Supporting French Immersion Teachers: A Look into the Linguistic Needs of Canadian French Immersion Teachers

Austin Learning

Department of Integrated Studies in Education

McGill University

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Abstract

French immersion education in Canada has provided students with the opportunity to develop proficiency in both of Canada's official languages: English and French. While these programs indeed boast strong academic and linguistic outcomes, there are flaws inherent to such programs. In particular, French immersion teachers, who are often non-native speakers of French themselves, tend to face challenges with regard to their French language proficiency (Bayliss & Vignola, 2007; Christiansen & Laplante, 2004; Veilleux & Bournot-Trites, 2005). Furthermore, this is exacerbated by high demand for and low supply of French immersion teachers in Canada, which has forced schools and school boards to lower their hiring standards to fill these positions insofar as the level of French spoken by teachers varies considerably (Bournot-Trites, 2008; Mady, 2018; OCOL, 2019). Using Likert-scale questions and semi-structured focus group interviews, this mixed-methods thesis investigated the linguistic needs of French immersion teachers ($N = 219$) by exploring their perspectives regarding French proficiency and desires for language-related professional development. The perspectives and desires expressed by the teachers in this thesis study will be shared to inform Canadian French immersion teacher training and professional development initiatives with regard to French language proficiency and will contribute to the development of a universal framework for French immersion teacher competencies.

Keywords: FSL, French immersion, immersion teacher education, professional development, French proficiency

Résumé

L’immersion française au Canada donne aux élèves l’occasion de développer des compétences langagières en français et en anglais, les deux langues officielles du pays. Bien que ces programmes se targuent d’avoir de bons résultats sur le plan scolaire et linguistique, il y a certains défauts qui sont inhérents au programme. En particulier, les enseignants d’immersion française, qui sont souvent des locuteurs non-natifs eux-mêmes, font face à certains défis concernant leur compétence en français (Bayliss & Vignola, 2007; Christiansen & Laplante, 2004; Veilleux & Bournot-Trites, 2005). De plus, la forte demande et la faible offre d’enseignants d’immersion au Canada exacerbent ce problème, ce qui oblige les écoles et les commissions scolaires à abaisser leurs attentes et leurs normes de recrutement pour combler ces postes dans le mesure où le qualité de français des enseignants varie (Bournot-Trites, 2008; Mady, 2018; OCOL, 2019). À l'aide de questions à échelle de Likert et d'entrevues semi-structurées avec des groupes de discussion, cette thèse à méthodes mixtes a examiné les besoins linguistiques des enseignants d'immersion française (N=219) en explorant leurs perspectives concernant leur compétence en français et leurs désirs en matière de perfectionnement professionnel lié à la langue. Les perspectives et les désirs exprimés par les enseignants dans cette étude de thèse seront partagés pour informer les initiatives de formation et de perfectionnement professionnel des enseignants d'immersion française en ce qui concerne la compétence en français et contribueront d’ailleurs à l'élaboration d'un cadre universel pour les compétences des enseignants d'immersion française.

Mots clés : FLS, l’immersion française, la formation des enseignants d’immersion, le perfectionnement professionnel, la compétence en français

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The establishment of bilingual education in Canada has been heavily influenced by the country's history of its French and English linguistic communities and the subsequent policies that sought to unify the two. In response to the disharmony between these two communities, the Canadian government, under then-Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, instituted a commission (the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1963) to investigate the status of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to offer advice as to how to reconcile the two communities. This commission recommended that both English and French be considered official languages in Canada and that parents have the liberty to enroll their children in schools in either one of the official languages. Under Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau's Official Languages Act (1969) and subsequent Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982), these recommendations eventually became law, ensuring equal status and rights for both languages across the country and allowing francophones and anglophones alike opportunities to receive instruction in either of the country's two official languages.

1.1 French Education in Canada

Prior to these pieces of legislation, however, social movements in Québec in the 1960s, particularly the Quiet Revolution (*La révolution tranquille*), enhanced the status of French in Québec and across Canada, eventually allowing for a favourable environment in which novel bilingual education models, including the now prominent French immersion (henceforth FI) model, could thrive (Dicks & Genesee, 2017). In fact, it was a group of anglophone parents – predominately mothers of anglophone children – who, dissatisfied with French as a second language (FSL) education in Québec, strove to overhaul traditional FSL education in order to

create a more effective bilingual education model (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2008). In consultation with researchers at McGill University in Montréal, Québec, these parents realized this goal, and, in 1965, the first FI initiative, known as the St-Lambert experiment, solidified FI education's place in Canadian bilingual education (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). To better understand FI, the following segments of this introductory chapter will first introduce FI and then situate it in relation to other bilingual education models in Canada (core French/FSL, intensive French, and extended French). Then, a brief look into FI teacher training and professional development will follow.

1.1.1. The French Immersion Model

Inspired by the Saint Lambert experiment, immersion education has firmly established itself as a viable curricular alternative to mainstream education across the world, as students, in addition to becoming functionally bilingual, consistently demonstrate academic outcomes that match those of their non-immersion counterparts (Genesee, 2004; Lindholm-Leary, 2013; Lyster 2007, 2017). In Canada, FI is a curricular alternative to mainstream education in which at least 50% of academic content instruction is conducted in the immersion language and in which the primary goal is attaining L2 proficiency without hindering academic achievement or first language development (Johnson & Swain, 1997). Moreover, while explicit study of language occurs in French language arts classes and may occur incidentally in content teaching, French proficiency is largely expected to develop implicitly through ample exposure to the L2 in FI (often referred to as 'by osmosis') (Dicks & Genesee, 2017). In Canada, there are several FI models that exist: early immersion (beginning in kindergarten or grade 1), middle immersion (beginning in grade 4 or 5), and late immersion (beginning in grade 7 or secondary school) (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2008). Additionally, the proportion of French instruction relative

to that of English can vary, “in early partial immersion programs, only 50% of instruction is ever taught in the L2; in total immersion programs, all instruction for one or more grades is through the L2” (Lyster & Genesee, 2012, p. 1). A more in-depth analysis of immersion models will be provided in the literature review portion of this thesis. Despite the popularity and positive outcomes of these programs, there is a number of challenges faced in the implementation of FI education, particularly with regard to the unique preparation and continued development required for FI teachers and their needs to effectively execute FI pedagogy. The purpose of the present thesis is to investigate the needs of FI teachers, particularly with regard to their French language needs, across Canada to better inform existing pre- and in-service FI teacher training and, ultimately, strengthen FI education across Canada. Before further considering FI, several other models of bilingual education in Canada will be outlined to situate FI relative to these programs and thus gain a better understanding of how they compare and contrast.

1.1.2. The Core French Model and Intensive French Model

With the inauguration of French and English as the official languages of Canada, implementing effective bilingual education models became paramount for developing and fostering bilingualism in Canadians. In addition to FI programs in Canada, a number of related bilingual education models have emerged. One such model is the Core French (CF) model (referred to as FSL in some provinces), which can be defined as, “a basic program in French as a second language where French is the subject being studied and the language is taught in periods that vary between 30 and 50 minutes a day” (Leblanc, 1990, p. 2), and which is mandatory in English programs (or mainstream education) from the fourth or fifth grade to the ninth or tenth grade in Ontario, Québec (kindergarten to secondaire 5), New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. In British Columbia and Yukon, studying a

second language is obligatory, though this does not have to be French. Finally, in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories, language study is only optional (Mady & Turnbull, 2010). In terms of pedagogy, historically, the underlying assumption of CF education was that students would gain proficiency in French through the linguistic study of language rather than through the study of content courses in which French is the medium of instruction, which contrasts with content-based models, such as FI (Lapkin, Harley, & Taylor, 1993). An important contrast to make between CF and FI pedagogy is the targeted content and the amount of time allotted to studying in the L2. On the one hand, CF models devote limited time (30-50 mins/day) to the French language and do not generally teach content through the L2; rather, the L2 is taught explicitly through certain thematic foci. On the other hand, in FI models, as it will be discussed in further detail, at least 50% of the content is taught through the L2.

A supplement to CF/FSL education that exists in some provinces (e.g., British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland Labrador, Yukon), intensive French (IF), is a high-intensity, communication-based approach in which CF students are submersed in French in order to develop their communicative skills, which are infamously reported as being minimally developed in CF programs (Netten & Germain, 2004). In contrast to CF and FI programs, IF programs do not include the teaching of thematic foci or content courses; rather, students learn to communicate in French by engaging in language activities related to learning a second language that emphasize group work and interaction (MacFarlane, 2005; Netten & Germain, 2004).

1.1.3. The Extended French Model

Another curricular alternative to FI – which exists predominately in Ontario–is the extended French (EF) model, a type of "midpoint" between CF and FI models, as:

> Students learn French as a subject and French serves as the language of instruction in at least one other subject. At the elementary level, at least 25 per cent of all instruction is

> provided in French. At the secondary level, academic courses are offered for Grades 9 and 10; university preparation courses are offered for Grades 11 and 12. In the Extended French program, students accumulate seven credits in French: four are FSL language courses and three are other subjects in which French is the language of instruction (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2020).

Whereas CF treats French as the object of study, and FI makes it the vehicle through which content is taught, EF does a bit of both. In fact, this latter model shares certain features with FI. In particular, EF and FI both have a focus on content learning through the L2. However, contrary to FI, which allots at least 50% of the academic content to be taught through the L2, EF only designates one to three content courses to be taught through the L2, in addition to the study of French like in the CF model (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2020; Swain, 1981).

1.2. Teacher Training in Canada

In a more general sense, to become a certified teacher of any discipline in Canada, aspiring teachers must receive provincial licensure to teach at publicly funded schools. The obtention process is, however, contrastive across provinces. That said, regardless of the B.Ed. program, all teachers graduate with a certificate that allows them to teach in publicly funded schools. For example, according to the Ontario College of Teacher's (OCT) website, "teachers must: have completed a minimum three-year postsecondary degree from an acceptable postsecondary institution; have successfully completed a four-semester teacher education program; apply to the College for certification and pay the annual membership and registration fees" (OCT, 2020). Similarly, in British Columbia, applicants must have completed four years, or 120 credits, of post-secondary studies and have attained a degree (or equivalent), as well as have completed a certified 1.5-to-2-year teacher education program (48 credits) (Government of British Columbia, 2020). In contrast, in Québec, both the postsecondary degree and teacher

education program are integrated into a single B.Ed. On the whole, though, teachers in Canada must have completed a Bachelor's degree and have satisfied the stipulations of their respective provincial government to teach, which is generally a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.).

1.3. FI Teacher Training and Professional Development

Applied to FI teacher education, these requirements hold true. That is, prospective FI teachers must complete an apposite Bachelor's degree, such as a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.), and a teacher education program (B.Ed.). These two degrees can be completed concurrently (at the same time) or consecutively (after obtaining a Bachelor's degree) in all provinces except Québec, where both the B.A./B.Sc. and B.Ed. are integrated into a single B.Ed. label; the program requirements satisfy content analogous to what would be a B.A./B.Sc. and B.Ed. in other contexts. An important note to make here is that the B.Ed. program may or may not explicitly target FI- or French language-related competencies in training teachers, as FI teachers, depending on the context, might have completed a general B.Ed. and still work in FI.

Regarding FI teacher competencies, these drastically distinguish themselves from those of mainstream teachers in that they require more complex demands with regard to content and language knowledge and teaching skills (Day & Shapson, 1996). That is, in addition to simultaneously attending to both language and content in immersion teaching, FI teachers must be experts in the theory and pedagogy of their discipline (e.g., social studies, maths, etc.), develop unique curricula that interweave language, content, and literacy (Cammarata et al., 2018), and develop a high level of proficiency in the immersion language, French, to successfully to enact these curricular and discipline-specific goals (Tedick & Fortune, 2013). Needless to say, FI instruction is a complicated and arduous undertaking. Furthermore, due to

low FI teacher supply and high demand for them, teachers with just a general B.Ed., and thus who are not trained in FI competencies, who have French proficiency may be – and often are – hired in an FI school simply for their ability to speak French even if they have limited proficiency in the language (ACPI, 2018; OCOL, 2019; Tedick, Christian & Fortune, 2011). In fact, this French proficiency – a crucial skill for effectively navigating FI pedagogy and teaching content in the L2 – is variable and, at times, flawed, which has negative implications for FI programs (Bournot-Trites, 2008; Mady, 2018). Paradoxically, these teachers, despite not having the appropriate FI-specific training or French proficiency, are expected to fulfil the role of language and content integration in their classrooms.

Of the universities in Canada offering a B.Ed., relatively few train FI teachers in the skillset required for enacting immersion pedagogy. B.Ed. programs that do prepare – or advertise that they prepare – teachers to teach in FI vary in the amount of FI pedagogy courses offered, ranging from limited (one to several courses) to extensive (many to most or all courses) immersion content. In fact, programs with extensive immersion content are rare. Oftentimes, these B.Ed. programs only offer a few immersion-specific courses in the broader context of the standard education courses that comprise the overall program. In a similar vein, when navigating studies that do investigate professional development initiatives in FI schools, which are few in number (Cammarata et al., 2018), it seems that these articles tend to focus more on language and content integrated pedagogy and not on the linguistic development and maintenance of FI teachers. While it is certainly indispensable to have professional development workshops that target language and content integration, especially given that research has clearly demonstrated the cruciality and necessity of such development (Cammarata, 2009, 2010; Cammarata et al., 2018; Cammarata & Ó Ceallaigh, 2018; Cammarata & Tedick, 2012), it is arguably equally

important to target and strengthen FI teachers' linguistic competencies to be able to effectively integrate this language and content.

As a result of the high demand for and low supply of FI teachers in Canada and the general lack of immersion teacher education programs and continued professional development targeting linguistic competencies, considerable inadequacies with regard to the quality of French that these teachers speak and subsequently teach to their students, as well as their ability to integrate language teaching into content, plagues FI programs (Cammarata & Haley, 2018; OCOL, 2019; Veilleux & Bournot-Trites, 2005). Nevertheless, these problems persist, and the research investigating immersion teacher training and professional development remains scant (Cammarata et al., 2018; Cammarata & Haley, 2018). This thesis will, therefore, contribute to our knowledge of immersion teacher education and professional development research by investigating the French language-related needs of in-service Canadian FI teachers to inform and improve future training and development.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, a review of the relevant literature is outlined. In the first section, FI is first situated relative to general conceptualizations and models of immersion education before being defined in the Canadian context. Following this, FI and other content-based instruction program outcomes are outlined. Then, the challenges faced in FI are presented first through the perspectives of immersion teachers themselves before those regarding teacher training, professional development, and hiring practices are provided. Lastly, challenges concerning FI teacher proficiency are established within the theoretical framework guiding this study.

2.1. Defining French Immersion: Models, Theory, and Pedagogy

While FI has seen much development and has inspired many language immersion programs across the globe since its inception in Saint-Lambert, Québec, where the first immersion program originated (Lambert & Tucker, 1972), it is helpful to first examine the qualifying features and different models of immersion education across contexts.

2.1.1. Definition and Models of Immersion Education

"Immersion is a form of bilingual education that provides students with a sheltered classroom environment in which they receive at least half of their subject-matter instruction through the medium of a language that they are learning as a second, foreign, heritage, or indigenous language (L2)" (Lyster & Genesee, 2012, p. 1). Lyster and Genesee's (2012) succinct definition of immersion education offers a glimpse into the qualifying features of immersion programs. However, immersion education, to be considered as such, must satisfy additional key criteria. In their definition of immersion education programs, Tedick, et al. (2011) outline a number of qualifying benchmarks and models. According to these authors, subject-matter

instruction must be conducted in the target language at least 50% of the time for at least six years in primary education and for at least two content courses in secondary education (Fortune & Tedick, 2008); however, depending on the program, this stipulation may be exceeded. Specifically, in partial immersion programs, 50% of the subject matter is taught in the L2 throughout the entire program, whereas in total immersion programs, 90% of the material is taught in the L2 at the beginning, with the proportion of L1 instruction increasing – and that of the L2 decreasing – as students progress through the program (Tedick & Wesely, 2015). Furthermore, immersion programs may begin at different stages. In early immersion programs, students begin in kindergarten or in the first grade (age 5-6); in middle or intermediate immersion, students begin in the fourth or fifth grade (age 9-10); and in late immersion, students typically begin in the sixth or seventh grade (age 11-12), or at the end of elementary education and the beginning of secondary (age 13) (Dueñas, 2004; Lyster, 2008).

In addition to subscribing to either an early/middle/late, partial/total model, immersion programs may manifest as either one-way immersion (OWI) or two-way immersion (TWI). Models under the OWI label represent typical immersion classrooms – such as French immersion in Canada and Swedish immersion in Finland – wherein majority language speakers learn content through a minority language (Lyster & Ballinger, 2011). TWI models, on the other hand, are different from OWI because of their student population: TWI programs integrate equal numbers of students from the majority language background (e.g., English) and minority language background (e.g., Spanish), with the target language being that of the other group (i.e., majority language learners learn the minority language and vice versa) (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Programs of this nature are predominantly found in the U.S. with English and Spanish language learners (Tedick, Christian, & Fortune, 2011), though other variants, such as Chinese-English

TWI, have gained in popularity (Lindholm-Leary, 2011). Other types of programs that integrate content and language instruction exist, such as content and language integrated learning (CLIL), English medium instruction, minority language immersion (e.g., Irish immersion), and Indigenous immersion; however, while all of these programs share qualities with immersion generally, they also vary in terms of the program goals and structure (Fortune & Tedick, 2008). Regardless of immersion model or instructional context, these programs all share a number of core goals: academic achievement meets or exceeds the expectations of mainstream education; additive bilingualism and biliteracy is fostered; and intercultural competence is enhanced (Tedick, Christian, and Fortune, 2011; Tedick & Wesely, 2015).

Lastly, immersion education can be further defined by referring to Swain and Johnson's (1997) article, in which the core characteristics of immersion are demarcated. Specifically, as succinctly summarized by Swain and Johnson (1997), the key characteristics of immersion education are:

– the L2 is a medium of instruction;
– the immersion curriculum parallels the local L1 curriculum;
– overt support exists for the L1;
– the program aims for additive bilingualism;
– exposure to the L2 is largely confined to the classroom;
– students enter with similar (and limited) levels of L2 proficiency;
– the teachers are bilingual;
– the classroom culture is that of the local L1 community.

2.1.2. Characteristic of Immersion Education and French Immersion in Canada

As mentioned in the introduction, FI was initiated in 1965 in Saint-Lambert, Québec, Canada – a largely anglophone community outside the city of Montréal – by a group of parents wishing for their anglophone children to attain bilingualism in French and English (d'Anglejean & Tucker, 1970; Lambert & Tucker, 1972). Indeed, FI can be defined within the above-described

characteristics. As a caveat, however, it is crucial to acknowledge that the tenets outlined by Swain and Johnson (1997), being published in 1997, are not all consonant with contemporary realities, as demographics and pedagogies have shifted since the publication of this article. In Canada, for instance, immigration has significantly impacted the demographic composition of the immersion classroom, as individuals with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds render some of these features spurious (Swain and Lapkin, 2005). For example, the majority language, which is English in the Canadian context, may not be the L1 of all students, making overt support for the L1 and additive bilingualism impossible for many learners in the programs. Moreover, the "local L1 community" is no longer homogenous, as myriad cultures and languages have established themselves as part of the fabric of Canadian culture; that is, Canadian culture is such that there is no singular culture. Finally, the penultimate criterion, that teachers are bilingual, may well be true in immersion, however, the degree of this bilingualism can vary significantly. In fact, immersion programs may differ in the amount of support offered to students to develop their L2 proficiency, as teachers are often left to determine their own approaches and resources to aid in this development (Swain & Johnson, 1997). In a similar vein, successfully implementing a curriculum that simultaneously develops students' L1 and L2 requires extensive training and the appropriate resources so that teachers can adequately provide the support that L2 FI learners need; however, as Swain and Johnson (1997) concede, this, too, is variable. These latter two issues underline the importance for appropriate pre- and in-service teacher education – a point that will be problematized in later parts of this literature review.

2.1.3. Theoretical Underpinnings and Pedagogical Implications of FI

Before further investigating FI, a look into the driving theories and associated pedagogical practices will be considered. FI grounds itself and its pedagogical approaches in a number of second language acquisition theories and classroom-based research.

First is Krashen's (1982, 1984b) comprehensible input hypothesis, which holds that since L2 learners seem to acquire grammatical and morphosyntactic elements in a sequence parallel to that of first language learners, L2 learning must, then, follow a similar process. As a result, Krashen (1984b) claimed that for successful L2 learning to occur, learners must be exposed to meaningful and comprehensible input in order for them to appropriately restructure their interlanguage. In other words, this input has to be modified (i.e., modified input) to be within learners' capacity to comprehend while simultaneously being just challenging enough for them to push their ability to parse (referred to as *i*+1). If this is implemented, "L2 learners would be able to integrate the input into their developing interlanguage systems and successfully acquire their second language in much the same way as children acquire their L1" (Spada, 2007, p. 274). While evidence from classroom studies has demonstrated that students do indeed attain subject-matter and L1 learning equal to those of their non-immersion counterparts, as well as high, near-native levels in the L2, particularly in reading and listening comprehension (Snow, 1993; Wesche, 1993), significant flaws in productive competencies (i.e., speaking and writing) and interpersonal communication eventually prompted researchers to denounce the exclusive reliance on comprehensible input alone in immersion education (Swain & Lapkin, 1989). Nevertheless, the comprehensible input hypothesis has heavily influenced how immersion education is designed and implemented, and it continues to serve as a core principle in contemporary immersion education.

In response to these cited insufficiencies of a comprehensible input-only approach, Swain (1985, 1993, 2005) proposed her now-prominent output hypothesis, which asserts that explicit attention to output (i.e., linguistic production) – and not just input – must be incorporated in immersion education for learners to see development. To this end, Swain (1985) insists that, pedagogically, teachers must have learners engage in considerable amounts of not simply speaking and writing, but in collaborative learning, where special attention is directed towards student output in order to, "enhance comprehensibility, appropriateness, and accuracy" (p. 161). In other words, this means that, in addition to providing ample exposure to L2 input, learners must maximize their output with explicit attention afforded to features of this linguistic production, including, for example, formal aspects (grammatical rules), pronunciation (phonological rules), and pragmatics (sociolinguistic and pragmatic rules). While the focus on learner output and the integration of formal aspects of language in content learning has certainly formed the theoretical and pedagogical bases of immersion programs, Swain (1985) also emphasizes that it is crucial for teachers to afford opportunities wherein students are challenged and pushed to produce longer, more complex utterances expressing their thinking (pushed output), as exclusively teacher-fronted activities tend to result in short and syntactically simple utterances on the part of the learners. This could take the form of, say, collaborative tasks completed in groups where students interact to negotiate meaning and subsequently modify their own output to better match the target language.

This emphasis on the importance of collaborative learning among L2 learners resounds with yet another theoretical underpinning of immersion education: sociocultural theory (SCT) (Vygotsky, 1978). Applied to L2 teaching and learning, SCT has the goal of elucidating the processes by which learners engage with and eventually learn an L2. Through an L2 pedagogy

lens, SCT holds that development is mediated from the external world to the internal mind via physical tools, such as dictionaries, and symbolic tools, such as language (Lantolf, 2012). In immersion pedagogy, mediation is necessary for internalization of language to occur**,** which is a negotiation process by which learners practice what they have recognized from sociocultural interactions and carry this knowledge into future performances (Kozulin, 1990; Lantolf & Thorne, 2000). However, to make learners internalize language effectively, mediation must be within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is, "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Pedagogically, this demands a form of mediation sensitive to the ZPD. One such form is regulation, which can present as object-regulation (using a dictionary to find a word), other-regulation (receiving scaffolded guidance from a teacher), and self-regulation (using a language form autonomously with minimal other-regulation) (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995). Other-regulation, which is particularly germane to immersion pedagogy, consists of instructors and peers with higher-level language ability who guide or scaffold learners' improvement by assisting them in solving problems they are incapable of addressing independently at that moment. Importantly, effective guidance or scaffolding must be sensitive to learners' ZPD; otherwise, learners may fail to internalize a language item, since the language item is not yet within their ZPD. Finally, after being other-regulated, learners can begin to self-regulate and use the language item more autonomously (Lantolf & Thorne, 2000). In summary, SCT applied to immersion holds that language is a sociocultural phenomenon and should, as such, be learned in this way, implying that through sociocultural interactions with the more skilled individuals (peer

or teacher) who mediate information within the learner's ZPD, the learner can internalize and thus independently use a language item.

