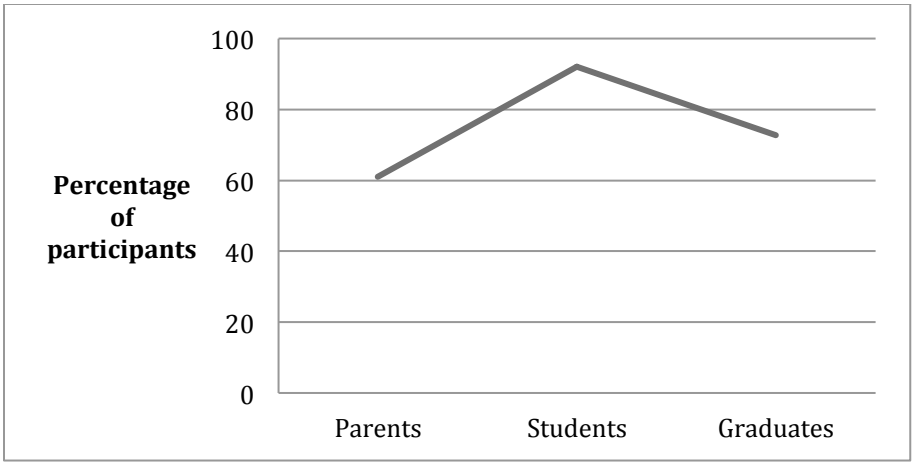
The former study indicates that parents, students, and graduates believe they are accumulating cultural capital in the form of French education. They are making assumptions that this cultural capital results in better employment; however, the data reveals that students have very limited intentions of obtaining employment which requires them to utilize their French language skills and French immersion graduates are not utilizing their French skills in order to acquire employment after all.

### *8.2. Better Opportunities*

As previously discussed, parents felt very strongly that French immersion studies would provide better future opportunities including better job prospects. In fact, these beliefs were the impetus for enrolling their children in French immersion for more than half of the parents surveyed.

The students currently enrolled in French immersion studies also believed that their involvement in French immersion studies would be advantageous to their futures and graduates agreed that being a French immersion graduate was advantageous to their lives in many ways. Figure 8.2. displays a comparison between the three participant groups of who believes French immersion studies is advantageous for the future.

Figure 8.2. Are French immersion studies advantageous for the future: A comparison between participants




As evidenced by Figure 8.2., high expectations for French immersion participation peaks amongst the secondary school students who, at 92%, indicated that they believed participation in the program would be extremely advantageous for their futures. While parents all believed that French immersion education provided at least one benefit to their child, 61% specifically indicated that French immersion education would be advantageous to their child's future. Finally, graduates had high satisfaction with the program with 72.8% of participants stating that their participation in the French immersion program had been an asset to their lives either professionally or personally.

Interestingly, of those who indicated French immersion education had been an asset to their personal lives, 37.5% indicated as such because they had used their French language skills while travelling. In fact, travel was the number one reason French had been an asset personally to the graduates. The current students had similar plans when it came to learning French for travel purposes with 72% agreeing that they learn French to use it when travelling internationally, while 60% said they learn French for domestic travel within Canada.

The spike in heightened expectations for their futures amongst current students could stem from the feelings of superiority French immersion students reported feeling. Of those surveyed, 80% of students indicated they felt privileged because they were part of the French immersion class at their school. This sentiment was still felt by some graduates many years after graduation as 7% specifically mentioned that being in the French immersion program made them better educated or privileged. Additionally, a quarter of parents also pointed to French immersion programs being better academically than English stream programs and 15% of parents believed that the schools who offered French immersion programs were better than those schools not offering the program.

This sentiment points to the notion that parents believe that children in French immersion programs are somehow better educated than those in traditional streams. This impression is then passed on to students who feel a sense of privilege, though this sense of privilege dissipates as they graduate and move away from the program. This idea that French immersion students are somehow academically superior and privileged over other students goes against the current premise of French as a second language education in Ontario schools that stipulates that these programs are suitable for all students and not just the academically advanced (Ontario, 2013c).

### *8.3. Importance of being bilingual*

Parents of French immersion children place high expectations on the quality of French they expect their children will learn. In fact, 83% of parents describe fluency or bilingualism in French as an expectation of the French immersion program. While 72% of current French immersion students surveyed believed they could speak French very

well in class, students expressed frustration when speaking to native speakers in authentic environments. These difficulties speaking outside of the classroom environment corroborate Lyster's (1987) assertion that French immersion students learn to "speak immersion" and Swain's (1996) observation that speaking is the weakest skill for French immersion students. Additionally, these results also indicate that even though much time has passed since Lyster's (1987), Swain's (1996), and Mougeon, Rehner, and Nadasdi's (2005) studies, students continue to demonstrate weak communicative competence outside of the classroom.

The present study further supports Tarone and Swain's (1995) assertion that French immersion classrooms are diglossic settings where French in the formal language which is not used for social interaction while English is the vernacular language. This dichotomy helps explain the challenges French immersion students encounter when they are faced with speaking French in social settings.

Many students in the present study had not attempted to speak French in native-French speaking environments or with others outside the classroom or their network of peers and FSL teachers where they felt confident. This finding suggests that while students display high self efficacy in the classroom setting, their confidence plummets when in unfamiliar social environments which results in low self efficacy. Not only does this support Genesee's (1987) assertion that French immersion students tend to be socially distant from native French speakers, but this result directly contradicts the goal of the 1999 FSL curriculum which was to "…prepare students to perform effectively in the challenging world they will face by providing them with the skills they will need to

communicate in a second language (Ontario, 1999), but it also contradicts the new vision for FSL in Ontario which is that "students in English-Language school boards have the confidence and ability to use French effectively in their daily lives" (Ontario, 2013a, p. 12). The finding that students struggle utilizing French in real life situations further indicates a breakdown in form-focused instruction which is meant to develop confidence for communicating in authentic settings (Lyster, 2007).

The results suggest that students do not have the confidence or skills they require to communicate in French which is a direct contradiction of one of the goals of FSL which is to "increase student confidence [and] proficiency…in FSL" (Ontario, 2013b, p. 12). This gap in producing language in the classroom and language outside of the classroom highlights a breakdown from moving from declarative to procedural knowledge (DeKeyser, 1998). Students describe being very capable to speak in the classroom but describe communicative barriers outside which suggest that their language use is not automatic.

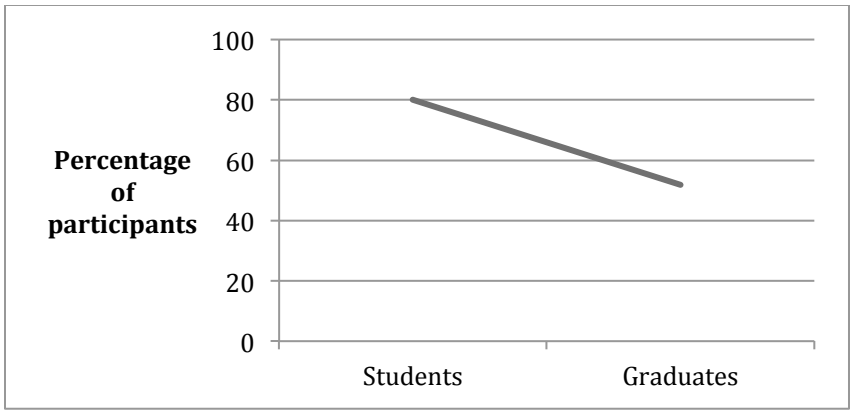
One of the guiding principles of FSL in Ontario is "learning FSL is a lifelong journey" (Ontario 2013a, p. 12); however, the findings of this study do not provide evidence that graduates of the program engage in learning French following graduation. In fact, 60% of graduates admitted to not seeking out opportunities to maintain their French language skills. Given that the framework was released just nine months prior to data collection, it remains to be seen how the framework might shape FSL education as a lifelong journey.

Additionally, 66% of graduates said they considered themselves bilingual notwithstanding the fact that many of these participants admitted to being out of practice and had not spoken, read, or written French in a number of years. This result indicates that even though they had not engaged in lifelong learning and their French skills were not current and were admittedly underused, being bilingual was still a part of their linguistic identities as adults.

As previously discussed in Chapter 7, 96% of graduates do not need French to function in their communities. This statistic indicates that despite their French language training, French immersion graduates continue to live in English-speaking communities and operate on a day-to-day basis with limited, if any, interactions in the French language. The admitted under-usage of the French language highlights the graduates' limited linguistic contribution to their respective communities.

