Being *'Immersion':* Identity, Belonging and Accent in BC French Immersion Students

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Abstract

This study examines the identities, feelings of group belonging and accents of British Columbia (BC) French immersion high school students. Through a mixed methodology, web-surveys and recorded in-class group discussions were used for data collection and analysis. 139 French immersion and Core French students from 6 schools and 4 cities across BC participated in the study. Of these students, 109 were in French immersion (between grades 10 to 12), and 30 were from Core French (grade 10 only). The Core French students represent English program peers and were used as a reference point, but immersion students remained the main group of interest. This study used a mixed methodology for data collection. Online surveys and in-class group discussions were used to collected data. A constructivist framework, together with social identity theory (SIT), accent and identity research and group belonging were applied in the analysis of results. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, data collection occurred remotely. Students were given class time in their schools to complete the web survey, of which 27 questions were selected for analysis. The web survey was completed by both immersion and Core French participants. For the in-class group discussions, students were given topics on identity, the French language, and their immersion program experiences. Only French immersion students completed the recorded discussions. The results suggest that immersion students and Core French participants are equal in terms of linguistic diversity, and the immersion participants also reflected the overall population in which they lived. On the other hand, immersion students were found to value peer acceptance significantly more than Core French participants. Immersion students also reported noted differences between themselves and non-immersion peers, including Core French and Francophone speakers. These differences were often expressed through perceived accent distinctions. Immersion participants generally agreed that there is a distinct immersion accent, but often rejected the notion of ‘immersionese’ in favour of speaking ‘French’. There was a greater overall agreement in the importance of the French language versus the importance of French immersion to the identities of immersion students. Immersion participants expressed a desire to be considered French speakers, French as a second language (FSL) speakers and even BC Francophones. Students’ linguistic defining of ‘BC Francophone’ (as French speaker) can also be seen as a more inclusive understanding of speaker status. Overall, the results of this study help to

reshape our understanding of French in BC, and the specific contexts of BC immersion students as speakers of French.

Keywords: French immersion; identity; belonging; accent; second language identity; social identity theory

Résumé

Cette étude porte sur les identités, les sentiments d'appartenance à un groupe et les accents des étudiants issus de l'immersion française en école secondaire dans la province de la Colombie-Britannique (C-B). Au total, 139 étudiants d'immersion française et de Français langue seconde (FLS) ont participé à l'étude. Ils viennent de six écoles et quatre villes différentes en C-B. 109 étudiants viennent du programme d'immersion (10e, 11e, et 12e années d'études), alors que 30 viennent du programme FLS (10e année d'études). Les étudiants FLS représentent les élèves du programme anglais et servaient comme point de référence vis-à-vis du groupe en 'immersion'. En appliquant une méthodologie mixte, des sondages en ligne et des enregistrements de groupe ont été utilisés lors de la collecte de données. L'analyse des donnés s'est faite sur la base d'un cadre constructiviste ainsi que de la théorie de l'identité sociale et de l'appartenance au groupe. La collecte de données s'est produite entièrement en ligne en raison de la pandémie de la Covid-19. Les étudiants-participants (en immersion et en FLS) ont complété en classe des sondages, dont 27 questions ont été analysées. Pour les enregistrements de groupe (étudiants en immersion seulement), les participants ont reçu des thèmes sur l'identité, la langue française et leurs expériences dans le programme d'immersion. Les résultats suggèrent que les profils linguistiques des étudiants en immersion sont égaux avec ceux du groupe FLS. La diversité des participant en immersion correspond aussi à celle de leurs villes/régions. Cependant, les étudiants en immersion semblaient apprécier l'acceptation par leurs pairs plus que les participants en FLS (une différence significative). Les étudiants du programme d'immersion ont aussi remarqué des différences entre eux-mêmes et les locuteurs FLS et Francophones. Ces distinctions sont souvent liées à des différenciations d'accent notées par les participants en immersion. En général, les participants en immersion s'accordent pour dire qu'ils ont un accent distinct, mais ils ne réclament pas la notion d''immersionese'/'français de l'immersion', insistant plutôt sur le fait qu'ils parlent français. En même temps, les participants en immersion mettaient plus l'accent sur l'importance du français pour leurs identités, en comparaison à l'importance du programme d'immersion (pour leurs identités). Les étudiants d'immersion ont exprimé un désir d'être reconnus comme des locuteurs de français, des locuteurs de FLS en général, et même comme des Francophones de C-B. L'usage linguistique de 'Francophone de C-B' (c'est à dire, locuteur de français) employé par ces étudiants peut

aussi être considéré comme étant plus inclusif envers les locuteurs de langues secondes. Enfin, les résultats de cette étude aident à reconsidérer notre compréhension du français en C-B et à repenser le statut de locuteurs de français dans le contexte spécifique des étudiants d'immersion britanno-colombiens.

Mots-clés: immersion française; identité; appartenance; accent; identité en langue seconde; la théorie de l'identité sociale

Szüleimnek, nagymamámnak, örök társamnak.

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There is no achievement in the world that is entirely solitary. Behind the scenes, there is a whole village of people helping, supporting, advising, questioning, cheering… All research is for the community, and all research involves the community. Throughout my research journey, I, like everyone else, have had my own 'village'. I would like to take these next few pages to acknowledge the people who have been there, helping in the background (and foreground) to make this thesis possible.

I want to begin with a most sincere thank you to my supervisor Dr. Cécile Bullock. I began working with Cécile in 2017 when I started my PhD journey. Very quickly after this, my advisor went on leave, and through a combination of bad timing, and a global pandemic's aftereffects, I would not see her again in person until 2021. However, Cécile's determination, ingenuity and evident love for teaching and mentoring made it so that I never felt alone or lost throughout my studies. If I was ever stuck, I knew that she was only a zoom-call away. Because I knew I always had her support, I was able to involve myself in many academic endeavours, like the Education Graduate Student Association, the SFU EdReview, and the many conferences I attended during my studies. Cécile would always encourage me to try something new, to read something outside of my area, and to always be involved. It is also through my supervisor's support and advice that I was able to receive a Social Sciences and Research Council (SSHRC) Doctoral Fellowship. Cécile's tenacity, but also patience, were the consistent and ever-present force I needed to initiate, execute, write, and now finally finish my doctoral work. *Merci Cécile!*

This next paragraph is dedicated to one of my committee members: Dr. Gaëlle Planchenault. I was a second-year undergraduate student, taking an introductory French linguistics course, with Gaëlle as its professor. If I can describe her in a few words during this course, and as I would come to find out, all courses, it would be: dedicated, invested, approachable, and extremely knowledgeable. It was evident from the beginning that she loves to teach and that she loves to see us students take the knowledge she has provided and turn it into something more, and I am very lucky to, today, consider her a mentor and friend (the transition from *vous* to *tu* is still a work in progress though). What she probably does not know is the impact she had on me through this very first course. One day, she walked in and started class with these

strange symbols that looked like the letters of the alphabet. It was, I would find out, the International Phonetic Alphabet. That day started changed the trajectory of my life. I ended up doing an MA in French on Immersion accents (using the phonetic alphabet – with Gaëlle as my committee member again), which then led to this current PhD study. We have an edited book together, an organized conference, all things that have made me a better, more well-rounded student and scholar. If you ever read this, I hope you know I would not be where I am today, had it not been for you. *[mɛʁsi gaɛl].*

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offer is, to me, a beacon of hope. I hope we never forget that we are better and stronger when working together for the common good of the communities we live in.

I also wish to give a special thanks to my good friend Zoé Roussel, who, I am convinced, is now the most informed non-academic on the topics of Canadian French immersion (basically, she has read everything I have written on this topic – I am so sorry *mon amie*). I met Zoé while studying in France in 2010, and through all the long distance and time-zone differences, we have maintained our friendship. She has always been there for me, and has helped immensely with polishing my French writing, and keeping up my spoken French. *Merci mon amie. À propos, quand viens-tu me voir…?*

Finally, but in no way least, I wish to thank my family. To anyu, apu, Gábor, and to nagymama who is still here and to nagytata, who could not be: *szeretném, hogy tudjátok, hogy soha nem fogom elfelejteni, hogy mit tettetek értem. A világ lehet, hogy nem szép, lehet, hogy van szomorúság meg kegyetlenség, de, ha Veletek vagyok, bárhol is ezen a földön, élek egy kicsi paradicsomban. Köszönöm.*

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List of Acronyms

BC	British Columbia
CBC	Canadian Broadcast Corporation
CPF	Canadian Parents for French
FSL	French as a second language
SIT	Social Identity Theory
StatsCan	Statistics Canada
TWI	Two-Way-Immersion
VOT	Voice Onset Time

Chapter 1.

INTRODUCTION

In February 2020, I began circulating from school to school with one goal: to find out how French immersion students in the Lower Mainland region of my home province, British Columbia (BC), identify themselves as French language speakers. Because of my previous MA research on French immersion accent identification, I was particularly interested in what role accent may play in constructing that identity and in any feelings of belonging expressed by these students.

Such a question reflects the general shift in second-language identity research; more so, it expands the narrative of research on French immersion, which, though extremely popular and well-studied, has become somewhat stagnant over the last decade.

Essentially, since its inception, French immersion has dominated Canadian Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies. Early researchers were eager to explore this new landscape as it offered an answer to Canada's own so-called 'bicultural' and 'bilingual' identity. After all, French immersion was viewed as the solution to constructing the new bilingual heritage of the country, while serving more practically as a tool for bettering English-speaking students living in French speaking environments – levelling the playing-field for job-market competition with local, majority Francophones. This was especially the case in Quebec, where the suburb of St. Lambert served as the birthplace of the program (Fraser, 2011). Indeed, French immersion, like so many aspects of Canadiana[1], came from the eastern parts of the country and spread to all provinces, even to those with differing linguistic traditions from their eastern counterparts. This last fact should be remembered as, in this study, I explore French immersion in Canada's westernmost province.

[1] In the same vein as 'Americana', 'Canadiana' describes materials and aspects of history and culture that reflect the characteristics of Canada (as understood in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, 2023)

1.1. Immersion Research: New Takes on an Old Topic

Before I continue introducing my study, I feel I must first, introduce *myself*.

In truth I am a 'product' of BC's French immersion program. I am also an immigrant to Canada, having moved to the country with my parents from the former Yugoslavia in 1994. My parents, minority Hungarians from the Vojvodina region of modern-day Serbia, grew up multilingual. It is perhaps because of their experience with language education that I ended up in late French immersion. And of all aspects related to language acquisition – syntax, grammar, vocabulary, even culture – it was always *accent,* with all its phonetic and socio-cultural properties, that I valued most. Indeed, since birth, I was brought up with my family's belief in the conforming power of accent and the simultaneous normality of multilingualism (and even supremacy – in Hungarian, we say '*Ahany nelvet beszelsz, annyi embert ersz'* or, 'the more languages you speak, the more people you are worth').

The belief made me keenly aware of accents as markers of identity (Barratta, 2021) well before even my formative years. More importantly perhaps, I understood linguistic plurality as a must for both the maintenance of heritage (Hungarian and Serbian, for me), and the adoption of new cultures, like those linked to English and later French. For my parents who went to Hungarian school but could pass for Serbs due to their native-sounding accents, French immersion was the solution their bi- (*tri-*? *multi-*?) lingual child (me) needed – and I believed it. I thought/think that I was/am bilingual because of French immersion, and that my classmates and all other immersion students were/are as well. When I naturally continued to investigate the French language in university, I came in contact with traditional Francophones and professors, who had…*other* opinions.

Later, when I began my foray into academic research during my MA thesis, I was further confronted with both the plethora of 'correctness' and 'accuracy' studies, and the scarcity of research on the nature of identity construction, accent identification/identity markers – or really anything from the perspective of immersion students as speakers of French. Even in studies that claimed to focus on identity, French appeared to be an afterthought with, for example, heritage languages taking center stage (Dagenais et al., 2008). I found these gaps to be interesting, partly because they appear to challenge the

positionality of second-language speakers. From a more personal stance, however, I was intrigued because of what these gaps in our collective knowledge say of individuals like myself whose only experience with French, specifically social experiences, comes from our interactions with other immersion students. By choosing to sideline this group, we are also forgetting the very real and very Canadian French experiences in places like BC, where the language very much occupies a minority status amongst native speaking Francophones.

Much research remains to be done before we can understand who French immersion students *are* as speakers of French. Now more than ever, as over 6.8 million people in Canada speak neither English nor French as a first language (StatsCan, 2020; this is almost as many as the population of Francophones in the country), our observed tendency to put aside French immersion students also calls into question our willingness, as a country, to accept and value new immigrants learning Canada's official languages. This further parallels a greater conversation about other second-language speakers across the country and what role they may play in the evolution of Canada's cultural and linguistic identity (Cervatiuc, 2009; Duff, 2007, 2009).

And here is where I begin my true introduction. In this first chapter, I wish to provide the background for how my study came about. Interestingly, it did so not only through previous readings or from personal interest in the topic, but by an accident of timing.

I began my research in February 2020. One month later, as I sat in front of my computer, I found myself without data, without a direction, and without a mode through which I would conduct this study. This seeming purposelessness, fostered by the COVID-19 pandemic, created a flurry of doubt, but also reflection – and even more so, *self*-reflection. As I continue to sit and write now, I am forced to ask: why immersion?

Perhaps in reading the above paragraphs, the answer to this question should appear obvious. In fact, I basically answered it by comparing immersion speakers to other second-language speakers of English or French in Canada. However, as a French immersion graduate, immigrant, and heritage language speaker of Hungarian, I began questioning the real reason for *my* research.

Ostensibly, I can suggest that the chosen direction of my study expresses how I have also witnessed and participated in the shifting directions of identity brought about by acknowledging the plurality of Canadian Francophone and French speaking peoples (Boudreau, 2008; Dagenais & Berron, 2001; Moore, 2010). Simultaneously, these changes reflect the original trajectories and purposes of French immersion research and the many great minds responsible for the creation and maintenance of this program I hold so dear.

1.2. Immersion Identity, Accent and Belonging: Returning to the Past to Find the Gaps

In the 1960s, French immersion was developed and implementation by the renowned McGill University psychologist Wallace E. Lambert. Almost immediately, a slew of Canada's most notable psychologists, linguists, and pedagogic researchers[2] either individually or collaboratively took on the task of studying students' progress in immersion. In the early days of the French immersion program, some of these researchers heavily emphasized students' French acquisition and French fluency. Most often, immersion students were compared to those of the pre-existing French as a Second Language Program (FSL, known as 'Core French' in BC). Later, the scope of the research changed to focus on comparisons with native/ heritage French-Canadian speakers, called 'Francophones' in the Canadian context.

The overall direction of Canadian immersion research, with its emphasis on language accuracy and correctness, is rooted in monolingual approaches to language and language learning (Cook, 1997; Genesee, 2022; Kachru, 1994; Mady & Masson, 2018). While this was a common, and still arguably important, path for language research before the early 2000s, it is certainly not the only stream of inquiry. Starting in the mid-1990s, an alternative lens, and one that has become more popular in recent decades, partakes in reframed conversations on/with second-language speakers (Norton, 1995). Here, the multiplicities of identity, and of group belonging were intertwined with language learning and use, especially in the context of second-language

[2] These researchers include, in the early days of immersion research, Fred Genesee, Sharon Lapkin, Merrill Swain, Elaine Day, Stan Shapson, Roy Lyster, Hector Hammerly, Jim Cummins, then later Monique Bournot-Trites, Raymond Mougeon, Terry Nadasdi and Katherine Rehner, and in the last decade, Sylvie Roy (to name a few).

speakers (Block, 2009; Duff, 2013; Norton, 2006, 2012; Marx, 2002; Morgan & Clarke, 2011). In the case of French immersion, possible reasons for the slow changes in research trends may include preoccupations with preserving the French language in its 'pure' form (Planchenault, 2015). Or, because earlier studies had already suggested that French immersion students are speaking a sort-of pseudo-French (called an inter-language by Selinker et al., (1975) and 'immersionese' by Lyster, (1987)).

Altogether though, it does appear that in the Canadian linguistic landscape, many researchers had not originally situated immersion students within the discourse on identity and linguistic legitimacy. Of further interest, is that many of these previous studies were conducted in eastern Canada where, again, the linguistic landscape differs greatly from that of western Canada. Yet the ubiquity of these studies, as they relate to language accuracy, may, at times, appear to speak for immersion students from all over the country.

At the same time, conversation about the multitudes of Canada's often marginalized French varieties and subsequent identities (such as Acadjan, Chiac, Joual, or BC's Franco-Britannic, etc.) has become more prominent (see, for example, Boudreau, 2016). Yet in some western, more 'Anglophone'[3] ,Canadian provinces, second language speakers of French (often referred to as 'Francophiles') who owe their knowledge of the language to the immersion program, have rarely been given a voice with regard to their identities as French speakers (Roy, 2010). Even when the conversation is steered in that direction, it still attempts to fit these speakers into the existing boxes of French *learners* rather than speakers. Furthermore, because of the nature of the more objectivist studies performed on French immersion students, the discourse inadvertently, has not always taken into account the students' own desires to self-categorize – to name, and to claim their roles related to *their* French. In short, we have been doing much research *about* immersion students, but rarely *with* them.

And yet, to a certain extent, immersion students' experiences as speakers and users of French have always been present in research. Even in the very early days of

[3] 'Anglophone' should be understood in the Canadian Federal context of French/English bilingualism, not that these provinces are predominantly populated by monolingual English-speaking individuals. Indeed, in British Columbia in particular, English is just one of many languages spoken by the population.

French immersion, researchers began witnessing a more social side of the program. Specifically, it was observed that students would choose to stay in the program because they felt a sense of kinship with their immersion peers. Throughout my readings, I also came across studies conducted in Australian French immersion schools. Here, it was suggested that students spent much more time with other immersion peers as opposed to English program students, and that these students may even be using French as a marker of group differentiation. Specifically, de Courcy (2001, see also, de Courcy et al.,) found that her Australian French immersion student participants would often choose to speak French, knowing that English program students would not understand them. Furthermore, the participating French language students treated all students in the immersion program equally, regardless of language fluency.

Later, Sylvie Roy (2015a, 2020) in Alberta – from yet another western Canadian and primarily 'Anglophone' province – examined local immersion students and their experiences with belonging, and suggested a unique 'bilingual' emergent identity (Roy et Galiev, 2011). Out of all previous studies on immersion, it was these two researchers who, perhaps, most influenced me in formulating my current investigations.

For myself though, there was still a missing element. I, of course did find identity to be important in language research, however as I stated earlier, it was *accent,* and its relationship to identity, that I found most fascinating. In my readings, I found that even my two greatest influences (de Courcy and Roy) had not delved into this matter. In fact, accent as a whole, was rarely treated with regards to French immersion, as I would come to find during my Master's research on immersion accent identification (Poljak, 2015). The few that do exist, can most frequently be found in Alberta. Here, a string of studies focusing on the accents of immersion students found that in some cases, accents could vary slightly from class-to-class (Li & Netelenbos, 2020). Or, some of these studies found that accents in immersion could even 'crystallize' as early as kindergarten (Netelenbos 2013). These studies did not, however, link accent to the topics of identity or group belonging.

Anecdotally, when I explained my MA study to colleagues and professors in Simon Fraser University's French Department – where I previously worked and studied – I was met with personal (from peers) and observed (from lecturers/professors) testimonials wherein former immersion students were noted as having a similar

sounding accent. Some lecturers would tell me that hearing one sentence from students was enough to identify them as immersion students, with many of my professors actively referring to an 'immersion accent.' I began wondering then, if other immersion students had noted accent similarities, and what possible role accent might have in identity construction for these students, or students' general relationships to French.

In truth, the subjects of immersion identity, belonging, and accent have been dancing around me possibly since the beginning of my tenure in the immersion program. However, up until the beginning of my doctoral studies – some nine years after I graduated high school – I did not know how to connect them or if they even should be connected. And yet, the connection was laid bare not through any obscure study, not even through my personal connection to immersion, but through the gaps in our knowledge.

Once again, therefore, I return to the question I asked in section 1.1.: why immersion?

Today's globalized societies have impacted both heritage speakers and multilingual and second-language speakers, as evidenced by the multilingual turn – a topic that I will define and return to near the end of this thesis. However, unlike the complex and multilayered questions I will explore for this study, the answer to the above query is rather simple. Indeed, it is clear that such research is necessary because it is deeply personal to a great number of people.

This question therefore becomes a collective issue, and the 'why' is followed by the inevitable 'because': because like my classmates, my student participants, and the currently over 53,000 peers in BC's eponymous language program, I am – *we are* – immersion. More broadly though, we are (together with traditional BC Francophones and native speaking French/Francophone immigrants) *also* a part of the conversation surrounding French in the western Canadian context.

Of course, the immediate rebuttal to such an assertion would be to point out that, as a former BC immersion student myself, I clearly hold a bias. This is not lost on me: I admit it would be nigh impossible to completely separate myself from my participants, nor do I think it necessary. However, considering I know the results of this study as I write this introduction (since this is the last chapter I have written for this work), it can be

argued that I am just as biased by my experiences as I am by the experiences of my participants. By giving my participants a voice in this study, I am finding my own, and I am remembering the voices of my former classmates, my university peers, and fellow lecturers. We immersion students are just some of the many (official) second-language speakers both in BC and Canada-wide. By following in the footsteps of general SLA accent and identity research as well as earlier work by researchers like Roy and de Courcy, I hope to highlight the unique BC experiences of immersion youths. In doing so, I have turned my immersion research interests to 'what does it mean to *be* an immersion speaker in the students' specific regional contexts?' For if we are indeed a mosaic, not a melting pot, we must acknowledge all the tiles that make up Canada's linguistic image – not just the 'big picture.'

1.3. The Study Moving Forward: An Overview of Chapters and Authorial Voice

Before moving on to the more traditional parts of a dissertation (the literature, the methodology, results etc.), I want to begin by addressing the voice – or *voices* – in this study.

I want to first discuss the dual tone of this study. Though such a topic may appear highly unrelated to the themes expressed in this dissertation, due to the nature of my research and my involvement/personal stake in the results (as a former immersion student myself), it would be disingenuous to pretend that the writing style is not somehow a reflection of how I have conducted, analyzed, and presented this study. As an example, you may have noticed my tendency to move between formal, more rigorous language traditionally associated with academic writing and a more conversational style that you (the reader) are seeing here. The juxtaposition is intentional, as it is my chosen writing style, but it further signifies the more socio-constructivist approaches I take in my study. I insist throughout this work that my research is collaborative; the words of my participants guide me and ultimately transform this work with every new result. That collaboration also extends to any reader who, by the very nature of reading and discovery, is participating in meaning making through interactions with the text.

I also must admit I am better acquainted with speaking than I am with writing, and indeed in my best work I have often been told that my texts feel as though they

should be read out loud. This is because I am trying to speak with you, the reader. Though I am obviously not physically present, I still hope you may begin feeling like an active participant in the ensuing conversation. This approach makes the most sense to me, as I would argue that research is indivisible from the self. To quote from Heller et al., (2017) "…our lives are our most accessible source of examples to situate and discuss the issues address" (p.11). This is also why I chose to begin this chapter with an introduction of the 'self': I am already situated within my own study. I am as much writing the story of my doctoral research as I am reporting the words of my Core and immersion student participants. The necessary acknowledgement of you, the reader, is a tacit understanding of the transformative and constructed nature of research. By the time you read this, my work will have become something else, as it will be serving whatever purpose you will take from it.

For example, maybe you need literature for an upcoming assignment. Chapter 2 might be best suited for such a purpose, as this is where I explain the theoretical principals guiding my own research. These principals include an overview of immersion research, social identity theory, a definition of identity, and how it might be presented by student participants. The chapter may give you some ideas for your research, may offer knowledge of works you may not have heard of before, or even make you wonder about the works I may certainly have missed.

Perhaps instead you need my work for its methodology, in which case you might skip to Chapter 3. Here you may note the more rigid writing structure I use in explaining the step-by-step process of data collection and analysis, as well as the external factors affecting my research (namely the COVID-19 pandemic). In this case, my study may serve as a helpful set of suggestions for formulating your own study.

Or perhaps you simply need my results. For that, you might want to look at Chapter 4, which, through the use of a web survey, offers a general profile of BC immersion students from the Lower Mainland, Interior and Northern regions of BC. Chapter 4 also compares immersion students' responses to those of their Core French program peers (standing in for English program students) and is heavier on quantitative data as I present the responses of all 139 participating students. The responses also represent what students individually think about their use of French or their immersion-peer relationships. Chapter 5 offers a more qualitative approach that samples a smaller

group of immersion students. Here, participants were asked to discuss and record their interactions with peers on a set of questions relevant to this study. Their ensuing responses reflect immersion students' collective and group-oriented interpretation of identity, belonging, and accent.

On the other hand, perhaps you are more interested in a further discussion of participants' individual and shared responses and how they reflect and often subvert our original assumptions of BC immersion speakers of French. Chapter 6, which also concludes this thesis, is best suited for this purpose. Whatever your goal, my work goes beyond the mere purpose of storytelling, unless of course that is the exact reason you have opened up this text. However, even then, it is no longer me *writing* down my active research, but you *reading* processes and results of my work.

And this was my somewhat sneaky way of presenting the upcoming contents of this current study. With the introduction complete, I now lead you to explore both my words and those of the participating students*,* as together we open the door on 'Being immersion' in British Columbia, Canada.

Chapter 2.

LITERATURE: Identity, Group Belonging, Accent and the French Immersion Program

> "*L'immersion est une notion novatrice et révolutionnaire dans le domaine de la didactique. Dans son étude, il est essentiel de tenir compte des facteurs d'ordre socio-historique et socio-structural, c'est-à-dire les rapports de force entre les groupes majoritaire et minoritaire. Il faut aussi tenir compte des contextes socio-culturel et socio-psychologique, c'est-à-dire le statu des langues en contact et le micro-milieu de l'enfant anglophone.* "[4] (Ouellet, 1990, p. 15)

From the above, and indeed much *older*, understanding of French immersion, Ouellet (1990) highlights the socially integrated nature of the Canadian French immersion program. This is perhaps unsurprising, as the very creation of French immersion arose from the socially and linguistically vibrant (some may even say turbulent) times of Canada's 1950 and 60s. This period was characterized by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, which began the discussion on Canada's French/English linguistic nature. This was especially true in Quebec, in the era of the Quiet Revolution where language was becoming a major point of interest for the province's population. Coupled with more overt demonstrations of language discrimination towards French speakers, who, at the time, between 1951 and 1961 made about between 28%-29% of the country's population (Hayday, 2013) it would make sense that the motivations of French immersion would be socially and linguistically driven.

And yet, as I came to understand, in my readings on Canada's French immersion program, the original intent of social integration, understanding and nation-wide community building via language learning has, in our modern era, been largely overshadowed by the language learning process itself.

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[4] Translation: [Immersion is an innovative and revolutionary notion within didactics. In studying in immersion, it is essential to take into account socio-historic and socio structural factors, that is to say, the relationships between majority and minority groups. The socio-cultural and socio-psychological contexts must also be taken into account, that is to say, the status of the contact languages of the micro-environment of the anglophone child.] (translation is my own)

In the 1960s, one of the purposes of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, was to officially grant existing French and English linguistic minorities across the Canadian landscape the right to be educated in their first language (Hayday, 2013). As such, the notion of language as a human right and as a direct link to cultural and social identity was beginning to form. The mid-20th century political discourse (McLaughlin, 2012; Castonguay, 1997), resulted in a need to more strongly educate the English speaking youths in Quebec in French to be able to properly compete with Francophone peers for jobs and economic security. This was especially the case as the province focused more heavily on establishing a monolingual province to, in politicians and citizen's eyes, protect the French language from English influences (Fraser, 2011, Parkin & Turcotte, 2004). In the suburbs of St. Lambert, Quebec, some of the Anglophone parents began seeking a better, more robust language learning process or program for their children. At the same time, views on bilingualism were rapidly shifting. The changes, brought about by the research of renowned linguists, such as Labov (1966, 1978), Gumperz (1982), and, especially for 'us', the Canadian psychologist Wallace Lambert (1963; also Lambert et al., 1960; Lambert et al., 1966), as well as the more practically (and indeed economically-minded) parents of the St. Lambert suburbs altogether created the perfect environment for the establishment and subsequent popularity of *French Immersion*.

Thus, was born the program in question.

Before we continue, however, I will clarify that this is not a study on the history of French immersion in Canada, nor in British Columbia (BC) specifically, as evidenced from the previous introduction chapter. Instead, I am interested in the identity construction and group belonging of BC immersion students as it relates to their accents in French. And yet, knowing where the program came from was integral to understanding how we got to where we are today and the types of research conducted on French immersion, and in particular, the immersion program students. Therefore, while it was important for me to situate the origins of French immersion, to further understand how my research interests formed, we must however jump, not to the creation and implementation of the Canadian French immersion program, but instead to the types of studies that influenced and guided my research.

As it happens, the plethora of research surrounding Canada's arguably most famous language program is, in and of itself, a worthy topic of inquiry. However, for us here, the specific gaps related to the same contexts, and indeed socio-cultural contexts mentioned in Ouellet's (1990) above citation were/are some of the major driving forces behind this current study – as are the Second Language Acquisition (SLA)-informed uses of identity/language identity and group formation and belonging. In this next chapter, we therefore, move to the opening of French immersion research.

2.1. Part I: French Immersion Research – What We Know, What is Missing

2.1.1. Early Purposes of French Immersion Research

Moving first to the 1980s, when a subset of researchers was turning away from earlier immersion research topics (Stern, 1978; Swain & Lapkin, 1981) (meaning that there was enough research to move away *from*). In this decade, we begin observing larger concentrations of meta-analyses on the program being collected. These evaluations of the researchers and research interests reflect the changes, and indeed, the scrutinizing of the original research goals of the late 1960s and 70s (Tardif & Weber, 1987).

To be specific, let us begin with an example in Tardif and Weber's 1987 article, in which they found that the contemporary French immersion research in the 70s and early 80s compared the progress of immersion students to their English program peers. The purpose of such studies was often to ensure that both programs provided students with equal levels of education in all subjects – with immersion students simply having more focus on French than English program peers. The emphasis of language equality reflected the contemporary beliefs on bilingualism as being two separate but equal monolingualisms (Grojean, 1989, 1992). Tardif and Weber (1987) argued that future research should shift towards an overview of second language acquisition by immersion students – this being the new stream. These first studies described the average immersion student as 'anglophone' or as English speakers (Harley, 1991; Fraser, 2011), giving us the understanding of who the Canadian French immersion program was designed for, and by extension, *not* meant for (ex: Francophones, and possibly even

Allophones, meaning anyone who did not speak English or French as an L1 in the Canadian context (see, for example, Mady & Turnbull, 2012)).

Another goal mentioned by Harley (1991) was to have these students "develop positive attitudes and cultural sensitivity towards French-speaking Canadians" (p.10), alluding to the historically negative views on Francophones and French speakers by Anglophones, as also demonstrated with the Matched-Guise studies by Lambert (1983). The importance placed on proving the seeming 'harmlessness' of bilingual education can of course be understood in context as the overall population of the time often feared multilingualism, and specifically, the affect it may have on children's mastery of English (Beardsmore, 2003), even when the fears of bilingualism were, according to the findings of Grosjean (1982), to be a 'figment of the [unilingual speakers'] imagination (p. 273). We are of course, looking at the debates of the so-called subtractive versus additive forms of bilingualism. Lambert, who referred to his creation as a form of the more positive 'additive bilingualism', explained the difference between the two as being (for additive bilingualism) the process where language is "unlikely to replace or displace the first language" (found in Baker, 1993, p. 57; Plüddemann, 1997) and without the worry of "ethnic/linguistics erosion, can add one or more foreign languages to their accumulation skills, and profit immensely from the experience, cognitively, socially and even economically" (Lambert, 1983, page 99-100; also in Plüddemann. 1997, p. 17).

Subtractive bilingualism on the other hand, usually referred to what happens with minority or immigrant youths entering majority language environments, such as schools. In these institutions, the minority and majority languages would compete for dominance, which would result in the displacement of one of the learned languages (usually the one(s) taught in their families, or from their home countries) in favour of the dominant language (often English in the case of North America) (Lambert, 1983, Liddicoat, 1991; Plüddemann, 1997). For Lambert and the many researchers after him in the 1960s and 1970s, the goal became to observe and even prove that the French taught through French immersion would not interfere with the native English language spoken by students (remembering again, that the program was geared towards Anglophone youths) – hence the propensity to focus on the comparative nature of immersion program and English program peers. Bilingualism and its cognitive benefits, also grew out of these studies, particularly in the works of Genesee (1979, 1985) and Cummins, (1983, 1977) (Swain et al., 1981; Shapson & Day, 1982, Heller, 1990) – all resulting in a

highly positive view of French immersion in its early days, both for researchers and the general public, which was, in and of itself a change from the original, more negative views of bi- and multilingualism held by both Canadians and abroad (Cummins, 1989; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1989; Jaworska & Themistocleous, 2018).

2.1.2. A New Research Leaf: A Focus on Language and Accuracy

In sum, the interests with regards to French immersion research, in the early days of the program, leaned towards proving the neutrality or even superiority of bilingual education.

Juxtaposed to these types of studies were the ones in the existing Second Language Acquisition (SLA) field in linguistics and education that focused much more heavily on language learning and acquisition, especially in the classroom setting. The purpose of these studies was often to contrast 'learning' with more 'natural' language acquisition (as in works by Krashen 1979; Krashen et al., 1978; DeKeyser, 1990). SLA research also emphasized grammatical instruction in the classroom from an early age (VanPatten, 1986), or even the importance of motivation for language proficiency (see, for example, Lukmani, 1972 and the entire body of work by Dörnyei (example, in 1990)). This was in contrast with immersion research interests in which the creation of a 'natural' environment within the classroom was thought to be the better way to create bilingual speakers (Lapkin, 1983), as opposed to the language drills of the past (DeKeyser, 1990). This is no doubt because of Lambert's influence, as well as the climate surrounding the newer aspects of acquisition research, related to, in the eyes of Chomsky (1970a 1970b, 1982), the creativity and innovation of language that are otherwise absent in stimulus-driven language classrooms (Newmeyer, 1987). And yet, it is interesting that French language acquisition per se, though it was *considered* in these early studies, was not the driving force for research on the immersion program.

It is perhaps not surprising then that the central argument for Tardif and Weber (1987), and later Lapkin et al. (1990) is that language acquisition and even teacher education and standardization for the purposes of French achievement should be the new/next step in our research interests on French immersion. Given the almost immediate interest by researchers such as Hammerly (1989a, 1989b) and Lyster (1987) in looking into immersion students' grasp of French, whether that was in comparison to

Core French peers (Tatto, 1983), or to Francophone peers (ex: Mougeon et al., 2004), it was clear that this new research trajectory was ripe for the taking. From this point on, the accuracy of French was the order of the day. Researchers such as Lyster (1990) pointed to the high levels of French comprehension (also see Genesee, 1984b). However, and perhaps more importantly for the trajectory of this current study, the emphasis on language evaluation, specifically students' 'mastery' of French, shifted the conversation away from the more socio-culturally driven origins of the program – where French was a connection between Anglophone students and Francophone students to understand each other linguistically and culturally – to the data-driven accuracy-focused stream of SLA research, even as this field, itself, began to evolve.

Immediately, the consensus on students' language was clear: we have very confident speakers who understand the language well (Genesee et al., 1977; Barik & Swain, 1978; Swain, 1978; Lapkin et al., 1990). However, these positive assertions were flanked by the apparent finding that the French immersion program (seemingly throughout Canada – its nationalization is something we will return to) was/is supposedly unable to produce "real bilingual" speakers. Starting from the late 80s/early 1990s, with study after study, it was found that the language spoken by French immersion students, which has since been dubbed a "pseudo-French", otherwise known as "Immersionese" or "Français de l'immersion" (Bournot-Trites, 2015; Peguret, 2009; Hammerley, 1989a; Lyster, 1987) did not represent the reality of the French spoken by native-speaking Francophones. Hammerly (1989c), one of the immersion program's most vocal critics in the 1990s and who wrote a book mostly denouncing the previously understood 'successes' of the program, often claimed that FSL (known as Core French in British Columbia) students' grammar was no less accurate (sometimes even more accurate) than that of immersion students. Lyster (1987, 1998, 2007) who coined the phrase 'immersionese' further suggested that the apparent lack of overt grammatical input in the classroom chosen in favour of the more organic 'acquisition' of language (essentially the original purpose of the program) was the reason why these second language students were behind Francophone peers.

Furthermore, when later studies shifted focus again from grammar, which some researchers found to be, at times, *overly* correct and formal in immersion students (Rehner & Mougeon, 1999; Mougeon & Rehner, 2001; Nadasdi, 2005 as seen in Roy, 2008), to an analysis of language features, such as slang, it was then found that the

French spoken by immersion students was devoid of sociolinguistic or cultural markers (Mougeon & Rehner., 2001; Uritescu et al., 2004; Mougeon et al., 2010). At the same time, studies also concluded that immersion students were/are lacking a "mastery" of an oft-lauded "standard" variety in terms of morphology and lexis (see, for example, Nadasdi & McKinnie, 2003; Collins, 2002; Tatto, 1983; Roy, 2008).

As a whole, the very fact that most research has tended to focus on the "quality" of French among immersion students, is indicative of a deficit model in the language learning research on immersion.

2.1.3. So, What Are We Missing: Bringing Back the Socio-Cultural Lens Into French Immersion

In my readings on the history of French immersion, with the cultural background associated with the program and then the subsequent deviation of research trends associated with it, I have found that our focus on immersion as a 'program', rather than, for example, the participants and their experiences within this particular language learning environment, has resulted in a split from its more socially-driven origins. Indeed the more social aspects of the program, related to group belonging, cohesiveness and identity have also been neglected among some researchers. When some studies did turn their attentions to the question of identity amongst immersion students, the focus would be on the effects French might have on pre-existing identities (Dagenais et al., 2008; Dagenais, 2003), or whether French immersion students consider themselves as Francophones (Marshall & Laghzaoui, 2012).

Earlier in this chapter, Ouellet (1990) highlighted the importance of 'context', specifically socio-cultural contexts when coming to understand the students that navigate learning and using French through the immersion program. And yet, the reality of the research trajectory as it pertains to French immersion, and indeed French immersion *students,* is one that leans towards the reductive, the nationally generalized and, very specifically the homogenization of both the student experience and the students themselves. The articles and studies that have inspired this current body of work were fundamental for the establishment of the program in its early days, as well as our understanding of bilingualism and bilingual education as it exists through the immersion program. The cited successes related to language education and early

childhood development, together with the valid criticisms of structure and language outcomes brought on by the curriculum of this seemingly nationalized immersion program (at least as it appears to be understood in the many articles cited above) have, however, strayed from the much-needed contextualization of French immersion students within their regions.

The many studies cited above often occurred in Eastern Canada where Francophone populations, and French linguistic communities are much larger and numerous. However, even when Western Canadian provinces were observed, such as Alberta, in the case of studies conducted by Hammerly (1989a, 1989b), the ensuing research questions did not properly interrogate the specific contexts, motivations, or regionally-linked purposes of learning/using French for students living in areas where exposure to Francophone populations are much lower. It is also important to note that in these western provinces, the existing Francophone communities are spread across the province (Fourot, 2018). Even in the more contemporary (to the year 2022) studies in places like British Columbia and Alberta (particularly their urban centers like the Greater Vancouver Area), when students are queried about their personal experiences within the immersion program, it is through the lens of 'les deux solitudes' (Anglophones and Francophones). Here, immersion students are nearly always the de facto Anglophones, and contact with Francophone communities is not guaranteed.

Such a linguistic, and indeed, social dichotomy stems, no doubt, from the origins of French immersion in the context of the 1960/70 Canadian national discourse. However, that historic dual-nature of Canada has long-since been overshadowed by the modern realities of multiculturalism. In his article 'Canada: From Bilingualism to Multiculturalism', Forbes (1993) outlines the path taken from the more dominant three-party national conflicts of Anglophones, Francophones and Indigenous populations – more so focusing on Anglo/Franco relations in the customary erasure of Indigenous issues and diversity, more common up until the latter part of the 2010s – to the more modern (1990s) era of multilingualism brought on by mass migrations from Asia, Africa and Eastern and Southern Europe, particularly after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The early 1990s have Forbes (1993) describing the overall population as being "British 37 percent, French 27 percent, Other Europeans 25 percent, Asian and Africans 8 percent and Native Peoples 3 percent" (p. 76), with a further remark of how the combined 'Other European' population as being nearly equal to the French group. The linguistic

population changes, and the subsequent move away from the bilingual discourse, were topics of conversation even before the new millennium. And yet French immersion research, it appears, has stagnated with researchers still working to convince local populations of the fittingness of the French immersion program for immigrant and multilingual speakers (not just Anglophones). In the 2015 and 2017 articles written by Mady (2015a, 2017), we are given evidence of students from immigrant backgrounds, enrolled in French immersion, doing just as well, or even outperforming their Anglophone immersion peers. In Davis et al., (2019) we see further discussions on immigrant students attending the immersion program in Saskatchewan. Yet the suitability of French immersion for Allophone populations was already discussed even before the 2010s (Genesee, 2007; Mady, 2017), giving the impression that the linguistic and ethnic diversity enjoyed in Canada is not reflected in the French immersion program.

On the other hand, to say that there are no researchers who have had an interest in French immersion students' identities or social experiences with the program would be false. Outside of Canada, in Australia, de Courcy's (2001) work demonstrated that French immersion students, when compared to Chinese-immersion students, were more likely to consider themselves a separate group from English program peers. These surveyed students were also found to use French without modification – as opposed to the Chinese immersion students who would choose to mix English/English-like expressions, and to even separate L1 Chinese speakers from L2 Chinese speakers in the same class, from each other. The results of de Courcy's studies were so interesting and influential for myself that, even in my previous MA research that focused primarily on immersion accent identification (not identity or group belonging), I made a point to ask my participants how frequently they spent time with immersion peers while in elementary and high school. Here too, my participants overwhelmingly attested to spending more time (sometimes nearly, or all of their time) with other immersion peers over English program peers (Poljak, 2015). Then, in Germany, in a different type of immersion program (called two-way immersion), in which the goal was to learn two languages at the same time (ex: the national language, as well as the language of a given dominant minority living close to the school), students appeared to form a more cohesive group, and had better problem-solving methods than students not participating in two-way immersion programs (Meier, 2014). And yet, even with its enormous popularity and research potential, in Canada, such studies are largely absent.

In Alberta, the work of Sylvie Roy heavily emphasises the 'bilingual' otherness of immersion students (2010). Her participants often suggest that, for immersion students, the act of speaking French makes them feel separate from both Francophone peers who learned the language in their homes with family, and English program peers, with whom they can no longer relate because of their (immersion students') knowledge of French (Roy et Galiev, 2011). However, such a focus is still rare, and even when some studies did turn their attentions to the question of identity amongst immersion students (Dagenais et al., 1998, 2008; Moore, 2010, Carr, 2013) the focus was often L1 language-identity oriented. As we saw earlier, the closest we have come to questions on cultural contexts was with researchers who compare the sociolinguistic capabilities of immersion students with Francophones. Closer to home, in British Columbia, we have researchers who focus on the effects French might have on pre-existing identities, especially with regards to allophone children (Dagenais et al., 2008; Dagenais, 2003), or on whether French immersion students considered themselves as Francophones (Marshall & Laghzaoui, 2012). As an example, in this latter study, former immersion students would often claim or reject Francophone status based on their proficiency in French (a point we will return to throughout this dissertation). The emphasis on accuracy by students as a marker of Francophone status is not unlike the focus on correctness in immersion students by researchers as a point of comparison to the same native-speaking group. This marks, perhaps a deference for the native-speaker-as-legitimate-speaker ideology (particularly in Canada), especially when that speaker's language happens to represent the standard variety, which we will discuss in the final part of this chapter.

Still, very few (if any) of these works interrogate immersion students' relationships to French, and by extension, each other, or how they may identify themselves, individually, or as a group, in the particular contexts they live in. This is certainly true in British Columbia, were no such research has been done to date. Furthermore, by not probing the identities of immersion students as speakers of French, we can take for granted that there, in fact, is no identity, separate or otherwise, to be found. Returning to Roy's work, even here, there does not appear to be room for students to consider themselves as Francophones or to even aspire to be such a group, nor is there an interest in the possible uniqueness of immersion students or the immersion experience, except perhaps in the in-between realm of bilingual identity (Roy

& Galiev, 2011). This is interesting since such questions on group cohesion within the immersion context have long been detected – outside of Canada.

It appears that there is a gap in our knowledge on immersion identity as it pertains to French and a gap in our understanding of immersion group belonging and formation, once again, as it relates to their new language. However, there is one more point we are missing: accent. Now, this may appear as though we are veering in a new direction, especially since we have made no real mention of accent, pronunciation or any such features of phonetics. And yet this may very well be my point: accent, as we will see in the next part of this chapter, is in fact a salient marker of identity (Baratta, 2018; Cohen, 2012; Dong & Blommaert, 2009; Levis, 2016; Planchenault & Poljak, 2021). It is much more often studied in relationship to dialects, to regional varieties, or, as is often the case in second language acquisition research when phonetics is involved, to the perceived auditory distinctions between so-called native speakers and second language speakers that may 'give away' the origins or identity of an individual. With regards to French immersion, even when language accuracy *was* the order of the day (or *is* - I don't think we have moved past this phase entirely), Genesee (1978a, 1978b) commented that the lack of pronunciation research in French immersion students (in comparison to Francophones) is due to the fact that pronunciation is not often something that is overtly taught or tested in classes (unlike reading and writing skills). The few subsequent studies taken on by Genesee (1979), and later by Lambert et al. (1993) were on how native-like immersion students sounded when compared to Francophone peers. Notably, these studies, conducted mostly in Eastern Canada, remained rare and were often not further expanded upon. More importantly, it is not explained to what 'native' pronunciation immersion students are being compared with. In more recent years, researchers in Alberta have observed unique pronunciation features in elementary immersion students, appearing as early as in kindergarten (Netelenbos, 2013b; Li et al., 2020; Netelenbos et al., 2016; Turner et al., 2015).

The underlying factors in these studies are that a) the native accent is the standard to achieve and; b) that the social and regional context of the immersion students themselves are not being considered. For my study this lack of context is significant. For example, BC immersion students are much further removed from Eastern Canadian Francophone populations, or indeed large Francophone populations altogether. Furthermore, the immersion students in places like the Western Canadian

provinces, may not have the same linguistic motivations as those students living in areas with larger Francophone populations. These are all important considerations when making observations on identity construction and group belonging, especially when the connecting force is language, and specifically, one of its most noticeable features: accent.

Therefore, through such research directions, we can begin to understand that the dominant narrative surrounding French immersion is one in which the students are a homogenous group of Anglophone-dominant, not-real 'French' speaking individuals, with little to no relationship to French from an identity perspective – except perhaps as separate 'bilinguals', belonging neither to Francophones nor to other Anglophone peers.

At the same time, the program, and by extension, the number of students enrolled in French immersion, is ever growing, with 2019 statistics stating that there are 477681 students enrolled in the program (up by 3% from the previous year) (StatsCan, 2018). British Columbia's *Canadian Parents for French* (CPF), an organization known for its advocacy of immersion programs across Canada, further reported, in 2021-2022, that there was a total of 53000 students enrolled in immersion, accounting for nearly 10% of the student population – the highest in the program's nearly 40-year history of the province (CPF, 2022). This is despite the fact that the traditionally understood Francophone population in the province is one of the lowest in the country, at around 1.1% (Auclair et al., 2023; StatsCan, 2020). Should we then come to the conclusion that we are dealing with language learning that is void of any attachment to itself (French, in this case)?

This assessment, is, in my view, an unrealistic interpretation of French immersion students throughout Canada. More than that though, it is an unrealistic interpretation of researchers' views and findings on these students. Indeed, I think that any researcher who has worked with French immersion students has never come to such a conclusion. Instead, we are greeted with a representation of what is lacking in the research: the socio-cultural context and the student-as-French-speaker perspective. In the province of British Columbia, where this current study is situated, this lack of context and research, coupled with my own experiences as an immigrant allophone child in the immersion program, have resulted in an interest in narrowing our more nationalized understanding of immersion students. Specifically, the points missing, that I hope to begin discussing

here, are related to identity and group construction among French immersion students as it pertains to language as expressed through its most salient marker: accent.

2.2. Part II: Social Identity, Language and Accent: A New Approach to Immersion Research

So far we have seen how immersion research has evolved from the need to provide evidence of the programs' effectiveness in the face of the existing English program stream, and how the shift towards researching correctness and language accuracy supplanted the original socio-cultural purpose of the program The major gaps in our knowledge of French immersion students related to their relationships to French, both when faced with peers in the classroom, and speakers in their communities, as well as a return to the more regional context driven approach taken in this study have led us to a need to explore the broader concept of identity as it relates to language and accent. To do this, we must first explore how identity, and indeed *language* identity is understood within the contexts of this study. In this second subsection, we begin, then, with identity. Specifically, as immersion students are often studied collectively, this study focuses on social identity theory to understand how group/social identities are formed and framed. Following this, I focus on accent and its role as a marker of group identity.

2.2.1. An Interpretation of Identity

It would not be difficult to believe that 'identity' has, over the years, gone through different definitions – different *identities,* if you will – that are also inherently tied to the person/persons giving such definitions. For example, in his 1975 paper on identity, Reid, after first refusing to outright explain his understanding of 'identity', finally decided that, for him, a 'personal' identity "implies the continued existence of that indivisible thing which I call *myself*" (p. 108, italics is original), which, as Reid (1975) continued, would also mean that this 'self' is "permanent, and has the same relation to all the succeeding thoughts, actions and feelings which I call mine" (p.108). Later, to Taylor (1989) who understood the concept of identity in much the same way, as a definition of the 'self', or to Gao et al., (2002) who, again described it as "who one is" (p. 95) (also see Huang & Benson, 2013), the explanation given by Reid (1975), years earlier, would not be far from their own understandings of the term.

As I began researching identity in the early days of this study, it was interesting that my first encounter with any definition of this term (specifically, the one seen above by Reid), was so highly personal, individualist, and, indeed unchanging. This is perhaps due to early researchers in the field of psychology viewing the apparent 'self' as an unchanging monolith (Fisher et al., 2020). Yet by the time *I* had started my readings, given the changes in society and social attitudes, such interpretations appeared outdated if not outright inaccurate. However, they did make the hesitancy towards bi- and multilingualism as seen in the early days of immersion research commented on in the beginning of this chapter, more understandable. That being said, in my continued readings, it became clear that the field of identity research has long since embraced the plurality of the 'self'. Indeed, Hunag and Benson, in quoting Norton (2000), found that more modern interpretations of identity are neither so ridged, nor are they uninfluenced by the environment: "[identity is] how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (Norton, 2000, p. 5 in Hunag & Benson, 2013). We can see, then, a progression from the unchanging to the more fluid, where an individual is both acting and acted upon by the society, time period and social contexts they live in. It is clear according to this understanding that identity is both constructed and emerging, rather than existing in a vacuum. Interestingly, even earlier researchers like Erikson (1968) would concur with the interplay between the individual and the environment, thus emphasizing the multidimensionality to the construction of the self. At the same time, Erikson, as described in Leary and Tangney (2003), distinguished between 'identity' and 'self' wherein, the 'self' was related to a more fixed 'psychological entity' (Fisher et al., 2020 p. 450) while 'identity' is constructed by this fixed 'self'. It is here that change and variety comes into play, as that constructed identity is subject to the changes around the 'self' and are influenced by the environment, including the people, the time period, the specific historical or socio-cultural events etc. (Oyserman & James, 2011) that surround the 'self'.

The importance of context is why understanding identity is so crucial, as it played so heavy a role in the original creation of the French immersion program as a tool for bringing together cultural divides. Even more importantly though, the fluidity of identity is, perhaps, even more visible when the messiness of language, and indeed multiple languages, come into play. As an addition to identity, language identity can be

understood as how the 'self' or how external individuals around the 'self' (or *a* self) identify a given person in each of the languages they speak (Fisher et al., 2020). Such an understanding of language identity presents both the multiplicity of identity, as well as the influence of external figures on one's own identities within all of the languages an individual speaks. Especially due to the ever-changing nature of language identity that, as explained by Fisher et al. (2020), implies that language identity/ies are/is tied to language performance, we can more easily come to understand both language identity and the identities subscribed to any given language, as being a construct (Joseph, 2004) of both the individual, as well as those surrounding the individual. Ultimately, the further I went with understanding identity, and in particular language identity, the more I became aware of just how important external factures were to identity formation, and indeed, how *social* identity construction truly is.

2.2.2. The *Social* in Social Identity Theory and Its Relationship to French Immersion

Now we are coming to what, for me, and for the purposes of my study, are the most directly related topics for immersion research in the field of belonging and language identity. This portion is so significant that it even made an appearance during my Master's study on accent identification (Poljak, 2015). Although I am now on a different path, I feel that I cannot proceed without reiterating the points on language and group identity I made in 2015. This next section explores these topics, and places them center-stage for this study.

In the introduction to their book, *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, Vignoles, Schwartz and Luyckx (2011) similarly explain identity through a question: "Who are you?". Though admittedly simplistic at first (Vignoles et al., 2011), it allows the queried to delve into an introspective analysis of the self, who you are in relation to others around you, who do you act like and how others see you (see for example Reicher, 2000; Butler, 1990 cited in Vignoles et al., 2011). However, it equally takes into account that the "you" in question may be a plural notion, as in a collectivised identity. This latter concept of "group identity" is of particular interest to French immersion and shall serve as a partial definition of the kind of identity used in this study.