These driving theories and the associated pedagogy of immersion education reveal crucial implications for the preparation and development of immersion teachers. Specifically, these teachers are expected to ensure that students' academic achievement matches or exceeds that of their non-immersion counterparts while simultaneously developing their bilingualism and biliteracy through the students' – and often their own – L2. Furthermore, these teachers must achieve these goals by means of pedagogical approaches that are unique from any other form of education. As such, immersion teacher preparation and continued development should be, in practice, unique from that of other L2 or content teachers; nevertheless, as it will be discussed, this is not always the case.

2.2. French Immersion: Program Outcomes

Though there are many forms of CBI in different instructional contexts, such as CLIL in Europe, content-based ESL in China, or FI in Canada, program outcomes tend to remain relatively constant. Specifically, three common program outcome themes have emerged in the research: academic and content learning achievement, L1 and L2 development, cognitive benefits, and positive attitudinal outcomes.

FI boasts a number of positive outcomes in academic achievement, language development, cognition, and attitudes that reinforce its effectiveness and viability as a pedagogical alternative to traditional language instruction. More specifically, findings from studies in FI have revealed that students demonstrate equivalent – and, in some cases, superior – competence in the L1, English (Genesee, 2004). Turnbull et al. (2001), for instance, explain that

the English language skills of FI students, despite initial, temporary delays in early total FI, develop to reach equal or superior levels when compared to mainstream, non-immersion counterparts enrolled in English-only programs. These delays, which were found in the third grade of early total FI, seem to disappear once FI students reach the sixth grade. In fact, the authors found that once these students reached the sixth grade, their English literacy scores even surpassed their English-only counterparts – a finding that has been supported by Statistics Canada (2004), which reports that older FI students' (15 years old) English language skills, particularly reading, were significantly stronger than non FI students. Importantly, FI does not have a negative impact on students' English language and literacy development, despite early claims (Au-Yeung et al., 2015).

In terms of academic achievement in content courses, such as mathematics, science and history, it has been established that FI students consistently perform at or above the grade-level expectations of students in non-FI programs, with no detriment to academic performance found due to the increased instructional time spent in the L2 (Lyster, 2008). In Bournot-Trites and Reeder's (2001) longitudinal study examining the effects of FI on the math performance of two groups of students – one which received 80/20 French-English instruction and one which received 50/50 French-English instruction – the authors note that at the end of the sixth grade, the 80/20 group outperformed the 50/50 group on a standardized mathematics test administered in English. These results indicate that not only is an increase in L2 instructional time not detrimental to academic performance, but it is actually beneficial. In fact, the consistently strong academic and L2 proficiency outcomes that FI programs boast have inclined some to refer to these programs as a "two for one" approach to education (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Concerning development in the L2, research has convincingly demonstrated that immersion students develop significantly higher levels of L2 proficiency than non-immersion students enrolled in French as a second language (FSL) instruction (i.e., one period/day) on all competencies of reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2013; Lyster, 2017). In fact, in their case study outlining the outcomes of two types of immersion programs, Genesee and Lindholm-Leary (2013) report that, in comparison to L1 French speakers, L2 FI students demonstrate equal levels of comprehension (reading and listening) and generally strong levels of production (writing and speaking), with particularly strong fluency and confidence in the L2. However, while this proficiency is indeed stronger than non-FI counterparts who learn FSL as a subject, FI students exhibit several notable weaknesses, especially concerning written and spoken production. That is, researchers acknowledge that these competencies, relative to native speakers, lack with regards to grammatical accuracy, lexical variety, and sociolinguistic appropriateness (Genesee, 1994; Lyster, 2007; Mougeon, Nadasi, & Rehner, 2010). Lyster (2007), for example, notes that FI students tend to: produce grammatically inaccurate utterances; rely on a simplified morphology and syntax, often opting for simple syntactic structures and verb tenses over complex ones; express themselves with limited vocabulary and unidiomatic speech; and inappropriately use sociolinguistic forms (e.g., using informal *tu* instead of the formal *vous* for the formal register). Lyster (2007) concludes that, "immersion students are second language speakers who are relatively fluent and effective communicators, but non-targetlike in terms of grammatical structure and non-idiomatic in their lexical choices and pragmatic expression – in comparison to native speakers of the same age" (p. 16). In fact, comparable findings to those outlined above have been reported in myriad immersion contexts outside of FI in Canada, for example: Swedish one-way immersion in

Finland (Björklund & Mård-Miettinen, 2011), Irish one-way immersion in Ireland (Ó Duibhir, 2011), and Chinese two-way immersion in the U.S. (Lindholm-Leary, 2011).

Another finding of FI programs is the cognitive benefits that these offer over mainstream, monolingual education (Baker, 2000, 2006; Bialystok, 2001; Genesee et al., 1975). In his review of the literature on the reported advantages of FI education in Canada, Lazaruk (2007) synthesizes a multitude of research reporting on key linguistic, academic, and cognitive benefits that FI students develop in these programs. With specific regard to cognitive benefits, Lazaruk's review reveals that FI students: have enhanced mental flexibility and creative thinking; demonstrate higher levels of metalinguistic awareness; and are more sensitive to verbal and non-verbal cues and individuals' needs (Lazaruk, 2007). Additionally, FI students enjoy heightened intercultural understanding and appreciation, especially with regard to French Canadians. Lambert (1987), in his study using Likert-scales and direct questions to measure the attitudinal outcomes of FI students, evidenced that FI programs foster positive intercultural attitudes toward French Canadians by expressing a desire to travel to French milieux and interact with francophones.

The above-outlined results have also been corroborated in the related realms of CLIL and content-based ESL/EFL contexts (Jexenflicker & Dalton-Puffer, 2010; Lasagabaster, 2008; Ruiz de Zarobe, 2010; Van de Craen, et al., 2007). CLIL and content-based ESL/EFL students are similarly reported to: possess equal content knowledge in the L2 when compared to their mainstream counterparts who engage content in the L1 (Dalton-Puffer, 2008; Rodgers, 2006); exhibit greater receptive and productive L2 language skills (e.g., vocabulary, grammatical and morphological awareness, fluency) (Brevik & Moe, 2012; Rieder and Hüttner, 2007; Burger & Chrétien, 2001); demonstrate equivalent, and sometimes improved, L1 literacy (Perez Cañado,

2018a; Snow & Brinton, 1997); and show more positive attitudes toward the target language and culture (Coyle, 2007; Dalton-Puffer, 2008). A concrete example of the aforementioned findings comes from Perez Cañado (2018b), who reports on a large-scale, longitudinal study following two groups of learners, a CLIL group and an English as a foreign language (EFL) group, from primary, through secondary, and finally into tertiary education in 53 schools across 12 provinces in Spain (N = 2,024). The findings of this study reveal that, on all measures of linguistic competence (grammar, vocabulary, reading, listening, and speaking), the CLIL group outperformed the EFL group at all levels of education (primary, secondary, tertiary), a finding that is upheld in Lagabaster (2008).

2.3. Challenges in FI

The outcomes reported from the previously mentioned studies indicate that FI and other forms of CBI foster positive results overall. Despite this multitude of positive outcomes, there is a number of challenges characteristic of these programs. Indeed, language and content integration has become a key topic in FI research; however, this implies a crucial degree of preparedness and continued development of FI teachers who have this dual responsibility of simultaneously attending to both language and content while often being non-native speakers of the immersion language themselves. It is clear, then, that these roles and responsibilities are idiosyncratic relative to mainstream education and, therefore, necessitate a unique form of teacher preparation and development. Despite this, research on immersion teacher training and professional development remains scarce (Cammarata et al., 2018), and what research has been conducted points to the cruciality of effective preparation and continued development of FI teachers to ensure the prosperity of FI programs.

2.3.1. Challenges in FI: Teacher Perspectives

Seeing as this thesis will be relying on the perspectives of immersion teachers as sources of data, it is crucial to consider the challenges that are faced in integrating language and content in immersion contexts from their perspectives. In fact, studies investigating the perspectives of immersion teachers have largely been overlooked, which, "prevents us from fully understanding the key issues at the core of content and language integration" (Cammarata & Tedick, 2012, p. 254).

To start, immersion teachers often refer to a lack of administrative support and immersion-specific resources in their schools and communities (Cammarata 2009, 2010; Tedick & Cammarata, 2012; Troncale, 2002). On the administrative side, immersion teachers often express feelings of isolation; specifically, seeing as there is a lack of interdisciplinary collaboration among language and content teachers and not enough support for immersion teachers from colleagues, administrations, and the community, they are often left feeling alone to 'fend for themselves' (Tedick & Cammarata, 2012; Troncale, 2002). As a result, immersion teachers' ability to merge language and content, and thus develop both language skills and content knowledge, is impeded. In fact, studies in immersion education have demonstrated that collaboration among teachers is not only beneficial for the teachers' ability to integrate language and content, but also for students L2 development (Lyster & Ballinger, 2011; Lyster et al., 2013). In a similar vein, there is a consistently reported lack of immersion-specific resources for teachers (Cammarata, 2009, 2010; Cammarata & Haley, 2018). Tedick and Cammarata (2012), in their phenomenological study with in-service immersion teachers participating in a year-long professional development workshop designed to target content and language integration, report that teachers' difficulty of balancing language and content is exacerbated by a lack of resources

needed to facilitate bridging these two as well as by curricular expectations and a lack accountability for language teaching, especially since language teaching is time consuming in the broader, content-driven curriculum.

While administrative and resource-related constraints are indeed ubiquitous in immersion contexts, there equally exist obstacles regarding immersion teachers' understanding of immersion-specific pedagogy and teaching philosophies that dictate their practice (Cammarata 2009, 2010; Cammarata & Haley, 2018; Tedick & Cammarata, 2012). In another phenomenological study, Cammarata (2009, 2010) notes that the teacher participants learning CBI (i.e., immersion) in a professional development workshop had difficulty defining exactly what CBI entails and how it is enacted. In particular, he notes that teachers understand CBI at the conceptual level, but not at the practical level, prompting him to conclude that pre- and in-service teacher training needs to be sensitive to this. Cammarata also offers potential solutions to address this lack of understanding, for example: (1) find ways to bridge theory and practice in such workshops, (2) provide more concrete models of CBI in action, and (3) treat CBI as an extension to teachers' practices and philosophies rather than a replacement (Cammarata, 2009, 2010). In fact, the latter suggestion, that CBI should be treated as an extension to teachers' existing philosophies and practice, exposes another challenge cited in the literature: there is a disjunction between immersion teachers' deeply rooted beliefs and teaching philosophies and employing new and innovative language and content integrated pedagogy (Marks & Gersten, 1998; Cammarata & Haley, 2018). This, in turn, reveals a resistance to change in how these teachers believe languages ought to be taught. This point is corroborated by Cammarata and Haley (2018) and Tedick and Cammarata (2012), who observe that since immersion teachers often see themselves either as content or language teachers, they rarely act as both. This

dichotomous perception of their identity as teachers perpetuates the problem of integrating language and content, as teachers who see themselves as content teachers teach only content and vice versa.

Lastly, studies inquiring into immersion teacher challenges reveal a final – and perhaps most prevalent – theme: difficulty balancing language and content teaching and developing L2 skills. Difficulties maintaining a balance between language and content have pervaded content-based instruction programs like immersion since their inception (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). In fact, while immersion teachers claim that they are always attending to both language and content, this is not necessarily the case, as content teaching tends to take precedence (Fortune et al., 2008; Hoare, 2001; Walker & Tedick, 2000). For example, in Fortune, Tedick, and Walker's (2008) study observing the language and content teaching practices of six immersion teachers, from both one-way and two-way immersion programs, it was revealed that, despite teachers' claims that they were always engaged in language teaching, any focus on language was designated to vocabulary related to the lesson at hand. Interestingly, one teacher was cognizant of the priority that content teaching takes over that of language, stating that, "she [was] so busy addressing content learning that language [was] often an afterthought" (p. 80). Importantly, Dupuy (2000) asserts that the privilege that content instruction enjoys over that of language impedes the development of L2 accuracy of immersion students, which is a consistently reported finding in the literature. This issue of L2 accuracy, furthermore, is perpetuated into the higher grades, as it is not uncommon for immersion teachers of more advanced-level content to resort to the L1 to facilitate student understanding, citing that students' L2 proficiency is not sufficient enough to grapple with complex academic content (Fortune, Tedick & Walker, 2008; Hoare & Kong, 2008).

These observations reveal a stark reality in immersion education, irrespective of the context: language teaching is often subordinated to content teaching to ensure adequate academic literacy and achievement. While this certainly is a result of the aforementioned obstacles (i.e., curricular demands, lack of support and resources, understanding of immersion pedagogy, and teaching philosophies), it also exposes teachers' inability to – or unawareness of how to – effectively integrate and teach relevant language foci. For instance, when it does come to teaching language, if such is the case, teachers often voice difficulty in determining what language forms to target in their content lessons (Cammarata & Haley, 2018). Naturally, not knowing how to appropriately incorporate and teach language can lead to lower levels of L2 accuracy. However, there is another factor hindering teachers' ability to integrate language into content teaching and negatively impacting the L2 accuracy of immersion students; that is, the teachers' L2 proficiency itself has been foregrounded as a problematic issue in the literature.

2.3.2. Challenges in FI: Teacher Training and Professional Development

To better understand the reason for FI teachers' lack of French proficiency, it is important to first consider the driving forces behind the cited weaknesses in FI. Indeed, the challenges mentioned above are not so surprising given the current state of FI teacher education in Canada. In fact, there are few programs in Canada that target and train prospective and practicing FI teachers in the required immersion-specific competencies, including French proficiency, needed for at once grappling with language and content (Erben, 2004; Cammarata et al., 2018; Tedick and Fortune, 2013). For instance, Cammarata et al (2018), in their knowledge synthesis of Canadian pre- and in-service FI teacher training research, state that teacher training programs that are specifically designed for the preparation of teachers in the immersion context are rare (p.109). As a result of this scarcity, rarely are FI teachers properly qualified to teach in

immersion. According to Tedick et al. (2011), the actual qualifications of teachers in immersion programs are often simply a general B.Ed. plus fluency in the immersion language, though this fluency may only be rudimentary.

As mentioned in the introduction, prospective FI teachers must complete an apposite Bachelor's degree (B.A./B.Sc.) and a teacher education program (B.Ed.) to teach in Canada. The B.Ed. programs, however, may or may not target immersion- or L2-specific competencies. In fact, after reviewing all universities in Canada, I found that universities offer varying degrees of immersion teacher preparation. Specifically, Canadian university programs (B.A.; B.Ed.; M.Ed.; and Certificate/Diploma) targeting FI-related competencies are either designed explicitly for FI teacher education, coded as (FI); include a considerable number of immersion-related courses (i.e., 4+), coded as extensive immersion content (EIC); or offer at least some FI-specific courses in their programs (i.e., 1-3), coded as limited immersion content (LIC) (see Table 1 for these programs).

Two caveats emerge in categorizing these programs. Firstly, some programs were omitted in the coding process, as they did not make mention of offering immersion-specific courses. In fact, these programs tend to amalgamate different forms of FSL teacher education under one FSL umbrella, stating that their programs prepare their teachers to teach in a variety of FSL contexts, including CF, EF, and FI. These are listed in Table 2. Secondly, the M.Ed. offered at the Université de Saint-Boniface interweaves immersion pedagogy topics into its curriculum, however, this is a general M.Ed. in language, literacy, and curriculum and is thus not specifically designed for FI teacher licensure.

Table 1

University programs offering immersion content

Name of University	Province or Territory	Immersion Content	Program Type
University of Alberta	Alberta	FI	B.Ed.; M.Ed.
Simon Fraser University	British Columbia	LIC	Minor; Cert
University of British Columbia	British Columbia	FI	B.Ed.
University of Victoria	British Columbia	FI	Cert
Université de Saint-Boniface	Manitoba	EIC	M.Ed.
St. Thomas University	New Brunswick	LIC	B.Ed.
Université de Moncton	New Brunswick	FI	B.Ed.
Memorial University of Newfoundland	Newfoundland	FI	B.Ed.
Université Sainte-Anne	Nova Scotia	LIC	B.Ed.
Nipissing University	Ontario	LIC	B.Ed.
Queen's University	Ontario	LIC	B.Ed.
University of Ottawa	Ontario	LIC	B.Ed., B.A.
University of Western Ontario	Ontario	LIC	B.Ed.
York University, Glendon Campus	Ontario	LIC	B.Ed.
University of Prince Edward Island	Prince Edward Island	LIC	B.Ed.
McGill University	Québec	FI	B.Ed., Cert.
Université de Québec à Montréal	Québec	EIC	B.Ed.
Université Laval	Québec	LIC	B.Ed.
Universitt of Regina	Saskatchewan	LIC	B.Ed.

Table 2

University programs offering general FSL programs

Name of University	Province or Territory	Immersion Content	Program Type
University of New Brunswick	New Brunswick	N/A	Cert.
Brock University	Ontario	N/A	B.Ed.
Laurentian University	Ontario	N/A	B.Ed.
University of Windsor	Ontario	N/A	B.Ed.
Université de Montréal	Québec	N/A	B.Ed., M.Ed.

It is clear that only a handful of programs offer full immersion programs (FI) or extensive immersion content (EIC). In fact, of the 18 universities offering some form of FI training, only six offer FI-designed programs and two extensive immersion content (EIC). Furthermore, there are six universities that claim, despite not having immersion-specific content, that their teachers will be prepared to teach in FI.

When it comes to professional development of FI teachers, much the same as FI teacher education, there is a significant lack of research investigating in-service teacher needs regarding immersion-specific competencies and proficiency in the immersion language (Cammarata & Ó Ceallaigh, 2018; Cammarata & Haley, 2018; Cavanagh et al., 2016; Cammarata & Tedick, 2012; Tedick & Zilmer, 2018). In their study examining professional development experiences with regards to embedding a focus on language into content teaching of practicing immersion teachers participating in a graduate-level professional development certificate, Tedick and Zilmer (2018) discover that course assignments that had the most positive impact on participants' teaching are

those that: are relevant to their practice; allow opportunities for giving and receiving feedback regarding their practice; allow teachers to practice what they are learning; produce tangible changes in student learning and language development; and allow for teacher collaboration and reflection. Parallel findings emerged from the aforementioned professional development studies conducted by Cammarata (2009, 2010), Cammarata and Tedick (2012), and Cammarata and Haley (2018), who investigated how to better support immersion teachers in their teaching practices and their endeavour to enact immersion pedagogy, discovering that, among other challenges (i.e., lack of collaboration, resources, administrative support, contrasting teaching beliefs), teachers needed support in understanding immersion pedagogy and how to execute it, especially with respect to integrating and balancing language and content (see 2.4.1. Challenges in FI: Teacher Perspectives). However, the issue with studies of this nature, despite being critical for the effective continued development of immersion teachers and the success of immersion programs, is that they target immersion competencies related to the enactment of immersion pedagogy in a broader sense. That is, while they certainly emphasize integrating language into content teaching, the language-related abilities themselves are not the focus; studies tend to overlook the microlevel linguistic needs of immersion teachers and how to support what is often their L2. This marked scarcity of FI teacher training and professional development research, and lack of focus on the language quality of FI teachers, has serious consequences for teacher preparedness in FI; yet, this is not the only aspect adversely affecting the quality of teachers present in FI schools.

2.3.3. Challenges in FI: Hiring Practices

Hiring practices, in tandem with the inconsistent preparation of FI teachers, compound the issue of teacher preparedness. While the basic requirements to teach in Canada are more or

less commensurate across provinces, qualification requirements for FI teachers, whose practice is pedagogically distinct from other bilingual programs such as CF, are less clear. Depending on the context, required FI teacher qualifications are more explicit or less so. An example with more explicit expectations for FI teacher qualifications is the Alberta context, in which, according the Government of Alberta's Handbook for French Immersion and Administrators (2014), FI teachers must have, "native or native-like proficiency in both oral and written French; training in and a good understanding of immersion methodology; an understanding of French culture and its relationship to language; and the ability to communicate in English" (p.15). Here, they make mention of compulsory competencies for FI teachers, particularly training in and understanding of FI pedagogy. Interestingly, there is a considerable degree of contrast between governmental stances on FI teacher hiring and the reality of FI teacher employment processes, which will be discussed below. A less explicit example is the Ontario context, in which, according to the Ministry of Education, FI teachers are classified as FSL teachers, implying that FSL teachers in CF must receive the same training as FSL teachers in FI, namely an appropriate Bachelor's degree and a teaching licensure; no indication of obligatory immersion-specific training is present, regardless of the distinct pedagogy.

While, at the policy level, FI teachers should theoretically all possess comparable training and competencies in order to be hired, this is not necessarily so. In fact, FI teacher hiring practices are largely left to the discretion of the staff of hiring school boards (i.e., principals, superintendents, human resources) (Veilleux & Bournot-Trites, 2005), and not to the provincial government, making evaluations of FI teacher applicant qualifications ecological, or context-specific, rather than universal, and adherence to governmental guidelines difficult. Further complicating this process is the variability of FI training (i.e., ranging from the umbrella FSL, to

LIC or EIC, to FI) and the rarity of finding teachers who have actually received such training, revealing that FI teacher shortages are ubiquitous in Canada. This shortage has, in turn, forced school boards to change their hiring practices insofar as they are being relaxed to fill these high-demand roles (Grimmett & Echols, 2001; Macfarlane & Hart, 2002; OCOL, 2019). Moreover, this dearth of FI teachers trained in the appropriate pedagogy extends to their French language proficiency. In fact, FI school boards have not only had no choice but to hire teachers without FI-specific training, but to hire those who are able to speak French to at least some degree, which could be, and often is, less adequate than expected by governmental standards (Mady, 2018; OCOL, 2019). As one may imagine, this practice dilutes the French competency of teachers, which, consequently, has negative implications for the quality of FI education.

2.4. French Proficiency and FI Teacher Identity

2.4.1. FI Teacher Proficiency

To successfully teach in an L2, proficiency in that language is crucial, regardless of the proportion of the curriculum taught in the L2. In fact, research has long established that adequate proficiency in an L2 is quintessential to be a strong language teacher who can effectively teach language and ensure student success (Banno, 2003; Bayliss & Vignola, 2007; Mady, 2018; Ullman & Hainsworth, 1991). This is especially true in an FI context, where teachers are expected to teach content through the L2 while also attending to aspects of the L2 itself. However, in the Canadian FI and FSL contexts, concerns have been voiced regarding the proficiency of these second language teachers' L2, French, citing considerable weaknesses as the primary concern, particularly in English-dominant provinces (Bayliss & Vignola, 2007; Bournot-Trites, 2008; Christiansen & Laplante, 2004; Mady, 2018; OCOL, 2019; Slavatori, 2009;

Veilleux & Bournot-Trites, 2005). Salvatori (2009), for instance, highlights the limited availability of FI and FSL teachers who are linguistically qualified to teach French as an L2. Salvatori also outlines the Ontario Ministry of Education's response to this paucity, which, in their renewal plan, sought to revamp FSL teacher education programs by ensuring better French proficiency of aspiring teachers wishing to teach in FSL or FI (Salvatori, 2009). However, in the ten years since this plan for renewal, these challenges persist. That is, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages' (OCOL, 2019) latest study on challenges in FSL teacher education supply and demand reports that, "as there is no standard across school boards for proficiency levels, and due to the pressing need to find FSL teachers, some respondents felt that teachers are sometimes being hired even with very low proficiency in French" (p.16). This practice of hiring teachers with low French proficiency, in consequence, has serious implications for the students' L2 development. In fact, the student participants in Mandin's (2010) study exploring FI graduates' experience learning French identify understanding grammatical elements in French as being the most problematic aspect of their experience in FI. It can be reasoned, then, that these students' L2 shortcomings may well be a result of teachers not being able to adequately explain? language in the classroom. This is confirmed by Christiansen and Laplante (2004), who note that, in their pre-service FI teacher education program, even students who meet the minimum proficiency requirement to advance through the program still struggle with French in their practicum and, in extension, into their careers as FI teachers. Results from the language portfolios used to inquire into pre-service FI teachers' experiences in the program reveal that many participants acknowledge weaknesses with regard to their language proficiency, especially in grammatical accuracy and syntax (Christiansen & Laplante, 2004). Considering the perspectives of pre-service teachers themselves, Bayliss and Vignola (2007), in a study

interviewing B.Ed students in French education, demonstrate that although students believe their French is satisfactory, more support is needed in order to adapt to the linguistic demands of French language teaching. Moreover, when it comes to training and preparation for teaching itself, Hedgecock (2002) emphasizes that teachers are under-prepared, and that language difficulties faced by pre- and in-service teachers are due to an absence of language awareness, which ultimately inhibits teachers' ability to sufficiently explain linguistic phenomena in the classroom.