Due to the importance of bilingualism as stated by the parents, it comes as no surprise that being labeled 'bilingual' was important to both the current French immersion students and the graduates. Figure 8.3. illustrates the importance of being labeled bilingual to both the current students and graduates.

Figure 8.3. The importance of being labeled *bilingual* to students and graduates.




As demonstrated by Figure 8.3., 80% students indicated that being labeled *bilingual* was very important to them. This sentiment diminishes as the students completed the program as illustrated by the graduates, where 52% expressed that being labeled *bilingual* was important to them. This decline can be attributed to the decreased presence of the language in the lives of the graduates due to their choice of employment and community.

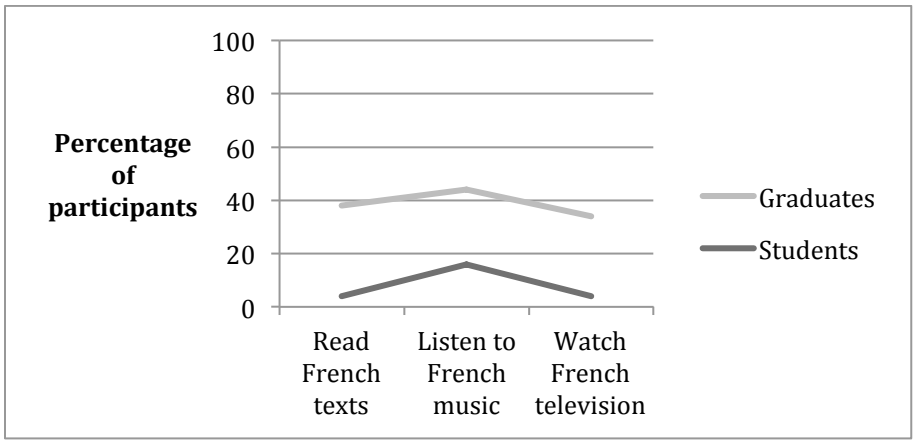
### *8.4. French usage outside of the program*

Considering the high percentage of parents who expect some degree of bilingualism for their children's participation in the program, the students and graduates do not utilize their French language skills outside of the classroom. The current students describe their French language education as something that is specifically classroom related. Only 16% of students indicated they spoke French outside of the classroom at all. When asked to elaborate, these students said they spoke French to their peers to gossip about their surroundings. When asked if French was important in their day-to-day lives outside of school, 56% indicated that it was not. This high percentage predicts that once these students graduate from the program, they will not be making linguistic contributions by utilizing their French language skills after graduation. It also reinforces

the idea that French immersion education is classroom bound rather than a link to bind the country together.

Origins of the French immersion program suggest that lifelong learning was always a goal of the program. Further opportunities to use French following graduation are discussed as early as 1983 (Lapkin, Swain, & Argue). As described in Chapter 7, 56% of graduates admit to not seeking out opportunities to maintain their French language skills. Even the current students did not seek out opportunities to reinforce their French skills outside of class. Figure 8.4. depicts a comparison of students and graduates who read French books, watch French television or listen to French music in their spare time.

Figure 8.4. A comparison of students and graduates who read French books, watch French television, or listen to French music in their spare time.



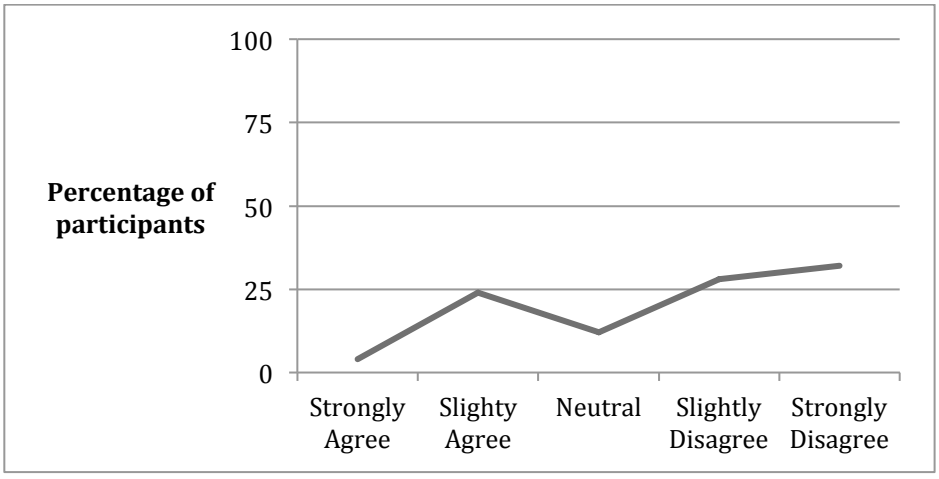

Students spend little to no time engaging in French resources outside of the classroom which can be explained by the fact that students are still exposed to the language in school on a daily basis and do not have the extra time to increase their French input or do not see the need to do so. Graduates, on the other hand, have admittedly little exposure to

French input unlike the current French immersion students, and despite this fact, less than 50% take in any type of French media. Again, the absence of French input suggests that current students are unlikely to become lifelong learners of FSL, while graduates prove that they do not prioritize FSL education in their lives.

### *8.5. French and the cultural connection*

Parents as well as graduates both felt that French immersion education facilitated better cultural understanding within Canada. In fact, the *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013* states, "the Government of Canada considers linguistic duality not only as a basis of Canadian identity, but also an essential took for ensuring Canadians' openness to the world". The French immersion students surveyed had a different perspective. Figure 8.5. illustrates the students' responses when asked if being truly Canadian meant being able to speak both French and English.

Figure 8.5. Does being able to speak French and English make one truly Canadian.




Overall, current students do not believe that being able to speak both official languages makes one truly Canadian. In fact, in the focus groups, students admitted to not thinking

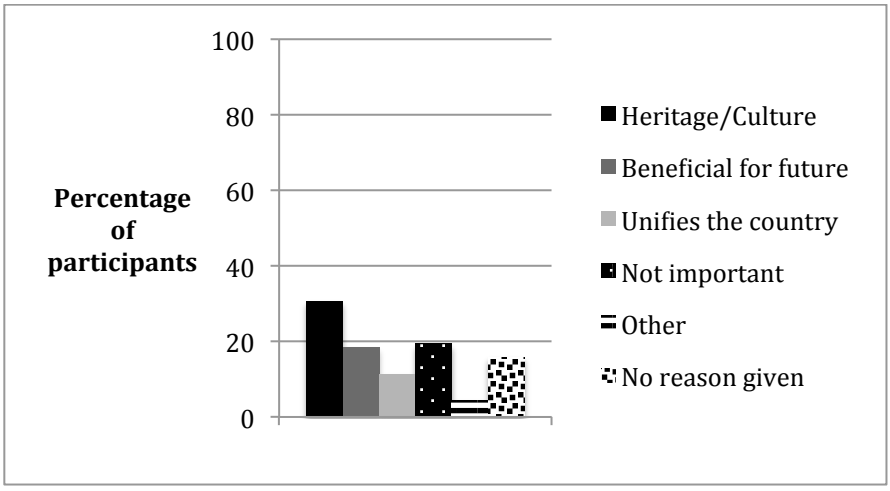
about French language studies as a unifying factor in Canada. This result contradicts not only the *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013*, but also one of the program overview of the French as a second language curriculum in 1999, which stated:

> As students study French, they gain an appreciation of French literature and an understanding of French societies in the world. Since language and culture are inseparable, the cultural study of French-language regions will be integrated into daily instruction rather than presented in an isolated fashion or on an occasional basis. (Ontario, 1999)

Students did not make the links between their language education and culture at all. Additionally, students seemed unaware of the linguistic tensions experienced in the country. Moreover, none of the 11 focus group participants knew about the origins of the French immersion program.

Graduates believed that knowing both French and English is important and gave a variety of responses. Figure 8.6. illustrates the most common responses when graduates were asked why it is important for Canadians to know both French and English.

Figure 8.6. Most common responses to why it is important for Canadians to know both official languages?



As evidenced by Figure 8.6, a number of social, cultural, and political reasons were given to the aforementioned question. Of those graduates surveyed, 31% believed that it was important for Canadians to know both official languages for cultural or heritage reasons, while 18% looked at both official languages as a benefit to one's future, and only 11% believed that it was important to know both official languages to unify the country. Most interesting was that 19% of graduates felt that knowing both official languages was not important at all.

These results contrast the opinions of current FI current students, who although agreed that learning French in school was important (88%), did not articulate a reason for this beyond future employment or travel. In fact, even though both parents and graduates believed that French immersion studies facilitated cultural understanding, current students of French immersion did not think about their language learning as a cultural connection. This omission on behalf of the current students suggests that the cultural connection is not made in their current studies. While the *Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools* is a new document, the *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality* is not. The fact that the cultural connection in French as a second language studies continues to be lacking suggests that a more explicit effort must be made in the classroom to bridge the gap of cultural understanding.