One way to analyze group identity is through the lens of social identity theory (SIT). Most closely associated with Tajfel, social identity theory was first introduced in the 1970s, though Tajfel laid the groundwork of this theory much earlier in his career. It is perhaps the first theory to consider that group identities can be separate from individual identities (Spears, 2011). However, it would be disingenuous to suggest that SIT was the link between languages and groups. Even before Tajfel's (1981a, 1981b) work, early social psychology had already spoken of a possible connection between language and ethnic, social and even economic groups. As an example, we can clearly see the mentioned links in the works of Labov (1978). Here, linguistic differences are tide to identity and are considered as a part of multiple 'norms' rather than favoring only one single norm. Group belonging is also considered fluid, in which individuals have the agency to feel connected to, or lose connection to one or more group(s), which, though not cited as SIT, can be used to understand assimilation within language communities (see example by Pavlenko, 2002, in this subsection).

Labov's (1978) early theories such as those in *Le parler ordinaire,* placed group communication at the forefront of identity research in which language was tied to the social structure of that, or any given group. In my earlier research on accent identification (Poljak, 2015), I noted the connection between Labov and Tajfel given the latter's definition of social identity as being "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1978a, p.68). It is this definition of group identity that I am using in this current study.

Tajfel's work is significant because at a time when identity was mostly seen as singular, fixed and unchanging, and certainly not influenced by external forced, SIT notes at least the duality of a possible individual identity and one that is derived from the people said individual most closely associate with. To give a broader definition of social identity theory, as summarized by Hogg (1996), we can come to understand this theory as the formation of an identity in which:

> "[…] a self-inclusive social category (e.g. nationality, political affiliation, sports team) provides a category-congruent self-definition that constitutes an element of the self-concept. People have a repertoire of such discrete category memberships that vary in relative overall importance in the self-concept. The category is represented in the individual members mind as a social identity that both describes and prescribes one's attitudes as a group member. When a

> specific social identity is the salient basis for self-regulation, self-perception and conduct become ingroup stereotypical and normative, perceptions of relevant outgroup members become outgroup stereotypical, and intergroup behavior requires, to varying degrees depending on the history of relations between the groups, competitive and discriminatory properties. Social identities are not only descriptive and prescriptive, but also evaluative. They furnish a relatively consensual evaluation of a social category, and thus its members, relative to other relevant social categories. Because social identity's have important self-evaluative consequences groups and their members are motivated to adopt strategies for achieving or maintaining intergroup comparisons that favor the ingroup, and thus the self." (Hogg, 1996, p. 66-67).

Hogg's interpretation of Tajfel's most famous contribution of social psychology highlights the multifacetedness of identity. Here, a person can feel a sense of belonging to – and thus identify with – a number of groups, thus making identity itself a plural notion. Tajfel, himself, linked membership to a group with the emotions and values associated with being a member of that group (Tajfel, 1978; also see Tajfel, 1974 and 1981). However, crucial to one's own affiliation with a particular group is the ability to identify who *isn't* a member, called 'out-group', (see Tajfel and Turner, 1979). As is so often the case, Tajfel developed his theory through his academic studies and past personal experiences as a Jewish person hiding his identity in Nazi-occupied France. Looking to (much more) peaceful examples of belonging, and indeed group creation, Tajfel (1981b) had participants dress in red and blue coloured shirts, and grouped these otherwise unrelated individuals accordingly. Tajfel demonstrated that wearing these similar coloured shirts allowed participants to find other commonalities that would make them distinct from those not wearing this colour. More importantly, participants were found to make generalizations about the other group that would place their own group in a more favourable light – all without knowing anything about these other people. The behaviours exhibited by participants suggest that the act of belonging to a group was also the act of understanding who did not belong to the group, and seeing positive connotations to one's own perceived group (Spears, 2011). This led him to postulate that we, as individuals, gain a sense of self-worth from being members of a "favourable" group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Even though Tajfel himself did not specifically deal with language and linguistics, it is not difficult to relate language, and indeed the often most salient feature of that language – the accent – to another adoptable aspect to any given individual who wishes to express their belonging to a group stereotypically associated with that given language. Related to what we understand about language identity and performance, when being/wanting to be part of a group one views as favourable, it is

possible to imagine taking on an accent in order to further emphasize one's position within said group. Here, it appears that the act of belonging is also the act of collective identity (Day, 2011; Jetten et al., 2017), making the analysis of belonging in the immersion classroom integral to the process of group identity – hence its relevance to this current study.

As noted above, the previous example also demonstrates the malleability and progression of identity. The direct ties to language were added in Giles and Johnson's (1981, 1987a, 1987b) ethnolinguistic identity theory where group identity was facilitated and even marked by a given language. Giles and Johnson (1987b), in working with Welsh-English bilinguals, where they wanted to see which participants would maintain the use of Welsh when faced with monolingual English speakers, adapted social identity theory through the addition of language. They understood language's role as a point of comparison with outgroups or ingroups. A positive association with a given group would then result in the individual "switching to ingroup language, accentuating ethnic dialect and slang" (p. 71). Borrowing from Tajfel again, Giles and Johnson (1987b) suggested that an unwillingness to change language or language features (such as accent) to that of the perceived outgroup was a result of strong ingroup identification as well as positive association with their own group.

However, the connection between language and identity is perhaps best explored in Norton's (1995) seminal work on identity, investment and imagined communities related to language learning. Once again, for Norton (2013), identity is "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p.45). Such a definition inherently assumes the possibility of change and highlights the importance of historical and social contexts (Darvin and Norton, 2015), in which the act of investing one's new language "regards the learning as a social being with a complex identity that changes across time and space and is reproduced in social interaction" (p.37). Even though this definition relates to the individual, there is no reason why it could not apply to the group (in this case, immersion student peers), given contexts and social situations are themselves ever-changing and can be shared. In the previous example of Tajfel's experiment (1981a), the context and situation were created by the parameters of the study itself, with participants only relating to each other because they joined the study and were provided matching red or blue shirts that they

did not already own. Why this matters in the case of French immersion research as a whole, is because by not looking at immersion students and their relationship to French, we, as a research community, are asserting that these students have no such investment, and subsequently, no such identity, thus excluding them from the discourse on L2 identity construction.

Indeed, in the 10-year anniversary article of Norton's (1995) publication, Darvin and Norton (2015) proceeded to list the many ways investment has been used in research since its inception in 1995. It was very interesting that they made no mention of French immersion research despite the fact that since 1995, both the public's and other researcher's interest in the immersion program has only grown. To further bring home the gaps in our knowledge of French immersion, we can see that even French immersion research would benefit greatly from this perspective, given how immersion students are both learners, and potentially holders of French-related identities. At the moment the two streams of research continue to run parallel with each other, and though this study does not specifically make use of investment as its key component, I must acknowledge its importance, and indeed its potential in further developing the notions of identity and belonging. Indeed, investment, as expressed by immersion students, can be important both from a research stand point, and more practically in the classroom, as something teachers could/should be made aware of when fostering students' connections to the French language, here in BC.

To be clear: there are no studies to date in BC that actively target identity construction as it pertains to the French language amongst immersion students. Outside of the province, the odd study, often on bilingualism and bilingual identity, mostly observed in Alberta in the works of Roy (best explored in 2020), as seen in an earlier part of this chapter, also do little to fill this gap, and certainly cannot be used to answer for the uniqueness of the BC immersion population. This is not to say that there is something 'special' or 'different' about French immersion students in BC. Rather, I am suggesting that we do not know enough about them to conclude either way.

Before we continue though, I must bring up the more recent allegations of (sexual) misconduct and harassment that have been levied against Tajfel in recent years, which have resulted in a re-evaluation of the merits of his character and, indeed, the environment he created for women working in the 70s, and 80s, as documented by

Rupert Brown (2019) in his analysis of Tajfel's work and person. The allegations, that have been documented, experienced, witnessed and corroborated by many colleagues, students and subordinates working in his labs, have resulted in his name being stripped from, among other things, the Henri Tajfel medal, awarded by the European Association of Social Psychology – founded by Tajfel himself. As well, certain core principals of this research have been called into question, coloured, perhaps by, certain personal beliefs he held about, for example, women, and their (in)ability to form separate social identities (Young and Hegarty, 2019). However, the core tenets of social identity theory as to how they might pertain to my current French immersion study, and indeed the students I worked with, are, I believe, sound, and have certainly helped me better understand group behaviour and identity. I am, therefore, choosing to continue using this theory to ground my own study, and perhaps, given my identification as a woman – part of the very group he had harassed – I can hope to reclaim and re-position, at least a very small part of his thoughts and research.

2.2.3. Emphasis on Accent as a Marker of Identity

Coming from the previous Introduction chapter, it is perhaps more clear what are the issues, related to research on French immersion, that have prevented a more wide-scale shift towards immersion students' own experiences. Yet, across the board, studies on second language (L2) identity and feelings of belonging, as well as those related to the ways accent plays a key role in identity construction, have been evolving. As my study is inspired by the changing discourse on second language speakers, this Literature Chapter illuminates the new research directions, in so far as they relate to the topic at hand, while highlighting the key differences with traditional immersion research in Canada. One specific difference in research trajectories relates to French immersion and (the lack of studies on) accents.

It is not at all to say that our tendencies for language identity research have somehow excluded accent from the discourse. In fact, when French dialects across Canada are being discussed accent often, as we will soon see, plays a strong role in both the perception by others, and the personal identification with a given language/dialect group. Interestingly, however, when accent (in the context of French) is breached in the Canadian research context, French identity and accent research is

almost exclusively targeting native Francophones. Researchers rarely examine immersion students' accents, perhaps precisely because a distinct accent, with its salient phonological traits (Derwing & Munro, 2009) is also an indicator of identity (Meyer, 2011; Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985). And as we have seen, identity, whether as a separate immersion grouping or related to other Francophone groups, has not been properly researched.

To begin discussing accent in the Canadian French immersion context, we must first move away from immersion altogether and go instead towards another Canadian phenomenon: Francophone dialectal accents and identity construction.

Looking at some of the Francophone varieties across Canada, helps to deconstruct the myth that 'la Francophonie' is one homogenous group. This is important, as in the previous studies on French immersion, the primary comparison group for immersion students were 'Francophones', giving the impression that we have one nationalized Francophone identity, just as much as we have one nationalized understanding of Canadian French immersion. Yet, Boudreau's (2008)'s work on French varieties in the Maritime provinces highlights the issues smaller communities may face with their own identities: " *Même si, dans les faits, nous savons les pratiques linguistiques hétérogènes et en perpétuel changement, l'idéologie du standard tend à masquer cette diversité et même à la nier. Dans les milieux où les francophones sont minoritaires, cette idéologie a façonné les représentations linguistiques*"[5] (p.59). To Boudreau (2008), the creation of an Acadian identity that is separate from the Quebec identity, illustrates the dominant position of the imagined 'Quebec French'. In particular, she goes on to name the phonetic characteristics of Acadjonne and Chiac, such as 'ouisme' (Houmme vs. Homme) and palatalization (tchoeur vs. Coeur) etc. demonstrating that accent does play a role in the "apartness" of Acadian varieties (Boudreau, 2008). She also addresses the hierarchies among Acadian varieties: while Acadjonne is lauded as a 'pure' version of the original 17th century French, Chiac is considered less favourable because mixing with English is a marker of impurity,

[5] Translation: [Even if, in fact, we are aware of the multiplicity and perpetually changing of linguistic practices, standard language ideology tends to mask this diversity, and even to negate it. In places where Francophones occupy a minority status, this ideology has shaped linguistic representations] (Translation is my own).

assimilation and acculturalization. This has led to linguistic insecurities among Chiac speakers (Boudreau et Debois, 1993, 2001, 2007). Yet the idea itself of 'naming' a variety is an act of power (Arrighi, 2014), and reclaimed power. Boudreau (2008) summarized that "*nommer sa variété c'est agir sur les représentations c'est refuser le dogme de la langue unique, c'est se positionner à l'intérieur de la francophonie, c'est réclamer une existence autre et c'est s'insérer dans une langue française qui se décline dans l'hétérogène*."[6](p.69).

My above choice to emphasize the studies on one specific variety of French speaker in Eastern Canada, not only presents the plurality of Francophone identity in Canada, but it also highlights the importance of accent in the construction and separation of this language identity. Questions of legitimacy, to which we will return in the final portion of this chapter, as well as the pride of separateness both stem from the uniqueness of accents which serve as salient markers of language identity, and indeed of group identity (see for example, Labov (1966, 1978), Boudreau (2010, 2008), Bourdieu (1991), Gasquet-Cyrus (2010), and Planchenault & Poljak (2021)).

Through the above examples, we can move to a more explicit breakdown of the role accent has played in language identity research over the years. Perhaps, one of the earliest researchers to demonstrate a link between language and social groups was Labov (1966, 1978). Though he tended to focus on the phonetic traits of accents, his work demonstrated that "groups living in close contact are participating in rapid linguistic changes which lead to increased diversity" (Labov, 1966, p. 7). Labov's (1966) work heavily emphasized phonology because, as he put it "language is one of the most highly determined forms of human behaviour, and that the phonological system is the most highly determined portion of language", (p. 502). He used phonetic markers as determinants of social groups because "in the analysis of language in a community with a limited range of stylistic and social variation, variance analysis and contrastive analysis will converge" (Labov, 1966, p. 520) suggesting that individuals belonging to specific social groups will end up sounding similar through their ongoing social interactions. In his 1966 study on accent, Labov links vowel shifts to social class/ethnic group (in other words, that lower middle class and working-class individuals tended towards similar mid-

[6] Translation: [to name one's truth is to act on the representations, to refuse the dogma of the single standard language, to position oneself within the Francophonie, to reclaim one's otherness, and to be a part of a French language that exists in diversity] (Translation is my own).

vowel raising). It is important to note that he did not specifically talk about identity or speculate on what the two groups might have in common socially that could explain a 'phonemic merger' (that is to say, similarities in their accent), as his work was too early for the social turn to come. Rather, the study uses identity as a pre-existing label for accent and treats it as a quantifiable factor for isolating specific phonetic traits. This is still quite common in SLA research today. What is relevant here is that identity is considered important, as it is used to label the speakers, and that the speech patterns are not regarded as "wrong" deviations from the "norm" (or standard, which has a strong implication in terms of legitimacy). Rather, the accent differences are regarded as potential "varieties" to be researched, each linked to the social/ethic groups of the speakers who use them.

Without explicitly aiming to, Labov's work demonstrated that accent is a salient marker of identity, and that variation, rather than unification in language, is the norm. It is unsurprising then that his work is very much a precursor to the Social/Cultural Turn as well as the emergence of sociolinguistics which would help take the study of language from the physical (and thus objectivist) to the more social and societal, in which the existing social norms and subsequent 'deviations' to these norms are called into question, as in the work of Becker (1964, 2008). Here we can see the explanation of how social norms and the grouping of those who break these norms both help to construct the societies we live in, and our allegiance to the norms and deviant groupings that help create our identities.

For this study, yet another reason why accent is so particularly important, with regards to immersion students, can be observed in the more recent works of Netelenbos (2013). In her study on the Voice Onset Time (VOT) of targeted phonemes, Netelenbos (2013) posited that variations from one class of immersion students to another could be due to immersion students feeling close to one another. Alternatively, she suggests that the immersion program itself creates a close-knit environment for students as it isolates them form other English program peers. Netelenbos' (2013) study came out around the time I worked on my own MA research on the uniqueness of immersion accents wherein I found that listeners could identify French immersion students from Core French graduates. Parallel to these findings, my immersion graduate participants claimed to spend more time with other immersion students, than they did with their English program peers, something that Netelenbos (2013) suggested could be a reason for immersion

students having developed similar accents. Additionally, both studies took place in Western Canadian provinces (in this case BC and Alberta) - each with relatively small Francophone populations. Moreover, since one of the only researchers to examine identity in immersion students (Sylvie Roy) is also from Alberta, I find it very noteworthy that it is this part of the country that has taken such a different approach to researching this (immersion) L2 speaking group. Importantly, however, given the volume of work that dominates immersion research from Eastern Canada (as seen throughout this chapter), such studies as those in Alberta and my own in British Columbia are all the more necessary to better represent the diversity of immersion experiences rather than presenting them as a monolith.

2.2.4. The Links to Accent in Social Identity and Language in French Immersion

In a 2001 article, Charaudeau stipulates that the relationship between language and identity is as old as the time we started codifying language, but that the modern idea of one language, one people, one nation ("une langue , un people une nation") has resulted in delimiting territories, and creating conflicts to protect these territories, leading to a "national consciousness" ("conscience nationale"). With regards to culture, Charaudeau (2001) states that just because they share a language, it doesn't mean that Quebec, Switzerland or Belgium all share an identity with France. According to Charaudeau, " … *ce ne sont ni les mots dans leur morphologie ni les règles de syntaxe qui sont porteurs de culture, mais les manière de parler de chaque communauté, les façons d'employer les mots, les manières de raisonner, de raconter, d'argumenter pour blaguer, pour expliquer, pour persuader pour séduire* "[7] (p. 343). For Charaudeau (2001), therefore, it is the social aspects of language, and indeed accent ('les manière de parler'), that make it a marker of identity. But Charaudeau seems to fall into the same discourse on legitimacy, regarding identity and ethnicity, as we have seen before. By favouring ethnic links to identity, language and culture, Charaudeau's (2001) own article presents a bias towards a more exclusionary discourse and it is clear to see who he gives power to. All speakers or members of a group have the right to discourse, but only

[7] Translation: [it is not the morphology of words, or the rules of syntax that are carriers of culture, but the manner of speaking of each community, the ways words are used the ways one explains, tells stories, argues to joke, to explain, to persuade to seduce] (Translation is my own).

some group discourses are passed down. In the case of language and identity, it might be linked to whoever is a native speaker, and indeed Charaudeau here, appears to only see language identity through the lens of ethnicity. Though this article was written in 2001 and definitions of identity have evolved to be more regionally, socially, and culturally inclusive, it is still important to note that ignoring regional/social aspects of identity is not uncommon. It can explain why so few studies have researched immersion students' identities since these students too do not have a single, uniform ethnicity, gender, culture, or socio-economic class (Mougeon et al., 2010; CPF, 2012).

Indeed, the main issue with identity in BC's French immersion context, is that it is presented in a traditional binary form: Francophone or Francophile. One is a representation of an ethnic and cultural link to language, while the latter links language to economic or political gain. Essentially, this binary approach is anchored in Canada's bilingual identity. In actuality, identity is layered. In Canada, 22.9% of the population has a non-official language as an L1 (CBC News, 2017). In BC 71737 individuals are counted as speaking non-official languages at home, and the majority of French speakers also speak English (StatsCan, 2018). BC's reality is, therefore, plurilingual, not bilingual, and therefore, using binary terms to describe identity, though prevalent, is something I will be addressing through the results of this study later, but should be kept in mind when understanding how we have approached L1 and L2 speakers of French throughout Canada.

The above researchers on language and identity help to justify the need to observe the links between immersion students' speech, and their identity as a group. As we will see in the third and final portion of this chapter, Bourdieu (1991, p. 221), Lippi-Green (1994, 1997,) Boudreau (2008, 2011), and Gatbonton et al. (2005), all understood that accent is not just a marker of language, but of identity itself. For example, in Gatbonton et al. (2005), an accent could evoke such strong feelings of connection, that losing it (even in favor of the more dominant/legitimate-seeming accent) could mean a break from the local ethnic community, or even disloyalty to the community. The connection to one's own perceived community is so strong that maintaining the accent, even if it is as a performance, is preferred over any possible gains made by joining the dominant language group. For another example, outside of Canada, the accents of French varieties in Belgium and French regional varieties, such as the ones found in Marseille, often serve to identify or even stereotype speakers (Gasquet-Cyrus et al.,

2012, Hambye, 2005). Back in Canada, accent was central in attempts made to identify or create a national Francophone language: Cox (1998) attempted to identify all common phonetic markers in Canadian Francophone varieties in order to propose a standard French pronunciation to be taught in schools across the country. During my MA research, I defined accent in phonetic terms. I used Munro (1998, p. 135) who described a foreign accent as a "non-pathological speech produced by second language learners that differs in partially systemic ways from the speech characteristics of native speakers of a given dialect", and Lippi-Green's (1994, p. 165) definition of accents as "sets of distinctive differences over geographic or social space, most usually phonological and intonation features. In case of second language learning, accent may refer to the carryover of native language phonology and intonation into a target language". These definitions still stand for this study, however, this time, I wish to expand on the more physical traits of the accent definition. Médéric Gasquet-Cyrus's definition is perhaps best suited for this study. To Gasquet-Cyrus, accent is "*la prononciation (faire un travail de description phonétique/linguistique, complémentaire de celui des socio-phonéticiens) mais aussi* [...] *des perceptions/catégorisations et des verbalisations de représentations linguistiques sous-jacents (en n'oubliant jamais que l'on a affaire à des continuums et à des dynamiques interactionnelles, sociales et politiques)*"[8] (Gasquet-Cyrus, 2010, p. 3, cited in Meyer, 2011). This definition combines the much-needed social contexts, and phonetic traits of 'accents' with the ideas, or preconceived perceptions, that they may invoke in the listener.

2.3. Part III: Connecting the Dots: Identity, Accent, Group Belonging and the Question of Immersion Speaker Legitimacy

In this chapter so far, our understanding of the gaps in our knowledge on immersion identity and accent, have led us to defining how we understand identity in its more social form, as well as the role accent (and its definition) plays in the construction of identities – specifically language identities. All these notions are integral to general language identity research, but are even more relevant to identity, and specifically social

[8] Translation: [the pronunciation (the job of phonetic/linguistic description in addition to socio-phoneticians) but also [(…) the perceptions/categorizations and the verbalisations of underlying linguistic représentations (and we should not forget that we are dealing with continuums and dynamics that are interactional, social and poltical] (Translation is my own).

identity. Through our subsequent defining of these terms, we have been led to further consider what, I think, is a crucial element to social identity construction: group belonging, and with it, the feelings of legitimacy within that group. In this final section, we discuss the merits of studying group belonging, how previous research has demonstrated the marking or displaying of belonging, and how this represents both a new research direction in French immersion analysis, as well as a continuation of our growing evolution on the topic of language learning, speaking and identity.

2.3.1. Bourdieu and Legitimacy and Belonging: Moving From Dialects to Second Language Accents

Throughout my readings, I have found that Bourdieu's theory on language legitimacy (and by extension, illegitimacy) is a viable framework for this current study of immersion students' identities and accents in BC. It is true that Bourdieu did not explicitly envision second language learners of French when writing passages for what would become *Language and Symbolic Power*. Rather, he strived to explain why the "oïl" dialect was a more accepted dialect than other variations of French spoken across the country – or indeed in other parts of the world. He postulates that traditional linguistics focuses on the so-called "ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 44). He is in opposition to this rather Saussurien approach to language, arguing that the act of naming a language 'language' without reference to variations, means to legitimize that one version while simultaneously delegitimizing all others – showing again the power of naming as we have seen with regards to Francophone varieties in Boudreau's works. This idea is shared by Gadet (2007 p. 113, cited in Boudreau, 2008) : "*le fait de décrire (les vernaculaires) comme des variétés prolonge la conception de langue homogène dont ils constitueraient des écarts et reproduit les présupposés de l'idéologie du standard*"[9].

In the case of this current study on immersion students, we could look to the act of naming the French spoken by immersion students as 'Fringlish/Franglais', 'Immersionese', or relegating it to a form of French like 'Français de l'immersion', as the

[9] Translation: [the act of describing (vernaculars) as varities prolongues the concept of the single homogenous language of which these vernaculars would contsitute deviations that reproduce the presuppositions de the standard language ideology] (Translation is my own).

act of taking away the legitimacy of these students as French speakers, and as simultaneously re-affirming the legitimacy of the traditionally perceived 'native French speakers' – something that we will explore throughout the upcoming results and discussions portion of this thesis. Still, through understanding his work, we can see how Bourdieu (1991) would argue that those who use such terms to describe French-immersion French – teachers, researchers/academics, politicians, members of the Francophone community and even some former French immersion students – would be the so-called "jurists" or "agents of regulation" who are charged with the promotion of the already "legitimate" French, or in-group members who are merely restating the status quo (p. 45). It is especially relevant in the case of French-immersion research on students, as the language is exclusively taught and used in the classroom, and this language is limited to a standardized version of the language, free of jargon, slang or any regional or dialectal variations: "The code, in the sense of cipher, that governs written language, which is identified with correct language, as opposed to the implicitly inferior conversational language, acquires the force of law in and through the educational system" (p.49). Bourdieu (1991, p. 55) follows this by stating that any speaker who lacks knowledge of the official 'language' will be ultimately excluded from positions of power, leading to the cyclical reproduction of the linguistic norm and exclusion and rejection of variety (ie: power is given to those who speak the norm, and all those who want power will assimilate to the norm).

However, this is also the start of Bourdieu's theoretical weakness when it comes to the topic of second language learning. First, the theory always assumes a single language dominating through government interaction, which isn't the case in federally bilingual Canada, where one language dominates by sheer numbers, but another has equal importance by law. In such cases, school language programs are sometimes the only resources for language learning and even the only environments where the language can be used, either formally or colloquially. Yet in Canada, it appears that learning French through what is considered a legitimate source for the 'official' language (ie: schools), is seemingly 'less' legitimate than the language used in communities (like the Francophone communities). It is these ethnic speakers that hold linguistic power, at least over second language speakers/learners, as they are the only ones seen as true 'native' speakers of the official language. Therefore, in the case of second language

learning, it is the community/ethnic/regional/native status that is more important than institutions.

2.3.2. Linguistic Variation, Bourdieu's 'Legitimacy' and 'Immersionese'

Returning to the topic of Francophone legitimacy, we saw earlier how speakers of varieties of Canadian French are reclaiming their legitimacy through the naming and speaking of otherwise undervalued dialects – meaning therefore that even between Francophone groups, legitimacy is not guaranteed. Though attitudes are changing, the main fear associated with Chiac, or indeed bilingualism in the Maritimes, is that it is mixed with English (Boudreau, 2008, 2009). Bilingualism is an ambivalent topic, again due to the English language and culture being considered equal to French in theory, while dominating in the public sphere in practice (leading to the Francophones' inability to "*vivre leur francité*" (Boudreau & Dubois, 2005). Though the linguistic landscapes and history of British Columbia is decidedly dissimilar to New Brunswick, the issues with French purity, and fears of assimilation, may help to explain a general uncertainty, for "le français de l'immersion" from across the board by researchers. In general, studies on French in Canada tend to focus on Quebec with little emphasis placed on regions outside of this province, the exception maybe being research in Ontario and the Maritime provinces. Corbett's (1990) book is exemplary of this trend: the first and second parts of this anthology of French varieties in Canada focus explicitly on Quebec, with only the third and final part left for all other varieties in the country. Interestingly, the title of Corbett's (1990) last section is "Le français hors Québec: Assimilation et Adaptation" implying perhaps that it is assimilation that awaits all Francophones who venture out of the Quebec bubble. Even here, territories with a greater number of Francophone speakers – either in the past or the present – are given full chapters, while British Columbia's Francophone community is relegated to a few paragraphs in a single chapter (Zwarun, 1990).

More recent studies on 'les Franco-Colombiens' also tend to focus on historical language sites like Maillardville, that are not representative of modern linguistic practices of the area (see, for example, Guilbault, 2012). The percentage of Francophone speakers is substantially smaller in BC than the Maritimes. Coupled by the fact that in Canada, French spoken outside of traditionally Francophone areas such as Quebec are

seen as a lost cause (consider Levesque's "dead ducks" comment, or Gauthier, 1990), it may make fears of assimilation and language loss even more prevalent. In terms of French immersion students, it is possible that the so-called "immersionese" is currently getting a similar treatment to Chiac.

Regarding French/English and bilingualism in Quebec, linguist, and former Laval University professor Gaston Dulong, is quoted as saying:

> "*La seule solution d'avenir du français au Québec […] c'est l'unilinguisme de la base de la pyramide sociale. La base de la pyramide doit pouvoir travailler dans sa langue, ce qui n'exclut pas l'apprentissage de l'anglais et le bilinguisme à partir d'un certain niveau dans la pyramide. Il y a une raison très simple à cela: c'est que si jamais la base de la pyramide devient bilingue, le français est fichu, parce que c'est une situation anormale. La situation normale, pour une base de pyramide, est l'unilinguisme. Pour tout peuple qui à sa base devient bilingue, cela signifie la perte de sa langue originelle – on va toujours vers l'unilinguisme. C'est toujours comme ça et ça a toujours été comme ça.*"[10] (Cited in Benoît, 1990, p. 87).

This quote is old (the original text was first published in 1972) and would probably not be supported by modern research on bilingualism. Outside of academic spheres, the beliefs cited by Dulong in 1990 may still resonate among individuals, and further reinforce the very real and legitimate concerns Quebecois citizens may have regarding the assimilation and replacement of their language with English (Planchenault, 2015). They also further reinforce the idea that bilingualism is elitist (which has often been said about French immersion), and thus, not the norm among average citizens.

Nonetheless, it is also true that Dulong's remarks are a direct response to the particular linguistic and political situations found within Quebec, which is also the only province in Canada to be officially monolingual French. The case of French in places like British Columbia, is not comparable with the social and linguistic issues found in *La Belle*

[10] Translation: [The only solution for the future of French in Quebec (…) is monolingualism of the lowest base of the social pyramid. The base of the pyramid must be able to work in its language, which does not exclude the learning of English or bilingualism of certain levels of the social pyramid. There is a very simple reason for this: it is that if the bottom of the pyramid would even become bilingual, the French language is done for, because it is an abnormal situation. The norm for the bottom of the pyramid is monolingualism. For all people that at their core become bilingual, it signifies the loss of their original language – we always tend towards monolingualism. It's always like this, and it has always been this way.] (Translation is my own).

Province. For this reason, I have chosen to look outside of this province for a closer representation of the realities of French and French speakers within minority contexts.

For example, in the eastern regions of Canada, there are varieties of French, such as Chiac and Acadjon (Horrocks-Denis, 2011; Heller & Boutet, 2006; Benoit, 199). Other French varieties in Canada are spoken by people like the Fransaskois in Saskatchewan (Debois, 2017; Denis, 1998), the Franco-Manitobans of Manitoba (Lafontant, 2002; Dallaire et Roma, 2003; Zwarun, 1990), the Franco-Albertans in Alberta, (Dallaire, 2002), along with many more examples in Ontario (ex: Boissonneault, 2004) and BC (seen later). Very often when these 'non-standard' varieties are discussed by researchers, it is through the lens of identity and stigma. Where language is concerned, the use of French appears to symbolise cultural unity and self-identification in the face of adversity and delegitimization (see Lafrenière, 2008 for examples on Joual; and Lafontant, 2002 for examples on Fransaskois). Above all, the studies on French varieties in Canada, often demonstrate a disparity between the treatment of 'languages' of the standard variety such as English, French, and Spanish, and 'vernacular languages' (Boudreau Francard, 2016) which is not unlike Bourdieu's (1991) description of linguistic legitimacy. Such studies on linguistic variety may have been inspired by previous attempts at language standardisation (Boudreau & Perrot, 2005; Cox, 1998; Chambard, 1990) where the goal was to create either a single standard language (that would exclude any varieties that were less favourable like Chiac or Joual), or many regional standards of French that could be taught in schools.

All of the above examples dispel the idea of a single, nationalized Francophone identity and language in favour of Francophone heterogeneity in Canada. With so many examples of French varieties in Canada, it is interesting that the majority of research on French immersion comparing immersion students to Francophones students appears to postulate that all Francophones speak the same variety of French. On the other hand, the number of studies on the many regional varieties of French in Canada has suggested that their speaker groups are in fact plural, and vary in degrees of social acceptance, as observed earlier (Boudreau, 2008; Gaudet & Clément, 2005; Fourot, 2016; Juteau, 1994).

It appears, therefore, that Francophones, like immersion students, are both made to appear as separate but otherwise homogenous groups. This is perhaps because the

French learned in the immersion program is thought to be devoid of 'culture' – in every sense of the term. For Denis (1998), in order for language to truly *be* a marker of identity, it would need to be ingrained in 'native' speakers, and 'native' speaker institutions, like minority language schools, and must be "contextualized in the group's identity, culture and experiences". Otherwise, it would be "a second language devoid of identity and culture, a language of consumption and job prospects rather than a language of participation and collective expression" (p. 438).

Notwithstanding the implications Denis' (1998) claims might have on French immersion students themselves, it is important to contextualize this quote. Denis (1998) was originally writing about Francophones living in Saskatchewan, some of whom were attending French immersion, rather than Francophone schools. The citation was later used in a 2003 master's thesis by Bonetto on French immersion's role in Saskatchewan's bilingualism, and was in turn cited in a 2009 doctoral thesis by Peguret entitled *Pour un cadre canadien commun de reference dans le contexte du français langue seconde post-immersif*[11]*,* from Nova Scotia. The conceptualization of French immersion as *lacking* something is not, therefore, unique or new in Canada. Many researchers and public figures have referred to this language in derogative terms such as 'franglais' (Hammerly, 1989), 'immersionese' (Lyster, 1987; Ippercial, 2009; Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2014), 'français de l'immersion' (Bournot-Trites, 2015), 'interlanguage' (Swain et al., 1998; Selinker et al., 1975), "pidgin[12] de salle de classe très incorrect" (Hammerly, 1989, p. 20) or a dialect/créole (Fraser, 2006, p. 196, cited in Peguret, 2009). However, rather than affirming 'immersionese's' illegitimacy, such comments only serve to affirm the power of the myth of the "standard" language.

2.3.3. Crossing and Passing: Mechanisms of Group Belonging and Language Identity

The general trajectory of immersion research, the interest in standard language ideology and the plurality of Canada's Francophone identities are themselves key factors in the direction of my current study. However, although the previous section focused

[11] Translation: [For a common Canadian framework of reference in the post-immersive French as a second language context] (Translation is my own).

[12] Note that this is *not* to state that a pidgin, Creole, or dialect is pejorative or negative, rather that these terms are being used in a derogatory fashion with respect to French immersion.

heavily on Francophones across Canada, my current research is not meant to question the status, the multiplicity or even the role of French Canadians with respect to French immersion students. Instead, the discourse on linguistic legitimacy and cultural identity have shaped my queries on immersion students, their possible interests in French, or even the impact French might have on BC immersion students. When I speak, therefore, about second language identity, I am also speaking of students' desires to be perceived in a given way by listeners, and by what students are conveying during their immersion experience.

Outside of French immersion research, in my readings, I came across two more theories that represented the second language speaking experience both in terms of out-group presentation, and in-group identities. These concepts were 'passing' and 'crossing' respectively. Focusing back on immersion students, and thus, second language speakers, I begin this next section with 'passing', followed by a definition of crossing. Altogether them, I look at how these theories, might, in addition to SIT, also serve as a possible lens through which my participants' responses might be viewed though.

2.3.3.1. Passing

According to Piller (2002), 'Passing' refers to the act of her participants' attempts at 'sounding' like native speakers. Here, 'passing' is an "act" and "something [her participants] do, a performance that may be put on or sustained for a limited period only (p. 181)". In other words, the accent is understood as a trait of a group. The wish to belong and ultimately identify with this group, is manifested by passing through the use of accent.

Furthermore, in order to pass as a native speaker, these interlocuters must have a very strong knowledge of the various sociolinguistic varieties. It is interesting to note, that the concept of identity in Piller (2002) still holds remnants of the idea that 'authentic' identity can only be associated with speakers' L1. Anything else is just a performance for the benefit of the L1 audience (which isn't necessary to maintain once the true identity of the speaker is made apparent to the listener). In terms of French immersion, it is unclear if students are either educated in French varieties, or if they have any motivation to mimic 'native-like' speech, or perhaps a speech that is more commonly associated with 'immersionese'. However, anecdotal evidence from my own experiences as an immersion student, suggest that students are very much aware of differing accents.

Upon attempting to mimic some Joual-like jargon I heard on the radio, I was told by classmates, not to do so, because a Francophone accent can only be used by other Francophones. As I discuss my research with others in the field (former students, parents, instructors, etc.), I find that my own experiences seem to be similar to others. However, further research is necessary on whether or not immersion students are, perhaps, attempting to 'pass' as 'immersion' because it is a group they feel kinship with (as we will see later in this chapter). Still, passing remains a way to identify the traits of a language group my target immersion speakers may wish to belong to (should belonging and identity be relevant to immersion students).

2.3.3.2. Crossing

On the other hand, if we understand Passing as being for the benefit of the L1 speaker, and thus not a part of the identity of the L2 speaker, we may not be witnessing actual group affiliation. For this, perhaps the notion of 'Crossing' would be better suited. Citing Hall, Cutler (2014) postulates that the 'ideological link' between language and one's ethnic group is so strong that an individual need only use a set of linguistic cues to be seen as a member of a particular ethnic group. This further strengthens the notion that language and group affiliation or group belonging are directly linked. However, with 'crossing', there is a distinction: crossing or 'language crossing' is when young people, particularly immigrants, adopt very different identities and linguistic features that belong to out-group members (for example, Asian-Americans using African American Language) (Cutler, 2014). Here, language is treated as a symbol for a trait (ex: use of Creole English to demonstrate assertiveness as seen in Rampton, 2010) rather than a marker of group identity. The distinction being that a marker would be the most salient feature of the group, while a trait is merely one of the markers, but necessarily the most prominent one. Speakers who use particular linguistic features, are not, therefore trying to 'pass' as native speakers of that variety. As stated in Rampton (1995, p. 275), the act of 'borrowing' terms (known as code-switching; see for example Lin & Li, 2012; Heller, 1988; Gumperz, 1982, p. 60-61) to form a potential new variety (code-mixing) is a form of crossing. In crossing, questions of linguistic and group legitimacy may be involved, due to certain racial tensions that may arise if one group is using a language style that is not seen as their own (Rampton, 2009, Cutler, 2014).

In her study on L2 phonology and identity, Cutler's (2014) participants would identify with pre-existing racialized groups (ex: a Bosnian speaker who identified with black culture more than white culture) due to being excluded from the majority (in this case 'white') identity group. However, in these examples, Cutler's (2014) research does not seem to suggest that individuals are creating new identities through new language, but rather that they are 'crossing' identity boundaries that already exist. Again, this tends to solidify the concept of plural, but fixed groups and identities. For example, Cutler's (2014) Bulgarian participants used New York Latino English and African American Language not as a tool to highlight a new and separate "Bulgarian" identity but rather as a means of projecting sympathy and group affiliation with Latino and African American ethnic group members.

Interestingly though, there appears to be a lack of information on group identity and language outside of an 'ethnic' context, especially in SLA research. In our multicultural schools in BC, as well as across Canada, students come from a number of ethnic backgrounds. However, as some researchers have suggested (Mougeon et al., 2010; Mougeon et al., 2004; Rehner, K., & Mougeon, 1999), students in French immersion do not appear to be aware of other French varieties, and it is unclear what 'traits' (if any) they may associate with such varieties. For this reason, crossing may not appear be a suitable theory for describing French immersion accents. However, if we consider that immersion students actively choose to use one language over another when faced with non-immersion students (as we have seen in de Courcy, 2001, section 1.2.) then crossing and code-alteration may be related to identity expression in immersion students. The whole French language may be the 'trait' that distinguishes immersion students from their English program peers. Rampton (1995, p. 284), citing Woolard (1988) expressed that the use of Catalan was influenced by the speaker's identity while Castilian was used when non-Catalan speaking individuals were present. De Courcy's study reported the opposite effects: her participants used French in the presence of non-immersion peers to express their 'otherness'. It may also be that students share a sense of pride in their French (as was suggested in Roy, 2015b) which is unlike the experiences of Catalan speakers. In Canada, even though French speakers are in the minority, the knowledge of French (especially by Non-Francophones) can increase one's social standing (Heller, 1992). This is especially true with French immersion, where, as we have seen in the media, participants are viewed as elitist,

because of the exclusivity associated with the program (Wise, 2011). Here, the act of knowing French as a second language, because of the perceived social status of French immersion Canada-wide, is more valuable than the alternative (in this case, knowing only English via the standard English program).

In both cases, we can come to understand the arguably most salient part (accent) as either a trait or as a marker. However, in the case of my study, possibly the most important aspects of either passing or crossing is that they are both commonly studied in relationship to second language speakers and learners. Depending on what immersion students are doing with their French (how we will observe them speaking/using French, for what purpose, what comments they make on language and the features of language etc.), crossing/passing are some of the ways we can help us to understand students' relationships to French, to each other in the program, and potentially, to other French speakers (and even non-French-speakers) around them.

2.4. The Point of Convergence: Final Thoughts on Identity, Belonging and Accent in French Immersion Research

Altogether, the construction of language identities by social groups can only be understood through the framework of belonging. The wish to belong is dictated by the social group's perceived legitimacy and status. However, not all markers of legitimacy (ex: native speaker status) are universally accepted. What might overwise be viewed as a stigma in one context, may be interpreted as desirable in another. Therefore, a second language speaker may come to associate themselves with their new language and choose to express their belonging, and thus social identity, through what is the most salient marker of that language: accent. Whatever that accent, it represents the individual's, connection to the other, their identity to the group or groups, and what they want out-group members to know about all persons within the group.

Returning to French immersion, when we open up questions on students' views of French, their feelings of belonging to French speaking communities – including those of their own immersion peer groups – we can see the notions of social identity, language markers – specifically accent – legitimacy, and belonging converge into one overarching theme of group construction and membership. In the end, as I read the many articles, books and studies listed throughout this chapter, I could not help but be reminded of the

original intent of French immersion. Early on, we saw that the socio-psychological and socio-cultural roots of the immersion program was based in the very human need to understand and accept one another. Through language, the creators of French immersion thought we could bridge the divide between those who spoke English and those who spoke French. By centering the *French language*, as opposed to the *students learning French*, I feel we have moved away from the very social aspects of language. But change is coming again. As we move towards a focus on the immersion students, and their cultural and regional contexts, we are witnessing a return to the human. In pursuing identity research with language as its vehicle, in which the French immersion students of British Columbia are, once again, the focus of the study, I hope to continue down the path the early researchers started on, and what I can see is becoming again the future of immersion, and indeed immersion *student,* research.

Chapter 3.

METHODOLOGY: Research Building, Data Collection and Analysis on Immersion Identity, Group Belonging and Accent

3.1. Research Question and Follow-Ups

My goal in this study is to answer the following question: *How are identity, belonging, and accent expressed by immersion students in the minority French language context of British Columbia?*

This question opens three major sub-topics related to both the quantitative framework associated with survey analysis and the more qualitative framework often found in analysis of discourses:

1. In their own words, who are BC French immersion students? What are their socio-cultural/sociolinguistic profiles? How do they differ from or relate to other French speakers around them? (diachronic analysis of results)

2. Are participants aware of any differing accents when compared to non-immersion and Francophone peers, and in what ways would these differences affect/reflect the manner/way in which they view themselves as French immersion students?

3. What are immersion students' relationships with one another in the program, and in what ways do they build their identities as separate/distinct, or indeed in tandem with their non-immersion and Francophone peers?

These key questions ground both the specificity of the BC immersion context, with students' individual and group experiences, and the need for generalizable data from what is, otherwise, a larger group. In Chapter 2, it became more evident that findings on French immersion did not represent the unique sociocultural and sociolinguistic nature of all provinces with immersion programs. It was evident that a dual approach to data collection and analysis was necessary to address these gaps in

our knowledge. To account for both, I have chosen to employ a mixed methodology for data collection and analysis.

Equally, it is notable in Chapter 2 that – while identity, language identity, accent and even group belonging were contextualized for this study – they were not always concretely defined. I left certain key aspects of this study up to the participants: collectively, the act of deferring to immersion students to help them construct/reveal *their* identities, *their* understanding of accent, and *their* feelings of group belonging was to express the overall worldview of my study – socio-constructivism.

Socio-constructivism as expressed by Vygotsky (1986) emphasizes the collaborative nature of language and the influence of society or social structures (such as a classroom) in the construction of identity (Kanselaar, 2002). The act of 'constructing' is indivisible from change, ambiguity, personal agency, personal identity, and social collaboration (Kanselaar et al., 2001). When it comes to identity and the glaring gaps in our knowledge about French immersion students in BC, I found it important to present the agency of these students as speakers of French and to highlight their voices as they understand the 'self.' As I have focused heavily on social identity theory (SIT) and how students in this study will be observed (related to either/both the immersion program and the French language), I argue that the use of surveys with all their statistical data still adheres to the core of socio-constructivism; in my survey, the responses of students, and their agentive (but also collective) understanding of who they are as French speakers are placed at the forefront. Their answers allow us to see how these immersion participants construct, manage, and negotiate identity, and how that identity shifts from the personal to the collective. This is even more so the case in the second portion of data collection, which employed recorded in-class group discussions.

Altogether then, I use SIT to understand group belonging and identity construction as it pertains to immersion students in BC. My use of SIT is then grounded in a socio-constructivist approach to the creation of questions and group discussions. These questions are then built and analyzed using mixed methods approaches to satisfy the aforementioned need for both generalizable and more specific open-ended information on these target students.

Moving to the breakdown of the upcoming sections, the format of this methodologies chapter is as follows: subsection 3.2 explains in greater detail the choice of mixed methods research, the origins of this research paradigm, and the associated worldview that most corresponds to this study. Subsection 3.3 gives a more elaborate breakdown of the data collection and analysis of the two phases of the study briefly described above. Finally, subsection 3.4 describes the 'speaker' participants (French immersion and Core French) necessary for this study.

3.2. Why Use Mixed Methods?

When I began to plan this research, it quickly became clear that both quantitative and qualitative methods would need to be applied if such a broad spectrum of questions as those posed here were to be answered. However, the two epistemologies seemed irreconcilable as the ontologies, or the way qualitative and quantitative researchers observe the nature of reality, appeared incompatible. Quantitative research can have a more objectivist or positivist understanding of reality, reflected in its epistemology where the "reality or object of study is perceived to be 'out there' amenable to investigation by researchers in a value-free way" (Mehdi Riasi, 2017, p. 18). Such an understanding of the world means that, at least in theory, the researcher can be completely 'detached' from the subject they are studying. If my sole goal had been to observe and potentially isolate a unique set of phonemes to establish the characteristics of the "immersionese" accent without otherwise interacting with the participants, then quantitative research might be enough. However, this would essentially constitute a repetition of my master's thesis, though on a larger scale with different participants, and would ultimately leave out the question of what role such an accent might play in the identities of students (if that exists). Essentially, the core of my study would be obsolete. As some of the studies I mentioned in Chapter 2 explain, language and identity are intertwined, and accent is often considered a very salient marker of that identity. In particular, studies on identity often require a greater interaction with the participants. Certainly, one's identity would be difficult to quantify using an 'objectivist' approach. Nor would it likely be possible to completely remove myself and my worldviews as a researcher from my own participants as per the dictates of such a highly objectivist worldview. Qualitative research would be best suited for such a 'subjective' or indeed 'constructivist' endeavour and might be enough if identity were the sole focus of the study, or if previous research on French

immersion accents and identity were more robust. Thus, the lack of research on French immersion identity and accent using either quantitative or qualitative approaches motivated me to look to mixed methods, as this methodology is compatible with both philosophical conventions (Mertens, 2012). In essence, and as was affirmed by Tashakkori & Teddlie (2003b), mixed methods research allows for both the quantitative and qualitative-oriented questions to be addressed more-or-less equally.

3.2.1. Origins of Mixed Methodology

In a 2007 paper published in the newly formed *Journal of Mixed Methods Research,* Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner attempt to put together a timeline as well as a definition of this third methodological paradigm. Their paper highlights that, although the two other methods – qualitative and quantitative – have both been developed and applied from as far back as Ancient Greece, it was only in the 20th century that the two began to be used systematically to complement both data collection and analysis (although 'mixed methods' as a term was never used until later). Effectively, the researchers surmise that though "mixed methods research is not new, it is a new movement […] that has arisen in response to the currents of *quantitative research* and *qualitative research*" (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 113). One of the first uses of multiple methods came in the form of triangulation, referred to by Campbell and Fiske (1959) as "multiple operationalism" (as cited in Johnson et al, 2007, p. 113). However, triangulation is not always seen as synonymous with 'mixed methods' research. In fact, this term refers to the use of method types to enhance "our beliefs that the results are valid and not a methodological artefact" (Bouchard, 1976, p. 268, as cited in Johnson et al., 2007, p. 114). Many of the methods in the early 1950s and 1960s connected with mixed methods would be better associated with multimethod research (Johnson et al., 2007). While mixed methods continued to evolve into what one is familiar with today, defining it was apparently a challenge. It was only after going over 19 mixed methods researchers for their personal definitions of mixed methods research (each with varying degrees of how integrated the quantitative and qualitative methods should be) that Johnson et al. (2007) proposed their own definition:

> Mixed methods research is an intellectual and practical synthesis based on qualitative and quantitative research […] It recognizes the importance of traditional quantitative and qualitative research but also offers a powerful third paradigm choice that often will provide the most informative, complete, balanced, and useful research results. […] Furthermore, the mixed methods research paradigm offers an important approach for generating important research questions *and* providing warranted answers to those questions in relation to one's research questions. This type of research should be used when the nexus of contingencies in a situation, in relation to one's research question(s), suggests that mixed methods research is likely to provide superior research findings and outcomes. (p. 129)

This study will rely on the above definition of mixed methods research.

3.2.2. To What Degree is Mixed Methods Mixed?

While looking for a definition for mixed methods research, Johnson et al. (2007) also highlighted three degrees to which qualitative and quantitative methods could be "mixed": *qualitative dominant*, referring to studies that were otherwise qualitative but included quantitative data as an important addition; *quantitative dominant*, or research that focused on quantitative methods while including qualitative data and analysis to enhance the study overall; and *equal status*, meaning that all aspects (the starting point, data collection, analysis, etc.) benefit from both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

In my original MA thesis, identity and group affiliation through language were side topics. However, in my own view, accent and identity cannot be separated if a more complete understanding of immersion students is to be reached. The use of both quantitative and qualitative frameworks, even if to varying degrees, cannot and should not be seen as unsuitable. Giddens (1984) also found that both research paradigms "should be seen as complementary rather than antagonistic aspects of social research" (p. 334). Indeed, no other framework could provide more complete answers in this study's research questions than can mixed methodology.

Even though identity is an important feature of my study, I find it difficult to justify relegating the language component of this research to a secondary feature of the study. In this respect, it could be argued that my overall research would fall under the category of *equal status* mixed-methodology. On the other hand, the two main parts of the data

collection and analysis do not all equally use both quantitative and qualitative methods. Overall, then, I would say that my research is mixed/qualitative dominant.

3.2.3. Mixed Methods Research Paradigms and the Use of Pragmatism for my Current Study

As is the case with the two predominately used research methods (qualitative and quantitative), mixed methods research comes with its own set of research paradigms or worldviews (Mehdi Riazi, 2017) that help frame approaches to particular research questions (Shannon-Baker, 2015). Of the four philosophical worldviews that inform mixed methods researchers – Pragmatism (Creswell, 2003; Howe, 1988), Transformatism (Mertens, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2009), Dialectal Pluralism (Green & Hall, 2010; Schwandt, 2000), and Critical Realism (Cruickshank, 2002; Mehdi Raizi, 2017) – I chose to take a more Pragmatist approach.

While all four worldviews briefly mentioned above serve to advance and promote the use of mixed methods in general, not all four are suitable for this study. For example, Dialectal Pluralism serves to address and reconcile the debates on positivist and constructivist ontologies. My study on French immersion does, to a certain extent, deal with these conflicting paradigms purely by using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. However, this study is not a 'metaparadigm', and the end goal isn't to confront qualitative and quantitative research ontologies on French immersion. Nor does it intend to re-evaluate previously existing studies in the hopes of finding more suitable theories on French immersion, as we see in Critical Realism. As this study is also not rooted in action research, it is therefore not using a Transformist approach to mixed methods research.

The pragmatist worldview, on the other hand, aims to answer questions that have been infrequently asked by employing any methodology necessary. The basis of research, from a pragmatist perspective, is the research question and not a particular ontology. This may appear to be research for the sake of research (as suggested by Mertens, 2007). However, due to the more exploratory nature of this study and the glaring gaps in our understanding of BC French immersion students as speakers of French, I argue that it is first necessary to ask questions and base my research methods on these questions, rather than to go in with a pre-selected and thus restrictive ontology.

As was seen throughout the previous chapter, there appears to be a difference in how accent and identity are studied, depending on the researcher's ontology. For example, many of the studies in SLA focus heavily on accent, with identity treated as a factor of accent (e.g., Derwing & Munro, 2009, Piller, 2002**)**. On the other hand, the more qualitatively rooted research on identity views language as a marker of identity, with accent being a dominant feature of that language and identity (e.g., Boudreau, 2008; Bourdieu, 1991). Both are valid forms of research, and it is not the objective of this study to debate these paradigms. The tentative nature of the study, therefore, calls for pragmatism.

My primary aim is to start answering questions suited more towards identity and language among French immersion students. A quantitative research approach would help me produce and collect more generalizable data on immersion students' accents and identity. Even so, it is not enough for me to just observe the data, nor is it possible for me to remain at arm's length as would otherwise be required in a purely positivist research paradigm. This is due to my position as a graduate of the French immersion program in BC. As a former member of this potential group, I have, at least some investment and involvement with the questions I am asking in my research, meaning that I am already a part of the reality that is 'BC French immersion.' Therefore, I am *not* an outsider to my own research. Thus, my interactions with any participants are already more constructivist in nature.

The advantage of having both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection/generation and analysis is that they are complementary, especially when the questions dictate a need for both as mine do. Taking a pragmatist approach allows me to generate and analyze data without being restricted to one ontology, and it allows me to bypass the 'paradigm debates' (Mehdi Riazi, 2017) so I can focus fully on my research questions.

3.3. Study Outline

Originally, my data collection was slated to begin in the very month that the COVID-19 pandemic required regulatory bodies in British Columbia to advise closing schools across the province. For this key reason, it was necessary to address all changes that had a direct impact on both the data collection and the analysis outlined in

this methodology chapter. Still, six schools from four cities within three regions in BC participated in this study. These cities were classified as *Ville A* (in Northern BC), *Ville B* (the province's Interior region), and *Villes C/D* (two cities in BC's Lower Mainland). I will elaborate on these classifications in the upcoming subsection dealing with study participants.