2.4.2. Linguistic insecurity and language teacher identity

The linguistic shortcomings and difficulties with regard to FSL, including FI, teacher proficiency foregrounds the phenomenon of linguistic insecurity, which, ultimately, can jeopardize L2 French teachers' professional identities as language teachers. Prior to developing professional identities, though, it is crucial to recognize that a global identity precedes a teacher's professional identity; that is, aspects of a teacher's life, such as lived experiences, values, and interests, form an identity basis. (Gohier et al., 2001, Tang, 2020). From this, teachers' professional identities emerge through their knowledge and experiences with regard to teaching and the work relations that they form, and this identity is constantly formed and reformed as a teacher has new experiences; in fact, this identity reformulation causes vicissitudinous periods of doubt and incertitude and certainty and motivation (Tang, 2020). Professional identity formation is also linked to the sociopolitical and sociocultural environment or circumstances of the individual, and is thus inherently linked to the social context, particularly the time and space in which an individual evolves (temporality) (Riopel 2006; Tang, 2020; Wenger, 1998). On this topic of temporality, Wenger (1998) emphasizes that temporality, specifically the past, present, and future, helps to shape identity. In this way, identity is constantly evolving, and an

individual's experiences in a given social context prompt it to evolve. This conceptualization of identity and professional identity is supported by Varghese et al. (2005) who draw on three studies exploring teacher identity and compare them with three theoretical frameworks: social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978), theory of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and the concept of the image-text (Simon, 1995) to theorize language teacher identity. Varghese et al. (2005) conclude that the following themes recur in the theoretical understandings of language teacher identity:

1. Identity as multiple, shifting, and in conflict;
2. Identity as crucially related to social, cultural, and political context; and
3. Identity being constructed, maintained, and negotiated primarily through discourse (p. 35).

However, the professional identity of language teachers is unique from other types of professional identity: competency in the language of instruction, which is often the L2 teachers own second language, is intimately linked to their professional identity, meaning that their linguistic identity is linked to their professional one (Tang, 2020). This means, then, that a perceived lack of competency can undermine a teacher's linguistic identity and, thus, their professional identity. In other words, linguistic insecurity, which can be defined as feelings of anxiety or fear that arise when an individual is required to speak in what is often a second language to them (Roussi & Messin, 2011), can have a significant impact on a teacher's professional identity. Furthermore, these teachers have to navigate within native speaker demands and mono centric ideologies of French proficiency (i.e., a pure, native-like proficiency), which can, in turn, cause feelings of linguistic insecurity and consequently threaten teachers' professional identities, resulting in sentiments of illegitimacy (Wernicke, 2017; Tang, 2020).

This, then, becomes a transition from linguistic insecurity to professional insecurity, as linguistic competency is considered by many language teachers to be a key criterion for their professional competency within their professional identities (Tang, 2020; Roussi & Messin, 2011; Wernicke-Heinrichs, 2013). Therefore, in the context of the present study, this study will subscribe to the assumption that FI teachers' perceived proficiency in French forms the basis of their professional identities as teachers and that if this competency is flawed, these teachers will experience feelings of linguistic insecurity and illegitimacy. The perceptions of the FI teacher participants' French language competency, as well as that of their colleagues, will, then, be analyzed through a teacher identity lens.

These linguistic shortcomings of FI teachers, coupled with variable hiring practices and the absence of concrete criteria with regard to a framework for qualified FI teachers across school boards and provinces, exposes a current reality: there is no coherent, centralized training or qualification to which provincial governments or school boards adhere their standards. This has prompted the argument that more research needs to be conducted to ascertain the necessary training benchmarks and resources required for preparing competent and qualified FI teachers (Cavanagh et al., 2016; Tedick, Christian & Fortune, 2011). Furthermore, while language-related issues of FI teachers are certainly pronounced, few articles have examined teachers', especially in-service FI teachers', language competence and needs (Bournot-Trites, 2008). Therefore, this thesis will attempt to both investigate the French language-related needs of FI teachers and fill this gap in the research literature. Additionally, it will serve to contribute to the development of a universal framework for FI teacher training and professional development with regard to French language proficiency of FI teachers by elucidating the linguistic challenges they face.

In this chapter, I have defined immersion education by describing the characteristics of the different models that exist in myriad contexts, including FI. The general outcomes from FI and related programs (such as CLIL and content-based ESL) were then outlined. Then, the challenges faced in immersion education from the perspectives of immersion teachers, as well as the challenges related to teacher training, professional development, and hiring practices, were detailed. Lastly, the theoretical framework of TLA was elucidated in the context of proficiency and language awareness of Canadian FI teachers. In the following chapter, I will outline the methodological framework guiding this thesis, including the research design, participant recruitment procedures, and data collection and analysis methods. Following this, the results of the study will be expounded alongside the analysis of the data. Finally, a discussion of the findings, their implications, and future research directions will be presented with the limitations of the study following.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Research Questions and Design

As mentioned in the literature review chapter, the purpose of the present thesis is threefold: to investigate the language-related needs of in-service FI teachers; to contribute to the development of a centralized framework for FI teacher training and professional, particularly with regard to linguistic competencies; and to thus fill this gap in the research literature. To accomplish this, the current study will draw on data in the form of questionnaires and focus group interviews coming from a pan-Canadian study investigating FI teacher professional development. The particular subset of data used for this thesis come in the form of questionnaire and focus group questions pertaining to the language-related needs of in-service FI teachers. These questions will serve as the data of this thesis. The research questions guiding this thesis are, therefore:

1. How do FI teachers perceive their French language proficiency?
    - How do these teachers perceive the proficiency of FI teachers in general?
2. Do FI teachers desire more language-related support?
3. What implications do the above have for FI teacher training and professional development?

This study employed a mixed-methods design, meaning that both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed. Mixed methods research, as so eloquently defined by Johnson et al (2007), refers to:

> … the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (p. 123).

While this definition succinctly captures what mixed-methods research entails, it is important to note that various terminology exist for a mixed-methods research design; for example, blended research (Thomas, 2003), mixed research (Johnson, 2006), and integrative research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Regardless of nomenclature, the core tenets of a mixed approach to research include the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, while using rigorous methods, with the goal of corroborating findings from one method with those of the other to enhance understanding of the data. Known also as triangulation, this practice of integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to offer confirmation and support to each type of finding is beneficial in that, "the bias inherent in any particular data source, investigators, and particularly method will be canceled out when used in conjunction with other data sources, investigators, and methods… [so that] the result will be a convergence upon the truth about some social phenomenon" (Denzin, 1978, p. 14). Additionally, by adopting a mixed-methods design, researchers can expect richer data and better confidence in their findings (Jick, 1979). In other words, this boosts the validity and reliability of the data. Historically, mixed-methods research, while not officially being known as such, has been present since the early 20th century, where researchers, largely in the fields of cultural anthropology and sociology, would draw on both quantitative and qualitative data in their work (Johnson et al., 2007). However, it is only in more recent history that the mixed-methods design, being known as such, has established itself as an alternative and legitimate research paradigm, as researchers have come to recognize the value in using both qualitative and quantitative data and methods to address their research problems (Johnson et al., 2007). In this study, quantitative data were collected through questionnaires and qualitative data through focus group interviews.

Seeing as the quantitative data and qualitative data were collected, analyzed separately, and subsequently compared, one may consider this to be a convergent mixed-methods design. According to Creswell (2018), "The key assumption of this approach is that both qualitative and quantitative data provide different types of information – often detailed views of participants qualitatively and scores on instruments quantitatively – and together they yield results that should be the same" (p. 300). With regard to sampling and data collection, the issue of sample size naturally comes to the fore in a mixed methods design, as the qualitative sample is unequivocally smaller than the quantitative sample. While there are several approaches to overcome this inequality, such as equalizing the sample sizes or weighting the qualitative sample to equal that of the quantitative, it can be argued that this is the point of a convergent mixed-methods design. That is, the two sources of data complement each other in that one set of data offers more in-depth insights while the other attempts to generalize to a population (Creswell, 2018). Another aspect of this design that has been problematized is whether or not the qualitative sample should derive from its quantitative counterpart. According to Creswell (2018), "mixed methods researchers would include the sample of qualitative participants in the larger quantitative sample, because ultimately researchers make a comparison between the two databases and the more they are similar, the better the comparison" (p. 301). Therefore, by drawing from the quantitative sample to form the qualitative sample, richer data are produced.

With regard to the data analysis phase, there is a number of analysis techniques for a convergent mixed-methods design that merge the two datasets. First, there is the side-by-side comparison approach, in which:

> The researcher will first report the quantitative statistical results and then discuss the qualitative findings (e.g., themes) that either confirm or disconfirm the statistical results. Alternatively, the researcher might start with the qualitative findings and then compare them to the quantitative results. Mixed methods researchers call this a side-by-side

> approach because the researcher makes the comparison within a discussion, presenting first one set of findings and then the other (Creswell, 2018, p. 301).

In tandem with side-by-side comparison, there is the data transformation approach, which quantifies qualitative data by "transforming qualitative codes or themes into quantitative variables and then combining the two quantitative databases" (Creswell, 2018, p. 301). While these two approaches to data analysis differ slightly, they both analyze each set of data before integrating the two to compare for convergences and divergences in the themes that emerge. The present study will adopt the side-by-side comparison approach to data analysis.

The rationale for adopting a convergent mixed-methods research design in this study comes from the fact that the information procured from the quantitative data (i.e., the responses to the questionnaires sent to in-service FI teachers across Canada) can be enhanced by and better understood through the deeper, more insightful responses obtained in the focus groups that further probe in-service FI teachers' language-related needs; it is in these focus groups that teachers are able to elaborate upon their needs in an open-ended, semi-structured way.

3.2. Participant Recruitment

As it pertains to this thesis, the participants were all primary and secondary in-service FI teachers at schools in all provinces and territories in Canada, except Nunavut. Seeing as this was a pan-Canadian study recruiting participants from nearly all provinces and territories, the study sample is representative of the population: Canadian in-service FI teachers.

Ethics approval for this study was obtained in the summer of 2020 and questionnaire piloting began in the fall of the same year. After piloting the questionnaire and making the necessary modifications, it was made available on SoGo Survey, an online survey software, in December 2020, when participant solicitation also began. Participants were recruited via social

media (Facebook, Twitter) and websites of professional organizations for immersion and second language teachers (ACPI, CASLT, AQEFLS), where the link to the questionnaire consent form and questionnaire was broadcast. Additionally, snowball sampling was used by the principal investigator, who sent out invitations to individuals who would then, in turn, send it to their colleagues. Before gaining access to the questionnaire, participants were invited to read the consent form, which included a detailed description of the project purpose, procedures, and voluntary participation and confidentiality. It was emphasized that participants may, at any point, decline to answer a question, stop the questionnaire, or withdraw their data altogether. Upon providing consent, participants were granted access to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was open from December 2020 to the end of March 2021 and garnered $N = 219$ responses. Regarding the focus groups, a question embedded in the questionnaire consent form inquired into the willingness of participants to be contacted to participate in follow up focus group interviews. Upon consenting, participants were requested to enter their contact information to be later contacted by a research assistant via email to schedule a date and time to meet on WebEx, a virtual meeting platform, for the focus groups. The focus group scheduling phase took place throughout March 2021. Finally, the focus groups took place from the end of March 2021 through to the end of May 2021 and garnered $N = 19$ participants.

3.3. Questionnaire Methods

The study's questionnaire sought to inform future FI teacher professional development initiatives by investigating in-service FI teachers' experiences, perspectives, and preferences with regard to this ongoing development. Hosted on Sogo Survey, which is an online survey platform, the questionnaire, titled *Professional Development Needs of Canadian French*

Immersion Teachers (Appendix A: Questionnaire for FI Teachers), had a total of 53 items in the form of multiple choice, Likert scales, and open-ended comments.

The questionnaire itself can be broken down into the following subsections: (1) demographic, educational, and professional background information; (2) experiences with professional development; (3) perspectives regarding immersion pedagogy, teacher language ability, and professional development availability and its suitability; (4) and preferences for different professional development formats related to FI pedagogy and language ability. The first subsection (1) had 17 items in multiple choice format; the second subsection (2) had 7 items in multiple choice format, 1 open-ended comment item, and 1 rank-order item; the third subsection (3) had 11 Likert-scale items with the following options: *Strongly Agree, Agree, Slightly Agree, Slightly Disagree, Disagree,* and *Strongly Disagree*; and the fourth subsection (4) had 12 items in Likert-scale format with the same aforementioned response options. Lastly, a final, open-ended comment question allowed participants to append any additional comments regarding FI professional development that was not addressed in the questionnaire.

While this questionnaire goes beyond the scope of this thesis, it is crucial to situate the apposite items in relation to the broader study to gain a better understanding of how they synergize within the FI professional development, and by extension teacher training, framework; that is, language abilities cannot be treated as discrete when considering FI teacher training and professional development, as they are inherently linked to the initial and ongoing development of FI teachers and their ability to effectively teach in FI. As such, of the 53 items, 8 pertained to the language abilities of FI teachers, of which 5 targeted French language ability. These were operationalized via Likert-scale questions following the above-mentioned format and were subsequently triangulated and elaborated upon in the focus group portion of the study. As it

pertains to data analysis, questionnaire data was exported from the SoGo Survey platform to the SPSS quantitative data analysis software, where descriptive statistics were run and chi-square tests were conducted to determine any statistically significant differences between groups on the response measures. The independent variables used in the chi-square tests, which will be further described in Chapter 4, were geographical location, first language, years of experience, and level of education.

3.4. Focus Group Interview Methods

In conjunction with the questionnaire investigating the professional development needs of Canadian FI teachers, semi-structured online focus group interviews were conducted. These focus groups were audio-video recorded and transcribed. To maximize the representation of the study sample, focus groups were held for teachers in different regions across Canada. While the research assistant sought to keep teachers together by time zone and relative proximity, this turned out not to always be feasible given the pool of participants who volunteered their time. Therefore, focus groups were held for: Québec (1); Alberta and the Northwest Territories (2); Ontario and British Columbia (3); Saskatchewan and Manitoba (4); and Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island (5). All focus group volunteers completed the online questionnaire and provided consent prior to participating. Focus groups, which took place between the months of March and May 2021, were held on WebEx, a McGill-approved online meeting software, and were conducted in French, though participants were given the choice to answer in English if they were not comfortable to do so in French. Before asking the questions, the research assistant verbally reiterated the information detailed in the consent form and explained the format of the meeting. For the interviews themselves, a total of eight questions

were asked, and each participant was given an opportunity to answer (Appendix B: Focus Group Protocol). The questions were read aloud and posted in the chat portion of the platform. Given that these were semi-structured interviews, participants were permitted, and encouraged, to offer follow up comments, but were requested to physically raise their hand or emulate doing so with the raised hand emoticon available through the software so as to respect other participants. Additionally, researchers would often ask follow-up questions in response to participants' answers for further clarification or supplementary information. Tantamount to the questionnaires, the focus group protocol included a prompt pertaining to FI teacher language abilities, though I asked several follow up questions regarding their language abilities and professional development initiatives targeting these to better understand the questionnaire responses. The four focus groups were scheduled to last 60 to 90 minutes and were comprised of three to four participants each (N=19). On average, the focus groups lasted one hour and sixteen minutes (1:16), with the shortest being one hour (1:00) and the longest being one hour and thirty-three minutes (1:33). Upon completion of each session, a research assistant transcribed the audio-video recordings. These transcripts were then plugged into the NVivo software, a qualitative coding software, to code the data for common themes. A thematic analysis was conducted following Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines for effecting thematic analyses of qualitative data. In particular, both inductive (bottom-up) and deductive (top-down) analyses were performed at both the semantic (explicit) and latent (interpretive) levels. That is, themes emerged both from the guiding research questions (deductive) as well as from the data itself (inductive). In particular, theme 1 (*Confidence in FI Teachers' Proficiency Perceptions*) and theme 4 (*A Strong Desire for More French Language Professional Development*) were found deductively using research questions 1 (*How do FI teachers perceive their French language proficiency?*) and 2 (*Do FI*

teachers desire more language-related support?) to analyze the focus group data. While coding the data deductively, theme 2 (*Linguistic Insecurity and Insufficiency*) and theme 3 (*Current French Language PD – a lack thereof*) emerged inductively. Specifically, while analyzing the perceptions that FI teachers had of their French proficiency, they often alluded to the linguistic insecurity and insufficiency that their colleagues felt. Similarly, while analyzing the focus group data through the lens of French language-related support desires, FI teachers often mentioned the lack of immersion-specific PD offerings. Furthermore, these themes were analyzed explicitly to ascertain the linguistic needs as voiced by participants (semantic level) as well as interpreted to determine the themes' implications (latent level). These qualitative data were then triangulated with the quantitative questionnaire findings. For the purpose of this study, only themes related to FI teacher language abilities that emerged from the interviews were compared and contrasted to relevant questionnaire responses.

Chapter 4: Results

The current chapter presents the results of the questionnaire titled *Professional Development Needs of Canadian French Immersion Teachers* and the focus group interviews. As alluded to in the methodology chapter, the questionnaire is broken down into four parts, beginning with the demographic and background information of the participants. Four major themes, which will be outlined below and unpacked in subsequent chapters, emerged in the data: (1) *Confidence in FI Teachers' Proficiency Perceptions* explores the confidence ratings of teachers' personal French proficiency; (2) *Linguistic Insecurity and Insufficiency* analyzes the linguistic preoccupations and shortcomings reported by FI teachers; (3) *Current French Language PD – a lack thereof* takes a look at the ubiquitous lack of systematic French language support for FI teachers; and (4) *A Strong Desire for More French Language Professional Development* follows up the preceding theme with the desires for more linguistic support voiced by FI teachers. Graphic depictions of the quantitative questionnaire data and focus group excerpts, with pseudonyms for participants, to complement and triangulate the questionnaire data are included in each of these thematic segments. The following segment outlines the demographic, educational, and professional background information of the participants. This information also served as the independent variables for the chi-square tests run to compare groups on the dependent measures.

4.1. Demographic, Educational, and Professional Background Information

The initial section of the questionnaire asked five questions inquiring into the demographic, educational, and professional background information of the FI teacher participants.

The first and second questions were demographic background questions. The first question, which was in multiple choice format, asked participants to select the province or territory in which they teach FI, with the 13 Canadian provinces and territories serving as potential answers. To facilitate statistical analysis in the quantitative data analysis phase, these provinces and territories were amalgamated into: Western Canada (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba), Central Canada non-French (Ontario), Central Canada French (Québec), and the Maritimes (Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island) (Table 3). Excluded from the data are Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and Yukon, as not enough responses were garnered to make statistical conclusions for these territories.

Table 3

In which province or territory do you teach?

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Western Canada	77	38.90%
Maritimes	33	16.70%
Central Canada (non-French)	45	22.70%
Central Canada (French)	36	18.20%

The second demographic question, which was also in multiple choice format, asked participants to indicate their first language. Naturally, French and English, being the majority languages in Canada (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2018), were the most dominant first languages of participants, with other languages, such as Mandarin, Russian, Italian, and Arabic, following. Because English and French were so dominant as L1s and other L1s were few in

number, languages were grouped into native French speakers and non-native French speakers to facilitate data analysis, which is detailed in Table 4.

Table 4

Do you speak French as an L1?

Answer	Frequency	Percent
No	102	51.50%
Yes	96	48.50%

Following is the educational background information of FI teachers. The third question looked at the highest level of education of participating FI teachers (Table 5). By and large, a bachelor's degree was the highest level of education, though a large portion of participants also held a graduate-level degree.

Table 5

What is your highest level of education?

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Undergraduate	119	60.10%
Graduate	62	31.30%

Last is the fourth question, which inquired into the professional background of participants. This question asked participants to provide the years of experience they had as FI teachers (Table 6). It is clear that most participating FI teachers had significant experience as FI teachers, as only 8.6% had taught for one year or less.

Table 6

How many years of experience do you have as a French immersion teacher?

Answer	Frequency	Percent
0-1 year	17	8.60%
2-5 years	44	22.20%
6-10 years	46	23.20%
11-15 years	28	14.10%
More than 15 years	59	29.80%

4.2. Questionnaire and Focus Group Responses

In this segment of the results chapter, the results for the questionnaires and the focus groups pertaining to the linguistic needs of FI teachers will be outlined. For the questionnaire, non-parametric chi-square tests were run to cross-tabulate the four independent variables above and the response measures (Questions 29, 36, 38, 44, and 46) to ascertain any influence that the independent variables had on the data. As mentioned, four primary themes presented themselves in the data. These will each be considered in turn.

4.2.1. Confidence in FI Teachers' Proficiency Perceptions

Questionnaire Responses

Two Likert-scale items measured FI teachers' self-perceived language proficiency by asking them to rate their confidence in their French language proficiency and their understanding of French grammar. The results to the first item, Question 36, which investigated participants' confidence rating with regard to their French proficiency, convincingly demonstrate that FI teachers are, by and large, confident in their ability to use French in the classroom (Figure 1).

Much like the responses to teachers' confidence rating in Question 36, the ratings for the Question 38, which asked FI teachers to evaluate their understanding of French grammar, too, indicate a high degree of confidence (Figure 2). That is, FI teachers are confident in their ability to both speak French with ease and accuracy and understand French grammar. To reveal any significant differences between groups (i.e., L1, geographical location, level of education, and years of experience) on the dependent measures, chi-square tests were run. However, no significant differences were found for the confidence ratings of participants' French proficiency for L1, χ^2 (4, N= 197) = 22.230, p = > .001; geographical location, χ^2 (12, N= 190) = 11.008, p = >.001; level of education, χ^2 (4, N= 181) = 7.185, p = > .001; or years of experience, χ^2 (16, N= 193) = 20.601, p = >.001. Similarly, participants' confidence ratings of their understanding of French grammar did not significantly differ for L1, χ^2 (5, N= 197) = 4.119, p = > .001; geographical location χ^2 (15, N= 190) = 9.373, p = > .001; level of education χ^2 (5, N= 181) = 5, p = > .001; or years of experience χ^2 (20, N= 193) = 32.628, p = > .001. In other words, participants' first language, geographical location, level of education, and years of experience had no significant effect on their confidence in French proficiency or understanding of French grammar.

Focus Group Responses

These responses were corroborated in the focus groups. Specifically, when asked how participants felt about their linguistic competencies to accomplish their everyday teaching tasks, both native speakers and non-native speakers alike voiced general confidence and comfort in their language abilities:

> Je suis francophone, donc 100% sur l'oral en fait, et sur l'écrit. Je n'ai pas de difficulté. – *P04QC, Québec, francophone*

> Moi, je me positionnerais peut-être à 82%. Un 82% de fluidité à l'oral et je dirais pas mal universel. Tu sais, je me débrouille, je réussi à me faire comprendre, mais c'est sûr qu'il y a des moments où que je cherche mes mots. Mais c'est sûr que c'est suffisant, je réussi à enseigner les enfants, mais pas sans lacunes de temps en temps. Mais je trouve que c'est correct. *–P06QC, Québec, non-francophone*

> En tant que mes compétences linguistiques, étant donné que moi j'enseigne à l'école secondaire, je me sens assez à l'aise en fait, surtout parce que [dans] notre école je suis assez chanceux que la plupart de mes collègues, à peu près un demi de mes collègues, dans mon département sont, en effet, les francophones qui viennent d'ailleurs, que ça soit du Québec, que ça soit de la France, etc. … Mais du coup, je suis tout à fait reconnaissant que moi, je suis anglophone, et des fois, je me retrouve un petit peu piégé avec certains mots, surtout si c'est de la langue, ou bien c'est le langage vraiment scientifique. Par contre, si c'est par exemple le français en tant que la littérature, je me sens à l'aise. *–P01ON, Ontario, non-francophone*

> Ma compétence linguistique est supérieure, ce que je crois. J'ai une maîtrise en français et je suis traductrice et linguiste. Donc, si je trouve ma compétence en français suffisante, oui, absolument. J'ai une grande passion pour la langue française. Je crois que -- je suis très fière d'enseigner un très bon français à mes élèves. Et mon français est suffisant pour accomplir mes tâches d'enseignant en immersion, mes élèves voient tous les jours, entendent tous les jours et sont exposés tous les jours avec compétence supérieure en français. Ils ont un bon exemple : comment parler, comment écrire, comment prononcer, comment faire une bonne prononciation, et je crois qu'ils ont un bon modèle à suivre et ils sont très fiers de parler français -- un bon français. *– P16MB, Manitoba, francophone*

> Je suis une finissante du programme d'immersion, alors je suis consciente que mon français n'est pas parfait. Je crois que j'ai amélioré avec les années, avec l'expérience en français, mais ce n'était pas par accident, j'ai travaillé mon français, j'essaye de perfectionner toujours, souvent mes fautes et mes lacunes. Alors, je sais que ce n'est pas parfait, je travaille encore pour améliorer mon français, mais je pense que c'est suffisant, mais ça pourrait être mieux aussi. *–P09AB, Alberta, non-francophone*

> Donc moi, mes compétences en français, j'ai aucun vraiment problème. Je me sens bien, compétences à l'oral et à l'écrit. *–P14SK, Saskatchewan, francophone*

Interestingly, however, while both native and non-native speakers expressed overall comfort with their French, it can be seen that non-native speakers hedged their responses by annexing the caveat that, being non-native speakers, they have linguistic shortcomings and that they are cognizant of these. Conversely, native speakers did not voice this preoccupation. This conflicts somewhat with the questionnaire responses, as respondents were, rather unanimously, confident

in their French language capacities, regardless of first language, geographical location, years of experience, and education. In summary, all participants felt confident in their French proficiency and their understanding of French grammar; however, it was non-native speakers in the focus groups who recognized and articulated their weaknesses in their French proficiency.