### *8.6. Motivation and second language learning*

All participants in the present study (parents, students, and graduates), have expressed different forms of motivation in regards to French immersion studies. I have applied the motivation in second language learning continuum in order to better

understand the parents' goals in enrolling their children in FI programs, the factors that influenced the students' participation in the program, and the graduates' linguistic contribution to Canada.

The parents of current and perspective French immersion students are motivated by *identified regulation*. Dörnyei (1994) explains, "identified regulation occurs when the person has come to identify with and accept the regulatory process seeing its usefulness" (p. 276). Parents describe the French immersion program as being extremely useful and valuable to their children. They admit to expecting fluency and bilingualism in French as a result of their child's participation in the program and view the program as a gateway to increased opportunities including access to better schools and increased job opportunities. The parents' expectations suggest they place a high value on French immersion education and are motivated by the usefulness and opportunities they presume the program provides. The parents' hopes and goals for enrolling their children in French immersion are ultimately extrinsically motivated since they enroll their children in the program expecting their child's participation to yield specific results. Parents are not focused on one of the goals of French as a second language education which is to bring Canadians together (Canada, 2013) but rather, they are focused on the prospective economic gains that a French immersion education could provide.

While parents are motivated by a sole influence, current students are influenced by a number of motivational sources. Students describe being motivated by *introjected regulation*, *identified regulation*, as well as *integrated regulation*. Dörnyei (1994) describes introjected regulation as, "…externally imposed rules that the student accepts

as norms that pressure him or her to behave" (p. 276). Students in both focus groups described being placed in the French immersion as young as five years old and remaining in the program because it was predominantly their parents' choice. However, as students progressed through the program, they began to view their participation as extremely useful and valuable to their futures for reasons stemming from travel to future job prospects and thus are also motivated by identified regulation. Almost all students believed that knowing the French language would benefit them some way in the future. Additionally, students are motivated by integrated regulation. Dörnyei (1994) explains integrated regulation "…involves regulations that are fully assimilated with the individual's other values, needs, and identities" (p. 276). The fact that the majority of students surveyed stated they want to learn French to be able to speak it in their futures suggests that immersion education is fulfilling their personal values and needs.

Moreover, almost all of the students surveyed said that being labeled *bilingual* was important to them and this internalization suggests a link between their French immersion education and their identities. This attachment between the French language and identity was also seen in a study of seven pre-service French teachers conducted by Byrd Clark (2010). Despite approaching the intrinsic side of the continuum, none of the students expressed an interest to integrate with the French speaking communities within Canada or abroad through work or other means. This result suggests that students are missing a key component of French language education which is to promote linguistic duality. According to *A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools*, "linguistic duality in Canada refers to the use, knowledge, and appreciation of

Canada's two official languages, English and French, as well as an understanding of the historical significance of these two cultures to the development of the Canadian identity" (p. 8). The present study uncovers that while students have an appreciation for the French language, they lack an understanding of the cultural implications that their language learning embeds.

The factors that influenced students' participation and ultimate completion of the program were the sense of pride students feel as a direct result of participation in the program and the better future opportunities. This pride stems from integrated regulation since being both able to speak French and being a French immersion student became engrained in the identity and values of the students. Additionally, students expressed that they were motivated by identified regulation in that they strongly believe that French immersion studies would afford them better opportunities and increased job prospects. This result was especially prominent during the focus group interviews when students indicated that while they had no intentions of seeking French language employment, they would indicate their skills on their résumés with a hope of achieving high paying employment.

Graduates expressed complex motivational influences ranging from external regulation to integrated regulation with some even displaying intrinsic regulation. Graduates explained that their parents were behind their initial enrolment in French immersion education and several indicated they remained in the program at least in part due to parental or teacher influence. This suggests that graduates were initially influenced by external regulation. Dörnyei (1994) explains, "external regulation refers to

the least self-determined form of extrinsic motivation, involving actions for which the locus of initiation is external to the person, such as rewards or threats" (p. 276). Since parents of graduates were behind the enrolment, the initiation was external and also governed by introjected regulation since attending the program was a rule imposed on the students.

Similar to the current students, as the graduates progressed through the program, their motivation became more and more self-determined. Graduates viewed their participation in the program as something of high value and usefulness since they were able to provide a variety of reasons for which the program was beneficial for both their personal and professional lives. Graduates stated they would re-enter the program based on their own experiences and felt that being labeled bilingual was important, both of which suggest integrated regulation since their participation became more entrenched in their own values, needs, and identities.

Despite the movement from external regulation to integrated regulation, very few graduates moved to intrinsic regulation. This is evidenced by the fact that only 3.5% of graduates live in a community that is predominantly French speaking and even fewer (1.8%) need to be able to speak French to function well in their community. Over 50% of graduates admit to not seeking out opportunities to maintain their French language skills and even fewer engage in French media in their spare time.

Again, despite the enthusiasm for French immersion education, graduates are missing a key component to *A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools*, which is "learning FSL is a lifelong journey" (Ontario 2013a, p. 11). Thus, very

few graduates are using French for its own sake. Those who do use French regularly do so in their places of work but not in their homes, communities, or with their families. This result juxtaposes with *Canada's Road Map for Canada's Official Languages* which states that French education, "…encourages mutual understanding, which allows us to live and work better together. This, in turn, contributes to the long-term stability, unity and prosperity of our country" (p. 5). Results from the current study indicate that graduates are not living in French communities and are not working in French communities. Rather, they are living in English-speaking communities and working in English as well. Of those who are working in French, they are doing so in predominantly English-speaking environments surrounded by other Anglophones.

These results do not suggest that French immersion graduates are contributing to the linguistic landscape in the way the policy documents indicate but rather utilizing the French language in English dominant environments for extrinsic gains such as better access to employment. However, despite the fact that graduates may not be fulfilling policy goals, they are contributing to the linguistic landscape in that many graduates are becoming French teachers and in doing so are continuing to spread the language to other generations.

Overall, parents, students, and graduates have a variety of motivational regulations that are the impetus for their stake in the French immersion program but all groups share identified regulation as a motivational influence. All groups identified a perceived value and usefulness in their involvement in the French immersion program which was linked to job prospects and opportunities regardless if this was a reality or not.

This perceived value and usefulness suggests an instrumental rather than integrative motivation which contrasts with the policy goals outlined by both *A Framework for French as a Second Language* and the *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages*. Moving forward, special attention should be paid to the motivations of the parents and students in order to successfully implement the *Framework for French as a Second Language* document in Ontario classrooms.

### *8.7. Summary of Chapter 8*

Chapter 8 illustrates the thematic links between all participants in the current study and highlighted similarities and differences in their results. Parents and graduates agreed that French immersion affords students many benefits which include better academic programs, access to linguistic and cultural capital in the form of better job prospects, better general opportunities, travel benefits, bilingual benefits, and it promotes more cultural understanding despite the fact that graduates may not have availed themselves of said benefits. For example, according to a *Framework for FSL in Ontario*, French language studies are for all students and thus should not be any better or worse academically than traditional English stream schooling. Moreover, while current students and graduates agreed with parents that French immersion studies provided many job opportunities, only those who became teachers seemed to benefit from studying the language.

All three groups of participants believe that French immersion is advantageous for the future. This belief is especially true for current students of French immersion where 92% agreed their studies would benefit them. This result can be attributed to the

heightened sense of superiority felt by these students. Eighty percent of current students admitted to feeling privileged as a result of their participation in the program. This statistic is more than four times the 15% of parents who believed that schools that offer French immersion programs are better than those that do not and much higher than the 7% of graduates who mentioned feeling superior in their studies as well.

The idea of being bilingual was agreed to be a crucial part of French immersion studies. Bilingualism was the top reason parents enrolled their children in early French immersion with 83% saying they expected their child would become bilingual as a result. Surprisingly, while 72% of current students believed they could speak French very well in class, those who participated in the focus groups revealed that they struggled in authentic French-speaking environments. This result directly contradicts both the vision and a goal of the *Framework for FSL in Ontario* which is that students are confident and proficient in FSL and able to use French in their daily lives (Ontario, 2013a, p. 12).

In addition to experiencing challenges speaking French outside of the classroom. Current students do not take in French input outside of the classroom and 60% of graduates admit to not seeking out opportunities to maintain their French. This result highlights a disconnect between the results in this study and a guiding principle in FSL education which is to make learning FSL a lifelong endeavour (Ontario, 2013a).

