

Learning More about our Learners: Comparing the Orientations and Attributes of Allophone and English-Speaking Grade 6 French as a Second Official Language Learners

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This article compares the motivational orientations and attributes of three different groups of Grade 6 students of French as a second official language (FSOL): Canadian-born English-speaking learners, Canadian-born bilingual learners, and immigrant multilingual allophones. This mixed-methods study used quantitative questionnaire data and qualitative interview data to determine potential differences in the three populations' willingness to communicate (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, and Noels, 1998) and other dimensions of integrative motivation. Quantitative findings reveal stronger motivations for immigrant multilingual learners than the other two groups on most measures, but qualitative findings reveal some contradictions to those results. The study offers insight into the ways different groups of learners are differently motivated to pursue FSOL study in Canada.

Cet article compare les orientations et les caractéristiques motivationnelles de trois groupes différents d'élèves en 6e année dans un programme de français comme seconde langue officielle (FSLO) : des élèves anglophones nés au Canada, des élèves bilingues nés au Canada et des immigrants allophones plurilingues. Cette étude à méthodologies mixtes repose sur données quantitatives provenant de questionnaires et des données qualitatives tirées d'entrevues. L'objectif en est de déterminer les différences potentielles dans la volonté de communiquer chez les trois populations (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, and Noels, 1998) et d'évaluer d'autres dimensions de la motivation intégrative. Les résultats quantitatifs révèlent que la motivation chez les apprenants immigrants plurilingues est plus forte que chez les deux autres groupes et ce, pour la plupart des mesures. Toutefois, les données qualitatives viennent contredire certains de ces résultats. L'étude donne un aperçu des façons dont la motivation d'apprendre le FSLO au Canada varie selon différents groupes d'apprenants.

Literature Review

Motivations and Attitudes of L2 Learners

Over the past two decades, the field of L2 education has been trying to explain and predict the

motivation of L2 learners. One of the most recognized concepts within these inquiries has been that of *integrative motivation*. First introduced by Gardner and Lambert (1972) in the Canadian French-English context, integrative motivation was originally defined as a learner orientation that reflects “a sincere personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group” (p. 132). Through this lens, the stronger the L2 learner’s desire to take on attributes of the other group (e.g., language), the more likely their motivation to master the L2 would be sustained over the long term. In other words, motivation was framed in relation to one’s desire to use the language like other speakers of the language or to adopt their cultural practices.

In recent years, the reconceptualization of English as a global language has broadened the underpinning of the traditional conceptualization of integrative motivation because of the influence of an expanding, dynamic, and global community of English language users. Previous conceptions of integrative motivation framed the community of users of a target language as static. This paradigm shift has prompted some noteworthy reconceptualizations of the construct (Dörnyei, 2005; Ushioda, 2006), but the notion of integrativeness has remained a key factor cited by researchers investigating linguistic, communicative, and social psychological factors affecting L2 learning.

One reconceptualization of integrative motivation implicates the notion of *willingness to communicate* (WTC) proposed by MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, and Noels (1998). Through this lens, the principal objective of L2 instruction is to instill a readiness on the part of learners to seek out opportunities to communicate in the target language, in other words, integration is achieved through one’s efforts to locate and initiate communicative exchanges in the target language. Since this iteration, much research has been conducted to determine what variables influence and predict WTC across second and foreign language learning contexts (Alikhani & Bagheridoust, 2017; Bahadori, 2018; Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Kang, 2005; Kissau, McCullough, Salas, & Pike, 2000; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrod, 2001; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002; MacIntyre, Burns, & Jessome, 2011; MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010; Tannenbaum & Tahar, 2007).

In addition to integrativeness, other variables such as perceived competence (Chung & Leung, 2016), anxiety (Liu, 2016) and learner attitudes (McNaughton & McDonough, 2015) toward the L2 and the L2 learning situation have been isolated as having a strong relationship with WTC. Recent work in this domain has gone further to question the once trait-like characterization of WTC and instead propose that WTC is a feature of the L2 learning that can change in each learner, moment to moment (Kang, 2005), necessitating the development of methods to capture WTC over time (MacIntyre & Leggato, 2011).