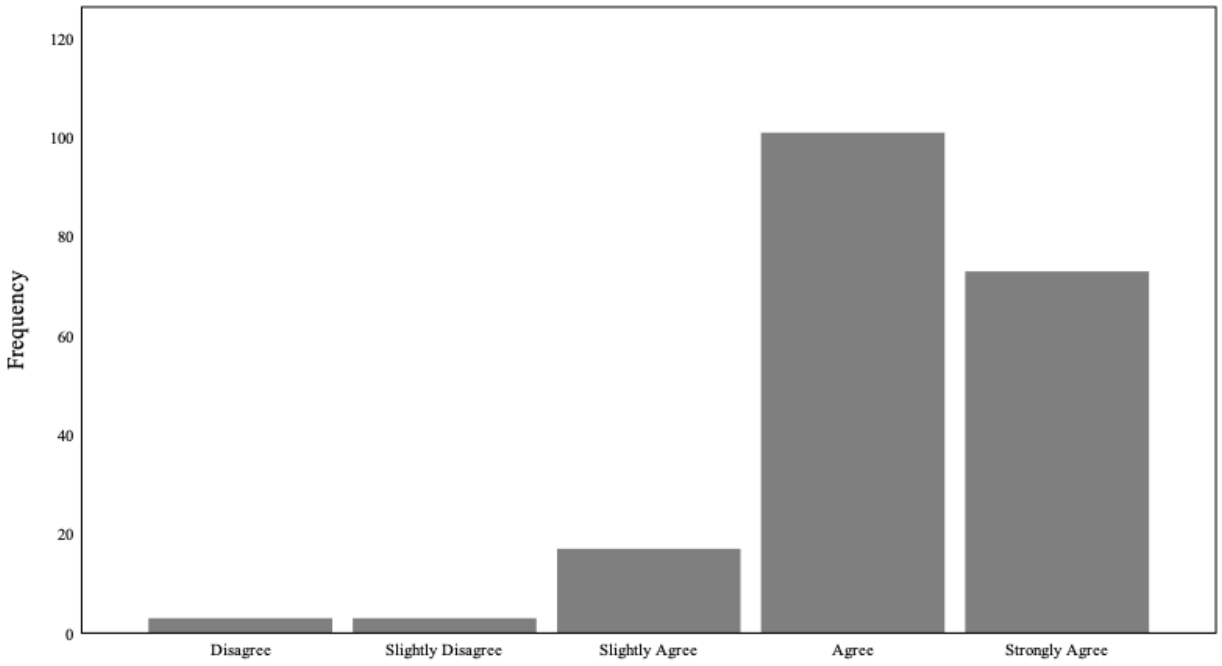

Figure 1: Overall, I feel confident in my French language proficiency.

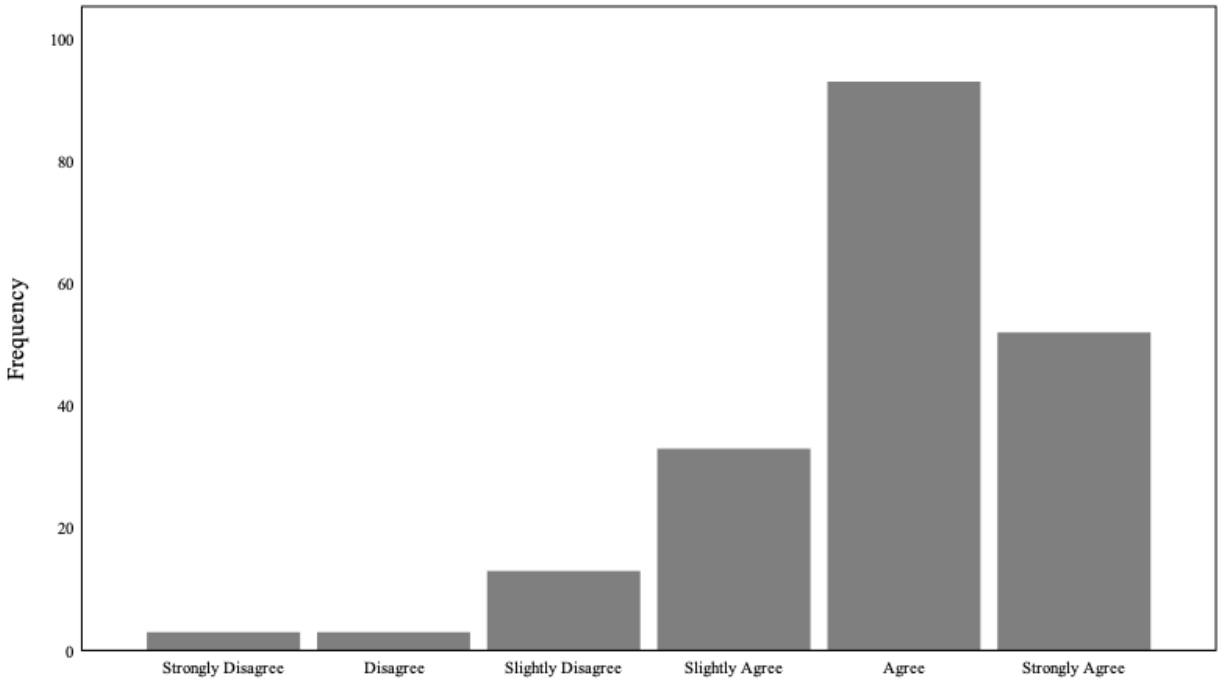

Figure 2: I believe that I have a profound understanding of how French grammar works.

4.2.2. Linguistic Insecurity and Insufficiency

Focus Groups Responses

Questions 36 and 38 of the questionnaire and the associated focus group prompt targeted FI teachers' perceptions of their own French language proficiency and understanding of French grammar. While the results of these questions did not indicate any significant disagreement with regard to FI teachers' personal perceptions of French confidence, a focus group follow up question, which was asked to gain a better understanding of how FI teacher French proficiency was perceived in a general sense by FI teachers, as well as conversation surrounding the first focus group prompt outlined in 4.1.1., revealed the titular theme: linguistic insecurity and insufficiency. In fact, this topic recurred in all focus group discussions, with or without prompting participants to further discuss it. FI teachers, when asked how they perceived the quality of FI teachers' French language production and knowledge in general, revealed a perception that this proficiency is flawed and that these teachers experience a high degree of linguistic insecurity:

> Les anglophones qui enseignent dans les cycles supérieurs en immersion ont de la difficulté avec la forme. Et il y a aussi des erreurs qu'on laisse passer à répétition et souvent pendant des années … La forme, c'est vraiment quelque chose qui pose problème, c'est apparent lors des examens de la commission scolaire … Ce que j'ai vu aussi, c'est que lorsqu'un enseignant d'immersion anglophone a un stagiaire francophone, il va lui laisser l'enseignement de la matière du français parce qu'il y a vraiment une insécurité de ce côté-là. *–P04QC, Québec, francophone*

> Alors, je trouve que surtout ici à Victoria, c'est que parmi les profs d'immersion, il y a beaucoup de fragilité envers leurs compétences linguistiques. Je crois que les gens se sentent un peu gênés quelques fois à parler en français entre eux … Et il y a aussi ce problème, dont j'ai parlé avant, de la fragilité que les gens se sentent envers leur niveau de compétence linguistique, et je sais qu'il y a beaucoup de profs qui ne sont pas confortables d'avoir un collègue dans leur classe parce qu'il se sentent gênés qu'ils ont pas un bon niveau de français. Et je crois que ça, c'est aussi un grand problème. *–P13BC, British Columbia, non-francophone*

> Ce que je voulais dire par rapport à mes expériences, la qualité de langue d'enseignement en français varie beaucoup d'une région à l'autre. *–P11NT, Northwest Territories, francophone*

It is evident that FI teachers, particularly non-native speakers, across Canada demonstrate weakness in French and experience linguistic insecurity with regard to this quality of French. The omnipresence of this linguistic security is, however, no accident. That is, two factors contributing to this linguistic insecurity and insufficiency arose in these conversations. Firstly, there is a penury of FI teachers in Canada necessitating schools and school boards to hire teachers with suboptimal French proficiency:

> Je trouve qu'il y a souvent des enseignants qui ont une petite connaissance de la langue française et ça va être dit « Okay, c'est suffisant. » Comme, tu peux demander des petites affaires, donc, OK allez-y avec un mode de vie simple pour immersion ou quelque chose. J'ai vu ça à plusieurs reprises. *–P17NS, Nova Scotia, non-francophone*

One participant who served on the hiring committee at their school noted that:

> On faisait les entrevues en anglais, et puis on savait pas vraiment – je trouve que des fois l'administration est tellement désespérée pour trouver un prof. Vraiment n'importe qui pourrait dire, ah oui, je suis francophone and « Go » tu es dans la classe. Donc ça tombe vraiment sur ceux qui embauchent d'être responsables de s'améliorer au besoin. *–P15MB, Manitoba, francophone*

Another mentioned a decline in the quality of French due to this shortage of qualified FI teachers:

> Je suis pas mal certaine que tout le monde est au courant du dilemme, du dilemme de la pénurie d'enseignants en immersion à travers le Canada. Mais ce qui arrive, c'est vraiment un dilemme parce qu'apparemment, ça, [P09AB] et moi, on a pris conscience, surtout au congrès ACPI à Québec, il y a 2 ans, mais la qualité du français à travers le pays est à la baisse. Et ça, c'est très inquiétant. C'est vraiment inquiétant. *–P07AB, Alberta, francophone*

In fact, one participant explained how it was necessary to lower hiring standards simply to fill these content roles:

> On avait besoin de continuer à trouver des personnes et ça devient vraiment difficile de trouver quelqu'un qui parle français et est une bonne enseignante. Alors même des fois, on doit baisser attentes. *–P08AB, Alberta, non-francophone*

Secondly, two participants describe how feelings of insecurity and insufficiency on the part of these weaker FI teachers creates resistance towards seeking out and attending professional development initiatives that are in French for fear of judgement. This, in turn, further impedes these teachers' ability and potential to improve their French proficiency:

> Pour ajouter à ceci, avec certaines séances de perfectionnement, je sais qu'il y a des gens qui ne veulent pas venir, ou bien tu ne peux pas y aller étant donné qu'ils ont la croyance que leur niveau de français n'est pas assez fort. Alors l'insécurité linguistique, je crois que ça c'est vraiment un problème qui existe surtout chez les enseignants, parce qu'ici en Ontario, dépendant du niveau que vous enseignez, dépendant des conseils scolaires, certains conseils scolaires ne nécessitent pas un test de français pour pouvoir enseigner le français d'immersion à leur niveau. Donc, étant donné qu'il n'y a pas de test, il y a certains enseignants qui entrent dans la profession sachant qu'il y a ces sessions de perfectionnement, mais ils ont – ils craignent, en fait, d'entrer ou bien d'assister, surtout parce qu'il y a l'idée en tête que les autres vont te juger, surtout si ton niveau de français n'est pas aussi haut, étant donné que c'est une séance à propos de l'immersion, on espère bien que notre niveau peut enseigner ce niveau, mais si on a pas de confiance, c'est presque comme une paradoxe qui se crée ici. *–P01ON, Ontario, non-francophone*

> Je crois que c'est difficile à trouver les choses qui marchent bien pour tout le monde, mais, de ce que je remarque dans mon conseil scolaire, je crois que l'insécurité linguistique, c'est une chose importante et ça empêche beaucoup de gens à aller aux conférences, les choses comme ça parce qu'ils ont peur, comme P01ON a dit, d'être jugé ou de se sentir -- alors, c'est exactement ça que le problème ne s'améliore pas parce qu'ils vont pas chercher des choses qui vont les aider à parler mieux en français. Alors, je crois qu'il y a un petit peu de « vicious cycle » que les choses qui sont en français. Il y a beaucoup de profs d'immersion qui n'y vont pas parce qu'ils sont en français, et ils ont peur qu'on va dire que leur français n'est pas assez bon ou qu'ils vont pas comprendre, ou quelque chose comme ça. *–P13BC, British Columbia, non-francophone*

To summarize, there is a reported linguistic insecurity and insufficiency of non-native speaking FI teachers with regard to their French language proficiency. This, as participants describe, is exacerbated by the high demand of FI teachers in Canada, which, in consequence, forces hiring committees to lower their standards to fill these rolls, thus creating, as one participant eloquently states, a "vicious cycle." Furthermore, once occupying these positions, FI teachers who experience this insecurity and insufficiency are reluctant to attend professional development

initiatives in French – which could, in theory, contribute to improving their linguistic capacities – thereby further compounding this aforementioned cycle.

4.2.3. Current French Language PD – a lack thereof

The preceding section considered the focus group data pertaining to FI teacher linguistic insecurity and insufficiency. This section once again draws on the focus group data but for the theme pertaining to the lack of language-related PD initiatives for FI teachers. Firstly, when asked about the immersion-specific PD initiatives that FI teachers have access to or have attended, participants often expressed that there were little-to-no initiatives targeting FI competencies:

> Ça fait peut-être 10 ans que j'enseigne et ça fait probablement 7 ou 8 ans que je ne suis offert aucun perfectionnement professionnel dans quoi que ce soit. Donc je ne suis jamais envoyée pour des formations, ça n'arrive pas. Parfois, il y a une fois par année… Parce que notre conseil anglophone, tous les supports qu'ils offrent, c'est en anglais, donc on peut jamais aider les élèves qui ont vraiment besoin de beaucoup d'aide et nous, on a pas de formation comme « we're floundering » c'est très -- c'est très difficile. *–P02ON, Ontario, francophone*

> Donc, cette année, on a pas reçu de nouvelles pour savoir quelles formations seraient intéressantes. Je sais que ça leur ferait du travail de plus, mais ça serait bien qu'ils nous envoient l'information pour que tous les profs soient au courant. Aussi, je n'ai pas encore eu d'atelier uniquement pour les enseignants en immersion française. *–P03QC, Québec, francophone*

> Spécifiquement pour l'immersion, non, non. Moi j'en ai pas vu en tout cas. Et puis c'est quelque chose que je pense qui manque beaucoup. La seule occasion que j'ai eue de prendre part à une activité de perfectionnement professionnel spécifique pour les enseignants d'immersion c'était à l'université lorsqu'il y a eu l'ACPI, on fait une conférence, je sais pas trop, à Régina, et puis ça c'était le seul temps dans mes 9 dernières années que j'ai eu la chance de participer à quelque chose qui était spécifiquement pour les enseignants d'immersion. Le reste du temps, habituellement, c'est anglophone. Et puis je trouve que c'est pas adéquat, ça reflète pas bien l'apprentissage d'une langue seconde. *– P14SK, Saskatchewan, francophone*

Instead, many of these initiatives targeted teaching, content, and curriculum in a more general sense rather than an immersion-specific sense:

> Je crois que -- je sais pas, depuis que je suis ici au Canada, ça fait 13 ans et je travaille toujours à la même école avec le même conseil scolaire, alors je n'ai pas beaucoup de niveaux de comparaison, mais on a 5 jours par année de développement professionnel et je crois qu'il y en a 3 qui sont basés à l'école, et on doit faire les choses comme [P02ON] a dit « Health and safety » des choses qui ne sont pas visés pour les enseignants français, c'est juste plus générale pour l'école et le curriculum et les choses comme ça. *–P13BC, British Columbia, non-francophone*

> Cette année, on en a beaucoup de perfectionnement qui est offert, mais c'est surtout relativement à l'enseignement en ligne. À ma commission scolaire généralement, il y a beaucoup de formation qui est offerte, pas nécessairement juste pour l'immersion par contre. On est toujours ensemble. Il y a quelques petites choses qui sont vraiment pour les enseignants d'immersion, mais en général, ça s'offre aux deux côtés en même temps. C'est plus des sujets généraux que des sujets spécifiques à l'immersion. Habituellement moi, pour aller chercher une activité de perfectionnement, je vais aller avec mes besoins du moment. *–P05QC, Québec, francophone*

> Ça dépend. Habituellement l'étude de perfectionnement professionnel qui s'offre à nous comme enseignants en Saskatchewan, en général, c'était offert par notre union. Donc le « Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation » ils ont comme un sous-groupe qui offre des occasions perfectionnement professionnel. Habituellement c'est des ateliers en lien avec la littératie, les mathématiques, le comportement parfois. *–P14SK, Saskatchewan, francophone*

> Ça, c'est une question un peu difficile pour moi parce que ça fait 4 ou 5 ans depuis que j'ai assisté à un atelier spécifiquement pour l'immersion. Normalement, c'est pour mathématiques ou plus précisément mathématiques 8 parce que c'est une année où on a un examen provincial, donc ils parlent comme, oh, nos élèves ne font pas bien, ils aiment plus parler de ça et non pas comment va nos élèves en – leur apprentissage en français, ça c'est comme ça, c'est moins important, ça me semble. *–P17NS, Nova Scotia, non-francophone*

Secondly, in all of the above-cited excerpts, there was no allusion to initiatives systematically offered by schools or school boards that target the linguistic development of teachers; instead, as mentioned, these favoured content, curriculum, and general teaching competencies over language. This is also true when PD does target immersion-specific competencies:

> On avait entre autres des formations avec des conseillers pédagogiques de la commission scolaire St. Exupéry pour apprendre comment enseigner des mathématiques en accueil à des non-locuteurs du français. *–P06QC, Québec, non-francophone*

> L'année passée, j'ai eu l'opportunité d'être la conseillère pédagogique pour le français dans notre conseil scolaire et j'ai eu l'occasion de trouver toutes sortes de groupes qui offrent le perfectionnement. Alors, je sais qu'il y en a au niveau provincial, au niveau régional, au niveau national et les partenaires d'ACPI aussi hors du Canada. Alors, ce que je cherche ces jours-ci, ce sont les ressources pour l'inclusion. Je sais que l'immersion est en évolution maintenant, et on veut que ça soit un programme plus accueillant pour tout élève. Alors, l'année passée, j'ai suivi une étude de livre avec Katie Arnett pour l'inclusion en immersion. J'aime les présentations de Renée Bourgoin de Nouveau-Brunswick parce qu'elle parle souvent de la compréhension de lecture et la difficulté en apprentissage des langues. Et elle fait le pont entre les difficultés en apprentissage de langue en français avec ce qu'on voit en anglais aussi. *–P09AB, Alberta, non-francophone*

> Donc avec le district dans lequel je suis, il y a plusieurs journées de formation qui sont intégrées dans l'horaire. Donc, par exemple, on a eu depuis que j'ai commencé, il y a eu plusieurs rencontres en mathématiques … comment enseigner les mathématiques en immersion. Et puis aussi on a eu dernièrement des formations pour la lecture en situation d'immersion. *–P11NT, Northwest Territories, francophone*

> Je pense que pour moi, mon accès au perfectionnement professionnel en général, c'est au SAGE, c'est les rencontres UFM à l'automne, c'est une journée où tous les profs au Manitoba, on a la journée pour faire du perfectionnement, donc, typiquement on se rend à Winnipeg et puis on fait des ateliers pendant la journée. Cette année, c'était de façon virtuelle, donc c'est bon. Pour nous autres, c'est difficile parce que on est éloigné. Bon, alors l'année passée, le bureau d'éducation française a fait un atelier au sujet du curriculum de mathématiques. *–P15MB, Manitoba, francophone*

> En temps normal, on a quelques ateliers où on est sorti de nos classes et on a des ateliers en littératie et en mathématiques… Il y a eu des ateliers sur les apprentissages à distance, mais il y a eu aussi des ateliers qui étaient pour les enseignants d'immersion avec René Bourgoin. On a appris, on a travaillé sur la lecture, puis les apprenants qui avaient des difficultés en lecture avec Léo-James Levesque. On a appris, on a travaillé sur la communication orale, la lecture, l'écriture et même la grammaire. *–P18NB, New Brunswick, francophone*

Evidently, these workshops do target key aspects of teaching and immersion pedagogy; however, linguistic development and maintenance are not at the forefront of initiatives offered by educational bodies. In fact, in one focus group, when asked about the opportunities available to FI teachers related to French language development, it was stated that teachers often had to fend for themselves in this regard to seek out and attend such workshops:

> Je sais que si on en trouve, on peut les prendre. Comme je sais que mes collègues, elles ont pris – elles ont suivi un cours de conversation francophone. Donc à chaque, je sais pas,

> jeudi soir, admettons, elles ont fait, comme, c'était en ligne, mais c'était à eux de trouver, comme, spécifiquement offert par la division ou par l'école, je dirais non. Mais y'en a, faut juste les trouver. *–P15MB, francophone*

> [Je veux] juste dire exactement la même chose, donc la tâche vous revient de les dénicher… quand on parlait des activités de perfectionnement professionnel encore là aussi, c'est à nous qui revient l'initiative de, okay, donc, si vous voulez quelque chose qui est spécifique à vous, vous devez l'organiser ou même quand il y a des sessions offertes par la division, on est à la recherche d'enseignants qui vont présenter, c'est jamais à des personnes qui viennent pour nous ou quoi que ce soit, ou on peut vraiment se concentrer sur différentes choses. *–P14SK, Saskatchewan, francophone*

To summarize, it seems that FI-specific PD is scarce relative to PD in mainstream education, and what PD is offered tends to favour more general teaching competencies that do not target those within the immersion framework. Furthermore, when PD initiatives do have a concentration on immersion-specific pedagogy, content and classroom-based competencies take precedence over those that are language-based, despite linguistic competencies being linked to those required to succeed as an FI teacher. Finally, it was inferred from antecedent excerpts inquiring into immersion PD and gleaned from those explicitly discussing language-related PD that governing school bodies do not systematically offer French language-related PD opportunities for FI teachers; rather, teachers are expected to locate and attend these of their own volition and time.

4.2.4 A Strong Desire for more French Language PD

Questionnaire Responses

Whereas the preceding segments investigated FI teachers' perceptions regarding their linguistic competencies and the current state of language-related PD opportunities, the present segment considers the desire expressed by FI teachers for more PD initiatives that target the French language. Three questionnaire items inquired into the French language PD desires of FI teachers. Firstly, Question 29 asked teachers to rate their level of agreement regarding the statement: "I would like more opportunities to continue improving my French proficiency." As it

can be seen in Figure 3, FI teachers largely agree with the statement in Question 29, with the most frequent response being 'Strongly Agree' (33.5%), followed by 'Agree' (23.9%), and then 'Slightly Agree' (19.3%). While there was disagreement among participants, the proportion of those who agreed outweighs those who disagreed; in fact, when tallied together, those who agreed, to any extent, totalled 76.6%, while those who disagreed totalled 23.4% (Figure 4). Therefore, on the whole, FI teachers want more opportunities to continue improving their French proficiency. To determine any significant differences in responses between groups, chi-square tests were run, and significant differences were found for L1 groups, χ^2 (5, N= 197) = 28.044, p = <.001 (Table 7). In other words, there were statistically significant differences on the response measure for Question 29 between participants who speak French as a first language and those who do not. Specifically, 90.2% of non-native speakers of French agreed that they would like more opportunities to continue improving their French proficiency (19.6% slightly agreed, 27.5% agreed, 43.1% strongly agreed), which, in turn, constitutes 60.9% of participants who agreed overall (Table 8). In comparison, 62.1% of native speakers of French also agreed that more of such opportunities is desired (18.9% slightly agreed, 20.0% agreed, 23.2% strongly agreed), which constitutes 39.1% of those who agreed overall. Furthermore, when considering the proportions of those who disagreed, only 21.7% of those who disagreed were non-native speakers, whereas 78.3% of those who disagreed were native speakers. Thus, by and large, non-native speakers of French more strongly desire opportunities to continue improving their French proficiency; nevertheless, a large portion of native speakers, too, desire more of these opportunities.