Moreover, the current data illustrates that despite changes to the program and its curriculum, French immersion students still struggle with communicative competence and continue to "speak immersion". Consequently, students struggle if they even attempt to utilize their French skills in authentic environments. This result suggests that speaking

is still a weak skill for immersion students and it highlights breakdowns in form focused instruction.

One of the original goals of the French as a second language curriculum was that students would learn to appreciate French cultures and societies around the world (Ontario, 1999). While 31% of graduates believed it was important to know both official languages for cultural and historical purposes, students did not share the same perspective. Focus group participants admitted to never considering the cultural connections between French immersion studies and Canada's linguistic history.

Finally, the motivations of parents, current students, and graduates was discussed. The results suggest that parents are solely extrinsically motivated by the assumed economic gains attributed to French immersion education. Current students' motivations are more complex and they range from introjected regulation, to identified regulation, to integrated regulation. Similarly, graduates of the program had complex motivations which transitioned throughout their participation in the program.

Chapter 9 gives a summary of the study, summary of the findings and links to research questions, limitations, directions for further research, recommendations and conclusions.

# Chapter 9 – Conclusion

## *9.1. Summary and Discussion*

The Commissioner for Official Languages in Canada, Graham Fraser (2006) describes, "the central idea behind immersion is that young people can learn a second language at the same time as they are learning an academic subject matter…" (p. 186). In other words, bilingual education aims to educate meaningfully by teaching through a second language. García (2009) posits that educating meaningfully involves not only facilitating the acquisition of a second language but also teaching students cultural awareness and the ability to function across different cultural lines.

Bilingual education can take a variety of forms including: immersion programs, maintenance/heritage language programs, two way/dual language programs, and mainstream bilingual programs (Baker, 2011). Immersion bilingual programs typically cater to students from the language majority group being instructed through another language. These programs aim to promote additive bilingualism in that students are learning a second language at no cost to their first language. Additionally, immersion programs promote cultural pluralism, bilingualism and biliteracy and thus corroborate García's (2009) notion of educating meaningfully.

Immersion bilingual education was coined in Canada during the 1960's as a result of a project which began by educating a small population of English speaking children in St. Lambert, Quebec through the French language. The project's goals were to facilitate acquisition of French as a second language; maintain regular English language development; ensure that regular achievement in other core academic subjects was not

compromised; and instill an understanding and appreciation of French Canadian culture (Genesee, 1998).

From the 1960's on, French immersion in Canada only grew in popularity. The program aims to educate meaningfully in hopes of promoting linguistic duality across the country. Currently, there are 341 000 students in French immersion programs (Canada, 2013, p.5). French as a second language (FSL) education in Ontario and across Canada has garnered significant support from the federal government as evidenced by the policy documents and financial allocation given to the program. In fact, *Roadmap for Canada's official languages 2013-2018. Education, immigration, communities* states that, "learning both official languages brings Canadians together…[and] contributes to the long-term stability, unity and prosperity of our country" (Canada, 2013, p. 5). Additionally, the *Canada-Ontario Agreement on Minority Language Education and Second Official Language Instruction* has spurred action plans to ameliorate and guide FSL practices within the province. The Ministry of Education in Ontario's vision for French as a second language education moves beyond acquiring a second language to utilizing the skills and knowledge of both language and culture to gain larger benefits from learning a second language (Ontario, 2013a).

Shaping a successful language program comes at a great cost. In 2013, the total language grant allotted for French as a second language in Ontario was $240.4 million, the highest allocation for any language-based grant (Ontario, 2013b, p. 41). This grant is used to cover costs of both French immersion, extended French, and core French programs.

Studies have indicated that French immersion students obtain high levels of proficiency in French by the end of secondary school (Public Service Commission of Canada, 2005), score well in English literacy (Turnbull, Hart, & Lapkin, 2001; Lazaruk, 2007), and score higher on provincial math tests than their peers in the English program (Turnbull, Hart, & Lapkin, 2001). Additionally, French immersion students might potentially experience many cognitive benefits including, enhanced metalinguistic awareness (Bialystok, 2001; Lazaruk, 2007) and heightened communicative sensitivity (Ben-Zeev, 1977; Genesee, Tucker, & Lambert, 1975).

French language skills are often regarded as a resource for competing in the job market in Canada. A study done by Roy and Galiev (2011) found that French represented access to better and more promising employment. Roy and Galiev (2011) interviewed parents whose children were currently enrolled in French immersion programs and found that parents anticipated that French immersion would provide certain employment benefits in their children's futures.

Despite the aforementioned benefits attributed to French immersion students, Canadian students have rarely been found to attain native-like proficiency in French. Genesee (1987) and Cummins (2001) both found that while early French immersion students develop native-like receptive skills by age 11, French immersion students are easy to distinguish from native speakers in their speaking and writing skills through linguistic errors in grammar, vocabulary, and phonology. Swain (1996) states that speaking is the weakest skill for immersion students and like Genesee (1987) found that students were weak in grammatical competence while Lyster (2007) found that students

often reached a plateau of communicability and found they spoke "immersion". Similarly, Peguret (in press) found that despite the fact that graduates of French immersion programs rated themselves highly in self-efficacy, they tend to rely on compensation strategies when faced with communicative challenges.

Research done by Auger (2002) and Tarone and Swain (1995), suggests that immersion students learn an academic variant of the French language but fail to acquire colloquial forms of language which would indicate more native-like speech and thus facilitate more authentic communication amongst peers as well as native French speakers. Consequently, students tend to view themselves as socially distant from native French speakers (Genesee, 1987), and struggle to communicate outside of the classroom setting (Lyster, 1987; Warden, Lapkin, Swain & Hart, 1995). Consequently, French immersion students may have decreased willingness to communicate outside of the classroom. Willingness to communicate refers to the act of engaging in communication when the situation arises. Linked to the willingness to communicate is motivation.

Motivation and second language learning plays a large role in parents' decisions to enroll their children in French immersion programs, the students' desire to complete the program, and the graduates perspectives on their experiences in the program. Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2002) self-determination theory helps explain motivation and its links to second language education.

### *9.2. Summary of the study*

Given the vested federal, provincial and public interest in the French immersion program, the present study investigates what motivates parents to enroll their children in

the French immersion program; what motivates current French immersion students to remain in the program; how they view the utility of their second language education; how graduates utilize their years of French immersion education; and finally how they perceive the utility of the French language in Ontario.

Data collection for this study stemmed from four main sources: a web-based questionnaire designed for parents with children enrolled in early French immersion programs or for parents who intended on enrolling their children as soon as possible; a paper questionnaire designed for current French immersion students on track to graduating secondary school; two focus group interviews with current French immersion students; and, a web-based questionnaire designed for graduates of the French immersion program in Ontario.

The data collected paints a detailed picture of parental impressions and expectations of French immersion education for their young children. The data also describes how students of French immersion studies view their language learning journey and how they hope to benefit from their years of schooling. Finally, the data illustrates the impact French immersion education had on the lives of graduates of the program, how they view the utility of the program and how and if they continue to use the language many spent at least 12 years learning.

### *9.3. Summary of the findings and links to research questions*

The findings describe the important role French immersion education plays in the lives of prospective students, current students, and graduates. The data collected yields answers to the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

9.3.1. Question 1: What are the parents' goals in enrolling their children in early French immersion programs?

Parents of prospective French immersion students view participation in French immersion studies as a great opportunity to not only receive a better than average education, but also to secure advantages in the future that those attending traditional English stream schooling will presumably not be afforded. To the participants in this study, French immersion studies represented cultural and linguistic capital. Parents were most influenced by pre-conceived ideas they have regarding the program including the superiority of the schools offering the program and the superiority of French Immersion over core French options. According to parents, a core French education is not sufficient for teaching their children a second language and thus would not yield as many opportunities as a French immersion education. The participants discussed a wide range of benefits they believed a French immersion education would provide their children which include: better general future opportunities, academic benefits, travel opportunities, bilingualism and specifically, better future employment.

Overall, parents believe that participation in the program will make their children completely bilingual by the end of grade 12. It is hoped that this bilingualism will lead to prosperous future employment. Parents are predominantly extrinsically motivated by their ideas of what a French immersion education will provide their children.

While two parents generally described the cognitive benefits of language learning and the cultural connections students would develop through studying in French immersion, most parents did not mention intrinsic motivational factors at all. Noticeably

absent from the parents' commentary was the cultural links the French immersion program is meant to facilitate. Parents did not view the program as something predominantly Canadian which could continue to unify the country but rather, as an opportunity for better education and prosperous employment.