This study relies on two stages of data collection. First, a general web survey for all participants was composed of two segments – forced-choice style questions (true/false, multiple choice, etc.); and second, a series of open-ended questions that serve to either complement the closed-form question or provide topics (similar to those found in the next portion of data collection) for students to discuss individually. The second part of the data collection consisted of recorded in-class group discussion on topics of identity, group belonging, accent, and immersion experiences from a smaller, randomized sample of students.

3.3.1. Phase 1: Web Survey

3.3.1.1. Web Survey Tools for Data Collection and Analysis

When looking at the advantages of web surveys overall, we can see that an online platform for data collection allows for a much wider audience to receive the web survey immediately. As a result, participants can in theory respond immediately (Shilling, 2013). Schilling (2013) also predicted that web survey participants would be more relaxed when completing the survey as no researchers would be around them. Web surveys were also found to be cheaper; however, cheaper and faster did not necessarily mean better and more robust answers (Flicker & Schonlau, 2002; Heiervang & Goodman, 2009; Schilling, 2013). In Heiervang & Goodman (2009), web survey participants' response rates were comparable with those of face-to-face interviews; however, the web survey responses were much less detailed and more questions had been skipped over. Leaving blank answers could be a result of unwillingness to answer certain questions, or the questions could be difficult to understand; since no researcher is present to supply a clarification, the participants might feel overwhelmed (Heiervang & Goodman, 2009; Schilling, 2013). Siniscalco & Auriat (2005) warned about creating web surveys with questions that are either too difficult or too time-consuming for participants, and to always pilot the web survey to make any necessary changes before the final

product is sent out. They also recommended devising questions that can be answered and quantified quickly. For example, closed questions (multiple choice, true/false etc.) were recommended over open-ended question in cases where the aim was to produce quick, quantifiable data, though these questions would often limit the participants' creativity (Siniscalco & Auriat, 2005).

Because few studies of this nature had been previously conducted on French immersion students in BC, my goal for this study was to create a larger data set. The questions for students would result in quick generalizable data and more in-depth follow-up responses to make up for the gaps in our knowledge. Essentially, the purpose of the web survey is in part to help create a profile of BC immersion students. As a result, for this portion of my study, I wanted both quick, quantifiable answers (again, for generalization purposes) and longer, more nuanced answers, which would make up for the limited creativity in short answers. These longer answers will be analyzed using content analysis to contextualize any recurring themes or differences of opinion. In terms of how students' responses will be presented, I will be copying their written answers exactly how the students themselves have given them – this includes spelling, capitalization, and punctuation discrepancies.

Defined as a rigorous analysis of a text or speech (Mayring, 2000), content analysis is useful when looking for patterns that can be interpreted to find a more generalizable conclusion. For example, in this study on French immersion, repeated ideas and themes among students might be a greater indication of a common thought process; this can later be revisited during the final phase of the study. Though content analysis has most often been used in journalism, communications, and business and has a reputation for being overly simplistic, it actually is as complex or as simple as the researcher requires it to be (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 5). It is also fitting in terms of methodology because content analysis can be used for both quantitative (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 9) and qualitative research (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005), which fits with the mixed-methods approach to this study. To this, it should be noted that the first part of this study is mostly equal-status mixed-methods research as the qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis are equally necessary and relevant to the survey.

In the original design of this study, the survey was to provide an overview of opinions immersion students might share or differ on with regard to their identity, the French language, and even their accent. As mentioned above, the answers to the longer open-ended survey questions were meant to act as a springboard for topics during the final phase of the study; however, this had to change because of the pandemic (see section 3.3.3. for further details). Instead, the results of the survey helped isolate patterns – or more common points that immersion students share on identity or accent and how these immersion participants might be similar or different from non-immersion students. These emerging patterns (to be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5) are based on the individual responses rather than group responses (see Phase II under section 3.3.2.). This is because the goal here was to compare individual responses to group responses on similar topics.

Of course, it must be noted that while the survey does help in finding some common ideas that participating immersion and Core French students share or differ in, a generalizable conclusion is neither completely possible (given how little related information we have prior to this study), nor is it the only purpose of this survey. Rather, the survey helps to see how immersion students from across the province respond to the same set of questions. In doing so, the web survey results broaden the discussion on French immersion identity and language, both from the immediate standpoint of this study and from a longitudinal standpoint: that is, I plan on making my data set available to other researchers. Hopefully, with more data available to researchers, some of the topics that students have commented on may inspire further inquiry, thus leading to a more complete understanding of the identity of immersion students in the future.

3.3.1.2. Questions selected for Analysis

Of the 80 web survey questions – which in themselves could have been worthy of a separate dissertation – a total of 28 were selected for further processing (13 analyzed in Chapter 4 and 15 in Chapter 5). While the other questions were important to a general understanding of BC French immersion, they were either too closely related to my MA study on accent identification, covered topics outside of accent, identity, and feelings of belonging, or were not relevant to participant profiling. To select the questions that would be analysed during this study, I returned to my main research question. From there, I selected the questions that were the most relevant to the topics of identity,

belonging and accent. The following table displays a list of the questions I selected as most relevant for this current study.

Table 3.1. 28 Questions and Answer Types Analyzed from SFU Web Survey

Questions Analyzed in Chapter 4	Questions Analyzed in Chapter 5
Q4: Gender: *Male* *Female* *Other*	Q43: Do you consider yourself 'bilingual' (French/English)? *Yes* *No*
Q7 What is your country of birth (If the country is Canada, please add the province) *Open-ended*	Q44: Elaborate on the question 'Do you consider yourself 'bilingual'?' (Ex: what is your definition of bilingual, is that important to you, can you describe what role French and English play in your identity etc.) *Open-ended*
Q8: What languages do you speak at home *Open-ended*	Q45: Do you consider yourself Francophone Yes No
Q9: What languages do your parents speak at home? *Open-ended*	Q46: Elaborate on the question 'do you consider yourself a Francophone?' (what is your definition of Francophone, is that important to you, can you describe your language identity, etc.). *Open-ended*
Q11: What grade are you in currently? *Open-ended*	Q50. French is an important part of my identity/identities *Yes* *No*
Q19: If there is ONE think that I could improve about my French speaking skills, it would be *My grammatical accuracy* *My lexical knowledge (vocabulary)* *My pronunciation* *Other*	Q51: based on your previous answer describe how important/unimportant French is your identity. *Open-ended*
Q27 On a scale of 1 (little importance) to 7 (very important), how important for you, is pronunciation for language proficiency? *Likert scale 1-7*	Q59. In terms of your spoken French, out of the following options what is the MOST important for you when you are AT SCHOOL (further elaborated upon verbally: imagine that a stranger is in the class with you and they do not know anything about you, what would you want them to think you sound like) *To sound like a native French speaker from France* *To sound like a native French speaker from Quebec* *To sound like a native French speaker from BC* *To sound like a speaker of French as a second language* *To sound like my classmates* *To sound like my teacher* *To sound unique*

Q29: How do you define 'accent'? *Open-ended*	Q60. In terms of your spoken French, out of the following options what is the MOST important for you when you are OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL (further elaborated upon verbally: imagine that a stranger notices you speaking French on the street and they do not know anything about you, what would you want them to think you sound like) *To sound like a native French speaker from France* *To sound like a native French speaker from Quebec* *To sound like a native French speaker from BC* *To sound like a speaker of French as a second language* *To sound like my classmates* *To sound like my teacher* *To sound unique*
Q38: I have noticed that French immersion students sound similar to **Core French** students *True* *False* *I have not noticed either way*	Q61: What are some of the reasons why you have chosen to remain in French immersion? Out of the options, choose the three that are MOST important to you. If there is a reason that is not listed click OTHER and specify in the following question *It gives me the opportunity to learn a new language* *I enjoy being in a close-knit group* *I am satisfied with the courses in the program* *I have good friends in the program* *French will help me with work* *My parents want me to stay in the program* *The program has a good reputation* *I enjoy the challenge of studying subjects in a different language* *It helps me understand a new culture* *French is/has become an important part of who I am as a person* *OTHER*
Q39: I have noticed that French immersion students sound similar to **Francophone** students *True* *False* *I have not noticed either way*	Q63: if you were told to leave French immersion effective immediately, what would you miss the MOST about the program *Open-ended*
Q40: I have noticed that French immersion students sound similar to each other, or **other French immersion** students *True* *False* *I have not noticed either way*	Q66: I would rather sound like my French immersion peers than like a Francophone *Yes* *No*
Q41: Have you ever heard of the phrase 'immersionese' or 'Français de l'immersion'? *Yes*	Q69: French immersion is an important part of my identity/identities:

No	*Yes* *No*
Q42: What are your thoughts on the phrase 'Immersionese' of 'Français de l'immersion'? *Open-ended*	Q74: I feel accepted by my French program peers *True* *False* *Neither (I feel neutral about this statement)*
	Q78: I have, at times, switched from speaking English to French with my classmates when non-French speaking students are around me *Yes* *No*
	Q79: Comment on the previous question 'I have, at times switched from speaking English to French with my classmates when non-French speaking students are around me' (why have/haven't you done this, who did you do this with, etc.) *Open-ended*

Of the above 28 questions selected for analysis in this study, 20 were designated for immersion students only. Though it would have equally been possible to focus solely on immersion responses or choose only questions that both Core and immersion students responded to, the reasoning for the discrepancy is twofold. First, since the purpose of the study was to examine immersion students and to prioritize their experiences, which were often a unique product of the program, some of the questions would not make sense to Core French students. Yet I did not want to completely exclude Core French students as they share, with immersion students, the experience of learning French as a second language in the otherwise English-speaking province (in the context of education) of BC. Second, and most importantly, a comparison of the two would provide necessary information on the differences and similarities of the two populations related to who they were, outside of being French program students. This was crucial for my study, as previous studies conducted mostly in eastern Canada have suggested that immersion students already had much in common before entering the program (for example, being mostly homogenous English speakers). On the other hand, English programs are considered to have far more immigrant and allophone speakers than are immersion programs (Davis et al., 2019; Lakin et al., 1990; Roy & Galiev, 2011; Stern, 1978). This is significant because of how rarely BC is explored in the literature, and even when it is, researchers often cite outdated attitudes to French immersion in the province that may not reflect the contemporary situation (see, for example, Mady & Turnbull,

2010). Assessing if this were true in the BC context could help further our understanding of any feelings of immersion group belonging.

Still, the main purpose of this study was to look at immersion students and to highlight their experiences, which may also be diverse. Given that the students come from many parts of the province (see 3.4. for discussion of student participants), and from two different modes of language instruction (early immersion and late immersion), a larger focus was placed these students, with the goal to understand how their responses reflect those of their immediate classroom peers and those from across the province.

In terms of how responses were processed, all non-open-ended questions listed in the above table were analyzed using SAS on Demand, specifically to look for significant associations between variables. SAS, or Statistical Analysis Software is a set of coordinated software products which is often used for data mining and statistical analysis, (Pedamkar, 2023).

In Chapters 4 and 5, I use graphs (bar graphs and pie charts) to represent students' responses and tables to showcase statistical analysis. To look for significant differences between groups (immersion vs. Core French, and early vs. late immersion), I used one of two tests. To test for associations between French program (Early, Late and FSL) and other variables (ex: languages spoken at home, feelings of acceptance by peers etc.), Chi Squares tests were used. Fisher's exact tests using Monte Carlo estimation were used in cases where the chi-squared table expected cell counts were less than 5. If the p-value is less than 0.05, then there is possible proof of an association between variables. However, chi-squared tests do not present where the relationship is between variables. In some of the cases where the p-value was less than 0.05, further testing via odds ratios was used to ascertain the likelihood of the outcomes. In general, odds ratios measure how closely one variable is related to another one (Szumilas, 2010). Any odds ratio results greater than 1.0 indicate that the odds of a particular outcome are greater than the odds of a control group. Meaning that the perceived events did not occur by chance alone (CDC, 2023).

Follow-up questions or other open-ended questions were treated with the intention of finding commonalities in responses between immersion groups (late and early) and Core vs. immersion. In addition, all selected open-ended questions were

related to the topics that immersion students were asked to discuss in their in-class groups (see section 3.3.2.).

3.3.1.3. Original Timeline and Processing of Web Survey Results

Originally, I began formulating the questions for this survey at the end of 2018 so they would be ready by the time I began my ethics application. Using my university's secure web survey system, I created an extensive set of 80 questions, closed and open-ended. These questions first covered some personal information about students, then their general experiences related to the French language, followed by a set of questions oriented toward French immersion students only, and finally ending with questions related to all students' experiences with their respective French language programs. Each survey took students from about 45 minutes to an hour to complete, meaning that teachers had to consider one class to be completely dedicated to this portion of the study. I submitted my application to Simon Fraser University's Department of Research Ethics in January 2019; however, approval was not granted until the end of the spring semester (May). This long delay was a result of structural changes within the department that resulted in some reviewers leaving mid-way through revisions, as well as some complications from the website on which ethics revisions were uploaded.

Upon gaining ethics approval at the university level, I was required to contact the various school boards before being able to contact individual schools, teachers and finally (through the teachers), the students. This was because I had chosen to work with minors (students under the age of 18). Originally, I had limited my group to students in Grade 10, which in the BC context, meant students would be between 15 and 16. Limiting the age of students was important for more practical purposes: in some school districts, this age was sufficient for students to be able to consent to taking part in the study on their own (without parental signatures). Furthermore, this was the last year that French immersion students, in particular, would have spent the most time with one another, as this was the last year they would have the maximum of three courses taught in French. From Grades 11 to 12, students would have fewer courses taught in French until only one course (French language/langue seconde) would be left. Limiting the student participant population would also keep the groups consistent: each school would have participants from French immersion and from Core French; they would have the same grade-level and age, and they would live in the same general location. Originally, I

intended to survey only schools in the Lower Mainland region of BC – the most populous in the province as well as the most diverse. Given the claims of some studies that immersion students were mostly homogenous English-speaking youths (as mentioned in Chapter 2 and further elaborated upon in Chapter 6), it was important to grasp if this was true for BC French immersion students as well, should any comparisons with Eastern Canadian immersion students be warranted.

Once ethics had been cleared for school districts and schools, I was able to successfully contact four schools and set up appointments with each one. Hence, my first round of data collection began in February of 2020. Two Core French classes from two different schools completed the web survey, and one French immersion class had started, but due to technical difficulties with the internet, students were not able to submit their results. Another date was chosen for March, while the three other schools had data collection dates set up through March, April, and May. This plan, however, was greatly altered due to the pandemic (see 3.3.3. below).

3.3.2. Phase 2: Classroom Group Discussions

3.3.2.1. Analysis for In-Class Group Discussions

When I first created the web survey, I realized that the study, while vast in the data provided, still lacked more in-depth discussions on the various topics displayed in the survey. For this reason, I chose to add second section in which students would have the opportunity to elaborate on their responses. I also wanted to observe students' interactions with each other in the classroom. Thus, these two separate interests resulted in the second phase of data collection: the recorded in-class group discussions.

I used discourse analysis to contextualize students' comments on identity and accent to see how they compare both to the responses of other groups around the province, and to the individual answers given during the online survey exercise. Discourse analysis allows language to be treated as more than just a tool for communication (Gee, 2015). It requires context and a greater understanding of the world around that language (Freire,1968). In particular, discourse analysis, according to Johnstone (2018), studies language, in which '*language'* should be understood through interaction, talk and communication between groups. Because I am focusing on oral communication between students, especially through in-class group discussions, the

communicative focus of discourse analysis, I find, is best suited, rather than the more general Blommeart-ian (2005) understanding of "meaningful symbolic behaviour" (p. 2; also found in Johnstone, 2018). To further quote Johnstone, from her seminal book on the topic:

> "Calling what we do "*discourse* analysis" rather than "language analysis" underscores the fact that we are not centrally focused on language as an abstract system. We tend, instead to be interested in what happens when people draw on the knowledge they have about language, knowledge based on their memories of things they have said, heard, seen or written before, to do things in the world: exchange information, express feelings, make thigs happen, create beauty, entertain themselves and others and so on." (p. xvii)

Furthermore, given the socio-constructivist worldview for this study, context plays a heavy role in both the responses of participants as well as our understanding of recorded conversations. Gee (2015) stated that to have a deeper understanding of the language being used, the listener must understand the speaker's position, their "social identities, roles and groups that make up a society" (p. 1). This is equally relevant to French immersion because Gee (2015) counted classrooms and classroom dynamics in his understanding of society. In his 2015 article summarizing discourse analysis, Gee again evokes the notion of 'Discourse' (capital 'D') and 'discourse' (small 'd'):

> "Gee (1990, see also Gee 1989, 1999) introduced the term "Discourse" with a capital "D" (so-called "big 'D' Discourses") for any such group and the ways in which such socially-based group conventions allow people to enact specific identities and activities. He used this term because such groups continue through time—for the most part, they were here before we arrived on earth and will be here after we leave—and we can see them as communicating ("discoursing") with each other through time and history, using us humans as their temporary mouthpieces. Gee used the term "discourse" (with a little "d") for any stretch of language in use. Little "d" discourse analysis studies how the flow of language-in-use across time and the patterns and connections across this flow of language make sense and guide in interpretation." (p.2)

That is, the words we pronounce and the grammar we use to present our thoughts (linguistic analysis) are a representation of small 'd' discourse; what those words represent would be capital 'D' discourse. Since French immersion is a school program, the classroom context and student-related dynamics must be taken into consideration when listening to what the participants are telling us about their experiences as immersion students. By using discourse analysis in this study, I am going beyond the more traditional SLA/applied linguistics research on French immersion. Analyzing the content and message of the students gives them a voice and a platform to construct and present their own interpretations of identity.

3.3.2.2. Topics Selected for Analysis

After deciding how to conduct my group discussions with immersion students, I proceeded to outline the topics that would be selected for discussion, as well as the timeline for data collection.

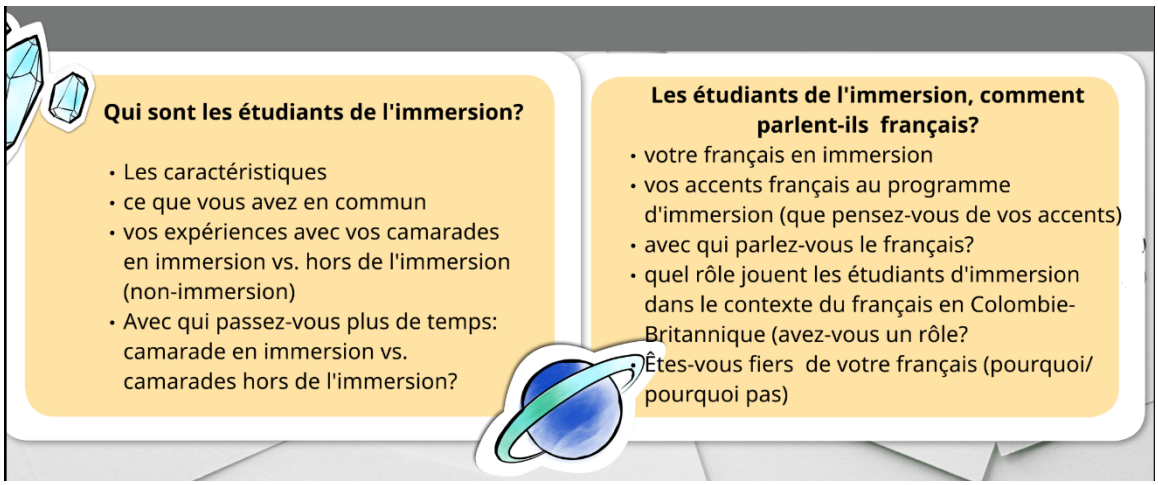


Figure 3.1. Image of Projected Topics of In-Class Group Discussions

Figure 3.1. above shows the subjects presented to immersion students during their in-class group discussions. As mentioned earlier, I used Prezi (prezi.com) to project the files. The images above come from a pre-selected Prezi template that I did not design but was instead freely available to the public. For my topics, I chose two over-arching categories (*qui sont les étudiants de l'immersion* and *les étudiants de l'immersion, comment parlent-ils français?*). From these main topics came the sub-points that were often taken directly from, or were inspired by, some of the questions from the web survey. All selected topics shared the commonality of allowing students to present their individual ideas on the immersion experience while, at the same time, allowing for more collaborative and negotiated answers. This also allowed me to observe (or at least hear) their group dynamics and interactions with one another. On the other hand, whether students were discussing language directly (as seen in in the right-hand slide in Figure 3.1.) or indirectly, the subjects were vague enough to allow participants to prioritize what was most important to them. Furthermore, students were told that these subjects were a guideline, and that it was not necessary for them to discuss everything

they saw on the slides. Instead, the choice was up the participants, thus complementing the constructivist nature of this study.

3.3.2.3. Original Timeline and Processing of Results

As earlier noted regarding the mixed-methods nature of this study, I considered how mixed the in-class group discussions section would be. In the end, both collection and analysis were heavily qualitative in nature, making it qualitative-dominant/mixed.

For this portion of the study, only French immersion students participated in in-class group discussions. I began writing my ethics request form together with those for the survey and the now-removed accent voice-recordings tasks. The entire procedure for ethics was the same as described in the previous 3.3.1.1. subsection, so I will omit repeating this here. Instead, given that the study partially took place before the pandemic-related school closures, I will focus on the mechanism of data collection and how the data was processed.

In terms of how this portion of the data collection came about, I knew I wanted to conduct recorded interviews with students; however, given my more quantitative background, I was honestly not sure how to proceed in a way that would not influence students' responses. Furthermore, as I would be working with minors through the assistance of their teachers, I knew that leaving the school to conduct individual interviews would not be an option. Given that this study looked at group relationships and feelings of belonging intermeshed with questions of identity and accent, I worried that I would not get students' full and more organic interactions with peers. Because I already had students' individual perspectives via the survey, I was much more interested in their group interactions within the context of their familiar classrooms. On the other hand, I found that an ethnographic study would not be suitable because I still wanted to hear students' views on selected topics of accent, identity, and belonging, rather than just observing them in their classrooms.

Upon reading some interview-driven studies – all of which included direct contact with participants (Baratta, 2021; Block & Hirsch, 2017; Carrie, 2021; Zheng & Gao, 2019) – I was directed by my research supervisor to a study led by one of her former students (Desgroseilliers, 2012). This education doctoral thesis took similar constructivist approaches to data and analysis that I had already been researching. In terms of data

collection, the methods used by Desgroseilliers (2012) were influenced by Cavalli et al.'s (2003) work in Val d'Aoste. Cavalli et al. (2003) had chosen to not speak directly to participants. They also decided to keep their respondents within their scholastic environments, something that Desgroseilliers (2012) had also noted as important, and chose to do for her study as well. That way, I thought I could, as Waldorf (2008) put it, "temper" my power as a researcher, and that participants' own accounts would take precedent over my ideas about French immersion identity and accents. Both Desgroseilliers' (2012) and Cavalli et al.'s (2003) studies opted for a hands-off approach to the interviewing process in which, as researchers, their only role was to present topics to participants. Other than that, the respondents would form their own groups, record themselves discussing the topics and, once completed, would give the recordings to the researchers, who would then process the data. Considering the constructivist nature of this study, such a format acknowledges the importance of the local setting in meaning-making (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Additionally, it highlights the importance of individuals' experiences and contexts and the everyday negotiations that occur within a social group (Gall et al., 2007; Larochelle, 2004, as cited in Desgroseilliers, 2012). The advantages, as noted by Desgroseilliers (2012), of such an interview process were that the context (the immersion classroom, in the case of this current study), and the interviewers/ees (the immersion students themselves) would be familiar, allowing participants to feel more at ease and thus more likely to share their experiences. I chose, therefore, to follow this procedure as well. In light of what was to come (the pandemic), this became the safest option from a health standpoint and the most time-flexible for all participants involved. For the purposes of this study, I named these self-directed interviews the "recorded in-class group discussions."

On the day of the recordings, students were given a few minutes to read over the topics (see 3.3.2.2. of a list of topics and what was selected for further analysis). Before COVID, students used recording devices and during the pandemic, their mobile phones to record their responses. Teachers and students emailed the recordings (or in the case of the first collection, I took back the recorders). In all cases, I created separate files for each school and a further set of files for each group per school that submitted their recordings.

Once all recordings were accounted for, I analyzed the survey results first (section 3.3.1). After selecting out what would be used from this portion of the data, I

turned to transcribing the recordings. Of the total 29 recorded groups, only one or two groups from each school were randomly selected to be fully transcribed. To properly randomize the groups, I used random.org and had the website generate a number between 1 and the maximum number of groups for a given school. For example, in City A (see classification of locations in 3.4.1.) there were 5 groups; therefore, the numbers would be between 1 and 5. Then, I worked to transcribe only the discussion topics that were most relevant to the selected survey questions (from Phase I). In total there were 6 full transcriptions and 11 partial transcriptions to work with. Each transcription was between 6 and 12 minutes long, and each group had about 3 to 5 participants. In total, 97 students took part in the in-class group discussions portion of the study.

3.3.3. The Changes: What Was Left Out and Why

3.3.3.1. Accent Identification

Even before the pandemic resulted in the closing of schools, I became aware that the comparison between Core French students (also known as French as a second language/FSL) and immersion students would be very difficult and arguably, unfair. In my first study on accent identification, I also used Core and immersion participants, but they had by that point been university students. Both sets of participants had completed their respective French language programs and both were in second-year courses, despite the students themselves being in their first year. Both groups were able to have a conversation in French, and while during the extemporaneous recordings task it became clear that immersion 'graduates' – as they were called in the study (Poljak, 2015) – were more fluent than their Core comparison group, the first two tasks were performed with considerable ease for both parties. This was not at all the case for my student participants.

While immersion students, once again, had no problems with any of the tasks, all Core French participants found it difficult to understand which words/phrases they needed to repeat from their delayed repetition tasks. I would sit and repeat the words and phrases until they understood what they needed to state – something completely contrary to the purpose of the study, but necessary as I witnessed how students struggled and felt discouraged. One of them was close to tears and stated that they felt completely incompetent in the language after this exercise. I continued only because I

was worried it might damage the individual students' reputations in the classroom if I stated that they could not take part in this study as they were clearly not ready for it. Still, I knew this situation was not salvageable, but I must emphasize this was by no means the fault of any of these Core French students. Rather, the fault was my own. I based the Core French students' abilities on those of their university student counterparts. My reasoning was that, in the case of the first two tasks (word repetition and sentences repetition), the requirements would not be too difficult since students merely had to repeat the words and phrases. Of course, 'merely' was misleading: all the instructions were in French, the examples were in French, and students were using words and expressions they had clearly never been exposed to. Hence, this was unfair. I believe that should any listener had been exposed to these recordings, they would have immediately guessed who was and who was not an immersion student. Their assessment would not, however, have been based on pronunciation.

It was also not possible to work solely with immersion students. Though this would otherwise have been an option, the pandemic made it impossible to work in closed quarters with this group. When I realized reformatting would be necessary with regard to accent analysis, the schools had already closed, and the only point of contact with participants would have been through online platforms. Therefore, Zoom (https://sfu.zoom.us/) became the primary mode of communication and data collection. Furthermore, students were not able to leave their classes for health and safety reasons during the time they were in school. As such, the recordings were riddled with background noises that, when processed through AudaCity (audacityteam.org), could not be removed without further corrupting the files. Many of the recordings were damaged, rendering them comprehensible but not fit for phonetic analysis. This is because all recordings took place either through Zoom itself or with the aid of cellphone recorders students had at their own disposal, as it was no longer a possibility to provide participants with recording devices. It thus became evident that such modes of data collection would not produce a recording of high enough quality for the purposes of Voice-Onset-Time or spectrographic analysis. For all these reasons, I therefore chose to forego accent analysis in this study.

3.3.3.2. Phase I and II Changes

I continue this next section with changes to the web survey procedure that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In March 2020, as the point data collection was set to continue, the crisis brought on by the pandemic required health professionals to require all schools from across the province to close and work using an online platform (Mangione, 2020). Often, teachers were understandably unprepared for such drastic changes. As my data collection took place in the classroom with the presence of teachers, it did not surprise me that all of my would-be participating schools declined to continue the study. I was sympathetic, especially given my own experiences with teaching under similar circumstances. Therefore, during the summer, I worked to revise the study so that the entire remaining data collection process could work online. Focusing just on the web survey, Table 3.2 below outlines the most relevant changes that were made:

Table 3.2. Plan and Changes to Study

	Original plan ➔ *Changes*
Timeline changes	• Data collection in-person from Feb 2020-June 2020 ➔ *Data collection online/zoom from September 2020-March 2021* • All surveys were to be completed first, followed by in-class group discussions ➔ *Surveys and in-class group discussions were mixed depending on schools/teachers' requestions and time constraints* • 3-week wait period between survey and in-class group discussions in which survey analysis would produce questions for group discussions ➔ *few days to 3-week period between survey and group discussions with all questions/topics prepared in advanced in case a school preferred the group discussions activity first*
Instructions	• I present the study/instructions while in class ➔ *dual explanatory set-up for teachers:* o in option 1, I present the study via zoom (7 classes) o in option 2, teachers present the study to students via written instructions provided by myself (2 classes chose)
Change of platforms	• In-person platform with myself in attendance to explain/answer any questions ➔ *Whole study was moved online with Zoom as the main platform:* o Little to no direct contact with students for questions/explanations
Anonymity	• Unique randomized 4-digit numeric codes (Haahr, 2020) assigned to students, by myself, for survey and the same code would be used for the in-class group discussions; using the same code allows for a comparison between individual and group-given responses ➔ *unique 4-5 digit code was given: 4 for the initial group of 3 schools, and was expanded to 5 after having run out of 4-digit numbers due to the larger number of schools participating than originally expected:* o Expanding to 5-digits was to prevent a repetition of the 4-digit codes generated by an online platform (Random.org) o Codes were given out by teachers; to simplify the task, teachers were not asked to note what code corresponded to which student o The lack of continuity between survey assigned codes and in-class group discussions made it impossible to directly compare individual study survey and group-discussion responses
Distribution of survey	• Manual transmission on consent forms to students ➔ *emailed consent forms to teachers who transmitted them to students* • Personally collected the consent forms ➔ *teachers returned consent forms via email*
Number of classes	• Participants were from the Lower Mainland ➔ *participants were from 3 regions: Lower Mainland, the Interior, Norther BC* • Equal number of 4 Core French and 4 French immersion classes ➔ *uneven number of Core French (3) and French immersion (8):*

	○ This change resulted from an unexpected surge in immersion class participation from around the province in 2021 which was facilitated by the use of an online platform ○ The focus shifted from being a direct comparison of immersion and Core French to immersion-dominant response analysis with some Core French comparisons (especially for the Lower Mainland groups)

These changes impacted both the delivery of the survey and the way the survey was used in relation to the in-class group discussions. Furthermore, probably one of the largest changes relates to the scope of the study. Originally, the study would have been more region-specific, focusing on Lower Mainland students only. However, the need to use an online platform to communicate with students resulted in a larger, more province-wide study. In terms of formatting, the order of survey-to-discussion was also modified. This had an impact on the in-class group discussion topics as well. With respect to Phase II, once again the pandemic and the restrictions it brought about impacted the way the in-class group discussion data was collected. The list below highlights the key differences.

Table 3.3. Plan and Changes to Study

	Original plan ➔ *Changes*
Survey and Groups Discussion Comparisons	• Individual survey responses of immersion students to be compared to Core French survey AND immersion in-class group discussion responses ➔ *No direct comparison between individual student responses for surveys and in-class group discussions* ○ Because it became too cumbersome to track the 4/5 digit codes of students between the survey and in-class group discussion ○ Teachers wanted faster timelines, so group discussion topics had to be prepared in advance ○ Group discussion students were label according to speaking order (ex: 'G1' for first speaking garçon/boy, 'F1' for fist speaking fille/girl etc.)
Scope of data collection	• Smaller, case study from the Lower Mainland ➔ *Nearly province-wide study* ○ Post-Covid-19 Pandemic, immersion teachers were interested in giving students more opportunities to use French in the classroom, the in-class group discussions became a selling-point which greatly increased interest in the study province-wide ○ Having an online platform allowed for more parts of the province to be contacted ○ The number of in-class group discussion groups increased from 5-10 (originally) to 29 groups

The resulting changes may have had an overall positive impact as they allowed a greater number of student participants from across BC to take part and greater representation of immersion students. On the other hand, since the topics in the survey and the in-class group discussions could not be coordinated (as was the original purpose), there was no way to check students' individual responses with those during their group discussions. However, the need for flexibility and to pre-select topics resulted in a more robust number of participating students, creating a much wider understanding of the immersion population throughout the province.

3.4. Participants

Without a doubt, the most important factor in this study on immersion identity, accent, and group belonging is the participants themselves. In this study, I worked with French immersion and Core French students. In terms of emphasis, this study focuses on immersion students. However, the comparative aspect of immersion and Core French students has very much been a hallmark of immersion research since the program's inception.

Though the two programs differ greatly in both their methods of language transmission and the sheer amount of time students have for using French, they both share the commonality of being institutional environments of language learning/acquisition. In the case of Core French, in my current study, this group is meant to otherwise represent English program peers. What they share with French immersion, other than learning French, is that Core French students attend the same schools, often together with immersion students, and take courses not otherwise taught in French (for immersion students). In essence, since immersion and Core French students are mixed together for all non-immersion courses, using the French language course unique for Core French students was the only way to assure that there were not French immersion students present during data collection with Core French students. Conversely, contacting French-immersion-only courses, when collecting data from prospective immersion students, made it possible to by-pass any English program peers. It was important to keep the groups separate as the activities were not always the same. I also wanted to observe the specific immersion classroom environment during data collection.

Most importantly, the French that both groups are learning is meant for non-native speakers. In reality, outside of the classroom French immersion students would have just as much (or in the case of BC, just as *little*) of an opportunity to use French in their community as would Core French students. Overall, I was interested in the dynamic within each language program group to see if feelings of group belonging are prevalent for both, and what role French plays in both cases.

3.4.1. French Immersion and Core French: What We Already Know and What We Can Add

When I first began building my study, the idea was to use students from all over the Lower Mainland: the most densely populated area of BC and the most ethnically and linguistically diverse when compared to the rest of the province. However, as this territory is widely dispersed and commuting would become an issue, for convenience purposes I selected four cities – Vancouver, Burnaby, Coquitlam, and New Westminster. I can name these cities without fear of losing anonymity, because ultimately the planned participation pool no longer matched my original intentions. In the fall of 2019, these cities were cut down to three as the school district in my fourth selected city did not grant me the opportunity to contact their immersion schools. Then another city decided not to proceed as well. Finally, from October 2020 to March 2021, when I moved to using an online platform for data collection, I was able to expand the study to include cities from all over the province – adding another three schools from regions outside the Lower Mainland. These changes increased my pool of participants while simultaneously rendering my study a more province-wide initiative as opposed to a regionally specific one.

All the schools that I worked with offered both French immersion and Core French programs. The contacted students were from two different programs: French immersion and Core French – also known as French as a Second Language, or FSL. I worked with Grade 10, 11, and 12 students from French immersion, and Grade 10 students only from Core French. In total, I worked with 139 students: 30 from Core French and 109 from French immersion.

Table 3.4. Immersion and Core French Self-Reported Gender

Program	Female	Male	Other	Total
Core French	60%	36%	3%	30
Early French Immersion	58%	36%	6%	70
Late French Immersion	56%	36%	8%	39

Table 3.4 presents the self-reported gender identities of students. For this question, students were asked to choose between 'female,' 'male,' and 'other.' The designation 'other' was used to help students who did not feel comfortable with the gender binary but may not have otherwise been comfortable outing themselves. Of the Core French participants, 60% self-identified as female, 36% as male, and 3% chose other. Similarly, 58% of early immersion and 56% of late immersion participants identified as female and 36% of early and late immersion identified as male, with a further 6% and 8% (early and late respectively) choosing other. In total, there were 80 self-reported female participants, 51 male participants, and 8 other participants.

Table 3.5. Total Number of French Immersion Students

	FRENCH IMMERSION							
	VILLE A		VILLE B		VILLES C/D		ALL VILLES	
GRADE	**TOTAL***	**T. P.****	**TOTAL***	**T. P.****	**TOTAL***	**T. P.****	**TOTAL***	**T. P.****
10	343	0	43	2	2473	55	2859	57***
11	314	11	34	10	2366	0	2714	21***
12	296	18	26	13	2202	1	2524	30***

* Total: Total population for the years 2019 and 2020.

**TP: Total participants for this current study.

***The number of total participants adds up to 108 instead of 109, as one of the students did not state their grade. The numbers above, therefore, represent only participants with known grades, not all participants.

Table 3.6. Total Number of Core French Students

	CORE FRENCH							
	VILLE A		VILLE B		VILLES C/D		ALL VILLES	
GRADE	TOTAL*	T. P.**	TOTAL*	T. P.**	TOTAL*	T. P.**	TOTAL*	T. P.**
10	1425	0	176	0	11495	30	13096	30
11	1288	0	131	0	9121	0	10540	0
12	592	0	43	0	4244	0	4836	0

* Total: Total population for the years 2019 and 2020.

**TP: Total participants for this current study.

To help maintain anonymity, the surveyed cities were renamed ‘Ville’ and each was given a letter. Ville A corresponds to a city in northern BC; Ville B, a city from the province’s Interior region; and Villes C/D are two cities from the Lower Mainland. I chose to keep students in Villes C/D together as their overall populations (not just student populations) were similar, but collectively differed from populations of both Ville A and Ville B (this will be further examined in Chapter 4).

Tables 3.5. and 3.6 show the total number of enrolled Grade 10–12 immersion and Core French students in each city in 2019 and 2020, which were the numbers I consulted when planning my study. The tables also show the actual number of students I worked with in each grade from each city. I first used BC’s Data Catalogue under “Student Headcount by Grade Range” (BC Ministry of Education and Child Care, 2022), for the publicly available numbers of Core and immersion students. However, the Excel files for the most recent years were missing from the government’s database. I turned instead to the Ministry of Education’s branch working with French education and was given access to the numbers seen above (under the ‘Total’ section of each ‘ville’ listed in the two tables above).

The goal had been to collect a representative sample for the Core French and French immersion populations. However, this depended on how many schools and teachers were willing to have their students participate. As of the termination of data collection for this study, it is not possible to say that, statistically, my participants’ responses are representative of the population in each area.

The number of Core and immersion participants is uneven because of the changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Originally, all participants would have been in Grade 10, residing in the Lower Mainland, and with an even number of Core and

immersion students (see 3.3.3.2. for pandemic-related changes). The choice of Grade 10 was made in large part because some school districts designated the age of 15 (Grade 10) as old enough to consent to research participation without the need for parent/guardian signatures. With regards to French immersion, Grade 10 was also the last year when students would take the maximum number of French language and French-taught courses (three). According to the BC Ministry of Education, as high school progresses, fewer and fewer courses are offered in French for immersion students; by Grade 11 and 12, only about 25% of their courses are taught in French (BC Ministry of Education and Child Care, 2018). Often by their last year of secondary school, students have only French 12 (Français langue seconde) as an immersion class.

When the pandemic resulted in the closure of all schools across the province, I had very few immersion participants. I contacted any and all school districts and schools that would possibly be interested in participating. The teachers who got back to me taught Grade 11 and 12 classes, as well as Grade 10 classes, and were interested in having their older students participate as well. As a result, for the actual data collection, only Villes C/D had students from Core French, all collected before the pandemic school closures. Still, the total number of 30 Core students participating in this study is too low to be a representative sample even for Villes C/D, representing only 0.2% of the cities' overall Core populations in Grade 10. For Grade 10 French immersion students, I had a 2.2% participation rate. Comparatively, for Grade 11 this rate was much higher in Ville B, with the number of students participating from the immersion program at 29%. For Ville A, no Grade 10 students participated. Altogether, taking into account Grades 10, 11 and 12, I sampled 1.3% of the immersion population from each listed city.

The total number of immersion and Core French students (139) seen in the tables above is in reference to the web survey portion of the study. However, I first had 141 participants for the survey results. The criteria for participating were that students had to have been in the same French language program they had originally started in: e.g., immersion from kindergarten (early immersion) or Grade 6 (late immersion), or Core French (from Grade 4). Two of the 141 did not meet these conditions, and as a result, I chose to remove their responses from this current study. The remaining participants included 30 students from the Core French program, 70 who were originally in early immersion, and another 39 who started their French immersion experience in Grade 6, late immersion. As an aside, all immersion students, early or late, would have

already been mixed in their high schools by the time I began my study; however, as late immersion students are together with their peers six fewer years than early immersion students – who would have been together from kindergarten – I believed it was important to know what program students originated from, should any differences be noted in the group.

As mentioned earlier, students here are from three major regions in BC: the Lower Mainland – the most populated and ethnically diverse part of the province (as detailed in Chapter 4) – the Interior, and northern BC, the least populous part of the province. Most respondents came from the Lower Mainland. I am missing data from the Vancouver Island region of BC, unfortunately because the school districts in the area did not get back to me regarding approval for contacting schools. Therefore, while this study is mostly province wide, the responses represent the mainland areas of BC only.

In terms of how students' individual responses were labelled, I used two different modes of identification. For the surveys, the labelling system was pre-made. As stated in 3.3.3.2, participants were given a numeric code to input in the beginning of their survey, without which the survey could not be completed. To then categorize participants into the French program groups they attended, I added a further set of letters in front of the numbers (FI for French immersion, CF for Core French, then later EI for Early Immersion, and LI for Late Immersion). Then, in cases where students' individual survey responses were analyzed (see Chapters 4 and 5), I created tables where the students' unique codes as well as their French program codes were placed in front of their response. In practice, you will see something like this: FI7777: "In my opinion…"

For the in-class group discussions, which consisted of 29 groups of 3 to 5 students (from 9 classes in 6 schools), the labelling was changed. This was because I could not be sure who the in-class group discussion participants were during transcription phases. While creating the rough transcriptions, I instead labelled each group numerically, starting from 1. Then I named the speakers based on vocally assessed genders, as students did not state their preferred gender identity during recordings. I then further numbered students based on who began talking first. Each group was also categorized by the cities they were from (Ville A, B, etc.). In practice, students' labels looked like this: Ville A, Groupe 1, Garçon 1, Fille 1, etc.

While the practice of using numeric labels for both the survey and the group responses may appear very technical and impersonal – as opposed to something like generating fake names for students – my reasoning behind this is twofold. First, I never knew the names and, in some cases, never even met the students. Creating a false name increases the risk of selecting a name that matches that of the actual student or one of their classmates, thus accidentally identifying them. Second, because of the number of speakers and transcriptions (see Chapter 5), I chose to use numbers to make it easier for you, the reader, to refer back to the transcription tables in instances where conversations are described but not fully presented during analysis.

3.5. Final Comments and Limitations of the Methodology Used in *Being Immersion*

In this chapter, the main question for my current work on BC immersion students was one that allows participants to lead the narrative on who they are and how they understand themselves in terms of their newly acquired language (French). As we saw with both fully completed forms of data collection (the survey and the in-class group discussions), the need to rely on immersion students' own interpretations, both individually and as parts of their immersion class (possibly group), comes from our deep knowledge gaps on this subject. In Chapters 2 and 3, I have amalgamated strategies and worldviews from a theoretical and methodological standpoint. For example, social identity theory helps us navigate feelings of group belonging and the placement of accent as a linguistic and social identifier. Socio-constructivist worldviews permit immersion and Core French participants to answer based on context and experience rather than an objectivist paradigm. Because of the need for information – and indeed for a fully regional representation of BC's immersion population, together with expansive and detailed responses from smaller groups of participants – mixed-methods research was best suited. Given this study is taking a new direction, especially in the context of BC, my goal is to open the door to research on identity and belonging for immersion students. While the information presented here is by no means conclusive, the survey and group discussion transcription results are much broader than those presented in the two upcoming results chapters. Yet, I believe the selected questions are most representative of the current subject matter, and more importantly are necessarily open-ended for further research that, I hope, will inevitably follow this work.

There are, however, several limitations that I wish to now reflect upon. They involve both structural issues, as well as an explanation of my personal biases through which the upcoming results must be measured against. In this last section, I look inward to my own position as both a researcher and former French immersion student as they relate to both the construction of this study, and the data that was collected. I then examen the limitations of mixed methods research as they pertain to this current study. Finally, I asses the specific issues that arose while collecting data both in the web-survey and the in-class group discussions.

3.5.1. Reflecting on My Position as A Former BC Immersion Student Doing Current BC Immersion Research

In the introductory chapter of this thesis, I presented myself as a former French immersion student, immigrant and second language speaker of French. Through my most formative years, the French language has, without a doubt, played an important part in both my social and academic life. It is, therefore, of no surprise that, as I was creating this study, I was often at odds with *myself,* as a French speaker, and *other self,* as a researcher.

In this second role, I wished to keep my participants at an arms-length due to, what can otherwise be considered, a vested interest in the French language context in BC. In essence, there was, for me, an issue with my positionality in my research. Holmes (2020) describes the term positionality as “an individual’s world view and the position they adopt about a research task and its social and political context” (p. 1). Through this understanding, the very nature of my study is a reflection of myself and the parts of me, that I can, and cannot control.

In terms of what I cannot control, such as my ethnicity (Hungarian) and immigrant status, my race (white) and my gender (woman), have influenced, for example, my interest in BC immersion student profiles. The more indefinite parts of my self, such as my social context and life experiences (Chiseri-Strater,1996; Holmes, 2020) are where my interest in identity research come from, especially in the classroom setting, as this was the first place I learned both English and French. By nature, I am much more of objectivist (Hiller, 2016). This is evidenced by my original interest in finding a measurable accent in the immersion classroom, as I did for my MA research. Yet, the

study of identity, whether plural, individual, or group-based, is much more constructivist (Marine-Roig, 2015). And yet, even as I chose to pursue a constructivist approach, there were still portions of my survey, for example, forms that looked for 'exact' responses (such as 'true'/'false' statements, or 'yes'/'no' responses). As I built my study, I also felt my position change, especially with my engagement with social identity theory (SIT). Indeed, my current worldview is more closely oriented towards the group, rather than the individual – hence my use of SIT. Altogether then, the mixed-methods approach is my attempt at marrying the two ontologies that have remained and changed my personal worldviews throughout the course of this research.

As I am aware that my personal worldview can, at times be at odds with the ontology used in this study, I used supplemental long-form questions to account for more binary responses. Throughout the text, if no such follow-ups were possible, I worked to present multiple alternative explanations to answers. Or, if these questions did not exactly fit the main question of my thesis, I chose not to discuss them here.

I am also aware that the wording of my questions can affect students' responses (Holleman, 2021; Kalton et al., 1978). It is always possible that the wording of a question is a direct result of my existing worldview, and my interpretations can also be coloured by my pre-research beliefs on French immersion students. One of my approaches was to phrase a question in different ways, with different options or question formats (closed versus open-ended). This is why my survey is so long. The in-class group discussion portion of my survey was also a means of mitigating my person beliefs as the topics were kept vague, and students did not need to discuss all of the topics or spend an equal amount of time on each topic. In essence the constructivist, student-led discussions are a direct result of shifting ontologies throughout my research journey.

3.5.2. Limitations Related to Mixed Methods Research

Although I do find the mixed methods approach ideal for the purposes of my research, of course it is not without limitations.

Bryman (2007) suggests nine "barriers" to research with this third paradigm. Of these, I have found the following three are directly related to this current study.

- *Timelines (timelines associated with the two methods are out of sync, again inhibiting the integration of results)*
    - This did happen in the current research, where web survey and program identification results may come in much sooner than results for the in-class group discussions recordings. As we will see later in this chapter, data collection happened sporadically and out of order, and was on occasion changed to fit the needs of the data collection context (notably the 2020 pandemic). Changes were also made to meet the needs of teachers whose students were participating during class time.
- *Ontology (viewpoints such as objectivist and constructivist may be difficult to reconcile)*
    - Early on, this was a personal problem for me, but ultimately I found it would not be necessary to reconcile ontologies in this study. By using a pragmatic approach to research and prioritizing the research questions over ontologies, it is possible to simply use the most appropriate method per question type without entertaining an ontological debate, as I've discussed above. However, in the future, should the results of this study be revisited, ontological differences may play a major role in the reinterpretation of students' responses and future direction on immersion research.
- *Lack of exemplary studies (at the time Bryman's [2007] study was published, researchers had few mixed methods research articles to use as examples for their own work)*
    - This remains true for mixed methods research on accent, identity, and French immersion. Though I cannot suggest a direct solution, the act of acknowledging the exploratory nature of this research may help explain any issues that arise during the study. Also, hopefully, the results found here can make future mixed methods research on French immersion more prevalent, thus making similar studies more accessible for other researchers.

3.5.3. The Limits of the Online Web survey and the In-Class Group Discussions

When I began formulating this study, I knew that one of the best ways to produce quick generalizable data (Best et al., 2001; Loban et al., 2017) would be through the use of surveys, and in particular, web surveys. Speed was an issue, as originally, I was supposed to have analyzed the results of the survey to know what to ask students during the in-class group discussions. Given that I was working with students and teachers, I needed to make sure that I could take up as little of their class time as possible in order to assure that more teachers would be interested in having their students participate in the study. The positive sides of survey collection do not, however, diminish the very real possibility of participant bias (Heiervang & Goodman, 2011). Participant bias refers to the phenomenon of participants "reacting purely to what they think the researcher desires" (Farnsworth, 2019). Farnsworth (2019) goes on to explain that participant bias occurs often as a result of people wanting to present themselves in the best possible light to others around them, this includes the researcher. In the case of my study there were a few questions that asked students to rate, for example, their accents or their abilities in French. However, most of these questions were not analyzed as they did not ultimately suit the purposes of my research. To further combat against participant bias, I made sure students were aware that the survey was anonymous throughout the survey collection process. Once students completed the survey, I explained that there is no additional way for me to return to any student for clarification, as there is no trail connecting the 5-digit numbers to the students, in if a clarification to a response was warranted.

The randomized response technique is another way to combat against participant bias (Blair et al., 2015; Farnsworth, 2019; Warner, 1965). In this approach participants are asked to flip a coin, and depending on the side the coin lands on, they can either give a truthful answer, or choose to fabricate a response. The biggest issue, and what made it impossible for me to do this with my immersion and Core French participants, is that the sample size was not big enough. This is yet another limitation, as the size of the sample could create a more accurate representation of the whole group (in this case, grade 10-12 immersion students from across the province of BC). My 139 participants are not numerous enough to be a representative sample.

Another limitation of this study is related to the types of questions posed during the survey. Specifically, the questions related to students' places of birth and languages spoken at home. One of the purposes of this research, as stated earlier, is to gain a better understanding of the profile of BC immersion students. However, a place of origin, and a language spoken does not necessarily account for ethnicity (Chandra, 2006). Ideally, the best way to go about understanding a person's ethnicity would be to ask (hence the web-survey). However, due to a multitude of factors (chiefly related to approval from the University's Department of Ethics, as well as access to students through school districts after the fact), it was suggested to me that I should remove such questions of a personal nature (such as ethnicity and gender identity) in order to improve the chances of having more participants. It, of course, should be noted, information on languages spoken at home are not meant to equate to the concept of ethnicity, which, due to the kinds of questions asked during the study, cannot be accounted for. Instead, the section that pertains to the place of birth and languages spoken by students and their parents, should be taken exactly at face-value: that they present some of these students as multilingual and multicultural/having multicultural origins.

One more aspect that could be considered in terms of participant bias, is actually related to the teachers of the students. In particular, there is no way for me to know how the teachers presented the research to the students. This is especially during the months of the Covid-19 pandemic, when some teachers chose to exclusively administer the surveys without my presence at all. I cannot be sure if, for example, the teachers had incentivized students to participate – although teachers were told not to do this. Furthermore, from the contacted schools, not all teachers who taught French immersion or Core French chose to participate in the study. This is also the case for the school districts. More school districts were contacted than that chose to take part in my research.

Even though I presented myself to teachers as a former immersion student, I am still an outsider to students (Holmes, 2020). On the other hand, so are the teachers whose students are participating. The teachers, who through their position of power in the classroom (Ferguson, 2004), presented the study to students, could also have influenced how the participants responded. As a result, it is possible that the teachers who did want their students to participate had cultivated an environment amongst students that was similar across the regions in BC. In particular, it is especially difficult to

know how Core French students would have responded to the web survey questions, as I only have data for one region. It is also possible that they students who chose to participate may have had a greater interest in French immersion, or the French language in general. However, after talking to teachers, it appears that in each class, only a very small portion of the students had not taken part (the maximum in one of the classes was 5 students who chose not the take part). It should also be noted that a lack of participation does not necessarily mean a lack of investment in either the research topics, or French as a whole. As these students were minors, in almost all cases, except for one of the cities in Villes C/D, all students needed permission to take part in the study. It is possible that some of the students who had not participated were not given permission by their parents/guardians.

I had hoped to mitigate some of the issues with the web survey through the use of in-class group discussions. As stated earlier, by using this technique, I would not be participating with students during the recording process, and students would essentially be interviewing each other. For Desgroseilliers (2012) and Cavalli et al. (2003), the original purpose of group discussion was to lessen the influence of the researcher on the participants. More importantly, the students might be more comfortable with other classmates than with researchers. As a result, these participants might be more forthcoming in their responses, which could then be compared to the web survey answers.

However, one of the most salient problems with regards to my study is the lack of follow up. Once again, because of the pandemic, it became impossible to be present at all while students were recording their discussions. While I would not have anyway been in any of the groups, I would still have been able to be in the classroom circulating from group to group, should they have questions. If I had heard anything noteworthy or questionable, I could have returned at a later date to address the points with students individually. However, because of the restrictions of the pandemic, I was not able to ask for clarification in cases where answers were not clear, or when they differed from web survey responses. In these cases, I chose to give multiple possible explanations or interpretations of the answers based on other answers given by students, or on previous research on similar topics. In either case, it is possible that any interpretation is a result of my personal biases. As such, throughout this text, I have continuously stated my

position as a form immersion student and second language French speaker in the BC context in an effort to account for these biases.