Although some of the aforementioned studies were conducted with FSOL learners (Kissau, McCullough, Salas, & Pike, 2000; MacIntyre et al., 2001; MacIntyre et al., 2003; MacIntyre et al., 2011; MacIntyre & Leggato, 2011), the few that examine a core French¹ context (the focus of the present study) provide an array of results. For example, Baker & MacIntyre (2000) found that their core French secondary school participants were satisfied with their progress. However, other studies examining core French student perspectives more generally found that learners were often dissatisfied with their FSOL learning progress (Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation, 2004; Canadian Parents for French, 2004; Desgrosseilliers, 2017; Massey, 1994;) or struggled to align their reported motives with their lived experience (Arnott, 2017). Beyond the perceptions of core French students in general, profiling and comparing the motivations and attitudes of immigrant Canadians and Canadian-born FSOL learners in particular has yet to have been prioritized through these well-established lenses. In the next section, the reasoning

for wanting to delve further into this topic is rationalized given the existing research in this regard.

Bi/Multilingual Students Adding FSOL to their Language Repertoire in Canada

Canadian classrooms, in urban centres in particular, often include children of immigrants (i.e., first generation Canadians) and children who came to Canada as immigrants themselves. These two groups of children typically have a variety of language repertoires. In the context of this study, both groups have, at minimum, a non-romance home language(s) and English as part of their language repertoire to which they are adding FSOL. While discussions of adding other languages to one's repertoire have centered generally on it being either *additive* or *subtractive* bilingualism (see Lambert, 1974), such inquiry has yet to focus on the learning experiences of this specific student population within FSOL programming, particularly in light of the changing demographics of Canada. As the following review will demonstrate, only limited FSOL research on multilingual students has considered the children of immigrants.

Research on Canadian students adding FSOL through immersion. The following research is pertinent to this study given that they are Canadian studies with students adding FSOL to their language repertoires. The educational context, however, is different in that they are from the immersion context. Genesee and Lambert (1983) examined the acquisition of three languages within a bilingual (French/Hebrew) immersion program. In their comparison of test results in the three languages, Genesee and Lambert concluded that the learning of two languages in immersion could be just as effective as the learning of one additional language in the same program. Bild and Swain (1989) and Swain, Lapkin, Rowen, and Hart (1990) compared the French proficiency of Grade 8 students to discover that children with a language repertoire that included a language of origin other than English or French outperformed those whose language repertoire was limited to the two official languages. Bild and Swain (1989) hypothesized that the superior performance of bilingual/multilingual students was due to positive transfer and heightened metalinguistic awareness. Swain et al. (1990) collected data to determine that literacy in language of origin positively correlated to French proficiency.

Taylor (1992) also stated that multilinguals could be successful in immersion based on her study of one first generation Canadian in immersion. Through math and language tests accompanied by classroom observations, Taylor determined that her participant was able to meet the demands of the French immersion program. More recently, Moore (2010) examined the English, French, and Chinese language skills of 14 Grade 1 children of Asian immigrants who were learning FSOL in the French immersion program. In the interviews, the children were able to visually and orally describe their use of the three languages. Moore noted that the children were able to transfer their knowledge among languages to benefit their understanding of writing in each language.

It is unclear whether the next two studies' participants were immigrant, children of immigrants, or associated with other groups, but both involved a comparison of bilingual and multilingual participants' FSOL proficiencies within immersion. Through the comparisons of Grade 12 French immersion graduates' French competencies, Lazaruk (2007) revealed that multilingual students performed on par with their bilingual (English/French) speaking counterparts. Similarly, Reyes (2008), with tests of FSOL reading, determined that multilingual students performed on par with their bilingual (English/French) peers in the Grade 11 or Grade 12 French immersion program.

Research on Canadian students adding FSOL through core French. Even though the core French program is the most prevalent in Canada for FSOL study (Canadian Parents for French, 2017), there is less Canadian FSOL research describing findings in this context. In their synthesis of core French studies to date Lapkin, Mady, and Arnett (2009) highlight the need for more research looking at student outcomes and the inclusion of multilingual learners in core French.

In terms of Canadian research on immigrants' FSOL proficiencies, Mady's (2007) study sought to compare the FSOL proficiency of three groups, two of which were multilingual groups, in a Grade 6 core French context (core French is the study of the French language for approximately one forty-minute period a day): Canadian-born English speaking, Canadian-born multilingual (children of immigrants), and immigrant multilingual participants. In her comparison of their FSOL proficiencies as measured with a multi-skills test, Mady determined that, where there were significant differences among the groups, the immigrant group outperformed the other two groups.