Additionally, most parents made the assumption that students would be native-like French speakers by the end of grade 12 and only one parent spoke of continuing to study the language following secondary school. This finding suggests that parents do not view French as a second language education as a lifelong process. Parents spoke mainly of increased opportunities and increased job prospects as a consequence of completing the program. Parents are motivated by the presumed economic returns they believe a French immersion education will provide. Thus, the goals of parents for enrolling their children in a French immersion education are ultimately increased opportunities in the future and better future employment.

9.3.2. Question 2: What factors influence French immersion students to remain in the program and how do they view the utility of their French language skills?

The findings reveal that current French immersion students have considerable amounts of pride as a result of their participation in the French immersion program. Students admitted that while it was initially their parents who encouraged them to remain in the program, they did so because they wanted to and saw value in seeing the program to its completion. Students described how they believed learning French in school was important to them and moreover, derived a sense of pride and privilege from being labeled as a bilingual.

While students felt extremely comfortable speaking French in class and described a high level of willingness to communicate with each other and their teacher, most of them had not spoken French in an authentic French-speaking environment. Additionally, those few who had attempted speaking French beyond the confines of their classroom environment struggled to communicate and make themselves understood. This result contradicts both the vision and goal of *The framework for French as a second language in Ontario schools* since students are not communicating effectively with confidence (Ontario, 2013b). Additionally, the data supports Lyster's (1987) notion that French immersion students learn to "speak immersion". It also corroborates Mougeon, Rehner, and Nadasdi's (2005) findings that French immersion students are weak in communicative competence.

None of the students who participated in the study had participated in any exchange opportunities. The French language for many of these students was limited to classroom activities as very few described engaging in French input outside of the classroom on their own time. Students also expressed some frustration with their fluency levels at this point in the program since many were under the impression they would be near native in their abilities by grade 12. This frustration suggests that form focused instruction meant to simulate authentic speaking environments is not producing the results it intends.

Students described how, like parents of students in the program, they believed that French immersion education would provide them with better opportunities in the future. Many students described that despite the fact that they have very few aspirations to

continue French in the future, they feel it is important to include on a résumé. Almost all of the participants believed that just indicating they have knowledge of the French language on their job applications would be advantageous and may aid them in securing future employment. The results indicate that students do have a positive affiliation to the program and thus are motivated intrinsically by the pride they derive from their participation; however, students are also extrinsically motivated by the advantages they believe they will incur from completing the program.

Despite the years invested in learning the language, the students did not discuss utilizing the French language in the future beyond using it while travelling. This result suggests that students will not continue to learn the language following secondary school and thus do not view its utility for the long term. The result also suggests that the message that French as a second language learning is a lifelong journey which is being put forth by the Ministry of Education (Ontario, 2013b) is not being heard by students; rather, students view their language achievement as static.

9.3.3. Question 3: What social or linguistic contribution do secondary school graduates of French immersion programs make to their respective communities?

Graduates of the French immersion program are extremely fond of their experiences and certainly see their participation in the program as something valuable to both their professional and personal lives. Participation in the French immersion program has certainly become internalized as part of the identities of participants. In fact, many describe themselves as bilinguals despite to admitting not having spoken, read, or listened to the language in many years and despite the fact that very few speak French in

their daily lives, speak French in their communities or use French in the work place. In spite of completing the program, very few graduates have continued to pursue studies in French nor do they seek out opportunities to maintain their French language skills. These results suggest that graduates possessed very little intrinsic motivation to learn the language for the language's sake or to communicate past secondary school, but rather continued their French immersion education motivated by extrinsic forces. The lack of intrinsic motivation explains why most participants have not continued in their journey as French language learners. In this regard, most participants in the study are not making social or linguistic contributions to the Canadian linguistic community.

However, those who described using French in their daily lives almost exclusively said it was in the work place. Of those who described using French in the work place (36% of respondents), 53% specified they went on to become core French or French immersion teachers. This result suggests a large investment in the language and reveals both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. Participants admitted that having French was the impetus for securing their employment but they also expressed appreciation of the language and desire to continue utilizing the language due to the love of it. Those who utilize their French skills in their place of work are making a linguistic contribution by acting as a link between English and French communities. Moreover, those who are teachers and who teach French are making both a linguistic contribution and social contribution since they are not only utilizing their own skills regularly but also passing them on to future generations.

### *9.4. Conclusions from the findings*

The above summary describes the key findings of this study by answering the three research questions. Also stemming from this research is information regarding French immersion education. While French immersion education is fulfilling many of the goals of the program initially discussed, including, affording students the opportunity to develop a functional competence in the French language, promoting normal levels of English-language development, and maintaining regular achievement levels in other subjects, the program is lacking when it comes to instilling an appreciation and tolerance of French Canadian culture in Canada. Considering that the government of Canada believes that learning both official languages "…bring Canadians together" (Canada, 2013, p. 5), the fact that this is not translating into practice at schools suggests that French immersion education is not bridging cultures as originally thought; other factors are motivating the program. Students seem to be prioritizing their learning with requirements of the Certificate of Bilingualism, rather than internalizing the social and cultural implications of language learning.

Given parents', students', and graduates' impressions that the French language is valuable when seeking employment, it comes as no surprise that the Ontario Ministry of Education and the government of Canada both emphasize the employability benefits of knowing a second official language. The government of Canada specifically states, "Canada's official languages are an asset to Canadian's employability" (Canada, 2013, p. 5) and this sentiment is echoed by the Ontario Ministry of Education which states a benefit of French as a second language education as increased "…competitiveness in an

increasingly global job market" (Ontario, 2013c). The aforementioned findings coupled with the emphasis on the job market by federal and provincial agencies suggest that the cultural ties between the English and French languages have been overshadowed by employability benefits of knowing both languages.

Additionally, given that parents expect near-native fluency by the end of grade 12; that students do not consider themselves life long language learners; and that most graduates have failed to maintain their French language skills, the program is not fulfilling one of the guiding principles for French as a second language education which is promoting French as a second language education as a lifelong journey.

### *9.5. Limitations*

The present study took place in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) which is a developed, urban, populated area of Ontario. The participants in the study come from the minority language group where English is the dominant language and French is the minority language. The impetus to learn French in this setting differs from that in St. Lambert, Quebec in that the working language of this target area is English rather than French.

This study aimed to collect data from as many respondents as possible and utilized social media as a means to attract participants. Consequently, the number of parents and graduates vary. Additionally, in both groups, significantly more females than males responded to the questionnaires. Moreover, due to the public nature the questionnaire, it was posted to many discussion groups with a vested interest in education that could have impacted the rate at which educators versus non-educators responded to

the questionnaire. As a result of the aforementioned limitations, it was difficult to achieve a sample size of both categories (parents and graduates) that had a representative distribution of the French immersion population. Further research with parameters surrounding the participants' background and sex could paint a more proportionate picture. In addition, closer contact with graduates and parents through in person interviews rather than online questionnaires could provide an opportunity to collect rich data beyond what is possible in an online environment.

Gaining access to current French immersion students proved to be extremely difficult. After submitting applications to two different school boards, only one school board consented to my request to conduct research. In addition, out of a possible 10 French immersion secondary schools, only one school responded to my invitation to participate in the study. At the time I was conducting my data collection, only two French immersion classes were being held. Students of both classes had two weeks to have a consent form signed by their parents (for those under 18 years old) and return it to their classroom teacher or (for those over 18 years old) sign the form themselves and return it to their teacher. Of a possible 46 students, only 25 students had the consent forms signed to participate in the study. All of the 25 students attended the same school and lived within the borders of this particular school board. More large-scale research would be needed to ascertain how and if geographical location influences students' opinions and goals regarding the French immersion program.

Due to the nature of this mixed-methods study, self-report data in the form of questionnaires and interviews were major data sources. While self-report data has some

weaknesses, including biases related to introspective reliability of the respondents, honesty of the participants, and difficulties with understanding questions, this method was appropriate in order to collect as many responses as possible in a limited amount of time.

The research was time sensitive. The questionnaires were available until response rates declined to zero responses after a week-long period. Parents of prospective French immersion students were given a three month period in which to complete a questionnaire online while graduates were given a six month period. Current students of the program were given significantly less time to minimize classroom disruption. The questionnaires were distributed on a day agreed upon by the classroom teacher while the focus group interviews took place the following week at lunch time at the students' discretion. Students were approaching the end of their school semester and seemed to be looking towards the end of their course. Doing a comparative study of students' opinions during the final year and immediately following its completion would be beneficial when studying how and if students' perceptions and motivations are affected by this changing period in their lives.