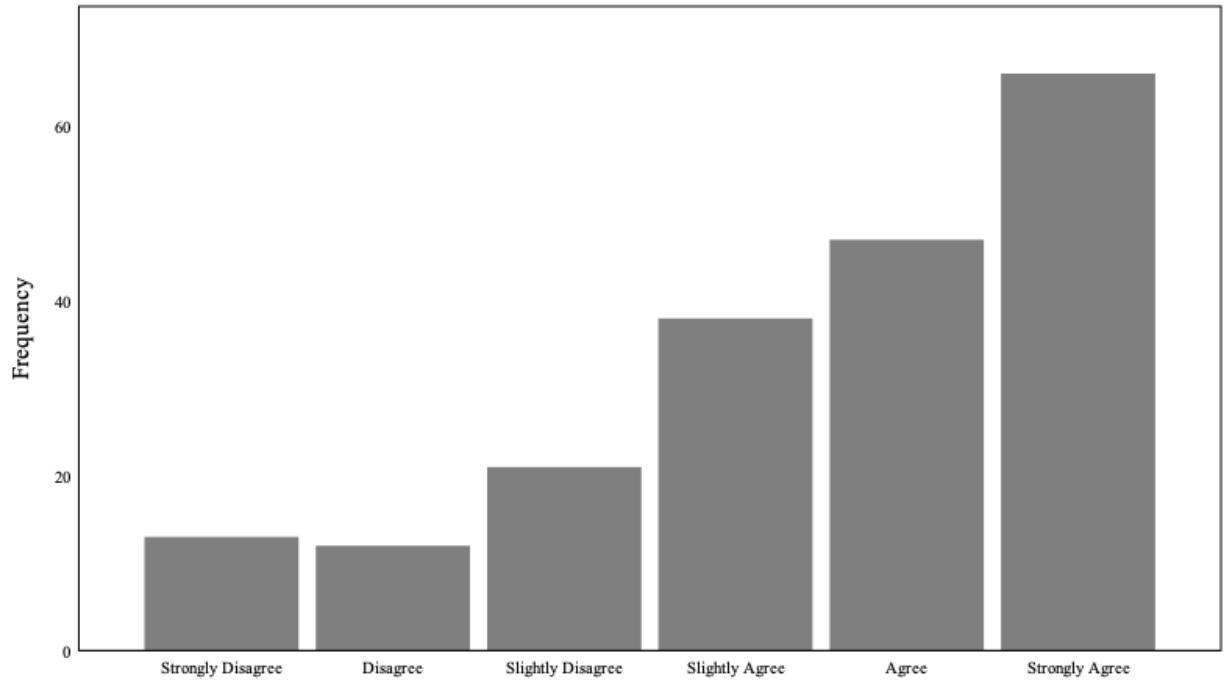

Figure 3: I would like more opportunities to continue improving my French proficiency.

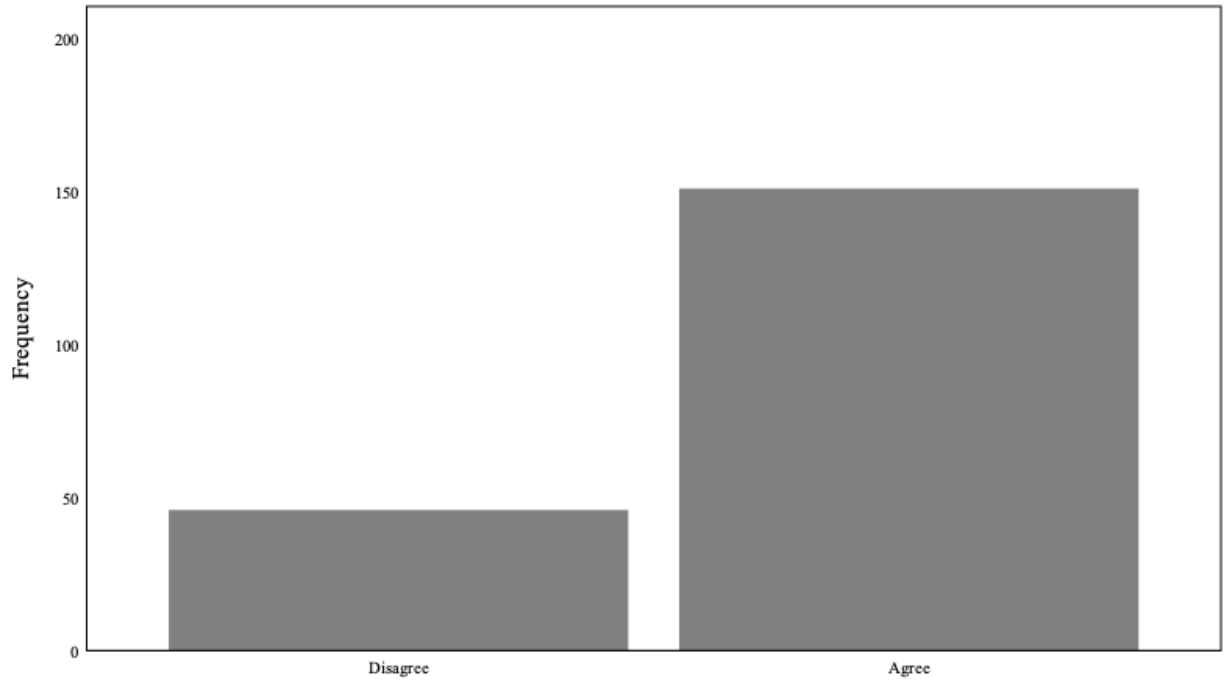

Figure 4: I would like more opportunities to continue improving my French proficiency.

Desire for more opportunities to continue improving French proficiency by L1 (French native speaker/non-native speaker)[aa]

			I would like to have more opportunities to continue improving my French proficiency.						
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Do you speak French as an L1?	No	n	0	5	5	20	28	44	102
		% of non-native/native speakers	0.0%	4.9%	4.9%	19.6%	27.5%	43.1%	100.0%
		% of participants	0.0%	41.7%	23.8%	52.6%	59.6%	66.7%	51.8%
	Yes	n	13	7	16	18	19	22	95
		% of non-native/native speakers	13.7%	7.4%	16.8%	18.9%	20.0%	23.2%	100.0%
		% of participants	100.0%	58.3%	76.2%	47.4%	40.4%	33.3%	48.2%
Total		n	13	12	21	38	47	66	197
		% of non-native/native speakers	6.6%	6.1%	10.7%	19.3%	23.9%	33.5%	100.0%
		% of participants	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

aa. Chi(df) = 28.044(5), p= 0.001

Table 7: Chi-square test for Question 29.

Desire for more opportunities to continue improving French proficiency by L1 (French native speaker/non-native speaker)

			I would like more opportunities to improve my French proficiency		
			Disagree	Agree	Total
Do you speak French as an L1?	No	Count	10	92	102
		% of native/non-native speakers	9.8%	90.2%	100.0%
		% of participants	21.7%	60.9%	51.8%
	Yes	Count	36	59	95
		% of native/non-native speakers	37.9%	62.1%	100.0%
		% of participants	78.3%	39.1%	48.2%
Total		Count	46	151	197
		% of native/non-native speakers	23.4%	76.6%	100.0%
		% of participants	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8: Chi-square test for Question 29.

Similar to Question 29, Questions 44 and 46 both investigated language-related PD desires of FI teachers; however, because Question 46 is closely related to Question 29, this will be considered first. Question 46 of the questionnaire asked participants to rate their level of agreement regarding the statement: "I would like to receive more professional development opportunities that would enhance my French proficiency." Overall, FI teachers do, in fact, desire more of such opportunities, as the most frequent responses were Slightly Agree (26.5%), followed by Agree (19.4%), and then Strongly Agree (16.8%) (Figure 5). Despite disagreement

in the responses, participants who agreed (62.8%), when added together, outnumbered those who did not (37.2%) (Figure 6). While the proportions are less convincing than those in Question 29, it is evident that FI teachers desire more opportunities to enhance their French proficiency. To ascertain any differences in the responses between groups, chi-square tests were run, which produced statistically significant differences between L1 groups, χ^2 (5, N= 196) = 52.141, p = <.001 (Table 9). Put differently, non-native speakers and native speakers differed significantly in their responses. On the one hand, 81.2% of non-native speakers agreed that they want more PD opportunities that would enhance their French proficiency (23.8% slightly agreed, 25.7% agreed, and 31.7% strongly agreed), which, overall, equates to 66.7% of participants who agreed to Question 46 (Table 10). On the other hand, 43.2% of native speakers of French agreed that they would like more opportunities to enhance their French proficiency (29.5% slightly agreed, 12.6% agreed, and 1.1% strongly agreed), which equates to 33.3% of the total amount of participants who agreed. Moreover, only 26.0% of those who disagreed were non-native speakers, while the remaining 74.0% of those who disagreed were native speakers. Unequivocally, significantly more non-native speakers desire more chances to enhance their French proficiency, though there

is still a considerable degree of agreement among native speakers, too.

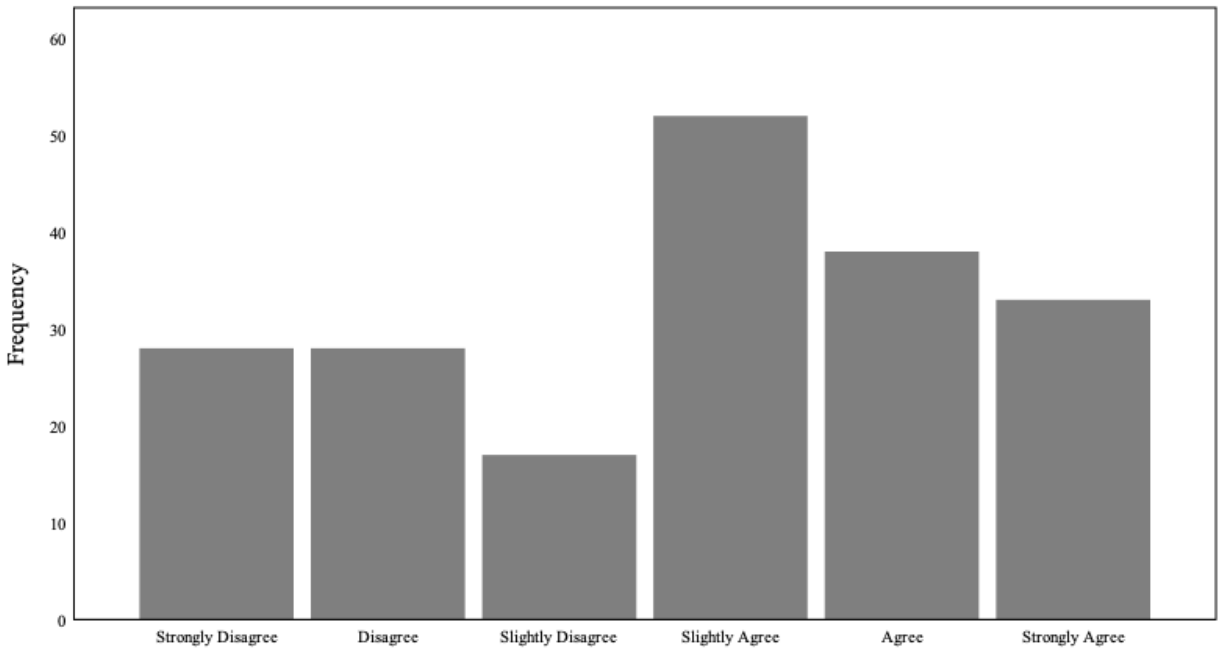

Figure 5: I would like to receive more professional development opportunities that would enhance my French proficiency.

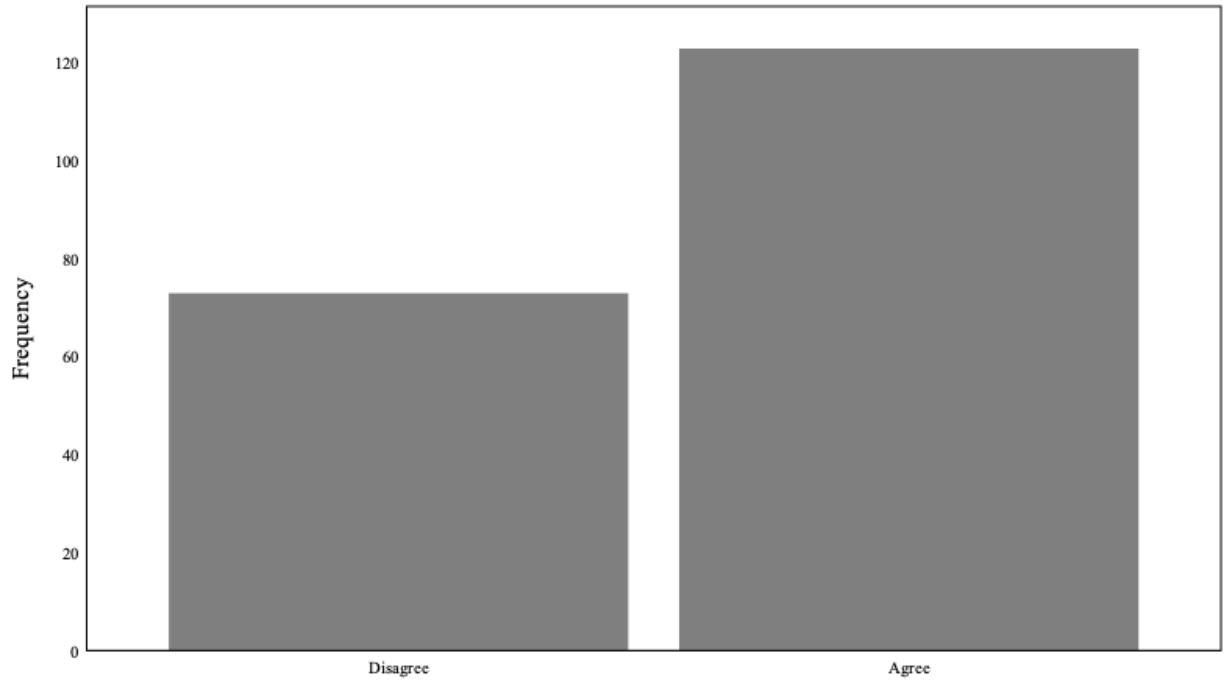

Figure 6: I would like to receive more professional development opportunities that would enhance my French proficiency.

Desire for mroe professional development opportunities that would enhance French proficiency by L1 (native/non-native speaker)[a]

			I would like to receive professional development opportunities that would enhance my French proficiency.[a]						
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total[a]
Do you speak French as an L1?	No	Count	7	9	3	24	26	32	101
		% of native/non-native speakers	6.9%	8.9%	3.0%	23.8%	25.7%	31.7%	100.0%
		% of participants	25.0%	32.1%	17.6%	46.2%	68.4%	97.0%	51.5%
	Yes	Count	21	19	14	28	12	1	95
		% of native/non-native speakers	22.1%	20.0%	14.7%	29.5%	12.6%	1.1%	100.0%
		% of participants	75.0%	67.9%	82.4%	53.8%	31.6%	3.0%	48.5%
Total		Count	28	28	17	52	38	33	196
		% of native/non-native speakers	14.3%	14.3%	8.7%	26.5%	19.4%	16.8%	100.0%
		% of participants	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

a. Chi(df) = 52.141(5), p= 0.001

Table 9: Chi-square test for Question 46.

Desire for more professional development opportunities that would enhance French proficiency by L1 (native/non-native speaker)

			I would like more professional development opportunities that would enhance my French proficiency		
			Disagree	Agree	Total
Do you speak French as an L1?	No	Count	19	82	101
		% of native/non-native speakers	18.8%	81.2%	100.0%
		% of participants	26.0%	66.7%	51.5%
	Yes	Count	54	41	95
		% of native/non-native speakers	56.8%	43.2%	100.0%
		% of participants	74.0%	33.3%	48.5%
Total		Count	73	123	196
		% of native/non-native speakers	37.2%	62.8%	100.0%
		% of participants	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10: Chi-square test for Question 46.

Questionnaire Responses

Lastly, Question 44 inquired into participants' level of agreement regarding the statement: "I would like to receive professional development that would help deepen my understanding of French grammar." On the whole, participants expressed general agreement that they would like more PD opportunities that target French grammar, with the most frequently selected responses being 'Slightly Agree' (29.6%), followed by 'Slightly Disagree' (17.3%), and then 'Agree' (15.3%) (Figure 7). Unlike the previous questions where the most frequent responses were along the 'Agree' spectrum, 'Slightly Disagree' was the second most frequently selected response in Question 44. Nevertheless, when all the responses were tallied together, those who agreed (59.7%) outweighed those who disagreed (40.3%) (Figure 8). As such, FI teachers indeed prefer to have more PD initiatives that target French grammar. To discern any differences between participants' responses to Question 44, chi-square tests were run, generating a statistically significant difference once again for the L1 groups, χ^2 (5, N= 196) = 18.007, p = <.001 (Table 11). This means that non-native speakers differed significantly from native

speakers in their responses for this questionnaire item. More specifically, 64.4% of non-native speakers agreed that they would like more PD that would deepen their understanding of French grammar (22.2% slightly agreed, 18.8% agreed, and 22.8% strongly agreed), which amounts to 55.6% of participants who agreed overall (Table 12). In comparison, 54.7% of native speakers expressed agreement to the statement in Question 44 (36.8% slightly agreed, 11.6% agreed, and 6.3% strongly agreed), which amounts to 44.4% of those who agreed overall. Despite the chi-square test producing a significant result for between L1 groups, these figures are not considerably different. That said, the proportions of participants who slightly agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed to Question 44 and who were also non-native speakers were 39.7%, 63.3%, and 79.3% respectively. By contrast, the proportions of those who slightly agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed and who were also native speakers were 60.3%, 36.7%, and 20.7% respectively. With the exception of slightly agree, the majority of participants who agreed or strongly agreed were non-native speakers. Thus, while the degree of agreement between native speakers and non-native speakers seems comparable at first blush, by looking more closely at the data, it can be concluded that non-native speakers more strongly desire PD that deepens their understanding of French grammar when compared to their native speaker counterparts. Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize that native speakers, too, desire grammar-oriented PD initiatives, albeit to a lesser extent.

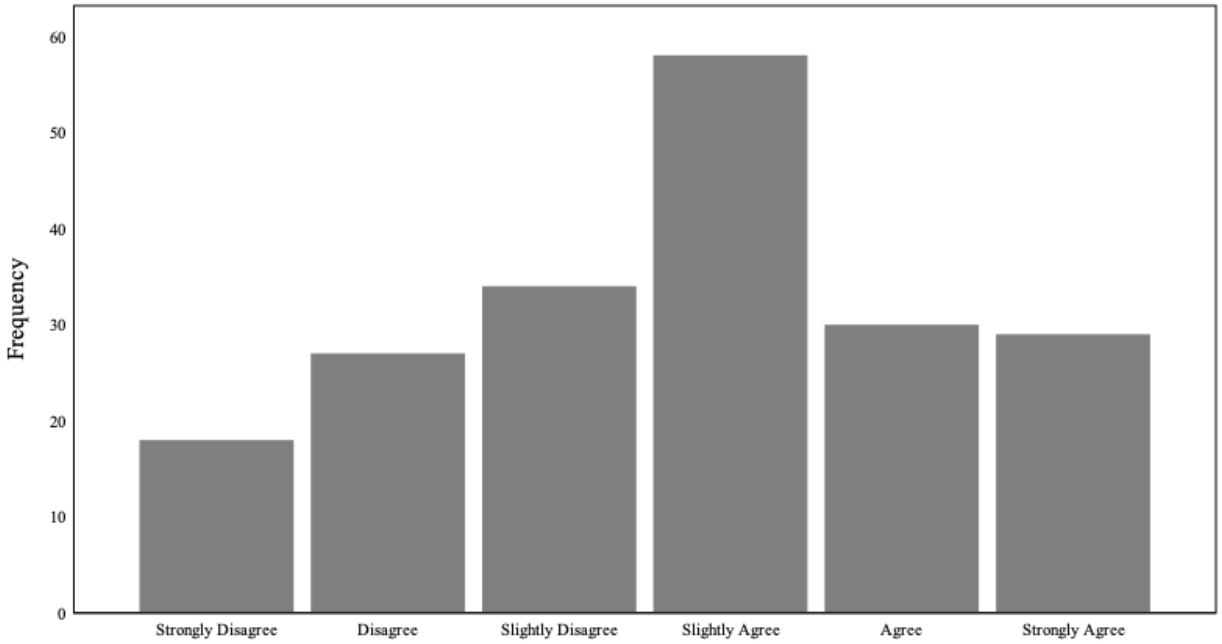

Figure 7: I would like to receive professional development that would help deepen my understanding of French grammar.

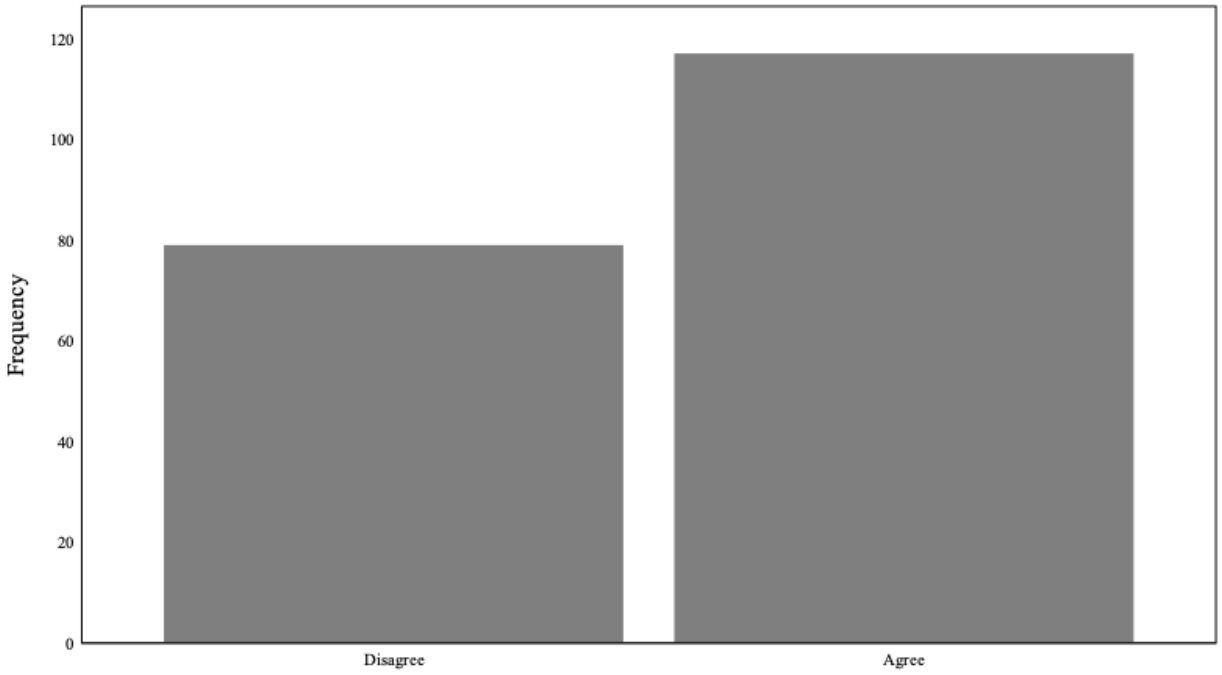

Figure 8: I would like to receive professional development that would help deepen my understanding of French grammar.

Desire for more professional development that would help deepen my understanding of French grammar by L1 (native/non-native speaker)[a]

			I would like to receive professional development that would help deepen my understanding of French grammar.						
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Do you speak French as an L1?	No	Count	5	14	17	23	19	23	101
		% of native/non-native speakers	5.0%	13.9%	16.8%	22.8%	18.8%	22.8%	100.0%
		% of participants	27.8%	51.9%	50.0%	39.7%	63.3%	79.3%	51.5%
	Yes	Count	13	13	17	35	11	6	95
		% of native/non-native speakers	13.7%	13.7%	17.9%	36.8%	11.6%	6.3%	100.0%
		% of participants	72.2%	48.1%	50.0%	60.3%	36.7%	20.7%	48.5%
Total		Count	18	27	34	58	30	29	196
		% of native/non-native speakers	9.2%	13.8%	17.3%	29.6%	15.3%	14.8%	100.0%
		% of participants	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

a. Chi(df) = 18.007(5), p= 0.003

Table 11: Chi-square test for Question 44.

Desire for more opportunities to improve French grammar knowledge by L1 (native/non-native speaker)

			I would like to receive professional development that would help deepen my understanding of French grammar.		
			Disagree	Agree	Total
Do you speak French as an L1?	No	Count	36	65	101
		% of native/non-native speakers	35.6%	64.4%	100.0%
		% of participants	45.6%	55.6%	51.5%
	Yes	Count	43	52	95
		% of native/non-native speakers	45.3%	54.7%	100.0%
		% of participants	54.4%	44.4%	48.5%
Total		Count	79	117	196
		% of native/non-native speakers	40.3%	59.7%	100.0%
		% of participants	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 12: Chi-square test for Question 44.