I wish to, therefore, clarify how these results should be interpreted: as a survey of the participants involved. It is true that results are not representative of the three major regions questioned (Lower Mainland, Interior and Northern BC). However, the responses of immersion and Core French students do represent the cities surveyed in this study.

Chapter 4.

Results Part I: Profiling BC Immersion Students

4.1. Chapter Prologue

In this chapter, I present the first portion of my findings on immersion identity accent and group belonging. The results presented here emphasis the parallels between BC French immersion student responses and Core French student responses.

However, before I could begin such an endeavour, the issue of participant profiling needed addressing. At the end of Chapter 3, I described participant traits such as gender, and the overall number of students per region. And yet, because of a strong absence of information on topics like place of birth and languages spoken by immersion students in BC, I found it would not be enough to simply assign the profiling to the methodologies chapter (as is standard). A deeper investigation into BC immersion students' backgrounds and how they compare to Core French students (this study's de facto English-program peers) helps address previous assumptions of immersion homogeneity (for example, as seen earlier in Mady, 2017; or Davis et al., 2019). More importantly though, a work on identity and belonging such as this could certainly benefit from a further understanding of the participant population, as such results may (or indeed, may not) have an impact on the responses given by these students.

As such, Chapter 4 serves the dual purpose of describing the unique nature of immersion students outside the confines of the program. The results observed here will help further explain the regional and program similarities and differences between both immersion vs. Core students. I will also be looking at any potential differences between immersion students living in difference regions in BC. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the following results are discussed in this chapter:

- taking a profile of the participants (specifically their languages spoken at home and by their parents)
- participants view(s) on "accent"
- participants view(s) on French immersion
- participants view(s) on "identity."

4.2. Survey Results

As mentioned above, the survey results are composed from 80 questions that Core and French immersion participants answered during allocated in-class data collection sessions. These questions covered a range of topics related to profiling participants, their relationship to their French program, to the language itself, and to each other in the classroom, etc. I have chosen to focus on three key sections of the survey, two of which will later tie into the upcoming "Group Discussions Results" sub-section[13]. I begin with a breakdown of participants' self-reported descriptions, including their place of birth and the languages they and their parents/guardians spoke at home. Next, I look at individual participants' thoughts about their identities as speakers of French or as members of their French program through various forced-choice questions (true/false, multiple choice etc.). These closed questions are followed by short-answer responses to elaborate upon previous answers. Finally, I focus more explicitly on the topics of identity and accent, pertaining to questions only French immersion students were asked to answer.

4.2.1. Participant Profiles: Place of Birth and Languages Spoken

In this first results section, I begin by addressing the obvious question: what are the places of origin for these BC immersion students, and what languages do they speak?

At the time of this current study, there have been very few immersion studies in BC that expressly profiled the students in question. I believe that, by not addressing possible differences in social, cultural, and even language identity, I too would be playing into existing stereotypes of immersion students being monolingual English speakers/anglophones. Asking students to express their cultural and linguistic backgrounds also helps to highlight the region-specific nature of this study. Ultimately, undertaking a study to reimagine immersion students as being at the centre of the

[13] I believe that for the scope of one doctoral thesis, the survey results on their own would be extensive enough – perhaps even too extensive – should all questions be covered. Many of the questions are also simultaneously too broad and do not go into more detailed inquiries from participants. The recorded in-class group discussions were thus meant to fill the void left by survey questions that were otherwise not elaborated upon.

research, rather than using them as a vehicle to study the French language, requires an exploration of students themselves: who they are when they are *in* immersion but also, who they are *outside* of the program in the BC context. In the beginning of Chapter 2, we were made aware of the importance of socio-cultural contexts when examining the purposes of the French immersion program. In essence, to profile students in the BC context is to highlight the uniqueness of these students to their regional environment. It offers the opportunity to question the homogeneity of immersion students, certainly in contrast with English program peers, and also allows us to see if the existing differences or similarities – outside of the immersion context – have any impact on immersion students' affiliation with the French language and even each other.

4.2.1.1. Origins and Language Used by Participants

One of the chief criticisms that follows this language program comes from accusations of elitism and exclusivity related to the population who attend. Both academic studies and the lay media have pointed out that many families with immigrant backgrounds are often discouraged from enrolling their children into French immersion (CPF, 2010; Mady, 2015), though this is changing (Masson et al., 2022). Students from immigrant families are thought to enrol more frequently in the late immersion program than in early immersion, when they do enrol (Makropoulos, 2009). Overall, a lack of knowledge about the program and being discouraged from sending students to the program – were cited as issues by CPF (2010) and other researchers (Mady, 2017). Both found that parents', teachers' etc. ingrained misconceptions about language learning often resulted in immigrant students being discouraged from immersion enrollment. The immersion program's level of difficulty did not, however, appear to be a factor in the low rate of immigrant student enrollment.

French Immersion Across British Columbia: Ville A, Ville B and Villes C/D

Because of the relatively prevalent stereotype (observed in Chapter 2) that immersion students are mostly monolingual English speakers, I turned to my own participants in order to re-examine this proposed reality. Living in BC and in a more diverse section of the province, I found my own experiences with the program did not reflect those of the studies above. I wondered, therefore, if the situation in BC might somehow be different – or if not, what other factors might be at play when it comes to the population of immersion students in BC. This is an especially interesting topic, given

that an established commonality outside of French immersion, for example, may have an influence on how similarly students respond to the upcoming questions of identity and belonging.

To address this, I first asked students to state the country they were born in:

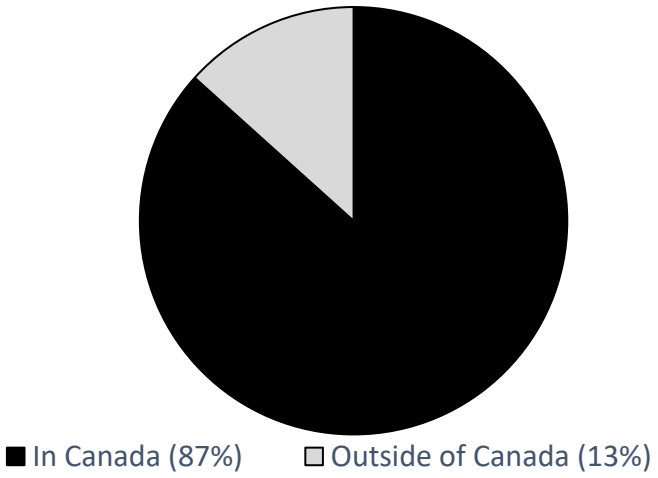


Figure 4.1. Core French Countries of Origin

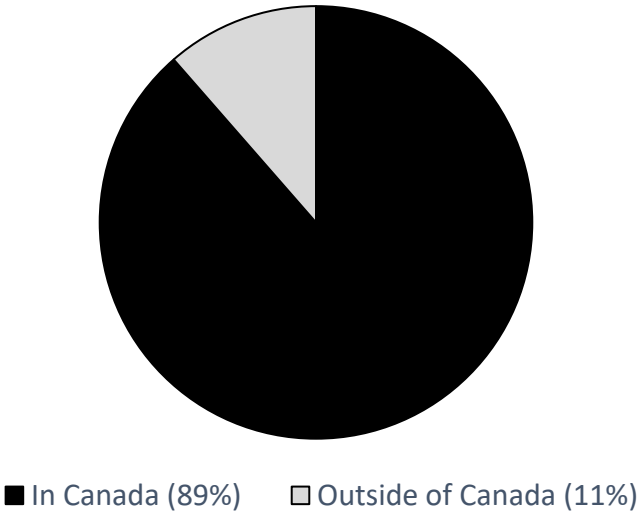


Figure 4.2. Early Immersion Countries of Origin

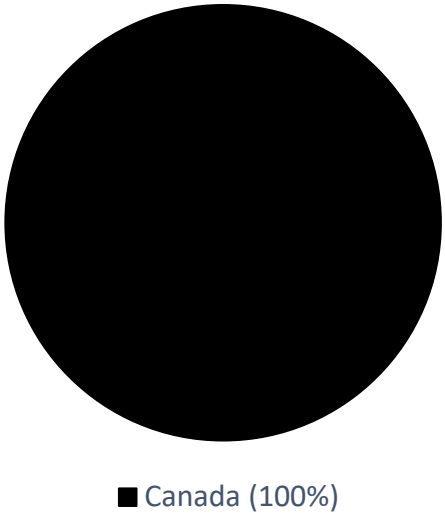


Figure 4.3. Late Immersion countries of Origin

The majority of early immersion students participating in this study claimed to have been born in Canada. Of the 70 students, 57 stated they were from BC, 1 student stated they were from Ontario, 1 from Nova Scotia, and 2 from Quebec (though they did not consider themselves to be Francophones). Among late immersion participants, there were even fewer Canadian varieties with 37 of the total 39 stating they were born in BC, while the 2 remaining students were born in Alberta and Ontario. For the few participants not born in the country, all from early immersion participants, 57% immigrated from East Asian countries (specifically 2 from Taiwan,[14] 1 from China, 1 from the Philippines, and 1 from Japan). The 3 remaining students were from the United States, Brazil, and Serbia.

The figures above show that BC participants from French immersion do seem to fit the existing narrative that there are many more Canadian-born students in the program, in particular when looking at late immersion vs. Core French. However, we

[14] For this study, Taiwan and China have been separated as two countries. This is not a political statement or position that I take explicitly. Regardless of political or social beliefs regarding the state of Taiwan, these participants actively chose Taiwan as a country of origin, and I am choosing to maintain this to respect my participants' answers and beliefs.

must consider that, as stated before, the Core French participants came from only one part of the province. If we focus only on the immersion students from the same area, we come up with the following results: 40 out of 46 early immersion students born in Canada (87%) with 13% from outside of Canada, and all late immersion students (11 in total) from BC. The early immersion percentages line up with the Core French results (see Figure 4.3), while it appears that these late immersion students were the least ethnically diverse. Such results are, so far, in opposition with the studies cited above that show late immersion students are more likely to come from immigrant populations than are early immersion students.

Yet, location of birth is still not the end of the story. And indeed, a given country does not necessarily relate to a common cultural or linguistic heritage. In the case of my study, being born in Canada does not make one an Anglophone or even a Francophone. Therefore, there is another issue to consider before moving on from this section: languages spoken at home.

Core and Immersion: Languages Spoken at Home by Participants and their Parents

Ideally, the questions about ethnic origin would have been directly posed in either the survey or during the group discussions portion of this study. However I wanted to both save time keep the focus on the participants rather than their families. I, therefore, chose to ask one question related to their personal language use at home, and only one question related to immersion and Core participants' parents/guardians. The focus, therefore, is on the number of languages students speak at home and the number of languages spoken by their parents, used as an indicator of further diversity in the Core and immersion programs. Indeed, studies have shown that by the third generation, the initial language spoken by those who first emigrated would be all but lost, with few maintaining bilingual status (Alba et al., 2002; Fillmore, 2000; Portes & Hao, 1998; Toppelbert & Collins, 2010).

It is important to note that heritage language maintenance is on the rise in Canada with some studies suggesting that previously lost heritage languages are being re-learned by later generations (Duff, 2017). However, I am unsure if the languages mentioned by students are ones they are relearning (with their parents) or ones they have spoken from birth, and still do. However, I was not able to find any more recent

studies in Canada about the percentages of third generation heritage languages speakers. Furthermore, Harrison (2000), writing for Statistics Canada, stated that immigrants in endogamous marriages were 3 times more likely to pass down their heritage languages than were immigrants that were married to someone who did not speak the same language as them. However, no comment was made regarding second generation speakers' rates of passing down heritage languages. About 76% of immigrants in endogamous marriages speak their languages with their children, as opposed to only 32% of heritage languages speakers in endogamous marriages (Nagy, 2021). We can still assume, then, that those who profess to speaking other languages at home or who have parents who speak other languages at home are more likely to be second generation (or in the case of the parents, first generation).

Participants were asked to write down the number of languages they used at home and the number of languages spoken by their parents. They were not given a list of options, nor were they prompted by any lay forms of language categorizations (e.g., Asian languages, European languages, etc.). More explicitly, the questions participants were asked to answer were as follows:

- What language(s) do you speak at home?
- What language(s) do your parents speak at home?

The latter question did not address guardians because participants were already informed that parents and guardians would be categorized together. During the data collection sessions, when students filled out the surveys, I was able to clarify that question in those instances where I was physically or virtually present. When I was not able to attend, teachers were sent detailed instructions that specified this information. The results are summarized in the following two tables below:

Table 4.1. Languages Spoken by Immersion and Core French Students

French program	English only	2+ languages (with English included)	1 language (without English)	2+ languages (without English)	Total participants
Core French	18	10 • *Cantonese* • **Chinese • Italian • Korean • Mandarin • **Persian • Punjabi • Tagalog • Tamil	1 • Russian	1 • Cantonese and Mandarin	30
Early Immersion	41	27 • ASL • Cantonese • **Chinese • **Filipino • French • German • Hindi • Japanese • Korean • Malay • Mandarin • Portuguese • Romanian • Serbian • Shanghainese • Spanish • Tagalog • Taiwanese	2 • Mandarin • Serbian	0	70
Late Immersion	28	11 • Farsi • French • Hindi • Japanese • Korean • Mandarin • Punjabi • Spanish	0	0	39

*The above order for both Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 is alphabetic and does not reflect the number of individuals speaking these languages per section.

**Any term with two stars (**) are for more generic language names used by participants (ie: Chinese vs. Mandarin or Cantonese; Filipino vs. Tagalog etc.)

Table 4.2. Language Spoken by Immersion/Core Students' Parents/Guardians

Parents/ guardians	English only	2+ languages (with English included)	1 language (without English)	2+ languages (without English)	Total participants
Core French	9	16 • Chinese • Filipino • Hungarian • Italian • **Persian • Punjabi • Swedish • Swiss-German • Tagalog • Tamil • Vietnamese	3 • Cantonese • Korean • Russian	2	30
Early Immersion	36	26 • ASL • Cantonese • **Chinese • Farsi • *Filipino • French • German • Hindi • Japanese • Korean • Malay • Mandarin • Portuguese • Romanian • Serbian • Shanghainese • Slovak • Spanish • Taiwanese	8 • Mandarin • Romanian • Serbian • Spanish • Tagalog	0	70
Late Immersion	28	9 • Farsi • Finnish • German • Hindi • Japanese • Korean • Mandarin • **Mandarin Shanghainese • Punjabi • Spanish	2 • French • Spanish	0	39

*Any term with two stars (**) are for more generic language names used by participants (ie: Filipino vs. Tagalog etc.)

** As Shanghainese is a separate language from Mandarin, it is not clear if the participant meant that they speak both Mandarin and Shanghainese, if they spoke a variety of Mandarin from Shanghai, or something else.

As indicated by the first table above, for the participants in the Core French group, there were 11 distinct languages mentioned by participants, excluding English. Of these languages, the most frequently spoken by Core French participants were Chinese dialects (Cantonese – 2 speakers, Mandarin – 1 speaker, and Chinese (non-descript) – 1 speaker), and Italian (2 speakers). Of the Core French participants, 60% claim to speak only English at home, and 33% stated that they spoke English as well as a second language at home.

With regard to their parents/guardians, Core French participants mentioned a total of 15 distinct languages, excluding English. Of these, the most frequently cited language or language groups were, again, Chinese: Cantonese mentioned 4 times, Mandarin mentioned twice, and Chinese (non-descript) mentioned once. This was followed by Italian and Tagalog/Filipino, stated 3 times each, and Punjabi, mentioned twice. About 53% of Core French parents/guardians speak more than one language at home, including English, while only 30% speak English only. Ten percent said they speak only a language other than English at home (Cantonese, Korean, and Russian), and one participated stated that their parents spoke Mandarin and Cantonese at home exclusively, totalling almost 17% of Core participants whose parents reportedly spoke no English at home.

Returning to the French immersion participants, beginning with Early immersion students (excluding English), Table 4.1 shows that participants claimed to speak a total of 18 different languages. Of these languages, the most frequently cited was Mandarin (8 times in total). The second most mentioned language was Serbian, with 4 participants stating they spoke the language at home either exclusively (1 participant), or in tandem with English (3 participants). Together with the four Serbian speakers, a total of 11 students speak continental European languages (Romanian, Serbian, Portuguese, Spanish, and German) which accounts for nearly 16% of the participants in this study.[15] When added together, these languages account for only about 4% of the total populations of Ville A, B, and C/D. This is much higher than the overall populations, which tend toward East Asian languages speakers, particularly in Villes C/D. This sample does, however, indicate that early immersion participants are a more diverse

[15] French was excluded from this count as the language has historic roots in Canada that could be otherwise accounted for.

group than the stereotype for these populations, but in a different way from the overall population. My findings, in which non-French/English European language speakers are disproportionately enrolled in French immersion, have been noted in a 2022 study (Masson et al., 2022). Here, pre-existing positive attitudes toward plurilingualism found among eastern European language speakers in particular (which include Serbian and Romanian, as seen in my study) are a likely reason why these parents choose to enrol their children in the immersion program.

Returning to participant responses, this diversity was mirrored by (and was even somewhat greater for) the parents of early immersion students. Excluding English, 20 distinct languages were cited by early immersion participants, including ALS. Specifically, 26 students stated that other than English, their parents spoke at least one other language at home (slightly over 37%), with Mandarin cited the most often (by 8 participants) followed by French and Serbian (5 participants' parents/guardians). Just over 11% stated that their parents used languages other than English exclusively at home.

When it comes to late immersion, though such students are often thought of as more diverse, it appears these participants were more or less linguistically homogenous with 72% speaking only English at home – slightly more than the 54% of late immersion participants' parents who only spoke English at home. A further 28% spoke at least one other language together with English at home (with 23% of their parents speaking 2+ languages, including English). Just as was seen for early immersion participants, 27% of parents – an over-representation for the regions – spoke continental European languages. Only 2 participants stated that their parents exclusively used a language other than English at home, while none of the late immersion participants spoke languages that did not also include English.

The above results appear to starkly contrast with those of Core and immersion students in terms of linguistic diversity. However, it is worth remembering that, especially for the notable lack of diversity of late immersion participants, geographic region might play a stronger role than any preconceived social beliefs on the immersion program. Indeed, as mentioned, Core French data was gathered only in what would otherwise be a much more diverse region overall (BC's Lower Mainland), while early and late French immersion included areas that, according to census data, are much more homogenous.

As such, if the data were split to focus solely on the regions where Core French participants reside (58 early immersion and late immersion participants to the 30 Core French participants) then the results for early/late immersion would be as follows:

- 47% English-only speakers
    - 22 early/5 late
- 50% Other language + English speakers
    - 23 early/6 late
- 3% Other language only speakers
    - 2 early/0 late

For their parents, the following:

- 32% English-only speakers
    - 19 early/5 late
- 47% Other language + English speakers
    - 21 early/6 late
- 12% Other language only speakers
    - 7 early/0 late

If taken this way, early and late participants are somewhat more diverse than their Core French counterparts. However, to fully analyze the extent to which Core and immersion students differ from each other linguistically (if they do at all), tests were run to assess for statistical significance. The purpose of these significance tests was to further ascertain the similarities and differences between Core and immersion students that could then better explain the responses to the forthcoming survey questions on French language identification, use, and feelings of belonging.

In general, all the statistical analysis was carried out using SAS Education Statistical software. To test for associations between French program (Early, Late, and French as a Second Language [FSL]) and questions 1–19 , Fisher's exact tests using Monte Carlo estimation were used. Standard Chi Squares tests could not be trusted due to small-expected cell counts for many of the bi variate tables. Starting with question 1 (seen below in Table 4.3), the following analysis examines the self-reported languages spoken by participants:

- *English language combination* represents English-only household use.

- *Other language/s + English combination* represents English spoken together with other languages (e.g., 1 or more languages including English).
- *Other language combination* combines the rest of the variations: 1 language used other than English and 2+ languages used other than English, the combination with English and ASL, and the combination with English and French, if applicable.

As an aside, the categorization *Other language combination* is somewhat different from the previous percentage points discussed above, due to the addition of ASL and French/English. However, this was done to better account for the varieties and to split English and French combinations from the main two groups as they represent a more federal linguistic phenomenon (rather than provincial). As well, they occurred very infrequently, as did ASL combinations. Such changes to the categorizations were not found to have any impact on overall differences.

The French programs are represented as follows for this question: Core French with FSL, and immersion programs were split into early and late – early immersion as EARLY_IM and late immersion as LATE_IMM. The question name new_Q1_LANG_STUDENT refers to the survey question where students were asked to indicate what language or languages they personally spoke at home.

Table 4.3. Q1_LANG_ STUDENT: Languagues Spoken By Core (FSL) and Immersion Participants

Table of FRENCH_PROGRAM_revised by new_Q1_LANG_STUDENT				
FRENCH_PROGRAM_revised	**new_Q1_LANG_STUDENT**			
Frequency Row Pct Col Pct	**Other language combinations**	**English only combination**	**Other language/s + English combination**	**Total**
FSL	2 6.67 22.22	18 60.00 20.69	10 33.33 23.26	30
IMM	7 6.42 77.78	69 63.30 79.31	33 30.28 76.74	109
Total	9	87	43	139

To explain the general breakdown of these statistical tables, in Table 4.3 (above), cell 1 (FSL x 30), the top number '2' corresponds to the total number of participants who selected from the "other language combinations" categorization (as clarified above). Just below, '6.67' is the row percentage, or the percentage from the total number of Core French participants (30 participants), while '22.22' is the column percentage, or the percentage from the total number of participants in all categories to have selected this combination. That is, the total of 9 represents 9 participants from Core, early, and late immersion who all chose options that correspond to the category *Other language combination*. Another point to note is the combination of late and early immersion into one category. When early and late participant responses were compared for the question related to language use at home, no statistical significance was found (with p= 0.4148, see Appendix A, Table A1. for full statistical breakdown). In general, this was the case for most questions, so a decision was made to combine the immersion groups for all questions comparing Core French participants where no statistical significance was found between early and late immersion groups.

Returning specifically to Table 4.3, we can see a very similar 63% and 60% of Core and immersion participants stating that they speak English exclusively. A further 33% and 30% of Core and immersion students selected from the *other language/s + English combination* category. To test for significance, I used Monte Carlo estimation as the Chi-squared value was not found to be accurate enough for such small cell counts in this bi variate table as well (meaning less than 5 selections/responses in at least one cell; see FSL x *Other language combinations*).

Table 4.4. Statistical analysis Tables for Q1_LANG_ STUDENT

Monte Carlo Estimate for the Exact Test	
Pr <= P	0.9449
99% Lower Conf Limit	0.9407
99% Upper Conf Limit	0.9490
Number of Samples	20000
Initial Seed	245068676

Table 4.4. indicates that the p-value =0.94 is not statistically significant at the 0.05 alpha level of significance. That is, once again we can reject the null hypothesis

and more firmly conclude there is no significant difference regarding the linguistic diversity of these current participants.

After analyzing the participants themselves regarding languages used at home, the next question looks at the difference between Core and immersion parent groups for the same question. Upon first analysis, a significant difference between Core and immersion parents/guardians was found (p. = 0.0136, and p. = 0.0110; see Appendix A, Tables A2., and A3. for Chi-Squared and Monte Carlo Estimate Table results respectively for Chi-squared and Monte Carlo Estimate Table results), suggesting that, at home, there may be a difference in the level of linguistic diversity between Core and immersion participants, even if that was not found to be the case between the students themselves.

However, earlier in this section, I had already noted Core responses came only from Ville C/D, and that the majority of self-reported English-only households appeared to be from the less diverse regions where Ville A and Ville B participants came from. I wanted to compare the Core French participants from Villes C/D with the immersion group from the same area to see if any significant differences could be noted in this case as well. Such a difference could, in turn, be a better indication of an actual difference between groups, even with the respective regions taken into account.

Table 4.5. Q2_LANG_PARENT_VILLE_C/D_ONLY: Languages Spoken By Core and Immersion Students' Parents in the Lower Mainland Region of Villes C/D

Table of FRENCH_PROGRAM_revised by new_Q2_LANG_PARENT_VILLES_C/D_ONLY				
FRENCH_PROGRAM_revised	**What language(s) do your parents use at home?**			
Frequency Row Pct Col Pct	**Other language combinations**	**English only combination**	**Other language/s + English combination**	**Total**
FSL	5 16.67 31.25	9 30.00 29.03	16 53.33 41.03	30
IMM	11 19.64 68.75	22 39.29 70.97	23 41.07 58.97	56
Total	16	31	39	86

On the other hand, Table 4.5. above suggests a much closer representation of responses between Core and immersion participants. The follow-up Chi-squared test further corroborated the null-hypothesis (with a p-value of 0.5466; see Appendix A, Table A4. for Chi-square results)for Chi-square results). This would suggest that in fact there is no significant difference for any of the levels (Other language combinations, English only combination, or other language/s + English combination) between Core and immersion participants' parents.

Based on this alone, I conclude that in terms of linguistic diversity, any differences among these participants are more closely related to geographic area rather than to the French program. Ideally, more Core French participants from Northern BC and the Interior of the province (as well as larger numbers as a whole for all programs) would be necessary to get a broader and possibly more generalizable, understanding of BC's French program populations. However, this is already a step toward our understanding that perhaps BC's immersion programs are more diverse than the initial estimates found in scholarly articles and the media.

Having reviewed the above tables and statistical analysis regarding the languages spoken by immersion and Core French students, it is important to return to the topics of identity belonging and accent. Indeed, the statistical information appears to drive far off into a tangent that has left these points behind. To summarize, I have noted a difference in the number of English language speakers among Core and immersion students, especially with regard to late immersion. However, after a closer look, I found these differences to be not significant, especially when the immersion and Core categories were analyzed in their shared region of Villes C/D. This was the case for the students as well as the parents of these participants. It would appear then, that we are dealing with a very similar set of respondents that, overall, reflect the linguistic diversity of the regions they live in. I argue these findings are significant, because, as we are about to see in upcoming sections of this chapter, the responses of immersion students on topics of acceptance, friendship, the French language, and accent will prove to be significantly more similar to those of their program peer group: certainly, much more so than to the Core French participants of this study.

This means that pre-existing homogeneity in the immersion group cannot account for similarities in responses because this groups was, in fact, just as diverse as

the Core group. Mindful that Core students are a stand-in for English program peers, the results I am presenting here are more likely to be a product of the programs these students are in rather than their external social and linguistic backgrounds. It appears that the French immersion environment has a greater impact on students' demonstrations of identity, feelings of belonging, and relationship to French than factors of home language and ethnicity.

4.2.2. Language and Identity in the Classroom: An Individual Participant Perspective on Accent

4.2.2.1. Questions related to accents/pronunciation

On a scale of 1 (little importance) to 7 (very important) how important for you is French pronunciation for language proficiency?

To begin with, the above title (*Questions related to accents/pronunciation*) is somewhat misleading as it appears to use accent and pronunciation interchangeably. To be clear, I am not taking the position in this study that the two are one and the same; rather, this highlights the general public's understanding of these terms. To further emphasize this, I begin this section with a breakdown of participants' own understanding of what accent is. To first gauge students' understandings of accents, I asked participants to define what the term means to them. Below, I offer a sample of the answers submitted by students from the Core, early, and late immersion groups. Indeed, many participants focused on sound-related definitions:

The way people sound when speaking
I define accent as the way you speak for the specific language.
I define accents based off tone
a mode of pronunciation of a language distinctive to a place
According to me, the definition to accent is not sounding like local, could be mispronouncing some words.
The native accent of people that are from the country have
An accent is the way people from different places sound when they talk
different ways people speak their language
N/A
I believe an accent is something that other people hear with the same language that is slightly different. For example, the British have an accent that they don't hear themselves with it but others do hear it.

Figure 4.4. Sample responses from Core French speakers on the definition of accent

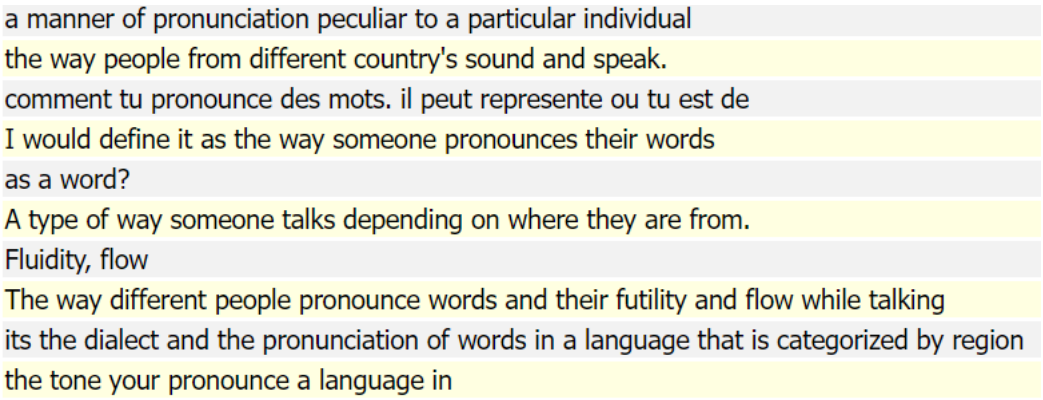


Figure 4.5. Sample responses from Early immersion speakers on the definition of accent

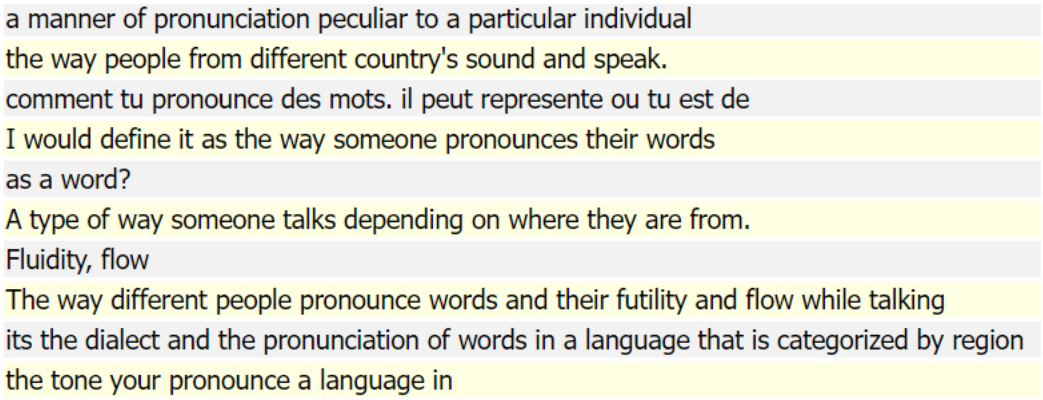


Figure 4.6. Sample responses from Late immersion speakers on the definition of accent

Despite never being mentioned in the question, the term “pronunciation” appears often among participants’ responses, showing they believed the two terms to be linked. Even more specifically, we can see participants conflating accent with the practice of “having an accent”: such as in Figure 4.4 above, where a Core French participant defined accent as “not sounding like a local, could be mispronouncing some words,” or in Figure 4.5, where an early immersion participant suggested that an accent is “a residue of ones [*sic*] mother tongue when speaking other languages.” While some participants did introduce ideas like dialects (see Figure 4.5) it was often in tandem with terms like “sounds,” “talking,” “tone,” “fluidity,” and the ever-present “pronunciation.”

Because I did not know how students would answer the above question, and because the phonetics of the language were built into the original structure of this study (see Chapter 3 for an explanation of changes made to my research), pronunciation and accent were often separated for nearly all subsequent questions. Returning to the first

questions to be examined in this sub-section, I wanted to see what value these students placed on accent, and in particular the pronunciation component of accent (which, as we saw earlier, was often thought of, by students, as being one and the same).

As this study places a high value on the idea that immersion students may have their own unique accent and that this accent forms as a result of an emerging identity among this group, it was important to gauge what value all these participants placed on pronunciation; this was seen as going hand-in-hand with how these participants understood what "accent" was to them. The first question examined in this sub-section, therefore, asked participants to use a Likert scale of 1 to 7 to rate the importance of French pronunciation when it comes to being perceived as proficient in the language. In this case, proficiency was explained to mean, in lay terms, how 'well' someone spoke a language (wellness being perceived by participants as meaning accurate or even native/native-like). This question played on existing assumptions about so-called language correctness and was meant to gauge the weight participants placed on pronunciation. For this question there were 137 respondents from the total 139, (with 2 participants who did not answer this question).

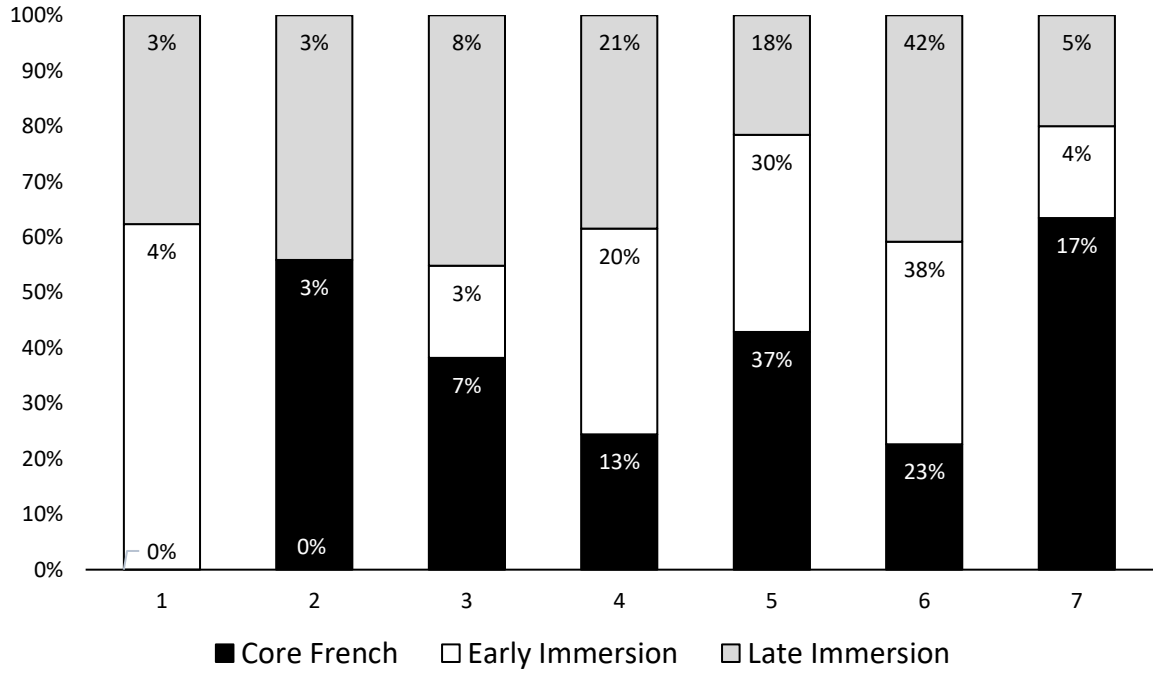


Figure 4.7. Importance of Pronunciation per French program (Core, Early, Late)

The above graph shows that in general, participants concentrated their selections between scale points 4 (13% for Core, 20% for early immersion, and 21% for late immersion); 5 (37% for Core, 30% for early, and 18% for late); and 6 (23%, 38%, and 42% for Core, early, and late immersion participants respectively). Participants rarely ever found pronunciation to be the least important factor for language proficiency, with 0% of late immersion participants selecting 1. Conversely, early and Core French participants were not likely to consider pronunciation to be the most important factor, with only 4% and 5% of early and Core participants selecting 7 respectively. Late immersion participants were more likely to select pronunciation as the most important factor in language proficiency, with 17% making this selection.

Table 4.6. Q8_FREN_PRON: On a scale of 1 (least) to 7 (most) How important is French pronunciation to Core and Immersion participants, Monte Carle Estimate Results

Monte Carlo Estimate for the Exact Test	
Pr <= P	0.1019
99% Lower Conf Limit	0.0963
99% Upper Conf Limit	0.1074
Number of Samples	20000
Initial Seed	735314134

Overall, as can be seen in Table 4.6, no significant difference was found between Core French participants and the immersion group (p-value = 0.01019). Nor was there a difference between the immersion groups (p-value = 0.5763; see Appendix A, Table A5. for table results). As a whole, it appears these participants do value pronunciation as a measure of language proficiency.

Questions on Immersion vs. Core French vs. Francophone accents (participant opinions)

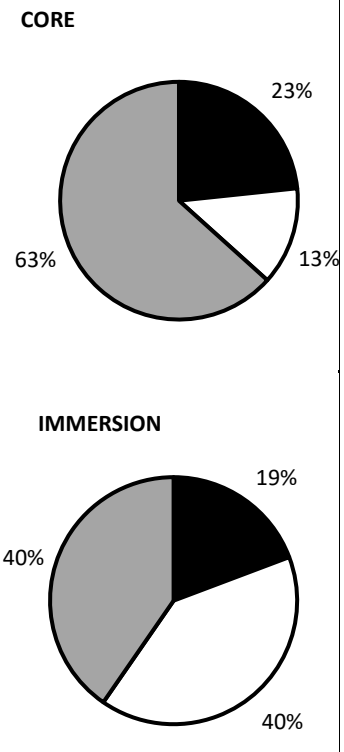
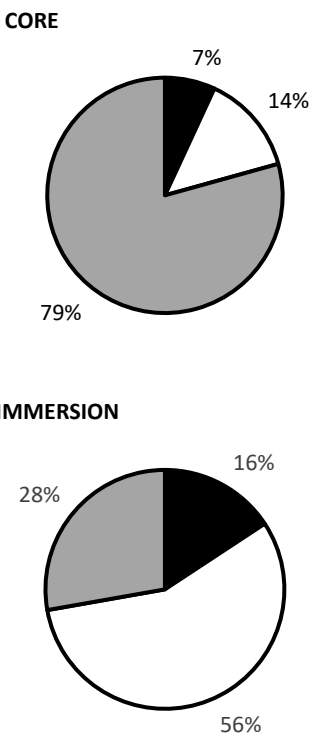
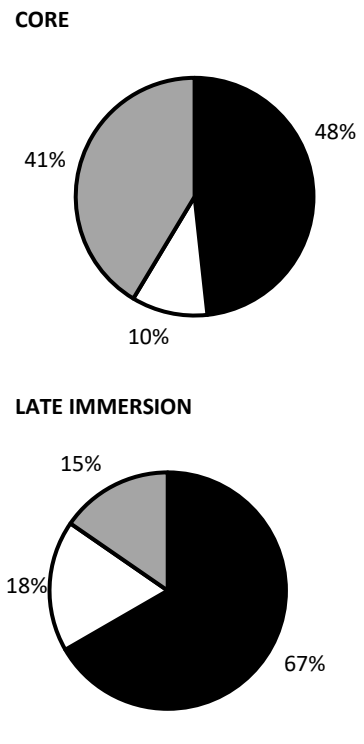
As seen above, the similarities between Core and immersion responses suggest some connection between the language program groups as well. However, for this reason, I found the responses to four other questions to be somewhat unexpected, especially with regards to perceptions of accents, and to attitudes related to ‘immersionese’.

In three subsequent questions, participants reacted to the following statements: *I have noticed that French immersion students sound similar (have similar accents) to*

- Core French students (question 38 of the survey)
- Francophone students (question 39)
- each other, or other French immersion students (question 40).

These three questions were ostensibly TRUE/FALSE questions; however, I found this binary to be limiting. In particular, I wanted to take into consideration the possibility that participants may not know or had not thought about pronunciation differences or similarities. I would not have known how important pronunciation would be to these students, and therefore, asking them to select from two options might have forced their hand and artificially inflated one selection over another. For this reason, the options participants had for each statement were TRUE/FALSE/NEITHER (the latter meaning “I have not noticed either way”). In this way, I hoped to encourage only those participants who were more certain of their answer to select between the traditional binary options, leaving the rest to select the more ambivalent option.

Table 4.7. Pie Charts on What Early/Late/Core Believe About Their Own Pronunciation

Core and Immersion Same	Immersion and Francophone Same	Immersion and Immersion Same
		

The above graphs first show Core vs. immersion results (for questions 38 and 39) and then Core vs. early vs. late results. For q38/39, the immersion groups were

combined because, when testing for significance between early and late immersion participants, the Chi-squared tests revealed p-values of 0.946 (question 38) and 0.229 (question 39), suggesting that the null-hypothesis of no significance should be accepted. That is, there was no significant difference between the early and late group responses (see Appendix A, Table A6., and A7. for significance tables).

Looking first at question 38, when participants were asked whether they believed immersion and Core French students sounded similar, a comparable percentage of immersion and Core participants selected TRUE (19% and 23% respectively). The divergence happened between the FALSE and NEITHER options. Here, immersion respondents were more likely to choose FALSE, but an equal number were likely to say they had not noticed either way (about 40%). Core French participants were much more likely to state that they had not noticed either way (63%). In general, it appears that immersion participants were still more certain that Core and immersion students did *not* sound similar (FALSE) than certain that they *did* sound similar (TRUE).

Table 4.8. Question 38: *I have noticed that Core French and Immersion students sound similar* – Chi-Squared Results

Statistic	DF	Value	Prob
Chi-Square	2	7.9096	0.0192
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	2	8.8334	0.0121
Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square	1	1.5706	0.2101
Phi Coefficient		0.2385	
Contingency Coefficient		0.2320	
Cramer's V		0.2385	

As seen in Table 4.8, these differences between Core and immersion selections were also statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.019 as found after performing a Chi-squared test. It appears Core participants were more likely to have not noticed immersion and Core accents, possibly indicating that, while all participating groups did value pronunciation, they perhaps did not think about these issues as readily as French immersion participants had done. My suggestion for such an assertion stems from how much more immersion students had actively chosen FALSE over TRUE. On the other hand, immersion NEITHER/FALSE selections being split exactly down the middle (44 respondents for both options) may also imply that immersion students, too, were not as heavily invested in immersion/Core comparisons. Especially for questions 39 and 40, the

immersion participant responses were much more likely to favour only one of the two options. I speculate this may be due in part to the original purpose of French immersion as a program that would more effectively teach French than the existing Core French/FSL program, as well as better help bridge the gap with native-speaking Francophones. This makes sense, given how the majority of immersion studies have proven to favour comparisons between immersion and Francophones (as opposed to immersion vs. Core French students), especially in the 1990s (as discussed in Chapter 2).

This possible explanation for Core/immersion differences in responses is made even more apparent in question 39, where nearly 57% of immersion students felt sure enough that immersion and Francophone students did not sound similar to each other. Only about 16% and 28% selected TRUE and NEITHER respectively. This contrasts with the Core French participants, where 23 out of 30 were not sure either way regarding immersion/Francophone accent similarities: only 2 participants picked TRUE while the rest (4) selected FALSE.

Table 4.9. Question 39: *I have noticed that Francophone and Immersion students sound similar* – Monte Carlo Estimate Results

Monte Carlo Estimate for the Exact Test	
Pr <= P	<.0001
99% Lower Conf Limit	<.0001
99% Upper Conf Limit	0.0002
Number of Samples	20000
Initial Seed	1932374983

Table 4.9 above firmly demonstrates that the differences between immersion and Core French selections were significantly different, where the Monte Carlo estimates show a p-value of <.0001. In the table above table's Monte Carlo estimate results are still more suitable as some cells, chiefly those found under the FSL (Core French) category, had fewer than 5 respondents. But overall, the significant differences highlight how much more sure immersion participants were in their selections.

However, the above results may not be entirely surprising. Core French students are generally not mixed with immersion students, even when they are in the same schools. In the case of Francophone students, these current Core French participants

may not have had any contact with that group at all. Conversely, immersion students are caught in the middle, being aware of both French-as-a-second-language students and Francophones. It is, therefore, interesting to see that for question 40 regarding immersion students sounding similar to each other, immersion participants were not more united in their selections. As seen earlier above in Table 4.7, the vast majority of both early and late immersion respondents had been sure enough that immersion students do sound similar to each other, with 84% of early and 67% of late participants selecting TRUE. Only about 3% of early immersion participants selected FALSE, in contrast to nearly 18% of late immersion respondents. Out of the rest of the respondents, nearly 13% (early) and 15% (late) stated that they had not noticed either way.

Table 4.10. Question 40: *I have noticed that Immersion students sound similar to each other/other immersion peers* – Monte Carlo Estimate Results

Monte Carlo Estimate for the Exact Test	
Pr <= P	0.0168
99% Lower Conf Limit	0.0145
99% Upper Conf Limit	0.0191
Number of Samples	20000
Initial Seed	154917533

The above table shows significance testing between early and late immersion responses regarding the similarity of accents between immersion students. The difference between groups does not appear to be great percentage wise, and their answers are skewed toward TRUE, but the differences are still significant, with a p-value of 0.01678. For this reason, the immersion groups were kept divided to visually represent the differences among all three French language program groups.

When compiling and analyzing these findings, the results came honestly as a surprise to me. From a very personal and thus anecdotal perspective, as a former late immersion student I had noticed that – as we mixed with early immersion students in high school – my former elementary school classmates (also late immersion students) sounded somewhat different from other early immersion students. This difference was never noted by either my high school teachers or later, my university professors in my undergraduate years. The significance differences between early and late immersion

students in this study was found to be between the 'false' selection. Only 2 early immersion participants from the total 70 stated they did not believe immersion students sounded similar to each other (3%), while 7 from the 39 late immersion respondents thought the same, accounting for almost 18% for the late immersion group. I will say that the percentages are not large enough, nor are the number of participants equal enough, to be representative of the general population of late immersion vs. early immersion students' thoughts on whether or not all immersion students sound similar to each other. However, the discrepancy does raise some questions. It could be that late immersion students hear a difference that early immersion students are not as aware of. Or, we could be witnessing some internalized ideas associated with the differences between early and late immersion students.

Still, the majority of early and late immersion participants of this study did believe that immersion students generally sound like, or have accents similar to, each other. On the other hand, Core French respondents were much more likely to have selected the more ambivalent response of *'I have not noticed either way,'* with 41% or 12 participants from the 29 who completed the question having made this selection. It should be noted that out of the three questions (38, 39, and 40), this was the first time a response other than '*I have not noticed either way'* claimed the highest percentage among the Core French group, with just over 48% having selected TRUE. It is possible that Core French participants made this selection because this is what they expect to be true. On the other hand, Core participants might have noticed that their immersion peers sound similar to one another when they speak French, just as the majority of immersion participants had done. However, given how close the '*true'* and *'I have not noticed either way'* percentages are, it may simply be that these students were guessing.

Out of the results noted in Table 4.7., the most interesting for this study is how the immersion students reacted to questions about how they 'sound' in comparison to other French program students. For question 40, most of the late and early immersion participants (though significantly different in percentage amounts) seemed to think that immersion students do sound like other immersion students. As these questions did not have follow-up short-answer questions, it is not possible to know why these immersion students believed this. However, when creating this survey, I had speculated that immersion students would be more aware of how they sound when speaking French since language is an important topic in the immersion program – not just in French class

but in all other French languages courses. Furthermore, the speculation that immersion students sound similar to each other was commented on during my master's thesis work (Poljak, 2015) and even much earlier. Though not exactly pertaining to the context of accents or sounds of French, the idea that French immersion students speak a type of interlanguage (Selinker et al.,1975), or even the term "immersionese" coined by Roy Lyster (1987), references similarities among all immersion students.

Terms like "immersionese" were often used to denote the inefficacy or "incompleteness" of immersion students as speakers of French, showing that they were not quite there yet or not native enough to actually be considered French speakers. As such, "immersionese" (or in French, *le français de l'immersion*) can be seen as pejorative as it promotes the idea of immersion students' French as "lesser than." Seeing that immersion participants also showed interest in pronunciation (see Q8_FREN_PRON, and Figure 4.8) and had firm beliefs about the similarities between immersion accents, I was interested to see if my participants had heard of "immersionese," and if so, what they thought of it.

Table 4.11. Question 41: Have you heard of the term 'immersionese' or 'français de l'immersion'?

Table of FRENCH_PROGRAM by Q16_IMMERSIONESE			
FRENCH_PROGRAM	**Q16_IMMERSIONESE**		
Frequency Row Pct Col Pct	**No**	**Yes**	**Total**
EARLY_IM	26 37.68 50.98	43 62.32 75.44	69
LATE_IMM	25 64.10 49.02	14 35.90 24.56	39
Total	51	57	108
Frequency Missing = 1			

Table 4.12. Question 41: *Have you heard of the term 'immersionese' or 'français de l'immersion'?* – Chi-squared results

Statistic	DF	Value	Prob
Chi-Square	1	6.9792	0.0082
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	1	7.0434	0.0080
Continuity Adj. Chi-Square	1	5.9593	0.0146
Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square	1	6.9146	0.0085
Phi Coefficient		-0.2542	
Contingency Coefficient		0.2464	
Cramer's V		-0.2542	

Staying with immersion results only, the above tables look at early and late immersion responses to question 41: *Have you heard of the term "immersionese" or 'Français de l'immersion'?* This was a simple binary yes/no style question that demonstrated an almost inverse set of percentages for each group. Nearly 38% of early immersion respondents stated they had not heard of this term, while slightly over 64% of late immersion participants stated the same. Conversely, about 62% of early immersion students in this study, versus just under 36% of late immersion respondents, had heard of the term. This difference was found to be significant following a Chi-squared test with a p-value of 0.0082. It is very interesting that early immersion participants were more likely than late immersion participants to have heard of "immersionese" and also more likely to consider that immersion students sounded similar to one another. This could mean that, having been longer in the program (starting from kindergarten), early immersion students would have had more exposure to existing ideas surrounding French immersion and the way immersion students are thought to speak French. Considering the otherwise negative connotations of *français de l'immersion*, if these students had heard of the term, I would have expected them to have equally negative thoughts on "immersionese". However, as the second part of this question potentially suggests, in which students elaborated upon having heard of "immersionese," any existing negative implications may not have trickled down to these participants. Of the 43 early immersion and 13 late immersion participants, a total of 52 respondents chose to answer something in the follow-up question: *What are your thoughts on the phrase "immersionese" or 'français de l'immersion?*' (40 early immersion, and 12 late immersion).

Table 4.13. Early and Late Immersion Participant Thoughts on Immersionese/Français de L'immersion

CODE	THOUGHTS ON IMMERSIONESE/FRANÇAIS DE L'IMMERSION
EI37242	I find it quite interesting - it's like another category in the types of French speaking (such as Quebec French, France French, Belgian French, etc). Variations to pronunciation and enunciation, but caused more by the fact that we've learned other language(s) first rather than the type of French speaking we were exposed to
EI90595	Personally, I consider myself part of "Francais de l'immersion" as I've been doing it since kindergarten, and have learned how to speak the language quite fluently.
EI31108	I think its cool since its kind of in a way like forming a subculture since it is its own accent
EI25074	I think it is someone who is part of French immersion who speaks like each other
EI33781	It's kinda weird that people cared enough about it to name it.
EI65698	It kinda lightheartedly makes fun (in a good way) of how french is a part of our life, but not fully, like we have better accents that the core french kids but we sound nothing like the francophone kids
EI93848	I think that immersionese is french with a slightly more canadian accent
EI802147	I think that students shouldn't be labeled by the amount of French they know or when they started learning. We all appreciate the culture and enjoy learning the language.
EI66976	All that comes to mind is my school
EI747381	I prefer francais de l'immersion because immersionese could be referring to any language.
EI803121	I believe people who speak immersionese are very varied, and it depends on the quality of teachers throughout school. We have similar accents but some speak french more fluently than others.
EI694687	It's kind of similar to the word "frenchie". If you are known as an immersionese, people will know that you speak french, but stereotypically, the accent/vocabulary would be weaker.
EI56425	It is a good way to portray the fact that immersion students have kind of developed their own accent due to most of their exposure to French coming from their fellow students
EI12555	details the the proficiency in which one speaks these languages
EI45368	I have never heard immersionese but francais de l'immersion is just a way to define what we are it's nothing bad or rude in my opinion
EI82341	It makes it sound as if the french immersion students belong to their very own group.
EI987590	I've heard it been used but I don't really know what it means,I always assumed it implied that immersion french is different than "actual french"
EI604400	People who are taking French as a second language. (more in depth than people in core French)
EI477940	A French level that's taught at a certain age.
EI799942	I have heard and think of it sort of as a variation of the French that native French speakers use– it sounds similar but with English terms thrown in and no slang, it is very formal.
LI77147	I think they accurately represent a different dialect, so to speak, of french because people from immersion won't speak the same as native speakers.
LI54362	i think it describes us
LI44013	I feel as though we learn French, it is just French, I don't feel like there's the need for another name for it.

LI88755	I think it is just a term to call people who learned french from french immersion.
LI47648	I believe it's a false term that is too general, any group developing a language will most certainly have an accent more oriented towards their native language.
LI43052	c'est un personne qui est dans l'immersion francais et qui parle avec un accent de l'immersion.
LI65884	I think that the concept of a language being learned as a second language having its own specifics, such as accent and vocabulary, is a very interesting concept. I would say I agree on some level that my French will most likely not be the same as the French of someone who has lived in France or learned French as a first language. The concept of having a different classification for the French that I speak is an interesting idea.
LI696456	C'est la français appris mais pas la première langue
LI47243	It represents frimm

Table 4.13 above illustrates 29 of the responses: first of early immersion students, then of late immersion students. To further focus just on relevant responses from both groups, any answers such as "I don't know" or "I have not thoughts on this" have been eliminated, leaving only 20 answers from early immersion students (see codes with EI following by 5 or 6 digits) and 9 late immersion responses (see codes with LI followed by 5 or 6 digits). As mentioned in Chapter 3, some students have 5 numeric sequences following their designated EI/LI coding, and some have 6. As a reminder, this distinction is related to new codes being created as the initial numeric sequences were used up and more were required to be added sporadically. The responses are not changed in any way, and all comments reflect exactly what students wrote.