### *9.6. Recommendations*

There is a disconnect between parental expectations and the actual outcomes of the French immersion program in Ontario. This may be a result of the information being accessed by parents. The boards of education and the policy documents all highlight the positive outcomes of participation in the French immersion program and they make no mention of the challenges faced by immersion students upon completion of the program.

Most parents expect bilingualism and advantages in the workforce as a result of participation in the program. The results of this study point to a need for the availability of more comprehensive resources that give a realistic description of the outcomes of French immersion education which include *both* the benefits and challenges of the program. This information would allow parents to have a more informed view of the French immersion program.

A goal of the French as a second language curriculum in 1999 was to prepare students to communicate in a second language globally (Ontario, 1999). The students and graduates in this study expressed difficulties with speaking French outside of the classroom and revealed that French was not apart of their daily lives. This result points to a need for more language learning opportunities outside of the classroom in authentic French speaking environments. While there are exchanges and language camps available, the students in this study did not avail themselves of these opportunities.

In an attempt to achieve the policy's vision, students should have to fulfill mandatory contact hours in authentic French speaking environments where they would have the opportunity to participate in linguistic and cultural activities to promote language learning and language use in secondary school.

In order to successfully facilitate contact hours, the Canadian government would have to fund all French immersion students to travel to French speaking communities for a specified amount of time where they would have the opportunity to be exposed to French in an environment outside of the classroom. Alternatively, contact hours could take place at local government offices were French is the language used.

Additional exposure in the form of digital connections and social media usage would also prove to be beneficial in connecting current students with French outside of the classroom. Classes could form connections with schools in French speaking areas and have Skype communications, Twitter accounts, or even Instagram accounts detailing classroom activities all using French.

This exposure would not only satisfy the goal to "increase student confidence, proficiency, and achievement in FSL" (Ontario, 2013b, p. 12), but this experience would also follow one of the guiding principles in French as a second language in Ontario which is to serve "as a bridge between languages and cultures" (Ontario, 2013b, p. 12), and also aid in the development of six of the seven criteria that are necessary for lifelong language learning including: authentic oral communication; listening, speaking, reading, and writing; development of language learning strategies; interdependence of language and culture; emphasis on real critical and creative thinking skills; and finally, making real world connections. If students are given the opportunity to really experience how their French immersion educations can be utilized following graduation, they may be more inclined to pursue paths that involve the French language in practice.

Finally, students should have access to information on future steps regarding their French immersion education. As evidenced by this study, the majority of students and graduates believe that their French education is finished following secondary school. These results point to a gap in resources for French immersion students. If students in secondary school had more information as to how they could continue to pursue French beyond studying it the post secondary level they may be more inclined to include it in

their daily lives. French speaking social groups such as Alliance Française should have more of a presence in the secondary school environment to expose students to ways in which they can continue to practice their French without changing their plans in post secondary education.

### *9.7. Directions for further research*

As a result of this study a number of possible future research directions has arisen. For instance, one obvious line of research would be looking into the presumed economic gains of French immersion studies versus non-immersion studies. There is an absence of literature discussing how and if French immersion education actually facilitates better future employment than non-immersion studies.

Furthermore, given the fact that many French immersion graduates admitted to having little contact with the French language outside of their place of employment and have now entered the teaching profession at both the core French and French immersion streams, how does this impact the quality of French being taught and learned?

Given the emphasis on lifelong language learning at the core of the current curriculum coupled with absence of lifelong language learning as a product of French immersion studies revealed from this study, will the changes in the curriculum impact future graduates of French immersion and change how they view French as a second language learning in their futures?

Finally, will the emphasis on cultural understanding currently addressed in the French as a second language curriculum result in students who have developed a cultural understanding and appreciation for French history and culture that renders the program

more meaningful for their identities as Canadians rather than just a commodity used to improve their economic status?

### *9.8. Concluding remarks*

I began this journey reflecting on my own personal experiences through French language education. I wondered if my path through French immersion studies was atypical or if my experience was similar to that of my peers? I wondered what the experience of French immersion education looked like today? Through conducting this study, I have come to realize that the journey of other French immersion students and graduates is not all that different from my own. We share similar experiences, fears, and realizations about our second language education. I am encouraged by the hopes of the parents who shared their expectations, I am proud of the students who chose to continue their studies on their own, and I am inspired by the graduates who have utilized their French language educations in their own lives and continue to be French language learners.

I believe that French immersion education is an extremely valuable opportunity for Canadian children. The potential contribution of French immersion studies to the Canadian linguistic landscape is immeasurable; however, based on the results of this study, I believe we can do better. I believe that through better promotion of French education outside of the four walls of the classroom, the contributions of French immersion graduates will only increase. As Fraser (2006) suggests, "…immersion students – need to connect to a French-speaking society; immersion curriculums should reach beyond provincial borders" (p. 304). I hope through continued program evolution,

future graduates do not have the same fears and anxieties as French speakers that I do. I hope they come to see their French language learning beyond its cosmetic use, but as a life-long journey that continues beyond their school days.

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Appendix A – Copy of the online questionnaire for parents available online

Parental Perspectives of French Immersion Education

1. I have read and understood the permission page and agree to participate in the study.
   Yes

2. Are you male or female?
   Male
   Female

3. Do you have at least one child who is currently enrolled in the French immersion program in between kindergarten and grade 4?
   Yes
   No

4. Do you have plans on enrolling your child or children in the early French immersion program when they are eligible?
   Yes
   No

5. How many children do you have currently enrolled in the French immersion program?

One

Two

Three

Four

Five or more

None, but I intend on enrolling my child as soon as possible

6. What grade is your child in? If you have more than one child in French immersion, please list the grades of all other children here as well.

7. What language(s) do you mainly speak at home?

English

Chinese

French

Russian

Spanish

Vietnamese

Dutch

Turkish

German

Korean

Italian

Farsi

Other (please specify)

8. What is your first language?

English

Chinese

French

Russian

Spanish

Vietnamese

Dutch

Turkish

German

Korean

Italian

Farsi

Other (please specify)

9. Will French be your child's second language?

Yes

No

Other (please specify)

10. Are you a secondary school French immersion graduate?

Yes

No

11. Why did you decide to put your child in early French immersion education?

12. Why choose early French immersion education over the traditional English stream

with core French offerings in later grades?

13. What are your expectations of the French immersion program?

14. What aspects of the French immersion program are most appealing to you?

15. Are you concerned about your ability to help your child with homework and other school project Why or why not?

16. How do you think your child will benefit from French immersion education?

Appendix B – Letter of information for parents of current of prospective French immersion students

The Parental Perspective on French Immersion Education

Tamara Vanderveen
York University
Toronto, Ontario

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Introduction:

My name is Tamara Vanderveen and I am a Ph.D student in the Faculty of Education at York University in Toronto. I can be reached at Tamara_Vanderveen@edu.yorku.ca. I am currently doing research into how French immersion contributes to the lives of French immersion students and how French immersion contributes to the bilingual landscape of Ontario. I am inviting you to participate in this study.

Purpose of the study:

The purpose of this study is to speak directly with French immersion parents and students to investigate how French immersion contributes both to the personal lives of French immersion graduates and the bilingual landscape of Ontario.

What you will be asked to do in the research:

If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to complete a questionnaire where you will be asked a variety of questions all relating to French immersion including your experiences with the program and the reasoning for pursuing French immersion education for your child.

The questionnaire will take approximately 5-15 minutes at your discretion.

Risks and discomforts:

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Benefits to the research and benefits to you:

You will be given the opportunity to contribute to a growing body of research on the outcomes of French immersion in Ontario. You will be given the opportunity to express your own opinion and you will be able reflect on your own experiences in French immersion and its place in your life and society.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to continue participating will not influence your relationship or the nature of your relationship with researchers or with staff of York University either now or in the future.

Withdrawal from the study:
You may stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event that you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

Confidentiality:
Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law. The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information that could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study. All information collected will remain in the researcher's possession and will not be shared with any member of the school including teachers or principal. All information will be kept confidential in a locked filing cabinet when not in use. I will destroy these data after five years by shredding.

Questions:
If you have any questions about this study, please contact me by email at Tamara_Vanderveen@edu.yorku.ca or Dr. Heather Lotherington at hlotherington@edu.yorku.ca. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, your may contact the Senior Manager and Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University, telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca

Legal Rights and Signatures:
I consent to participate in The Societal contribution of secondary school French immersion in Ontario: Life after French immersion?, Parental Perspective of French Immersion Education, conducted by Tamara Vanderveen. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by completing this questionnaire. My completion of the questionnaire indicates my consent.