Focus Group Responses

Focus group data pertaining to the language-related PD desires of FI teachers corresponds with the questionnaire findings. When asked about their linguistic competencies and the topics they wished to be covered in PD, participants often alluded to a need for initiatives that would allow for continued development of FI teachers' language-related competencies:

> Ça fait que je pense qu'une partie qui manque, ça c'est de la formation continue en français ou un accès à des cours pendant toute notre carrière et pas juste pour avoir le poste. Puis comme, j'ai eu le poste, c'est bon, je suis à la retraite, mais comme un genre d'apprentissage continu tout au long de la carrière. *–P20NS, Nova Scotia, francophone*

> Est-ce que ce sera possible de payer les enseignants, de leur donner plus de temps de préparation pour travailler son français ? *–P07AB, Alberta, francophone*

> Alors d'avoir l'occasion de vraiment pratiquer le français, surtout avec les domaines qui piègent la plupart des enseignants, les mathématiques par exemple, les chiffres, ça serait fantastique… Alors comment est-ce qu'on peut régler le problème un peu d'informer des nouvelles et nouveaux enseignants à être un petit peu plus à l'aise d'entrer dans ces programmes pour enseigner ces cours ? *–P01ON, Ontario, non-francophone*

> En termes de perfectionnement, il faudrait vraiment montrer aux enseignants à enseigner la forme et comment le faire en immersion. Autant pour les enseignants anglophones que francophones. *–P04QC, Québec, francophone*

In fact, when it came to PD that targeted language, one participant, a native speaker of French, voiced a desire for opportunities to maintain her French:

> J'aimerais avoir parfois des cours ou des sessions juste pour me remémorer certaines règles, remémorer certaines choses qui, présentement, vont de soi, mais juste pour me souvenir. *–P19NB, New Brunswick, francophone*

To summarize, both questionnaire and focus group data irrefutably indicate that FI teachers desire more language-related PD. Furthermore, the chi-square tests produced significant differences in the responses of native speakers and non-native speakers for all three questions targeting French language PD desires of FI teachers; specifically, non-native speakers, when compared to their native speaker peers, more strongly desire PD initiatives that target French language competencies. Nevertheless, it is indispensable to acknowledge the undeniable desire

of native speaker FI teachers for more PD opportunities that would permit continued linguistic development and maintenance.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study sought to investigate FI teachers' perceptions with regard to their French proficiency as well as to ascertain their linguistic needs with the goal of informing future FI teacher training and professional development in Canada. The preceding chapter presented the findings and analysis of the questionnaire data and triangulated these with the focus group data, which, in turn, produced four principal themes. The current discussion chapter will further unpack and interpret these themes within the scope of the three driving research questions.

Two central goals, which are embedded in the research questions, guided the direction of this study. Firstly, it set out to paint a picture of current, in-service Canadian FI teachers' perceptions of their own proficiency and of FI teachers in general, which is linked to the first research question. As such, the first segment will examine and discuss FI teachers' personal perceptions of their proficiency, which will include the general confidence expressed by participants and the misgivings articulated by non-native speakers. Following this segment, teachers' perceptions of the general proficiency of FI teachers will be expatiated upon, which will include the phenomenon of linguistic insecurity and insufficiency reported by teachers, the hiring practices compounding the issue, and the reluctance of FI teachers to seek out PD opportunities. Thus, this segment will conclude the first research question by addressing its latter half: How do FI teachers perceive FI teachers' French proficiency in general? The third and fourth segments will attend to the second research question: What types of linguistic support do FI teachers need? The third section will first delve into the current lack of language-related PD opportunities for FI teachers by discussing prevalent PD offerings in schools today, the marked lack of systematic support from schools and school boards to develop and improve FI teachers' French language competencies, and the means teachers take to supplement their language skills

and thus respond to this lack of systematic support. Finally, the fourth section will complement its predecessor by considering FI teachers' concordant desire for more language-related support. In terms of organization of this chapter, in each segment, the findings from the previous chapter will first be synopsized, then situated in relation to the literature, and finally interpreted within the scope of the project and research questions.

5.1. Confidence in FI Teachers' French Proficiency Perceptions

In the broader sense, this study aspired to inform future FI teacher training programs' professional development initiatives by investigating the linguistic needs of Canadian FI teachers. To accomplish this, it is primordial to first uncover current FI teachers' perceptions of their own French language capacities, which was the aim of the first portion of the first research question. By first turning to the questionnaire data, specifically Question 36 which asked teachers to rate their confidence in their French proficiency, it is abundantly clear that FI teachers are indeed confident in their French language proficiency. Identically, respondents uniformly voiced confidence in their understanding of French grammar, which was the goal of Question 38. Furthermore, this confidence remains steadfast when all four independent variables were cross tabulated with the response measures for these questions. That is, neither first language, geographical location, years of experience, nor level of education had any statistically significant impact on the reported confidence ratings in Questions 36 or 38. Therefore, it can be concluded with certainty that questionnaire respondents, without any doubt, were confident in their French proficiency and their understanding of French grammar.

The focus group data also validates the decisive confidence ratings seen in the questionnaire. In particular, focus group participants expressed general unanimity in their

confidence in their French proficiency; not one participant communicated that they experienced a lack of confidence in their abilities to accomplish their everyday teaching tasks. However, a pattern emerged in the focus group data that did not in the questionnaire data. Specifically, while none of the independent variable groups had any influence over the response measures in Questions 36 and 38, non-native speakers in the focus groups, when compared to native speakers, tended to hedge their responses to the French proficiency confidence prompt. Indeed, both native and non-native FI teachers were confident in their French proficiency, but rather than articulating resolute confidence in their abilities, non-native speaker FI teachers often softened their response by stating that their French is not perfect and that they are aware of this shortcoming, with one even apologizing for her imperfections. This finding also corroborates what Bayliss and Vignola (2007) found in their study: pre-service FSL teachers deemed their French proficiency as satisfactory for the job but recognized their limits and expressed a desire for more support to meet the linguistic demands of teaching French. Focus group participants in this study, when hedging their responses, also often cited that they achieved their proficiency by no accident; rather, it was through their hard work and self-study (for example, doing a master's degree in French or taking the time to improve their French on the job) that they achieved their level of proficiency. This, in turn, indicates that there is a lack of linguistic support provided by the school and school boards in which teachers work. This is a point that will be revisited in the third segment of this discussion chapter, in which the lack of systematic language support that pervades FI schools and boards will be discussed. To conclude, participating FI teachers were, in general, found to be confident in their French language capacities, which provides an answer to the first portion of the first research question. This confidence notwithstanding, non-native teachers may also experience a degree of ambivalence with regard to their proficiency, as their

confidence may be accompanied by recognition of their shortcomings as non-native speakers and a desire to improve their French proficiency. It is also important to note that some of the non-native speakers in the focus groups expressed a sense of pride for the level of proficiency that they have attained. That said, the high degree of confidence and proficiency of the focus group participants could be a product of self-selection, as those who chose to volunteer to participate in this study may have been more likely to be highly proficient themselves.

5.2. Linguistic Insecurity and Insufficiency

The previous segment addressed the first portion of the first research question, which sought to establish how FI teachers perceived their own French proficiency. The present segment will attend to the second half of the first research question, which aimed to ascertain teachers' perceptions of FI teacher proficiency in a broader sense. To determine this, Questions 36 and 38 will be considered in relation to focus group data pertaining to teachers' perceptions of general FI teacher proficiency. Firstly, as it was firmly established in the preceding segment, teachers are concertedly confident in their French proficiency and understanding of French grammar. While this appropriately responds to the former half of the first research question, it proposes a discrepancy for the latter half. That is, contrary to the questionnaire results, a highly prevalent theme in the focus group data was one of linguistic insecurity and insufficiency of FI teachers; in all focus groups, participants revealed that there is a lack of confidence and competency among FI teachers, particularly among non-native speakers of French. However, despite findings of linguistic insecurity and insufficiency on the part of FI teachers, the questionnaire items inquiring into teacher confidence regarding their French proficiency are convincingly positive. Importantly, though, a key difference between the questionnaire data and the focus group data is

that the questionnaire asked participants to rate themselves, while the focus groups also asked them to rate other teachers. When asked to rate themselves on the questionnaire and in the focus groups, participants gave positive ratings, however, when asked to evaluate other teachers' French proficiency in general, the results were not as consonant. Based on the lower evaluations of teacher proficiency discovered in the focus groups, it is surprising that participants reported high confidence for themselves on the questionnaire and in the focus groups. That said, participants in the focus groups did acknowledge that their French could be improved over time, which is linked to the following theme regarding a desire for language-related PD (this will be discussed below). A number of psychological phenomena may help to better understand the reasoning behind this discrepancy. Firstly, however, before considering these phenomena, it is critical to acknowledge that self-reporting studies have inherent weaknesses. For instance, there is the presence of response bias in self-reporting studies like questionnaires, which is a common criticism of such instruments. Specifically, a response bias may influence individuals to report more positively on socially desirable behaviours and lower on those that are undesirable (Bradburn et al., 1978). Applied to the context of this study, this response bias could have manifested as teachers providing higher ratings of their French proficiency because it would be socially undesirable to be in a teaching position where they may be considered incompetent, which could, in turn, have professional and affective repercussions for these individuals. This positive consensus on confidence ratings could also be explained by the psychological phenomenon known as illusory superiority:

> When people estimate their relative position on a number of attributes, they typically report that they possess positive characteristics to a higher [degree], and negative characteristics to a lower degree than the average other or most others (Vera Hoorens, 1993, p. 117).

As such, questionnaire respondents, when compared to their actual competence, might have more positively rated their perceived linguistic competence seeing as it is a positive characteristic to possess as an FI teacher. In a similar vein, the Dunning-Kruger effect, which asserts that those with weaker competency in a given skill are incognizant of their shortcomings (Kruger & Dunning, 1999), could have also impacted participants' self-ratings. Individuals with weaker French proficiency might have not even been aware of their imperfections and, thus, more positively rated their competency in French. Finally, a self-serving bias, which "refers to a tendency for people to take personal responsibility for their desirable outcomes yet externalize responsibility for their undesirable outcomes" (Shepperd et al., 2008, p. 895), may account for the universally strong ratings on Questions 36 and 38. Not dissimilar to illusory superiority, a self-serving bias could have skewed the results such that teachers externalized their weaknesses in proficiency, as exhibiting such would be considered an undesirable outcome or characteristic of an FI teacher. Thus, teachers might not have attributed any potential shortcomings in their proficiency to themselves, opting, instead, to conjure up alternative, external reasons impeding their proficiency.

The questionnaire data and psychological phenomena possibly influencing them notwithstanding, the focus group data did, conversely, reveal that FI teachers, particularly non-native speakers of French, do in fact experience a degree of linguistic insecurity and insufficiency. As alluded to previously, this theme recurred in all focus group interviews, whether participants were asked to elaborate on French proficiency in FI or not. Interestingly, participants also went a step further and offered explanations for the factors exacerbating this issue. Firstly, teachers referenced the dearth of FI teachers in Canada and the means that school boards are taking to fill these high-demand roles. Specifically, participants described that hiring

schools and school boards must often lower their language benchmarks in order to hire teachers who can teach the content, even if the prospective teacher only has a limited degree of proficiency. In other words, hiring committees are filling content roles at the expense of French proficiency. Such a finding is not novel in this domain of research. In fact, Grimmet and Echols (2001) reported identical practices within the British Columbia context: school boards and schools were relaxing their hiring standards due to a shortage of qualified teachers. Similarly, Veilleux and Bournot-Trites (2005) also found that school districts generally only had partially qualified teachers because fully qualified teachers were hard to come by. Evidently, hiring practices, and thus the shortage of French teachers across Canada, have not changed, despite a lapse of 20 years since Grimmet and Echols' (2001) article. In fact, a recent study conducted by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (2019) confirms that there is still a significant shortage of FSL teachers and that schools are hiring teachers with lower proficiency levels to fill these roles. Thus, the shortage of FI teachers is aggravating their misgivings with regard to their French proficiency and is, as a result, necessitating relaxed hiring standards of schools and school boards to hire teachers with limited French proficiency simply to fill the roles.

In tandem with the teacher shortage and the associated hiring practices negatively affecting the presence of proficient FI teachers in the schools, FI teachers' feelings of inadequacy and insecurity themselves render it difficult for them to seek out PD opportunities in French that could potentially facilitate improvement in their French proficiency. That is, weaker French speaking teachers are resistant to attending PD initiatives in French due to a fear of judgement concerning their proficiency, consequently perpetuating limited proficiency and hindering potential for linguistic improvement. This cycle may be a product of low self-efficacy (Bandura,

1997; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). As conceptualized by Bandura (1997), four primary sources influence self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological factors, with the most influential being mastery experiences (i.e., past performances). In fact, the phenomenon of FI teacher resistance to PD in French due to feelings of inadequacy and judgement is an example of a mastery experience, or past performance, impeding their ability to improve. Teachers' weaker or suboptimal past performances in French subvert their feelings of self-efficacy, thus engendering feelings of insecurity and inadequacy (i.e., lower self-efficacy). Importantly, as so eloquently captured by Swanson (2012):

> One's perception of self-efficacy not only affects expectations of success or failure, but also affects motivation and goal setting. If an individual has a high sense of efficacy in any given area, he or she tends to set higher goals, fear failure less, and persevere longer in the face of obstacles. Conversely, if an individual has a lower sense of efficacy, he or she may avoid the task altogether or give up easily as difficulties emerge (p. 82).

Therefore, due to FI teachers' low self-efficacy from unsuccessful past performances in French, it is possible that they are more averse to or disinclined to taking on difficult tasks, such as PD in French, that may incite feelings of inadequacy, thereby resulting in a cycle in which teachers are unwilling to jeopardize their self-efficacy and are thus unable to, or limited in their ability to, improve.

The teacher participants in the focus groups offered good insight regarding the sources of FI teachers' linguistic insecurity and insufficiency. However, the hiring process and teacher shortage detailed above are but two factors allowing the sentiments of linguistic insecurity and insufficiency that teachers face to perpetuate. In addition to this, there are other factors aggravating these difficulties faces by FI teachers and prompting the aforementioned vicious cycle. In particular, one such force is the state of language-related FI PD offerings in FI schools.

5.3. A Lack of Current Language PD and a Strong Desire for More

Whereas the preceding segments strove to answer the first research question, this subsection aims to answer the second research question, which sought to investigate the current state of language-related PD opportunities in FI and whether FI teachers desire more. To facilitate discussion, the final two themes presented in the results chapter have been amalgamated into a single theme, 'a lack of current language PD and a strong desire for more'.

To start, the current offerings of language-related PD was a topic of inquiry during the focus groups. The data from these sessions suggest that, first and foremost, there is little in the way of PD initiatives that target PD pedagogy and competencies. In fact, in some of the more extreme cases, participants had not had any immersion-specific PD whatsoever in their teaching careers. Instead, participants elucidated that the PD offered by their schools or school boards was often designated to more general teaching, content, and curricular competencies. In some cases, participants outlined rather extensive PD opportunities and initiatives organized by their schools or school boards; nevertheless, these did not incorporate immersion-related pedagogy or competencies into their agendas. This lack of immersion-specific PD is not surprising nor is it a novel phenomenon in the realm of immersion education, for, as stated in Cammarata and Haley (2018), PD for immersion teachers, despite being quintessential for success in immersion education, "[is] greatly underrepresented within the immersion body of research" (p. 345). It can be reasoned, then, that the paltry and insignificant availability of immersion-specific PD is reflected in the research, as it has only been addressed in select research studies (for example, see Cammarata & Tedick, 2012). While some participants emphasized the lack of immersion-related PD in their contexts, others did in fact describe PD initiatives that targeted FI. Indeed, these workshops that focused on FI-related competencies, such as French and English literacy

development and teaching mathematics in FI, are indispensable for FI teachers to develop and improve their immersion teaching. Importantly, however, these workshops did not include a concentration on French language-specific competencies, such as proficiency and understanding of grammar, which are also crucial for teachers to enact FI pedagogy and succeed as FSL teachers (Banno, 2003; Mady, 2018). Moreover, when pressed further on the topic of PD offered in FI schools, focus group participants admitted that their schools or school boards did not systematically organize PD initiatives that targeted the linguistic development and maintenance of FI teachers. On the contrary, these teachers communicated that FI teachers, should they desire such initiatives, were expected to endeavour on their own to seek out opportunities that would allow them to improve their language abilities. In fact, many non-native speakers of French, when asked about their perceptions of their French proficiency, stated that they took the time throughout their careers to individually work to strengthen their language. For example, several participants alluded to graduate-level programs delivered in French in which they enrolled to have opportunities to bolster their French. Another participant referred to a government-funded language program in which individuals spent five weeks in a French language milieu (such as in Québec or another French speaking community) to enhance their French. There is no doubt that such means can be successful for teachers; however, it is abundantly clear that not one of the methods shared by participants was implemented by the schools or schools board for which teachers worked. Furthermore, in analysing the PD topics described by participants in the focus groups, it is also evident that there was no mention of language-related PD. This, then, reveals a stark reality in FI schools today: there is no systematic support for teachers' French language. By referring to the literature once again, this is not so unexpected. That is, when navigating the body of research that investigates PD in the immersion context, linguistic development and

maintenance are not at the forefront of these studies. More specifically, a majority of the studies exploring immersion PD that have been conducted (Cammarata, 2009, 2010; Cammarata & Ó Ceallaigh, 2018; Cammarata & Haley, 2018; Cammarata & Tedick, 2012; Cavanagh et al., 2016; Tedick & Zilmer, 2018) focus on immersion competencies needed for deploying immersion pedagogy in a more general sense, such as how to integrate language and content in the classroom. However, while this emphasis on immersion competencies is indeed critical for successful immersion teaching, the microlevel language abilities of the teachers are equally crucial, as the immersion language is often the L2 of these teachers. Despite this, L2 development is not at the nucleus of these studies. Perhaps, then, this scarcity of research on the development and maintenance of the immersion language, which is French in the Canadian context, could be a reflection of the lack of attention and importance accorded to PD initiatives that target microlevel linguistic competencies. Thus, on the whole, PD opportunities that target immersion-specific competencies are insufficient, and those that do concentrate on immersion pedagogy tend to overlook the development of the French language skills of FI teachers, despite such initiatives being paramount for non-native speakers with weaker French abilities.

Evidently, language-related PD in FI is scant, and FI teachers are aware of this paucity, who, on all measures of the questionnaire and in the focus groups, expressed a desire for more PD that targets language. The three questionnaire items that investigated FI teachers' language-related PD desires (Questions 29, 44, and 46) revealed a resounding degree of agreement among all participants, regardless of first language, geographical location, years of experience, and level of education. Specifically, on Question 29, more than three quarters of participants agreed to some extent that they wanted more opportunities that would allow them to continue to improve their French proficiency, with the majority of those agreeing being those who strongly agreed

(33.5%). Furthermore, the chi-square tests revealed that non-native speakers were statistically significantly different in their responses when compared to native speakers. This means that non-native speakers more strongly desired PD that would permit continued improvement of their French (90.2% of non-native speakers agreed to some extent). Nevertheless, while the differences in response between non-native speakers and native speakers were statistically significant, it is crucial to be cognizant of the considerable number of native speakers (62.1%) who also agreed to the statement in Question 29. Thus, there is a very compelling case for more opportunities in which FI teachers, both native and non-native speakers alike, can continue to develop their French. A similar story came of Question 46, too, which inquired into participants' desire to have more PD opportunities that would allow them to enhance their French proficiency. Admittedly, this question closely mirrors Question 29, though this similar question can serve as corroborative evidence for its counterpart. Caveat aside, a large portion of participants (62.8%) agreed to some extent that they would like to have the potential to enhance their French proficiency, with the most frequently selected response being slightly agree (26.5%). Similar to Question 29, non-native speakers more strongly desired such opportunities (81.2%) compared to native speakers (43.2%). This further adds to the case, albeit to a lesser extent than Question 29, for more PD opportunities that target French proficiency. Overall, though, it is readily apparent that there is a universally strong desire on the part of FI teachers for schools to offer more initiatives that would enable them to continue to improve and enhance their French proficiency. Whereas Questions 29 and 46 inquired into FI teachers' desires for PD related to French proficiency, Question 44 diverges slightly by probing their desires for PD that would deepen their understanding of French grammar. Results from the questionnaire demonstrate that a considerable portion of respondents agreed to some extent (59.7%) that they would like more

opportunities to deepen their understanding of French grammar, with the most frequent response being slightly agree (29.6%). The chi-square tests run for Question 44 also produced a statistically significant result once again for the L1 group; non-native speakers more strongly desired PD that would deepen their understanding of French grammar than native speakers did. Specifically, 64.4% of non-native speakers desired more of such PD, while 54.7% of native speakers did. Despite the statistically significant difference between L1 groups, it is very clear that a substantial number of native speakers – more than half – desired grammar-related PD. Therefore, it can be concluded that both native and non-native speakers in the questionnaires desire more opportunities that would deepen their understanding of French grammar, though non-native speakers are more enthusiastic and thus do slightly outweigh their native counterparts; nonetheless, it is primordial to acknowledge that native speakers, too, are inclined towards French grammar PD. Finally, the focus group data, which triangulated the questionnaire results, indicate that FI teachers, both native and non-native speakers alike, wished for more opportunities to improve French proficiency and grammar. In conclusion, there is a unanimous and ubiquitous desire for schools and school boards to offer more PD that targets linguistic competencies in French (i.e., proficiency and grammar); yet, this desire is not reflected in what schools offer in the way of PD that develops FI teachers' language.

The results from the questionnaire and focus groups leave no doubt regarding what FI teachers desire in terms of language-related PD, which provides a firm answer to the second research question. However, there is a severe discrepancy between what teachers desire and what schools offer. On the one hand, as seen in the focus groups inquiring into the current state of language-related PD, schools do not systematically offer such PD; FI teachers must locate and attend opportunities that would improve their French language and understanding of grammar on

their own accord and, crucially, on their own time. This can be problematic, as teachers are often stressed and inundated with teaching-related responsibilities, which could subsequently lead to teacher burnout (Kokkinos, 2007). As such, to deprive teachers of time to decompress from the stressors of teaching in order to undertake additional PD, which could take place during their evenings, weekends, or summers, could exacerbate this burnout. Moreover, the perpetual 'vicious cycle,' in which teachers with low self-efficacy are reluctant to attend PD initiatives that would cause disquiet or unease, prevents teachers from seeking out and attending language-related PD initiatives, which, consequently, further impedes their ability to see linguistic improvement. On the other hand, teachers long for more opportunities that would allow them to bolster their linguistic competencies. Naturally, then, one would expect that schools would offer such support for their teachers, yet this is not the case. Put differently, teachers desire more linguistic support, but schools do not afford such opportunities. Furthermore, so long as this imbalance persists between teachers' desires for support and schools' lack of offerings, so too will the cycle of weak French proficiency, linguistic insecurity, and low self-efficacy. This, in turn, creates a paradox.

5.4. Implications

Chapter 5 provided a more in-depth analysis of the questionnaire and focus group data reported in Chapter 4. The present chapter will follow up Chapter 5 with the implications and contributions of this study for teacher training and professional development. It will also outline some of the necessary actions that educational bodies ought to take to address and begin to rectify the issues outlined in the preceding chapters. Additionally, this will answer the third and

final research question, which sought to explore the implications of the findings from the questionnaires and focus groups.

Hiring Process

To start, the hiring process must be addressed and reformed to begin to effect change in the linguistic insecurity and insufficiency of FI teachers. For instance, schools and school boards could establish a universal language standard to which hiring committees adhere to effectively screen teachers' qualifications, particularly French proficiency. This is crucial since hiring practices, as evidenced in the focus groups, have not significantly changed since Grimmet and Echols' (2001) and Veilleux and Bournot-Trites' (2005) studies. That said, to establish a universal standard may seem idealistic and untenable, especially given the severe shortage of FI teachers; with such a rigid standard, few teachers may in fact be hired, thus further aggravating the FI teacher shortage. So, this begs the question: what can be done to ensure that teachers have optimal French proficiency, in addition to possessing the necessary teaching qualifications, without jeopardizing the supply of FI teachers? First, as delineated in the literature review portion of this thesis, relative to other teacher education programs, there are few teacher education programs that specifically target and train teachers in immersion competencies (see Table 1 in 2.4.2. Challenges in FI: Teacher Training and Professional Development). Furthermore, in the analysis of these programs, it is not fully clear that they develop and maintain the linguistic competencies of their pre-service teachers, whether by means of courses, workshops, etc. Additionally, many teacher education programs state that their teachers will be trained to teach in a variety of FSL contexts, which includes FI, CF, and EI (see Table 2 in 2.4.2); yet there is still no indication of courses or initiatives that develop and maintain the French proficiency of their pre-service teachers. It can be reasoned, then, that pre-service service

teacher education programs that train teachers in FSL, and thus FI, are not adequately addressing the linguistic competencies of their students, as the problem of linguistic insecurity and insufficiency on the job still persists. This was also reported by participants in Bayliss and Vignola (2007). Therefore, this study serves as a call for a more standardized FI teacher training framework in which language skills are afforded equal importance through courses that further develop or maintain pre-service teachers' French language capacities. In consequence, an adequate and universal preparation of FI teachers can aid in remedying the necessity to hire underqualified teachers, thereby alleviating the linguistic insecurity and low self-efficacy issues that FI teachers may face.

With regard to professional development, the findings from the focus group clearly demonstrate that there is a degree of linguistic insecurity and insufficiency among FI teachers. The other question that presents itself is: how do schools address limited proficiency once teachers are already hired? It is apparent from both the questionnaires and focus group sessions that, despite the lack of systematic language support, there is a strong desire for it. A starting point for schools, then, could be to first systematize or standardize linguistic development and maintenance workshops or initiatives for both native and non-native speakers, especially since native speakers, too, expressed a desire for more language-related support. Another potential avenue for schools could be to implement a practice of conditional hiring in which teachers with lower proficiency, but who are otherwise competent and meet the school's criteria, must take French language courses organized by their school or school board. This could even be in the form of expert teachers, such as francophone or highly proficient colleagues, who are compensated to offer initiatives to support the language skills of those with weaker language skills. This would also obviate the necessity for teachers to seek out such initiative themselves,

which can be a daunting task in itself, especially for teachers with lower self-efficacy. Additionally, the implications of this study also constitute a call for more resources for FI teacher education and PD from university, private, and governmental organizations. There is an extremely high demand for FI teacher and FI education that simply is not being met under the current circumstances. This problem will continue to fester so long as it is left unaddressed. Lastly, this study is also a contribution, albeit a diminutive one, to the development of a universal framework for FI teacher training and PD that includes a focus on the linguistic capacities of FI teachers. In this chapter, I have offered a discussion in which the four themes that emerged in the data were analysed in relation to the research questions and existing literature. In the next chapter, the implications and contributions of the findings of this study will be provided. Following this, there will be a final chapter with a conclusion and the limitations of the study.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This thesis study sought to establish FI teachers' perceptions regarding teacher proficiency and to determine their language-related professional development needs by means of a mixed-methods study design with questionnaires and focus group interviews. As discussed in preceding chapters, this study produced a number of key results. First, FI teachers, when evaluating their own French proficiency and language abilities, are concertedly confident that their French is sufficient for teaching in FI, though non-native speakers tend to hold reservations regarding the quality of their French. Second, when considering the French abilities of FI teachers in a more general sense, it was revealed that there is a pervading sense of linguistic insecurity and insufficiency among non-native FI teachers across Canada, which is exacerbated by teacher shortages and relaxed hiring practices. Third, PD initiatives that target immersion-specific competencies are infrequent – which supports the literature on PD in immersion – and those that target French proficiency and language capacities are all but absent from PD in FI schools. Finally, there is consensus among FI teachers that PD initiatives that do target French proficiency and language capacities are welcomed and desired, which has implications for schools and school boards that, as previously established, do not offer such opportunities for their teachers. To summarize, while teachers are generally confident in their French abilities, there exists a degree of insecurity, and, despite teachers wanting more opportunities to develop these language skills, schools do not systematically offer language-related PD.

6.1. Limitations and Future Directions

While this study did indeed produce interesting results with regard to FI teacher proficiency perceptions and PD desires, there are certain limitations of the research to consider.

Most notably, the questionnaire items pertaining to French proficiency and language-related PD are few in number; that is, there were only five questions investigating the language abilities of FI teachers and their PD desires. Similarly, in the focus group sessions, only one question, and several follow-up questions, targeted language and language-related PD. Therefore, in future research, it would be intriguing to design a more robust questionnaire that more rigorously targets aspects of FI teacher language abilities and PD desires. For example, it would be interesting to explore with what aspects of language teachers have the most difficulties and how they would most prefer being supported in this regard (i.e., what PD formats they would find most effective to improve their French). A related limitation caused by the data collection instruments concerns the data that was drawn upon in the analysis phase. That is, for the second and third themes (Linguistic Insecurity and Insufficiency and Language-related PD – a Lack Thereof), the data could not be triangulated with the questionnaire data due to the limited number of questions examining these aspects. Thus, in future research, a questionnaire and focus group sessions dedicated exclusively to language abilities and language-related PD would engender fascinating results. Another limitation of this study pertains to the areas from which responses were garnered. Specifically, a large portion of questionnaire participants were located in central Canada (Ontario and Québec) and certain Western provinces (Alberta, British Columbia, and Manitoba). Furthermore, the Maritime provinces were largely represented by New Brunswick, as very few came from other the other provinces in the peninsula. Also, northern Canada was scarcely represented; no participants were located in Nunavut, and only several participants were from the Yukon and Northwest Territories. Much like the questionnaire, the focus group sessions were limited in their representation. In particular, there were no participants located in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nunavut, or the Yukon, and only one participant from the

Northwest Territories, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Saskatchewan. As such, future research on this topic ought to strive to include a more representative sample that would better reflect the FI situation in these areas. Additionally, focus groups held in each province would stimulate interesting conversations, as teachers within the same province, and thus the same ministry of education, can discuss how their situations may diverge and converge. Finally, while not a limitation to the study, the questionnaire participant sample consisted of a large proportion of native French FI teachers who, naturally, have stronger French abilities than their non-native counterparts. Furthermore, focus groups were comprised of native speakers and highly proficient non-native speakers, which could have skewed the qualitative findings. Therefore, future research that investigates the proficiency perceptions and linguistic needs of non-native FI teachers, or those who may experience difficulties in French, could produce results that would better support these teachers, especially those who work in English majority contexts outside of Québec and other French speaking environments and who may need more PD opportunities that would allow them to develop their language abilities. On the whole, this study underscores that there is not a pool of qualified FI teachers that exists and that there needs to be a concerted focus on PD for FI teachers, both in terms of FI-specific competencies and French language abilities.

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Appendix A: Survey Consent Form

McGill | Faculty of Education | Department of Integrated Studies in Education

Researchers:

Dr. Susan Ballinger
Assistant Professor, Second Language Education
McGill University, Department of Integrated Studies in Education
(514) 398-4527
susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca

Dr. Fred Genesee
Professor Emeritus
McGill University, Psychology Department
(514) 398-6022
fred.genesee@mcgill.ca

Dr. Jessica Saada
Director, Educational Services
Riverside School Board
(450) 672-4010
JSaada@rsb.qc.ca

Dr. Caroline Erdos
Coordinator of Complementary Services
New Frontiers School Board
(450) 691-1440
cerdos@nfsb.qc.ca

Title of Project: Professional Development Needs of Canadian French Immersion Teachers

Sponsor(s): Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

Purpose of the Study: This is an invitation to participate in a research study which responds to the need for more widespread immersion-specific professional development initiatives among French immersion teachers in Canada. We seek to determine what type of professional development immersion teachers want and need as well as the most accessible formats for that professional development.

Study Procedures:
15-minute on-line survey of French immersion teachers' experiences with professional development and perspectives on ideal professional development initiatives

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in parts of this study, decline to answer any question, and you may withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason. Whether you choose to participate will not have any impact on your employment. If you decide to withdraw from the study, your data that has already been gathered will be destroyed unless you give permission otherwise. Survey data will be de-identified approximately one month after collection. Once survey data has been de-identified, it can no longer be withdrawn.

Potential Risks: There are no anticipated risks to you by participating in the survey. Should you agree to send in your latest course outline, we will ask you to remove your name and other identifiable information from the document.

Potential Benefits: : There are no expected direct benefits to you from participating in this study, but it is hoped that this study will contribute to an understanding of immersion teachers' professional development needs and will aid in the creation of relevant and accessible initiatives.

Compensation: There is no compensation for completion of the survey.

Confidentiality: In this study, we will collect information on in-service immersion teachers' experiences and perspectives in relation to professional development. All identifiable data that you provide will be kept secure in a password protected file in encrypted iCloud storage (sync.com) that only the researchers and research assistants can access. Findings will be disseminated via presentations at professional and academic conferences as well as publications in professional and academic journals. A summary of overall research findings will be made available to professional associations and other organizations that may offer immersion teacher education. Your name and identifiable information will not appear in any presentation or publication.

Yes:_____No:____You consent to allowing researchers contact you to participate in a follow-up focus group interview with other immersion teachers.

Questions: If you have any questions or need any clarifications about the project, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Susan Ballinger at 514-398-4527 or susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca".

Submitting your survey responses indicates that you consent to participate in this study. Please save or print a copy of this document to keep for your own reference.

Appendix B: Focus Group Consent Form

McGill | Faculty of Education | Department of Integrated Studies in Education

Researchers:

Dr. Susan Ballinger
Assistant Professor, Second Language Education
McGill University, Department of Integrated Studies in Education
(514) 398-4527
susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca

Dr. Fred Genesee
Professor Emeritus
McGill University, Psychology Department
(514) 398-6022
fred.genesee@mcgill.ca

Dr. Jessica Saada
Director, Educational Services
Riverside School Board
(450) 672-4010
JSaada@rsb.qc.ca

Dr. Caroline Erdos
Coordinator of Complementary Services
New Frontiers School Board
(450) 691-1440
cerdos@nfsb.qc.ca

Title of Project: Professional Development Needs of Canadian French Immersion Teachers

Sponsor(s): Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

Purpose of the Study: This is an invitation to participate in a research study that responds to the need for more immersion-specific professional development for Canadian French immersion teachers. We seek to determine what type of professional development immersion teachers want and need as well as the most accessible formats for that professional development.

Procedures:
- Video and audio recorded focus group interviews (max 90 minutes with a 5-10 minute break after 45 minutes) with a maximum of five French immersion teachers from your province.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in parts of this study, decline to answer any question, and you may withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason. Whether you choose to participate or not will not have any impact on your employment. If you decide to withdraw from the study, your data that has already been gathered will be destroyed unless you give permission otherwise. Only research assistants will be able to view the videos in order to transcribe them. You may choose to use a pseudonym during the focus groups, and videos will be destroyed after transcription.

Potential Risks: There are risks to your privacy and confidentiality by participating in focus groups. Other focus group participants will be able to hear your answers. To offset this, you may leave your video camera off and use a pseudonym during the interview.

Potential Benefits: There are no expected direct benefits to you from participating in this study, but it is hoped that this study will contribute to an understanding of professional development for immersion teachers and aid in the creation of future professional development initiatives.

Compensation: If you agree to it, your email address will be included in a drawing for 5 Amazon gift certificates valued at $50 each. You will have a 1 in 40 chance of winning the draw.As per Canadian federal law, you will need to complete a simple mathematical problem in order to compete in the raffle.

Confidentiality: In this study, we will collect information on teachers' experiences and perspectives regarding professional development for French immersion teachers. All identifiable data that you provide will be kept secure in a password protected file in encrypted iCloud storage system (sync.com) that only the researchers and research assistants can access. Although we cannot ensure complete confidentiality during focus group interviews, you will be offered the opportunity to use a pseudonym during the interviews, and you will be assigned one upon transcription. These interviews will be audio and video recorded but only research assistants (not other project members) will view the videos when they are transcribing them. Once the videos are transcribed, they will be permanently deleted. Data will be disseminated via both professional and academic presentations as well as professional and academic publications. A summary of overall research findings will be made available to professional associations and other organizations offering professional development to immersion teachers. Your name and identifiable information will not appear in any presentation or publication. If excerpts from your interviews are included, you will be assigned a pseudonym. Although all precautions are taken, there is always the possibility of a third party interception when using communications through the internet. We ask in turn that you maintain the confidentiality of other participants by not disclosing the contents of the discussion outside of the focus group.

Yes:____No:____You consent to be video recorded during the focus group.

Questions: If you have any questions or need any clarifications about the project, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Susan Ballinger at 514-398-4527 or susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca.

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to
participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. Please sign or print a copy of this document to keep for your own reference.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date:_____

Appendix C: Questionnaire

Section 1: Biographical Information

1. Do you consent to participate in this study? Clicking 'Yes' indicates your consent to participate and will give you access to the survey.
    a. Yes
    b. No
2. Considering this definition, are you a French immersion teacher?
    a. Yes
    b. No
3. What province do you live and work in?
    a. Alberta
    b. British Columbia
    c. Manitoba
    d. New Brunswick
    e. Newfoundland and Labrador
    f. Northwest Territories
    g. Nova Scotia
    h. Nunavut
    i. Ontario
    j. Prince Edward Island
    k. Quebec
    l. Saskatchewan
    m. Yukon

4. What is your first language?
5. For how many years have you been a teacher?
    a. 0-1 year
    b. 2-5 years
    c. 6-10 years
    d. 11-15 years
    e. More than 15 years
6. For how many years have you been a French immersion teacher?
    a. 0-1 year
    b. 2-5 years
    c. 6-10 years
    d. 11-15 years
    e. More than 15 years
7. What grade level(s) do you teach in French immersion (select all the apply)?
    a. Kindergarten
    b. Grade 1
    c. Grade 2
    d. Grade 3
    e. Grade 4
    f. Grade 5
    g. Grade 6
    h. Grade 7

i. Grade 8

j. Grade 9

k. Grade 10

l. Grade 11

m. Grade 12

8. Do you teach French immersion to a multi-level group?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. Other (please specify)

9. On average, how old were your students when they began French immersion education?

    a. 5-8 years old

    b. 9-11 years old

    c. 12 years old or older

    d. I don't know

    e. Other (please specify)

10. What type of school do you teach at?

    a. Dual-track school

    b. Single-track immersion school

    c. Other (please specify)

11. Which of the following descriptions best fits the French immersion program at your school?

    a. Partial immersion: a minimum of 50% of the curriculum is taught in French

    b. Total immersion: 90-100% of the curriculum is taught in French

c. Decreasing: 90-100% in French at the beginning of the program, with the amount of French instruction decreasing over time (i.e., 90/10, 80/20, 70/30, 60/40, 50/50)
d. Increasing: 50% in French at the beginning of the program, with the amount of French instruction inceasing over time (i.e., 50/50, 60/40, 70/30, 80/20, 90/10)
e. I do not know
f. Other (Please specify)

12. How would you describe the socio-economic status of the students you teach in French immersion?
    a. Low socio-economic status
    b. Middle socio-economic status
    c. High socio-economic status
    d. Other (Please specify)

Section 2: Educational Background

13. What is your highest level of education?
    a. Teaching certificate
    b. Bachelor's degree
    c. Master's degree
    d. Doctoral degree
14. Prior to beginning teaching French immersion, had you taken a university class or classes on second language instruction?
    a. Yes
    b. No
15. Have you received a degree in second language instruction (not immersion instruction)?

a. Yes

b. No

16. Prior to beginning teaching French immersion, had you taken a university class or classes on French immersion instruction?

    a. Yes

    b. No

17. Have you received a teaching degree in immersion instruction?

    a. Yes

    b. No

Section 3: Professional Development Experiences

18. Since you started teaching French immersion, have you engaged in professional development that specifically targets immersion instruction?

    a. Yes

    b. No

19. What was the topic of the professional development you engaged in? Please check all that apply.

    a. Reading development

    b. Writing development

    c. Oral language development

    d. Evaluation of oral skills

    e. Evaluation of written skills

    f. Classroom management

g. Supporting language learners during content (math, sciences, humanities, arts, etc.) instruction
h. Integrating content and language instruction
i. Vocabulary Development
j. Teaching content through a second language
k. Bilingual development
l. On-line instruction
m. Supporting Allophone learners
n. Supporting at-risk learners
o. Opportunity to improve my French proficiency (Not applicable)

20. What was the format of the professional development that you engaged in? Please check all that apply.
    a. In-person
    b. Online
    c. Other (please specify)
21. Did the professional development that you engaged in require travel? (Please check all that apply.)
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Other (please specify)
22. What organisation offered the professional development that you engaged in? (Please check all that apply.
    a. Professional development offered by my school

b. Professional development offered by my school district / schoolboard
c. Professional development offered by a professional organization (e.g. Teacher Association, etc.)
d. Professional development offered by a university
e. Other (Please specify)

23. Who was the trainer for the professional development you engaged in? (Please check all that apply.)
    a. An expert teacher
    b. A pedagogical advisor
    c. A university professor
    d. A guest speaker
    e. Other (Please specify)
24. When was the professional development that you engaged in offered? (Please check all that apply.)
    a. On a pedagogical day
    b. During a teaching day while a substitute replaced me
    c. On weekends during the school year
    d. In the evening during the school year
    e. During the summer
    f. Done on-line at my own pace
    g. Other (Please specify)

25. What was the length and the frequency of the commitment of the professional development that you engaged in? (Example: Every Monday evening for one semester / 1 intensive weekend / 2-week summer workshop)
26. In the past, have you engaged in mandatory professional development (i.e. it was a condition of employment)?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Other (Please specify)
27. Please rank the list below from 1 to 8 in terms of how influential each factor was in your decision to engage in professional development (with 1 being most influential and 8 being least influential).
    a. Topic
    b. Desire for continued learning
    c. Timing (for ex., evening, weekend, summer)
    d. Length of commitment
    e. Possibility for career advancement
    f. Increased salary
    g. Travel opportunity
    h. Qualifications of the trainers

Section 4: Perspectives

28. I would like to have more opportunities for immersion-specific pedagogical training.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

29. I would like to have more opportunities to continue improving my French proficiency.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

30. I am satisfied with my knowledge of French immersion pedagogy.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

31. I am satisfied with the amount of professional development opportunities available to me.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

32. My school supports my need for immersion-specific professional development.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

33. I have enough time to engage in professional development.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

34. The professional development that is available to me is relevant to my needs as an immersion teacher.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

35. I believe that my knowledge is up to date in relation to innovations in immersion teaching.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

36. Overall, I feel confident in my French language proficiency.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

37. Overall, I feel confident in my English language proficiency.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

38. I believe that I have a profound understanding of how French grammar works.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

39. I believe that I have a profound understanding of how English grammar works.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

Section 5: Professional Development Preferences

40. I would like to receive professional development that focuses on literacy development.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

41. I would like to receive professional development that focuses on responding to students with learning difficulties.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

42. I would like to receive professional development that focuses on balancing content and language instruction.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

43. I would like to receive professional development that focuses on teaching for linguistic transfer.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

44. I would like to receive professional development that would help deepen my understanding of French grammar.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

45. I would like to receive professional development that would help deepen my understanding of English grammar.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

46. I would like to receive professional development opportunities that would enhance my French proficiency.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

Section 6: Professional Development Preferences

47. I am interested in taking an evening class or classes on immersion teaching at a university.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

48. I am interested in attending summer workshops on immersion teaching.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

49. I am interested in taking online courses on immersion teacher education.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

50. I am interested in having teacher educators visit my school to offer immersion teacher education.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

51. I am interested in engaging in a short-term, intensive professional development workshop (example, a weekend workshop / a 2 week summer workshop).

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

52. I am interested in engaging in a series of shorter workshops spread over time (example, 1 hours every Monday for a semester / a 2 hour workshop once a month).

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Strongly Disagree Disagree Slightly Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree

53. Do you have additional comments on specific questions you answered or on this study in general?

Appendix D: Focus Group Protocol

1. Please describe your educational background. Please describe your current position. How long have you been at your school? Which grade levels do you teach? What type of program do you teach in?
2. How do you feel about your own French proficiency and French grammatical knowledge? Do you feel that it is sufficient as a French immersion teacher?
    a. How do you feel about the French proficiency of French immersion teachers in general?
3. Do you have a mentoring system in your school? If yes, please elaborate.
4. What type of professional development is available to you during a regular school year? What factors influence your decision to take part in professional development activities and are you able to take part in activities that are specifically for immersion teachers?
5. What are the biggest teaching challenges for immersion teachers? What subjects would you like to explore in professional development activities to support you as an immersion teacher?
6. What was the format of the professional development sessions that you've taken part in in the past? Was it in person? Was it intensive, sporadic, or online? In your opinion, what is the ideal format?
7. Is there anything that you did not get a chance to say that you would like to add about professional development for French immersion?

Appendix E: Figures and Tables

Table 1

University programs offering immersion content

Name of University	Province or Territory	Immersion Content	Program Type
University of Alberta	Alberta	FI	B.Ed.; M.Ed.
Simon Fraser University	British Columbia	LIC	Minor; Cert
University of British Columbia	British Columbia	FI	B.Ed.
University of Victoria	British Columbia	FI	Cert
Université de Saint-Boniface	Manitoba	EIC	M.Ed.
St. Thomas University	New Brunswick	LIC	B.Ed.
Université de Moncton	New Brunswick	FI	B.Ed.
Memorial University of Newfoundland	Newfoundland	FI	B.Ed.
Université Sainte-Anne	Nova Scotia	LIC	B.Ed.
Nipissing University	Ontario	LIC	B.Ed.
Queen's University	Ontario	LIC	B.Ed.
University of Ottawa	Ontario	LIC	B.Ed., B.A.
University of Western Ontario	Ontario	LIC	B.Ed.
York University, Glendon Campus	Ontario	LIC	B.Ed.
University of Prince Edward Island	Prince Edward Island	LIC	B.Ed.
McGill University	Québec	FI	B.Ed., Cert.
Université de Québec à Montréal	Québec	EIC	B.Ed.

Université Laval	Québec	LIC	B.Ed.

Table 2

University programs offering general FSL programs

Name of University	Province or Territory	Immersion Content	Program Type
University of New Brunswick	New Brunswick	N/A	Cert.
Brock University	Ontario	N/A	B.Ed.
Laurentian University	Ontario	N/A	B.Ed.
University of Windsor	Ontario	N/A	B.Ed.
Université de Montréal	Québec	N/A	B.Ed., M.Ed.
University of Regina	Saskatchewan	N/A	B.Ed.

Table 3

In which province or territory do you teach?

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Western Canada	77	38.90%
Maritimes	33	16.70%
Central Canada (non-French)	45	22.70%
Central Canada (French)	36	18.20%

Table 4

Do you speak French as an L1?

Answer	Frequency	Percent
No	102	51.50%
Yes	96	48.50%

Table 5

What is your highest level of education?

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Undergraduate	119	60.10%
Graduate	62	31.30%

Table 6

How many years of experience do you have as a French immersion teacher?

Answer	Frequency	Percent
0-1 year	17	8.60%
2-5 years	44	22.20%
6-10 years	46	23.20%
11-15 years	28	14.10%
More than 15 years	59	29.80%

Desire for more opportunities to continue improving French proficiency by L1 (French native speaker/non-native speaker)[aa]

			I would like to have more opportunities to continue improving my French proficiency.						
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Do you speak French as an L1?	No	n	0	5	5	20	28	44	102
		% of non-native/native speakers	0.0%	4.9%	4.9%	19.6%	27.5%	43.1%	100.0%
		% of participants	0.0%	41.7%	23.8%	52.6%	59.6%	66.7%	51.8%
	Yes	n	13	7	16	18	19	22	95
		% of non-native/native speakers	13.7%	7.4%	16.8%	18.9%	20.0%	23.2%	100.0%
		% of participants	100.0%	58.3%	76.2%	47.4%	40.4%	33.3%	48.2%
Total		n	13	12	21	38	47	66	197
		% of non-native/native speakers	6.6%	6.1%	10.7%	19.3%	23.9%	33.5%	100.0%
		% of participants	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

aa. Chi(df) = 28.044(5), p= 0.001

Table 7: Chi-square test for Question 29.

Desire for more opportunities to continue improving French proficiency by L1 (French native speaker/non-native speaker)

			I would like more opportunities to improve my French proficiency		
			Disagree	Agree	Total
Do you speak French as an L1?	No	Count	10	92	102
		% of native/non-native speakers	9.8%	90.2%	100.0%
		% of participants	21.7%	60.9%	51.8%
	Yes	Count	36	59	95
		% of native/non-native speakers	37.9%	62.1%	100.0%
		% of participants	78.3%	39.1%	48.2%
Total		Count	46	151	197
		% of native/non-native speakers	23.4%	76.6%	100.0%
		% of participants	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8: Chi-square test for Question 29.

Desire for mroe professional development opportunities that would enhance French proficiency by L1 (native/non-native speaker)[a]

			I would like to receive professional development opportunities that would enhance my French proficiency.[a]						
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total[a]
Do you speak French as an L1?	No	Count	7	9	3	24	26	32	101
		% of native/non-native speakers	6.9%	8.9%	3.0%	23.8%	25.7%	31.7%	100.0%
		% of participants	25.0%	32.1%	17.6%	46.2%	68.4%	97.0%	51.5%
	Yes	Count	21	19	14	28	12	1	95
		% of native/non-native speakers	22.1%	20.0%	14.7%	29.5%	12.6%	1.1%	100.0%
		% of participants	75.0%	67.9%	82.4%	53.8%	31.6%	3.0%	48.5%
Total		Count	28	28	17	52	38	33	196
		% of native/non-native speakers	14.3%	14.3%	8.7%	26.5%	19.4%	16.8%	100.0%
		% of participants	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

a. Chi(df) = 52.141(5), p= 0.001

Table 9: Chi-square test for Question 46.

Desire for more professional development opportunities that would enhance French proficiency by L1 (native/non-native speaker)

			I would like more professional development opportunities that would enhance my French proficiency		
			Disagree	Agree	Total
Do you speak French as an L1?	No	Count	19	82	101
		% of native/non-native speakers	18.8%	81.2%	100.0%
		% of participants	26.0%	66.7%	51.5%
	Yes	Count	54	41	95
		% of native/non-native speakers	56.8%	43.2%	100.0%
		% of participants	74.0%	33.3%	48.5%
Total		Count	73	123	196
		% of native/non-native speakers	37.2%	62.8%	100.0%
		% of participants	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10: Chi-square test for Question 46.

Desire for more professional development that would help deepen my understanding of French grammar by L1 (native/non-native speaker)[a]

			I would like to receive professional development that would help deepen my understanding of French grammar.						
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Do you speak French as an L1?	No	Count	5	14	17	23	19	23	101
		% of native/non-native speakers	5.0%	13.9%	16.8%	22.8%	18.8%	22.8%	100.0%
		% of participants	27.8%	51.9%	50.0%	39.7%	63.3%	79.3%	51.5%
	Yes	Count	13	13	17	35	11	6	95
		% of native/non-native speakers	13.7%	13.7%	17.9%	36.8%	11.6%	6.3%	100.0%
		% of participants	72.2%	48.1%	50.0%	60.3%	36.7%	20.7%	48.5%
Total		Count	18	27	34	58	30	29	196
		% of native/non-native speakers	9.2%	13.8%	17.3%	29.6%	15.3%	14.8%	100.0%
		% of participants	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

a. Chi(df) = 18.007(5), p= 0.003

Table 11: Chi-square test for Question 44.

Desire for more opportunities to improve French grammar knowledge by L1 (native/non-native speaker)

			I would like to receive professional development that would help deepen my understanding of French grammar.		
			Disagree	Agree	Total
Do you speak French as an L1?	No	Count	36	65	101
		% of native/non-native speakers	35.6%	64.4%	100.0%
		% of participants	45.6%	55.6%	51.5%
	Yes	Count	43	52	95
		% of native/non-native speakers	45.3%	54.7%	100.0%
		% of participants	54.4%	44.4%	48.5%
Total		Count	79	117	196
		% of native/non-native speakers	40.3%	59.7%	100.0%
		% of participants	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 12: Chi-square test for Question 44.

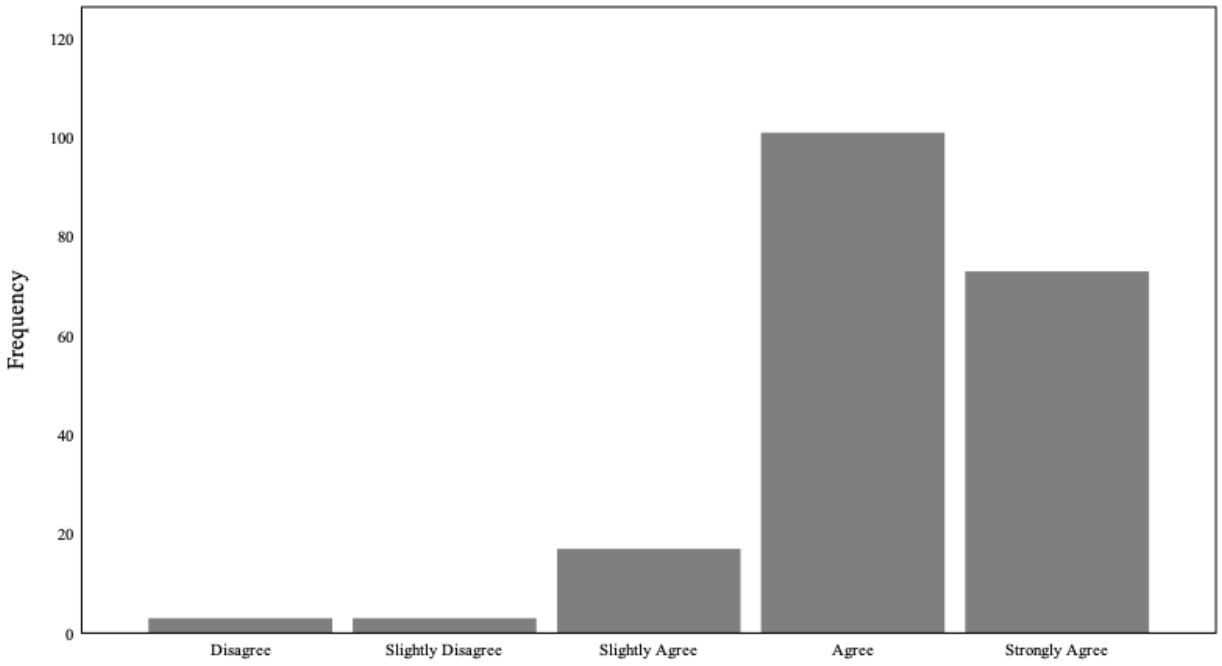

Figure 1: Overall, I feel confident in my French language proficiency.

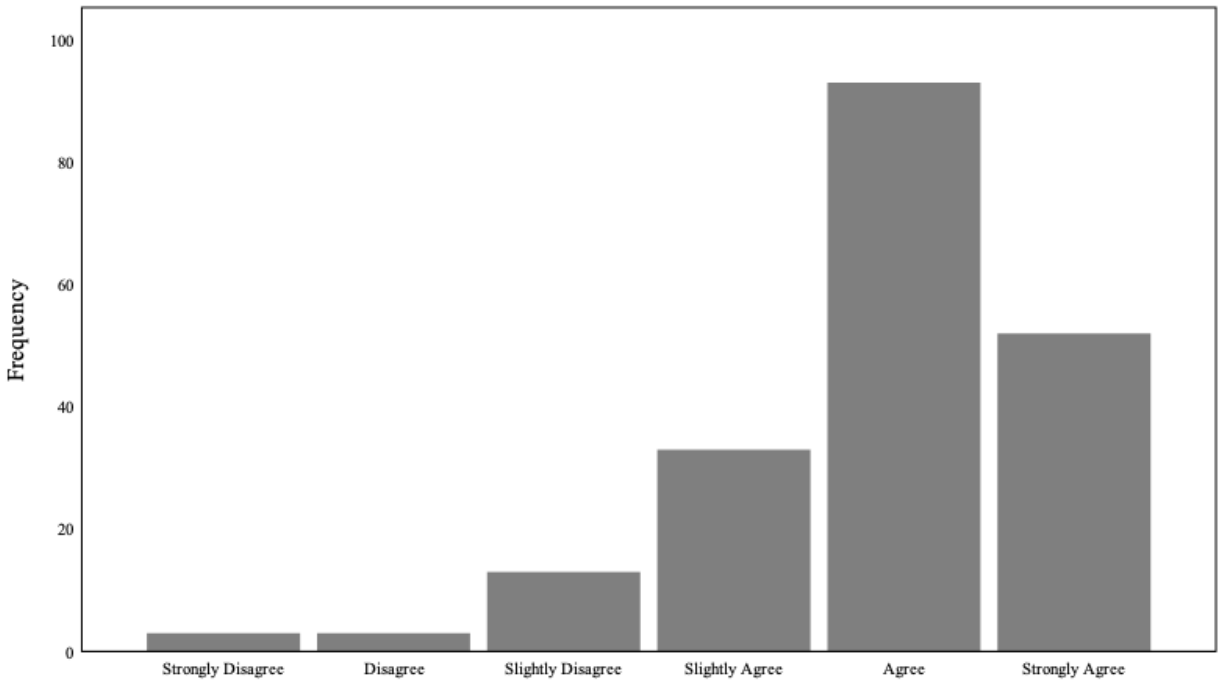

Figure 2: I believe that I have a profound understanding of how French grammar works.

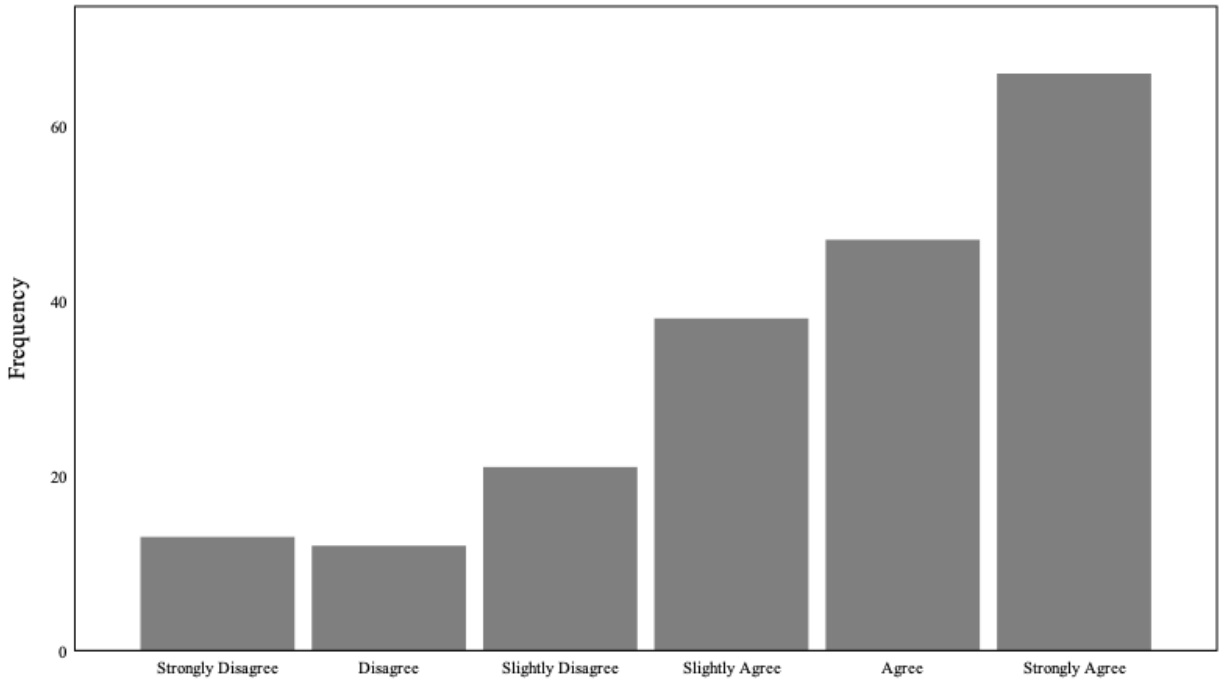

Figure 3: I would like more opportunities to continue improving my French proficiency.

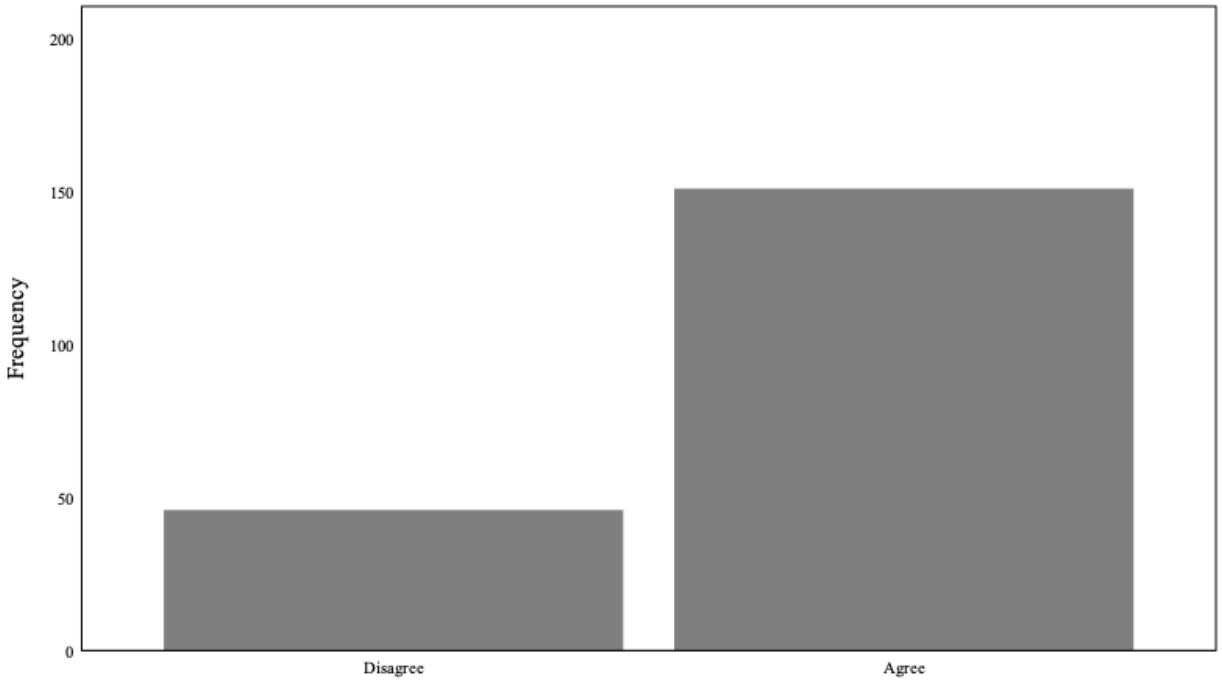

Figure 4: I would like more opportunities to continue improving my French proficiency.

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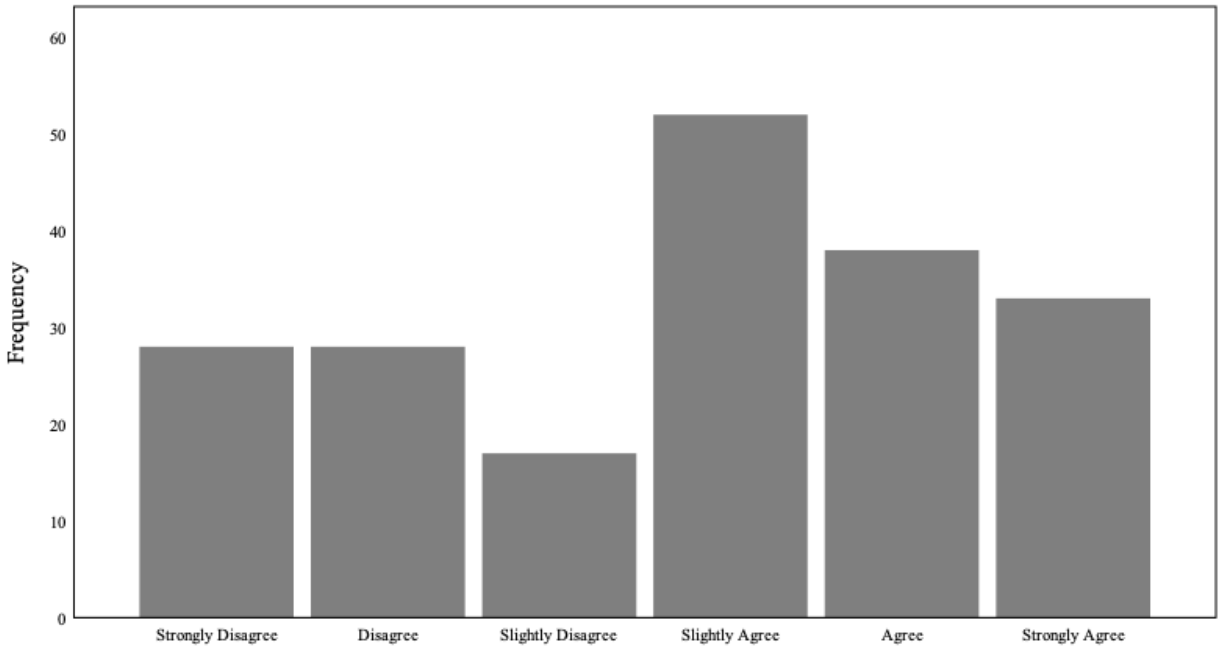

Figure 5: I would like to receive more professional development opportunities that would enhance my French proficiency.

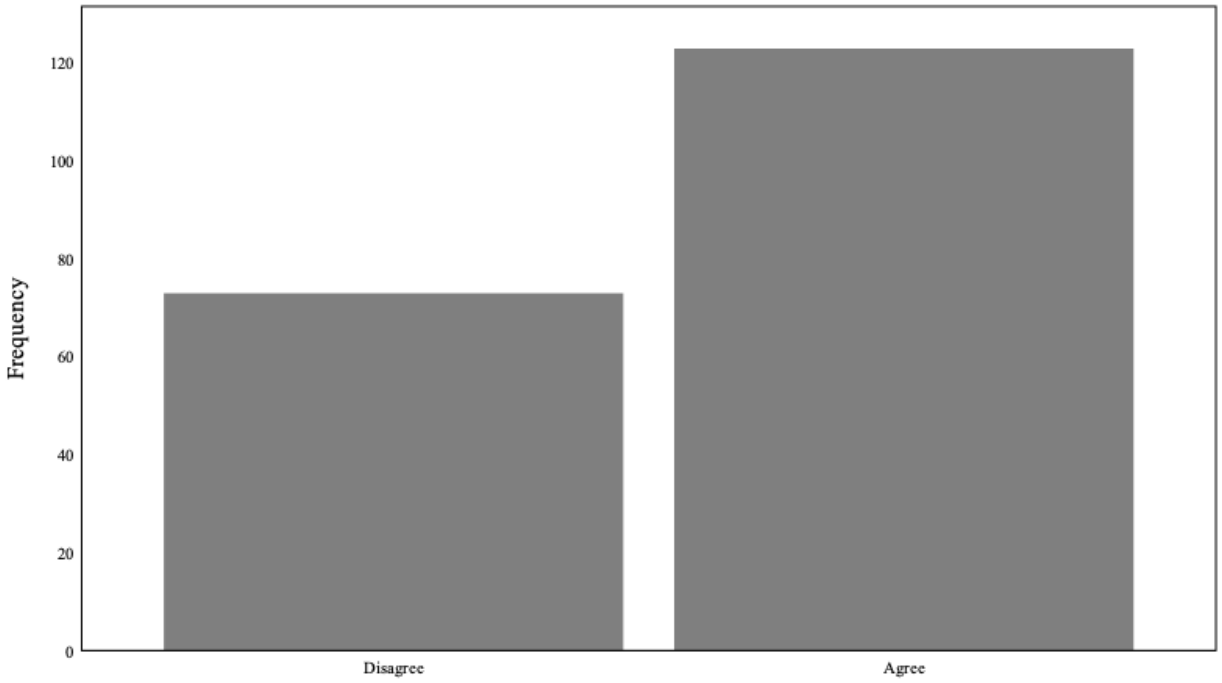

Figure 6: I would like to receive more professional development opportunities that would enhance my French proficiency.

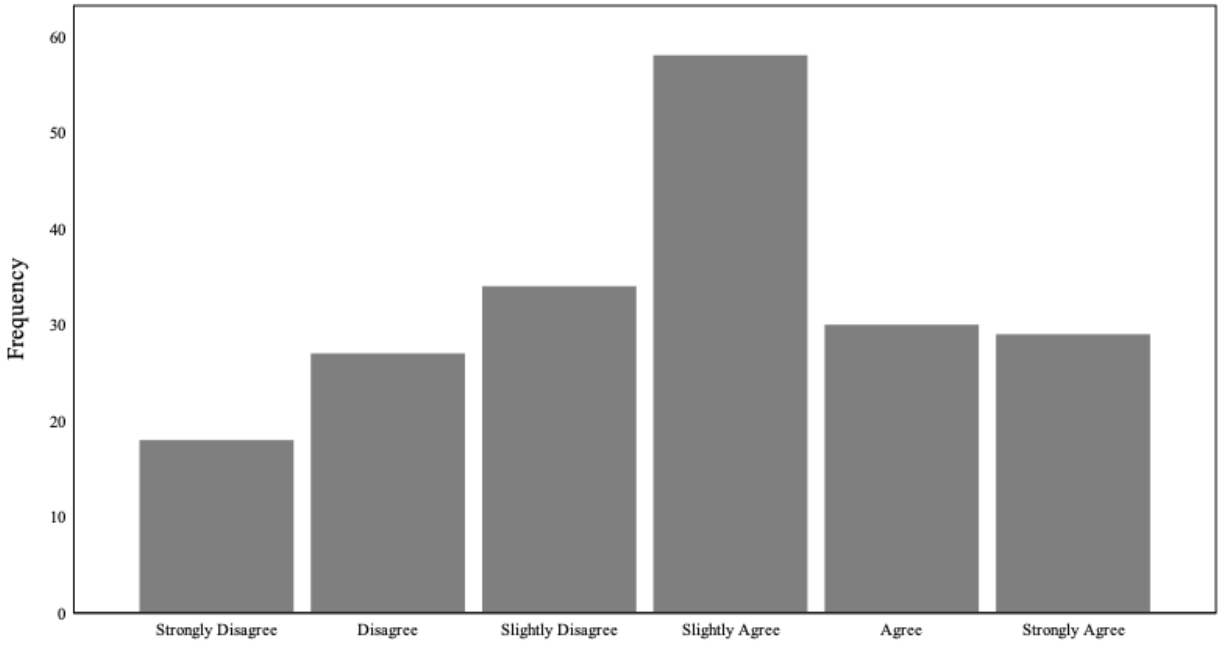

Figure 7: I would like to receive professional development that would help deepen my understanding of French grammar.

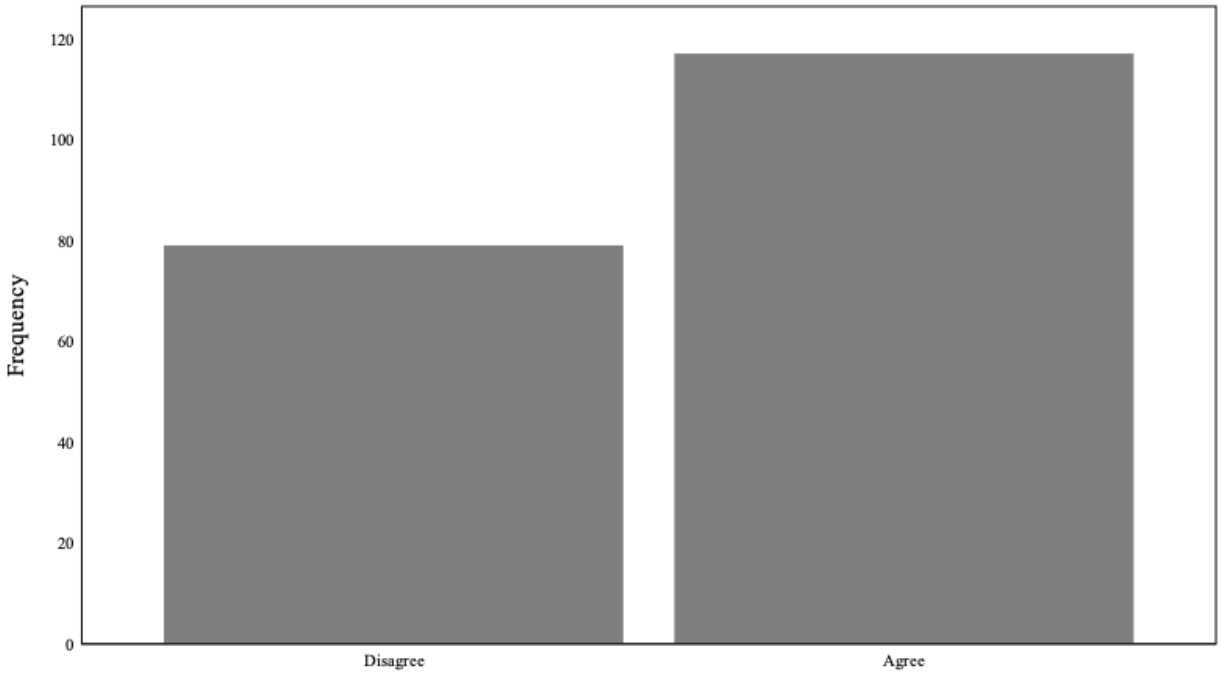

Figure 8: I would like to receive professional development that would help deepen my understanding of French grammar.