Returning first to early immersion participant answers, since this group was more likely to have heard of either "immersionese" or *française de l'immersion*, there appears to be a strong interest in connecting these terms to accents/pronunciation (Table 4.13: EI,37242, EI31108, EI65698, EI93848, EI803121, EI538929, EI694687, EI56425). This could be because these students associate the way they speak as "having an accent"; however, the more likely reason for the abnormally high frequency with which participants linked immersionese/*français de l'immersion* with the term "accent" is that the three previous questions all focused heavily on accents, with participants having to think about how they sounded in relationship to different French speakers (Core French, immersion, or Francophone). Though questions 41 and 42 did not explicitly mention "accent," "pronunciation," or "sounds of a language," respondents might already have been primed to think about that word and assumed it was related to "immersionese" or *français de l'immersion* in some way. Nevertheless, the way some early immersion participants approached "immersionese" or *français de l'immersion* goes beyond simply

stating that they are ‘accents’ of French. Respondent EI37242, for example, thought the existence of these terms indicated another category or variation of French outside of the characteristic Quebec and Euro-French pronunciations, and remarked that the category could be due to the influence of other languages having been learned first. It is interesting that English was not the default “other language(s)” for EI37242, indicating perhaps they are aware that immersion speakers are not all the stereotypical monolingual English speaker learning French. This would make sense, as earlier in the chapter it was found that in Villes C/D, about 50% of immersion students claimed to speak at least one other language besides English or French.

EI31108, on the other hand, associated accent with “sub-cultures” and thought the terms could indicate the formation of one, while EI93848 thought that “immersionese” indicated “french [*sic*] with a slightly more canadian [*sic*] accent.” What was meant as ‘Canadian’ in terms of accent was not specified, but it could be an indication of the link between French immersion as a more Canadian phenomenon. EI803121 used “immersionese” as though it were a language (“I believe people who speak immersionese are very varied”), indicating that to them, “immersionese” was a real phenomenon but that its speakers were not monolithic. Another early immersion participant, EI694687, associated “immersionese” with the word “Frenchie”’. This participant clarified that if a person is called “immersionese” (assuming therefore that the term is related to the person and not the language), they speak French but “stereotypically, the accent/vocabulary would be weaker.” This comment seems to play into the more demeaning ideas related to immersion students’ speech but is still somewhat ambiguous as it less-directly expresses that “immersionese” is related to immersion students. Looking at the comment – “if you are known as ‘immersionese’”– the ‘you’ could indicate that this participant does not identify with the phrases (meaning “immersionese” is related to someone ‘other’).

The variations in understanding suggest that the terms are at least somewhat known to students, but the meaning is not always made clear to them. Perhaps the most complete explanation of “immersionese”/*français de l’immersion* was given by EI56425: “It is a good way to portray the fact that immersion students have kind of developed their own accent due to most of their exposure to French coming from their fellow students.” Again the idea of “accent,” though not related to the present question, could have come from participants having been primed from the previous three questions (Q 38–40)

However, the more complete thought process, which demonstrates a good level of self-awareness (at least for this one participant), is that such an accent could come from fellow peers in the immersion program, and that this was the primary input for immersion students as opposed to other, more traditionally-deemed 'native' variations, or even their teachers,. Overall, these definitions indicate that students are actively thinking of the language they speak and are engaging with it, possibly not only from a learner-perspective.

Equally, while many students had heard of the terms and had properly situated them within their language-based origins, we can also see from other participants' answers that, while they had heard of at least one of the expressions, they were not always aware of the context in which these terms had first been used. For example, EI664462 stated they thought "immersionese"/*français de l'immersion* was meant to "classify" immersion students. Going even further, EI90595 stated that *français de l'immersion* emphasized a sense of belonging ("Personally, I consider myself part of 'Francais de l'immersion'"). Neither of these students had anything seemingly negative or pejorative to say about "immersionese." On the other hand, EI802147 suggested that these terms made them feel "labelled" based on the "amount of French [immersion student] know" and that students should not be categorized as such because they "all appreciate the culture and enjoy learning the language." It is of note that while EI802147 identified themselves as someone who would be labelled as speaking "immersionese" ("we all appreciate the culture"), they did not appear to think they were actually a part of the culture or that they were speakers of French, preferring to qualify what they were doing in French immersion as *learning* the language rather than using it. Still, the fact that EI802147 thought it important enough to raise the issue of categorization, based on language proficiency vis-à-vis French immersion students, indicates that some students do not agree with the need for such groupings. Here, it is not "immersionese" that is seen as wrong or in need of correction. Rather, the very act of creating this category is called into question as these expressions directly impact immersion students, especially when the years they spend learning, and indeed speaking, French appear to be belittled by the existence of such terms.

Some equally interesting responses came from students who directly commented on the terms "immersionese" and *français de l'immersion* and how they felt about them, rather than trying to define them. As seen earlier, EI90595 immediately decided this was

something like a group to be a part of; they considered themselves a member due to their longevity in the program and their French proficiency. EI33781 found it odd that the terms existed at all, while EI747381 perceived a distinction between the two terms and preferred *français de l'immersion* over "immersionese" because, in their words, "immersionese could be referring to any language." Although they did not give a reason for their preference, the specificity of *français de l'immersion* as it uses *français* was perhaps more important to this student, possibly because it highlights immersion students as French speakers.

More explicitly, though, some early immersion participants directly commented on how or what kind of an othering effect "immersionese"/*français de l'immersion* might be having on them. Two participants pointed out that, to them, it did not appear that these terms were meant to be "rude" or pejorative in any way (EI45368); they may even be positively used to express the partial impact of French on the lives of immersion students: e.g., "lightheartedly makes fun (in a good way"). This participant, EI65698, also made the assumption that these two terms were about French immersion students and possibly felt included in this categorization when they used words like 'our' or 'we' to express their feelings of belonging to/together with other immersion students. Such a feeling of belonging was also expressed by participant EI90595 for the same question. This further suggests that the concept of belonging, and group identity is already becoming apparent in some of the responses seen here. It should be noted that students were asked questions on group belonging; however, they came much later in the survey, and respondents could not go back to re-do their answers based on the new questions they were given. Therefore, the statements on group belonging may have come about organically for these participants.

Looking now at the choice of viewing "immersionese"/*français de l'immersion* from a more positive light, this may be an indication that participants are taking these terms back from their more disparaging origins and reframing them as something that reflects these students' use of French in the unique context of the immersion program. As we saw earlier with respondents who did not see the need for such terms, both the rejection and reframing of "immersionese" fit quite neatly into the overall necessity to question the existence of categories like the 'native' or the 'native-like' speaker. ESL/EAL speakers in majority English-speaking countries like America or England, or

even in post-colonial[16] countries, deal with the stigma of feeling like they never fully belong because of some linguistic differences highlighted by governmental, social, and even academic systems, often rooted in exclusionary and racist politics (Fleming, 2015; Foo & Tang, 2019; Harper et al., 2008; Taylor, 2006). Adjacent to this, we have the immersion students, otherwise viewed in the media as elitist or as monolingual English speakers (a fact that does not reflect the reality of these BC participants, especially those in the Lower Mainland) (Barrett DeWiele & Edgerton, 2020; Safty, 1992; Wise, 2011). Still, even after having completed the program, immersion speakers are labelled as "francophiles," a term that outside of the Canadian context has no real link to language or even the ability to speak French (Boily & Vachon-Chabot, 2018; Dudas & Chenard, 2009; Knoerr, 2020).

The key distinction between immersion and Francophone schools, is the absence of the question of identity construction and community belonging from the French immersion category. This appears to demonstrate a belief that immersion students lack these feels of belonging. Such a belief does makes sense as historically, French immersion was a tool for federal bilingualism, and has no mandate when it comes to identity (CPF, 2023).

Such beliefs on immersion can results in the 'othering' of these students. The emphasis on linguistic preservation and the maintenance of separate categories for 'Francophones' and 'francophiles' ignores the realities of a changing linguistic landscape that would allow for creating a new identity more firmly linked to the regions where French is spoken (in this case, the English-dominant province of BC). Such categorization also misses the bigger picture: that learners are also speakers regardless of their level, and that they, too, as EI802147 put it, "appreciate the culture and enjoy learning the language."

Moving on to the nine late immersion participants, though fewer students in this study had heard of "immersionese" or *français de l'immersion*, the types of responses

[16] In this study, post-colonial countries refer to any country that is currently independent officially from a colonizer country. It is often used in contrast with non-Western, or even 'Third-World' (Moore, 1995). The term used above does not reference postcolonial theory, which has risen from the experiences of people within these post colonial countries, such as Latin America, Asia and Africa (Rukundwa & Aarde, 2007).

given were much the same. Starting with participants who related the terms directly to accents/pronunciation, LI77147 expressed that “immersionese”/*français de l’immersion* showed that the French spoken by immersion students represented a different dialect from that spoken by native speakers, while LI696456 thought it represented learned French (*français appris*) rather than French as a first language (*la première langue*). LI65884 also agreed that there were some differences between immersion speakers versus, in their words, “someone who has lived in France or learned French as a first language,” and appeared very interested in the idea that such terms could be created to express this difference. There were, again, some participants who were more neutral about the terms, simply defining them (see LI43836, LI88755, LI43052 or even LI696456, seen above). The sentiment was somewhat echoed by LI47648, who did not think the term was specific enough to describe immersion students’ French; they believed that all groups learning a language would be influenced by other languages around them and thus labelled “immersionese”/*français de l'immersion* as “false term[s].” However, we can also see how some late immersion participants felt the terms related to who they were as immersion students. LI47243 thought “immersionese”/*français de l’immersion* represent French immersion generally, while LI54362 expressed that the terms described “us.” Another student (LI44013) also seemed to identify with the term but felt it should not be used, as it distinguished them from other speakers of French: “I feel as though we learn French, it is just French, I don’t feel like there’s the need for another name for it.”

Again, the general perception of these terms by late immersion participants was not necessarily negative, and none of them highlighted a need to correct or change the way they spoke, favouring words like “different” whenever a comparison to other dialects of French was being made. It is possible, therefore, that respondents were less insecure about their French despite the somewhat ubiquitous idea that immersion students’ French is lacking. These answers appear unburdened by the concept of native/native-like proficiency. Just as before, even when some participants appeared less partial to the terms, any such grievances were more related to their having been created in the first place. Students’ more negative impressions of “immersions” did not, however, appear to be self-deprecating, or in any way related to an internalized devaluing of students’ own quality of French.

Of greatest interest for us in this study are the relative similarities between immersion students' reactions on topics of pronunciation and "immersionese." Again, we are seeing students voicing their understanding of French and their relationship to it, but also to each other. Furthermore, these relationships are shared by immersion peers across this study. As such, we can already begin to form an understanding of the overall profile of these participants as well as their understanding of accent.

More importantly, though the questions in the latter part of this chapter focused heavily on segments of language – in particular pronunciation (also understood as "accent" by many participants) – the tendency to link language with expressions of group affiliation, particularly with fellow immersion peers, is already being demonstrated. In Chapter 5, I continue this exploration of identity and belonging. The chapter combines the survey results of individual students with the in-class group discussions, which helps illustrate students' interactions with each other and compares their individual and group responses. Through a more dominant emphasis on students' interpersonal relationships as well as their relationship to French, French immersion, and their desires as French speakers in the BC context, the results in this upcoming chapter round out the experience of "being immersion."

Altogether, in this chapter we can more clearly see that the participating students from French immersion have reported to speaking multiple languages at home with their parents. Immersion students from Villes C/D are found to be equally linguistically diverse as those in the Core French program (the stand-ins for English program peers). Furthermore, the proportion of second languages spoken by immersion participants generally matches those found in the communities where these students live.

This much-needed profile of BC immersion students can, then, better contextualize the other survey responses provided by participants. In particular, the similarities between student responses may not necessarily be accounted for by a shared linguistic heritage, outside of the immersion program. Indeed, we observed very few significant differences between early and late immersion students (or between the three different geographic regions surveyed for this study). Immersion participants consistently shared similar views on the topics of accent definitions, their belief in accent similarities and even their views on the importance of pronunciation. The similarities in immersion students' responses are possibly indicative of participants' positions of

togetherness and even group affiliation, a topic which will be further explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 5.

Immersion Participants: Connecting Accent, Identity, and Community Belonging

5.1. Chapter Prologue: Survey and Group Discussions Results

In this next section, I expand on immersion students' feelings of belonging and how the French language – in particular the trait of accent – plays a role in constructing their identities as speakers of French. For the most part, this section differs from the previous ones as it focuses almost exclusively on responses from immersion participants. It also adds a new set of data for analysis: the in-class group discussions. The two overarching themes[17] presented to students during the in-class group discussion are the focus of this chapter. These themes looked at feelings of peer acceptance and uses of French as a marker of identity in the classroom environment, while also questioning students on the more outward-looking, community-based themes of bilingualism, Francophone status, and BC Francophone community belonging. In addition, the sub-topics of the in-class group discussions will be integrated with the individual survey questions that focused more heavily on the immersion group.

5.1.1. Early and Late Immersion: Looking Inward

5.1.1.1. Evaluating Immersion-Peer Acceptance

In one of the last sections of the individual survey, I asked students to comment on the phrase: "I feel accepted by my French program peers." This question was meant to be as general as possible, with no connection to language or immersion and was intended to have students expand upon how they understood and attributed importance to 'acceptance.' As before, in Chapter 4, Table 4.7., students were able to choose from three options: 'TRUE,' 'FALSE,' or 'NEITHER: I feel neutral about this statement.' The selection of 'Neither' allowed for participants to express disinterest in the statement,

[17] As a reminder, those themes were : *Qui sont les étudiants de l'immersion* and *Les étudiants de l'immersion, comment parlent-ils français?*

meaning that they could very well feel (or not feel) accepted by their peers, but this feeling would not be important enough to warrant a response of 'True' or 'False.'

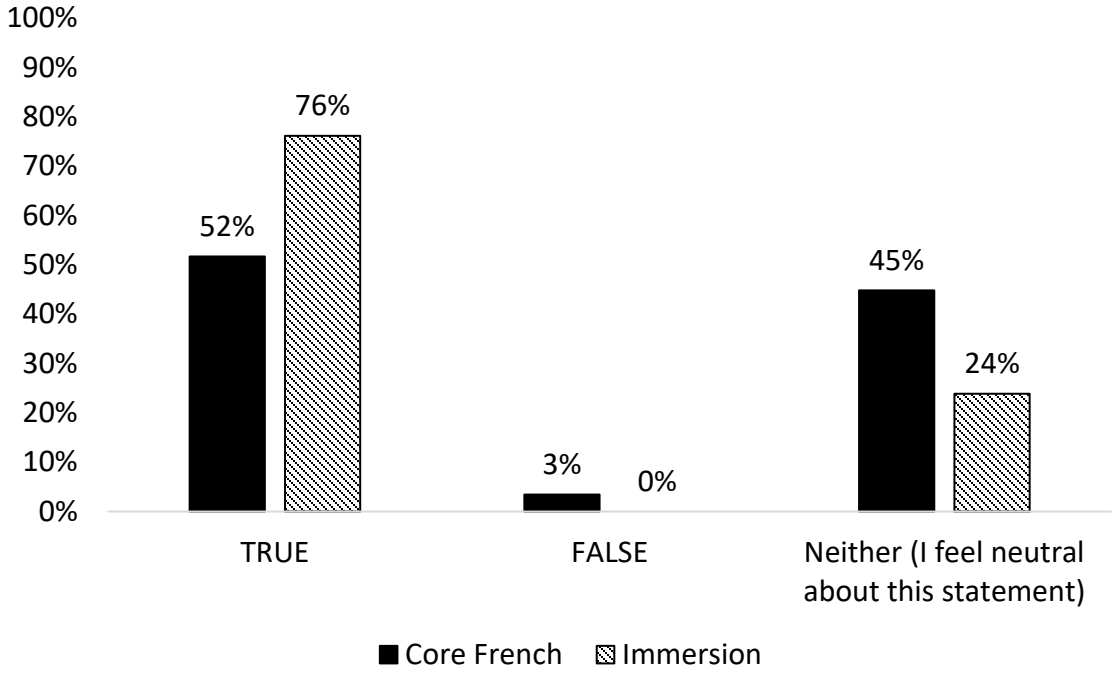


Figure 5.1. I feel accepted by my French Program Peers

In observing the above Figure 5.1., it quickly becomes evident that the major difference between immersion and Core French respondents lay in the third, neutral, option: Core French students were more likely to choose 'Neither'. The impression given by these results is that, to Core French students, feelings of acceptance appear to be less important.

On the other hand, for immersion students 'True' was the dominant answer. In addition, no significant difference between early and late immersion participant responses was found; Chi-squared tests resulted in a p-value of 0.7437, thus proving the null-hypothesis. (See Appendix, Table A8.). More specifically, when looking only at the 'True' responses, odds ratio results suggest that immersion students were found to be 2.8 times more likely to answer 'True' than were the participating Core French students (tested through 95% confidence intervals between 1.2-6.6; see Appendix A, Table A9. for Odds Ratios). These results were found to be statistically significant.

Based on the above results, it may be possible to suggest that feeling accepted was not only important to immersion students, but that a majority of these participants did indeed feel a positive connection to their peers. These results were further corroborated during the recorded in-class group discussions. Here, it was interesting to note how prevalent notions of togetherness or friendship were. For example, when asked who they spend more time with (immersion or English program students), immersion students were more likely to say they spent more time with other immersion students. Participants' reasonings often related to being closer friends with immersion students, or to feelings of familiarity, and even to familial and community ties with other immersion peers.

Table 5.1. Recording Samples on Friendship/Family Feelings in French Immersion

Villes C/D
Groupe 2 • G2 : comme nous sommes dans **notre propre groupe** Groupe 3 • G3 : oui! Car j'ai plus de classe avec eux • F2 : pas vraiment, pour moi c'est comme égale • F1 : alors vous avez votre **propre groupe** • G1 : je disais que pour cette année, je suis beaucoup plus proche au immersion français • G3 : oh on a deux classes, et les deux sont en français Groupe 5 • F4 : um… je pense que on a comme une, comme un peu de… **kinsmenship** oui? Et de, avec notre étudiants en l'immersion français parce que on besoin de parler en français tout le temps et on comprends ce qui se passe quand vous essayiez de de utiliser cette langue, au lieu de n'avoir pas cette connexion avec les étudiants qui sont en immersion anglais Groupe 7 • G2 : ce que nous avons en commun, je pense qu'avec tout les étudiants en français, en immersion français, on a comme beaucoup de choses en commun, comme on parle le français, et faire les mêmes devoirs et juste en générale, on a comme créée un relation entre… entre nous, comme on est dans le même immersion et dans le même classe, et dans le même école, comme en middle school, on est presque tous ma même classe, je pense que tout le monde a des choses en commun en immersion français Groupe 13 • F1:I feel like a cool kid as a French immersion student. • F2:Yeah French immersion feels like **a community** cause we have classes all together, we have classes together since grade 8 we're kind of like all friends, kind of like a **squad** of French immersion kids
Ville B
Groupe 1 F2 : je pense que les étudiants de l'immersion française sont **comme un communauté** comme dans la classe, mais ça c'est juste parce que-G1 : -ils sont dans les classes-….. • G1 : oui exactement, c'est juste nécessité, pas … parce que tout le monde l'un l'autre, c'est juste… c'est ce n'est pas comme… il y a plus de camarades mais il y a toujours plus de camarades quand des personnes sont dans **un groupe** ou choses comme ça Groupe 2 • F3 : comme nos plus proches amis sont dans le programme avec nous • F2/F1 :oui • F1 : on passe le plus de temps avec les personnes dans l'immersion français • F3/F2 : oui … • F2 : on a passé plus plus de temps avec l'autre classe pas les personnes hors de l'immersion • F1 : les gens dans note classe c'est **comme notre famille** et pas des amis • F3 : oui • F1 : et on passe plus de temps avec nous
Ville A

Groupe 1

- G1 : um… qui est-ce que passe plus de temps avec : nos camarades en immersion ou hors?
- G3 : immersion –
- G2 : oh oui-
- G1: car on était ensemble dans les mêmes classes pour
- G3 : oui
- G1 : depuis-
- G2 : -élémentaire
- G1 : oui

Groupe 2

- F3 : tout, tous mes amis sont dans l'immersion français… alors
- F2 : um… non-immersion sont usually comme, c'est pas si difficile comme
- F3 : **exclusif**
- F1 : **oui exclusif**

…

- F1 : oui et on a un plus fort **communauté** je crois parce que tout le monde sais tout le monde
- F3 : oh oui
- F1 : oui comme j'ai seulement des camarades en immersion

Table 5.1. above represents a sample of some of the transcribed comments made by students in Ville A, Ville B, and Villes C/D regarding their relationships with one another in the program. Starting with Villes C/D, in Group 1, the student named 'F2' found it important to label her student relationship as a community (something the other group members agreed with), reasoning that this came from immersion students being in the same class (or same classes) since the beginning of their high school days. F2 also used the term 'squad' – a more modern, often social-media-influenced term for 'group,' with their affiliation stemming from friendship. Fittingly, all such groups emphasized their closeness as a result of the many years spent together.

Returning to Villes C/D, 'F4' in Groupe 5 referred to their immersion bond as "kinsmanship,". 'Kin' or 'kinsman' are often used to denote a family member. It is also possible that the participant meant 'kinship', which, in the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2006), is defined as a "blood relationship" or as "a sharing of characteristics or origins" (p. 784). Interestingly, the student noted that the feeling of 'kinsmanship' was in direct relation to immersion students having to use French together in the classroom setting. This assertion gives the impression that the exercise of speaking the language, and most specifically as a second language, is an act that bonds these students.

Altogether in this study, the commonality of speaking French and being in the same class for many years, together with its vagueness and superficiality, is a hallmark of immersion responses for questions on students' interpersonal relationships. According to the immersion student participants, there seems to be very little else that they have in common with each other. In Groupe 7, G2 stressed that immersion students have much in common with each other but was not able to explain why, other than again, speaking French and sharing classes. It should be noted, that immersion students also share classes with English program peers. Still, the idea of being/belonging to this 'immersion' group was more or less universally accepted by immersion participants in my study.

Thinking back to Tajfel's (1981a) work with red- and blue-shirt-wearing participants, the bare minimum (wearing the same-coloured shirt) was enough for Tajfel's participants to identify with each other. It is, therefore, unsurprising that sharing a language and the immersion classroom environment with the same students could foster similar feelings of community. The consistent closeness brought on by being members of the immersion program even appears to foster feelings of family as opposed to friendship, as noted by F1 (Groupe 2, Ville B). For students who remained in the immersion program, this closeness was unavoidable, and thus the feeling of community was also unavoidable, according to G1 from Ville B's Group1:

> … c'est juste nécessité, pas … parce que tout le monde l'un l'autre, c'est juste… c'est ce n'est pas comme… il y a plus de camarades mais il y a toujours plus de camarades quand des personnes sont dans **un groupe** ou choses comme ça.

Table 5.2. Immersion Students' Self-Reported Differences from Non-Immersion Peers

Villes C/D
Groupe 6 • G2 : comme nous sommes dans notre propre groups • G1 : oui pour le plupart je dirai que nous sommes plus intelligents et plus capables dans l'école • G2 : généralement – … • G3: would I think that immersion students are different than Core French or even regular students is our mindsets to where we focus our studies to where a lot a lot of English students I'm sure could do just as good as us, it's just that we have invested so much time into it whereas they might not want to, and that's what I think our mindsets are different in that and with that different mindsets you find different people focus on studies more or focus their studies less to where they don't want to put in that extra effort and that is why I think there is that line where we think we are a little bit better or their a little worse is because it's like that little hurdle you have to get over some people are not willing to just like jump over that – • G1: oui • G3: and we are, but I don't think there is too much difference • G1: oui je suis en d'accord avec ce que G3 a dit je pense que c'est plus façile d'identifier avec les étudiants immersion • G3 : on a comme un différence point de vu en école, je ne pense que j'ai rencontré quelqu'un un immersion qui est vraiment un slacker Groupe 13 • F3 : I feel like English immer – no English immersion is not a thing, but that is just what we call it, they think that we're smarter, yeah thay have like this whole idea that we are smart that we always get like straight As and like and like some of us do, yeah like • F1: I was thinking that like, if you quit French immersion, it's sort of embarrassing • F3: There is this pressure to stay in French immersion with your community cause it's like 'oh why',d you drop out, you're a Frenchie drop out'
Ville B
Groupe 2 • G1 : je - tout les personnes en immersion ils sont comme plus ah… plus focused sur • F1 : sur l'école! • G1 : sur l'école oui • F2 : mm! • G1 : mais tout les autres qui ne sont pas dans l'immersion sont plus focused sur les sports- • F3 : -mmm-hmmm- • G1 : -et les autres choses • F2 : une chose j'ai vu est que quand j'étais plus petit et avant j'ai jugé l'immersion j'ai pensé que les français ont pensé qu'ils sont meilleurs que les autres personnes • F3 : oui! Yeah! • F2 : comme ils sont elite, ou je ne sais pas, mais maintennant je vois pas ça mais quand j'étais plus petit j'ai pensé qu'ils sont meilleurs
Ville A

Groupe 1

- F3 : oui et ont un peut différence des étudiants anglais car on est plus ah… academic
- F2 : académique
- G1 : grand cerveau
- F1/3 : laughing
- G1 : on est plus intelligent
- F1 : pas intelligent mais on travaille un peu, peu plus fort
- F2 : oui
- G1 : oui

Groupe 2

- F1 : c'est vrai! On est comme ambitiouse
- F3 : c'est vraiment comme un stereotype que les élèves du français sont comme beaucoup plus bon que les autres
- F2 : comme academique
- F3 : … et comme il y a des professeur d'anglais qui quand tu dis quelque chose comme intelligent ils sont comme, oh tu est dans l'immersion
- F2 : oui
- F1 : oui, c'est déjà c'est beaucoup, comme, c'est vrai
- F2 : je crois que c'est un stéréotype qui est vrai

Groupe 4

- G1 : ils sont ah… plus intelligents –
- G2 : oui je dirais que nous sommes très intelligents-
- G1 : -oui, plus intelligents que les … not immersions
- G3 :ah…. Pas toujours mais oui

Another aspect of group identity, as evidenced in the works of Tajfel (1981a) is the ability to find, or indeed, invent differences from the out-group. In Table 5.2 above, there are clear examples of immersion students not only noting differences between immersion and non-immersion peers, but focusing on differentiations that would render their own group as superior. In Villes C/D, we have, for example, G3 from Groupe 6 mentioned intellect, in particular that immersion students might be smarter than English program students, or Core French students. G3 from Groupe as well as G1 in Groupe 1 from Ville A all bring up intellect. Throughout Table 5.2., we have examples of terms like 'ambitious' (Groupe 2 Villa), 'academic' (Groupe 1 Ville A), 'smart' (Groupe 13 Villes C/D). There is also the general suggestion that immersion students are more focused on school (Ville B, Groupe 2), while English program students are insinuated as being 'slackers (Groupe 6, Villes C/D), or more sports oriented (Groupe 2, Ville B). From these above interactions, it would be possible to suggest that immersion participants not only

perceive a difference between themselves and non-immersion peers, they also have a more positive view of immersion students.

Altogether, the topics of togetherness, group, and community were so prevalent to be independently brought up by every group recorded in this study, not just of the sample seen in Table 5.1. Students' reasonings may be superficial and possibly insufficient to represent something like a cultural identity or linguistic identity as we see it expressed by proponents of BC Francophone schools. However, it must be reiterated that while the explicit purpose of Francophone schools is the maintenance of language, culture, and identity and is thus ingrained in the education structure, this is not the case for French immersion. Here, the feelings of group belonging, are a by-product of trying to create an immersive linguistic environment within an otherwise Anglophone educational space. Identity and culture are not taught to immersion students as a measurer of minority language and heritage preservation. Instead, it would appear that, for these participating immersion students, the provided classroom space is organically turned into a community by the immersion students themselves.

5.1.1.2. Expressing Closeness Through the Use of French

At the end of the individual online survey, I further asked all participants to answer 'yes' or 'no' about the statement: "I have, at times, switched from speaking English to French with my classmates when non-French speaking students are around me."

This question derives from an earlier study done in Australia by de Courcy in 2001. In the 1990s, she found that French immersion students, regardless of language status (L1 or L2), used French as a whole (without any varied expressions) to distinguish themselves collectively from non-French speaking peers. de Courcy (2001) further surmised that the French immersion students she was working with would often use French when English program students were around them, possibly as a marker of distinction. For my study, I also wanted to know if these immersion students had a similar tendency toward language switching.

Table 5.3. Early and Late Immersion responses to : I have, at times, switched from speaking English to French with my classmates when non-French speaking students are around me

FRENCH_PROGRAM	Q29_FREN_ENG_SWTICH		
Frequency Row Pct Col Pct	No	Yes	Total
EARLY_IM	20 28.99 54.05	49 71.01 70.00	69
LATE_IMM	17 44.74 45.95	21 55.26 30.00	38
Total	37	70	107
Frequency Missing = 2			

In terms of language switching, in my current study too, the immersion participants showed a stronger tendency to use French when faced with non-French speaking peers. As seen in Table 5.3 above, this was true for both early immersion students and late immersion students, who responded 'yes' 71% and 55% of the time respectively. Furthermore, though the percentages appear to be quite different between late and early immersion groups, after applying Chi-squared testing, the differences were not found to be significant (with a p-value of 0.1011; see Appendix A, Table A10.). These results suggest that the majority of immersion students participating in this study do profess to switching from English to French when (or perhaps *because*) there are non-French speakers around them.

Table 5.4. Reasons Given by Immersion Students for Switching to French Around English-Program Peers

CODE	REASONING BEHIND SWITCHING
EI31108	Sometimes I want to say something only to a certain person so we switch languages so the other cannot understand
EI99875	Sometimes i forget a word in english* and have to say it in french and sometimes i would do it to confuse the people around me who do not speak french
EI301679	I do this sometimes purposefully so that the non-French speakers do not understand, more as a joke. I do this with other French-speaking classmates, normally close friends. I usually do it on purpose, it is not something that I find myself doing regularly as well.
EI43658	So they couldn't understand what we were speaking about
EI301678	Sometimes, French can be used as a "secret language" when non-French speaking students are around me.
EI604400	I do this mostly to play a joke on people who do not understand French, but also as a way to communicate thoughts privately.
EI664462	I do this to have fun and confuse the non French speaking people
EI683382	Because we are proud of speaking a language that others often don't understand
EI799942	Yes I have done this, usually for fun or to keep secrets.
LI49097	well sometimes i speak french with my french immersion friends because it is fun when you can talk about someone and they cant understand
LI51792	I didn't want the Non-French speaker to know what I was saying, or like I was making a joke.
LI67559	Sometimes it is just for fun, just to confuse our non French classmates.

*All terms, expressions, capitalizations or spelling changes are a direct copy of the web survey answers provided by students.

The results of Table 5.3 do not, however, address some of the reasons why immersion students might want to use French when faced with a non-French speaking peer.[18] So in a follow-up question, I asked participants to explain their reasoning for changing languages. Table 5.4 above presents the responses of participants who answered 'yes' to the question of language switching. For the 32 participants who answered this follow-up question, the main reasons for switching to French were that students felt they had private conversations to discuss and that these conversations did not include students from English-medium programs. French here serves as a tool for communication (i.e., the topics of discussion by immersion students). More importantly though, the choice to use French conveys who can and who cannot take part in the conversation: immersion students can because they speak the language; English program students cannot because they do not speak the language. Another prevailing

[18] See Appendix B, Table B1.for a longer list of reasons immersion students chose to switch from English to French in the presence of those who did not speak French.

reason for switching to French from English is that immersion participants were doing so as a joke or because they knew it would “confuse” their English program peers (see above for EI799942, EI99875, EI301679, EI301678, EI1604400, EI664462, LI49097, LI51792, LI67559 in Table 5.3.). By using French in this more or less exclusionary manner, these students may be demonstrating their distinction from non-French speaking English-program peers. Such reasons seem to align with what I previously presented about crossing (Rampton, 1995). This could simply be seen as showing off their linguistic knowledge, thus reinforcing the stereotype of immersion students as elitist. However, it is as likely that these immersion participants may be using French as an implicit signal to English-programs peers that they are not a member of the same group, and thus immersion students are ‘crossing’ from the English environment to the French one. Immersion students could also be signalling to each other, showing now that they do belong to the same perceived group.

On the other hand, neither passing nor crossing, as presented in the literature chapter, appear to be accurate representations of what immersion students are displaying by switching languages. In terms of passing, it is clear immersion students are not taking on an accent or mode of communication that is otherwise expected by native (in this case French) speakers. Most of the time, these students would be the only French speakers in their schools. Furthermore, it is when facing English program peers that these immersion participants are attesting to switching languages. On the other hand, based on students’ responses, it also does not appear that the French language represents any kind of trait (see, the example of Creole English being used to demonstrate assertiveness in Rampton, 2010). Nor does it appear that immersion participants feel at all excluded by English program peers, thus resulting in French being used to highlight their preexisting otherness (as seen with the Bosnian speakers in Cutler (2014)). If any form of solidarity is being presented, it is between immersion speakers. Such a realization has made me rethink the suitability of both passing and crossing in the case of French language use by immersion students, at least in this instance.

Still, whether students are using French to exclude English program peers, or as a signal of their immersion status to English program peers, the participants of this study are demonstrating their ability to choose. In essence, these students are fully in control of the image they want to project both to each other and to non-immersion peers.

In making the conscious choice to switch languages, what these immersion participants are attesting to has already been described by researchers looking into the practices of plurilingual individuals. Hafner et al., (2015) noted three main reasons why their English/Cantonese-speaking participants would switch to either one of their languages. The first two reasons related to language accessibility (for example, when Cantonese better represented the meaning of a word or phrase, or when participants need to make sense of the written Chinese language). However, the third reason Hafner et al.,'s (2015) participants gave for speaking Cantonese over English was often related to the expression of mutual identities shared by a common group. In essence, switching from one language to another can be an affirmation of one's social identity (Hafner et al., 2015; Morgan, 1994; Myers-Scotton,1995).

With regards to the immersion participants of this study, their use of language switching, and their justifications for speaking French indicate that the French language, itself, is being used as a marker of distinction. Indeed, even the early research by de Courcy (2001) made mention of the importance immersion students placed on French, especially in the presence of English program peers. Moreover, the way some 'yes' respondents justified switching languages also alludes to students grouping themselves into 'immersion' vs. 'non-immersion' categories.

This self-categorization was typified by immersion students' use of generic terms like 'us,' 'we,' or 'they' without explaining who the 'we' or 'they' would be indicating. We see examples of this in Table 5.3 where respondents like EI683382 used the dichotomy of 'we' vs. 'others' "because we are proud of speaking a language that others often don't understand". Other examples can be found in EI31108 who stated "so we switch languages so the other cannot understand," or EI43658 who used 'we' vs. 'they' in "so they couldn't understand what we were speaking about." The 'we' is often meant to appear obvious: it is immersion students. However, there is a second layer where the 'we' signals, first, that the speakers include themselves in the category of 'we.' This is possibly because, the immersion students in this study have already established themselves as a group., It is also noteworthy that such categorizations may not uniquely come from immersion students. Going back to Table 4.12 in Chapter 4, where participants were asked about their view on "immersionese/Français de l'immersion," one of the participants likened the terms to "frenchie,". Interestingly, the students understood "Frenchie" as an expression others (presumably, those outside of French

immersion) would call French immersion students. Therefore, the act of grouping may not simply be created by immersion students for themselves. These immersion students may instead be equally playing into existing categorizations as much as they are forming their own.

Staying with the topic of (self-)categorization, I want to return to the ways immersion students distinguished themselves. Indeed, it did not escape me that 'immersion' was used extremely rarely by participants. Looking at both Tables 5.2., and 5.3., of the 'yes' respondents, only LI49097 referred to their possible group mates as "my french [SIC] immersion friends." For all others, the 'we' was meant to be implicitly understood. In general, there was no definite indication that the 'we' was intended, by participants, to mean 'immersion'. It is also possible, that the 'we' could be involving all those who speak French. At the same time, used, 'other'/'they' was more often described by participants as "non-French" or "English" but never as "non-immersion." With the current limitations of my study, it is difficult to surmise a more overt meaning behind using "non-French" as participants were not asked a follow up to these questions. Still, it is possible that immersion students simply viewed themselves as French speakers rather than immersion speakers. We see this more clearly when some respondents found the very existence of "immersionese" to be unnecessary, preferring to call what they speak as just "French." Indeed, terms like 'immersion' and 'bilingual (as suggested by Roy, 2015) might not be enough of a group identifier for these participants. At least it can be stated that (in Table 5.3.) participants never alluded to 'immersion' or 'bilingual' groupings when making distinctions between themselves and English program peers. However, speaking French itself did appear to be a factor influencing the students' 'us' vs. 'them' dichotomy.

But how important was French really to these students, and how much of a role did they think the language played in their lives? To address this topic, during the in-class group discussions phase of the study I asked students when (or if) they used French together or why they did not use French together.

Table 5.5. Group Transcription Responses for Why or Why Not Immersion Students Use French (Villes C/D)

Villes C/D
Groupe 1 • G1 : on seulement parle français quand c'est nécessaire • F1/2 : oui • Class 2 : • F2 : je parle le français avec mes enseignants à l'école, je ne parle pas le français à la maison Groupe 3 : • G3 : I don't use French at all in my daily life • G2: même en classe …. • G3 : i think it's pretty cool but like when there is a French speaker on an English show I'm like ha! I know what they are saying but um… aside from that I don't find it all that useful Groupe 4: • F2 : i mean, quand les amis sont comme à la maison et nous veux comme parler et nous ne veux pas que ils nous comprendre nous parle en français • F1 : oui on utilise comme une langue secret parfois comme beaucoup de nous on parle dans les rues en français parce nous ne voulons pas que les autres nous comprends et quand on parle toute seule nos accents sont très bon Groupe 5: • F1: French is just like a language I speak at school/it just feels like another language I speak/ • F3: yeah well you still speak multiple languages as well/ yeah/ and it helps learning languages like other modern languages/ Groupe 6: • F4 : avec les camarades, il y a plusieurs de nos amis qui aussi ne parlent pas le français alors.. • F3 : umm… je pense que aussi on choisit de parler en anglais la plupart du temps car en classe je pense qu'on peut parler plus de français Groupe 7 : • F1 : ok est-ce que vous parlez français hors de la classe? • G1 : oh non! • F1 : non • G2 : oui un petit peu • G3 : alors, on a sauté de la première question à la dernière

Table 5.6. Group Transcription Responses for Why or Why Not Immersion Students Use French (Ville B)

Ville B
Groupe 1 : • G2 : comme c'est… c'est bon à avoir mais comme… si je vivre dans mon monde, et je ne parle pas français peut-être je ne vais pas comme faire assez des expériences mais dans la vie normale, ça va pas changer ma vie du tout, parce que je pourrai lire les deux types de signes sur les Stop Sign • F2 : (rire) Groupe 2 : • F1 : quelque fois comme à des, des personnes qui viennent chez, comme mon travail qui sont français, je vais les dit comme : ah je parle français je peux vous aider; ils sont comme : tu parles français, c'est très bien … • F3 : moi! J'utilise le français pour quand je suis avec des anglophones et ils n'écoutent pas, pour comme ne comprendre pas alors je peux dire comme tous que je peux

Table 5.7. Group Transcription Responses for Why or Why Not Immersion Students Use French (Ville A)

Ville A
Groupe 1 : • F1 : um les profs • F2 : juste les profs • F3 : quelque fois comme • F1 : entre les amis mais c'est un mixe de l'anglais français Groupe 2 : • G1 : avec qui parle-vous le français- • G3 : -les camarades • G2 : et les profs • G3 : oui, les camarades et les profs qui sont franco Groupe 3 : • F1 : on ne parle pas le français avec ces personnes alors • F1 : non • F2 : pas du tout, si je peux parler anglais, je parle en anglais … • F2 : um… les professeurs – Groupe 4 : • G3 : ah… souvent je parle pas le français la plus par du temps, c'était seul, c'est seulement les professeurs, ah des fois les ah… • G2 : les camarades aussi si le professeur nous dit de parler en français • G1 : je parle… en français avec mes camarades quand on est avec des étudiants qui n'est pas dans l'immersion pour • G2 : oui • G1 : confuser

In Tables 5.5, 5.6. and 5.7 above, we can see some sample transcripts of students from Villes C/D, Ville A, and Ville B discussing whom they spoke French with. Starting again with Ville C/D with Group 1, French is reported by participants as being used mainly as a means of communication with their teachers, or with family if students had French-speaking family members. Groupe 3, and Groups 5–7 reiterated these claims, as well as by Groups 1–4 in Ville A.

The lack of self-professed French is not completely surprising to me. In looking at some journal publications in the media, I found the ever-present articles that questionedimmersion students' French capabilities. A particularly famous and somewhat inflammatory article of this nature, is that of "When it Comes to French Immersion, Just Say 'Non" by Hutchins (2015). This article focused on the elitism and apparent lack of ESL students in the BC program. However, Hutchins also went on to quote Fred Genesee[19] who explained that the few hours a day students spent using French could not possibly make them effective users of the language. Such an assertion was understood by Hutchins (2015) to mean that immersion students are less than, in his words "fluent bilinguals with the perfect accents"[20]. Such a statement is noteworthy because accent was not otherwise alluded to in the article. Indeed, the fact that accent was mentioned at all is suggestive of its perceived importance as a tool for measuring language proficiency by those outside of academia. In particular, the reference to accent is emblematic of the role it plays in representing the ideal native speaker (Clymer et al., 2020; Derwing & Munro, 2009; Ng, 2018) and bilingual speaker (Choi, 2016). Coming back to my participants, the topic of accent was also often used as an indicator of language proficiency, but also of affiliation (either to immersion peers, or other Francophones). This is a topic I will be returning to later in this chapter, and in the subsequent Chapter 6 discussions.

Bypassing Hutchins' (2015) assertion of a lack of diversity in French immersion, (the results from this current study (see Chapter 4) have so-far shown otherwise), the idea that immersion students do not speak French is a common topic in the media (Foundations for Learning and Speaking Another Language, 2014; Hutchins (2015);

[19] Hutchins (2015) does not explain where Genesee's assertion comes from. It appears that Genesee was being interviewed by Hutchins, though this is not made clear by the author.

[20] There is no page number, Hutchins' work is an online newspaper article.

Wente, 2016. I wondered if it was possible that students in this study had heard these misconceptions about immersion students in general, thus leading participants to believe that they don't speak French or would be embarrassed to use it (the topic of French-speaking pride comes up in a later portion in this chapter). It may also be that the use of French is so commonplace for these immersion students that they did not even notice how often they were speaking it. Still, I am inclined to believe students if they say they do not use the language; perhaps as their high school years progress, with French immersion offering fewer and fewer courses in French, they have noticed a decline in the use of the language. However, it must be noted that all but one group used French exclusively, and even in cases where one student preferred to use English over French, that did not deter their group mates from speaking French. In fact, it led students to encourage the English-speaking participant to "essayer" – try to speak French. Perhaps instead, it would be possible to say that when the opportunity to speak French presents itself, as participants' linguistic choice during this study has shown, students would take it.

Table 5.8. Sample Conversations from Immersion Students on English-French Language Switching

Cities and Speaker Groups	Conversations
Villes C/D, Groupe 7:	« G3 : j'utilise pour la plupart pour des blagues hors de l'école, ça c'est tout F1 : pour exclure les personnes qui ne comprennent pas/ G3 : oui oui!/ F2 : oui!/ G2 : oui! »
Ville B, Groupe 2:	« F3 : moi! J'utilise le français pour quand je suis avec des anglophones et ils n'écoutent pas, pour comme ne comprendre pas alors je peux dire comme tous que je peux/ F1 : au oui!/ F2 : oh comme nous comme on fait des blagues comme,… »
Ville A, in Groupe 4:	« G1 : je parle… en français avec mes camarades quand on est avec des étudiants qui n'est pas dans l'immersion pour/ G2 : oui/ G1 : confuser ».

Regardless of students' professed beliefs about when they did/did not speak French, many groups did agree that when French was used, it was often when facing English-speaking peers. As in Tables 5.5., 5.6 and 5.7. previously, switching languages was a topic of discussion for students. Indeed, I found the conversations on language switching to be particularly interesting, as I had not proposed this topic during the in-class group discussion (see Table 5.8. above). Students appeared to come to this discussion spontaneously. It is equally possible that students were being influenced by the survey questions that did address language switching. It must be noted, however, that not all groups took the survey before the in-class group discussion. Groupe 7 from Villes C/D as well as all of Ville B participants had completed the survey after having participated in the recorded in-class group discussions.

The overall findings of French use are, once again, in line with de Courcy's conclusions (2001) as well as with the results from my survey question on language switching. It would once again appear that French is used by many of these students as a marker of distinction. Both the answers given for the survey, and during in-class group discussions reinforce the possibility that immersion students understand themselves as a separate group. Whether or not this distinction was a result of being 'immersion' or being a 'French speaker,' is still unclear. What is more certain is that French is the marker students have agreed upon.

5.1.1.3. French Immersion: How Important is the Program to Students?

The question of whether these immersion participants have a stronger connection to one another in the program rather than to all French speakers remains unanswered. Addressing this issue more definitely are the responses for a set of three related questions (labelled Q50, Q61, and Q63) that ask students to reflect on the role that the French language and French immersion played in constructing immersion respondents' identities. I start this section with the question of how important French immersion was to students' identity (Q50).

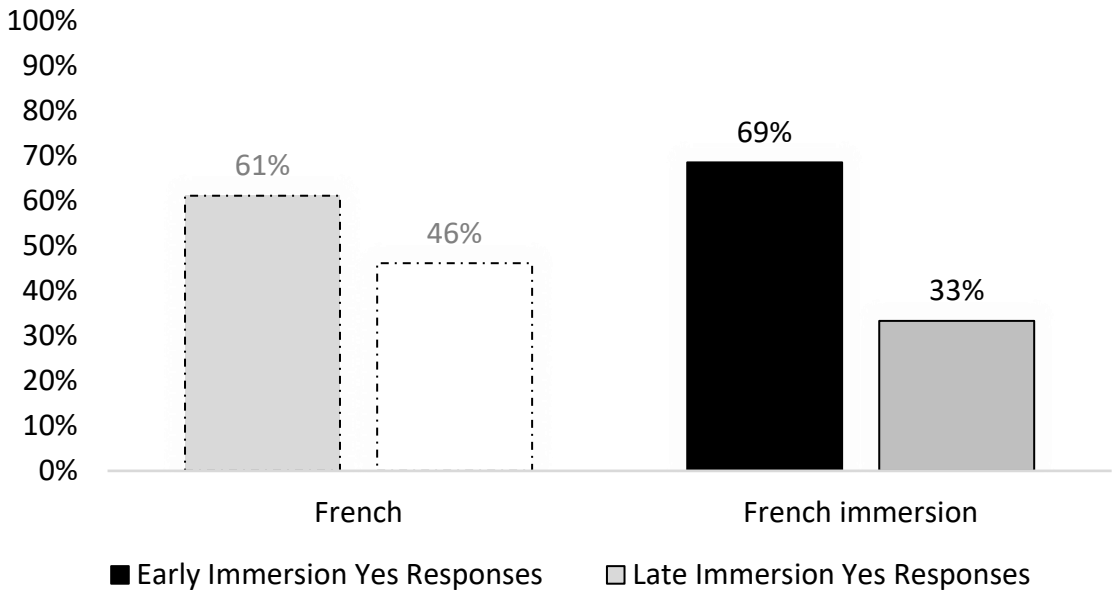


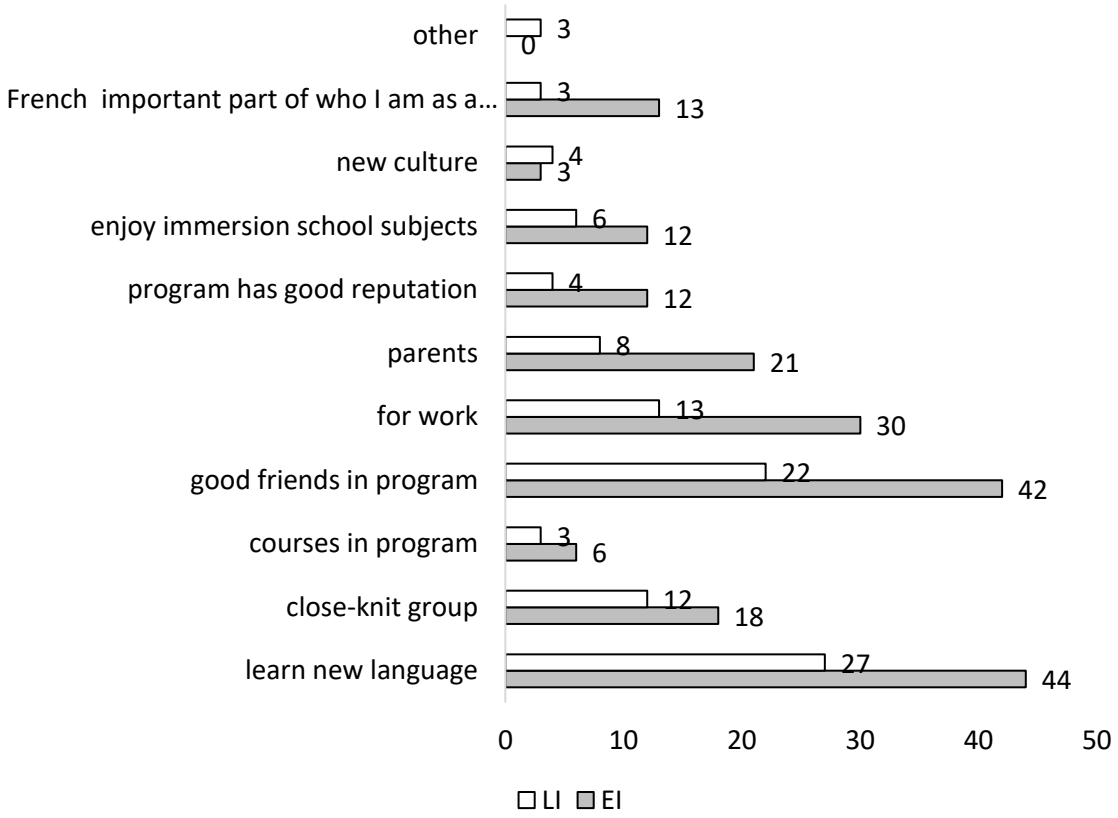
Figure 5.2. Is French Important vs. Is French Immersion Important to Your Identity (Emphasis on FRENCH IMMERSION)

As can be seen in Figure 5.2 above, 33% of late immersion and 69% of early immersion students agreed that French immersion was important for their identities. Early immersion participants were more likely than late immersion participants to answer 'yes,' and the difference in responses was found to be significant (with Chi-squared p-value results of 0.0002; see Appendix A, Table A11. for statistical results). When asked to elaborate, respondents often cited the number of years they were part of the program and that it was a major part of their education, but they would most often default to discussing the French language. One participant (LI98564) highlighted the importance of the program and felt that "French immersion students are different from the people in the English program." They did not elaborate on the way that difference manifested itself, but it shows that this participant generalized all immersion and all English program students, which is a hallmark of social identity theory (Tajfel 1974, 1981a, 1981b). Another participant (EI37242) stated that "I have spent all my academic years in the immersion program, so this does feel more meaningful to me compared to French on its own. It has decided the people I'm friends with and the classes I'm taking." This is significant for two reasons: first, an acknowledgement that French may be less important to their identity than the program; second, that the program was the driving force behind

their interpersonal relationships (such as friendships) at school. The student found it important enough to mention this last point, highlighting there would not necessarily be a reason for immersion students to be friends otherwise. This is an important statement, for as seen in Q61 (Figure 5.3 below), friendship was a key reason why many immersion students chose to stay in the program.

For question (Q61), immersion students were asked to choose from 11 options when thinking about reasons for choosing to *remain* in French immersion. This question also has roots in a previous study from the early 1980s by Tatto (1983), who surveyed present and former immersion students on the reasons they chose to remain in or to leave the program. The majority of immersion students who chose to remain in the program cited more typical reasons such as future careers and wanting to learn the language – reasons often listed by the general public as being the benefits of French immersion (Tatto, 1983). The key point of interest, at least for this study, is that the third most-quoted reason for remaining in French immersion was the friendships they had formed in the program. Friendship is not an advertising point for French immersion, and yet so many students had mentioned it even back in the 1980s. It meant, perhaps, that students are more likely to have come up with this reasoning on their own. I find it, therefore, fascinating, that we may have been looking at the burgeoning of group belonging in these early days of the immersion program.

For this study, I wanted to partially replicate the spirit of Tatto's questioning. So for Q61, I asked students to give reasons for having remained in French immersion. I presented students with 11 possible options, and asked students to choose the three that best applied to them.



Note. A total of 70 early immersion participants and 39 late immersion participants responded to this question. Participants could choose as many of the above options as they wished; therefore, the numeric values above are not shown in percentages.

Figure 5.3. Reasons for Staying in French Immersion

In Figure 5.3., we can see that the majority of late and early immersion students choose to remain in the program because it gives them the tools to learn a new language. Again, this is the basis of the program itself, and seeing many students select this option was not entirely surprising. However, the second most selected reason was that participants felt they had good friends in the program, and presumably, this was an important enough reason to stay.

I want to emphasize, however, that though students could choose only three options (with the SFU web-survey formatting used for data collection), the three options could not have been ranked in order to importance. It is not therefore possible to know which of the three selections was the most important one: specifically for the 42 early- and 22 late-immersion students who selected 'I have good friends in the program,' it is not possible to know how important that specific reason was or what position (first,

second, or third) this option occupied. Still, close to 60% of respondents selected having good friends as one of their top three reasons for remaining in the program. Another 27% thought that being in a tight-knit group was also high enough in importance, and nearly 6% of students choose both having friends and being in a tight-knit group out of their three possible choices as reasons for remaining in French immersion. This suggests a certain measure of closeness felt by many of the immersion participants of this study that may go beyond the ability to speak French.