Although the FSOL research that examines multilingual language acquisition remains limited, the research above suggests that bilinguals can add FSOL to their language repertoire with at least the same success as their English-speaking peers. In addition, when considered with research from abroad (Cenoz, 2003; Clyne, Hunt, & Isaakidis, 2004; Kemp, 2007), the results suggest that bilinguals in general, and bilingual immigrants in particular, may be advantaged in adding another language to their repertoire.

Reasons for such successful multiple language acquisition have also been explored to a limited degree in the Canadian context. In order to explore the role of motivation in FSOL learning, Mady (2010) interviewed six Grade 9 participants (four Canadian-born and two immigrant) about their motivations to study FSOL within a core French context. The immigrant participants were more motivated to study FSOL than their Canadian-born peers indicating hope for economic (i.e., a good job) and social (i.e., a Canadian identity) rewards on their investment. Mady (2012a) also explored investment in FSOL from immigrant university students' perspectives by means of a questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire respondents ($N = 125$) and interview participants ($N = 4$) linked official language bilingualism to obtaining a Canadian identity. They also cited the hopes of obtaining the economic advantages associated with official language bilingualism (i.e., improved job opportunities) as motivation to study FSOL.

Research on parent perspectives and attitudes about FSOL study in Canada. Multilinguals' positive attitudes toward FSOL learning have also been confirmed by Canadian research that explored the views of adult immigrants. In a mixed-methods study of adult immigrants' perceptions of bilingualism, Galiev (2013) found the majority of his 64 participants to favour official language bilingualism as expressed through a questionnaire and interviews. In fact, participants favoured the governmental support and promotion of English and French as Canada's official languages more heavily than the need for support of their languages of origin as they judged English/French bilingualism as important to maintaining the national identity. In Mady's (2012b) research, she interviewed immigrant adults in British Columbia and Ontario to explore their experiences with FSOL. Her 19 participants revealed that their desire to learn FSOL themselves and their pursuit of intensive FSOL learning opportunities for their children were grounded in their belief that FSOL acquisition would demonstrate Canadian affiliation. The parents also believed that official language bilingualism would result in economic advantages for their children.

In a series of studies, Dagenais explored immigrant parents' motivations to enroll their children in French immersion in British Columbia. For their longitudinal, ethnographic study, Dagenais and Jacquet (2000) interviewed nine immigrant families regarding their choices of language use for their children. The immigrant parents revealed that their value of multilingualism was grounded in their prior successful experiences with multilingual acquisition. They also explained that their choice of French immersion for their children was based on their view that additional languages are beneficial for social mobility, integration, and economic reasons. It is important to note that the parents not only took steps for their children to add French to their language repertoire, but also made an effort to have their children maintain their language of origin so as to maintain their part in that cultural group.

Similarly, Dagenais, and Berron (2001) adopted an ethnographic approach for their study of the language use and choices of three South Asian families in British Columbia. Their findings are also similar to those of Dagenais and Jacquet in that they found the families chose to maintain their language(s) of origin in order to maintain family ties and chose French immersion for their children based on their experience learning multiple languages and their beliefs that adding French to their language repertoire would bring economic benefits. The above research with immigrant adults suggests that children in these families may benefit from a family where FSOL learning is viewed as advantageous.

The above review suggests that bi/multilingual children (i.e., immigrants and children of immigrants) are successful in FSOL learning in Canada to a greater degree than their Canadian-born, English-speaking peers. Findings have revealed that such advantages may be due to literacy in their language of origin; whereas, Bild and Swain (1989) hypothesized that positive transfer and heightened metalinguistic awareness may be positive influential factors. Findings from the qualitative studies reviewed above suggest that motivation in the hope of economic and social rewards, parental experience with learning multiple languages, and support of official language bilingualism may also positively impact FSOL learning of immigrants and first-generation children of immigrants.

Method

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this study to collect data on Canadian allophone immigrant and Canadian-born multilingual and unilingual FSOL learners' motivations and attitudes toward learning FSOL. Following Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner's (2007) fundamental principle of mixed methods research, the rationale for adopting a mixed methods approach centred on a desire to "optimize the complementary strengths of the qualitative and quantitative methods being employed" (p.126), while also increasing the potential of yielding a more comprehensive understanding of research problems than either type of approach could do alone. Contrast and contradiction of findings derived from both types of methods were also welcomed in this study as "it is in this tension that boundaries of what is known are most generatively challenged and stretched" (Greene & Caracelli, 1997, p.12).

