

“Pardon my French”: A non-static case-study of the social dimensions of non-classroom  
language anxiety in Montréal

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## Abstract

This inquiry explores the social dimensions of non-classroom language anxiety from the perspective of ten individuals who speak French as an additional language in Montréal. More specifically, the study examines the interplay between these individuals' social experiences and their language anxiety from a critical social perspective. Using a qualitative multiple case study design and emphasizing a non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013), I collected narrative data in three phases, including: (Phase 1) interviews and language maps; (Phase 2) *in situ* recordings, journals, and walking interviews; and (Phase 3) focus groups. Data analysis was guided by an immersion/crystallization (I/C) approach (Borkan, 1999). Key findings were that: (1) individuals of many different kinds experience language anxiety in varied and unpredictable ways; (2) language anxiety is not a fixed or stable construct, but is rather shaped by individuals' social experiences; and, (3) language anxiety has the potential to negatively affect how individuals experience and use French. The thesis closes with a discussion of the theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical implications of the study.

## Resumé

Cette enquête explore les dimensions sociales de l'anxiété langagière non liée aux classes chez dix individus qui ont le français comme langue seconde à Montréal. Plus précisément, cette étude examine l'interaction entre leurs expériences sociales et leur anxiété langagière sous un angle critique et social. En utilisant un modèle d'étude de cas multiples avec analyse qualitative et collecte de données non-statiques (Lamarre, 2013), nous avons recueilli les données narratives en trois étapes: (Étape 1) entrevues et cartes de langues; (Étape 2) enregistrements audio *in situ*, journaux de bord, et entrevues « hors les murs » (Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009, p. 113), et (Étape 3) groupes de discussion. L'analyse des données a été guidée par l'approche de recherche d'immersion et de cristallisation (I/C) (Borkan, 1999). Les principales constatations étaient(1) des individus issus de milieux variés éprouvent de l'anxiété langagière, et ceci, de différentes façons aussi variées qu'imprévisibles; (2) l'anxiété langagière n'est ni stable ni prévisible, mais plutôt façonnée et influencée par les expériences sociales de chaque individu; et (3) l'anxiété langagière peut avoir une incidence négative sur l'expérience et l'utilisation du français chez ces individus. En conclusion, l'auteure présente une discussion sur les implications théoriques, méthodologiques, et pédagogiques de cette étude.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### *Background and introduction to the study*

According to the overarching goal of *La charte de la langue française* [the Charter of the French language] (colloquially, Bill 101), everyone in Québec should speak French as their normal and everyday language in public. However, many learners of French in Montréal avoid speaking French, even though they may value being multilingual (Pletch Kanashiro, 2011). Their avoidance suggests a link with language anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) that has not been explored. Research into language anxiety is needed in cities like Montréal, where active multilingualism may be an important part of successful sociocultural integration. Indeed, previous research has suggested that anxious language learners may be economically, politically, and socially disadvantaged beyond the classroom; for example, they may have difficulties securing employment (Dewaele, 2007), accessing essential government services (Guntzville, Jensen, King, & David, 2011), and negotiating the politics of everyday language choices in their interactions with others (Heller, 1982). Language anxiety can also affect learners' identity and sense of belonging (Brown, 2008). Yet, we know relatively little about non-classroom language anxiety because the majority of studies about language anxiety are classroom-based. As a consequence, we are currently unable to explain or understand the experiences of learners of French in Montréal who are anxious about their French in non-classroom contexts.

Language anxiety is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon (Dewaele, 2007; Price, 1991), sometimes defined as feelings of stress, fear, apprehension, or tension in using an additional language (Horwitz et al., 1986). Although it is more commonly referred to as ‘foreign language anxiety’ (FLA), I prefer the term ‘additional language anxiety’ (or simply ‘language anxiety’) because ‘additional language’ encapsulates the diversity of experiences within which languages are learned and used (Nicolas & Starks, 2014).

Thanks to a strong quantitative classroom-based research tradition, we know that up to a third of classroom language learners experience language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986). Links have been made between language anxiety and cognitive variables such as personality (Dewaele, 2007), aptitude (Sparks & Ganschow, 1994), perfectionism (Gregerson & Horwitz, 2002), and learning difficulties (Chen & Chang, 2004). Learners who begin at an older age (Dewaele, Petrides, & Furnham, 2008) and those of higher proficiencies (Ewald, 2007; Marcos-Llinas & Garau, 2009;) are more likely to score highly on language anxiety measures. However, since most language anxiety research has emphasized the cognitive and academic dimensions of language anxiety, little is known about the social dimensions of language anxiety. Furthermore, the majority of language anxiety research has been quantitative, so it cannot reveal learner experiences, perspectives, and voices (Shao, Ji, & Yu, 2013). Moreover, most qualitative language anxiety research (Cohen & Norst, 1989; Bailey, 1983; Ewald, 2007; Liu, 2006; Pappamihiel, 2002) has been limited to the language classroom. Recently, a handful of non-classroom based studies (Cheng & Erben, 2012; Brown, 2008; Dewaele, 2007;

Guntzviller et al., 2011; Ito, 2008; Ohata, 2004) have successfully expanded the concept of language anxiety to include individuals in non-classroom contexts. However, more qualitative research in non-classroom contexts is needed to add breadth, depth, and richness to our understanding of the phenomenon from the perspective of the individuals having the experience.

My study addresses a growing interest in non-classroom language anxiety from a qualitative perspective. Uniquely, I explore language anxiety from the perspective of individuals for whom French is an additional language, in the context of Montréal's complex sociolinguistic dynamic (Lamarre, 2013). However, the importance of this study extends beyond the sociolinguistic contribution that it can make to our understanding of Montréal. There are also theoretical and methodological contributions that such a study can make. First, because little previous research has explored language anxiety from a social approach, our understanding of the social dimensions of the experience remains largely unknown. Moreover, from a methodological perspective, my study has the potential to make two contributions: first, my study can add to a small body of literature that has considered language anxiety in non-classroom contexts; the second methodological contribution comes from the non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013) that I used in conducting my field work. Using research techniques like language map drawings, *in situ* recordings, participant journals, and walking interviews, I was able to 'follow' my participants throughout their everyday movements around the city, allowing me to observe how they experienced language anxiety in different social contexts.

*Researcher motivation and positioning*

My interest in this topic stems from my personal experiences of non-classroom language anxiety (Godfrey-Smith, 2015) and, in this sense, I approach my study as an insider to the phenomenon; as an adult, I moved to Montréal and devoted nearly a year to studying French in a full-time intensive program. I loved learning French as an additional language so much that I eventually became a teacher of English as an additional language myself. Yet, where I had been confident and competent in my French classes, using French outside the classroom for everyday tasks like buying a bus ticket, ordering a coffee, viewing apartments, first dates, and job interviews made me nervous, stressed, and anxious. During my Master's degree, I started researching and writing about my experiences of language anxiety; these ideas eventually took shape in the form of an autoethnography (Godfrey-Smith, 2015) where I found that my everyday experiences of languaging (Phipps, 2010) in Montréal were sites of anxiety that intersected critically with my sense of identity, belonging, and self-actualization. As one of few autoethnographies about language anxiety and one of a handful of studies about language anxiety in non-classroom contexts, my autoethnography (Godfrey-Smith, 2015) underscored a gap in our understanding of the non-classroom language anxiety experiences of additional language learners. Yet, while my autoethnography helped me to understand how my own experiences of language anxiety had to do with my negotiations of identity and belonging, I wanted to expand the scope of my understanding to include the perspectives of others and in doing so, gain a more multidimensional understanding of the phenomenon of language anxiety.

In positioning myself as a researcher, I take a postmodern-problematizing stance, rejecting the possibility of critical distance or objectivity, and instead seeking reflexivity (Pennycook, 2001). I acknowledge my privilege as a white, able-bodied, educated woman. I also acknowledge my native English-speaker status, which puts me in a position of further privilege in my professional career as an English language teacher. On the other hand, I was born to immigrant parents and am an immigrant to Montréal myself. I live my public life in my additional language in a city where interacting with strangers can feel like a political act (Heller, 1982) because language choice can reflect issues of power and inequality (Auer, 1998). All of this is to say that I accept the inevitability of bias and acknowledge that I live and breathe language in my academic and personal life, something which has a definite impact on the lens with which I have considered the questions that this research seeks to address.

#### *Research objectives and guiding questions*

The primary aim of my research was to explore the social dimensions of non-classroom language anxiety from the perspective of the individuals having the experience. Ultimately, I hoped to arrive at an in-depth understanding of non-classroom language anxiety. With these objectives in mind, my study was guided by an overarching research question:

- What does it mean to experience non-classroom language anxiety for individuals who speak French as an additional language in Montreal?

Two focused sub-questions provided additional scope to make meaningful links between individuals' experiences of language anxiety and their social worlds:

- What is the interplay between their social experiences and their language anxiety?
- What do their experiences tell us about the social dimensions of language anxiety?

### *Conceptual framework*

In order to address the research questions, I used a set of conceptual lenses that offered a critical social perspective on non-classroom language anxiety. This framework:

- 1) views languages as socially distributed resources, and therefore considers language anxiety to be a social phenomenon;
- 2) acknowledges the mobility of learners as individuals who move through different social contexts in their everyday lives;
- 3) situates individuals' language practices within the wider sociolinguistic context.

Drawing these ideas together, the conceptual framework provided a set of lenses through which I was able to interpret what it means to experience non-classroom language anxiety and consider the social dimensions of the phenomenon. In the following paragraphs, I explain how a critical social perspective on non-classroom language anxiety shaped my investigation.

#### *Languages as socially distributed resources*

The first conceptual lens views languages as socially distributed resources (Heller, 2007), and therefore considers language anxiety to be a social phenomenon. In order to establish such a conceptualization of language anxiety, it is important to first explore the notion of language itself. I see languages as part of a given set of socially distributed resources that learners draw from in their negotiation of social meaning

(Heller, 2007) and approach my inquiry “from a point of view that views social relations as problematic” (Lamarre, 2013, p. 6) because they reflect issues of power and inequality. Within this view, languages are seen as socially distributed through historical, political, and economic processes that may inform what resources are assigned what value, by whom, and with what consequences (Heller, 2007). In other words, individuals’ language choices may be guided by ideologies of language. I view language ideologies as “the beliefs about language and language use” (Spolsky & Shohamy, 2000, p. 4), which designate the speech community’s consensus about which variety is appropriate for which user to use and when. Moreover, “the negotiation of language has to do with judgments of... how one expects to be treated in such a situation” (Heller, 1982, p. 118) and language choice can reflect issues of power and inequality (Auer, 1998).

If languages are socially constructed and socially distributed resources, language anxiety must therefore be considered a social experience. Such a conceptualization of language anxiety contrasts with much of the existing literature, which has mostly focused on the quantifiable aspects of language anxiety through the measurement of variables and testable skills. This has led to different conceptualizations of language anxiety; for example, as a personality trait, a situation specific anxiety, or as the transfer of generalized anxiety. While I discuss these elements in further depth in Chapter 3 (Literature review), overall, most conceptualizations have framed language anxiety as a cognitive phenomenon that happens in classrooms, focusing on the disruptive effect of language anxiety on learning, cognition, and competence. Within this view, language anxiety is something that can be induced, measured, and is often explicitly or implicitly



indicative or predictive of a learner's shortcomings. Such conceptualizations of language anxiety have successfully been able to provide extensive quantitative information about how many learners experience language anxiety, how often they experience it, and to what effect on their classroom learning. In other words, the majority of existing research has focused measuring the causes and effects of language anxiety in classrooms.

However, the experiences that concern me are beyond cause and effect (Bochner & Ellis, 2006). Instead, I am interested in what it means to experience non-classroom language anxiety; therefore, I need a set of conceptual lenses that provide the scope for such an investigation.

Nicholas and Starks (2014) encouraged us to ask: "When is emotion a cognitive phenomenon and when is it a social process experienced in what learners do and engage with?" (p. 73). I agree with Dewey (1938) that all human experiences that involve contact and communication are ultimately social because languages are "the medium through which communities... make sense of and shape the world" (Phipps, 2010, p. 2). In my mind, therefore, emotions themselves – especially those that relate to language as inextricably as language anxiety does – must be considered more than cognitive phenomena. I view language anxiety as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, relating to issues of identity, belonging, voice, self-determination, etc. (Dewaele, 2007). Fundamentally, I view language anxiety as a phenomenon that learners experience in social contexts that are situated within the historical, political, and sociolinguistic dynamic of their environment.

### *The mobility of learners*

The second conceptual lens acknowledges the mobility of learners as individuals who move through different social contexts in their everyday lives. Here, I draw on the concept of mobility (Blommaert, 2014; Najar, 2014). Blommaert compelled us to consider people as mobile, in that they do not stay in the place where their languages are traditionally used (e.g., their home countries). In this sense, Blommaert's argument for mobility was tied to globalization, migration, and society. However, this concept of mobility can also inform how we think about additional language learners as individuals who do not stay in the places (i.e., classrooms) where their additional languages are learned. Just as Blommaert encouraged us to move away from conceptualizations of language as relatively fixed in time and space, so too must we move away from imagining learners as sedentary. Rather, learners are mobile, non-static, and not site-bound. In my view, this refers to both their geographic mobility as well as their temporal mobility, with their personal histories and experiences operating as part of the context of their language practices (Pennycook, 2012). My emphasis on mobility allows me to move away from existing one-dimensional conceptualizations of learners as site-bound to the language classroom or other static locations.

### *The wider sociolinguistic context*

The third and final conceptual lens positions language anxiety within the wider sociolinguistic context where individuals are having the experience of language anxiety. I locate my study within the context of Montréal and have already mentioned some of the historical, geopolitical, and sociolinguistic factors that may inform learners' experiences

of language anxiety. I agree that learners of French in Montréal negotiate a complex sociolinguistic dynamic (Lamarre, 2013) that is informed by Québec's history and politics. I also agree with Tollefson (1994, 2006) that researchers whose work relates to language policy must also consider the socio-historical influences that act on current language policies and language practices. I therefore consider socio-historical influences part of the context of the study. Within this view, context can also include the language ideologies (Spolsky & Shohamy, 2000) that learners hold or encounter.

Finally, I share Lamarre's (2013) view that linguistic and social interactions are intrinsically interwoven with the city itself and cannot be separated from it because "it is within larger processes, always and necessarily, that [individuals] understand and make sense of their lives, negotiate the everyday, and contribute to the production and reproduction of the world" (p. 44). Viewing context through this lens, my exploration of the phenomenon of language anxiety must also consider how learners make sense of the historical, political, and sociolinguistic dynamic of the city where they experience language anxiety.

A brief word about the terms multilingual and multilingualism: I acknowledge that the term of multilingualism can be problematic by framing languages as discrete systems and also by overlooking the complex ways that languages are used in the increasingly diverse and globalized world (Nicolas & Starks, 2014). However, in Québec, we cannot escape talking about languages as discrete entities because we are historically, politically, and culturally socialized to do so. Thus, the common labels, multilingual and

multilingualism, are used throughout this report to describe knowledge of two or more languages.

*Comments on the conceptual framework*

Ultimately, my conceptual framework positions language anxiety as a social phenomenon that learners experience in specific social contexts. This framework provided the scope for me not only to consider the characteristics of this social experience, but also to emphasize the social dimensions of non-classroom language anxiety. In this sense, my conceptual framework guided the formulation of my research questions. A critical social perspective also provided the scope to shift the focus of the study away from the traditional measurement of language anxiety and towards the individual having the experience. Thus, the participant and researcher become collaborators, representing a critical shift in power relations.

*Organization of the dissertation*

This thesis is organized into six chapters, including the present chapter (Introduction). As articulated by Crump (2014), any sociolinguistic study of language in Montréal needs to be located in an understanding of the past and present issues to do with language policy and politics in Québec. Thus, in the second chapter of the thesis (Context), I contextualize my study by outlining some of the complexities of the context where users of French as an additional language negotiate their everyday lives and language practices. In the third chapter (Literature Review), I explore what existing scholarship has contributed to our understanding of language anxiety, as well as considering what remains to be known about the phenomenon. In Chapter Four

(Methodology), I describe and justify the methodological approach for the study: qualitative case studies, using a non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013). In Chapter Five (Findings) I present the results of the research in two parts. In the first part, I present case studies of each of the ten participants that I worked with in collecting narrative data about their experiences of language anxiety in Montréal. In the second part of the chapter, I present the results of the cross-case analyses, which revealed three key findings that addressed the research questions. The interpretation and theorization of the key findings are taken up in Chapter Six (Discussion). In the final chapter (Conclusion), I close the thesis by discussing the implications and limitations of the study, as well as by suggesting future directions for further research about the social dimensions of language anxiety.

## Chapter 2

### Context: Locating the study in Montreal

#### *Chapter overview*

The importance of non-classroom language anxiety research is particularly relevant in Montréal, where users of French as an additional language must negotiate a complex sociolinguistic dynamic in their everyday movements around the city and in their interactions with others (Lamarre, 2013). This complex dynamic is informed by Québec's history, language laws, and ongoing sociolinguistic tensions that are played out in provincial politics and picked up by the media. In this chapter, I contextualize my study by outlining some of the complexities of the context where users of French as an additional language negotiate their everyday lives and language practices. I begin with a brief outline of the language demographics of Montréal before going on to consider the socio-historical influences related to its language communities. I conclude by exploring the language policies, political and media discourses, and present-day sociolinguistic dynamics of Montréal.

#### *Language demographics*

Montréal, population 3.7 million, is a major metropolis located in the eastern Canadian province of Québec, population 8 million (Statistics Canada, 2011a). The official language of Québec is French; 80% of Québec residents speak French as their first language and 94% say they can hold a conversation in French (Statistics Canada, 2011b). Although French is also the official language of Montréal, it is often described as a multilingual city. Montréal's multilingualism is reflected in its language demographics;

in 2011, 63% of Montréal residents described their native language as French, 11% described their native language as English, and almost 22% said their first language was neither English nor French (Statistics Canada, 2011c). Moreover, more than half of Montrealers said they knew both English and French, and less than 10% of Montrealers said they didn't know any French at all (Statistics Canada, 2011c).

*Sociohistorical tensions: 1642 - 1977*

In the paragraphs that follow, I briefly sketch the sociolinguistic history of Montréal and, more broadly, Québec. My overall aim is to highlight how users of French as an additional language in Montréal negotiate their language practices within the context of complex sociohistorical tensions that are underscored by issues of language and power. Note that in this section of the report, I use several terms to describe different groups of people who feature in Montréal's history. For the sake of this report, I use Bouchard's (2008) terminology to describe these people.

Montréal was first colonized in 1642 by French missionaries (Warren, 2003). The area now known as the province of Québec eventually became the seat of a thriving fur trade and an important outpost of the French colonies in North America (Warren, 2003). This era was characterized, above all, by the influence of the Catholic church, which assumed a prominent role in providing social and educational services to the French-speaking population of the colony (Henchy & Burgess, 1987). In other words, the conservative Catholic church was in a position of significant power over the population and culture and society in Québec were heavily influenced by religious values.

By the time the British took over control of New France with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763 (Dickinson & Young, 2002), there were between 65,000 and 70,000 French Canadians living in the territory (Warren, 2003). They were soon joined by several hundred English settlers, merchants, and traders (Dickinson & Young, 2002); they soon took control of the beaver pelt industry, which represented over 75% of New France's economy (Warren, 2003). This resulted in an English monopoly of business and industry, creating a class system whereby the social position of French Canadians was significantly below that of their English peers (Warren, 2003). In this sense, critical issues related to language and economic power were exigent from the beginning of franco-anglo relations in Québec. In 1791, thirty years after the signing of the Paris Treaty, the new British colony was divided into Lower Canada (which eventually became the province of Québec) and Upper Canada, both of which were administered by the English (Bouchard, 2008). Under the new British rule, French Canadians were now isolated from France and turned to the Catholic church as a means of maintaining an identity distinct from the British (Henchy & Burgess, 1987).

The first century of British rule was characterized by struggle on the part of the French Canadians for their linguistic, cultural, and especially religious rights (Bouchard, 2008). This struggle came in response to the assimilative moves of the English against the French *habitants*; rather than affording the French Canadians equal social and economic opportunities, emphasis was instead placed on achieving linguistic and cultural assimilation as soon as possible (Bouchard, 2008). By 1806, the idea of assimilation of the French into the English way of life was so common that it was talked about freely in



newspapers (Warren, 2003). Assimilation was seen as a solution to economic and social tensions that existed between the French and English, and it was hoped that the increasing numbers of Irish and English immigrants to Québec would expedite the assimilation of the French (Warren, 2003). However, in some ways, these assimilative moves backfired because they helped cement language as one of the defining symbols of the French Canadians and strengthened the links that language represented to their ancestors and traditions (Bouchard, 2008).

In 1838, Louis-Joseph Papineau led *Les rébellions de 1837–38*, also known as the Lower Canada Rebellion, the Patriot's War, or Papineau's Rebellion (Warren, 2003). The rebellion, which ultimately failed, was largely a question of the French Canadians trying to regain power from their English administrators. In response to the failed rebellion, John George Lambton, Lord Durham, was sent from England to investigate and address the causes of the rebellion (Bouchard, 2008). His report led to the Act of Union 1840, which united Upper and Lower Canada into the province of Canada (Bouchard, 2008). The Act of Union banned French from the legislative assembly and specified that the official and formal language of the territory was to be English (Warren, 2003). This was the first formal declaration of a language policy in Québec's history, and it is important to note the assimilative intent that came with it (Bouchard, 2008). As articulated by Lieberman (1970), "the surrender of distinctive mother tongues is a necessary step in the assimilation of ethnic groups in contact... in this sense, language provides an important shield against assimilation" (p. 6).

The actions of Lord Durham clearly reflected a language ideology that English was valued above French, and that the language-based privilege that the English enjoyed was a natural condition. The Act of Union saw these ideologies pass into law, thereby cementing the linguistic hegemony of English in Québec as the only appropriate language for government, and the English was of life as the ‘correct’ way (Warren, 2003). For eight years, only English was spoken in the legislative assembly of Canada (Dickinson & Young, 2002), an example of linguistic hegemony which must have significantly impacted the sense of representation and collective self-worth of French Canadians. In 1848, the decision to ban French from the legislative assembly was overturned (Dickinson & Young, 2002), a move which was viewed as a French Canadian victory (Warren, 2003).

The 1840s was also an important decade for education in Québec (Magnuson, 1980). Public schooling was passed into law, and in the cities of Québec and Montréal, two school systems were established according to denominational lines: one Catholic and one Protestant (Magnuson, 1980). The confessional school system all but cemented the power that the highly conservative Catholic church had over the lives of French Canadians in Québec (Dickinson & Young, 2003) because Catholic schools were mostly attended by the children of French Canadian families (Lamarre, 2008). The establishment of a confessional school system in the 1840s is important because of the role that it eventually played in the establishment of Québec’s formal language policy, which I explore in more depth in the next section of this chapter.

The end of the nineteenth century saw significant changes in the political economy of Québec and Canada. Federation had been declared in 1867, making Canada a country of its own, loyal to the Queen of England, and making the former territory of Lower Canada into the new province of Québec. However, French Canadians were hardly represented in the new federal government (Bouchard, 2008). This lack of representation of government made the 1896 election of Sir Wilfred Laurier, a French Canadian, to the position of Prime Minister of Canada in 1896 an even greater political victory for the French Canadians (Warren, 2008). However, despite these victories, by the turn of the twentieth century, little had changed in Québec in terms of the balance of power between the English and French (Warren, 2008). English was the dominant language of commerce and administration, yet the majority of French Canadians spoke no English (Bouchard, 2008). To practice law or politics, English was required (Bouchard, 2008). However, the prestige associated with speaking English was not reflected in the reverse; English speakers did not require French unless they wanted to practice a handful of specialized professions (Bouchard, 2008). Imbalanced language ideologies were also reflected in the fact that, although French was the language of the streets, all the signs were in English (Bouchard, 2008; Levine, 1990; Warren, 2003). In other words, multilingualism was widespread, but it was officially invisible in government and most public discourses.

Despite the industrial boom around the turn of the twentieth century, French Canadians did not benefit as much as their wealthy English counterparts because they were unable to front the capital for investments (Warren, 2003). Warren (2003) cited

how, in 1905, the three French-owned banks in Montréal held just 32 million dollars collectively, while the English-owned Bank of Montréal alone had 150 million. The economic disparity between the English and French Canadians was apparent to insiders and outsiders alike. For example, Levine (1991) quoted a European visitor's perceptions of Montréal in the early twentieth century: "English society... bears itself exactly as though it had no French neighbours. They seem to regard Montréal as their property... the commercial concerns are all in their hands" (p. 16).

The English monopoly of business and industry reinforced a class system whereby the social position of French Canadians was significantly below that of their English peers. This class division was supported and legitimized by perpetuating negative stereotypes that aligned French Canadians with the traditional image of backcountry *habitants* (Bouchard, 2008), akin to modern-day negative connotations of hill-billies or country bumpkins. These negative stereotypes associated with French-speakers likely stemmed from the significant numbers of young French Canadians who were moving from their traditional agricultural lives in rural areas to urban centers as a result of a decreasing availability of land and a greater industrialization (Bouchard, 2008). French Canadians found themselves working for bosses who spoke a different language than they did, and were forced to learn English (Bouchard, 2008). English became the working language for urban Quebecers, pushing French to the private domain (Bouchard, 2008).

In post-World War II, Montréal's major economic institutions were controlled by the English (Levine, 1990) and Canadian industry was dominated by the English language, caused in part by large American and British investment, but mostly by the fact

that English-Canadians were more likely to own industries than their French Canadian peers (Lieberson, 1970). As a consequence of the dominance of English-speakers in upper-management positions (Bouchard, 2008), French Canadians continued to be at a severe economic disadvantage, and Montréal's labour market was characterized by a division of labour that saw the English dominant in command positions to which French Canadians were subordinate (Levine, 1990). Lieberson (1970) described this as a form of economic subordination. The overwhelming economic power was in the hands of English speakers (Lieberson, 1970), and the collective identity of the French Canadians was increasingly tied to their dependent circumstances (Bouchard, 2008). By the 1960's, language had become the key ingredient in the identity of French Canadians (Coulombe, 1995).

The devaluation of the French language was seen as evidence of inequality and discrimination against French Canadians in Québec (Mills, 2010). For example, Mills (2010) described how “merely walking in downtown Montréal was enough to convince many that the French language, although first in terms of number of speakers, was second in terms of power and prestige” (p. 7). Indeed, statistical proof of this discrimination was provided by The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in response to nationalist upsurge of the 1960's (Haque, 2012; Mills, 2010). Defense of the French language was closely tied to the sense of nationalism that arose in Québec during the 1960's (Dickinson & Young, 2003) and political activism reached new heights during this era (Mills, 2010). However, the concerns of the people were not limited to language alone. Recalling that, since the 1840's, the conservative Catholic church had had

significant power over education and social life, the revolution also called for a move towards a secular society. The changes that were fought for and eventually won in the transfer power away from the church are now referred to as *la Révolution tranquille*, or the Quiet Revolution (Warren, 2003). Overall, the Quiet Revolution was a social uprising that called for an end to the cultural and economic power of the English language and a move away from the traditional values of the church and towards more socialist, progressive values (Mills, 2010). Quebec's jump into progressive modernism informed much of how Québec's language policy and Montréal's sociolinguistic dynamic took shape in the following decades. These, and other themes are explored in more depth in the following section of this chapter.

Overall, it is evident that there were significant issues of language and power at play in the period between 1642 and the end of the 1960s. These issues related to negative language ideologies about the kind of French being spoken in Québec (Bouchard, 2008), formal and informal assimilative moves of the English towards the French, lack of representation of French-speakers in government, and an overwhelming tendency towards socioeconomic disparities of wealth, education, and class based on language. This is important because it is within the context of this complex sociolinguistic history that users of French as an additional language in Montréal negotiate their language practices and their everyday interactions with others. However, there is also more at play when considering the context of the present study; Québec's current formal language policy is another important piece of the puzzle that is Montréal's

complex sociolinguistic dynamic. It is to this formal language policy that I turn in the section that follows.

*Modern language policies: 1977 onwards*

Nowadays, learners of French in Montréal negotiate their non-classroom experiences within the context of *La charte de la langue française* (colloquially Loi 101 or Bill 101), formal language policy which was passed into law in 1977. *La Charte de la langue français* was the newly elected Parti Québécois' response to nationalist protests that called for greater protection and use of French in the workplace and schools (Dickson & Young, 2003). The current version had two predecessors: first, *La loi pour promouvoir la langue française au Québec* (Loi 63), or Law to promote the French language in Québec, passed by Jean-Jacques Bertrand's government in 1969; and second, *La loi sur la langue officielle* (Loi 22), or the Official Languages Act, commissioned by Premier Robert Bourassa and declaring French the official language of Québec in 1974 (Dickson & Young, 2003).

The overall aim of *La charte de la langue française* was to make French the normal language of work, education, communication, and business, while still working in a spirit of fairness, open-mindedness, and respect for the English-speaking communities of Québec (Charter of the French Language [CFL], 2015). *La charte de la langue français* had the effect of increasing the amount of French spoken in business, government, and schools. For example, public signage became predominantly French (although not necessarily precluding English) and government documents such as legislative bills were made available in both French and English.

Perhaps the most significant changes that the Charter had on people's lives were those that had to do with education; the Charter brought about a massive reform of the educational system in Québec (Magnuson, 1980). More specifically, in 1976, the educational clauses of the Charter limited access to English schools to children with a parent or sibling who had been educated in English in Québec (Dickinson & Young, 2003). This essentially funneled students into French schools and away from English schools, including the children of new immigrants as well as those of Canadian families from outside of Québec (Lamarre, 2008). In 1984, the Charter was revised to allow out-of-province Canadian parents who settled in Québec to send their children to school in English. Schools were also deconfessionalized in 1998, from a Catholic-Protestant division of school populations (with linguistic subdivisions) to a linguistic division, all overseen by the centralized *Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport* (MELS) (Lamarre, 2008). Overall, the educational clauses of the Charter had a huge impact on the English school system as well as the English-speaking population of Québec. For example, enrollment in English schools has declined, as has funding, and English school closures have increased (Lamarre, 2008). On the other hand, bilingual education in English schools has increased and more English Quebecers are bilingual than before thanks to their use of schools as sites for acquiring language skills (Lamarre, 2008).

Overall, and in many ways, the *charte de la langue française* has been largely successful in meeting its goals of making French the normal language of work, education, communication, and business in Québec (Charter of the French Language [CFL], 2015). As articulated by Bourhis (2008), "Thirty years of language planning in favour of French



can be credited for ensuring that the knowledge of French is shared by 94% of the Québec population and maintaining 82% of its population as users of French at home.” (p. 29). Moreover, the rate of bilingualism is said to have increased in Québec from 25% in 1961 to 43% in 2012 (LePage & Corbiel, 2013). Besides an overall increase in the number of people speaking French, it is argued that many of the sociodemographic disadvantages faced by French Canadians in Québec seemingly disappeared (Floch & Pocock, 2008). For example, within ten years of the adoption of Bill 101, the percentage of companies in Québec with managers who spoke primarily French had jumped from 38% to 58% (Warren, 2003, p. 83). Some now argue that French Canadians no longer feel dispossessed of their language (Bouchard, 2008). However, there are those that continue to contend that Québec’s language policy has not gone far enough and that French remains under threat (Corbeil, 2007). For example, Corbeil (2007) argues that there is an urgent need for the citizens of Québec to take collective action that fights for a ‘francophone’ society because of concerns that French in Québec may yet be abandoned in favor of English. There are also some who argue that “while public policies such as Bill 101 proved effective in bolstering the upward mobility of the French-speaking majority, it has failed to define a legitimate place and ‘voice’ for its non-Francophone minorities in the province” (Floch & Pocock, 2008, p. 59).

It is evident that there are still significant tensions to do with language at play in the province of Québec and especially Montréal. Indeed, political and media discourses underscore these ongoing sociolinguistic tensions between language communities in Montréal. For example, political events over the course of 2013 and 2014 saw Pauline

Marois, the then-serving premier of Québec, refuse to participate in English-speaking political debates related to the upcoming election (CBC News, 2014), highlighting an example of linguistic hegemony whereby certain languages are excluded from public discourse through being seen as inappropriate or unnecessary (Tollefson, 1991).

Sociopolitical tensions to do with language continue to play out in public events and discourses that are reported by the local media. Some examples of these include: a series of letters to the editor published in the *Montréal Gazette* which called attention to the linguistic challenges of being anglophone in Montréal (Barbieri, 2013; Desgroseilliers, 2013; Tartaglia, 2013); a group's public protest against what they saw as the ongoing 'anglicization' of Montréal (The Gazette, 2013); public statements by supporters of the Parti Québécois that individuals who couldn't buy a metro ticket in French should have to walk (CTV, 2013); and a woman who was allegedly refused service at a gas station for speaking English (Parrillo, 2016). More recently, media attention has focused on new language laws that would require French signage on all outdoor storefronts, meaning that big-box stores like Wal-Mart and Canadian Tire would have to add French descriptions to their storefronts (CBC News, 2016). These events and discourses highlight the ongoing complexity of the context within which users of French as an additional language in Montréal must negotiate their everyday language practices.

#### *Montréal's complex sociolinguistic dynamic*

In the previous paragraphs, I described some of the more macro historical and political features that inform Montréal's sociolinguistic dynamic. In the paragraphs that follow, I explore the more micro sociolinguistic context that learners of French in

Montréal negotiate in their everyday movements around the city and interactions with others (Lamarre, 2013).

As articulated by Lamarre (2008), “French is increasingly necessary for social and economic integration into the life of the city and the province” (p. 71). That speaking French is now considered a prerequisite for success in Montréal suggests a shift in language ideologies that has the potential to impact the experiences of users of French as an additional language in their interactions with others. Heller (1982) alluded to this language ideology when she described how “admitting that you are not perfectly bilingual (for an Anglophone) entails a loss of face” (p. 114) when interacting with strangers in public. Such ideologies are also reflected at the government level, as evident by Immigration Québec’s provision of free language training to immigrants to the province. This program, known as *francisation*, offers new immigrants up to a year of full-time intensive language training, often with financial assistance, with the view that “a good knowledge of French is crucial to [one’s] integration and participation in Québec society” (Immigration Quebec, 2016).

### *The ‘Montréal switch’*

In their everyday movements around Montréal, learners of French will likely encounter the sights and sounds of multiple varieties of French as well as languages other than French and English. Their everyday interactions may bring them into contact with individuals who effortlessly mix linguistic resources associated with English, French, and other languages to express themselves in a variety of contexts (Lamarre & Paredes, 2003; Lamarre, 2013). Importantly, learners of French in Montréal may find that multilingual

Montrealers respond to them in English, even if the learner initiated the exchange in French (Godfrey-Smith, 2015; McNaughton, 2014; Pletch Kanashiro, 2011). I refer to this practice as the *Montréal switch* (Godfrey-Smith, 2015).

Historically, most research into phenomena like the Montréal switch came from social psychology and attempted to explain why people might change their speech patterns to be more or less like someone else's. Specifically, Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) came out of a series of Montréal-based field studies (Giles, Coupland, & Coupland, 1991; Genesee & Bourhis, 1988; Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1987; Giles, 1973) conducted both prior to and just after the enactment of Bill 101. CAT is based on the concepts of convergence and divergence, whereby speakers who adjust their speech to be more like their interlocutors are converging, whereas speakers who adjust their speech to be less like their interlocutors are diverging. In other words, within this framework, it is assumed that a Montrealer who responds in English to a learner of French is converging because they are adjusting their speech to the learners' perceived preferred language: English. Proponents of CAT argued that individuals converge to their interlocutor's speech style because they are motivated by a desire for social approval, communicative efficacy, and positive social attitudes (Giles et al., 1991; Genesee & Bourhis, 1988; Giles et al., 1987; Giles, 1973).

The two cornerstone principles behind CAT are the motivations for convergent behaviors and the perceptions and interpretations of those behaviors (Bergoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995). Simply put, according to the CAT model, convergence is intended to be accommodating in nature. However, convergence can simultaneously be interpreted as

undermining of an individual's competence, which is generally referred to as overaccommodation or overconvergence (Street, 1991). While CAT has been used to explore convergence behaviors in Montréal (Bourhis, Montaruli, & Amiot, 2007; Moïse & Bourhis, 1994; Bourhis, 1984), these studies did not go so far as to explore overconvergence or overaccommodation behaviours. Moreover, while CAT may be a useful framework for understanding behaviours like the Montréal switch, it is important to also recognize the limitations of the theory. Importantly, CAT fails to recognize other reasons why an individual may switch between or mix their linguistic resources. For example, research has suggested that some individuals may feel more comfortable using multiple languages because doing so allows them to express their personal identity (Dewaele, 2010; Lamarre & Paredes, 2003). Language switching can distance speakers from emotionally challenging topics (Dewaele, 2010) or make evident existing levels of (in)formality within a community (Jagero & Odongo, 2012). Between different speech communities, switching between languages can emphasize relative group identities (Harwood, Giles, & Palomares, 2005), create social boundaries (Heller, 1988; Woolard, 1988), and reinforce social distance (Ross & Shortreed, 1990). Moreover, while CAT can be helpful in attempting to understand why people switch into English when they hear accented French, it does little to shed light on the effect that such accommodative moves have on the learner of French in these situations. In fact, until recently, few studies have considered the affect that accommodative moves like the Montréal switch may have on language learners.

In the last five years, three studies have considered the Montréal switch from a language learning perspective (Godfrey-Smith, 2015; McNaughton, 2014; Pletch Kanashiro, 2011). To the best of my knowledge, the only study to make explicit links between the Montréal switch and language anxiety was my own autoethnography (Godfrey-Smith, 2015). Through reflective self-study, I found that my experiences of the Montréal switch interplayed with my non-classroom language anxiety and affected my sense of belonging, identity, and confidence (Godfrey-Smith, 2014). On the other hand, both Pletch Kanashiro (2011) and McNaughton (2014) investigated the Montréal switch in terms of its effect on motivation. While neither study made explicit links between the Montréal switch and language anxiety, the results are important for two reasons. First, they help shed light on the Montréal switch, an important part of Montréal's complex sociolinguistic dynamic. Second, studies about motivation can help inform our understanding of language anxiety because motivation and anxiety are closely linked phenomena. Indeed, motivation and language anxiety are often thought of as two of several affective variables in language acquisition. For example, it has been suggested that motivation and language anxiety have a reciprocal relationship (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993) and that language anxiety is an antecedent to motivation (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995).

For her Master's research, Pletch Kanashiro (2011) explored the Montréal switch in terms of its effect on motivation among learners and non-learners of French in Montréal using a questionnaire and a matched-guise task. She found that switches into English were less common than non-switches, especially among individuals who were

not actively studying French (Pletch Kanashiro, 2011). In other words, her participants reported that people switched into English less frequently than they maintained speaking French. Pletch Kanashiro also found that participants who experienced the Montréal switch usually perceived it to be related to their own proficiency in French. For example, Pletch Kanashiro's participants interpreted switches to English to mean that their French wasn't good enough, that their interlocutor wanted to help them, or that the interlocutor thought their English was better than the participant's French. Pletch Kanashiro found this was more likely to affect motivation among individuals who were actively learning French compared to those who had completed French studies. Pletch Kanashiro also found that no matter whom participants were speaking with (e.g., friends, strangers, co-workers), they consistently reported not taking advantage of the opportunities they had to use French. This finding is important because it suggests an interplay between the Montréal switch and avoidance. Pletch Kanashiro's participants reported that when they did take advantage of opportunities to use French with friends, colleagues, and service workers, they did so out of a sense of obligation. In other words, they felt obliged, rather than motivated, to speak French. Overall, Pletch Kanashiro's study is important because it suggests that some individuals in Montréal may not seek out opportunities to use their French, even if they place a high value on being bilingual.

McNaughton (2014) also investigated the Montréal switch and its effect on motivation among individuals in Montréal for her Master's research. Like Pletch Kanashiro (2011), McNaughton found that switches to English happened less frequently than non-switches; in other words, when her participants spoke to people in French, the

interlocutor responded in French more often than they switched into English. While McNaughton was also unable to make explicit links between switching and decreased motivation, her results did point to experiences of not switching having a positive effect on motivation. In other words, McNaughton's participants were more motivated when they didn't experience the Montréal switch. Like Pletch Kanashiro (2011), McNaughton's research did not consider language anxiety *per se*. However, a compelling reflection is found in her description of her own experiences of the Montréal switch in the introduction of her thesis: "Regardless of intent, I still felt that each switch somehow meant I had failed as an L2 learner and this perceived failure to use French meant that the L1 community did not accept me" (McNaughton, 2014, p. 5). The feelings of being evaluated and non-belonging that McNaughton described suggest an interplay with language anxiety that was not explored.

Beyond recent scholarly contributions to our understanding of the Montréal switch (Godfrey-Smith, 2015; McNaughton, 2014; Pletch Kanashiro, 2011), there is further evidence in informal discourse communities (e.g., blogs, newspapers, videos) that suggests a sense of frustration with the Montréal switch among learners of French in Montréal. As one blogger put it, "if your accent isn't 'French', and if you stumble around with your words a bit, people in the city will INSTANTLY switch to English" (de Guzman, 2013). Another example is evident in a comedic music video (Patterson, 2012) that circulated a few years ago and has since gained more than 15,000 views on YouTube. In the video, made in the style of a 90s hip-hop song, Montréal-based comedian Mike Patterson sings about the challenges of being an 'anglo' in Montréal. His



frustration at always being spoken to in English is evident in lyrics like: “Je suis un Anglo, Shui pas slow, Parle a moi en Francais, Je doit practiquer...[sic] [I’m anglo, I’m not slow, speak to me in French, I have to practice...’]” (Patterson, 2012). Such lyrics suggest that switches into English can be perceived as patronizing and frustrating to individuals who wants to practice their French. Issues to do with identity and belonging are also evident in lyrics like: “Français dans ma coeur, c-c-c-coeur” [sic] [French is in my heart, ha ha ha heart]... Je suis une fier Quebecer” [sic] [I’m a proud Quebecer]” (Patterson, 2012).

### *Linguistic insecurity*

Another piece of the puzzle that makes up Montréal’s complex sociolinguistic dynamic (Lamarre, 2013) is how Montrealers themselves feel about the variety of French that they speak. Historically rooted, negative language ideologies related to the way that French is spoken in Québec have persisted into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Bouchard, 2008), and there is an ongoing concern for the quality of French that is spoken in Québec and Montréal (Corbiel, 2007). This collective perception of regional inferiority is sometimes referred to as linguistic insecurity, a term that is generally understood to refer to “speakers feeling that the variety they use is somehow inferior, ugly, or bad.” (Mayerhoff, 2006, p. 292).

Linguistic insecurity is similar to language anxiety insofar as they both refer to individuals’ negative feelings towards language(s). However, there are important differences between the two concepts. Linguistic insecurity was first defined by Labov (1966) and is a notion based on a tradition of language attitude studies using either

surveys or matched-guise techniques, deeply tied to pronunciation, accent, phonological differences in speech patterns. The notion of linguistic insecurity is mostly focused on perceptions of correctness in language use, especially pronunciation, and based on the premise that individuals or groups of individuals who perceive their own speech variety as less correct than another are therefore ‘insecure’. Importantly, the concept of linguistic insecurity is most often used in reference to how speakers feel about their own ‘native’ language (Mayerhoff, 2006). For example, the French-speaker in Québec who holds the negative self view that they speak a version of French that is vulgar in comparison to other regional varieties of French (Bouchard, 2008) could be said to experience linguistic insecurity. In this sense, it is a useful tool for understanding how ‘native’ French-speakers in Québec or other parts of Canada feel about the variety of French that they speak (see: Boudreau, Malaborza, & Violette, 2006).

#### *Chapter summary*

In this chapter, I described the backdrop to the present study by exploring Montréal’s complex sociolinguistic dynamic, as informed by Québec’s history, language laws, and ongoing sociolinguistic tensions that are played out in provincial politics and media. Overall, it is evident that learners of French in Montréal must negotiate a challenging sociolinguistic dynamic in their everyday movements around the city and in their interactions with others (Lamarre, 2013). The next chapter (Literature review), focuses on our current understanding of language anxiety, based on existing research and scholarship into the phenomenon.

## Chapter 3

### Literature review

#### *Chapter overview*

In this chapter, I review the existing research literature about language anxiety in order to provide an overview of how it is conceptualized, measured, and understood. I begin by conceptualizing language anxiety and establishing a working definition of language anxiety as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon associated with various negative emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural responses. Second, I critically consider the measurement of language anxiety and argue that further qualitative research is needed to add breadth and depth to our understanding of the experience. Third, I review our understanding of the different dimensions of language anxiety that existing research has revealed, including the cognitive, academic, and identity/cultural dimensions. Finally, I consider what studies of language anxiety in non-classroom contexts have revealed. I conclude with comments about gaps in our understanding, and ultimately argue that further qualitative research into the social dimensions of non-classroom language anxiety is needed.

#### *Conceptualizing language anxiety*

Throughout my doctoral research journey, people have asked me: What is language anxiety? By virtue of its name, it would be easy to assume that language anxiety is simply feeling anxious about using an additional language. In fact, anxiety is just one of the emotions that can characterize an individual's language anxiety experience. Indeed, language anxiety is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon (Dewaele,

2007; Price, 1991), characterized by any number of negative emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioral responses to using an additional language. To better understand and conceptualize language anxiety (an experience), it is useful to consider how it is distinct from anxiety (an emotion) or an anxiety disorder (a medical condition). In the paragraphs that follow, I begin by presenting a brief definition of anxiety and anxiety disorders before considering how language anxiety has been conceptualized in the existing literature.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) (2016a) referred to anxiety as an emotion that is “characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure” (para 1). Similarly, the following entry is found in the Encyclopedia of Psychology:

Anxiety is an emotion characterized by heightened autonomic system activity, specifically activation of the sympathetic nervous system (i.e., increased heart rate, blood pressure, respiration, and muscle tone), subjective feelings of tension, and cognitions that involve apprehension and worry. (Kowalski, 2000, p. 209)

In other words, anxiety is a normal reaction to stress that individuals may feel from time to time. In contrast, an anxiety disorder is usually characterized by “recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns” (APA, 2016b) and can only be diagnosed by a medical professional. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) (APA, 2016b):

The key features of generalized anxiety disorder are persistent and excessive anxiety and worry about various domains, including work and school

performance, that the individual finds difficult to control. In addition, the individual experiences physical symptoms, including restlessness or feeling keyed up or on edge; being easily fatigued; difficulty concentrating or mind going blank; irritability; muscle tension; and sleep disturbance. (p. 2)

Unlike anxiety (an emotion) or an anxiety disorder (a medical condition), the construct of language anxiety is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon (Dewaele, 2007; Price, 1991) associated with the specific task of using or learning an additional language. The most often-cited definition of language anxiety comes from Horwitz et al.'s (1986) seminal paper, where the authors defined language anxiety as “a distinct, complex construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128). While limited in its failure to recognize the experiences of non-classroom learners and those individuals who may have completed formal language training, Horwitz et al.'s definition of language anxiety is helpful in demonstrating that language anxiety is neither a singular emotion nor a diagnosable medical disorder.

The multifaceted nature of language anxiety is exemplified by both its definition and its measurement. The most popular tool for measuring language anxiety in quantitative language anxiety research is the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986), a Likert-based scale in which participants respond to statements about how different additional-language tasks make them feel. The questions on the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) refer to an array of emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural responses, such as: (emotional) feeling nervous,

frightened, embarrassed, and upset; (cognitive) feeling overwhelmed, self-conscious, unsure of oneself, uneasy, mind-wandering, and self-comparison; (physiological) trembling and heart-pounding; and, finally, (behavioural) avoidance.

Looking beyond quantitative measures of language anxiety, qualitative researchers have observed further emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioral responses to additional language use. For example, participants in Price's (1991) interview study reported obsessive thoughts, sleeplessness, dread, anger, embarrassment, frustration, and feeling terrified, hysterical, and anxious when faced with using their additional language. Participants in Cohen and Norst's (1989) diary study reported physiological and behavioural responses to using their additional language, including blushing, heart pumping, rushing adrenaline, hands shaking, as well as cognitive and emotional responses such as feeling embarrassed and foolish, frightened, unnerved, dumbfounded, nervous, inhibited, guilty, and generally mentally and physically stressed. Other qualitative researchers have observed behavioural responses to additional language use, such as limited eyebrow movement, excessive blinking, reduced eye-contact and smiling, rigid posture, fidgeting movements like foot jiggling (Gregerson, 2005), and avoidance of the additional language altogether (Brown, 2008).

It is evident that the concept of language anxiety can represent a number of different negative emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural responses. In other words, one individual who experiences language anxiety might feel nervous, stressed, and sweaty while her classmate or peer might feel tongue-tied or like their mouth is full of marbles, angry, and fidget excessively. Such is the complex and

multidimensional nature of language anxiety that it may manifest in different emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural responses for different individuals. The term language anxiety, therefore, may be better conceptualized as an umbrella term referring to a number of possible negative emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural responses associated with the task of using an additional language.

In the preceding paragraphs, I have considered how the concept of language anxiety (an experience) is distinct from anxiety (an emotion) and an anxiety disorder (a medical condition). I conceptualized language anxiety as a complex and multidimensional experience, characterized by various negative emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioral responses to using an additional language. In the paragraphs that follow, I consider how language anxiety has been measured and explored from quantitative and qualitative perspectives.

*Measuring language anxiety: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*

Research interest in language anxiety stems from the disciplines of applied psychology and applied linguistics. Two seminal papers are of particular significance to the development of research interest in language anxiety: Scoval (1978) and Horwitz et al. (1986). While Scoval's paper was not the first to consider the phenomenon of language anxiety (see: Chastain, 1975; Dulay & Burt, 1977; Kleinmann, 1977), it was important in its review and identification of conflicting and mixed results in terms of how language-related anxieties were being measured. Approaching language anxiety from an applied psychology perspective, Scoval predicted that language anxiety would be more directly implicated in formal language learning contexts, in contrast to those contexts

where learners are not formally instructed. Scoval's paper now seems prescient; the majority of language anxiety research has focused on identifying bidirectional variables associated with language anxiety in classroom contexts.

In many ways, Horwitz et al.'s (1986) seminal research seems to have responded to Scoval's (1978) call for clearer measurement of language anxiety. Horwitz et al. were the first to systematically define and quantitatively measure language anxiety by developing the foreign language anxiety classroom scale (FLCAS), a Likert-based scale which they administered to undergraduate students taking 'foreign' language classes at the University of Texas; participants answered 33 questions on a five-point Likert scale about their feelings of anxiety related to their additional language, with an emphasis on productive language skills (i.e., speaking, writing). Based on their research, Horwitz et al. argued that language anxiety is related to, but not composed of: communication apprehension, whereby learners fear they will not be able to understand others and/or be able to make themselves understood by others; fear of negative evaluation, whereby learners fear negative perceptions of their peers and teachers; and, test anxiety, whereby learners fear performing badly in test or test-like situations. Significantly, while Horwitz et al. focused their research on classroom-language learning (and used the term 'classroom' in the name of their tool of measurement), they did not limit the potential application for future study to classroom contexts alone; indeed, the authors suggested that language anxiety could also occur in social and professional contexts. Yet, to date, few studies have explored the phenomenon in non-classroom settings.



The significance of Horwitz et al.'s (1986) contribution to the field is evident in the surge of research interest their paper triggered as well as the widespread use and adaptation of the FLCAS. Examples of adaptations of the FLCAS include: the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS), which measures reading-related language anxiety (Saito, Horwitz, & Garza, 1999); the Input, Processing, and Output Scale (IPOAS), which measures language anxiety related to both reading and listening tasks (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994); the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test (DMAWT), which measures language anxiety related to written tasks (Cheng, 2002); and the Foreign Language Anxiety in a Medical Office Scale (FLAMOS), which measures language anxiety related to seeking medical services (Guntzviller et al., 2011). In addition, the FLCAS has also been translated for use in research contexts beyond North America. Examples of languages that the FLCAS has been translated into include: Hungarian (Tóth, 2010), Spanish (Pappamihel, 2002; Rodríguez & Abreu, 2003), Thai (Koul, Roy, Kawekuekool, & Ploisawaschai, 2009), Turkish (Aydin, 1999, as cited in Yayli, 2012; Kunt & Tüm, 2010; Özütürk & Hürsen, 2013), Japanese (In'nami, 2006; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004), and Chinese (Shao et al., 2013).

Despite the popularity of the FLCAS and similar instruments, the appropriateness of Likert-scales for language anxiety research may be limited by a number of factors, including: ambiguous wording of questions (Mauer & Andrew, 2006); the number of scale points (Adelson & McCoach, 2010); the psychological distance between scale points (Wakita, Ueshima, & Noguchi, 2012); and, inconsistencies between Likert scale data and narrative accounts (Ogden & Lo, 2011). Moreover, it has been argued that some

participants may not be familiar with rating scales (Ogden & Lo, 2011), which could result in misrepresentations of learners' voices in terms of their experiences and perspectives (Shao et al., 2013). It has even been argued that the FLCAS does not measure language anxiety at all and instead assesses language learning skills more broadly (Sparks & Patton, 2013). Another important issue is the relatively static nature of the FLCAS, which participants complete only once. As articulated by Scholtz (2010), "a learner could potentially score high enough on the day of administration, but this anxiety may be entirely contingent upon his or her current relation to various social groups and language beliefs" (pp. 4-5). In other words, the FLCAS does not adequately take into account the argument that language anxiety may vary from individual to individual and from moment to moment (Zheng, 2008).

When considering the results of FLCAS-based studies, it is also important to bear in mind that the FLCAS was originally written and intended for 'native' English speakers of educated backgrounds learning 'foreign' languages in a United States college setting in the 1980s (Horwitz et al., 1986). Yet, the instrument has been borrowed and used to measure language anxiety among learners in vastly different learning contexts around the world. However, as Turner (1993) argued, "a questionnaire cannot be assumed to be valid and reliable for any group other than the population for which the reliability and validity were established" (p. 737). This means that the cross-cultural transferability of Likert scales like the FLCAS may be questionable. Indeed, Peng, Nisbett, and Wong (1997) drew attention the potential for "cultural differences in the meaning of particular value terms" (p. 329) and also pointed out that it is possible "that some value judgments are

based on social comparison or deprivation rather than on any ‘direct reading’ of personal preferences” (p. 329). In other words, it may be impossible to compare the levels of language anxiety across different language groups, calling into question studies that have sought to determine the stability of the construct across contexts using instruments like the FLCAS (see: Kim, 2009; Rodríguez & Abreu, 2003).

Looking beyond issues to do with culture and demographics, there are concerns about the language in which the FLCAS is administered. For example, the untranslated FLCAS should not be used to study the language anxiety of learners of English because, as Turner (1993) articulated, “when questionnaires are presented in a language that respondents are engaged in learning, limitations in their language ability may prevent them from responding in a manner that accurately reflects their true opinion or attitude” (p. 736). A seemingly simple solution to this problem would be to translate the FLCAS into the native language of the participant, an approach which a number of researchers have used. However, despite a common belief that the quality of the obtained data improves if the questionnaire is presented in the respondents’ own mother tongue (Harkness, 2008), translated versions of the FLCAS may be limited in other ways. For example, translation may change the meaning or the way that items are interpreted by participants (Behling & Law, 2000; Harkness, 2008; Ogden & Lo, 2011), which again limits the comparability of results obtained in different languages. Moreover, because translation always involves some lexical or structural changes to the original text, it can be challenging to find the right balance of necessary language changes without changing the instrument (Harkness, 2008). Indeed, when it comes to assessing abstract mental

variables like anxiety, the wording of questions is important and minor changes in the wording may produce radically different results (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2011).

Technical issues aside, it is also important to consider what kind of information is revealed by the FLCAS; for the most part, it is a tool for measuring and defining language anxiety, focusing on the disruptive effect of language anxiety on learning, cognition, and competency. However, such methods cannot reveal meaning in terms of individual learner experiences, perspectives, and voices (Shao et al., 2013). Overall, it is evident that the FLCAS is somewhat limited as a research instrument.

As articulated by Shao et al. (2013), “by integrating qualitative methods such as observations, interviews, or reflective journals, it [is] possible to obtain a more comprehensive picture of [language anxiety] issues” (p. 924). Indeed, the value that qualitative approaches can bring to our understanding of language anxiety is evident in a small but rich body of qualitative language anxiety literature dating back several decades. For example, there are several examples of early studies that used qualitative data, such as diary studies (Cohen & Norst, 1989; Bailey, 1983) and semi-structured interviews (Price, 1991), to explore language anxiety from the learner’s perspective. More recently, language anxiety researchers have used mixed methods approaches (Pappamihel, 2002; Tóth, 2010), ethnographic techniques (Brown; 2008; Liu, 2006) and action research (Ewald, 2007) to add to our understanding of the phenomenon. For example, Liu (2006) combined classroom observations with semi-structured interviews with both learners and teachers. She also asked learners to keep reflective journals, while teachers kept weekly records of their observations of anxious and non-anxious students in different classroom

activities throughout the term (Liu, 2006). Ewald's (2007) action research project with advanced Spanish learners similarly involved participants as collaborators, creating a model for involving students in language anxiety research. Another example of a qualitative study of language anxiety is evident in Brown's (2008) ethnographic study of international postgraduate students studying in a British university. Brown used ethnographic methods such as participant interviews and observation over a 12-month period to explore how international graduate students adapted to life in a UK university. Similarly, Ito (2008) and Ohata (2004) also conducted qualitative research of language anxiety among graduate students for their doctoral research projects. Overall, these studies added breadth and depth to our understanding of language anxiety, providing especially rich insight into the experience of language anxiety from the perspective of the learner.

In the preceding paragraphs, I considered how language anxiety is typically measured and I explored some of the critiques and concerns to do with the FLCAS. I acknowledge the value that quantitative studies, including those that used the FLCAS and its related instruments to study language anxiety, have contributed to the field of language anxiety research. However, more qualitative research is needed to add breadth, depth, and richness to our understanding of the phenomenon from the perspective of the individuals having the experience. In the paragraphs that follow, I explore what specific dimensions of language anxiety are understood and those that remain unknown.

### *The dimensions of language anxiety*

A number of different dimensions of language anxiety have been explored within the quantitative and qualitative paradigms. By far the most researched are the cognitive (e.g., Dewaele, 2013; Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002; Scoval, 1978) and academic (e.g., Bailey, Onwuegbuzie, & Daley, 2003; Horwitz et al., 1986) dimensions of language anxiety. There is also an emerging research interest in the possible sociocognitive (Brewer, 2011), identity (Stroud & Wee, 2006) and cultural/policy (Brown, 2008; Cheng & Erben, 2012; Zheng, 2008) dimensions of language anxiety. However, as I will illustrate, few studies have explored the social dimensions of language anxiety in non-classroom contexts.

#### *Cognitive dimensions of language anxiety*

Interest in the cognitive dimensions of language anxiety has focused on the cognitive causes of language anxiety as well as the effect that it may have on cognition, such as memory processing and efficiency. Pre-existing psychological factors, like generalized anxiety, perfectionism, learning difficulties, and emotional intelligence are also emphasized in such investigations. For example, Scoval (1978) viewed language anxiety as the transfer of generalized anxiety into additional language learning contexts. Indeed, having generalized language anxiety was a strong predictor of language anxiety related to reading tasks in a later study (Saito et al., 1999). Sparks and Ganschow (1993) argued that language anxiety is caused by a lack of linguistic aptitude, while Chen and Chang (2004) argued for a causal link between language anxiety and pre-existing general learning difficulties (Chen & Chang, 2004).

Dewaele (2007) also contributed to understandings of the cognitive dimensions of language anxiety, viewing language anxiety as a personality trait and approaching his research from a trait theory perspective. According to this theory, personality traits are hard-wired, biologically based, and only influenced by culture in the sense that learned behaviours are expressed according to local norms (Dewaele, 2007). Dewaele (2013) later investigated the relationship between pre-existing personality traits and language anxiety, and found high levels of neuroticism, defined as the personality trait that reflects anxiety, in anxious additional language learners. Similarly, Tóth (2010) found that personality traits including introversion and low self-esteem appeared to predispose Hungarian learners of English to higher levels of language anxiety. Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) also found a link between high language anxiety and behaviour associated with perfectionism among learners. In terms of emotional intelligence, Dewaele et al. (2008) found that learners with high emotional intelligence experienced lower language anxiety, a finding which was later corroborated by a Chinese study of high school English learners (Shao et al., 2013). These researchers found significant association between low emotional intelligence and high language anxiety, suggesting that emotional intelligence may have some power to mitigate language anxiety.

Factors such as age and sequence of language learning have also been considered in the study of the cognitive dimensions of language anxiety. For example, Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) found that older individuals were more likely to experience language anxiety. Similarly, those language learners who began additional language learning later in life were more likely to experience language anxiety (Dewaele, 2007; Dewaele et al.,

2008). Conversely, multilingual learners of third, fourth or further additional languages are thought to be less likely to experience language anxiety than their ‘second’ language-learning peers (Dewaele, 2007).

*Academic dimensions of language anxiety*

A significant amount of language anxiety research has also focused on the academic dimensions of language, or the pedagogical factors related to language anxiety (Zheng, 2008). In such investigations, emphasis is usually placed on the bidirectional relationships between language anxiety and academic variables, especially the effect that language anxiety may have on communicative competence and learning outcomes. In other words, language anxiety is usually conceptualized as something that may be caused by either teachers, classmates, individual differences, or learning materials, all of which in turn may cause poor academic achievement. Within this view, it is thought that “negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, stress, and anger can compromise learners’ optimal learning potential and largely reduce their learning capacity” (Shao et al., 2013, p. 918). The experiences and anxieties of learners beyond the language classroom are not usually taken into account.

Like many theories of second language acquisition (SLA), much of the language anxiety research that has focused on the academic dimensions of language anxiety treats the phenomenon as competency-based, emphasizing level-based measures of proficiency and assessment outcomes. For example, studies have found that learners at more advanced levels may tend to experience more language anxiety than novice or intermediate learners (Ewald, 2007; Marcos-Llinàs & Garau, 2009; Tóth, 2010).



Although there is conflicting evidence as to whether or not anxiety has a direct negative impact on assessment, it is generally agreed that there is some interplay between language anxiety and poor achievement (Awan, Azher, Anwar, & Anjum, 2010; Horwitz, 2001; Marcos-Llinàs & Garau, 2009; Tóth, 2010). Research that looks at language anxiety from the perspective of academic performance has also emphasized learner behaviours, such as those that teachers may notice in their anxious students, including changes in facial expression, eye contact, posture, body movement, and gesturing (Gregersen, 2005), avoiding class, not completing assignments, a preoccupation with the performance of other students in the class (Horwitz et al., 1986), and attrition (Bailey et al., 2003). Others have emphasized field of academic study (Awan et al., 2010), quality of learning materials (Bekleyen, 2008), and changes in learning environment (Pappamihiel, 2002) as academic variables of language anxiety. According to Stroud and Wee (2006), “it is assumed that students become anxious because they are insecure about their language abilities, and because of this, are concerned about how their use of the target language will be evaluated by the teacher or target community of native speakers” (p. 299). This notion was supported by a Turkish study that found that learners were more likely to be anxious if they felt that their language learning background, vocabulary, or grammatical knowledge was insufficient (Bekleyen, 2008). Similarly, a Canadian study of French immersion students showed that students were more likely to underestimate their additional language competence if they experienced language anxiety (MacIntyre, Noels, & Clément, 1997).

*Identity and cultural dimensions of language anxiety*

Although Horwitz et al. (1986) mentioned identity in their seminal paper, suggesting a potentiality for learners to be anxious about losing their native-language identity when speaking a new language, the relationship between language anxiety and identity remained largely unexplored. Recently, however, Stroud and Wee (2006) proposed the identity-based anxiety framework for the study of language anxiety, “where an individual may be more concerned with maintaining his or her relationship with particular groups than with his or her language abilities” (p. 300). Citing Norton (2000), the authors emphasized that identity references desire for recognition, affiliation, and security, and emphasized that competence is less important than perceptions of belonging. For example, Stroud and Wee found that participants reported not wanting to do certain activities in their additional language classes because they were aware of the potential to be negatively evaluated by their friends. Stroud and Wee also observed participants deliberately making mistakes so as not to stand out. In these situations, Stroud and Wee argued that the learner is more concerned with how she is perceived by her peers, a group to which she feels a desire for belonging, than she is about her language competency. Although very much an emerging conceptualization of language anxiety, the identity-based anxiety framework is important because it is one of the first to formally emphasize the centrality of learner identity in terms of language anxiety.

There is also emerging research interest in the cultural dimensions of language anxiety (Awan et al., 2010; Brown, 2008; Cheng & Erben, 2012). Such interest has focused on language anxiety in both classroom and non-classroom contexts. For example,

Zheng (2008) argued that a better understanding of cultural dimensions of language anxiety may be able to shed light on why students from cultures that practice high-stakes testing may experience more language anxiety than their peers from cultures that do not. Further research has suggested that, in cultures where correctness and accuracy are highly prized, learners tended to feel more anxious if they felt they had made errors (Awan et al., 2010).

One of the first researchers to explore the cultural dimensions of language anxiety in non-classroom contexts was Brown (2008), a higher-education researcher based in the United Kingdom. Brown was interested in exploring the lived experiences of international post-graduate students adapting to university life in a UK university. Working with thirteen students over a 12-month period, Brown's ethnography involved in-depth interviews, observations, and field notes. Brown discovered that language-related anxieties featured in many of the narratives of her participants, across different language backgrounds. More specifically, Brown found that her participants experienced debilitating language anxiety, especially in face-to-face oral interactions with colleagues and professors. Moreover, Brown's study drew a significant link between language anxiety and issues of identity, belonging, and adequacy. Brown's study is important because it was one of the first to explore language anxiety in a non-classroom setting, challenging the assumption that language anxiety is a phenomenon that is limited to the language classroom. Another important strength was the emphasis that she placed on responding to and including the voices and concerns of her participants in her study. Brown's study also stands out because, rather than seeking to measure or define the

anxieties of her students, she offered a uniquely rich and detailed description of their experiences, painting a complex and multidimensional picture of the experiences of anxious learners.

Similar to Brown's (2008) work, Cheng and Erben's (2012) study involved graduate students in institutions of higher education. Cheng and Erben used an acculturation framework, based on the assumption that "when people with socially appropriate behaviour in their own culture suddenly become incompetent in a new context, they may feel anxious and lose self-confidence, or even worse, they may become socially isolated" (p. 480). Drawing links between acculturation, culture shock, and anxiety, they conducted a mixed-methods study of 156 Chinese graduate students of advanced proficiency at an American university, including background questionnaires, a modified version of the FLCAS, and semi-structured interviews with 12 participants using a phenomenological approach for analysis (Cheng & Erben, 2012). They found that newly-arrived students were the most anxious, based on FLCAS scores, and they reported that they avoided using English unless accompanied by an intermediary. Even those students who had studied English extensively in China reported feeling very anxious about interacting with 'native' English speakers, despite the fact that many of them reported that improving their English was one of their primary goals of studying abroad. Cheng and Erben also found that the longer these graduate students had been in the USA, the less language anxiety they reported. Cheng and Erben's study is important because it supports Brown's (2008) work indicating the existence of language anxiety in non-classroom contexts.

Like Cheng and Erben (2012), Ohata (2004) was also interested in the cultural dimensions of language anxiety. For her doctoral research, Ohata explored the experiences of Japanese international graduate students at a university in the United States. Using a qualitative case-study approach, Ohata conducted in-depth interviews with seven participants. She found a significant interplay between their cultural perceptions and their experiences of language anxiety. Ohata argued that language anxiety is inherently related to culture because “culture and language are equally critical elements of our existence” (p. 224). In other words, the difficulties of learning an additional language have to do with the processes of learning to use it in connection to both the social and the cultural contexts (Ohata, 2004). Similar to Horwitz et al.’s (1986) suggestion that language anxiety was related to a fear of negative evaluation, Ohata suggested that language anxiety occurred when learners felt their self-identity was threatened:

Every single opportunity of interaction with others in a second language becomes naturally threatening to the learners’ self-identity because it involves the possibility that their existence as both cultural and personal beings might be misrepresented in their limited command or control of second language. (p. 231)

#### *Language anxiety in non-classroom contexts*

I have already mentioned that the majority of language anxiety research has focused on experiences in language classroom contexts; within both the qualitative and quantitative paradigms, only a handful of studies have explored language anxiety in contexts other than traditional language classrooms, such as graduate schools (Brown,

2008; Cheng & Erben, 2012; Ito, 2008; Ohata, 2004), doctor's offices (Guntzviller et al., 2011), and other public settings (Dewaele, 2007). These studies form part of an emerging body of literature that supports the notion of language anxiety beyond the language classroom. This small body of literature suggests an interplay between language anxiety and difficulties related to negotiating issues of identity and belonging (Cheng & Erben, 2012; Brown, 2008; Ohata, 2004), securing employment (Dewaele, 2007), and accessing essential government services (Guntzviller et al., 2011).

One study that explored language anxiety in non-classroom contexts was Dewaele's (2007) study of 106 university students at Birkbeck, University of London. Dewaele found that individuals experienced language anxiety when interacting with strangers in public in an additional language. In comparison, private interactions with people that were well known to the participants were less anxiety-inducing. While the primary aim of Dewaele's study was to compare the stability of language anxieties among individuals with access to two, three, or more languages, it served the secondary purpose of clearly demonstrating the existence of non-classroom language anxiety. Guntzviller et al.'s (2011) study also supported the notion of language anxiety in non-classroom settings in their development of a language anxiety scale for English-using Latino populations seeking medical services in California. Although their study was limited to the development and initial testing of the validity Foreign Language Anxiety in a Medical Office Scale (FLAMOS) (Guntzviller et al., 2011), they laid the groundwork for further studies to investigate the role of language anxiety in additional language users seeking essential services.

Most research on non-classroom language anxiety has focused on the experiences of international students studying in English-language universities. I have already described the studies by Brown (2008) and Cheng and Erben (2012). Similar to these studies, two recent doctoral research projects have also explored non-classroom language anxiety among graduate students in North American contexts (Ito, 2008; Ohata, 2004). These studies are important because they add to a growing body of literature about non-classroom language anxiety and demonstrate a need for further research into the phenomenon. For example, Ito's (2008) research was focused on the facilitative effect of language anxiety among ten international undergraduate and graduate students from nine different countries around the world. Ito posited a new construct of language anxiety called identity frustration, whereby learners' language anxiety is informed by inner self-comparison between who they felt they were in their home countries and who they saw themselves to be in the US. According to Ito, language anxiety can be facilitative when learners are able to reconcile their identity frustration and begin to accept themselves as additional language learners. Similarly, Ohata's (2004) study of Japanese international graduate students in the US suggested that individuals who experience non-classroom language anxiety may have difficulty adapting and integrating into their new environments. Ohata's participants reported feelings of self-doubt, inner turmoil, and psychological distress in response to using English in non-classroom contexts. Like Cheng and Erben (2012) and Brown's (2008) studies, Ohata's research suggested that non-classroom language anxiety can have a significant impact on an individual's acculturation and sense of belonging in their sociolinguistic environment.

The studies described above (Brown, 2008; Cheng & Erben, 2012; Dewaele, 2007; Guntzviller et al., 2011; Ito, 2008; Ohata, 2004; Toth, 2010) indicate that language anxiety is not limited to the language classroom, countering conceptualizations of language anxiety as a classroom-specific phenomenon. Moreover, these studies suggest that learners are more likely to experience language anxiety when using their additional language in unfamiliar public situations where there is an element of performance. Significantly, this emerging field lays the groundwork for further study in sociolinguistic contexts like Montréal.

#### *Chapter summary*

In this chapter, I explored the existing literature about language anxiety. Overall, my review of the literature reveals three main gaps in our understanding of language anxiety. First, since most language anxiety research has emphasized the cognitive and academic dimensions of language anxiety, little is known about the social dimensions of language anxiety. Second, since the majority of language anxiety research has relied on quantitative research, more qualitative research is needed to add breadth, depth, and richness to our understanding of the phenomenon from the perspective of the individuals having the experience. Finally, since the majority of language anxiety research has focused on experiences of individuals in classroom contexts, more research into non-classroom language anxiety is necessary.



## Chapter 4

### Methodology

#### *Chapter overview*

In this chapter, I outline the methodological approach that I used in order to collect and analyze data. In the first part of the chapter, I explore the principles behind the chosen methodological approach: qualitative case studies, emphasizing a non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013). In the second part of the chapter, I describe the instruments that I used to collect narrative data, including interviews, language maps, *in situ* recordings, journals, walking interviews, and focus groups. In the third part of the chapter, I describe the participants and procedures for the study, which included three phases: Phase 1 (Preliminary interviews and language maps); Phase 2 (Participant field work); and, Phase 3 (Focus groups). Finally, I describe how I used an Immersion/Crystallization approach (Borkan, 1999) to analyze my data with participants collaborating through participant interpretation and validation.

#### *Methodological approach*

I used a qualitative case study approach because I felt that such an approach would provide the scope for me to study non-classroom language anxiety in its natural setting. There are several key principles to case study research that informed my decision. First, case studies have a wholeness (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005), presenting a complete description of a phenomenon in its context (Duff, 2008). Thus, the end product of the case study is a thick description of the phenomenon of investigation; this thick description is achieved through the collection of rich qualitative data, through which the

case study researcher seeks to capture the complexity of the case itself (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). Second, case studies work under the assumption that the same phenomenon can be viewed from different perspectives or interpreted differently (Duff, 2008). Therefore, many case study researchers will collect data that represent the perspectives of multiple individuals and/or emphasize multiple tools of data collection as a means of triangulation. Next, case studies are inextricably tied to the context within which the case occurs. In this sense, a significant aspect of case study research involves spending time in the world of those being researched (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). Finally, case studies emphasize participant voice and may even involve participant collaboration at various stages of the research process (Cohen et al., 2005).

*Non-static approach to data collection*

Within the broader qualitative case study approach, I drew from a non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013), which refers to the use of non-static tools of data collection, or techniques that are not bound to specific locations and allow the researcher to ‘follow’ participants as they move through different contexts. I was inspired to use a non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013) by the recent work of Lamarre (2013; Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009), who explored the language practices of young multilingual Montrealers in their day-to-day movements around the city (Lamarre, 2013). Using their non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013) allowed the researchers to reveal the dynamic and creative ways that young Montrealers drew on their linguistic resources over the course of their everyday lives, highlighting Montréal’s

complex sociolinguistic dynamic and challenging the ways in which language in Montréal is considered and investigated (Lamarre, 2013).

Examples of non-static tools of data collection can include participant biographies, journaling, reflective interviews, participant field notes, and go-along interviews (Lamarre, 2013; Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009). Indeed, the idea of non-static tools of data collection has also been articulated as mobile methods because they allow the notion of mobility to enter into the research design on a practical level (Najar, 2014) and provide the scope for the researcher to go beyond what site-bound studies of language are able to achieve (Lamarre, 2013), namely to ‘follow’ participants throughout their day-to-day lives. Such an approach has the potential to capture the wholeness of the participants as individuals who move through different spaces and social situations every day. It is my belief that non-static tools of data collection have the potential to paint a more complex and multi-dimensional picture of learners and their experiences of non-classroom language anxiety. Importantly, a non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013) is particularly appropriate given that the concept of mobility (Blommaert, 2014) is emphasized within the conceptual framework of my study.

#### *Instruments for the non-static approach to data collection*

In the paragraphs above, I described the methodological approach for the study and explored how a non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013) has the potential to shed new light on language anxiety. In the paragraphs that follow, I describe the four different instruments that I used in implementing this non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013), including: language maps, *in situ* recordings, participant

journals, and walking interviews. These instruments were also used in Lamarre's (2013; Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009) study using a non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013).

### *Language map drawings*

The first instrument that I used in implementing the non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013) was language map drawings, an instrument that I adapted inspired by Lamarre's (2013) use of maps of Montréal as interview prompts and Crump's (2014) use of language portraits (Krumm & Jenkins, 2001).

In their study of young multilingual Montrealers, Lamarre (2013; Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009) asked participants to indicate on a map of Montréal the places where they usually went, with the aim of gaining a picture of their language practices. In her study of multilingual children in Montréal, Crump (2014) also used a visual prompt; Crump drew from Krumm and Jenkins' (2001) language portraits technique, whereby the researcher asks participant to color in the outline of a person and use different colors to represent each language they speak. A similar technique has also been used by Busch (2010) in exploring the experiences of language learners in South Africa. By using this technique with her participants, Crump was able to elicit conversations about children's understandings of their multilingualism. The use of both the maps (Lamarre, 2013; Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009) and the language portraits (Busch, 2010; Crump, 2014; Krumm & Jenkins, 2001) appealed to me because they allow participants to represent their conceptualizations of language visually. I imagined that a combination of these two

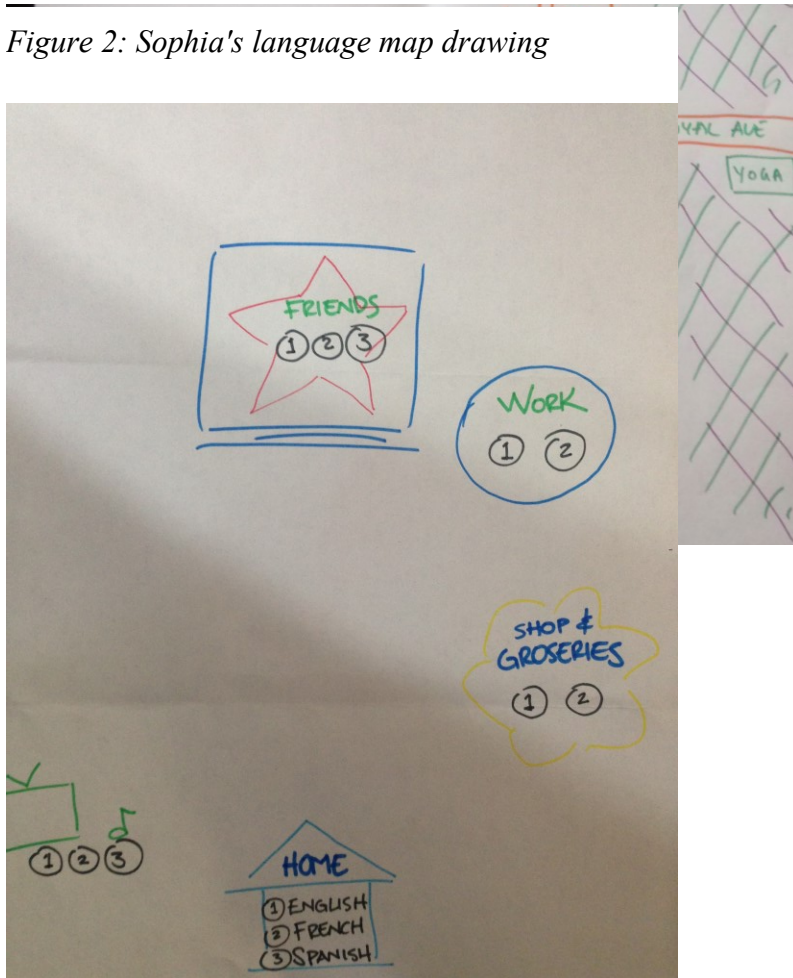
instruments would be a good way to elicit conversations about participants' language anxiety in different social contexts.

Drawing inspiration from both Lamarre's (2013) use of language maps and Crump's (2014) use of language portraits (Busch, 2010; Krumm & Jenkins, 2001), I adapted the two techniques and asked my participants to draw language maps. My participants drew a map that represented their everyday language practices, with different colors representing the different languages they used in different places. We then used their language map drawings as prompts for the participants to reflect on and describe their experiences of language anxiety in different social contexts. I wanted my participants to draw their language maps because I wanted them to be in control of how they chose to represent their language practices. This reflected the overarching principles of collaborative and participatory research practices by involving participants as co-researchers. I also wanted participants to draw their maps because I wanted their drawings to represent their own conceptualizations of their language practices. This was important because the maps were used as prompts for the participants to talk about the language practices, rather than data for me to interpret. In other words, it was more important that the participants were able to make sense of and talk about their language map drawings than it was for me to understand their maps. Essentially, I was interested in the interplay between participants' social experiences and language anxiety, so the geography of their language practices was secondary to the social context of their experiences.

I found that participants' drawings were vastly different from each other, but that drawing their own maps allowed for great creativity and flexibility. In other words, by drawing their own maps, participants represented their conceptualization of space and their language practices in their own unique ways. For example, where some participants chose to represent their language practices geographically, with different neighborhoods drawn on their paper (see Figure 1: Jordan's language map drawing), other participants' maps were representations of different social zones (see Figure 2: Sophia's language map drawing).

Figure 1: Jordan's language map drawing

Figure 2: Sophia's language map drawing



Unlike other non-static tools of data collection that I will describe in the paragraphs that follow, the language map drawings were generated in a closed interview setting in my office at McGill. At first glance, therefore, it may seem that the participant language map drawings were not non-static *per se* because participants were not making the language map drawings in the context of their everyday lives and movements around the city. Nevertheless, I consider the language map drawings to be a non-static instrument

for data collection for several reasons. First, language map drawings emphasize participants' mobility as language users and thus reflect the spirit of a non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013). In addition, through making language map drawings, participants thought about and described their language practices and language anxiety in a non-static way. For example, rather than having participants tell me what made them feel anxious about their French, they instead reflected on their language anxiety within the context of their language practices and their everyday movements around the city. In this sense, the data that were generated through the language map drawings was non-static in nature. Overall, it is my belief that the language map drawing brought the participant's social world into the interview setting, making it a viable non-static instrument for data collection.

#### *In situ recordings*

The second instrument that I used in implementing the non-static approach to data collection was *in situ* recordings. Traditionally used in linguistic anthropology research (Duranti, 1997), second language acquisition research (Chaudron, 2003), and more recently in sociolinguistic research in Montréal (Lamarre, 2013; Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009), *in situ* recordings provide a form of naturalistic data about individual's use of language (Chaudron, 2003). Typically, the researcher records participants' speech in naturalistic settings, for example children at play or teachers interacting with students (Chaudron, 2003)

Lamarre's (2013; Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009) research reflected a twist on the traditional research instrument by giving control of the recording device to participants



themselves, thus allowing the researchers to access interactions that were otherwise limited: those that take place as participants go about their day to day lives. Moreover, by having participants make their own recordings, Lamarre's participants became collaborators and co-creators in the research process, which reflects the same principles of collaborative participatory research that I wanted to emphasize in my own research.