To add to the notion that immersion students value the company of their peers possibly even more than French language learning, I offer results for the open-ended Q63. In this question students stated the one thing they would miss most about French immersion if they had to leave it. All 109 immersion participants provided an answer. In particular, 59 respondents gave reasons related to personal relationships or social reasons for missing the program (see Appendix B, Table B2. for a list of student responses). In Q63, the words “friend/ami” came up 39 times, with 26 participants giving “my friends” as the only thing they would miss. Four students used the word “peer(s),” and 8 mentioned “people,” with a further 10 mentioning “teacher(s).” It is worth noting that many of the above respondents mentioned only one thing they would miss, even though in the previous Q61, students could choose up to three reasons for staying in the program.

It is interesting that immersion students in this study often did not assume they would maintain or have access to these friendships or teacher-student relationships outside of the program. After all, leaving the program does not necessarily mean they would leave the school, and many immersion teachers do teach other classes that English program students might also have access to. This further emphasizes the more insular nature of the program, where an exit from the program means an exit from all existing social contacts – at least in the minds of these participants. However, even more revealing is that, for some students, it is not the friendships themselves they would miss, but the feeling of group belonging that the friendships created. For example, LI47579 stated they would miss “the close friend group/class and our bonds and relationships,” while EI98721 said they would “miss being in a French environment [and would] miss being with my friends in French immersion.” Student EI301679 wrote about missing the connections they had formed with immersion classmates, while EI93848 would miss the familiarity of being in a class where they already knew everyone. All these reasons point

to immersion participants viewing the program as a means of social connection beyond one found in an average learning environment. While the French language was the reason they were in the program, personal connection is the primary driver for remaining in the program.

5.1.1.4. Immersion Students' Bond with French

So far, the results for the above questions have given more insight into the inner workings of immersion students and their wants and desires as learners and speakers of French. The responses have heavily suggested, as found by other researchers (de Courcy, 2001; Roy 2015), that immersion students do develop a sense of community belonging, possibly even feelings of distinction from those outside the program. On the other hand, nearly all the responses continue to relate back to the French language itself.

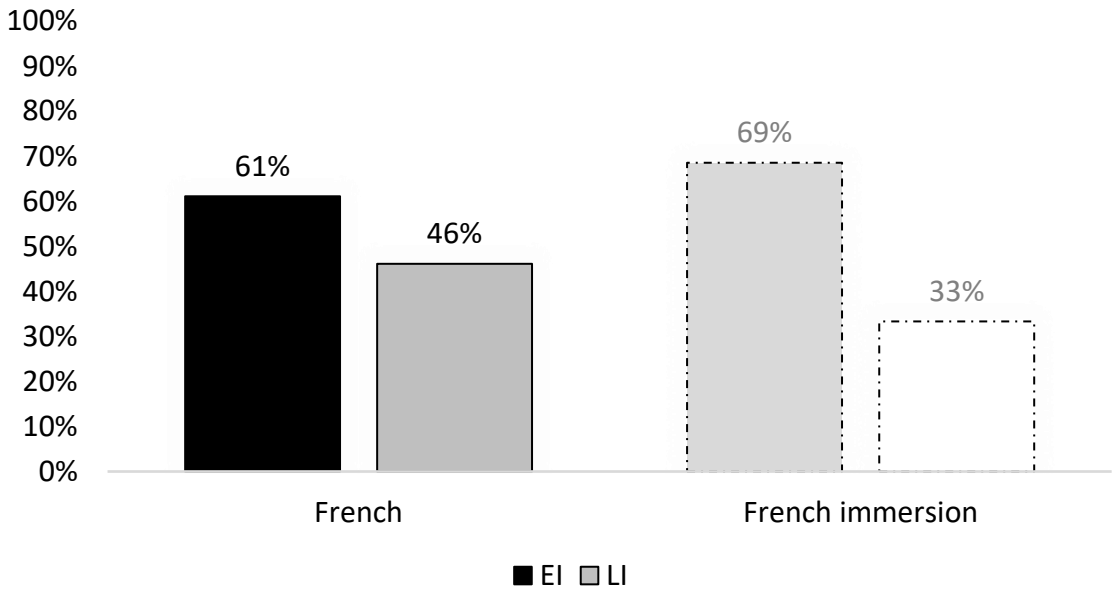


Figure 5.4. Is French Important vs. Is French Immersion Important to your Identity? (Emphasis on FRENCH)

Looking at Figure 5.4. above, I focused this time on the importance immersion students placed on the French language itself. Though up till now, this study has found evidence that immersion students are invested in their French program peers and that they may view their English program peers as separate or different, this does not mean they would reject other individuals who share the experience of speaking French. As

shown above in Figure 5.4., 61% of early-immersion participants and 46% of late-immersion respondents stated that the French language played an important role in their identities. This percentage is lower for early immersion students than seen in Figure 5.2., regarding the importance of French immersion to participants' identities. However, more late immersion students responded affirmatively to this question than in Figure 5.2. Despite less than 50% of late immersion students responding in the affirmative, there does not appear to be a significant difference between immersion groups ($p = 0.1236$; see Appendix A, Table A12. for full statistical results).

Recall that in Figure 5.2. (whether French immersion was important to students' identity), immersion students from early and late immersion, were not in agreement. On the other hand, nearly 56% of all immersion respondents found that the French language was important for their identities. In the follow-up question, which probed their reason for finding French important, those who replied 'yes' mentioned the longevity of French learning in their lives, often from their childhood. French was a way to maintain relationships with extended family in other parts of Canada who might also speak French; French was like a gateway to new cultures, connecting them to other people around them who also spoke French while giving them a greater sense of being more culturally Canadian. As previously mentioned, even when asked about the importance of French immersion for their identities, both early and late respondents often stated that French itself was more overtly important to them than French immersion. These responses lend credence to immersion students having a general interest in the language that goes beyond the classroom, and that these participants are more united in their agreement about the importance of French than about the importance of French immersion.

Evidence that immersion students do, in fact, have a strong interest in the French language could be found during the in-class group discussions. Though accent was one of many topics, students spent a disproportionate amount of time talking about immersion students' accents (see Appendix B, Table B3. for a lengthy summary on the topic). Indeed, listening to the recordings, it was noteworthy how frequently students self-criticized their French. Chief complains were often related to grammar and vocabulary, a lack of fluency and, most prevalent of all, accent (Such instances of self or even group-related deprecation will be discussed in Chapter 6). The subject of accent permeated discussions across groups and province regions: in Villes C/D, 9 of the 18

groups discussed accent, while in Ville B and Ville A, 2 out of 4 groups and 4 out of 7 groups respectively mentioned accent during their discussions. In total, out of the 25 groups that did discuss the French language, 60% found accent (or indeed pronunciation, as the two seemed to be used interchangeably by many students) to be important enough to at least bring it up, and just over 50% (8 groups) spoke exclusively about their accents without discussing vocabulary or grammar.

Returning to the section above on immersion students' bond with French, when discussing the topics of accents or indeed any other aspects of the language, the general consensus appeared to be that immersion students do indeed have similar traits. This was stated explicitly (such as in Groupe 3, Groupe 5, Groupe 6, and Groupe 11 in Villes C/D or Groupe 1 in Ville B) or implied by using generalizing terms such as "nos accents" or "les accents des étudiants de l'immersion," making the assumption that all students shared it (see for example Groupe 10 in Villes C/D). Often, the similarity came from mixes with English as attested to by Groupe 1 in Villes C/D, with some students calling this accent "franglais"' or even '"franglaisphone"':

Table 5.9. Sample Conversations from Immersion Students on Accent(s)

Cities and Speaker Groups	Conversations
Ville B, Groupe 3:	F2 : je pense que quelque fois mon accent c'est très bon … F2 : mais quand je parle à mes amis, je parle comme ça F1 : je pense que mon accent est très mal F3 : oui je préfère un bon accent, mais je choisis de ne pas parce que F2 : ils vont penser que je suis stupide F3 : oui alors je parle comme **franglais**
Ville A, Groupe 1:	F2 : ok, notre accent est un mix de anglais et de français F3-F1-G1 : **français**! … F2: je dirai que c'est notre propre accent comme G1: comme anglephone francophone et **franglaisphone**
Ville A, Groupe 3	F2 : je pense que notre français est différent en immersion, c'est comme beaucoup plus **franglais**

The desire to create their own labels (such as 'Franglaisphone') may be another example of a marker of group distinction from other French speakers. I will return to this new term in Chapter 6, in sub-section 6.1.2.

If we were to analyse students' behaviours vis-à-vis accent through the lens of social identity theory, these immersion participants may be using the traits of accent as the signifier of their separate group affiliations with other immersion students – if not also a sort of separate identity. But at the very least, such displays of self (or group) categorizations represent a disruption of the existing social and linguistic classifications. What makes these disruptions interesting is that they are created by the students themselves, and not by external and more traditionally *legitimate* (to borrow from Bourdieu, 1990) individuals.

In terms of group affiliation, the knowledge or expectation of a similar accent among immersion peers that both marks them as members and distinguishes them from non-members may also prevent these students from trying to modify their existing accents. As a related example, Labov (1972) had previously proposed that, in terms of accent, instead of following example of their parents, youth instead "follow the pattern of their peers" (p.304). The general consensus about non-native accent changes is that local dialect will "win out" over the non-native one (Sharma & Sankaran, 2011, p. 401). However, because accent can be a marker of one's social identity (LeVelle & Levis, 2014), if the affiliation to one's ethic group is strong, some researchers have suggested that there is decreased motivation to take on/use the more legitimately perceived accent (Gatbonton et la., 2011).

An unwillingness to use a different accent is exemplified by F2 in Groupe 3 from Ville B (see above transcriptions in Table 5.9.). This student claimed to have been on exchange in a French majority city in Quebec[21] and noticed a shift in their accent; they even professed to prefer this new accent. They were, however, worried about using this accent in front of their immersion peers upon returning to school, for fear of being mocked. All group mates in Groupe 3 agreed with this fear, which further highlights both a conscious wish to conform to their existing immersion group and simultaneously seek approval from an outside community (in this case, their exchange community), as

[21] The name of the city is not included to further maintain the participant's anonymity.

demonstrated by their change of accent while on exchange. Moreover, the fact that immersion students identified accent as a marker of group affiliation (in this case, with the potential immersion group) harkens back to social identity theory (Chakraborty, 2017) as well as questions about agency (Norton, 1995) and legitimacy (Bourdieu, 1991). The immersion students did not appear to want to be excluded from their peers, and using a different accent might have resulted in these students being 'othered' by classmates. Essentially, this accent was the 'red shirt' of immersion students (harkening back to social identity theory). On the other hand, we can question why immersion students reported wanting to take up a different accent in the first place while on exchange if they were attached to their immersion identity (and the traits of language that came with that identity). Once again, I will return to these points in the discussion section of Chapter 6.

Altogether, looking back at the results of 5.1.1., the ways students express their interactions with each other in the immersion classroom are indicative of close social bonds. In their own words, these immersion students do see themselves as a group: belonging neither to the English program nor the Francophone sphere. And yet, however strong the feeling of group affiliation might be among immersion students, there is also some evidence that belonging to the 'immersion group' is not the end goal for them. For the results on language especially (5.1.2.2. below), the French accent is treated as a tool of belonging in general – both with each other and potentially other French speakers. In the final section of this chapter, I look at the results focusing on how immersion students interact with the French-speaking world outside their classrooms, and what roles they as learners and speakers report as playing in the larger Francophonie.

5.1.2. Early and Late Immersion: Looking Outward

5.1.2.1. Questions on Bilingualism vs. Francophone Status among Immersion participants

The apparent self-professed 'uniqueness' of immersion students does not necessarily mean a rejection of other existing French language groups. Indeed, of all the comments made by these immersion students, of chief significance to me was the comparative nature of students' responses when discussing language, and indeed accent. As shown earlier in this chapter, not only were these immersion students interested in the French language itself (with greater consensus between late- and early-

immersion groups), they were also constantly comparing their French either to each other's (often as a group), to that of Core French students, and most interestingly, to that of Eastern Canadian Francophones. Such comparisons situate immersion students inside the discourse on French and French speakers, language learning, and even on 'la Francophonie'.

Stepping away from the notion that immersion students represent a unique group of speakers, I begin this section with the question of bilingualism. In the greater conversation on French immersion, bilingualism – as seen in the works of Roy (2020) – is a major point of group distinction and categorization. With regards to my study, considering that many of the immersion students are multilingual, their tendencies to compare themselves with Core French speakers and with others who do not speak French (as seen throughout the previous section) suggests a greater interest in the English/French dichotomy. In essence, it is the immersion participants who have situated themselves inside the bilingual discourse through their comparisons and their conversations on language. Thus, bilingualism is an important aspect when analyzing immersion French speakers outside the strict confines of the immersion program.

Fittingly, the act of 'being bilingual' seems to be the driving force behind the very creation of French immersion. In Chapter 2, we saw how the fear of not being able to speak French led Anglophone parents in Quebec to seek out a new language-learning system for their children (Fraser, 2011) and how the narrative of Canadian bilingualism and biculturalism has shaped the narrative and understanding of immersion students as speakers of English and French – vs. being Francophone. Indeed, regarding immersion students in Alberta, Roy (2015) noted a difference in identity among immersion students from their English-program peers, and highlighted how "Bilingualism" was the difference and driving force in their newly created identity while still fitting into existing linguistic groupings in Canada.

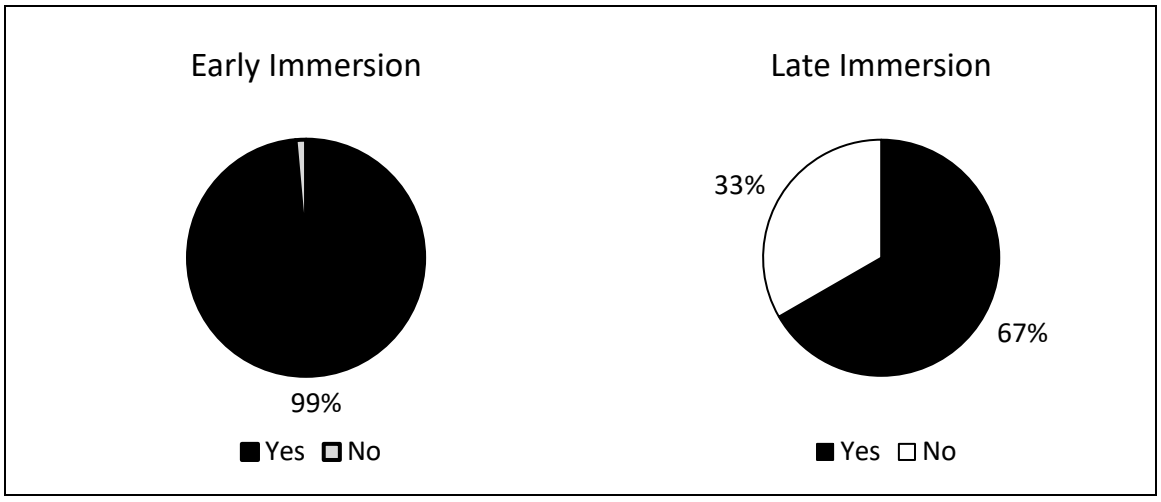


Figure 5.5. Do Early and Late Immersion Participants Consider Themselves to be Bilingual?

When working on the survey questions for this study, I was interested to see what role bilingualism played for immersion participants. According to the results of the survey, it appeared that the vast majority of immersion students considered themselves to be bilingual, with a little over 87% of all immersion respondents stating 'yes.' But interestingly, it soon became apparent that the two immersion groups were not totally in agreement. As can be seen in Figure 5.2 above, only 1 early immersion student stated they did not consider themselves to be bilingual. This is in contrast with late immersion participants, of whom only 67% thought of themselves as bilingual. This difference would prove to be significant (with Chi-squared results suggesting a p-value of <.0001 – see Appendix A, Table A13. for the full significance testing table). Even though the majority of late immersion students still thought that they were bilingual, the fact that one third of them did not is, in and of itself, worthy of further study. Nonetheless, there was a follow-up question asking students to elaborate upon their bilingualism (or lack thereof).

Table 5.10. Why Immersion Participants Claim to Not Be Bilingual

CODE	ELABORATE ON BILINGUAL NO: MEANING/IMPORTANCE/IDENTITY?
EI538929	My definition of bilingual is to speak two languages equally well, and that does not apply to me because I rarely speak French, and use other languages way more. English is 80% of what I use, and while I would like to use French more, I don't have any reason to.
LI194660	I am not fluent therefore not bilingual
LI929591	When your bilingual in my opinion it means ur fluent in both languages or have family relations within the two cultures.
LI66910	im not fluent in French, therefore i don't consider myself bilingual
LI55067	my ability to speak French is not equal with English.
LI38223	I would consider myself bilingual if I lived in a French speaking place for at least a month to further expand my French skills and hopefully get a better accent
LI51792	Fluently being able to speak two different languages is what I consider bilingual. I don't believe I can fully and fluently speak French yet so I don't consider myself bilingual.
LI35669	I don't consider myself bilingual because I am not quite fluent in French as I am in English
LI69816	if you can speak the language fluently
LI71939	bilingual is when you can speak two languages somewhat fluently and I cannot speak French very fluently
LI43052	I don't think I can fully understand French enough to call myself bilingual
LI65884	Personally, I think that I will only start to consider myself bilingual when I graduate and I have completed my French language studies. French and English, as languages, do not play a very large part in my identity, because to me French is really just a language class that I take in school, and English is the language that I have spoken for as long as I can remember. Perhaps if I start to use my French language skills more later in life, French will become a bigger part of my identity, but for now it is equitable with classes like Physics and Social Studies.
LI272141	I don't consider myself bilingual because I am not very fluent in French compared to English.
LI983126	I consider myself trilingual. And being multilingual means speaking writing and understanding languages well. I would say French is my least used language and am starting to loose it since I don't practice it. But I would still consider that it is a language I know very well because I can understand talk and write more than the basics.

To try to ascertain differences in responses to the question of bilingualism, I decided to focus on those students who responded 'No' in Figure 5.5. Above, Table 5.10. shows that of these 14 participants, again over 57% cited fluency. Both groups (early and late immersion) used this term; however, it is very likely that the meaning of 'fluent' was not the same across all groups (Biancarosa & Shanley, 2016; Chambers, 1997). The way these students understood bilingualism is emblematic of the traditional

(and still prevalent) monolingual approach to language learning and use (Auer, 2007). It demonstrates that while – in traditional applied linguistic fields and sociolinguistic fields – studies and researchers are steadily moving toward plurilingualism and multilingualism when understanding speakers learning/using more than one language (Conteh & Meier, 2014; Ibrahim, 2021), these perspectives and studies have not always trickled down to educational institutions outside of academia.

Another point to note is that neither late nor early immersion students mentioned any differences between immersion groups as a possible motivation for their 'No' responses. It would appear that reasons related to language quality trump those related to inter-immersion-group differences. More importantly, though, unlike in studies by Roy (2020), bilingualism was treated as a state of language mastery rather than as an identity. This is perhaps best exemplified by LI983126, who stated they are "Trilingual" and not bilingual because they speak three languages. Other students, who did still state that they were bilingual, made a further correction in their elaboration question that they were in fact trilingual (see Appendix B, Table B4.). Such responses suggests that 'bilingualism' was being taken literally, not as a reference to cultural Canadian French/English bilingualism.

So far the closest we have seen to these participants' expression of an identity in relationship to French was through their immersion student status. Yet there still were other options. As I was creating the survey and group discussion questions, I had also wondered about the status of being Francophone and how these students might relate to it. Admittedly, the reason I chose to ask about Francophone status was that previous studies had suggested that immersion students rejected being identified with this group (Keeting et al., 2018; Roy, 2010; Roy & Galiev, 2011). However, up till this point, my participants were not coming to the same conclusions as those seen in these other studies. However, in the case of Francophone identification, the resounding answer from my immersion participants appears to be 'No.'

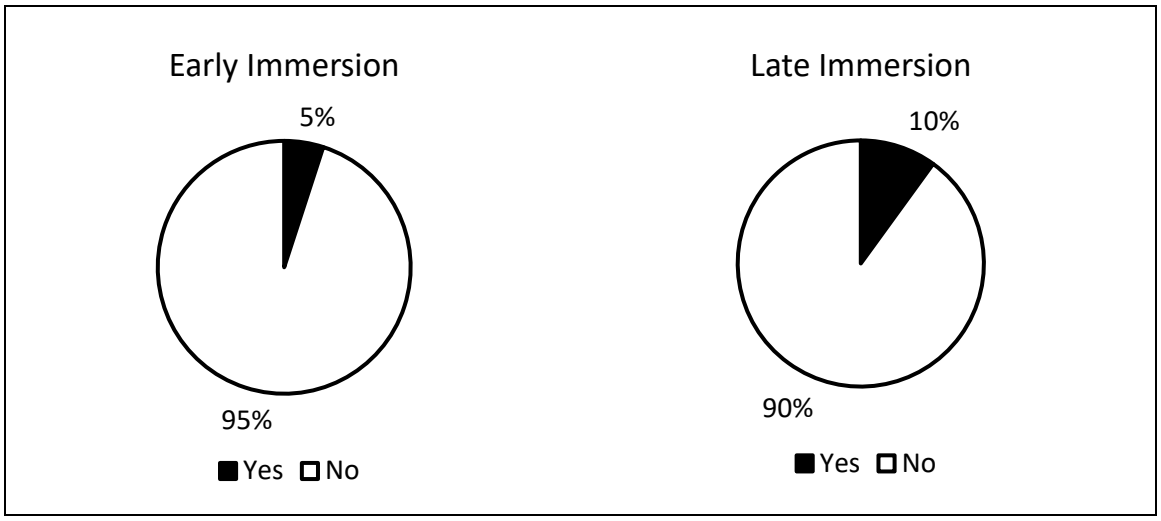


Figure 5.6. Do Early and Late Immersion Participants Consider Themselves as Francophones?

As seen in Figure 5.6. above, 95% of early immersion and 90% of late immersion participants did not view themselves as Francophone. Looking at the late immersion data specifically, while it appears that these participants were slightly more likely to answer 'yes,' the Chi-squared test showed that the difference was not significant (with a p-value of0.2229 – see Appendix A, Table A14.). Altogether, both early and late immersion students' most common reasons for not considering themselves as 'Francophone' were:

- not being a 'native' speaker
- not being from a French-speaking region, or
- not having native French family members.

Such reasoning clearly demonstrates that for this study's participants, 'Francophone' is understood through the Canadian perspective in which one's Francophone status is linked to ethnicity rather than just the ability to speak French (as discussed in Chapter 2). This is still very important, because it means immersion students are also thinking of Francophones as an ethnicity and indeed as an identity – at least, much more so than bilingualism.

Table 5.11. Reasons Immersion Participants Consider Themselves as Francophones

CODE	Francophone?	Francophone Yes Elaborated
EI31108	Yes	Yes because I'm able to read, write, talk and understand French
EI886166	Yes	Having a part of me that's of French origins and embracing it.
EI694687	Yes	I think a francophone is a person who can speak french fluently, or someone who is French. I do not think that it's very important, but I do consider myself as a francophone as I am French and previously went to a francophone school. However, I wouldn't say that I'm completely francophone, as I don't speak French as much as I used to.
LI45508	Yes	i dont speak a lot of French
LI71939	Yes	I don't know, I know how to speak some French more than others
LI79892	Yes	?
LI272141	Yes	I consider myself francophone because that's what I've been taught instead of regular French.

Still, some early and late immersion participants *did* see themselves as Francophones, yet the reasons they gave were not always linked to culture or family background as one would have otherwise imagined. In total, only 7 participants (3 early and 4 late) classified themselves as Francophone, accounting for only about 5% of total respondents.

With the exception of LI45508, who perhaps did not comprehend the meaning of 'Francophone' in either the national or international definition, when looking at the limited responses in Table 5.10. above, it appears that participants in general still understand 'Francophone' through ethnic or language- speaking terms. For example, we see both EI886166 and EI1694687 following the traditional Canadian understanding of Francophone as linked with their heritage, since both spoke of their Francophone ancestry. This is despite not otherwise identifying as native French speakers or having French speaking families (see Chapters 3 and 4). It could be that these two participants had Francophone ancestors much further back in their histories, but no follow-up questions were asked to provide clarification.

On the other hand, the final three – EI31108, LI71939, and LI272141 – spoke of their ability to speak French as reason enough to be considered as Francophone. LI272141 further emphasized that "Francophone" is what they were taught rather than "regular French." Though I cannot conclusively say what this participant was alluding to,

it is possible that they associated Francophone with the language being taught or used at school, possibly even in Canada as a whole, vs. French of the more European variety. Or it could be that the student is referring to French that is taught in a classroom setting, rather than taught at home (Cummins, 2017, MacLure & French, 1981). Still, the fact that some students in this study did explicitly think that speaking French was enough for Francophone categorization is reason enough to reassess lines between 'Francophone' and 'immersion/francophone.' Perhaps in the minds of these students, the Francophone/immersion divisions are not as clear-cut as we have been initially led to believe.

Furthermore, while we saw that the majority of immersion participants in this study did not view themselves as Francophone, this did not mean that Francophone status was understood as an impossibility for them. In a later question (Q53, see Appendix C, Figure C1.), students were asked to select all responses they deemed relevant to them, one of the options being "I feel like I cannot be part of the Francophone community." Only 35 respondents actively chose 'yes,' (meaning they did not think it would be possible for them to join/be a part of a Francophone community). This does not mean that the remaining 74 respondents believed they *could* join (or that they would even want to), but for the majority of respondents, it does not appear this statement was important enough. It could very well be that these students believe, for the most part, that they are not *now* Francophone, but the option was still open to them in the future. This was fully expressed by some respondents who stated 'no' to being 'Francophone (see Figure 5.3 earlier in this chapter) but left the possibility open. Said one student, "At the moment, I do not consider myself a francophone, but I think that I will once I have completed my high school French language studies and have graduated." (see LI65884 in Appendix B, Table B5.). Many of those who stated 'no' to being bilingual had similar rationales: that their education is not yet complete, but once it is, their opinions (and by extension, their identities) could change.

This finding is more in line with researchers who have argued for multiple identities related to the languages spoken by individuals, whether through early acquisition, school, or later in life (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Yi, 2013). Moreover, it lends credence to the argument made here, through immersion students' responses, that learning a language vs. having spoken it from birth is not a good enough reason to exclude a group from the overall language-speaking population. Or at least, this is not a

good reason to exclude immersion students from contact with the Francophone population (in this case), especially when immersion speakers may have some interest to join in and continue using French outside of the immersion context.

On top of individually asking students about whether they felt like Francophones or not, it was also important to see if there was any difference between how these participants might have responded once they were in a group setting. A major factor in maintaining Francophone identity in such a minority setting as BC is linked to French pride, or more aptly the pride students felt when speaking French (Durepos, 2018). In section 5.1.1.1., *Immersion students' bond with French,* we saw students discussing accent and particularly the quality of their accent as immersion students, and I mentioned that students would often talk disparagingly about how they sounded. In some groups, this talk extended to their use of grammar and lexis. While data throughout this study have not suggested that students among themselves take issue with the 'quality' of their French, it does appear that, when comparing themselves to native speakers, there may be some evidence of linguistic insecurity (Preston, 2013; Francard et al., 1993; Remysen, 2018). Even here, however, this shame is presented not as a failing of the individual self, but from the perspective of the immersion program. In Appendix B, Table B3., we see a conversation held by Groupe 3 in Ville A, where three students (F1, F2, and F3) discussed their accents when using French. Starting from line 7, student F2 first affirmed a commonality among all immersion students' accents, specifically due to the influence of English ("Je pense que notre français est different en immersion, c'est beaucoup plus frangalis"). However, F3 and F2 clarified that the reason they believed their accents, and by extension their French overall, was lacking was due mostly to an absence of teacher encouragement:

- F2 : oui, nos accents…
- F3 : est terribles juste comme ew!
- F2 : je crois que qu'en élémentaire tous nos accents étaient vraiment comme mieux
- F3 : qu'ils sont maintenant
- F1 : oui on parler français tout le journée, et maintenant je parle comme, pour trente secondes dans la classe
- F2 : et le professeur est comme parle le français s'il vous plait et puis comme, ils ne mentionnent pas encore, ils n'encouragent nous pas vraiment et pis personne parle français alors c'est bizarre si quelqu'un comme…

F2 clarified they believed their accents to have been better in the past while in elementary school; though this student did not elaborate on that assertion, we could

assume that, as students had more classes in French between kindergarten and Grade 7, they would have been encouraged to use the language more as per the dictates of the immersion curriculum (BC Ministry of Education, 2018). The emphasis these students placed on the institutional environment (such as their teachers) is perhaps suggestive of an acute awareness of their dwindling French-speaking opportunities. These students' desire for greater encouragement by their French instructors is, perhaps, an outcry for more French-speaking opportunities. Furthermore, this does not suggest an ambivalence toward French.

Table 5.12. French Pride

Villes C/D
Groupe 1 • G2 : est-ce que vous êtes fier de votre français, pourquoi, ou pourquoi pas? Allez G3 • G3 : je suis assez fier de mon français bien sur il y a beaucoup d'améliorement à faire, mais suis assez content avec mon niveau maintenant • G2 : ok, G1? • G1 : je suis assez fier de mon français aussi oui • G2 : oui haha, mon tour? Je suis beaucoup fier de mon français oui…. C'est incroyable de parler plusieurs langues n'est-ce pas? • G3 : oui (laughing), je suis assez fier, c'est pas le meilleur mais ça va! • G2 : ok! • G3 : est-ce que c'est le fait que tu parle français, ou ton niveau de francais? • G2 : oh j'ai pensé que c'est le fait que je parle du français du niveau… je suis… un peu moins fier Groupe 2 • G1 : est-ce que vous êtes fiers de votre français? • F3 : oui parce que je peux voyager aux places qui parlent français et je peux comme parler avec • F2 : je parle un autre langue! C'est un chose un peu normaliser pour nous mais comme ça c'est un grand-chose • F1 : oui c'est cool • G1 : et on a comme travailler depuis • F1 : oui • F3 :yeah • F2 : on a travaillé très fort • G1 : comme depuis le maternelle
Ville A
Groupe 2 • G3 : on est pas si bon dans le français comme les franco, mais on est dans le milieu • G2 : on est quand même dans le milieu • G3 : oui du spectre francophone • G1 : alors, qu'est-ce que nous avions en commun? • G3 : on peut tout parler le français Groupe 3 • G1 : ok… etes-vous fier de votre français? • G3 : oui! • G2 : oui! • G3 : ça .. ca prends beaucoup de temps pour • G1 : apprendre • G3 : oui, pour développer notre français

- G2 : comme le maternelle
- G3 : oui, depuis la maternelle
- G1 : oui
- G3 : tu fais ça pour 13 ans…

If the results in section 5.1.1.1. are any indication of students' interests in advancing their French, Table 5.12. further demonstrates that many participants were also very proud of their French.[22] It is likely that this pride was not for the same reasons as local BC Francophones would otherwise give: Lai-Tran's (2020) work suggests that pride in French is related to pride in these individuals' Francophone status. Specifically, it is the pride in being a Francophone within a minority context that is being expressed my BC Francophone youths. However, looking at the sample conversations from above, we can see that among those groups who did choose to discuss this subject, the ability to speak French was enough for students to feel a sense of pride and accomplishment (see for example Villes C/D, Groupe 2). Though this may not appear to be a strong enough proof of identity ties to French, Groupe 2 in Ville A gives us an idea of how students bridge this gap. Again, these students do not suggest Francophone identity but place themselves on what they called the "Francophone spectrum" – being somewhere between Francophones and not. Being able to speak French like Francophones was the important commonality for these students. This is very similar to the "franglaisphone" comment at the end of 5.1.1.4., in which students are shown to be creating their own categorizations as speakers of French. Importantly though, these categorizations are always in conjunction with those of other French speakers, specifically Francophones, and the immersion participants display an interest in interacting with these existing communities through their shared language. The glue that binds all of these young speakers is indeed the French language. If any point of commonality can be found among Franco-British Columbian youths of the province, it is very much through the attachment to French by which all of these students (immersion and Francophone) navigate in the more globalized, multilingual, and multicultural context of BC, as suggested by Lai-Tran (2020).

Perhaps of the above data, the strongest evidence that French does play a role in these students' identities is immersion participants' self-professed interests in travel.

[22] To see the longer conversations of students, please consult Appendix B, Table B7.

The desire to use French outside of the immersion classroom with other French speakers can be seen in Group 2 in Villes C/D and Group 2 in Ville A. Immersion students expressed interest in travelling and speaking to others in French, thus connecting these participants to French-speaking communities outside of their immediate classroom environment. The ability to travel and use French was also discussed throughout other topics unrelated to language pride. Seeing how interested students were in using French outside of the classroom is (at the very least) indicative of a further interest in French as a whole, not just as a school subject. The connection to the outside French-speaking world is further discussed in the final subsection below.

5.1.2.2. Immersion Students: Interest in the BC Francophone Community At Large

The fact that immersion students, despite feeling like they are not Francophone, may still want to be included with Francophones was further illustrated in survey questions 59 and 60. Participating students were asked how they would want to be identified when speaking French in school, and later when speaking French outside of school. The term 'identified' meant that the sound of their French could be identified as any of the following:

- French from France
- French from Quebec
- French from BC, as BC Francophones
- French as a Second Language
- Sounding similar to their teachers
- Sounding similar to their immersion classmates
- Sounding completely unique.

The idea behind this question was to see if students would opt for more stereotypical forms of pronunciation (such as 'France' or 'Quebec'), or – assuming they felt a close connection with their immersion peers and would prefer to sound like them – that they would choose 'classmates.'

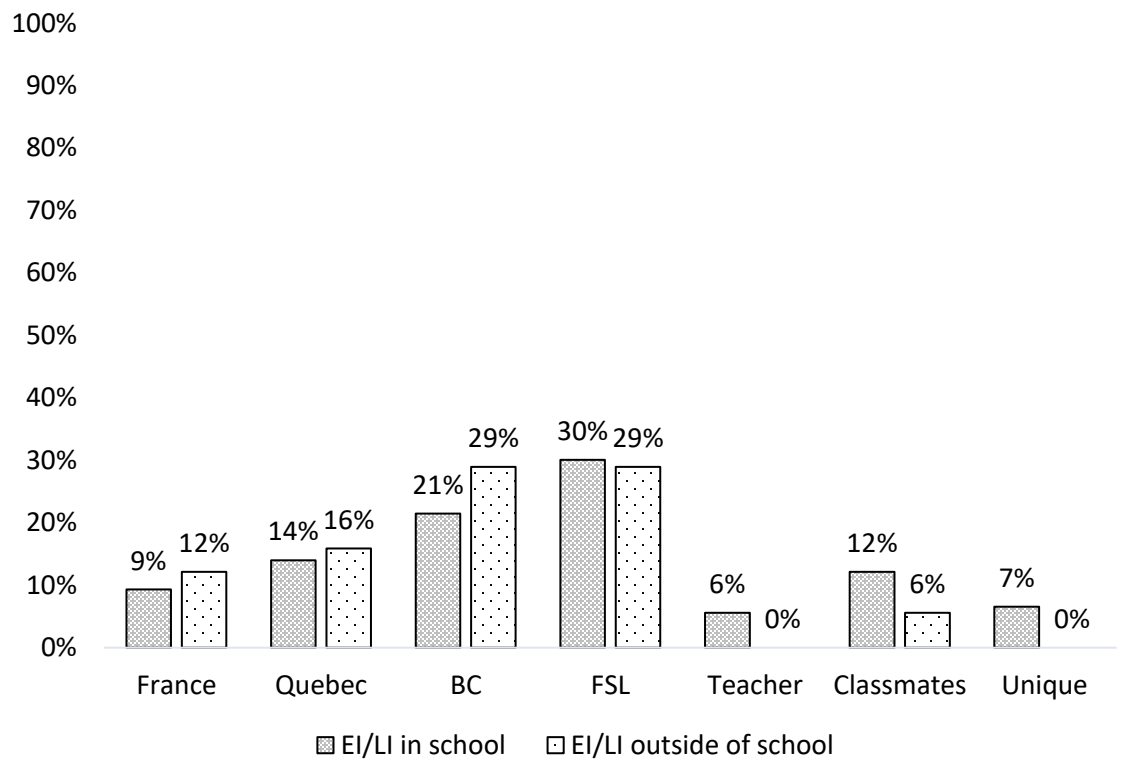


Figure 5.7. What Immersion Students Want to Sound Like IN and OUT of School

Figure 5.7. shows that my assumptions were wrong on both counts. In fact, when looking only at how students wanted to be identified when speaking French at school, immersion participants most often chose the option of FSL, or French as a second language speakers. Of the 30% of respondents who selected FSL, 19 were from early immersion while 14 were from late immersion. This appears to further indicate that these participants may not overtly prefer sounding like their peers, but that they may still wish to be more closely associated with those who speak French as a second language (like most immersion students). These findings suggest a disconnect with the more traditional Francophone speaker, thereby more likely affirming the long-held belief that immersion students are not interested in the most commonly understood native French speaking groups (with only 9% and 14% wishing to be identified as French and Quebec speakers respectively).

However, the story is much more complex: even though the majority of immersion students chose 'FSL,' the second most selected option was sounding like a BC Francophone, with 21% of participants choosing this option. The majority of this 21% were from early immersion (17), with only 6 late immersion participants making the same

selection. Yet, even when broken down, late immersion students' overall second choice (after FSL) was still also 'BC Francophone,' suggesting these students have a preference for local Francophone populations.

The greatest proof of BC Francophone preference over other Francophone groups is seen in the second half of Figure 5.7 When asked how immersion students would want to be identified *outside* of the classroom, there was a roughly even split of 29% between FSL and BC Francophone, with 26 early immersion students and 5 late immersion students selecting these. Going further, early immersion participants were even more likely to select BC Francophone rather than FSL for the 'outside the classroom' question (26 early immersion participants selected BC Francophones versus 17 early immersion students who chose FSL).

It may be possible, at least for the participants in this study, that sounding like a member of the more local BC Francophone community is of greater importance than initially thought. In particular, this sense of importance could result from students' own understanding of what it means to be 'Francophone': those who speak French rather than those with French-Canadian heritage. Thinking back to section 5.1.2.1., though the majority of immersion students did not call themselves Francophone, the fact that some did, and that *becoming* Francophone was seen as a possibility for these students, can also explain immersion students' interest in local BC Francophones. In this case, 'BC Francophone' could be understood by immersion students as any French speaker from BC or with BC characteristics. In this way, immersion students are looking at ways their French is unique to BC when compared to other Francophones or indeed to FSL speakers outside of BC.

Regardless of these participants' understanding of the term, or even their place as Francophones, the notion of placing importance on the local rather than the nationalized (often Eastern Canadian) understanding of 'Francophone' is more in line with the feelings of traditionally defined BC (heritage language-speaking) Francophone youths. They too have, in recent years, made apparent their wish to express further solidarity with the more local francophone community and culture in the hopes of furthering and developing their own unique culture and indeed language (Lai-Tran, 2020). Young local BC Francophones are making it more and more apparent that the Eastern Canadian forms of French (such as Quebec) are no longer their preferred

reference points when it comes to French language and heritage. It is not clear how aware immersion participants are of their local Francophone communities, but the clear interest in this group, which seems to be sprung up independently of Francophone youths in the province, suggests that immersion students too prefer a more local French language and culture, which is not so different from their Francophone counterparts.

Table 5.13. According to Immersion Students: Their Role in BC French

Villes C/D
Groupe 1 • G1 : um.. quel rôle jouent les étudiants de l'immersion dans le contexte du français en Colombie-Britannique, avec vous un rôle? Ah oooo • G2 : ah non, on n'a pas un rôle • G1 : actuellement, je crois qu'on a un rôle, moi je .. je … les personnes qui parlent français dans la Colombie-Britannique, sont seulement les étudiants d'immersion je crois • G2 : y a quelques immigrants mais • G1 : quelques, un peu d'immigrants mais… • G3 : et aussi il y a comme un école française, seulement français? • G2 : oui oui mais • G1 : c'est presque seulement les étudiants en immersion • G2 : yeah, mais je crois que c'est plutôt les étudiants en immersion qui parlent français en Colombie-Britannique Groupe 2 • quel rôle jouent les étudiants dans le contexte du français en Colombie-Britannique – oh mon dieu ça c'est un grand question – avez-vous un rôle • F2 : quel français? le seul français en Colombie-Britannique- • G1 :c'est nous! • F1 :yay • F3 : c'est yeah! c'est de immersion • F1: donc ok, on joue un grand rôle • G1: parce que si on ne faisait pas le français ça c'est comme • F1 : il y avait pas de français en Colombie-Britannique Groupe 3 • G1 : quel rôle jouent les étudiants d'immersion dans le contexte du français en Colombie-Britannique, alors je crois que notre rôle c'est comme de garder notre langue nationale, comme ah… les deux languages nationales sont le français et l'anglais, si comme les étudiants apprend le français plus, on va garder notre langue et notre identité • G2 : oui, je pense que ah… c'est très important, le français est dans (????) la Colombie-Britannique, si plus de personne parler un autre langue, c'est bien juste pour nous de (???) plus, aussi de trouver des ah… emploie dans les autres pays ça ouvre comme beaucoup des opportunités, je pense que la rôle dans la Colombie-Britannique c'est très important car on est aussi un province qui est très comme international? • G1 : international, comme avec beaucoup des autres comme races des personnes… • G3 : oui je pense que c'est important que nous reconnaisse tout notre culture comme partout dans le Canada, je sais que le Colombie-Britannique lui-même n'est pas tellement francophone, mais savoir le français dans les autres provinces c'est important
Ville B
Groupe 1 • F2 : quel rôle jouent les étudiants de l'immersion dans le (???) je pense que c'est juste comme plus de personnes qui peuvent avoir les du gouvernement qui sont bilingues à un niveau ou c'est comme utile de.. ça c'est probablement … tout

G2 : ah… oui je pense, mais aussi, je pense que … comme oui c'est , il y a un rôle de l'immersion, mais c'est ce n'est pas comme, je trouve pas que le immersion française est un.. n' est le vrai francophonie, parce que le plupart comme, est-ce que vous pense que le plupart de notre classe ne va pas continuer de prendre le français?
Ville A
Groupe 3 • F1 : quel rôle joue les étudiants de français dans la Colombie-Britannique? • F2 : on le soutien! On le soutien! • F3 : on est un peu le futur parce que on joue en grand rôle • F1 : on aide avec le diversité du ah,,, • F2 : du langue! • F1 : oui, et aussi, il y a beaucoup ah… le francophonie ou le immersion français devenu beaucoup plus populaire dans la Colombie-Britannique • F2 : oui, on a commencé maintenant les classes sont comme, énormes alors, on est le futur du français en Colombie-Britannique • Groupe 4F2 : et notre rôle? On n'a pas de rôle en Colombie-Britannique, mais à cette école, on a comme, up tous les standards de toutes les classes • F1 : c'est vrai! On est comme ambitieuse • F3 : c'est vraiment comme un stéréotype que les élèves du français sont comme beaucoup plus bon que les autres • F2 : comme académique

Table 5.13. above shows extracts from some of the students' conversations about what their role as French speakers would be in the context of BC French.[23] Again, the topic did not directly address BC Francophones or BC Francophone communities and whether immersion students thought they had a place. Instead, by formulating the topic as what their 'role' would be, students had the opportunity to discuss their futures as French users in the province. Seeing the results from the survey for Q59 and Q60 as well as for the question on accent preference, I assumed that, going into the transcriptions, I would find some kind of affirmation from these participants: that they would indeed express an interest in their local French speaking community. What happened instead threw my whole understanding of these students' wants in question – at least for a moment.

What I found, contrary to what I saw in the survey, was that immersion students participating in this study appeared to be completely unaware that there even was a

[23] For a more in-depth list of student exchanges, see Appendix B, Table B5. .

local Francophone community – historic, current, or otherwise. Starting from Groupe 1 from Villes C/D, we can see that G1, G2, and G3 believed the role immersion students should play in BC is to be the sole users of French. Even when G1 and G3 brought up other potential speakers of French, they could only think of French speaking immigrants to the province, and even when G3 suggested that there might be such a thing as a school where they only speak French ("et aussi il y a comme un école française, seulement français?"), it was brought up as an afterthought, in a way that showed they were questioning whether such a thing existed or not. Ultimately, the group members still concluded that the only meaningful contributors to French in BC were French immersion students. Groupe 2 in Villes C/D also came to the same conclusion as well as groups 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9 (see Appendix B, Table B6. for the rest of the selected conversations).

In Ville B, Groupe 1 did not think that immersion students represented a real "Francophonie" in the words of G2, because there would be no opportunities to use the language outside of the program. Such a statement could suggest that Groupe 1 in Ville B also thought that there were no Francophone communities in the province (despite having a recently transferred classmate from the Programme Cadre in their class at the time of the recordings[24]). Groupe 3 from Ville A also appeared to believe there were no other speakers of French in BC, citing that without French immersion, no one would be able to work in the federal government (presumably), which is of course English/French bilingual. In Groupe 2 from Villes C/D, F1 appeared to conflate "le francophonie" [*sic*] with French immersion, and all G2 participants appeared to agree that due to the immersion program's popularity, immersion students are contributing by increasing the linguistic diversity of the province. Groupe 4 from Ville A thought that their contribution was only a local one, believing that immersion students helped to enhance the reputation of their school. For this last group, it should be noted that the reference to prestige may be both internal – with students stating what they have come to believe about themselves as immersion program participants – and perhaps external, related more to Ville A being less than ideal both socially and economically (as reported by the students). I say this because, even though the stereotype about immersion students as 'elitist' does exist (Barrett et al., 2020; Wise, 2011), it was not brought up by any of the other groups from around the province with regard to their role as French speakers.

[24] Note that this Francophone-identifying student's responses were not otherwise considered for the purposes of this study, but she did wish to participate in the group discussions.

Even when the subject of elitism was brought up by students, it was to highlight what those outside of the immersion program were saying about students and not necessarily what students thought about themselves.

Based on these immersion students' responses during the group discussions, it would not be possible for them to want to be part of the local Francophone community because they did not seem aware that there was a Francophone community in BC. And yet in the survey, results from Q60 and Q59 appear to demonstrate both an interest in sounding like a Francophone and in being identified as a member of the local BC Francophone community.

In an effort to make sense of and possibly even reconcile the comments of these students, I went back to their responses regarding pride (see subsection 5.1.2.1. Questions on Bilingualism vs. Francophone Status among Immersion Participants). From Table 5.7., it is true that immersion respondents did not appear to know of an existing Francophone community in the province. However, commenting on their role as French speakers, participants often stated they were the only speakers of French in BC, or that, by speaking French in BC, they were helping to maintain linguistic diversity. Moreover, students' pride in French was related to having maintained the language despite feeling they had no other opportunities to use French. It could very well be that the act of learning and using French in BC has resulted in these students believing themselves as the inheritors of BC French. Therefore, when the topic of 'la Francophonie' is broached by immersion participants, the language community these students relate to is their own – the immersion group. However, in the greater context of 'la Francophonie' in Canada, these BC immersion students may understand themselves as the de facto Francophones of this western province vis-à-vis Quebec or the Acadian provinces. Chapter 6, the final chapter of this study, furthers this line of thinking and what such an understanding of Francophone status would mean in the case of second-language speakers of French.

Chapter 6. BC French Immersion Identity, Group Belonging and Accent: Final Discussions and Conclusions

I begin this last chapter by returning to the core question posed in Chapter 3: *How are identity, belonging and accent expressed by immersion students in the minority French language context of British Columbia?*

In essence, the crux of my study centres around asking how immersion students understand and display these three notions through their newly acquired French language while living in a (federally) English-dominant province.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I presented and analyzed the answers that BC French immersion youths had given on the topics of immersion student identity and students' relationships to the French language and their French accents. Here in Chapter 6, I revisit social identity theory (SIT) as I assess the implications of the results from Chapters 4 and 5 through the questions asked in the methodologies section. I also return to the themes of 'passing' and 'crossing' as discussed in Chapter 2, and I introduce the Multilingual Turn (May, 2014) as it pertains to immersion students' agency vis-à-vis French.

The discussion portion of this chapter is divided into two main sections. In 6.1, I re-examine the three questions posed in Chapter 3. Finally, section 6.2. offers concluding thoughts about immersion students' identity and their sense of belonging.

6.1. A Closer Look: Returning to BC Immersion Student Profiles, In-Group Belonging and Community

6.1.1. Nexus of Profiles and Belonging: How Immersion Students' Languages and Ethnicities Relate to Discussions on Identity and Belonging

In the first follow-up question from Chapter 3[25], I wondered about BC immersion students' socio-cultural and sociolinguistic backgrounds: how they relate to or differ from those of other French speakers or peers who do not speak French. As a reminder, many of my participants from French immersion responded similarly about placing a high value on their friendships and feelings of group belonging. This could, for example, have been because immersion students are demonstrating perhaps feelings of belonging fostered by the program itself, or because of pre-existing similarities between students.

There is already much evidence to suggest that sharing commonalities, such as ethnicity (Verkyten, 2005), language (Ali & Johnson, 2017), or even professions (Tsui & O'Reilly, 1992) can allow people to relate more closely with each other. Going back to languages, Chapter 2 showed how a strong affiliation with one's heritage language community may lead individuals to refrain from learning/using a new accent – even if this accent represents the dominant language of the region – lest they be rejected from their original language group (Gatbonton et al., 2005). In the case of French immersion, there seems to be a perception that immersion students are a more homogenous group (e.g., Anglophone Canadian). I begin with an example from DeWiele and Edgerton (2020), who present one of the most recent studies to take a comparative look at the research on immersion student populations. The studies they cite tend to suggest that immersion students are ethnically similar (DeWiele & Edgerton, 2020); they note, for example, that the French immersion classrooms "do not reflect the multicultural nature, nor the diversity of Canada" (p. 5). According to DeWiele and Edgerton's (2020) findings through the Ottawa School Board, only about 10% of immersion students have English-as-an-additional-language (EAL) backgrounds while between 25 and 50% of English program students are EAL. If no background information had been provided by students in this

[25] In their own words, who are BC French immersion students? What are their socio-cultural/sociolinguistic profiles? How do they differ from or relate to other French speakers around them (diachronic analysis of results).

current study, it would be possible to assume that any similarities experienced by BC immersion students could be because they are an otherwise homogenous population.

DeWiele and Edgerton (2020) conceded that not all provinces have these same imbalances. However, the fact that they did not give equal time to showcase provinces with more diverse immersion populations gives the impression that there is perhaps not enough information on other provinces regarding immersion diversity. They cite Mady (2015b, 2017) whose results suggest that within the immersion program, when groups of newcomer immersion students are numerous enough to be studied significantly, they were shown to "outperform their Canadian counterparts" (p. 6). Mady (2015b) also found that immigrant-born immersion students were significantly more likely to want to speak French than were Canadian-born immersion students. In either case, DeWiele and Edgerton's (2020) article, as well as the two studies conducted by Mady, were done in Ontario. Research by Davis et al. (2019) further corroborates the conclusion that French immersion was suitable for allophone students but that there are comparatively few such students in the program. Based on the premise of the Davis et al. (2019) study, which was conducted in Saskatchewan, once again it appears that in this province, the overall immersion population is more homogenous (Anglophone). Another study by Davis (2019) attempted to unravel the myths surrounding immigrant children and their place in French immersion – this time from the perspective of teachers. What these many studies have in common is that they are all quite recent, and they are all coming to the same conclusion: in this case, that the immersion program is equally suitable for Anglophone and allophone students. The apparent novelty of these conclusions is noteworthy because earlier studies in the 1990s and late 1980s also arrived at the same results (as seen in Chapter 2), yet over 30 years later, we are still seeing researchers posing the same questions regarding immersion student diversity. It is important to note that most of these studies were situated outside of BC, yet it appears the results are meant to be generalizable, to address the current issues in Canadian French immersion as a whole.

This is exactly why exploring the linguistic and ethnic backgrounds of BC immersion participants was so critical in my study. To sum up, my immersion participants appear to be just as diverse as their English program peers and, indeed, as the communities in which they live. This was especially the case in Ville C/D where the numbers of Core French (the stand-in for English program peers) and French immersion students were comparable, with no significant difference between groups in terms of

linguistic diversity. Therefore, it may be the case that any feelings of group belonging expressed by immersion students are less likely to be attributed to other factors such as sharing native languages. As I mentioned earlier, citing Tsui et al. (1992), shared ethnicities were not the only pre-existing points of commonality leading to identity formation. These researchers found that participants with similar professions also developed feelings of identity and belonging even if they did not have similar ethnicities. In the case of French immersion, it is possible that feelings of belonging are more likely because of shared "immersion experience." This was strongly suggested by students themselves in Chapter 5, where immersion students expressed that one of their greatest commonalities is that they have learned to speak French. Furthermore, the fear of losing each other's friendships and community, if students would ever have to leave the program (see Chapter 5, Figure 5.3., and Appendix B, Table B2.), further solidifies the argument that French immersion itself is the strongest point of connection between students. It appears that students considered their strong friendships within the program to be an inevitability (see Chapter 5, section 5.1.1.1.). Outside of having spent years learning and using French *together*, I was not able to find a stronger pre-existing factor that could have also resulted in so many of these immersion students feeling like members of a group.

And indeed, the participants in my study were adamant that having learned French may have led them to re-interpret who can and who cannot be part of previously closed linguistic groups. Specifically, the ability to speak French has also given some of the participants a feeling that their collective role as immersion students in BC would be to contribute to the maintenance of the French language in the province – something previously believed to be the role of traditionally viewed "native speakers." Whether through individual or group responses in this study, the newer self-professed interpretation of BC immersion students' French language-related roles is a further representation of their individual and, indeed, group agency. This is especially possible, as students' interpretations (or reinterpretation) of their aforementioned French speaker role does not necessarily align with our more traditional understanding of speaker legitimacy (Bourdieu, 1991).

The act of being in French immersion, despite all other differences, is at the crux of participants' feelings of belonging; any notions of group identity appear to be constructed by the students themselves through their group interactions. Such a

possibility would be well placed within SIT. Looking back to Chapter 2, Tajfel (1972) found that the simple act of giving the same colour shirt to participants who previously had nothing in common not only caused them to feel as though they were part of a group, but also resulted in these same participants finding generalizable differences between themselves (e.g., red shirt-wearing participants) from others (blue-shirt-wearing participants). More importantly, Tajfel's (1972) participants often looked for traits that would put their own "group" in a more positive light (see also Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1994). Conversely, in this current study, the act of being in French immersion and of speaking French was seen to have a similar effect on students. In Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, immersion participants would often generalize English program peers as less hardworking while viewing themselves (collectively) as more studious and ambitious for having learned French. Such assertions are akin to in-group-out-group bias, which Lee and Ottati (2002) have defined as "the tendency to evaluate the ethnic out-group more negatively than the ethnic in-group" (p. 619). This perspective helps maintain a positive view of their own social group and thus social identity and, by extension, a positive view of the self.

In this study, while students' out-group biases did not arise from classmates viewing themselves as a separate *ethnic* group, the act of generalizing about their own group (immersion peers) as well as the students they othered (English program peers) reinforces the possibility that immersion students have constructed some kind of social identity, or at the very least view themselves as a social group. Furthermore, French is highlighted as an important factor in the existence of this potential group. This is because the act of learning French is the trigger for immersion students possibly creating some negative stereotypes about English program peers. Specifically, some participants' claims that English program peers are less hardworking (Chapter 5, Table 5.2.) come directly from immersion students' views that learning French, while also taking all other courses English program students have to take (some of which immersion students also take in French), makes immersion students *more* hardworking.

Indeed, it appears that immersion students attribute their positive views of the self and their whole immersion group not to the pedagogical structure of the immersion program that may make language learning more accessible, but rather to students' individual abilities. This is similar to how a given ethnic group might make negative generalizations about their out-group based on their views of the individuals rather than

on the social structures that give their own in-group a (potential) advantage (Ben-Ner et al., 2009; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2016; Verkuyten & Reijerse, 2008).

Returning to the diachronic analysis in Chapter 4, it is quite possible that none of the above assertions could have been made without more information about my target population (their backgrounds, how they identify, etc.). This is why an analysis of immersion students' backgrounds is critical for our understanding about their views on the French language and group belonging. Such an analysis helps take into account all aspects of these students' very being, and by doing so allows us to view their experiences from a regional standpoint – in this case BC – rather than as a Canadian monolith. Most importantly, we can focus more readily on students' group and individual responses from within their immersion context than we could if this information were missing.

Therefore, to better answer this study's first follow-up research question on immersion participant profiling, it can be said that the backgrounds and languages of immersion students are often as diverse as those of their English program peers and often reflect the diversity of the population found in their local regional areas. They and their parents come from many places around the world and speak many languages (counting a total of 18 distinct languages spoken by immersion participants). However, any feelings of group belonging may not necessarily be related to pre-existing ethnic or linguistic similarities between immersion students– a conclusion I base on the students' responses throughout the survey and in-class group discussions.

It is true that immersion students in this study seem to reflect their regional environments (ethnically, linguistically, etc.). As such, these participants are otherwise distinct from one another. And yet, we cannot ignore that there *is* a point of commonality outside of *being in* the immersion program: every one of the immersion students in this study, by virtue of the immersion program and/or their family backgrounds, is a multilingual speaker. Even as students in this study are displaying their collective agency as immersion group members about what it means to speak French, it cannot be ignored that they are also participants in the multilingual experience. To address this, I now introduce the Multilingual Turn as another means to understand students' feelings of belonging and group affiliation.

6.1.2. Group Belonging Among French Immersion Students: The Role of French and Accent Perception in Group Affiliation

I begin this next section with Stephen May's 2014 book on the Multilingual Turn. In this work, May (2014) explains how the interest in multilingualism is not necessarily new. However, May (2014) expresses that the Multilingual Turn, itself, is a new path directly influenced by terms and concepts created by researchers over the years. Such terms include but are not limited to Jorgensen's (2008) polylingual languaging, Canagarajah's (2011) codemeshing, or Rampton's (2011) contemporary urban vernaculars. May (2014) also references Makoni and Pennycook's (2012) understanding of many languages or language features used together through the concept of "lingua franca multilingualism," which they define as a state where "languages are so deeply intertwined and fused into each other that the level of fluidity renders it difficult to determine any boundaries that may indicate that there are different languages involved" (p. 447).

Indeed, the overall concept of multilingualism, as understood by pioneering researchers such as May (2014), Garcia (2011), Pennycook (2007, 2011), Blommaert (2010), Heller (2007), and Norton (2014; see especially her dedication chapter in May's 2014 book on the subject), tends to focus on valuing and re-valuing the languages spoken at home as opposed to only the language – often "standard language" – of a given country, region or territory. In the case of the classroom setting, for example, Cummins (2001) noted that

> "…to reject a child's language in the school is to reject the child. When the message, implicit or explicit, communicated to the children in the school is "Leave your language and culture at the schoolhouse door," children also leave a central part of who they are – their identities at the schoolhouse door." (p. 19)

Traditional multilingual approaches, therefore, call for the recognition of the inherent messiness and interconnection of all the languages that individuals live with daily (Ibrahim, 2017).

Given everything we have understood on multilingual approaches to research, this perhaps explains why I did not mention the Multilingual Turn in the literature chapter of my dissertation: I did not consider that to be suitably linked to French immersion issues, particularly because of what the language transmission method of the immersion

program entails. Moreover, the Multilingual Turn was more suitable for giving context in this study than it was for use as part of my theoretical framework. Thinking now about how we have traditionally understood French immersion in the Canadian context – as a system that creates an artificial French (and often French-only) environment for students to be 'immersed' into, which would heavily discourage even the use of English, let alone any other languages – it may indeed appear odd to have even considered the Multilingual Turn as connected with my current research. However, upon reading other researchers' understanding(s) of the Multilingual Turn, and especially Makoni and Pennycook's previously cited definition, I was immediately struck not by what French immersion is meant to be, but by what my participants were actively *doing* and indeed *telling us*, especially during their recorded interviews.

Throughout Chapter 5, in every school and almost every group, we can see clear instances of students using, mixing, *meshing* French and English as their normal form of communication. This is already a clear demonstration of students' agencies as speakers of French, as according to Duranti (2004), "any act of speaking involves some kind of agency … due to the fact that by speaking we establish a reality that has at least the potential for affecting whoever happens to be listening" (p. 451). However, especially given that students were not being asked to speak only in French – they could choose how they wanted to communicate, or indeed to choose not to use French at all – it is possible to see French as a conscious, agentive choice by students. However, throughout their use of French, the mixture of English should also not be ignored. Indeed, it is possible that these instances of French/English mixing are not merely moments where the participants' French vocabulary may be lacking. Instead, immersion students may be displaying their multilingual competence, which, as Cook (2009, 1995) suggested, may be the norm for any speaker of multiple languages. Therefore, the mixing used by immersion students may represent perfectly integrated uses of both languages to convey meaning to each other. Whether by using a word, applying two different grammatical features, or using *anglicismes*, the way students spoke and used language that indeed all groups appeared to understand was the very definition of 'lingua franca multilingualism' (Makoni & Pennycook, 2012)

Furthermore, returning to the choice of French between immersion participants during their in-class group discussions, it could be that French is a language these students are comfortable using with one another. More than that, though, the choice to

use French can be connected to feelings of acceptance, especially in the second language context. We have known for some time that feelings of anxiety and shame affect individuals' ability to learn and use their L2 (Galmiche, 2017; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991) and could also impact speakers' language-related motivation (Chastain, 1975; Kleinmann, 1977). However, these students instead were displaying a confidence in their abilities in French. Confidence amongst French immersion students is not necessarily surprising as it was reported in earlier research on the program (Wesche, 1992). In the case of my immersion participants, they exhibited confidence even in the face of traditional errors or missing words and expressions.

Interestingly, it was not only individual students who reported feeling pride, or feeling comfortable in speaking French. Indeed, this confidence could also be directed towards their groupmates – confidence that their peers would not single a speaker out negatively for any linguistic transgressions – further suggesting a real sense of community, belonging, and comfort amongst these participants. These immersion students, it appears, have transcended being mere 'learners' of French: as Ibrahim (2017) stated during a conference on multilingualism in the classroom, "language isn't all about grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, it's about living and experiencing the language." Every day, with every decision they make while using French together, these BC immersion participants are living and experiencing the language, and most importantly, they are aware of that. No more is this evident than when students were asked to describe how they use French. It was noted in the results of my study that 71% of early immersion, as well as 55% of late immersion participants, professed to switching from English to French at least once while in the presence of English program peers who would not understand them (see Chapter 5, Tables 5.3., and 5.4.), Later, during the in-class group discussions, some groups of students were observed speaking of deliberately switching to French at home when other immersion peers would come over to visit. In fact, these students would refer to French as a "secret language" they could use together, so as to not be understood by parents (see, for example, group 4 in Chapter 5, Table 5.8).

Chapter 5 showed numerous examples of students explicitly referring to accents, specifically *their* accent (referring to ownership of), and how it differs those of both Francophone and Core French speakers. My section on 'Immersion Students' Bond with French' (subsection 5.1.1.4), describes immersion participants being observed

discussing, for example, the accents of eastern Canadian Francophones in comparison to their own accents in immersion. In particular, some students discussed feeling the need to use accents that were similar to those of their classmates, despite having learned and presumably used a different accent while on exchange. It appears that these immersion participants understand accent as having a time and a place. To them, accent is not only shifting and changing but is context-based; the act of changing accents could equally be an attempt to *cross* from one speaker group identity to another, depending on what is most appropriate (see Chapter 2 for "crossing"; also Rampton, 2010).

More importantly, accents appeared to be markers of groups that students could become a part of or could become affiliated with, as when students chose to sound like their classmates. Indeed, while these immersion students are able to switch, and even perform or "take" different French accents – perhaps in the form of "passing" as explained by Piller (2002) in Chapter 2 – participants did not always appear to be comfortable with maintaining any accent that deviates from what they are used to hearing in their immediate classroom. In part, this is due to peer pressure (see examples in Chapter 5, Table 5.9.). Though this was not discussed by students, the act of using a more standard accent (during students' exchange programs, for example), may also represent students' wish to be accepted by other speakers of French, especially given how important being accepted by immersion classmates appeared to be for students in this study (see Chapter 5, subsection 5.1.1.1.).

Speaking of "passing" (a topic I last touched on in Chapter 2), when I observed immersion students' interactions with each other vis-à-vis their accents, I was reminded of Piller's (2002) suggestion that the speakers mainly choose to "pass" as a way of benefiting native-speaking listeners, not because the speakers' accents were part of their identity(ies). With these French immersion students, even though they are not so-called "native speakers," it is possible to consider peer pressure as a way of appeasing the majority or "immersion sounding" students.

On the other hand, by students' own admissions (see Chapter 5, Table 5.9, and Appendix B, Table B3.), using a different accent would not make sense, as that could result in being viewed as different from immersion peers – something students did not appear to want. This is especially relevant if these immersion participants viewed

themselves as members of their own linguistic group, which, as seen in Chapter 5, was likely the case for many of these participants. As such, the act of changing accents can be seen as taking on a different (but salient) trait that is most relevant to the identity the student wants to display (see again Rampton, 2010). For example, these identities would be “Francophone” and “immersion student.” For further evidence that the “immersion identity” exists in the minds of the immersion participants, I return to the previously discussed subject of “Fringlish”, “Franglais,” or “Franglaisphone,”(Chapter 5, subsection 5.1.1.4.).

“Franglaisphone” is not a term used either colloquially or in the research community when describing second-language speakers of French and appears to be an example of neologism on the part of these participating students. It appears to be an amalgamation of ‘franglais’ (a term students say is used about them), and the suffix ‘-phone’, or ‘sound’. The students could mean that they sound like ‘franglais’ speakers. What is more likely though, is that –‘phone’ is taking from ‘Francophone’. In Chapter 4 (Table 4.13), I showed how ‘immersionese’ or ‘français de l’immersion’ were sometimes understood to represent French immersion students. They were not seen as shameful, however, some students rejected the labels in favour of ‘French’. The new expression ‘Franglaisphone’, therefore, appears to connote that these students are not viewed as Francophones by outsiders. Yet in creating a new term, these participants are reversing the stigma brought on by the expression ‘franglais’. Just like ‘Francophone’, ‘Franglaisphone’ acknowledges students’ speaker status.

Interestingly, the term ‘bilingual’, which was accepted by 99% of early immersion students, and 67% of late immersion students (see Chapter 5, Figure 5.5), was not talked about or embraced as widely in the recorded in-class group discussions. In the survey, students only appeared to address bilingualism in the questions that directly mentioned or related to the term. Even when students did speak of being bilingual, they did so only as an acknowledgement of their multilingual status, with some students overlooking the term if they happened to speak more than two languages (see EI959630 and EI305948 in Appendix B, Table B4., and LI983126 in Chapter 5, Figure 5.5.). It is possible, that since ‘bilingual’ does not directly refer to these immersion students’ as French speakers, it is not seen as specific enough. If that is the case, then the rejection of ‘immersionese’ makes sense, as it, once again, fails to describe students as French speakers. On the other hand, the new term, ‘franglaisphone’ created by students, does

appear to demonstrate students' otherness from both English and native French speakers. More importantly though, 'franglaisphone' is a uniting force, bringing together immersion participants' English speaker status with their desired French speaker status.

Other examples of how immersion students express group belonging is through their choosing to modify their own accents to play out what immersion participants thought Core French or traditional Francophones in Eastern Canada sounded like (see again Appendix B, Table B3). It is through their generalizing that both parties (Core French learners/students and traditional Francophones) are considered out-group members. And so, even though students can take on other accents – potentially passing as traditional Francophones, for example – the participants in my study would often choose not to often because they did not wish to be othered by their immersion classmates, thus solidifying their positions within their own perceived group.

Furthermore, the act of changing accents (for example, to suit the ones heard during students' exchange programs), does not mean they have also formed an identity related to the newly acquired accents. It is possible that these immersion students simply like the idea of being able to speak with a different accent as it presents an extra ability that they, as immersion students, have with regard to the French language. However, it is just as likely that our existing prejudices with respect to non-native accents may be colouring these students' views toward their own accent. Never once do these students mention wanting to become "Quebecois" (as the exchange program, participating students spoke of, took place in Quebec). Even when later in this study, some students were seen as either identifying as Francophone or having the ability to one day become Francophone, participants did not appear to possess strong opinions about French speakers outside of British Columbia. Instead, immersion participants appeared to prefer the more local (BC) Francophone identity (see in Chapter 5, section 5.1.2.2.). This is important, because it shows that these immersion participants have identified something that is uniquely their own, created by the environment in which they are currently living: the immersion experience. I can perhaps even specify the *BC* immersion experience, given the frequency with which students chose to compare themselves with eastern Canadian French speakers.

Interestingly, such an immersion-group relationship, while rarely researched, has been documented in Australia (de Courcy, 2002), where it was found students in French

immersion would prefer to spend more time with each other than with their English program peers (also see Chapter 2). In fact, the literature review chapter also showed that in Two-Way Immersion (TWI) programs in Germany, Meier (2014) had made the connection between language learning and group belonging, in which “TWI research has established a positive link between TWI classes and group cohesion and conflict-resolution skills” (p. 183) between participating students. Even my own earlier MA thesis survey found that immersion students attested to spending more time both in and outside of the classroom with other immersion students. Evidently what we are seeing in the BC context has played out before, though the identity and group factors consistently remained under-researched.

What was also often missing – and I had intended to assess this in my current study – is how such feelings of group belonging relate to French. Figure 5.1 further demonstrates students’ interest in their immersion peer group. Essentially, the resulting reactions to the statement “I feel accepted by my French program peers” suggest that feeling they are accepted by their French program peers was important for immersion students, much more so than for their Core French counterparts. Core French students’ greater likelihood to choose “neither (I feel neutral about this statement)” – in which students expressed ambivalence towards the question – was contrasted with immersion participants’ preference to selecting “True.” In the follow-up question, immersion students expressly stated that the many socially motivated reasons – such as having been together for a long time through French immersion – are often why feeling accepted was important or why it led to these students feeling like a group (Chapter 5,subsection 5.1.1.1. for further explanations). Specifically, in this survey question, we saw students individually state that they felt like a group, with one student even referring to themselves as an “immersion community” that this individual felt as if they belonged to. We also saw how students placed a high value on friendships in French immersion as a reason for staying in the program (see Chapter 5, section 5.1.1.3., in particular, Figure 5.3.)) and that students would profess to missing their peers and teachers the most should they ever have to leave French immersion (as noted in as Appendix B, Table B2.). However, none of these examples explicitly relate to the French language – and yet, I am assured that the language has been present all along.

Perhaps the most telling connection to French is how the language is used by students. Now that we understand the participant perspective – that they view

themselves as a distinct group – French becomes the expression of distinction. Throughout this chapter so far, I have noted instances of students using or professing to use French when English program peers are present or when parents are around them. The use of French in these cases excluded whoever does not belong: i.e., English program peers. French is also a means of distinction students chose to use in the presence of anyone considered to be part of the out-group. Essentially, the agency shown by immersion students using French around non-French-speaking individuals is evidence that students saw themselves as members of a group. Even in instances where immersion participants claimed more socially related reasons for feeling accepted, the often-unspoken point that immersion students are all in the French immersion program for the purposes of learning French was ever-present. For example, the connection to each other expressed by some students (Chapter 5, sub-section 5.1.1.1.) is the act of having learned French together. In addition, during the in-class group discussions when students were talking about different speakers of French, it was through accent that participants were distinguishing each group (immersion, Francophone, and Core French). Furthermore, the act of using the perceived "immersion accent" when speaking French with peers is also an acknowledgement of group membership that BC immersion participants are choosing.

All this encourages us to understand that what we are seeing is, potentially, a new and distinct group, and specifically that this new group is a direct result of the language (and accent) immersion students are learning and speaking together: French. Perhaps the most important point is that these immersion participants are constructing these groups and feelings of belonging through their continued classroom relationships. Yes, it is true that students in French immersion do not have control over who is in their program; however, they do have agency over how they interact with one another, how they name each other (e.g., franglaisphone), and how they choose to use the French language. Returning once more to social identity theory, the use of French amongst immersion peers, especially in the presence of English-speaking students, can very much be perceived as an agentive choice to demonstrate their constructed separate immersion status. The choice, however, is made together with their perceived group members. In this example, we can see the individual actions affected by the perceived existence of the immersion group. Adherence to a specific accent, for example, is yet another affirmation of the group – more specifically, the individual loyalty to the group.

By placing the focus of identity construction and group belonging squarely on the participants of this study, we are beginning to witness these students as they actively re-work and even re-define language group membership and belonging in their unique immersion (and BC) contexts. Students are doing so both *through* French as they use the language in communication and while *centring* French, as when students compared themselves both to English program peers and other Francophones based on the French language. Essentially then, returning to the follow-up questions of this study, BC immersion participants do appear to be aware of differences in accents between themselves and other French speakers (Core French and Francophone). These differences are often used as markers of group distinction, both as a means of affirming French immersion otherness when compared to English program peers and of situating themselves in the wider French-speaking context. Furthermore, students' relationships with immersion peers are at the centre of their feelings of group belonging and are predicated on students' perceived linguistic (specifically accent) differences when compared to other French speakers.

At this point, the sub-topics of my study have been completely addressed. Yet a key element is still missing. As stated earlier, French was the connecting point for immersion students as a tool of expressing difference, and yet there was no further insistence on any separate variety of French. Referring to Chapter 4, many immersion participants either did not have strong opinions on such terms as *immersionese/français de l'immersion* or outright rejected them. Even in the expressions students created for themselves, such as "Franglaisphone," my participants did not appear to favour these terms in place of French. French is, of course, not unique to immersion students, and is shared with anyone else who speaks the language. In this way, French is equally a tool of connection as well as distinction.

6.1.3. BC French Immersion Participants and Their Relationships to the Wider French-Speaking World Around Them

Outside their classroom-based affiliations, I found some evidence that the immersion student participants in my study are looking towards a larger community of French speakers as well. This is described in Chapter 5, when students were asked how they would want listeners to identify them with regard to their French (see Figure 5.4). Out of all the options (French from France or from Quebec, BC, FSL in general – or

French that sounds like that of their teachers, their immersion classmates, or a unique-sounding French), there was a somewhat even split between wanting listeners to identify participants as French-as-a-second language (FSL) speakers *and* as BC Francophones. More students favoured being perceived as FSL speakers, especially in the classroom context: i.e., 30% for FSL and 21% for BC Francophone (I will get back to this second selection later). The preference for FSL may appear to give further credence to immersion students' group affiliation, but I must reiterate that participants were also given the option of being identified as sounding like their immersion peers or even their teachers in the program. Still, they preferred selecting the larger and more generalized group of FSL speakers – a group that does not represent immersion only.

Yet further evidence that immersion participants are looking towards larger French-language speaker groups outside of their immediate classmates can be found in Chapter 4 (see Tables 4.11 and 4.13). Here, when students were asked to talk about their understanding of *immersionese/français de l'immersion*, some participants did not even want such terms to exist, specifically because these participants wanted to be associated generally with the French language and not a specific variation of it. My participants cited that the act of learning French is what they were doing, and that this is what they wanted to be acknowledged as having accomplished. Therefore, while French is a unifying force for immersion students within the program, participants may also be viewing it as a window to a much wider speaker group, far outside of their classrooms. Once again, despite not overtly being studied, much earlier studies provide some evidence that exposure to Francophones from an early point in students' immersion education has resulted in a greater interest in French outside of the classroom. Wesche (1992) suggested that immersion students who had interactions with Francophones "were the ones who tended in their young adult lives to use French on social occasions, to attend French plays, to use French with neighbors, and to take opportunities to live in French" (p. 231). Essentially, a greater exposure to French speakers resulted in immersion students' increased involvement of French, at least in their daily lives if not explicitly in their identities.

Regarding my participants, none openly stated the possibility that immersion students may indeed be looking for French speaker groups to connect with outside of their classroom peers. On the other hand, students were never asked such a question, nor were any of the questions in this study tailored to address such a possibility. Yet for

topics that should have facilitated a discussion on separate group belonging, participants' responses surprised me by how interested they were in the French language outside of their immediate immersion classes. A good example of this interest can be found in Figures 5.2. and 5.4., where immersion participants addressed the question of French and French immersion importance to students' identities. Figure 5.2. showed that 69% of early immersion students in this study found *French immersion* to be important to their identity, as opposed to 61% stating that the *French language* was similarly important. But it is noteworthy that the way early and late-immersion respondents addressed this question was significantly different. Late-immersion students were significantly less likely to consider French immersion to be an important part of their identities. This suggests that the overall importance of French immersion for these participants cannot be generalized. Thus, I cannot conclusively say that French immersion itself plays an important role in both early and immersion students' identities even if there is evidence of group belonging among immersion participants.

On the other hand, there was no significant difference between early and late-immersion groups regarding the importance of the French language to their identities. We can, therefore, be more certain of the value these students place on the French language itself. This is important because it shows that the majority of immersion respondents hold the French language at a similar level of importance – much more so than they do French immersion. This finding lends further credence to the possibility that immersion students in this study are seeking something bigger than their immediate immersion program environment, given that French is much more likely to be something students can share with others *outside* of their immersion program while French immersion is unique to those *within* the program.

Based on the greater uniformity of value placed upon French by immersion participations, I was reminded of Norton's (1995) seminal work on identity investment and imagined communities. Here, Norton suggested that it is through language that we build our identities, which are also always in flux and changing according to the contexts we are in (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Relating back to the Multilingual Turn discussed earlier, Norton's (1995) theory on investment helps explain the possibility that immersion students' knowledge of French has made them interested, or even to feel like current members of, French speaking communities: locally in BC and maybe even across Canada. As stated by Darvin and Norton (2015), "if learners invest in a language, they do

so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital and social power" (p. 37).

Clearly, the conversations students have about their level of French and their desires to continue bettering their L2 are a sign of investment (see Chapter 5, sub-section 5.1.2.1.). However, it is unclear for whom these students are trying to increase their cultural capital. It could be that immersion participants are trying to improve for the sake of their peers but, given how some students chose not use accents they acquired while on exchange (something that would traditionally be seen as an improvement), it is more likely another possibility. Evidence of this can be found in students' responses to finding French important to their identities ("True" for over 50% of all immersion respondents), as well as in Table 5.16. Here, during in-class group discussions, students talked about their role with regard to French in BC. During these discussions, many students asserted that their role was important as they felt like representative French speakers of BC. Even though Norton's (1995) views on identity are more oriented towards the individual whereas this study focuses more on immersion students as a group and on their collective desires, investment can be re-purposed for group identities, especially given how many of the students' comments on their roles as French speakers were made in collaboration with other immersion peers and were meant to present immersion students collectively.

Students' responses are also valuable because they make us question the created boundaries of Anglophone/Francophone that our immersion participants, as multilingual speakers, already do not fit into. In particular, the way students spoke of their own French throughout in-class group discussions could be another sign of their investment in the language. This would make much more sense if, indeed, these BC immersion students consider themselves as *the* French speakers of the province. Such an assertion is plausible given how, for the question on students' role with regards to French in BC, immersion participants were frequently heard comparing themselves to French speakers, specifically Francophones, in Quebec but not to BC Francophones. Whenever their place as French speakers in BC was brought up, students saw themselves as either Francophones or de facto Francophones (making the assumption, at least in the eyes of some students, that no other large Francophone populations of note live in the province).

‘De facto Francophone’ should be understood through the perspective of the participants. To reiterate, according to many of these immersion students, (see Chapter 5, Table 5.13.), they (immersion students) are the BC equivalent to Francophones. Students made these assessments often because they were unaware of how many traditionally understood Francophones – meaning heritage language speakers of French-Canadian – there were in their province. In some cases, students appeared to believe that they were the only French speakers. I therefore, added ‘de facto’ in order to express that students did not mean that, as immersion students, they are now heritage language speakers of French. Instead, because of students’ lack of knowledge about BC Francophone communities, they saw themselves as the default BC Francophone group within the greater Canadian context.

Through these students’ understanding of their own positions as French speakers, we are asked to re-evaluate the term ‘Francophone,’ especially in this minority, BC, context. According to the immersion participants of this study, Francophones are most often found in Eastern Canada, and that any living “here” (in BC) are immigrants either from outside of Canada or from those eastern regions. Ultimately then for my study’s participants, the perceived lack of home-grown Francophones has resulted in their taking up the mantle as French speakers representing BC.

At the same time, the emphasis on ‘French speaker’ versus ‘heritage language speaker’ is as important distinction. With students’ insistence on them knowing how to speak French, and comparisons with other French speakers outside of their home province, ‘Francophone’ becomes another expression for French speaker. As was suggested by EI31108 in Chapter 5, Table 5.11., it is the act of speaking French itself that rendered this student a ‘Francophone’. Earlier still, in Chapter 4, Table 4.13, LI44013 and emphasized speaking French as opposed to ‘immersionese’ while EI802147 did not see the need for labels that excluded them from ‘French speaker’ status. The general connection to the French language was much more important to these students. We can also see students’ interests in their selection of ‘BC Francophone’ and ‘FSL’ with regards to who students would like to be identified as when speaking French (see Chapter 5, Figure 5.7.,). In doing so, when students are speaking of ‘Francophones’, they are broadening, and perhaps even deviating from the standard Canadian definition.

Clearly though, students' understanding of themselves as French speakers is at odds with existing ideologies concerning how Canada understands Francophones vs. how it understands Anglophones. Specifically, within the context of French immersion, all students are 'Anglophones' with respect to their acquisition of French, even when – outside of the classroom context – many of these students would not otherwise be considered Anglophones (given that not all speak English as a first language, nor do all assert having English/English-Canadian ancestry). Instead, Anglophone appears to mean just "English speaker." Another point to add here is that outside of Canada, all immersion students *would* be Francophones; as noted in Chapter 2, the term otherwise lacks a relationship to heritage, similarly to how 'Anglophone' is being treated in the case of French immersion students.

In essence, students' positionalities about the subject of being 'Francophone' shows both a submission to the ideological definition of the term (Chapter 5 notes that 95% of early immersion and 90% of late immersion students do not consider themselves to be Francophones). It also demonstrates students' reframing of 'Francophone' because of the way some students used it to define themselves, despite not otherwise adhering to the traditional definition. The political connotation (Gallant, 2010, Heller, 1999) that is especially prevalent in Eastern Canada as well as minority Francophone communities across the country, has been removed. In essence, students appear to be defining 'Francophone' through the linguistic definition of 'French speaker' (Vigouroux, 2013). This is similar to how 'Anglophone' is understood as 'English speaker', which also lack the political nuance.

Therefore, these participating students are expressing their own desires as French speakers in the context of French being a minority in BC. The desire is to be recognized as French speakers and to understand 'Francophone' as anyone who speaks French. Interestingly, such a new approach to understanding Francophone status may come from students having only each other and possibly their teachers as arbiters of linguistic legitimacy, à la Bourdieu (1991; and see Chapter 2 for a discussion on legitimacy and symbolic power). While linguistic skills – possible markers of symbolic capital – were discussed and auto-critiqued by these students, it is important to reiterate that their statements were rarely a means of de-legitimizing themselves as French speakers. Rather, their comments serve as critiques of the program both in its lax approach to French instruction and in the ever-decreasing number of opportunities

afforded to students to use the language. On top of that, students' criticisms about their own French were often matched by their pride in having acquired the language as well as their understanding of themselves as BC French speakers. The act of viewing yourself as the de-facto BC Francophone is, perhaps, an act of self-legitimization.

It is true, however, that a search for legitimacy does not necessarily indicate identification with the dominant linguistic group. Yet as described in Chapter 5, not only did students have an interest in being identified with the larger FSL group, but immersion students wanted to be identified with local BC Francophone speakers. Table 5.4. showed a very even split between wanting to be identified as FSL in general (29%) and as BC Francophones (29%) when *outside* of the immersion classroom. These results differ from those of students being asked earlier to imagine the stranger observing them *in* the classroom: immersion students were more interested in being identified as FSL while in the classroom, with 30% selecting FSL vs. 21% selecting BC Francophone (see Chapter 5, Figure 5.7). However, in the "outside of the classroom" scenario, the number of students who wanted to be identified as BC Francophones increased by 8%; that may even have impacted the FSL option, which decreased by 1%.

This result certainly made me think and even begin to believe that these current immersion participants may already have a close association with existing local Francophone communities. Yet I was still surprised, as from my own experiences in the program I remember only vaguely knowing about Francophones in BC. Often if we, as immersion students, did think about them, it would be as expats from French-speaking areas of Canada or around the world rather than Francophones with long-standing histories and roots in the province.

The participants' interest in being considered a 'BC Francophone' could very well come from a reimagining of this definition, as stated earlier. Evidence for this redefinition can be expressed thusly: recall again how some students stated they were Francophones, with the ability to speak/read/write in French as reason enough for such a designation, while others said they did not *yet* feel like Francophones but thought one day they could become Francophones upon improving their knowledge of French. In these examples, the act of speaking French appears to be enough to justify group affiliation: in this case as speakers of French outside of their classes. The reconstruction of 'BC Francophone' by participants, and its attachment to all French speakers is an

example of an imagined community (Anderson, 1999). Though students have not met all French speakers, or, seemingly any BC Francophone community members, they share a perceived similarity through the French language specifically. Thus, a redefinition of 'Francophone' could have resulted in a new imagined community for immersion students to identify with.

At the same time, we still saw that not all students identified with 'Francophone'. This was often because students defined the term according to the social and political (Canadian) definition. On the other hand, language proficiency was also factor. If immersion students are focusing on the French language as a group marker, then any more negative comments on students' own French could be indicative of stigmatizing behaviour and finding ways to justify being 'othered' (e.g., I am not yet a Francophone because my French is not good enough). In SIT, feeling like a group also means expressing what makes someone a member of the out-group. Stigmatization, even self-stigmatization as understood by Goffman (1986a, 1986b), is further acknowledgement of a group's existence. Marshall and Laghzaoui's (2011) study provides an example of a student ('Stephanie') who would not consider herself Francophone. The reasons she gave were language related, not ethnicity/heritage-based, meaning that once again the status of being Francophone was viewed as attainable. Essentially, the act of 'becoming' Francophone was tied to language proficiency. While it is interesting that many of our immersion participants did not understand "immersionese" in the traditional way defined by researchers, the disparaging views on language from Stephanie in the Marshall and Langhzaoui (2011) article and in this study could be hallmarks of "self-stigmatization" as expressed in Goffman's work on personal and group identities (1986a, 1986b). For this previous study, self-stigmatizing applies in particular when students thought their French was not good enough to be Francophone yet, or when – during their in-class group discussions – certain students would call their French terrible. In terms of immersion identity or belonging, we already saw that some students did not agree with the notion of "immersionese" as the ultimate goal was to speak French and not something else. Therefore, the more disparaging comments made by students about their own French can be thought of as self-stigmatization regarding their favoured (local BC) Francophone group, and even a wish to be part of that group. However, once again we have seen that these same student participants may not even be aware of such a local group. Who, then, might they be 'deviating' from?

I cannot provide a conclusive answer here, but by going back to the in-class group discussions, I see immersion students compared themselves to other speakers of French outside of their province, primarily as a way to highlight their own status as BC French speakers (see, for example Table 5.13., and Appendix B, Table B3.). The act of comparison, along with the disparaging comments made on their own French can be a sign of students' feelings of linguistic insecurity. What these student participants are expressing is not new. Feelings of such linguistic insecurity when faced with the dominant Francophone speaker group (often Quebec in the Canadian context) are also present among more traditional minority Francophone groups that have English as a direct contact (for example, see the use of Chiac in Chapter 2, section 2.2.3.). Altogether, the importance of French is highlighted as the students are striving for, in their view, 'self-improvement' of the language.

At the same time, we also saw from the in-class group discussions that students believed in their own importance as speakers of French in BC, often because they did not seem to have knowledge of the existing local Francophone communities or the scope of the Francophone communities around them. As such, the participants in this study expressed both an interest in, and a self-professed ability to be a part of, multiple Francophone communities – which include Quebec, for example – or even to *be* the Francophone members in their own province. Immersion students' imagined communities and imagined identities, (Norton 2001, 2014), are therefore both the immersion classroom/immersion peer community and the traditionally thought-of Francophone communities. In some instances (see Chapter 5), these two separate communities and identities were possibly seen as one and the same, especially by participants who equated language ability/proficiency with Francophone status – again a re-imagining of the old definition of Francophone. Therefore, in the case of these immersion participants, 'Francophone' should be understood using the more global definition rather than through heritage, as here in Canada.

To revisit the idea that immersion students may view themselves as Francophones (according to the more linguistic definition of 'French speaker'), we must also think about how legitimacy may play a role in this thought process. Piller (2001) explains that language can be treated as symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) as a marker of ethnic, national, and/or social identity. French immersion students, with their diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, are a prime example of BC's linguistic laboratory, and

the ways these students negotiate their identities (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) may be representative of the more plurilingual realities lived by BC citizens.

Thinking back to Chapter 2 on speaker legitimacy and linguistic legitimacy, such terms as "immersionese" can be used as a discursive tool to remove legitimacy from speakers – in this case because they are not said to be speaking French. Both "immersionese" and "français de l'immersion" are created and applied by researchers and experts, who, by Bourdieu's (1991) understanding, hold power, that these students may not have. "Immersionese" could also be used to isolate, rather than join, speakers to a broader language speaking community. However, these same terms of delegitimization and separation can be reclaimed by speakers as seen in the cases of French varieties, such as Chiac, in Canada (see Boudreau, 2005, 2007; also Boudreau, 2008). As a potential example of this, when participants in this study were asked to explain what they understood by the terms "immersionese'" or "Français de l'immersion," it became clear that an otherwise negative stance was not shared by most immersion participants. In fact, "Français de l'immersion" in particular was understood by many as a tool to bring immersion students together, thus helping students re-define community and belonging. The creative use of "franglaisphone" is another example of students re-defining themselves as French speakers and positioning themselves in the wider French-speaking world. For those participants who did not see the positive merit in "Français de l'immersion," it was not because of any internalized shame at not speaking the standard variety. Instead, students did not see the need for such terms to begin with, asking instead for the language they speak to be called just "French" because that is the community (the community of French speakers) with which they choose to be associated. Many students in this study feel they have earned this right due to the many years spent in the program with the explicit goal of learning and speaking French, not "immersionese." At the same time, students oscillated between pride in a newly acquired accent and the need to sound like their immersion program peers.

These contradictions – wanting to be like immersion students yet wanting to be like Francophones as well – could be a sign that the true, ultimate goal of French immersion students is to be accepted by all French speakers: both FSL and their Francophone peers. More importantly, students in this study are showing us their collective understanding of what it means to speak French and indeed to *be* a French speaker. These immersion students' agentive redefinition of 'Francophone' exists within

the context of BC, which is an Anglo-dominant province federally, and deeply multilingual regionally. Yet the knowledge of French, learned through the collective of the immersion classroom, has made these students more open, more globalized, and indeed more *united* with French speakers as a whole.

6.2. *Le français? C'est nous!:* Concluding Thoughts on Immersion Identity, Belonging, and Accent

> " *F2: …le … française en Colombie-Britannique – ?*
> *G1 : c'est nous – !*
> *F1 : yay – !*
> *F3 : c'est – yeah – C'est de immersion –*
> *F1: donc ok, on joue un grand rôle…*"[26]

We have come to the end of my study on BC French immersion belonging, identity, and accent. In this study, my goal was to begin a new conversation on BC immersion students. I did so by interrogating students' identity construction as it might relate to French within their provincial and regional contexts. Through selected questions and topics using online surveys and recorded in-class group discussions, immersion students presented their lived experiences in the immersion program and their relationships to one another, to other French speakers and to the French language itself.

Looking back, I can summarize my results as being the following: BC immersion participants have displayed a strong bond with one another in the program. This bond can be interpreted as feelings of group belonging, in which students see themselves as different from English program peers. Most importantly, this difference stems from knowing French. Their attachment to each other, through French, has resulted in students noting a separate accent that also distinguishes them from those traditionally understood as Francophones.

On the other hand, French is also a point of contact with other speaker groups, and immersion students' investment in the language is noted by consistent comments and efforts to better their linguistic skills: in particular, their accents. BC immersion students' willingness to improve indicates an interest in French speaker groups outside of their own immersion peers, specifically FSL speakers in general, as well as local BC

[26] Translation: [F2: the … French in British Columbia – ? / G1: that's us – ! / F1: yay – ! F3: it's – yeah – it's from immersion – / F1: so, ok, we play a big role…] (Translation is my own).

Francophones – a group immersion participants have shown an interest in being identified with. Throughout the study, students expressed their otherness, as well as their wish to belong through the creation of new terms like 'Franglaisphone' that further emphasised their French speaking abilities. On the other hand, existing terms like 'bilingual' and 'immersionese' were often rejected by these immersion participants, as they did not specifically express their desired French speaker status.

In creating new terms, or revising old ones, these participants are, by themselves, subverting the existing stigmas around immersion students. Most importantly though, BC immersion students' identification with others who speak French, has led to a more inclusive understanding of the term 'Francophone'. Here, it is language, rather than culture or heritage, that makes one a 'Francophone', rendering the meaning equivalent to 'French speaker'. And at the very least, these students are telling us that they want to be identified as speakers of the French language.

Altogether for these immersion participants, French, with accent as its marker, is both a tool for in-group identity construction and out-group belonging. But the key is that the BC immersion students' own world views are being demonstrated, individually, and collectively; most importantly, the immersion students are consciously constructing their current, future, and longed-for communities of belonging. It is by listening to these BC immersion students and their experiences as French speakers that we can begin breaking down the provinces' prevailing barriers created by linguistic and cultural categorizations. Though we are only at the beginning stages of understanding the constructed social structures of these participants, articulated throughout this study, is that they want to be acknowledged for their efforts in learning French, and for their pride in the language. Immersion students tell us that they are second-language French speakers and representatives of BC French. They are proud of their new language and also want to improve it. They have created a group while looking toward existing ones. In short, they are both the *products* of their province, regions, and immersion program and the *producers* of communities.

More importantly, though, it appears that the BC immersion participants' more open approach to language group membership may allow us to re-examine existing social and linguistic categorizations as well as what purpose they serve in today's multilingual and multicultural world. And it is precisely this open spirit and attitude that

harkens back to the original purposes of French immersion, in which pioneering scholars, like Wallace Lambert, understood language as a bridge between groups.

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Appendix A.

Statistical SignificanceTables

Table A1. Q1_LANG_ STUDENT: Languagues Spoken By Immersion Participants: Monte Carlo Estimates

Monte Carlo Estimate for the Exact Test	
Pr <= P	0.4148
99% Lower Conf Limit	0.4058
99% Upper Conf Limit	0.4237
Number of Samples	20000
Initial Seed	239979968

Table A2. TABLES ON Q_1 PARENT LANG SIGNIFICANCE: Chi-Squared Test

Statistic	DF	Value	Prob
Chi-Square	2	8.5997	0.0136
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	2	8.6627	0.0131
Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square	1	0.3856	0.5346
Phi Coefficient		0.2487	
Contingency Coefficient		0.2414	
Cramer's V		0.2487	

Table A3. TABLES ON Q_2 PARENT LANG : Monte Carlo Estimates

Monte Carlo Estimate for the Exact Test	
Pr <= P	0.0110
99% Lower Conf Limit	0.0091
99% Upper Conf Limit	0.0129
Number of Samples	20000
Initial Seed	1353207498

Table A4. Q_2 PARENT LANG SIG VILLES C/D : Chi-Squared Tests

Test	ChiSquare	Prob>ChiSq
Likelihood Ratio	1.208	0.5466
Pearson	1.208	0.5466

Table A5. Q8_FREN_PRON: Monte Carlo Estimates Between Early and Late Immersion Participants: Monte Carlo Estimates

Monte Carlo Estimate for the Exact Test	
Pr <= P	0.5763
99% Lower Conf Limit	0.5673
99% Upper Conf Limit	0.5853
Number of Samples	20000
Initial Seed	1734392459

Table A6. Early and Late Immersion on IMM vs. CORE SAME: Chi-Squared Test

Statistic	DF	Value	Prob
Chi-Square	2	0.1101	0.9464
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	2	0.1101	0.9464
Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square	1	0.1088	0.7415
Phi Coefficient		0.0318	
Contingency Coefficient		0.0318	
Cramer's V		0.0318	

Table A7. Early and Late Immersion on IMM vs. FRANCOPHONE SAME: Chi-Squared Test

Statistic	DF	Value	Prob
Chi-Square	2	2.9399	0.2299
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	2	3.0752	0.2149
Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square	1	2.1663	0.1411
Phi Coefficient		0.1650	
Contingency Coefficient		0.1628	
Cramer's V		0.1650	

Table A8. I Feel Accepted by My French Program Peers: Chi-Squared Test

Statistic	DF	Value	Prob
Chi-Square	1	0.1069	0.7437
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	1	0.1061	0.7446
Continuity Adj. Chi-Square	1	0.0086	0.9263
Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square	1	0.1059	0.7449
Phi Coefficient		0.0313	
Contingency Coefficient		0.0313	
Cramer's V		0.0313	

Table A9. I feel Accepted By My French Program Peers: Odds Ratios

Odds Ratio	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
2.766667	1.166663	6.560974

Table A10. Early/Late Immersion Attestations of Switching from English to French in Front of Non-French Speaking People: Chi-Squared Test

Statistic	DF	Value	Prob
Chi-Square	1	2.6875	0.1011
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	1	2.6517	0.1034
Continuity Adj. Chi-Square	1	2.0363	0.1536
Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square	1	2.6624	0.1027
Phi Coefficient		-0.1585	
Contingency Coefficient		0.1565	
Cramer's V		-0.1585	

Table A11. Importance of French Immersion for Identity: Chi-Squared Test

Statistic	DF	Value	Prob
Chi-Square	1	14.0358	0.0002
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	1	14.1872	0.0002
Continuity Adj. Chi-Square	1	12.5569	0.0004
Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square	1	13.9046	0.0002
Phi Coefficient		-0.3622	
Contingency Coefficient		0.3405	
Cramer's V		-0.3622	

Table A12. Importance of French Language for Identity: Chi-Squared Test

Statistic	DF	Value	Prob
Chi-Square	1	2.3712	0.1236
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	1	2.3665	0.1240
Continuity Adj. Chi-Square	1	1.7919	0.1807
Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square	1	2.3494	0.1253
Phi Coefficient		-0.1475	
Contingency Coefficient		0.1459	
Cramer's V		-0.1475	

Table A13. Immersion Student Considering Themselves to be Bilingual: Chi-Squared Test

Statistic	DF	Value	Prob
Chi-Square	1	22.7745	<.0001
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	1	23.4529	<.0001
Continuity Adj. Chi-Square	1	20.0136	<.0001
Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square	1	22.5655	<.0001
Phi Coefficient		-0.4571	
Contingency Coefficient		0.4157	
Cramer's V		-0.4571	

Table A14. Do Immersion Students Consider Themselves to Be Francophones: Chi-Squared Test

Statistic	DF	Value	Prob
Chi-Square	1	1.4857	0.2229
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	1	1.4147	0.2343
Continuity Adj. Chi-Square	1	0.6583	0.4172
Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square	1	1.4721	0.2250
Phi Coefficient		0.1168	
Contingency Coefficient		0.1160	
Cramer's V		0.1168	

Appendix B.

Web Survey Open-Ended Answers and Transcriptions

Table B1. Reason Given by Immersion Students for Switching to French Around English-Program Peers

CODE	REASONING BEHIND SWITCHING
EI31108	Sometimes I want to say something only to a certain person so we switch languages so the other cannot understand
EI99140	I switch to French if I don't want them to understand our conversation.
EI937098	to say things you I want others to hear
EI89228	i speak french around people who don't all the time. not conversations, just phrales i like
EI33966	Sometimes just for fun, other times to keep a secret
EI99875	SometImes i forget a word in french or english and have to say it in french and somelimes i would do it to confuse the people around me who do not speak french
EI93848	becalse if i want to talk to one person specific'lly, it's easier
EI2'4475	we've done this solple dont 'now what we're talking about
EI301679	I do this sometimes purposefully so that the non-French speakers do not understand, more as a joke. I do this with other French-speaking classmates, normally close friends. I usually do it on purpose, it is not something that I find myself doing regularly as well.
EI955722	i have, sometimes i just need to say things that non-french spea'ers shouldn't he'r, or i don't want them to hear those things
EI694687	Som'times I don't want people hearing what I have to say so I will switch languages. I do this often with my friends, as it makes it a lot easier for us to speak freely.
EI448150	We were just talking about a proj'ct and didn't want to be interrupted.
EI74246'	I guess it's just a way of communicating 'hen you don't want everyone to hear you or understand you.
EI643713	I was talking to a friend about something private and when English kids started c'ming in, we'd switch to French because we knew'they wouldn't understand.
EI89746	For fun
EI43658	So they couldn't understand what we were speaking about
EI20115	Pour me donner un balance entre les langues
EI987654	to talk merde
EI305948	Just something everyone does
EI96318	Because it is entertaining to talk about someone or something in front of people who don't understand
EI301679	Sometimes, French can b" used as a "sec"et language" when non-French speaking students are around me.
EI604400	I do this mostly to play a joke on people who do not understand French, but also as a way to communicate thoughts privately.
EI664462	I do this to have fun and confuse the non French speaking people
EI683382	Because we are proud of speaking a language that others often don't understand
EI799942	Yes I have done this, usually for fun or to keep secrets.

LI49097	well sometimes i d239renchith my french immersion friends because it is fun when you can talk about someone and they cant understand
LI70736	I have but not to be rude. I do not remember why I did or what it was about but I believe it was in a situation of explaining something that had happened in class
LI51792	I didnt want the Non-French speaker to know what I was saying, or like I was making a joke.
LI36826	Because it's a really easy method of making sure no-one overhears you. If they did speak French we would just stop talking until they moved out of earshot. Being able to switch to French is a matter of 'onvenience, and I'm not in the habit of talking shit abo't people so I don't feel it matters.
LI47648	To avoid unwanted comments in conversation
LI67559	Sometimes it is just for fun, just to confuse our non French classmates.

Table B2. If you were told to leave French immersion effective immediately, what would you miss MOST about the program?

CODE	BC French Immersion Student Responses
EI66353	Nothing
EI48236	I would miss the enviroment of french speaking people.
EI37242	The pace of learning, learning in French (ex. the vocabulary) is something I have become accustomed to. I feel switching to English would mean relearning everything
EI90595	Just in general I would miss having to speak french on the daily.
EI84108	my friends
EI31108	My fellow peers
EI99140	My friends.
EI63473	not having the same classes with my friends in the French immersion classes
EI96473	The teachers
EI42046	Speaking the language and learning the grammar
EI98721	I would miss being in an french environment and I,Äôll definitely miss being with my friends in French immersion
EI25074	Being able to practice my French
EI77266	The motivated students around me
EI89228	having all my friends
EI33966	My ability to speak the langauge
EI99875	The familiarity of learning in french
EI33781	My friends, probably
EI94800	My friends
EI65698	My friends, the opportunity to speak french
EI93848	I would miss being in a class where i already know everyone and am comfortable talking with everyone
EI204475	My friends and the missed opportunities from not graduating with a second language
EI301679	I would miss the opportunity to graduate with a full 12 grades of French education. It would feel like a waste of 10 years of my life to stop learning French right now.
EI959630	My friends

EI30378	I would miss the people the most (as cliche as that sounds).
EI297333	My friends
EI937098	my friends
EI886166	Speaking French
EI802147	Being able to further improve my proficiency in the language and relations I've created during the program.
EI66976	Having classes with my friends and mr chenafi
EI619828	I would slowly lose my abilities to speak or remember the language
EI44848	nothing
EI747381	Speaking the language in school and I would miss all the friends that I have grew up with in the program
EI955722	my friends, the language i'd slowly forget, my teachers, the environment i grew to like
EI588825	the practice of speaking french every day
EI803121	Becoming more fluent in the french language.
EI36880	career oppurtunities
EI867228	the teachers
EI78636	speaking the language in class
EI538929	having a community of people who have learned the same things since elementary
EI694687	Being able to learn/speak a different language
EI124245	My friends
EI448150	Have classes with my french immersion friends.
EI742465	The teachers and learning about the culture
EI643713	The experience of learning about different cultures and the closeness of the group.
EI440271	I would miss speaking French with my peers and teachers. I would also miss constantly improving my French and learning about Francophone culture.
EI56425	The opportunity to speak French regularly
EI89746	Not being able to get my french diploma
EI43658	My friends
EI20115	Analyse de phrase
EI305948	The grammar
EI64415	The language
EI45368	I would miss the aspects of learning french and knowing a new language, I enjoy that I have somewhere to speak french and test my ability and without french immersion I wouldnt have anywhere to do that
EI32701	Probably my friends in the program.
EI82341	The people.
EI96318	Nothing; it is not significant to me
EI987590	Having the chance to learn and speak in french , I could always read and do other things in french at home but the only time i actually get to talk to other people in french is at school
EI68215	Learning with my friends
EI565891	The fact that is gets me two deplomas
EI301679	All of my connections with my friends
EI604400	I would miss the friends, teachers and experiences.

EI154408	The graduation certificate
EI664462	The challenge of learning in a second language
EI77895	My friends
EI669110	The people and the time lost
EI577042	The one that
EI477940	Some of the teachers
EI683382	The teachers and my peers. I would also miss the level of French we are learning
EI799942	I would miss the teachers and the language itself.
LI47243	The time I wasted
LI98564	I would miss having a lot of the same classes with the same people the most.
LI49097	well i would most likely stop speaking french that i would probably forget a lot
LI75830	My friends
LI77147	I would miss my teachers and my friends in the program. I like all my teachers and because of immersion, I have had them all many times so it's easy to get along and communicate with them.
LI370424	i would miss the opportunities that it will give me for my future
LI793261	The language in class
LI194660	the people
LI506168	The friends
LI929591	The culture
LI54362	my friends
LI66910	learning the second language of my country
LI70736	my friends
LI55067	probably nothing
LI43836	My friends.
LI47579	The close friend group/class and our bonds and relationships
LI66852	I would miss my friends in the class the most.
LI44013	The challenge as well as the people.
LI33763	the double dog wood
LI87676	What i had done with my peers throughout the years and to know that i gave up before finishing and that i didnt have a choice
LI45508	ma friends
LI38223	I would miss my friends
LI51792	the opportunity to be able to learn french
LI88755	The people. My friends
LI35669	my friends and graduating with my double dogwood
LI70411	most likely the ability to learn the language.
LI36826	The focus on academics and self improvement.
LI47648	Mes amis.
LI28403	My friends
LI71939	nothing
LI79892	nothing
LI43052	My peers, my double dogwood

LI65884	I would miss my friends in the class, and the learning opportunities from the program, both with the language learning that the other things that I have learned and am learning while learning a second language.
LI272141	I would miss learning about different French-speaking cultures
LI37911	Not much
LI983126	My friends
LI67559	Learning a second language.
LI696456	The opportunity post secondary

Table B3. Immersion Students 'Accents' and Feelings on Their Own French

Villes C/D
Groupe 1 • G3 : les étudiants de l'immersion, comment parlent-ils le français? Um… notre français c'est mélangé avec l'anglais beaucoup • G1 : (laughing) un peu trop! • G3 : et nos accents sont ah… • G1 : damn! … • F1 : non, il y a des accents mais c'est pas comme un bon accent • G1 : c'est comme un accent négative Groupe 3 • F1: qu'est-ce que vous pensez de le accent des étudiants de l'immersion française • F2 : je crois que les étudiants de l'immersion français on un accent différent que les étudiants francophones ou qui sont en anglais et qui parlent le français parce que nous n'apprenons pas le français comme langue première mais nous parlons un assez grand mondant de français ah.. et nous pratiquons le français en classe et plusieurs cours sont en français alors nous avons beaucoup de pratique • F1 : je pense que ça dépende sur l'étudiant parce que il y a beaucoup d'étudiant qui parle comme à la maison avec les leurs, avec leurs amis • F3 : leurs parents • F1 : yeah à la maison, ils ont plus de des avantages mais il y a des autres étudiants qui seulement parlent dans les classes, ils ont pas beaucoup de pratique et je pense que ça c'est à propos la dédication aussi • F3 : oui, je pense que c'est aussi um leur culture, comme ce qu'ils ont… • F4 : oui je suis d'accord avec tout les réponses, je pense que, il y a des avantages pour des francophones et des désavantages pour nous parce que nous parlons pas chaque jour au maison • Class 4 • F3 : um… je pense que mon accent français, c'est très évident que je ne suis francophone • F2 : (laughing) • F3 : ça sent comme le français est mon deuxième langue um… je ne suis pas comme fière de mon français mais je ne pense pas que c'est le plus pire,

- F2 : je pense que , la plupart des élèves dans immersion on des accents similaire, moi personnellement j'étais dans un école francophone je sais que mon accent c'est un peu plus fort que certain personnes, mais en gros je crois que ça va bien et les profs en immersion c'est beaucoup différent que les fra-les écoles francophones en cas des accents la grammaire et la façon dont ils étudient, mais je crois que ici en immersion, ils sont assez bien, comme ils peuvent au moins avoir un conversation en français facilement et ça fonctionne bien

Groupe 5

- G2 : je pense que, on a tous comme le même accent, qu'est-ce que c'est accent en français?
- G1 : accent
- G2 : oui, le même, car on a parle en anglais alors n'est pas comme les personnes francophones, je pense qu'on parle avec un certain accent, c'est peut-être un peu différent avec chaque personne, mais en générale, je pense que tout le monde ont comme… presque le même accent, comme c'est en immersion français
- G3 : oui pense que notre accent est un peu pire que les personnes francophones, mais c'est un peu meilleur des élèves du programme anglais qui prend le français
- G2 : je pense aussi que um notre français c'est comme, les étudiants ont comme, que les comme, late French?
- G3 : l'immersion tard
- G2 : l'immersion tard c'est comme le français comme c'est un peu meilleur que les étudiants dans le, le français tôt… ah, je ne sais pas pourquoi, mais ça c'est comme ce que j'ai vu
- G3 : je pense que notre prononciation s'améliore avec du temps, juste avec du pratique

Groupe 6

- G2 : alors, vos accents français? – est-ce qu'on parle au sujet de nos accent ou est-ce que c'est plutôt on parle et tu vas déterminer nos accents?...
- G2 : ok
- G1 mon accent c'est 'r'
- G3 : mon accent c'est comme les 'r' sont difficiles les 'u' sont difficiles les autres sons sont eh… plutôt difficiles
- G1 : car je peux
- G3 : avoir un accent naturel c'est difficile c'est probablement la partie la plus important dans apprendre un langue alors
- G1 : pour moi c'est pas trop difficile
- G2 : c'est que c'est (speaking someone's name) pas vraiment difficile de parler comme une personne francophone G1 peut parler comme un francophone –
- G1 : mais ah… ça c'est, ça c'est le seule chose que je peux faire je comme peux…répéter les choses… français mais ah… that's it that's the only thing I can do
- …
- G1: Les étudiants en immersion ont leurs propres accents
- G2 : oui
- G1 : comme ah comme nous parler différemment des gens en Core French
- G4 : yeah it's very
- G1 même avec les ahhh les … vraies personnes?? Très différents
- G4 : it's just like what you pay attention to in Core French it's a lot about grammar verbs and like the teacher trying to get their students to make that 'r' sound that we all can't do-
- G2: pas trop d'importance sur le français oral

- G4 : yeah while… in immersion French teachers do make an effort to try and keep up the French language ahh flow better instead of choppy ah choppy sentences
- G1: oui… pour moi le jeux tal ou comme End Game ou whatever est pour ahhh c'est de sonner comme une français québécois

Groupe 7

- G1: … no questions.. alright so people who speak French, that's all of us you might notice that you speak differently than someone from France, right?
- F1: year
- G2: yeah
- G1: it's my belief that no one speaks French well anywhere like in the vicinity of French immersion just because their only experience is other French immersion students.
- G1 : c'est magnifique mais les Québécois ont un accent très différent… de nous comme c'est un petit peut plus claire quand on voyage au Québec il parle français et tu es comme wow il sont comme they're amazing!
- G2 : (….???)
- G1 : mon oncle et mon cousin sont québécois alors ils parlent comme très très bien le français, mais je ne sais pas c'est quoi les accent les étudiants de l'immersion
- G2 : on n'a pas d'accent
- G1 : je pense que c'est comme ils parlent le français comme ils parlent l'anglais. Leurs inflexions anglais ce sont comme les mêmes inflextons que en français. S'ils prononcent comme un son spécifique comme…. Ils prononcera le même son au même façon en français
- G2 : car ça c'est leur accent
- G1 : je pense que s'ils voyagent quelque part où ils parlent français comme Québec ou France, Le France, leur accent c'est beaucoup beaucoup plus authentique même si c'est juste comme pour un semaine
- G1 : ….. you practice your accent by immersing yourself and you listen to people who have the accent
- …
- G1 : ok le lien entre les accents et les étudiants en immersion, moi je pense que si vous peux parler en français avec un accent très fluid français ça semble mieux car moi je souffre un petit peu quand je lis un livre et quelqu'un parle comme et il parlent comme ça
- F2 : (laughing) oui!
- G1 : et énoncer comme si c'est anglais et umm.. oi! That hurts! Anyone else have any thoughts on that?
- Class 7
- F4: If you are in early French immersion… like your accents are better if you are in late French immersion, I don't…. I'm bad at speaking French. I feel like French immersion, like kids, we like ok so like, there is like English accents, in French there is like Parisian… like French immersion finds this weird middle ground its not English accent but its just a French immersion accent and I feel like it's its own accent…. Just like everyone in French immersion always talks the same…. It's like French immersion French. I feel like, I went to Quebec in grade 7 and then I noticed that like I mean the teachers spoke like, I mean we had this tour guid lady and she spoke slowly so I could understand her, but everyone else there, like if I went to a store or something, I had to really pay attention to understand them it was like um… like especially since they had the Quebec accent…

Groupe 8

- F1 :um… je pense que je ne pense pas beaucoup des accents mais je peux l'entendre avec… les autres élèves dans la classe comme les late French, comme les personnes qui ont commencé en 6e année je… je pense que je peux entendre la différence
- F3 : umhm
- F2 : oui comme il y a un différence comme on a étudié le français pour comme, pour comme 6 ans plus que eux, alors
- F3 : oui
- F2 : alors il y a un différence dans les accents français
- F1 : oui
- F2 : ah… pas même juste étudier mais juste comme être avec les professeurs et l'entendre plus comme quand j'étais jeune j'étais forcé d'écouter les f.. ah… les télévisions en français dans le matin quelque chose comme ça mais juste entendre ce type de choses je pense que um… on comme… pick up..
- F3 : laughs
- F2 : ces … sons

Groupe 9

- F1 : oh je… on je parle pas de mon accent!
- G3 : je dis oh, um grammaire! Je dirai que
- G1 : je pense
- F1 : j'ai comme un accent
- G1 : ce n'est pas très bon
- F1 : je n'ai pas un accent parce que je comme parle deux autres langues à la maison alors je ne pas un bon accent pour moi le français c'est comme ce n'est pas bien mais c'est comme
- F2 : ce n'est pas mal non plus
- G3 : c'est descent
- F1 : (laugh)
- G3 : ok on doit démontre notre
- F1 : (laugh)
- G3 : notre compétence
- G2 : oui dans le français
- G1 : ah… je dirai que ma, mon accent est le meilleur
- F1 : de la classe (laugh)
- G2 : de la classe!
- G1 : peut-être de la classe
- G2 : je pense que c'est bon
- G1 : mais ah… de niveau 4 bien sur
- F1 : ah ok
- G3 : ah… je pense que (NAME) est pas correcte
- G2/F2/F1 : (laugh)
- F1 : c'est difficile
- G1: ok, ok, ok
- G2: non, je suis d'accord comme ça, je pense que (NAME G1) est le
- G3 : et votre accent? C'est comme çi comme ça
- F1 : c'est plud naturel
- G2 : pour moi je pense que je parle le même accent que l'anglais et en français

- G3 : oui c'est assez proche
- G1 : oui je pense pas que je vraiment un accent
- …
- G3 : ok alors… ok prochaine question le lien entre vos accents, et le programme de l'immersion, alors pour commencer je dirai que il y a de professeurs qui parlent bien le français
- F1 : oui
- G1 : (PROF NAME FEMALE) est bien, et (PROF NAME MALE) est incroyable, mais il y a des gens comme (PROF NAME MALE) qui
- F1 : oh!!
- G3 : sont horribles! Et c'est vraiment de qui vous avez commencé avec comme je…
- G1 : je dirai que mon accent beaucoup similaire au professeurs et des autres élèves que j'étais avec
- F2 : oui!
- G1 : oui, umm… les professeurs que j'ai eu comme dans le maternelle et le première année on vraiment ah…
- F1 : te influence
- G1 : oui ah… ça c'était l'influence des comment mon accent à l'aire d'être, um… j'étais très chanceux oui, je pense que j'étais très chanceux
- …
- F1 : comme, je, um, j'apprends par l'example alors, si les professeurs et les amis ils prononcent quelque chose dans un certain façon, alors je vais prononcer comme ça aussi, alors c'est comme on a dit avant, ça dépende de notre, c'est avec qui vous passez de temps avec

Groupe 10

- F2 : je pense que notre français en immersion est meilleur que les personnes de Core French on apprends tout en français et on parle dans la classe la plupart du temps en français et on doit améliorer notre grammaire et prononciation plus que les autres dans Core French
- F4 : je pense qu'on parle meilleur le français comme nos accents c'est plus… mieux les autres de la programme de français parce que nous parle français plus dans la classe

Groupe 11

- F1 : alors, notre accent est très différent, on ne peut pas le comparer avec les accent au Québec ou la France mais c'est comme notre propre accent parce que on n'est pas très expériencés… on n'a pas beaucoup d'expérience en français alors c'est très différents des autres gens qui est né dans un pays ou un endroit qui est plus française que la nôtre alors, et ne pense que notre accent est très différentdes autres, les gens anglais qui fait les cours de français parce que on avait encore étudier le français pour plus d'années qu'ils
- F2 : je pense que um, les gens de l'immersion n'ont pas un accent spécifique comme du Québec ou de la France, je pense que c'est un petit peu mélangé parce que pendant tout les années que on été dans l'immersion on avait des différents professeurs comme quelques un été de Québec, et quelques un de la France alors, notre accent sont mélangés

Ville B

Groupe 1

- F1 : je pense que tout les personnes tout les gens qui sont dans l'immersion française ah… si ils sont dans comme la même classe, ils vont avoir un accent similaire-
- G2 : -oui-

- F1 : -et comme le vocabulaire similaire mais je pense que ça c'est comme vraiment tout et comme ça juste dépends ton prof et si
- G1 : est-ce que vous change à l'autre partie?
- F1 : yeah
- G1 : ok
- F1 : c'est juste comme et si ton prof est quebecois ou français ou comme… ils sont de l'immersion française ils vont avoir un vocabulaire différent et donc, c'est juste comme ça

Groupe 3

- F2 : je pense que quelque fois mon accent c'est très bon (with extra French accent)
- F3 : laughing)
- F2 : mais quand je parle à mes amis, je parle comme ça (as she is doing now)
- F1 : je pense que mon accent est très mal
- F3 : oui je préfère un bon accent, mais je choisis de ne pas parce que
- F2 : ils vont penser que je suis stupid
- F3 : oui alors je parle comme franglais
- F2 : je pense que quand j'ai retourné de l'échange j'avais un accent
- F1/3 : oui!
- F2 : et j'ai tellement aimé mon accent mais après comme beaucoup de temps dans la classe avec les personnes qui ont pas les accents j'ai comme perdu l'accent

Ville A

Groupe 1

- F1: ok, umm les étudiants
- F2 : oh le français c'est terrible
- F1 : laughing
- F2 : je ne pense pas qu'il y a des caractéristiques, just qu'on parle français
- F3 : terriblement
- F1 : oui
- …
- F2 : ok, notre accent est un mix de anglais et de français
- F3-F1-G1 : franglais!
- F3 : ok que'est que vous pensez de vos accents?
- F1 : ah oui, pas bon pas bon!
- F2 : les personnes première langue étaient français et puis ils nous entendent
- F3 : c'est terrible, mais les personnes qui ne parlent pas de français du tout ils pense que wow!
- F1 : c'est comme, par example un de mes co-worker um… au travail m'a entendue parler en français et puis elle était comme wow tu es très bon, tu es tr`s fluent mais
- G1 : mais je pense que tu peux être fluent mais ton accent est terrible
- F2 : je dirai que c'est notre propre accent comme (3 :58)
- G1 : comme anglephone francophone et franglaisphone

Groupe 2

- G3 : on peut tout parler le français
- G2 : oui
- G1 : oui

- G3 : un niveau-
- G1 : médéocre, …. Un niveau dans le milieu… comme neutre
- G2 : il y … on a quand même un accent anglophone
- G1 : eh… s'ai pas le…
- …
- G2 : tu peux savoir si ils sont les étudiants de l'immersion cars ils ont un accent anglophone
- G1 : ils ne sais pas toutes les mots notre authograph n'est pas parfaite
- G2 : et comment dire, les expressions-
- G1 : oui, les idonimes on ne sais pas les idonimes francophone, oui, oui, oui
- G3 : ok, nos accent français au program,
- G2 : qu'est-ce que c'est? On a déjà;…
- G3 : oui on a un accent française

Groupe 3

- F1 : on ne parle pas le français avec ces personnes alors
- F1 : non
- F2 : pas du tout, si je peux parler anglais, je parle en anglais
- F1 : ok, les étudiants comment-
- F1/F2/F3 : parlent-ils en français? (laugh)
- F1 : ça c'est pas vraiment un question
- F2 : je pense que notre français est différent en immersion, c'est comme beaucoup plus franglais
- F3 : oh oui, bien sur
- F1 : nous?
- F2 : on a de mauvaise français
- F3 : oui nous accents um…
- F2 : aussi on a un différent français comme des personne d'anglais, comme ils fait comme le France
- F3 : et on fait la Québec
- F2 : oui
- F1 : c'est une mélange
- F2 : oui, nos accents…
- F3 : est terribles juste comme ew!
- F2 : je crois que qu'en élémentaire tous nos accents étaient vraiment comme mieux
- F3 : qu'ils sont maintenant
- F1 : oui on parler français tout le journée, et maintenant je parle comme, pour trente secondes dans la classe
- F2 : et le professeur est comme parle le français s'il vous plait et puis comme, ils ne mentionnent pas encore, ils n'encouragent nous pas vraiment et pis personne parle français alors c'est bizarre si quelqu'un comme…

Groupe 4

- G1 : ok! Votre français en immersion?
- G3 : c'est… c'est mediocre médiocre
- G2 : la mienne n'est pas-

- G3 : c'est, c'est plus, un peu plus bon que intermediate je ne dirais pas que c'est fluent mais je peux parler
- G1 : um… le lecture est bon pour nous on peut commet
- G2 : parler
- G1 : oui on peut parler mais, c'est quelque fois difficile, um… je pense que presque tout le monde est pas bon avec les verbes
- G3 : très mal!
- G2 : les verbes horribles
- G1 : mais on peut comprendre vraiment bien mais pas écriver
- G2 : quels sont vos accents en immerison
- G3 : um… on n'a pas des accents, ah je peux faire un accent
- G1 : oui je peux fais l'accent aussi
- G2 : je peux être français, être bien, mais oui… mais pas vraiment

Table B4. Reasons Students Do or Do Not Consider Themselves As Bilinguals (Full Table)

CODE	BILINGUAL?	ELABORATE ON BILINGUAL: MEANING/IMPORTANCE/IDENTITY?
EI66353	Yes	I believe that I am able to speak French on a good conversational level therefore I am bilingual
EI48236	Yes	I can speak both French and English and understand mostly the language.
EI37242	Yes	Bilingual - more or less fluent in two languages. I like to consider "fluent" being if you were thrown in a setting that speaks that language, you can communicate (generally) well and survive. Languages aren't an absolute necessity, but I still find it nice to know some. Linguistics seems like such a fascinating subject. Although French speaking is not a massive part of my identity, it's still part of me and I'm happy it is :)
EI90595	Yes	I said yes because I can speak not only french and english fluently but a third language aswell.
EI84108	Yes	i can speak two languages
EI31108	Yes	Yes I consider myself bilingual since I'm able to read,write,understand and speak two language in at least the most basic way possible
EI99140	Yes	
EI634 73	Yes	being able to speak and understand more then one language. yes it is important because when you travel to different countries it will be easy for you to communicate to people there.
EI96473	Yes	I can make more friends because of the languages i speak. I can enjoy different genres of music
EI42046	Yes	
EI98721	Yes	Yes
EI25074	Yes	I think bilingual means speaking more than one language well enough to understand and speak it, which I do

EI77266	Yes	I feel more confident with jobs because I am bilingual, and it makes me feel connected to french culture.
EI89228	Yes	i am bilingual because i can speak two languages, and i am proud of my capability
EI33966	Yes	I think being bilingual means having a conversational proficiency in two languages. In my case, that is French and English. English is my first language, and so affects my identity the most
EI99875	Yes	
EI33781	Yes	Bilingual to me is being proficient enough in both languages to carry a conversation. I don't think about it much, and I don't think it plays any role in my identity
EI94800	Yes	A person who can fluently speak two languages, but is probably scared to speak their second language infront of 'native-speakers'
EI65698	Yes	I am bilingual on paper, in theory and in an english setting, but in a predominantly french setting I am less bilingual.
EI44317	Yes	someone who speaks two languages fluently
EI93848	Yes	Yes because i can speak and understand both english and french
EI204475	Yes	bilingual is when someone speaks two or more languages fluently, or close to fluently
EI301679	Yes	I think bilingual means that you can have a comfortable conversation in both languages. Writing in both languages is not as important, as the main use of bilingualism is to be able to communicate with more people. Being bilingual is important to me. I worked hard to have this understanding of a whole new language and it's something I'm proud of. It is definitely a part of my identity, it mainly influences my school life at the moment, but that might change in the future.
EI959630	Yes	i am actually trilingual.
EI30378	Yes	I define the question "Do you consider yourself 'bilingual?" as "Are you able to speak two or more languages proficiently (regardless of the accent)?"
EI297333	Yes	Well i would like to think that i understand french pretty well, considering i've been in french immersion since preschool.
EI937098	Yes	bilingual means being able to speak 2 languages and i am bilingual because i can speak 2 languages
EI886166	Yes	Speaking more than one language fluently. I dont only speak English and French but also Serbian. French rounds me as a person since I've been speaking it for the majority of my life.
EI802147	Yes	I believe that I am Bilingual because I am able to converse in French and am able to understand, speak and read thoroughly.
EI66976	Yes	I consider myself bilingual because I speak two languages and that is literally the definition of bilingual. It plays no major role in my identity however I am greatful that i can speak french anyway
EI619828	Yes	I conider myself bilingual because I can comprehend and speak the french language well enough to have conversations and communicate to others

EI44848	Yes	I do consider myself bilingual because I know how to speak French and English fluidly. Making me bilingual has no major impact on my identity and it does not really carry any importance to me except for I know more than 1 language .
EI747381	Yes	Bilingual is somebody who can speak fluently in two languages. I like being able to speak two different languages and be able to communicate with others, and use French in my life.
EI955722	Yes	bilingual means someone who can speak more than 1 language. it is very important to me to be multilingual because it gives me a sense of self and identity. with the languages that i speak and learn it gives me another part of myself that i can have depending on my determination to exel in that language. knowing different languages lets you connect with thousands of different people. you get to know different cultures and discover a world outside of your comfort zone
EI588825	Yes	bilinguel in my conversation is the ability to have proper conversations and easily communicate the same in multiple languages. i am able to talk to french speaking peoeple and have conversations the same as with english speaking people. for me bilinguel is conversation beacuse i have horrible grammair in both langauges and usually mix up the kanguages when i write
EI803121	Yes	Knowing several languages and being able to have a conversation in that language. eg; Speak, Read and Write. Yes, it is important to me to speak more than one language. French and English don't necessarily make up my identity but, it makes me feel more Canadian to know both our Native Languages.
EI36880	Yes	I can speak and write very exceptionally in three different languages. English, Serbian and French
EI867228	Yes	that you know how to speak 2 languges
EI78636	Yes	someone who can speak both languages fluently
EI538929	No	My definition of bilingual is to speak two languages equally well, and that does not apply to me because I rarely speak french, and use other languages way more. English is 80% of what I use, and while I would like to use French more, I don't have any reason to.
EI694687	Yes	Bilingual is when you are able to speak more two languages. I think that it's important to be able to speak more than one language, as it allows you to communicate more and opens you to possibly travel to new places to furthermore improve your understanding of the language/culture. I think here in Canada, it's important to be able to speak both french and english, as the majority of us speak those two languages.
EI124245	Yes	My definition of bilingual would be being able to speak, read, and write in both of the languages.
EI448150	Yes	If you can speak and understand the basics and a little more than the basics in my opinion you're bilingual. Especially if you can read, write and speak it.
EI742465	Yes	My family is from Quebec so I speak French over the phone and while I'm visiting. Bilingual means you can speak two languages.

EI643713	Yes	Bilingual to me means being able to adequately communicate in 2 different languages, I think being bilingual is important as it opens up more opportunities.
EI440271	Yes	I describe myself as 'bilingual' because I can understand and communicate in both French and English.
EI56425	Yes	I am fluent in two languages, and it has influenced my life in ways such as what friends I,Äôve made
EI89746	Yes	I can speak french and english so I am bilingual
EI43658	Yes	I can communicate in both the French and English language
EI20115	Yes	Yes, I am able to speak proficiently in both French and English
EI987654	Yes	not much, just that of being able to speak seperate languages
EI305948	Yes	I'm actually trilingual
EI64415	Yes	I can have a conversation and understand both French and English
EI45368	Yes	My definition of bilingual is that I can fluently speak and write in two separate languages. I think that it is quite important to be able to speak two languages and it will help me in the long run
EI32701	Yes	I am able to speak French well enough to communicate with people who only speak French. I also consider myself to be bilingual because I can write and speak French fluently.
EI82341	Yes	I consider myself bilingual because I can speak and comprehend both English and French.
EI96318	Yes	I can both understand and speak French
EI987590	Yes	My definition of bilingual is someone who can speak two languages fluently and understand both languages.Im not sure what role french and english play in my identity
EI68215	Yes	Bilingual is someone who can speak two different languages. It is important to me because I feel like i can understand more about a language by knowing a different language. There are more ways to describe certain things by knowing how to explain it in a different language. It will help me to become a more educated person by knowing French and English.
EI565891	Yes	I am but I don,Äôt have any confidence or faith in my French I could read and write but I don,Äôt think I could carry a real conversation with a French speaking person
EI301679	Yes	Bilingual means that I can read, write, speak and listen in French. I can maintain a conversation and understand native French speakers. English is a large part of my identity because it's how I communicate with others. I have been in French immersion since kindergarten, and it has taught me different qualities, like independence because my parents can't help me and has pushed me with my learning through public school.
EI604400	Yes	French is part of my identity as I have spoken French for many years.
EI154408	Yes	I can speak them both
EI664462	Yes	I can speak and understand french and English which will help me in the future
EI77895	Yes	I can speak both French and English fluently there for I am bilangual

EI669110	Yes	Bilingual is when you are fluent in 2 languages and I consider myself fluent in french
EI577042	Yes	Being able to understand and communicate in French
EI477940	Yes	I know how to speak both English and French fluently, I consider French being my second language as I have been taught it at a very young age and so on
EI683382	Yes	I am bilingual because I can speak and understand two different languages. It is pretty important to me if I think of how many students actually get the chance to speak more then one language
EI799942	Yes	I would say that I am bilingual because I speak what could be considered fluent French, and see it as a second language rather than a language I am learning. While I don,Äôt see myself as French, I feel that through the French that I speak, I am connected to the French that is spoken in Canada
LI47243	Yes	Being able to speak more than 1 language decently
LI98564	Yes	I think I'm bilingual because bilingual means a person who can speak two languages and it's also part of my identity because I think it is cool to speak more than one language.
LI49097	Yes	bilingual is when you can speak at least two languages where you can comfortable communicate with others in that language. it is not that important to me but it is fun when i can understand it when others speak
LI75830	Yes	Bilingual means being able to speak two languages
LI77147	Yes	I do consider myself bilingual and that is a great source of pride for me. I really value seeing and experiences others cultures and lives and being bilingual helps me do that when I travel.
LI370424	Yes	i consider myself bilingual because i know enough now that i can easily communicate with other in french even though there are still some words that i dont know
LI793261	Yes	Bilingual means to me that you can speak a language to the point that someone else can understand you.
LI194660	No	I am not fluent therefore not bilingual
LI506168	Yes	I speak both languages and both languages do influence one another when i speak so yes, i do consider myself bilingual
LI929591	No	When your bilingual in my opinion it means ur fluent in both languages or have family relations within the two cultures.
LI54362	Yes	i just kinda say i am because i speak english and a bit of french
LI66910	No	im not fluent in french, therefore i don't consider myself bilingual
LI70736	Yes	I can speak two languages therefore I am bilingual
LI55067	No	my ability to speak French is not equal with English.
LI43836	Yes	If you are speak more than one language you are bilingual. Being bilingual to any extent can greatly help in your comprehension of many other subjects.
LI47579	Yes	to me bilingual means being able to speak two languages almost just as good as the other. it is important to me because i want to be able to live somewhere french.

LI66852	Yes	I believe that I am bilingual because I can proficiently communicate in both french and english. After going on my three month exchange I believe that the language became a small part of my identity.
LI44013	Yes	I can carry a conversation in both French and English in relative comfort, and if someone were to throw me in an area where the only language was French I would be able to fairly comfortably get by. In short, I can fairly comfortably speak both languages to a point where I'd consider myself bilingual.
LI33763	Yes	I think I'm semi bilingual
LI87676	Yes	I say if you can have a conversation in a language that is not your first language i would say that means you are bilingual
LI45508	Yes	yes i speak fench and english
LI38223	No	I would consider myself bilingual if I lived in a French speaking place for at least a month to further expand my French skills and hopefully get a better accent
LI51792	No	Fluently being able to speak two different langages is what I consider bilingual. I don't believe I can fully and fluently speak French yet so I don't consider myself bilingual.
LI88755	Yes	I could speak with people who only speak english or only speak french. I can communicate in two languages, therefore I believe I am bilingual. French is not a big part of my identity. English is a part of my identity because it is the language I usually speak in. Lots of people who know me don't even know I speak french.
LI35669	No	I don't consider myself bilingual because I am not quit fluent in French as I am in English
LI70411	Yes	I Believe that I am capable of speaking both French and English for the most part fluently.
LI36826	Yes	My French is not perfect but it is good enough that I can communicate in French with native French speakers. I consider myself bilingual because I think, dream and speak to myself in both French and English.
LI69816	No	if you can speak the langaue fluently
LI47648	Yes	I believe being bilingual is simply being able speak and understand a language to the point were you can comprehend and communicate in that language
LI28403	Yes	bilingual is defined as someone who can speak two languages, its important to know more than one language so that you are able to know what it's like to learn another language, and in Canada, if you want to work in a government position you have to know French
LI71939	No	bilingual is when you can speak two languages somewhat fluently and I cannot speak French very fluently
LI79892	Yes	I can speak both fluently
LI43052	No	I don't think I can fully understand french enough to call myself bilingual

LI65884	No	Personally, I think that I will only start to consider myself bilingual when I graduate and I have completed my French language studies. French and English, as languages, do not play a very large part in my identity, because to me French is really just a language class that I take in school, and English is the language that I have spoken for as long as I can remember. Perhaps if I start to use my French language skills more later in life, French will become a bigger part of my identity, but for now it is equitable with classes like Physics and Social Studies.
LI272141	No	I don't consider myself bilingual because I am not very fluent in french compared to English.
LI37911	Yes	I can speak 2 oanguages. That is what bilingual means.
LI983126	No	I consider myself trilingual. And being multilingual means speaking writing and understanding languages well. I would say French is my least used language and am starting to loose it since I don,Äôt practice it. But I would still consider that it is a language I know very well because I can understand talk and write more than the basics.
LI67559	Yes	Benign bilingual means knowing two languages, and yes I would consider myself bilingual because I can speak both French and English. It plays a role in my identity, but very little, I have spent my whole elementary, high school experience learning French and taking French classes. So yes, it has been a big part of my life. And now if I any to travel to places who have French speaking people, I will be able to communicate with them.
LI696456	Yes	French is something that I see as a tool, I can use it in many circumstances and that makes it important to me

Table B5. Reasons Immersion Participants Consider Themselves as Francophones (Full Table with Assenting and Dissenting Reasons)

CODE	Francophone?	Participant Responses
EI66353	No	I am student of the French language. Francophone you,Äôre me is a native French speaker
EI48236	No	i feel like people who are francophone has already fully understand french and they also have a different accent which makes them even more francophone.
EI37242	No	I feel like Francophone is when someone speaks French from birth, and is extremely familiar with the language. I don't feel like I'm exposed to French enough or fluent enough to be considered Francophone, so I feel like I'm more someone who happens to have learned it and know how to speak it
EI90595	No	
EI84108	No	
EI31108	Yes	Yes because I'm able to read,write,talk and understand french
EI99140	No	My definition of francophone is someone who lived in an area that speaks mainly French. For example, someone who lived in France and learned french there.

EI63473	No	being born and raised into a French country and that being your native language
EI96473	No	Francophones are more comfortable speaking french than I am (im assuming)
EI42046	No	
EI98721	No	
EI25074	No	I think francophone is someone who grew up speaking French since birth and speaks French at home
EI77266	No	I don't because French is my second language
EI89228	No	no! i am not a native speaker and francophone isn,Äôt something you ¬´¬†consider yourself¬†¬ª as, you arE or you Aren,Äôt
EI33966	No	I don't think that I am francophone, since I believe it means coming from a community that speaks French as a first language
EI99875	No	I am not a native french speaker or french
EI33781	No	Im not a francophone. French was not my first language, nor is it a language I consistently speak at home. I'm very anglophone
EI94800	No	
EI65698	No	Francophone is someone whos heritage is french and who has atleats one parent who fluently speaks french
EI44317	No	francophone to me means that they are a native speaker of the language
EI93848	No	
EI204475	No	i dont consider myself francophone because im not a native french speaker and i didnt grow up in a francophone household, or part of the world
EI301679	No	To me, being Francophone is someone who's first language is French. They speak French at home regularly and French is the language that they feel the most at ease with. I am not Francophone, it is not part of my identity.
EI959630	No	
EI30378	No	I define the question "Do you consider yourself a Francophone?" as "Are you well-connected with the French culture and identity?".
EI297333	No	
EI937098	No	francophone means encountering the french language since a very young age and french is or is almost like a first language
EI886166	Yes	Having a part of me that's of French origins and embracing it.
EI802147	No	I am not Francophone because neither of my parents speak French and have not taught me the language as a baby.
EI66976	No	I don't because my french is no where up to par with them, I have to conciously listen to a movie in french in order to understand anything. I do not speak french at home or with a native accent
EI619828	No	I do not consider myself francophone because it is not my first language and my parents do not speak it

EI44848	No	A definition of a francophone for me is someone whose primary language is French, therefor they use French when they speak regularly. It is not important to me if I am francophone or not and its not really part of my identity
EI747381	No	Francophone is somebody who has French as their first language and for me French is my second language.
EI955722	No	i consider francophone as someone who speaks french as their first language or speaks very fluently.
EI588825	No	i can speak proper french, have family in france and have only french speaking people i communicate wiht, but i always thought of francophone like someone whos first language is french
EI803121	No	Francophone is being able to speak french fluently and with confidence. Speaking french outside of a learning environment, either at home or in a public setting.
EI36880	No	I don't consider myself a francophone because i od not speak french at home and i am not a native french speaker
EI867228	No	
EI78636	No	Francophone are people who grew up speaking french at home
EI538929	No	I do not because I do not speak French with as much ease as if it were my first/native language, and French is only a small part of my cultural identity.
EI694687	Yes	I think a fracophone is a person who can speak french fluently, or someone who is french. I do not think that it's very important, but I do consider myself as a francophone as I am french and previously went to a francophone school. However, I wouldn't say that I'm completely francophone, as I don't speak french as much as I used to.
EI124245	No	
EI448150	No	A francophone speaker is someone who grew up in a french culture, who speaks, reads and writes french very well. A french immersion student is someone who learns the french language at home.
EI742465	No	Francophone for me is someone whos is born in the French speaking world and grew up hearing the accents so it sounds more fluid.
EI643713	No	I wouldn't consider myself a Francophone because English is my native language and that influences the way things are perceived and pronunciation.
EI440271	No	I think Francophone means having French as a first language in Canada.
EI56425	No	
EI89746	No	Im not francophone
EI43658	No	I don,Äôt have French parents
EI20115	No	No
EI987654	No	im not one of them
EI305948	No	No
EI64415	No	It,Äôs not my first language and I don,Äôt have an accent
EI45368	No	I do not consider myself francophone, they have french heritage and such and I do not qualify or have the education for that

EI32701	No	I believe that francophones are people that speak French at their household and I do not speak French at home.
EI82341	No	I don't consider myself a francophone because I don't participate in the french community and only have a basic grade 12 level understanding of the language.
EI96318	No	N/A
EI987590	No	I consider someone who is Francophone someone who's first language is french or they mostly speak french at home and are in the francophone program
EI68215	No	Francophones are born with their first language as French. I am not Francophone, because my first language is English.
EI565891	No	
EI301679	No	Francophone is someone who is from a French-speaking country. This does not really have any importance to me, because I put more emphasis on learning how to speak French, and it does not matter that I'm not considered "francophone"
EI604400	No	
EI154408	No	I dont
EI664462	No	Francophone have a thicker accent and are in general stronger in the French language
EI77895	No	Franco phone is where you went to a francophone school and usually have a family background in french
EI669110	No	Francophone are those who are in the francophone program
EI577042	No	Francophone is someone who speaks French from birth
EI477940	No	
EI683382	No	Francophones have their own program and they have people in their family who speak French. No one in my family speaks good French.
EI799942	No	To me francophone is someone who is born into a French speaking family and even if they aren,Äôt born in a French speaking place, has French roots and speaks French to French parents or grandparents at home.
LI47243	No	No I'm not native
LI98564	No	Francophone is a person whose native language is French and is from a place where french is heavily used, unlike me and where I live.
LI49097	No	a francophone is someone who lives in a french speaking area, and they speak it more often then not. it is not very important to me
LI75830	No	no because i am not french
LI77147	No	
LI370424	No	no, because for me i think that francophone is when french is a language that you speak at home, that is one of your first languages.
LI793261	No	Francophone means you can speak the language very comfortably, as if it was your first, even if it is not.
LI194660	No	Im not born in a french speaking country
LI506168	No	I do not have a francophone question and have never really been introduced to any native francophone speakers so my pronunciation and overall use of french is diferent.

LI929591	No	Francophone in my opinion means your from quebec or in Canada where french is the main language
LI54362	No	i dont know what it is
LI66910	No	i think a francophone is someone who is fluent in french
LI70736	No	I do not consider myself francophone because it is not my first language or the language I speak at home
LI55067	No	I am not a francophone
LI43836	No	I don't consider myself francophone and instead think of myself more as an Anglophone who speaks some french.
LI47579	No	I do not think i am a francophone since it is not my first language .
LI66852	No	I believe I am not a francophone
LI44013	No	A francophone is somebody who grew up speaking French, it is a part of their cultural identity because it is most likely what their parents/family spoke as well.
LI33763	No	to be born in a french home
LI87676	No	Francophone is someone who can speak fluent french with zero errors
LI45508	Yes	i dont speak alot of french
LI38223	No	I believe a francophone is someone who has grown up speaking French or has lived in a French speaking place for over a year
LI51792	No	I don't speak french in day to day life, a Francophone is a person who speaks french.
LI88755	No	A francophone is someone who speaks french at home, usually because their parents are french. I am a native english speaker who can also communicate in french
LI35669	No	I said no because I consider a francophone someone that goes or went to French school
LI70411	No	My definition of a francophone is someone who's first language is French but who also speaks French.
LI36826	No	In my opinion, Francophone implies mother tongue or complete fluency as well as it being your dominant language in day-to-day life.
LI69816	No	
LI47648	No	
LI28403	No	
LI71939	Yes	I don't know, I know how to speak some French more then others
LI79892	Yes	
LI43052	No	no
LI65884	No	At the moment, I do not consider myself a francophone, but I think that I will once I have completed my high school French language studies and have graduated. If I was to define my language identity, I would say that I am a fluent English speaker with moderate French speaking and comprehension abilities.
LI272141	Yes	I consider myself francophone because that's what I've been taught instead of regular french.
LI37911	No	I am not full french

LI983126	No	A francophone is someone that has family who a are native French speakers and come from a French speaking country
LI67559	No	I don,Äôt consider myself Francophone because my French isn,Äôt that good, they only time I practice French is in school. I do not have family members who speak French.
LI696456	No	

Table B6. According to Immersion Students: Their Role on BC French (Full Table)

Villes C/D
Groupe 1 • G1 : laughing, merci merci um.. quel rôle jouent les étudiants de l'immersion dans le contexte du français en Colombie-Britannique, avec vous un rôle? Ah oooo • G2 : ah non, on n'a pas un rôle • G1 : actuellement, je crois qu'on a un rôle, moi je .. je … les personnes qui parlent français dans la Colombie-Britannique, sont seulement les étudiants d'immersion je crois • G2 : y a quelque immigrants mais • G1 : quelques, un peu d'immigrants mais… • G3 : et aussi il y a comme un école française, seulement français? • G2 : oui oui mais • G1 : c'est presque seulement les étudiants en immersion • G2 : yeah, mais je crois que c'est plutôt les étudiants en immersion qui parlent français en Colombie-Britannique Groupe 2 • G1 : je pense qu'on parle plus en français avec les professeurs qu'avec les amis • F3 : oui je crois, mais de temps en temps, moi j'essaie de- • F2 : on parle en français à l'un et l'autre maintenant! • F1 : oui, ok, nous sommes capables de parler en français, oui… ok, quel rôle jouent les étudiants dans le contexte du français en Colombie-Britannique – oh mon dieu ça c'est un grand question – avez-vous un rôle • F2 : quel français? le seul français en Colombie-Britannique- • G1 :c'est nous! • F1 :yay • F3 : c'est yeah! c'est de immersion • F1: donc ok, on joue un grand rôle • G1: parce que si on ne faisait pas le français ça c'est comme • F1 : il y avait pas de français en Colombie-Britannique • F3 : oh mais c'est… je ne sais pas les statistiques mais c'est… • F1 : il y a aussi les personnes qui sont comme bouger ici • G1 : oui les déménageurs • F1 : comme notre professeur Groupe 3

- G2 : je pense que, je je parler le français comme juste avec mon, ah, mes amis les personnes dans le immersion comme, je ne parle pas français avec ma famille ou comme des personnes qui ont, comme dans le monde anglais, juste les personnes dans notre classe, et dans mes autres classes de français, et avec mes profs, mais sans… je ne parle pas français avec ma famille ou mes amis hors de l'école, juste comme dans l'école, je parle le français
- G3 : oui le communauté c'est vraiment anglophone ici alors c'est difficile de parler français hors de l'école alors , c'est vrai c'est seulement dans la classe normalement qu'on parle le français
- G1 : quel rôle jouent les étudiants d'immersion dans le contexte du français en Colombie-Britannique, alors je crois que notre rôle c'est comme de garder notre langue national, comme ah… les deux languages nationales sont le français et l'anglais, si comme les étudiants apprend le français plus, on va garder notre langue et notre identité
- G2 : oui, je pense que ah… c'est très important, le français est dans (????) la Colombie-Britannique, si plus de personne parler un autre langue, c'est bien juste pour nous de (???) plus, aussi de trouver des ah… emploie dans les autres pays ça ouvre comme beaucoup des opportunités, je pense que la rôle dans la Colombie-Britannique c'est très important car on est aussi un province qui est très comme international?
- G1 : international, comme avec beaucoup des autres comme races des personnes…
- G3 : oui je pense que c'est important que nous reconnaisse tout notre culture comme partout dans le Canada, je sais que le Colombie-Britannique lui-même n'est pas tellement francophone, mais savoir le français dans les autres provinces c'est important

Groupe 4

- F1 : oui je pense nous avons aussi un rôle parce que dans l'immersion on continue de um.. apprendre le langue français et on apprend pour les autres générations et plus comme la langue dans Canada alors je pense que c'est bon

Groupe 5

- G2 : oui pour moi
- G2 :les prof que j'avais au Canada (-----) étaient des vrais ahhh des vrais francophones
- G1 : oh!
- G2 : et seulement un était un québecois
- …
- G1 : rôle de français chez-vous
- G3 : ah…
- G2 : oh mon dieu!
- G3 : non
- G1 : le français n'a pas du tout un rôle dans ma vie personnelle, je pense que ça vas prendre une rôle assez grand quand je voyage dans une pays francophone mais…
- G3 : ma famille parle Englais en chinois et ça c'est tout
- G1 : je parle en anglais à la maison
- G3 : I don't use French at all in my daily life

Groupe 6

- F4 : um le français joue en grande rôle dans notre vie car on a étudie cette langue pour si long mais aussi car nos parents et nos familles ne parlent pas le français um… alors, on ne utilise pas vraiment le français à la maison
- F1 : oui

- F4 : avec les camarades, il y a plusieurs de nos amis qui aussi ne parlent pas le français alors..
- F3 : umm… je pense que aussi on choisit de parler en anglais la plupart du temps car en classe je pense qu'on peu parler plus de français
- F2 : non
- F3 : on pas mais on peut mais comme, dans ma ville comme, quand on était au Québec on a parler presque tout le temps en français mais parce que on était pas un environnement ou tout le monde parler français

Groupe 7

- G1 : oui et même si on ne sais pas le français aussi bien que comme les francophones
- G2 : ou Québécois
- G1 : les quebecois, mais c'est très toujours très utilie à l'utilisé dans les situations comme les aéroports
- F1 : oui, quand nous sommes allés au Québec
- …
- G3 : le rôle de français chez vous?
- F1 : pas de rôle!
- G2/G1 : laugh
- G1 : avec les camarade de classe, avec l'école c'est un
- G3 : j'utilise pour la plupart pour des blagues hors de l'école, ça c'est tout
- F1 : pour exclure les personnes qui ne comprennent pas
- G3 : oui oui!
- F2 : oui!
- G2 : oui!

Groupe 8

- F2 : quel rôle jouent les étudiant de l'immersion dans le contexte du français en Colombie-Britannique , avez-vous un rôle? Je pense que nous avons comme un rôle de assurer la diversité de les langues et d'introduire le culture français en cette communauté plus que des autres étudiants comme de l'immersion anglais
- F1 : pour moi, je pense que il n'y a pas à faire avec notre français parce qu'il y a tellement peu de gens qui parlent français dans Colombie-Britannique, comme si tu vas dans le publique, sur la rue, je vois plus de personnes le parle le chinois que le français même si c'est une langue canadienne, alors juste, seulement n'utilise pas le français

Groupe 9

- F4 : ah le rôle que nous étudiants de l'immersion joue au Colombie-Britannique, je pense que le rôle est que nous sommes les étudiant qui est ici pour savoir le français donc dans le future, nous pouvons aider les gens qui ne comprend pas l'anglais beaucoup parce c'est, le français c'est un langue commune au tours du Canada, donc je pense que c'est… ça peu aider les gens dans le future et ça peu aussi nous aider pour l'université et toute ça, et je pense que c'est juste um cool de savoir un autre langue
- F2 : au je pense que notre rôle est très important de savoir français parce que le Colombie-Britannique, le français n'est pas très grand dans la Colombie-Britannique parce que on n'est pas si proche de Québec que Ontario ou les autres provinces alors je pense c'est, notre rôle est de que tout le monde savoir le français que on peut être préparer dans le future si il y a un grand change d'environnement et um… il y a le français partout et pas seulement dans un place

Ville B

Groupe 1

- G1 : mais quand les françaises de la France ou Quebec ou les francophones, quand s'ils sont les francophones ils , c'est plus probables qu'ils vont juste ignorer quelque règles parce que c'est plus facile de parler comme ça, mais ont ne pourrai pas parce que on ne sais pas comment le faire ça
- F2 : et aussi ça peut… basé eh… nos eu…
- F1 : notes?
- G2 : oui
- F1 : si le (???)
- G2 : oui on apprends de parler formellement parce que la meilleurs façon de …a voir une bonne note dans la classe

…

- F2 : quel rôle jouent les étudiants de l'immersion dans le (???) je pense que c'est juste comme plus de personnes qui peuvent avoir les du gouvernement qui sont bilingues à un niveau ou c'est comme utile de.. ça c'est probablement … tout
- G2 : ah… oui je pense, mais aussi, je pense que … comme oui c'est , il y a un rôle de l'immersion, mais c'est ce n'est pas comme, je trouve pas que le immersion française est un..n' est le vrai francophonie, parce que le plupart comme, est-ce que vous pense que le plupart de notre classe ne va pas continuer de prendre le français?
- F1 : oui
- G1 : probablement pas, ils vont juste utiliser ici
- G2 : oui, et comme ça, ils vont probablement oublier avec quelque temps, ils vont
- G1 : ils vont juste sais quelque mots
- G2 : exactement

…

- G2 : c'est quelque chose qui va changer après du temps alors, l'immersion est comme, est pas le vrai francophonie parce que le plupart des gens en l'immersion ne vont pas continuer avec cette langue, ils vont juste garder qu'est-ce qu'ils ont, et juste être perdu un peu et ce n'est pas un vrai partie de le français en Colombie-Britannique, c'est juste une… c'est une partie minuscule

Groupe 3

- F1 : Je pense que le rôle c'est comme ici la langue français c'est pas langue principale mais les personnes qui parlent français comme beaucoup de personnes ont fait l'immersion et ils ont continuer à parler français alors ça c'est comme beaucoup de gens qui parlent français en Colombie-Britannique c'est les gens de l'immersion alors… comme c'est pas de Quebec ou tout le monde parle français, ici c'est juste les personnes qui apprend le français qui parle ou les personnes qui ont déménagé ici alors je pense que ça c'est le rôle si ça fait de sens
- F3 : à oui et je pense que c'est important à cause que on a besoin de personnes qui parle le français pour les travail du gouvernement alors si rien de personnes fait l'immersion française ou juste l'école de français il n'y a pas de personnes qui peut parler

Ville A

Groupe 2

- F1 : quel rôle joue les étudiants de français dans la Colombie-Britannique?
- F2 : on le soutien! On le soutien!
- F3 : on est un peu le future parce que on joue en grand rôle

- F1 : on aide avec le diversité du ah,,,
- F2 : du langue!
- F1 : oui, et aussi, il y a beaucoup ah… le francophonie ou le immersion français devenu beaucoup plus populaire dans la Colombie-Britannique
- F2 : oui, on a commencé maintenant les classes sont comme, énormes alors, on est le future du français en Colombie-Britannique

Groupe 4

- F3 : et puis on peut apprendre les autres langues plus facilement
- F2 : et notre rôle? On n'a pas de rôle en Colombie-Britannique, mais à cette école, on a comme, up tout les standards de toutes les classes
- F1 : c'est vrai! On est comme ambitiouse
- F3 : c'est vraiment comme un stéréotype que les élèves du français sont comme beaucoup plus bon que les autres
- F2 : comme académique

Table B7. French Pride (Full Table)

Villes C/D
Groupe 1 • G2 : est-ce que vous êtes fier de votre français, pourquoi, ou pourquoi pas? Allez G3 • G3 : je suis assez fier de mon français bien sur il y a beaucoup d'améliorement à faire, mais suis assez content avec mon niveau maintenant • G2 : ok, G1? • G1 : je suis assez fier de mon français aussi oui • G2 : oui haha, mon tour? Je suis beaucoup fier de mon français oui…. C'est incroyable de parler plusieurs langues n'est-ce pas? • G3 : oui (laughing), je suis assez fier, c'est pas le meilleur mais ça va! • G2 : ok! • G3 : est-ce que c'est le fait que tu parle français, ou ton niveau de francais? • G2 : oh j'ai pensé que c'est le fait que je parle du français du niveau… je suis… un peu moins fier Groupe 2 • G1 : est-ce que vous êtes fiers de votre français? • F3 : oui parce que je peux voyager aux places qui parlent français et je peux comme parler avec • F2 : je parle un autre langue! C'est un chose un peu normaliser pour nous mais comme ça c'est un grand-chose • F1 : oui c'est cool • G1 : et on a comme travailler depuis • F1 : oui • F3 :yeah • F2 : on a travaillé très fort • G1 : comme depuis le maternelle Groupe 4

- F4 : uh je suis assez fière de mon français je sais qu'il y a toujours des choses que je pourrais améliorer mais ah… le français orale ou l'écriture ah mais je suis assez fière de mon français et je pense que c'est très bon que nous avons l'opportunité d'apprendre l'anglais et le français parce que c'est les deux langues officielles du Canada alors, c'est comme un point positif pour nous

Ville A

Groupe 1

- G3 : on est pas si bon dans le français comme les franco, mais on est dans le milieu
- G2 : on est quand même dans le milieu
- G3 : oui du spectre francophone
- G1 : alors, qu'est-ce que nous avions en commun?
- G3 : on peut tout parler le français

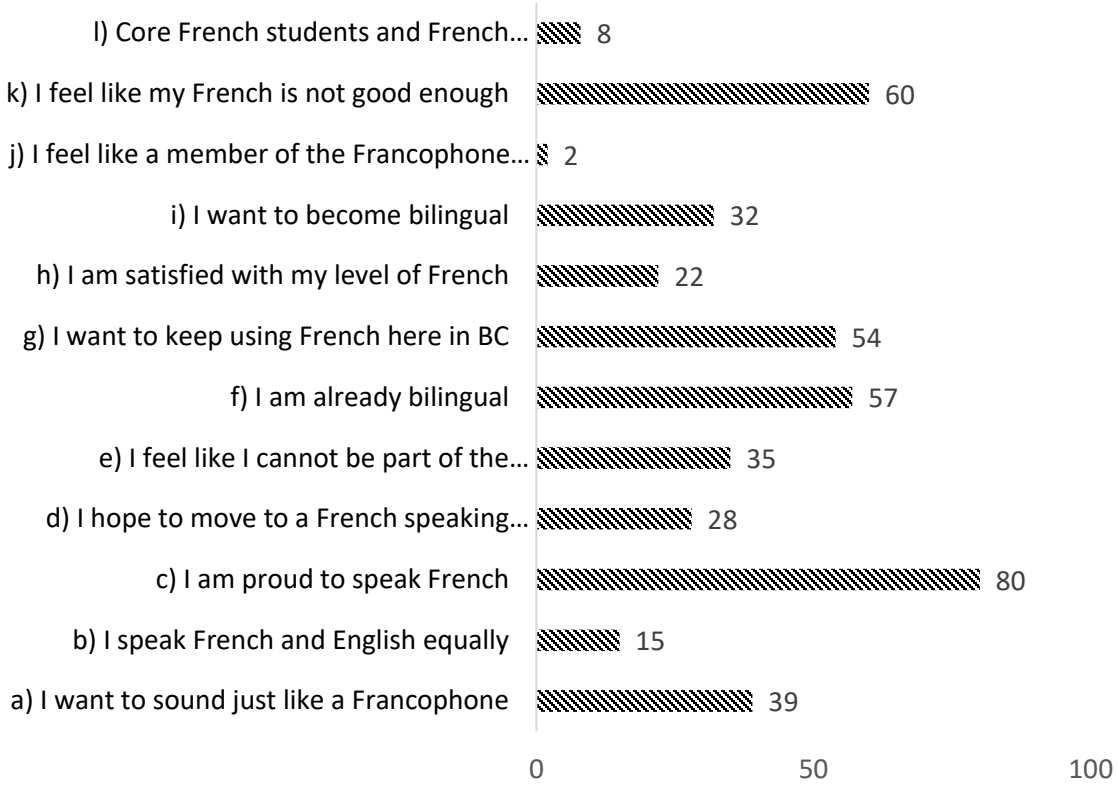
Groupe 2

- G1 : ok… etes-vous fier de votre français?
- G3 : oui!
- G2 : oui!
- G3 : ça .. ca prends beaucoup de temps pour
- G1 : apprendre
- G3 : oui, pour développer notre français
- G2 : comme le maternelle
- G3 : oui, depuis la maternelle
- G1 : oui
- G3 : tu fais ça pour 13 ans…

Groupe 4

- G2 : est-ce que vous êtes fier de votre français?
- G1 : oui je suis fier que je peux parler français
- G2 : oui aussi, parler un deuxième langue est pas toujours facile
- G3 : oui aussi, mais pas comme extraordinairement
- G2 : je peux ajouter : alors il y a beaucoup de anglais en (Ville A) et ah… il y a seulement comme un. un program de l'immersion alors pour les ah…
- G3 : écoles?
- G2 : les écoles
- G1 : de secondaire
- G2 : de secondaire alors c'est comme, alors il y a juste peu de nous

Appendix C. Figures



*Some of the options above are cut off. Here are the full options for d), e), j), and l):

d) I hope to move to a French speaking country/province/city
e) I feel like I cannot be part of the Francophone community
j) I feel like a member of the Francophone community
l) Core French students and French immersion students have similar levels of French

Figure C1. Select ALL the statements that best describe your feelings about French