Participants

This study was conducted with FSOL Grade 6 students in southern Ontario in the greater Toronto area. In Ontario, FSOL is an obligatory subject of study from Grades 4 to 9. Although some boards within the province offer immersion as an option for FSOL study, the majority of

students (78%) (Canadian Parents for French, 2017) meet their compulsory FSOL study requirements through the core French program.

At the time of the study, participants had been enrolled in the core French program for two years, having begun their FSOL studies in Grade 4. At the end of Grade 5, students in this program are expected to be able to understand and produce familiar language dealing with themselves and their immediate surroundings (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). Data were collected in eight Grade 6 core French classes in two schools within the same board in an urban area during the spring of their Grade 6 year. In excess of 150 Grade 6 students completed the questionnaire (N=173). A subset of 125 students participated in one semi-structured interview.

A total of 20 questionnaire respondents were Canadian allophone immigrants; therefore, the quantitative findings compare all of the immigrant participants' responses to equal groups of randomly selected Canadian-born English-speaking (unilingual) and Canadian-born multilingual participants' responses. All of the allophone students participated in the interviews; the corresponding 20 interviews were from each of the other randomly selected groups: Canadian-born unilinguals and multilinguals.

The majority of the immigrants were born in South Asia (61%) with the remaining coming from Africa (13%), Southeast Asia, Southern Europe, and Central Asia (4%) and another 13% not providing the corresponding data. The Canadian allophone immigrant and Canadian-born multilingual groups had similar language backgrounds, with the majority of both groups (65%) using a language of the Indo-Aryan family at home (e.g., Hindi) and a minority of both groups using a language of Afro-Asiatic, Dravidian, or Slavic origins (4%). In addition, the Canadian allophone immigrant group had one participant from Austronesian background (4%) and another with Indo-European roots; whereas, the Canadian-born multilingual group had one participant from an Austro-Asiatic language background (4%) and two from Indo-European language groups (8%). The corresponding data for 13% of the participants were missing. Their group status was verified in the demographic data, teacher and student consultations, and parental input.

Data Collection

Questionnaire. Several FSOL education graduate students and professors collaborated to create the questionnaire for this study. In addition to demographic information, the questionnaire also collected continuous, ordinal, and categorical data. The findings presented here and the corresponding questionnaire item descriptions are limited to the continuous data types. These items were created based on previous research that either hypothesized or identified influential factors on bi/multilinguals' additional language acquisition (Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre et al., 2001; Mady, 2007). As such, the questionnaire sought to explore integrativeness as it pertains to contact with French people in general with three items, integrativeness pertaining to Canada specifically (3 items), motivation to continue with French studies (3 items), attitude toward FSOL learning (3 items), anxiety to use FSOL (4 items), willingness to communicate (12 items), use of learning strategies (9 items). The participants completed the questionnaire online while in their French class. It took approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Interview. Participants' orientations were triangulated using semi-structured interviews conducted with a subset of participants from each group ($n = 60$), where more detailed questions targeting many of the same constructs as the questionnaire were asked. More

specifically, students were asked where they were born, what language(s) they knew and/or spoke at home or elsewhere, motivation to learn French (e.g., easiest/most difficult aspects, whether they planned on using it in the future), how they felt about participating in French class, and their general opinions about the importance of learning French and in relation to their understanding of what it means to be Canadian. Each interview was transcribed and analyzed for emergent themes, beginning within each group (Canadian allophone immigrant, Canadian-born multilingual, Canadian-born unilingual) and then moving across groups.

Findings

Qualitative and quantitative data were first analyzed in isolation and were then compared to ascertain whether perspectives focusing on the same constructs converged or diverged across the methods. As seen below, the interview data revealed points of support, expansion, and contradiction relative to the questionnaire findings.

Questionnaire Findings

The questionnaire data were prepared prior to conducting any analyses. In preparation, principal components analyses were conducted to determine if the multiple questionnaire items could be condensed into composite variables. Composite variables were created according to the questionnaire description above for the six categories: integrative motivation, Canadian integrative motivation, motivation to continue with FSOL, attitude toward FSOL learning, anxiety to use FSOL, and willingness to communicate. The learning strategies category produced two variables with the following division adopted: learning strategies (5 items) and metalinguistic awareness (4 items). These composite variables were then used in the analyses.

In order to compare the questionnaire results among the three participant groups, ANOVAs were conducted when comparing groups on continuous variables. Table 1 presents the significance results for each ANOVA. F statistics with significance are starred. Significant differences among groups were identified for motivation to continue FSOL $F(2, 55) = 3.33, p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = .11$, attitude toward FSOL $F(2, 36) = 5.75, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = .11$, anxiety $F(2, 59) = 4.30, p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$ and willingness to communicate in French $F(2, 36) = 5.75, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = .17$. Effect sizes indicate a moderate effect.

Table 1

ANOVA Results Comparing Participant Groups' Questionnaire Results

Score	df	F	partial η^2
Integrative Motivation	2, 36	1.83	.06
Canadian integrative Motivation	2, 58	3.10	.10
Motivation to Continue	2, 55	*3.33	.11
Attitude to FSOL	2, 59	*3.46	.11
Anxiety	2, 59	*4.30	.13
WTC	2, 57	**5.75	.17
Learning Strategies	2, 59	1.04	.03
Metalinguistic Awareness	2, 59	2.98	.09

***= $p < .001$; **= $p < .01$; *= $p < .05$

Where significant differences were found, Dunnett's C post hoc tests were conducted. Confidence intervals for differences among the three groups are presented in Table 2. Starred mean differences indicate significant differences between those two means ($p < .05$). Specifically, the Canadian allophone immigrant (CI) group had significantly higher mean values on measures related to the participants' motivation to continue FSOL studies, ($M = .49$, $SD = .86$), compared to the Canadian-born English-speaking (CBES) group ($M = -.32$, $SD = 1.05$), with a confidence interval ranging from -1.58 to $.22$. The CI group had significantly higher mean values on measures related to the participants' willingness to communicate in FSOL, ($M = .51$, $SD = .70$) compared to the CBES group ($M = -.46$, $SD = 1.04$), with a confidence interval ranging from -1.68 to $.29$. Lastly, CI group had significantly higher mean values on measures related to the students' anxiety to use FSOL, ($M = .47$, $SD = .78$) compared to the CBES group ($M = -.36$, $SD = 1.11$), with a confidence interval of -1.59 to $.45$. In the post-hoc tests, attitude toward learning

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Dunnett's C Post-hoc Test Results

Score	Language Group	Mean	sd	N	95% confidence interval	
					CBES	CBM
Integrative Motivation	CBES	-0.26	1.11	21		
	CBM	0.28	0.64	21		
	CI	0.23	1.07	20		
Canadian Integrative Motivation	CBES	-0.32	0.91	20		
	CBM	-0.11	1.01	21		
	Immigrant	0.40	0.91	20		
Motivation to Continue	CBES	-0.32	1.05	21		
	CBM	-0.09	1.05	19		
	CI	0.49	0.86	18	*-1.58 to -.03	-1.39 to .22
Attitude to FSOL	CBES	-0.28	1.03	21		
	CBM	0.38	0.86	21		
	CI	0.34	0.84	20		
Anxiety	CBES	-0.36	1.11	21		
	CBM	0.25	0.92	21	-1.41 to .18	
	CI	0.47	0.78	20	*-1.59 to -.08	-.89 to .45
WTC	CBES	-0.46	1.04	20		
	CBM	0.12	0.97	20		
	CI	0.51	0.70	20	*-1.68 to -.26	-1.07 to .29
Learning Strategies	CBES	.35	.92	21		
	CBM	.17	.89	21		
	CI	-.06	.94	20		
Metalinguistic Awareness	CBES	-.25	.96	21		
	CBM	.20	.87	21		
	CI	.43	.90	20		

French failed to identify significant differences between specific groups. It is also noteworthy that where significant differences were found they were between the CI and CBES groups.

Interview Findings

As stated earlier, considering the interview data in conjunction with the questionnaire data, findings revealed interesting points of support, expansion, and contradiction, particularly in relation to the post-hoc analyses presented at the end of the previous section (the CIs group scoring significantly higher than the CBESs on three variables). The qualitative data related to these two groups in particular is presented below in an attempt to elaborate further on these quantitative findings.

With respect to the first variable (motivation to continue FSOL studies), in response to a question as to whether they anticipated using the French they had learned, CI participants were more definitive than the CBESs, with 100% answering “Yes” in their response. Slightly more than half of the CBESs (54%) indicated that they planned on using the French they had learned, with the remaining participants expressing mixed feelings (31%) or claiming that they were not planning to use the French they had learned at all (14%).

Positive responses across both groups centred on the belief that the French they had learned was eventually going to be useful to them in some way. The most popular prospective use reported by both groups was related to hypothetical travel to French-speaking areas; however, the groups were divided in terms of secondary reasons. The CI group expressed a perceived usefulness of the French they had learned for prospective job opportunities saying, “Yeah, if I get a job and then I need to, if I need to use French and it’s important, it can help me there” or “I will, because if I’m going to be a doctor and I have a French patient coming in, then I won’t be able to understand them if I don’t know any French.” In contrast, the CBES group intended to use the French they had learned if they ever found themselves in a hypothetical interaction where they needed it, with such statements as “Yeah, just in case I need to speak to someone [in French].” This group also expressed significant skepticism about whether French was relevant to their immediate environment and everyday lives saying, “I don’t have reasons why I should use it” or “I’m not really planning on moving first of all, I’m just going to be staying around here. That’s one reason [why I don’t anticipate using my French].”

This theme of the *utility of French* emerged repeatedly in response to other interview questions, particularly those prompting student attitudes toward the FSOL learning situation. However, while the Canadian-born English-speaking participants again maintained their focus on French being useful for hypothetical travel and interaction with French speakers in response to this question (67%), the Canadian allophone immigrant group’s responses deviated somewhat from their initial reasoning for why French was useful to them. For example, while hypothetical travel and job prospects were still a priority, when asked about their general feelings toward learning French, a large proportion of immigrant participants (32%) cited that doing so added to their multilingual repertoire in a way that supported identity or belonging issues. Their responses addressed three different themes: the value of additive bi- or multilingualism, “I want to learn French. I want to learn four languages, so yeah, more languages more knowledge,” French’s status as the other official language of Canada, “We’re in Canada, and French is the second language ... so you better learn it,” and French as part of the Canadian identity, “If you know both it’s like you’re more of a Canadian.” Thus, the interview portion of the study allowed some expansion of the immigrant group’s perspectives on learning French to feature these more

integrative ideas, even though there were no statistically significant results on the sections of the questionnaire that tested for the integrative motivations.

Finally, just as the questionnaire data revealed differences across the groups in measures focused on willingness to communicate (WTC) and language anxiety, there were qualitative differences in the responses across the three groups in the interviews that both support the questionnaire data and contradict the findings. First, on the questionnaire, the immigrant students expressed a greater willingness to communicate than the Canadian-born multilingual and English-speaking student groups (62% to 49% and 46% respectively), and broadly, the interviews supported this finding. However, when asked directly to comment on their feelings about participating in French class, the immigrant students offered rationales that drew on very specific reasons for their participation in class, while the two Canadian-born groups offered more general rationales. For example, the immigrant group took comfort from the classroom routine as support for their participation, “Like, what’s your name, how do you feel today, and we do, our teacher tells us to do calendar every day, and that’s pretty easy” or “I think it’s really easy to understand because, with the gestures, so, I don’t feel shy because everyone knows equal, nobody knows higher nobody knows lower because of the gestures. So, I don’t feel shy.”

Whereas the Canadian-born groups offered more general comments pertaining to their perceptions of participating in class, “I like to participate in French class” or “Yeah, it’s good to participate in French ... it’s better to participate instead of just sitting in the corner and just trying to pay attention.”

As it related to language anxiety in the questionnaire data, the immigrant students were, overall, more anxious about using French than the Canadian-born English-speaking students. Yet, in responses to the questions about participating in French class, 27% of the Canadian-born English-speaking students expressed more anxiety about participating in French class, while only 8% of the immigrant students expressed anxiety about participating in French class. Many of the Canadian-born English-speaking students expressed nervousness to speak in class, “I’m sort of nervous because I don’t really know that much French” or “I’m actually kind of shy in French class, because I don’t pronounce the words, sometimes I don’t pronounce it right.” More immigrant participants expressed confidence to speak French in class, “I like to participate in French, and I’m confident about it and stuff” or “I feel like, like I’m at kind of the age, level as a lot of other people, so if I say something wrong, everybody else does at random times, so I just feel comfortable.”

Within the students’ comments about anxiety, we see other differences between the immigrant and Canadian-born English-speaking groups. Half of the immigrant comments were general statements of anxiety about using the language, while the other half of the comments cited a perceived incompetence in their language skills that caused them anxiety about participating in class. For example, “Sometimes I don’t really want to participate ‘cause I don’t really know that much French, but I want to learn more.” None of the interview comments referenced any of the ideas that emerged in the questionnaire; those data revealed that immigrant students were more anxious than other groups when speaking or reading to individuals or small groups. Looking at the Canadian-born English-speaking students’ comments, they also offered general statements of anxiety about participating in French class, “I feel like, a little bit nervous,” and their perceived incompetence in the language, “I can’t really read [F]rench, or I could say it, just not much French, I don’t know a lot.” In addition, Canadian-born English-speaking students expressed anxiety about participating in whole class activities within French class, “I get nervous when I’m talking in front of the whole class.”

Discussion

The findings of this study have implications for understanding the role of willingness to communicate and anxiety within students' motivation to use a language, the constructs of additive and subtractive bilingualism, and finally, FSOL teaching. In the context of this study in an English-dominant province of Canada, French is most often additive in that, in the vast majority of cases, it will not replace English for our participant groups. As evidenced in other research described above (e.g., Dagenais & Berron, 2001), French can be added to immigrants' language repertoires while they maintain their home languages thus having the potential to be additive for our multilingual groups. Despite this potentially beneficial addition, as has been mentioned in other studies (Mady, 2007; 2012b), there is sometimes a reluctance to allow immigrant newcomers to Canada to pursue French study while also learning English. Such perspectives have been grounded in the belief that the study of French would be a detriment to the students' learning of English and perhaps be a hardship for immigrant students. The desire and ability of immigrant students to meet with success learning French and English (Mady, 2015) provides evidence for educational gatekeepers to consider as they make recommendations for immigrant populations in particular. In fact, Mady's (2015) study, through English and French test comparisons, showed the immigrant group to outperform the Canadian-born students in both languages. This study also highlights the willingness and confidence of immigrant students to gain proficiency in FSOL, and given many educational policies focused on the premise of individual needs and goals, such information may be relevant to programmatic decisions.

As it pertains to understanding the role of willingness to communicate and anxiety within students' motivation to use a language, the results here provide additional evidence that the Canadian allophone immigrant learner population brings positive motivations to their FSOL study, with all of the participating immigrant students reporting the value of adding French to their language repertoires and enhancing their multilingualism; their motivations were stronger than the Canadian-born multilingual participants. Of note, the immigrant participants expressed their motivation through acknowledging how French enhanced their linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1977) or added to their ability to be more Canadian. This motivation is paired with the findings that this group of students had the highest competencies on the French language measures used in this study to provide additional evidence in support of enrolling this learner group in FSOL classes. The consistent distinction between the Canadian-born English-speaking group and the Canadian allophone immigrant group as revealed by the findings in this study in combination with others (e.g., Mady, 2013) suggests that these groups present distinct profiles. Such differences may be grounded in social status where the immigrant group believes in the national discourse that official language bilingualism will bring rewards such as employment opportunities and Canadian identity. The Canadian-born English-speaking group, on the other hand, may be more apt to rely on the power of English not seeing the benefits of official language bilingualism beyond the pleasure of travel nor needing the potential rewards (Clyne, 2008).

In terms of the classroom, the Canadian allophone immigrant and Canadian-born groups revealed differences in the kinds of learning activities that affected their willingness to communicate and their language anxiety. In particular, participants revealed that routines and non-verbal supports increased their willingness to communicate. In addition, the interview findings associated anxiety to perceived competence. Given previous research indicating that

anxious students communicate less and thus miss opportunities to increase their speaking proficiency which in turn may reduce their anxiety, findings from this study suggest that teachers consider how differences in views towards small-group or individual work (revealed as less anxiety provoking) and whole-class activities could influence their students' motivation to persist with FSOL study.

Moving forward, the contradictory findings across the interview and questionnaire data about all groups' willingness to communicate and language anxiety will require additional inquiry to understand their relationship to one another. As a starting point, the data from this study are essentially measures of the constructs at a specific point in their study of French, but as found by MacIntyre and Legatto (2011), there may be more dynamism in their relationship than this methodology captured. MacIntyre and Legatto found some independence between anxiety and willingness to communicate when considering a person's individual experience at any given moment and that anxiety can rise and fall without necessarily changing the students' willingness to communicate. Thus, future research may need to consider measuring both constructs multiple times and across multiple events.

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Note

1 Core French programs typically provide students with 20-45 minutes of French instruction per class session, either as a daily class or as a class held multiple times a week

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