Appendix C – Letter of information for students under 18 years old

Current Students' Perspectives on French immersion

Tamara Vanderveen
York University
Toronto, Ontario

LETTER OF INFORMATION
(For parents of students under 18)

Introduction:
My name is Tamara Vanderveen and I am a Ph.D student in the Faculty of Education at York University in Toronto. I can be reached at Tamara_Vanderveen@edu.yorku.ca. I am currently doing research into how French immersion contributes to the lives of French immersion students and how French immersion contributes to the bilingual landscape of Ontario. I am inviting your son or daughter to participate in this study.

Purpose of the study:
The purpose of this study is to speak directly with French immersion students to investigate how French immersion contributes both to the personal lives of French immersion graduates and the bilingual landscape of Ontario.

What you will be asked to do in the research:
If you give your consent to participate in this study, your son or daughter will be asked to complete a questionnaire giving their opinion on a variety of questions all relating to French immersion. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and will be completed in a classroom in the school.

In addition to the questionnaire, your son or daughter will be invited to participate in a focus group interview where we will discuss their opinion on French immersion. The focus group will consist of 3-5 participants, will take approximately 20 minutes, and will be conducted during lunch hour in a separate classroom in the school. I will collect all questionnaires and will be audio recording the focus group interview. The audio recordings will be transcribed and the audio files later destroyed. All identifying information will be removed from the transcripts. If there are more volunteers than spaces in the group, I will choose participants by random draw. If your son or daughter is interested in participating in the focus group, please provide their name below.

Risks and discomforts:
There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Benefits to the research and benefits to you:
Your son or daughter will be given the opportunity to contribute to a growing body of research on the outcomes of French immersion in Ontario. He or she will be given the opportunity to express their own opinion and he or she will be able reflect on their own

experiences in French immersion and its place in their life and society.

Voluntary Participation:
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your son or daughter may choose to stop participating at any time. Their decision not to continue participating will not influence the nature of their relationship with researchers or with staff of York University either now or in the future.

Withdrawal from the study:
Your son or daughter may stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if he or she so decides. The decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your son or daughter's relationship with the researchers, York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event that he or she withdraws from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. Your son or daughter may refuse to participate, refuse to answer questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on their academic status with the Toronto District School Board.

Confidentiality:
Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law. The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name, your son or daughter's name nor information which could identify you or your son or daughter will be used in any publication or presentation of the study. All information collected will remain in the researcher's possession and will not be shared with any member of your school including your son or daughter's teacher or principal. All information will be kept confidential in a locked filing cabinet when not in use. I will destroy these data after five years by shredding and disk reformatting.

Questions:
If you have any questions about this study, please contact me by email at Tamara_Vanderveen@edu.yorku.ca or Dr. Heather Lotherington at hlotherington@edu.yorku.ca. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, your may contact the Senior Manager and Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University, telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Appendix D – Parental consent form for students under 18 years of age

Tamara Vanderveen
York University
Toronto, Ontario

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I _____ consent for my son or daughter_____ to participate in The Societal contribution of secondary school French immersion in Ontario: Life after French immersion? conducted by Tamara Vanderveen. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Principal Investigator: Tamara Vanderveen

Additional Consent:

I _____ consent for my son or daughter _____ to participate in the focus group portion of the study and consent to being audio recorded by the researcher.

Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Participant: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Appendix E – Letter of information for students over 18 years of age

Current Students' Perspectives on French immersion

Tamara Vanderveen
York University
Toronto, Ontario

LETTER OF INFORMATION
(For students over the age of 18)

Introduction:
My name is Tamara Vanderveen and I am a Ph.D student in the Faculty of Education at York University in Toronto. I can be reached at Tamara_Vanderveen@edu.yorku.ca. I am currently doing research into how French immersion contributes to the lives of French immersion students and how French immersion contributes to the bilingual landscape of Ontario. I am inviting you to participate in this study.

Purpose of the study:
The purpose of this study is to speak directly with French immersion students to investigate how French immersion contributes both to the personal lives of French immersion graduates and the bilingual landscape of Ontario.

What you will be asked to do in the research:
If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to complete a questionnaire giving your opinion on a variety of questions all relating to French immersion. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and will be completed in a classroom in your school. Completion and return of the questionnaire will include your signed consent to participate in this part of the study.

In addition to the questionnaire, you will be invited to participate in a focus group interview where we will discuss your opinion on French immersion. The focus group will consist of 3-5 participants, will take approximately 30 minutes, and will be conducted during lunch hour in a separate classroom in your school. I will collect all questionnaires and will be audio recording the focus group interview. The audio recordings will be transcribed and the audio files later destroyed. All identifying information will be removed from the transcripts. If there are more volunteers than spaces in the group, I will choose participants by random draw. If you are interested in participating in the focus group, please provide your name below.

Risks and discomforts:
There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Benefits to the research and benefits to you:
You will be given the opportunity to contribute to a growing body of research on the outcomes of French immersion in Ontario. You will be given the opportunity to express your own opinion and you will be able reflect on your own experiences in French immersion and its place in your life and society.

Voluntary Participation:
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to continue participating will not influence your relationship or the nature of your relationship with researchers or with staff of York University either now or in the future.

Withdrawal from the study:
You may stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event that you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your academic status with the Toronto District School Board.

Confidentiality:
Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law. The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study. All information collected will remain in the researcher's possession and will not be shared with any member of your school including your teacher or principal. All information will be kept confidential in a locked filing cabinet when not in use. I will destroy these data after five years by shredding and disk reformatting.

Questions:
If you have any questions about this study, please contact me by email at Tamara_Vanderveen@edu.yorku.ca or Dr. Heather Lotherington at hlotherington@edu.yorku.ca. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, your may contact the Senior Manager and Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University, telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Appendix F – Consent form for students over the age of 18

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I _____ consent to participate in The Societal contribution of secondary school French immersion in Ontario: Life after French immersion? conducted by Tamara Vanderveen. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator: Tamara Vanderveen

Additional Consent:

I _____ would like to participate in the focus group

portion of the study and consent to being audio recorded by the researcher.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix G – Student questionnaire administered by paper copy in person

Introductory information:

1. How old are you? _____

2. Male_____ or Female_____

3. In what grade did you enter the French immersion program? _____

4. Are you on track to completing the requirements to achieve your Certificate of Bilingualism?

---

The following are a number of statements with which some people will agree and others will disagree. Because these answers are all asking your opinion, there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer honestly. **Please do not write your name anywhere on this questionnaire.** Your answers will remain confidential and private. Your answers will not be seen by your teacher or any other member of the school. I would like you to give me your opinion about each statement by circling the one answer that best represents the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

The following is an example. Please circle the option that best represents your opinion. Circle only one answer per statement.

1. Sidney Crosby is the best Canadian hockey player *alive*.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

In answering this question you should have circled one of the above statements. Some people would circle Strongly Agree, others would circle Strongly Disagree, and others would circle one of the choices in between. The one you chose to circle would best represent your own opinion based on what you know and have heard. Remember there is no right or wrong answer and I will not know who chose which answer. All that is important is that you chose the option that was best for you.

Please give your immediate reactions to the following statements. Give your most honest answer. There is no time limit in completing the questionnaire. Once you have finished, please turn over your questionnaire.

Please circle the option that best represents your opinion. You may only circle one option per statement.

1. I enjoy learning French.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

2. I speak French while in French class.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

3. I think it is important to learn French in school.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I feel comfortable speaking French with my friends.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

6. I feel comfortable speaking French with my teachers.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

7. I think being able to speak both French and English is what distinguishes Canadians from other people from other countries.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

8. I think one is truly Canadian when one can speak both French and English.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

9. I read French books in my spare time.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

10. I watch French television in my spare time.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

11. I listen to French music in my spare time.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

12. My mother and/or father can speak French.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

13. My grandparent(s) can speak French.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

14. I often will speak French with my friends outside of school.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

15. I *will often* speak French with my family.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

16. My parents encourage me to speak French outside of school.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

17. I think knowing the French language will benefit me in my future.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

18. I plan on acquiring a job which requires me to know French.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

19. If I could start my schooling over I would choose NOT to be in the French immersion program.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

20. Knowing the French language gives me a sense of privilege.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

21. I want to learn French to communicate with people who live in French speaking provinces (for example, Quebec and New Brunswick).

