

FRENCH IMMERSION FOR ALLOPHONE STUDENTS IN SASKATCHEWAN

The Suitability of French Immersion for Allophone Students in Saskatchewan:

Exploring Diverse Perspectives on Access, Support, and Inclusion

Stephen Davis

Department of Integrated Studies in Education

McGill University

August 11, 2017

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the  
degree of Master of Arts in Second Language Education

Copyright © Stephen Davis 2017

### Abstract

French immersion programs in Saskatchewan have traditionally served to further the goals of additive bilingualism between Canada's two official languages, French and English. Whereas these programs have historically consisted of predominantly Anglophone populations, recent trends in immigration have contributed to the increasingly diverse linguistic backgrounds of students throughout the province. The motivation, family support, and high academic achievement of Allophone students learning French as an additional language have been documented extensively in Canada (Dagenais & Jacquet, 2000; Mady, 2013, 2014, 2015). Nevertheless, Allophone students often do not benefit from the same access to second language education programs as their Anglophone and Francophone peers; indeed, such learners are sometimes excluded from French immersion programs on the basis of their lack of English language proficiency (Roy, 2015). Through Likert-scale surveys and semi-structured interviews, this mixed-methods thesis study explored the perceived suitability of French immersion for Allophone students by examining the perspectives of parents (N=23) and educators (N=56) in several schools in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. This thesis will share the triangulated findings of the study, discuss the suitability of French immersion programs for Allophone students, and provide recommendations for the future of such programs in Saskatchewan.

**Keywords:** FSL, French immersion, Allophone, inclusive education, multilingualism

## Résumé

L'immersion française renvoie à une approche pédagogique qui a pour but la préparation des élèves à travailler et à vivre en français tout en leur permettant de développer des compétences dans les deux langues officielles du Canada. Bien que, historiquement, les élèves anglophones nés au Canada aient été ceux qui ont le plus fréquenté l'immersion française en Saskatchewan, on observe une hétérogénéisation de la population d'élèves inscrits dans ce type de programme, grâce à une augmentation récente de l'immigration dans la province qui contribue à la diversité grandissante tant sur le plan linguistique que culturel. Plusieurs études ont examiné la motivation des élèves allophones envers l'apprentissage du français au Canada, leurs capacités d'acquérir le français et l'anglais simultanément, et l'importance que leurs familles accordent au multilinguisme (Dagenais & Jacquet, 2000; Mady, 2013, 2014, 2015). Malgré leur succès bien documenté en immersion, les élèves allophones sont parfois exclus de ces programmes à cause de leurs niveaux insuffisants d'anglais (Roy, 2015). Cette recherche vise à explorer divers discours au sujet des élèves allophones en immersion française. Spécifiquement, l'étude adopte une méthodologie mixte, menée par l'entremise de questionnaires et d'entrevues, afin d'examiner les perspectives de parents (N=23) et d'éducateurs (N=56), tous provenant de plusieurs écoles de Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Ce mémoire disséminera les résultats quantitatifs et qualitatifs de cette recherche, ainsi que certaines recommandations pour les programmes d'immersion dans le but d'offrir une éducation équitable à une population diversifiée.

Mots clés: FLS, immersion française, Allophone, éducation inclusive, multilinguisme

### Acknowledgements

Thank you first and foremost to my two brilliant co-supervisors, Dr. Susan Ballinger and Dr. Mela Sarkar, for your unwavering support, enthusiasm, and guidance throughout the entirety of my thesis research. You are both incredibly gifted academics and dedicated mentors, and I am forever grateful for the honour of sharing this journey with you. Furthermore, thank you to Dr. Sylvie Roy for your insightful revisions.

Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Roy Lyster, Dr. Carolyn Turner, and Dr. Jesús Izquierdo for teaching me at McGill University and for the important ways each of you shaped this study. Moreover, thank you to the BILD/LIDA Research Community for introducing me to critical sociolinguistics, and to Mimi Masson for her suggestions with respect to research design. J'aimerais remercier également Dr. Andrea Sterzuk, Dr. Stephenie Leitaó Csada, Dr. Laurie Carlson Berg, Dr. Fadila Boutouchent, M. Mo St. Amand, Mme Claire St. Cyr-Power, et M. Jean Dufresne de m'avoir enseigné à l'Université de Regina. Andrea, tu m'as inspiré à poursuivre des études supérieures et tu m'as guidé tout au long du chemin. Merci mille fois pour ton encouragement inoubliable.

Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to the educators and parents who participated in this study and who work tirelessly to teach and nurture all learners in their care. Most importantly, thank you to my parents, Arthur and Diane, for auspiciously enrolling me in French immersion and for always supporting my dreams. Thank you also to my brother, Ryan, whose music has long served as inspiration for my endeavours.

Finally, this research would not have been possible without the generous funding provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

## Table of Contents

Tables.....	viii
Figures.....	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 French Education in Saskatchewan.....	2
1.2 Languages in Saskatchewan.....	4
1.3 Researcher Motivation.....	7
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	9
2.1 Overview of French Immersion.....	9
2.2 Outcomes in French Immersion.....	12
2.3 Allophone Access and FSL Policy.....	14
2.4 Perspectives of FSL Educators.....	18
2.5 Allophone Student Motivation.....	20
2.6 Allophone Family Support.....	22
2.7 Allophone Language Learning.....	25
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	28
3.1 Research Questions and Design.....	28

3.2 Participant Recruitment.....	31
3.3 Survey Methods.....	34
3.4 Interview Methods.....	36
Chapter 4: Results for Educators.....	39
4.1 Demographic Information.....	40
4.2 Questions for Educators.....	43
4.2.1 The Importance of Learning English and French in Saskatchewan.....	43
4.2.2 The Role of English.....	46
4.2.3 The Language Learning of Allophone Students.....	51
4.2.4 The Suitability of French Immersion for Allophone Students.....	57
4.2.5 Gatekeeping.....	63
4.2.6 Supports and Resources.....	68
Chapter 5: Results for Parents.....	73
5.1 Demographic Information.....	74
5.2 Questions for Parents.....	79
5.2.1 The Importance of Learning English and French in Saskatchewan.....	79
5.2.2 The Role of English.....	82

5.2.3 The Language Learning of Allophone Students.....	85
5.2.4 The Suitability of French Immersion for Allophone Students.....	90
5.2.5 Gatekeeping.....	94
5.2.6 Supports and Resources.....	98
Chapter 6: Discussion.....	102
6.1 The Suitability of French Immersion for Allophone Students.....	103
6.2 The Inclusion and Exclusion of Allophone Students.....	111
6.3 The Supports and Resources for Allophone Students.....	114
Chapter 7: Conclusion.....	120
7.1 Limitations.....	121
7.2 Contributions.....	122
7.3 Future Research.....	124
References.....	126
Appendices.....	134

## Tables

Table 1. What is the name of your current school?.....	40
Table 2. Which of the following best describes your current position?.....	41
Table 3. Including the 2016-2017 school year, how many years have you been teaching in a French immersion program?.....	42
Table 4. How many children in your family have been enrolled in French immersion programs?.....	74
Table 5. What school does your child attend?.....	75
Table 6. What is your child's current grade level?.....	76
Table 7. Including the 2016-2017 school year, how many years has your child been enrolled in a French immersion program?.....	76
Table 8. Including the current year, how many years has your family lived in Canada?..	77
Table 9. How many languages does your child speak?.....	78



## Figures

Figure 1. I believe that it is important for Allophone students in Saskatchewan to learn English.....	45
Figure 2. I believe that it is important for Allophone students in Saskatchewan to learn French.....	45
Figure 3. I believe that success in French immersion requires a high level of English proficiency.....	48
Figure 4. I believe that Allophone students should focus on learning English before learning French.....	48
Figure 5. I believe that learning French will support the learning of English for Allophone students.....	50
Figure 6. I believe that learning French is detrimental to the learning of English for Allophone students.....	50
Figure 7. I believe that Allophone students learn French effectively in French immersion.....	53
Figure 8. I believe that Allophone students learn English effectively in French immersion.....	53
Figure 9. I believe that Allophone students have disadvantages learning French compared to their Anglophone peers.....	56

Figure 10. I believe that Allophone students have advantages learning French compared to their Anglophone peers.....	56
Figure 11. I believe that French immersion is a suitable program for Allophone students.....	59
Figure 12. I believe that Core French is a suitable program for Allophone students.....	60
Figure 13. I would recommend French immersion for a student with limited English proficiency.....	62
Figure 14. I would discourage Allophone families from enrolling their children in French immersion.....	62
Figure 15. I believe that Allophone students should be included in French immersion...	64
Figure 16. I believe that school administrators and teachers should be able to decide whether or not to include Allophone students in French immersion.....	65
Figure 17. I believe that Allophone parents should be able to select the program of study for their children.....	67
Figure 18. I believe that Allophone students receive adequate homework support in French immersion.....	69
Figure 19. I believe that Allophone students receive adequate language support in French immersion.....	70
Figure 20. I believe that Allophone students receive adequate English instruction in French immersion.....	72

Figure 21. I believe that it is important for my child to learn English.....	81
Figure 22. I believe that it is important for my child to learn French.....	81
Figure 23. I believe that success in French immersion requires a high level of English proficiency.....	83
Figure 24. I believe that my child is able to learn French and English at the same time..	84
Figure 25. I believe that learning French is detrimental to the learning of English for my child.....	84
Figure 26. I believe that my child is learning English effectively in French immersion...	86
Figure 27. I believe that my child is learning French effectively in French immersion...	87
Figure 28. I believe that my child has advantages in French immersion compared to students whose first language is English.....	89
Figure 29. I believe that my child has disadvantages in French immersion compared to students whose first language is English.....	89
Figure 30. I believe that French immersion is a suitable program for my child.....	91
Figure 31. I believe that my child's teacher is supportive of my decision to enrol him or her in French immersion.....	92
Figure 32. I had difficulty finding information about French immersion programs when I first enrolled my child in the school division.....	93

Figure 33. I was informed of all possible programs of study when I first enrolled my child in the school division.....	94
Figure 34. I was encouraged by school administrators to enrol my child in French immersion.....	95
Figure 35. I was discouraged by school administrators from enrolling my child in French immersion.....	96
Figure 36. I believe that school administrators and teachers should be able to decide whether or not to include Allophone students in French immersion.....	97
Figure 37. I believe that Allophone parents should be able to select the program of study for their children.....	98
Figure 38. I believe that my child receives adequate homework support in French immersion.....	99
Figure 39. I believe that my child receives adequate language support in French immersion.....	100
Figure 40. I believe that my child receives adequate English instruction in French immersion.....	101

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Throughout the recent history of Canada's linguistic development, a discourse of dualism has existed between the country's two official languages, English and French. This ideology is influenced by the revised Official Languages Act, which contains a commitment to "enhance opportunities for all to learn both English and French" (Official Languages Act, 1985). For this reason, Canada's language education initiatives have traditionally offered English instruction for students whose first language is French (Francophones) and French instruction for students whose first language is English (Anglophones) (Roy & Galiev, 2014). Whereas French immersion initially comprised more linguistically homogenous populations, recent developments in immigration have transformed the ethnic and linguistic demographics of the country. Indeed, 20.6% of Canadian students today speak a first language that is neither English nor French, hereafter referred to as Allophones (Statistics Canada, 2014). The language learning achievement of Allophone students in French as a Second Language (FSL) programs has been documented in a number of studies, in addition to the motivation of such families to learn both English and French (Dagenais & Jacquet, 2000; Mady, 2013, 2014, 2015). Nevertheless, FSL educators sometimes question whether such programs are appropriate for Allophone students, and French immersion teachers in particular have been found to espouse exclusionary views (Mady, 2011; Roy, 2015). The purpose of the present study is to examine the perspectives of educators and parents concerning the suitability of French immersion for Allophone students in Saskatchewan. The first chapter of this thesis will present the history of French education in Saskatchewan, provide an overview of language demographics in the province, and discuss the motivation for this research.

## 1.1 French Education in Saskatchewan

French language instruction in Saskatchewan has been shaped by significant challenges throughout the history of the province and indeed before its official origins. The North-West Territories Act of 1875 enabled the establishment of separate schools predicated on religious affiliation; the language of instruction in such institutions could be either French or English, as per the educational and linguistic rights of French Canadians outside of Québec (D’Almeida, 2006). Nevertheless, certain provincial laws presented noteworthy obstacles for French instruction. For instance, it was forbidden to teach French in primary grades from 1888 to 1892 in Saskatchewan. Furthermore, although the inauguration of Saskatchewan as a province of Canada in 1905 signified in theory that French educational rights would be protected throughout the province, provincial legislation did not permit French education until 1915 (D’Almeida, 2006). Subsequent laws limited French language instruction to Grade 1 in 1917, restricted the teaching of French to one hour per day in 1918, and assigned to the *Association catholique franco-canadienne de la Saskatchewan* (ACFC) in 1925 the duties of planning and funding French education throughout the entirety of the province with no government support (D’Almeida, 2006). Moreover, it is important to note that the historical opposition to French language instruction was not limited to the provincial government, but was also demonstrated by radical organizations throughout Saskatchewan. Notably, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) contested many tenets of the French Catholic community of the province. Indeed, “the KKK had many followers in Saskatchewan who protested against religious dress of nuns and brothers who taught in ACFC schools, the use of religious images and symbols, and the use of the French language” (D’Almeida, 2006). Evidently,

French instruction and religious education proved highly contentious issues throughout the history of Saskatchewan, as exhibited by provincial legislation and radical opposition.

The more recent history of Saskatchewan includes several positive developments for French education in the province. Most importantly, the federal government adopted French and English as Canada's two official languages in 1968; subsequently, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms of 1982 established the right to minority language education (D'Almeida, 2006). These events, in concert with significant lobbying by the ACFC, led to the creation of a school division for Francophone families in Saskatchewan, titled *Conseil des écoles fransaskoises*. This school division consists of 14 schools situated throughout the province and contrasts with public and separate divisions insofar as it exists to promote Francophone culture and serve the *Fransaskois* community (Francophone population of Saskatchewan); specifically, families eligible for enrolment include those of French heritage, those whose first language is French, or those who received elementary education in French (*Conseil des écoles fransaskoises*, 2014).

The Official Languages Act of 1968 would prove significant for French education in Saskatchewan not only for the Francophone community, but also because it ensured, in principle, the provision of French instruction for learners beyond the Francophone population. Indeed, 1968 also marked the launch of the first French immersion program in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, followed by the advent of a second program the following year in Regina, Saskatchewan (Reeves, 2006). French immersion history and pedagogy in Canada will be discussed more thoroughly in subsequent chapters of this thesis. Today, there are 28 school divisions in Saskatchewan, including 18 public school divisions, eight separate Roman Catholic school divisions, one separate Protestant school division, and

the *Conseil des écoles fransaskoises* (Saskatchewan School Boards Association, 2017).

Whereas there is only one school division specifically for eligible Francophone students, many divisions throughout the province seek to develop French proficiency and foster appreciation for the language and culture more widely by providing some form of FSL instruction, under the direction of the Official Minority Language Office established in 1980. The FSL programs of different school divisions, such as French immersion and Core French, vary with respect to their implementation; for instance, some school divisions offer Late French immersion for Grade 6 and Grade 7 students who have received no prior French instruction, and others offer Intensive French programs as a continuation of Core French in Grade 6 (Saskatchewan School Boards Association, 2017). Notwithstanding certain pedagogical differences amongst divisions, FSL programs in Saskatchewan share the intent to educate learners of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds throughout the province, and prior exposure to the French language is neither necessary for enrolment nor required for success in such programs.

## **1.2 Languages in Saskatchewan**

In addition to understanding the history of French language instruction in Saskatchewan, it is important to consider the language demographics of the province. English is unequivocally the most widely spoken language in Saskatchewan; specifically, 84.5% of the province's residents are Anglophones, declaring English to be their first language; in contrast, Francophones represent only 1.6% of the province's population (Government of Saskatchewan, 2011). Whereas 872,250 Saskatchewan residents speak English as a first language, the second most common mother tongue in the province is German, with 26,965 native speakers. Cree, an Indigenous language of the Plains Cree



First Nations, is the third most prevalent first language in Saskatchewan with 24,045 native speakers, followed by French, the mother tongue of 18,935 (Government of Saskatchewan, 2011). In terms of Saskatchewan residents with multiple mother tongues, 9,845 people speak English and non-official languages, 1,730 speak both English and French, and a mere 750 speak French and non-official languages; similarly, as pertains to Canada's official languages, 965,925 residents speak English but not French, 430 speak French but not English, and 46,570 speak both English and French (Government of Saskatchewan, 2011). In summary, bilingualism and multilingualism of various configurations are growing in Saskatchewan, but bilingualism rates in Canada's official languages remain relatively low. Indeed, the above statistics demonstrate the discrepancy between the number of English speakers in the province and speakers of other languages, as well as the extent to which French is arguably a minority language in Saskatchewan.

Although the Anglophone and Francophone populations of the province have decreased slightly since the 2006 census, the number of Allophones has increased during this period as a result of greater numbers of immigrants and refugees settling in Saskatchewan; specifically, 12.7% of Saskatchewan residents today claim a first language other than English or French (Government of Saskatchewan, 2011). In 2014, Saskatchewan received 11,826 new immigrants, and the five most common source countries were as follows: first, 3,477 newcomers came from the Philippines, constituting 29% of the total number of immigrants that year; second, 2,446 people migrated from India (21%); third, 1,224 immigrants came from China (10%); fourth, 449 people migrated from Ukraine (4%); fifth, 441 newcomers originated in Pakistan (4%) (Government of Saskatchewan, 2014). In terms of first languages, the five most common

mother tongues of immigrants to Saskatchewan are Tagalog (26%), Chinese (8%), Punjabi (8%), English (8%), and Gujarati (6%) (Government of Saskatchewan, 2014). It is particularly important in the context of the present study to consider the official language proficiency of immigrants in the province: 78% of immigrants demonstrated some English proficiency, 21% spoke neither English nor French, and less than 1% demonstrated French language proficiency (Government of Saskatchewan, 2014). In summary, although Saskatchewan receives fewer immigrants and refugees than most provinces in Canada, the number of newcomer Allophones is rising considerably.

Finally, it is important to consider the significance of Indigenous languages in Saskatchewan. Indeed, Cree and Dene represent the third and seventh most widespread mother tongue languages in Saskatchewan, respectively (Government of Saskatchewan, 2011). Nevertheless, the effects of colonialism in Canada, both historic and ongoing, have threatened the vitality of Indigenous languages in Saskatchewan. Thus, certain communities seek to offer Indigenous language instruction, such as the Nêhiyâwiwin Cree Language and Culture Program in Saskatoon (Saskatoon Public Schools, 2017). Furthermore, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada included five Calls to Action for the federal government related specifically to language and culture (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Researchers have also examined power imbalances between the English varieties of Indigenous students and settler students in Saskatchewan schools (Sterzuk, 2008, 2011). Although Indigenous language revitalization and the language learning of Indigenous students are beyond the scope of the present study, further research in these areas is essential to the critically important work of fostering Indigenous languages, cultures, and identities throughout Canada.

### 1.3 Researcher Motivation

Whereas the first two sections of this chapter provided a synopsis of the history of French language instruction in Saskatchewan and an overview of the linguistic demographics of the province, the third section will discuss the previous experiences of the researcher with respect to the above domains to share the motivation behind the present study. First, the researcher has firsthand experience learning French as a second language in an FSL program by virtue of having completed primary and secondary school in French immersion in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, as well as having obtained a Bachelor of Arts in French at the University of Saskatchewan and a *Baccalauréat en éducation* at the University of Regina. Subsequently, the researcher taught a French immersion Grade 3 class in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, for two years in the same school division before pursuing graduate studies in the Master of Arts in Second Language Education program at McGill University, thereby demonstrating a degree of familiarity with French immersion programs in Saskatchewan as a student and educator.

Additionally, the school division in which the researcher studied and currently teaches is the division that participated in the present study; for this reason, the researcher had prior relationships with certain educator participants, either as former classmates or as colleagues. In terms of previous experience with Allophone families, the researcher has worked and volunteered with two non-profit organizations that serve immigrants and refugees in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Through the aforementioned experiences, the researcher has witnessed a significant shift in student language demographics, both in the city and in French immersion, and is thus motivated to examine diverse perspectives regarding the suitability of such programs for Allophone learners in Saskatchewan.

The introductory chapter of this thesis sought to present the history of French instructional programs in Saskatchewan, provide a brief overview of language demographics in the province, and discuss the researcher's background and motivation for the present study. Subsequently, the literature review chapter will offer a synopsis of French immersion programs in Canada, followed by an analysis of previous research pertaining to various aspects of Allophone learners in FSL programs. The third chapter will provide an overview of the methodology employed in the present study, discussing methodological theory and participant recruitment. Ensuing chapters will present the data generated in this thesis research, first in terms of educator findings and then the results of Allophone parents. In the discussion chapter, the researcher will interpret the results of the present study in light of previous research. Finally, the conclusion will summarize key findings, discuss limitations of this research, and recommend directions for future research and for the future of French immersion programs in Saskatchewan.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Overview of French Immersion**

French immersion was first created and implemented in St. Lambert, a predominantly English-speaking suburb of Montréal, Québec, in 1965 (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). The program was designed as a response to the concerns of Anglophone parents, who recognized the need to equip their children to compete in the increasingly French-dominant workforce throughout the province. Specifically, Roy (2008) explains that these parents “were disillusioned with traditional methods of language-teaching such as drills and repetitions and were eager for their children to have a bilingual advantage in Québec” (p. 398). Whereas certain English-speaking parents were motivated to create French immersion programs for reasons of employment and economic opportunity, federal and provincial governments embraced French immersion as a means to unite Anglophones and Francophones, two distinct populations within Canada. However, it is important to note that the concept of official-language bilingualism has different implications for Anglophones than it does for Francophones because of the inequitable power dynamics between English and French in the Canadian context. To this end, Kjolseth (1977, p. 249) stated the following: “For Anglophones, Canadian bilingualism is additive and in no way presents a threat to English language maintenance. For Francophones, Canadian bilingualism tends to be displacive or replacive and presents a major threat towards French language shift.” In summary, French immersion offered official-language bilingualism to English-speaking families, while simultaneously striving to increase social cohesion between Anglophones and Francophones in Canada.

In terms of pedagogy, French immersion represented a shift toward content-based instruction, a new and innovative approach to second and foreign language education. While traditional approaches to language teaching “dissociated language learning from cognitive, academic, and social development,” immersion and other content-based instructional programs “seek to bring these aspects of development together in the classroom by using the L2, along with the L1, as a vehicle for teaching academic subjects that comprise the core curriculum” (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2013, p. 5). Similarly, Lyster (2008, p. 5) reports, “traditional methods isolate the target language from any substantive content except for the mechanical workings of the language itself, whereas content-based instruction aims to integrate language and cognitive development.” French immersion programs vary considerably in terms of the instructional time allocated to the two official languages, English and French. In early total immersion programs, the entire curriculum is taught through the medium of the French language until English instruction begins around Grade 3; in partial immersion, alternatively, only half of the curricular content is taught through French, while the other half is taught in English (Genesee, 2004). Furthermore, there exist a number of different entry points in French immersion programs. Namely, early French immersion begins in kindergarten or Grade 1, middle French immersion programs begin in Grade 4 or 5, and late French immersion begins in Grade 6, 7, or 8 (Lyster, 2008). Different formats of French immersion have been introduced to every province and territory in Canada and these models have served to inspire numerous second language education initiatives worldwide.

Notwithstanding the above discrepancies pertaining to instructional time and starting points, French immersion programs share several core tenets. Johnson and Swain

(1997, p. 6-7) enumerated the following eight common traits that characterize Canadian French immersion, in addition to other language immersion programs worldwide:

1. The L2 is a medium of instruction.
2. The immersion curriculum parallels the local L1 curriculum.
3. Overt support exists for the L1.
4. The program aims for additive bilingualism.
5. Exposure to the L2 is largely confined to the classroom.
6. Students enter with similar (and limited) levels of L2 proficiency.
7. The teachers are bilingual.
8. The classroom culture is that of the local L1 community.

Although some of the above tenets represent immersion programs in a general sense, many of these descriptors are inaccurate in the current Canadian French immersion context, given the changing student demographics throughout the country. For instance, Roy (2008, p. 400) notes, “the first criterion (“The L2 is a medium of instruction”) is not accurate in the case of new immigrants for whom French is their third language.” Similarly, Swain and Lapkin (2005) argue that the third criterion is only true for Anglophone students, as they receive instructional support in their first language but Allophone students do not. Furthermore, the above researchers consider the eighth criterion somewhat dubious as well, as the notion of the classroom culture is also transforming because of immigration-related demographic shifts throughout Canada.

Additionally, the increased linguistic diversity of Canadian students also has implications for the fourth criterion of French immersion; indeed, additive bilingualism is only a reality of French immersion for Anglophone students, as French and English are generally the only two languages of instruction in such programs. For this reason, French immersion risks becoming what Swain and Johnson (1997) referred to as submersion, wherein the first languages of Allophone students are not supported in Canadian schools

and therefore might be subtracted and replaced with French and English. In order to counter this phenomenon of subtractive bilingualism, many Allophone families pursue heritage language programs or other such opportunities to maintain and support their children's learning of family languages, as will be discussed in greater depth elsewhere in this literature review. Mady (2015, p. 269) states that the core tenets of French immersion must be reconsidered to include the following noteworthy characteristics: "(a) recognition of the immersion language as an additional language rather than a second language, within two of the core principles, (b) use of languages in addition to English and French, and (c) recognition of multiple cultures in the classroom." Evidently, the original eight criteria for language immersion programs were predicated on the presumption of linguistic homogeneity amongst learners. Therefore, Swain and Lapkin (2005) revised the aforementioned features of immersion to reflect the sociopolitical reality of language instructional programs in Canada today. Further research is required to determine how the criteria and planning of French immersion programs must be adapted to serve the increasingly diverse demographics of Canadian schools.

## **2.2 Outcomes in French Immersion**

French immersion is widely considered the most effective approach for Anglophone children to develop proficiency in both of Canada's official languages, English and French (Genesee, 2007). Indeed, there are numerous positive findings pertaining to the academic achievements and language abilities of French immersion students. Lyster (2008) reports that the "academic achievement of French immersion students in subjects they study in French is equivalent to that of non-immersion students studying the same subjects in English" (p. 6). Furthermore, Cummins (2014) noted that



French immersion students develop English language proficiency that is equivalent to or greater than that of students who study in regular English programs. Genesee and Lindholm-Leary (2013) indicate that this “catch-up in reading and writing in English that early total IMM students experience is often attributed to the transfer of reading and writing skills in French to English and the fact that they have extensive exposure to English outside school” (p. 9). Regarding French language proficiency, immersion students outperform students who learn French through other instructional programs in areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2013). Moreover, this language growth comes at no detriment to the learning of curricular content; rather, immersion enables students to develop “high levels of communicative proficiency in the second language, while at the same time allowing them to acquire subject matter content and progress in their mother tongue at rates equivalent to their peers in regular English programs” (Day & Shapson, 2001, p. 49). Lightbown and Spada (2013) called immersion a “two for one” approach, as French immersion students master academic content while simultaneously learning a new language. Nevertheless, Lyster (2008, p. 7) reported that “French immersion students are second language speakers who are relatively fluent and effective communicators, but non-target-like in terms of grammatical structure, and non-idiomatic in their lexical choices and pragmatic expression – in comparison to native speakers of the same age.”

The distinctive nature of the language variety observed in French immersion often leads to students not considering themselves fully bilingual or legitimate French-speaking Canadians (Roy, 2008). Roy (2010) explains this phenomenon of social exclusion further:

In Canadian society, the monolingual view of bilingualism dominates; bilinguals are lost between the two legitimate monolingual worlds; the third space or their transculturality is not recognized. In French immersion programs, this view causes a lot of anxiety among students, who believe that they will never speak as well as native speakers. French immersion students are not recognized as legitimate bilinguals because they do not conform to the definition of what it means to be a bilingual in Canada (p. 556).

Evidently, French immersion offers several academic and linguistic advantages; however, there are certainly shortcomings in language development, problems of social exclusion, and issues of identity that require consideration from researchers and educators alike.

### **2.3 Allophone Access and FSL Policy**

In addition to understanding the historical and social dimensions of Canadian French immersion and the pedagogy thereof, it is also important to consider issues of equitable access to FSL programs. Specifically, this section of the literature review will examine previous research concerning various FSL policies throughout Canada and the extent to which the implementation of such policies affects the accessibility of French instructional programs for Allophone students. Whereas Canada's language policy is determined at the federal level, educational policy is created under provincial and territorial jurisdiction; for this reason, access to FSL programs is influenced by both levels of government (Mady & Turnbull, 2012). In terms of federal support for official bilingualism, two government policy statements titled *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality* (2003) and *The Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future* (2013) discuss the goal of doubling the number of secondary school graduates throughout Canada who are functionally bilingual in the two official languages (Mady & Turnbull, 2010). While promoting official-language bilingualism has long been a stated priority of the Canadian government, few policies

address this goal as it pertains to Allophones. In their analysis of federal documents regarding official language education, Mady and Turnbull (2010) note the following:

The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1967) and The Multiculturalism Act (1985), for example, limited the government's assistance to facilitate immigrants' learning of one of Canada's official languages, but not both. In English Canada, immigrants must learn English, but their access to also learn French at school is not guaranteed by federal policy documents. Such limitations continue to this day; *The Next Act*, for example, limits its description of improved access to linguistic duality to Anglophones and Francophones at it seeks to double the proportion of bilingual graduates (p. 5-6).

Indeed, the federal government's documents indicate a strong desire for Allophone students to learn one of Canada's official languages; however, there is minimal policy in place to support these students' simultaneous learning of French and English (Galiev, 2013). In her review of federal, provincial, and territorial FSL policies, Mady (2007, p. 733) contends that "the influx of immigrants should force the necessary reworking of official language acquisition planning to include allophone students in FSL."

Official-language bilingualism for Allophone students is also rarely discussed explicitly at the provincial or territorial level. Mady and Black (2012) report that "the provinces and territories have not used their authority to create many formal policies," which may lead to inconsistencies with respect to Allophone access to French immersion (p. 498). Specifically, "of the 132 opportunities for specific policies to ensure access to FSOL education, only five such policies were found – two in New Brunswick, two in Ontario and one in the Yukon" (Mady & Black, 2012, p. 499). Moreover, there is significant discrepancy amongst Canadian provinces and territories regarding whether French language education is mandatory or optional. To this end, Mady and Turnbull (2010) note that French language instruction is compulsory in Ontario, Québec, New

Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador; alternatively, studying a second language is required in British Columbia and the Yukon, but French is not the only option in these cases; finally, French language education is optional in Alberta, the Northwest Territory, Nunavut, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba (p. 13). The divergent policies of Canada's provinces and territories concerning FSL instruction, it has been argued, contribute to inconsistent practices pertaining to the inclusion of Allophone students in such programs. Specifically, Mady (2007, p. 746) asserts that these discrepancies in policies "suggest that decisions on the inclusion of allophone students in French are based on hearsay evidence and intuitive choices rather than on research or the expectations of ministries of education," emphasizing the need for further research examining the integration of Allophone students into French instructional programs and the extent to which their inclusion is based on sound policy.

In Saskatchewan, students are not required to study French or any other second language. Moreover, there are no policies in place to ensure that Allophone students are able to access FSL programs, to ensure that parents are properly informed about the entry points and expected outcomes of such programs, or to prevent the exclusion of certain learners from French immersion programs (Mady & Black, 2012). In her prior review of FSL policies throughout Canada, Mady (2007, p. 741) examined language instruction in Saskatchewan, noting the following in terms of policy, curriculum, and demographics:

Although approximately 60% of school divisions choose to offer French – core French, French immersion, or intensive French (a program option offering enrichment to the core French program by means of intensive exposure to French) – there is no policy on the inclusion or exclusion of allophone students. However, many immigrant parents enrol their children in French immersion classes where these are available (S. Gareau, personal communication, March 29, 2006). At present, there is no ESL curriculum. The lack of such a curriculum

may be due in part to the low number of foreign-born residents: only 5% of the population of Saskatchewan (47,825 persons) was born outside Canada.

Indeed, the absence of a provincial EAL (English as an Additional Language) curriculum and FSL policy for Allophone students at the time of this review could be attributed to the low number of newcomers in Saskatchewan relative to other Canadian provinces and territories. However, no such curriculum exists today, despite the fact that the population growth in Saskatchewan, “principally driven by immigration, has resulted in the rapid growth of many languages relatively new to the province. 70 different languages increased in prevalence, 16 of which are completely new to the province, having not been reported in the 2006 census”; furthermore, Allophones account for 12.7 percent of Saskatchewan residents today (Government of Saskatchewan, 2011). Indeed, as the languages demographics of Saskatchewan grow increasingly diverse, the lack of ESL curriculum and FSL planning for Allophones become increasingly problematic.

It is important to note that although certain provinces and territories officially mandate French instruction for all students, the policies do not ensure that Allophone learners in those regions have access to such programs. For example, there is evidence of Allophone students being excluded from FSL programs in Ontario, the province’s policy for compulsory French instruction notwithstanding. In a three-year longitudinal study, Taaffe, Maguire, and Pringle (1996) compared the practices of several schools within the same Ontario school board regarding the inclusion of Allophone students and found substantial inconsistencies from one school to another. For instance, some schools prevented newcomer Allophone students from studying in FSL programs so that they could participate in ESL classes until their English proficiency improved, whereas one of the schools observed provided FSL instruction for all students (Taaffe et al., 1996).

Thus, the mere existence of policy requiring French instruction does not in itself guarantee that Allophone students can access FSL programs, insofar as the interpretation, implementation, and ignorance of such policies vary considerably from school to school. Further research examining FSL policies and their effects on inclusion is necessary.

## **2.4 Perspectives of FSL Educators**

While the creation of FSL policies for the inclusion and support of Allophone students remains the responsibility of Canada's federal, provincial, and territorial governments, the implementation of such policies depends on the school boards under their jurisdictions. Therefore, the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the suitability of FSL programs for Allophone students are of central importance, given that educators serve as gatekeepers for families who might be considering French instruction for their children and are thereby in a position to influence the inclusion or exclusion of such students. In a survey examining the beliefs of 1,305 FSL teachers throughout Canada concerning a variety of subjects, teachers indicated that student diversity was among the greatest challenges they faced as educators, noting the presence of Allophone students as a cause of this diversity (Lapkin, Macfarlane, & Vandergrift, 2006). In a subsequent study, Mady (2011) conducted surveys and interviews with FSL teachers to investigate their beliefs with regard to Allophone students in FSL programs. Some French immersion teachers suggested that immersion programs were too difficult for Allophones and would instead recommend Core French, as per these interview excerpts:

it's really challenging and you know, it really depends on the student and whether they're going to be able to do that or not, and for many of them that's too much. Participant 5  
if the child can't do immersion...they just transfer to the core class. Participant 3

maybe those children should not be in French immersion, it's still good for them to be doing core French, this access to a second language, but expecting them to learn all the subjects in French, maybe too much. Participant 1

As far as I know, if the person coming into our class is a non-English speaker, they are often encouraged to get out of the French immersion program.

Participant 2 (Mady, 2011, p. 51).

Moreover, in her analysis of the survey data, Mady (2011) found that French immersion teachers espoused less inclusive views pertaining to Allophone students than Core French teachers; specifically, many French immersion educators did not express the belief that learning English and French would be mutually beneficial for Allophone learners.

Indeed, Mady (2011) demonstrates some degree of apprehension among French immersion teachers to include Allophone students, which could result in the exclusion of such students from immersion programs. While this finding is important, Mady and Turnbull (2012, p. 134) underline the fact that studies exploring teachers' and principals' perspectives are few and far between and that "the few studies that exist have almost all been completed in Ontario or in larger urban centers where many immigrants live." This area of research remains largely unexplored in many regions of Canada and must be investigated more broadly, given the increase of Allophone students nationwide.

Also of interest in this discussion are the beliefs and experiences of FSL teacher candidates. Mady and Arnett (2016) conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 pre-service FSL educators across Canada in order to compare their practical experiences in Core French and French immersion programs with their university content in terms of the inclusion of at-risk students and Allophone students in FSL instruction. The juxtaposition revealed significant gaps between teacher candidates' educational training and practical placements with regard to both Allophone students and at-risk learners. Specifically, the researchers noted that although some of the participants did learn about Allophone

students in their university courses, “the vast majority (7/9 or 78%) could not access any scientific knowledge about these students and their learning needs to support the work in the practicum, thus revealing a disconnect between the content of their teacher education program and the classroom reality in most cases” (Mady & Arnett, 2015, p. 87). Indeed, many participants expressed that they felt underprepared to teach students with diverse linguistic backgrounds and those with special learning needs, and that although such learners were prevalent in their FSL practical placements, they were seldom discussed in teacher training courses. Thus, the findings of this study illustrate a gap between the theoretical learning of pre-service educators and their practical experiences. Further research is required to determine not only the perspectives of pre-service teachers and in-service teachers regarding the suitability of FSL programs for Allophone learners, but also the extent to which these beliefs are informed by reliable research.

## **2.5 Allophone Student Motivation**

The first reason for which Allophone students should be supported and encouraged to pursue their education in French immersion is that they demonstrate a strong sense of motivation toward multilingualism. These incentives toward official language bilingual education include both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Through the use of surveys and interviews, Mady (2010) compared the motivation of Canadian-born secondary students and recent immigrants to study in Core French programs in the province of Ontario. The findings of this study indicate that newcomer Allophone students are more likely to consider official language bilingualism to be an indispensable element of Canadian identity, whereas this belief is less prevalent amongst their Canadian-born peers; for this reason, immigrant students view bilingual education as a



means of integration into Canadian society (Mady, 2010). Furthermore, Mady (2010) asked the secondary students whether French instruction should be mandatory for all students in Canada and reported that immigrant Allophone students often responded in the affirmative. Conversely, Mady (2010) noted several Canadian-born students were ambivalent toward this sentiment, as per the following interview excerpts: “I don’t know. It is just a part of school”; “No, I was wondering why we had to learn it and it was dumb” (p. 572). While there are certainly diverse opinions in both populations, newcomer students are generally highly motivated to pursue official language education for reasons of social integration. Inasmuch as Allophone students perceive French-English bilingualism as an essential component of Canadian identity, this represents an intrinsic incentive to pursue bilingual education; nevertheless, the potential for this bilingualism to serve as a means of acculturation signifies extrinsic motivation as well.

Moreover, Allophone students often believe that bilingualism in Canada’s two official languages will provide greater employment opportunities in the future. In her study comparing the motivation levels of Allophone students to those of Anglophone students, Mady (2003, p. 573) found that the former group was more likely than the latter group to view official-language bilingualism as beneficial for both intrinsic and extrinsic purposes pertaining to economic opportunity and Canadian identity, as per the following:

These responses unveil the Allophone participants’ belief that French would help them get a good job. It also shows that they connected being educated to getting a good job. In contrast to the Canadian-born participants, Allophone participants interviewed expressed responsibility to their families. This responsibility includes getting a good job and a good education, which they believe Canada is offering.

Evidently, the belief that official-language bilingualism is economically advantageous in Canada presents an important motivator for Allophone students to study French in

English-dominant regions. Additionally, in spite of the obstacles Allophones face with regards to access to French instruction, many such students demonstrate a high level of confidence in their aptitude in French and English language development (Mady, 2007; Mady & Turnbull, 2012). These motivations display Allophone students' strong desire to develop proficiency in both English and French. Whereas this research was conducted in Core French programs, the motivations – developing Canadian identity, integrating into Canadian society, and receiving greater employment opportunities – are arguably even more conducive to success in French immersion than in Core French, given the superior linguistic and academic outcomes documented in French immersion (Mady, 2015).

## **2.6 Allophone Family Support**

In addition to the significant degree of motivation that Allophone learners feel toward multilingual education, these students often receive remarkable home support in their pursuit of official language bilingualism. Indeed, the determination of Allophone students to learn both English and French often stems from their families' desire for them to pursue their education in Canada's two official languages. Dagenais and Berron (2001) analyzed the perspectives and experiences of three Allophone families from South Asian countries with children in French immersion programs in British Columbia. The findings of this study indicate several reasons for which Allophone parents would select French immersion for their children. Foremost among these was the belief that French-English bilingualism would provide work and travel opportunities that their children would not receive if they learned only one of the official languages (Dagenais & Berron, 2001). Similarly, Dagenais and Jacquet (2000) noted that many Allophone families value multilingualism for reasons of social and economic mobility, both in Canada and

internationally; specifically, parents offered the following responses: “I think if you know more than 2 languages, I think it is easy for the children to find a job”; “I want them to know international languages because in today’s competitive world, it helps to master a few languages, mainly French and English. It is vital to survive in the job market” (p. 397-398). Norton (2000) describes this mentality toward language learning in terms of investment and return, explaining that the investment parents make by enrolling their children in multilingual instructional program might result in employment opportunities in their future. In this way, French immersion represents an avenue for socioeconomic advancement for Allophone families in Canada.

Additionally, the fact that French is an official language in Canada contributes significantly to Allophone parents’ decision to enrol their children in French instructional programs. Carr (2013, p. 33) noted that this idea of French-English bilingualism being important to Canadian identity was quite pervasive amongst Allophone parents, as demonstrated by the following interview response related to this theme:

First of all, French is an official language of Canada and it is important to be able to use it. It’s as simple as that. This is a second language of Canada... If you speak a country’s official language or two, you understand a lot more. The fact that it is an official language, that’s huge. It’s one of the best decisions we made.

Dagenais and Berron (2001) also observed this sentiment, reporting that Allophone parents “attribute importance to the French language as one of the official languages of the country and as a language that is spoken in several other countries as well” (p. 152). The literature on this topic suggests that Allophone parents view official language bilingualism as an essential component of Canadian identity and therefore seek to provide French instruction for their children in English-dominant provinces and territories.

Furthermore, Allophone parents are confident in their children's ability to develop English proficiency through French immersion (Dagenais & Moore, 2008). Additionally, Allophone parents in English-dominant regions of Canada recognize that their children have ample exposure to the English language in school and beyond. To this end, a parent stated the following in a previous study: "English is very simple to pick up, it's very easy to pick up. And we are there to help them learn that language. And they learn it from their friends. French is more difficult and to get the accent and those sorts of things, we could not be helpful to them. So, that was our priority" (Dagenais & Berron, 2001, p. 151). Allophone students' aptitudes for acquiring English and French language skills simultaneously have also been documented; for instance, Mady (2015) observed that Allophone newcomers to Canada "outperformed the Canadian-born English-speaking and Canadian-born multilingual groups on French proficiency measures of reading, writing, and speaking, whereas there were no significant differences among the groups on the French listening score or the English test components" (p. 279). Indeed, Allophone parents' confidence in their children's language learning is congruent with the research on their proficiency, which will be discussed in greater detail subsequently.

Finally, it is important to note that, in addition to pursuing official language bilingual education for their children, Allophone parents may endeavour to provide language instruction in the children's first languages as well. Specifically, Dagenais and Berron (2001) report that "the parents of South Asian ancestry that we interviewed were adamant that their children should learn the family language so that they could maintain ties with their language community in their country of adoption and abroad" (p. 153). Rather than viewing official bilingual education as a replacement for the family language,

some Allophone parents provide heritage language instruction for their children, compensating for the lack of first language support their children receive in Canadian schools; alternatively, other families offer informal occasions for development of heritage languages, such as gatherings with extended family (Dagenais & Berron, 2001). Importantly, studying a family or heritage language does not preclude Allophone students from developing strong abilities in French. In fact, Bild and Swain (1989) generated data from two oral and two written tests and demonstrated a positive correlation between Allophones' continued study of their first languages and their French proficiency.

## **2.7 Allophone Language Learning**

The present section of this chapter will examine the literature concerning the language proficiency of Allophone students in various FSL programs. In their study of the effect of the typology of students' first language on academic achievement in French immersion programs, Bérubé and Marinova-Todd (2012) compared three student populations – English monolingual students, multilingual students with an alphabetic first language, and multilingual students with a logographic first language – on a range of measures, such as listening comprehension, vocabulary, word recognition, and reading comprehension. The findings demonstrate that “English monolinguals and the multilingual alphabetic L1 group had stronger English and French oral skills than the multilingual logographic/syllabary L1 group. The English monolinguals and the multilingual alphabetic L1 group also had better English and French reading comprehension skills” (Bérubé & Marinova-Todd, 2012, p. 286). For this reason, the researchers concluded that speaking English as a first language was no more advantageous in French immersion than prior knowledge of any other alphabetic

language; rather, Allophone students whose first language uses a similar alphabet to French receive the same benefits as their Anglophone peers. Moreover, Allophone students' first language might offer linguistic advantages in French language learning that English does not. For instance, Izquierdo and Collins (2008) reported that Spanish-speaking students demonstrate greater understanding of *passé composé* and *imparfait* verb tenses, a common difficulty for Anglophone immersion students (Lyster, 2008). Furthermore, the multilingual repertoires of Allophone students are particularly conducive to additional language learning. Herdina and Jessner (2002) examined the language learning of multilingual learners and found that such learners demonstrated strong metalinguistic awareness, which contributed to their aptitude for third language acquisition. Subsequently, Jessner (2008) argued that the strong abilities of multilingual learners to acquire additional languages, whether simultaneously or sequentially, could be explained by a dynamic systems theory, which holds that multilingual development is both nonlinear and complex. In summary, the linguistic backgrounds of Allophone students should not be viewed through a lens of deficiency with respect to language learning; rather, researchers and educators must consider that Allophone students may have distinct advantages in French immersion compared to their Anglophone peers.

Allophone students' aptitude for simultaneous language learning in French and English has been observed consistently in Canadian language instructional programs. Moreover, it is noteworthy that this proficiency is especially strong amongst first-generation immigrant students. In a Core French context, Mady (2007) noted that the French language skills of immigrant Allophone secondary students in Ontario were stronger than those of Canadian-born students. These results are "particularly striking

given the discrepancy in their experience with French: the ESL participants had had only 100 instructional hours of French, while the Canadians had had over six times the amount of French instruction at 625 hours” (Mady, 2007, p. 193). In a recent study conducted in French immersion, similarly, Mady (2015) reported that newcomer Allophone students demonstrated greater French language skills than their Canadian-born Anglophone classmates and Canadian-born multilingual peers in a variety of capacities. Furthermore, previous research demonstrates that the English proficiency of Allophone students does not suffer as a result of studying French. Carr (2007) compared the English language abilities of Grade 5 Allophones in an intensive French program to those of Grade 5 Allophones in the regular English stream and found that the students who were studying both languages demonstrated significantly higher English proficiency than those who were solely studying English. Thus, in contrast to the widespread belief that Allophone students will find learning both French and English overwhelmingly difficult and should instead study only one official language, the research indicates that these students are not linguistically disadvantaged in FSL programs; rather, Allophone students’ remarkable propensity for simultaneous language acquisition contributes considerably to their academic and linguistic success in such programs. The next chapter of this thesis will provide the research questions that guided the present study, offer an overview of the methodological framework and methods employed, and discuss participant recruitment.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Questions and Design

The objective of the present study was to examine the diverse perspectives of French immersion teachers, school administrators, and Allophone parents regarding the suitability of French immersion programs for Allophone students in Saskatchewan. Specifically, the three research questions that guided this thesis were the following:

1. What are the perspectives of French immersion educators and parents regarding the suitability of French immersion for Allophone students in Saskatchewan?
2. What are the experiences of Allophone families in terms of inclusion and exclusion from French immersion programs in Saskatchewan?
3. What resources and supports do Allophone students need to succeed in French immersion programs in Saskatchewan?

In terms of the methodological design of this research, both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in the gathering and analyzing of data. While many educational researchers have traditionally ascribed to the incompatibility thesis (Howe, 1988), which holds that qualitative methods and quantitative methods are irreconcilable, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) reject this notion of mutually exclusive methods, arguing instead that mixed-methods research represents a pragmatic response to this paradigm division:

Mixed methods research also is an attempt to legitimate the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions, rather than restricting or constraining researchers' choices (i.e., it rejects dogmatism). It is an expansive and creative form of research, not a limiting form of research. It is inclusive, pluralistic, and complementary, and it suggests that researchers take an eclectic approach to method selection and the thinking about and conduct of research. What is most fundamental is the research question – research methods should *follow* research



questions in a way that offers the best chance to obtain useful answers. Many research questions and combinations of questions are best and most fully answered through mixed research solutions (p. 17-18).

Inasmuch as mixed-methods research is predicated on the complementary nature of quantitative and qualitative results, the findings from one method often provide support and confirmation of those attained through its counterpart. This phenomenon has been referred to as triangulation, which “reduces the risk of chance associations and of systematic biases due to a specific method, and allows a better assessment of the generality of the explanations that one develops” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 128). Thus, a core tenet of mixed-methods research and perhaps its greatest benefit is that the mutual reinforcement of multiple methods and the corroboration of their results serves to increase the validity and reliability of the results generated by each method individually.

To the extent that the present study employed quantitative and qualitative research methods simultaneously and that the data generated by these approaches were analyzed separately, the methodological framework of this research might be considered a convergent parallel methods design insofar as “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” (Creswell, 2014, p. 219). In terms of this methodological framework’s approach to the sampling of participants in the two methods, Creswell (2014, p. 222) asserts the following: “Typically, mixed-methods researchers would include the sample of qualitative participants in the larger sample, because ultimately researchers make a comparison between the two databases and the more they are similar, the better the comparison.” Thus, it has been argued that the greater the overlap between participants in the quantitative and qualitative research methods, the greater the validity of the findings.

As it pertains to data analysis, the convergent parallel mixed methods design provides several possible options for combining the qualitative and quantitative data.

Creswell (2014, p. 222) presents certain relevant approaches to data analysis as follows:

The first approach is called a side-by-side comparison. These comparisons can be seen in the discussion sections of mixed methods studies. 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 writers 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.

In addition to the options described above, mixed-methods researchers sometimes merge the two types of information in a process called data transformation, whereby qualitative data is coded or analyzed thematically in order to form quantitative measures. The feature shared by these approaches is that the two forms of data are analyzed separately and subsequently combined in order to observe consistencies and discrepancies. Finally, data interpretation in convergent parallel mixed-methods research often entails a discussion of the quantitative and qualitative data and the degree to which these parallel one another.

The rationale for the use of a convergent parallel mixed-methods approach in the present study is that one method would generate quantitative data from larger populations of the stakeholder groups in question – namely, French immersion educators and Allophone parents – in an effort to provide a global understanding of the diverse perspectives; concurrently, the qualitative component of this approach enables a deeper, more thorough analysis of the beliefs and personal experiences of a smaller sample of these populations. Specifically, the two instruments developed for the quantitative component of this study consist of two 20-item Likert scale questionnaires, one each for

educator and parent participants. Likert-scale surveys are commonly used to generate quantitative data regarding attitudes and perceptions across large populations; therefore, they represent a pragmatic and effective approach to exploring the broad perspectives of diverse participants concerning the suitability of French immersion for Allophone students in Saskatchewan. Additionally, although the questionnaires serve first and foremost to gather quantitative information through closed-item responses, the surveys nevertheless generate qualitative data in the form of open-ended comment submissions.

In parallel, a number of semi-structured interviews were conducted with several participants from each population of survey participants; these interviews were the primary source of qualitative results for this study. Subsequently, the survey responses and interview data were analyzed separately and then interpreted in parallel so as to determine the extent to which the results of each method confirm or disconfirm one another. The individual research methods outlined above will be explained in greater detail in subsequent sections of this chapter, in addition to the timeline of this research and the recruitment of participants across diverse stakeholder populations. The following subsection will discuss the school division that participated in the present study.

### **3.2 Participant Recruitment**

The present study sought to examine the perspectives of teachers, principals, and parents regarding the suitability of French immersion programs for Allophone students in Saskatchewan; thus, the participants belong to the above populations. The teacher and principal participants work in different French immersion elementary schools within the same school division in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. This school board was selected for

research for the following reasons: first, the division in question is among the largest school boards in the province and provides a variety of French immersion programs at the elementary school level; second, the city of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, is the largest urban centre in the province and receives greater numbers of newcomer families and students per year than other cities and rural communities in Saskatchewan (Statistics Canada, 2014); finally, the researcher is currently employed by the division and has experience teaching in a French immersion elementary school. This connection provided a degree of knowledge of French immersion programming within the school board, in addition to a sense of membership with the educators. In light of the aforementioned reasons, the school board in question was an appropriate and pragmatic site for the study.

In order to obtain permission to invite French immersion educators to participate in this study, it was necessary to apply for approval to conduct research within the school division. The superintendent overseeing research in the school board approved the proposed study on June 27, 2016, with the following caveats: first, contact must be made with school principals prior to inviting teachers and parents to participate; second, only teachers, principals, and Allophone parents who were currently connected to French immersion programs could be included in the study. The above stipulations placed considerable restraints on the recruitment of participants for this study. For instance, the requirement that principals must be contacted before teachers and parents precluded the possibility of conducting research without the permission of administrators. Moreover, families who had withdrawn their children from French immersion or had been excluded from the programs could not be recruited to participate in this research. Therefore, the extent to which Allophone students might be excluded from French immersion and the

experiences of such students could not be examined in this study, as permission was only extended to families currently in French immersion. The above limitations of the present study will be analyzed in greater depth subsequently in this thesis.

The researcher first contacted the principals of each of the seven elementary schools in the division offering French immersion programs via email in September 2016, requesting to present the proposed study to the educators in their respective schools. Five of the seven principals invited the researcher to meet with the French immersion teachers in their schools at various points throughout the fall season; conversely, one principal agreed to participate after the proposed data collection period, and another did not reply to the invitations. The researcher attended staff meetings of the above schools, invited French immersion teachers and principals to participate in the study, and distributed consent forms (Appendix A: Educator Consent Form). The educators indicated on the consent forms whether they agreed to participate in the online survey, interview, or both, and then returned the signed consent forms to the researcher immediately. In the case of the principal who agreed to participate after the data collection period, consent forms were distributed and collected via email. In total, N=56 educators completed the survey and N=43 of these participants were also interviewed.

The recruitment of parent participants, conversely, presented a challenge insofar as the researcher could not access contact information for parents whose children were enrolled in the school division. For this reason, French immersion homeroom teachers were given different consent forms for Allophone parents (Appendix B: Parent Consent Form) and asked to distribute these to the students in their respective classes who had a first language that was neither English nor French. The consent forms for Allophone

parents were attached to stamped, pre-addressed envelopes so that prospective participants could indicate whether they agreed to complete the survey, interview, or both, and then send their signed consent forms via post to the researcher's personal residence. Survey responses were received from N=23 parent participants, seven of whom were interviewed as well. All interview participants also completed the survey for their respective population; thus, the sample of N=50 interviewees are included in the N=79 survey participants. Furthermore, at least one educator and at least one parent from each of the six schools participated in the study. Subsequent sections of this chapter will discuss the survey and interview procedures in addition to the methods of data analysis.

### **3.3 Survey Methods**

The present study employed online surveys to generate data that reflect the broad perspectives and attitudes of participants regarding the suitability of French immersion for Allophone students in Saskatchewan. Specifically, two such surveys were created through LimeSurvey, a questionnaire instrument supported by researchers in various social science departments at McGill University. The two surveys are distinctly different from one another, as one was designed for French immersion educators and the other was developed for Allophone parents with children enrolled in French immersion programs. The survey for teachers and principals, titled *The Suitability of French Immersion for Allophone Students: Survey for Educators*, was sent via email and was completed by N=56 educator participants (Appendix C: Survey for Educators). This survey began with an introductory message and instructions, as well as the following definitions to ensure a mutual understanding of the terminology amongst participants: "In this survey, the term

‘Anglophone’ refers to a student whose first language is English, whereas the term ‘Allophone’ refers to a student whose first language is neither English nor French.”

The questionnaire itself consisted of two groups of questions: *Demographic Information* and *Questions for Educators*. In terms of demographic information, teachers and principals were asked to select their current school and teaching position, as well as how many years they had been teaching in a French immersion program. Subsequently, the *Questions for Educators* section posed 20 different multiple-choice questions examining various dimensions of the research questions pertaining to Allophone students in French immersion programs. These questions were phrased in the form of statements and educators were asked to select one answer from a dropdown list of the following five possible answers: *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Neutral*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree*. These responses represent a Likert scale of measurement, a widespread approach to generating quantitative data regarding attitudes and perceptions. Additionally, each item in the *Demographic Information* and *Questions for Educators* question groups also included a comment box in which participants could provide written responses to supplement their answers. Finally, every question was optional, as participants could submit the questionnaire without answering or providing comments for every item.

Similarly, the survey for Allophone parents, titled *The Suitability of French Immersion for Allophone Students: Survey for Parents and Guardians*, was sent to participants via email (Appendix D: Survey for Parents). This questionnaire was also prefaced with an introductory message with greetings and instructions for completing the survey, as well as the same definition for the terms ‘Anglophone’ and ‘Allophone’ sent to educators. This opening statement also includes the following essential directive for

parent participants: “If you have more than one child in French immersion, please complete the survey for your oldest child currently enrolled in French immersion at the elementary school level.” This instruction served to eliminate the potentially confounding variable of some participants completing the survey on behalf of several children. By ensuring that each participant completed the survey with only one child in mind, each response had the same impact on the survey results. The survey consisted of two question groups: *Demographic Information* and *Questions for Parents and Guardians*. In the first section, parents were asked eight questions regarding the child’s school, grade level, and home language practices. Subsequently, participants were asked 20 questions examining their experiences with French immersion and perceptions thereof. Each question in this section contained the same Likert-scale responses as the survey for educators, as well as a comment box in which parents could elaborate on their questionnaire answers.

### **3.4 Interview Methods**

In parallel with the Likert-scale surveys examining the perspectives of educators and parents with respect to the suitability of French immersion for Allophone students in Saskatchewan, the researcher conducted semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews with participants from the survey populations. Teachers and principals who had indicated on their consent forms that they agreed to be interviewed were contacted via email to arrange a date and time. In some cases, educators who had previously consented to the interview later declined, whereas others who had first abstained from the interview ultimately decided to participate. However, all of the interview participants also completed the online survey. The N=43 educator interviews were conducted by the researcher in the respective schools of the teachers and principals, with the exception of



one teacher who was interviewed via Skype as a result of learning about the study after the researcher had returned to Montréal, Québec. Furthermore, all interviews were held in English, but some included certain phrases, expressions, and examples in French. As per the nature of semi-structured interviews, the researcher developed several questions that are essential to the study (Appendix E: Interview Questions for Educators), but strived to remain flexible and open to the natural progression and topics of interest to the specific participant. Educators were told that the interview would likely last 30-60 minutes, but could be shorter or longer, depending on the preference of the participant. The average interview duration for teachers and principals was 32:46 minutes long, the shortest and longest interviews taking 12:34 minutes and 87:09 minutes respectively.

Allophone parent interview participants were also contacted via email by the researcher in order to schedule a suitable date and time for the interview. In total, N=7 parents participated in audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher in English, all of whom also completed the online survey. The researcher had previously taught the child of one parent, but had no prior contact or relationship with the remaining six interview participants. Each interview was conducted in a location of the participant's choosing, which included the child's school, the parent's workplace, the family home, a restaurant, and a music studio during a child's piano lesson. The children of the Allophone parents attend four of the six schools participating in this study; thus, there are two schools from which educators were interviewed but parents were not. In the same vein as the educator interviews, the researcher had prepared several questions (Appendix F: Interview Questions for Parents) to ask parents, but also made an effort to allow individual participants to shape the direction of the interview. Also, whereas the

survey instructed parent participants to complete the questionnaire for their eldest child in French immersion, the open-ended nature of the semi-structured interviews allowed participants to discuss the experiences of multiple children. Moreover, a second parent or a child was sometimes present for the interview, but they were not counted as participants because of negligible contributions. The average parent interview lasted 47:08 minutes, while the shortest and longest lasted 35:50 minutes and 73:17 minutes respectively.

The interviews with teachers, principals, and parents took place from October through December 2016, followed by one teacher interview over Skype in February 2017. Throughout this time period, the researcher transcribed each of the N=50 interviews in full. Subsequently, the researcher carefully read and examined the interview transcripts in order to investigate the perspectives expressed by each participant. The transcripts were then analyzed through NVivo, a common research instrument designed for the purpose of coding qualitative data. Maxwell (2013, p. 107) notes that “the goal of coding is not primarily to count things, but to ‘fracture’ (Strauss, 1989, p. 29) the data and rearrange them into categories that facilitate comparison between things in the same category and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts.” By coding the various trends in the interview results, the researcher was able to compare and contrast the perspectives of the different stakeholder groups as well as triangulate the interview findings with the quantitative and qualitative survey data. The subsequent chapters of this thesis will provide the results generated by the present study regarding the perspectives of stakeholders regarding the suitability of French immersion for Allophone learners, beginning with the findings for educators, followed by the results for parents.

## Chapter 4: Results for Educators

The present chapter provides the results generated by the interviews and the questionnaire titled *The Suitability of French Immersion for Allophone Students: Survey for Educators*, beginning with three demographic survey questions. Subsequently, the 20 Likert-scale items from the *Questions for Educators* section that examined perceptions of the suitability of French immersion programs for Allophone students and pertinent interview excerpts are presented in the following six themes: first, *The Importance of Learning English and French in Saskatchewan* analyzes educators' beliefs about the significance of learning these languages in the province; second, *The Role of English* explores perspectives on whether English and French should be learned simultaneously or sequentially; third, *The Language Learning of Allophone Students* measures perceptions of Allophone students' learning of English and French, as well as advantages and disadvantages they might have in French immersion compared to Anglophone students; fourth, *The Suitability of French Immersion for Allophone Students* examines whether educators would recommend various FSL programs for such learners; fifth, *Gatekeeping* explores the role educators play in the inclusion and exclusion of Allophone students in French immersion; sixth, *Supports and Resources* examines diverse forms of support for such students. Each subsection includes graphic representations of the questionnaire results, as well as interview excerpts and survey comments for the purpose of data triangulation. Interview excerpts include participant names (pseudonyms), teaching positions, and schools (pseudonyms). Survey comments, conversely, include only teaching positions and schools, since survey participant identities were kept anonymous. The next section of this chapter will provide the demographic information.

#### 4.1 Demographic Information

The first section of the questionnaire for teachers and principals consisted of three demographic questions. Question 1 asked participants to indicate the name of the school in which they were currently working (Table 1). The seven French immersion elementary schools in the division were provided as answers; however, only six of the seven schools were represented in this study. École Grand Trunk is the only school in the division that offers a single-track French immersion program, which means that all educators at this school were eligible to participate. Additionally, the researcher taught at École Grand Trunk for two years and was thus acquainted with certain educators prior to the study; this is a likely explanation for the relatively high number of participants from this school.

Table 1

*What is the name of your current school?*

Answer	Count	Percentage
École Broadway School	7	12.50%
École Circle Drive School	6	10.71%
École C.P.R. School	0	0.00%
École Gordie Howe School	9	16.07%
École Grand Trunk	16	26.79%
École Sid Buckwold School	7	12.50%
École Spadina Crescent	10	17.86%%
School		

The second item of the demographic section of this survey asked participants to select the multiple-choice answer that best represents their current position. In order to ensure a mutual understanding of these answers, the researcher provided a description for certain terms. Moreover, the term ‘Administrators’ includes both principals and vice principals in schools with French immersion programs, which is consistent with the terminology used in the division. The option ‘General/Specialist Teacher’ refers to educators who specialize in certain academic subjects and instruct across several grade levels. Finally, ‘Resource Teacher’ refers to educators who work with at-risk learners. The results for this demographic question for educators are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

*Which of the following answers best describes your current position?*

Answer	Count	Percentage
Primary Years Teacher (Kindergarten – Grade 2)	17	30.36%
Middle Years Teacher (Grade 3 – 5)	14	25.00%
Senior Years Teacher (Grade 6 – 8)	10	17.86%
Administrator	6	10.71%
Resource Teacher	3	5.36%
General/Specialist Teacher	3	5.36%
Teacher Librarian	1	1.79%

The third and final question of the *Demographic Information* section of the questionnaire for educators asked participants to indicate their professional experience in terms of the number of years they had been teaching in a French immersion program, including the 2016-2017 academic year. The results for this survey item are displayed in Table 3. Evidently, the majority of educators who participated in the present study had less than 10 years of experience teaching in a French immersion program at the time of the research. Subsequent sections of this chapter will provide the quantitative results of the *Questions for Educators* Likert-scale items examining educators' perceptions of the suitability of French immersion programs for Allophone students in Saskatchewan, as well as qualitative findings in the form of interview data and questionnaire comments.

Table 3

*Including the 2016-2017 school year, how many years have you been teaching in a French immersion program?*

Answer	Count	Percentage
1 – 5	30	53.57%
6 – 10	12	21.43%
11 – 15	3	5.36%
16 – 20	5	8.93%
21 – 25	1	1.79%
26 – 30	3	5.36%
31 – 35	0	0.00%
36 – 40	0	0.00%

## 4.2 Questions for Educators

**4.2.1 The importance of learning English and French in Saskatchewan.** The first Likert-scale item measured the extent to which French immersion educators believed that it was important for Allophone students in Saskatchewan to learn English. The responses to this question demonstrate, without exception, that teachers and principals place paramount importance on the learning of English for such students (Figure 1). Evidently, participants accord primordial value to English in Saskatchewan and believe that it is essential for Allophone students to learn this language. Similarly, the second question of this survey was designed to assess the degree to which teachers and principals believed it was important for Allophone students in Saskatchewan to learn French (Figure 2). Whereas the majority of participants agreed with the statement, their responses were more divergent with regard to learning French than they were concerning the learning of English. The following interview excerpts provide an account of educators' perspectives with regard to the importance of English and French, as well as the motivation they believe Allophone students have to learn both languages:

I think that when they come to this country, they really believe that, you know, we have two official languages and that it's important – very important – for them to learn those two languages. I don't know, like, people that are from this country – it's not that they forget about the French, but they just – I don't know. It's almost like people coming from these other countries value it way more, coming in. They go, 'Oh, it's French and English! You need to do both! This is important!'

– *Britney, Grade 2 Teacher, École Gordie Howe School*

You know, they want to embrace the culture of Canada, and they say, 'Well, we are a dual-language country and so we feel like it's important for our child to learn the two official languages of this country. That's often the statement that I get, like, 'This country speaks French and English. We want our children speaking both of those languages.'

– *Josephine, Vice Principal, École Broadway School*

I don't always notice that as much with parents that are from here, and you know, their first language is English and most of them don't speak any French. So, they're like of like, 'Oh, it's a little something extra to have on their, you know, transcripts or on their resumes and stuff.' So, you know, it's just kind of, for them, it's 'Oh yeah, it's a little extra something,' and for other – for a lot of Allophone families, I find – that's something necessary. Like, they think it's a necessary thing to know more than one language.

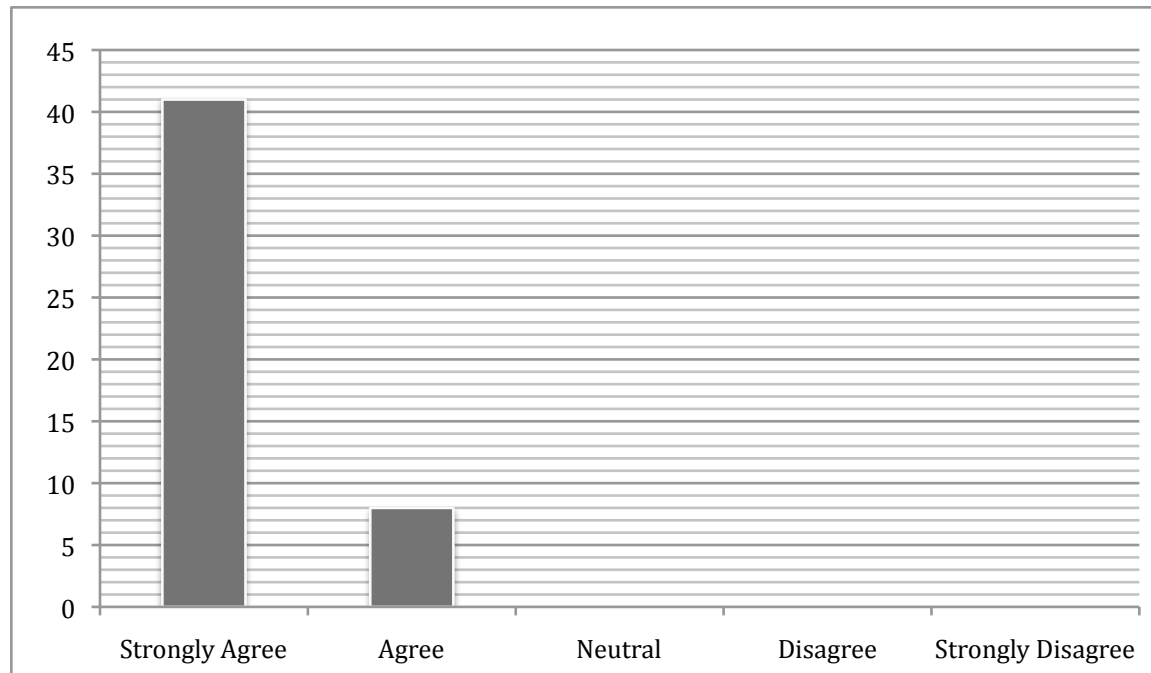
– *Marissa, Grade 2 Teacher, École Grand Trunk*

Thus, many French immersion educators affirmed the high motivation of Allophone families to acquire both English and French, due in large part to their status as official languages of Canada. Furthermore, several teachers and principals emphasized that official-language bilingualism was often considered critically important to Allophone families, whereas many Anglophone families did not necessarily prioritize the learning of both languages. However, certain educators argued that learning English is of greater importance than French for Allophone students, as per the following interview excerpt:

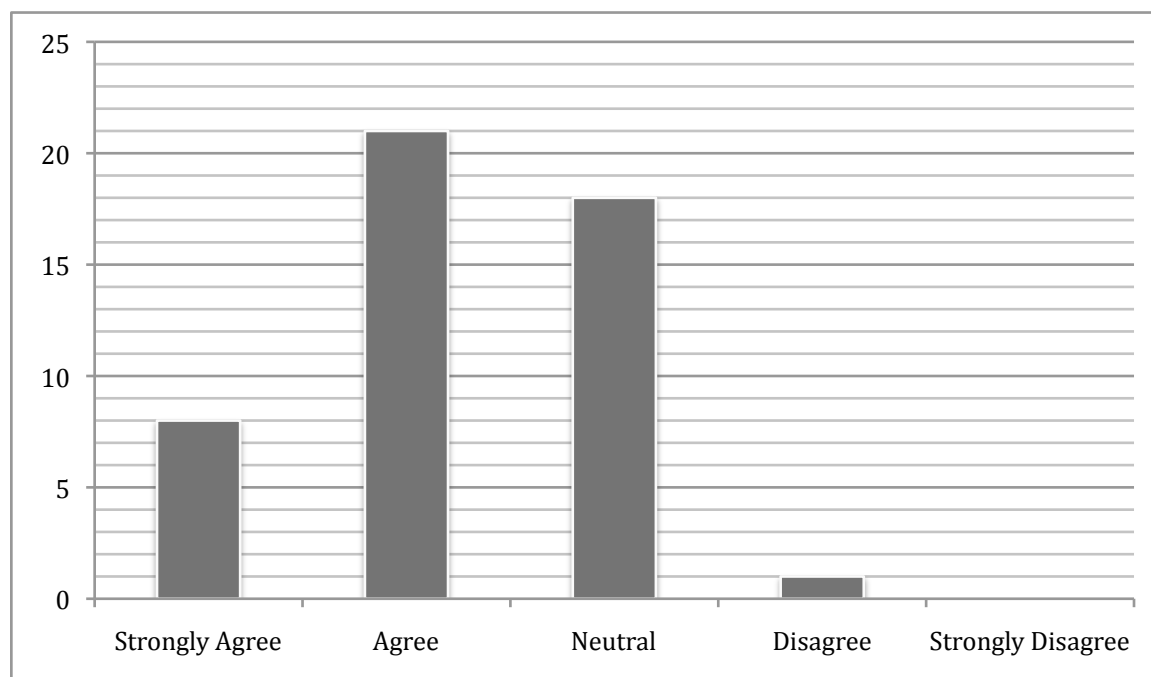
I just think, give them a head-start in the language that they're going to hear and use most of the time in Saskatoon, which is going to be English, and then let them get to grips with that, get ahead with that, see how well they're succeeding in the learning. – *Andrea, Grade 2 Teacher, École Spadina Crescent School*

In summary, many French immersion teachers and principals believed that it was beneficial for Allophone students to learn both English and French and that such families were often highly motivated to acquire both official languages; nevertheless, most educators contended that there was greater urgency for Allophone students to learn English in the context of Saskatchewan, given the prevalence of this language throughout the province.





*Figure 1.* I believe that it is important for Allophone students in Saskatchewan to learn English.



*Figure 2.* I believe that it is important for Allophone students in Saskatchewan to learn French.

**4.2.2 The role of English.** Whereas Question 1 and Question 2 of the survey analyzed educators' beliefs about the importance of learning English and French for Allophone students in Saskatchewan, the items presented in the present subsection explored more nuanced aspects of the role of English in French immersion. First, Question 10 examined whether teachers and principals believed that a high level of English proficiency was required for success in French immersion, which was rejected by most educators (Figure 3). Nevertheless, some teachers viewed a certain degree of English language proficiency as a prerequisite for learning French, as demonstrated in the following interview excerpt:

I've heard some teachers in the staff room here saying, 'How am I supposed to teach them French when they can't speak English?'

– Kevin, Resource Teacher, École Gordie Howe School

The belief that prior English ability is essential to learn French was particularly prevalent amongst teachers in the Late French Immersion program, as noted in the excerpts below:

In Late French, you can definitely be successful because it doesn't necessarily matter what your background language is; you're brand new to French. Everybody in the class is in the same game, so that helps. However, there is some leaning upon English that is used, and if you have no English, then, you know, you don't have that crutch.

– Carl, Grade 7 LFI Teacher, École Gordie Howe School

I think that with an English knowledge – with an English language knowledge base, we're able to relate a lot of the sentence structures and stuff like that to a knowledge of English, which can help them scaffold into their knowledge of French. And I think not having that common base can prove challenging. I know especially for me in Late French Immersion, it's assumed that the kids entering in Grade 6 will have, you know, six previous years of ELA.

– Jesse, Grade 6 LFI Teacher, École Grand Trunk

Furthermore, certain educators argued that prior English abilities were necessary not only for academic success in French immersion programs, but also for social purposes:

Yeah, just from my experiences, and even watching these kids from Syria on the playground, and they really struggle to sometimes interact, or they just go to each other. And I think it's because they don't have those language skills.

– *Britney, Grade 2 Teacher, École Gordie Howe School*

The results indicate that most educators refute the notion that a high level of English proficiency is critical for learning French; nevertheless, certain teachers and principals believe that some English ability is indeed an important determinant of students' success.

Question 14 of the survey asked educators whether Allophone students should focus on learning English before learning French (Figure 4). The variance in survey data is reflected in the interview results as well. For instance, certain participants were confident in Allophone students' ability to learn both English and French simultaneously, citing the prevalence of English beyond the school:

You're going to have enough of an English environment to learn that English through osmosis, almost. Why not provide that child with that French immersion experience because it's here?

– *Kristine, Grade 6/7 Teacher, École Gordie Howe School*

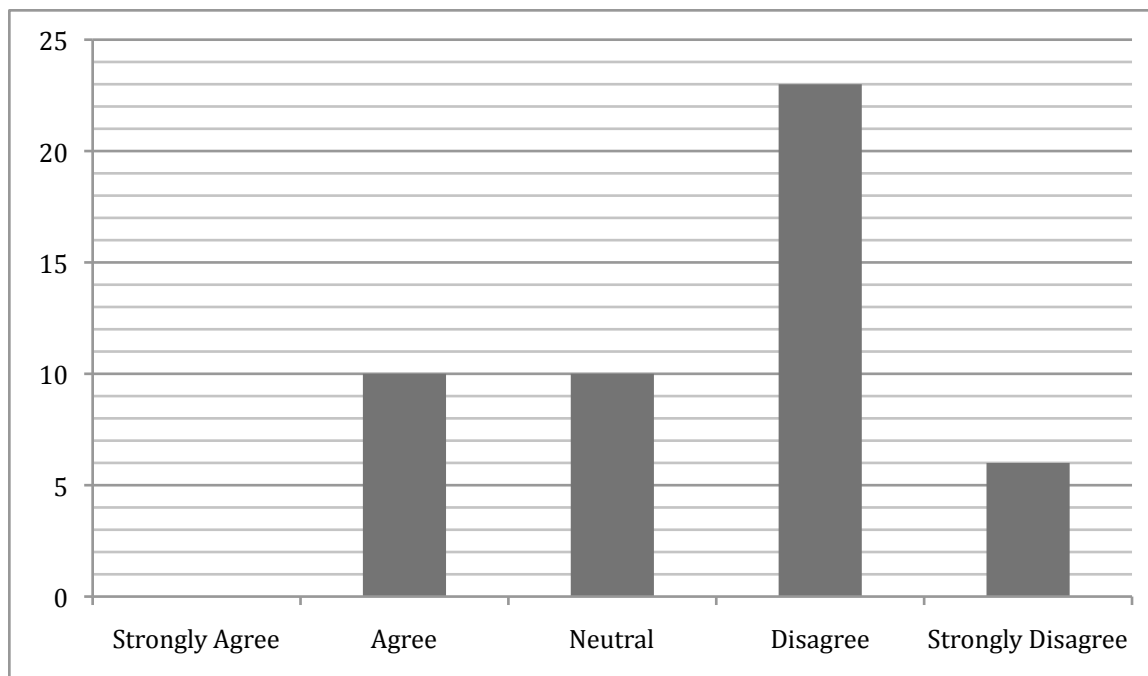
In Saskatchewan, we're surrounded by English everywhere, so students pick up, young people pick up everything. They're always learning, even though they don't know they're learning.

– *Luke, Grade 4/5 Teacher, École Spadina Crescent School*

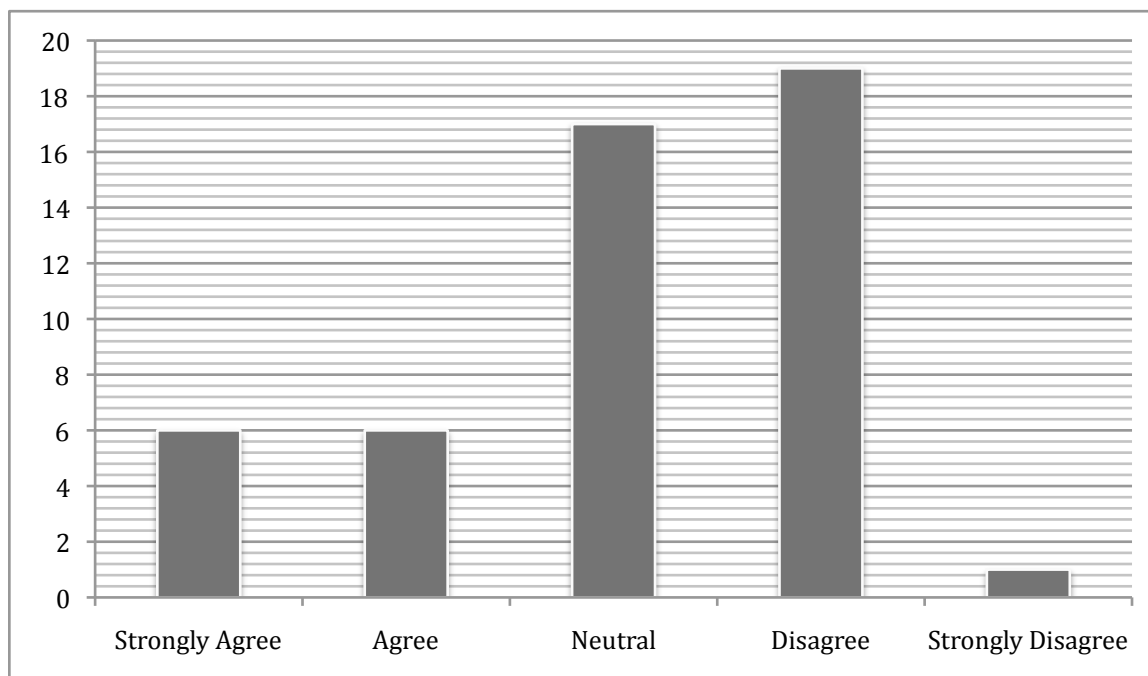
Conversely, some educators demonstrated a preference for Allophone students to learn English and French sequentially, as illustrated by the following interview excerpt:

And I think it makes sense to first master the language that you need to get by in Saskatchewan. And French is awesome, and it's going to be really useful in life. So, get it, but just make sure that you get that one that you need to survive first, I think. – *Jennifer, Grade 2 teacher, École Spadina Crescent School*

In summary, some educators affirmed Allophone students' ability to learn French and English concurrently, whereas some teachers and principals advocated for sequential language learning. This distinction will be discussed in greater detail subsequently.



*Figure 3.* I believe that success in French immersion requires a high level of English proficiency.



*Figure 4.* I believe that Allophone students should focus on learning English before learning French.

Furthermore, two survey items addressed the role of English in French immersion programs by asking whether learning French was detrimental or beneficial for the learning of English for Allophone students. The results for Question 12 demonstrate that most educators believe that the learning of French will support the learning of English for Allophone students (Figure 5). Certain interview excerpts illustrate teachers' perspectives about mutually beneficial language learning, such as the following:

Well, I think if they're, if they're increasing their fluency and doing a lot better with their reading, I think that fosters a love for reading, right? So, if they're, um, doing well in that, I think it's just going to transfer over to English as well.

– *Wallace, Grade 2 Teacher, École Sidney Buckwold School*

I'm not of the opinion that languages confuse each other; I think languages clarify each other, you know? Way back to my studies at the university in the early 80's, where the whole sort of 'conflict of language' idea was there, research showed that they build each other as opposed to cancel each other.

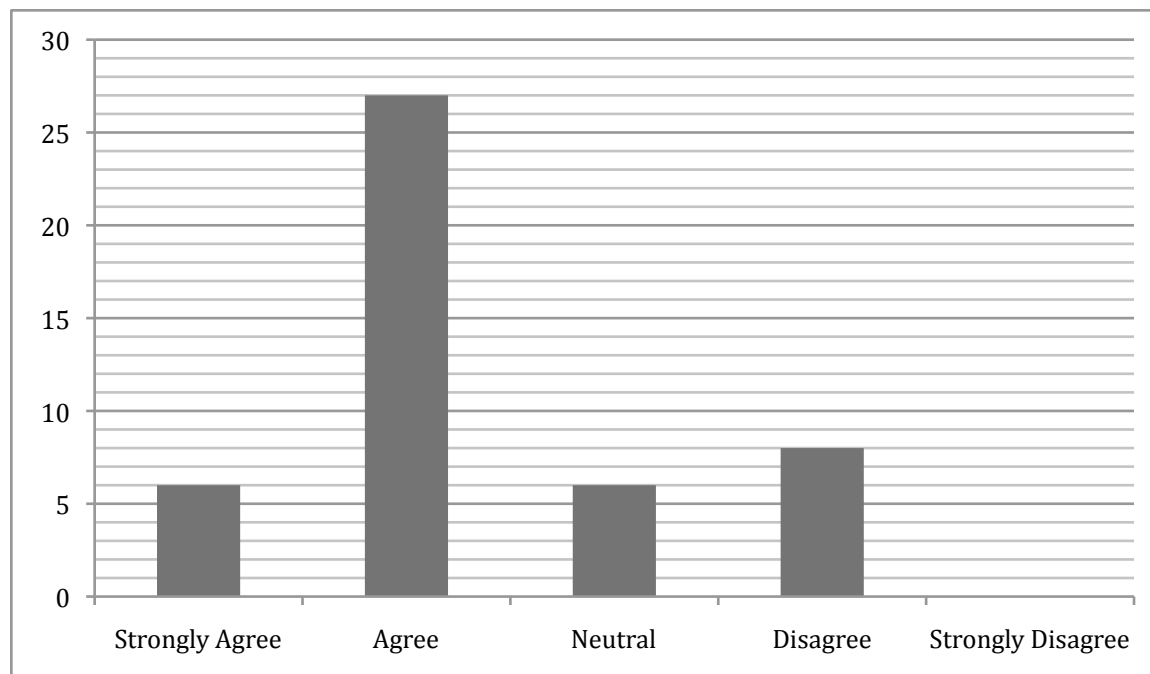
– *Darius, Principal, École Gordie Howe School*

Thus, for most educators, learning French and learning English are mutually beneficial, and many teachers and principals espoused the view that developing skills in one language would lead to skills in the other. In contrast, Question 16 asked educators if they believed that learning French was detrimental to the learning of English for Allophone students (Figure 6). Most participants refuted this statement, but some survey comments expressed concern for Allophones who were struggling to learn languages:

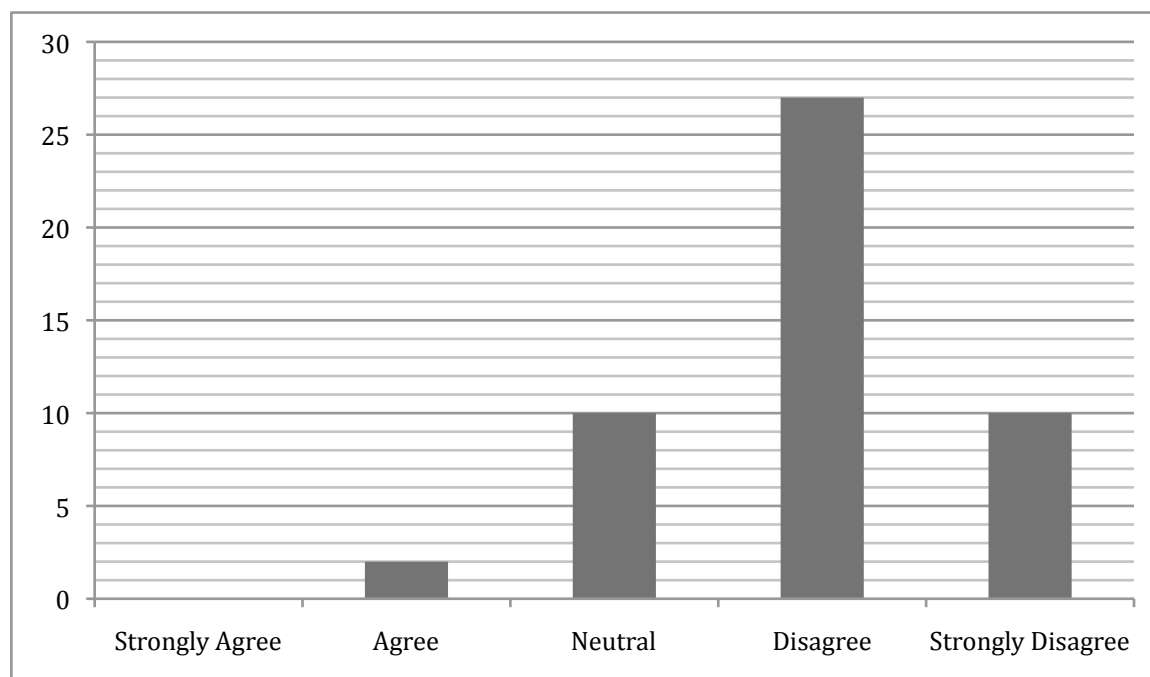
Learning in French would only be detrimental if the student were already struggling in their first language. In this case, learning a third language before mastering a first language may cause more barriers to success.

– *École Broadway School, Resource Teacher*

In summary, the majority of French immersion teachers and principals do not view the learning of English and the learning of French as antithetical aims for Allophone students, but rather support these goals as mutually beneficial processes for such learners.



*Figure 5.* I believe that learning French will support the learning of English for Allophone students.



*Figure 6.* I believe that learning French is detrimental to the learning of English for Allophone students.

**4.2.3 The language learning of Allophone students.** The present subsection explores the beliefs of French immersion educators regarding the language learning of Allophone students. First, the responses for Question 9 demonstrate that most French immersion teachers and principals believe that Allophone students are learning French effectively in immersion programs (Figure 7). The qualitative data further affirm educators' confidence in Allophone students' ability to learn French, including the following teacher interview excerpts:

They are often some of the stronger ones, and by stronger, I mean, academically. Obviously they all have different strengths and weaknesses all over the map, but academically, reading, math, writing, very strong.

– *Cécile, Grade 1 Teacher, École Gordie Howe School*

Of all the students I have taught – again, I'm going to say that they rise slightly – not a lot – but they rise slightly above some of their Anglophone peers, in a very general sense. They seem to be more... They seem to be a little more engaged in the process of learning an additional language because, again, it's an additional language to the two or three that they're already speaking at home.

– *Phoebe, Grade 1 Teacher, École Broadway School*

Indeed, the above results underscore the positive perceptions most educators have concerning the effectiveness of Allophone students' French learning abilities.

In a similar vein, Question 8 asked educators whether they believed that Allophone students were learning English effectively in French immersion. The results for this survey item show that several participants believe this to be the case (Figure 8). The qualitative data generated by this survey item corroborate the quantitative findings. For instance, certain educators argued that Allophone students learn English effectively at school and beyond the classroom, as demonstrated by the following interview excerpt:

As much as all the instruction is happening in French, they're still talking English at recess and still learning English as they go. But, you know, to be, you know, starting to develop those structures in Grade 3 and if you haven't had any

exposure to that before, I think you definitely see by Grade 6, 7, 8 that those students still are missing some of those basics in writing and English, some structures that, you know, they just haven't had a lot of experience with.

– *Eric, Grade 7 Teacher, École Spadina Crescent School*

The above comments seem to suggest that Allophone students are generally learning English effectively in French immersion, both as a result of formal instruction and exposure outside of school; however, some educators distinguish between oral and written language, arguing that greater attention must be given to the latter component.

Moreover, several educators were concerned with the English instruction offered in French immersion programs, both in terms of class time allotted for English Language Arts (ELA) and in terms of English as an Additional Language (EAL) support for Allophone students, as per the following comments provided for this survey item:

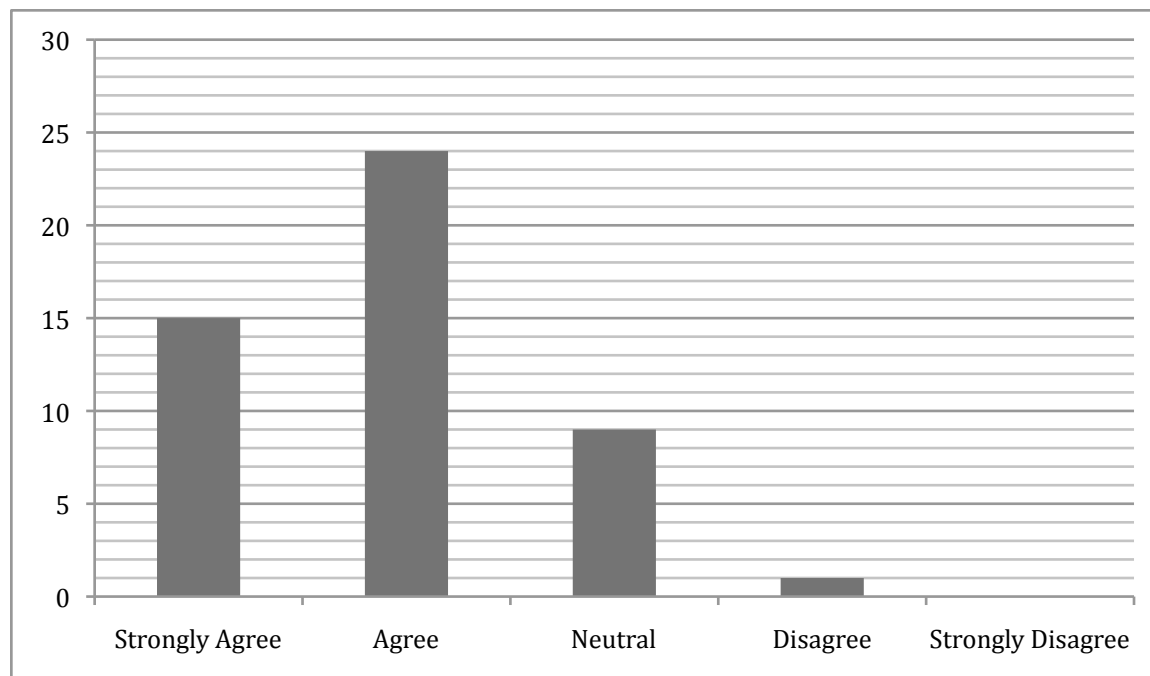
I do not agree with this statement. English is not even provided until grade 3, and at that point it is less about the mechanics of the language and more about how to analyze stories, how to present, etc. The program assumes that students are English speakers who are simply refining their English skills, as opposed to Allophone students receiving instruction for the first time, and for only 50 minutes a day. – *École Spadina Crescent School, Kindergarten – Grade 2 Teacher*

Up to Grade 2, they do not receive any English support or instruction. By Grade 3, this can create a very large gap in English literacy, and there is still relatively little English instruction to close that gap. Students who seem to have the most success are those with other sources of English input beyond school.

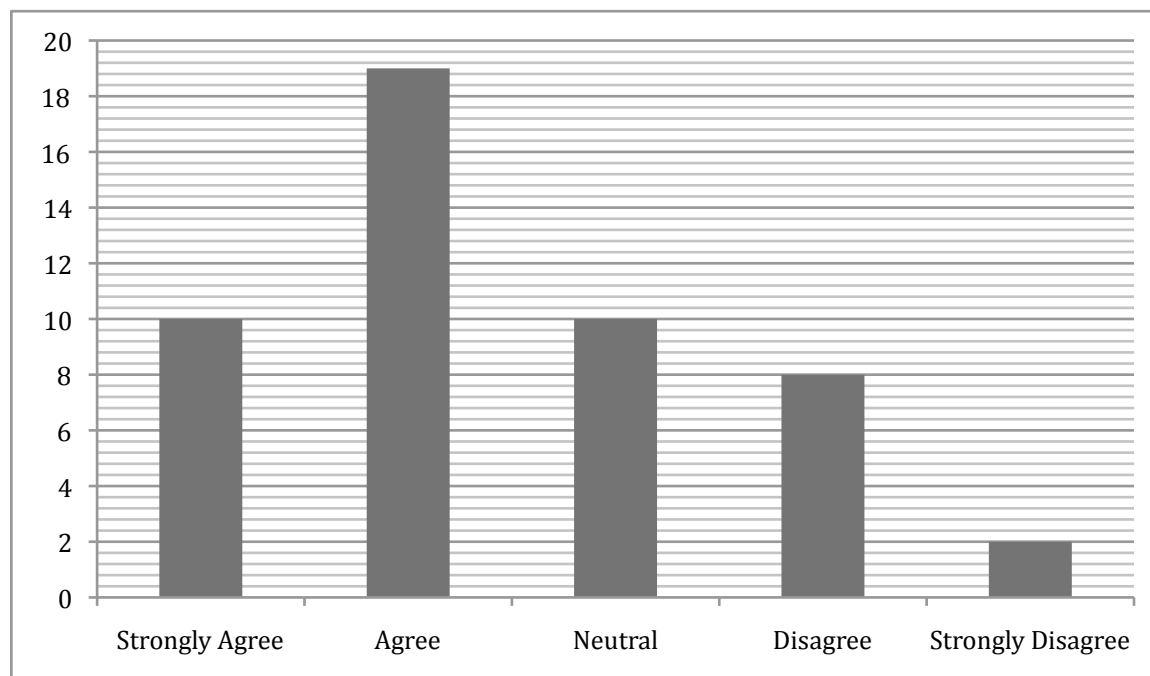
– *École Circle Drive School, Grade 3 – 5 Teacher*

In summary, the quantitative and qualitative results demonstrate that teachers and principals were generally confident in the learning of French and English for Allophone students in French immersion programs, albeit less so for English than French.





*Figure 7.* I believe that Allophone students learn French effectively in French immersion.



*Figure 8.* I believe that Allophone students learn English effectively in French immersion.

Question 13 and Question 15 also addressed the perspectives of teachers and principals concerning the language learning of Allophone students in French immersion by asking whether Allophone students have distinct advantages or disadvantages learning French compared to their Anglophone peers. The results for Question 13 demonstrate that educators are divided as to whether Allophone students have disadvantages in French immersion relative to Anglophone learners (Figure 9). The most common disadvantage cited for Allophone students was the tendency for some French immersion teachers to use English in class, as expressed by the following survey comment:

Unless their background language is a romance language, then they might have an advantage. However, teachers, often use English to help support French instruction, so there's that. – *École Broadway School, Grade 6 – 8 Teacher*

Furthermore, some participants stated in their interviews that students of certain ethnic and linguistic backgrounds experience more disadvantages than other Allophone learners:

I have found, like I said, the two Chinese students, that they've picked it up very, very quickly, whereas students, my East Indian students – students that Urdu is their first language – have struggled much more.  
– *Andrea, Grade 1 Teacher, École Circle Drive School*

If you take a student who I have who speaks Spanish, I think that – being that it's close to French – I think he excels in acquiring French, whereas if you have a language like Mandarin or Urdu, which is completely different structures...  
– *Eric, Grade 7 LFI Teacher, École Broadway School*

Thus, French immersion educators are divided as to whether or not Allophone students have particular disadvantages in French immersion compared to their Anglophone peers.

In contrast, Question 15 measured perceptions regarding advantages for such learners (Figure 10). Several participants recognized distinct advantages for Allophone students in French immersion, as demonstrated by the following interview excerpts:

Well, two of my students were from Romania last year, and so they could relate to certain words I was writing on the board. They would say, ‘Oh! I know that word!’ just because they knew Romanian, right? So they tend to, in a way, gravitate to Romanian to understand.

– *Alfonso, Grade 4 Teacher, École Spadina Crescent School*

So I would just say that, generally, they have a bit more of a propensity to learning more languages because they’re growing up with Urdu and Hindi, and even Arabic at home. So by the time they’re young fellows, they’ve got two or three languages under their belt, and then they’re learning English and French after that. – *Kristine, Grade 7 Teacher, École Gordie Howe School*

I would say that they have advantages in the sense that a lot of our Allophone students already speak multiple languages. So when they come into these classrooms, the idea of learning another language is not shocking, it’s not difficult. The idea of learning a language is something that they just accept as reality. – *Vanessa, Vice Principal, École Spadina Crescent School*

Indeed, the advantages that most educators perceived for Allophone students in French immersion consisted of having prior experience learning at least one additional language other than French, a high value placed on multilingualism, and the cross-linguistic connections that this multilingualism enables. Additionally, two educators expressed the belief in their interviews that Allophone students generally made a greater effort than Anglophone learners to speak in French at school, as per the following excerpts:

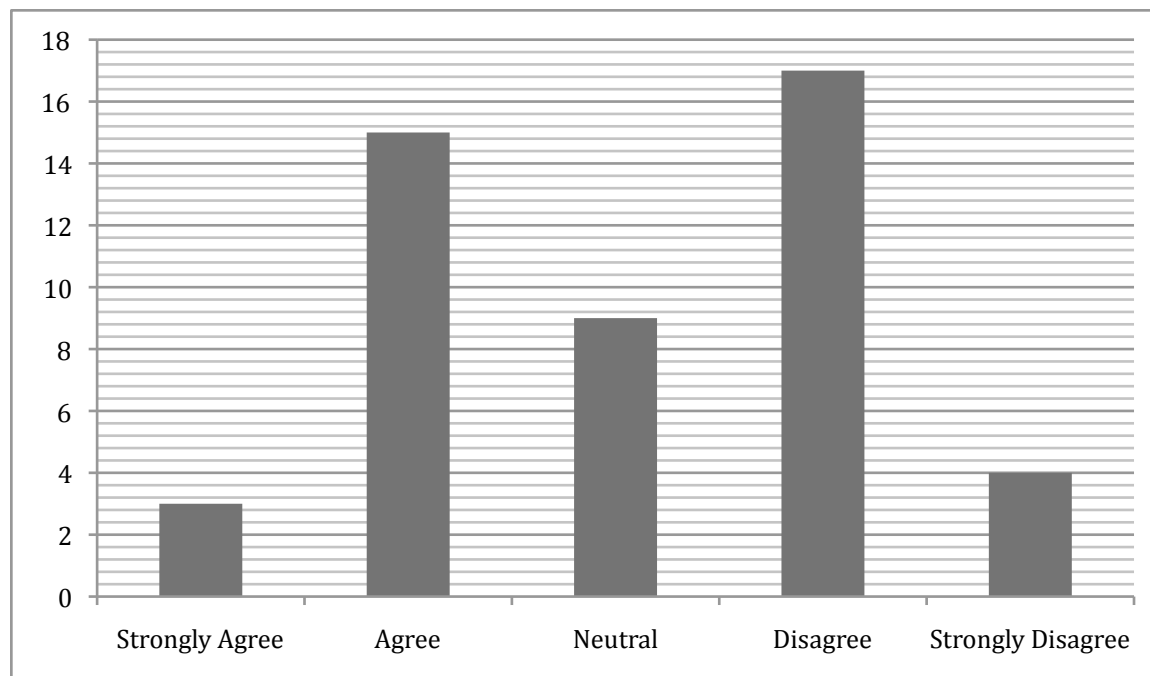
I mean, there’s always going to be variances in abilities, and there is definitely a variance with those students in abilities – but generally I find those students actually speak in French more at school than English-speaking because they don’t necessarily have the English to revert to.

– *Lindsey, Grade 3 Teacher, École Grand Trunk*

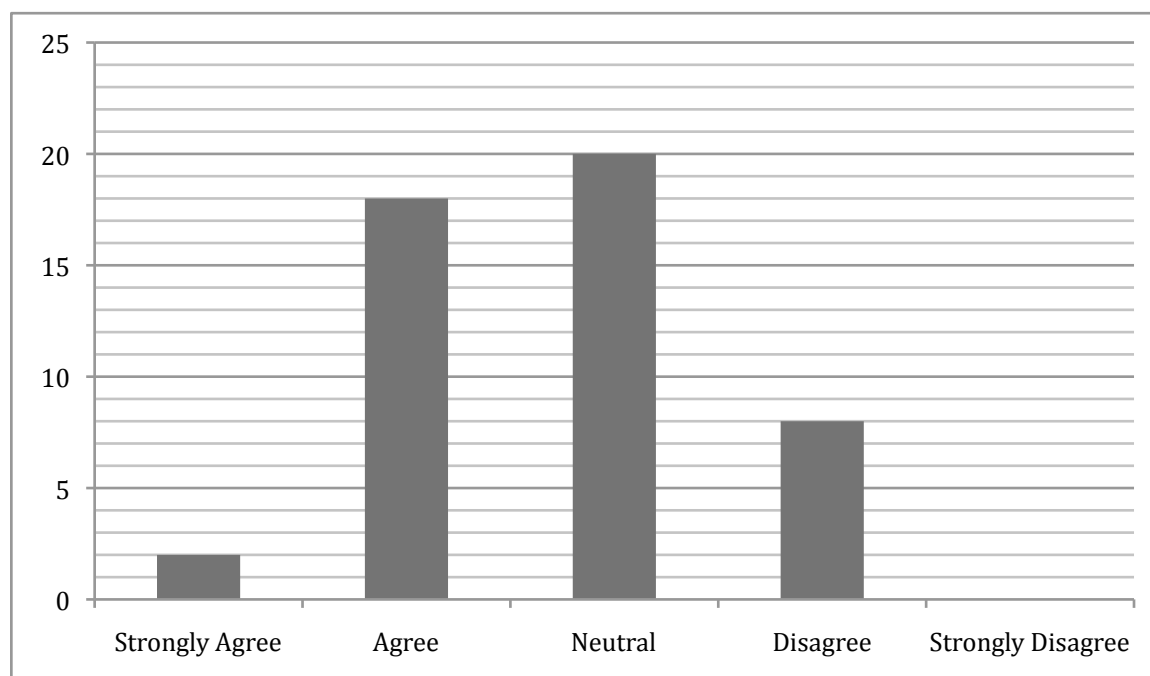
I think, too, they know that most of us teachers are also English speakers, and so they default to that quickly, whereas I do not speak Urdu. I do not speak multiple languages other than French or English, and so to default to that doesn’t really help us converse or understand each other better. And so I just find that they try harder in French, because it’s the one thing that we might have in common.

– *Jada, Vice Principal, École Sidney Buckwold School*

Evidently, there is significant divergence with respect to educators’ perspectives regarding advantages and disadvantages for Allophone students in French immersion.



*Figure 9.* I believe that Allophone students have disadvantages learning French compared to their Anglophone peers.



*Figure 10.* I believe that Allophone students have advantages learning French compared to their Anglophone peers.

**4.2.4 The suitability of French immersion for Allophone students.** The present subsection will discuss the suitability of French immersion for Allophone students. The results for Question 3 demonstrate that most educators believe that French immersion is an appropriate program for Allophone students (Figure 11). However, many teachers and principals expressed in their interviews that the perception of French immersion as a suitable program for Allophone learners was a recent development. Specifically, some educators noted that the division now promotes French immersion for all learners, whereas Allophone students were often excluded from such programs in the past. The following interview excerpts illustrate certain perspectives of this transition:

And the attitude of French immersion not being just an elite program – regardless of what we said it was – it was always kind of an elite, you know, upper-middle-class program. And, you know, if a kid struggles, then you just move them out of French immersion, and if you don't speak English, well, then you can't come into French because you don't speak English. And I still have dealt with that here in the last few years where teachers say, 'Oh, it would be better if they went and learned English first.' – *Darius, Principal, École Gordie Howe School*

I'm seeing it being less and less of an elitist program. I've lived that, you know, that whole attitude for the last 15-20 years. I'm seeing it less and less, and I like that. I think that as long as we're providing the proper supports for these children, like we would for any program, then there's no reason why we can't have students with special needs or Allophones coming in and learning another, like, learning French as opposed to just English.

– *Josephine, Vice Principal, École Broadway School*

And I would say, in the last five years, there's a big shift in French immersion being for all and accessible to all, whereas when I was a French immersion student, it was very much an elitist program. And if you did not fit into that program and you were not successful without any accommodations or adaptations, you simply were removed from the program.

– *Jada, Vice Principal, École Sidney Buckwold School*

Evidently, several interview participants suggested that the collective perception of the suitability of French immersion for Allophone learners has changed over time, and certain educators – school administrators in particular – affirmed this inclusive position.

Nevertheless, some teachers argued that French immersion was not necessarily suitable for Allophone students, as demonstrated by the following interview excerpts:

But then the other thing is that they, oftentimes in many divisions, push French immersion as being for everybody. 'French immersion is for everyone! French immersion is for everyone! Anyone can take French immersion!' I just don't think that's true! As I said, if you're already struggling with your first language or your second language, we're not doing you any favours by starting you on a third, in my opinion. You know? Like, if you're already struggling with English, or you're already struggling with Spanish or Urdu, or whatever language you speak, then adding a third is just making less space in your brain, you know?

– *Billy, Grade 7 LFI Teacher, École Grand Trunk*

In our school board, they don't want us to say it to anybody. They want us to say to everybody that everybody can succeed, and I'm not sure that's reality, because I don't think everybody can be a good mechanic. I don't think everybody can be a good surgeon. I think we all have abilities that are different, and that's what makes life different. – *Elliot, Grade 5 Teacher, École Grand Trunk*

In summary, although the survey item examining educators' perspectives regarding the suitability of French immersion for Allophone students generated positive results, the interview findings reflect more complex and nuanced beliefs with respect to suitability.

In a similar vein, Question 4 assessed the extent to which educators perceived Core French as being a suitable program for Allophone students (Figure 12). The results demonstrate that participants were supportive of Core French programs for such learners, but less so than for French immersion. Reasons for this distinction include the following:

I don't believe in Core French in any situation... We were seeing the same situations happen: our students had to learn their colours, and their numbers, and their days of the week every single year, and it wasn't being retained. When we looked at why it wasn't being retained, well, they only get two periods a week... We didn't think it would be beneficial for Anglophone or Allophone students.

– *Vanessa, Vice Principal, École Spadina Crescent School*

Thus, Core French was widely considered a less appropriate program than French immersion for the reasons above, irrespective of students' language backgrounds.

Whereas most educators were united in the belief that French immersion was a more suitable program for Allophone learners than Core French, there was some variance as to whether Late French Immersion was perceived as being more appropriate for such students than the early immersion option, as per the following interview excerpts:

I think the ideal would be Core French and then do Late French Immersion. I think that's a perfect transition. Like, get your English, which is, like, what you need to survive in Saskatchewan, and then you can still get French immersion and catch up. – *Jennifer, Grade 2 Teacher, École Spadina Crescent School*

If you could choose, I would say early entry. The faster you're exposed to it, the better. – *Martha, Grade 6 LFI Teacher, École Broadway School*

In summary, most participants expressed the belief that French immersion was a more suitable choice for Allophone families than Core French; however, educators were divided between Late French Immersion and early-entry instructional programs.

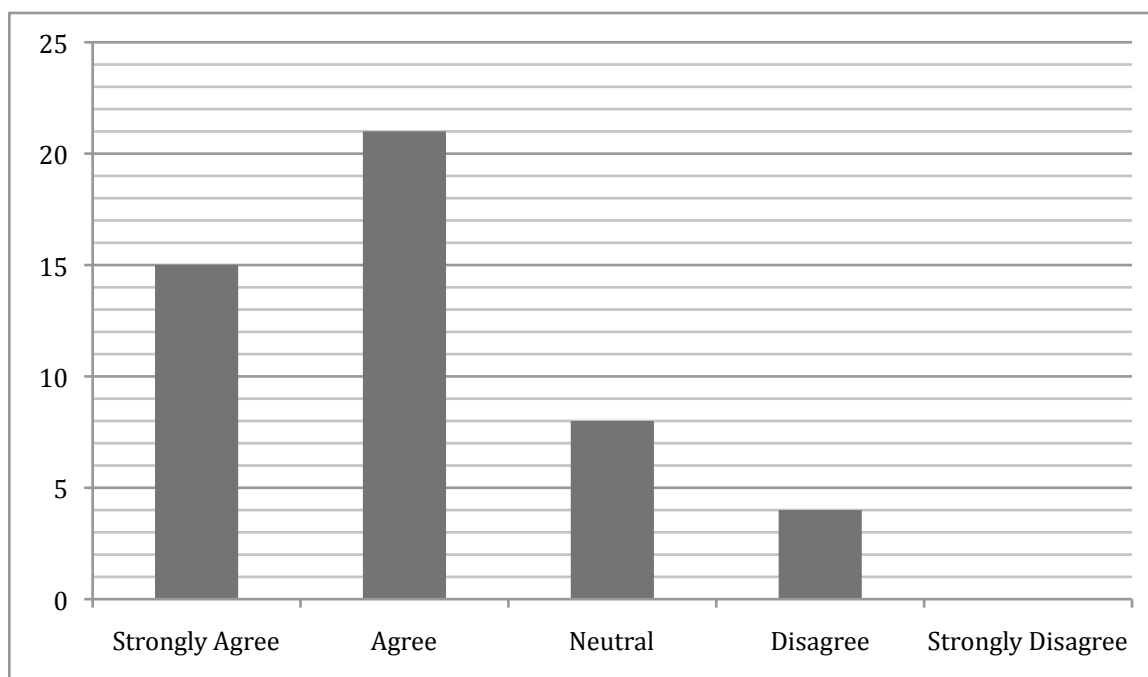


Figure 11. I believe that French immersion is a suitable program for Allophone students.

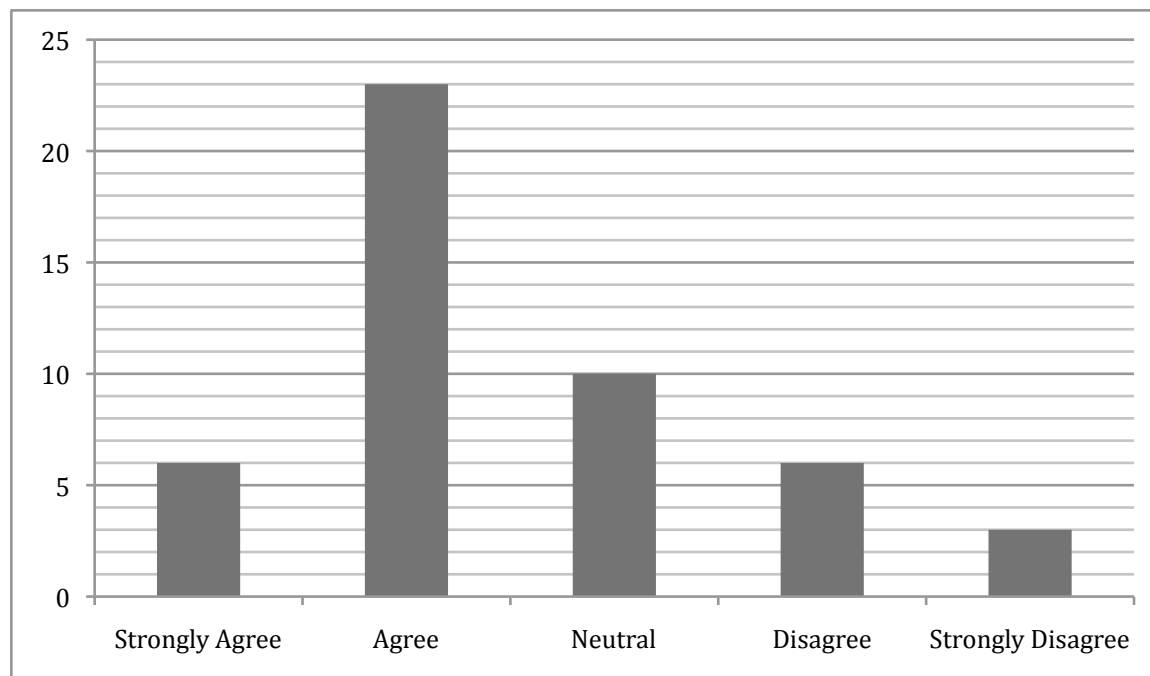


Figure 12. I believe that Core French is a suitable program for Allophone students.

Subsequent survey items pertaining to the suitability of French immersion measured the extent to which teachers and principals would encourage or discourage an Allophone family from enrolling their child in such programs. Specifically, Question 11 asked educators whether they would recommend French immersion for a student with limited English proficiency, which generated divergent answers (Figure 13). The diverse responses of teachers and principals are expressed in the following interview excerpts:

I always encourage it for absolutely anybody.

– Cassie, Kindergarten Teacher, École Grand Trunk

I usually advise sticking with the program. Um, you know, as long as the kid is willing to try, then they'll be meeting the goals of school, anyway, like improving yourself. – Carl, Grade 7 LFI Teacher, École Broadway School

I would probably discourage them if they were outside of kindergarten or Grade 1. And I would just be, 'You would know your child best, but at the same time, it may be difficult.' – Yolanda, Principal, École Grand Trunk



In summary, the extent to which participants would recommend French immersion for a student with limited English proficiency varied substantively amongst educators, and the age of entry for learners was often an important consideration for teachers and principals.

Conversely, Question 18 asked educators whether they would discourage Allophone families from enrolling their children in French immersion (Figure 14). The results indicate that the majority of participants would not dissuade Allophone families from French immersion. Nevertheless, interview findings demonstrate that certain teachers would prefer that Allophone families not enrol their children in French immersion, but that they do not consider it their place to encourage or discourage such families. This feeling of being stifled from advising parents was expressed as follows:

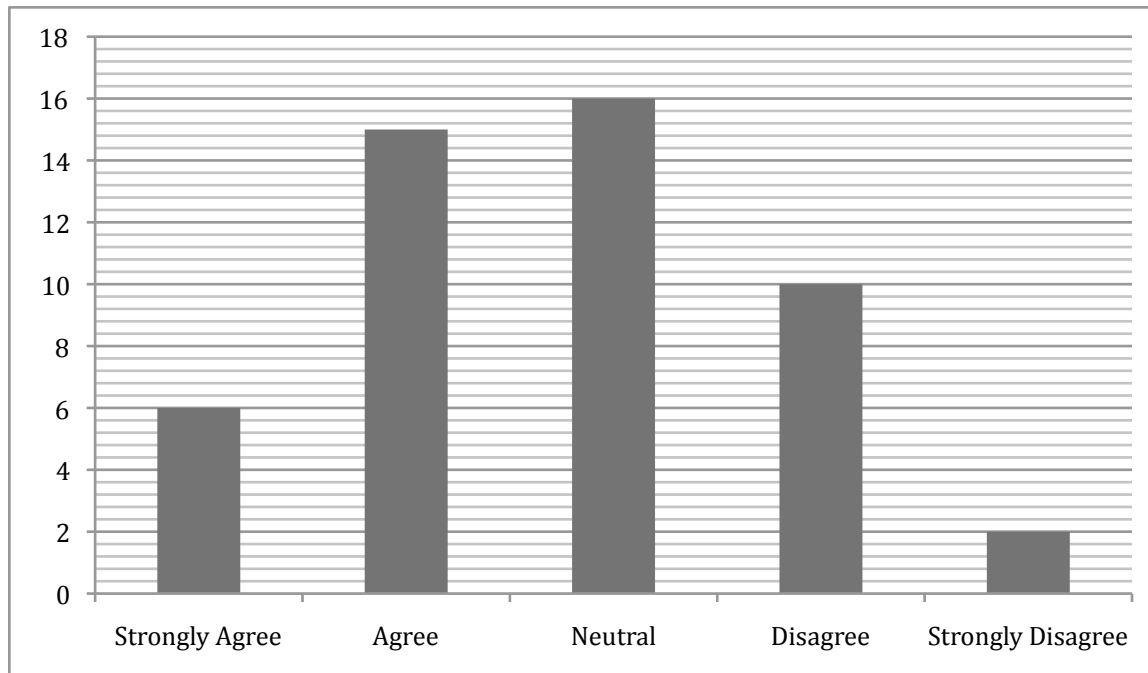
I think if we feel that a child is really, really struggling, we shouldn't feel frightened to suggest to admin or the division that maybe this isn't working. We always get the sense that in French immersion, it's their choice, parents can make the final decision. We can't suggest that maybe their child would do better in English, and I don't feel like we're being honest or fair to anybody by not being allowed to suggest this to parents.

– *Andrea, Grade 2 Teacher, École Circle Drive School*

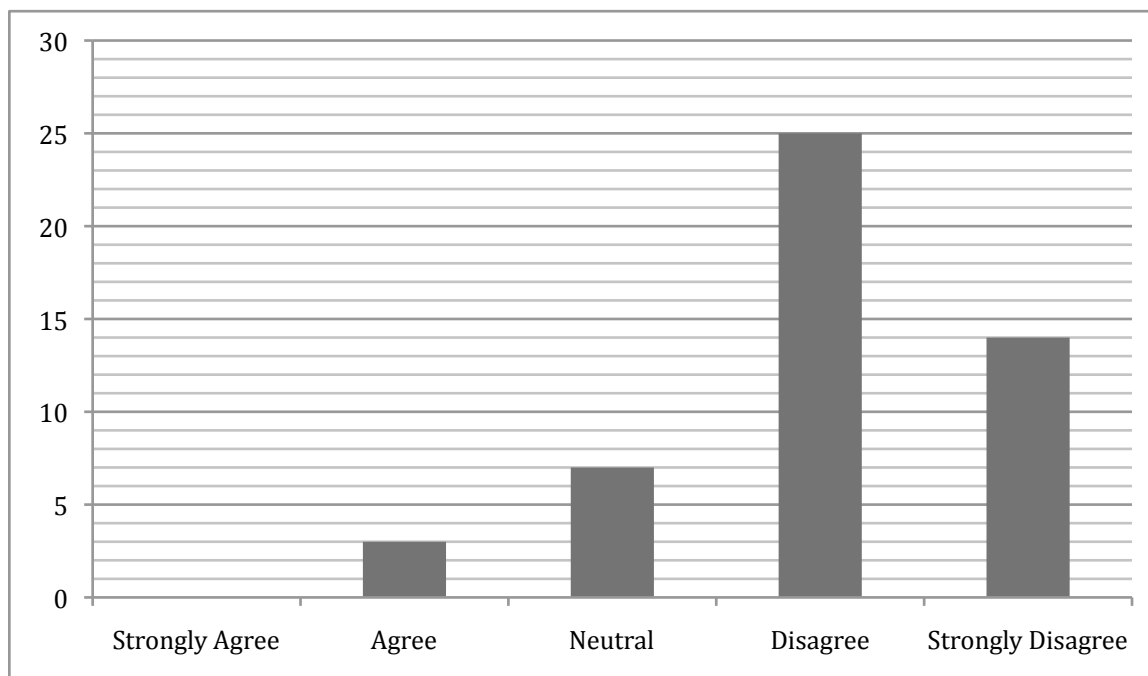
I think teachers should be able to be honest with parents about where their kids are at. I feel like sometimes I'm not able to be honest with parents about... Parents will ask me, 'Do you think my child should be transferred into English?' and I feel like I'm not able to say, 'Yes. Your child is in Grade 2 and is at Level 0 and cannot read words like *oui* or *non*, or cannot understand me when I say something like, '*Est-ce que t'as besoin d'aller aux toilettes?*' And they'll look at me blankly. Two years in French immersion, and they don't know how to reply to that. So, yeah, I wish I had more freedom to be honest about that. I think it's unfair to parents when teachers can't relay that information.

– *Jennifer, Grade 2 Teacher, École Spadina Crescent School*

In conclusion, most educators expressed that they would not discourage Allophone families from enrolling their children in French immersion; however, it is important to note that some teachers felt prohibited from dissuading such families in this way.



*Figure 13.* I would recommend French immersion for a student with limited English proficiency.



*Figure 14.* I would discourage Allophone families from enrolling their children in French immersion.

**4.2.5 Gatekeeping.** The previous subsection of this chapter presented results pertaining to the perceived suitability of various FSL programs for Allophone students and whether educators would recommend these programs for such students. The present subsection follows this thematic trajectory by examining the gatekeeping function of teachers and principals – that is, the role that educators believe that they should play in the inclusion or exclusion of Allophone students in French immersion. Question 5 of the survey for teachers and principals stated that Allophone learners should be included in French immersion, which generated strong results in the affirmative (Figure 15). Nevertheless, certain educators noted opposition from colleagues regarding their inclusive positions, as per the interview excerpt below:

We have two examples in Late French Immersion this year, one where the student's coming in and speaking no English at home, and lots of people were saying, 'Oh, she should just go into English. She shouldn't go into French.' And I wasn't discouraging to the parent, but I pointed out that it could be an added challenge. But Mom just kept saying that she had always had this dream of learning French, and this was her chance to learn French, and she wanted to learn French, and so we put her in the program and away she went. She's doing fabulously. – *Darius, Principal, École Gordie Howe School*

In contrast, some educators expressed that French immersion was not suitable for all Allophone learners, as demonstrated by the following interview excerpt:

I think a lot of the ones we've been getting, like, we've gotten lots of families from Syria at this school. I think they're just struggling to, you know, have proper clothing and lunches. I just think they think, you know, let's... I mean, it's an old fact, I mean, obviously if they're teaching in French, it's just another stress at home, and I think we should just look at it as 'Let's learn English first.'

– *Britney, Grade 2 Teacher, École Gordie Howe School*

Thus, most educators espoused views that were inclusive of Allophone students in French immersion; however, some teachers and principals argued that the inclusion of such learners should be contingent upon factors such as English proficiency and grade level.

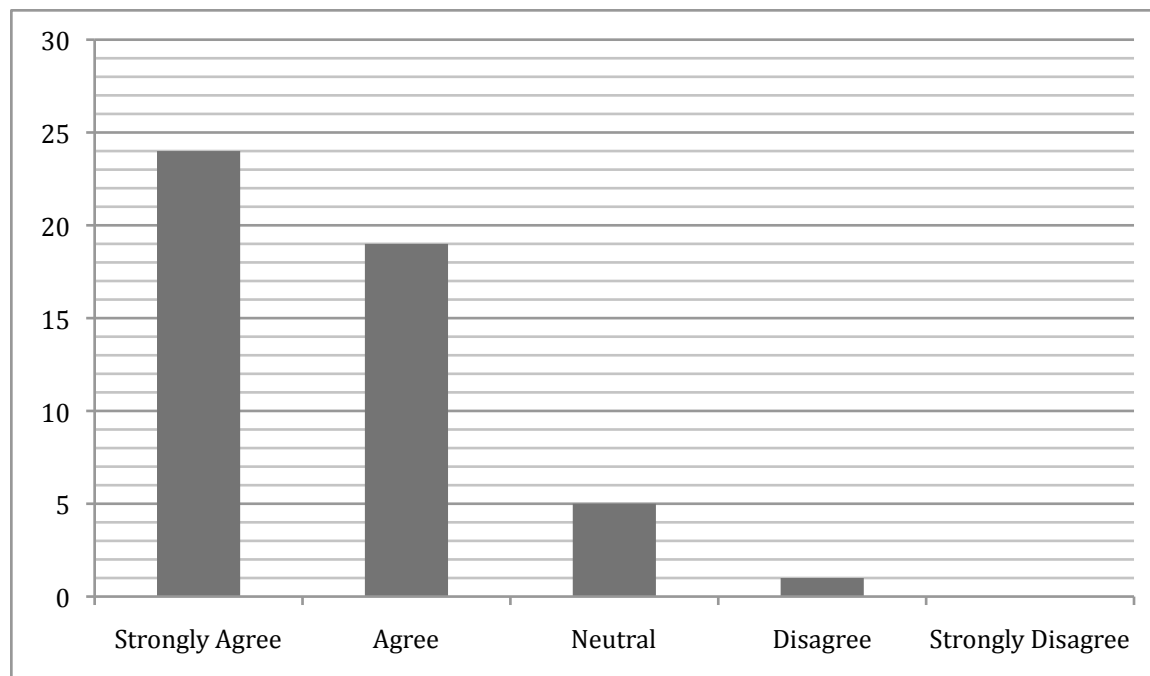


Figure 15. I believe that Allophone students should be included in French immersion.

Whereas Question 5 explored broad perspectives concerning the inclusion of Allophone students in French immersion, Question 6 and Question 7 examined gatekeeping by assessing the extent to which educators and parents should determine how Allophone students access French immersion. First, Question 6 examined whether educators believed that school administrators and teachers should be able to decide whether or not to include Allophone students in French immersion (Figure 16). The quantitative and qualitative data indicate that there is considerable difference of opinion on this matter. Some educators argue that French immersion enrolment is a decision unequivocally for parents themselves, as demonstrated by the survey comments below:

All students should have the right to participate in any program offered by a public school board. – *École Grand Trunk, Kindergarten – Grade 2 Teacher*

Each child is different. Students should not be excluded from the program based on their first language. – *École Circle Drive School, Resource Teacher*

In addition to participants who asserted that Allophone parents should always be able to enrol their children in French immersion, some educators contended that teachers and principals should provide recommendations and that the decision should be made through consultation between families and educators, as per the following interview excerpt:

I want to use some specific examples. So, a Syrian family comes in. There's possible trauma in the family. There's so much more going on, possibly, than just a student being in a new country and starting in a new school. And I think that those conversations are important. So it's not that we would, uh, encourage or discourage; it would just be, 'Where are you guys at? Let's get to know each other a little bit. What do you want for your child and why do you want this for your child? How has your child done in the past?'

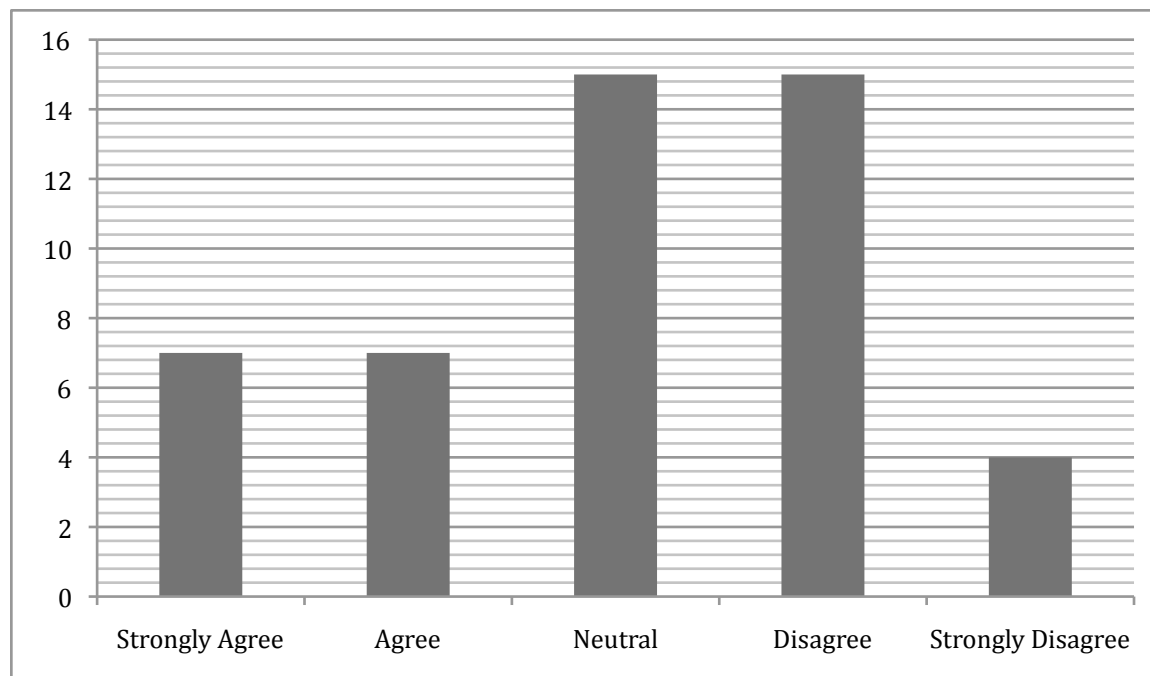
– *Josephine, Vice Principal, École Broadway School*

Finally, some participants argued that educators should have the authority to exclude Allophone students from French immersion, as demonstrated in the following excerpt:

I think parents need to realize before they put their child in French immersion, is the amount of work it takes. And you need that extra support from parents at home because it is that second language. So, you know, you're going to have to put in that time, the time at home to help your child even more. And I don't think parents realize that when they put them into French. And also, I don't know how you could introduce any screening to see if the child is suitable, but I feel, right now, there's a lot of kids – and I'm not just talking about my classroom – but French immersion probably isn't the best place for them. But it doesn't matter what you do, what you say – they're there, and they struggle.

– *Andrea, Grade 1 Teacher, École Circle Drive School*

Evidently, the perspectives of French immersion teachers and principals varied considerably as to whether educators believed that they should include all Allophone students, serve as advisors for such families, collaborate with parents to reach a decision in tandem, or overrule the decisions of parents and exclude certain learners entirely.



*Figure 16.* I believe that school administrators and teachers should be able to decide whether or not to include Allophone students in French immersion.

Moreover, Question 7 measured the extent to which educator participants affirmed that Allophone parents should be able to select the program of study for their children (Figure 17). Although most participants responded positively to this survey item, the following interview excerpts suggest that some educators believed that enrolment decisions should be made in consultation with teachers and principals:

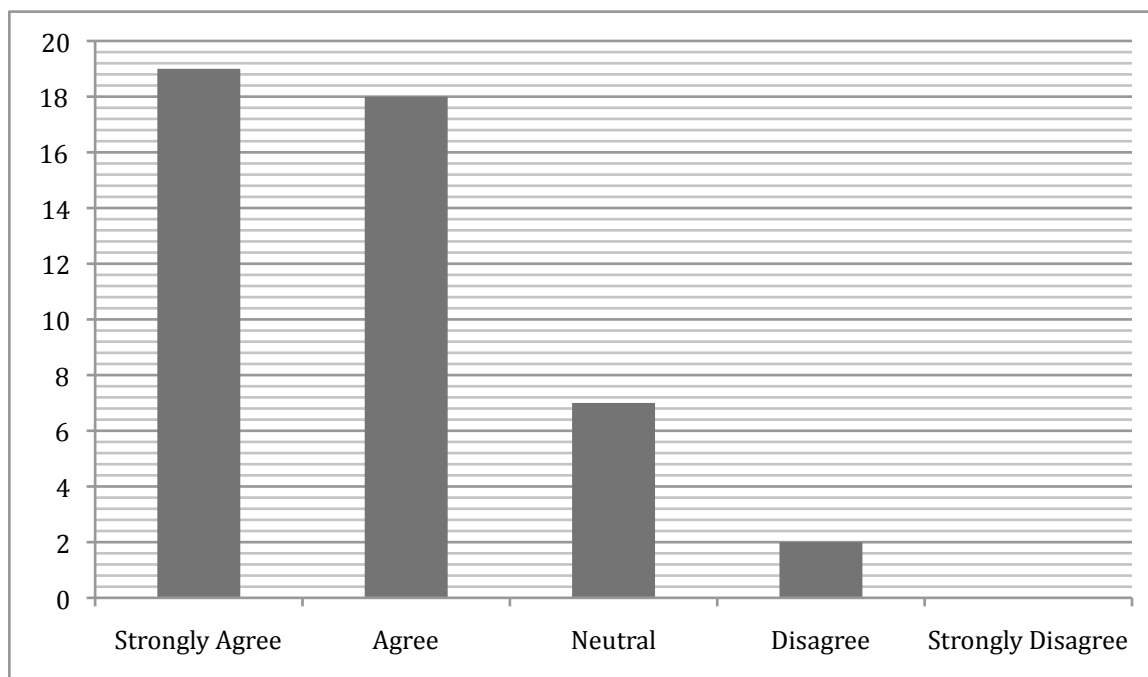
You know, I'm happy just giving them the facts, like, this is how they're doing, this is what I'm doing to make sure they're successful, and hopefully if they're not, just letting them know. If they're worried, ultimately they can decide.

– *Michelle, Grade 3 Teacher, École Circle Drive School*

You know, if a dentist tells you, 'You need a root canal,' are you ever going to question him? Probably not. If your doctor tells you, 'You need to have your appendix taken out,' you're not going to question it, you know? That is the person in the position in that profession that's telling you that this is what you need, so, therefore, you do it. But there seems to be a little bit more of a greyish hue to the teachers who are, I think, in all the right ways, and, you know, with every, with

every ounce of, you know, good evidence and compassion towards these kids when we might be suggesting that children and families consider not continuing in French immersion. – *Phoebe, Grade 1 Teacher, École Broadway School*

In summary, the results presented in this subsection illustrate a complex and nuanced position regarding educators' perceived roles as gatekeepers for French immersion programs. Whereas teachers and principals espoused inclusionary views with respect to Allophone students in French immersion and most educators believe that parents should be able to select the program for their children, certain educators still argued that they should have greater authority in the decision to include or exclude Allophone students.



*Figure 17.* I believe that Allophone parents should be able to select the program of study for their children.

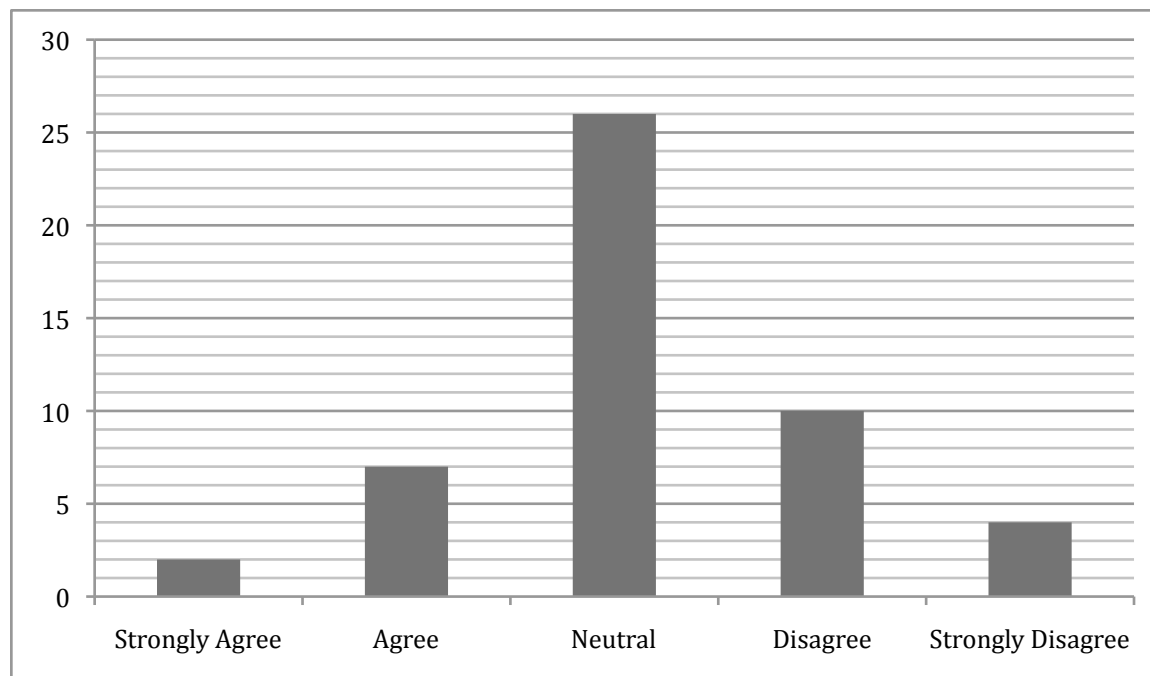
**4.2.6 Supports and resources.** The final subsection of the chapter comprising results for educators explores resources for Allophone students in French immersion programs. Specifically, the survey questions and interview excerpts presented here address the perceptions of teachers and principals with regards to the effectiveness of different forms of support provided for Allophone students in French immersion, including resources offered by families, teachers, the school division, and beyond. Question 17 sought to measure the extent to which educators believe that Allophone students receive adequate homework support in French immersion, which generated divergent results (Figure 18). In terms of qualitative data, the following interview excerpts provide insight into the perspectives of one principal participant and one teacher regarding the homework practices of Allophone families:

I would say that there would be some difficulty for families to support them in French and in English, because most of our Canadian families have a little bit, Sesame Street French, at the very least, you know? And I think that they can support a little bit differently. Even if they don't feel bilingual or fluent, they still have knowledge of the French language, whereas some of our Allophone families may have none. – *Yolanda, Principal, École Grand Trunk*

I just know that some struggles that some of the teachers have is a lack of support at home. A lot of the parents are working quite a few hours, I know, and the students might need a little bit of help at home, you know, doing their reading and all that type of stuff, whereas they get home and they're expected to almost be that parent figure for maybe some younger siblings or anything like that, so they don't necessarily have the supports that they need at home to help.  
– *Spencer, General/Specialist Teacher, École Grand Trunk*

Indeed, some educators expressed concern about the perceived inability of many Allophone families to assist their children with French homework. Nevertheless, certain teachers and principals argued that Allophone parents were able to provide meaningful help for their children's learning, noting that French immersion programs do not require families to provide French support at home, nor is this expected of Anglophone families.





*Figure 18.* I believe that Allophone students receive adequate homework support in French immersion.

Moreover, the present study explored the perceptions of educators pertaining to the language support that such students receive in French immersion. Several participants believe that these students are supported in their language learning, as demonstrated by the positive quantitative data generated by Question 19 of the survey (Figure 19). Nevertheless, many educators expressed concern that Allophone students are not given sufficient support to succeed in French immersion, specifically arguing that such programs require more Resource instruction in order to support at-risk learners:

Ideally, I would like to see more. Again, in my career, I've seen everything from full-time Resource to half-time Resource to two-thirds Resource, and... You know, the struggles that some of our kids have are very real, and, you know, the teachers within the classroom, the framework of the classroom, can only do so much, and are doing their very best. But I would definitely advocate for more Resource within French immersion, for sure.

– *Phoebe, Grade 2 Teacher, École Broadway School*

I would love to be able to say to every family, ‘Absolutely, French is the right place for you,’ and the reason I think that some people can’t say that is because we don’t have as much Resource support.

– Julie, Grade 3 Teacher, École Sidney Buckwold School

Evidently, the lack of Resource instruction in French immersion was a central finding of the present study. The following survey comment provides greater details on the subject:

Currently, only 2 of the 7 FI Elementary schools in [the school division] have full time French resource teachers assigned to them. The other 5 schools only have ½ time French resource support. The face of French immersion has changed greatly over the past few years and it is long overdue that each French Immersion school have full time French resource support to meet the increasing needs of our struggling learners.

– École Spadina Crescent School, Resource teacher

In summary, although many educators were confident in the language support that Allophone students received, several maintained that French immersion programs must offer more Resource support, which would benefit learners of all linguistic backgrounds.

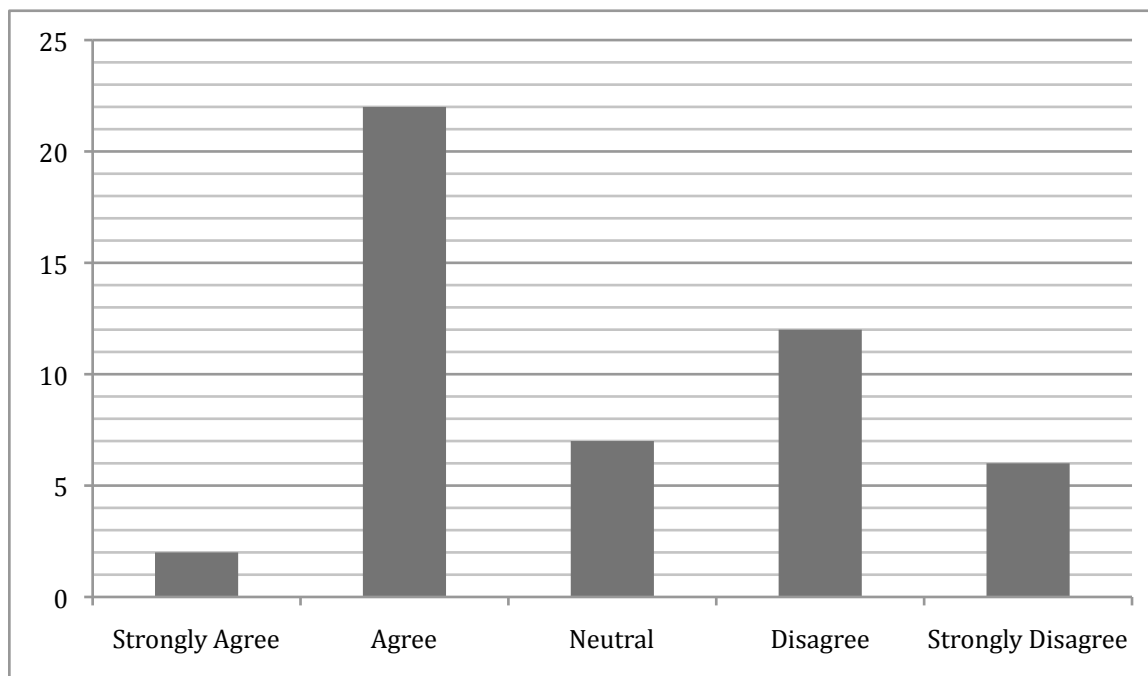


Figure 19. I believe that Allophone students receive adequate language support in French immersion.

Question 20, the final item of the survey for educators, measured the beliefs of teachers and principals regarding a more specific aspect of language support for Allophone students – that is, the English instruction that such students receive in French immersion. The quantitative data below reveal that educators are very divided on this matter (Figure 20). This divergence in views is also reflected in the qualitative results. First, some teachers and principals are of the opinion that Allophone students receive sufficient English language instruction in French immersion, and some believe that a lack of formal English instruction is mitigated by significant exposure to the language beyond the classroom. However, the vast majority of educator participants espoused the view that more English language instruction is required for such students in French immersion:

But the argument that you don't need EAL because you're studying in French immersion and there's no formal English instruction, I consider a little bogus. We live in Saskatoon, you know? Support in EAL would be huge for these families. And all it really does is become a disincentive for them to go into French immersion. When a new family, when Syrian families are arriving, and they say, 'We'd like to go into French immersion,' and I say, 'You're more than welcome, but just so you know, there's no English language support until the end of Grade 2.' That becomes a roadblock to them, you know?

– *Darius, Principal, École Gordie Howe School*

We tried accessing it this year for a boy in Grade 2 who does not speak English really well or French. His first language is Serbian, so he has difficulty expressing himself in English and French, which is the two languages we speak here. So there are some communication gaps with him. We tried seeing if we could access EAL services for him, but we can't access that until Grade 3.

– *Carmen, Resource Teacher, École Spadina Crescent School*

In summary, although many teachers and parents believed that Allophone students receive sufficient English instruction in French immersion, several educators asserted that Allophone students require English language instruction in the form of EAL support before they reach Grade 3, the current starting point for this service in such programs.

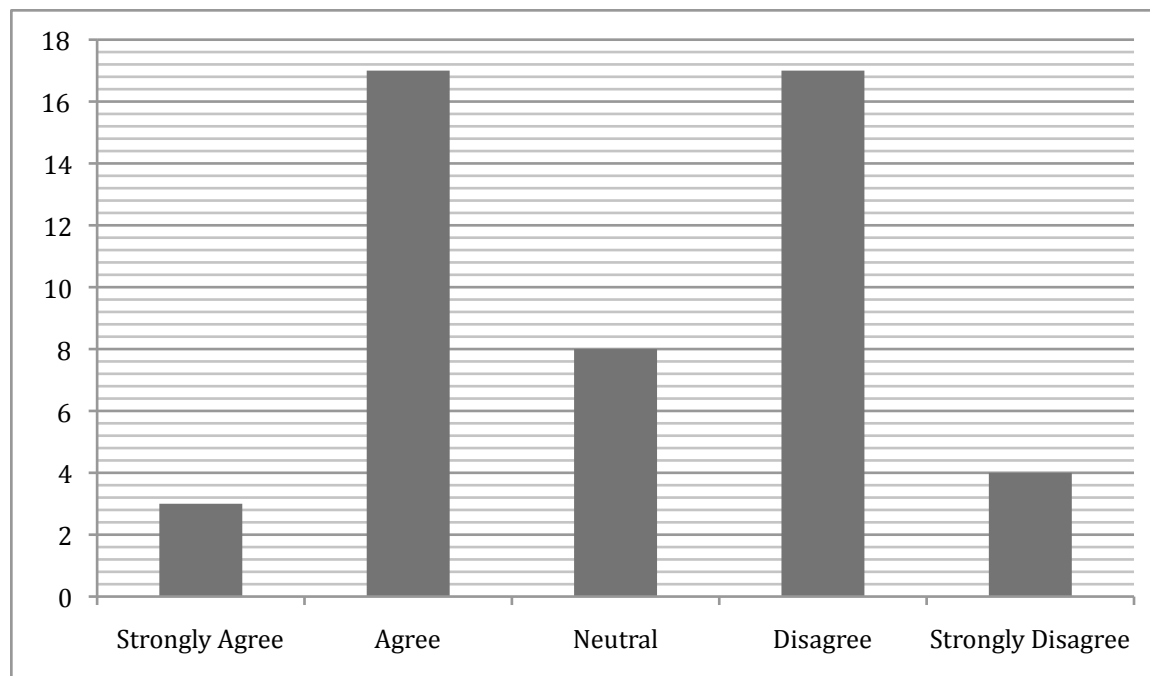


Figure 20. I believe that Allophone students receive adequate English instruction in French immersion.

Finally, several educators discussed and recommended a variety of supports and resources for Allophone students in French immersion that extend beyond language learning and English instruction. Specifically, some teachers noted a lack of Educational Assistant (EA) support in French immersion programs, as per the following comment:

We have a school of 370 or so students, and we have one and a half EAs in the building, you know? – *Billy, Grade 7 LFI Teacher, École Grand Trunk*

Additionally, several educators suggested that the school division create a position for a superintendent or consultant who would oversee French immersion programs throughout the school division and serve as an advocate for such programs amongst newcomer societies and organizations in the city. The subsequent chapter of the present thesis will present the results for Allophone parents, including the quantitative data of the survey, as well as the qualitative findings of questionnaire comments and interviews.

## Chapter 5: Results for Parents

The purpose of the present section of this thesis is to provide the results of the survey for Allophone parents, titled *The Suitability of French Immersion for Allophone students: Survey for Parents and Guardians*, in addition to the findings of the seven parent interviews. In much the same vein as the questionnaire for educators, this survey began with a series of demographic questions to ascertain background information of parent participants. Subsequently, the 20 Likert-scale items in the *Questions for Parents and Guardians* section of the survey and interview results will be presented according to the following six themes: first, *The Importance of Learning English and French in Saskatchewan* measured parents' beliefs regarding the value of these languages in the province; second, *The Role of English* explored whether parents believed their children should learn English and French sequentially or simultaneously; third, *The Language Learning of Allophone Students* examined the extent to which parents believed that their children were learning languages effectively in French immersion; fourth, items grouped in *The Suitability of French Immersion for Allophone Students* assessed how parents perceived the appropriateness of French immersion for their children; fifth, *Gatekeeping* explored parents' beliefs about the inclusion and exclusion of Allophone students in French immersion and their personal experiences accessing such programs; sixth, *Supports and Resources* examined different forms of support in French immersion. Each of these six subsections will provide a graphic representation of the results generated by the survey questions discussed therein, as well as pertinent interview data. Interview excerpts will provide pseudonyms for parents and the names of the schools that their children attend, whereas survey comments will disclose only the names of the schools.

### 5.1 Demographic Information

The first section of the survey for parents, titled *Demographic Information*, consisted of eight questions created for the purpose of obtaining demographic information relevant to the research questions of the present study. The eight questions explored several important considerations for Allophone parent participants pertaining to their family's experiences with French immersion and the school division more generally, in addition to different dimensions of language use for the students and families. The first question in this section asked parents to indicate the number of children in their families who had been enrolled in a French immersion program (Table 4).

Table 4

*How many children in your family have been enrolled in French immersion programs?*

Answer	Count	Percentage
1	13	56.52%
2	3	13.04%
3	4	17.39%
4	0	0.00%
5	0	0.00%

The second item of this section asked parents to select the school their child attends from a list of the elementary schools in the school division that offer French immersion programs, presented below with pseudonyms (Table 5). The results show that each of the six schools that participated in the study was represented by at least one

Allophone parent. The most likely reason for the relatively high number of participants from École Grand Trunk is that this is the only single-track French immersion school in the division and therefore has more eligible participants than the dual-track schools.

Table 5

*What school does your child attend?*

Answer	Count	Percentage
École Broadway School	1	4.35%
École Circle Drive School	1	4.35%
École C.P.R. School	0	0.00%
École Gordie Howe School	2	8.70%
École Grand Trunk	8	34.78%
École Sid Buckwold School	4	17.39%
École Spadina Crescent	4	17.39%
School		

Subsequently, two questions measured children's grade levels at the time of the study, as well as the number of years they had been enrolled in a French immersion program including the 2016-2017 school year. The grade levels of participants' children included a range of elementary school grades, as per the responses displayed in Table 6. The number of years that participants' children had been studying in French immersion also vary considerably (Table 7). The n=8 parents who stated that their children were in their first year of French immersion included n=5 with children in Kindergarten; n=1

with a child in Grade 1; as well as n=2 with children in Grade 6, most likely in their first year of the Late French Immersion program. Additionally, parents were asked to indicate the range of years that their family had lived in Canada at the time of the study (Table 8).

Table 6

*What is your child's current grade level?*

Answer	Count	Percentage
Kindergarten	5	21.74%
Grade 1	2	8.70%
Grade 2	0	0.00%
Grade 3	4	17.39%
Grade 4	1	4.35%
Grade 5	1	4.35%
Grade 6	4	17.39%
Grade 7	3	13.04%
Grade 8	0	0.00%

Table 7

*Including the 2016-2017 school year, how many years has your child been enrolled in a French immersion program?*

Answer	Count	Percentage
1	8	34.78%
2	1	4.35%



3	2	8.70%
4	3	13.04%
5	0	0.00%
6	3	13.04%
7	3	13.04%
8	0	0.00%
9	0	0.00%

Table 8

*Including the current year, how many years has your family lived in Canada?*

Answer	Count	Percentage
1-5	7	30.43%
6-10	5	21.74%
11-15	4	17.39%
16-20	0	0.00%
21-25	1	4.35%
26-30	0	0.00%
31-35	2	8.70%
36-40	1	4.35%
41-45	0	0.00%
46-50	0	0.00%

In addition to the five aforementioned questions that examined the experiences of participants' families with French immersion programs and living in Canada, three items explored information pertaining to the language practices and linguistic repertoires of such families. To this end, the sixth question asked parents to select from a list of responses the number of languages that their children speak (Table 9).

Table 9

*How many languages does your child speak?*

Answer	Count	Percentage
1	1	4.35%
2	7	30.43%
3	10	43.48%
4	2	8.70%
5	0	0.00%

Subsequently, the seventh question offered a text box and asked parents to list the languages their children speak. This item generated various combinations of the following 12 languages, presented here in order of the frequency with which they appeared in the answers: English (n=19), French (n=12), Mandarin (n=4), Chinese (n=3), Urdu (n=3), Hindi (n=2), Bangla (n=2), Spanish (n=2), Afrikaans (n=1), Arabic (n=1), Cantonese (n=1), and Filipino (n=1). It is unclear as to whether the 'Chinese' response provided by n=3 participants refers to Mandarin, Cantonese, or another language entirely; thus, it is listed here as a distinct entity, so as not to presume a certain meaning.

Finally, the eighth item of the *Demographic Information* section of the survey for Allophone parents sought to measure the languages that participants considered to be their children's strongest languages. The results, again in order of the frequency in which each language appeared in the N=19 responses, are as follows: English (n=18), Bangla (n=2), Cantonese (n=2), French (n=2), Mandarin (n=1), and Spanish (n=1). Whereas n=15 participants provided only one language in their answers, n=4 parents offered two or more languages. Subsequent sections of this chapter will present the data generated by the 20 Likert-scale items in the *Questions for Parents and Guardians* section of the survey, as well as interview findings corresponding to the aforementioned six themes.

## 5.2 Questions for Parents and Guardians

**5.2.1 The importance of learning English and French in Saskatchewan.** The first two questions in the *Questions for Parents and Guardians* section of the survey examined Allophone parents' perceptions of the importance of learning English and French. The purpose of these questions was to juxtapose the relative importance of the two languages of instruction in French immersion, as well as to create a comparison between the perspectives of parents and educators. Question 1 analyzed the extent to which Allophone parents believed it was important for their children to learn English (Figure 21). The following survey comments indicate that parent participants considered the English language critically important for their children, both in Canada and beyond:

“because I want my son stay in Canada for ever”  
– *École Gordie Howe School, Parent*

“English is the universal language of the world.”  
– *École Gordie Howe School, Parent*

Thus, parent participants demonstrated resoundingly that it is of paramount importance that their children learn English, not only because this language is considered essential for life in Canada, but also because of its prevalence globally.

Similarly, Question 2 asked Allophone parents to indicate the level of significance they accord to their children learning French (Figure 22). The data generated by this item suggest that the parents considered French to be valuable, but to a slightly lesser degree than English. Moreover, several parents expressed that it was important for their children to learn both languages due to official status in Canada, as per the following excerpts:

Canada has two official language. And then we thought about, maybe, we really like the idea about diversity, culturally, because we are minority, right? We like the policy maybe keep Canada as diversity as possible. And the French language, to keep this in Saskatoon for English-speaking people, maybe some people don't care about the French, right? But for us, we kind of want to contribute a little bit and let him enrol in the, in the French school.  
– *Li, Parent, École Sid Buckwold School*

We're a bilingual country and they should receive both. And one of the biggest things they say that's driving French immersion in Canada is the immigrant class. You know, the ones that are coming now, they look at it and say, 'Oh, Canada is bilingual. They better learn both of them.'  
– *Duncan, Parent, École Grand Trunk*

Indeed, Allophone parent survey and interview participants believe that it is critically important for their children to learn both English and French, in large part because of the notion that official language bilingualism is important for Canadian society. In summary, although most parents indicated that there was greater urgency for their children to learn English because of the dominance of the language in Saskatchewan, all participants affirmed the importance of learning French for both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons.

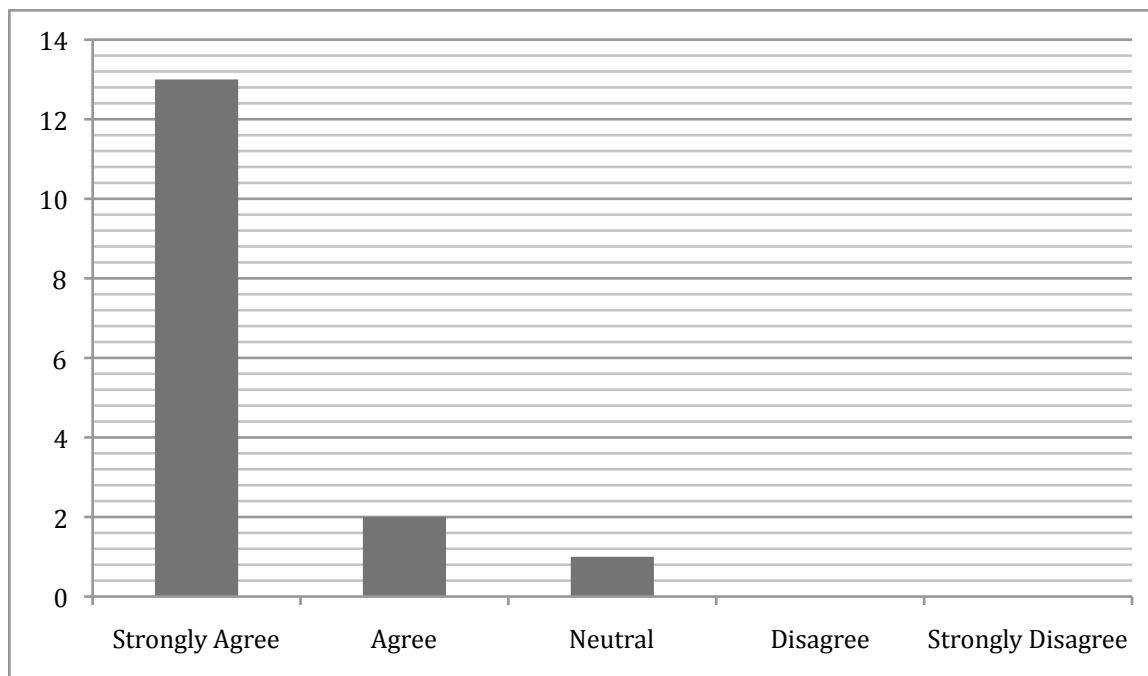


Figure 21. I believe that it is important for my child to learn English.

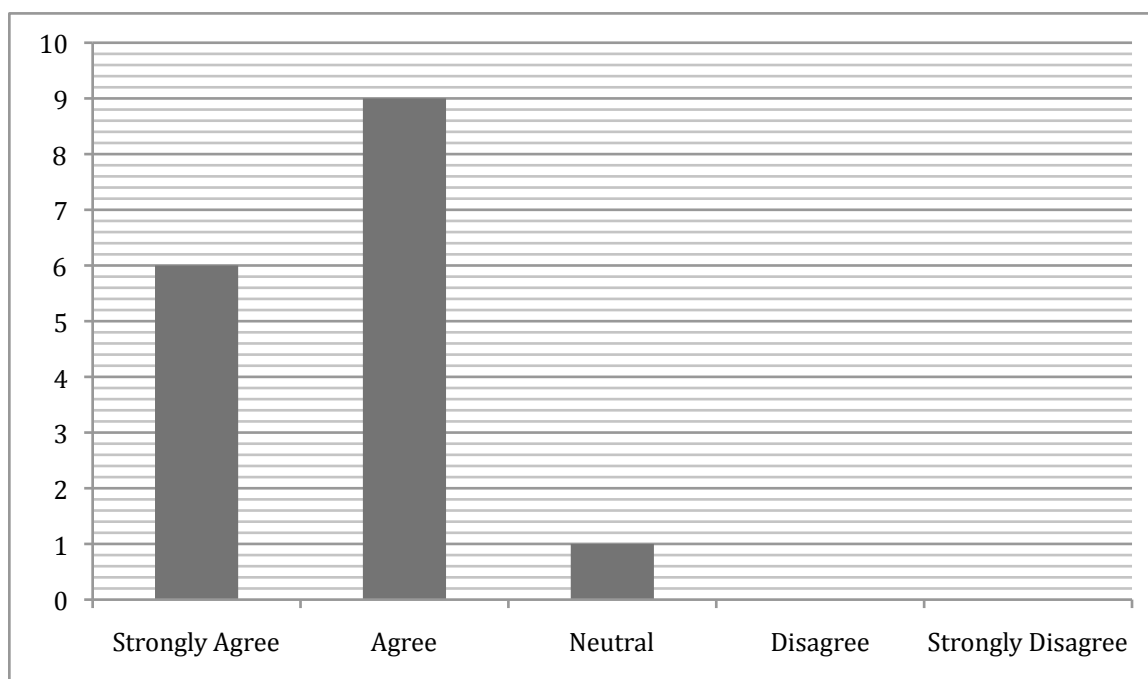


Figure 22. I believe that it is important for my child to learn French.

**5.2.2 The role of English.** The items presented in this subsection measured Allophone parents' ideas concerning the role of English in French immersion programs. Question 14 asked parents whether they believed that success in French immersion required a high level of English proficiency (Figure 23). The results indicate that relatively few parents agree with this notion. Furthermore, the sole comment provided for this survey item indicates a strong sense of disagreement, as per the following:

I do not believe that success in the language of French requires a high level of English because when we lived in Mexico he was having little French classes without knowing English. – *Parent, École Spadina Crescent School*

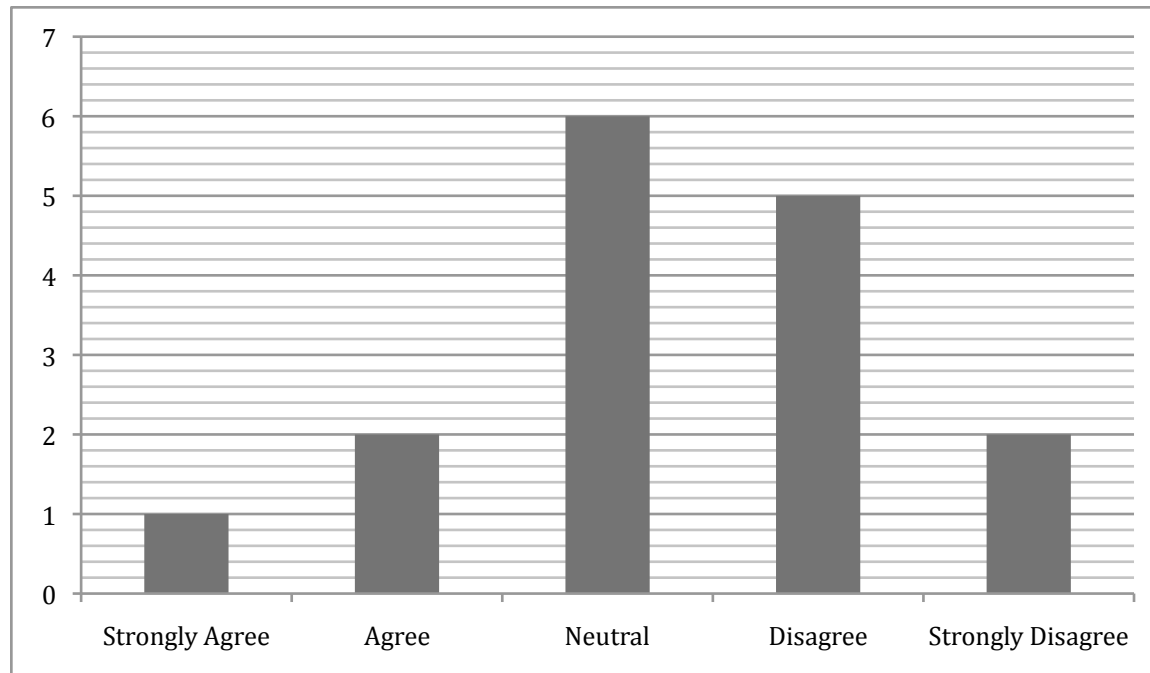
The data generated by this item suggest that most parents do not view the mastery of English as an essential prerequisite for success in French immersion programs.

In contrast, Question 5 examined parents' beliefs about Allophone students learning English and French simultaneously (Figure 24). The survey results indicate that, without exception, all participants believe that their children can learn both languages concurrently. Several parent participants expressed confidence in their children's ability to learn multiple languages simultaneously, as per the following interview excerpts:

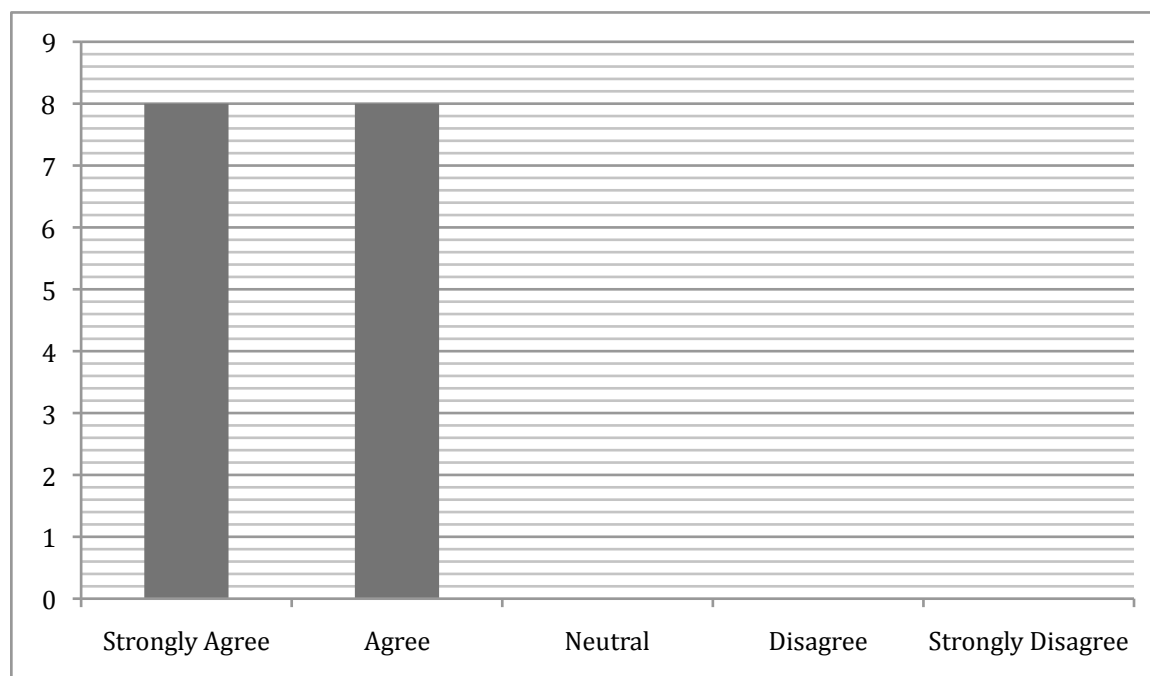
We have a saying in my early people. They say mind – child mind – like clean paper. Whatever you write on it, they will keep it. Understand what I mean? If you have a paper, you have writing, and I come and write Arabic. It's the same; they take yours, they take mine. – *Badawi, Parent, École Grand Trunk*

Um, I think it's ok to learn both at the same time, because I see myself, too. And I see it's ok to learn as many languages as you want at the same time because sometimes you can make connections, and that just make it easy to learn, while when you learn one language, leave it, go to the other language, you miss that language and sometimes you don't make all the connection that you can make when you're learning both at the same time. – *Kamal, Parent, École Grand Trunk*

Thus, the results generated by the present study indicate that Allophone parents were confident in the abilities of their children to learn multiple languages concurrently.

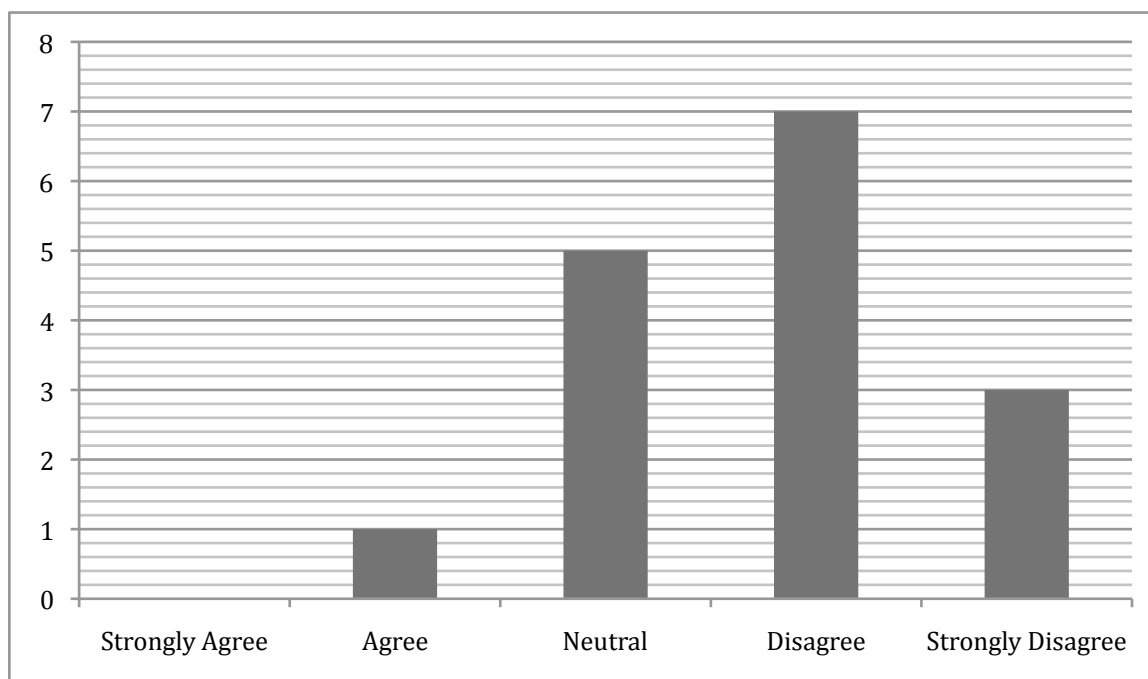


*Figure 23.* I believe that success in French immersion requires a high level of English proficiency.



*Figure 24.* I believe that my child is able to learn French and English at the same time.

In addition to Question 14 and Question 5, a third survey item examined Allophone parents' perspectives on the role of English in French immersion. Question 16 asked participants whether they espoused the view that learning French was detrimental to the learning of English for their children (Figure 25). Most parents rejected this notion, as demonstrated by n=3 participants choosing 'Strongly Disagree,' n=7 selecting 'Disagree,' n=5 responding with 'Neutral,' and only n=1 parent selecting 'Agree.' In summary, the results show that Allophone parents did not view the learning of English and the learning of French as competing for finite mental faculties. Rather than seeing English and French proficiency as conflicting and contradictory goals for their children, Allophone parents considered the learning of multiple languages a complementary and mutually beneficial process.



*Figure 25.* I believe that learning French is detrimental to the learning of English for my child.



**5.2.3 The language learning of Allophone students.** The four survey items analyzed in the present subsection examined the perspectives of Allophone parents regarding the language learning of their children in French immersion programs. To this end, Question 3 asked parents to indicate whether they believed their children were learning English effectively in French immersion (Figure 26). The results for this item demonstrate that nearly all parents believe that their children are learning English effectively in such programs. All participants were confident in their children's English learning ability because of the prevalence of the English language in Saskatchewan, as per the following interview excerpts:

I learned Chinese to begin with, and once I entered Grade 1, you learned English very easily and pretty soon you forget your mother tongue. Like, I can still speak in Chinese, but I cannot read or write in Chinese. When my daughter was born, it's one of the things that I pushed for, for her to learn the Chinese language first, because knowing from personal experience, I knew she'd be able to remember it for life that way. English will come very easily.

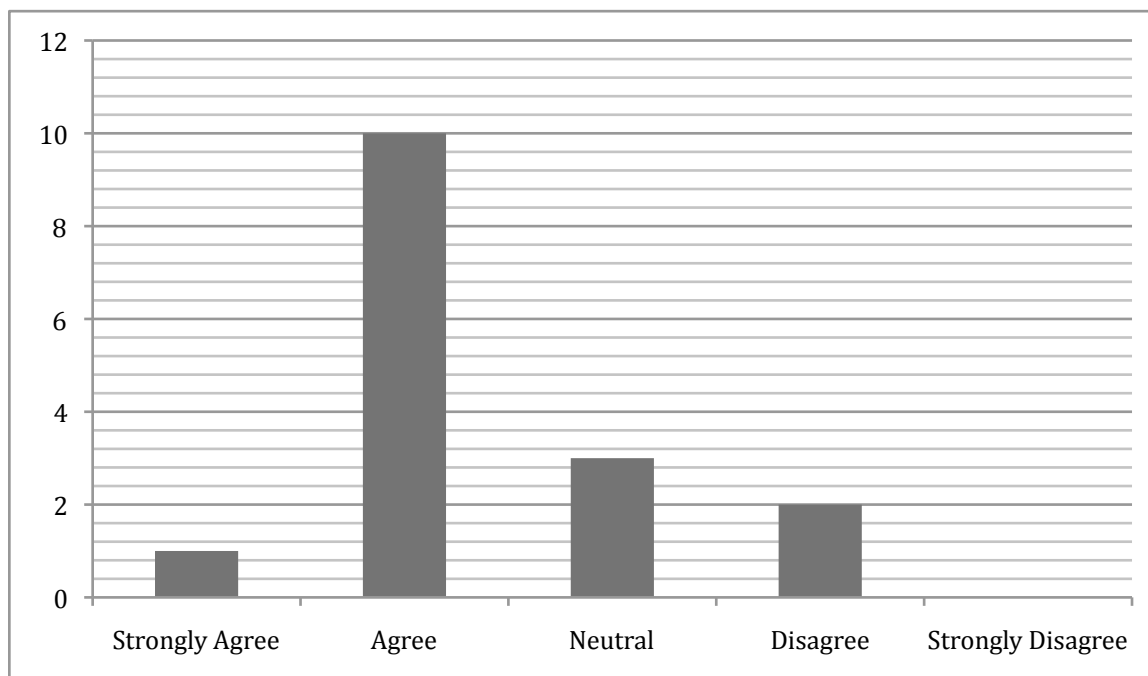
– *Duncan, Parent, École Grand Trunk*

I don't think it would be difficult for her. You know, it depends the mind. I think she is very good for two languages. It's not that much. And English and French, I think it will be easy. – *Badawi, Parent, École Grand Trunk*

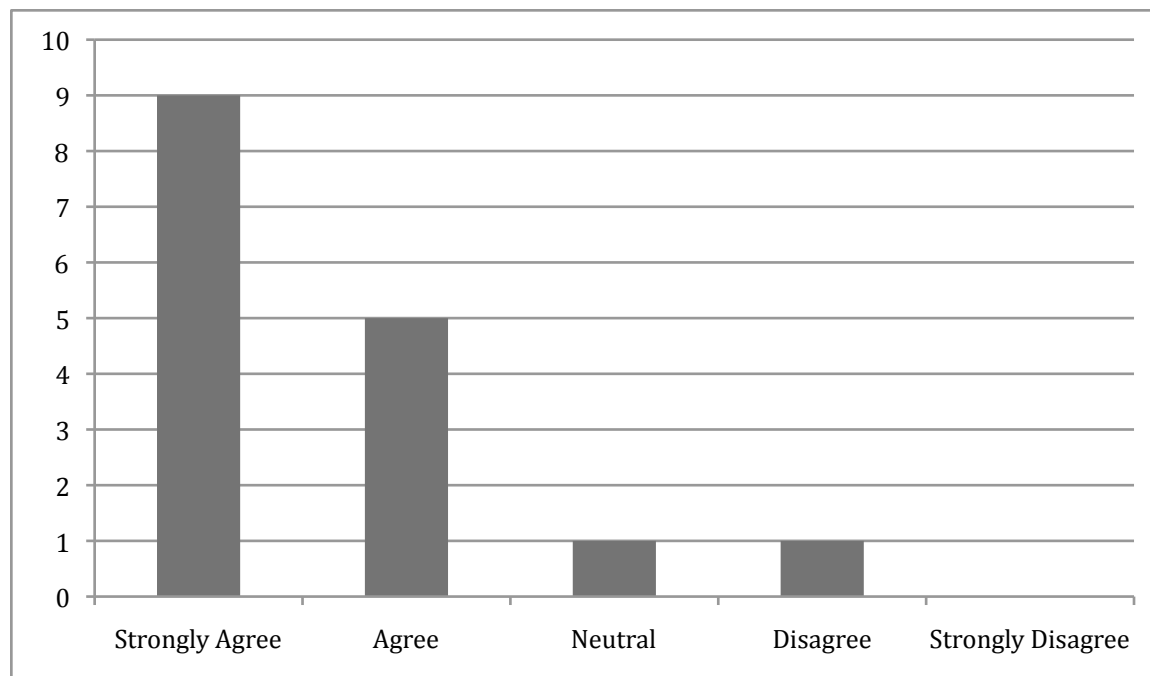
Thus, the majority of participants in this study were confident in their children's abilities to develop English proficiency in the French immersion program, especially given the dominance of the language throughout Saskatchewan. Indeed, a greater concern for many Allophone parents is the need to preserve the family language and ensure additive – rather than subtractive – multilingualism for their children.

Similarly, Question 4 measured Allophone parents' opinions concerning the effectiveness with which their children are learning French in French immersion programs (Figure 27). In this case, the results were overwhelmingly positive, as n=9

participants indicated that they ‘Strongly Agree’ that their children are learning French effectively, in addition to n=5 parents who selected ‘Agree.’ The juxtaposition of the results for Question 3 with those of Question 4 reveals that most Allophone parents believe that their children are learning both English and French effectively in French immersion programs, albeit more so in the case of French language learning. The beliefs of Allophone parents pertaining to English language support in French immersion will be examined in greater depth elsewhere in this chapter.



*Figure 26.* I believe that my child is learning English effectively in French immersion.



*Figure 27.* I believe that my child is learning French effectively in French immersion.

In addition to the two questions that explored the perceptions of Allophone parents regarding the effectiveness with which their children were learning English and French, two subsequent items examined whether participants believed that their children had advantages and disadvantages in French immersion compared to Anglophone learners. First, Question 7 asked Allophone parents to indicate the extent to which they believed that their children had advantages in French immersion compared to Anglophone students (Figure 28). The vast majority of participants affirmed that their children had some advantages over Anglophone learners, although several parents appeared uncertain about this subject. As for the nature of these perceived advantages, several participants commented that their children benefited from cross-linguistic transfer as a result of their language repertoire, including the following interview excerpt:

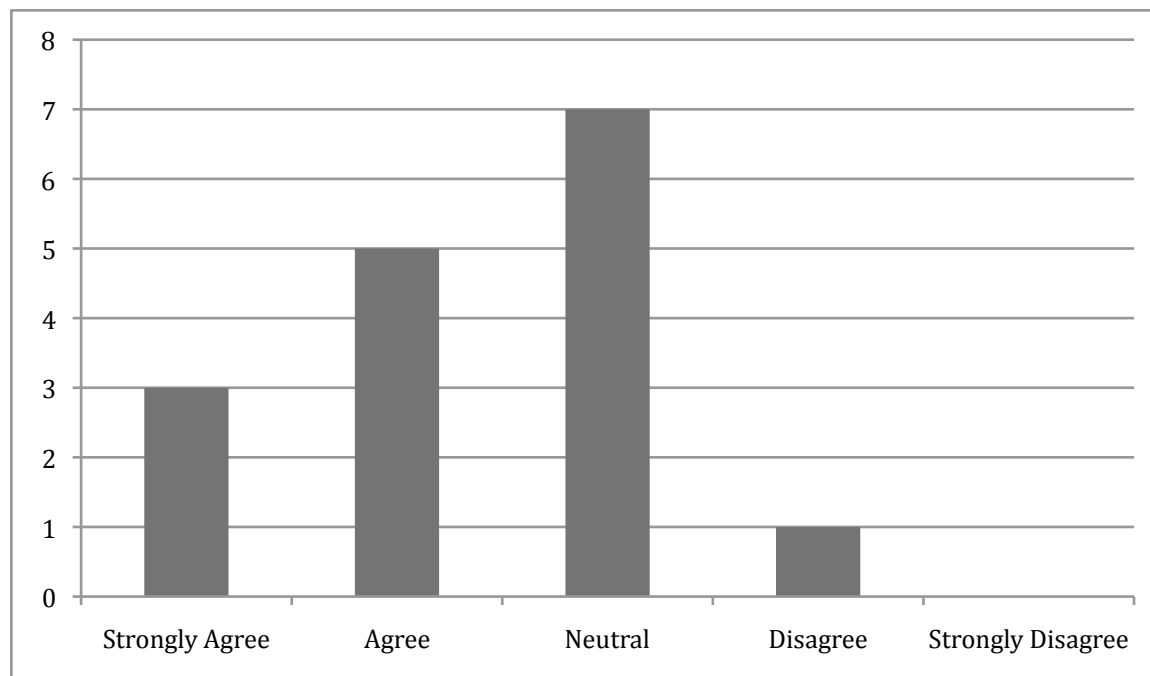
So we learned that there are bilingual schools in Canada, so we decided that if he learn one language, why not to learn second language? And especially because there are so many words borrowed from French in Serbian language – plenty of them! ‘*Camion*’ for ‘truck,’ we don’t have any other words apart from ‘*Camion*,’ and he knows that, and for ‘*sofa*,’ and other words. So we remind him we have the same word in English, like ‘super,’ for example, or same word in French.  
 – *Volodymyr, Parent, École Spadina Crescent School*

Evidently, some parent participants expressed the opinion that the first languages of their children served to equip such students for success in French immersion by providing certain language learning benefits exclusively for Allophone students.

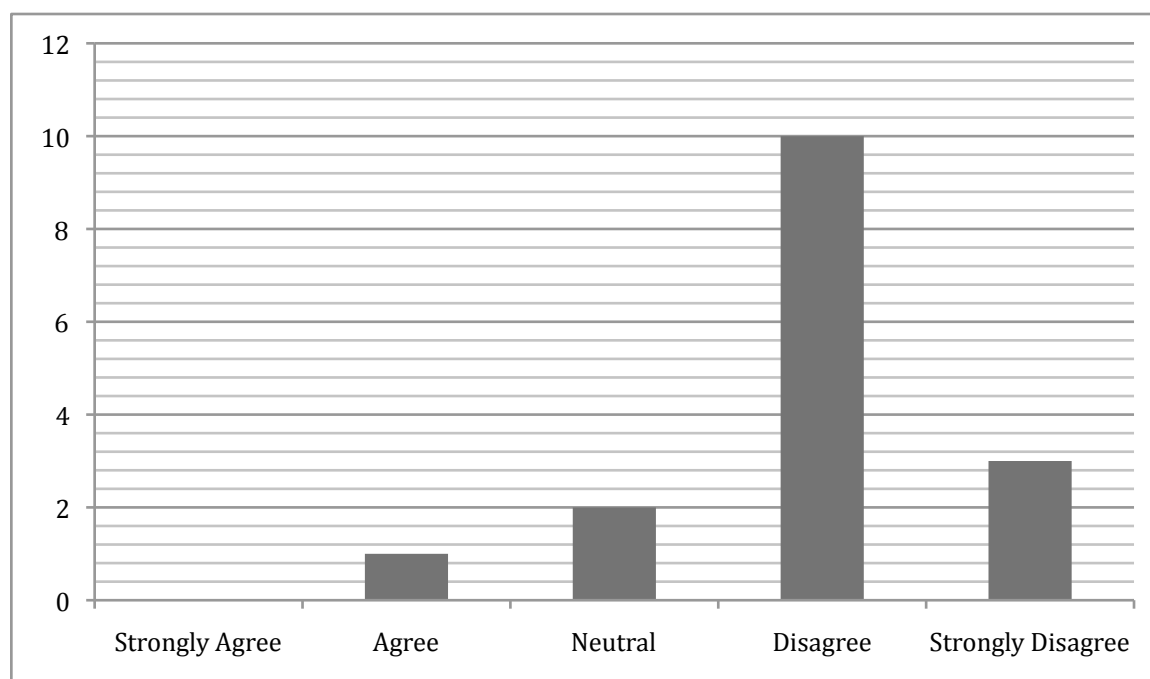
Conversely, Question 15 of this survey asked parents the extent to which they believed that their children had disadvantages in French immersion compared to Anglophone learners (Figure 29). In this case, the results were more cohesive than for Question 7. Moreover, one father mentioned that some Allophone students are presumed to have disadvantages learning languages in Canada because of racial discrimination, recounting his personal experience in the following interview excerpt:

Like, from my own experience when I was a child, you know – because I only knew Chinese when I started – and, you know, what they did with all the non-white students was they’d stick them into the English ESL class because that’s what they stuck them into. And I remember that I wasn’t in that ESL class for too long because a lot of the words that they were teaching in Grade 1, I was usually able to stay a little bit ahead of the others in the class. I could figure out the words fairly easily, so I spent less than a month in ESL before they said, well, ‘He doesn’t need that.’ ... They always assume that because a person’s not white that they don’t understand English, which I think is wrong. You know, there’s a lot of people here who are not Caucasian that will pick up English a lot faster than others. – *Duncan, Parent, École Grand Trunk*

In summary, nearly all parent participants repudiated the notion that their children might have disadvantages compared to Anglophone students. Whereas there was some discrepancy as to whether Allophone students have advantages in French immersion, the findings show that parents do not believe that their children have disadvantages.



*Figure 28.* I believe that my child has advantages in French immersion compared to students whose first language is English.



*Figure 29.* I believe that my child has disadvantages in French immersion compared to students whose first language is English.

**5.2.4 The suitability of French immersion for Allophone students.** In addition to examining the perceived importance of English and French in Saskatchewan, the role of English in French immersion, and language learning for Allophone students, several survey items explored the beliefs of Allophone parents concerning the suitability of French immersion for their children. Question 8 asked parents to indicate the extent to which they believed that French immersion was a suitable option for their children (Figure 30). The belief that French immersion is an appropriate instructional program for Allophone learners was a recurring theme throughout the interviews as well. Several parents stated that French immersion was suitable because they believed that the program added an enriching challenge for their children's learning. For example, one father explained that his son was initially enrolled in English, but the family moved him into the French immersion program for an additional cognitive and academic challenge:

He was there for a week. But everyday, he come back home saying, 'I don't like the school because it's boring.' Yeah, that was Grade 1. He said, 'I know everything they're doing now.' The thing is that, when he finished his Pre-K in Mexico – no, Kindergarten, in Mexico – he learned to write and read in Spanish. So he was good in Math. So, for him, it was very, very basic, Grade 1 here... So, I was afraid that he was going to be discouraged at school, and we thought, 'Well, he already speaks English, and he speaks Spanish. So, it is a good opportunity for him to learn another language.'

– José, Parent, *École Spadina Crescent School*

Similarly, one Allophone interview participant offered that, although her eldest son was invited to join an enriched version of the English program in secondary school, he decided to continue in French immersion for the added challenge, as per the following:

Like, Muhammed, he was accepted in the advanced program, and it was his choice: 'Do you want to stick with French, or you want to go to the advanced program? If you go to the advanced program, this, this, this will be your advantage. You will be taken to the university like that.' And who doesn't want to be feeling good about advanced program? But he chooses to go to the French

immersion. So, my kids always supported the program and they feel comfortable there, and they want to continue in the program... I think he said, 'All my efforts would go in vain if I just go to advanced program.' He thinks that learning everything in French is in itself an advanced program. So, it's like, being bilingual is not easy; you have to switch all the time in your head, and we have other language also. So, it's like switching everywhere. So, he thought that it's more helpful to stay in French program than go into advanced.

– *Kamal, Parent, École Grand Trunk*

Thus, most Allophone parent participants who enrolled their children in French immersion continue to believe that it is a suitable program for them, citing the benefits of multilingualism and the appropriate challenge that immersion provides.

Subsequently, Question 19 measured the extent to which Allophone parents felt that their children's teachers were supportive of their enrolment in French immersion (Figure 31). Indeed, the data indicate strongly that Allophone parents believed that their children's teachers were supportive of their enrolment and that most Allophone parents perceived a harmony between their views and those of educators in this regard.

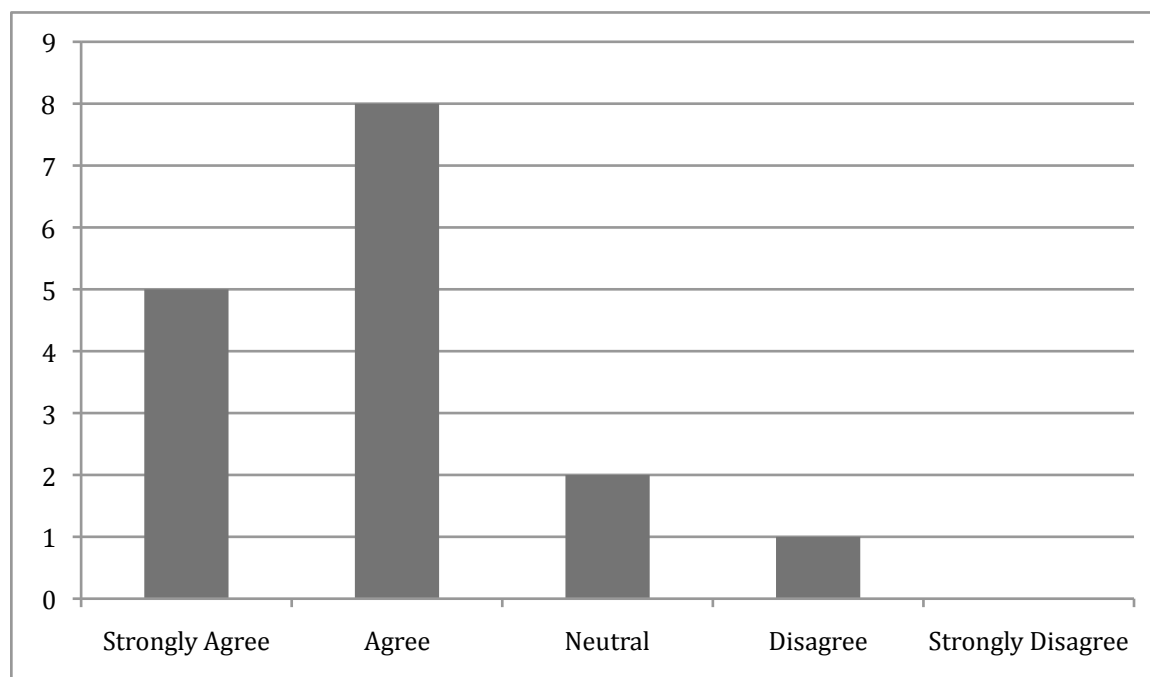
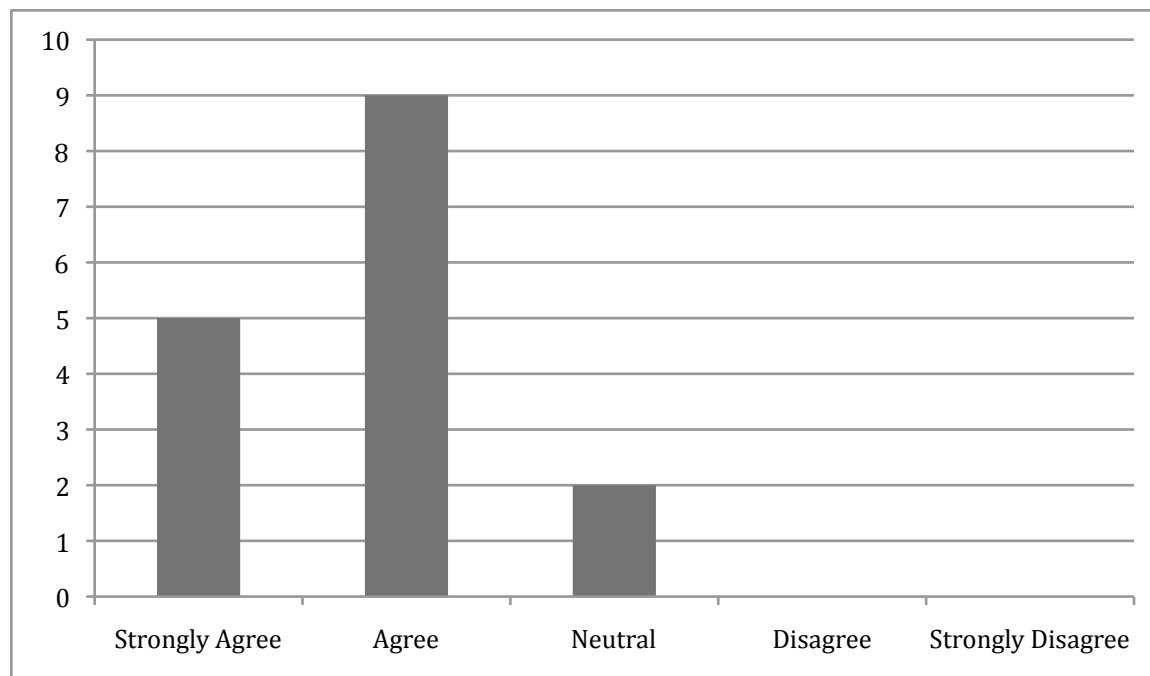


Figure 30. I believe that French immersion is a suitable program for my child.



*Figure 31.* I believe that my child's teacher is supportive of my decision to enrol him or her in French immersion.

Subsequently, two survey items explored Allophone parents' perceptions of the suitability of French immersion programs for their children by assessing their experiences learning about French immersion programs. Specifically, Question 6 asked parents to indicate their degree of difficulty in finding information about such programs when they first enrolled their children in the school division (Figure 32). The results indicate that most participants did not experience difficulty obtaining such information. Similarly, Question 20 sought to measure the extent whether Allophone parents believed that they were informed of all instructional programs when they first enrolled their children in the school division, which yielded mixed results (Figure 33). One father said that he was unaware of the Late French Immersion option for his eldest daughter until the researcher mentioned it in the interview, as noted in the following interview excerpt:

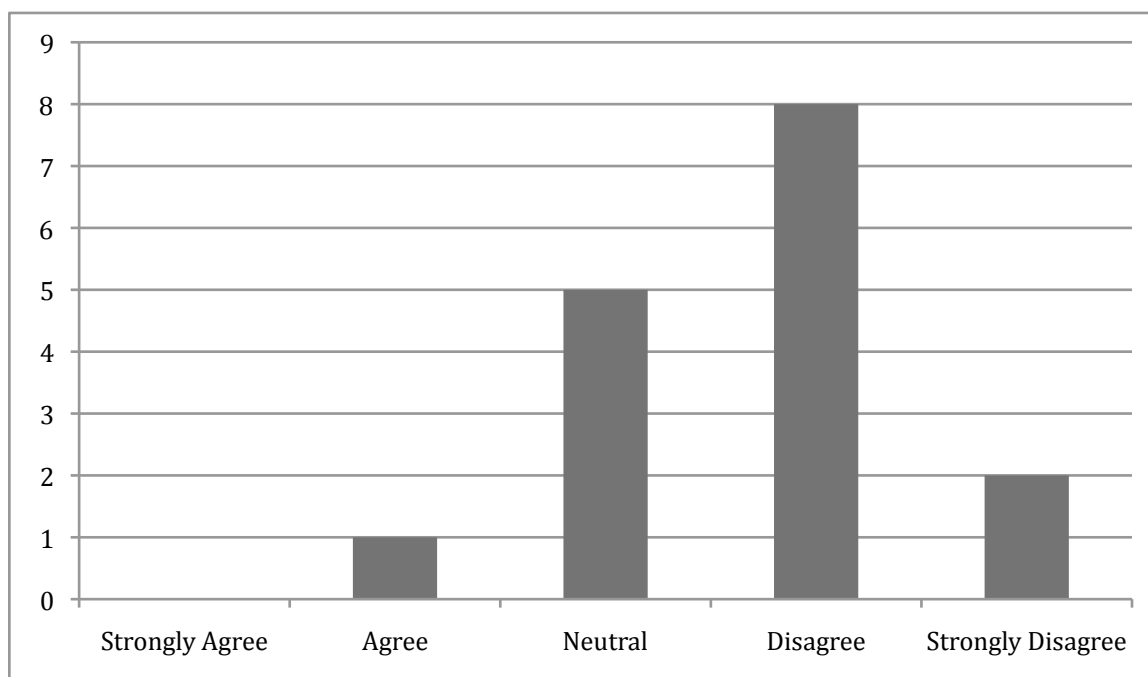


Yeah, if they have more people – as you say now, they accept Grade 7 like that – that’s very nice, and try to make room for everybody. I’m sure many people, they like to learn French, but they say – that’s what I heard before – that they have just Kindergarten. You have to start in Kindergarten or Grade 1. But the good thing now, you told me, you say they have Grade 7. Many people, they don’t know that. – *Badawi, Parent, École Grand Trunk*

Additionally, a second father suggested that newcomer Allophone families might be unaware of French immersion programs due to a language barrier, as noted here:

Well, to try to get more Allophone families, you may want to – especially for the immigrant families – is to have something in their own mother tongue so they can understand what the program is about, why it’s important.  
– *Duncan, Parent, École Grand Trunk*

In summary, most participants stated that it was not difficult to find information about French immersion; however, certain Allophone parents believe they were not informed of such programs, which will be discussed subsequently.



*Figure 32.* I had difficulty finding information about French immersion programs when I first enrolled my child in the school division.

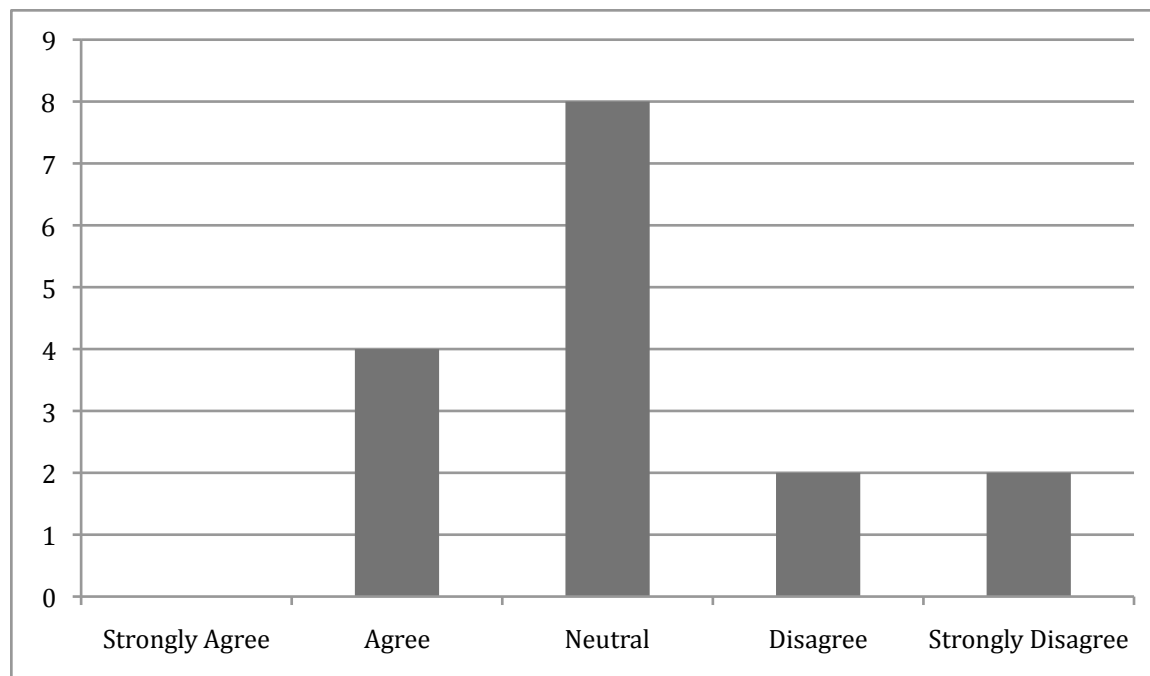


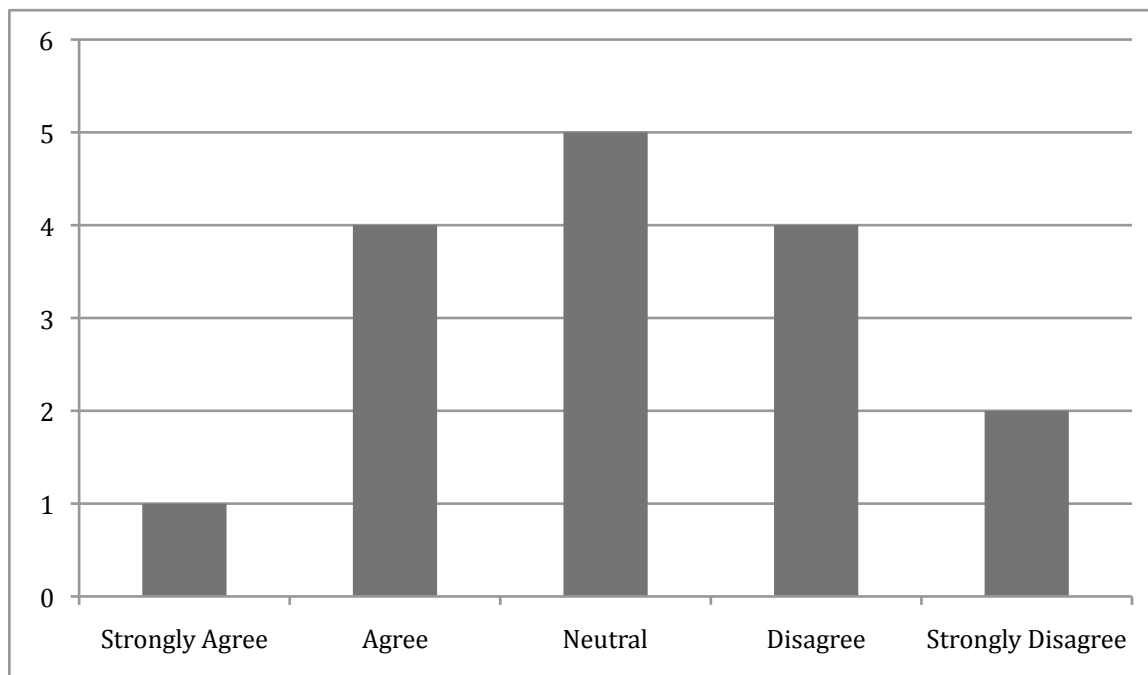
Figure 33. I was informed of all possible programs of study when I first enrolled my child in the school division.

**5.2.5 Gatekeeping.** This subsection examined the extent to which educators influenced the inclusion or exclusion of Allophone families attempting to access French immersion. Question 9 asked parents to indicate whether they were encouraged by school administrators to enrol their children in French immersion (Figure 34). There is significant divergence in the results, which was reflected in the interview data as well. Specifically, one interview participant stated that he felt neither encouraged nor discouraged to enrol his son in French immersion, as per the following excerpt:

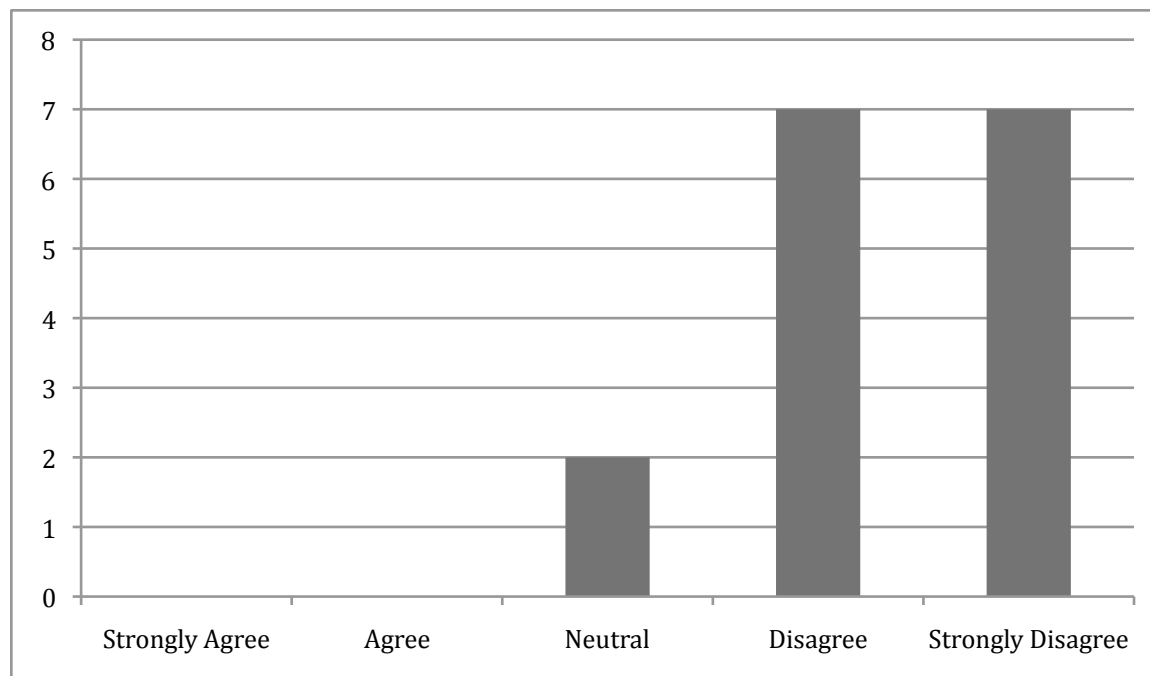
Oh, some of them were concerned, although nobody advised us to skip that step. Some people, they, they ask, 'Ok, English is not his mother tongue,' but nobody was firm in the decision that he cannot go, of course. Some people were supportive. – *Volodymyr, Parent, École Spadina Crescent School*

Thus, the considerable discrepancies in the data denote a range of experiences for Allophone families accessing French immersion programs, which suggests that there is not a consistent practice or policy throughout the school division.

Conversely, Question 12 asked parents to indicate whether administrators discouraged them from enrolling their children in French immersion (Figure 35). The majority of participants rejected this statement entirely. In summary, some participants were encouraged by principals to enrol their children in French immersion and some were not, but no participants stated that they were discouraged in this matter. It is important to note, however, that because the researcher was only permitted to contact Allophone parents with children enrolled in French immersion, families who were discouraged by administrators were likely to be underrepresented in this study.



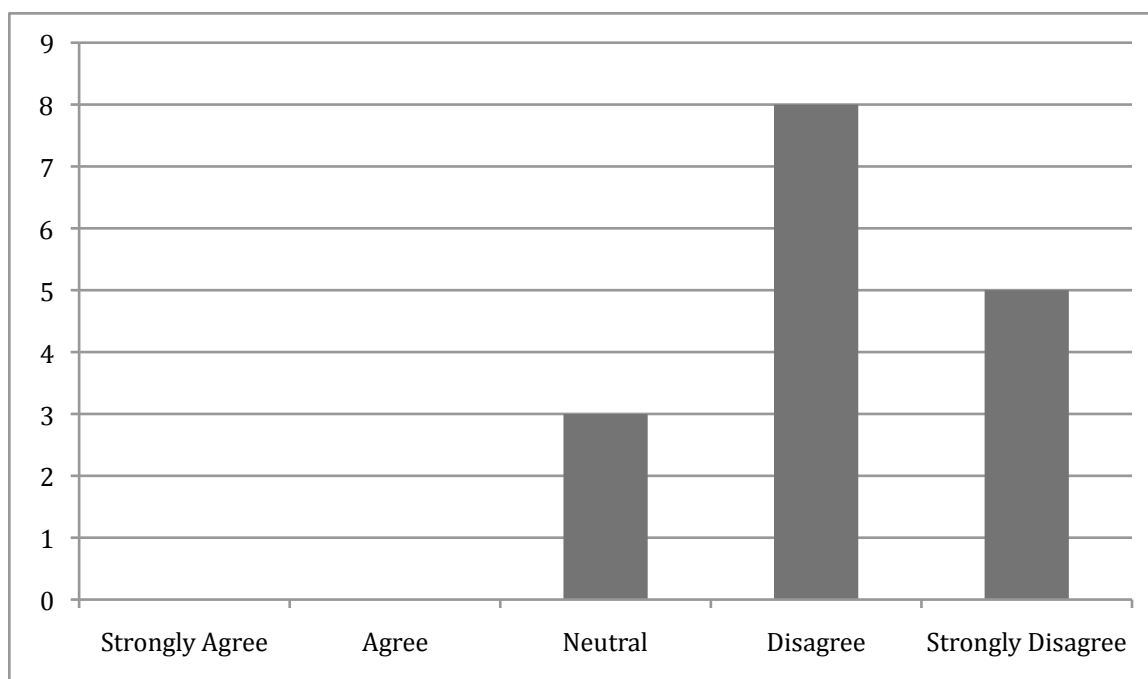
*Figure 34.* I was encouraged by school administrators to enrol my child in French immersion.



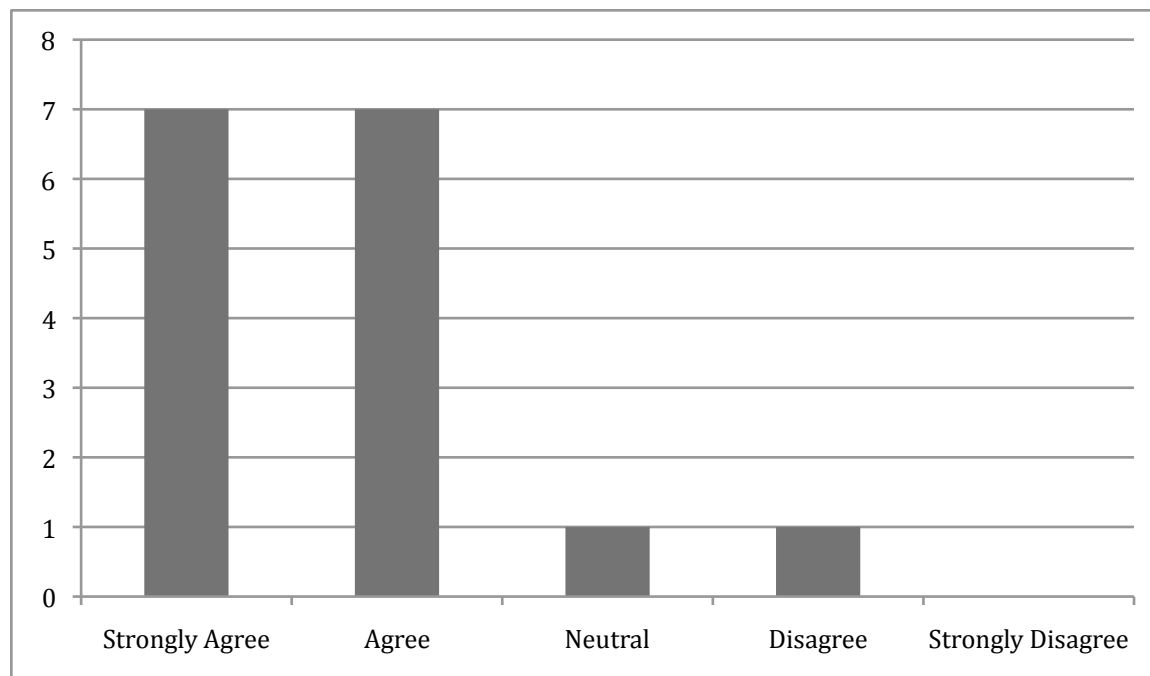
*Figure 35.* I was discouraged by school administrators from enrolling my child in French immersion.

Whereas Question 9 and Question 12 measured the extent to which Allophone parents were encouraged or discouraged from enrolling their children in French immersion programs, additional survey items addressed gatekeeping in more theoretical terms. Specifically, two questions asked participants if educators should be able to decide whether to include or exclude Allophone students from French immersion, or if parents should be able to select the program of study for their children. The results for Question 17 indicate resoundingly that parent participants believe that principals and teachers should not have the authority to determine whether Allophone students are included or excluded from French immersion (Figure 36). Indeed, zero participants responded positively to this notion. Evidently, Allophone parents believed strongly that French immersion enrolment decisions should not be made by teachers or principals.

In contrast to Question 17, Question 18 examined whether Allophone parents believed that they should be able to select the instructional program of their children (Figure 37). The results for this question demonstrate that the majority of Allophone parents believed that they alone should have the right to determine whether or not to enrol their children in French immersion, which is consistent with participants' rejection of Question 17. In summary, the results of the present study pertaining to theoretical understandings of gatekeeping indicate that Allophone parents believed that educators should not have the power to exclude their children from French immersion, and that enrolment decisions should be left entirely to the families.

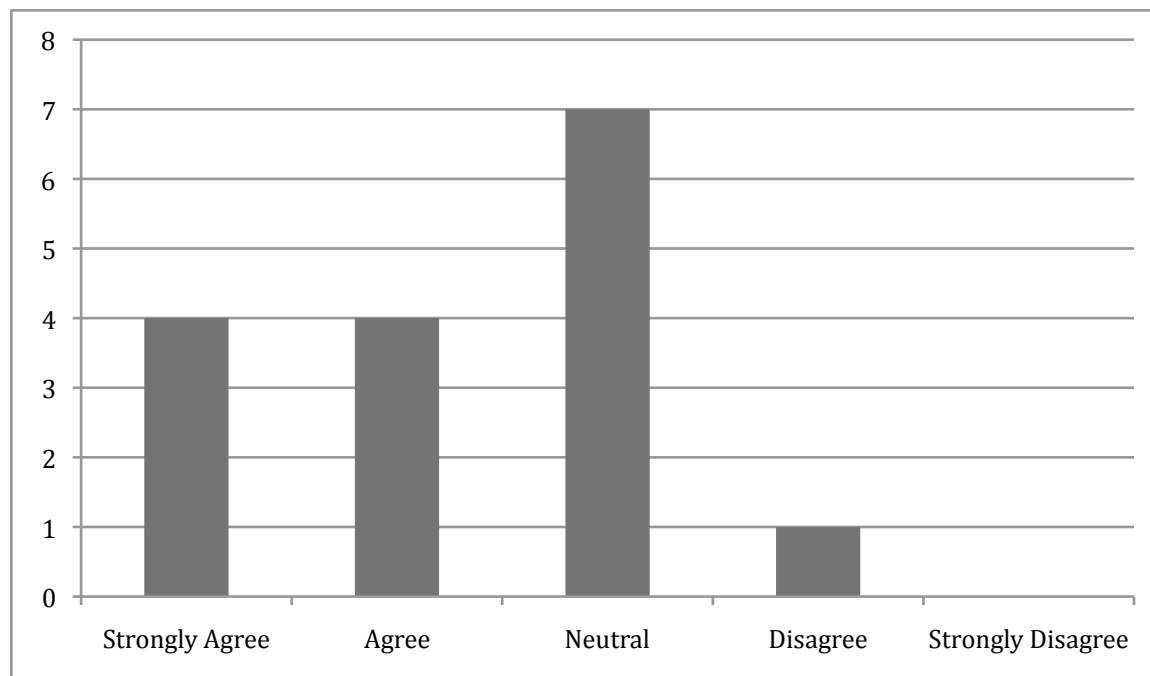


*Figure 36.* I believe that school administrators and teachers should be able to decide whether or not to include Allophone students in French immersion.



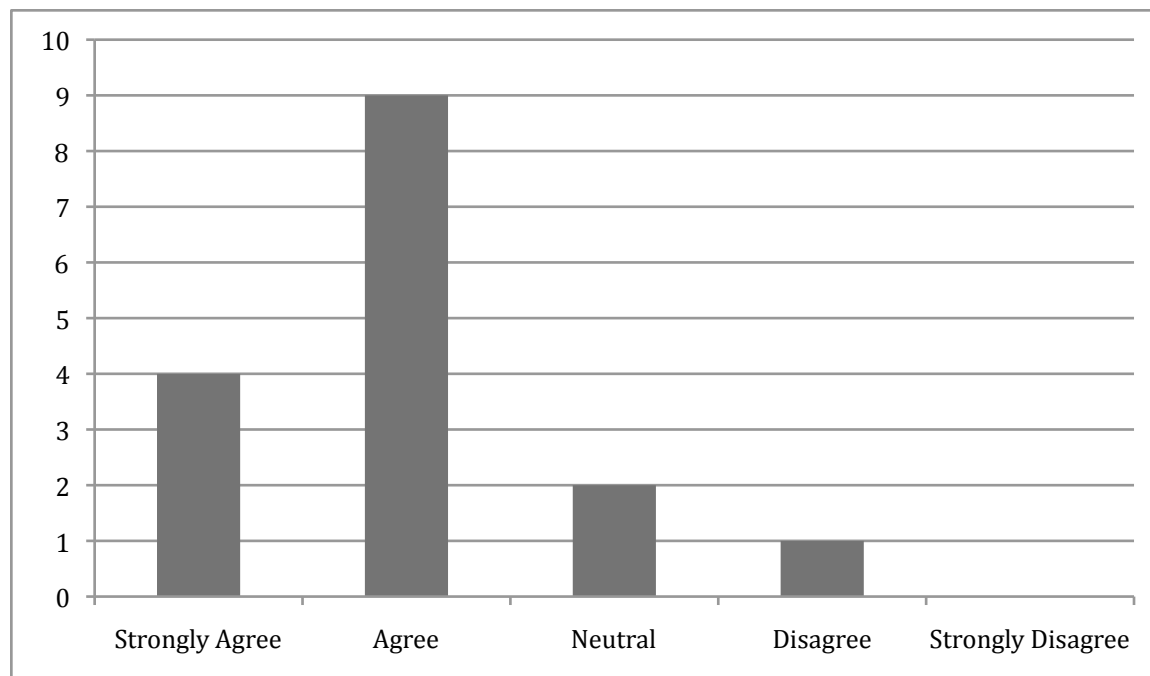
*Figure 37.* I believe that Allophone parents should be able to select the program of study for their children.

**5.2.6 Supports and resources.** The final subsection of the present chapter consists of questions that explore the perceptions of Allophone parents regarding different resources that exist to support students in French immersion programs, both at school and beyond. Question 10 asked parents whether they believed that their children received adequate homework support in French immersion, which generated generally positive results (Figure 38). Moreover, some parents shared in interviews that although they were initially concerned that they would not be able to help with homework because they did not speak French, they ultimately believe they are able to assist with this learning. In summary, the results indicate that most Allophone parents were confident in their ability to support their children with their homework in French immersion.



*Figure 38.* I believe that my child receives adequate homework support in French immersion.

Subsequently, two additional survey items explored different forms of supports and resources that exist for students in French immersion. Question 11 sought to measure the extent to which Allophone parents believed that their children received sufficient language support in French immersion programs (Figure 39). The results for this item were generally positive, as the majority of participants affirmed this statement to some degree. However, there were no comments provided for this item; thus, it is unknown whether Allophone parent survey participants were aware of specific support services offered by the school division, such as Resource support and EAL instruction. Nevertheless, the data suggest that most Allophone parent participants believed that their children received adequate language support in French immersion programs.



*Figure 39.* I believe that my child receives adequate language support in French immersion.

Finally, Question 13 asked Allophone parents to indicate the extent to which they agreed that their children were receiving adequate English instruction in French immersion (Figure 40). The results for this item were quite positive, inasmuch as  $n=11$  participants chose 'Agree,'  $n=3$  selected 'Neutral,' and only  $n=2$  responded with 'Disagree.' Nevertheless, some interview participants stated that they believed that more English instruction was required, as demonstrated in the following excerpts:

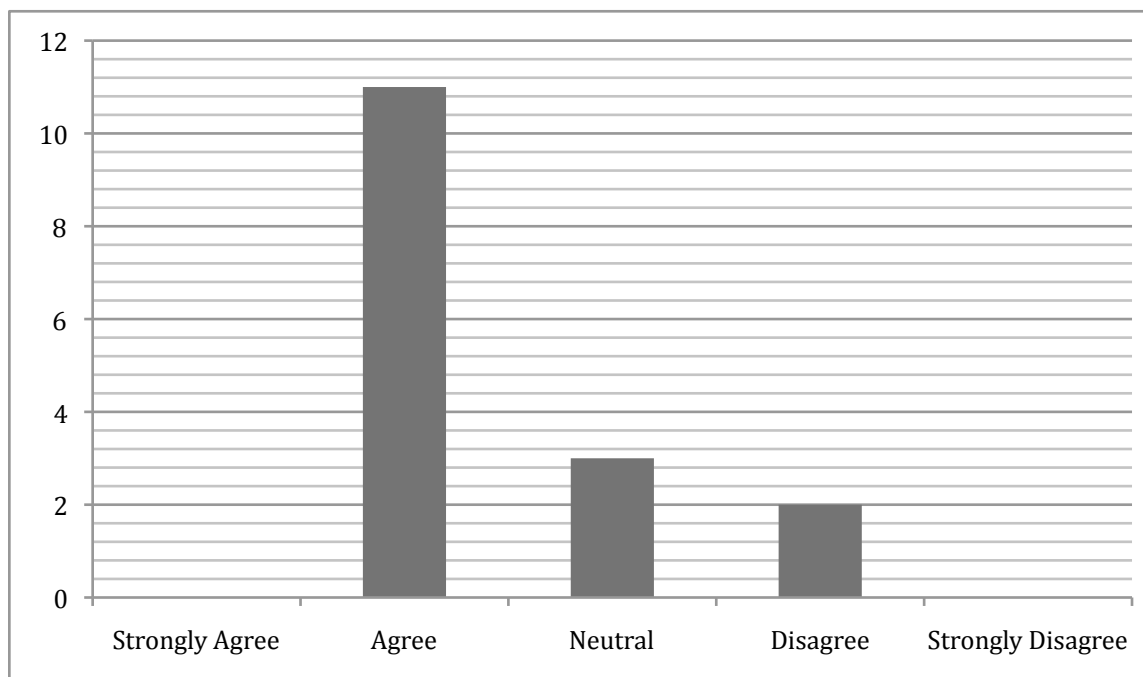
Well, I would like to see him to receive more English, definitely, at least 45 minutes per week, because my wife and me, we noticed when we show him some word, 'What,' 'How,' he understand what it means because he's listening other kids. But he cannot read them. For example, he cannot read this, you know? He probably never encounter English word in some school environment, so that's why we ask him in our books in our apartment, here, at home – I have some books back home – some simple words, 'How,' 'Home,' 'Sister,' 'Dog,' and he said, 'I never saw this word in school,' which is normal.  
 – Volodymyr, Parent, École Spadina Crescent School



Whereas the above comment was in reference to a Grade 2 student who had not received English instruction, a similar view was expressed about a Grade 6 student in the Late French Immersion program. Specifically, a mother shared that after her family had immigrated to Canada from China, her son had received EAL instruction in Grade 5 but lost access to this support after beginning Late French Immersion, as per the following:

So they don't mind if, one hour, or one hour later, for EAL. They don't mind. They are support for this kind of thing. – *Xing, Parent, École Broadway School*

Thus, although the majority of parents asserted that their children were receiving adequate support in the development of their English language skills in French immersion programs, some argued that earlier English instruction was necessary for success. The findings of the present study will be discussed in the following chapter of this thesis.



*Figure 40.* I believe that my child receives adequate English instruction in French immersion.

## **Chapter 6: Discussion**

The purpose of the present study was to examine the diverse perspectives of parents and educators regarding the suitability of French immersion for Allophone learners in Saskatchewan. Whereas the previous two chapters of this report presented the results of the study as they relate to the six central themes that emerged from an analysis of answers to the survey questions, the present chapter discusses and interprets the findings of this study in light of the three research questions that guided this thesis.

First and foremost, this study sought to explore the ideas of different stakeholders concerning the suitability of French immersion for Allophone students in Saskatchewan. Thus, the first section of this chapter will discuss several components of the perceived suitability of French immersion, including beliefs pertaining to the relative importance of learning English and French in Saskatchewan, simultaneous versus sequential language learning, English proficiency as a determinant of the successful learning of French, and a comparison of different FSL programs offered by the school division. The second research question that informed the present study concerned matters of gatekeeping in French immersion. Therefore, this section will provide interpretations of the results related to the inclusion and exclusion of Allophone students in French immersion, the extent to which educators would encourage or discourage Allophone parents from enrolling their children in such programs, and the theoretical beliefs of participants regarding the role that educators and parents should play in enrolment decisions. Finally, the third research question focused on the resources that exist in French immersion programs; thus, this section will include a discussion of the findings related to different forms of support for Allophone learners. The researcher will

summarize the central findings of the present study, analyze the data in the context of previous research, and provide interpretations of the results in each of the three sections.

### **6.1 The Suitability of French Immersion for Allophone Students**

The overarching research question that guided the present study sought to examine the perspectives of educators and parents regarding the suitability of French immersion programs for Allophone students in Saskatchewan. Integral to this discussion is the extent to which different stakeholders believe that it is important for such students to learn English and French in the province. In terms of the importance of learning English, there were similarities between the results for the two groups of participants. Notably, the results demonstrate that virtually all participants considered English the most important language in Saskatchewan and therefore the most critical for Allophone students to learn. Specifically, most participants indicated in their questionnaire responses that English was of primordial importance for Allophone students, and the majority of interviewees emphasized the prevalence of English in everyday life in Saskatchewan. However, the results differ somewhat concerning the perceived importance of English on a global scale; Allophone parents expressed the notion of English as an international language, whereas educators were more likely to localize its importance to Saskatchewan itself. The above distinction seems to reflect the broader and more diverse experiences of Allophone parents with respect to language learning compared to educators, as well as a more globally informed understanding of the fluidity and mobility of languages resulting from the families' experiences with international migration.

In terms of the perceptions of French immersion educators and Allophone parents pertaining to the importance of learning French in Saskatchewan, virtually all interview participants of both stakeholder groups expressed the notion that French language proficiency might provide employment opportunities in the students' future, notably in the federal service and in academia. Furthermore, parents and teachers alike espoused the view that French abilities might prepare learners to travel to French-dominant countries and the province of Québec. However, interview analysis revealed that most Allophone parents also believed that French-English bilingualism was an essential element of Canadian identity and a means of integrating into Canadian society, whereas teachers and principals seldom mentioned this reason for Allophone students to learn French. Thus, although most French immersion educators and Allophone parents agreed that French language proficiency might be beneficial for extrinsic, utilitarian purposes – such as employment opportunity, economic growth, and travel – the parents were more likely to advocate for French language learning for intrinsic purposes, related to Canadian identity. This distinction corroborates the findings of Mady (2013), which demonstrate that newcomer Allophone families are more likely to consider official language bilingualism an important component of national identity than Canadian-born, Anglophone families. Insofar as the majority of French immersion educator participants in the present study speak English as a first language, their perspectives would likely resemble those of the Anglophone families interviewed in Mady (2013). Perhaps the most likely explanation for the divergence of views between populations is that teachers and principals might be more aware of the pervasiveness of English in Saskatchewan, whereas Allophone parents—particularly recent newcomers—might overstate the presence of French in the

province due to national discourses surrounding Canada's two official languages. For instance, certain parent interview participants mentioned first arriving in Québec and Ontario, where they likely received exposure to both English and French and thereby conceptualized Canada as a bilingual country. In summary, most educator and parent participants considered the learning of French to be beneficial for Allophone students for extrinsic purposes related to future economic opportunities; however, the views of the two stakeholder populations differed insofar as Allophone parents also expressed that learning French is intrinsically important for their children, due in part to the idea that official language bilingualism is linked to Canadian identity.

Additionally, the present study explored whether participants believed that the learning of French for Allophone students is beneficial or detrimental for their English language development. Educators and parents indicated, almost unanimously, that learning French was not detrimental for the English learning of Allophone students; rather, the majority of participants from both populations expressed that learning French would support the development of English language abilities for Allophone learners, which has been demonstrated in previous research (Carr, 2009). However, certain teachers and principals suggested that Allophone students who struggle with language learning should consider withdrawing from French immersion in order to focus exclusively on acquiring English. Specifically, educators provided examples of students who have experienced difficulty learning languages in French immersion, such as those with learning disabilities, and some teachers and principals demonstrated knowledge of research that has documented the language learning successes of students with physical or learning disabilities. In summary, most participants believed that the learning of

English and the learning of French were mutually beneficial for Allophone students, but some contended that at-risk students should prioritize learning English over French; evidently, this preference reflects the educators' understanding of the former language being more important than the latter in the sociolinguistic context of Saskatchewan.

In a similar vein, the present study explored participants' perceptions concerning whether students require strong English language abilities to succeed in French immersion. Several participants from both groups rejected the notion that Allophone students' success in French immersion is contingent upon strong English language abilities. Parents in particular contended that prior English proficiency was not required for success in French immersion, inasmuch as certain families had learned some French before studying English. In contrast, some teachers and principals supported the idea of English proficiency determining success for Allophone learners in such programs. Specifically, some educators discussed the notion of English being the language of socialization, both at school and more broadly in Saskatchewan. Thus, although the majority of Allophone parents rejected the idea that strong English skills are necessary for success in French immersion, some educators believe that it is essential to attain some degree of English proficiency prior to learning French.

The present study also examined participants' perceptions regarding whether Allophone students should learn English and French simultaneously or sequentially. Educators were somewhat divided on this issue. Some teachers and principals believed that such students were generally able to learn both languages concurrently, whereas others asserted that this simultaneous language learning was often overwhelming for Allophone learners. In contrast, all Allophone parents were confident in the ability of

their children to learn English and French simultaneously, which is consistent with the findings of Dagenais and Moore (2008). Specifically, Dagenais and Moore (2008) found that Allophone families were confident not only in their children's aptitude learning French and English concurrently in French immersion, but also in their ability to maintain and nurture their heritage cultures and languages. The divergence in views between Allophone parents and French immersion educators likely stems from the differences in language learning experiences between the two populations. For instance, many parents stated that they had previously learned multiple languages concurrently in their countries of origin, and therefore believed that their children would be capable of doing the same in Canada. The language learning experiences of the teachers and principals, conversely, were significantly less diverse; indeed, all educator interview participants except for one spoke either English or French as a first language and thus did not learn the two languages simultaneously. In summary, Allophone parents were much more confident in their children's ability to learn English and French concurrently than the French immersion educators, due in part to the former group's firsthand experiences learning multiple languages simultaneously and the latter population's lack thereof.

The belief that Allophone students must acquire some English skills before learning French was a central theme in the results of the present study. In order to interpret this position, it is important to consider two different ideas that might influence educators. First, teachers and principals might believe that learning English is necessary before learning French, although this position is entirely unsubstantiated by research. Perhaps the reason for this erroneous position is that because most educator participants are Anglophones who learned French as a second language, some believe that this order

is important for Allophone students as well. Alternatively, educators might prefer for Allophone students to learn English before French, not because they view the former as a prerequisite for acquiring the latter, but because they view sequential language learning as a more advantageous approach than simultaneous language learning. The researcher theorizes that, given the frequency with which teachers and principals asserted that English was more important than French and their marked lack of experience learning languages simultaneously, both of the above explanations likely influenced educator participants to some degree, in spite of research demonstrating otherwise (Mady, 2007).

In addition to exploring the perceptions of parents and educators regarding the extent to which English proficiency determined Allophone students' success in French immersion, the present study also examined participants' ideas about different FSL programs. To this end, most teachers and principals indicated that Core French was less favourable for Allophone students than French immersion, suggesting that Core French programs do not provide sufficient instructional time and support for students to develop fluency or strong abilities in the language, and that such programs are implemented inconsistently throughout the division. It is important to note, though, that teachers and principals favoured French immersion over Core French for all learners, irrespective of their first languages. Furthermore, several educators expressed the opinion that Late French Immersion was a particularly prudent choice of program for Allophone students, arguing that this option allowed learners to develop strong English language proficiency in earlier grade levels before beginning to learn French in Grade 6; this recommendation appears consistent with teachers' widespread preference for sequential language learning. Educators also argued that Late French Immersion was advantageous for newcomer



Allophone students who arrive several years into elementary school. Moreover, certain Late French Immersion teachers stated that it was often necessary to use some English to ensure comprehension for Allophone and Anglophone students alike, especially at the beginning of the school year. Arguably, teachers' use of English in the French immersion classroom serves to perpetuate the narrative that it is necessary to develop some level of English proficiency before learning French. Whereas the merits of bilingual instructional strategies have been the subject of much interest in recent French immersion research (Cummins, 2014; Swain & Lapkin, 2013), it is problematic to presume that English is the first language of all learners, particularly in light of the transforming linguistic demographics of students in Canadian schools. Thus, although teachers who use English in the French immersion classroom almost certainly do so with positive intentions, it is important to reflect critically on practices that might have the unintended tacit effect of legitimizing one language to the detriment of others. Indeed, teachers must be encouraged to be cognizant of the increasingly diverse student demographics in French immersion and to pursue pedagogical practices that will empower all learners to view their linguistic repertoires as resources for language learning, rather than obstacles to overcome.

In summary, the overall findings of the present study—both in terms of survey data and interview results—demonstrate overwhelmingly that most educators and parents believe that French immersion is indeed a suitable program for Allophone learners in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. To this end, parents discussed their children's eagerness to learn French, motivation toward developing multilingual competencies, and belief in the importance of official language bilingualism. Moreover, parents were confident in their children's abilities to learn English and French simultaneously, and were thus in favour

of the early French immersion program. Similarly, many teachers and principals asserted that Allophone learners tended to be strong students in French immersion for many of the reasons listed above, such as prior experience learning new languages, substantive support for multilingualism from the families, and remarkable work ethic. However, teachers and principals were divided with respect to whether it was preferable for Allophone learners to study in the early French immersion stream or the Late French Immersion program. The researcher theorizes that this discrepancy is the result of two conflicting ideologies: specifically, educators believe that it is advantageous for students to begin learning a new language at a young age, but also that it is less onerous to acquire new languages sequentially, rather than simultaneously. For instance, several educators espoused the view that French immersion is most suitable for students who have demonstrated a certain level of proficiency in their first languages, asserting that learners who have not attained some fundamental abilities in their home languages often struggle to learn French. For this reason, the extent to which many teachers and principals perceive French immersion as an appropriate program for Allophone learners is contingent upon the students' English language ability, given that French and English are the only two languages such educators can reliably assess. The belief that French immersion is appropriate for learners who have developed some degree of proficiency in their first languages is problematic insofar as teachers are able to measure these abilities for Anglophone learners but not necessarily for Allophones. Subsequent sections of the present chapter will discuss further findings of this study – namely, those pertaining to the additional research questions examining gatekeeping and resources, as well as the extent to which such issues influenced perceptions of the suitability of French immersion.

## 6.2 The Inclusion and Exclusion of Allophone Students

The second research question sought to examine opinions about the gatekeeping roles that different stakeholders should play in determining the inclusion and exclusion of such learners. For instance, the vast majority of teachers and principals responded positively to the questionnaire item asking whether they believed that Allophone students should be included in French immersion programs, and certain survey comments were also affirmative in this regard. Some educators mentioned a recent institutional shift toward the inclusion of Allophone students in French immersion, explaining that learners with diverse home languages were often excluded in the past but that their presence in French immersion was increasingly embraced across the school division. Thus, the majority of educator participants in this study indicated that they support the idea of including Allophone learners in French immersion programs.

Whereas the survey items related to gatekeeping analyzed ideas about inclusion in very broad, hypothetical terms, the interviews delved more deeply into the subject of inclusion and exclusion, eliciting beliefs and reflections from practical experiences. Interview analysis revealed a degree of tension for many educators between the espoused belief that Allophone learners should be included in French immersion and the notion that French immersion may not be truly appropriate for all learners. Specifically, several teachers and school administrators expressed the notion that all students—regardless of first languages—should initially be included in French immersion, but that those who are later deemed to be struggling learners should be removed from such programs. However, the criteria upon which these enrolment decisions should be based were not consistent across participants; examples of such criteria included limited English proficiency,

academic difficulties, and behavioural challenges. Therefore, most educators expressed the view that the division should not adopt a widespread policy or practice as it pertains to the inclusion of Allophone students; rather, such decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis. In summary, most participants were theoretically inclusive of Allophone learners, but a more nuanced analysis of their views revealed that relatively few educators would advocate for the categorical inclusion or exclusion of such students.

Additionally, the present study examined participants' beliefs regarding the gatekeeping roles that educators and parents should play in French immersion programs. Most participants from both populations expressed that Allophone parents should be able to select the program of study for their children, although support for this sentiment was stronger amongst parents. Similarly, both surveys included identical statements asking participants to indicate the extent to which teachers and principals should be able to decide whether to include Allophone students in French immersion. Most Allophone parents were strongly opposed to the idea that educators should influence such decisions; specifically, all parents argued that enrolment decisions should be made exclusively by the families in question. In contrast, teachers and principals espoused tremendously different views pertaining to the gatekeeping role of French immersion educators, ranging from supporting the family's choice unequivocally, through serving as advisors for parents, to overruling the decision entirely in order to exclude certain Allophone students. The desire on the part of many educators to be able to influence the inclusion or exclusion of Allophone students appears to be consistent with the findings discussed previously in this section; specifically, such teachers and principals are apprehensive about establishing a practice that would ensure the unconditional inclusion of all

Allophone learners, and therefore believe they should contribute to individual enrolment decisions. Evidently, this disagreement between educators and parents is indicative not only of tensions regarding the gatekeeping of French immersion, but also signifies conflicting views regarding the suitability of such programs for Allophone learners.

The present study also explored gatekeeping in French immersion by asking teachers and principals whether they would discourage Allophone families from enrolling their children in the program. Whereas the vast majority of participants answered in the negative for this survey item, some educators stated that they did not believe they had the authority to encourage or discourage parents in this matter and therefore refrained from discouraging families for fear of being reprimanded by school administrators. Thus, there is a distinction to be made between educators who truly believe that French immersion is suitable for Allophone students versus teachers and principals who oppose this view but feel stifled from influencing enrolment decisions. Specifically, some educator interview participants mentioned that they had recommended that certain Allophone parents withdraw their children from French immersion when they were experiencing significant academic difficulty and when they demonstrated limited English language proficiency. In light of the controversy surrounding this practice, teachers and principals likely underreport the frequency with which they discourage families from enrolling or continuing in French immersion. Moreover, although most parent participants in this study indicated that teachers did not discourage their participation in French immersion, these findings do not preclude the possibility of certain educators dissuading other Allophone families from enrolling; evidently, such families would be underrepresented and ineligible to participate if they were indeed excluded from French immersion.

Similarly, the researcher investigated the extent to which Allophone parents believed they were encouraged or discouraged from enrolling their children in French immersion by principals or other school board officials. Whereas no parent participants suggested that principals discouraged them from enrolling their children in French immersion, few believed that they were encouraged by administrators to select this program. The vast discrepancies amongst parent participants' experiences suggests that there is no consistent practice or policy that is followed throughout the school division with regards to the inclusion of Allophone students in French immersion; rather, the gatekeeping function of principals varies considerably from one school to the next. The absence of a sound, evidence-based policy pertaining to Allophone students in French immersion, both within the school division and within the Ministry of Education, inevitably leads to inconsistent and erratic practices throughout the province, based not on research, but on the variable discretion of individual administrators. Therefore, the researcher strongly recommends the development and implementation of a policy to ensure equitable access to French immersion for Allophone learners and prevent the arbitrary practices endemic in Saskatchewan today.

### **6.3 The Supports and Resources for Allophone Students**

The final subsection of this chapter will discuss supports for the language learning of Allophone students in French immersion, both at home and at school. First, the present study examined whether educators and parents believed that Allophone students were learning English and French effectively in French immersion. Most participants from both populations believed that Allophone students were learning French effectively, though the affirmation was stronger amongst parents than educators. Furthermore, several

educator interview participants expressed that their Allophone students were highly motivated to learn French because their families believed strongly in the benefits of multilingualism. Similarly, some teachers stated in their interviews that Allophone students often made more of an effort to speak French at school than their Anglophone classmates, suggesting that this was partly because the former group was less likely to rely upon English for to scaffold their learning. Additionally, many educator participants and virtually all parents expressed that Allophone students had advantages learning French compared to Anglophone students by virtue of having learned additional languages prior to beginning French immersion—including, but not limited to, English—whereas this was not necessarily true for Anglophone students. Moreover, some parents explained that their children spoke languages that enabled cross-linguistic transfer that would not be possible between English and French. For instance, one parent provided a range of vocabulary words shared between French and Serbian; another parent discussed the similarities between French and Spanish in terms of tense-aspect acquisition, a point also noted in Izquierdo and Collins (2008). In summary, the results were overwhelmingly affirmative with respect to French learning, particularly amongst parents. Such findings pertaining to the language learning advantages of Allophone students are consistent with previous research conducted in French immersion programs (Mady, 2015).

Whereas Allophone parents identified several advantages for their children compared to Anglophone students learning French, some teachers and principals also noted disadvantages for such learners. The most common disadvantage that educators discussed was that some French immersion teachers used English in the classroom to ensure comprehension in their French instruction; thus, the argument is that using the

English language as a resource serves Anglophone students, but not necessarily Allophone learners. Moreover, some educators suggested that many Allophone parents were unable to assist their children with their French learning since they did not speak the language themselves, whereas some Anglophone parents are able to support this learning because they have likely had some prior French exposure. However, the argument that Anglophone families have previously encountered French more than Allophone families is not only unsubstantiated by research, but also particularly dubious in Saskatchewan, where only five percent of the province's population speaks French (Statistics Canada, 2014). Furthermore, to imply that students whose parents demonstrate some familiarity with French are best suited for French immersion is to misunderstand the purpose of such programs entirely. The intent for French immersion and indeed all FSL programs has never been to support the French practices of families who already demonstrate ability in the language; rather, such programs exist to teach and promote the French language beyond the French Canadian population, not only for the cognitive and social benefits provided by multilingualism, but also for reasons of national unity (Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Kjolseth, 1977; Lapkin, 1983; Swain & Lapkin, 2005; Hayday, 2015).

In terms of English language learning, most educators and parents believe that Allophone students are acquiring sufficient English skills in French immersion, due to both formal instruction and exposure beyond the classroom. Furthermore, many parents expressed that they were confident in their children's ability to develop strong English proficiency, both because of formal instruction and because the pervasiveness of English in Saskatchewan enabled them to foster language abilities beyond the classroom. Several educators rightfully pointed out, though, that although the prevalence of English outside



of school certainly assists with children's development of oral fluency, the extent to which this facilitates their acquisition of literacy skills is negligible. Indeed, teachers and principals were significantly divided as to whether Allophone learners received adequate English language instruction in French immersion. To this end, many educators argued fervently that Allophone students should be able to access EAL instruction prior to Grade 3, the current starting point for English teaching in French immersion programs.

Similarly, teachers in the Late French Immersion program contend that EAL should be offered for Allophone students in Grade 6, some of whom benefited from this support before enrolling in the program. Several teachers and principals cited the lack of EAL support in French immersion as a major reason that some Allophone families ultimately decide not to enrol their children in such programs. In summary, nearly all parent participants and many educators believe that Allophone students receive adequate English instruction in French immersion, whereas several teachers and principals believe that earlier support is needed. The scarce provision of EAL support in French immersion reflects the erroneous assumptions that learners have received prior English instruction or have been exposed sufficiently to the language beyond school, premises that must be challenged in light of the increasing linguistic and ethnic diversity in such programs.

In addition to analyzing the perspectives of French immersion educators and parents with respect to the language learning of Allophone students and the urgency of EAL support for such learners, the present study also examined the extent to which educators and parents believe that Allophone students receive sufficient homework support in French immersion. The results between populations were somewhat similar insofar as many participants remained neutral, but were notably more positive for parents

than for teachers and principals. This distinction indicates that Allophone parents are generally very confident in their ability to assist their children with homework. Indeed, although some parents expressed in interviews that they were initially apprehensive about French immersion because they feared that they would be unable to support French learning at home, many were reassured by their children's teachers that French proficiency was not required for family members. Furthermore, some parents stated that they were fully capable of assisting with French learning and that they helped their children build connections between different languages in their linguistic repertoires. As for the educators, many teachers and principals espoused the view that Allophone parents were able to provide effective support for their children at home, and some even argued that such families were often more invested in their children's French learning and academic progress than Anglophone families. Nevertheless, certain educators discussed communication difficulties resulting from language barriers with Allophone parents, which might influence their perceptions about the abilities of such parents to support their children's learning. Although it is certainly true that some parents struggle to communicate in English, it is both unfounded and discriminatory to extend this generalization to all Allophone families. Indeed, many such parents demonstrate strong English proficiency, and the extent to which the English abilities of parents is relevant for supporting their children's French learning is highly suspect in the first place.

Finally, the most important finding of the present study pertaining to supports for language learning in French immersion programs concerns Resource instruction. Virtually all educator interview participants expressed the belief that students in French immersion programs do not receive sufficient Resource support; specifically, teachers

and principals noted that only three of seven French immersion elementary schools in the division had full-time French immersion Resource teachers, whereas all dual-stream schools provided full-time English Resource instructors. This constraint places strict parameters around the support learners receive in French immersion. For instance, most classroom teachers insisted that they had several students who required more intensive support in their language learning, and all Resource teachers lamented not being able to address the needs of every student due to the insufficient time allocated for this critical resource. It is important to note that Resource instruction is not offered exclusively for Allophone students, but rather benefits all learners, irrespective of first languages. Thus, the researcher strongly advocates for full-time French immersion Resource teachers in every school offering such programs. Educators have emphatically demonstrated the critical need for further support, and the lack of Resource instruction in French immersion serves to further perpetuate the elitist notion that such programs are only appropriate for strong and gifted learners. If indeed French immersion is suitable for everyone, it is high time for school boards to provide the necessary support for all learners to succeed. The single most important message the researcher hopes to convey with the present study is that although most educators and parents consider French immersion a suitable program for Allophone students, greater supports and resources are required from the school division in order to ensure the success of such learners. The concluding chapter of this thesis will discuss the contributions and limitations of the present study, as well as provide recommendations and directions for future research.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

The present study employed a concurrent mixed-methods research design, consisting of surveys and semi-structured interviews, in order to explore the perspectives of educators and parents concerning the suitability of French immersion programs for Allophone students in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. This research, as discussed in previous chapters, generated several important results about participants' perceptions of French immersion for Allophone learners, including numerous discrepancies between the two stakeholder populations regarding the following six themes: first, educators and parents believed that it was important to learn English and French in Saskatchewan; second, the researcher examined diverse discourses of participants with respect to the role of English in French immersion and whether success in such programs was contingent upon strong English language proficiency; third, various areas of Allophone language learning were analyzed, including the complex beliefs of educators and parents regarding advantages and disadvantages of Allophone students compared to Anglophone learners in French immersion; fourth, the present study explored perceptions of the suitability of early French immersion for Allophone learners, as opposed to alternative FSL programs offered by the school division, such as Late French Immersion and Core French; fifth, the researcher examined the domain of gatekeeping, such as Allophone families' experiences accessing French immersion and educators' beliefs about their role in enrolment decisions; sixth, ideas about supports and resources for Allophone learners in French immersion programs were analyzed. The final chapter of this thesis will discuss the limitations of the study, present the contributions of this research, and recommend avenues for future exploration.

## 7.1 Limitations

Whereas the present study generated interesting and significant results concerning the perspectives of different stakeholders in terms of the suitability of French immersion for Allophone learners, it is important to consider certain limitations of the research in order to accurately interpret the findings. Notably, the limited number of participants constitutes a significant limitation of this thesis. Specifically, the number of survey participants is quite small compared to previous questionnaire-based research, such as in Lapkin, Macfarlane, and Vandergrift (2006). Thus, the extent to which the quantitative results of this study can be generalized and extrapolated across different contexts is limited. The restricted number of parent interview participants presents a limitation for the study as well, and this sample is by no means representative of all Allophone families with children enrolled in French immersion throughout the school division. Furthermore, the small number of Allophone parents precluded the researcher from drawing conclusions specifically for newcomer students or for Canadian-born learners.

Additionally, the methods employed to recruit Allophone parents to participate in this research generated a number of limitations. First and foremost, it is possible that prospective parent participants were deterred from contributing to this research due to real or perceived language barriers. Indeed, that the consent form and survey for Allophone parents were created exclusively in English likely prevented some families from participating. In the same vein, the linguistic repertoire of the researcher meant that interviews could only be conducted in English or French, which might have dissuaded certain Allophone parents from agreeing to be interviewed. Similarly, parents might have declined to participate in the study since the researcher is employed as a French

immersion teacher in the school division. Such circumstances might have represented an inequitable power dynamic between the researcher and the parents, which may have discouraged parents from sharing negative experiences or from participating altogether. Finally, the most important limitation regarding participant recruitment was that the administrator responsible for research ethics for the school division granted permission for the researcher to contact parents whose children were enrolled in French immersion, but not those whose children were registered in other programs. Evidently, the above constraint prevented the researcher from documenting the experiences of Allophone families who might have been removed from French immersion or uninformed about FSL programs, because these parents were precluded from participating in the first place. Therefore, although certain teachers and principals admitted to counselling Allophone parents to remove their children from French immersion, the present study cannot make definitive claims about the frequency with which such exclusionary practices occur.

## **7.2 Contributions**

Certain limitations notwithstanding, the present study nevertheless makes several important contributions to the body of empirical research concerning Allophone students in FSL programs in Canada. First, the number of educators who contributed to this research constitutes a strong representation of the population in question. Specifically, the majority of French immersion elementary school teachers and principals in the school division participated in both the survey and interviews, which lends strength and credibility to the findings of this research. Moreover, this study was conducted in the province of Saskatchewan, a context seldom explored by researchers interested in the French language education of Allophone learners, particularly with respect to diverse

stakeholders' perspectives. Mady and Turnbull (2012, p. 134) note that "the few studies that exist have almost all been completed in Ontario or in larger urban centers where many immigrants live. Additional research is required in many areas of Canada." Indeed, the present researcher is not aware of a single previous study that has documented the experiences of Allophone families in FSL programs in Saskatchewan or the beliefs of educators and parents regarding the suitability of French immersion for such learners throughout the province, which is problematic in light of the rapid growth in immigration to the province and the increasingly diverse language demographics resulting from this migration. The urgency for such research, both in Saskatchewan and throughout the country, is especially critical at present, given the Government of Canada's commitment to resettle several thousand Syrian refugees nationwide (Government of Canada, 2017).

In addition to the contributions discussed previously with regard to empirical research, the present study also advances several important recommendations for the school division and for the Government of Saskatchewan. First and foremost, this thesis demonstrates resoundingly that educators and Allophone parents alike believe that greater support is required in French immersion programs in terms of Resource instruction. Thus, the researcher strongly recommends that the school board allocate a full-time French immersion Resource teacher in every school with such programs. Full-time Resource instruction is currently offered in English instructional streams throughout the school division, and it is critically important that French immersion programs provide equitable support in order to ensure the success of all learners, irrespective of home languages. Furthermore, several educators and some parents advocated for Allophone students to be able to access EAL instruction prior to Grade 3, as well as throughout the Late French

immersion program. Stakeholders in the school division must discuss the suitability of providing EAL support for French immersion learners, regardless of whether the students receive English Language Arts instruction. Finally, it is critically important that the school division and the Government of Saskatchewan create and implement policies and practices to guarantee equitable access to French immersion and other FSL programs for Allophone learners throughout the province.

### **7.3 Future Research**

The present study generated several important findings and recommendations with respect to French immersion for Allophone students in Saskatchewan, which have implications for empirical research and educational policy. Nevertheless, further research is required in a variety of domains related to Allophone learners in French immersion. In terms of the perspectives of teachers and principals regarding the suitability of FSL for Allophone students, researchers must investigate whether educators believe that some instructional programs are more appropriate for such learners than others. Late French Immersion in particular is a relatively new program in Saskatchewan and elsewhere in Canada, and educators' perspectives on the suitability of this program for Allophone learners and the achievement of such students remain largely unexamined. Similarly, although some studies have explored the gatekeeping function of French immersion principals and Kindergarten teachers, this topic requires greater attention as it pertains to educators in Late French Immersion. Additionally, given that the present study focused exclusively on the suitability of French immersion for Allophone elementary school students, researchers might consider exploring the perspectives of teachers, principals, and parents at the secondary level. Moreover, further research analyzing policy



implementation in FSL programs is needed, including the effects of different policies and practices on Allophone learners' access to French immersion (Mady & Turnbull, 2012). Finally, studies comparing the effectiveness of FSL policies of different provinces and territories and the extent to which such policies contribute to inclusion are required.

Researchers must also examine the inclusion and exclusion of different student populations in French immersion. For instance, the researcher is not aware of the existence of any studies documenting the experiences of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis families accessing French immersion, which illustrates a critical shortcoming of research concerning inclusive language education. Furthermore, the arrival of thousands of Syrian refugee students across different Canadian provinces and territories, as discussed above, necessitates research examining FSL instruction specifically for such learners, both in terms of language learning achievement and access. The researcher recommends that scholars analyze French immersion through the lens of LangCrit, or Critical Language and Race Theory (Crump, 2014), a particularly important theoretical approach in light of the increasingly diverse student population in Canadian schools. Specifically, the extent to which students of certain minority groups are underrepresented in French immersion programs might be the result of policies and perspectives that privilege certain ethnic and linguistic demographics to the detriment of certain others, which warrants closer attention from anti-racist scholars. Indeed, the researcher hopes that the present study might serve as inspiration for educators, academics, and policy developers to explore different elements of FSL instruction with respect to Allophone learners in order to generate greater understanding and practices to benefit such students in French immersion, both in Saskatchewan and beyond.

## References

- Bérubé, D., & Marinova-Todd, S. H. (2012). The development of language and reading skills in the second and third languages of multilingual children in French Immersion. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 9(3), 272-293.
- Bild, E. R., & Swain, M. (1989). Minority language students in a French immersion programme: Their French proficiency. *Journal of Multilingual & Multicultural Development*, 10(3), 255-274.
- Canada Privy Council Office. (2003). *The next act: New momentum for Canada's linguistic duality*. Available: [http://www.cpfnb.com/articles/ActionPlan\\_3.pdf](http://www.cpfnb.com/articles/ActionPlan_3.pdf)
- Carr, W. (2007). Teaching core French in British Columbia: Teachers' perspectives. *Vancouver, BC: British Columbia Association of Teachers of Modern Languages*.
- Carr, W. (2009). Intensive French in British Columbia: Student and parent perspectives and English as additional language (EAL) student performance. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 65(5), 787-815.
- Carr, W. (2013). Learning French in British Columbia: English as additional language learner and parent perspectives. *Minority populations in second language education*, 22-37.
- Conseil des écoles francsaskoises (2014). Retrieved from <http://ecolefrancophone.com/fr/>
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.

- Crump, A. (2014). Introducing LangCrit: Critical language and race theory. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 11(3), 207-224.
- Cummins, J. (2014). Rethinking pedagogical assumptions in Canadian French immersion programs. *Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education*, 2(1), 3-22.
- Dagenais, D., & Berron, C. (2001). Promoting multilingualism through French immersion and language maintenance in three immigrant families. *Language Culture and Curriculum*, 14(2), 142-155.
- Dagenais, D., & Jacquet, M. (2000). Valorisation du multilinguisme et de l'éducation bilingue dans des familles immigrantes. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 1(4), 389-404.
- Dagenais, D., & Moore, D. (2008). Représentations des littératies plurilingues, de l'immersion en français et des dynamiques identitaires chez des parents chinois. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 65(1), 11-31.
- Day, E. M., & Shapson, S. M. (2001). Integrating formal and functional approaches to language teaching in French immersion: An experimental study. *Language Learning*, 51(s1), 47-80.
- D'Almeida, E. (2006). French Education in Saskatchewan. Retrieved from [http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/french\\_education\\_in\\_saskatchewan.html](http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/french_education_in_saskatchewan.html)

Department of Canadian Heritage. (2008). *Roadmap for Canada's linguistic duality*

*2008-2013: Acting for the future*. Available: <http://www.pch.gc.ca/slo-ols/pubs/08-13-LDL/index-eng.cfm>

Galiev, A. (2013). *Official bilingualism and immigrants: Perceptions, experiences and practices* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta.

Genesee, F. (2007). French immersion and at-risk students: A review of research evidence. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 63(5), 655-687.

Genesee, F., & Lindholm-Leary, K. (2013). Two case studies of content-based language education. *Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education*, 1(1), 3-33.

Government of Saskatchewan. (2011). Saskatchewan Language. Retrieved from <http://www.stats.gov.sk.ca/stats/pop/2011Language.pdf>

Government of Saskatchewan. (2014). Saskatchewan Statistical Immigration Report 2012 to 2014. Retrieved from <http://publications.gov.sk.ca/documents/310/93353-2014%20Immigration%20Statistical%20Report%20%20July%2020%202016.pdf>

Government of Canada. (2017). #WelcomeRefugees: Canada resettled Syrian refugees. Retrieved from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/index.asp>

Hayday, M. (2015). *So they want us to learn French: Promoting and opposing bilingualism in English-speaking Canada*. UBC Press.

- Herdina, P., & Jessner, U. (2002). *A dynamic model of multilingualism: Perspectives of change in psycholinguistics* (Vol. 121). Multilingual Matters.
- Howe, K. R. (1988). Against the quantitative-qualitative incompatibility thesis or dogmas die hard. *Educational researcher*, 17(8), 10-16.
- Izquierdo, J., & Collins, L. (2008). The facilitative role of L1 influence in tense–aspect marking: A comparison of hispanophone and anglophone learners of French. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92(3), 350-368.
- Jessner, U. (2008). A DST model of multilingualism and the role of metalinguistic awareness. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92(2), 270-283.
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational researcher*, 33(7), 14-26.
- Johnson, R. K., & Swain, M. (1997). *Immersion education: International perspectives*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Kjolseth, R. (1977). Bilingual Education: For What and for Whom?.
- Lambert, W. E., & Tucker, G. R. (1972). Bilingual education of children: The St. Lambert experiment.
- Lapkin, S. (1983). *French Immersion: The Trial Balloon That Flew. Language and Literacy Series*. OISE Press, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V6, Canada.

- Lapkin, S., MacFarlane, A., & Vandergrift, L. (2006). Teaching French in Canada: FSL teachers' perspectives. *Ottawa, ON: Canadian Teachers' Federation.*
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How Languages are Learned 4th edition.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Lyster, R. (2008). Evolving perspectives on learning French as a second language through immersion. *Studies in French applied linguistics*, 21, 1.
- Mady, C. J. (2003). Motivation to study and investment in studying core French in secondary school: Comparing English as a second language and Canadian-born students. *Unpublished manuscript, OISE/University of Toronto, Toronto.*
- Mady, C. (2007). The suitability of core French for recently arrived adolescent immigrants to Canada. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics (CJAL)/Revue canadienne de linguistique appliquée (RCLA)*, 10(2), 177-196.
- Mady, C. (2010). Motivation to study core French: Comparing recent immigrants and Canadian-born secondary school students. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 33(3), 564-587.
- Mady, C. (2011). Moving toward inclusive French as a second official language in Canada. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. doi: 10.1080/13603116.2011.580463
- Mady, C. (2013). Adding languages adding benefits: Immigrant students' attitudes toward and performance in FSOL programs in Canada. *Minority populations in second language education: Broadening the lens from Canada*, 3-21.

- Mady, C. (2014). Immigrants outperform Canadian-born groups in French immersion: examining factors that influence their achievement. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, (ahead-of-print), 1-14.
- Mady, C. (2015). Examining immigrants' English and French proficiency in French immersion. *Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education*, 3(2), 268-284.
- Mady, C., & Arnett, K. (2016). French as a second language teacher candidates' conceptions of allophone students and students with learning difficulties. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics/Revue canadienne de linguistique appliquée*, 18(2), 78-95.
- Mady, C., & Black, G. (2012). Access to French as second official language programs in English-dominant Canada. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 57(4), 498-501.
- Mady, C., & Turnbull, M. (2010). Learning French as a second official language: Reserved for Anglophones?. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*.
- Mady, C., & Turnbull, M. (2012). Official language bilingualism for allophones in Canada: Exploring future research. *TESL Canada Journal*, 29(2), 131.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (Vol. 41). Sage publications.

Norton, B. (2000). Investment, acculturation, and language loss. In S. McKay & S. L. C.

Wong (Eds.), *English language learners in the United States: A resource for teachers* (pp. 443-461). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Official Languages Act. (1985). Retrieved from the Justice Laws website: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/o-3.01/page-1.html#h-1>

Reeves, M. (2006). French Immersion Education. Retrieved from [http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/french\\_immersion\\_education.html](http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/french_immersion_education.html)

Roy, S. (2008). French immersion studies: From second-language acquisition (SLA) to social issues. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 54(4).

Roy, S. (2010). Not truly, not entirely... Pas comme les Francophones. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, 33(3), 541-563.

Roy, S. (2015). Discours et idéologies en immersion française. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics/Revue canadienne de linguistique appliquée*, 18(2), 125-143.

Roy, S., & Galiev, A. (2014). Why do immigrants want to learn French? *Language Portal of Canada*. Retrieved from the Government of Canada website: <https://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/collaborateurs-contributors/articles/immigrant-frnc-eng.html>

Saskatchewan School Boards Association. (2017). School Divisions. Retrieved from <https://saskschoolboards.ca/school-divisions/>



Saskatoon Public Schools. (2017). Nêhiyâwiwin Cree Language and Culture Program.

Retrieved from <https://www.spsd.sk.ca/school/confederationpark/Programs>

Services/cree/ Pages/default.aspx

Statistics Canada. (2014). *Linguistic Characteristics of Canadians*. Retrieved from the

Statistics Canada website: [http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-](http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-314-x/98-314-x2011001-eng.cfm)

[sa/98-314-x/98-314-x2011001-eng.cfm](http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-314-x/98-314-x2011001-eng.cfm)

Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (2005). The evolving sociopolitical context of immersion

education in Canada: Some implications for program development. *International*

*Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 15(2), 169-186.

Sterzuk, A. (2008). Whose English counts? Indigenous English in Saskatchewan schools.

*McGill Journal of Education/Revue des sciences de l'éducation de McGill*, 43(1),

9-19.

Sterzuk, A. (2011). *The struggle for legitimacy: Indigenized Englishes in settler schools*

(Vol. 12). Multilingual Matters.

Taaffe, R., Maguire, M., & Pringle, I. (1996). The impact of social contexts and

educational policy/practice on biliteracy development: Ethnolinguistic minority

children in English primary schools in Ottawa and Montreal. *Journal of the*

*CAAL*, 18(2), 85-101.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). Calls to Action. Retrieved from

[http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls\\_to\\_Act](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Act)

[ion\\_English2.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Act)

**Appendix A****Educator Consent Form**

**Department of Integrated Studies in Education**  
3700 McTavish Street, Montreal, QC H3A 1Y2

**Consent Form for Teachers and Administrators to Participate in MA Thesis Study:  
French Immersion for Allophone Students in Saskatchewan: Examining Diverse Perspectives**

My name is Stephen Davis and I am a teacher for Saskatoon Public Schools, currently studying in the Master of Arts in Second Language Education program at McGill University. I will be conducting a study on students whose first language is not English (Allophones) in French immersion. I hope to research the suitability of these programs for Allophones by learning about your teaching experiences.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study, which involves two stages. The first stage is a survey including twenty questions, which will be emailed to you and will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The surveys will be given numerical codes so that only my supervisors and I will be able to identify participants. Survey data will be kept in a locked file cabinet that only my supervisors and I can access. The second stage of the study is an interview, which will be recorded digitally and transcribed into my password-protected computer. The interview will last no longer than 60 minutes and will be held in your school at a time that is convenient for you. The audio recording of the interview will not be disseminated. The results of this study will be used in my thesis, publications, and presentations. Publications will not include your name or the name of your school.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please place a checkmark in the box or boxes below to indicate whether you would like to participate in the survey, the interview, or both. Then, please sign your name and return the consent form in the stamped, pre-addressed envelope provided. Please understand that even if you agree to participate now, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Moreover, you may refrain from answering any question without consequences. If you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager at (514) 398-6831 or [lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca](mailto:lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca). Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Student Researcher: Stephen Davis  
Email: [stephen.davis4@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:stephen.davis4@mail.mcgill.ca)  
Phone: (306) 290-9548

Supervisors: Dr. Mela Sarkar & Dr. Susan Ballinger  
Email: [mela.sarkar@mcgill.ca](mailto:mela.sarkar@mcgill.ca) [susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca](mailto:susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca)  
Phone: (514) 398-4527 (514) 398-4527

I agree to participate in the survey: Yes ☐ No ☐  
I agree to participate in the interview: Yes ☐ No ☐

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B****Parent Consent Form**

**Department of Integrated Studies in Education**  
3700 McTavish Street, Montreal, QC H3A 1Y2

**Consent Form for Parents and Guardians to Participate in MA Thesis Study:  
French Immersion for Allophone Students in Saskatchewan: Examining Diverse Perspectives**

My name is Stephen Davis and I am a teacher for Saskatoon Public Schools, currently studying in the Master of Arts in Second Language Education program at McGill University. I will be conducting a study on students whose first language is not English (Allophones) in French immersion. I hope to research the suitability of these programs for Allophones by learning about your family's experiences.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study, which involves two stages. The first stage is a survey including twenty questions, which will be emailed to you and will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The surveys will be given numerical codes so that only my supervisors and I will be able to identify participants. Survey data will be stored separately from the numerical codes in a locked file cabinet that only my supervisors and I can access. The second stage of the study is an interview, which will be recorded digitally and transcribed into my password-protected computer. The interview will last no longer than 60 minutes and will be held in a setting that is convenient for you. If you require an interpreter, I will arrange for one to be present during the interview. The audio recording of the interview will not be disseminated. The results of this study will be used in my thesis, publications, and presentations. Publications will not include your name, your child's name, or the name of your child's school.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please place a checkmark in the box or boxes below to indicate whether you would like to participate in the survey, the interview, or both. Then, please sign your name and return the consent form in the stamped, pre-addressed envelope provided. Please understand that even if you agree to participate now, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Moreover, you may refrain from answering any question without consequences. If you have any questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager at (514) 398-6831 or [lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca](mailto:lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca). Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Student Researcher: Stephen Davis  
Email: [stephen.davis4@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:stephen.davis4@mail.mcgill.ca)  
Phone: (306) 290-9548

Supervisors: Dr. Mela Sarkar & Dr. Susan Ballinger  
Email: [mela.sarkar@mcgill.ca](mailto:mela.sarkar@mcgill.ca) [susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca](mailto:susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca)  
Phone: (514) 398-4527 (514) 398-4527.

I agree to participate in the survey: Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to participate in the interview: Yes ☐ No ☐

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix C**

### **Survey for Educators**

#### **The Suitability of French Immersion for Allophone Students: Survey for Educators**

##### **Demographic Information:**

1. What is the name of your current school?
2. Which of the following answers best describes your current position?
3. Including the 2016-2017 school year, how many years have you been teaching in a French immersion program?

##### **Questions for Educators:**

1. I believe that it is important for Allophone students in Saskatchewan to learn English.
2. I believe that it is important for Allophone students in Saskatchewan to learn French.
3. I believe that French immersion is a suitable program for Allophone students.
4. I believe that Core French is a suitable program for Allophone students.
5. I believe that Allophone students should be included in French immersion.
6. I believe that school administrators and teachers should be able to decide whether or not to include Allophone students in French immersion.
7. I believe that Allophone parents should be able to select the program of study for their children.
8. I believe that Allophone students learn English effectively in French immersion.

9. I believe that Allophone students learn French effectively in French immersion.
10. I believe that success in French immersion requires a high level of English proficiency.
11. I would recommend French immersion for a student with limited English proficiency.
12. I believe that learning French will support the learning of English for Allophone students.
13. I believe that Allophone students have disadvantages learning French compared to their Anglophone peers.
14. I believe that Allophone students should focus on learning English before learning French.
15. I believe that Allophone students have advantages learning French compared to their Anglophone peers.
16. I believe that learning French is detrimental to the learning of English for Allophone students.
17. I believe that Allophone students receive adequate homework support in French immersion.
18. I would discourage Allophone families from enrolling their children in French immersion.
19. I believe that Allophone students receive adequate language support in French immersion.
20. I believe that Allophone students receive adequate English instruction in French immersion.

## **Appendix D**

### **Survey for Parents**

#### **The Suitability of French Immersion for Allophone Students: Survey for Parents**

##### **Demographic Information:**

1. How many children in your family have been enrolled in French immersion programs?
2. What school does your child attend?
3. What is your child's current grade level?
4. Including the current year, how many years has your family lived in Canada?
5. Including the 2016-2017 school year, how many years has your child been enrolled in a French immersion program?
6. How many languages does your child speak?
7. What language(s) does your child speak?
8. What language(s) do you consider to be your child's strongest language(s)?

##### **Questions for Parents and Guardians:**

1. I believe that it is important for my child to learn English.
2. I believe that it is important for my child to learn French.
3. I believe that my child is learning English effectively in French immersion.
4. I believe that my child is learning French effectively in French immersion.
5. I believe that my child is able to learn French and English at the same time.
6. I had difficulty finding information about French immersion programs when I first enrolled my child in the school division.

7. I believe that my child has advantages in French immersion compared to students whose first language is English.
8. I believe that French immersion is a suitable program for my child.
9. I was encouraged by school administrators to enrol my child in French immersion.
10. I believe that my child receives adequate homework support in French immersion.
11. I believe that my child receives adequate language support in French immersion.
12. I was discouraged by school administrators from enrolling my child in French immersion.
13. I believe that my child receives adequate English instruction in French immersion.
14. I believe that success in French immersion requires a high level of English proficiency.
15. I believe that my child has disadvantages in French immersion compared to students whose first language is English.
16. I believe that learning French is detrimental to the learning of English for my child.
17. I believe that school administrators and teachers should be able to decide whether or not to include Allophone students in French immersion.
18. I believe that Allophone parents should be able to select the program of study for their children.
19. I believe that my child's teacher is supportive of my decision to enrol him or her in French immersion.
20. I was informed of all possible programs of study when I first enrolled my child in the school division.

## **Appendix E**

### **Interview Questions for Educators**

1. What is your educational background?
2. How long have you been teaching in a French immersion program?
3. How many newcomer students are enrolled in your class whose first language is not English or French?
4. What are your opinions regarding the suitability of French immersion programs for newcomer students whose first language is not English or French?
5. Would you recommend French immersion for a newcomer child with limited English language proficiency?
6. What are the policies and practices of the school division regarding the inclusion of these students in French immersion programs?
7. Why do you believe newcomer families might be interested in enrolling their children in French immersion programs?
8. Under what circumstances would you encourage or discourage newcomer families from enrolling their children in French immersion programs?
9. What challenges do you believe these children face in French immersion?
10. What advantages or disadvantages do you believe these children might have learning French in French immersion programs compared to Anglophone students?
11. How do you believe these children perform in French immersion programs?
12. What types of support are available to newcomer families in French immersion?
13. What types of further support do you believe are needed for newcomer families in French immersion?



## **Appendix F**

### **Interview Questions for Parents**

1. How long have you lived in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan?
2. What languages are spoken in your home?
3. What information was made available to you regarding different instructional programs within the school division?
4. What do you think about your child learning French at school?
5. What are your opinions about French immersion programs?
6. Would you say that you were encouraged or discouraged from enrolling your child in French immersion?
7. Is there anything about French immersion that you wish you had known when your family first arrived in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan?
8. Why did you choose to enrol your child in French immersion?
9. What advantages or disadvantages do you think your child might have learning French in French immersion compared to Anglophone students?
10. What do you know about your child's experience in French immersion?
11. Would you recommend French immersion for a newcomer child with limited English language proficiency?
12. What types of support are available for your child in French immersion?
13. What types of additional support do you believe are needed for your child to succeed in French immersion?