For my study, I used *in situ* recordings to capture natural, spontaneous speech acts of my participants and their interlocutors in public. Because the *in situ* recordings were the first task that participants completed in Phase 2 (participant field work), this instrument also served the secondary purpose of helping raise participants' awareness of their own language practices in Montréal. In other words, the act of making the *in situ* recordings was a useful precursor to the journaling task because participants were already thinking about their language anxiety in the context of their everyday language practices. The specific details of how *in situ* recordings were used in the present study are outlined a later section of the this report (see: Procedures).

#### *Participant reflective journals*

The third instrument that I used in implementing the non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013) was participant reflective journals. Participant journals are particularly suitable for case study research because case study research is concerned with the experiences of real people in real situations, recognizing the power of context (Cohen et al., 2005). The centrality of context is reflected in the fact that participant journals are characterized by their immediacy to the experience at hand (Hamilton & Corbett-Whitter, 2013). Journals can help researchers gain an understanding of the lived

experiences of participants and how they respond to events and interactions with the world around them (Hamilton & Corbett-Whitter, 2013). Journals take the researcher where she is otherwise unable to go over a long period of time: with the participants as they go about their day to day lives and interact with others. In classroom or workplace studies, it is often possible for the researcher to spend long periods of time *in situ*, observing participants and collecting data about the phenomenon of investigation through observation techniques. In the study at hand, this would have been intrusive and impractical since *in situ* would have been the participants' home, workplace, social, and public life. Therefore, it was necessary and appropriate to recruit the participants themselves to collect data about their own lives. This was achieved, in part, by having participants keep reflective journals.

Having participants keep reflective journals achieved more than just the collection of rich non-static data; it also reflected principles of collaborative and participatory research practices. In designing my study, I was particularly inspired by the collaborative and participatory nature of Lamarre's (2013; Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009) use of reflective field notes. In their study of young multilingual Montrealers, the researchers had participants keep field notes in the form of a logbook, recording information about how and where they used different languages as they moved throughout the city in their day-to-day lives. Participants were asked to go further than simply recording facts; they were also asked to interpret their own experiences and the data that they collected, thus "allowing them to engage in a reflection on their own multilingual experience, as well as participate in the preliminary analysis of data" (Lamarre, 2013, p. 44). In this sense, the

use of participant field notes was highly participatory and democratic, involving the participants as collaborators in Lamarre's (2013; Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009) investigation. As Lamarre (2013) argued, collaborative approaches of this nature are valuable because they "allow participants to engage in the research process, drawing on reflexivity and reflectivity, to bring more depth to observation and interview techniques" (p. 53). This fit within my view of participants as co-researchers and collaborators in this project.

Lamarre's (2013; Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009) use of participant field notes is reflective of a wider tradition of using written participant narratives in qualitative research. For example, Duff (2008) argued that diaries or journals can be useful in qualitative case study research in applied linguistics because of what they reveal about learner experiences and language use. Unlike observations, journals provide written first person narrative accounts of experiences (Merriam, 2009). Reflective logs and journals that are written by participants can capture the narrative of the participant (Hamilton & Corbett-Whitter, 2013). These narratives are valuable beyond the simple relaying of facts and moments; they are also useful in terms of how individuals construct and articulate their stories (Blommaert & Dong, 2010). In this sense, the narratives that emerge from the journals can help the researcher understand the inner world of the individual (Hamilton & Corbett-Whitter, 2013).

While participant journals can be structured, flexible, or unstructured (Hamilton & Corbett-Whitter, 2013), I aimed for a flexible structure. The advantage of a flexible structure is that it empowers the individual writing the journal, but maintains the focus of

the research (Hamilton & Corbett-Whitter, 2013). Hamilton and Corbett-Whitter (2013) recommended combining the use of participant journals with a follow-up interview; in my study, this was accomplished in the walking interview, which I describe in the next section.

### *Walking interviews*

The fourth instrument that I used in implementing a non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013) was walking interviews. Walking interviews are an emerging instrument that have mostly been used in urban anthropology (Jones, Bunce, Evans, Gibbs, & Hien, 2008). Nevertheless, walking interviews can also bring value to research that is concerned with spatial experiences (Jones et al., 2008) or practices in everyday life (Kusenbach, 2003), such as language anxiety. Only recently have walking interviews been used for language-related research (see: Lamarre, 2013; Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009; Najar, 2014). To the best of my knowledge, prior to this study, the walking interview instrument had never been used in any language anxiety research.

Walking interviews usually involve participants leading the researcher through locales of the participant's choosing, usually those that form part of the participants' immediate geographies (Najar, 2014). Because they allow the researcher to see and engage with the participant *in situ*, walking interviews constitute a kind of hybrid between observation and interviews (Jones et al., 2008; Kusenbach, 2003). Walking interviews also contrast the traditional interview that takes place in a room or office because the traditional interview is limited by the fact that it usually removes participants from their natural environment and activities (Kusenbach, 2003). In this way, certain

aspects of the lived experience may remain invisible or unexplored in the closed interview (Kusenbach, 2003). Researchers using a closed interview may seek to address such limitations by using association props such as photographs, letters, or books (Kusenbach, 2003). Yet, most closed interviews are still static encounters (Kusenbach, 2003). In the words of Najar (2014), “it seems somehow paradoxical to talk about intercultural learning as a social practice while sitting in an isolated place conducting the interview” (p. 201). In contrast, interviews that take place on the move hold great potential for shedding light on how participants use and engage with different spaces (Jones et al., 2008; Najar, 2014). The environment itself may act as a prompt for discussions, stories, or sharing (Jones et al., 2008) that may not have had the potential to emerge from sedentary interviews that take place in a room.

I wanted my research design to reflect principles of collaborative and participatory research practices by involving participants as co-researchers in my project. The walking interview technique was particularly suited to this aim because walking interviews “give the participant a central role while letting her or him guide the route” (Najar, 2014, p. 203). In other words, the participant is in control of where the walkers go and what stories emerge from those spaces. This is significant because the power dynamics in an interview situation have the potential to inform the kind of data that are generated (Jones et al., 2008). By changing the power dynamic, new insights and dimensions of the puzzle may be revealed. However, walking interviews do not simply invert the power dynamic between interviewer and interviewee. Najar (2014) argued that by walking in a pair, participant and researcher are doing more than following each other;

rather, they participate in “an exchange of different ways of orienting... [which] enables the language learner and researcher to create new and emerging spaces” (p. 203). In this sense, the walking interview is a collaborative research technique and participants may be empowered in the process (Jones et al., 2008).

### *Other instruments*

In the previous paragraphs, I described four instruments that I used in implementing the non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013). These instruments included: language maps, *in situ* recordings, participant journals, and walking interviews. In addition to these non-static instruments, my data collection was bookended by two additional instruments: semi-structured preliminary interviews and focus groups. While these instruments are not necessarily non-static *per se*, in that they do not happen on the move or *in situ*, they fit within the wider non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013). In the paragraphs that follow, I describe how these two research instruments fit within the wider methodological framework.

My study opened with a preliminary semi-structured interview with each participant. As I have mentioned, while interviews have a growing presence in applied linguistics research (Mann, 2010), they can also be a relatively static encounter (Kusenbach, 2003) that can isolate participants from their social context and experiences (Najar, 2014). Indeed, nine of the ten preliminary interviews took place in my office at McGill, a space that my participants were not familiar with, nor did it reflect the social context of their everyday experiences (one participant, Mary, was not able to come to my office, so I met her at her home). Nevertheless, the preliminary interview played an

important role in the overall research because it facilitated the language map drawings and served as an orientation to the next stages of the research. I have already argued that the participant language map drawing can be considered a non-static instrument for data collection. In this sense, it can be argued that the relatively static nature of the preliminary interview was offset by the participant language map drawings because drawing their maps brought the outside world into the interview space. Indeed, the preliminary interview was an ideal space for participants to make their language map drawings because I had a drawing surface and the art supplies in my office. The preliminary interview also doubled as a necessary orientation to the next stages of the research, where participants were generating data through more non-static instruments such as *in situ* recordings, reflective journals, and walking interviews.

There were also benefits as to the kind of data that we were able to generate in the preliminary interview. Indeed, the closed-room style of interview offered benefits that the other instruments could not (at least for our preliminary meeting). As articulated by Gerson and Horowitz (2002):

Although it may seem paradoxical, the bounded nature of the interview and the professionally neutral stance of the interviewer make the process of disclosure possible. The structure of the situation, with its guarantees of confidentiality, creates a space outside of the 'real' world in which disclosure and insight can proceed... By creating an impartial emotional space, the interviewer provides the opportunity for people to step back from their ordinary routines and reflect on their lives. (p. 210)

In other words, the preliminary interviews allowed me to meet my participants and get to know them in a quiet, closed, and confidential space in anticipation of the more open walking interviews, where I asked participants to bring me into their own personal worlds and geographies. Moreover, in the closed-room interview setting, participants may be open to answering questions that might seem “intrusive, impertinent, too nose-y within the context of polite conversation” (Schostak, 2005, p. 10). In this sense, the interview context allowed us to go deeper and explore topics and issues in a way that other techniques would not have been able to offer. Indeed, Lamarre (2013; Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009) used semi-structured interviews in their study of young Montrealers’ language practices, the study on which my overarching methodological approach is based. In Lamarre’s study, participants took part in two semi-structured interviews where they reflected on and interpreted their experiences and the data that they had generated. Similarly, the purpose of my semi-structured interview was to establish a relationship with participants whereby their reflections and interpretations were encouraged.

In the paragraphs above, I described the rationale and use of semi-structured interviews. I now consider focus groups, the second research instrument that was not non-static *per se*, but nevertheless fit within the overarching non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013) emphasized in my research design. My data collection opened with a preliminary interview with each participant and closed with focus groups. Like the preliminary interview, the focus groups were relatively static in nature because they took place in a closed room at McGill University. However, their use also brought something



to the research process that would otherwise have been unattainable using other non-static research instruments.

Focus groups have an established presence in qualitative research. For example, Stewart, Shamdasani, and Rook (2007) refer to focus groups as “a distinctive member of the qualitative research family” (p. 1) and “an important part of the social scientist’s toolkit” (p. 2). Focus groups have been used for language related research, including Lamarre’s (2013) study of young multilingual Montrealers, as well as language anxiety research (Horwitz et al., 1986; Pappamihel, 2002). Focus groups usually involve interaction between participants in a group setting for the purpose of generating discussion about a topic (David & Sutton, 2010) and gathering opinions (Kreuger & Casey, 2008). Focus groups are ideal for case study research because case studies often emphasize participant voice and involve participant collaboration at various stages of the research process (Cohen et al., 2005). Indeed, this was one of my primary goals of the focus group stage of the research; I wanted to bring my preliminary analyses back to participants for validation (Cohen et al., 2005) and give participants the chance to collaboratively interpret the data that they had generated.

Like the preliminary interview, focus groups have already been used to complement a non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013). For example, in Lamarre’s (2013) study, “focus groups brought participants together, five at a time, to discuss their experience of the city and of languages as young multilinguals” (p. 45). This is important because it demonstrates how focus groups can be used within the framework of a non-static approach. Indeed, focus groups reflect several principles of a non-static

approach. For example, focus groups are “socially oriented, studying participants in an atmosphere more natural than artificial experimental circumstances and more relaxed than the exposure of one-to-one interviews” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 115).

Moreover, focus groups assume “that an individual’s attitudes and beliefs do not form in a vacuum: People often need to listen to others’ opinions and understandings to form their own.” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 115). As articulated by David and Sutton (2010), “it can be argued that the focus group is democratic and participatory, giving more power to the interviewees.” (p. 134). Overall, it is evident that focus groups reflect several principles of both a non-static approach to data collection as well as the overarching critical social conceptual framework for my study.

In sum, both the preliminary interview and the focus groups allowed me to work with participants in generating data that would not have been possible through the participant language maps, *in situ* recordings, reflective journals, and walking interviews. Overall, and as previously demonstrated in Lamarre’s (2013) study, traditionally static research instruments can be used to complement non-static tools of data collection within the overarching framework of a non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013). In other words, a non-static approach to data collection does not necessarily have to use exclusively non-static tools of data collection. I agree with Lamarre (2013) that a non-static approach to data collection can include more traditional static instruments, as long as the spirit of generating non-static data is reflected throughout the research process.

In the previous paragraphs, I explored semi-structured preliminary interviews and focus groups, two traditionally static instruments that nevertheless fit within the

overarching non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013) used for my study.

The specifics on how the different research instruments were administered are detailed later in this chapter (see: Procedures).

### *Design*

In the paragraphs above, I described and explored the rationale behind the methodological approach and data collection chosen for the study. Ultimately, these ideas came together in the form of three phases of data collection:

- *Phase 1 (September, 2015)*: I conducted semi-structured preliminary interviews with each participant during which they drew language maps as prompts to discuss their language anxiety.
- *Phase 2 (October, 2015)*: Participants worked as collaborators in the field, making recordings of themselves using French in their day-to-day lives and keeping a journal of interactions during which they experienced language anxiety. This phase concluded with participants taking me on a walking interview (Lamarre, 2013; Najar, 2014) around an area of Montréal of their choice.
- *Phase 3 (November, 2015)*: Participants came together for focus groups, during which the themes from the field were discussed, follow-up questions addressed, and preliminary analyses brought back to participants for reflection and validation (Cohen et al., 2005).

### *Field journal*

In addition to the three phases of the research outlined above, I kept a field journal throughout the research process to capture reflections, tentative themes, and ideas that

derived from the data as it was generated (Merriam, 2009). I wrote in my field journal after every interview with a participant and whenever I interacted with the data; for example, after a session of transcribing or reading their journal entries. Over the course of my study, I produced over 22,000 words in my field journal; more than simply interview memos or field notes, the journal became a one-stop-shop for my interpretations, reflections, emerging themes, notes-to-self, reminders, jottings, thoughts, ideas, follow-up questions, and a place where I posed and answered questions of myself and the data. In this sense, my field journal was also a key component of my data analysis, which I explore in more depth in the analysis section of this report. Moreover, my field journal was important because case studies, especially those with multiple cases and multiple forms of data collection, are notoriously data-heavy, which can result in a daunting amount of data for the case study researcher to contend with (Duff, 2008). For this reason, my field journal became a place for self-dialogue where I was able to express some of the pressure I was feeling in managing my field work.

#### *Recruitment and selective sampling*

In the paragraphs that follow, I describe the recruitment and selection of the participants that I worked with over the course of the three phases described above, before detailing the steps that I took in carrying out each of the three phases of the research.

As a recruitment technique, I used an online questionnaire (see: Appendix 1: Phase 0 recruitment flyer) hosted by Google Forms. The recruitment questionnaire included 19 closed-ended and open-ended questions about participants' language

backgrounds and experiences of language anxiety. At the end of the questionnaire, I asked participants to enter their email address if they were interested in participating in the main study. It was therefore very easy for people to express their interest in participating in my study. I distributed the questionnaire through my personal, professional, and academic networks via email, Facebook, and Twitter (see: Appendix 2: Phase 0 recruitment scripts (email & social media)) starting on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015. As an incentive to participate in the recruitment questionnaire, participants had the chance to win a \$50 Amazon.ca gift certificate. Between July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015, a total of 56 people completed the online questionnaire; 48 expressed interest in participating in the main study.

The ultimate goal of the recruitment questionnaire was to generate a pool of potential participants so I could selectively sample ten participants for the main study. Selective sampling refers to the purposeful selection of participants based on their individual characteristics and is a common feature of case study research because it enables researchers to explore a range of human possibilities in a particular domain (Duff, 2008). In August, 2015, I began selective sampling from the list of people who had completed the recruitment questionnaire and expressed interest in participating in the main study. The first step in the selective sampling process was to eliminate candidates who did not report experiencing non-classroom language anxiety. I then selectively sampled ten potential participants, seeking variation in terms of demographics (e.g., age, gender, personal backgrounds, proficiencies, language learning experiences, etc.) and in terms of their experiences of non-classroom language anxiety. In other words, I was

looking for participants whose backgrounds and experiences differed from each other. I emailed each potential participant individually to invite them to participate in the main study. Of the ten whom I initially contacted, eight accepted and agreed to participate in my study. In the following weeks, I contacted two additional potential participants from questionnaire responses, both of whom accepted to participate in the main study. In total, ten people participated in the main study.

Only the questionnaire responses of the final 10 participants who joined the main study were kept in order to be used as stimulus material in the first interview. All other data generated from the online questionnaire were deleted from Google Drive and my password-protected computer at the end of the recruitment process.

### *Participants*

The ten participants (see: *Table 1: Information about participants (at the time of data collection)*), chosen through the process of selective sampling detailed above, were all individuals for whom French was an additional language, who lived on the island of Montréal, and who self-reported feelings of language anxiety. All participants were between the ages of 24 and 34 and were not taking any formal French classes at the time of their participation in this study. Of the ten participants, eight were female and two were male. Seven participants were from Canada, one was from Colombia, one was from Iran, and one was from the United States. Three participants had lived in Montréal for all or most of their lives, and one was from another part of Québec. Background information about language background and proficiency was collected at the time of recruitment and added to directly by each participant at the time of the Phase 1 interview (see: *Table 1:*

*Information about participants (at the time of data collection)*). Participants chose their own pseudonyms, which were used exclusively for all data generated. Participants also supplied pseudonyms for significant others who featured prominently in the stories they shared, and these pseudonyms were likewise used exclusively for all data generated.

*Table 1: Information about participants (at the time of data collection)* (below) provides an overview of participants' demographic and background information. Participants are listed using their pseudonyms and according to the order in which they were first interviewed. Similarly, the case studies in the Results (see: Chapter 5) of this report are presented and organized in the same manner as Table 1.

Participation in this study required a total time commitment of 10 hours from each participant over the course of three months (September to November, 2015). All participants were given a \$100 compensation at the completion of their participation. This compensation would have been pro-rated for participants who could not or did not wish to complete all the phases of the study; however, there was no attrition and all 10 participants completed all three phases of the study. I also provided light refreshments at all interviews and at the focus group sessions.

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years in Montreal</b>	<b>Languages &amp; self-described proficiency</b>	<b>Age began learning French</b>	<b>Setting where French was learned</b>	<b>Place of Origin</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
Sophia	F	30	6	English – Advanced French – High-int Spanish - Native	25	Adult Ed. (McGill)	Colombia	Designer
Ryan	M	34	3	English - Native-like French – Beginner Farsi - Native	28	Adult Ed. (Francization)	Iran	Graduate student (Education)
Kiki	F	29	3	English – Native French – High-int	13	Adult Ed (McGill)	USA	Graduate student (Health Admin)
DJ	M	29	4	English – Native French – High-int	7	Core French	Eastern Townships, Québec, Canada	Teacher
Karine	F	24	24	English – Native French – High-int	6	French Immersion & French Courses	Montreal, Québec, Canada	Graphic Designer
Mary	F	28	21	English/French (bilingual)	5	French school	Montreal, Québec, Canada	Social Worker
Denise	F	24	2	English – Native French - Advanced	from birth	Home & French Immersion	Ontario, Canada	Marketing
Rainbow	F	30	3	English: Native French: Int/Adv. Mandarin: Advanced	5	French Immersion	New Brunswick, Canada	Teacher
Jordan	F	27	27	English – Native French –Int	5	Bilingual School	Montreal, Québec, Canada	Accountant
Alice	F	29	3	English: Native French: Int Japanese: Int	3	Core French & Adult Ed. (Francization)	Saskatchewan, Canada	Student (Nursing)

*Table 1: Information about participants (at the time of data collection)*



*Ethical approval and informed consent*

At the beginning of the preliminary (Phase 1) interview, participants read and signed a consent form (see: Appendix 4: Phase 1, 2, & 3 Consent form). After reviewing the consent form and clarifying any questions they had, each participant signed two identical copies of the consent form. The participant kept one copy of the signed consent form and I kept the other copy. My copy of the consent form was stored in a locked cabinet in my co-supervisor's office at McGill. I explained to participants that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

*Audio and video recording*

My primary recording device was my iPhone. I used the Voice Memos application to record the audio of all interviews (preliminary interview, walking interview, and focus group). I used the camera application to take photographs of participants' language maps (Phase 1). I also used a small digital camera to take photos of identifying landmarks during the walking interviews (Phase 2.3). For the preliminary interview (Phase 1) and the focus groups (Phase 3), I used a computer program called Audacity to make back-up recordings; however, these backup recordings were not needed and were subsequently deleted. After each interview, I transferred the audio file from my password-protected iPhone to my password-protected computer and erased the file from my iPhone. All digital data was stored on my computer. Files that contained identifiable information, such as participants' names, were protected with an additional and different password. I removed identification information of all the participants' data at the time of transcription.

## *Procedures*

Data were collected over the course of three phases: Phase 1 (Preliminary interviews and language maps); Phase 2 (Participant field work); and, Phase 3 (Focus groups). In the paragraphs that follow, I detail the steps that were used in carrying out these phases of the research.

### *Phase 1: Preliminary interview*

Between September 1, 2015 and September 17, 2015, I conducted 10 semi-structured preliminary interviews, one with each participant. I set up the interviews via email correspondence and invited participants to either come to my office for the interview or to choose another location, according to their preference. Of the 10 participants, nine chose to come to my office in the Education building at McGill for the preliminary interview; one participant (Mary) invited me to her home.

The purpose of the preliminary interview was for participants to describe their language background/biography with me, to begin talking about their experiences of language anxiety, and to become orientated to the next phases of the inquiry. The first part of the preliminary interview was focused on generating information related to their language learning backgrounds and experiences (see: Appendix 5: Phase 1 Preliminary interview guide) by reviewing their responses to the questionnaire and asking related open-ended questions. In the second part of the interview, participants created language map drawings by drawing a map that represented the places they usually go in their everyday lives, what languages they use, with whom, and why. We then used the language maps as prompts for the participant to reflect on and describe their experiences

of language anxiety. Finally, we concluded the interview by discussing the next phase of the research.

*Phase 2: Participant field work*

The main data for the inquiry were generated in this phase, with participants working as collaborators in the field. Participants completed three tasks in the weeks following their preliminary interview, including: making *in situ* recordings of typical public interactions; keeping reflective journals entries about their language practices; and, taking me on a guided walking interview. I provided participants with a guide that included prompts, templates, and a timeline for this phase of the research (see: Appendix 6: Phase 2 Participant ‘field work’ guide).

Each participant began their field work in the week after their preliminary interview with me. In the first week of their field work, they made the *in situ* recordings of interactions that they had with people in public that were typical of their experiences of using French (see: *Table 2: Phase 2.1 Recordings*). I encouraged participants to try and make 1 to 2 recordings of 30 to 60 seconds every day in the first week of their field work, and then choose the six recordings that they felt best represented their typical experiences of using French in public. Nine participants made at least one recording. One participant (Jordan) did not make any recordings because, when she spoke French in public, which was rarely, she did not have her recording device with her. I gave participants the option of transcribing their recordings themselves or sending the audio files to me for transcription. Two participants sent me transcriptions of the recordings.

Seven participants sent audio files, which I transcribed. The length of the recordings ranged from 30 to 60 seconds.

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Number of recordings</i>	<i>Format of data</i>
Sophia	4	Audio file
Ryan	6	Audio file
Kiki	6	Audio file
DJ	4	Transcription
Karine	4	Audio file
Mary	2	Audio file
Denise	1	Audio file
Rainbow	3	Transcription
Jordan	0	N/A
Alice	1	Audio file

*Table 2: Phase 2.1 Recordings*

In the second week of their field work, participants kept a daily reflective journal of their language practices. The journals were flexible, but maintained the focus of the research through a set of guiding prompts (see: Appendix 6: Phase 2 Participant ‘field work’ guide) that asked them to record and reflect on where they went, the languages they used, the people they interacted with, the circumstances of the interaction, and their experiences of language anxiety. The reflective journal prompts (see: Appendix 6: Phase 2 Participant ‘field work’ guide) also provided participants with the scope to record memories of past encounters that were related to their experiences of language anxiety. In

this sense, participants did more than simply record the facts; they also interpreted their own experiences. All participants completed their journal over the second and third week of their field work.

The participant field work concluded with a walking interview in the third week of this phase of the study. After participants had shared their journals with me, I asked them to choose an area of the city where they experienced language anxiety. Each participant approached the walking interview slightly differently. Some participants invited me to accompany them on their daily commute home from work or school. Others took me on a more traditional ‘tour’ of their habitual locations. One participant took me shopping, since she was only able to fit me into her schedule by having me accompany her while she ran errands. One participant requested that we do a driving interview, since the part of Montréal that she lived in is suburban, decentralized, and sprawling and therefore difficult to get around on foot.

Between October 2, 2015, and October 31, 2015, I completed nine walking interviews and one driving interview. In total, my participants and I covered almost 80km of ground on foot, bus, metro, and car. The walking interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. I met up with each participant at a location of their choosing, such as a Montréal metro station or a central location on the McGill campus. To record the walking interview, I used my iPhone’s ear-bud and microphone headset, which I clipped to the participant’s jacket or scarf; they kept my phone in their pocket throughout the interview. During the walking interview, I made sure to always be on the same side of the participant as the microphone so my questions would also be audible in the recording. I

was able to record all the walking interviews in full using this technique and could hear both the participant and myself clearly in the recording.

Over the course of the walking interview, I also used a digital camera to take pictures of street signs, landmarks, and other geographical features. These pictures were not used as data *per se*, but rather served to help me map our route from memory after the walking interview and as memory prompts for my field journal, which I wrote in after each walking interview. I used a route-mapping website (<https://mapmyrun.com>) to map the route of each walking interview and included a screenshot of the route in my field journal and transcription of the interview.

The format of the walking interview was flexible. I followed participants around the area of their choosing. Participants talked to me about the places where we walked and shared stories of their experiences of learning and using French in these places. I also had several general and specific follow-up questions, based on my reading of their Phase 1 interviews, recordings, and journals. We also discussed some initial themes and interpretations of their individual data. In this sense, we used the walking interview for preliminary participant analysis and validation.

### *Phase 3: Focus groups*

The final phase of the research involved two focus group, with five participants at each focus group. The composition of the two focus groups (see: *Table 3: Focus group composition*) was based primarily on individuals' availabilities, but also on whether participants knew each other personally, in which case I grouped them separately to protect their privacy and anonymity. I also tried to create groups of participants with

similar backgrounds and experiences. For example, the first focus group was composed mostly of participants who had grown up in Montréal or Québec; one participant in this focus group had grown up in New Brunswick, a neighboring province. The second focus group was almost entirely composed of people who were not from Montréal or Québec: three participants had come from other countries (Colombia, Iran, and the USA); one came from Saskatchewan; one participant in the second focus group was born in Montréal but had grown up in Toronto, Ontario.

<b>Focus group 1</b>	<b>Focus group 2</b>
<b>Saturday, November 21, 2015, 1pm – 3pm</b>	<b>Tuesday November 24, 2015, 6:15pm – 8:15pm</b>
DJ	Sophia
Karine	Ryan
Mary	Kiki
Rainbow	Denise
Jordan	Alice

*Table 3: Focus group composition*

One week before the scheduled focus group, I compiled a packet for each participant that contained all the data they had individually generated over the course of the study, including: the full transcription of their preliminary interview; the transcriptions of their *in situ* recordings; their journal; and the full transcription of their walking interview, plus the photos I had taken during the walking interview and a map of the route we covered. I emailed each participant their packet of data and asked them to review it in advance of the focus group. I also sent them a document with an outline of

the focus group, including what questions and themes we were going to discuss (see: Appendix 7: Phase 3 Focus group outline). I explained that the main purpose of the focus group would be for them to offer their own analyses of their data, to discuss some of the recurring themes from the data, and to give them another chance to validate my preliminary analyses of the data thus far.

Both focus groups took place in a closed room in the Education building at McGill University. The duration of the focus groups was 90 to 120 minutes. Both focus groups were structured the same way and followed the same outline (see: Appendix 7: Phase 3 Focus group outline). First, we began with an icebreaker activity for participants to feel at ease with each other. Second, each participant introduced themselves, told their language anxiety story, and shared their thoughts on the data they had generated. I encouraged the rest of the group to share their comments, interpretations, insights, reflections, and questions as they came to mind. The third part of the focus group was geared towards participant validation and analysis of the themes that had emerged from my preliminary analyses of the data from the different stages of the field work. Together we worked through a list of themes (see: Appendix 7: Phase 3 Focus group outline) and I asked participants to share their thoughts, comments, analyses, insights, and feelings. Fourth, we moved into a more general discussion about language anxiety, and concluded by discussing some debriefing questions and sharing final thoughts.

#### *Transcription of the data*

I transcribed verbatim all the interview and focus group data myself, as well as 26 of the 31 *in situ* recordings that participants had made; two participants (DJ and



Rainbow) chose to transcribe their own *in situ* recordings. I did not use any transcription software; the pause-play key on my keyboard while playing the recording in iTunes was sufficient. Transcribing my own interviews and focus groups was an important part of my data analysis process because it allowed me to immerse myself in the data. In the section that follows, I discuss my data analysis process in more depth.

### *Analysis*

My data analysis was guided by an immersion/crystallization (I/C) approach (Borkan, 1999). I/C is an established approach to analyzing qualitative data where interpretations are arrived at by engaging in a cyclical process of immersion in the data and reflection on it:

Immersion/crystallization (I/C) consists of cycles whereby the analyst immerses him- or herself into and experiences the text, emerging after concerned reflection with intuitive crystallizations until reportable interpretations are reached. (Miller & Crabtree, 1992, cited in Borkan, 1999, p. 179-180)

An I/C approach is particularly suitable to studies where multiple forms of data are at play (Borkan, 1999), making it an appropriate approach for analyzing case study data. Using an I/C approach, data analysis becomes a process of reduction, display, and conclusion drawing that happens before, during, and after the study's conceptualization, implementation, and completion (Borkan, 1999). I was drawn to an I/C approach because I agree with Merriam (2009) that "data collection and analysis should be a simultaneous process in qualitative research" (p. 169). Moreover, because I can relate so closely to the

subject matter and the experiences of my participants (Godfrey-Smith, 2015), it would have been impossible for me to suspend my interpretations of what was happening throughout the research process and only begin analysis after my interactions with participants were over. With this in mind, my data analysis began at the time of recruitment and continued throughout the field work process.

A key component of the I/C process is that the researcher goes beyond simply collecting the data; rather, they are immersed in the data and their own field notes and experiences are also at play (Borkan, 1999). There were several ways that I immersed myself in my data, particularly through extensive writing in my reflective field journal. I have already described how my field journal was both a product of the research as well as a tool for identifying themes, categories, and segments in the data that were responsive to the research questions (Merriam, 2009). Transcribing all the interviews and focus groups myself (approximately 40 hours of audio) also helped me immerse myself in my data. During transcription, I used the comments function in Microsoft Word to make notes directly onto the document as ideas, thoughts, and insights occurred to me. Doing this allowed my insights to crystallize.

Using an I/C approach, insights can also crystallize while data are being collected, which can assist with the identification of early patterns; these insights may take the form of epiphanies or *ah ha!* moments during an interview (Borkan, 1999). Borkan (1999) quotes Carol McWilliam:

I guess it begins the minute I ask a question and they start answering, I am trying to analyze what are the basic concepts, thoughts, key points that are coming out. I

go after whatever really stands out for me – whatever appears to be important. I try to probe more in-depth right then at that time, I try to immerse myself a bit further. (p. 184)

In tandem with the I/C approach to data analysis, I also emphasized participant collaboration throughout the analysis process. This was achieved largely through participant interpretation and validation. For example, beginning with their reflective journals, I encouraged participants go beyond recording situational information to also include their own interpretations of their experiences of language anxiety. The scope for this participant analysis and validation was built into the timing of my study; I scheduled the walking interviews to take place at least a week after participants had completed their reflective journals to allow me enough time before the walking interview to review and consider what they had written in their journals. Before each individual's walking interview, I immersed myself all the data they had generated (e.g., reading journals, interview transcriptions, etc.), so I was able to bring my preliminary crystallizations back to them for validation and further interpretation. Doing this complemented the overarching I/C approach because “a critical phase of I/C involves the systematic review of accumulated data, texts, and preliminary analysis notes” (Borkan, 1999, p. 185).

I would add that I found the walking interview to be a particularly rich technique because it served a dual purpose: it generated primary data through the stories that each participant shared with me as we moved through different locales; and second, it was a space of interpretation and analysis where participants and I discussed and interpreted their data from the previous stages of the research (preliminary interview, *in situ*

recordings, and journals), posing and answering questions to each other in an attempt to make sense of their experiences. Thus, during the walking interview, the participants and I were simultaneously generating new data at the same time as discursively analyzing the existing data.

I have already mentioned that I compiled and sent to each participant a packet of all the data they had generated over the course of the study and asked them to review and consider their data in preparation for the focus group. In this sense, participants themselves engaged in a form of I/C by immersing themselves in their own data before the focus group. In the first part of the focus group, each participant shared their own interpretations of their data with the rest of the group, at which time the individual participant analysis snowballed into a group interpretation of each individual's experiences through discussion and reflection of the experiences they shared. In the second part of the focus group, I asked participants to discuss and offer their interpretations, analyses, and validation of a list of tentative thematic codes (Appendix 7: Phase 3 Focus group outline) that I had developed and shared with them.

The cyclical process of immersion and crystallization that I have described in the paragraphs above continued after I had wrapped up my field work in November, 2015. Working with all the data and documents that my participants and I had generated, I engaged in further cycles of immersion and crystallization through reading, re-reading and reflection on the data. I continued this process until all the data had been examined and themes, categories, and segments in the data emerged that were responsive to the research questions (Merriam, 2009).

*Chapter summary*

In this chapter, I began by presenting how I arrived at a qualitative case study approach, emphasizing non-static tools of data collection. I explained the principles behind qualitative case studies and the non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013) used in this study. I described the design of the study, including the basic details of the 10 participants that I worked with over the 12 weeks of field work for this study. I described how I successfully used an online questionnaire to selectively sample the 10 participants that I worked with. I described the procedures for the study, which included three phases: (Phase 1) Preliminary interviews and language maps; (Phase 2) Participant field work; and, (Phase 3) Focus groups. I also explored the added value that my field journal brought to the study. Finally, I described how I used an Immersion/Crystallization approach (Borkan, 1999) to analyze my data with participants collaborating through participant interpretation and validation. In the following chapter, I present the results of the field work through a description of the findings about each participant.

## Chapter 5

### Findings

#### *Chapter overview*

This chapter describes the findings of the research. As described in the previous chapter (Methodology), the data for my study were generated through working closely with participants in three phases, including: (Phase 1) preliminary interviews and language maps; (Phase 2) participant field work, where participants made *in situ* recordings, kept journals, and took me on a walking interview; and (Phase 3) focus groups. Together, participants and I generated over five hundred pages of narrative data, which I analyzed using an immersion/crystallization (I/C) approach (Borkan, 1999) that also included participant interpretation and validation. The ten case studies presented in the body of this chapter are the product of this cyclical analysis process. Working in the same spirit of participant collaboration and validation that guided the data collection and analyses process, each case study was read and approved by the corresponding participant.

Each of the case studies in this chapter is presented thematically, distilled from the mix of data sources and organized into logical themes and sections that tell a story about each participant and their experiences of language anxiety. This approach reflects how each participant's story emerged through the data collection process, with new light being shed on the different parts of their stories at each stage of the research. In this sense, the mix of data sources (interview and focus group transcripts, hand-drawn language maps, *in situ* recordings, and journals) created the kind of multi-dimensional

picture that I felt was necessary to capture the social dimensions of their language anxiety. Case studies are presented in the order that I interviewed participants for the preliminary interview in the first phase of the research. For each case study, I begin with a brief introduction to the participant's background in terms of their biography, language learning experiences, and proficiencies. Next, I describe their everyday language practices and their experiences of language anxiety. Finally, I describe the main themes that emerged from the analysis and interpretation of their data. Italics are used to for direct quotes where participants spoke in French, with my own translation enclosed in square brackets directly after. Italics in square brackets indicate participants' non-verbal communication, such as laughter, pauses, hand gestures, etc.

In the second part of the chapter, I present the results of the cross-case analyses. Interpretation and theorization of the research findings will be presented in Chapter 6 (Discussion).

*Case 1: Sophia's story*

*"It's like losing the battle with yourself."*

Sophia was a 30-year-old fashion designer from Colombia. At the time of the research, she had been in Montréal for seven years, was working as a fashion designer at a mostly English-speaking workplace, and living with her French Canadian (French-L1) boyfriend. Sophia told me that she learned French through a combination of formal and informal training; when she first arrived in Montréal, she took an eight-week full-time intensive French course through McGill's school of Continuing Studies, and her informal learning continued when she studied fashion design at vocational college in a bilingual

program and when she started living with her boyfriend. She described herself as a native speaker of Spanish, an advanced speaker of English, and a high-intermediate speaker of French.

*Sophia's language practices and language anxiety*

At the time of the research, Sophia's everyday language practices included English, French, and Spanish. At home, she and her boyfriend communicated in a mix of English and French with some simple Spanish. English was the main language of her workplace, where she used French mainly for answering the phone or talking with French-speaking clients. For more public interactions, such as ordering a coffee or making a purchase, Sophia defaulted to French and explained why: "For respect, I guess it's better to let them know that you, as an immigrant, are trying to adapt to their environment. So I try to speak more in French." Sophia told me that she used Spanish to communicate with her family, either via phone or text messages with her parents in Colombia or in person with her sister, who was also living in Montreal. With her boyfriend's family, communication was almost entirely in French. Socially, Sophia used English, French, and Spanish with her friends (depending on the friend), and when she went to parties hosted by French Canadian (French-L1) friends of her boyfriend, she used mostly French.

Although Sophia seemed relatively comfortable with her ability to make herself understood in her everyday life, she nevertheless experienced language anxiety about her French. Some of the feelings that she described included stress, frustration, embarrassment, and the inability to tune into conversations around her. For example, she



said: “All of sudden my ears just go like silence absolute... I just hear like a blah blah blah blah blah blah. And then just nothing.” I asked Sophia whether she had ever felt this way in the French classroom. Her response is important because it shows that her language anxiety was a uniquely non-classroom experience:

When you’re in a classroom and you’re learning a language, somehow everybody is at the same level as you are... But once you go outside, it’s all this world kind of looking at you. And you’re just like, how do I do? What do I say? How is it supposed to be said. So it’s too much pressure.

*Barriers to Sophia’s comprehension*

Although Sophia was confident in her ability to make herself understood in French, the data suggest an interplay between her language anxiety and barriers to her comprehension. In other words, Sophia tended to experience language anxiety about her French in social situations where she was unable to understand the French being used around her. For example, at times, she struggled to follow conversations in group situations where the conversation would bounce back and forth between multiple speakers “like a ping pong game.” Sophia expressed her anxiety about not being able to understand when she said:

That brings you down. Because when there’s too many people, it’s just hard to keep up. ... when there’s too many people, it’s just frustrating, because by the time you figure out what they’re talking, all the slangs, and the mix of English words that they do a lot here, you just lost the subject. So at the end, I just want to sit down in the corner.

The relationship between Sophia's language anxiety and barriers to comprehension was also evident in how she faced difficulty with language mixing. She expressed how language mixing caused difficulty in terms of her comprehension when she said:

Like my boyfriend. That's the hardest part. He speaks to me in English most of the time, but he hasn't finished a sentence and he will switch to French. And my brain doesn't know what he is saying. I'm like whoa, what did you say... it's like if I'm speaking to you and *puis je commence à parler comme ça* [then I start talking like this]. It's like, eh?! That's hard, especially if he's giving me directions or my mom is texting me in Spanish. So my cables just go, like [*waving her hands around her ears*]....

*Sophia's multilingual self-image*

Responding to my question about what knowing French meant to her, Sophia explained:

It actually makes me feel cooler. Like more important... when you start saying that you speak more than one foreign language, people are like oh wow. And I like the feeling that they think, oh she knows more than two languages. She speaks three languages, oh that's so cool. So it's a self-esteem thing that makes me feel cool.

Sophia's answer above is important because it helps explain the role of language choice – both her own and that of her interlocutors - in her language anxiety about her French. Sophia's knowledge of French was an important part of her self-image, so much so that that she saw successful interactions in French as validation of this self image. For

example, Sophia expressed frustration because certain friends wouldn't speak French with her, even though she felt her proficiency in French was strong enough:

Right now what happens is I have friends that used to speak English to me when I was in school. But now I speak better French, so when we see each other I speak to them in French and they think it's funny... If they don't even try to speak to me in French, that's when I get frustrated. It's like, I know French. Talk to me in French!

Similarly, Sophia also expressed frustration when people switched into English with her when she had initiated conversation in French because it caused her to question her proficiency in French. She expressed this frustration when she said:

Cause like I am trying, and then if all of sudden they just switch, and I didn't even show that I didn't understand. It's like, man, wasn't I speaking properly? Did they not understand? What happened? So it's like, dammit.

That said, Sophia admitted to feeling a mix of anxiety and relief when people switched into English with her: "First I feel like an anxiety. But because English is like a language I feel more comfortable, then I calm down."

The situations described above all suggest that the language choices of others contributed to Sophia's experiences of language anxiety. However, her own language choices may have also played a role. For example, she told me that she could substitute an English word for a French word and feel confident that her interlocutor would understand: "You could actually save your butt by just saying whatever in English. And even people who don't speak English, they might understand the word." However,

although able to make herself understood in this situation described above, Sophia also saw her need to use English as a sign of failure. She expressed this feeling when she said: “It’s like I lost the war. I lost the battle. I feel defeated. And I don’t like that feeling.

That’s the frustration I get. Like, oh man! I couldn’t!” Sophia offered this interpretation:

I’m a person that, I need, I like things to be perfect. I’m too perfectionist and I try too hard with myself... you’re trying to communicate something, and when you just can’t, it’s like losing the battle with yourself.

*Sophia’s language anxiety, avoidance, and social isolation*

I asked Sophia to tell me how her life would be different if she didn’t feel anxious about her French, hoping to gain insight into the effect that language anxiety had on her life. Her answer sheds light on how her language anxiety shaped her social experiences:

If I know there’s a lot of francophones, sometimes I will not even go... If my boyfriend tells me that there’s a party and 20 people are going to be there and the whole room is crowded, you’re not going to be able even walk, I’ll be like, uh maybe I won’t go.

In turn, this avoidance affected her social life more broadly, as she articulated:

I think that affects me in order to make friends. Because it’s like you are familiar with certain people, but when you get out of that comfort zone, you’re very uncomfortable. So it makes it harder to make new friends, which is the case that is most complicated for me. ‘Cause I cannot express myself.

*Case 2: Ryan’s story*

*“It’s like I’m missing something.”*

Ryan, a 34-year-old teacher and graduate student, immigrated from Iran to Montréal with his wife. At the time of the research, he had been living in Montréal for three years, was teaching English as a second language (ESL) at a local French-language university, and was completing graduate studies in Education at an English-language university. Ryan described himself as a native speaker of Farsi and a native-like speaker of English. He described his proficiency in French as beginner:

I can say beginner because I can understand a lot. But in terms of speaking I think I really need practice because I haven't been practicing a lot... When people talk to me, I can understand what they're saying. But when I answer I have to look for words and think a lot.

Ryan told me that he first started learning French in Iran, six months before coming to Canada, and described these courses as focused on learning functional, conversational French, “talking about ourselves, jobs, education, this kind of things” that would allow him and his wife to pass an exam for their immigration to Québec. After arriving in Canada, Ryan continued studying French full-time at first and later part-time through the francisation program, (provincially funded French language courses at low or no cost to new immigrants to Québec). At that time, his goals shifted from passing the exam to being able to live and communicate in the language of his new home. He articulated these new learning goals when he said, “I realize like many people I have to improve my French if I want to live in Québec society. I have to take French... I really wanted to improve and learn French.”

*Ryan's language practices and language anxiety*

At the time of the research, Ryan's everyday language practices included Farsi, English, and limited French. He used mostly Farsi in his personal life with his wife, family, and friends. In his professional and academic life, he used more English. His use of French was mostly limited to exchanging simple greetings with people like bus drivers and French-speaking colleagues, and for simple transactional interactions (e.g., ordering a coffee or sandwich) in cafés or shops. However, these relatively simple exchanges with cashiers and service personnel meant more to Ryan than simply getting a coffee or a bagel; about such interactions, Ryan told me, "this is an opportunity to practice French, to learn French, to be able to speak French with French speakers." In other words, Ryan saw these interactions as valuable opportunities to practice his French, which he needed in order to succeed in his new home. Moreover, Ryan's language choices were also guided by feelings of obligation that he *should* be speaking French. Ryan articulated this obligation when he said: "I think that I should be able to speak with someone in his or her language, not the other way around, not that he or she should speak my language." Thus, considering the stakes of his everyday interactions in French, it follows that Ryan sometimes felt anxious about his French, mostly in situations where he had to communicate orally. Ryan's language anxiety was characterized by feelings of frustration, concern, regret, discomfort, nervousness, and feeling "bad".

#### *Ryan's regret*

Responding to my question about what would have to change for him to feel less anxious about his French, Ryan told me, "I have to improve my French proficiency. I have to learn French better." His response underscored his interpretation of his language

anxiety as inextricably tied to the limitations of his French. It was evident that his limited proficiency in French made certain everyday interactions difficult and frustrating. He expressed his worries about his proficiency when he said, “Sometimes I think I might miss something. For example, when I negotiate, maybe they say something and I miss it.” This anxiety was especially apparent in high-stakes interactions, where the information being communicated held some importance: “When it comes to negotiation or arguments, this kind of thing, so serious topics, I get anxious because I want to say something but I can’t and the person persists to speak in French.”

Ryan’s anxiety about his proficiency in French also had to do with how proficient he felt he should be in French, as was evident when he said:

I feel bad because it’s like oh come on, you’re living in this country, so it’s been three years now... I think it’s good to speak French. Now that I can’t, so what should I do? I mean I don’t show it like, oh I feel bad. But in my inside, I just feel bad. Like oh you should be able to speak French or something like that.

In other words, having been in Québec for three years, Ryan saw the limitations in his proficiency and communicative capacity in French as regular reminders that he had not taken advantage of the opportunities available to him to improve his French: “It’s like this is a very good situation and I can improve my French, but I see that I’m more involved with the English part.”

Overall, it was evident that Ryan associated his proficiency in French with feelings of missed opportunities and regret. In fact, by the end of our work together, these

feelings of regret had come up so many times that he referred to regret as a “keyword” in his data.

Ryan’s feelings of regret were not only tied to his feelings of having missed valuable opportunities to learn and improve his French, but also to certain ideologies of language about what language immigrants to Québec should speak. He expressed this when recounting an experience of waiting in line at a government office to renew his health care card. Realizing that everyone around him was speaking French, Ryan began to feel worried about his French because, as he articulated: “When you don’t speak French, it means that you are not integrated... people think, oh, you are not part of us... You should be able to speak French.” His response is important because it indicates an awareness or perception of certain ideologies concerning language and immigrants. In other words, Ryan’s language anxiety in this situation was tied to a worry about how others might evaluate his success or belonging as an immigrant based on his proficiency in French.

#### *The power of language choice*

One of the most important themes that emerged from Ryan’s data was language choice. Ryan expressed feeling like he needed all the practice he could get in French, and saw transactional interactions such as buying coffee or a sandwich as important opportunities to practice his French. However, he sometimes found it difficult to take advantage of such opportunities because people often switched into English with him, when he would have preferred them to continue in simpler, more accessible French:



In my experiences living in Montreal, most of the time [people] don't try to grade (simplify) their language. They don't try to help you understand what they say.

They just say something and because they know English, the moment that they realize you don't understand, they switch to English. So they don't try to help you actually understand what they say.

Here, Ryan's comments point to the Montréal switch as a source of difficulty for him in his language practices. These comments reflect an interplay between the Montréal switch and Ryan's language anxiety that came through elsewhere in his data. For example, He captured this experience of the Montréal switch in his journal:

I tried to speak French with the cashier, but she switched to English ☹. I think she did that when she saw me struggling with a few words and that I was trying to understand what she was saying.

Ryan's use of the sad-faced emoticon (above) is helpful because it indicates that this interaction was a negative experience for him. When I asked him about this experience later, during our walking interview, he confirmed that "in that moment" it made him anxious about his French to the extent where he was "thinking about it all day."

An interesting contrast to the experience with the cashier was evident in another excerpt from Ryan's journal, where he described how he normally greeted his colleagues in French before switching to English. Recalling that Ryan taught ESL at a French-language university, this excerpt points to how he engaged with his colleagues whose main language was French:

When I see one of these workers, I often initiate the conversation in French and then I switch to English. I don't know why I do that, but maybe because I really want to speak French with them but then I realize that I'm not able [to] continue in French and switch to English, which is easier for me but might be harder for them - now I'm in power ☺.

Again, his use of emoticons is helpful because it suggests that this experience was positive for Ryan. Ryan expressed his interpretation of these contrasting situations when he said: "Because when I decide, I know that ok, I am the decision maker, so I don't feel anxious." Then, responding to my question about when someone switched into English with him, Ryan said: "Switches into English? When I want to speak French? Ok, in that situation it's terrible."

Ryan's data suggest that language choice interplayed with his language anxiety in situations where he could not assert his own language choices. Although he wanted all the practice he could get in French, he also wanted to be in control and to be able to regulate when, where, and with whom he spoke French. Situations where he was forced by his interlocutor's language choice to speak English when he wanted to speak French, as in the interaction with the cashier, made him anxious because he felt he had been denied an opportunity for the practice he needed. This language anxiety was also evident in situations where he was forced to speak French when he would have preferred to speak English. For example, in his journal, Ryan shared a memory of trying to buy a phone at a local shopping mall:

I remember the day we bought the phone... there was this French sales assistant who could speak English with difficulty. Although he knew we couldn't understand French well, he continued to speak in French... I felt so frustrated and I wish I could speak French with him.

Overall, the data suggest that situations like the one recounted above, where Ryan's language choice (in this case, English) was superseded by that of his interlocutor (in this case, French), caused anxiety because he was made acutely aware of the limitations of his French, his need to improve, and his regret for not having done more to improve his French already.

*The facilitative effect of Ryan's language anxiety*

Ryan offered the following closing thoughts on his language anxiety at the end of the focus group:

It started from a negative stress and now it's positive stress in a way that I know I have to learn French, I have to improve my French. So it's a motivation, it's encouraging. It's not a bad thing anymore.

His answer reflects an important finding about the effects of his language anxiety: although it certainly caused him to experience some negative emotions, it had very little negative effect on his life. Rather, he described his language anxiety as "a blessing in disguise." Ryan's experience contrasts that of other participants in the study; he was the only participant in the study for whom language anxiety had a facilitative effect. For example, recounting an experience where he felt anxious about his French in a

government office, he told me: “It was a little bit of a kind of motivation to speak French. You have to speak French, come on!”

*Case 3: Kiki’s story*

*“I feel like people think I’m stupid because I can’t communicate.”*

Kiki, a 29-year old graduate student from the United States, had been living in Montréal for three years at the time of the research. She lived with her husband, whom she described as a bilingual Montrealer, was just starting her Master’s in Health Administration at a French-language university, and worked part-time in a lab at an English-language university. Kiki described herself as a native speaker of English and her proficiency in French as high-intermediate: “I can communicate and I’m able to talk to people when I need to at this point, and I’m pretty sure that they can understand me and I can understand a lot.” Kiki learned French through a combination of high school French classes and an intensive French program upon arriving in Montréal. However, she expressed some doubts about how well her French classes had prepared her for the world beyond the language classroom when she said:

You take all these French classes, and you’re feeling pretty good about yourself, and then you go out on the street and you literally cannot say ‘hi’ to somebody. They don’t teach you the words that you need to have a conversation with somebody.

Kiki also expressed doubts about her proficiency in French when she said: “I feel like for the amount of time I’ve been here there are things that I should be able to do and say in French.”

*Kiki's language practices*

Kiki used both English and French on a daily basis. English was the main language of the personal and professional spheres of her life; she spoke mostly English at home, at church, and at her workplace. Conversely, French was the language of the academic and public spheres of her life; she attended a French-language university, where she used mostly French, and also used French in most of her interactions with the general public, such as when ordering coffee, buying groceries, or shopping because she felt like she “should speak French for some reason.” Like Ryan, Kiki saw these transactional interactions as valuable opportunities to practice her French, which she felt she needed if she was to improve her proficiency and succeed in Québec. Kiki expressed this motivation in our first meeting when she told me:

Any job I'm looking for requires you to be bilingual... I want to work here and I want to be in the field that I enjoy working in and I just don't think that will be possible if I continue to function only in English.

However, the data also suggest that knowing French meant more to Kiki than just professional success; rather, there were also certain ideologies of language at play in her language practices, as was evident when she told me, “I learned French because I think that it's disrespectful not to here.” It didn't surprise me, therefore, when Kiki expressed feelings of frustration when people at the French university that she attended responded to her French with English. Kiki saw her university as a French zone and her interlocutor's use of English as a violation of the norms she had established for herself in terms of which language(s) she should use where.

While Kiki seemed resistant to using English in French zones, she was open to using French in spheres of her life that she otherwise saw as mostly English zones (e.g., home, work, church). For example, although she used mostly English with her husband, she told me that they “throw some French around too.” In her workplace (on the campus of an English-language university), she chose to speak French with delivery personnel or clients, even if she knew they could speak English. Similarly, she attended an English-language church, but actively sought out opportunities to speak French with a member of the congregation who didn’t speak English. The fact that she looked for chances to use and practice her French points to a motivation to improve her French.

However, although Kiki was motivated to improve her French and sought out opportunities to integrate it into her everyday life, she experienced emotional, physical, and cognitive distress when faced with using French in certain social situations. For example, over the course of the research, she described feeling terrified, scared, and overwhelmed about using French. She described physiological symptoms such as her heart pounding, wanting to pass out, and wanting to cry. Symptoms of self-doubt, anger at herself, feeling like an outsider or a fraud, and wanting to run away were some of the cognitive manifestations of her language anxiety.

*Kiki’s experiences of language choice and the Montréal switch*

Describing her language practices to me, Kiki told me that she often tried to speak French in downtown Montréal “because I know that I need the practice,” but that “more often than not, as soon as I start speaking French, they switch to English.” Kiki expressed the effect of the Montréal switch on her language practices when she said: “Any

confidence that I had built up about my level of French is completely diminished... For sure the next time for sure I hesitate.” Describing a situation where she anticipated the Montréal switch, Kiki said:

In the moments before she switched to English, my heart was beating so fast I thought it was going to come out of me. I could just feel it pounding. And it’s sort of like it completely took over.

Kiki’s description reflects a typical language anxiety response, including emotional and physiological symptoms. Kiki offered the following interpretation of the interplay between the Montréal switch and her language anxiety:

It takes, sometimes, it takes a lot of courage for me to choose to speak French when I know that I don’t have to because the person I’m speaking to can probably speak English. So when I make the decision to go through with this in French, probably beforehand there is some anxiety involved. And then when I go through all of that psychological [and] emotional effort and speak French and then they speak back in English, it’s like it was all for nothing.

The data also suggests that the social context of the Montréal switch played a part in Kiki’s language anxiety. For example, she recounted this memory of the Montréal switch during the focus group:

Even last week it happened, and my husband was there. Which is the worst case scenario for me... It was because I said the wrong word for something, even though [the salesperson] clearly knew what I was talking about... So first of all,

she did a little giggle, and then she corrected me, and then spoke English for the rest of it.

Not only does this memory capture an example of the Montréal switch, but it also points to social context being an important part of the language anxiety that accompanies the Montréal switch; in this case, Kiki's distress was magnified by the presence of her husband. Kiki offered the following comparison between experiencing the Montréal switch in the presence of familiars versus with strangers:

I think that if there are people around that hear that interaction happen, where I speak French and somebody speaks English back to me, I'm more I guess like ashamed or disappointed as compared to if I'm by myself and I don't know anybody around me, in which case I couldn't care less if they switch to English.

*The role of Kiki's social context and social comparison*

As indicated above, an important theme that emerged from Kiki's data was that of social context, in the sense that her language anxiety was related to her relationships with the people around her. Specifically, Kiki felt especially anxious about her French around her husband and her classmates at university, particularly when she had to initiate conversation in French. For example, a significant amount of emotional distress was evident in her description of her first day of classes at the French university where she had just started her master's:

I was really nervous yesterday. My heart was pounding and I thought I was going to pass out.... the woman who was running the thing asked everybody to



individually introduce themselves... and that was like the third or fourth point where I wanted to just pick up my things and leave.

The importance of social context to Kiki's language anxiety was also reflected in her description of her experiences of learning French:

[In high school] my level of anxiety was much probably much lower because I knew that I was on the same level as my peers. We were all in the same situation and I knew I wasn't necessarily going to get judged... in the French classes here in Montréal... I was always very comfortable. We all had fun together and we knew that we were all on the same page.

Kiki's interpretation of how she felt in the language classroom centered around her feeling like she was on an equal playing field as her fellow learners, where in the "real world" she told me, "I feel like people think I'm stupid because I can't communicate." This insight is important because it highlights an interplay between her feelings of language anxiety and how she compared herself to the people around her in social situations. This interplay was also evident when Kiki wrote in her journal:

Talking to classmates who are also learning French and on my level is (clearly) much easier than speaking to people in "real life" who have grown up speaking French. In meeting with my group for our group project, it quickly becomes evident where my weakness lies. I am normally the type of person that has a lot to say, and I find myself not saying anything for almost the whole meeting... I am sure that my group isn't impressed.

The significance of social context and social comparison was also evident in Kiki's anxiety about speaking French around her husband. She described her husband as "completely bilingual" and told me:

I usually avoid speaking French when I know he can hear me... I worry to make mistakes because I want him to be proud of what I've learned at this point, so every time I don't know something I'm almost embarrassed.

Kiki offered this interpretation of her anxiety about speaking French around her husband: "I feel like he has something above me... We're very competitive and I feel like this is something that he's always going to be better at than me." Kiki made similar comments about her classmates at the university: "Mostly I feel like people here who are fluently bilingual in English and French, I feel like they have an advantage over me in life here in Montréal."

*Kiki's courageous journey*

Having started a Master's degree at a French-language university the day before our first meeting, Kiki's participation in this study straddled a period of significant change for her. At the end of the data collection process, she said this about her first semester of her Master's: "I have probably just gone through one of the most anxiety-producing months of my life, honestly." Indeed, over the course of the months that we worked together, Kiki and I both observed changes in her relationship with speaking French and her language anxiety. While the stress of her group presentation continued to feature strongly in our discussions, by late November, Kiki was no longer "terrified" of going to school and even expressed pride in how far she'd come:

There are so many things now that I do now without even a second thought that before would have immobilized me... Even on the first day, I wrote in my journal, I wanted to pick up my things and leave, at least four times. Because I would start to panic and be like I can't do this, what am I doing? ... But I think, I dunno, it's just one of those things that you have to live through. It takes a lot of, I guess, courage.

A few times, Kiki also commented on how her participation in this study was part of the support system that got her through her first semester of doing a Master's degree in French, suggesting that the acts of talking, journaling, and self-reflection have much to offer learners experiencing language anxiety. Kiki offered this reflection during the focus group:

The interviews were helpful to sort of come back to what I had written in the journaling. But for that two weeks, I honestly – I'm not even just saying this – I don't know if I would have kept going, like with school. Because for some reason it legitimized my feelings. Writing them down was my own way of internalizing it in a good way... in this sense it was like getting it all out. And especially two months later, reading this and seeing where I was two months ago and knowing where I am now, it adds a whole other element to my confidence and self confidence level at this point. Just knowing literally two months ago how differently I thought about everything than I do now.

*Case 4: DJ's story*

*"I'm in a vicious circle to getting my French better."*

DJ, a 29-year old elementary school teacher, was born and raised in a small town in a historically English-speaking region of Québec. At the time of the study, it had been three years since he moved to Montréal. He had recently completed graduate studies at an English-language university in Montréal and was splitting his time between Montréal and his hometown. He lived with his fiancée, who was French Canadian (French L1). DJ described himself as a native English speaker and a “proud English Quebecker,” but had a distinctly French Canadian last name. He explained, “the history of my family is French... [but] the French was lost.” DJ expressed the challenge of growing up with a French last name when he said:

All through my life it’s been exactly the same thing. They hear my last name, 100% think I’m French... it’s horrible when someone sees you and all of sudden, they think you’re French right away and then speak as fast as possible.

DJ told me that he grew up speaking only English at home and started learning French in elementary school. He described his proficiency in French as high-intermediate and explained, “I understand eighty or ninety percent. Speaking, I don’t know. I never trust myself enough to figure out how well I speak.”

In terms of his personality, DJ had this to say: “I am not a stressed out person. I pride myself in how I don’t stress over things. Pretty sure I’m the happy person I am because stress doesn’t bother me.” About his French, however, DJ expressed feeling “DAMN stressed, anxious and embarrassed.” Overall, DJ’s language anxiety was characterized by nervousness, anger, discomfort, worrying, feeling upset, avoidance, freezing on the spot, and self-doubt.

*DJ's language practices*

At the time of the research, DJ used both English and French regularly, although his use of French was mostly limited to simple transactional interactions (e.g., ordering a coffee) or listening to other people speak French. For example, in his normal communication with his French Canadian fiancée, he told me, “she speaks French to me 90-80% of the time, and I’ll speak English right back to her.” He went on to tell me that the rare occasions that she had heard him speak French were because “she sneaks up behind me and listens.” The same avoidance was evident in his language practices around his core group of friends. He told me, “Even if we’re at a table at a table all ordering and they order in French, I’ll probably be the one to order in English.” Although he avoided speaking French in front of his close friends and fiancée, among his friends from the university, he often stepped in as the *de facto* French speaker in some situations because: “I was the one that knew the most French. So if anything, I had more confidence... I felt like the bilingual one.” This is important because it points to a link between his language practices and his social context.

*The legacy of DJ's past negative experiences*

One of the strongest themes that emerged from the analysis of DJ's data was his negative experience of learning French. When I asked him how he had felt in French classes, he told me, “I felt horrible. Always nervous if she ever asked me something, I’d be so nervous.” He told me that he “despised” French classes because he had poor relationships with his French teachers, whom he perceived to have unrealistic expectations of him because of his French Canadian last name. He explained, “I think

what really started it was my last name is Gagné [a pseudonym], so I was expected to know French.” This expectation was paired with schoolyard bullying about his French; DJ told me, “all the kids would pick on me too about how horrible my French was.” Because he was the target of his friends’ teasing throughout his schooling years, DJ still refused to speak French around his friends as an adult. Moreover, these experiences continued to feed his language anxiety, not only when he was around his friends, but also with other people whose opinions mattered to him. For example, I have already mentioned how DJ’s language practices did not include him using French around his fiancée. He told me, “I am so nervous to speak French in front of her... She’s probably heard me speak French maybe five times in our three-year relationship, and those times, I didn’t know she was around.” DJ offered this interpretation of why he felt so anxious about his French around his close friends and fiancée:

Because if I make a mistake - and it’s weird when I say that because I know that [my fiancée] would never bug me or pick on me and most likely a lot of my friends wouldn’t either - but it’s still in my head if I make a mistake, I’m going to have to hear about it for like a week of jokes or something like that.

*DJ’s aversion to having attention drawn to his French*

Many of DJ’s language anxiety experiences that were captured in the data involved him feeling like attention was being drawn to him because of the way that he spoke French. This included being complimented, encouraged, or corrected about his French. He expressed his aversion to being complimented about his French when he said:

“‘Oh wow how good your French is, oh you should speak more.’ I don’t like that very much at all.” Similarly, being corrected made him feel anxious about his French:

I don’t like being corrected in my French. If I’m trying my hardest I don’t want to be corrected on every mistake I make... I’ve had [a past] girlfriend’s grandparents do that to me quite a bit. Like fix every mistake I make. And that makes me not want to try anymore either.

*DJ’s experiences of language choice*

The data also revealed an interplay between DJ’s language anxiety and language choice. This played out in situations where people switched into English with him as well as in situations where he had no choice but to speak French. An example of the interplay between his language anxiety and people switching into English was evident in a memory that DJ shared with me during our first meeting. He recounted stopping at a fast food chain for a drink and a snack:

I spoke French to her.... So I just did my regular order, like *un gros café avec un crème et sucre* [a large coffee with one cream and sugar], and then I went to say the spicy crispy sandwich. And I couldn’t think what crispy was in French. . . And she looked at me like who the fuck am I? And I just couldn’t think of crispy. And she just went ‘Point to which one you want.’ In English. A really bad English. ‘Point which number. Point which number.’ That’s what she said. And so I looked through and I pointed and she typed it in. And that made me feel so horrible.

However, while DJ expressed feeling frustrated when people switched into English with him, he also admitted “I guess it’s how a person does it. Cause there is different ways to do it.” He expressed his mixed feelings about the Montréal switch when he said:

I have a hard time deciding if I think it’s rude or nice. Sometimes I don’t like it cause I’m trying to speak French and want to develop it more and other times I like it because it shows how easy communication can be in a bilingual society and who cares who talks what as long as the message gets through.

The interplay between DJ’s language anxiety and the language choice was also evident in situations where he had no choice but to speak French. He expressed this when he wrote in his journal, “I do get anxiety when I know the person can’t switch into English or that I might have to try and explain it in French.” In other words, DJ felt anxious about his French when it was his only option – where he knew that the other person could not speak English at all. Examples of situations where this was an issue for DJ included parent-teacher interviews where parents of his students insisted on speaking French, or situations where his interlocutor couldn’t or wouldn’t speak English. A more specific example was evident in a particular experience that he shared in his journal; at the time of his participation in this research, DJ and his fiancée were buying a house, a process which took place mostly in French. DJ shared this reflection in his journal after meeting with their real estate agents:

So today would be damn good example of feeling anxiety! Here are 4 to 5 people talking about the house myself and Devon [a pseudonym] might be buying and I don’t understand everything. I’m too damn shy to jump in with a question because



I'm scared what I think I'm understanding isn't what they are actually talking about. In moments like that, I get really shy and just don't say anything. Then I wonder if people think I'm uninterested, which is NOT the truth. So now I get into a vicious circle of being scared to jump into the convo [sic] but want to say something 'cause I don't want to seem uninterested. Another problem is if I did want to jump in speaking French, I would have rehearsed it so many times in my head that, by the time I was ready to say it, they would be on another subject. So you can say I felt pretty embarrassed about my French today.

Thus, the data revealed that DJ's language anxiety had to do language choice and especially with his not having English as an option. This related to the social dimensions of his language anxiety because of his concern for what others would think of him based on his not understanding, or the way that he spoke French.

*DJ's experiences of the politicized nature of language in Quebec*

The data also revealed an interplay between DJ's language anxiety and the politicized nature of language in Québec. This interplay was evident in his comments in his journal about his fiancée, Devon, whom he described as French Canadian:

It's when I'm with Devon's family or friends and the convo [sic] gets to a point where I have NO CLUE what is going on any more. I think I get those feelings more because I don't want to seem 'out of place' for Devon. I don't want people to think negatively about me, although it's more for Devon than me. If they want to think negatively about the English boy then screw them, I couldn't care less.

But what I do care about is Devon and I don't want their negative thoughts to come off me and get stuck to Devon as in why is she with that English guy.

In this situation, DJ's anxiety about speaking French had to do with a fear of what people would think about his fiancée for dating an "English boy." In other words, he feared that his fiancée would be the target of negative social evaluation because of the way that he spoke French.

DJ's anxiety about how his French would reflect onto his fiancée was also related to his awareness and lived experiences of wider sociopolitical tensions to do with language. For example, when I asked him what would have to change for him to feel less anxious about his French, he told me, "All that two, three hundred years of the separation between the English and French." Indeed, several times in the research, DJ recalled memories of being persecuted for being an "English Quebecker." For example, he told me, "I've gone to bars with tickets and when they knew I was English, they said 'No, you don't have a ticket'." His feelings of persecution were even more explicit when he said, "They want me out and no way I'm fucking going to leave. It's a rare breed... to me it's almost my duty as an English Quebecker to stay here and show that I can thrive as an Englishman." He added that, in response to these feelings of persecution, he used language as a means of asserting himself as an anglophone in Québec:

I'll always end with 'Thank you' in my most English accent possible, just so they sort of say, wow there's an English person, he's nice, he's polite, he spoke French and maybe they're not all bad people.

However, DJ also felt that his use of English to assert his rightful place in Québec had affected his proficiency – and likely his language anxiety – in French:

I'm in that sort of limbo where I'm proud of my English and want to speak English everywhere, but also at the same time I want to speak French, I want to learn French. So if I didn't have all that, I'd probably speak French a lot more openly.

These comments highlight an interplay between DJ's language anxiety, avoidance, and proficiency, which was also evident when he said:

I'm in a vicious circle to getting my French better. Because of my anxiety, I don't speak French. And the only way my French is going to get better is if I speak it. And the reason I don't want to speak French is because I don't think my French is good enough.

#### *Case 5: Karine's story*

*"I've lived here my whole life, French heritage, French name, so it almost feels embarrassing when I don't speak French as well as they expect."*

Karine, a 24-year-old graphic designer and undergraduate student, was born and raised in Montréal. At the time of the research, she was living with her boyfriend, for whom French was also an additional language, and working as a graphic designer in an office where both French and English were spoken by her colleagues. She described herself as a native English speaker, but "primarily francophone family in terms of heritage" because she had French Canadian heritage on both sides of her family; her paternal grandfather and maternal grandmother were both French Canadian. However,

Karine grew up speaking mostly English at home and explained, “I guess my parents’ generation, they started speaking exclusively English”. Because of this heritage, like DJ, Karine’s last name was recognizably French Canadian. She articulated how her French Canadian heritage had shaped her experience with using French as an additional language when she said:

[French] is important to me because such a significant part of my heritage is here. I feel a duty to my heritage to know the language, which also increases the guilt when I don’t know it... I just feel like I’ve done a disservice to my heritage and where I’ve come from.

Karine began learning French at elementary school through a combination of core French and partial French immersion, and described her French as high-intermediate:

I mean, I can get by. I can communicate ideas. I’m not necessarily using all the right words and all the correct grammar. But I feel like I’m capable enough of expressing what I’m trying to communicate.

In terms of her personality, Karine described herself as a perfectionist, a generally anxious person, and told me that she used to have a “panic disorder.” However, she went on to explain, “I don’t think my generalized anxiety causes the language anxiety.” The data support Karine’s interpretation that her generalized anxiety and language anxiety should be considered distinct and separate phenomena because her experiences of language anxiety reflected that of other participants in the study; Karine experienced language anxiety that was characterized by feelings of frustration, guilt, nervousness, discomfort, and self-doubt. She experienced physiological symptoms: “I tense up a little

bit and my heart starts to race a little faster,” and reported avoidance behaviors: “I’ve kind of retreated to sticking to English environments as much as possible, consciously or not”.

*The pressure of expectation*

Like DJ, Karine’s feelings of language anxiety started in the language classroom, where she felt her teachers expected her to excel by virtue of her French Canadian last name. She articulated the pressure and expectation that she had felt in the language classroom:

I find that I’ve generally been quite anxious in my French classes, especially having a francophone name... there were many more people who were much better at French than I was in the class, so in those ones I felt more anxiety.

These comments are important because they reveal an interplay between her language anxiety and the pressure that she experienced in the classroom compared to other students who didn’t have French Canadian heritage. Moreover, Karine carried the pressure of such expectations into adulthood, and they continued to inform her language anxiety; she articulated the significance of her French name to her ongoing experiences of language anxiety in Montréal when she said:

In everyday life too, whenever I go anywhere and give my name, because I have a francophone name... there’s a level of expectation for my French... So often I get the question, why don’t you speak French if you have a French name? And then I feel more self-conscious every time I speak it because I know those kinds of questions happen.

Karine shared a memory from going to vote on Election Day that exemplified the ongoing pressure that having a French last name put on her in her everyday life:

As I made my way to the polling booth he made a comment about my French name, clearly in relation to the fact that I wasn't speaking or understanding any French. I'm sure his comment wasn't ill-intentioned, though he may have been a little frustrated, but for me it was just another reminder of how I don't live up to the expectations people have of me, based solely on my name.

Overall, the stakes were high for Karine when speaking French. Not only did she feel the normal pressure of communicating in an additional language, but she also felt the weight of having to prove herself to others (and, likely, herself) by means of the way that she spoke French. Karine offered this interpretation of how her name continued to shape her experiences of language anxiety:

I've lived here my whole life, French heritage, French name, so it almost feels embarrassing when I don't speak French as well as they expect I should based on that knowledge. Even if it's just the knowledge of my name... I want to do the name proud and it makes me feel that I've failed as a Quebecker in some capacity if my French doesn't meet their expectations.

*Karine's language practices, language choice, and agency*

At the time of the research, Karine's main language of communication was English. She used some French in her everyday life, mostly for oral communication for transactional interactions in public (e.g., buying groceries, ordering coffee, etc.), with her French Canadian colleagues at work, and occasionally for practice at home with her

boyfriend (recalling that French is also his second language). In public, Karine usually initiated conversations in French, and she reported that people often switched into English with her when she did speak French. About such switches, Karine had this to say:

On the one hand, I'm understanding because I appreciate that they're trying to accommodate me. But on the other hand, it's a little upsetting feeling like you've worked really hard your entire life to learn this language, you still can't quite succeed in it.

When I asked her to clarify what she meant by succeed, Karine explained:

Just, I guess telltale signs in my accent or if I'm not using the right gender pronouns or if I'm not conjugating the verbs correctly... I do remember on a couple of occasions wondering what was wrong with what I said. Like is it that easy to tell I'm anglophone?

Karine's reflections on the Montréal switch are important because they highlight an interplay with language anxiety; Karine, who described herself as "terrified of speaking for fear of making mistakes," assumed that people switched into English with her because she made a mistake in French. However, Karine's feelings were different if she was the one who chose to switch to English, for example, if she couldn't make herself understood:

I think I'm much more receptive to the idea of switching if... I have some kind of control over it. So let's say where it's happened where I ask in French, they answer in English, if I respond again in French because I really want to try, I'll be insulted if they respond again in English after I've made it clear that I want to

keep in French.... But then, other times I'll try my best at French, they'll roll with French, and then I'll forget a word and just apologize and ask if it's ok for me to switch to English.

In other words, it was not the use of English alone that made Karine feel anxious about her French; rather, it was whether she decided to use English or if the other person decided for her, as she expressed:

I think if I start switching into English, I'm not upset if they start switching into English because I guess I took control of the situation and directed it in that way and indicated that I'm more comfortable in English.

Karine's comments above are important because they show how language choice played into her language anxiety when she did not feel that she had agency in the language choices being made in a given interaction.

*Social comparison and Karine's awareness of an evaluative other*

One place that Karine indicated struggling with language anxiety was at her workplace, particularly in interactions with a particular co-worker who spoke French as her first language. For example, Karine captured this experience of language anxiety in her journal:

I avoided speaking French to my coworker again for the rest of the day, but since I knew I wasn't going to see her on Friday, I wished her a *bonne action de grâce* [Happy Thanksgiving] on my way out. It's crazy how much I had to muster up the courage just to say those four tiny little words. I can't rationalize why I'm so



afraid of speaking French with her. I guess in this instance I was worried again about seeming like I was trying too hard... What am I trying to prove?

Karine answered her own question during our walking interview when she said, “I try to inject bits of French to try and prove that I can speak French” and offered this interpretation of the feelings of language anxiety that she experienced around her co-worker:

[My co-worker] said in the past that she thought I didn’t speak French at all. So I guess that’s made me feel more anxious for future interactions because I want to show that I actually can speak French well... Sometimes when we’re chatting I’ll throw in a French phrase, or I’ll say goodbye to her in French. Just to sort of inch my way in in French with her. But even then, even if it’s just, one sentence, I’m super anxious about it.

In contrast to the language anxiety that she felt around her co-worker, Karine told me that she was at ease speaking French at home with her boyfriend and that sometimes they “challenge each other to speak in French to each other.” Karine offered this interpretation of why she didn’t experience language anxiety about her French around him: “Partially because I know my French is much better than his. Also because I feel comfortable and don’t feel judged for the quality of my French.” This is important because it highlights the role of social comparison in her experiences of language anxiety.

*Karine’s self-assessed proficiency*

Although Karine’s language anxiety had more to do with her perception of expectations and social comparison, her proficiency in French was something that we

talked about a lot. Karine put on a lot of pressure on herself in terms of her proficiency in French, especially to do with her accent. She told me, “the way I roll my r’s is much more like in Spanish or Italian.... So that’s one of the telltale signs that I’m not a native speaker.” Responding to my question about whether sounding like a native speaker of French was important to her, she said, “I would really love to,” but was also aware “that’s not something that I’m going to be able to change.” Knowing that her accent was something that she wouldn’t be able to change, Karine put extra pressure on herself to compensate by having as close to perfect grammar and vocabulary as possible when speaking French.

While the data reveal an interplay between Karine’s self-assessment of her proficiency in French and her language anxiety, we also talked about how her proficiency alone was not the issue. Rather, it was what her proficiency meant in certain social contexts. This was illustrated by how her language anxiety changed so fundamentally depending on who she was around. For example, as described above, around her co-worker, something as simple as a holiday greeting in French was a source of distress; in contrast, she was at ease speaking French around her boyfriend. In these situations, it was not her proficiency that changed, but rather the social context.

I asked Karine whether she thought her life would be different if she didn’t experience language anxiety about her French. Her answer is helpful in shedding light on the effect that language anxiety had on her life: “I don’t want to go so far as to say that I don’t feel comfortable in my own skin... but a lot of things would be easier if my French were better.” Her answer is also important because it shows how difficult it was for her to

tease apart the notion of proficiency and language anxiety. Although the data does not suggest a causal link between Karine's proficiency in French and her language anxiety, the two remained wrapped together in her own conceptualization of language anxiety:

I guess if I weren't anxious about my French, my French would be a lot better because without that anxiety in place, feeling like I can't speak it, I would have more opportunity to speak it. And so I'd gradually become better.

*Case 6: Mary's story*

*"I often hear, 'You speak such good French, wow.'"*

Mary, a 28-year-old social worker, had been living in Montréal since her family relocated from Alberta when she was six years old. A first-generation Canadian, Mary described herself as a visible minority. At the time of the research, she was living in a suburban part of Montréal with her husband, whom she described as perfectly bilingual in English and French. Mary attended a French elementary school and a French immersion high school, and described learning French as a positive experience. In terms of her proficiencies, Mary's told me that her French was nearly indistinguishable from her English; she identified herself as a bilingual Montrealer, but articulated the challenges that she faced in asserting this identity when she said:

I definitely find that if you learned French as a second language, which I did, no matter how good your French is, you're still always an anglophone who speaks French... And I find that my French has to be really, like I have to speak well so that people don't notice that you're an anglophone speaking French. It's weird but that's how I interpret it.

*Mary's language practices*

At the time of the research, Mary used both French and English in both the professional and personal spheres of her life. At work, she used mostly French with her colleagues, and both French and English with her clients, depending on the client's preference. In her personal life, with her husband, friends, and in-laws, Mary used a mix of English and French with flexibility and ease. For example, she told me that she and her husband switched back and forth between languages, often mid-sentence and, at times, she wasn't even aware of which language she was using. She told me, "[Sometimes] I have a thought I have only in French and I have to say it in French because I can't think it in English." Overall, the data indicate an expert proficiency in French. However, despite her native-like proficiency, Mary experience language anxiety about her French, as she explained:

No matter how good your French is... there's always an element of anxiety. In different kinds of situations. Not all the time but it can still happen. Even if I consider myself bilingual, even if I consider myself fluent, I still have moments where I experience anxiety about it.

Although Mary told me "I'm not constantly walking around worrying about the way I speak French," the data indicate that her language anxiety had some effect on her feelings of professional legitimacy, feelings of belonging, and her ability to put herself "out there," suggesting social consequences.

In describing what her language anxiety felt like, Mary told me: "It starts as anger. Like this moment of, hey how dare you? What it actually probably as is 'oh I don't

like this'. It's probably insecurity and anxiety, but it comes out as anger." Other feelings that accompanied Mary's language anxiety included self-consciousness, "blanking" on words, hesitation, and a feeling of being "psyched out." She also described physiological manifestations, including: "feeling warm, sweating, or just fidgeting, not feeling comfortable where you are."

*Barriers to Mary's communication*

When Mary made her language map drawing in our first meeting, she showed me how a lot of the language anxiety that she felt about her French was at her workplace. At least some of this language anxiety had to do with situations where limitations in Mary's French presented a barrier to her comprehension, as she explained:

I don't worry that when I'm speaking I'm not able to communicate myself properly. I don't worry about that. It's more that I'm going to miss things when people are speaking really really quickly in an accent that I'm not familiar with and using expressions that I don't know. I'm worried that I'll miss the information and I'll feel out of the loop, out of the conversation.

However, there was clearly more at stake for Mary than feeling out of the loop. Rather, Mary's ability to communicate effectively in French also had the potential to determine the extent to which she could "form a good therapeutic link" with a client. This was evident when she told me about her worries: "that I might miss something or they might not understand me, and that's really going to set our whole interaction off on a bad start." Given what was at stake, I wasn't surprised that many of Mary's experiences of language anxiety took place in her professional context. She told me: "language, just being able to

understand each other is essential for the kind of work that I do” and “if I can’t serve a client in French, then I would get fired.”

*On the politicized nature of language and being ‘non-white’*

Responding to my question about what would have to change for her to feel less anxious about her French, Mary told me:

Oh boy. I think [French] just carries so much weight and meaning. There’s so many values attached to language here, specifically in Québec. And people’s willingness, unwillingness, ability, whatever not ability to speak each language. It comes with assumptions.

Her answer reveals an awareness of and sensitivity to the sociopolitical tensions to do with language that exist in Quebec. In her own self-reflection on her language anxiety, she suggested that these tensions played into her fears and frustrations about the way she spoke French:

I’ve gotten comments like ‘oh you don’t appreciate French culture, or Québécois culture’. This assumption that I don’t appreciate all the intricacies of the culture because I’m not French Canadian and I don’t speak French as my first language. Or they’ll be talking about old radio or TV shows that are French that I didn’t grow up listening to. And so a comment will be like *oh les anglophones connaissent pas ça*, ah they don’t know that stuff. Instead of using it as an opportunity to enlighten me or expose me to something new that I didn’t learn, it’s like pointing out that I’m an anglophone.

Experiences like these played into Mary's language anxiety because, in her everyday interactions, she felt that she needed not only to achieve her communicative goals, but also demonstrate that she did not fit into certain negative stereotypes about people for whom French was an additional language. For example, she had this to say about what it means to be seen as a "unilingual anglophone":

It has a negative connotation. This idea of a unilingual anglophone person who didn't just arrive last week, that's considered a negative thing, even though that's the norm for many people.

In other words, not only did Mary feel like she needed to demonstrate that she is was not a unilingual anglophone, but also she also felt she had to work to fight against certain stereotypes of anglophones in general:

Anyone who happens to speak English as a first language, it's assumed that we don't want to learn French, that we're forced to do it, that it's this reluctant learning and that we don't appreciate anything about the language in French Canadian culture. Which for me is not the case.

It's difficult to say definitively whether the interplay between Mary's language anxiety and her awareness of the sociopolitical tensions to do with language were also informed by her experiences of being a visible minority. Even Mary found it hard to tease apart being a linguistic minority and being a visible minority, as she expressed: "I have to admit it's hard to distinguish between my awareness of myself as an English speaking person and my awareness of myself as a non-white person." That said, Mary's experiences of being non-white were important to her language anxiety because of the

assumptions and comments that people made about her French, which she perceived to often be based on her looks. For example, she told me about repeated experiences of speaking French with new people, only to have them derail the conversation by pointing out their surprise at her proficiency in French with comments or compliments like “Oh my god, your French is, you speak French so well.” About such experiences, Mary wondered:

If I was white, would somebody even notice if I spoke French? Cause maybe they wouldn't be paying as much attention to me... It's hard to know whether or not people would have paid attention to that or whether it would have blended in more, so it's hard to separate those two layers.

In exploring why such experiences were so frustrating for her, our discussion came full circle, returning to Mary's awareness of the socio-politicized nature of language in Québec:

I guess it just seems a contradicting question to ask because the goal is for everybody who lives here to learn French. So asking somebody where you learned French, seems like it doesn't make sense. People who come here and move here, the natural goal would be for people to learn French, then why would you ask somebody where they learned French? I just never understood why people... I mean, I live in Montréal. Where else would I have learned it?

Mary's response sheds light on how her frustration at people commenting on – or even complimenting – her French had to do with her perception of certain implicit ideologies of language and explicit language policies guiding what languages should be spoken by



whom in Québec; namely, that immigrants to the province should be educated in French and use French as their everyday language. Yet, despite Mary's language background reflecting such norms, she expressed feeling as though she was treated as an exception to the rule. Such attention was unwelcome.

Mary articulated what effect her awareness of the sociopolitical tensions to do with language had on her everyday experiences of using French in Montréal when she said:

I guess this is where I think the political baggage is what ends up maybe ruining potential great moments... it only takes a couple of really negative experiences where somebody labels you or passes judgment on why they think you're not speaking the language. And then that just kind of changes the way you view everyone.

*The unwelcome spotlight and Mary's fear of an evaluative other*

In the previous paragraphs, I presented findings that revealed an interplay between Mary's language anxiety and her awareness of and sensitivity to the sociopolitical tensions that have to do with language in Québec. The data suggest that Mary's experiences of such tensions played into her language anxiety because she felt placed under an unwelcome spotlight. Indeed, it was evident from Mary's data that she hated having attention drawn to her French – and often felt that such attention was unjust. In this sense, it follows that her language anxiety was closely linked to her fears of what others would think about her based on the way that she spoke French. For example:

If I'm meeting somebody new in a professional context, I know what they're seeing and their assumption is that I don't speak French, and it's almost like that kind of psyches me out... So sometimes I'll blank on a word or I'll use an expression that isn't quite right, so I'll be like uhhh, I just did that... So then I worry that, ugh they're going to think I can't speak French properly.

In the quote above, the way in which Mary's fear of negative evaluation interplayed with her language anxiety is clearly evident. Mary validated this finding during the focus group session when she said:

I would have never really described myself as being a self-conscious person or being scared of that, but it really came out a lot [in the data] that that's a big concern of mine is what people think when I'm speaking, or what reasons people might attribute to my actions.

Mary's fear of what people would think about her had to do with her experiences of negative discourses about proficiency and professional legitimacy. She expressed the effect that such discourse has had on her when she said:

I've heard people make comments about other people, even if it's not about me... I'll hear people say things like, 'Why couldn't they find a francophone speaker to come and do that presentation instead?'. So I'm very aware, I'm reminded a lot, that people always notice the slightest mistake you make, and then immediately, I find it's an offence that some people, some people take it as an offence. If you're living here you should be able to speak [French]. And if you can't, then you shouldn't be here.

Mary's comments are important because they show how her language anxiety about attention being drawn to her mistakes was also informed by her awareness and sensitivity to the sociopolitical tensions that have to do with language in Québec. It is also likely that Mary's aversion to having attention drawn to her mistakes in French related to negative experiences that she had experienced directly. For example, she told me:

With my immediate coworkers... I think sometimes they poke fun at my little mistakes. Like even today, I made a mistake with a word in French and my co-worker just burst out laughing. She thought it was hilarious that I mis-said this word.

This particular comment highlights how being corrected was another form of unwelcome attention. She told me, "I find that I'm sensitive to the way in which people correct me," further indicating an interplay with language anxiety that has to do with a fear of negative evaluation.

*The power of language choice*

Another way in which unwelcome attention on Mary's French interplayed with her language anxiety was language choice. An example was evident in a particular incident that she shared with me during our driving interview. She recounted how, when taking part in a professional training seminar that was conducted entirely in French, the trainer suddenly switched into English in an apparent effort to accommodate Mary:

He started giving me synonyms [in English] to explain what that word meant... And I was actually really confused and not quite grasping why he was doing it. So it took me a while to respond, which I think just further confirmed to him that I

wasn't understanding, when in fact I was just confused as to why he was doing it. And then everybody jumped in, all the other people at the conference, they were all trying to help and explain to me what it meant... And then I got hot, I was self-conscious. And then for the rest of the session, I was like oh my god oh my god oh my god, they don't think I understand any of this... I felt hot. I was sweating, I felt flushed.

Mary's language anxiety is clearly evident in the emotional and physiological responses that she recounts. It is also important to note the significance of social context to this experience of language anxiety. This became evident when Mary told me: "It was such a small group. And we were all sitting around this round table staring at each other, so I think it was also the social setting." The data also suggest that Mary's language anxiety had to do with what was at stake in this particular experience, as she articulated when she said:

It was mostly my pride and my ego that was at stake. That feeling of being judged. So not liking that. That was at stake. Protecting myself. My self-esteem. In that particular situation, that's what got injured, was my pride.

#### *Case 7: Denise's story*

*"I'll speak to them in French just to, I dunno, prove it to myself... I don't want to lose it even though I don't use it."*

Denise, 24, was born in Montréal to an anglophone mother and francophone father, and moved to Ontario as a child after her parents' divorce. Denise described

herself as a native speaker of English, although at a young age she spoke some French at home. She explained:

Both my parents are bilingual and most of my father's side of the family speaks French, so I think the agreement between my parents was that my mother was only going to speak to us in English and my father only in French so that it would be not a second language but two languages at once.

After she moved with her mother to Toronto, Denise was no longer exposed to French at home. From there, she attended French immersion for elementary and middle school, and a French high school. Denise described her proficiency in French as very advanced French with written difficulties. At the time of the research, she had been living in Montréal for two years and working for an English-language publishing company. When we met, she was living with a French Canadian (L1 French) roommate. Her father and stepmother (who spoke only French) also lived in Montréal, and she told me that she visited them often.

*Denise's language practices, language anxiety, and personality*

Denise told me that she was “for sure” more comfortable using English than French. Her preference for English was reflected in her language practices; she used English for the majority of her communications in both the personal and professional spheres of her life. However, there were certain situations where she used French. For example, one of her roommates was French Canadian, so Denise sometimes spoke French with her. In public, if she bought a coffee or a sandwich, or went out for a drink with friends, Denise made “a point to speak French with them, even if it's a conversation

as brief as exchanging money.” Responding to my question about why she used French in such interactions, Denise explained, “I’ll speak to them in French just to I dunno, prove it to myself... I don’t want to lose it even though I don’t use it.” Her answer is important because it sheds light on what was at stake for Denise in her everyday language practices, namely her self-image as someone who knew and was able to communicate in French. I gained further insight into Denise’s language practices when we talked about what knowing and using French meant to her. She told me, “I like to be able to speak two languages and it is definitely nice to be able to speak French and live here... And also that I can speak to my family.” Denise reflected further on these themes in her journal and shared this reflection:

I’m a little worried about keeping up my level of oral French. Half of my family is francophone (most are bilingual, but French is their native tongue), and I’d say my desire to continue speaking the language is in part so I can communicate with my family and in part to not throw away a skill.

Two places where Denise reported using the most French in her everyday language practices were her driving school, where she was taking a course in French, and (recalling that her step-mother spoke only French) at her father’s house. Both of these were contexts where Denise also reported feelings of language anxiety. For example, Denise captured a typical language anxiety response in her journal when recounting this experience at her driving school:

He asks a question no one volunteers to answer, and then calls on me to answer it. Suddenly, I can't understand what he is asking. I ask him to repeat himself once,

and then again, not making sense of the words and feeling the other student's eyes fixed on me, not understanding why I can't respond to this apparently easy question. I'm very anxious I will have to say I don't understand the French and that I will be asked to leave and return to my anglophone class, which isn't studying this unit again for another month. I am definitely sweating.

This experience is important because it captured a typical language anxiety response, including emotional (anxious), cognitive (blanking), and physiological symptoms (sweating). Overall, the data reveal that Denise's language anxiety was characterized by feeling worried, stressed out, flustered, embarrassed, and anxious. When I asked Denise to imagine how her life would be different if she wasn't anxious about her French, she told me:

I'd just be a more outgoing person in general. There are a lot of times where I have something to say, a question to ask, or I want to talk to this person, meet them or whatever I want to say, but I just don't because I'm embarrassed or anxious and I can't initiate a conversation.

Like other participants in the study, Denise reported that she hadn't felt anxious about her French in the language classroom. When I asked how the language classroom was different to non-classroom contexts, she explained:

It's a learning environment so it's like obvious that you're not going to be perfect at it. That's why you're there learning. And outside of that it's like clumsy to speak in broken French. And if you're in school, the teacher is listening to you say a sentence and correct you, that's fine.

Denise's interpretation of the difference between classroom and non-classroom contexts contrasts with that of other participants in the study. Where other participants referred to the social differences, Denise's answer has more to do with her own perfectionism. This was also evident when she said:

I'm more worried about my accent and being able to communicate exactly the same as I can in English...When I hear other people speaking any other language, their accent really doesn't bother me. But it's just not right, so I don't want to speak.

In terms of her personality, Denise described herself a generally anxious person but offered this interpretation of the differences between her language anxiety and generalized anxiety:

I think the normal anxiety is a lot more severe and more about potential things that could happen that have no relevance to any language, just people and my relationships with them and whatever else. Probably knowing that anxiety is a problem for me could explain why it's easier for me to feel anxious about my accent.

*Denise's experiences of social pressure and expectation*

Denise told me that she found it easier to speak French with strangers because "it's like I don't care what you think about me." In contrast, some of the situations where she reported the most anxiety about her French were with her family. This is important because it points to the social dimensions of her language anxiety. It was not speaking



French *per se* that made Denise feel anxious; rather, it was speaking French around certain people. For example, about her stepmother, Denise told me:

When I'm around her, they'll be something like an anecdote that I want to say and I just won't say it because I can't think of all the words before they come out of my mouth.

Denise told me that her language anxiety in situations like this had to do with both her proficiency as well as her worries about her ability to communicate effectively in French with her stepmother. However, a more emotional and social element to the language anxiety that Denise experienced about her French around her stepmother was also evident, as she expressed in her journal:

The situation where I feel the most upset or maybe I'm not sure if it's anxiety necessarily, but most disappointed with my French is when I'm speaking to my stepmother because I know that she has told my father before, 'Denise doesn't seem to like me'. And that's not the case. But it's hard... I've been trying to prove that it's not true for over 10 years now.

Denise's reflection is important because it highlights what was at stake in her interactions with her stepmother, namely her ability to prove her affection for her stepmother. These stakes played into Denise's language anxiety because of the extra emotional pressure that speaking French represented to her.

*Denise's past negative experiences*

Denise's data revealed an interplay between her past negative experiences and her ongoing language anxiety. This was particularly evident in the comments and reflections that she made about her experiences of using French around her extended family:

Some of my father's side of the family doesn't speak English, and from the time I was 9 or 10 until pretty recently, like maybe 18 or 19, I didn't really talk to them at all because I understood everything they were saying and I could speak in French, but I was afraid to. And as years went by, it become more of a big deal. They'd be like, oh just say one sentence in French. Because they were expecting that, it made me more scared to speak to them.

However, Denise's language anxiety about speaking French around her family was not just about the pressure that their expectation placed on her. Rather, it also had to do with the way that such expectation was framed as friendly teasing or banter. Denise explained, "Sometimes [my extended family] would also tease me like, oh yeah, you and your brother moved to Toronto, now you talk funny." Denise expressed that this teasing played into her language anxiety because "I want to be able to talk to my grandparents and my aunts and uncles, but I can't because I'm afraid of speaking in French."

Denise reported these feelings of language anxiety about speaking French around her family despite her ability to rationalize that her fears were probably unfounded, as she articulated: "I know that it's unreasonable because I know it's my family. They're not going to judge me. They're happy to see me and to talk to me." Nevertheless, these comments are important because they show how an emotional language anxiety response can co-exist with a conflicting rational understanding of the situation. Denise told me, "I

know it's just teasing. It's my grandfather saying this; he's not trying to hurt my feelings." However, such rational thoughts did little to mitigate the negative consequences of such comments for Denise: "Even though it's not an insult, I'm just not going to speak to them anymore because they're just going to make fun of my accent." Denise only realized the significance of these themes during our first interview: "I never realized how all the times I feel bad about speaking French is because someone's making fun of me. They're not trying to hurt me but that's just how it feels."

*Denise on language choice and the Montréal switch*

The data reveal an interplay between language choice and Denise's experiences of language anxiety. For the most part, this played out in situations where Denise initiated an interaction in French and her interlocutor responded to her in English. Indeed, Denise captured a typical example of this in one of her *in situ* recordings. She recorded this interaction with an employee at a local hardware store where she was looking to get a key copied:

Denise: *Si je veux faire couper une clé, c'est où?* [If I want to get a key cut, where is it?]

Employee: *Couper, ou* [cut or] to redo it?

Denise: Redo it, yeah.

Employee: Yeah it's, sorry I tell by your accent, isle 13, you'll see there's...

Later, during our walking interview, Denise had these comments to make about the interaction: "He had a thick French accent so obviously it wasn't any easier for him to speak in English... It was pretty typical." Her comments indicate two things: first, that

she noted his accent suggests that she tried to understand or interpret the switch through the lens of social comparison; second, the fact that she described the experience as typical suggests that the Montréal switch was a part of her everyday experiences of using French.

Responding to my question about how she felt when people switched into English with her, Denise told me, “It’s accommodating, but at the same time I wish I was better at French that you didn’t have to do that... it’s like, dang. I’ve sort of failed.” This comment is important because it shows that the interplay between Denise’s language anxiety and language choice came from her interpretation of what accommodative moves like the Montréal switch meant about her French; namely, that switching into English meant something negative about her French. Denise articulated the ongoing effect of repeated experiences of the Montréal switch on her language practices when she said:

It’s not the worst thing that can happen, but it’s just, ok I made the choice to speak to this person in French for whatever reason and maybe next time I won’t because this happened. There are places that I go to regularly, like there’s this café near my house, speak to them in French, but then if we ever start speaking in English one day, I’ll probably never speak to them in French again.

*Case 8: Rainbow’s story*

*“I have this little accent and I’m like, I’m not one of you!”*

Rainbow, 30, was a graduate student and teacher from New Brunswick. At the time of the research, she had been in Montréal for three years, was living with her French Canadian (French L1) partner, working as a Mandarin teacher at a local French language CÉGEP (post-secondary college), and completing graduate studies at an English-

language university. Rainbow began learning French in grade one and started French immersion in grade four. She described her experiences of learning French in school as very positive because “everyone was in the same boat” and her teachers were “awesome.” She described herself as a native speaker of English, an advanced speaker of Mandarin, and her French proficiency as between intermediate and advanced. About her French proficiency, she said: “I can get by in pretty much every situation... but I’m not mistaken for a native speaker... every now and then I won’t know the word for something.”

*Rainbow’s language practices and social context*

At the time of the research, Rainbow was regularly using French in both the personal and professional spheres of her life. She lived with her French Canadian partner, had many French Canadian friends, and worked in a French environment. Overall, she was at ease using French in her everyday life. As she commented in her journal: “I often can’t remember what language my interactions with my partner happen in. We switch back and forth between English and French A LOT, sometimes mid-sentence.” In public, Rainbow used French as her default language choice for most transactional interactions in public (e.g., ordering coffee, making purchases, etc.). A typical day, as recorded in Rainbow’s journal: “Read the news in English. Read emails in English, one in French. Ordered coffee in French... Read in English. Wrote in English. Grocery store, spoke French.”

Rainbow did not consider herself a generally anxious person and told me that she was ease with French in most of her everyday language practices. Nevertheless, certain

situations made Rainbow experience language anxiety about her French. She described feelings of embarrassment, shame, inadequacy, anger, mental blocks, and feeling “tongue-tied.” Rainbow expressed the significance of her language anxiety when she said, “I do spend quite a bit of emotional energy on it... I mean, it affects me.” The data also revealed that Rainbow’s language anxiety was specific to certain social contexts. She expressed the social nature of her language anxiety when she was explaining how she chose the route for our walking interview: “I kept trying to think of a place and I was like, where am I anxious? And there is no place. There is no neighborhood in Montréal that makes me anxious. What makes me anxious is contexts.”

*Rainbow’s experiences of language choice and an imaginary audience*

One of the places that Rainbow showed me on our walking interview around her home neighborhood was her local grocery store where she did much of her shopping. When I asked her what language she usually used when shopping there, she told me:

French. Though, as I’ve said, many of them actually speak English and French. Like the people who work there I mean. But I just can’t bring myself to be the person who walks up to the cash register and starts speaking English... because mostly it’s kind of like the guy behind me, the imaginary potential guy behind me, who would, you know, see me as someone who’s demanding service in English.

In public. In Québec. In a situation where many people think that one should not. Rainbow’s answer is important because it reveals the implicit stakes and ideologies behind her language choices. In other words, Rainbow’s answer indicates that her language choices had to do with more than the exchange of goods and services; rather,

her sense of belonging and acceptance was also at stake. Rainbow's explanation of her language choices in the grocery store also underscores the language ideologies that were at play in her everyday language choices. Such ideologies had to do with who should speak which language where and with whom. Rainbow expressed how ideologies of language played into her sense of belonging and acceptance when she said:

[There are] these strong feelings of we must always be speaking French and everyone must always be speaking French and yay French and nay everything else. That is exclusionary and causing me to feel these feelings of I'm not good enough and I'm an outsider and I'll never be one of you.

Rainbow and I also talked a lot about language choice in terms of the Montréal switch. During the focus group, Rainbow said: "I love and hate the Montréal switch." She explained that she loved it because "Montréal is an amazing multilingual city and it's super cool that people are just switching between languages all the time." However, she also expressed how the Montréal switch could also be distressing:

[It] makes me anxious, makes me... causes an emotional reaction that I can't quite name. Makes me feel inadequate. That I'm speaking to someone and they'll switch over to their second language. It feels like they're saying your French sucks.

However, Rainbow's difficulty with the Montréal switch was not just about how the switcher negatively evaluated her French, but also had to do with the stakes and ideologies that Rainbow brought to her everyday language practices and interactions with others. For example, Rainbow shared a particularly poignant memory of experiencing the

Montréal switch while buying a gift for a dinner party in a store with some French Canadian friends of her girlfriend:

I go in and I'm buying this thing, and it was almost Easter, and [the cashier] asked me for my phone number and I had to kind of stop and go like this to say my phone number in French. So it was pretty clear that it's not my first language 'cause I was translating it. And then after that, she tried to say Happy Easter, but she didn't know the words for Happy Easter and so she was like 'Ha- happy... um... happy'... and she couldn't find it and she was trying, and then she just said 'joyeux paques.' And just the fact that she was drawing so much attention to me not being one of them was upsetting to me.... I just went and I sat in the car and I had a cry. And I was like 'I will never be one of you. I will never be accepted as one of you.' Like I can't pretend to be one of you even when trying to buy a stupid little thing.

Rainbow's story exemplifies how the Montréal switch played into her language anxiety: already anxious that her French could be a factor in whether she was going to be accepted by her girlfriend's friends, Rainbow questioned her belonging even further when she was outed as a learner of French by the storekeeper. This story shows how the emotional language anxiety response to the Montréal switch co-existed with a rational understanding or assumption of the accommodative intention behind it. Rainbow articulated this dissonance when she went on to say:

In my mind, in the non-emotional part of my brain, I know that she was trying to be nice to me. I know that she was trying to say 'happy Easter,' she was trying to



say it in my language, she was trying to be friendly. But this part that couldn't listen to that was like, I'm going to go to this dinner party and they're all going to know that I'm not one of them and I'm going to just feel like an outsider the whole time.

Overall, the data reveal that the Montréal switch played into Rainbow's desire for belonging, her aversion to standing out because of the way that she speaks French, and her awareness of certain ideologies of language. These elements were evident when she said:

For me one of the big things about the Montréal switch isn't so much a feeling of failure as feeling like other people are now watching me... it's not just I should speak French. It's I should speak French better... It's not just try to form the words. It's you've really got to do a better job of trying to be one of us. Otherwise we're going to switch and switching means acknowledging that you're not one of us. And that we know it.

*Rainbow on unwanted attention and the presence of an evaluative other*

Rainbow shared this reflection in her journal about attending a workshop in French: "I didn't feel any language anxiety at all during the workshop. The environment was really very relaxed. I was never the center of attention and no one pointed out or commented on my accent." Rainbow's final comment about the absence of language anxiety during the workshop underscores how having attention drawn to her because of her French could interplay with her language anxiety. An example of this interplay was also evident in another experience that Rainbow recorded in her journal. She recounted

meeting some friends for a picnic, and explained how she felt “a bit of anxiety” speaking with a particular friend:

Because she almost always references in some way the fact that I’m not francophone when we speak with each other. Usually, after she’s been speaking for a while (often very quickly) she’ll apologize to me for speaking so quickly and tells me she’ll try to slow down or she’ll look at me and ask me if I’ve understood. It irritates me a lot because... all she does is draw attention to my possible lack of comprehension.

This kind of attention was unwelcome because it pointed out the shortcomings of Rainbow’s French. However, even if the attention was more positive or complimentary attention, it was still unwelcome. For example, here Rainbow described meeting a friend of a friend for the first time: “The first thing that she said was basically, “*Eh! Tu parles français!*” [Oh! You speak French!]. Although intended to be a compliment, Rainbow articulated the effect that this kind of well-meaning but unwanted attention had on her when she said, “Now I don’t want to speak French because you’re listening to it. I don’t want to speak French in a situation where someone’s trying to determine if I speak French... Like I don’t want to be evaluated right now.” In other words, such attention did more than make Rainbow feel that she was unwillingly placed under a spotlight. Rather, it also made her feel that her French was being evaluated. Rainbow validated this interpretation when she said, “The times that I’m most anxious speaking French I think [are] when I feel like I’m being evaluated ‘cause someone makes that clear.”

*Rainbow’s feelings of non-belonging*

In the preceding paragraphs, I described how Rainbow's language anxiety manifested in situations where unwanted attention was drawn to her because of the way that she spoke French. Rainbow also articulated this when she said, "I don't like having attention drawn to me... Attention that makes me different. 'You're not one of us.'" This comment indicates that her language anxiety also had to do with the extent to which she felt a sense of belonging. Indeed, a theme that came up several times during the course of our work together was Rainbow's feelings of non-belonging, of otherness, and her ultimate desire to fit in. For example, during the focus group session, Rainbow told us:

I think there was a moment when I moved here, when I imagined settling here and this being my home, wanting to be able to eventually feel like I belong and call myself of this place. And when I realized over time that that can't happen, it is disappointing. That I am excluded from that category forever.

Rainbow expressed how these feelings of non-belonging feelings interplayed with her language anxiety when she said:

My language anxiety reminds me that I'm an outsider, or reminds me that I feel like an outsider at least. It reminds me that I think other people think I'm an outsider... Reminds me that I'm not completely at ease here.

In an attempt to arrive at a deeper understanding of how these forces have shaped in her language anxiety, I asked Rainbow what would have to change in order for her to feel less anxious about her French. Her answer underscores the importance of social belonging and acceptance to her experiences of language anxiety:

Have a Québécois accent. Blend in. In French. And then just – hah it’s all gone. And then I can have my English and sound like myself in English, but then I don’t give myself away ever in French and it’s just like phew relax. ...The anglo accent sometimes it’s just like, man I wish I didn’t have to carry that around.

*Case 9: Jordan’s story*

*“I never speak French because I want to.”*

Jordan, 27, was born and raised in an English-speaking neighborhood near downtown Montréal. At the time of the research, she was working as an accountant in a large corporate firm in downtown Montréal. Jordan told me that her family was of Chinese descent, and she described herself as a “minority within a minority,” referring to her visible and linguistic minority statuses as a Chinese-Canadian anglophone in Montréal. Jordan attended English schools with French immersion programs throughout elementary and high school. She described her proficiency in English as native, her proficiency in Cantonese as beginner, and her proficiency in French as intermediate. About her proficiency in French, Jordan explained, “I don’t feel comfortable necessarily having a full-blown conversation in French, but I will speak French when necessary. And I know more than just the basics.”

*Jordan’s language practices*

At the time of the research, Jordan preferred English and usually only used French for simple interactions. She explained:

If I'm asking a very simple question that's going to elicit a very simple answer and that would be the end of it, I would just speak in French. If it was a little more complicated than that, then I would ask the question in English.

Through her interviews and journal entries, it became evident that Jordan only used French if she couldn't avoid it. She told me, "I never speak French because I want to." However, avoiding French also had the potential to lead to feelings of anxiety and guilt for Jordan. She explained, "Because I feel like I should be speaking French... I feel like I should be a lot better than I am."

It is notable that Jordan's language practices changed over the course of the research because she started in a new job that required her to use French on a more frequent basis, both for communication with her colleagues and superiors, but also with clients. In this sense, Jordan's participation in the research also took place during a period of significant change for her, as she transitioned from the role of a student to the role of a professional. In our first interview, before she had started at her new firm, she expressed some concerns about how much she was going to have to use French at her new workplace. Jordan's new job became a focal point in her data, and as she progressed through her participation in the study, her anxiety about using French at work increased. For example, Jordan's anxiety about speaking French at work was clearly evident in this excerpt from her journal, which she recorded about halfway through her participation in the study:

I'm feeling more and more uncomfortable with the prospect of especially having to speak to clients in French that I'm even finding ways to avoid it. For example,

today I'll probably have to go to the client today... and the idea of that is making me so nervous – I feel like I'm just going to get so confused and flustered when we talk in French to each other.

In terms of her language anxiety, Jordan described “a pervasive sense of discomfort” about using French. Her language anxiety was characterized by feelings of nervousness, tension, stress, worry, and confusion. Jordan added, “I think when I'm forced to think on my feet and speak in French... I just start stuttering, and I can't even string together the most basic sentence even 'cause I'm just so tense and nervous.” She told me that her language anxiety made her feel awkward and said, “I don't really feel myself” when using French.

Jordan told me that her feelings of language anxiety “definitely” affected her life in Montréal and described how her behavior changed when she experienced language anxiety about her French: “I just become very unsociable. I ... yeah, I just don't say anything. That's not a very normal way to act in a social setting.” Indeed, Jordan's language anxiety and associated avoidance behaviors had affected her to the point where she was considering leaving Montréal to live in an English-speaking city where her language anxiety would not be a part of her everyday life: “Even though I work here, I'm planning to move to Toronto or the US or something like that. Somewhere I can really, you know, thrive and speak in the language of my choice.”

*The role of Jordan's social context and social comparison*

Like many other participants in the study, Jordan did not experience feelings of language anxiety when she was learning French in the classroom. When I asked her how the two contexts were different, she explained:

I was with peers who were at the same level as me... I felt like we couldn't really judge each other... whereas here, when I speak French it's obviously with a Quebecker, so it's a different ball game entirely.

Jordan's answer reveals that her language anxiety was – at least in part – related to her social context and how she perceived her French in comparison to others. Indeed, she reported feeling similarly at ease while speaking French during her travels in Lebanon: “I was speaking French with other people whose first language wasn't French, so we were all on the same level.” This interplay between Jordan's language anxiety and her tendency to compare herself to the people around her was also evident when she responded to my question about speaking French with people who also knew English: “Definitely if they spoke really good English I would feel more anxious.” Her answer shows that she was highly aware of the extent to which her interlocutors were proficient in the languages they knew, and how she experienced anxiety when she felt her own proficiency was lacking in comparison.

The interplay between Jordan's awareness of and comparison to the proficiency of others was evident in a particular experience that she shared in her journal; she recounted an interaction with a group of her new colleagues where she became acutely aware that she was the only person in the room who was not comfortable in both French and English. In this case, and in contrast to her experiences of using French in Lebanon,

Jordan perceived her proficiency in French as lower than that of her peers. She expressed a feeling of inadequacy in comparison to others when she wrote:

I also realized that I was the only person in a room of 6 people who wasn't comfortable in both languages... I was certainly the worst French speaker in the room... Even the other two guys, whom I thought were anglophones, were actually of Italian descent and whose grandparents apparently don't speak a lick of English (only Italian and French). I guess the more trilinguals I meet, the more inadequate I feel, as I realize more and more that so many Montrealers are trilingual at the very least, whereas here I am, a unilingual and barely bilingual."

*The present parallels of Jordan's past negative experiences*

Another theme that emerged from Jordan's data had to do with negative experiences in her past, which continued to inform her present experiences of language anxiety. She recounted these memories of learning Cantonese as a child:

When I was a child and I was learning Cantonese... anytime I spoke in Cantonese with a slight anglophone accent, everyone would burst out laughing. Like my aunts, my uncles, my cousins, everyone... for a very long time I was the only member of the family who didn't [speak Cantonese], and it caused a lot of anxiety. Like I never wanted to go to family reunions because no one would talk to me.

When we talked about this memory later, Jordan's interpreted her ongoing language anxiety about French as "definitely related" to her past negative experiences with Cantonese. Jordan expressed how, in the world beyond the classroom, she experienced



similar feelings of shame and anxiety that she had felt about not speaking Cantonese perfectly. The parallels between her feelings of French and Cantonese were also evident when she said: “Going to an anglophone school and learning French was fine, but then I left that school, and I entered the real world and again I felt sort of this anxiety and shame that I was speaking not perfectly.” These parallels between Jordan’s feelings about Cantonese and French are important because they suggest that past negative experiences with additional languages continued to inform her present experiences of language anxiety, even if the languages were different. Indeed, Jordan recounted an experience that exemplified this point; she shared a memory from work, where a number of colleagues offered their unsolicited advice about why she should take on a certain client who only spoke French: “Suddenly half the room had an opinion on why I should absolutely take the client, with people saying ‘well, if you don’t practice now, when are you going to do it?’” This experience left Jordan feeling attacked, put on the spot, stressed, anxious, and incompetent. She commented: “A lot of people are weighing in. For me it’s completely parallel to how I felt growing up with my mom and my extended family.”

*Jordan on language choice: A lose-lose situation?*

The data revealed that language choice interplayed with Jordan’s language anxiety in two ways. The first way had to do with her preferred language choice: English. Jordan told me that she preferred to speak English, not only because she felt concerned about her proficiency in French, but also because she wanted her interlocutors to be aware of her language background. She expressed this in her journal when she wrote: “I also want to make it *clear* that I’m an anglophone... Maybe it’s so they take it easy on

me when they speak to me in French.” In other words, Jordan wanted her language background to be obvious in an attempt to lower people’s expectations of her French, or pre-empt certain assumptions about her proficiencies. She offered this explanation:

I think because I realize that when people hear that I’m from here, I think they automatically assume that I must have gone to a French school... at this point I don’t want people to be confused about why I don’t speak French well.

Jordan’s anxiety about people’s assumptions about her French ties back to her experiences of growing up in Montréal as a visible minority. Jordan told me that, because of Bill 101, people often assumed that she attended French elementary and secondary schools. This played into her anxiety about the way that she spoke French because she perceived people to have certain expectations about her proficiency in French, which she felt unable to meet.

The second way that language choice played into Jordan’s language anxiety had to do with the language choices of others. For example, Jordan reflected in her journal that when she did speak French, “most of the time (at least 90% of the time), the French speaker tends to switch to English.” Like other participants in the study, Jordan described a mixed relationship with the Montréal switch, but one that pointed to an interplay with her language anxiety:

I mean it’s like an immediate relief, but in the long run it doesn’t make me feel great... ‘cause it makes me feel like I need to be babied all the time. Like I have this disability that needs to be accommodated.

Jordan's comments show how the Montréal switch had the effect of reminding her of the shortcomings of her French, of which she was already painfully aware. Moreover, not only did it feel like she was unable to hold a conversation in French, but she was also reminded that she wouldn't be able to accommodate them if the tables were turned:

I wish I could do the same. I wish I felt comfortable enough in French that I could just switch to French easily and accommodate them. But when they do that to me it's like I know it's a crutch that I'm just relying on.

In other words, Jordan interpreted the Montréal switch through the lens of social comparison, which is to say that she took such accommodative moves to mean something negative about how her interlocutor has compared her proficiency in French to their own in English. She also expressed this in her journal when she wrote:

While it is very accommodating of them, I also feel like it's a bit condescending, due to the fact that they assume (or know for a fact) that their grasp of the English language is better than mine of the French language.

However, Jordan also talked about situations where people didn't – or wouldn't – switch into English with her, and also expressed language anxiety about such situations:

I feel like if they don't switch to accommodate me, and then I'm forced to speak French in a public setting, that's when the spotlight turns on. Because that's when I feel like everyone's assessing everything single thing I'm saying and judging my grammar, checking to see if I'm making mistakes. It's probably all in my head, like people don't really care that much.

Overall, the data reveal that Jordan's anxieties about language choice had less to do with her ability to communicate with the people around her and more to do with what her language choices would mean about her French. Indeed, she admitted that she could almost always make herself understood:

I know that at the end of the day, people will always be able to understand me, and worst case scenario I switch and I use some English terms or *anglicismes*, which appears to be totally normal, especially in Québec where I hear francophones all the time throwing in English words as they're speaking. But then I don't feel comfortable doing that because I feel judged because I'm not doing that because it's cool or because I understand that there's a better term to express what I'm trying to say in English. It's more that I can't find my words in French.

Jordan's comments suggest an awareness of the way that individuals in Montréal use the linguistic resources that they have, but a perception that her own use of English was somehow invalid. In other words, although Jordan could make herself understood by using a few English words, which she knew to be a part of the way people in Montréal use the languages they know, she was afraid that people would still interpret such language practices negatively.

*Case 10: Alice's story*

*"I feel there's a pressure here, not only to speak French, but to have a certain attitude about speaking French."*

Alice, 29, was a nursing student from Saskatchewan, studying at an English-language institution. At the time of the research, she had been living in Montréal for three

years and working in a mostly English-speaking workplace. For most of the three years prior to her participation in this study, she had been living with her American partner, who didn't speak French. Alice began learning French through core French classes in pre-school and continued core French throughout elementary and high school. When she moved to Montréal, she took the free *francisisation* courses offered by the Québec government. Alice described herself as a native speaker of English, an intermediate speaker of Japanese (she spent time living in Japan after completing her undergraduate degree), and she considered her proficiency in French to be intermediate. In her words her French was “not terrible but not great either.”

*Alice's language practices and the role of her social context*

Responding to my question about how she had felt in the language classroom, Alice said, “I've taken lots of language classes and they don't usually make me anxious.” However, about using her French in non-classroom contexts, Alice told me:

I really feel anxious about language a lot. I feel discouraged from speaking... I'm not an anxious person in general, but being in a situation where I need to speak French makes me very anxious.

Alice offered this interpretation of the difference between the classroom and non-classroom contexts:

[In the classroom] the playing field is equal... And especially classes are usually broken down by level, so you're really with people who are speaking the same basic amount of language. Even if there's variation, it's a lot narrower in range.

Her answer is important because it reveals an interplay between her language anxiety and her social context. The significance of social context to Alice's language anxiety was also evident in her everyday language practices. At the time of the research, she was studying nursing at an English-language university, and her partner was American, so much of her life was lived in English. At the hospital where Alice was doing clinical placement, she told me "I do not normally try to speak in French because I'm not confident that I would be able to express myself professionally." With friends, even those who were French Canadian, Alice used English because "speaking French in front of friends makes me really anxious." Much of the French that Alice encountered was overheard in public places, such as the metro. When I asked her to describe situations where she would normally speak French, she told me, "I think I speak French when I don't think I'm going to have to speak much at all," suggesting that she was uncomfortable when interactions in French extend beyond simple, predictable chunks of speech. For example, like most other participants in the study, Alice defaulted to French for most simple interactions in public (e.g., bus drivers, cashiers, service personnel). Alice also reported that people often switched into English with her. In contrast to other participants in the study, for whom switching into English was a source of language anxiety, these accommodations did not make Alice feel anxious about her French. In fact, she told me that "it's a relief" when people switched into English with her. However, Alice was empathetic to other participants' feelings towards the Montréal switch and offered the following interpretation of her indifference:

Let me get to [a] place where I can speak French. Maybe once I get to the point where I'm trying to practice French, maybe then I'll be annoyed by the switch, but right now I want to avoid French at all costs, so if you are going to help me with that, that's good.

Although much of Alice's everyday use of French was limited to transactional interactions (e.g., running errands, ordering coffee, etc.) and simple conversations at the hospital (e.g., greeting patients, giving directions, etc.), even these relatively predictable interactions could cause her to experience language anxiety about her French. However, she reflected in her journal about how her language anxiety in such situations had been changing in recent months:

Having moved at the beginning of September to a neighborhood where English is very rarely spoken, I've started to use French more often, and I have become gradually less anxious about speaking French while buying groceries or doing other basic errands. However, I sometimes don't understand everything that's said to me (slang and accents play a role in this) and that can be anxiety-provoking, because sometimes I don't know how to respond.

In terms of the everyday language practices recorded in her journal, Alice encountered several situations where she felt anxious about her French. Some situations involved Alice having to speak French to complete a simple task, such as running errands to the pharmacy, getting take-out, or returning a faulty product to a store; these situations made Alice feel "a little bit anxious." In other situations, Alice's anxiety was what prevented her from speaking French somewhere that she normally would speak French,

such as a café or bar near her house, because she was with friends or classmates; the idea of them overhearing her speaking French made her feel “self-conscious” and “really anxious.” She said, “Even if I’m speaking English, the reason for that is because not necessarily I wouldn’t know what to say [in French], but because I’m anxious about speaking in French.” However, using English was not necessarily a solution to her language anxiety; even speaking English in certain social situations made her feel anxious about her French “because I definitely feel sometimes, ugh, I should be speaking French.”

Responding to my question about the effect that language anxiety had on her life, Alice told me, “My French would be better if I wasn’t avoiding it. Probably my social experiences in Montréal would be different. For having lived here for three years, I don’t have a ton of friends. And that’s probably related.” Her answer is important because it highlights the social dimensions of Alice’s language anxiety; not only was her language anxiety shaped by her social experiences, but it also shaped her social experiences and had a negative impact on her life.

*Alice on the pressure and expectations of language choice*

During our time together, Alice talked a lot about the social pressures and expectations that she has experienced in Montréal. Indeed, the data reveal a strong interplay between these experiences and her language anxiety. Alice traced this piece of her language anxiety puzzle back to when she first arrived in Montréal with her partner; not only was Alice using French to accomplish her own communicative needs, she was also using French to support her partner’s needs as well:



Being here with her was a big part of my language anxiety experiences as well because she's American and had never taken French classes, so she spoke no French at all and sometimes I would become the person who interacted with the world on behalf of both of us.

At the same time, Alice was also experiencing pressure to speak French in her professional life:

In my first job, I was working in an office and there was definitely pressure too.

Like you should be making this phone call in French, you should be doing this in French, you should be doing that in French.

The situations described above all relate to the pressures that Alice experienced in situations where she was obliged to speak French. However, the data show that Alice did not experience language anxiety in all situations where she felt obligated to speak French. Rather, her language anxiety depended more on whether the obligation was due to practical need or social pressure. Alice offered this example and interpretation of the role of obligation in her experiences of language anxiety:

There's two different kind of obligations. There's the 'should' and the 'have to.'

So if you're speaking to someone where really the only language the person and I share in common is French, then that makes me a lot less anxious because there's no other way. I'm going to get through it, one way or another... like for example I just moved to Hochelaga, so it's a lot more French speaking than where I lived before, so I feel like I have less options there and it makes me less anxious. The 'should' makes me more anxious than the 'have to.'

Her answer is important because it points to an interplay between language choice and her language anxiety. In situations where French was the only option, Alice seemed to know that she would be able to make herself understood somehow, and did not feel anxious about her French. However, in situations where she had a choice to speak French or English, she worried about the assumptions her interlocutor would make about her based on her language choices. In other words, the pressure that Alice felt had to do with more than just her language choices, but also the implicit meaning or attitude behind her language choices. This was evident when she said:

I've even spoken to native English speakers who have said, 'I really don't want to speak English in social contexts because I feel I should be working on my French here.' So I feel there's a pressure here, not only to speak French, but to have a certain attitude about speaking French. Or to perceive... yeah there's a pressure to speak French and for that to be very important to you.

Alice described how these experiences accumulated over time, making other situations feel more stressful:

Like the other pressures that we've talked about from social situations or work or school. If none of that was going on, then this might be no big deal at all... So the time when you are in a social situation and someone asks if you speak French and you don't, and they are just not going to talk to you anymore at all, increases the pressure that you feel when you go to work the next day and somebody asks you to call one of the government agencies, make sure you do it in French.

In our first meeting, Alice told me that she was glad that non-classroom language anxiety was being studied because she had often felt that her experiences of language anxiety were dismissed by the people around her. She reported hearing comments such as: “‘Why don’t you speak French more. Just do it.’ Not exactly ‘get over it’ in those words, but that’s the message. ‘You should really be practicing your French’, ‘You should just be more confident’.” While likely well-meaning, such comments translated into another kind of pressure that fed Alice’s language anxiety, as she expressed:

I think that a lot of people assume that if you’re not getting out there and practicing a language that you’re learning, that that’s a very easy thing to fix. Like oh, you should just put it all out there. Just don’t worry about it. I’ve heard ‘just don’t worry about it’ lots. Like you just have to speak more. It’s not necessarily that easy. And not to say that it’s incredibly hard either, but it’s not like I’m not wanting to do that. At all. It’s not like it’s never occurred to me to speak more French.

*Alice’s experiences of the politicized nature of language in Québec*

Responding to my question about what would have to change in order for her to feel less anxious about her French, Alice told me, “I feel like if people who were all from here, whatever their native language is, got along better about language, it would be easier for people who move here, whatever they speak.” Her answer points to an awareness of and sensitivity to the sociopolitical tensions that have to do with language in Montréal. Responding to my question as to whether these sociopolitical tensions had affected her experiences of using French in Montréal, Alice told me, “Yeah, absolutely.

Because that's a site of pressure around French here." Alice offered this insight into how the politicized nature of language in Québec has played into her language anxiety:

I feel like there are a lot of feelings of resentment that go back and forth between anglophone and francophone communities here... As someone moving here from elsewhere, I find it really difficult to deal with that, like the magnitude of baggage.

### *Cross-case analyses*

In the first part of this chapter, I presented case studies of the ten participants who I worked with in collecting narrative data about their experiences of non-classroom language anxiety in Montréal, describing their backgrounds and experiences of language anxiety and identifying various themes that emerged through the analysis and interpretation of their data. In this section of the chapter, I present the results of the cross-case analyses, which brought to light three key findings:

- Key finding #1: Individuals of many different kinds experience language anxiety in varied and unpredictable ways
- Key finding #2: Language anxiety is not a fixed or stable construct, but is rather shaped by individuals' social experiences
- Key finding #3: Language anxiety has the potential to negatively affect how individuals experience and use French.

In the pages that follow, I explore each of these key findings in terms of recurring themes and significant contrasts between participants' experiences. Discussion, interpretation,

and theorization of the findings will be taken up in the next chapter (Chapter 6: Discussion).

*Key finding #1*

Key finding #1: Individuals of many different kinds experience language anxiety in varied and unpredictable ways.

All ten participants in my study self-identified as experiencing language anxiety. Their diverse backgrounds, proficiencies, life experiences, language practices, and learning experiences indicate that non-classroom language anxiety can affect individuals with vastly different life experiences (for a tabular view of participants and their biographical information, see: *Table 1*). Moreover, for all participants, using French had the potential to trigger various and unpredictable negative emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural responses.

*Participants' backgrounds*

Participants' backgrounds were diverse and varied. They came from different parts of Montréal, Québec, Canada, and abroad. Seven (DJ, Karine, Mary, Denise, Rainbow, Jordan, and Alice) were born and raised in Canada. Of these seven Canadians, four were from Québec; Karine, Mary, and Jordan had grown up in different parts of Montréal, while DJ was from a small town in Québec. The other three Canadians (Denise, Alice, and Rainbow) came from other Canadian provinces. Of the three participants who were not born in Canada (Sophia, Ryan, and Kiki), two (Sophia and Ryan) had both immigrated from non-English speaking countries, while Kiki had immigrated to Québec from the United States.

Participants' backgrounds also reflected significant diversity. Two participants (Mary and Jordan) identified as visible minorities, two (Sophia and Ryan) were members of different immigrant communities and spoke English as an additional language, and two participants (Rainbow and Alice) were in same-sex partnerships. Most, but not all, were married or living in common-law partnerships. At the time of the research, they all lived in different areas Montréal. Professionally, participants worked in industries such as healthcare, social services, corporate finance, fashion and design, and education. Although two participants (Karine and Denise) reported having experienced generalized anxiety in their lives, the majority of participants did not describe themselves as generally anxious people. Overall, the diversity of participants' personal backgrounds suggests that language anxiety can affect individuals from a range of backgrounds and experiences.

*Participants' proficiencies and learning backgrounds*

Just as participants' personal backgrounds differed, so too did their self-described proficiencies in French, which varied from beginner to native-like. One participant (Ryan) described his French as beginner. Two participants (Jordan and Alice) described their French as intermediate. Four participants (Sophia, Kiki, DJ, and Karine) described their French as high-intermediate, while Rainbow described her proficiency as between intermediate and advanced. One participant (Denise) described herself as advanced, and one participant (Mary) described herself as bilingual. Overall, the research suggests that individuals of any proficiency can experience non-classroom language anxiety. As articulated by Mary, "No matter how good your French is... there's always an element of anxiety."

Participants' language backgrounds also varied in terms of how they had learned French. For those participants born and/or raised in Canada, all had learned French through their elementary and secondary schooling. More specifically, Karine, Denise, and Rainbow all attended French immersion schools. DJ and Alice both attended English schools and took core French classes. Jordan also attended an English school, but described it as a bilingual school. Mary was the only participant who attended a French school. Four participants (Sophia, Kiki, Ryan, and Alice) had all spent time studying French as adults; Sophia and Kiki had both taken intensive language programs at McGill, while both Ryan and Alice had studied French through the Québec government's *francisation* program. The length of time that participants had been speaking French varied from five years to their whole life.

For the most part, participants described their classroom language learning experiences positively. Just two participants (DJ and Karine) reported having experienced classroom language anxiety. Interestingly, both DJ and Karine made explicit links between their French Canadian last names and their language anxiety, especially in terms of the expectations that they perceived from their French teachers; this theme will be explored further in this chapter in relation to Key Finding #2. Notably, although participants reported mostly positive classroom language learning experiences, many described feeling ill-prepared for the world beyond the classroom. As articulated by Kiki:

You take all these French classes, and you're feeling pretty good about yourself, and then you go out on the street and you literally cannot say 'hi' to somebody.

They don't teach you the words that you need to have a conversation with somebody.

Similarly, Ryan expressed frustration with the differences between the kind of French he learned in the classroom compared to what he encountered 'on the ground' in Montréal:

I had learned French based on the French system of France, and here I can't understand people when they're speaking because they speak in a different accent and use different words. It makes it so hard for me to understand.

In other words, participants' feeling of ill-preparedness had to do with the kind of French they encountered beyond the classroom, especially slang and different accents.

Participants also described feeling unprepared for the complexity of the sociolinguistic dynamic of Montréal. For example, participants told me that their French teachers had never talked to them about the possibility of the Montréal switch (which I explore further in relation to Key finding #2). Importantly, participants also told me that their teachers had never talked about language anxiety, neither within nor beyond the classroom. This is important because most participants' first experiences of language anxiety were in non-classroom contexts.

### *Participants' language practices*

Participants drew on their linguistics resources to accomplish a variety of communicative tasks. Some participants used French more than others. For example, Sophia, Mary, and Rainbow all used French in most aspects of their day-to-day lives. For these three participants, speaking French was an integral part of their familial, social, and professional communication. Other participants' everyday language practices involved



much less use of French. For Ryan, this was likely due to limitations in his proficiency. For others, it was evident that their limited use of French had more to do with their language anxiety. This seemed to be the case for DJ, Jordan, and Alice, who all described avoiding French as much as possible. This finding is important because it demonstrates the extent to which non-classroom language anxiety shaped their language practices.

Language practices that were consistent across all participants had to do with their use of French in public interactions. All participants reported using French by default in most of their transactional interactions in public (e.g., buying a coffee, shopping, etc.). In fact, for many participants, such interactions represented the majority of the French that they used in their everyday lives. Responding to my question about why they usually used French in public, both Denise and Ryan explained that it was because they wanted to practice their French; Denise also used these transactional interactions as a test or proof of her ongoing ability to speak French. Similarly, Jordan expressed how her language choices were guided by a feeling that she should be speaking French and that she should be better. Even though they expected that their interlocutor might switch into English with them, participants reported that they usually initiated public interactions in French out of a sense of obligation, sometimes to themselves (for practice or to prove their proficiency to themselves). More often, however, participants reported that they initiated public interactions in French out of respect and obligation to the perceived wider sociolinguistic norms. Their responses highlight an awareness of certain ideologies of language that have to do with who should speak French, where, and with whom, and the extent to which such ideologies of language informed their language practices.

### *Participants' manifestations of language anxiety*

For all participants, using French had the potential to trigger negative emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural responses that were varied and unpredictable. All participants described negative emotional responses, including: feeling stressed, frustrated, embarrassed, nervous, worried, scared, terrified, confused, guilty, flustered, anxious, withdrawn, shamed, inadequate, or angry. Five participants (Sophia, Ryan, DK, Kiki, and Rainbow) reported cognitive manifestations of their language anxiety including: mental blocks, self-doubt, feeling overwhelmed, being unable to tune in to conversations, blanking on words, freezing, feeling put on the spot, feeling tongue-tied, feeling angry at themselves, feeling like an outsider or a fraud, and wanting to run away. Physiological manifestations were evident in three participants' (Mary, Karine, and Kiki) descriptions of their language anxiety. These included tensing up, feeling warm, heart racing, sweating, and wanting to cry or pass out. Finally, five participants reported behavioural responses; Mary noticed herself fidgeting, and DJ, Karine, Jordan, and Alice reported avoidance behaviours when experiencing language anxiety.

### *Key finding #2*

<p>Key finding #2: Language anxiety is not a fixed or stable construct, but is rather shaped by individuals' social experiences</p>
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Participants' language anxiety was shaped by their social experiences, suggesting that language anxiety is not a fixed, stable, or universal construct but rather may change depending on several social factors. These social factors related to participants' immediate social context, their experiences in the broader sociopolitical context, the

potential for breakdowns in communication between interlocutors, the language choices of others, and the extent to which participants felt evaluated by their interlocutors.

*Participants' immediate social context*

I have already mentioned how, for most participants, their only experiences of language anxiety were in non-classroom contexts. This is important because it highlights the role of social context in the language anxiety experience. Responding to my question about how the classroom was different to the non-classroom contexts where they experienced language anxiety, participants offered comments like “everyone was in the same boat” (Rainbow) or “the playing field is equal” (Alice). In the classroom, participants were less worried about their French because they interpreted it through the lens of social comparison. In contrast, as articulated by Kiki: “I feel like people [who are fluently bilingual in English and French] have an advantage over me in life here in Montréal.” Overall, these data suggest that the perceived proficiency of the people around them was an important factor in how participants felt about their own French. In other words, who participants were interacting with was an important piece of their language anxiety puzzle.

The power of social context also had to do with the relationships they had with the people around them. This was perhaps most obvious in DJ, who experienced a lot of language anxiety around his high school friends and his fiancée to the extent that he never spoke French around them; around other groups of friends, however, he would step in as the *de facto* speaker because, as he expressed: “I was the one that knew the most French. So if anything, I had more confidence... I felt like the bilingual one.” However,

while there may have been an element of social comparison at play in his willingness to use French around his university friends, this does not explain why he didn't use French around his high school friends; in fact, he told me that his French was no worse than theirs. Rather, it was the relationship and the history that he shared with these friends – in other words, his social context – that shaped the language anxiety he experienced around them. In contrast to DJ's experiences, Alice told me that she felt more anxious speaking French around strangers than loved ones. Both DJ and Alice's experiences underscore the importance of social relationships in shaping language anxiety and the extent to which language anxiety can change depending on social context.

*The broader sociopolitical context*

Another way that social context interplayed with participants' language anxiety had to do with their awareness and lived experiences of the broader sociopolitical tensions related to language in Quebec. This was especially true for participants who had spent most of their lives in Québec. Karine offered this interpretation of how language politics played into her language anxiety:

I think it's kind of almost like a collective fear that anglophones have here... you hear stories about people being refused service because they speak English, you know in hospitals and stuff... There's that expectation that no matter who you're speaking to, you're being judged somehow.

Participants who grew up outside Québec also made links between language politics and their language anxiety. For example, Alice said:

I feel like there are a lot of feelings of resentment that go back and forth between anglophone and francophone communities here... As someone moving here from elsewhere, I find it really difficult to deal with that, like the magnitude of baggage.

Sophia expressed similar sentiments when she said, “I just hate the whole francophone-anglophone war that they have... it is frustrating in the sense that that kind of mentality affects people around you.”

Participants’ experiences of the sociopolitical tensions to do with language in Québec related to their perception of language ideologies and their lived experiences of language policies. For example, Jordan said that her perception of language politics definitely played into the pressure and obligation to speak French that she felt, which in turn fed into her language anxiety. Alice also talked about pressure and obligation and told me, “I feel there’s a pressure here, not only to speak French, but to have a certain attitude about speaking French.” Rainbow similarly expressed how such ideologies of language played into her language anxiety when she said:

[There are] these strong feelings of we must always be speaking French and everyone must always be speaking French and yay French and nay everything else. That is exclusionary and causing me to feel these feelings of I’m not good enough and I’m an outsider and I’ll never be one of you.

Such feelings of non-belonging also had an effect on Mary, who reported frustration with the “assumption that I don’t appreciate all the intricacies of the culture because I’m not French Canadian and I don’t speak French as my first language.”

Participants also brought up formal language policies when we talked about their language anxiety. DJ described feeling caught in the crosshairs of “two, three hundred years of the separation between the English and French” and brought up Bill 101 in both his walking interview and the focus group: “Just look at fucking Bill 101... over another hundred years, that’s going to be an assimilation of the English language.” Reporting on how these experiences interplayed with his language anxiety, he said:

It would certainly pile up onto the aspect of my anxiety where I say I’m in that sort of limbo where I’m proud of my English and want to speak English everywhere, but also at the same time I want to speak French, I want to learn French.

*Barriers to communication in social interaction*

One of the ways that social context interplayed with participants’ language anxiety had to do with their proficiency and what it meant in their social interactions with others. I have already mentioned that participants’ self-described proficiencies varied from beginner to advanced. It was therefore interesting to note how three participants of vastly different proficiencies described feeling language anxiety about their proficiency; Ryan, Sophia, and Mary, who described their proficiencies in French as beginner, high-intermediate, and native-like respectfully, all reported experiencing language anxiety to do with their proficiency. For these participants, the potential for breakdowns in communication between them and their interlocutor was one of the main sources of their language anxiety. For example, some of the most stressful situations that Ryan described with using French had to do with “not being able to understand a few words, not being

able to respond back.” Sophia tended to experience anxiety about her French in social situations where she was unable to understand the French being used around her and described trying to follow group conversations in French as “like a ping pong game.” Sophia told me that she often struggled to understand people’s accents because “they don’t even speak the French they teach you in the classroom”; the potential for such breakdowns in communication caused Sophia to “get too anxious and too stressed.” Even Mary, who described her proficiency in French as native-like, experienced language anxiety about the potential for breakdowns in communication. She told me, “I’m worried that I’ll miss the information and I’ll feel out of the loop.” Overall, the cross-case analyses suggest that breakdowns in communication have the potential to be anxiety-inducing for individuals of any proficiency.

#### *The language choices of others*

One of the key social experiences that participants talked about in terms of their language anxiety had to do with language choice – both their own as well as the language choices of people they interacted with. Language choice interplayed with participants’ language anxiety in two ways. The first was when participants wanted to speak English but had to speak French. This came up in the data for DJ when buying a house and Ryan when buying a phone. DJ interpreted his language anxiety in this kind of situation by saying, “I do get anxiety when I know the person can’t switch into English or that I might have to try and explain it in French.” In other words, DJ felt anxious about his French because it was his only option; he knew that the other person could not speak English at all. Ryan’s interpretation was similar: “When it comes to negotiation or arguments, this

kind of thing, so serious topics, I get anxious because I want to say something but I can't and the person persists to speak in French." For Ryan, the anxiety of being forced to speak French stemmed from a fear that there might be a breakdown in communication. For other participants, being in a situation where they had to speak French meant unwanted attention being drawn to them. As articulated by Jordan, "[when] I'm forced to speak French in a public setting, that's when the spotlight turns on. Because that's when I feel like everyone's assessing everything single thing I'm saying and judging my grammar, checking to see if I'm making mistakes."

The second way that language choice interplayed with participants' language anxiety was when they wanted to speak French but people switched to English with them. Some of the comments that participants had about the Montréal switch include:

"It's like, dang. I've sort of failed." (Denise)

"It feels like they're saying your French sucks." (Rainbow)

"I tried to speak French with the cashier, but she switched to English ☹️." (Ryan)

Overall, cross-case analyses revealed that the Montréal switch interplayed with participants' language anxiety because they assumed that people switched to English because they had made a mistake or something was wrong with their French. That said, some participants reported mixed feelings about the Montréal switch. Rainbow said, "I love and hate the Montréal switch," and Jordan told me, "It's like an immediate relief, but in the long run it doesn't make me feel great." Sophia said, "First I feel like an anxiety. But because English is like a language I feel more comfortable, then I calm down." Other



participants said that their reaction to the Montréal switch depended on how people did it.

For example, DJ said:

Sometimes I don't like it cause I'm trying to speak French and want to develop it more and other times I like it because it shows how easy communication can be in a bilingual society and who cares who talks what as long as the message gets through.

Many participants said that they knew that the Montréal switch was probably meant to be helpful, but still experienced language anxiety about it because it made them question their proficiency in French. As Karine said:

On the one hand, I'm understanding because I appreciate that they're trying to accommodate me. But on the other hand, it's a little upsetting feeling like you've worked really hard your entire life to learn this language, you still can't quite succeed in it.

This is important because it suggests that language anxiety about the Montréal switch can co-exist with a rational understanding or assumption of the accommodative intention behind it.

Looking back to the two different ways that language choice interplayed with participants' language anxiety, an important parallel is evident. In one situation, participants wanted to speak English but felt forced to speak French, whereas in the other, participants initiated interactions in French but their interlocutor switched to English. In both situations, participants felt forced to speak either English or French, and experienced language anxiety. In other words, language choice interplayed with participants' language

anxiety in situations where they could not assert their own language choices. Overall, the data suggest that most participants wanted to speak French and saw interactions in public as especially valuable opportunities to practice and improve their French, but appreciated having the option of switching to English if necessary. However, they wanted to control and regulate when, where, and with whom they spoke French. As articulated by Karine, “If I start switching into English, I’m not upset if they start switching into English because I guess I took control of the situation.”

*Participants’ experiences of standing out and perception of evaluation*

Another important way that social context and social experiences interplayed with participants’ language anxiety had to do with their feelings of standing out because of the way they spoke French, as well as the perceptions they had of being evaluated by others. As articulated by Sophia, “Once you go outside, it’s all this world kind of looking at you... So it’s too much pressure.” These feelings of standing out interplayed with participants’ language anxiety because they felt evaluated, as expressed by Jordan:

[When] I’m forced to speak French in a public setting, that’s when the spotlight turns on. Because that’s when I feel like everyone’s assessing everything single thing I’m saying and judging my grammar, checking to see if I’m making mistakes.

Similarly, Mary articulated how such experiences interplayed with her language anxiety when she said, “Sometimes I’ll blank on a word or I’ll use an expression that isn’t quite right, so I’ll be like uhhh, I just did that... So then I worry that, ugh they’re going to think I can’t speak French properly.” Mary’s comments are important because they shed light

on what was at stake for her in interactions when she felt evaluated, namely her self-image as a proficient user of French.

However, participants' discomfort about standing out was not just about their fears of negative evaluation. Rather, simply having attention drawn to them with a compliment, comment, or encouragement was often anxiety-inducing. For example, many of DJ's language anxiety experiences captured in the data involved him feeling like attention was being drawn to him because of the way that he spoke French. This included being complimented, encouraged, or corrected about his French. He expressed his aversion to being complimented about his French when he said: “‘Oh wow how good your French is, oh you should speak more.’ I don’t like that very much at all.” Rainbow also talked about the discomfort of having people comment on the fact that she spoke French, which made her feel evaluated and self-conscious: “Now I don’t want to speak French because you’re listening to it. I don’t want to speak French in a situation where someone’s trying to determine if I speak French... Like I don’t want to be evaluated right now.” Rainbow articulated the effect that such experiences had on her language anxiety when she said, “The times that I’m most anxious speaking French I think [are] when I feel like I’m being evaluated.”

Some participants' experiences of being evaluated and standing out also had to do with their racialization. Both Jordan and Mary described themselves as non-white and interpreted their experiences of being a visible minority as related to their language anxiety because of the assumptions people made about them and the attention that their visible minority status brought to the way they spoke French. For example, Jordan, who

attended an English school, told me about how people frequently assumed that she was a “Bill 101 baby,” and she found herself often having to explain to people why her French did not meet their expectations. Jordan attempted to deal with such situations by “mak[ing] it *clear* that I’m an anglophone... Maybe it’s so they take it easy on me when they speak to me in French.” In contrast, Mary attended French schools because of Bill 101, but she too found that she also had unwanted attention drawn to her visible minority status and to the way that she spoke French – in this case, because she spoke French so well. Overall, Jordan and Mary’s experiences are reflective of a wider social assumption about the language abilities of immigrants and suggest a social norm where the proficiencies of visible minorities are up for public discussion and scrutiny. As articulated by Mary, “If I was white, would somebody even notice if I spoke French?”

Another shared experience worth mentioning is that of DJ and Karine. Both grew up in Québec and identified their cultural heritage as French Canadian. Both DJ and Karine identified that having recognizably French Canadian last names related to their language anxiety because of the assumptions that people made about them as well as the attention it drew to the way they spoke French. As articulated by DJ:

All through my life it’s been exactly the same thing. They hear my last name, 100% think I’m French... it’s horrible when someone sees you and all of sudden, they think you’re French right away and then speak as fast as possible.

In the paragraphs above, I described how different ideologies of language played into participants’ experiences of language anxiety because of how people drew attention to their French, which made them feel evaluated. For Jordan and Mary, their experiences

related to their visible minority status, whereas for DJ and Karine it was their French Canadian last names and family backgrounds that left them feeling vulnerable to the comments and evaluations of others. Rainbow similarly articulated how ideologies of language informed her language anxiety when she said:

I just can't bring myself to be the person who walks up to the cash register and starts speaking English... because mostly it's kind of like the guy behind me, the imaginary potential guy behind me, who would, you know, see me as someone who's demanding service in English.

Rainbow's comments are important because they shed light on a recurring interplay between participants' awareness of certain ideologies of language, their feelings of standing out, and their language anxiety.

### *Key finding #3*

<p>Key finding #3: Non-classroom language anxiety has the potential to negatively affect how individuals experience and use French.</p>
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Cross-case analyses revealed two central themes related to the negative effects of language anxiety for participants. The first theme had to do with how language anxiety had shaped participants' self-image in terms of their confidence and sense of belonging. The second theme had to do with how language anxiety had shaped their social experiences and use of French in their everyday interactions with others.

Language anxiety had a negative effect on several participants' self-image in terms of their self-confidence and sense of belonging. For example, Sophia and Mary both made explicit links between their language anxiety and their confidence and self-

image. This tied back to what was at stake for these two participants in knowing French; for Sophia, knowing French was tied to her self-esteem and self-image and her language anxiety made her question her proficiency in French. Similarly, Mary's language anxiety affected her feelings of professional legitimacy because speaking French was important to her job. Language anxiety also affected some participants' sense of integration and belonging. For example, Ryan felt his language anxiety had affected his sense of accomplishment in integrating successfully into his new home. Similarly, Rainbow said, "My language anxiety reminds me that I'm an outsider... I will never be accepted as one of you." Rainbow's comments underscore how language anxiety can affect an individual's sense of belonging.

Participants' language anxiety also affected how they experienced and used French in their interactions with others. For example, Sophia, Denise, and Kiki all made direct links between the Montréal switch and their language anxiety. Kiki expressed how the Montréal switch made her feel when she said, "any confidence that I had built up about my level of French is completely diminished" and Denise articulated how this affected her language practices: "I made the choice to speak to this person in French for whatever reason and maybe next time I won't because this happened." Denise's comment is important because it underscores how her language anxiety affected her language practices and informed her avoidance of French. Indeed, several participants made links between their language anxiety and avoidance of using French. For example, DJ, Karine, and Alice all talked about how their proficiency in French had suffered as a result of their language anxiety and avoidance. As articulated by DJ:

I'm in a vicious circle [sic] to getting my French better. Because of my anxiety, I don't speak French. And the only way my French is going to get better is if I speak it. And the reason I don't want to speak French is because I don't think my French is good enough.

Overall, the data show that participants' language anxiety informed their broader social experiences in negative ways. For example, both Sophia and Alice made links between their language anxiety, avoidance, and social isolation. Similarly, Jordan, Denise, and Mary expressed how their language anxiety had caused them to become unsociable and less outgoing. For Mary, experiences of language anxiety not only shaped her social behaviour, but also her feelings towards others: "it only takes a couple of really negative experiences... and then that just kind of changes the way you view everyone."

### *Chapter summary*

In this chapter, I presented the research findings. In the body of the chapter, I introduced and described each of the ten case studies in terms of their backgrounds, experiences, and the significant themes that emerged from the analysis of their data. In the final part of the chapter, I presented the three key findings that emerged from the cross-case analyses of the data. The research suggests that (1) language anxiety affects individuals of different backgrounds, proficiencies, life experiences, language practices, and learning experiences and also that it manifests in each individual in varied negative emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural responses; (2) that language anxiety is not a fixed or stable construct, but rather may change according to an individual's social context, experiences, language practices, and also over time; and, (3) that language

anxiety has the potential to negatively affect a person's sense of belonging, confidence, and social well-being. Overall, it is evident that, for these ten individuals, language anxiety was a very social experience. In the next chapter (Discussion), I revisit the key findings of the study to discuss why they are important and what they mean in terms of the research questions and the existing research literature, with an overall view towards interpretation and theorization of what the research has shown.



## Chapter 6

### Discussion

#### *Chapter overview*

In the previous chapter, I presented case studies of the ten participants who I worked with in collecting narrative data about their experiences of non-classroom language anxiety in Montréal. Cross-case analyses revealed several recurring themes and significant contrasts between participants' experiences. The cross-case analyses ultimately took shape in the form of three key findings:

- Key finding #1: Individuals of many different kinds experience language anxiety in varied and unpredictable ways
- Key finding #2: Language anxiety is not a fixed or stable construct, but is rather shaped by individuals' social experiences
- Key finding #3: Language anxiety has the potential to negatively affect how individuals experience and use French.

In this chapter, I consider the existing research literature to discuss what my research and these key findings mean and why they are important. I begin with interpretation of the three key findings in terms of the research questions, before proposing a theoretical model of the social dimensions of language anxiety.

#### *Responding to the research questions*

The study focused on the social dimensions of non-classroom language anxiety, guided by a central research question and two focused sub-questions:

- What does it mean to experience non-classroom language anxiety for individuals who speak French as an additional language in Montreal?
  - What is the interplay between their social experiences and their language anxiety?
  - What do their experiences tell us about the social dimensions of language anxiety?

The first research question provided the scope for an in-depth investigation and description of the experience from the perspective of the participants. In this sense, the first research question is broadly addressed by the ten case studies and the overall findings of the research, and more specifically addressed by Key finding #1:

- Key finding #1: Individuals of many different kinds experience language anxiety in varied and unpredictable ways.

The two focused sub-questions were aimed at uncovering the social dimensions of non-classroom language anxiety, especially in terms of the interplay between language anxiety and participants' social experiences. In this sense, these questions are addressed by Key findings #2 and #3:

- Key finding #2: Language anxiety is not a fixed or stable construct, but is rather shaped by individuals' social experiences.
- Key finding #3: Non-classroom language anxiety has the potential to negatively affect how individuals experience and use French.

In the paragraphs that follow, I discuss and interpret each of the key findings in terms of the existing research literature.

*Discussion of key finding #1*

Key finding #1: Individuals of many different kinds experience language anxiety in varied and unpredictable ways.

The first key finding revealed in the cross-case analyses related to participants' backgrounds, proficiencies, learning experiences, and language practices as well as the manner in which they experienced language anxiety.

Learner demographics (e.g. background, age, proficiencies, etc.) have been the focus of much prior language anxiety research, especially studies that have compared anxious and non-anxious individuals in an effort to identify predictive variables associated with the phenomenon. For example, from this body of research, we know that learners at more advanced levels tend to experience more language anxiety than novice or intermediate learners (Ewald, 2007; Marcos-Llinàs & Garau, 2009; Tóth, 2010). Older learners (Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999) and those who come to additional language learning later in life (Dewaele, 2007; Dewaele et al., 2008) may also be predisposed to language anxiety. In contrast, language learners who are already multilingual are said to be less likely to experience language anxiety than learners who are learning an additional language for the first time (Dewaele, 2007; Dewaele et al., 2008). As I argued in the literature review chapter of this report, such research has definite value; not only do the findings of such studies add to our understanding of the phenomenon, but they can also have pedagogical implications: teachers, with such knowledge, may be better able to support their learners if they know who is more or less predisposed to language anxiety.

In the previous paragraph, I highlighted the findings of a number of prior studies that have sought to identify differences between anxious and non-anxious language learners in order to identify variables associated with the phenomenon. My own study marks a break from this research tradition; in contrast to prior studies, I worked exclusively with individuals who all reported experiencing language anxiety about their French in Montréal. In sampling participants for my study, I chose ten individuals whose backgrounds and experiences differed from one another because doing so allowed me to capture a broad spectrum of human experiences (Duff, 2008). Sampling in this way revealed that language anxiety is possible in individuals of many backgrounds, proficiencies, and language learning experiences. In this sense, my study provides a counter-narrative to the existing research literature that has emphasized the variables associated with language anxiety, the implicit goal of which was to predict which individuals may or may not experience language anxiety. In contrast, my study serves as a reminder to researchers and teachers that it is possible for learners of diverse backgrounds and all proficiencies to experience language anxiety.

While I do not refute the value and validity of quantitative studies that have sought to identify the variables associated with language anxiety, it is my belief that, in emphasizing such variables, there is also the potential for teachers to overlook the possibility of language anxiety in certain learners, namely those who are unlikely to experience the phenomenon. An example of this point is evident in Ryan's story. As a novice user of French and otherwise multilingual in several languages, Ryan could be considered an unlikely candidate for language anxiety. However, despite his apparent

lack of predisposition to language anxiety, Ryan experienced language anxiety that made him question his sense of belonging and legitimacy as a user of French and citizen of Québec. As a language teacher myself, I agree that there is value in knowing which learners in my classes may be more likely than others to experience language anxiety. Such insights are valuable because they allow me to support my students more effectively. However, through my research, I am reminded that although some learners may be more susceptible to language anxiety than others, even the most unlikely candidate can experience language anxiety.

My research suggests that we must consider the possibility of non-classroom language anxiety in students who do not or did not experience classroom language anxiety. The pedagogical importance of doing so becomes evident when one considers how the existing research literature frames the teacher's role in addressing language anxiety. For example, Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) argued that "it is important to identify students with high levels of foreign language anxiety so that, where possible, activities can be tailored to their needs" (p. 221). Similarly, Gregerson (2007) contended that the negative effects of language anxiety can only be combated once teachers are able to identify learners who experience language anxiety. In other words, teachers should figure out who experiences language anxiety so they can help those specific students; the underlying assumption here is that teachers do not need to worry about their non-anxious students. Indeed, Horwitz (2016) recently reminded teachers "to remember that if 30% to 40% of learners are anxious, then the majority of language learners do not identify as language-anxious" (p. 3). Such assumptions are problematic because, if we assume that

identifying anxious learners is the first step in helping them deal with their language anxiety, we are ignoring learners who are not displaying at present any signs of language anxiety in the classroom context. In other words, assuming that language anxiety is stable is to overlook the notion that language anxiety may vary from individual to individual and from moment to moment (Zheng, 2008), as the findings of my study suggest. I found that language anxiety is highly related to individuals' ever-changing social context. This was exemplified in my participants' experiences of language anxiety in classroom and non-classroom contexts: few of my participants reported ever experiencing language anxiety in the context of the language classroom, yet went on to experience it – often in a debilitating way – in other social contexts. For example, of my ten participants, only Karine and DJ reported having ever experienced language anxiety in their French classes. In other words, individuals who experience language anxiety in one social context (e.g., their workplace) may or may not experience it elsewhere (e.g., a family gathering).

I argue that researchers and teachers who are interested in how language anxiety can affect additional language learning must also look beyond the classroom; failure to do so is to assume that language learning is linear, with a clear beginning and end that are bookended by learners' entry to and exit from the classroom. This is important because teachers play an important role in preparing their learners for the world beyond the classroom. Yet, my participants told me that their French teachers had never discussed with them the possibility that they might experience language anxiety beyond the classroom. After relatively positive classroom experiences, my participants did not expect the stress and anxiety they experienced about using French in the world beyond the

classroom. This is important because it points to a disconnect between the classroom and individuals' experiences of non-classroom language anxiety and suggests that teachers need to be addressing language anxiety with all their learners, not just those in whom they are able to identify language anxiety. In other words, teachers should work with the whole class to discuss the possibility of non-classroom language anxiety and prepare students with skills and strategies they can use beyond the classroom to help them cope with possible non-classroom language anxiety.

To date, little research has explored what can be done to address or manage language anxiety in non-classroom contexts. Indeed, the majority of research attention has been focused on what teachers can do to help learners who experience language anxiety in the classroom context. For example, Horwitz et al. (1986) suggested that teachers can prevent and address language anxiety by helping students cope with their language anxiety and making learning less stressful. Other researchers have suggested changes in classroom patterns such as reduced speaking in front of the class (Price, 1991) in favor of increased pair and group work (Crookall & Oxford, 1991). Researchers have also recommended that teachers use encouragement and positive reinforcement (Price, 1991), change their teaching style to be less focused on lecture-and-listen tasks (Chen & Chang, 2004), and be more focused on positive experiences and learning strategies, especially with learners who are predisposed to language anxiety, such as those with learning disabilities (Chen & Chang, 2004). Chen and Chang (2004) also suggested that teachers can even use the FLCAS as a means of finding out who their anxious students are. This is especially problematic since the current conceptualization of language anxiety

that the FLCAS is modeled on reflects only a few of many possible manifestations of language anxiety that my participants reported in this study.

Overall, most studies that discuss the pedagogical implications of language anxiety and pedagogical interventions suggest strategies that are aimed at helping anxious classroom learners unpack why they feel anxious and making the classroom a less stressful environment for them, but fail to address the possibility that learners who do not experience classroom language anxiety may experience it in non-classroom contexts. Despite the limited and problematic conceptualization of language anxiety and language learners reflected in the studies mentioned above, these studies point to a direction for future research that was beyond the scope of my project because the aim of my study was to explore the social dimensions of language anxiety, rather than explore how participants managed or coped with their feelings of language anxiety. Yet, some valuable insights related to coping with language anxiety emerged nonetheless from participants' reflections on their research experiences. For example, Kiki told me that her journal helped her manage the stress of her first semester at a French university, and Rainbow said that the focus groups felt like group therapy. Their comments suggest that journals and peer support have the potential to be helpful for individuals experiencing non-classroom language anxiety.

The potential value of peer support and self-reflection strategies like journaling is supported by prior research geared towards addressing language anxiety in classroom contexts. For example, Huang, Eslmai, and Hu (2010) found that peer support correlated positively with Taiwanese students' comfort in the English-language classroom and



students felt more comfortable and less language anxiety when they had peer support. Indeed, many of the activities recommended to teachers for helping anxious language learners reflect elements of peer support and self-reflection, such as Crookall and Oxford's (1991) agony aunt activity or Campbell and Ortiz' (1991) self-evaluation strategies and relationship building activities. It is possible that many of the strategies suggested by classroom researchers have valuable application for individuals experiencing language anxiety in non-classroom contexts, especially if – as I have argued – teachers take a more global approach in teaching such strategies to their whole class, rather than just those students who appear anxious in the classroom context.

My first key finding also had to do with how participants described their experiences of non-classroom language anxiety. Overall, the data revealed that, like classroom language anxiety, non-classroom language anxiety manifested in different negative emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural responses for each of the ten individuals who participated in this study. This is important because it sheds light on the diverse ways in which individuals can experience language anxiety, bringing to light new information not previously reported in the existing research literature.

At the outset of this report, I conceptualized language anxiety as an umbrella term to describe a number of different negative emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behaviour responses to using an additional language. My findings reflect this conceptualization of language anxiety and support the arguments made by Dewaele (2007) and Price (1991) that language anxiety is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. However, my findings do more than confirm what was already known; my

study also sheds additional light on the complex and dynamic nature of the language anxiety experience for each individual. The use of a critical social conceptual framework for the present study provided the additional scope to consider the ways in which participants' experiences of language anxiety were, like the individuals themselves, dynamic and non-static. Each participants' experience of language anxiety manifested in different negative emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural responses. This is important because it indicates that language anxiety is experienced in different ways by different individuals, confirming Zheng's (2008) argument that language anxiety likely "varies from culture to culture, from individual to individual, or even from moment to moment" (p. 9).

Ultimately, my findings suggest that individuals' experiences of language anxiety in non-classroom contexts are similar to those of individuals who experience it in the classroom. In both contexts, the experience is typified by a combination of different negative emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural responses to using an additional language. In this sense, it is evident that the experiences of classroom and non-classroom language anxiety are inherently similar. Given that classroom learners are themselves also individuals who spend time beyond the classroom (as they do not shape-shift into new people when crossing the threshold of the school), I argue for the reconceptualization of classroom language anxiety and non-classroom language anxiety as simply *language anxiety*, which I established at the outset of this thesis. Rather than seeking to establish how individuals who use their additional language in the classroom

or beyond are different from each other, future research attention could focus on how they and their experiences are similar.

How language anxiety is defined has important implications for how it is researched and, more specifically, measured. As presented in the literature review section of this thesis, the most frequently cited definition of language anxiety comes from Horwitz et al.'s (1986) seminal study, where they defined the phenomenon as “a distinct, complex construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128). This definition was born out of the researchers' work using the popular FLCAS, a five-point Likert-based scale that measures language anxiety by asking about a number of emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural responses. These responses include: (emotional) feeling nervous, frightened, embarrassed, and upset; (cognitive) feeling overwhelmed, self-conscious, unsure of oneself, uneasy, mind-wandering, and self-comparison; (physiological) trembling and heart-pounding; and, finally, (behavioural) avoidance. This is important because most subsequent quantitative studies about language anxiety have used the FLCAS, or an adapted version thereof, thus accepting the conceptualization of language anxiety that the questionnaire assumes. This is problematic because it means that individuals whose experiences of language anxiety do not reflect this conceptualization of language remain unrepresented within the research literature because the questionnaire would not consider them as language anxious.

Qualitative studies, on the other hand, are unrestricted by the parameters of the FLCAS and have therefore been able to add to our understanding and conceptualization of language anxiety. In the literature review section of this report, I described several qualitative studies (e.g. Bailey, 1983; Brown, 2008; Cohen & Norst, 1989; Gregerson, 2005; Price, 1991) where the researchers found that language anxiety manifested in a diverse range of negative emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural responses – far more than the FLCAS presently accounts for. In this sense, qualitative studies of language anxiety are important because they have helped us to expand our conceptualization of the phenomenon. The present study adds to this body of qualitative research; I found that my participants reported experiencing a number of different negative emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural responses associated with using French as an additional language. These included:

- Emotional: feeling stressed, frustrated, embarrassed, nervous, worried, scared, terrified, confused, guilty, flustered, anxious, withdrawn, shamed, inadequate, angry
- Cognitive: mental blocks, self-doubt, feeling overwhelmed, being unable to tune in to conversations, blanking on words, freezing, feeling put on the spot, feeling tongue-tied, feeling angry at themselves, feeling like an outsider or a fraud, and wanting to run away.
- Physiological: tensing up, feeling warm, heart racing, sweating, and wanting to cry or pass out.
- Behavioral: fidgeting and avoidance.

These findings may have important implications for future language research because my study adds to a growing body of qualitative research that has expanded our conceptualization of language anxiety beyond that of the FLCAS. My findings, considered alongside the results of other qualitative inquiries, may be valuable in informing future studies looking to quantify variables associated with language anxiety. For example, future measures of language anxiety could be adapted to include a more diverse range of emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioral responses than what the FLCAS presently accounts for. In this way, future researchers looking to measure and quantify language anxiety would have the scope to consider the experiences of individuals whose language anxiety experiences are not accounted for in the conceptualization of the phenomenon that the FLCAS represents.

Overall, my research suggests that non-classroom language anxiety can affect individuals of different backgrounds, proficiencies, learning experiences, and language practices. Moreover, my findings revealed that individuals experience language anxiety in varied and unpredictable ways. Not only does this finding add to our understanding of the phenomenon, but it also points to several directions for further research related to how teachers may address language anxiety in the classroom and prepare their learners for the world beyond. In the literature review chapter of this report, I described some of the important contributions that the quantitative tradition has made to our understanding of language anxiety. It is my view that qualitative research complements the findings that have come out of such studies by adding breadth, depth, and rich description of the phenomenon from the perspective of the individuals having the experience. My findings

suggest the ongoing value of such a symbiotic relationship. Working hand-in-hand, qualitative and quantitative researchers have much to offer the field of language anxiety as interest in the phenomenon grows. Given that bi/multilingualism is becoming more and more important in our increasingly globalized world (Block & Cameron, 2002), interest in how learners of additional languages may experience language anxiety is becoming more and more important

*Discussion of key finding #2*

Key finding #2: Language anxiety is not a fixed or stable construct, but is rather shaped by individuals' social experiences

The second key finding that came out of the cross-case analyses was that participants' language anxiety was shaped by their social experiences. In other words, language anxiety wasn't something that my participants experienced everywhere they went, but rather something that they experienced because of what was happening in the social world around them. This finding suggests that language anxiety is not a fixed, stable, or universal construct but rather something that can change depending on several social factors, including individuals' immediate social context, the stakes of the interaction, their experiences of the broader sociopolitical context, the potential for breakdowns in communication between interlocutors, the language choices of others, and the extent to which individuals feel evaluated by their interlocutors. In the paragraphs that follow, I discuss this finding in light of the existing research literature

As I pointed out in the literature review section of this report, the majority of research about language anxiety has focused on the experiences of individuals in

classrooms. A smaller body of research has explored language anxiety in non-classroom contexts, such as graduate schools (Brown, 2008; Cheng & Erben, 2012; Ito, 2008; Ohata, 2004), doctor's offices (Guntzviller et al., 2011), and other public settings (Dewaele, 2007). These studies are important because they support the notion of language anxiety beyond the language classroom and suggest that non-classroom language anxiety can contribute to difficulties related to negotiating issues of identity and belonging (Brown, 2008; Cheng & Erben, 2012; Ohata, 2004), securing employment (Dewaele, 2007), and accessing essential government services (Guntzviller et al., 2011). However, as I have previously argued, by focusing on the experiences of individuals in static locations, these studies have tended to overlook the ways in which non-classroom language anxiety may be shaped by social context and social experience and are thus unable to capture the social dimensions of the experience. In other words, the static nature of previous language anxiety studies, both in classroom and non-classroom contexts, has meant that such research is unable to capture the dynamic and complex ways that language anxiety plays out for individuals across different social contexts. In this sense, my findings are unique. By using a non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013), I was able to follow my participants throughout their day-to-day lives, capturing the wholeness of individuals who move through different spaces and different social situations. In doing so, my data painted a picture of non-classroom language anxiety that was complex, multi-dimensional, and shaped by participants' social experiences and social context.

The clearest example of how language anxiety played out in different social contexts was evident in participants' descriptions of their classroom and non-classroom experiences. More specifically, cross-case analyses revealed that just two of the ten participants had experienced language anxiety in their French language classes, and that for most participants, their first experiences of language anxiety were in non-classroom contexts. Responding to my question about how the classroom was different to the non-classroom contexts where they experienced language anxiety, participants offered comments like "everyone was in the same boat" (Rainbow) or "the playing field is equal" (Alice). This is important because it clearly indicates an interplay between language anxiety and social context. In the classroom, participants were less worried about their French because they interpreted it through the lens of social comparison, as I discuss below.

The concept of social comparison has received little attention from within the field of language anxiety, but serves as a useful lens for understanding this element of my participants' experiences of language anxiety. First proposed by Tajfel (1974) and a cornerstone of social identity theory, social comparison is based on the notion that individuals define themselves according to the social group to which they belong. According to social identity theory, social identity only acquires meaning by comparison (Bourhis & Hill, 1982), thus individuals compare themselves to others in order to evaluate and understand themselves (Hogg, 2000). As articulated by Hogg (2000):

People compare themselves with fellow group members, they compare themselves with people in other groups, and they compare their own group with



other groups. From these comparisons emerge group norms, group structure, and intergroup relations, which in turn provide the framework for group-based social comparisons. (p. 401)

The concept of social comparison, and social identity more broadly, is helpful in making sense of the social dimensions of language anxiety because such ideas provide a framework for understanding why most of my participants did not experience language anxiety in their French classes, a social context in and of itself (Pennycook, 2001). It is my interpretation that these participants compared themselves, and more specifically their proficiency in French, to that of the people around them because, according to social identity theory, social comparison is an important way that individuals make sense of their social identity and their group belonging (Hogg, 2000). In the classroom, my participants found themselves to be similar to their peers in terms of their proficiency. However, beyond the classroom, my participants experienced language anxiety when they perceived their proficiency in French to be lower than their interlocutors'. An example is evident in Jordan's comments: "I guess the more trilinguals I meet, the more inadequate I feel, as I realize more and more that so many Montrealers are trilingual at the very least, whereas here I am, a unilingual and barely bilingual." On the other side of the coin, DJ experienced less language anxiety when speaking French in front of friends who didn't speak French as well as he did. He expressed this when he said, "I was the one that knew the most French. So if anything, I had more confidence... I felt like the bilingual one." Both Jordan and DJ's comments underscore the role of the social comparison in their experiences of language anxiety.

In the previous paragraphs, I considered the role of social comparison in participants' experiences of language anxiety. However, it is my interpretation that their language anxiety also had to do with what they brought to their interactions with others, namely what was at stake for them in their interactions with others. The idea of stakes is often encountered in research literature related to testing and assessment, usually in relation to high stakes tests, or those in which the outcome of the test determines “who will and will not gain access to employment, education, and licensure or certification opportunities” (Sackett, Borneman, & Connelly, 2001, p. 302). For example, Sackett et al. (2001) pointed to the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), which all high school seniors in the United States of America must take for university and scholarship applications, as a well-known example of a high stakes test. There are also a number of examples of high-stakes tests specific to language proficiency, for example the well-known International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), both of which can be used to make decisions related to immigration, education, and employment. According to Shohamy (2013), the power of high-stakes tests “emerges from the discourse of testing, where testers pose questions and assign tasks that the test takers are expected to react to by providing answers and engaging in performances that match these demands” (p. 227).

The relationship between testing and classroom language anxiety is well-established in the research literature. Indeed, one of the four cornerstones of Horwitz et al.'s (1986) theoretical framework of language anxiety was test anxiety. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), test anxiety is a type of performance anxiety related to fear of

failure. In other words, students' success or failure is what is at stake. This fear of failure also comes up in non-classroom language anxiety research. For example, Ohata (2004) alluded to stakes in her study of language anxiety among graduate students in describing how language anxiety occurred when learners felt their self-identity was threatened:

Every single opportunity of interaction with others in a second language becomes naturally threatening to the learners' self-identity because it involves the possibility that their existence as both cultural and personal beings might be misrepresented in their limited command or control of second language. (p. 231)

The concept of stakes is also encountered in the research literature related to social anxiety, defined by Schlenker and Leary (1982) as fear that arises due to the prospect of being evaluated by others in a real or imagined social situation. According to Buttermore (2009), social anxiety "is an emotion aroused by appraisals that indicate the presence of a high-stakes social interaction" (p. 43). This is important because it establishes a clear link between stakes and social anxiety. Buttermore (2009) argued that "individuals should experience more social anxiety when they are facing the prospect of evaluation in a domain in which they are heavily invested" (p. 27). By this logic, individuals should experience more language anxiety when the perceived social stakes are high.

It is my belief that the concept of stakes can help us understand my participants' language anxiety in situations where the success of a particular interaction was – in part – determined by their ability to complete the interaction in French. A particularly relevant example is evident in DJ's experience of buying a house and having to interact with the

real-estate agent and mortgage broker in French. In this situation, the stakes had to do with a major life purchase as well as how others would perceive DJ based on the way he spoke French. Similarly, Ryan expressed needing to speak and improve his French for the sake of his future in Québec: “I realize like many people I have to improve my French if I want to live in Québec society. I have to take French.” In Ryan’s case, it was his future in Québec that was at stake. However, even simple everyday interactions can carry high-stakes for the individual and interplay with their language anxiety. For example, the stakes of Jordan’s interaction with a bus driver in French had to do with how she was treated by the bus driver and her self-image in front of the general public. As she recounted in her journal:

I feel obligated to speak to [bus drivers] in French, mainly because I’m afraid they will get angry at me if I don’t (or treat me badly, which reminds me of all those YouTube videos I’ve seen of Quebecers yelling at foreigners for talking to them in English).

Jordan’s reflection does more than highlight the social stakes implicit in her interactions with bus drivers; they also underscore the role of the wider sociopolitical context in shaping her experiences of language anxiety. Indeed, this was true for several participants. The first way that the wider sociopolitical context shaped my participants’ language anxiety had to do with language ideologies, or “the beliefs about language and language use” (Spolsky & Shohamy, 2000, p. 4) that govern which languages should be used where and by whom. For example, Alice told me, “I feel there’s a pressure here, not only to speak French, but to have a certain attitude about speaking French.” My

participants' reflections on the pressures and expectations that they felt to speak French are reminiscent of Heller's (1982) comments about Montréal that "admitting that you are not perfectly bilingual (for an Anglophone) entails a loss of face" (p. 114). In other words, there was something important at stake for my participants in these interactions, and their perceptions of certain ideologies of language played a role in shaping these stakes and, in turn, their language anxiety.

The second way that the wider sociopolitical context shaped my participants' language anxiety had to do with the formal language policy, *La charte de la langue française* (colloquially Bill 101). For example, DJ described his fears that Bill 101 would result in the assimilation of the English language and Mary and Jordan both described an interplay between language policy, their racialization, and their language anxiety. While little previous language anxiety research has considered the role of language ideologies and policies, my research suggests that they can play an important role in shaping the broader context where the individual is having the experience.

In the previous paragraphs, I explored some of the ways in which participants' language anxiety was shaped by social context, including: who they were using their French with and the role of social comparison; what they brought to their interactions with others and the role of stakes; and, where their interactions were taking place in terms of the broader sociopolitical context. I now consider how their language anxiety was shaped by what was happening within their social interactions with others, specifically in terms of the potential for barriers to communication and the potential for the other person to switch into English with them.

Beginning with barriers to communication, several participants experienced language anxiety in situations where there was a possibility that they may not be able to understand or make themselves understood in French. For example, Ryan said, “When it comes to negotiation or arguments, this kind of thing, so serious topics, I get anxious because I want to say something but I can’t and the person persists to speak in French.” These comments point to an interplay between Ryan’s language anxiety and his ability to make himself understood. This interplay is reminiscent of communication apprehension, one of the three cornerstones of Horwitz et al.’s (1986) theory of language anxiety. Horwitz et al. postulated that language anxiety related to communication apprehension, whereby learners feel anxious about not being able to understand others and/or make themselves understood by others. Ryan’s case supports this argument. Indeed, Ryan described his proficiency in French as beginner and expressed frustration at not being able to express himself in French.

However, it is my interpretation that there is more at play and that the concept of communication apprehension is limited in how well it can help us understand this aspect of non-classroom language anxiety. The reader will recall that Horwitz et al.’s (1986) theory of language anxiety was based on classroom research and devised to help explain the experiences of learners in the classroom context. This is important because, in the classroom context, learners are interacting with others of the same proficiency as them and with their teacher, who likely modifies her speech style to accommodate the learners’ developing proficiency in the additional language. In other words, the learner is likely to understand most of what is going on around them, but may experience language anxiety

related to their ability to express themselves. Thus, it makes sense that Horwitz et al.'s theory of language anxiety refers to communication apprehension as mostly related to learners' ability to make themselves understood. However, beyond the classroom, there is a much greater potential for breakdowns in communication that relate to one's comprehension. This has to do with the fact that interlocutors in naturalistic settings (i.e., bus drivers, shopkeepers, servers, etc.) often speak with native-like proficiency and do not usually grade their language in the same way that a teacher would. Indeed, returning to Ryan, his language anxiety related to breakdowns in communication that had to do with both his ability to make himself understood as well as his ability to understand what was going on around him.

For other participants, it was also breakdowns in their receptive, rather than productive, communication that interplayed most strongly with their language anxiety. For example, Mary experienced language anxiety in professional situations because she worried about missing information and feeling "out of the loop." Similarly, Sophia also experienced language anxiety in situations where there might be a barrier to her understanding, namely in social situations with several people speaking French in a group, which Sophia described as like trying to follow a "ping pong game." Overall, my findings suggest that language anxiety relates to communication apprehension (Horwitz et al., 1986), but that the construct is somewhat limited in terms of its application to non-classroom contexts.

My research suggests that language anxiety is shaped by social experiences. For my participants, the interplay between language anxiety and social experience was

informed by a number of factors, including what was happening within their social interactions with others. Having just considered the potential for barriers to communication as related to language anxiety, I now offer my interpretation of the Montréal switch as it related to my participants' language anxiety. Indeed, the Montréal switch was perhaps one of the strongest themes that recurred across all ten case studies. Several participants described an interplay between their language anxiety and the Montréal switch. As articulated by Rainbow, "It feels like they're saying your French sucks." Rainbow's comments reflect the sentiments expressed by other participants in my study, namely that they assumed people switched to into English because their French wasn't good enough. Yet, as I outlined in the second chapter of this report, there are a number of reasons why people in Montréal might switch to English with speakers of French as an additional language. However, investigating the reasons behind the Montréal switch from the perspective of the switcher was beyond the scope of the present study, which was focused on exploring the social dimensions of language anxiety. Moreover, my research suggests that the reasons behind speech acts like the Montréal switch may have little to do with the interplay between the Montréal switch and language anxiety. Take, for example, Karine's comments here:

On the one hand, I'm understanding because I appreciate that they're trying to accommodate me. But on the other hand, it's a little upsetting feeling like you've worked really hard your entire life to learn this language, you still can't quite succeed in it.



Karine's comments are important because they suggest that language anxiety about the Montréal switch can co-exist with a rational understanding or assumption of the accommodative intention behind it. This indicates that the reasons for the switch itself matter less than how it made my participants feel. In other words, the reasons behind the switch may not matter; it is the switch itself, rather than the intention behind it, that interplays with language anxiety.

Karine's comments (above) are also important because they point to an element of over-accommodation/over-convergence, whereby the speech act is interpreted as undermining of an individual's competence (Street, 1991). However, for unpacking the interplay between the Montréal switch and language anxiety, the notion of overaccommodation is limited for two reasons. First, and as I argued in the second chapter of this report, the theory on which overaccommodation is based fails to take into account any reasons beyond accommodation for speech acts like the Montréal switch. Yet, as I have shown, there are a number of reasons – beyond accommodation – why individuals might switch languages. Moreover, the concept of accommodation fails to explain why the Montréal switch interplayed with my participants' language anxiety in certain situations, but not in others. For example, Karine said, "If I start switching into English, I'm not upset if they start switching into English because I guess I took control of the situation." In other words, it was not the use of English alone that made Karine feel anxious about her French; rather, it was whether she decided to use English or if the other person decided for her. Karine's comments reflect how my participants wanted to control

and regulate when, where, and with whom they spoke French, suggesting an interplay between language anxiety and their sense of agency.

According to Duff (2012), agency “refers to people’s ability to make choices, take control, self-regulate, and thereby pursue their goals as individuals leading, potentially, to personal or social transformation” (p. 413). In this sense, agency is not an individual phenomenon; rather it is always co-constructed via interaction with other agents (Block, 2003). Pennycook (2001) also conceptualized agency as inherently related to social structure, arguing that “what we do, think, say as humans is always affected by larger questions of social power” (pp. 119-120). Thus, the Montréal switch can become an instrument of power because it can have the effect of taking away the individual’s agency to be self-determining in their language choices. Moreover, the Montréal switch can also become an instrument of power because it limits the individual’s ability to be heard by other users of the additional language. Here, I am referring to Miller’s (2003) argument that “to be authorized and recognized as a legitimate user of English by others, you must first be heard by other legitimate users of English” (p. 47). This argument can be applied to learners of languages other than English, such as French in the case of my research. It is my interpretation that the Montréal switch interplayed with participants’ language anxiety because it prevented them from being heard by legitimate users of French; by switching the interaction into English, their interlocutors prevented participants from using French and being heard doing so. Looking at it another way, the switcher becomes the gatekeeper to an imagined community to which the additional language user wishes to belong, that of a legitimate user of the language (Norton, 1995, 2000).

By looking at the Montréal switch with the notion of agency in mind, we can also see why participants sometimes didn't experience language anxiety about the Montréal switch. For example, Alice's preferred language was English, so when people switched into English with her, she didn't experience any loss of agency. Looking beyond the Montréal switch, the notion of agency also explains why my participants experienced language anxiety in situations where they wanted to speak English but felt forced to speak French, for example when DJ wanted to speak English with his real estate agent and mortgage broker. In this situation, DJ's agency to be self-determining in his language choices was undermined by his interlocutor's use of French. Indeed, DJ alluded more broadly to the notion of agency and language choice during our walking interview when describing an idealized multilingual environment: "you're speaking two languages back and forth, not a care in the world. You don't really know what you're doing, as long as communication's there. I think that's beautiful. That's what I think Canada should be, not just Québec."

In the previous paragraphs, I considered the role of agency in participants' language anxiety. Overall, the data suggest an interplay between agency, language choice, and language anxiety. This relates to individuals' social experiences because agency is an inherently social construct (Block, 2003; Pennycook, 2001). To close my discussion of Key finding #2, I explore a final theme that emerged from the cross-case analyses: how participants' language anxiety was informed by their feelings of being evaluated when they spoke French. The data revealed several examples of an interplay between participants' language anxiety and a feeling of being evaluated. For example, DJ

and Karine expressed feeling evaluated when they spoke French because people made assumptions about them and their French based on their recognizably French last names. Similarly, Jordan and Mary expressed feeling evaluated when they spoke French because of how others racialized them as visible minorities; these four participants all negotiated their language practices within the context of ideologies of language that related to how, where, and when they should be able to speak French based on their names or skin color. These participants, and others in my study, felt evaluated when they spoke French, which informed their experiences of language anxiety. As articulated by Jordan, “I feel like everyone’s assessing everything single thing I’m saying and judging my grammar, checking to see if I’m making mistakes.”

Fear of negative evaluation is well documented in the existing literature to do with language anxiety. Indeed, fear of negative evaluation is one of the key elements that make up Horwitz et al.’s (1986) theoretical model of language anxiety. Horwitz et al. theorized that language anxiety is related to fear of negative evaluation, whereby learners fear negative perceptions of their peers and teachers. Overall, my findings support Horwitz et al.’s argument that language anxiety is related to individuals’ fear of negative evaluation. However, the fear of negative evaluation construct does not explain why my participants experienced language anxiety when they were praised or encouraged for their French. For example, when DJ described how his aunt praised his French and encouraged him to speak more, the evaluation was positive, rather than negative. Similarly, Rainbow was not necessarily worried about people negatively evaluating her French because she knew that her French was excellent; instead it was the evaluation itself that made them

feel language anxious about their French. It is my interpretation that these experiences interplayed with Rainbow and DJ's language anxiety similar to how Jordan and Mary's feelings of being placed under a spotlight interplayed with their language anxiety. In these situations, it was not necessarily a fear of negative evaluation alone, but also their feelings of standing out and being conspicuous. Conspicuousness refers to "the degree to which the speaker stands out from others" (McCroskey, 1984, cited by Buttermore, 2009, p. 24). The concept of conspicuousness is helpful in understanding my participants' language anxiety because it takes into account how negative, positive, and neutral evaluations can interplay with an individual's language anxiety.

### *Discussion of key finding #3*

Key finding #3: Non-classroom language anxiety has the potential to negatively affect how individuals experience and use French.

The third and final key finding of my study is related to the negative social consequences of language anxiety. I found that language anxiety negatively affected how my participants experienced and used French in their social interactions with others. My participants made links between their language anxiety and diminished self-confidence, feelings of non-belonging, and avoidance of French. This is important because it sheds light on the social consequences of language anxiety and the ways in which it can shape individuals' social experiences. In the paragraphs that follow, I discuss how my findings extend our understanding of the consequences of language anxiety. First, I consider how prior research related to the academic consequences of language anxiety in the classroom can help us understand the social consequences of the phenomenon in non-classroom

contexts. Next, I discuss how my qualitative study adds to the breadth and depth of our understanding of the consequences language anxiety and may be used to inform future quantitative research. Then, I consider my own study alongside other studies of non-classroom language anxiety. Finally, I discuss avoidance as a consequence of language anxiety and its broader implications for the field of applied linguistics.

The existing research literature, largely focused on individuals' experiences in classrooms, points to several negative effects of language anxiety. These classroom-based studies have identified a number of ways in which language anxiety can affect individuals academically. First articulated by Horwitz et al. (1986), language anxiety "impedes [individuals'] ability to perform successfully in a foreign language class" (p. 125), a finding that has been validated a number of times. For example, Bailey et al. (2003) found that language anxiety could lead to student attrition among college students taking foreign language classes at an American university. Awan et al. (2010) found that university students in Pakistan taking EFL classes who experienced language anxiety were more likely to perform poorly academically. Overall, it is generally accepted that language anxiety can negatively affect academic achievement. While limited to the language classroom, such findings can help shed light on my participants' experiences of language anxiety in certain social situations. If language anxiety can negatively impact a learner's "ability to perform successfully in a foreign language class" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 125), it follows that non-classroom language anxiety also has the potential to negatively impact an individual's performance in their additional language in non-classroom contexts. Indeed, several of my participants described situations where their

ability to speak French was affected by their language anxiety. For example, participants described feeling tongue-tied, blanking on words, having mental blocks, and being unable to tune into conversations. However, further research is necessary to determine how non-classroom language anxiety affects proficiency in the additional language.

I now turn to what the qualitative nature of my project revealed about the social consequences of language anxiety. As I have previously mentioned, much of the existing research literature about language anxiety is focused on the identification and measurement of predictive variables associated with the phenomenon, most often using the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) or some adapted version of it. Because so much of this research has centered around the measurement of language anxiety, considerably less emphasis has been placed on the consequences of language anxiety for the individual having the experience. This is especially true within the quantitative paradigm. In contrast, qualitative studies are able to offer insight into the consequences of language anxiety that quantitative research is unable to achieve because qualitative studies have the scope for greater depth and breadth. For example, in her phenomenological study of language anxiety among international students in an American university, Ito (2008) found that language anxiety affected participants' self-confidence. The findings of my study support Ito's findings that language anxiety can affect self-confidence. This interplay between language anxiety and self-confidence was particularly evident in relation to my participants' experiences of the Montréal switch. For example, Kiki expressed how the Montréal switch made her feel when she said, "any confidence that I had built up about my level of French is completely diminished."

In the previous paragraph, I described how my findings can make important contributions to our understanding of the negative consequences of language anxiety because of the qualitative nature of the data and findings. Another important contribution relates to the context of the present study. Since the majority of language anxiety research is focused on individuals' experiences in classrooms, my findings are important because they shed light on the negative consequences of language anxiety in non-classroom contexts. Indeed, only a handful of studies have explored language anxiety in non-classroom contexts, so our understanding of the negative consequences of the phenomenon are limited. Nevertheless, this small body of literature suggests that there is an interplay between language anxiety and difficulties that individuals may have in negotiating issues of identity, belonging, and legitimacy (Brown, 2008; Cheng & Erben, 2012; Ohata, 2004). For example, Ohata's (2004) study of Japanese international graduate students in the US suggested that individuals who experience non-classroom language anxiety may have difficulty adapting and integrating into their new environments. Ohata's participants reported feelings of self-doubt, inner turmoil, and psychological distress in response to using English in non-classroom contexts. Ohata's research suggested that non-classroom language anxiety can have a significant impact on an individual's acculturation and sense of belonging in their sociolinguistic environment. Similarly, Cheng and Erben (2012) found a negative relationship between language anxiety and social belonging. According to their research, individuals "feel anxious and lose self-confidence, or even worse, they may become socially isolated" (Cheng & Erben, 2012, p. 480). Like the studies cited above, I also found that language anxiety had a



negative effect on participants' self-image in terms of their sense of belonging. As articulated by Rainbow, "My language anxiety reminds me that I'm an outsider... I will never be accepted as one of you." In this sense, the findings of my study support those made through prior research about non-classroom language anxiety.

In the previous paragraphs, I discussed two of the consequences of language anxiety that emerged from the cross-case analyses: diminished self-confidence and feelings of non-belonging. I now turn to the third negative consequence of language anxiety that emerged from my cross-case analyses: avoidance. As a consequence of language anxiety, avoidance is well documented in the existing research literature. For example, Bekleyen (2009) found that pre-service teachers reported avoiding opportunities to speak English (their additional language) as a consequence of their language anxiety. Similarly, Pappamihel (2002) found that learners who experienced language anxiety were less likely to participate in class. While both the studies cited above were classroom-based, their findings are helpful in understanding the avoidance that my participants reported as a consequence of their language anxiety. Indeed, avoidance of social situations where they would have to use French was one of the main consequences of language anxiety that my participants reported. Moreover, my participants made links between their language anxiety, avoidance, and the lack of improvement that they perceived in their French proficiency. As articulated by DJ:

I'm in a vicious circle [sic] to getting my French better. Because of my anxiety, I don't speak French. And the only way my French is going to get better is if I

French is good enough. And the reason I don't want to speak French is because I don't think my French is good enough.

DJ's reflection underscores the sentiments that of several of my participants described: wanting to improve their French and knowing that their language anxiety – and subsequent avoidance – was holding them back from accomplishing this goal. In other words, they felt that their avoidance resulted in dramatically reduced opportunities to use and improve their French. This dilemma is reminiscent of Norton's (2000) description of language learning in naturalistic settings as a catch-22 situation: learners find themselves needing the additional language in order to communicate while simultaneously needing to communicate in order to learn the additional language.

My study is not the first to make links between language anxiety, avoidance, and proficiency. In discussing the results of her study of language anxiety among international students in an English-language university, Brown (2008) suggested that "language proficiency would certainly have been greater in interviewees if they had practiced their spoken English more often and if they had reduced interaction with conational students" (p. 89). These comments reflect a wider belief in applied linguistics that additional language practice in naturalistic settings "in the form of interaction between native and non-native speakers" (Leow, 2007, p. 20) will lead to improved learning outcomes (Mackey, 2007; Swain & Lapkin 1995). However, such notions can also be problematic because they do not take into account the ways in which access in naturalistic settings may be limited (Block, 2003). As articulated by Alice:

A lot of people assume that if you're not getting out there and practicing a language that you're learning, that that's a very easy thing to fix. Like 'oh you should just put it all out there'... I've heard 'Just don't worry about it' lots. Like 'You just have to speak more'. It's not necessarily that easy.

While acknowledging the importance of practice for additional language learning, Block (2003) argues that we should move “away from the notion that a naturalistic setting provides abundant and useful opportunities for the learner to interact in the L2 and learn through such interaction” (p. 53). In other words, it may not be enough for learners to put themselves “out there” and there may be other barriers to their access to opportunities to practice in naturalistic settings. One of those barriers, as my research suggests, may be language anxiety and subsequent avoidance. Indeed, my research suggests an interplay between language anxiety, avoidance, and proficiency. I found that participants avoided opportunities to practice their French because of their language anxiety, which they perceived to have a negative impact on their improved proficiency. In other words, my research suggests that non-classroom language anxiety can be a barrier for individuals wishing to use, practice, and ultimately improve their additional language skills.

There are potential implications here for the fields of applied linguistics and second language acquisition (SLA). If researchers are concerned with practice as a keystone to acquisition, they must also concern themselves with potential barriers to practice like language anxiety. Moreover, they must concern themselves with language learning as a lifelong process and look beyond the classroom because, as my study

suggests, leaving the classroom and interacting with others in naturalistic settings can be challenging to the individual.

*Proposing a theoretical model of non-classroom language anxiety*

In the previous paragraphs, I discussed each of the three key findings that the cross-case analyses brought to light in terms of the existing research literature. Overall, my findings support what is already known about language anxiety, while also bringing to light new understandings of the ways in which language anxiety shapes and is shaped by social experiences. In the paragraphs that follow, I take up the theorization of these findings and suggest a theoretical model of the social dimensions of language anxiety which responds to the existing theorization of language anxiety from a critical social approach. In this sense, my theoretical model of the social dimensions of language anxiety is informed by the critical social conceptual framework that I used in developing this study.

In the third chapter of this report (Literature review), I referred to the seminal work of Horwitz et al. (1986), whose research instrument and theorization of language anxiety is one of the most often cited papers in language anxiety research. Horwitz et al. argued that language anxiety is related to three elements, including: communication apprehension, whereby learners have mature thoughts that they are unable to express due to a lack in proficiency; fear of negative evaluation, whereby learners fear negative perceptions of their peers and teachers; and, test anxiety, whereby learners fear performing badly in test or test-like situations. To an extent, my findings support this model of language anxiety. I found that my participants' language anxiety related to the

three constructs that make up Horwitz et al.'s theoretical model of language anxiety. Yet, as I have argued, there was also more at play that this classroom-based theory was unable to explain about language anxiety in the non-classroom context. It is evident that such a theorization of language anxiety is limited in terms of its ability to help us understanding non-classroom language anxiety. Nevertheless, a lot of research about language anxiety is still drawing on Horwitz et al.'s theorization and the associated research instrument, and it is therefore a useful starting place for a new model from a more social approach. Thus, I propose a theoretical model for language anxiety that draws from and adapts Horwitz et al.'s model.

Based on my analysis of the data and reflection on my key findings, I theorize that the social dimensions of language anxiety are related to four constructs: individuals' real or imagined barriers to communication, their sense of conspicuousness, what is at stake for them in using their additional language, and their sense of agency. This model is adapted from Horwitz et al.'s (1986) theory in that the first three constructs of my model are direct parallels of the three components of Horwitz et al.'s theory, but reimagined through a critical social lens. In addition, I propose the inclusion of agency as part of the adapted theoretical model.

Figure 3: The social dimensions of language anxiety



*Communication apprehension → Barriers to communication*

The first component of my theoretical model of the social dimensions of language anxiety is barriers to communication, which I propose as an adaptation and broadening of Horwitz et al.'s (1986) construct of communication apprehension. Horwitz and et al. argued that language anxiety related to communication apprehension, whereby learners feel anxious about not being able to understand others and/or make themselves understood by others. Horwitz et al. theorized that language anxiety related to communication apprehension because individuals in language classrooms have little control of the communicative situation and their performance is constantly monitored: "The special communication apprehension permeating foreign language learning derives from the personal knowledge that one will almost certainly have difficulty understanding others and making oneself understood" (p. 30). As I discussed in relation to Key finding #2, my findings support Horwitz et al.'s conceptualization of communication apprehension as related to language anxiety. I found that my participants were anxious

about both being understood by others as well as understanding what was happening around them in French. For example, Ryan told me, “I get anxious because I want to say something but I can’t.”

However, as I have argued, because the original theory of language anxiety proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986) seeks to explain the experiences of individuals in classroom contexts, it is limited in its ability to explain the experiences of individuals in non-classroom contexts. Horwitz et al.’s construct of communication apprehension is also limited in scope because it fails to take into account the inherently social nature of communication and the social function of language. Horwitz et al. argued that learners’ language anxiety relates to communication apprehension because of shortcomings in their productive or receptive additional language proficiency. In other words, the authors frame language anxiety as something that happens to the learner in isolation to the social world around her. I argue that, in order to theorize the social dimensions of language anxiety, we must broaden our scope to consider the social world where the experience is taking place. If languages are socially distributed resources (Heller, 2007), limitations in proficiency have the potential to create barriers to communication that can limit access to these resources. In other words, language anxiety relates not only to limitations in receptive or productive language skills, but also to what such limitations mean for the individual’s ability to communicate with others.

I propose that language anxiety relates not only to communication apprehension, but more broadly to the real or perceived barriers to communication that individuals experience in using their additional language. I argue that individuals experience

language anxiety not solely because of limitations in their proficiency, but also what these limitations mean for their ability to communicate with others in social contexts. In other words, the social dimensions of language anxiety are related to barriers to communication between the additional language user and their interlocutor. By reframing communication apprehension as barriers to communication, the theorization of language anxiety emphasizes the inherently social nature of language and the social context where language is being used.

*Fear of negative evaluation → Conspicuousness*

The second component of my proposed theoretical model of the social dimensions of language anxiety is conspicuousness, which I propose as an adaptation and broadening of Horwitz et al.'s (1986) fear of negative evaluation. According to Horwitz et al., classroom learners experience language anxiety because they fear the negative evaluation of their peers and teachers. To an extent, this was reflected in my data. My participants reported a strong interplay between their language anxiety and their perception of being negatively evaluated by others. Indeed, Horwitz et al. (1991) argued that fear of negative evaluation “may occur in any social evaluative situation such as interviewing for a job or speaking in a foreign language class” (p. 31). However, while my findings support Horwitz et al.'s arguments about the role of negative evaluation in language anxiety, there was also more at play that the original theory does not explain. Here I am referring to how my participants also experienced language anxiety when people praised, complimented, or commented on their French, which they described as feeling like they had a spotlight trained on them. In other words, it was enough to simply feel a sense of



being evaluated. For this reason, I propose expanding the theoretical model to include the broader concept of conspicuousness as an alternative to fear of negative evaluation. It is my belief that the concept of conspicuousness, referring to “the degree to which the speaker stands out from others” (McCroskey, 1984, cited by Buttermore, 2009, p. 24), captures a broader range of language anxiety experiences than allowed for in Horwitz et al.’s construct of fear of negative evaluation. Broadening the scope of evaluation apprehension to include situations where the individual may feel anxious about evaluations that are negative, positive, or even neutral allows for a more complex and multidimensional picture of non-classroom language anxiety to emerge.

*Test anxiety → Stakes*

The third component of my proposed theoretical model of the social dimensions of language anxiety is stakes, which I propose as an adaptation and broadening of Horwitz et al.’s (1986) construct of test anxiety. Horwitz (1991) defined test anxiety as a type of performance anxiety related to fear of failure and argued that it related to language anxiety because errors are frequent when using an additional language. I agree with Horwitz et al. that language anxiety relates to test anxiety, but I argue that the anxiety stems not so much from the fear of making mistakes and failing the test, but what is at stake in taking the test in the first place. It is reasonable to assume that a learner taking a high-stakes proficiency exam that will determine the outcome of a university or immigration application will experience more language anxiety than if they were doing the practice test. In this case, it is not the test itself or the potential to fail the test, but rather what is at stake if they fail or succeed. If we broaden the scope of how we think

about test anxiety to ask What is at stake in this interaction?, we can easily imagine how the experience of taking a language proficiency exam might be as high-stakes and anxiety-inducing as, for example, visiting the pediatrician in one's additional language. In both situations, something important is at stake and the outcome of the interaction (in the first case, immigration or education; in the second case, the health of one's child) is tied to how well the individual can use their additional language.

I argue that additional language users in non-classroom contexts have to negotiate test-like situations that carry potentially high stakes on a daily basis. Indeed, some of the test-like situations that my participants encountered were external, while others were internal. For example, an example of an external test-like situation was evident in Jordan's experiences of using French to interact with her clients; this experience caused her to experience language anxiety because her professionalism and job were at stake in these interactions. On the other hand, some participants' test-like situations were more internal. For example, Denise experienced language anxiety when people switched into English with her because she used her interactions in French to prove to herself that she could still speak French. For Denise, her self-image as a proficient user of French was at stake in this test-like situation. For other participants, their sense of belonging, their ability to communicate with their extended family or in-laws, or their job security were some of what was at stake when they spoke French.

I argue that, while the concept of test anxiety may have been useful in understanding the language anxiety experiences of classroom language learners, its application in non-classroom contexts is limited. For this reason, I suggest the use of

stakes as an alternative to test anxiety in modeling the social dimensions of language anxiety.

### *Agency*

The fourth and final component of my proposed theoretical model of the social dimensions of language anxiety is agency, referring to “people’s ability to make choices, take control, self-regulate, and thereby pursue their goals as individuals leading, potentially, to personal or social transformation” (Duff, 2012, p. 413). Unlike the other three components of the theoretical model (barriers to communication, conspicuousness, and stakes), which represent adaptations to Horwitz et al.’s (1986) theory of language anxiety, agency represents an entirely new and additional component to the theorization of the social dimensions of language anxiety made possible through the use of a critical social approach to the study.

I found that many of my participants experienced language anxiety in situations where they lacked agency in their language choices. For example, DJ experienced language anxiety when he had no choice but to speak French when he was buying a house because his real estate agent and mortgage broker didn’t or wouldn’t speak English with him. Other participants wanted to speak French in their everyday interactions because even simple interactions like buying a coffee or shopping for clothes were, for some, their only opportunities to practice and improve their French, which they felt they needed to succeed in Québec (so again, back to the stakes). However, their language choice – French – was undermined by people switching into English with them, essentially taking away their agency to make their own language choices. Thus, I propose

that individuals may experience language anxiety when they experience a loss of agency in their language practices and language choices. This part of the theoretical model helps us understand why the Montréal switch was problematic for certain participants, but not for others. For example, Alice preferred to speak English, so any switches into English by her interlocutors did not represent a loss of agency for her.

As I have mentioned, Horwitz et al.'s (1986) theory of language anxiety may have been appropriate for the understanding of language anxiety in classroom contexts; however, it is limited in terms of its application in non-classroom contexts. It is my belief that the inclusion of agency in the theorization of the social dimensions of language anxiety is necessary, as articulated by Duff (2012):

Learners are not simply passive or complicit participants in language learning and use, but can also make informed choices, exert influence, resist (e.g., remain silent, quit courses), or comply, although their social circumstances may constrain their choices. Such actions or displays of agency, which might be as simple as insisting on speaking one language, can also be considered acts of identity. (p. 413)

In other words, the concept of agency emphasizes the goal-orientation of the additional language user and acknowledges the role that both agents in any given interaction may play in shaping the experience for each individual.

#### *Comments on the theoretical model*

In the previous paragraphs, I presented a theoretical model of the social dimensions of language anxiety. Adapted and expanded from Horwitz et al.'s (1986)

seminal theory of language anxiety through a critical social lens (Heller, 1982; Lamarre, 2013), my theoretical model proposes that the social dimensions of language anxiety are related to: individuals' real or imagined barriers to communication, their sense of conspicuousness, what is at stake for them in using their additional language, and their sense of agency. This theoretical model offers a framework for understanding the different forces that may interplay with an individual's experience of language anxiety in a variety of social contexts and may be appropriate for helping learners and educators make sense of language anxiety in non-classroom contexts. This model emphasizes the mobility and social context of the individual having the experience. Accordingly, language anxiety is intrinsically linked to the individual's social context, which can change because individuals are mobile, both spatially and temporally. Thus, while we may be able to predict that an individual will experience language anxiety when they perceive a barrier to communication, and/or conspicuousness, and/or high social stakes, and/or a loss of agency, their language anxiety is also constantly subject to change based on their context, mobility, and language practices.

### *Chapter summary*

In this chapter, I considered the existing research literature and discussed what my key findings mean and why they are important to our understanding of language anxiety. I began with interpretation of the three key findings in terms of the research questions, before proposing a unique theoretical model of the social dimensions of language anxiety. Overall, I argued that the non-classroom language anxiety shapes and is shaped by individuals' social experiences. In the chapter that follows, I close the thesis by

considering the theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical implications of the study. I also reflect on the limitations of the study and suggest some directions for future research that my study was unable to address.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

#### *Chapter overview*

In this chapter, I close the thesis by providing a summary of the key findings of the study. I consider the theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical implications of the study. I also offer my reflections on the limitations of the study and my recommendations for future research directions.

#### *Summary of the research*

The purpose of this study was to explore the social dimensions of non-classroom language anxiety from the perspective of ten individuals having the experience. The study was guided by a central research question:

- What does it mean to experience non-classroom language anxiety for individuals who speak French as an additional language in Montreal?

Two focused sub questions provided the scope to make meaningful links between the individuals' experiences of language anxiety and their social worlds:

- What is the interplay between their social experiences and their language anxiety?
- What do their experiences tell us about the social dimensions of language anxiety?

The study was guided by a set of conceptual lenses that offered a critical social perspective (Heller, 2007; Lamarre, 2013) on language anxiety. This framework emphasized the notion of languages as socially distributed resources (Heller, 2007), reframing language anxiety as a social phenomenon (Nicholas & Starks, 2014) that

individuals experience in their social worlds. Drawing from Blommaert's (2014) notion of mobility, the framework conceptualized individuals as non-static, moving through different social contexts in their everyday lives (Lamarre, 2013). The framework situated these individuals within the wider sociolinguistic dynamic where they negotiated their local language practices (Lamarre, 2013; Pennycook, 2012), providing the scope for me to consider what their experiences of language anxiety could tell us about social organization more generally.

Methodologically, I was guided by the overarching principles of the case study approach (Cohen et al., 2005; Duff, 2008; Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). Emphasizing a non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013), I worked with ten individuals to collect narrative data about their experiences of language anxiety in Montréal over the course of three phases of research. In the first phase of the research, I conducted semi-structured interviews with each participant where they made language map drawings as prompts to discuss their language anxiety, a technique which I adapted from Crump's (2014) use of language portraits and Lamarre's (2013) use of city maps. In the second phase of the research, participants worked as collaborators in the field, making *in situ* recordings of themselves using French in their day-to-day lives (Lamarre, 2013) and keeping a reflective journal of their language use and experiences (Duff, 2008). This phase concluded with participants taking me on a walking interview (Jones et al., 2008; Kusenbach, 2003; Lamarre, 2013; Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009; Najar, 2014) around an area of Montréal of their choice. The third and final phase of the research involved focus groups, during which the themes from the field were discussed, follow-up questions



addressed, and preliminary analyses brought back to participants for reflection and validation (Cohen et al., 2005).

The three phases of the research described in the paragraphs above generated over five-hundred pages of narrative data, which I analyzed using the Immersion/Crystallization approach (Borkan, 1999). Through multiple cycles of immersion in and reflection on the data, themes and segments that responded to the research questions eventually took shape in the form of ten case studies, which I presented in the Findings chapter of this report. Cross-case analyses of the ten cases brought to light three key findings that addressed the research questions:

- Key finding #1: Individuals of many different kinds experience language anxiety in varied and unpredictable ways
- Key finding #2: Language anxiety is not a fixed or stable construct, but is rather shaped by individuals' social experiences
- Key finding #3: Language anxiety has the potential to negatively affect how individuals experience and use French.

The discussion and theorization of these key findings were taken up in the Discussion chapter of the thesis, where I offered a new theoretical model of language anxiety that attempts to make sense of the social dimensions of the phenomenon. In the paragraphs that follow, I explore some of the theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical implications of the study before considering the limitations of the study and potential directions for future research.

### *Theoretical implications of the research*

In the third chapter of this thesis (Literature review), I explored the existing research literature related to language anxiety and highlighted a number of gaps in our understanding of the phenomenon. I argued that, because little previous research has explored language anxiety using a social approach, our understanding of the social dimensions of the experience remained largely unknown. My study, focusing on the social dimensions of language anxiety, goes some way towards addressing this gap in our understanding. My research indicates that language anxiety both shapes and is shaped by social experience. My theoretical model of language anxiety has the potential to inform future research of language anxiety by providing a framework on which further study of the phenomenon may be undertaken from a social perspective. My theoretical framework also provides the scope to consider language anxiety as a dynamic and non-static experience, situated in social experiences and social context.

### *Methodological implications of the research*

Methodologically, my study has the potential to make three important contributions and inform the ways in which future language anxiety research is conducted. First, my study adds to a small body of literature that has considered language anxiety in non-classroom contexts. By exploring individuals' experiences of language anxiety beyond the classroom, I was able to see the extent to which language anxiety both shapes and is shaped by social context. My focus on non-classroom contexts allowed me to uncover some of the ways in which language anxiety can have a debilitating effect on

an individual's social experiences. My research underscores the need for further language anxiety research in contexts other than the language classroom.

A second methodological contribution comes from the kind of data that my methodological approach generated. Where most language anxiety research is focused on the quantifiable measurement of language anxiety and predictive variables associated with the phenomenon, I focused instead on generating qualitative data. In this way, my study adds to a small body of qualitative research about language anxiety, thus contributing additional breadth, depth, and richness to our understanding of phenomenon through the kind of data that were generated during the research process. For example, I found that language anxiety can manifest in a number of different negative emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural responses, and that different individuals experience language anxiety in different ways. The ways in which participants in my study experienced language anxiety suggest that language anxiety is a far more complex and multidimensional experience than what is implied in popular quantitative measures, such as the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986). There are potential implications, therefore, in terms of how language anxiety is measured in future research. As I argued in the previous chapter of this report, the findings of my study and other qualitative studies of language anxiety could be used to inform the adaptation of future quantitative measures of language anxiety. Measures of language anxiety could be adapted to allow for a greater variety of language anxiety responses, thus capturing the experiences of individuals whose voices would otherwise remain unheard.

The third and most significant methodological contribution of my study comes from the non-static approach to data collection (Lamarre, 2013) that I used in conducting my field work. Using innovative research techniques like language maps, *in situ* recordings, participant journals, and walking interviews, I was able to ‘follow’ my participants throughout their everyday movements around the city, which allowed me to observe how they experienced language anxiety in different social contexts. To the best of my knowledge, a non-static approach to data collection on language choice and language behavior (Lamarre, 2013) has never been used in language anxiety research before. Yet, the approach and instruments that I used in implementing it were pivotal in the kind of data that my study generated and the insights that emerged from this data. The use of a non-static approach to data collection revealed the extent to which participants’ experiences of language anxiety both shaped and were shaped by their social experiences. By ‘following’ my participants around their everyday locales and considering their language anxiety in different social contexts, it became evident that language anxiety is a dynamic and fluctuating phenomenon; in other words, an individual who experiences language anxiety in one social context may not experience it in the same way or not at all in another social context. The implications of this for the future of the field may be significant in terms of our understanding of language anxiety and the ways in which it is treated by teachers and researchers. For example, as I argued in the Discussion chapter of this report, by focusing on pedagogical interventions that only address language anxiety in language anxious learners in the classroom, we may be overlooking individuals who might experience language anxiety later in life and/or in social contexts other than the

classroom. In the paragraphs that follow, I consider this and other pedagogical implications of my study.

*Pedagogical implications of the research*

As a language teacher myself, the pedagogical implications of my study have been at the forefront of my mind throughout the research process. Now that I am nearing the end of my doctoral journey and transitioning towards teacher education, I think often about how my research may inform future teaching practice. Perhaps the most surprising pedagogical insights that I gained from this study came from my participants' descriptions of their language learning experiences; of the ten individuals that I worked with, just two (DJ and Karine) reported having ever experienced any language anxiety in their language classes. In fact, for most of my participants, their classroom language learning experiences were largely positive. I admit that this finding surprised me; before recruiting participants for my study, I assumed that most individuals who experienced language anxiety beyond the classroom would have some experience of it from their classroom days. Yet, this was not the case for the majority of my participants. For most of these individuals, their first experiences of language anxiety were well after they had finished their French courses and were without the support of their teachers. In reflecting on their classroom experiences, my participants also told me that their teachers had never talked about language anxiety, so they lacked the literacy to understand it as well as strategies for managing it. My participants also shared with me feelings of being ill-prepared for the world beyond the classroom, both in terms of the way that the people around them used French, as well as in terms of the complexity of Montréal's

sociolinguistic dynamic. My participants told me that their French teachers had insisted that they speak only French in the classroom, which did not reflect the on-the-ground reality that they encountered beyond the classroom. Here, I am specifically referring to the experience of the Montréal switch, which my participants often interpreted as indicating that something was wrong with their French.

Reflecting on my participants' descriptions of their classroom experiences has given me three important insights that can inform my own teaching practice and that of other interested educators. It is my belief that these insights have the potential to go some way towards preventing and addressing non-classroom language anxiety among individuals like the participants in my study. First, teachers can place more emphasis on what it's like in the real world beyond the classroom, not just by teaching their learners to understand different accents and slang, but also by attempting to convey what it means to live in a city with complex sociolinguistic dynamics, like Montréal, where people might switch into English when they speak French.

Second, teachers can start talking about language anxiety more and prepare their students with strategies to cope with it. As a teacher myself, I've reassured my learners who are experiencing language anxiety about a test or presentation and coached them through it. However, I've now realized that I need to talk with all my learners about the possibility that when they leave the classroom, they might experience language anxiety. In the existing research literature, it is generally agreed that language anxiety affects approximately a third of classroom language learners. Yet, most of my participants did not experience classroom language anxiety. I therefore recommend a more explicit

discussion of language anxiety in language classes. Rather than addressing language anxiety on an individual level as it happens in the classroom, teachers would do better explicitly and directly discuss language anxiety with their entire class, working towards the goal of understanding the phenomenon and helping students understand that they might experience it beyond the classroom, even if they are confident and competent in the classroom. This discussion could also include an emphasis on what students can do if they begin to experience language anxiety beyond the classroom.

This leads me to my third pedagogical recommendation. While I didn't necessarily set out to find ways of helping individuals cope with their language anxiety, some of my participants told me that their language anxiety improved over the course of their participation in my study. For example, Kiki told me that her journal helped her manage the stress of her first semester at a French university. Rainbow said that the focus groups felt like group therapy. Their reflections suggest that journals and peer support have the potential to help individuals who experience language anxiety. In the previous chapter (Discussion), I presented existing research literature that supports this recommendation. However, further research is necessary to explore the role of strategies like journals and peer support in helping individuals with the experience of non-classroom language anxiety.

### *Reflections on bridge building and bridge travelling*

I agree with Hulstijn et al. (2014) that "there is a story behind every study... we always miss something or discover limitations." (p. 402). In this section, I offer my reflections on and insights into some of the limitations of my study. These limitations had

to do with the challenge of exploring non-classroom language anxiety from a critical social approach.

At the outset of this report (see: Chapter 1 Introduction), I established a set of conceptual lenses that offered a critical social perspective for my exploration of language anxiety. This set of conceptual lenses provided the scope for me to consider my participants' experiences of language anxiety as situated in the social world around them and highlight the interplay between their language anxiety and their social interactions. Such an approach contrasts with the ways in which language anxiety is normally conceptualized and explored, namely as if it resided solely in the individual, rather than having a social component. Furthermore, most language anxiety research has been conducted from within the cognitivist framework. By drawing from the ideas of scholars such as Heller (2007), Lamarre (2013), Auer (1998), Nicholas and Starks (2014), Phipps (2010), Blommaert (2014), Najar (2014), Pennycook (2012), Tollefson (1994, 2006), and Spolsky & Shohamy (2000), I was aligning myself with researchers who think about and explore language and language learning from a social perspective. While sociolinguists have been looking at language as a social practice for several decades (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972), the social turn in applied linguistics is relatively recent (Firth & Wagner, 1997). In this sense, I was situating myself at the relatively recent intersection of second language learning and teaching research, critical applied linguistics, and critical sociolinguistics.

In approaching my study from a critical social perspective, I was undertaking an epistemological challenge because my background was in psychology and applied



linguistics, grounded in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). However, as I progressed through my doctoral studies, I found that the cognitivist-individual perspective on language that was offered by SLA research did not fully explain my experiences of language anxiety (Godfrey-Smith, 2014) and those that I read about in the literature. Yet, rather than choose one perspective over the other, I endeavoured to be interdisciplinary, attempting to construct a bridge between the cognitive and social ways of thinking about and researching language and language learning. Hulstijn et al. (2014) (2014) described this process as bridge travelling, or "the integration of the cognitive and the social within a single study" (p. 409). Hulstijn et al. (2014) added that building and travelling such bridges is an opportunity to "explore the possibility for blending of research traditions in ways that give us more insight into phenomena studied in the fields of language learning and teaching." (p. 403). However, and according to Hulstijn et al. (2014), the process of bridge building and bridge travelling can be vulnerable and risky, especially for the new researcher. This sense of risk and vulnerability relates to how new researchers navigate the ideological divide between cognitive and social approaches to language and language learning (Hulstijn et al., 2014).

While Hulstijn et al. (2014) encouraged new researchers to take these kinds of risks, she also reminded us that such struggles can cause "uncertainty in terms of who the audience is for their work" (p. 406). Indeed, because of the cross-disciplinary nature of my project, I have also sometimes felt that my thesis must speak to two audiences: those who usually think about language and language learning from cognitivist perspectives in terms of the individual, and those who think about language and language learning from

social perspectives in terms of the collective. Importantly, because I felt that I was negotiating a balance between these two ways of thinking about language and language learning – and attempting to remake myself epistemologically in doing so –, the extent to which I pushed boundaries and problematized aspects of language anxiety was sometimes limited.

Hulstijn et al. (2014) reminded us that "being epistemologically open does not necessarily mean that a researcher is able to merge the two". In other words, while a researcher can attempt to embody two research paradigms, they may not always be able to bring them together well. Indeed, one of the main limitations that I have been able to identify in my study relates to how I was not always successful in my attempt to merge the popular cognitivist-individual conceptualization of language anxiety with the critical social approach. More specifically, I am referring to the extent to which I often focused on the individual aspects of non-classroom language anxiety, which reflects an epistemology more often associated with cognitivist SLA-oriented research and less with sociolinguistic research. Rather than focusing on the interaction itself, I was instead focused on the experiences of one of the individuals in that interaction. A more complete application of a critical social approach might have placed more emphasis on the interaction and all the players involved, more fully revealing language anxiety as not an individual trait but something that emerges in interaction with other speakers.

Another related limitation of my study was the relatively one-sided nature of my exploration. No interaction happens involving a single interlocutor; by nature of the term "interaction", it is evident that there are at least two actors involved in any social

interaction. Yet, in this study I have focused exclusively on the experiences of *one* speaker in any given interaction: the learner of French as an additional language, to the exclusion of those that they interacted with. Yet, the voices of French-L1 speakers in Montréal also need to be heard since they are also agents in such interactions and part of the wider sociolinguistic dynamic informing participants' language anxiety. One way that this narrow focus limited the scope of my interpretation had to do with issues of power and control, which I only briefly alluded to in my discussion of my data. Because my research only explored one side of the social interactions that my participants were part of, my interpretation of these notions remained incomplete. In other words, I treated the language and power stakes as one-sided, while French-L1 speakers in Montréal may also struggle with similar feelings of anxiety, insecurity, and power stakes as they understand them. Future research could push the social approach to language anxiety further by considering the entire interaction as situated within a social context. One way that this might be picked up is by using the concept of linguistic insecurity (Labov, 1966; Mayerhoff, 2006), which I briefly mentioned in the second chapter of this report (see: Context). Perhaps speakers of French are experiencing their own feelings of anxiety about the way that they speak French or about the status of French in general; in this sense, perhaps linguistic insecurity and language anxiety are more closely related than I have argued (see: Context). However, such an exploration was beyond the scope of this project.

Reflecting on my doctoral journey, I can see that I have come a long way. From my initial perspective as an applied linguist and ESL teacher with an SLA-orientation, a

lot has changed in terms of the way that I think about language and language learning. I hope that my research demonstrates the way that "various approaches and methodologies inspire one another" (Hulstijn et al, 2014, p. 402). It is my belief that this thesis, and the research that it reports, has the potential to contribute to new ways of thinking about and researching language anxiety. Yet, while I know that I have accomplished a lot, I can also see that I have only just arrived at the foothills of a much larger mountain, and one that this thesis alone cannot tackle. There is certainly more work to be done here. Indeed, it will take future research projects to push this exploration further, to dig deeper and further reveal the social elements of language anxiety. In the paragraphs that follow, I describe some specific directions that future research may take, but that were beyond the scope of the thesis project proper.

#### *Directions for further research*

As is the case with many doctoral studies, the scope of my study was limited and I was only able to explore a small piece of a much bigger puzzle. Thus, several questions that I began with remain unanswered, while others have emerged over the course of the research. In this section of the chapter, I consider some potential directions for further research.

The first area for future research that my study points to is the pedagogical. I have already mentioned that some of my participants noted an improvement in their experiences of language anxiety over the course of the research. Their comments suggest that journals and peer support have the potential to be effective coping strategies for individuals experiencing non-classroom language anxiety. However, a systematic

exploration of how or why such tools were effective was beyond the scope of this study. Future research could explore the effectiveness of different strategies for managing and coping with non-classroom language anxiety. My research raises a number of questions that future research could seek to address, including:

- How can peer support and journals help individuals manage their experiences of non-classroom language anxiety? What other strategies might prove effective in managing and/or alleviating individuals' non-classroom language anxiety?
- How can teachers equip their learners with strategies for managing potential non-classroom language anxiety?
- What else can teachers do to prepare their learners for the possibility that they may experience language anxiety beyond the classroom?

The second direction for potential future research relates to the sociolinguistic context of the study. Due to the limitations of my study, I was only able to explore the experience of non-classroom language anxiety in one city: Montréal. This limitation suggests an opportunity for future language anxiety research in other sociolinguistic contexts, especially other multilingual cities like Montréal. Some questions that such research could attempt to address include:

- How is non-classroom language anxiety shaped by social context in other multilingual cities and/or for learners of languages other than French?
- What issues of power and politics are at play for individuals experiencing language anxiety in post-colonial or post-conflict countries?

- How does non-classroom language anxiety shape the settlement experiences of refugees and asylum seekers?
- Are switches into English (or other languages) a part of the sociolinguistic dynamic of other cities, and if so, how do such switches interplay with individuals' experiences of language anxiety? For example, do Spanish learners of Catalan experience the Barcelona switch and feel anxious about it? Do Canadians teaching English abroad and learning the local language experience the Seoul switch or the Tokyo switch, and if so, how does it shape their language anxiety?

These questions lead me to a third potentially fruitful area of future research. I am interested in the experiences of the Montréal switch that participants in my study described. Many of the participants in my study pointed to the Montréal switch as a source of language anxiety for them, and many assumed that people switched into English because something was wrong with their French. However, an investigation of the reasons why people switched into English were beyond the scope of my study. It would therefore be fruitful to explore the motivations behind speech acts like the Montréal switch to see if they are always intended to be accommodating in nature. For example, my participants told me that they assumed the Montréal switch was meant to be helpful, but also felt it meant something bad about their French. Their reflections point to an area of future research that could address questions such as:

- Why do people (e.g. French-L1 speakers) in Montréal switch to English with individuals who speak French as their additional language?

- Is the Montréal switch always meant to be accommodating, or are there also issues of power and politics at play here?

A fourth direction for future research also relates to the Montréal switch. I approached my study from the perspective of language anxiety, and I have cited two master's theses that have looked at this phenomenon from the perspective of its effect on motivation (McNaughton, 2014; Pletch Kanashiro, 2011). Further research could explore the Montréal switch in terms of other elements related to language, such as belonging and identity. Potential questions that such research could address include:

- What is the interplay between the Montréal switch and individuals' experiences of belonging and identity?
- How does one's sense of belonging and identity shape their experiences of the Montréal switch?

### *Closing thoughts*

In this study, I sought to explore the social dimensions of non-classroom language anxiety from the perspective of ten individuals having the experience: Sophia, Ryan, Kiki, DJ, Karine, Denise, Mary, Rainbow, Jordan, and Alice. Overall, my findings indicate that, for these ten individuals, language anxiety both shaped and was shaped by their social experiences. Based on my reflection and interpretation of the research findings, I theorized that the social dimensions of language anxiety relate to individuals' fear of barriers to communication, their feelings of conspicuousness, what is at stake in their interactions with others, and their sense of agency.

In approaching my study from a critical social approach (Heller, 2007; Lamarre, 2013) and drawing on the concept of mobility (Blommaert, 2014) in my methodological design, my study represents a shift away from earlier studies of language anxiety, which – by focusing on the experiences of individuals in static locations – framed learners as one-dimensional and static themselves. Overall, my work represents a first step towards a more social approach to the study of language anxiety that recognizes the role of social context and experience in individuals' everyday language practices, and frames individuals having the experience as complex, mobile, and multidimensional.



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Is French your second language (or third, fourth, etc...)?  
Do you live on the island of Montréal?  
Are you between 18 and 35 years old?  
Do you ever feel anxious about your French?

The questionnaire takes about 10 minutes and you could win a \$50 gift card to Amazon.ca. There is also the possibility of participation in further stages of the research (for which \$100 compensation is offered to eligible selected participants).

<http://goo.gl/forms/D9nsr4sAE3>.

Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE),  
RESEARCHER: Lauren Godfrey-Smith, PhD Candidate, McGill University: [lauren.godfrey-smith@mcgill.ca](mailto:lauren.godfrey-smith@mcgill.ca); FACULTY SUPERVISORS: Dr. Caroline Riches, [caroline.riches@mcgill.ca](mailto:caroline.riches@mcgill.ca); Dr. Mela Sarkar, [mela.sarkar@mcgill.ca](mailto:mela.sarkar@mcgill.ca).

[illegible]

## Appendix 2: Phase 0 recruitment scripts (email & social media)

### **Email invitation to Phase 0 questionnaire script:**

Dear all,

I'm writing to see if you might be interested in completing a short questionnaire as part of my PhD research, which is about learners of French in Montréal and language anxiety. If you are happy to complete the questionnaire, it should only take you about 10 minutes and you will be invited to enter in a draw for a \$50 gift card to Amazon.ca (your contact information for the draw won't be linked to your responses). On the first page of the questionnaire, you will find a more detailed description of my research project and what your data will be used for if you decide to participate. If you have any questions about the research project, please don't hesitate to contact me at [lauren.godfrey-smith@mcgill.ca](mailto:lauren.godfrey-smith@mcgill.ca).

Here is the link to the questionnaire: <http://goo.gl/forms/D9nsr4sAE3>

Also, would you mind sharing the link to the questionnaire with anyone else who you think would be interested in completing it? I am hoping to reach as many people in Montréal as possible: people between 18 and 35 years old, of all linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and all levels of proficiency in French. It doesn't matter whether the participants were born in Canada or not, as long as they are living in Montréal at the moment and have learned French as an additional language at some point in their lives.

Thank you very much in advance, your help is greatly appreciated!

Kind regards,

**Lauren Anne Godfrey-Smith**  
PhD Candidate, Educational Studies  
DISE, Faculty of Education  
McGill University

### **Facebook invitation to Phase 0 questionnaire script:**

Friends in Montreal! Is French your second language (or third, fourth, etc...)? If so, please consider completing a short questionnaire for my PhD research. It takes about 10 minutes and you could win a \$50 gift card to Amazon.ca! I'd also be grateful if you could share the link with your friends. Thank you!

<http://goo.gl/forms/D9nsr4sAE3>

### **Twitter invitation to Phase 0 questionnaire script:**

Anxious in French? Please consider participating in a study about language anxiety and Montreal: <http://goo.gl/forms/D9nsr4sAE3>

### Appendix 3: Recruitment Questionnaire (Google forms)

*French as an additional language in Montréal: Language and anxiety study (REB #466-0515)*

#### **Consent for Participation in Research Study**

You are invited to complete this questionnaire as part of a doctoral research project that is being conducted by Lauren Godfrey-Smith, a PhD candidate in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE), McGill University. This consent form outlines your agreement to participate in this part of the study.

#### STUDY INFORMATION:

This research study is focused on learners of French as an additional language and their experiences of language anxiety in non-classroom contexts in Montréal.

#### RESEARCHER:

Lauren Godfrey-Smith, PhD Candidate, Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE), McGill University: [lauren.godfrey-smith@mcgill.ca](mailto:lauren.godfrey-smith@mcgill.ca); Phone number: +1-514-222-8701.

#### FACULTY SUPERVISORS:

Dr. Caroline Riches, Associate professor & Director of Teacher Education Programs, McGill University, Rm. 248B, Education Building, 3700 McTavish Street, 514-398-5793, [caroline.riches@mcgill.ca](mailto:caroline.riches@mcgill.ca); Dr. Mela Sarkar, Associate Professor, McGill University, Coach House, 3715 Peel St., Rm. 218, Montreal, Québec H3A 1Y2, 514-398-2756, [mela.sarkar@mcgill.ca](mailto:mela.sarkar@mcgill.ca).

#### PROCEDURE:

If you decide to complete this questionnaire, you will be asked to answer a number of multiple choice and short answer questions about your language background, language use, and experiences of language anxiety. There are no right or wrong answers because the questions are about your own experiences. Completing the questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes. At the end of the questionnaire, you will be asked if you would be interested in participating in further stages of the research. If you agree to be contacted to participate in further stages of the research, you will be asked to provide an email address.

#### VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:

You are under absolutely no obligation to participate in this research project or complete the questionnaire. If you do decide to participate but you then change your mind, you can withdraw your data. You can do so at any point during the completion of the questionnaire or at the end, before submitting it. All you have to do is close this browser



window. Your data will thereby be withdrawn and the researcher will never have access to it.

#### RISKS & BENEFITS:

This study involves minimal risk and discomfort levels not exceeding those encountered in everyday life. Possible benefits of participating in this part of the study include an increased understanding of the relationships between your language practices and your experiences of language anxiety.

#### COMPENSATION:

Upon completion of the questionnaire, you will be invited to provide your email address to be entered in a draw to win a \$50 gift card for Amazon.ca. This is optional and the email address you provide here will not be linked to your responses. Subject to the number of responses to the online questionnaire, I anticipate that you have approximately a 1/50 chance of winning the draw.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY:

The data in this questionnaire will be collected anonymously. You do not have to provide your name or any other identifying information, unless you wish to be entered in the draw and/or agree to be contacted about participating in further stages of the research. In the write-up of the research output, the researcher will use a pseudonym when referring to participants. Neither your name, the name of any person mentioned in the questionnaire, or any information by which a participant or any person mentioned in the questionnaire may be identified, will be used in any reports of the data. All questionnaire data will be kept in password-protected files, on a password-protected computer, in the possession of the researcher. Only the researcher and her faculty supervisors will have access to the data. Only the researcher will know the passwords to the computer and the files, and her faculty supervisors will only have access to the data under the researcher's supervision. The data gathered by means of the questionnaire will only be used by the researcher, and only for the purposes of this research project. In accordance with the McGill Regulation on the Conduct of Research, the data will be kept securely for a period of seven years. During this time, the data will remain in the password-protected files, on the password-protected computer, in the possession of the researcher. Only the researcher and her faculty supervisors will have access to the data during this time. After this time, the files will be deleted.

#### DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS:

The results of this study will be disseminated through a doctoral thesis written under the co-supervision of Dr. Caroline Riches and Dr. Mela Sarkar. The expected completion date of the thesis is the first quarter of 2017. Findings from this study will also potentially be used to publish articles in peer-reviewed journals. Findings from this study may also be presented at one or more academic conferences.

#### QUESTIONS:

If you would like to know more about the study, or if have any questions regarding the information detailed above, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher at [lauren.godfrey-smith@mcgill.ca](mailto:lauren.godfrey-smith@mcgill.ca). If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights or welfare as a participant in this research study, please contact the McGill Ethics Officer at 514-398-6831 or [lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca](mailto:lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca) (referring to REB file number #466-0515).

If you have read and understood the information above, and you do not have any questions, please click on the “agree” button below to confirm that you are 18+ years old and voluntarily agree to participate in this project.

☐ Agree

*[Recruitment Questionnaire (Google forms), Page 2]:*

1. Please indicate your age group:
  - ☐ 18-25
  - ☐ 26-35
  - ☐ 35+
2. Do you live on the island of Montréal?
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No

Comments:

3. How long have you lived in Montréal?
4. What is your main occupation?
5. How would you describe your ethnicity?
6. What languages do you speak? (Please select all that apply).
  - ☐ English
  - ☐ French
  - ☐ Others (please list):
7. How would you describe your proficiency in the languages you speak (i.e. native or native-like / advanced / intermediate / beginner)?
8. How old were you when you started learning the languages that you speak?

9. What languages did you grow up speaking (e.g. at home, in school, with friends, etc.)?
10. Where did you go to elementary school, and in what language?
11. Where did you go to high school, and in what language?
12. Where did you go to cégep, and in what language (if applicable)?
13. Where did you go to university, and in what language (if applicable)?
14. How did you learn French? Please describe briefly.
15. Are you currently taking any formal French classes?
  - Yes
  - No

Comments:

16. Do you ever feel anxious about your French?
17. If you answered 'yes' to the previous question, please briefly comment/describe. Under what circumstances do you feel anxious about your French? How often? Where? With whom? Why? How does it affect your life?
18. Would you describe yourself as an anxious person in general? If so, how does your general anxiety compare to any anxiety that you feel about your French (if applicable)?
19. Do you have any additional comments that you would like to share about this topic?
20. Thank you for participating in this questionnaire! Please write your email address in the box below if you would like to go in the draw for a \$50 gift certificate from Amazon.ca (please note that your email address provided here will not be linked to your responses):

Thank you again for your participation in my project by completing this questionnaire. I am currently looking people who would be interested in the possibility of participating in the next stage of the project. You would be offered a compensation of \$100 at the completion of the study. You would be asked to take part in interviews and a focus group and make recordings and journal entries. Your participation would involve a total commitment of about 10 hours (at times convenient to you) during the months of

September, October, and November 2015. If you are interested in participating in the next part of the study, please provide an email address (below) where you may be reached. Please note that, by providing an email address here, you are only agreeing to be contacted about participating in the next stage of the study, and you may decide later if you want to participate. Only suitable candidates for the next stage of the project will be selected.

Thank you for your participation. Your answers have been recorded.

#### Appendix 4: Phase 1, 2, & 3 Consent form

#### ***French as an additional language in Montréal: Language and anxiety study (REB #466-0515), Phases 1, 2, & 3***

#### **Consent for Participation in Research Study**

You are invited to participate a doctoral research project that is being conducted by Lauren Godfrey-Smith, a PhD candidate in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE), McGill University. This consent form outlines your agreement to participate in this part of the study

#### STUDY INFORMATION:

This research study is focused on learners of French as an additional language and their experiences of language anxiety in non-classroom contexts in Montréal.

#### RESEARCHER:

Lauren Godfrey-Smith, PhD Candidate, Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE), McGill University: [lauren.godfrey-smith@mcgill.ca](mailto:lauren.godfrey-smith@mcgill.ca); Phone number: +1-514-222-8701.

#### FACULTY SUPERVISORS:

Dr. Caroline Riches, Associate professor & Director of Teacher Education Programs, McGill University, Rm. 248B, Education Building, 3700 McTavish Street, 514-398-5793, [caroline.riches@mcgill.ca](mailto:caroline.riches@mcgill.ca); Dr. Mela Sarkar, Associate Professor, McGill University, Coach House, 3715 Peel St., Rm. 218, Montreal, Québec H3A 1Y2, 514-398-2756, [mela.sarkar@mcgill.ca](mailto:mela.sarkar@mcgill.ca).

#### PROCEDURE:

Your participation in this study will involve approximately 10 hours of participation over three stages of research. In the first stage of the research, you will be asked to take part in a preliminary face-to-face interview with the researcher at a location of your choosing. In this interview, you will be asked to draw a map of your language use. The interview will be approximately 60 minutes and will be audio-recorded. In the second stage of the research, you will be asked to complete “field work” about yourself, including digital recordings of yourself speaking French with other people and a daily journal of your language use. This stage of the research will conclude with a walking interview of approximately 60 minutes and will be audio-recorded. In the final stage of the research, you will be asked to participate in a focus group, which will take place in the Education Building, 3700 rue McTavish, Montréal. The focus group will be approximately 90 minutes. The focus group will be audio recorded.

#### VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer in the interviews and focus groups. You are free to decide not to take part in the research study. You are free to withdraw at any time (compensation will be pro-rated for partial participation).

#### RISKS & BENEFITS:

This study involves minimal risk and discomfort levels not exceeding those encountered in everyday life. Possible benefits of this study include increased understanding of the relationships between your language practices and experiences of language anxiety.

#### COMPENSATION:

Your complete participation in this study will involve approximately 10 hours of your time over a period of three months. Upon completion of the three phases of the study, a compensation of \$100 will be provided to you (compensation will be pro-rated for partial participation). Light refreshments will be provided at interviews and the focus group.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY:

Your answers will be confidential. Before commencing the research study, you will have the chance to review all confidentiality and privacy agreements, and have the opportunity to withdraw at any point throughout the study. Furthermore, the records of this study will be kept private. Your name will be kept confidential and you will be asked to choose a pseudonym. Neither your name, the name of any person mentioned in the interviews or focus groups, or any information by which a participant or any person mentioned in the interviews or focus groups may be identified, will be used in any reports of the data. Physical research records and artefacts will be kept in a locked file and digital records and artefacts kept under password; only the researcher and the faculty supervisors will have access to the records. In accordance with the McGill Regulation on the Conduct of Research, the data will be kept securely for a period of seven years. During this time, the data will remain in the password-protected files, on the password-protected computer, in the possession of the researcher. Only the researcher and her faculty supervisors will have access to the data during this time. After this time, the files will be deleted. The researcher would like to remind participants to respect the privacy of your fellow participants and not repeat what is said in the focus group to others.

#### DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS:

The results of this study will be disseminated through a doctoral thesis written under the co-supervision of Dr. Caroline Riches and Dr. Mela Sarkar. The expected completion date of the thesis is the first quarter of 2017. Findings from this study will also potentially be used to publish articles in peer-reviewed journals. Findings from this study may also be presented at one or more academic conferences. Prior to the dissemination of the results of the study, copies of your own data (i.e. journal entries, transcriptions of interviews, recordings, and focus group) will be shared with you to ensure any concerns you might have regarding anonymity and confidentiality of you as a person are fully taken into consideration.

**QUESTIONS:**

If you would like to know more about the study, or if have any questions regarding the information detailed above, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher at [lauren.godfrey-smith@mcgill.ca](mailto:lauren.godfrey-smith@mcgill.ca). If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights or welfare as a participant in this research study, please contact the McGill Ethics Officer at 514-398-6831 or [lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca](mailto:lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca) (referring to REB file number #466-0515).

If you have read and understood the information above, and you do not have any questions, please sign below to confirm that you are 18+ years old and voluntarily agree to participate in this project.

---

*Participant signature*

---

*Date*

## Appendix 5: Phase 1 Preliminary interview guide

### **Phase 1 Preliminary interview guide**

*[The participant will be warmly welcomed to the interview and made to feel comfortable and at ease through casual small talk over light refreshments (e.g. coffee and snacks). After they have signed the consent form and been given a copy to keep, the interview will begin and the audio recording started.]*

#### **Part 1: Background information**

“In this first part of the interview, I’d like to go over some of the answers that you gave in the questionnaire and get some more details from you.”

*[I will go over the participant’s responses to the questionnaire, asking them to elaborate on their answers. Possible follow-up questions are listed below.]*

- Tell me about your language background. What language(s) did you grow up speaking?
- What languages did you learn in school? (elementary school, high school, etc.)
- Do you have any informal language learning experiences?
- Where did you grow up? Where did you go to elementary school? High school?
- When did you first come to Montréal? *(if applicable)*
- Why did you learn French?
- Tell me about how you learned French.
- What does knowing French mean to you?
- How would you describe your proficiency in French?
- What language(s) do you feel most comfortable using?
- What do you like about knowing French? What is difficult for you?

#### **Part 2: Language maps**

“In this next stage of the interview, I’d like you to draw your own personal language map. Please show on your map the places you usually go in your everyday life and what languages you use. Please feel free to be creative and take as much time as you need. After you’re done, I’ll ask you to explain your map to me.”

*[The participant will be provided with paper and markers and given as much time as they need to complete their map. When they feel ready, I will ask them to explain their map to me. Then I will ask them to return to their maps and indicate the places where they feel anxious about their French or have felt anxious about their French. Then I will ask them to explain what they have added. This part of the interview will progress in a relatively flexible way.]*

#### **Part 3: Orientation to next stage of the research**



“To conclude the interview, I’d like to go over some of the details of the next stage of the research.”

*[I will provide the participant with the ‘field work’ guide and walk them through the different steps. I will answer any questions they have about it.]*

## Appendix 6: Phase 2 Participant ‘field work’ guide

### **Phase 2: Participant “field work” guide**

Thank you for your ongoing participation in this study! This document outlines the tasks that you are being asked to complete in this stage of the research. Please don’t hesitate to be in touch (day or night) if you have any questions: [lauren.godfrey-smith@mcgill.ca](mailto:lauren.godfrey-smith@mcgill.ca) / 514.222.8701.

#### Week 1: Recordings

For the first week of your “field work”, you will record yourself using French in public. The purpose of the recordings is for you to capture some “live” interactions that you have with people in public that are typical of your life in French in Montreal. Using your smartphone or recording device (if you don’t have a recording device, one will be provided to you), record some typical interactions that you have in French in public (i.e. ‘in public’ refers to spaces where people usually can’t assume full privacy, such as spaces where they may be overhead. Examples include: conversations you have with people in cafés, on public transportation, on the street, in stores, supermarkets, waiting rooms, parks, etc. – please don’t record any conversations occurring in private places such as homes or closed meetings, etc. Please contact me if you have doubts about what is a public vs. private space). Your recording device should be discreetly concealed (we are trying to capture natural, spontaneous interactions). Each recording should be short (between 10 and 60 seconds). You should aim to make one or two recordings every day of this week. At the end of the week, choose six (6) recordings that are typical of your overall experiences of using French in Montreal. Complete the table below about the six recordings that you chose, and submit the recordings and the description table to me.

<i><b>Recording name</b></i>	<i><b>Date/time</b></i>	<i><b>Location/ circumstances</b></i>	<i><b>People</b></i>	<i><b>Comments/ reflections</b></i>

#### Weeks 2 & 3: Journal entries

For the next two weeks, please keep a daily journal of your language practices. You are invited to be reflective and interpretive in your writing. As you think more about these topics, you are also welcome and encouraged to record any memories of past experiences that come to you. Please use the following questions as prompts for your journal entries:

- Where did you go today? Why?
- Who did you talk with? Why?
- What languages did you use? Why?
- What languages did they use? Why?
- How do you feel about your French today?
- If you felt anxious about your French today, why?
- If you didn’t feel anxious about your French today, why?
- Do you have any further reflections that you would like to share (e.g. on today’s experiences or experiences from the past)?

Week 4: Walking interview

In the fourth week of your “field work”, you will guide me around an area of Montréal of your choosing in a walking interview (a walking interview is similar to a typical interview, except we will do it while we are walking around). The purpose of the walking interview is for us to talk about the area that you choose and for you to tell stories about the locations that you choose to show me. You should choose a location that is related to what makes you anxious about your French. The walking interview will take about 60 minutes, and will be audio recorded. Your chosen route does not have to be limited to one location – it can include rides on public transportation, visits to stores and coffee shops, or other locations that are significant to how you use French in Montreal. At the end of the interview, we can go out for lunch or a coffee together and talk about your field work.

## Appendix 7: Phase 3 Focus group outline

**McGill French in Montréal study (Phase 3): FOCUS GROUP OUTLINE****1. Icebreaker**

*Everyone to introduce themselves (with pseudonym) + icebreaker question (choose one):*

- What did you want to be when you grew up when you were a kid?
- What's your favorite part of the day?
- What are three words you would use to describe yourself?

**2. Introductions & data review**

*Going around table, each person to share their thoughts on their data (others to share comments, interpretations, insights, reflections, questions as they come to mind.)*

- What's your (language anxiety) story?
- What was it like to read your packet of data?
- What did you learn? What did it make you think about, feel, wonder?
- What jumped out at you? What was interesting, surprising, shocking, funny, etc.?
- Anything missing?

**3. Participant analysis/validation**

*Review the themes that have emerged from the different stages of the field work for participant analysis. Ask: What do you think? Share thoughts, comments, analyses, insights, feelings, etc.*

- KINDS OF LANGUAGE ANXIETY
  - Communication breakdown (not understanding or being understood)
  - Evaluation/judgment by others (people making judgments, evaluations, assessments, drawing conclusions, perceptions based on language)
- CONDITIONS OF LANGUAGE ANXIETY
  - People switching into English, aka 'the Montréal switch' (appreciation of willingness of others to be accommodating vs. feelings of failure; on one's own terms vs. otherwise)
  - Self-perceived proficiency (if my proficiency was better, I'd be less anxious about French)
  - Past negative experiences (informing present feelings of language anxiety)
  - Strangers vs. people who are close to us (parents, partners, friends, etc.) – what's at stake?
  - Proficiencies of the other person (e.g. people who can speak English vs. people who can't; equal playing field?)
  - Safe zones vs. not safe zones
  - Having attention drawn to oneself and one's French
  - Feelings of pressure, obligation, 'should'
  - Language politics; sociolinguistic tensions of English vs. French

- Language as power
- CONSEQUENCES OF LANGUAGE ANXIETY
  - Proficiency (less likely to practice and therefore improve in French slower)
  - Social isolation, less outgoing, less sociable, less likely to speak up
  - Avoidance of speaking, avoidance of situations where French is needed
  - Feelings of non-belonging
  - Feelings of shame, guilt, stress
  - Immobilization (e.g. blanking, freezing)
  - Feelings of professional legitimacy

#### **4. General discussion/reflection/questions**

*Consider some general questions related to language anxiety and open the floor to a more general discussion.*

- How would you define language anxiety?
- What does language anxiety tell us about human nature/social organization in general?
- What should people know about language anxiety?
- Any questions you'd like to ask the rest of the group or another participant?

#### **5. Wrap-up & Final thoughts**

*Share final thoughts, reflections, comments, and/or questions about language anxiety and/or participation in this study.*