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Linguistic Identity and Investment in Grade 8 Core French Students

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Graduate Program in Education

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Education

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(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

Heather <u>Gauthier</u>

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i

Abstract

This study examines the linguistic identities and language-learning investment(s) of eight

Grade 8 core French students at a Cambridge, Ontario elementary school. I address the

following questions: (1) How do FSL students in a Grade 8 classroom in Ontario identify

themselves linguistically? (2) Does linguistic identity play a role in students' investment

in French language learning? (3) Do students who perceive themselves as bilingual,

multilingual, or learners of French have more success than peers who identify themselves

as 'English only'? Following Blackledge and Creese (2010), Byrd Clark (2008, 2009,

2010, 2014), Lamoureux (2012, 2014), Roy (2010), and Taylor (2009, 2014), I use

ethnomethodology to understand the relationship between students' multiple identities,

language-learning investment, and achievement. I draw on post-structuralist theories of

language learning, identity, and investment, and use discourse analysis to explore

students' beliefs about bi/multilingualism, languages, and the importance of learning

French, to suggest improved FSL outcomes in Ontario.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Geoff; my mother, Donna; my father, Herman; my siblings, Ra and Kevin; and my fur baby, Charlie. Thank you for your support, understanding, encouragement, and patience over the last two years. Your love and reassurance has made it possible to meet the challenges that I have faced throughout this process, even when I was not sure that I could.

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Appendices

Chapter 1: Introduction

This ethnographic case study examines the linguistic identity and language

learning practices from the perceptions of eight Grade 8 core French students from a

public elementary school in Cambridge, Ontario, through the use of self-assessment

grids, individual interviews, and group observations. This chapter examines the

inspiration for the study, the rationale for conducting it, the research questions addressed,

the significance of the study, my positionality as a researcher, and the outline of this

thesis.

Inspiration and Context

Having started my teaching career as an elementary teacher of core French in an

Ontario public school last year, I worked with over two hundred students between Grades

3 and 8 on the acquisition of French on a daily basis. Amongst these students, I noticed

very different levels of interest in and value placed on learning French. Overall, the core

French program seemed to be of low priority to most of the students in my classes,

possibly because the students whose families had a particular interest in the learning of

French happened to be a part of our school's partial French immersion program. Similar

disinterest in French was observed by Marshall (as cited in Lapkin, Mady, & Arnott,

2009), possibly stemming from that fact that "opportunities to use French out of school

were rare; and many parents reported strong negative attitudes towards official

bilingualism in Canada" (p. 8).

Despite the generally low levels of enthusiasm, there were still some students who

were thriving in the core French program; students who were motivated to learn French,

regardless of the environment or the opinions of their peers. It is these differences in core French students' investments and achievement that made me want to delve further into the matter; to try to understand what accounts for such differences in outcomes. Consequently, I have endeavored to examine the role played by students' linguistic identity/ies on language learning investment and success, with the intention to inform educators and researchers alike on creating a more positive FSL learning environment. To explore this issue, I probed the relationships (and perspectives) between eight Grade 8 core French students' linguistic identities, their investment in French language learning, and some of their individual French achievement outcomes.

Rationale

Given Canada's bilingual status on the world stage, French plays an important role in life in Ontario and Canada as a whole. The Canadian government regards bilingualism not just as "a basis of Canadian identity, but also an essential tool for ensuring Canadians' openness to the world. Through second-language education, the Government offers young Canadians a boost toward wider professional horizons and a key to the international stage" (as cited in Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 8). According to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (2008), the Commissioner has invited the "provinces and territories to step up their efforts to ensure greater continuity in second-language instruction, from kindergarten until the students enter the labor market. Programs must be strengthened so that they produce positive results and support student retention" (as cited in Makropoulos, 2010, p. 516). This

priority on bilingualism is also echoed by the Ontario government through statements such as the following by the Ontario Ministry of Education (2013b):

> Students have tremendous advantages when they speak more than one language. Learning another language helps students:
>
> - strengthen their problem-solving, reasoning and creative thinking skills
>
> - develop their understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures
>
> - increase their competitiveness in an increasingly global job market; (What are some of the benefits of learning French as a Second Language (FSL)? Section, para. 1)

Beyond the push from the provincial and national governments, many others see bilingualism as an asset as well. Participants in a study by Byrd Clark (2010) shared feelings that "being bilingual in English and French would offer them more career opportunities and access to increased social, geographic, and economic mobility" (p. 391). Despite efforts to promote French at the federal and provincial levels, Canada has experienced a net loss of French speakers over time; as many as 263,000 French speakers between 1991 and 1996 alone (Patrick, 2010). Keeping in mind that in Ontario students are required to pursue French studies up to and including Grade 9, it would be of great value to have an increased understanding of what factors are influencing students' success and willingness to invest in FSL learning, especially for the better. However complex and multi-faceted the reasons for the continuation or discontinuation of core French, bringing this information to light could be used to increase the proportion of positive outcomes resulting from FSL education in Ontarian schools as well as elsewhere.

Research Questions

The principal research question examined by this study is whether students'
linguistic identity has an impact on their investment in learning French, and therefore
improves their achievement in core French. The following guiding questions informed
my investigation of the relationships between identity, investment, and achievement in
FSL education:

(1) How do FSL students in a Grade 8 classroom in Ontario identify themselves
linguistically?

(2) Does linguistic identity play a role in students' investment in French language
learning? For example, do students who are academically strong in French have a
different linguistic identity than other well rounded students who do not demonstrate the
same success in French?

(3) Do students who perceive themselves as bilingual, multilingual, or learners of
French have more success than peers who identify themselves as only knowing English?

The answers to these questions have relevance to the disciplines within the field
of applied linguistics, particularly that of second language education (SLE).

Significance

While research on identity (Byrd Clark, 2009, 2010; Creese & Blackledge, 2015;
Faez, 2011; Fishman, 2010; Giampapa, 2004; Kinginger, 2004; Lamoureux, 2005, 2012;
Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985; McNamara, 1997; Noels, 2013; Norton, 2010, 2013a;
Norton & Toohey, 2011; Norton Peirce, 1995; Roy, 2010), language learning investment
(Byrd Clark 2008, 2009; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 2013b; Norton & Toohey,

2011; Norton Peirce, 1995; Pittaway, 2004; Taylor, 2009, 2014), and achievement in FSL education (Byrd Clark, 2010; Day & Shapson, 1988; Erler & Macaro, 2011; MacNamara, 1972;) has been conducted, little attention has been focused on the relationship of these factors in the core French classroom (Lapkin, Hart, & Harley, 1998; Lapkin et al., 2009); even less in Ontario (Calman & Daniel, 1998; Mady, 2010). This may be due in part to the attention paid to Canadian French immersion, a relatively unique form of FSL education whose success and benefits have been the focus of much international attention (Dagenais, Day, & Toohey, 2006; Dagenais & Moore, 2008; Lapkin, Hart, & Turnbull, 2003; Lazaruk, 2007; Makropoulos, 2010; Roy, 2012; Swain & Lapkin, 2008, 2011).

However, new research is starting to emerge that examines student motivation and attrition in core French (Arnott, Romero, & Fairbrother, 2015) which appears pertinent, now that we have passed the 2013 deadline to "double the proportion of secondary school graduates with a functional knowledge of their second official language" (Government of Canada, 2003, p. 27) outlined in *The action plan for official languages*. Understanding the role that linguistic identity plays in a student's choice to pursue or to leave core French can help educational stakeholders get a clearer picture of what core French should look like in the future, especially if we hope to achieve the Ontario Ministry of Education's (2013a) vision for "students in English-language school boards [to] have the confidence and ability to use French effectively in their daily lives" (p. 8) in the future.

Positionality

I acknowledge that my own positionality has molded my understanding of what constitutes bi/multilingualism, identity/ies, investment, and language learning; which in

turn will colour my interpretation of the study's results. In an effort to be reflexive and to clarify how I have come to these understandings, I will begin at the center of my linguistic identity. I consider myself to be multilingual. I was born into an English-speaking household, to a Canadian-born mother and a Dutch-born father. English was the language of our home, but I began to study French when I entered Grade 1 in French immersion at a school in Markham, Ontario. I remember the program being both exciting and a challenge; striving to find round-about ways to ask for missing vocabulary without resorting to English (lest I be scolded). By Grade 2, I considered myself to be bilingual. Not because I had any great understanding of bilingualism at the time, but because I was able to conform to the "French-only" expectations of my classroom teachers and because I was able to read novels in both French and English. At 10 years old, this was all that I needed to consider myself bilingual.

I continued to study French in an immersion setting until the end of Grade 8. I took French classes until the end of high school, winning an award for *joie de vivre* in French at the time of graduation. I was enrolled in core French for Grades 9 and 10 because it was all that was offered, and then I switched to extended French for Grades 11 and 12 after I moved to a larger city. In Grade 11, I also took a Spanish course. I found that I picked it up easily and enjoyed the class. However, due to a lack of opportunities to use my new found linguistic capital and a timetabling incompatibility in Grade 12, my Spanish studies ended and my novice abilities faded. During my undergraduate degree, I took the prescribed courses to obtain a *Certificat de français pratique*, and won an award for oral French proficiency at convocation.

My most recent linguistic acquisition took place in the Netherlands. I spent a total of two and a half years there, working as a nanny and learning Dutch; the language of my father's family. I considered myself multilingual when I had learned enough Dutch to identify the familiar sounds from a nursery rhyme that my father repeated when I was a child as individual words with specific meanings (*Heet kastanjes op mijn vuur, heel echt lekker, niet zo duur. Ik ben zo blij dat niemand weet, dat ik Repelsteelje heet.* [Hot chestnuts on my fire, very delicious, not very expensive. I'm so happy that no one knows my name is Rumpelstiltskin- translation my own]).

As far back as I can recall, I have enjoyed learning languages, and have always found this to enrich my life. When I was young, my mother told me that I had a 'gift' for languages, and I suppose that this is a message that I truly took to heart. Although in my current linguistic repertoire I list English, French, and Dutch, I have the strongest feelings about French; a passion which stems from having had positive learning environments, strong and passionate immersion teachers, a linguistically supportive family, and from having opportunities to use my French outside of school (in Québec and France). I believe that having seen myself as bilingual from a young age helped me to incorporate French deeply into my linguistic identity; roots that have grown, provided me with opportunities for travel and employment, and have given me the desire to instill a similar passion in as many students as possible.

I started my teaching career in 2013 as a core French teacher for students from Grades 3 to 8. I decided to teach French because of my passion for the language, and for my own beliefs in the importance of being able to speak, or at least being able to understand, French, as a Canadian citizen. In my travels throughout Europe and French

Polynesia, no one was ever surprised to learn of my Canadian identity after having discovered that I could speak French. I did not have the heart to shatter my international acquaintances' views of Canadians as English-French bilinguals, but it brought me great sadness to know that this is not the reality for most Ontario students. Even within my own family, with a brother and a sister who also studied French in an immersion context from Grades 1 to 8, I am the only one who claims French as part of his or her linguistic identity.

While I started teaching core French with the intention of staying in the program, I was pulled into the French immersion program by the start of my second term of teaching, against my belief that all French students, even those in core, deserve to be taught by a passionate (and competent) French teacher. My administration was desperate to find someone with strong enough French to teach in the school's partial French immersion program, in light of an unexpected paternal leave. After interviewing the available candidates, my principal and vice principal asked if I would take over the French half of the day for two classes: one Grade 2 class and one Grade 3. After acknowledging my position on the importance of strong core French teachers, I was informed that they did not feel they had any other qualified candidates to teach the classes. They felt that my role as the core French teacher could easily be filled, but they needed me to switch programs in less than two weeks. I was deeply disappointed to be asked to leave my core French students, but with it being my first year of teaching, I felt that there was little choice if I hoped to find permanent employment.

Now in my second year of teaching, I have a permanent contract as a partial French immersion teacher, despite my position on core French. After speaking to some

French colleagues, I was told that this was to be expected; my French is too strong to be a core French teacher. It is beliefs such as this, and administrative practices that prioritize the education of French immersion students over that of their core French peers that point to a larger problem; the systemic devaluation of the Ontario core French program (Lapkin et al., 2009; Marshall, 2002).

In acknowledging my own epistemological orientation, I understand individuals to have agency, to play an active role in their identities and in making meaning of their situations. I believe that multiple perspectives exist around a single situation and that the role of the researcher is to expose these different layers of meaning. Consequently, this paper draws on post-structuralist theories of language learning, identity, and investment to examine how to encourage student success in FSL.

I have used ethnographic methodology to examine the discourses that influence eight Grade 8 students' identity, investment, and achievement in core French programs in Ontario. This information was obtained through interviews and observation in order to collect various accounts of language learners' experiences and to approximate each learner's language abilities.

Following in the footsteps of Byrd Clark and Dervin (2014), I have tried to engage in self-reflexivity throughout this process, as a means to "recognize and engage with complexities" (pp. 2-3) that have emerged in my data, but also recognizing that research involving other people "necessitates as well as exudes multimodal ways of engaging with representations of social life, particularly those that are unexpected" (p. 3). Through self-reflexivity, I recognize that as a researcher, I am in a position of power over what is acknowledged and what is passed over; although the study participants have

shared their thoughts in their own words, through the use of discourse analysis, I have interpreted their words to look for messages that these students have received throughout their lives; messages about languages being separate code, messages about the importance of learning another language, messages about the value of their linguistic capital.

This has given me the opportunity to reflect on the messages that I received as a language learner, and so I have attempted to step "away from dogmatic, essentialized truths about [myself] and others, and possibly get at the deeper, underlying ideological conditions and attachments, which may have led to such 'truths' in the first place" (Byrd Clark & Dervin, 2014, p. 3). With the data collected throughout this study, I hope to gain a better understanding of the significance of linguistic identity and investment on students' achievement in the core French program and to examine whether particular discourses can be addressed, in order to influence more students toward positive outcomes in Ontario core French.

Thesis Organization

This thesis is presented in six chapters. This, the first chapter, examines the inspiration for the study, its rationale, research questions, significance, my positionality as a researcher, and explains the thesis organization. Chapter Two positions this study within a theoretical and conceptual framework, looking at important theories that were used to guide this study, and reviewing identity, investment, and core French in the literature. Chapter Three outlines the study's methodology, while Chapters Four and Five explore the data collected; looking first at the findings in a descriptive fashion (Chapter

Four) and then at the data's complexities through the use of overlapping themes (Chapter

Five). The final chapter, Chapter Six, presents the study's main findings, explains their

significance, examines the study's limitations, and points to future directions for myself

as a researcher, and for the field.

Chapter 2: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This chapter outlines the theoretical and conceptual framework upon which this study is based. It describes the larger theories that have guided me in my research, and situates this study theoretically within a post-structuralist framework of understanding. Through a review of the literature, I take a look at contemporary understandings of multilingualism, and explore the concepts of identity and investment, both independently and within the context of second language education (SLE) and FSL.

Theoretical Framework

I believe that the processes of language learning and identity construction are messy, complex, and ongoing; contextualized within society, but influenced by individuals' differences, diversity, and the "contradictions and tensions within themselves" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p. 28). According to Norton Peirce (1995), through a post-structural lens, individuals and their identities are understood as "diverse, contradictory, and dynamic; multiple rather than unitary, decentered rather than centered" (p. 15). Post-structuralism then, as I understand it, reaches beyond the descriptive nature of structuralism to recognize that reality is not fixed; rather that it is influenced and shaped by "discursive and interpretive practices" (*Merriam-Webster's*, 2013, p. 970). I, in turn, have adopted a post-structural framework (Bourdieu, 1991; Byrd Clark, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) for this study because of my understanding that the individual plays an active role in his or her language learning and identity construction; that we all have certain degrees of agency, which provides us with "the possibility of moving from the 'margins' (exclusion) to the

'center' (inclusion) or the reconfiguration and/or establishment of other centers"
(Giampapa, 2004, p. 193).

According to Giampapa, it is through our agency that we are able to perform the
"political act" (p. 193) of claiming one or more identities. We must not forget that in
claiming any identity, we are imagining ourselves at a particular time and in a particular
space (Giampapa, 2004). Creese and Blackledge (2015) state that identities, or "our sense
of self can only emerge as the result of communicative interaction with others" (p. 23).
Our identities are therefore subject to change in different contexts, and throughout our
lives, as seen with the French language high school students transitioning to bilingual or
Anglophone universities studied by Lamoureux (2005, 2012), who struggled to identify
themselves in new linguistic contexts and with different interlocutors.

The premises outlined above are in line with Canagarajah's (2004) list of post-
structuralist assumptions commonly accepted within the field of applied linguistics:

- that the self is shaped considerably by language and discourses;

- that the self is composed of multiple subjectivities, deriving from the
  heterogeneous codes, registers, and discourses that are found in society;

- that these subjectivities enjoy unequal status and power, deriving from the
  differential positioning in socio-economic terms;

- that, because of these inequalities, there is conflict within and between subjects;

- that, in order to find coherence and empowerment, the subject has to negotiate
  these competing identities and subject positions in relation to the changing
  discursive and material contexts. (p. 267)

Appropriately then, this paper draws on post-structuralist theories of language learning, multilingualism, identity, and investment, to examine how these constructs impact and/or impede students' success in FSL.

It is important to note that my use of the terms second language teaching and learning, FSL, and SLE have been chosen for their widespread use in the literature; they are intended to represent contexts of learning and use of an additional language, not to conceptualize languages as numerable, discrete, separate entities (i.e. L1, L2, L3, L4, etc.). As put by Norton (2010), "language is … theorized not only as a linguistic system, but as a social practice in which experiences are organized and identities negotiated" (p. 351). Byrd Clark (2012) criticizes the acronym FSL because it "denies the multi-dimensional, heterogeneous nature of language(s) and identities as well as the complexity of contexts" (p. 144). For these reasons, a post-structural approach is appropriate; recognizing the influence of discourse on language learning and identity construction and opening the data collected in this study up to "different meaning and interpretations" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 28).

Accordingly, the literature examined throughout the rest of this chapter has contributed to a post-structuralist, sociocultural understanding of the concepts of multilingualism, identity, and investment; some interdisciplinary perspectives from outside the field of applied linguistics have been included for the way in which they can inform the field of SLE.

Multilingualism

In order to understand contemporary views of multilingualism, we must first examine the problematic notion of monolingualism. Blackledge and Creese (2010) indicate that truly monolingual communities do not exist, but are a mere "figment of the imagination" (p. 7), since accepting a monolingual view of the world involves the "marginalization or outright ignoring of anyone who speaks something other than the majority language, or speaks the majority language in a way that diverges from the general norm, or both" (p. 7). While SLE has strived for monolingual-like competence in the past (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; García 2009; Heller, 2002), Cummins (2007) has criticized the "two solitudes" (p. 229) approach's emphasis on the development of bilingual competence through monolingual instruction in the target language. Instead, Cummins proposes that "bi- and multilingualism represent dynamic cognitive systems that are qualitatively different from the cognitive systems of monolinguals" (pp. 233-234), with their own complex practices and ways of making meaning; practices such as translanguaging and code-meshing (Blackledge & Creese, 2014; Creese & Blackledge, 2015; García & Sylvan, 2011; Piccardo, 2013; Taylor & Snoddon, 2013).

According to Piccardo (2013), linguistic proficiency is "no longer seen as a monolithic phenomenon that occurs independently of the linguistic repertoires and trajectories of learners and teachers, but rather [is] shaped by uneven and ever-changing competences, both linguistic and cultural" (p. 600). It may then be more appropriate to discuss a student's verbal or linguistic repertoire rather than his or her language proficiency, which, as Makoni and Mashiri (2007) explain, gives a speaker "control over some linguistic forms associated with different 'languages', but this does not necessarily

mean that the speaker has anything approaching a full competence in the language from which the speech forms are drawn" (as cited in Blackledge & Creese, 2010, p. 35). García (2009) understands these differing levels of linguistic competence as part of plurilingualism; defined by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe as "*the ability to use several languages to varying degrees and for distinct purposes*"(as cited in García, 2009, p. 54). According to Taylor and Snoddon (2013), a plurilingual lens challenges "standard notions of languages as fixed and discrete entities" (p. 440), allowing for the construction of complex, overlapping, multilingual identities (Byrd Clark & Lamoureux, 2013).

García and Sylvan (2011) feel that teachers in today's multilingual, pluralistic, multicultural classrooms ought to focus on "communicating with all students and negotiating challenging academic content with all of them by building on their different language practices" (p. 386). Further, Byrd Clark (2009) positions multilingualism "in relation to multiculturalism by looking at the interconnectedness of this relationship in regards to cosmopolitanism as well as the redefinition of the value of languages in the new globalized economy" (p. 43). While it was previously thought that monolingualism was a societal norm, "multilingualism represents the new norm in a multilingual (pluralist) and multicultural model of society" (Byrd Clark, 2009, p. 46).

In order to affirm multilingualism and "genuine pluralism and multiplicity, it is necessary to interrogate existing power relations that sustain a hierarchy of multiple perspectives and linguistic forms and to explore possibilities for oppositional discourses" (Kubota, 2004, p. 46). To be able to fully understand how a student's perceptions of his/her linguistic identity and language investment affect his or her language learning, it

is imperative to understand that we are all multilingual (though as Byrd Clark [2009]

reminds, at "varied degree[s]" [p. 9]); for instance, we are all capable of using different

styles, accents, genres, and registers when speaking with different interlocutors (Weber &

Horner, 2012), and we all use an "eclectic array of linguistic resources to create, parody,

play, contest, endorse, evaluate, challenge, tease, disrupt, bargain and otherwise negotiate

[our] social worlds" (Blackledge & Creese, 2010, p. 25); but that due to various personal

and societal discourses, we may not conceive, understand, or accept all parts of our

multilingual selves. However, Blackledge and Creese advocate for a critical perspective

when it comes to multilingualism because "debates about minority languages and

linguistic minorities have become embroiled in the construction and reproduction of

social difference" (p. 5) and because it "enables us to interrogate the notions of

'multilingualism', or 'bilingualism' themselves" (p. 5).

Identity

      Perspectives on identity. Sociocultural perspectives of identity are "informed

by post-structuralist and critical theory" (Noels, 2013, p. 289). While these views of

identity vary, according to Noels (2013), most contemporary definitions of identity

reflect the idea that "identity is a subjective experience of holding and/or act of claiming

a set of characteristics and/or a social position that distinguishes one from other persons,

and is important to one's sense of self" (p. 289). Byrd Clark (2013) has argued that the

construct of identity is political, in the sense of boundary making and ethno-linguistic

group belonging. In her seminal article "Social Identity, Investment, and Language

Learning", Norton Peirce (1995) proposes the use of the term "social identity" as

"multiple, a site of struggle, and subject to change" (p. 9). While Bonny Norton (also known as Norton Peirce) has contributed a great deal to the conceptualization of social identity (Norton 2010, 2013a, 2013b; Norton Peirce, 1995), in more recent work she has said, "I use the term identity to reference 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, 2013a, p. 45). Recent research has followed suit, placing emphasis on the "multiplicity of learners' identities" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 423) and exploring the complex intersection of language, sexual orientation, race, age, and gender identities (Byrd Clark, 2009, 2010; Giampapa, 2004; Noels, 2013; Norton & Toohey, 2011).

In her study with Italian-Canadian FSL teachers-in-training, Byrd Clark (2009) noted that her participants struggled with their overlapping, multiple identities, revealing and challenging different discourses depending on constraints, contexts, and interactions. A noteworthy critique of Norton Peirce's (1995) theory of social identity comes from McNamara (1997), who points out that while Norton Peirce uses the term social identity, it is without reference to the conceptual framework proposed by Tajfel. Tajfel "presents the development, maintenance, and transformation of social identity in terms of social psychological processes" (McNamara, 1997, p. 561), meaning that "a given social context… provides categories through which individuals, by learning to recognize linguistic or other behavioral cues, allocate others (and themselves) to category membership and learn the valuation applied by the in-group and salient out-groups to this membership" (McNamara, 1997, p. 562). Byrd Clark and Dervin (2014) have also challenged Norton's use of post-structuralism in relation to her use of the construct of

identity. Following Kramsch (1999) and Canagarajah (1996), they note that Norton used

static, unidimensional categories in her 1995 study to label her participants rather than

capturing the complex, contradictory, and post-structural multiplicity of their identities.

While the concept of social identity has done a lot for SLE in terms of

explaining the relationship between the "language learner and the language learning

context" (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 10), it remains a broad field of study. For this reason, I

have chosen to narrow my focus to learners' linguistic identities and other identities that

overlap or are inextricably linked to them; recognizing that from a post-structural

perspective identities are "more than abstract, fixed, and essentialized categories" (Byrd

Clark, 2009, p. 20) and that they will have different meanings to different individuals.

In seeking to gain a greater understanding of the nature of linguistic identity,

Faez's (2011) reconceptualization of the native/non-native speaker dichotomy provides a

useful perspective on possible alternative categories for speaker identification. Faez

suggests that "*linguistic* identities should be viewed using a sociocultural lens whereby

the dynamic, dialogic, multiple, and situated nature of identity is emphasized" (p. 231);

that the native/non-native speaker dichotomy "falls short in capturing the complex and

multifaceted nature of individuals' diverse linguistic backgrounds and tends to

misrepresent them. This misrepresentation often leads to discrimination and perpetuates

social inequality" (p. 232). Faez criticizes the oversimplified nature of the native versus

non-native speaker dichotomy, and suggests instead that multiple categories are required

to "organize and capture the diversity and complexity that exists in [learners']

background and linguistic identities" (p. 245).

In her study, which examined learners' self-identified English proficiency, Faez (2011) notes that six linguistic identity categories emerged, described as: bilingual, English as a first language speaker, Second-generation English speaker, English-dominant, L1-dominant, and English-variety speaker. According to Faez, "these categories are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive. A larger sample might have revealed more linguistic groups. A different sample might have resulted in different linguistic groups" (p. 247). These categories prove useful because they "made it easier and possible to discuss the complexity surrounding linguistic identities" (Faez, 2011, p. 247). However, Faez warns that these categories are "not intended to be used in a prescriptive or fixed sense" (p. 247); they simply illustrate the complexity that exists within categories of identity, even when narrowed.

However, these categories often reflect the researcher's perspectivism and all too often allow the reproduction of such static, unidimensional categories and continued investment in prescriptive and fixed interpretations. For Byrd Clark (2012):

> Perpetuating the use of monolithic categorizations (L1, L2, ESL, FSL) does not appear to take into account any type of reflexivity on the hierarchical and problematic nature of the imposition of social categories or the recognition of transnational, diverse, plural, or contradictory identities. In other words, it does not reflect the researcher's awareness of his/her own investments in the employment of such categories. (p. 149)

Therefore, it is important for me to be aware of my positioning as a researcher and the ways in which I will interpret the participants' discourse, and more importantly, to work with the participants to the best of my ability by incorporating and reflecting their own

use of categories as well as the potential contradictions and overlappings in their use of categories, as well as my own.

The construction of identity. Research on language learning in the 1970s and 1980s "conceptualized the 'identities' of language learners as their fixed personalities, learning styles, and motivations" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 419). In stark contrast, a sociocultural perspective conceives that "identities are fluid, context-dependent, and context-producing" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 419), negotiated "through face-to-face or mediated interactions between individuals" (Noels, 2013, p. 290). According to Norton (2010), "every time we speak, we are negotiating and renegotiating our sense of self in relation to the larger social world, and reorganizing that relationship across time and space" (p. 350). As previously mentioned, "our gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, among other characteristics, are all implicated in this negotiation of identity" (Norton, 2010, p. 350).

The negotiation or positioning of identities occurs "within particular contexts, or 'communities of practice' (i.e., a language classroom, a language community)" (Noels, 2013, p. 290), and involve the "continual positioning and repositioning of the self and others during any given social interaction and/or across different interactions with the same or other people" (Noels, 2013, p. 290). Kinginger (2004) discusses the efforts of Alice, a young American woman, who studied in France for two years in an attempt to build her linguistic and cultural capital, who experienced such frequent repositioning.

During her time abroad, Alice saw "herself as participating in a variety of communities of practice where access to knowledge of language and culture [should] be freely given as equal exchange within a context of higher cultural awareness" (Kinginger,

2004, p. 228). However, Alice's identity as a French speaker was reconstructed multiple times, due to "unfamiliar norms for interaction" (Kinginger, 2004, p. 234) that she experienced in France. Creese and Blackledge (2015) state that "judgements about whether a person has (or performs) enough of the requisite emblematic templates to be accepted as, or endowed with, membership of a particular identity or group are highly nuanced, and not always negotiable" (p. 23). According to Kinginger, Alice "made repeated attempts to gain access to social interaction using the strategies for demonstrating openness and friendliness that she had developed at home, but was constantly rebuffed" (p. 233); requiring a different approach altogether in order for Alice to "claim a more complex and more satisfying identity" (p. 222).

Fishman (2010) postulates that there is no one true identity, "only situationally and contextually more effective and less effective identities and more salient and less salient identities" (p. xxix). Depending on an individual's position within a particular community, they are "assumed to have more or less 'capital', or resources, to make desired identity claims. Identities, then, are shaped by social interactions within a particular social structure, but reciprocally identity negotiations shape those social conditions" (Noels, 2013, p. 290) in a complex and dynamic relationship. While dynamic and complex, it is important to note that relations of power also play a large part in every interaction.

Pierre Bourdieu (1991), a French sociologist, has argued that language as symbolic capital regulates people's access to different resources (political, linguistic, social, material). Drawing on Bourdieu's work, Byrd Clark (2008) explains that language, (through interaction) is seen:

As a tool through which groups of people collectively mobilize and establish

linguistic communities as well as a means of creating shared symbols which

members construct boundaries between the 'us' and 'them' and how these

symbols are used through interaction to create the repertoire of identity. (p. 3)

While people interact on a daily basis with "members of many communities: they may be

involved in neighborhood, workplace, educational, medical, and religious communities.

… these are not the only communities with which people are affiliated; they also affiliate

with communities of the imagination" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 422). Nations, for

example, are imagined communities, "because the members of even the smallest nation

will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in

the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (as cited in Norton & Toohey,

2011, p. 422). Blackledge and Creese (2010) are critical of the "common-sense

understanding of the relationship between language and nation [because it] ignores the

diversity and variety of language(s) spoken within many states" (p. 26).

Norton (2001) introduced the idea of a relationship between imagined

communities and imagined identities to the field of SLA; suggesting that "there is a focus

on the future when learners imagine who they might be, and who their communities

might be, when they learn a language" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 422); like Alice, who

thought that she was going to "meet a lot of friendly old people and even young people

who would think that [she] was interesting and… that would invite [her] into their lives

and… tell [her] about themselves and teach [her] about being French" (Kinginger, 2004,

p. 228) when she moved to France to study. Consequently, language learners' imagined

identities may indicate a desire to be a part of an imagined language community; adding further to the complexity of learners' possible, flexible, multiple identities.

Effects of identity on second language teaching and learning. Language teachers have "increasingly examined how identity categories and language learning might be intertwined" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 424). Block and Cameron (2002) propose that "the commodification of language affects both people's motivations for learning languages and their choices about which languages to learn" (p. 5). In Canada, there has been a shift from seeing English-French bilingualism as a part of national identity, towards "language as an acquirable technical skill and marketable commodity" (Heller, 2002, p. 47). Norton and Toohey (2011) state that there exists a "powerful relationship between identity and language learning" (p. 413), and "while some identity positions may limit and constrain opportunities for learners to speak, read or write, other identity positions may offer enhanced sets of possibilities for social interaction and human agency" (Norton, 2010, p. 350). According to Norton (2010), it is through language that we are able to negotiate our identity/ies "within and across a range of sites at different points in time, and it is through language that a person gains access to—or is denied access to—powerful social networks that give learners the opportunity to speak" (pp. 350-351).

As language teachers, it is important to realize that "despite the best intentions, classroom practices can recreate subordinate student identities, thereby limiting students' access not only to language learning opportunities, but to other more powerful identities" (Norton, 2010, p. 361). According to Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985), "*we then find prestige or stigma being transferred from the group whose norm has been so marked, to*

a construct which comes to be thought of as autonomous [emphasis in original]" (p. 187).

Students may start to believe that a particular language or way of speaking is

"*intrinsically* 'good' or 'bad', 'correct' or 'incorrect', and unchangeable" (Le Page &

Tabouret-Keller, 1985, p. 187). Consequently, practices that are "ritualized and allow for

little meaning-making on the part of students" (Norton, 2010, p. 361) may limit students

language learning progress, and prevent powerful identity development.

      In SLE, we must be aware, as Noels (2013) explains, that interlocutors have the

ability to use language in a variety of ways to construct their identities. Heterogeneity is

increasing within language groups (Byrd Clark, 2012) with boundaries becoming unclear

or non-existent between language groups and language users' identities (Noels, 2013). Le

Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) criticize the traditional anthropological proposition that

"a race = a culture = a language and that a society = a unit" (p. 208), indicating that "one

has only to think of linguistic communities such as those who speak English, or French,

or Spanish, to see that the linguistic and ethnic boundaries are far from isomorphous" (p.

235). For instance, in multilingual contexts, though learners may have the opportunity to

make regular use of the target language, they may not identify with the associated

ethnolinguistic group (Noels, 2013). Additionally, some interlocutors may use language

to perform overlapping, hybrid identities (Byrd Clark, 2008; 2009; 2011) or identities

other than an ethnolinguistic one, such as a professional identity (Noels, 2013).

Therefore, a "multiplicity of language and identities relations are possible" (Noels, 2013,

p. 290), and ought to be encouraged by second language educators.

      According to Norton and Toohey (2011), teachers should consider "students'

identities as potential, and to experiment with activities that do not lock students into

'finalized identities'" (p. 429). In *Crossing: Language and Ethnicity Among Adolescents* (1995), Rampton examined the language crossing patterns of adolescents in a town in the South Midlands of England who came from a variety of ethnic backgrounds including: Afro-Caribbean, Anglo, Bangladeshi, Caribbean, Caribbean/Anglo, Indian, Indian/Anglo, and Pakistani descent. According to Rampton (1995):

> Whether or not white and Asian uses of Creole were seen as an authentic reflection of the person's identity depended on who the speakers and recipients were, what their relationship was, the degree of their involvement with black culture, the particular occasion, the specific contours of the character being claimed, and so forth. (p. 279)

García and Sylvan (2011) wrote about the linguistic complexity that existed within a two-way bilingual class of fifth-Graders, unbeknownst to the teacher; she "described the class as being half Latino, half Anglo. However… amongst the so-called 'Latinos,' there were monolingual Spanish speakers, monolingual English speakers, and bilingual and trilingual speakers" (p. 390). While the teacher was knowledgeable about bilingual pedagogy and its accompanying frameworks, she did not recognize the linguistic complexities present in her own classroom, and as a result, "the individual linguistic, cultural, and school experiences of the children were being ignored" (García & Sylvan, 2011, p. 390). Consequently, it is of utmost importance that educators be attentive to the ways in which students and their linguistic practices "are in motion – that is, to focus on how the students are engaged in meaningful activities" (García & Sylvan, 2011, p. 390).

If second language educators begin to acknowledge that "diverse classroom practices offer learners a range of positions from which to speak, listen, read, or write, [and that] it is important… to explore with students which identity positions offer the greatest opportunity for social engagement and interaction" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 429), we will empower our students. García and Sylvan (2011) emphasize the need for simultaneous attention to the singularity of a student's experiences and the plurality of the experiences and languages that make up the classroom; advocating for the recognition of students' different linguistic practices, because "focusing on the singularity of the individual experience and the oppression of groups of minority people could enable language minority students to become engaged in their own struggle for liberation and education" (p. 391). According to Pittaway (2004), "empowered learners will continue to advance toward becoming legitimate speakers as their identities develop during their language learning experience" (p. 206); it is this legitimacy that gives students access to the powerful identities that Norton (2010) references. Through practicing reflexivity, teachers are able to examine their own beliefs about language learning, bi/multilingualism, and identity/ies; exploring how the messages that they are transmitting can either empower or disadvantage the learners in their care, both at the present time and in the future.

Investment

Investment as a construct. According to Norton (2013b), investment "signals the complex relationship between language learning identity and language learning commitment" (p. 343). In 1995, Norton Peirce built upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu

(1991) and proposed use of the term investment to "complement constructs of motivation in the field of SLA" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 420). Historically, motivation related to the field of psychology (Norton, 2013b). McKay and Wong (1996), referring to Norton Peirce's work, state that:

> Motivation connotes some monolithic inner quality that a learner may summon in varying amounts. Focus on motivation not only simplifies the learner's subjectivity and diverts attention from the multiplicity of social factors that the learner must address, but it may also contribute to a misguided vocabulary of agency whereby an unsuccessful learner is blamed for not making him/herself 'more motivated'. (p. 579)

Further, after studying some of Dörnyei's (1994) work with second language motivation, I decided that motivation, as a concept, does not align with my epistemological views; due largely to its' static nature, but also because it ignores the social negotiation that takes place as learners try to be considered legitimate language users (i.e. reaping the rewards of their language learning investment).

One of the strengths of investment is that it "recognizes that learners often have variable desires to engage in the range of social interactions and community practices in which they are situated" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 420); it recognizes that language learners' identities are complex, changeable, and more importantly, socially influenced. According to Taylor (2014), "children's daily lives and social conditions lead them to make different investments in some languages as opposed to others" (p. 169).

Another tenet central to the construct of investment is that "learners must be considered *legitimate speakers*… by people in the real world with whom learners desire

to interact" (Pittaway, 2004, p. 204). According to Bourdieu (1991), "acceptance into these communities is based on the possession of the appropriate *symbolic, cultural,* and *linguistic capital*" (as cited in Pittaway, 2004, p. 204). In a study with French immersion high school students in Ottawa, Makropoulos (2010) found that differences in students' cultural capital acquired from home can influence their investment and retention in FSL education programs for the better. Bourdieu's view fits with investment as an economic metaphor; where "learners must acquire capital that they can redeem for profitable return. In the case of language learning, the return can be acceptance into an L2-medium community of practice" (Pittaway, 2004, p. 204).

Unequal power relations between native speakers and language learners (Norton, 2013b) or an absence of the appropriate capital and conditions may mean that a language user's speech may not be considered legitimate (Rampton, 1995), potentially causing that learner's investment to diminish or disappear (Pittaway, 2004). According to Norton (2000):

> If learners invest in a second 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. Learners expect or hope to have a good return from that investment—a return that will give them access to hitherto unattainable resources.
>
> (as cited in Pittaway, 2004, p. 204)

Initially, it may seem that a learner's desire to gain resources or access to an imagined community is a form of instrumental motivation (Pittaway, 2004). However, instrumental motivation "presupposes a unitary, fixed, and ahistorical language learner who desires

access to material resources that are the privilege of target language speakers. In this view, motivation is a property of the language learner—a fixed personality trait" (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 17). Therefore, instrumental motivation "does not account for the learner's complex identity or shifting desires" (Pittaway, 2004, p. 207), nor does it take into account that "the desire to learn a second language is not as simple as the desire to obtain a tangible reward" (Pittaway, 2004, p. 207).

According to McKay and Wong (1996) investment can be described in terms of "any one or combination of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing" (p. 604); which do not develop in a particular order, nor with proficiency in one skill guaranteeing proficiency in another. These skills are also of "different values for the learner in terms of how his/her identities are defined and how well they help meet his/her social and academic demands" (McKay & Wong, 1996, p. 604). McKay and Wong note that "learners' historically specific needs, desires, and negotiations are not simply distractions from the proper task of language learning or accidental deviations from a 'pure' or 'ideal' language learning situation" (p. 603); they must instead be seen as the "very fabric of students' lives and as determining their investment in learning the target language" (p. 603). Therefore, if we are to understand learners' investment in language learning, we must realize that it will vary over time, across skills, and through social interaction.

Effects of investment on second language teaching and learning. In her 1995 study with immigrant women learning English, Norton Peirce (1995) found that "high levels of motivation did not necessarily result in 'good' language learning, and that unequal relations of power between language learners and target language speakers were

often salient in her learners' accounts" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 420). Pittaway (2004) notes that "a learner's investment is often fragile and is subject to change by interaction in the social world" (p. 203). More importantly, "without support and guidance, a language learner's investment can be trampled upon by outside forces or go unrealized for lack of expression" (Pittaway, 2004, p. 203).

According to Pittaway, "engaging investment is a necessary condition for second language acquisition (SLA) because investment embodies the affective factors (i.e., anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence) that many scholars assume play a fundamental role in SLA" (p. 204). Accordingly, language learners will invest in discourses that are appropriate for the communities they wish to join, their imagined communities (Pittaway, 2004). However, "if learners believe that the language-learning situation within a classroom is not going to help them achieve a return on their investment, then they are likely to resist by dropping out… or by disengaging from tasks" (Pittaway, 2004, p. 204).

Pittaway (2004) suggests that language teachers can help their students get a good return on their language learning investments by assisting in the development of a long-term plan that "outlines the educational steps students need to take in order to achieve their goals. … [and articulates] short-term language learning goals that build incrementally toward the realization of the ultimate investment goal" (p. 205). This long-term plan can help students see the return on their language learning investment as it builds over time (Pittaway, 2004).

Norton Peirce (1995) suggests that a "language learner's motivation to speak is mediated by investment that may conflict with the desire to speak. Paradoxically, perhaps, the decision to remain silent or the decision to speak may both constitute forms

of resistance to inequitable social forces" (pp. 19-20). Language teachers need to be aware that although a learner may be "integratively motivated to become an active member in the target language (TL) community, but can face rejection by that community and therefore acquire little to no language as a result. … the condition of not realizing a return on investment" (Pittaway, 2004, p. 208).

Building from Norton's work, Pittaway (2004) suggests that the construct of investment tries to recognize the "social obstacles surrounding legitimacy and the right to speak" (p. 212). By engaging students' investments, we are helping them "appropriate a range of symbolic, cultural, and linguistic capital that can be redeemed for legitimate access into a desired community of practice" (Pittaway, 2004, p. 212). This process needs to stem from interactions between language teachers and language learners; that "is not to say that engaging investment will erase racism or prejudice, but that instructors who actively seek to engage investment can prepare their learners to handle these issues constructively" (Pittaway, 2004, p. 212) when they encounter them in their social worlds.

Byrd Clark's (2009) study also contributed an important expansion to Norton's conception of investment, arguing that "language learning is not so much an investment in the target language as it is an investment (and awareness of the investment) in ideologies and representations of such a target language and culture" (Byrd Clark, 2010, p. 384). Thus, for Byrd Clark, investment is multi-dimensional, taking into account ideologies, discourses, and representations of language and culture.

Identity, Investment, and SLE

While identity and investment were discussed separately above, it is important to note that these concepts seem to be closely linked in SLE. McKay and Wong (1996) state that "an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own social identity, an identity that is constantly changing across time and space" (p. 579). According to Pittaway (2004), language teachers are in "the unique position of interacting with learners to create a room full of empowered identities, which can then be leveraged in the service of helping learners achieve a return on their investment" (pp. 203-204). García and Sylvan (2011) second the call, stating that "teachers' pedagogies and practices that facilitate learning in these complex [language teaching] contexts must build on students' singular language practices as part of the classrooms' pluralities" (p. 386).

As previously discussed, identity and investment are changeable, with positive change hopefully facilitated by second language educators. However, the fluidity of identity and investment are also of concern, as "slights to identity, adverse economic circumstances, and other forms of prejudice or racism can wound learners' identities and hence their investment and cause them to want to resist learning and subsequently pull out of their language learning venture" (Pittaway, 2004, pp. 205-206).

Other sources of influence include Norton's (2000) discussion of imagined communities (Noels, 2013). According to Noels (2013), the "vision of a future self in an 'imagined community' has considerable motivational significance, as it indicates how much we should 'invest' in learning other languages" (p. 290). Norton and Toohey (2011) go so far as to indicate that "imagined communities may well have a reality as

strong as those in which learners have current daily engagement, and might even have a stronger impact on their investment in language learning" (p. 422).

Returning to Norton Peirce's (1995) paper, and its advice for the field, "second language teachers need to help language learners claim the right to speak outside the classroom. To this end, the lived experiences and social identities of language learners need to be incorporated into the formal second language curriculum" (p. 26) as much as possible.

Identity, Investment, and FSL

While the previous section took a general look at the role of identity and investment in SLE, there are several noteworthy contributions that have been made specifically within the field of FSL. First, Byrd Clark's (2008; 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012) work with multilingual Italian-Canadian pre-service French teachers provides insights into the complex relationship between identity construction and investment in an Ontario FSL context. Byrd Clark (2011) explains that:

> Because French represented multiple meanings (purposes) for [the participants], sometimes simultaneously (i.e. a way to integrate socially in Canada and acquire upward social and economic mobility, a way to still teach something relatively close to Italian, a way to be recognized, valued, seen as worldly, cultured, sophisticated, a way to have some ownership over claiming a Canadian identity and have equal footing with other Canadians, a way to claim one's linguistic rights) they persisted with their studies in French and many of them became teachers of French. (p. 114)

Being aware of factors such as the purposes listed above which may affect students'

inclination to invest in French can help inform policy and practice in FSL, as well as

further research.

In their study with Chinese French immersion parents in Western Canada,

Dagenais and Moore (2008) found that plurilingual literacy practices in French

immersion classrooms allowed students to construct positive social identities, "revealing

a close relationship between the dynamics of representation and identity" (p. 11). Roy

(2010) found that many parents of junior high students in Alberta enrolled their children

in French immersion programs to "participate in the ideal of bilingualism of their

country" (p. 549), though discourses on Canadian bilingualism perpetuate it as "two

monolinguals, while knowing that students in French immersion do not meet this

criterion" (p. 557). Consequently, many French immersion students in Roy's (2010;

2012) study had difficulty identifying as "*totally bilingual*" (Roy, 2010, p. 557), "lost

between the two legitimate monolingual worlds" (p. 556).

Core French students are presented with further obstacles, as they are often

exposed to negative community attitudes about learning a second language, are placed in

a marginalized program within their schools, where there is "widespread dissatisfaction

with the outcomes" (Lapkin, Mady, & Arnott, 2009, p. 7) of the program. Byrd Clark

(2010) argues that part of the problem stems from the fact that while language use and

social identities are changing, variable, and complex, FSL policy does not reflect the

multiple identities and linguistic diversity evident in Canadian society. Roy (2012)

further argues that "in order for French to be valued in different areas of our day-to-day

life, one needs to accept different French speakers" (p. 1), providing the "new discursive spaces and 'wiggle room'" (Byrd Clark, 2010, p. 401) called for by Byrd Clark.

Though not explicitly investigating investment, while examining the motivation of Allophone[1] and Canadian-born Anglophone students to study core French at the secondary level in Ontario, Mady (2010) observed that the Allophone group was "more motivated to study French but also differently motivated" (p. 582) than their Canadian-born English-speaking peers who had taken French for a longer period of time. This highlights the struggle with retention in Ontario's core French program as indicated by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (as cited in Makropoulos, 2010), and as highlighted in recent studies on reasons for core French attrition (Arnott, Romero, & Fairbrother, 2015). Though further research is required, it is possible that the differences in motivation in Mady's study were related to differences in students' investment in the language learning process, and potentially to differences in their cultural capital.

Situating the Study

Recognizing that I understand identity to be a social construction (both complex and changing), and investment to be a reflection of how valuable or useful competence in a particular language is believed to be, I have used student interviews, classroom observations, and self-assessed French proficiency to help expose the influence of particular linguistic identities on: students' investment in learning French, their beliefs about their linguistic abilities, and their level of success in core French. Through this study, I hope to add to the body of literature on FSL education in Ontario and Canada

1. Mady (2010) describes an allophone as someone "whose first language (L1) is neither French nor English" (p. 565)

(Arnott et al., 2015; Byrd Clark, 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011; Calman & Daniel, 1998; Dagenais et al., 2006; Dagenais & Moore, 2008; Day & Shapson, 1988; Lamoureux, 2005; 2012; Lapkin et al., 1998; Lapkin et al., 2003; Lapkin et al., 2009; Lazaruk, 2007; Mady, 2010; Makropoulos, 2010; Marshall, 2002; Roy, 2010; 2012; Swain & Lapkin, 2008; 2011), helping to clarify the influences of linguistic identity and investment on the FSL education outcomes of elementary school students; a population largely neglected in the research to date; focusing specifically on those students who experience Ontario's most prevalent FSL program, through no choice of their own.

Since core is the default FSL program for Ontario students, the experiences of those in the core French program represent the experiences of the majority of Ontario's student population, and up to Grade 8, these students have had no input on the level of French they must study. Understanding if and why students identify with French and how they invest in learning the language will help Ontario educators and FSL policy makers to make more informed decisions about how to teach and encourage students towards more positive French outcomes.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the reasons for embedding this study within a post-structuralist framework of understanding, explored contemporary understandings of multilingualism, as well as the literature on identity, investment, and these constructs within the field of SLE and FSL. Chapter 3 will outline the methodological details of this study, including rationale for an ethnographic study design, the setting, the participants, and how the data was collected and analyzed.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, I will outline the methodology used to conduct this study. First, I will explain my reasons for my methodological approach: an ethnographic study with a discourse-analytic framework (see Fairclough, 1995), then I will highlight the need for reflexivity and the ethical process required for this study. Next, I will describe the setting of the study, followed by a brief description of the participant group (more detail to follow in Chapter 4), and finally, I will discuss the details of how data were collected, the instruments that were used, and how the data were analyzed. I will conclude this chapter with a brief discussion about how I tried to maintain validity in my ethnographic study.

Ethnographic Study

As previously stated, I conceive reality to be a social construction, and so I have chosen to perform a qualitative study rather than a quantitative one. Taylor (2014) compares choosing an appropriate research technique to selecting a photographic lens; it is essential that the lens allows all of the desired information to be captured. Following in the footsteps of Blackledge and Creese (2010), Byrd Clark (2008, 2009, 2010, 2014), Lamoureux (2012, 2014), Roy (2010), and Taylor (2009, 2014), I have used an ethnographic research method (in my case, a qualitative research study with ethnographic approaches) to explore and describe the relationships between students' identity/ies, particularly their linguistic identity/ies, their investments in learning French, and their levels of achievement in core French.

According to Watson-Gegeo (1988), the goal of ethnographic research is to capture "the relationship between events, and recommends viewing events as 'embedded

in a series of concentric rings of increasingly larger (more 'macro') contexts'" (as cited in Taylor, 2014, p. 154). Ethnomethodology is therefore an appropriate research lens because it allows for the capture of the "richness, complexity, [and] connectedness" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 219) of the aforementioned relationships, and to "generate rather than test hypotheses" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 220).

The resulting data were able to be "analysed inductively, with constructs derived from the data during the research" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 220) rather than based on a pre-determined, pre-supposed, set of constructs and discourses. Performing an ethnographic study also allowed me to interview, observe, and interpret accounts of a group of students over time, and in both group and individual settings. In line with Byrd Clark (2009), an ethnographic approach enabled me to "get at" or capture complex data with thick descriptions, which can be missed when using quantitative methods. It also permitted the examination of some of the more intricate details of the relationship between identity/ies, investment, and achievement, since, as Taylor (2014) explains, using an ethnographic approach allows the researcher to "peel away layers of truisms, revealing qualifications, nuances, and variation" (p. 155) which would have been lost had I used other, more quantitative methods.

To take full advantage of the ability of an ethnographic study to capture complex data with thick descriptions, I chose a group of eight students. A larger group would have taken away from the time that could be spent interviewing and observing each individual participant, which would have sacrificed some of the depth and complexity that was afforded by conducting multiple interview and observation sessions with each student. Also, keeping the participant groups restricted to two or three students per class allowed

me to focus on the dynamics of the students together and their actions as individuals within their classroom settings; comparing different combinations of genders and linguistic abilities between the classes.

Discourse Analysis

My study also draws from discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 2008; 2011) to look at the ways in which individuals construct meaning through their social and linguistic practices in different social contexts, particularly school settings. I take the position of Gee's 2011 understanding of discourse as a social practice, but in line with Michel Foucault, I also understand discourse to be institutionalized patterns of knowledge that get manifested and accepted as social norms observable through spoken, everyday language (Byrd Clark, 2009). So in this case, it is important for me to be able to examine some of the ideologies and power relations involved in discourse (Fairclough, 1995, 2006), particularly as concerns the value of French in Ontario vis-à-vis the students' ways of seeing themselves and their linguistic investments in French.

Reflexivity: The Role of the Researcher

One facet that remains of on-going importance throughout this research process is examining my own role as a researcher; the ways I construct the field and engage with the participants. As a researcher, I continually have to reflect upon my own biases, my investments in French language learning, my beliefs about multilingualism, as well as my social and lived experiences and how they impact the ways in which I have gone about doing this research study. In the positionality section in Chapter 1, I tried to reflect on my

own language learning history, my biases, and my language learning experiences. I have attempted to remain reflexive throughout the research process by examining my positionality (see Chapter 1), by situating my research within a post-structuralist framework of understanding (see Chapter 2), by exposing my experiences as an FSL student and learner (see Chapter 1), by exploring my multilingual identities (see Chapter 1), and by recognizing that my interpretation of the data collected in this study is only one perspective, influenced by all of the factors I just mentioned (see Chapter 5). I recognize that having had positive experiences through my French language learning journey, in immersion (Grades 1 to 8), core (Grades 9 and 10) and extended (Grades 11 and 12) French settings, I have had a different experience than most students in Ontario (Arnott et al., 2015; Marshall, 2002) and even many Ontario French teachers (Lapkin et al., 2009; Byrd Clark, 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011). In my travels to Québec, France, and French Polynesia, my variety/ies of French have always been legitimized, and therefore my French linguistic investment has proved fruitful and my linguistic capital, valuable. Knowing French has given me power (mobility and access to different global communities) and resources (access to employment as a teacher) that have been denied to other French and non-French speakers. This has inevitably shaped the way that I see French, the way that I feel about learning French, and the way that I conceived and conducted this study; though I have tried to remain reflexive by being honest about my positioning and inevitable biases, and my own newness to the process of reflexivity.

Ethical Process

Due to the fact that my research was conducted with human subjects, specifically with children under the age of majority, my study was subject to the University of Western Ontario's ethical review process and informed consent was obtained from all applicable parties before data collection began. I submitted the required ethical review protocol to the Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) in August of 2014, which was reviewed, and resulted in two rounds of comments, prior to approval in November, 2014. Once approval was obtained from the NMREB, I was able to obtain consent from the school's principal (see Appendix A) and the core French teacher (see Appendix B), in order to conduct the study at the desired site. Next, consent was obtained from the parents of the research participants and from the participants themselves (see Appendix C), as well as from the parents of the remaining students in the three Grade 8 classes (see Appendix D), since they would also be present during the observations of the key participants (though their individual actions were not observed, nor were their comments transcribed). To ensure the participants' privacy and safety, the school where the study was conducted has not been identified in this thesis, and at the outset of the study, each participant chose a pseudonym, to ensure that his or her identity would remain private in all discussions of the data.

Setting

The study took place in a public elementary school in Cambridge, Ontario. The school itself is a kindergarten to Grade 8 facility which serves approximately 580 students, 10% of whom are from lower-income households (City-data, 2015). The school

is dual track, offering partial French immersion and core French from Grades 1 to 8. The school is also a part of the Nutrition for Learning program, serving a breakfast that includes 3 out of 4 food groups to students in need before the start of the school day (Nutrition for Learning, 2014). In the Grade 6 year of this Grade 8 cohort, of the students who participated in the Education Quality and Accountability Office's (2015) Junior Division standardized testing, 79% were at or above the provincial standard for reading, while 65% were at or above the provincial standard for writing, and only 50% were at or above the provincial standard for Mathematics.

I chose this setting because the location is a public Ontario elementary school to which I already had access as a former core French teacher. I have a strong, pre-existing relationship with the administration, staff, and many of the families, which allowed me to negotiate access to appropriate research participants. Having taught over 200 core French students at the school in the 2013-2014 academic year, almost 90 of whom had then advanced to Grade 8 at the time of the study, I had firsthand experience with potential participants, helping to support the rapport required for an ethnographic approach. Since September 2014, I have been teaching French immersion students at a different school within the same school board. As a result, I no longer have any direct affiliation with the school or its students, I no longer have a direct student-teacher relationship with the participants, nor do I have any bearing on their academic programming or standing. Consequently, the students were able to be invited to participate in the study without fear of any type of coercion, such as having academic repercussions or concerns related to declining to participate or dropping out part way through the study.

Being both an insider and an outsider in this educational community has advantages and limitations (i.e., as a former teacher, I know all of the students, but no longer work with them). Having only taught at one school when the study was proposed, my options for public elementary research sites that were likely to grant me access to Grade 8 students were limited. I chose this particular school because of the support of the principal, French teacher, and students; though another site, for example, where the students had a consistent French teacher, might have provided clearer results; eliminating the potential effects of an inconsistent learning environment on students' feelings about core French. Having already worked with the study participants in a classroom environment meant that rapport had previously been established between the researcher (myself) and the participants, through our interactions the year before, in both academic and extra-curricular settings (such as Student Council, and the 'Me to We' committee). This allowed students to open up to me about their identities and feelings about French from the beginning of the first interview; though it may also have influenced what information some of the students' shared or withheld, if they thought it might be insulting to me as their former French teacher.

Prior to inviting anyone to participate in the study, I explained the nature of the study to the school's principal, the core French teacher, and all three of the Grade 8 core classes. Letters of information and consent forms were provided to all of the above-mentioned parties, with an additional letter and consent form provided to those students who decided to participate directly in the study. Students who did not return their consent forms were provided with an enriching French learning experience outside of the classroom during the times of observation.

Participants

Eight students agreed to participate in this study. I limited the number of participants in order to generate thick descriptions and to allow for depth in the analysis of the individual participants' data. A larger group would have taken away from some of the complexity and depth that was afforded by conducting multiple interviews and observation sessions with each student. To protect the identities of the participants, each was asked to choose a pseudonym by which to be referred for the purposes of this study.

The participant group included three male students and five female students, all in Grade 8 and part of the school's core French program, from three different classes (for more detailed profiles, see Chapter 4). Both the parents of the students and the students themselves gave their consent to be a part of the study, as did the core French teacher, and the school's principal. The participants were all academically strong students, achieving at or above the provincial standard in core French. Due to the fact that the participants were chosen from a relatively small population (three Grade 8 classes at one school), and were not necessarily representative of the attitudes or demographics of this population, the group is not representative of "any group apart from itself" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 156), and the results of this study are not generalizable. However, this study could provide a framework for further representative research, as the complex relationships between students' linguistic identity/ies, language learning investment, and French achievement become clearer.

In the first class, the participants were both male: Bob and Juan Pablo. Bob is of Chinese decent, and speaks Cantonese, English, and some French, Vietnamese, and

Cambodian. Bob also attends an enrichment class offsite one day per week. Juan Pablo's parents are from South Africa, and both speak Afrikaans and English at home.

The second group of participants were all female, and included Kennedy, Shanaynay and Shaquisha Dingo. Kennedy's father is from Columbia, so she is exposed to some Spanish at home. Shanaynay started out as a French immersion student, but left the program in Grade 3 because she was not learning enough English. Shanaynay's father is a French teacher, and both of her older siblings speak French; having continued in the French immersion program into high school. Shaquisha Dingo comes from an English speaking home.

The third class included two female participants and one male: Brodis, Clara, and Autumn Smith. Brodis' mom and sister both speak French, and he has had some exposure to German. Clara started to take French in kindergarten, and sometimes is able to speak French with her grandma. She is enrolled in the International Baccalaureate program for French for Grade 9. Finally, Autumn Smith's parents both are partially fluent in French, as are her grandparents. Like Bob, she also attends a weekly enrichment class offsite.

Table 3.1: Summary of Participant Information

Name	Gender	FSL Program(s)	Brief Description
Bob	Male	Core French only, started in Grade 1	Chinese decent. Speaks Cantonese, English, some French, some Vietnamese, some Cambodian. Attends enrichment class offsite one day per week.
Juan Pablo	Male	Core French only, started in Grade 1	Parents are from South Africa; both speak Afrikaans and English at home.
Kennedy	Female	Core French only, started in Grade 1	Father is from Columbia; is exposed to some Spanish at home.
Shanaynay	Female	French immersion (Grades 1 and 2), Core French since Grade 3	Father is a French teacher, older siblings both speak French and continued in immersion.
Shaquisha Dingo	Female	Core French only, started in Grade 1	English speaking home.
Brodis	Male	Core French only, started in Grade 1	Mom and sister speak French. Some exposure to German.
Clara	Female	Core French only, stared in kindergarten	Enrolled in IB program for Grade 9. Sometimes speaks French with grandmother.
Autumn Smith	Female	Core French only, started in Grade 1	Parents both partially fluent in French, as are grandparents. Attends a weekly enrichment class offsite.

Data Collection Instruments

      Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted prior to any classroom observations, and again after the classroom observation sessions were done. A set of pre-determined questions (see Appendix E) was used to guide the interviews, with additional questions added as needed (to clarify statements by the study participants). All interviews were audio-recorded to allow for later transcription. The interviews provided a rich source of data; exposing feelings about learning French, language learning habits, contradictions, self-selected identity categories, and revealing messages that students had received about language learning and themselves.

      Self-assessment grid. Each participant completed a self-assessment grid based on the standards of the CEFR, prior to each of the interview sessions. The grid (see Appendix F) features "can-do" statements that describe what language users at various levels of proficiency are able to do across five linguistic domains: listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production, and writing. This metacognitive exercise engaged students in thought about their own linguistic abilities prior to elaborating on these skills during their interviews. By having students complete the grid at the beginning and end of the study, I was able to compare their self-assessed proficiency over time.

      Observations. Each student participated in three 30-minute classroom observation sessions. During these observations, the participants' conversations (where applicable) were audio-recorded, and I took descriptive notes of their actions, interactions, and study habits, based on a pre-determined observation schedule (see

Appendix G). The observation sessions allowed me to observe: how the students engaged during classroom activities, their language of choice during French class, their linguistic competencies compared to their self-assessed proficiency (based on the CEFR self-assessment grids), their work habits and types of interactions, and to take note of interesting events that either supported or conflicted with answers given during the initial interviews.

Data Collection

I used a qualitative approach to data collection, including student interviews and classroom observations to examine the relationship between the linguistic identity/ies, investment and language learning habits, and academic achievement, in French, for my Grade 8 participants. In addition to consent from the students' parents and the student-participants, I also obtained informed consent from the classroom teacher, as well as the parents of the other students in the class. Any student who themselves or whose parents chose not to allow participation in the classroom during periods of observation were provided with an alternative, non-punitive setting and activity for the duration of the period. Each participant had an initial interview approximately 15-20 minutes in length, three 30 minute audio-recorded classroom observation sessions, and a 15-20 minute final interview. Data collection took place over several weeks, to allow sufficient time to collect multiple interview and observational artifacts for each participant.

Interviews were conducted on an individual basis with each student twice throughout the study. All interviews took place outside of instructional time, and were audio recorded to allow for accurate transcription and data analysis. The questions used

were based on a basic list (see Appendix E), allowing for the addition or removal of

interview questions depending on the answers to the previous questions. Each student

was asked to assess his or her French language competencies according to the standards

of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) at the first

and final interviews. The CEFR standards were presented using can-do statements on a

self-assessment grid (see Appendix F) divided across the core competencies of listening,

reading, spoken interaction, spoken production, and writing (CEDEFOP, 2013). The

interviews were used to investigate how students see themselves as learners of the French

language; do they see themselves as Anglophones, Francophones, Allophones,

monolinguals, bilinguals, core French students, former immersion students, or all of the

above, etc. ? Which cultural and linguistic heritages do they claim? Do they give any

indication that they see themselves as having multiple identities? Do these identities

change over time or conflict with one another? How proficient do the students believe

themselves to be in French?

The interviews were also used to see how students feel about learning French in a

core French setting, in other words, what their attitudes are towards their current and past

FSL instructional experiences and environment. Do they enjoy studying French? Do they

find French to be a difficult or an easy subject to study? Do they read in French, listen to

any sort of French music or media, or speak in French outside of class time? Do they see

learning French as a valuable activity? What kinds of ideas and ideologies do they

associate with learning French? From revisiting these different types of questions on

multiple occasions and in different contexts, it is possible to observe the recurrence of

identity and investment variables. Supplementary to the interviews, classroom

observations were used to determine if achievement, self-perceptions, attitudes, and identity variables were aligned with classroom realities, compared to what was reported during the individual interviews.

Data Analysis

Using an ethnographic methodology to study the relationship between participants' identity/ies, language-learning investment, and French achievement allowed for the subjective interpretation of the details shared, and as previously mentioned, fostered inductive analysis of themes derived from the research (Cohen et al., 2011). Patterns emerged in the data over time, and so I used discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995; Johnstone, 2008; Gee, 2008; 2011) to identify these themes and to investigate the relationships between linguistic identity/ies, investment, and achievement. Discourses, according to Cohen et al. (2011), "can be regarded as sets of linguistic material that are coherent in organization and context and enable people to construct meaning in social contexts" (p. 450). It is this constructed meaning in student interviews and classroom interactions to which I was drawn, because of the "inferential and interactional aspects of discourse" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 451).

In order to perform discourse analysis, all interviews were transcribed, creating large amounts of data for analysis and coding, and adding to the "thick descriptions" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 220) afforded by qualitative research. The data was analyzed around common themes and discourses that emerged, cross-referencing what was said by the students with what was observed in the classroom setting. I examined how language was used, what practices the students claimed to use (compared to what was observable

in the classroom setting), and how investments were constructed at home and school. In addition to the discourses present in the students' interviews, their CEFR self-assessment grids were compared from their initial and final interviews, to see if their perceived proficiency varied over time, and whether it agreed or conflicted with what was said by the students themselves, or what I observed during the classroom sessions.

As discussed in Chapter 1, I have tried to engage in self-reflexivity throughout this process, as a means to "recognize and engage with complexities" (Byrd Clark & Dervin, 2014, p. 2-3) that have emerged in my data, but also because I recognize that research that involves people "necessitates as well as exudes multimodal ways of engaging with representations of social life, particularly those that are unexpected" (p. 3). Through self-reflexivity, I recognize my position of power over what is acknowledged and what is overlooked from what my participants have shared, but through critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995), I have strived to look for messages that have been transmitted and internalized by these students, which may be influencing their understanding of their own linguistic capital, identity/ies, and legitimacy as language users/learners, engaging critically with what has been said and the ideologies and discourses that underpin them.

Taylor (2014) warns that "disempowering trends in wider society can trickle down into educator beliefs, attitudes, and educational structures (i.e. programs, curriculum, assessment, and community relations)" (p. 155), and it is these beliefs and attitudes that I have sought to uncover in the student-participants, to see which discourse(s) contribute to more positive linguistic identities. As will be seen in the upcoming data chapters, Chapters 4 and 5, the discourse analysis was conducted through

a careful investigation of each participant's interview data as well as doing a cross-analysis with other participants. This analysis proved very helpful in allowing me to identify recurring discourse themes.

Discussing Validity

During this research process, I had to engage with questions of what makes a study valid, and how I would demonstrate to others the validation of my research. As stated earlier, my study is contextually situated, so it will not produce generalizable results. According to Patai (1991) it is difficult to near impossible to achieve a perfectly ethical study because of power imbalances between the researcher and the researched. However, in wanting to bring reflexivity to this process, my research employed a number of checks, including triangulation from multiple data sources: observations and field notes; initial interviews and follow-up interviews; students' self-assessed language proficiency; and the review of the literature. The intention in conducting follow up interviews was to use face and construct validity (Rist, 1990) whereby I had hoped to ask the student participants to confirm their meanings, as well as my interpretations of what they had said previously. However, due to the difficulty that these 13 year-old students had in articulating their linguistic identities in the first place, it became impractical to ask them to judge such interpretations. As mentioned earlier, all data was transcribed and coded manually. The analysis also took into account word choice used while speaking, reduplication, affirmation, and contextualization cues, along with gestures, gazes, pauses, changes in tone, pitch and frequency.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodological underpinnings of this study, specifically the reasons for conducting an ethnographic study, the setting and participant details, as well as how data were collected, what instruments were used, and how the data were analyzed. The next chapter begins to discuss the study's findings, looking in more detail at the individual participants, their ways of self-identifying, their differing approaches to classroom tasks, and their perceptions of linguistic proficiency.

Chapter 4: Data Findings

This chapter begins to examine the study's findings. According to Taylor (2014),

"ethnographic research does not preclude zooming in on a single participant from time to

time, but a wide angle approach is most appropriate" (p. 154). In this chapter, I will zoom

in on the individual participants, to highlight the discourses and identities presented by

each, whereas Chapter 5 will take a wide angled approach, to engage with the complexity

that exists within the data. First in this chapter, I will discuss the original way in which I

had grouped the participants, and provide a profile of each, based on my interpretations

of their interviews. Then, I will discuss some of the differences I noted during classroom

observations. Next, I will examine the different ways that each of the participants self-

identified linguistically, and how they perceived their French proficiency, using the

CEFR self-assessment grid (see Appendix F). Finally, I will discuss some of the themes

that emerged as I engaged with the complexities in the collected data, to be addressed in

greater detail in Chapter 5.

Original Participant Groups

As discussed in Chapter 3, the eight study participants were in Grade 8 at a public

elementary school in Cambridge, Ontario, participating in core French classes for 30

minutes per day, five days per week, at the time of the study. The students were from

three different Grade 8 core classes; five were female, and three were male. It would have

been ideal to have equal numbers of male and female participants, however, each of the

classes had slightly more female than male students that returned the consent forms, and

the key participants were chosen from the available population. Of the eight study

participants, four were meeting the standards for Grade 8 core French, and four were exceeding them. While I initially anticipated that the group of students exceeding the provincial standards would have more positive identities in relation to their French proficiency, I largely underestimated the complex ways in which all of the students might identify themselves. Once I began discourse analysis, my original groupings dissolved, giving way to a series of complex, and sometimes contradictory identity categories.

Participant Profiles

In order to better understand how the students identified themselves, I will now endeavor to paint a portrait of each participant, based on my interpretations of the answers they gave during the pre- and post- interview questions (see Appendix E). Again, as explained in Chapter 3, all of the participants chose their own pseudonyms.

Juan Pablo. Juan Pablo generally feels positively about French. He described it as "good, stable I guess you could say" in his initial interview, and "getting easier as it goes on" in his final interview. He does not find French to be a particularly difficult subject, but says that it can be a struggle to memorize the necessary verbs sometimes. His feelings about French have been influenced by teachers (though he admits that these are often changing), and by his career aspirations and desires: "I've always wanted to speak another language", he said. He feels that learning French in a core classroom is fun, and easier than learning entirely on your own, but that consistent French teachers and more repetition are needed to make learning French in a core classroom easier.

Juan Pablo started learning French in Grade 1, and has always been in the core French program. Amongst his languages, he claims to know English well, "a little bit of

French", as well as being able to understand some Afrikaans and some Dutch; though French was only mentioned in his initial interview, and Dutch was added in his final interview. When asked about his French proficiency, he described himself as "not the best, but not the worst, so maybe a three" on a scale of four. He believes that his speaking is better than his writing, but that his reading is stronger than his speaking. He does not read, watch television, or listen to music or any other media in French at home, except occasionally the radio if he accidentally turns it on. He says that he does sometimes speak in French with friends during nutrition breaks, but only in a joking manner. While he has visited South Africa which he considers to be "sort of French, [but] not really mainly", his only other visits to any French-speaking countries occurred around the age of three, and so he does not remember them.

Juan Pablo's parents speak English and Afrikaans at home. He states that does not have any French support or learning that happens outside of school. Juan Pablo thinks that it is important to learn French; he even goes so far as to say that he thinks everyone should learn it. He plans to join the army when he is older, and so thinks that it is important to learn French for this purpose. He has positive views of speaking more than one language and bilingualism stating that "it helps the brain… 'cause it stays, if you get, if you learn more, you can remember more" and that "it's good to be bilingual". Juan Pablo intends to take academic French in Grade 9, and expects that he will continue to take French all the way through high school. He aspires to one day be bilingual in French and Spanish, but does not seem to count English towards this bi-/multilingualism.

Bob. Bob also has positive feelings about French. He says that he feels good about learning French because "it introduces you to a whole new language", which he

associates with having a better life in the future. He claims that it is one of his top subjects, along with Science, Math and Physical Education. While Bob acknowledges that there are both positive and negative factors that have influenced how he feels about French, he seems to focus on the positive elements of the French culture, such as celebrations like Carnaval de Québec, and teachers with teaching styles that he enjoys, as opposed to some of the "really bad" French teachers that he has had, one even having been fired after getting particularly mad at his class in Grade 4. When asked what it is like to learn French in a core classroom, Bob said "you're sitting there while the teacher talks and explains how you conjugate a v- uh a verb or something, and then she gives you a little practice work, and later on there's gonna be a test on it". He believes that doing more activities that help you "to get to know the topic better" would be more helpful than worksheets, and suggests that having different teachers with different approaches to teaching might make learning French in a core classroom easier.

Bob started learning French in Grade 1, and has always been in the core program. He says that there are "some [pause] bad parts to it", referring to some of the early core French teachers he had, but he acknowledged that most of the teachers that he has had since Grade 6 have been better. Amongst his languages, Bob claims fluency in Cantonese and English, "semi" proficiency in French, and the ability to interpret but not to speak Cambodian and Vietnamese. When asked specifically about his French proficiency, Bob claims to be "high up there" by core French standards, "like in the mid-80s around the 90s" in terms of grades. In his initial interview, Bob claimed that his reading and listening skills are higher than his speaking and writing, however, in his final interview, he said that his writing and listening skills are strongest, admitting that having braces has

caused his speaking to suffer because he "might tend to slur the words, but maybe if [he didn't] have braces, it might change".

Bob sometimes reads, watches television, and speaks with his little brother, and Montreal-based aunt and cousins, in French. He has visited Montreal three times in the last three years, and went to Québec City for the first time last year. Bob has improved his French through these visits, and through communicating with his aunts, cousins, and little brother, though the language used at home seems to be primarily Cantonese. He believes that learning French is important for obtaining future employment, and for being able to communicate with a variety of people in different settings. He is interested in learning French in order to be able to order food, talk to others while touring France, and to be able to ask and follow directions. In Grade 9, Bob intends to take academic French, and he expects to study French in high school up to Grade 11 or 12, maybe into an additional year of Grade 12, as chosen by some Ontario students in preparation to attend college or university.

Kennedy. Kennedy's feelings about French appear to be mixed. In her initial interview, she said that learning French is "good, but uh fun sometimes", but in her final interview, she admitted that "it depends on the day, sometimes I like it, sometimes it's a little like annoying", but more because of the environment or specific topics being learned than because she dislikes French as a subject. Kennedy states that French is "like not difficult, but it's harder to like, and like get through the class, because I don't enjoy it as much as some of the other ones". She acknowledges that if things are not explained well or if she is expected to know something without having sufficient time to understand, French proves more difficult. She explained in both of her interviews that

teaching styles have significantly influenced how she feels about learning French, because if the teacher is not able to control the class or if she does not enjoy a particular unit of study, she enjoys the class less.

Kennedy started learning French in Grade 1, and has always been in the core program. She says that she knows English well, French is "in the middle", and that she knows a little bit of Spanish. When asked specifically about her French proficiency, Kennedy said that she has "not like really high understanding but not like super, super low". She also stated that her reading and writing are her stronger skills when compared to listening or speaking. Although Kennedy does not read, watch television, or speak in French outside of class, she is occasionally exposed to French music by a cousin's girlfriend who is training to become a teacher. At the time of her final interview, she had not visited any French-speaking countries, but she was supposed to visit Paris later in the spring.

Kennedy's father is Columbian, so she has been exposed to some Spanish at home, but none of her family speaks French, and she has not improved her French outside of school. When asked if it is important to learn French, Kennedy believes that knowing French might be important for getting certain jobs or for moving to French-speaking areas, but that "if you're not like really going for any of those things, then I wouldn't say so". While Kennedy states that it might be nice for her to know French for travel purposes or to obtain employment, she explains that she is "not really like keen on knowing everything". She plans to take academic French in Grade 9 because she strives to "be the best", but that she probably will not take French again after that because "I don't see any like main reason for [it] and it's not something I particularly enjoy all the

time". She also states that there are other languages that she might put to better use, such as those associated with her family.

Shanaynay. Shanaynay's relationship with the French language is a complicated one. She describes herself as being "a little bit confident, but not confident at the same time". She also alludes to some teachers making French harder for her because they "don't really interact with you and… just give you worksheets and say 'do this' and it makes it hard to learn"; by the time of her second interview however, she was starting to feel better about learning French, because the teaching was getting more interactive, which she has found to really help.

Shanaynay says that French is one of her hardest subjects; that she did not try as hard in the past and it is now catching up with her. Amongst her French influences, she credits her French teachers for "pushing me to be better in French and sometimes I don't want to, but most of the times it works and I try and work a whole lot harder on French", but she also mentions that the environment and peers' opinions can have negative effects; "cause like if everyone else hates French, then you feel like you hate French too" and "if someone says something bad about French, like saying how hard it is, fur uh, high school, then I'm thinking, 'wow, it's gonna be so hard for me' and you feel like you don-, don't wanna take it and you shouldn't take it". When asked how she would describe learning French in a core classroom, Shanaynay compared its difficulty and utility to what is learned in French immersion:

> I think it's easier, but you learn different things, 'cause uh, in French immersion,
> you know like more words to like do geography and all that stuff, but in core you

don't need to know umm as much detail, so, umm, I think it's pretty good and a

little bit easier than, like full French.

In making recommendations about how to improve learning French in a core classroom, Shanaynay says that it is important for the teacher to maintain control of the class, using a balance of interactive, hands-on, and independent activities, to keep the class' attention, but also to get them involved in their learning.

While she is now in the core French program, Shanaynay's French language learning journey began in the partial immersion program; though she transitioned into the English stream in Grade 3, as she states, "because I wasn't learning English and I only knew French, so I could only choose between one language". When asked about what languages she knows, Shanaynay admits that "French is umm not that good, umm and English I'm still working on that too 'cause uh I struggle wi- I struggle most days with reading books, 'cause they still seem hard". In her initial interview, Shanaynay told me that she would not say that her French is strong because she still struggles, getting things like the personal pronouns *nous* and *vous* mixed up all of the time. In her final interview, she stated that "I think it's definitely better than last time that we checked in", citing the use of dictionaries instead of blindly typing words into her phone as a source of better understanding. In both interviews, Shanaynay claimed that her listening skills are strongest. She does not read in French outside of school, but she will occasionally watch a French cooking show or listen to a French radio talk show if she is driving to school with her father. She says that she jokingly speaks French with her friends, but "half the time we just start laughing 'cause we have no idea what we're saying", and sometimes

with her family in France. She has not, however, had a chance to visit any French-speaking countries, though the rest of her immediate family has been to France.

In Shanaynay's home, her father, a French teacher, and her older brother and sister all speak French, but "only to each other when I'm not around," she says. She believes that occasionally asking for help from her family members has improved her French, but she tends to seek help from her mother, who does not speak French, rather than from her French-teacher father. Shanaynay believes that it is important to learn French for future job applications, and in case she moves to Québec. Her interest in learning French varies with her mood, but she sees herself possibly taking up French again later in life, because "I think it might be easier and I'd be more focused on it". In her initial interview, Shanaynay said that she planned to take applied French in Grade 9, but by her final interview, had changed her plans to enroll in academic French, "to strive to be better". She seems to begrudgingly plan to continue to take French throughout high school:

> I probably, prob'ly will 'cause I should, uh, I'm prob'ly deny it for a long time since I know I don't wanna do it, but I, I'll take the courses though through Grade 9 through 12, if I can, 'cause it's gonna benefit later on.

She does seem to recognize that there will be benefits to her future self, and that it would provide a strong home base for her possible children to be able to learn a second language more easily.

Shaquisha Dingo. Shaquisha seems to feel okay about learning French, though she is not particularly enthusiastic. In her initial interview, she said that learning French is "kinda okay, 'cause I have to, and it would be kinda cool to know a second language",

which she echoed in her final interview, adding that "it's not my favourite but it's, well, since it's like the second language kind of, it's kind of like easier to um to like it more"; acknowledging that French is "kinda like heritage and stuff". Shaquisha says that the difficulty of learning French for her is about a five on a scale of 10; "like if the teacher breaks it down for me so that I can understand it easier, then it's not very difficult". Her feelings about French have been influenced by different teachers and their teaching styles, appreciating the teachers who make French fun and more easily understood; her improved understanding over the years has also made her feel better about French over time. Shaquisha says that learning French in a core classroom can be loud, "but like when it's all calmed down it's pretty good" and that she can understand "with the basics that you're learning". However, she still thinks that if her understanding were greater, learning core French would be easier.

Shaquisha started learning French in Grade 1, and has always been a core French student. She says that she knows English pretty well and French "kind of, I'm not the best at it but I can speak some of it and stuff". She assesses her French proficiency to be about a B+ in her initial interview, and six and a half out of ten during her final interview, with listening and reading as her strongest skills. Shaquisha does not read at home in French unless it is homework, nor does she watch or listen to any other French media. She will sometimes speak in French with a cousin who is in French immersion, but she admits that she quickly gets lost during their conversations. She has not visited any French-speaking countries, has not made any attempt to improve her French outside of class, and there is no one who speaks French that lives in her home. She states that it is important to learn

French because it is Canada's second language, and to be able to speak to other people who do not speak English, whether here or in a French-speaking area.

Shaquisha is interested in learning French because "it'd kinda be cool to know a second language, like if I were to go to Paris or something, I'd need to know how to get food and stuff and like get around". She plans to take applied French in Grade 9, but she doesn't expect to study French again after that because, she elaborated "I like English [laughs]. It's kind of easy and basic".

Brodis. Brodis is alright with French; "I don't hate it, but I don't love it" he said in his initial interview. He does not feel that French is a difficult subject, but he adds "I don't know if I'm doing well in it, but from what I'm doing, I feel I'm not doing too bad". He says that his mom and his sister have influenced his feelings about French, because both have encouraged him to study in order to "get a better job and have better chance for better things". When asked to describe learning French in a core classroom, he first described it as "I guess [pause] fun, it's not like boring but yeah, I find it kind of fun and interesting", but by the time of his final interview, had decided that it was in fact boring, stating that "I kinda like doing the stuff not listening to it". Brodis' main complaint about what makes learning French in a core classroom difficult was that some of the "kids in um our class don't pay attention, and talk back, talk out loud and it's hard to learn". When asked what would make it easier for him, he stated "different classmates, but like you can't really change that".

Brodis started learning French in Grade 1, and has always been a part of the core program. Amongst his languages, he includes English, French, and some basic German. In his initial interview, Brodis said that his French was "not that strong", but in his final

interview he took a more relative view, stating that "I don't think I'm terrible compared to [pause] some other kids in my cla- I'm not trying to be mean when I say that, but not as terrible [laughs] as some people, but I'm not like really great". Despite these statements about his proficiency, when asked about his individual French skills, he described reading as "okay", speaking as "strong, I just don't like to do it", writing as "pretty good" and about his listening skills, he said "if it's not going like, fast, I can kind of understand".

Brodis does not actively read, watch, or listen to French media at home, though he has listened to French radio while driving with his dad; he qualified this experience by saying that "I don't actually know what they're talking about, or I'm not really learning anything". If he speaks French outside of the classroom, it is only in joking, saying things like *oui oui*. He visited Québec when he was seven, but he has not had any other opportunities to improve his French outside of school, despite his mother and sister both speaking French.

Brodis believes that it is important to learn French because "the more languages you know, the better jobs you can get". He claims to be "kind of" interested in learning French, to be able to get a "decent job", but he admits that "I'm kind of lazy, so sometimes I just don't feel like doing it and some days I do". In Grade 9, he plans to take applied French classes, and may or may not study French after that, depending on "how it goes the first time".

Clara. Clara is very enthusiastic and passionate about French. It is one of her favourite subjects, and she even helped organize a French club during nutrition breaks this year. In her final interview, she told me "I really do enjoy like learning French and I

really hope that I can uh like go further in it than I am now". She rates its difficulty as a subject as a three out of ten, with ten being the hardest. Clara's feelings about French have been influenced by her belief that having French will help her to get a job, and "the fact that I know some people who don't wanna learn it… so I can be different and be able to learn it".

She describes learning French in a core classroom as involving watching videos and answering questions about them, playing games, using vocabulary sheets, and trying to learn some basics to communicate with others. She also said that "in my classroom specifically, I find it, sometimes can be chaos", referring to the same kids that Brodis complained about. She thinks that learning French in a core classroom would be easier for her if there were more worksheets and related activities.

Clara started to learn French in kindergarten, at a private school. She also attended the private school for Grades 1 and 2, where her homeroom teacher was the school's French teacher. According to her initial interview, Clara found that she did not learn very much French in this setting because "I started at too high of a level". However, in her final interview she stated that "I was a lot better when I was younger, but I found… after Grade 1 and 2 that I didn't learn it as much, so I kinda lost some of the skills I [pause] I had". Since then, she has been in the core French program.

When asked about her linguistic repertoire, Clara said that she knows "English very well" and when speaking about French, she said "I think I'm the upper middle part of good in French… 'cause upper middle class, upper middle part of [laughing]". When asked specifically about her French proficiency, she rates it as a six and a half or seven out of ten. In her initial interview, she listed listening and writing as her stronger skills,

adding that "speaking is definitely not my strongest part". In her final interview, she said "I can definitely read better than I can speak" and "my writing is okay".

Clara will occasionally read something in English and then in French at home "to see if there's any words that I remember from the English text to the French text" on things such as granola bar wrappers. She will sometimes watch television in French when she cannot find anything to watch in English, or if she is babysitting, she will sometimes put on kids'-shows in French. She also speaks with her grandma in French from time to time. Although she has not been to any French-speaking countries, she has visited Québec three times. No one at her home speaks French, but she believes that her grandma has helped her improve her skills somewhat by helping her with homework and by showing her an old French textbook.

Clara thinks that it is important for "all people to have an understanding of French, or another language" in case they go to a French-speaking place, and because "there's a lot more job things they can do" with French. She acknowledges that being able to speak French is "just a lot better… it's also another social skill you have". Clara is interested in learning French because "learning another languages will give you a lot of other opportunities in life". She aspires to be a National Geographic journalist and photographer, and she believes that learning French is necessary to get such a position. In Grade 9, Clara will take French as part of the school's International Baccalaureate program. She sees herself continuing to study French up to and including university, at least as a course.

Autumn Smith. Autumn has a passion for the French language and French culture in general. She feels that "French is such an amazing and beautiful language" and

she describes the opportunity to learn French "in our own school, on our own time" as a "privilege" that many people do not have. According to Autumn, French is one of her better subjects, and she says that "last year I had a fairly high grade, I think it was like 90 or something, so I think I'm doing fairly well". She attributes her positive feelings about French to her teachers, her friends, her family, her background, and the media; particularly "romance films in Paris and all that stuff and just how like basically they've shown it off".

When talking about learning French in a core setting, she explained that despite the frequently changing teachers, they have all "worked in a way that sort of makes it so it's easier for us to get our education and um ah so we understand it"; she also mentioned that learning French with her particular class is "sometimes a little rowdy". She feels that more organization would benefit her class in particular, to help keep everyone focused and to allow them to complete their work.

Autumn started learning French in Grade 1 in a core setting. She counts English, French, and some Portuguese and Spanish among the languages that she knows. She describes English as her "native language", her French as "very direct… because I don't know a lot of the little things to make your French sound a little less um uh like a translator, more like an actual person", and in Portuguese and Spanish, Autumns says that she is "kind of incompetent almost [laughing]". When asked specifically about her French proficiency, Autumn says that she is "fairly proficient, um I can form coherent sentences, and get my thoughts out, um but I don't exactly think um that I could be considered exactly 100% fluent yet".

In her initial interview, Autumn claimed that her writing and speaking skills were stronger than her reading and listening. In her final interview, she had reconsidered slightly, and listed reading and speaking as a little bit better than her writing and listening skills. She will occasionally read on the internet or instant-message with friends in French, and she sometimes watches the foreign film channel or other French television stations. Autumn will occasionally speak with friends in French, but she admits that this is more so that she can "kind of confuse them wha- trick around with them"; she also speaks with her parents from time to time, who are both partially fluent in French. She has not had the opportunity to visit any French-speaking countries, though a trip to visit Québec had been planned when she was in Grade 3, but it did not actually happen. In preparation for the would-have-been trip in Grade 3, Autumn says that she "really buckled down and like studied a lot because I thought I was going to Québec" and although she did not end up going, she feels that this extra work "really did help me with ah not only helping my grades and get the extra marks in French classes but also just helping me appreciate the language and the culture a lot more".

Autumn thinks that learning French is very important because it is Canada's second language, and it is "a very big part of our history as Canadians, and um the um ah French have been deeply rooted in our culture for a very long time". She believes that everyone should have the opportunity to learn a second language, "be it French or English, or Spanish, or whatever they nee- or whatever they're interested in". Personally, she is very interested in learning French because "to be able to speak more than just one language, um not only is [*sic*] it look good on a resume, but it's also just interesting, it makes you more cultured, more well-rounded".

At the time of her initial interview, Autumn intended to take applied French in Grade 9, but by her final interview she had decided that she would "probably go for the academic course". Although Autumn seems to see herself learning French in the future, she is not sure if she will take it throughout high school because "it all depends on what I want to get my majors in and all that stuff in high school". She does expect that she will take a course later on at the very least, something like Rosetta Stone perhaps to "like build a resume more, of even if I wanna get involved in a different country, go traveling".

Reflections on profiles. Several of the students mentioned that learning French would be useful for finding future employment, for potential travel (to Québec or France), and for communicating with other people (who may or may not also speak English). Each of the students identified French as one of the languages that they speak (to some degree), though their beliefs about which of their skills are strongest varied. Several, though not all, of the students have access to French speakers outside of school; though the degree to which they take advantage of this fact also seems to vary. While the participants seem to have generally positive (or at least neutral) views about learning French, they gave very different reasons for their plans to continue (or discontinue) the study of French after Grade 9.

Classroom Observations

Juan Pablo and Bob. On three occasions, Juan Pablo and Bob were observed together. During the first lesson, the boys were working on –ER and –IR verb exercises, though not the same one at the same time. During the second lesson, the class watched a video about Lumocité at Carnaval de Québec, and then completed a vocabulary activity.

The third observation took place during a reading assessment, where each student read a paragraph in French about an activity from Carnaval and then answered four short-answer questions. While both boys expressed positive views of French and learning a second language during their interviews, I noticed differences in their behavior during the classroom sessions.

Firstly, Bob used his time very effectively. Whenever the teacher gave instructions, he turned his attention immediately to listen, and then went straight back to work when she had finished speaking. Bob worked quietly, occasionally answering questions from Juan Pablo or other students. Bob tended to find questions that he knew the answers to first, filling these in before getting a dictionary to help complete the other exercises. He also checked in with the teacher whenever he had finished, to see if corrections were required, and ignored distractions caused by other students.

Juan Pablo on the other hand, while mostly diligent, relied heavily on his phone to look things up whenever he had an activity to complete. He did not choose to use a dictionary until the third observation, during the reading assessment, as phones were not allowed for this activity. The use of his phone appeared to be mostly on task, though the phone itself caused occasional interruptions, such as accidently reading aloud the word *cabane* and vibrating while Juan Pablo was working, causing him to tell it "no, go away". Juan Pablo occasionally turned to Bob for clarification or for help with his work, and sometimes wandered to chat with other students. He also checked in with the teacher to clarify some questions or to have his work corrected. Both boys used English exclusively in class, except when reading a particular word from an activity sheet.

Kennedy, Shanaynay, and Shaquisha Dingo. These three girls were observed together on three different occasions as well. During the first, they completed –ER and –IR verb activities. In the second observation, they watched the Lumocité video from Carnaval de Québec and completed a vocabulary activity. The final observation took place during a reading assessment, as with Juan Pablo and Bob. The three girls behaved similarly during the classroom sessions. They worked intently, asking each other questions and justifying their answers when necessary. All of the girls spoke English throughout the observations, except when repeating specific vocabulary from the various activities.

Other students seemed to ask more questions of Kennedy than either of the other girls. She was able to explain that –ER verbs with a 'g' before the –ER have a –*geons* ending with *nous* for pronunciation, and redirected her group when they were looking for a word that was not a part of the exercise. Kennedy used a dictionary during the second and third observations, advising Shaquisha that you have to look words up individually, even on WordReference (a website with a variety of free, online dictionaries), or they will not make sense. Kennedy's reading assessment showed good comprehension, having looked up only the words that she did not already know and that would be essential to her to understand the paragraph or questions. She responded in full sentences, in French, using some vocabulary from the original text.

Shaquisha, while not overtly confident in her interviews, displayed good understanding of basic grammatical concepts, such as personal pronouns and –ER verb endings. She was able to help Shanaynay figure out whether *nous* or *vous* comes first when conjugating. She chose to complete activities that she found easier first, drawing on

her own knowledge before asking other students or the teacher for help. During the second observation, she used her phone to look up words for the vocabulary activity, commenting on the fact that using a French keyboard moves the letters around. Shaquisha seemed to maximize her time on task, getting started right away and staying focused throughout the lesson. During the reading assessment, Shaquisha highlighted most of the paragraph, writing it out in English beside the original text before attempting to answer any of the questions. She responded in written French, with some subject-verb-object reversals. Due to the amount of time she spent writing out the original paragraph, Shaquisha was pressed for time to finish her test.

Shanaynay appeared to be less confident than Shaquisha and Kennedy. She double checked most of her work with her peers or the teacher, and frequently asked for clarification; talking her way through her work out loud. Shanaynay also used her phone during most of the second observation to look up vocabulary, but this led to some poor translations such as "a combination of skiing" instead of a snowsuit. She was confused about which subject pronouns would replace particular subjects, such as the name Monique, and asked Shaquisha if *les* is plural. Shanaynay occasionally expressed general confusion about what was going on, and at one point, could not find the activity that she was supposed to complete, spending several minutes wandering around the class, checking her binder, and talking to the teacher. During the last observation, Shanaynay appeared to be nervous, chewing on her lip as she initially surveyed the test paper. Though she looked up many of the words in the paragraph, her reading assessment showed limited comprehension, as some of her answers simply repeated the question, and were a mixture of French and English.

Brodis, Clara, and Autumn Smith. This class was observed on four occasions, though each individual was only observed three times. During the first observation, all three participants were present, and the class was taught a lesson about regular –ER verbs. During the second observation, all three students were present, with the class working on some –IR verb sheets. The third observation was only of Brodis, and involved him completing the same reading assessment as the other students above. The fourth observation was of Clara and Autumn, and involved Autumn writing the reading assessment that she had missed, and Clara practicing a French play with a group of her classmates. All three students spoke English during the entirety of the observations.

Brodis, while not particularly enthusiastic about French, worked well and stayed focused during the three classes observed. Autumn and Clara helped to clarify some of the conjugation rules for various verbs for him, but he always made attempts to answer the worksheets, using the classroom resources and reference sheets provided to stay on track. He tended to stay on task, even when the girls started talking about other things, though still asking questions like whether a particular name is male or female. Autumn corrected his work on quite a few occasions, to which he always responded positively and made the changes she suggested. His reading assessment showed some understanding of the text, having written in many of the words in English, which he looked up after initially having surveyed the text. Though his answers were written in French, they were sometimes incomplete or difficult to understand.

During the –ER verb lesson, Clara paid close attention to the teacher and to the video being shown. She sang along with the video, bobbing her head to the music. When the class transitioned to seat work, the teacher did one example for an –ER verb and one

for an –IR verb. Clara went straight to work, apparently confident enough not to need this assistance. During the second observation, Clara had a list of verbs she was using to study for an upcoming test. She seems to have a good understanding of the subject pronouns and verb conjugations, and easily responded to questions from Brodis and Autumn. While Clara was obviously ahead of the rest of the class at this time, she and Autumn sometimes engaged in off topic conversations that eventually led to their complete distraction from their work; talking about puppies, their semi-French backgrounds, getting jobs at the mall, amongst other things. During the third observation session, Clara and a group of other students practiced reading a French fairy tale, laid out as a play. While the group took turns reading their lines, Clara listened intently, and read her part where appropriate. The group started talking about props for the presentation, to which Clara eagerly made her own suggestions. Clara maintained focus, even while some group members got off task, reminding them that she was being recorded, and that they should probably stick to reading the play. Her pronunciation of some words such as *fille* prompted correction from some group members.

Autumn's passion for French was evident in her classroom sessions. During the first observation, she took notes during the –ER verb rap video, and then danced and sang along. When transitioning to seat work, she listened to the teacher's examples, but immediately started on her own work, not needing these explanations to get started. In the second observation, she worked on an –IR verb sheet, occasionally correcting Brodis' work and asking questions of Clara for clarification, such as "*Vous* is the plural of *nous*, right?". Autumn often chatted with Clara while they worked, but this sometimes led to completely off task discussions as well. However, her understanding of French was

evident when she explained to Clara that the upcoming verb test should be manageable because all of the regular –IR, -ER, and –RE verbs follow the same conjugation rules, then repeating the chants from the different videos that they had seen in class on the subject. When she completed her reading assessment during the third observation, Autumn read through the paragraph, and then immediately started to answer the accompanying questions. She used the dictionary occasionally to look up words in formulating her answers, but her test showed good comprehension of what she read, and her answers were in complete, French sentences. These sentences were well structured when the answer could be based on the original question, but became a little less clear when she had to completely structure her own response.

Reflections on observations. Upon reflecting on the classroom observations, I was able to see and hear how the students tackled different types of tasks, where they required clarification, and what concepts they were able to explain independently. I noticed that some students seemed to prefer to use dictionaries when looking up vocabulary, while others seemed to prefer to use their phones. The classroom sessions also allowed me to observe the language(s) that the students used when completing their French activities. Interestingly, they all chose to speak in English, unless they were repeating a particular French word from an activity/worksheet. Finally, the reading assessment allowed me to see how well the participants were able to understand a short paragraph in French, and whether or not they were able to answer questions about the contents of the paragraph, in French. It is important to note that these observations reflect not only the events that took place, but my own inferences, impressions, and interpretations of the students' interactions, ways of working, and learning in the

classroom(s). In the next section, I discuss some of the ways in which students talked about themselves, as well as their linguistic proficiency.

Self-Identifications and Self-Assessed Proficiency

An important piece of data that emerged from this study was the many different ways in which the students identified themselves in relation to their languages. Although I had originally anticipated that half of the students would see themselves as only speaking English, or at least English-dominant, and that the other half would identify with French on some level, whether as a learner, as bilingual, or as a multilingual individual, I grossly underestimated the complexity involved in positioning oneself linguistically, and over-simplified what the possible categories could be. I will now share the ways that these eight, complex, young people self-identified. It is important to note these were the labels that the students used to describe themselves; they were not imposed on them, but they do shed some interesting light on some messages and discourses that these students have been exposed to and have possibly absorbed throughout their lives.

English-only. Three out of the eight students put themselves into a category that only valued their English language abilities. While each expressed this in a slightly different way, the message that only their English language skills counted was clearly communicated. Brodis, though claiming to know English, French, and some basic German, told me in the next breath that he sees himself as "probably [an] only-English type of person". Shaquisha Dingo, immediately after stating that she knows English pretty well and French "kind of", told me that she sees herself as "probably like, English-

only" because "well it's the only thing I speak at home". Shanaynay's messages were even stronger, and more direct. Although she started learning French in an immersion setting, and at one point "only knew French", she told me that she sees herself as "just one. I can only speak one language at a time and I see myself in the future just speaking one language, which is English 'cause I think that other ones are too complex and too hard to describe"; despite having said that even now she's "decent [pause] for core", just moments before.

Speaker of multiple languages. Although several of the participants have access to languages other than, or in addition to, French or English at home, only Bob identified himself as a speaker of multiple languages. According to Bob, he sees himself as "someone that can speak multiple languages and can communicate with other people who might not speak English or French", because, he says "my aunt's in Montreal, I have another aunt in, I have lots of aunts in uh Vietnam, I've got two in Cambodia, they're all over the place" and he is able to understand and communicate with all of them.

Bilingual. Interestingly enough, although all of the participants mentioned knowing English and French at some point in their interviews, only Autumn considered herself to be bilingual. Her explanation is very telling:

> I see myself as bilingual, um but I definitely understand that my French is not exactly perfect and sometimes I might sound a lit- aw- a little bit odd when I'm uh trying to figure out sentences and trying to get myself, my thoughts, portrayed clearly um but I definitely think that with more education, with more,[a] little more time, I could definitely be completely fluent in both French and English. So, I consider myself bilingual.

Autumn is aware of the disparity between her French and English language abilities, but this does not deter her from acknowledging the linguistic capital that she has and calling herself bilingual.

   Learner of French. Kennedy was the only participant to consider herself a learner of French. In her final interview, she said that she sees herself as "like an English speaker and like, learner of French, 'cause like, I know some things about French but not everything". She elaborated, comparing these two languages; "like I wouldn't be able to carry through a conversation of French, where I would be able to do that with English". Although Kennedy claims a little bit of Spanish as part of her linguistic capital, this does not feature in her linguistic identity.

   Future-bilinguals. The final two participants, Clara and Juan Pablo, both identified themselves in a way that expressed a hope of becoming bilingual in the future. In both of Clara's interviews, she alludes a future-self that speaks both French and English fluently. In her initial interview, she said that "French is one of the language [*sic*], languages, like, I really want to learn fluently, umm, so ah, hopefully in, like, ten years or something I can say that I can speak French fluently and be able to do that". In her final interview, she repeated the sentiment by saying "I hope to someday be able to say that I can speak French fluently and English fluently". Juan Pablo too expresses a desire to be bilingual in the future. In his final interview, he said "I wanna be completely bilingual, or at least um just a little bit… [in] French and Spanish". What is somewhat confusing in Juan Pablo's case, is that he claims to know English, some French, some Afrikaans, and some Dutch already. Why he does not consider at least English as part of his future bi/multilingualism is puzzling. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Self-assessed proficiency. Before the initial and final interviews, each participant completed a CEFR self-assessment grid to help determine how strong they deemed their individual French language skills (see Appendix F). The grid uses 'can-do' statements to reflect what users at each of the six grid levels (A1 & A2 – Basic User, B1 & B2 – Independent User, and C1 & C2 – Proficient User) should be able to do across the five language skills (listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production, and writing).

Possibly due to unfamiliarity with what constitutes a basic user when compared to an independent or proficient user, most of the students assessed themselves higher than is realistic; Kennedy assessed herself to be either and A1 or A2 on all skills, Shanaynay assessed her skills to range from an A1 to a B1, Shaquisha assessed her skills to be mostly A2 or B1; Autumn's range was greater and shifted largely between interviews, starting at mostly B1 in the first assessment, and moving up to B2 or C1 in the second assessment; Clara viewed her skills ranging from an A2 to a B2, Brodis saw himself ranging between A2 and C1, Juan Pablo figured that his skills ranged from an A2 to a B2, and finally Bob's ratings ranged from B2 to C1. Most of the participants assessed their skills slightly higher at the second interview.

To put these levels into better perspective, students in Grade 12 French immersion in the same school board are anticipated to have reached a B2 level by the end of high school (Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate and Vocational School, 2015). In retrospect, these statements may not have provided students with enough information to accurately gauge what they are able to do. For example, the B2 statement "I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options"

(see Appendix F), which Bob identified as his level of spoken production on both occasions, does not articulate what constitutes a wide range of subjects or what might qualify as a field of interest. A more detailed list of 'Can-do' statements spanning the A1 and A2 levels of competency may have been a more appropriate instrument.

Emerging Themes

From the collection of participant interviews, observations, and self-assessments, there were many themes that emerged. I will introduce some of these now, but will explore these themes in greater detail in Chapter 5. First, I will look at what constitutes bi/multilingualism in the eyes of the study participants. Secondly, I will look at the lack of recognition or inclusion of multiple identities. Finally, I will briefly highlight some of the factors, repeatedly mentioned, that seem to have an impact on how these students feel about French.

What is bi/multilingualism? What has been clearly shown from the variety of ways that the students self-identified, is that even in such a small group, there is not a clear definition of what constitutes bilingualism or multilingualism. No participant listed only a single language when asked the question "What languages do you know and how well do you know them?" (see Appendix E), but three classified themselves as English-only speakers. All of the participants mentioned English and French as being part of their linguistic repertoires at some point, and five out of the eight listed at least some knowledge of another language (i.e. Kennedy said Spanish; Juan Pablo said Afrikaans and Dutch; Brodis said German; Autumn said Portuguese and Spanish; Bob said Cantonese, Vietnamese, and Cambodian), but only Bob identified himself as speaking

multiple languages. Even Autumn and Kennedy, who acknowledged their developing competence in French, did not incorporate their other sources of linguistic capital into their identity/ies. The question now is how can we, as researchers and educators, help students to value the linguistic capital that they already have; how can we teach them that all of the linguistic capital that they have counts?

Non-inclusion of multiple identities. Of all of the study participants, Brodis, Shanaynay, and Juan Pablo presented some of the most contradictory identities. Brodis, who lives with a mother and a sister who speak French and identifies himself as having some basic German skills, says that he is an "only-English type of person". What is troubling here is that Brodis is engaged and has good study habits in French class, he obviously has some linguistic ability in French, and he identifies with German enough to mention it as a language that he knows; but when he tallies up his capital, only English counts, and so strongly that it defines the "type of person" that he is.

Shanaynay's story is more poignant. She comes from a family that is mostly composed of French-English bilinguals (her father, sister, and brother), and even started out in French immersion herself. However, at some point she was taught that she could only use one language at a time, a belief which she internalized, and she not only gave up her French studies in an immersion setting, but gave up any French identity that she once claimed.

Finally, Juan Pablo presents a complex disconnect between his linguistic capital and his linguistic identity. His parents both speak Afrikaans and English, and he is exposed to these languages at home. He even claims to know some Dutch because of its linguistic relationship to Afrikaans. He says that he knows a little bit of French, but he

rates his proficiency as a three out of four. By all accounts, Juan Pablo is a speaker of multiple languages, but he still says things like "I've always wanted to speak another language" and "I wanna be completely bilingual… [in] French and Spanish". He does not seem to acknowledge any of his present linguistic capital, looking only to what languages he may speak in the future.

Factors impacting French learning. A common reason given by the students for the importance of learning French was to get a job in the future; whether they were hoping to have a specific career themselves, or just believed that French would generally provide them with better opportunities. This idea seems to be engrained in Canadian society; a view of "language as an acquirable technical skill and marketable commodity" (Heller, 2002, p. 47). Several also commented on the role of the classroom environment, either encouraging or taking away from their ability to learn, and their enjoyment of learning French. Many of the students spoke of the role of constantly changing teachers; this proving to be an advantage if the new teacher had a more preferable teaching style, but also proving detrimental if the new teacher was impatient or did not interact with, or engage, the students. Some mentioned the utility of knowing French for travel, or moving to a French-speaking area; Autumn even shared similar daydreams as those seen by Kinginger (2004) with Alice, whose imagining of France "recalls the many stereotypes of the French landscape within American cultural productions, such as French language textbooks, travel brochures, and television shows, where France is presented as a vast formal garden studded with works of monumental architecture" (p. 227). This list of factors is neither complete nor exhaustive, but serves to introduce the complexity present in the data, to be further examined in Chapter 5.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the original groups that I used to categorize/identify the participants. I have also provided more in-depth profiles of the participants, outlined what was seen during classroom observations, described the different ways in which the students identified themselves, and how they perceived their French proficiency. Finally, I briefly introduced some of the complex, overlapping themes that populate the data. In the next chapter, Chapter 5, I will endeavor to explore these overlapping themes from a wider perspective, to engage with the complexities afforded by ethnographic research, to expose the messages these students have received about language teaching and learning, and to use reflexivity to take a critical look at the data, moving beyond its face value.

Chapter 5: Overlapping Themes

As Chapter 4 zoomed-in on the study participants as individuals, presenting some of their individual discourses and experiences, in this chapter, I will endeavor to engage with the complexity within the collected data. Drawing upon reflexivity (see Byrd Clark & Dervin, 2014), I will begin by discussing why the original groupings and identity categories that I used to identify participants were problematic. Then, I will explore the overlapping themes mentioned in Chapter 4 in greater depth. I will continue by explaining how reflexivity was used to critically evaluate the data and some of the discourses present; looking past their face value to explore some of the messages that the students have received and adopted, and how this has affected their linguistic identity, investment, and success in core French. Finally, I will conclude this chapter by challenging the notion put forth by Mady (2010) that multilingual students have an advantage in French over their monolingual peers.

Problematic Groupings

When I first began this study, I considered myself to have enough knowledge about, and experience with, each of the participants to be able to anticipate their feelings about French, even possibly their linguistic identities. I believed that the students who experienced greater success in core French probably had more positive attitudes about French in general, and likely saw French as part of their linguistic identity/ies (either as a learner of French, as a bilingual individual, or as a speaker of multiple languages/multilingual). I thought that the students who were meeting the standards but were not excelling in French as they did in other classes would probably not have

internalized French as part of their identity; that they would see themselves as only speaking English. However, as I began to interview the participants and analyze the data, these initial, simplistic categories inadvertently imposed restrictions on these students, and I realized that trying to fit the data to this model would produce distorted results.

Instead, I tried to step back, to let the data and the students' words speak for themselves. For this reason, Chapter 4 includes several quotes transcribed from the students' interviews. Although I had initially predicted four categories, all of which were present to some degree in the data, I had not considered that some of the students might aspire to have a future identity, looking past their current linguistic capital to what they hope to gain in the years to come. Even the three participants who identified themselves as only speaking English did so in very different ways; Brodis said that he is an "only English *type of person*" [emphasis added], while Shaquisha Dingo justified her English-only identity by saying that "it's the only thing I speak *at home*" [emphasis added], and Shanaynay said that she sees herself as "*just one*. I can only speak *one language at a time*" [emphasis added]. The largest commonality between these students was not the English-only categorization; rather, their identities did not reflect the languages they had claimed to know moments earlier.

Overlapping Themes

 Bilingualism/multilingualism. While transcribing and performing discourse analysis on the participant interviews, it became clear that this group of students does not have a common definition of bilingualism or multilingualism. In fact, from what was said by the students in their interviews, it seems that many had received a message (or were

exposed to a "Discourse"; see Gee, 2008) during their education or home life that only native-speaker-like proficiency in another language can be counted towards being bi- or multilingual. For example, Shanaynay described the struggles that she faced when learning French and English simultaneously in Grades 1 and 2, explaining the reasons behind her transition from French immersion to core French in Grade 3 as follows:

> I dropped out because I wasn't learning English and I only knew French, so I could only choose between one language because it's kinda hard to learn two when you're still trying to understand one. So I had to drop out and French just seemed a whole lot easier but no one knew how to speak it, so then you had to like convert your brain to change your thinking and like um your understanding of like letters because uh *le* would not be *le*, uh or like complicated words like dog, you would probably see it in uh like different letters, cause "g" is not "g" anymore.

Heller (2002) discusses the problematic fact that in Canada, "while bilingualism is valued, it is only valued as long as it takes the shape of 'double monolingualism'. One is expected to speak each 'language' as though it were a homogeneous monolingual variety" (p. 48). One of the problems with this standard is that it ignores the fact that receptive and productive skills may not develop simultaneously; ignoring that students may be able to understand the French that they are hearing, even though they may not yet be able to respond in kind. For example, although Shanaynay and Shaquisha identify themselves as only speaking English, they both claim that their listening skills (receptive language skills) are stronger than their speaking skills. However, Canada's focus on 'elite bilingualism' reproduces inequalities of political and economic power, marginalizing the

complex, overlapping existence and use of languages, or "mixed varieties, which of course are common in bilingual settings" (Heller, 2002, p. 48), and indicates that these bilingual strategies and realities should be seen as a form of 'working-class bilingualism'. Heller, who borrows the notion of *dual monolingualism* coined by Gumperz (1982), Grosjean (1989), and Gogolin (1994) further points out that although not all Canadians have equal opportunities to develop idealized English-French bilingualism, the 'double monolingual' ideology is "quite hegemonic" (p. 48). The pervasiveness of the notion of 'double monolingualism' being the standard for bilingualism explains why many of the students do not see themselves as having strong enough French to count or be seen as legitimate speakers.

Not only a Canadian problem, the concept of balanced bilingualism is one that has been and continues to be, pervasive in the field of SLE (García, 2009). This concept aligns with the goal of developing native-like proficiency in a second language, and "presents a picture of children and adults who are equally competent in two languages in all contexts and with all interlocutors" (García, 2009, p. 44). Despite the widespread acceptance of this theory, García (2009) stated that "such a form of bilingualism does not exist" (p. 44). Rarely do bilinguals have the occasion to use both of their languages in the same contexts, with the same people, or to the same degree; and so a view of bilingualism as "a bicycle with two perfectly round wheels" (García, 2009, p. 45) holds bilingual individuals to an unrealistic standard.

Despite both living in bilingual environments, Shanaynay and Brodis consider themselves to be monolingual. Shanaynay`s father and siblings are bilingual, and she claims that at one time she "only knew French", having left French immersion to improve

her English language skills. Although Shanaynay definitely lost some of her language proficiency over time, she still seems to be able to understand spoken French. She says that she can get the gist of things in French, but that "listening to someone say it makes it a whole lot easier". It seems that Shanaynay has been taught that her listening skills are not valuable. Consequently, she does not see herself being able to listen and understand as a form of bilingualism. Brodis, on the other hand, claims that speaking French is one of his stronger skills because "I like, hear my mom and my sister speak it a lot". He shared that "I know like a lot, but I just don't usually, when I talk out loud in French, I don't usually try, I just kinda do it, 'cause I don't really like speaking out loud". Even though he says that he hears a lot of French and can even speak it, reluctantly, he does not consider himself to be bilingual. He also says that he knows "a bit of German, but like basic words"; another language that he appears to view as not strong enough to count.

According to Heller (2002), double monolingualism is reinforced through "homogenizing ideologies of nation and state" (p. 49); the picture of Canada as a country full of French-English bilinguals. Shaquisha Dingo, talked about it being important to learn French because it is Canada's second official language, and "kinda like heritage", alluding to Canada's history of "conquering English-speakers and conquered French speakers" (Heller, 2002, p. 49). She says that "I speak mostly English, like it's probably, well it's the only thing I speak at home, and then I do French at school". When asked about French, Shaquisha says that she "speaks some of it and stuff" but, for her, it seems that French does not exist outside of school; she appears to ignore French as part of her linguistic identity because it is not associated with her day to day, real life, beyond her 30 minute daily French class.

Kennedy sees herself as a learner of French, because she has some skills, but still has a long way to go before she will have achieved fluency in the language. Although she has somewhat incorporated French into her linguistic identity, she does not go so far as to claim to be bilingual. This may be further evidence of using the 'double-monolingual' ideal as the standard for bilingualism; discounting the value of the competence that she has achieved and undermining the importance of continuing to study French. Kennedy does not anticipate studying French beyond the mandatory Grade 9 course because she does not see it as adding any value to her life; she does not want to go to a French-speaking area, and she does not want to get a job that would require her to know French. Although she claims to know some basic phrases in Spanish, this is not part of her current linguistic identity. She does subtly allude to it being a potential future identity though when she says that there are "other languages that I might be able to put to better use, [than French] 'cause of family issues and stuff".

Clara and Juan Pablo present a particularly interesting identity: that of being bilingual *in the future*. While Clara acknowledges that she has some French at the present time in addition to her English, she does not *yet* claim a bilingual identity. When asked directly about her linguistic identity, she says that "French is one of the language, languages, like, I really want to learn fluently, umm, so ah hopefully in, like, ten years or something I can say that I can speak French fluently". From this statement, it seems that Clara's linguistic identity has also been restricted by the double-monolingual myth. While she is very passionate about French and enjoys learning it, she is not able to claim it as part of her identity because she believes she is not yet fluent. This ties in with Byrd Clark's (2009, 2010) research on Italian Canadian youth and their investments in French

as several of the youth felt that their French was 'not good enough' because of not being able to attain or master such so-called, idealized linguistic norms. Juan Pablo's future identity is even more restrictive; he desires to be bilingual in French and Spanish. While the languages that he desires to acquire are not problematic themselves, the fact that Juan Pablo does not believe that he will be bilingual *until* he speaks both French and Spanish ignores the fact that he is already fluent in English, and speaks some Afrikaans and some Dutch. By all accounts, future-Juan Pablo should be multi- or plurilingual; adding to the linguistic capital that he already has, not subtracting from it. It is hard to know if Juan Pablo believes that he currently has any linguistic capital at all, as what he already has does not seem to fit anywhere in his future identity.

A more useful understanding of bilingualism is established from a dynamic perspective. García's (2009) view of dynamic bilingualism recognizes the "simultaneous multiplicity" (p. 53) of the bilingual individual, stating that bilingualism is "*dynamic*, drawing from different contexts in which it develops and functions" (p. 53). From this perspective, bilingualism is no longer a bicycle, but an all-terrain vehicle; extending, stretching, and connecting interlocutors on an uneven field of communication (García, 2009). According to García, the dynamic model is closely linked to plurilingualism. Understanding dynamic bilingualism as a form of plurilingualism is useful because it "extends mastery of two or more standard languages to include hybrid language practices" (García, 2009, p. 55); where the hybrid perspective reaffirms that competence in one language, added to competence in another language, is not equal to the abilities of two monolinguals in one person (García, 2009).

Autumn seems to have an understanding of bilingualism that aligns with García's (2009) model of dynamic bilingualism. Rather than believing that her French and English language competencies must be equal to be valued, she acknowledges that "I definitely understand that my French is not exactly perfect and sometimes I might sound a lit- aw- a little bit odd when I'm uh trying to figure out sentences and trying to get myself, my thoughts, portrayed clearly". She does not shy away from claiming a bilingual identity even though her French skills are not as fully developed as her English skills, which I propose is possible because she is not restricted by a 'double-monolingual' ideal. Autumn also acknowledges that her linguistic repertoire is likely to change over time, stating that "I definitely think that with more education, with… [a] little more time, I could definitely be completely fluent in both English and French", without diminishing her current bilingual identity. Although Autumn says that she knows "little phrases in like Spanish and Portuguese", these languages do not seem to factor strongly enough in her life to warrant a multilingual self-identity at this point in time.

It will be recalled that Clara and Autumn were the most enthusiastic and passionate about taking French. Although passion might be assumed to contribute to more positive attitudes about French and therefore more complete identities related to it, this does not seem to be enough. When asked in her initial interview what languages she knows and how well she knows them, Clara said the following:

> I'd say that I could probably communicate if I really needed to with people, to try and figure out, and feel like I could understand a little bit of what they're saying, but carrying on a full, complicated conversation, I probably would not be able to do.

In the very next question, when asked about her linguistic identity, Clara said "I hope to someday be able to say that I can speak French fluently and English, fluently". While Clara is very passionate about French and very successful in the core French classroom, her understanding of bilingualism as requiring complete fluency limits her ability to identify as bilingual in French and English. Her passion still leads her to aspire to become bilingual, but this perspective makes French competency a distant dream; diluting her confidence in her own abilities and her connection to the language. Autumn on the other hand, has a very passionate, romantic view of the French language that has been allowed to flourish into a bilingual identity, because of her dynamic understanding of what constitutes linguistic legitimacy. She said that she feels positively about French because of "the media definitely…. you know, romance films in Paris and all that stuff and just how like basically they've shown it off" and "mostly just like my friends and my teachers, and people who have supported me, and like shown me the positives of such an amazing culture". It is therefore imperative that teachers of French, at the very least, start to legitimize all forms and levels of linguistic competency, in order to foster rather than extinguish passion for French (including all varieties of French), and make space for bi- and multiple identities.

Bob is the only participant to have a multilingual identity at the time of the study. He identifies himself as "a speaker of multiple languages"; as someone who can "communicate with other people who might not speak English or French". Bob claims varying degrees of competence in five languages: Cantonese, English, French, Cambodian, and Vietnamese. Though Cantonese and English are the languages that Bob speaks fluently, he includes all of his linguistic capital as part of his identity, unlike the

rest of the study participants. He seems to have a plurilingual perspective, accepting the different levels of proficiency between his languages because they are used to different degrees and for different purposes in his life. Encouraging a perspective like Bob's in the core French classroom might help students recognize that all of their linguistic capital is valuable; what they bring from home, what they use at school, and what they are learning to use.

Multiple identities. Given that all of the study participants claim to speak English, and at least some level of French, all could have multiple identities. Since Brodis, Shanaynay, and Shaquisha do not, and Kennedy, Clara, Juan Pablo, and Autumn's identities are not entirely reflective of their linguistic realities, there is an obvious disconnect between the languages that the students' claim to know, and the incorporation of these languages into their identity/ies. There are several possible reasons for this disconnect. First, there is an apparent lack of awareness of the existence of multiple identities within this group of students. Second, although some participants make mention of additional languages, they are unclear of how these languages are related to themselves and their lives. Finally, as reflected throughout Chapter 2, the establishment of identities is complex, changing, and context dependent; the students might have identified differently in another place, or with different people, such as friends or family. Although I cannot determine with certainty why seven out of the eight participants did not incorporate all of their linguistic capital into their identity/ies, I will endeavor to explore possible reasons in greater detail.

The participant who was most obviously unaware of his linguistic capital and possible multiple identities is Juan Pablo. In his initial and final interviews, he did not

establish a clear, present linguistic identity. In his first interview, he said "I'm not really that closest with French, but with Afrikaans and English, I'm pretty close to". This positions him as feeling closest to English and Afrikaans, the languages that his parents speak at home, but he does not articulate these as being *his* languages or a part of his linguistic identity. In his later interview, he said "I wanna be completely bilingual, or at least um just a bit… [in] French and Spanish"; completely ignoring the fact that he is presently bilingual, being fluent in English and Afrikaans, and that he identifies most closely with his home languages. Although Juan Pablo's world is plurilingual, he does not clearly position himself within it, and as a result, is only able to articulate the linguistic capital that he hopes to acquire in the future; an identity to which he aspires.

Shanaynay's identity as only speaking one language is also surprising, given the multilingual reality in which she lives, and the relationship that she has had with the French language in the past. She too seems to be unaware of the fact that she has multiple identities, given that she possesses strong French listening skills, and is surrounded by bilingual family members on a daily basis.

Brodis, Kennedy, and Autumn make mention of languages in addition to English and French, when listing the languages that they know, which they have not incorporated into their linguistic identities. Brodis said that he knows some basic German, Kennedy said that she knows a little Spanish because her dad is Columbian, and Autumn said that she knows some Spanish and Portuguese from watching children's television shows and from her friends. Though none of these students are likely to have monolingual-like proficiency in these languages, they are significant enough in their own minds to list as part of their linguistic repertoires. It is possible that these languages have not been further

incorporated into their linguistic identities because they have not clearly identified where these languages fit into their lives, or because they have such a limited field of contact. It also stands to reason that the students' restrictive views of what constitutes a legitimate language user, transmitted from home, school, or friends, might prevent these students from seeing themselves as competent enough in these other languages to claim them as part of their multiple identities. According to Byrd Clark (2012), it could also be that none of the linguistic repertoires or multiple identities of the students are ever recognized, discussed or attributed any value at school. During my own observations of these students, none of their additional languages were mentioned, acknowledged, or used.

Another possible reason that Brodis, Kennedy, and Autumn did not include their additional languages as part of their linguistic identities during this study, is that all of the interviews took place between myself, a former French teacher, and the students individually, at the school. As discussed in Chapter 2, identities are not static; they are fluid and context dependent, meaning that had the interviews taken place at a different locale, perhaps in the participants' homes or in a social setting, they might have identified differently. Further, had other people been present, such as parents or friends who spoke the language, these students might have expressed more complex, multiple identities tied to these other parts of their linguistic repertoires.

Factors impacting French learning. There were several reasons given by the participants for it being important to learn French. The most common benefit listed for learning French, in fact, a reason given by all of the participants, was to get a better job in the future or to have access to a particular career path. This belief reflects the 'education-work link' described by Heller (2002) as "not only part of discourse in everyday life, it is

very explicitly a core dimension of Ontario government educational policy" (p. 59).

Interestingly however, this discourse does not align with job market realities. According

to Heller:

> It is at the interface between enterprise and clientele that multilingual skills are
> most required, that is, at the front line of the provision of services and
> information. It is the telephone representatives in call centres; the wait staff and
> desk clerks in hotels; the croupiers in the casinos; the sales clerks in stores who
> are bi/multilingual, and not the managers. (p. 60)

Although all of these students see bilingualism in French and English as advantageous for

future jobs, these skills seem to be "an advantage mainly for getting low-level entry jobs"

(Heller, 2002, p. 60) as opposed to the idea that having French gives you the chance to

"get a better job and have better chances for better things", as suggested by Brodis, and

believed by the rest of the participants.

Shaquisha Dingo and Autumn Smith both expressed views that it is important to

learn French because it is one of Canada's official languages, and because of its historical

significance. These positions show some evidence of the incorporation of a discourse of

national identity, depicting Canada as a country with two languages of equal status.

However, this discourse often ignores the fact that French-English bilingualism in

Canada historically marked "compromises of the francophone elite, and the domination

of the francophone urban industrial working and service class" (Heller, 2002, p. 51) by an

English-dominant society.

Juan Pablo, Shaquisha Dingo, and Autumn Smith all thought that learning French

would be "cool", "amazing", or just "good to know a second language". Juan Pablo and

Autumn also thought that everyone should learn French; a belief echoed by Clara, who thinks that it is important for all people to have an understanding of French, or at least another language. Juan Pablo added to this that bilingualism "helps the brain" to be able to learn more, and has an attitude that it is simply "good to be bilingual".

Shanaynay, Shaquisha Dingo, Bob, Kennedy, Autumn, and Clara talked about French's usefulness if one were to visit or move to a French-speaking country or area, many citing France or Québec, with emphasis on it being necessary to be able to order food, get around, and communicate with locals in their own language. Shaquisha and Bob said that speaking more than one language allows you to communicate with more people. Clara said that it is a social skill, because there are some people in Ontario who only speak French. Autumn added that it helps to make you more well-rounded and cultured, and Shanaynay said that it helps you to be able to understand people better.

There were also two related factors that all of the participants felt have influenced their ability to learn French, for better or for worse. Autumn, Bob, Juan Pablo, Kennedy, and Shaquisha all talked about how important their French teachers have been to their learning of the language. Bob had some initially negative experiences in French, but this was turned around by later, more positive teachers and their styles of teaching. Kennedy attributed her enjoyment of French classes largely to the teacher's style. Autumn, Shanaynay, and Shaquisha credited positive teachers with motivating them to try harder in French. However, teachers who are unable to control the class, or who allow the negative attitudes of some students to create chaos and ruin the learning environment, were seen as detrimental to learning French by Shanaynay, Autumn, Kennedy, Clara, and Brodis. It is interesting to note that none of the participants had a consistent French

teacher throughout their elementary years; the only constant in French for them seems to have been changing teachers.

While consistency of access to French experiences and other French speakers outside of the classroom varied between the participants, it did not on its own influence whether the students were particularly successful in French. For example, while Shanaynay theoretically had access to as much French as she wanted at home, she sought French help from her non-French-speaking mother rather than her father or her siblings, and found French as one of her more difficult subjects. Brodis too, having access to his mother and sister as French speakers at home, was meeting but not exceeding the provincial standards for French. For others, such as Clara, whose grandmother speaks French; Autumn, whose parents and grandfather are semi-proficient; and Bob, who has an aunt and some cousins in Québec with whom he communicates, having access to French speakers outside of class seems to have had a positive influence on their success and passion for learning the French language.

Returning to Heller's (2002) comments about Ontario's education-work discourse, the Ontario Ministry of Education (2013c) describes a vision for FSL education in Ontario where "students will communicate and interact with growing confidence in French, one of Canada's official languages, while developing the knowledge, skills, and perspectives they need to participate fully as citizens in Canada and in the world" (p. 6), listing the benefits of such a program as "increased mental flexibility; improved problem-solving skills; a better understanding of aspects of a variety of cultures; a greater awareness of global issues, including those related to the environment and sustainability; expanded career opportunities" (p. 7). Of these five

benefits, four were mentioned by some or all of the study participants to varying degrees. Clearly the Ontario government's vision is being communicated to these students as reasons for studying French, but the effects of these discourses have not produced equivalent results for the students.

The Need for Reflexivity

Lamoureux (2014) discusses the need for reflexivity when conducting research where one works, or in my case, used to work, because of the inherent power relations between the school and the researcher, between the researcher and the participants, and between researchers themselves. Inevitably, the researcher must "navigate the many roles and preconceived notions of researcher and researched" (Lamoureux, 2014, p. 119). I have endeavored to be reflexive, as described by Byrd Clark and Dervin (2014), by striving to "recognize and engage with complexities" (pp. 2-3), but also by taking stock of the ways in which I "make and index meaning" (p. 3) and how I have invested in "certain social meanings and representations, as well as in [my] performances of them" (p. 3). I have tried to look beyond the surface of what has been said by my participants, to interpret the messages that they have received from family, friends, and educators; and the discourses that have influenced their statements. However, in so doing, I have inevitably drawn my own conclusions, as I cannot completely eliminate the effects of my own reading of events.

In looking for and examining some of the driving discourses communicated by the students, I believe that they have had messages communicated to them throughout their learning that have influenced their social interpretations, beliefs about and

confidence in their own abilities. One of the most damaging discourses that emerged was that of the L1 and L2 being separate, and distinct, and only accessible one at a time. The participant that I think was the most profoundly influenced by this discourse is Shanaynay. Knowing Shanaynay's background as a former French immersion student, her peers expect her to have an easier time learning French. However, the two solitudes myth and message that languages should not be mixed has caused Shanaynay to believe that she is incapable of learning and using more than one language at a time; that her early learning of French has been detrimental to her later development of English, and for this reason she says that her English is "terrible".

Another recurring discourse was that bilingualism is like a bicycle; that to have legitimate claim to a linguistic identity, one must possess complete and correct fluency in that language. This discourse devalues bilingual realities that involve the mixing of languages, such as code-switching and translanguaging, and other strategies used by bilingual individuals to make sense of their daily circumstances and situations. It also prevented seven of the participants from claiming multiple identities that may have accompanied the variety of languages that they consider important enough to claim to know and speak.

Another ideology, the discourse of what constitutes Canadian national identity, or what it means to be and become Canadian (Byrd Clark, 2009) cannot be ignored. This discourse is evident in government documents, such as the revised FSL curriculum, released by the Ontario Ministry of Education (2013c) which states that:

While the knowledge of any language has value, French is not only a global

language but the mother tongue of many Canadians and an integral part of the

Canadian identity. Learning French equips students to communicate with French-

speaking Canadians and millions of French speakers around the world. (p. 7)

While appearing democratic and neutral, the Ministry documents at the same time

position Canadians who, for whatever reason do not speak French competently enough to

communicate with other French-speaking Canadians and people around the world as less

than Canadian; or missing 'an integral part' of the Canadian national identity. Such a

discourse only legitimizes two of the participants' identities: Autumn and Bob; who see

their proficiency in French as enough to consider themselves bi-/multilingual.

While striving to be reflexive throughout the process has made me aware of some

of my own preconceived notions and helped me to re-evaluate my own positions, I am at

an early stage in my reflexive development and recognize that as I continue to grow as a

researcher and an educator, I will probably evaluate my own work and the participants'

words differently. All that I can claim now is to have attempted to critically examine the

data that I collected; not taking the participants' words at face value, but trying to tease

out the discourses and ideas that might underpin them.

Multilingualism Does Not Ensure Success in FSL

In her 2010 study with Ontario Grade 9 French students, Mady concluded that

"both the quantitative and the qualitative results show that Allophone[2] students are more

motivated to study French than their English-speaking Canadian-born peers" (p. 564).

Mady's study looked at Allophone students' motivation to study French in Southern

Ontario, an area where English is the dominant language, and where these students were

2. Mady (2010) describes an allophone as someone "whose first language (L1) is neither French nor English" (p. 565)

also learning English as a second language. Mady used interviews and qualitative data analysis to describe her Allophone participants as:

> Willing French language learners, more willing than their Canadian-born peers. Different from their peers, the Allophone participants saw French as a means to a variety of desirable outcomes: (a) a good education, (b) a good job, and (c) a Canadian identity. (p. 580)

Mady also credits the Allophone students with greater motivation to adopt a Canadian cultural identity; "they expressed their desire to belong to the Canadian community through their stated desire to gain citizenship and to learn French which they consider part of being Canadian" (Mady, 2010, p. 581).

There are some obvious differences between this study and the one conducted by Mady (2010), but this does not explain away the differences in the results. While Mady's study included Canadian and Allophone students in applied and academic core French classes, in their last year of mandatory French language education, I worked with participants who displayed general academic proficiency, differing primarily on their success in the core French classroom (though all were at minimum meeting the standards), all taking the same level of French from the same teacher during the last year of elementary school, in an effort to minimize effects of other factors such as a dislike for school or general academic difficulties, on attitudes and outcomes in French.

Though Mady (2010) attributes the Allophone students with greater motivation and more positive attitudes about French as part of Canadian identity, being multilingual (whether self-identified or not) was not a factor that could predict the level of success of the students in core French in my study. The greatest examples of this are Juan Pablo and

Clara. As previously discussed, Juan Pablo's parents both come from South Africa and speak Afrikaans and English with him at home. Juan Pablo not only had difficulty describing his linguistic identity/ies, but he also did not exceed the provincial standards in French. Clara on the other hand, does not have anyone who speaks French or any other language at home, but has still invested greatly in learning French for the future opportunities it may provide for her, specifically in terms of career opportunities and travel. While many of the participants expressed similar motivations for learning French to Mady's Allophone participants; such as getting a better job, or learning Canada's second official language; the participant who was most like the Allophones in Mady's study was Bob; claiming varying degrees of competence in five languages, with Cantonese as his home language. However, it was not Bob, but rather Autumn and Shaquisha who made connections to French as a part of Canadian identity and heritage, suggesting that categorizing students by their Canadian versus Allophone status oversimplifies the relationship between identity, investment, and success in core French; speaking another language at home is neither enough, nor the only predictor of success in core French in Ontario. As the data in my study reveal, and as argued by Byrd Clark (2009, 2012), students' investments in French language learning are much more complicated, varied, and multidimensional. Furthermore, Weber and Horner (2012) argue that we are all multilingual, in fact because of the different registers, styles, genres, and accents that we draw upon in our everyday interactions.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter began by discussing the original groupings and identity categories that I used to choose and identify participants, and why they became problematic. Then I went into greater depth with the overlapping themes mentioned in Chapter 4, used reflexivity to critically evaluate some of the discourses present in the students' interviews, and challenged the notion put forth by Mady (2010) that multilingual students have an advantage in French over their monolingual peers. The next chapter will review the study's main findings, explain the study's significance to the field and its limitations, as well as possible directions for the future of the field, future research, and for myself.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Having examined the study data close-up in Chapter 4 and more broadly in Chapter 5, this final chapter aims to tie everything together, and to suggest future needs and directions for the Ontario FSL research and learning communities. First, I will summarize the main study findings and outline the significance of this study to FSL education in Ontario and to the field of SLE in general. Then, I will discuss the implications of the study, as well as its limitations. I will conclude by discussing where I would like to go next, both as a researcher, and as an educator, based on what I have learned from conducting this ethnographic study.

Main Findings

Throughout this ethnographic study, I have explored the words and discourses of a group of eight Grade 8 core French students, who were near the end of their mandatory FSL education at a public elementary school in Cambridge, Ontario. I had hoped to determine if students' linguistic identity/ies or ways of identifying play a role in their language learning investment, in an effort to understand differences in French achievement outcomes between students who all displayed general academic proficiency. Throughout this study, I have discovered that: (1) different or particular linguistic identities seem to be associated with different levels of success in core French (for example, students who appeared more successful in French behaved differently in French class); (2) students are being taught and are comparing themselves to an unrealistic and often unattainable standard (see Byrd Clark, 2012) for bilingualism; (3) students believe that learning French is important for getting a better job in the future, for future travel,

and for communicating with French speakers, but they may not see these things as being connected with or a part of their own lives; (4) student identities are complex, and may reflect a desired reality rather than present circumstances; and (5) finally, that multilingualism at home is not necessarily an indicator of positive outcomes or attitudes about learning French. These findings are discussed below in greater detail, building on the discussions from Chapters 4 and 5.

   Linguistic identities and achievement outcomes. After reviewing the interview and classroom observation data, it appears that recognition of different linguistic identities may be related to differences in French achievement outcomes. That is not to say that any one identity marker is better than another, only that some patterns were evident in the data collected from this particular group of students. The most prominent identity-achievement relationship that I saw was related to having an identity as an "English-only" speaker. Although not all of the students who were meeting but not exceeding the provincial standards in core French identified themselves as "English-only", all three of the participants who did self-identify as "English-only" displayed less confidence in their French proficiency and felt that French was not among their strongest subjects. Comparatively, the participants who saw themselves as either a learner of French, as bilingual, or as multilingual, had more confidence in their abilities and displayed greater understanding during classroom activities. It appears that having access to another language at home (i.e. French for Brodis and Shanaynay) is not enough to guarantee that a student will self-identify with one or any of these plurilingual markers. Such patterns were not clear when examining the identities of those who saw themselves as "future-bilinguals"; Clara is obviously very passionate about learning French and has

had success in core French to date, while a similar identity for Juan Pablo appeared to ignore all of his current linguistic capital. This is a facet of linguistic identity that requires further exploration to gain a better understanding of what it entails.

      More successful students behave differently in class. During my classroom observation sessions, I noticed differences between how the students who were exceeding the standards and how the students who were meeting the standards, behaved. In this case, I am using the Ontario curriculum expectations for Grade 8 core French students as a standard against which to measure the participants' successful learning of French. Although this is not necessarily the ideal reference, the participants have all been taught according to the Ontario curriculum expectations to date, and it provides a common set of standards to use for comparison. In being reflexive, I realize that these standards are not neutral, or without political associations; after all, there are many different ways to construct success. I am using these standards because at this time, the curriculum expectations make up the bar against which students in Ontario are measured for academic purposes.

      The stronger students tended to get started on their work right away; listening only as long as necessary to understand the task at hand, and initially filling in words or answers that they already knew. They also seemed to opt for using a dictionary to fill in any gaps, rather than using their cellphones, and were often interrupted to explain grammatical concepts to their puzzled peers. The students who were meeting the standards often chose to use their phones instead of dictionaries, and were more susceptible to distraction, either by other students or by additional information from the teacher (such as the explanations about using Google Classroom that followed the

Lumocité video). The exceptions to this of course were Autumn and Clara, who as good friends, were occasionally drawn off task in conversations with one another. However, these conversations seemed to happen when one or both were ahead or had already demonstrated understanding of the concept being explained, and did not seem to prevent them from completing their work in the allotted time. While there are many different styles and modes of learning that students may draw on, each with its own values and advantages, amongst this group of students and during my limited observations, there appeared to be some common learning habits between the students who were able to exceed the curriculum expectations, which may have influenced their success.

Unachievable standards of bilingualism. Another important finding from this study is that the ideology of bilingualism as two solitudes or as a bicycle, with linguistic competencies that are complete and equal in both languages, was prominent among the study participants; resulting in linguistic identities that did not include all of the languages that the students claimed to know, at varying degrees. This ideology holds students to an unrealistic standard, and delegitimizes many French speakers around Ontario and throughout the country (see Byrd Clark & Lamoureux, 2013; Byrd Clark 2012; Lamoureux, 2011). It also positions strategies used by individuals in bilingual environments, such as code-switching and translanguaging, as problematic, and ignores that all of our linguistic capital contributes to our sense-making and understanding of day-to-day experiences. Whether these messages are being transmitted to students from home or school, it will become increasingly important in core French classrooms to model reasonable standards of bilingualism, and to legitimize bi/multilingual ways of knowing and learning, which have previously been treated as forms of interference. This

ties in with what García (2009), Piccardo (2013), and Taylor and Snoddon (2013) have said about the importance of adopting a plurilingual perspective, which acknowledges the "multiple discursive practices that plurilinguals engage in as they make meaning with one another" (Taylor & Snoddon, 2013, p. 440), thereby honouring all parts of a student's linguistic repertoire.

Disconnect between reasons for learning French and future-selves. Similar to Byrd Clark's (2008) findings, the Grade 8 core French student participants in the study discussed having multiple investments in their reasons for learning French. In their interviews, all of the participants in this study stated that learning French provides access to better jobs or better opportunities in life. Many believe that learning French is useful for travel or relocation to Québec or France in the future, and that being able to speak French allows you to communicate with more people in general. However, some of the students who understood the benefits of learning French for the future, did not see this aligning with their own plans and goals, and so do not plan to continue French after the mandatory course in Grade 9. The disconnect between reasons for learning French and what students envision for the future is demotivating for many, but even those students who continue to study French are likely to find that the jobs which require knowing French, the 'better opportunities' that they expect to have gained from their hard work, are actually low-level customer service positions (Heller, 2002); not necessarily equal to the economic investment they have made in learning French.

Complex, future identities. In addition, I found through conducting this study that the linguistic identities of students, even as young as those in Grade 8, are extremely complex; influenced by their understanding of what constitutes bi/multilingualism, the

value they see in their linguistic capital, the environment in which they have learned French and other languages, and the messages they have received about their own linguistic competence (from parents, peers, and teachers). While most of the study participants were able to describe their current linguistic identity/ies, two members of the group presented future identities to which they aspired, rather than considering their linguistic resources at present. For Clara, this seemed to be a way for her to identify the importance of French in her life, without yet feeling comfortable claiming a bilingual identity. For Juan Pablo, his future bilingual identity in French and Spanish appears to negate and neglect his current linguistic capital; dismissing his fluency in English, and competence in Afrikaans and Dutch. From the different identities presented by the students, it is clear that identity is a site of struggle or conflict; that all of the participants but Bob were not able (or encouraged) to incorporate all parts of their linguistic repertoires into their identities at the time of the study.

  Multilingual students are not necessarily at an advantage. The final finding that I will discuss here is that students who speak another language at home, other than French or English, do not necessarily exceed their so-called *monolingual* peers in core French. Even students who have access to French at home may not exceed their peers who only speak English with their families. While Juan Pablo's parents are South African and speak Afrikaans and English with him at home, he only meets the curriculum standards in core French; exceeded by students like Clara, who comes from what is considered to be a monolingual, English, home. Shanaynay, who is surrounded by French-English bilinguals within her own family and started in French immersion, is also able to meet the Ontario FSL curriculum standards, but does not exceed them. Brodis

claims some affiliation with the German language, though the details of this association are unclear, since he only spoke of his mother and sister's French-English bilingualism; he too meets but does not exceed the curriculum expectations, despite strong encouragement from his family. While Mady (2010) found that newly-arrived Allophone students and their families value French more than their Canadian peers, it does not seem that the access to another language at home, or a lack of proficiency by one's parents in French is enough to guarantee motivation and success in Ontario FSL. Other complex factors need to be explored and considered.

Significance

This study is significant, primarily because it fills a research gap in the field; looking at the relationship between identity, investment, and achievement in FSL, but specifically in core French[3], and within an Ontario context. This study involves students who are in their last year of common French instruction before choosing which level of French; academic or applied; to pursue during their last year of mandatory French language education. The results of this study are significant because they show that core French student success appears to be mediated, at least partially, by recognizing linguistic identity and the positioning of the value of different languages. If educators are able to guide their students towards valuing different forms of bilingualism (such as receptive skills, as well as productive skills), and to teach them strategies that value all of their linguistic repertoire and capital, more positive outcomes could be possible for more core French students, and they may be less likely to abandon French after Grade 9.

3. The majority of FSL studies to date have been focused on French immersion in Ontario, and in Canada in general.

Students who consider themselves "English-only" need to be taught that they are multilingual too, by showing that we all use different genres, styles, accents, and registers for different purposes and within different contexts (see Weber & Horner, 2012). It is also significant that students from multilingual backgrounds may need to be taught at school about their own cultural and linguistic capital, so that they recognize their multilingualism as an asset, and use this to strengthen their language learning; this is not automatic just because they may speak a language other than English or French at home.

This research also shows that while Ontario's FSL curriculum seems to clearly communicate the values of bilingualism to students, it has not effectively communicated realistic standards and of bilingualism, nor does it reflect contemporary bilingual realities such as code-switching and translanguaging (Blackledge & Creese, 2014; Byrd Clark, 2012; Creese & Blackledge, 2015; García, 2009). This research has helped to reveal the need for a shift in emphasis from the value of bilingualism to the value that all linguistic and social capital brings to language learning, so that our students are able to build inclusive, multiple, and flexible identities, rather than continuing to see bilingualism as an unattainable ideal or 'bicycle'.

Implications

From this study, it is clear that teaching students about the value of bilingualism, such as the list of benefits included in the revised Ontario FSL curriculum, is neither complete or enough without teaching students about bilingual realities, such as code-switching and translanguaging, and debunking the myth of 'pure' bilingualism (double monolingualism), because it holds students to an unrealistic, demotivating standard that is

by all accounts unattainable. Further research is needed to explore students' linguistic identities and their understanding of bi/multilingualism, on a larger scale, in order for educators and researchers alike to fully comprehend the effects and prevalence of limiting discourses on language learning, and students' decisions to continue or to abandon the study of French. Further research is also required into the effects of teacher turnover and the class environment (i.e. the teacher's level of control) on students' attitudes about learning French, and their success. Finally, it seems that many students need to be shown the value of French in their own lives (making meaningful connections), not distant, hypothetical futures; they require opportunities to use French in practical, authentic situations, to build confidence in using the language, and to help students to see French as more than just a subject they study at school (as Shaquisha and Kennedy did).

Limitations

Due to the size and criteria used to select participants, this study is not generalizable; I only worked with eight students in the same grade, from the same classes, at the same school, all taught by the same teacher. It is likely that if I had a conducted this study with different students, at a different school, or with different teachers, the results of the study would have been different. However, the findings of this study do support the trend of declining continuance in French (Arnott et al., 2015) and they do support the need for the value of heterogeneity (concerning identities and linguistic investments) in contemporary French language pedagogy (Byrd Clark, 2012; 2014). This study was also limited by the amount of time available to collect and analyze data, and by its limited scope. For example, collecting more data at different locations

and in different settings (i.e. with friends, family, or in other social settings) might have yielded a completely different picture. However, a post-structuralist framework does not set out to provide a whole complete picture, rather fragmented glimpses of students' discourses and experiences.

In addition, this study was limited by the students' words and my readings of these words. It may be that since the study was explained as being focused on how Grade 8 core French students identify themselves linguistically, with many of the questions relating specifically to French language learning habits, I may have in fact limited the students to thinking about their relationships with the French language alone. The data presented in this study are my interpretations of what the students said, and how they said it, and I have only been able to provide one reading of this data. Additional readings by other researchers may have revealed different discourses and attitudinal trends, though I have done my best as a researcher to be reflexive throughout this process, and to be aware of my own inclinations and sensitivities to the data. However, since reflexivity is a complex, on-going process, as stated by Byrd Clark and Dervin (2014), I look forward to reflecting back on this journey and to future journeys of continuing to develop critical self-awareness.

Future Directions

As mentioned in the implications section of this chapter, I believe that the field of second language education, specifically French as a Second Language, requires further, large-scale research into students' linguistic identities and understandings of bilingualism, to inform educators and the field as we move forward, particularly about

how to encourage more positive, inclusive identities in our students, that recognize all of their linguistic and social capital. I think that in addition to the benefits of studying French outlined in the revised Ontario FSL curriculum, further information and training is required for teachers to be able to effectively teach why learning French is beneficial, but more importantly, to legitimize dynamic understandings of bilingualism which are more reflective of French-English bilingual realities in Ontario and Canada (Byrd Clark, 2010, 2012; Byrd Clark & Lamoureux, 2013; García, 2009; Heller, 2002; Lamoureux, 2005, 2012; Roy 2012).

As a researcher, it would be interesting to revisit the questions from this study, and others, with the same study participants as they reach the end of their high school careers. Whether this is possible or realistic is debatable, though it would certainly provide a more informed picture of whether and why these students choose to study or abandon French in high school, and how their linguistic and social identities shift, grow, and change over time and circumstance.

As an educator, I will return to my classroom with a more thorough appreciation of the potential influence that I could have with my FSL students; recognizing that the messages that I transmit to them about the value of French, the value of their linguistic and social capital, and what constitutes bi/multilingualism may affect the identities that they claim now and in the future, including their confidence in using the language, and whether they ever truly feel that they are legitimate speakers of French. Heller (2002) states that "it is possible to go to a French school, to speak French, and still not be sure to what extent one counts as francophone" (p. 56). Considering this, imagine how much

harder it must then be for students in core or immersion French programs to see themselves as Francophone and/or legitimate, bilingual Canadians.

Conclusion

If students are to be encouraged to see themselves as more than monolingual English speakers, systemic changes are necessary; changes that encourage the growth of students' inclusive identities and legitimize dynamic models of bi/multilingualism. Lapkin et al. (2009) observed that "while the official discourse promotes bilingualism in Canada, the study of French in schools is often paradoxically marginalized" (p. 8). This marginalization communicates a strong message to students about the value of French, and may be a large part of why students abandon the study of French after the mandatory period. If we hope to teach our students that all of their linguistic capital is valuable, we need to start by showing them that French is a valuable part of their repertoires, for reasons that matter to them, here and now. We need to encourage them to bring all of their languages (and language practices) into the classroom, to support their learning through bilingual strategies such as code-switching and translanguaging. We need to make them aware of their multilingualism and multiple identities, so that they can have the volition to incorporate them into their own self-identities and world views. Most importantly, we need to accept that their identities are complex, changing, and a site of struggle; that the best thing we can do is to support and educate them, and provide a safe place for them to explore their potential, developing, and at the same time, complex, identities.

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Appendix A: Letter of Information and Principal Consent

Western Education

LINGUISTIC IDENTITY AND INVESTMENT IN GRADE 8 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Introduction

My name is Heather Gauthier and I am a Master of Education student at the Faculty of Education at Western University. I am currently conducting research into the linguistic identity/ies and language learning investments of Grade 8 core French students.

Purpose of the study

The aims of this study are to investigate the possible relationship between students' linguistic identity, language learning investment, and core French achievement outcomes, to explore possible ways of encouraging student success in French as a Second Language (FSL) education programs.

Methodology

This is an ethnographic study. Student participants will complete an initial interview approximately 15-20 minutes in length, followed by three 30 minute audio recorded classroom observation sessions during their regular core French classes, and a 15-20 minute final interview. If the classroom observations require clarification, students may be asked to participate in a five to ten minute follow up interview to provide additional details. All interviews will take place on school property outside of class time, to minimize disruptions to learning.

Confidentiality

The information collected will be used for research purposes only. Neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. All names will be removed and pseudonyms will be used through all interactions to ensure privacy and confidentiality. No real names or names of locations will be used or identifiable in the report or future publications.

All data will be stored on an encrypted USB device in the thesis supervisor's office. The data will be stored in a locked cabinet with all names removed from the data (replaced

with a pseudonym). All data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for a period of five years after the completion of the study. Upon completion of the study, all data will be shredded and destroyed.

Risks & Benefits

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time.

Questions

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Research Ethics, Western University. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Heather Gauthier or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Julie Byrd Clark. This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Sincerely,

Heather Gauthier

LINGUISTIC IDENTITY AND INVESTMENT IN GRADE 8 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS

Heather Gauthier, M.Ed. student, UWO

Dr. Julie Byrd Clark, Associate Professor and Thesis Supervisor, UWO

PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree that students from my school may be invited to participate in the study. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name of Principal (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B: Letter of Information and Teacher Consent

Western Education   *LINGUISTIC IDENTITY AND INVESTMENT IN GRADE 8 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS*

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Introduction

My name is Heather Gauthier and I am a Master of Education student at the Faculty of Education at Western University. I am currently conducting research into the linguistic identity/ies and language learning investments of a small group of Grade 8 core French students in your core French classes.

Purpose of the study

The aims of this study are to investigate the possible relationship between students' linguistic identity, language learning investment, and core French achievement outcomes, to explore possible ways of encouraging student success in French as a Second Language (FSL) education programs.

If you agree to participate

If you agree to participate in this study, the researcher will observe and audio record six to eight of your Grade 8 core French students (on three occasions for each class) during your regular core French programming. To facilitate audio recording and observation, you will be asked to group the key research participants in each class together during the periods of observation. With consent, the rest of your class will be present and class should continue as usual. Any students who choose not to participate will be provided with an alternative, non-punitive setting and activity for the duration of the observation(s). You will not be asked to participate directly in any form of research, nor will you be observed. Should your voice be heard on any audio recordings, your comments will not be transcribed or analysed.

Confidentiality

The information collected will be used for research purposes only. Neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. All names will be removed and pseudonyms will be used through all interactions to ensure privacy and confidentiality. No real names or names of locations will be used or identifiable in the report or future publications.

All data will be stored on an encrypted USB device in the thesis supervisor's office. The data will be stored in a locked cabinet with all names removed from the data (replaced with a pseudonym). All data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for a period of five years after the completion of the study. Upon completion of the study, all data will be shredded and destroyed.

Risks & Benefits

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time.

Questions

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Research Ethics, Western University. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Heather Gauthier or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Julie Byrd Clark. This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Sincerely,

Heather Gauthier

LINGUISTIC IDENTITY AND INVESTMENT IN GRADE 8 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS

Heather Gauthier, M.Ed. student, UWO

Dr. Julie Byrd Clark, Associate Professor and Thesis Supervisor, UWO

TEACHER CONSENT FORM

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree that my Grade 8 core French classes may participate in the study. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name of Teacher (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Letter of Information and Participant/Parental Consent

Western
Education

LINGUISTIC IDENTITY AND INVESTMENT IN GRADE 8 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Introduction

My name is Heather Gauthier and I am a Master of Education student at the Faculty of Education at Western University. I am currently conducting research into the linguistic identity/ies and language learning investments of Grade 8 core French students and would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Purpose of the study

The aims of this study are to investigate the possible relationship between students' linguistic identity, language learning investment, and core French achievement outcomes, to explore possible ways of encouraging student success in French as a Second Language (FSL) education programs.

If you agree to participate

If you agree to participate in this study, your child will be asked to participate in two interviews of approximately 15 to 20 minutes to provide their feelings and thoughts about learning French; one interview at the beginning of the study, and one at the end. These interviews will take place at school outside of class time, either during Nutrition Breaks or before/after school at a pre-arranged time. Your child will be asked to estimate his or her French language abilities at each of these two interviews. Your child will also be observed on three separate occasions during core French class. He or she may also be asked to participate in up to three brief five to ten minute interviews following these observations, if clarification is required about things that have happened in class. All interviews and classroom observations will be audio recorded for later transcription. You must agree for your child to be audio recorded in order to participate in this study. After data analysis has occurred, your child will have the opportunity to provide feedback in a 15 minute meeting with the researcher about how his or her answers have been represented in order to eliminate misinterpretation. This too will occur at school outside of class time, to minimize disruptions to learning.

Confidentiality

The information collected will be used for research purposes only. Neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. All names will be removed and pseudonyms will be used through all interactions to ensure privacy and confidentiality. No real names or names of locations will be used or identifiable in the report or future publications.

All data will be stored on an encrypted USB device in the thesis supervisor's office. The data will be stored in a locked cabinet with all names removed from the data (replaced with a pseudonym). All data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for a period of five years after the completion of the study. Upon completion of the study, all data will be shredded and destroyed.

Risks & Benefits

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your academic status.

Questions

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Research Ethics, Western University. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Heather Gauthier or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Julie Byrd Clark. This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Sincerely,

Heather Gauthier

***LINGUISTIC IDENTITY AND INVESTMENT IN GRADE 8 CORE FRENCH
STUDENTS***

Heather Gauthier, M.Ed. student, UWO

Dr. Julie Byrd Clark, Associate Professor and Thesis Supervisor, UWO

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me
and I agree that my child may participate in the study. All questions have been answered
to my satisfaction.

Name of child (please print): _____

Signature of Child: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D: Letter of Information and Parental Consent of All Students

Western Education *LINGUISTIC IDENTITY AND INVESTMENT IN GRADE 8 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS*

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Introduction

My name is Heather Gauthier and I am a Master of Education student at the Faculty of Education at Western University. I am currently conducting research into the linguistic identity/ies and language learning investments of a small group of Grade 8 core French students in your son or daughter's core French class.

Purpose of the study

The aims of this study are to investigate the possible relationship between students' linguistic identity, language learning investment, and core French achievement outcomes, to explore possible ways of encouraging student success in French as a Second Language (FSL) education programs.

If you agree to participate

If you agree to participate in this study, your child will be present in his or her core French class during the observation and audio recording of two to three key research participants. He or she will not be asked to participate directly in any form of research, nor will he or she be observed. Should your child interact with any key participants or should his or her voice be heard on any audio recordings, these comments will not be transcribed or analysed. Should you choose not to allow your child to be present during the observation periods, your child will be provided with an alternative, non-punitive setting and enriching French activity for the duration of the observation(s), outside of the classroom.

Confidentiality

The information collected will be used for research purposes only. Neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. All names will be removed and pseudonyms will be used through all interactions to ensure privacy and confidentiality. No real names or names of locations will be used or identifiable in the report or future publications.

All data will be stored on an encrypted USB device in the thesis supervisor's office. The data will be stored in a locked cabinet with all names removed from the data (replaced with a pseudonym). All data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for a period of five years after the completion of the study. Upon completion of the study, all data will be shredded and destroyed.

Risks & Benefits

There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your academic status.

Questions

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Research Ethics, Western University. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Heather Gauthier or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Julie Byrd Clark. This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Sincerely,

Heather Gauthier

LINGUISTIC IDENTITY AND INVESTMENT IN GRADE 8 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS

Heather Gauthier, M.Ed. student, UWO

Dr. Julie Byrd Clark, Associate Professor and Thesis Supervisor, UWO

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree that my child may participate in the study. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name of child (please print): _____

Signature of Child: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E: Initial and Final Interview Questions

1. How do you feel about learning French?

2. How would you describe learning French in a core classroom?

3. How would you describe your French language learning history? (Possible promptings: When did you start to learn French? Where? Have you ever experienced a different FSL program?)

4. What languages do you know? How well do you know them?

5. How would you describe yourself linguistically/your linguistic identity?

6. Have you learned or improved your French outside of school? How?

7. Have you visited any French-speaking countries? Where? When?

8. Do you read in French at home?

9. Do you listen to music, television, or other media in French at home?

10. Do you ever speak French outside of the classroom? Where?

11. Is there anyone else at home who speaks French?

12. Are you interested in learning French? Why?

13. What level of French do you intend to take in Grade 9?

14. Do you think that you will study French again after that? Why or why not?

15. What factors would you say have influenced how you feel about French?

16. Do you think that it is important for you to learn French? Why or why not?

17. How proficient would you say that you are in French?

18. Are some of your French skills stronger than the others? (i.e. reading, writing, speaking, listening)

19. How difficult a subject is French for you?

20. What would make learning French in a core classroom easier for you?

Appendix F: CEFR Self-Assessment Grid (Created by the CEDEFOP, 2013)

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - Self-assessment grid

		A1 Basic User	A2 Basic User	B1 Independent user	B2 Independent user	C1 Proficient user	C2 Proficient user
Understanding	Listening	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
Understanding	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
Speaking	Spoken interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
Speaking	Spoken production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
Writing	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF): © Council of Europe

Appendix G: Observation Schedule for Key Participants

Observation in the classroom:

- Description of student's participation and observable engagement in class.

- Description of student's language use and language of choice during classroom interactions/participation.

- Description of student's linguistic competencies based on standards of the CEFR (can-do statements), in reference to student's self-assessment.

- Description of student's independent work and interactions with the teacher/peers.

- Description of interesting events or events that support/conflict with answers provided in the initial interview.

Immediate follow-up:

- Discuss any events or interactions that have prompted questions about the student's linguistic identity, investment, or achievement in French.

Curriculum Vitae

Name:	Heather B. Gauthier

Post-secondary Education and Degrees:

The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
2005-2010, B.Sc., Certificat de français pratique

The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
2012-2013, B.Ed.

The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
2013-2015, M.Ed.

Honours and Awards:

Sir Wilfrid Laurier Memorial Prize
2009-2010

Helen G. Mitchell Award for excellence in FSL student teaching
2012-2013

Related Work Experience:

Elementary FSL Teacher
Waterloo Region District School Board
2013-Present