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

22. I want to learn French because I think I will need to be able to speak it in the future.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

23. I believe I can speak French well.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

24. I am very interested in continuing to learn French after secondary school graduation.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

25. I think French is very important in my day-to-day life.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

26. Knowing French has helped me get a job.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

27. I think knowing French will help me get a job in the future.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

28. Being labeled 'bilingual' is very important to me.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

29. I made the decision to remain in the French immersion program to better my future.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

30. My parents encouraged me to complete the French immersion program.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

31. My parents forced me to continue on in the French immersion program.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

32. I believe graduating from the French immersion program *will open* doors for my future.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

33. My parents believe graduating from the French immersion program will open doors for my future.

Strongly Agree Slightly Agree Neutral Slightly disagree Strongly Disagree

## Appendix H – Focus group questions

Why did you enroll in French immersion?

Do you speak French outside of the classroom? When? Where?

How comfortable are you speaking French inside the classroom?

How comfortable are you speaking French outside of the classroom?

Is learning French important to you? Why or why not?

Do you have immediate family members who can speak French?

Do you intend to continue to study French at the post secondary level?

Has learning the French language given you any unique abilities? Opportunities?

Why did you continue in the French immersion program?

Did you achieve your aims for French immersion study?

What were those aims?

Tell me about a time when you used French outside of the classroom.

Outside of school, where do you find yourself speaking French?

How do you see yourself using French in the future?

How would you describe the importance of the French language in your life?

How would you describe your relationship with the French language? Is it something you look forward to speaking everyday or not?

Were you encouraged to continue studying French? By whom?

How do you see yourself using French in your future career? Social life?

Appendix I – Letter of information for graduates of French immersion available online

Tamara Vanderveen
York University
Toronto, Ontario
LETTER OF INFORMATION

Introduction:
My name is Tamara Vanderveen and I am a Ph.D student in the Faculty of Education at York University in Toronto. I can be reached at Tamara_Vanderveen@edu.yorku.ca. I am currently doing research into how French immersion contributes to the lives of French immersion students and how French immersion contributes to the bilingual landscape of Ontario. I am inviting you to participate in this study.

Purpose of the study:
The purpose of this study is to speak directly with French immersion parents and students to investigate how French immersion contributes both to the personal lives of French immersion graduates and the bilingual landscape of Ontario.

What you will be asked to do in the research:
If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to complete a questionnaire giving your opinion on a variety of questions all relating to French immersion. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Completion of the questionnaire will indicate your signed consent to participate in this part of the study.

Risks and discomforts:
There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Benefits to the research and benefits to you:
You will be given the opportunity to contribute to a growing body of research on the outcomes of French immersion in Ontario. You will be given the opportunity to express your own opinion and you will be able reflect on your own experiences in French immersion and its place in your life and society.

Voluntary Participation:
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to continue participating will not influence your relationship or the nature of your relationship with researchers or with staff of York University either now or in the future.

Withdrawal from the study:
You may stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not

affect your relationship with the researchers, York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event that you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer questions or withdraw from the study at any time.

Confidentiality:
Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law. The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information that could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study. All information collected will remain in the researcher's possession and will not be shared.

Questions:
If you have any questions about this study, please contact me by email at Tamara_Vanderveen@edu.yorku.ca or Dr. Heather Lotherington at hlotherington@edu.yorku.ca.
This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, your may contact the Senior Manager and
Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University, telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca.

Legal Rights and Signatures:
I consent to participate in The Societal contribution of secondary school French immersion in Ontario: Life after French immersion? conducted by Tamara Vanderveen. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. My completion of the questionnaire indicates my consent.

Appendix J – Questionnaire for graduates of French immersion available online

1. I have read and understood the permission page and agree to participate in the study.
Yes

2. How old are you?

3. Are you male or female?

4. In what grade did you enter the French immersion program?

5. In what year did you graduate from the French immersion program?

6. What type of secondary school did you attend?
Public School
Catholic School
Private School

7. From what board of education did you graduate secondary school?

8. In which province/territory do you currently reside?
Ontario
Quebec
Manitoba
Saskatchewan
Alberta
British Columbia
Newfoundland and Labrador
Nova Scotia
Prince Edward Island
New Brunswick
Northwest Territories
Yukon
Nunavut
Other (please specify)

9. Given your current command of the French language, please rate the following:

Your French speaking skills:

Poor Fair Very Good Good Excellent

Your French reading skills:

Poor Fair Very Good Good Excellent

Your French writing skills:

Poor Fair Very Good Good Excellent

10. Is the community you live in predominantly French speaking?

11. How did you feel about learning French in school?

12. Why did you take French immersion?

13. Was it your decision to complete the French immersion program or was someone else behind your continuation in the program?

14. If you could go back in time, would you choose to enter the French immersion program? Why or why not?

15. What does the word 'bilingual' mean to you?

16. Do you consider yourself bilingual? How do you make that decision?

17. Do you speak French regularly in your daily life? If yes, please describe the circumstances.

18. Do you feel comfortable speaking French sporadically?

19. Do you think it is important for Canadians to know both official languages (French and English)? Why or why not?

20. Do you read French books, novels, and/or magazines in your spare time?

21. Do you watch French television in your spare time?

22. Do you listen to French music or radio in your spare time?

23. Has knowing the French language been an asset to your personal life? Please explain.

24. Has knowing the French language been an asset to your professional life? Please explain.

25. Does your job require you to read/write/speak French? If yes, please describe.

26. Given the opportunity, would you feel comfortable applying for employment which required you to predominantly speak French?

27. Do you speak French socially in your community?

28. Is being labeled ‘bilingual’ important to you? Why or why not?

29. Do you think knowing the French language is a valuable tool in one's life?

30. Do you need to be able to speak French to function well in your community?

31. Given your command of the French language, would you be comfortable relocating to a French speaking community?

32. Do you seek out opportunities to maintain your French language? If yes, please describe how.

Appendix K – Thematically organized questionnaire responses

| | Strongly Agree | Slightly Agree | Neutral | Slightly Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Part 1: French background** | | | | | |
| 1. My mother and/or father can speak French. | 5 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 10 |
| 2. My grandparents can speak French. | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 19 |
| 3. I will often speak French with my family. | 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 15 |
| **Part 2: French in the classroom** | | | | | |
| 1. I enjoy learning French. | 14 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. I try to always speak French while in French class or other immersion classes. | 0 | 5 | 10 | 8 | 2 |
| 3. I think it is important to learn French in school. | 10 | 12 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| 4. I feel comfortable speaking French with my friends. | 15 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 1 |
| 5. I feel comfortable speaking French with my teachers. | 11 | 10 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 6. I believe I can speak French very well. | 8 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| 7. My parents encouraged me to complete the French immersion program. | 20 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 8. My parents forced me to complete the French immersion program. | 4 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| 9. I made the decision on my own to complete the French immersion program. | 15 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| 10. If I could start my schooling over I would choose NOT to be in the French immersion program. | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 20 |
| **Part 3: French outside of the classroom** | | | | | |
| 1. I think being able to speak both French and English is what distinguishes Canadians from other people in other countries. | 4 | 9 | 8 | 3 | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. I think one is truly Canadian when one can speak both French and English. | 1 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 8 |
| 3. I like to read French books in my spare time. | 0 | 1 | 5 | 10 | 9 |
| 4. I like to watch French television in my spare time. | 0 | 1 | 7 | 7 | 10 |
| 5. I like to listen to French music in my spare time. | 1 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 11 |
| 6. I will often speak French with my friends outside of school. | 0 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 12 |
| 7. My parents encourage me to speak French outside of school. | 5 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 3 |
| 8. I would be comfortable speaking French with someone I did not know. | 11 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| 9. I think French is very important in my day-to-day life outside of school. | 1 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 9 |
| 10. I have completed a French language exchange program to a French-speaking district. | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 24 |
| 11. I have plans to complete a French language program to a French-speaking district. | 1 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 13 |
| **Part 4: French utility in the future** | | | | | |
| 1. I think knowing the French language will benefit me in my future. | 21 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2. I plan on getting a job which requires me to know French. | 6 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 0 |
| 3. Knowing the French language makes me feel privileged. | 12 | 8 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| 4. I want to learn French to use it when I travel to French speaking provinces in Canada. | 6 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. I want to learn French to use it when I travel to French speaking areas outside of Canada. | 11 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| 6. I want to learn French because I think I will need to be able to speak it in the future. | 11 | 8 | 5 | 0 | 1 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7. I am interested in continuing to learn French after secondary school graduation. | 7 | 7 | 7 | 2 | 2 |
| 8. Knowing French has helped me get a job outside of school. | 1 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 9 |
| 9. I think knowing French will help me get a job in the future. | 16 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 10. Being labeled 'bilingual' is important to me. | 12 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| 11. I made the decision to remain in the French immersion program to better my future. | 17 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 12. I believe graduating from the French immersion program will open doors for my future. | 17 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 13. My parents believe graduating from the French immersion program will open doors for my future. | 19 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |