Migrant-background Students in Québec, Primary Mainstream Classrooms:
An Exploratory Study on Collaborative French Language Learning

Alexa-Savan Ahooja,
McGill University, Montréal

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
M.A. Second Language Education
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would first like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Susan Ballinger, for encouraging me to pursue this research project. Her patience, resourcefulness and knowledge allowed me to envision a study that would not have been possible without her. I am deeply grateful for her help and guidance. Secondly, I must also give thanks to the North Shore Primary School administration, teachers and students who welcomed me into their school and classrooms with great openness. Magalie was especially supportive in helping me pursue this project at the school.

I would also like to thank my friends and family who reassured me in times of doubt. A special thank you goes out to my friends and colleagues, Samantha Traves and Julie Dompierre, who motivated me to remain intellectually rigorous while providing me with continuous mental support. I am deeply indebted to my mother, Josée Biard, who steadfastly supported me throughout my graduate studies. Her wisdom, encouragement and care have allowed me to finish this thesis. I am also grateful to Sarita Ahooja (and her tribe) and Mikhail Ahooja for their unconditional love. Finally, I would like to thank an exceptional friend, Charles Dubé, whose support and sense of humour also made the completion of this thesis possible.
ABSTRACT
This exploratory case study examines eight primary, migrant-background (MB) students’ experiences and peer collaboration when learning French in a grade three and five mainstream classroom in a Greater Montréal school. Teachers’ beliefs and perceptions are also investigated to offer a detailed analysis of participants’ needs and challenges in this school context. The findings of this study are based on classroom observations as well as students’ in-class peer interactions and interviews with students, teachers and parents. The different data collection methods elicited participants’ experiences learning and teaching French as a second language (L2), and the nature of students’ peer collaboration during French tasks. The findings of this study indicated that there are insufficient and inconsistent school resources allocated to meet students’ French-L2 needs. This study revealed the challenge faced by mainstream teachers of MB students. They must face the complex task of teaching grade-level content while attending to their students’ L2 needs. Their lack of L2 teacher training as well as the aforementioned lack of school resources make this a difficult and sometimes frustrating challenge for them. Instances of peer collaboration observed in class revealed the potential and vulnerabilities of this language-learning context. This study also found that students’ imposed identities as Allophones had a negative impact on their academic investment as multilingual learners. Through teacher and student training, peer collaboration may be maximized to counter contextual restrictions and develop these students’ academic language skills in French.

Keywords: second language, Allophone, mainstream class, peer collaboration.
**RÉSUMÉ**

Cette étude de cas exploratoire traite des expériences et de la collaboration entre pairs liées à l’apprentissage du français de huit élèves du primaire issus de l’immigration (EII) dans une école de la région métropolitaine de Montréal. Les croyances et perceptions d’enseignants sont aussi analysées afin d’offrir un portrait détaillé des besoins et défis que vivent les participants dans ce contexte académique. Les résultats divulgués découlent d’entrevues avec les élèves, enseignants et parents, d’observations en classe ainsi que d’interactions entre pairs durant des activités de français. Ces différentes méthodes permettent de se renseigner sur les expériences d’apprentissage et d’enseignement du français langue seconde (L2) des participants et sur la collaboration entre EII. Les résultats démontrent une attention insuffisante et inconsistante pour combler les besoins de français L2 de ces élèves causée par un manque de ressources de l’école. Les enseignants de classes régulières ont de la difficulté à répondre aux besoins linguistiques complexes et diverses de leurs élèves en plus de leurs responsabilités liées à l’enseignement des matières scolaires. Les occasions de collaboration observées en classe révèlent le potentiel et les limites de ce contexte d’apprentissage linguistique. La catégorie linguistique allophones est aussi discutée comme identité imposée défavorable à leur investissement académique en tant qu’apprenants multilingues. En sensibilisant élèves et enseignants aux particularités de la collaboration entre pairs, il est possible de contrer les limites du milieu scolaire et de maximiser le développement du français académique des EII.

*Mots-clés:* langue seconde, allophone, classe régulière, collaboration entre pairs.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION: Setting the Wider Context ................................................................. 3  
   1.1. Implications of Immigration in Canada and Québec ............................................ 3  
   1.2. Québec and the French Language ..................................................................... 4  
   1.3. Introducing Newcomers to French Schools .................................................... 6  

2. BACKGROUND ISSUES .................................................................................................. 9  
   2.1. Problems in Practice ......................................................................................... 9  
      2.1.1. Effective models for all MB learners in Québec? ...................................... 9  
      2.1.2. Mainstream teachers. ............................................................................... 10  
      2.1.3. MB students’ proficiency in the L2 ............................................................. 12  
      2.1.4. Empirical studies on MB students’ French development. ......................... 13  
   2.2. My Experience as a Teacher of MB Students ................................................. 14  
   2.3. Research Questions ......................................................................................... 15  

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE .......................................................................................... 17  
   3.1. Evolving L2 Learning Contexts ....................................................................... 17  
      3.1.1. Implications of multilingualism in the classroom. ................................... 17  
      3.1.2. Identity and investment in L2 learning. ...................................................... 19  
      3.1.3. Collaborative learning ............................................................................. 22  
   3.2. Peer Interaction ................................................................................................. 24  
      3.2.1. Theoretical frameworks .......................................................................... 24  
      3.2.2. Implications and shortcomings of peer interaction .................................. 27  

4. METHODOLOGY .......................................................................................................... 33  
   4.1. Context of the Study ......................................................................................... 34  
      4.1.1. Rationale for participants and school context ............................................ 34  
      4.1.2. General characteristics of the context and participants. .......................... 36  
   4.2. Data Collection ................................................................................................ 38  
      4.2.1. Research instruments. ............................................................................. 38  
      4.2.2. Procedure ................................................................................................. 39  
   4.4. Data Analysis .................................................................................................. 43  
      4.4.1. Interviews and interactions. ................................................................. 43  
      4.4.2. Data triangulation ................................................................................. 45  

5. FINDINGS .................................................................................................................... 47  
   5.1. MB Students’ Experiences with the French Language .................................... 50  
      5.1.1. Students’ French language use .............................................................. 50  
      5.1.2. Students’ French language development .............................................. 57
1. INTRODUCTION: Setting the Wider Context

1.1. Implications of Immigration in Canada and Québec

This study examines first- and second-generation immigrants’ experiences with the French language in Québec, primary mainstream classrooms and their perceptions about peer collaboration as an effective language-learning context. In Canada and Québec, individuals who do not have English or French as a first language (L1) are identified as Allophones, and they were reported to constitute 20% of the country’s population in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2011, p. 326). Although these students are normally referred to as Allophones by schools and in the literature, the term migrant-background\(^1\) (MB) will be used in this study so as to encompass the focal students’ French-language experiences.

To better understand and assess the way in which the current Québec school system supports MB students to learn French and integrate into the host society, it is essential to briefly outline the province’s major immigration waves and policies that have influenced these students’ academic journey. Québec’s immigration patterns may be described by three waves of immigration. The first wave of the start of the 20\(^{th}\) century reflects the province’s biggest immigration influx. However, many of these immigrants later chose to relocate to the United States. The second wave (1930 to 1950) is characterized by the lowest rate of immigration because of the impact of the Great Depression and World War II. The third wave, representing the present period, demonstrates a steady immigration influx with the highest retention rate in the last hundred years (Piché & Laroche, 2007, p. 2).

As a result of this growing influx, immigrants are projected to constitute up to 32% of the country’s population by 2031 (Statistics Canada, 2011, p. 326). In addition, first- and second-

\(^1\) For the purposes of this research, I will use the term ‘migrant-background’ to refer to students who are first- and second-generation immigrants. This term was inspired by the MELS’ (2014) use of Élève issu de l’immigration (EII). This category includes students born outside of Canada (first-generation) or who are born in Canada but for which one parent was born abroad or who does not have French or English as a first language.
generation immigrants, who represented 38.2% of Canada's population in 2011, could account for nearly one in two people in 2036 (Statistics Canada, 2017, p. 1). Therefore, it is clear that Canada is welcoming an increasing number of newcomers, which affects the demographic and linguistic landscape of the country. In the province of Québec, the Institut de la Statistique du Québec (ISQ) has predicted that by 2061, the province’s population growth will be secured through immigration (2014, p. 27). This is a repercussion of Québec’s low fertility rates observed during the 21st century that are now insufficient to insure population maintenance (Bakhshaei, 2015, p. 7). What this means is that Québec’s diversity is growing rapidly, and this has important implications for educational policy and MB students’ learning of the French language.

1.2. Québec and the French Language

Until the 1960s, the Roman Catholic Church managed education for the French-speaking community in Québec, and the Protestant school system was in charge of the English-speaking and other linguistic minorities’ education. In other words, newcomers were integrated into English-speaking schools. During this period, Church and state were not separate entities regarding provincial educational matters, and it was only in 1964 that the first ministry of education was created. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Quiet Revolution came about as a result of the French-Québécois people’s need to place the French language and culture at the foreground of the province’s political agenda. This revolution was the backlash of a long history of Anglophone economic and political as well as religious ‘dominance’ over the French Québécois community (Allen, 2006) and reflected an empowering political and identity-driven enterprise. It wasn’t until 1998, however, that confessional school boards were secularized and reorganized along linguistic lines. Thus, the declining power of the Church and the liberating role of education caused by the Quiet Revolution lead to a historical
birth decline in the province, which made education in French for newcomers a way of ensuring the survival of the French language in Québec (Sarkar, 2005).

In the 1970s, Québec started formulating an intercultural vision of its society that led to the creation of a policy inspired by its inception in European countries (Bouchard, 2012). Québec’s policy of interculturalism as related to the French language is based on “the existence of a moral contract between the newly arrived and the host community, founded on a common public culture with the view to recognizing a real power of influence for all with regards to issues of state” (Oakes, 2004, p. 541). One may extrapolate that the term “common culture” above-mentioned refers to a culture that is the carrier of and carried through the French language. This policy has impacted most immigrants’ acquisition of the French language and will increasingly do so since 12.8% of Québec immigrants were reported to be Allophones in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2012). Accordingly, since immigrants who do not speak French as a L1 constitute an important proportion of the Québec population today, one may better understand the need for interculturalism to establish a raison d’être in terms of newcomers’ linguistic integration. The French language, which is the province’s only official language (Allen, 2007), therefore plays a central role in Québec’s intercultural policy given that it acts like the “glue” for all Québécois individuals to remain united through their diversity.

Interestingly, in 2013, as reported by the Ministère de l’Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC), about 60% of the Québec immigrant population spoke French (MICC, 2015). The high percentage of French-speaking immigrants may be partly explained through the instauration of the French Language Charter (commonly referred to as Bill 101), introduced in 1977 that established French as the common, usual language to be used in the province’s public sphere (Morissette, 2005, p. 309). According to the French Language Charter, French was chosen as the common, neutral language used in public spaces “favouring a linguistic homogeneity that is inclusive and equitable”
(my translation, Calinon, Allard, Denault, & McLaughling, 2015, p. 126). In this case, a public language may be understood as the language “most spoken outside of the home with people other than family and friends” (my translation, Renaud & coll., 2001; as cited in Calinon et al., 2015, p. 129).

Furthermore, with regards to public education in Québec, article 72 of Chapter VIII of the French Language Charter, *La langue d’enseignement* (the language of instruction), stipulates that “instruction in the kindergarten classes and in the elementary and secondary schools shall be in French, except where this charter allows otherwise” (Conrick & Donovan, 2010, p. 338). Because of the Charter, newcomers and most MB families no longer have a legal choice with regards to the language in which their children are educated. In an educational context, this phenomenon is exemplified by 89% of MB children attending English schools in the late 1960s, whereas almost 95% of them pursued their education in French in 1997 (Mc Andrew, Veltman, Lemire, & Rossel, 2001, p. 105-106).

1.3. Introducing Newcomers to French Schools

In 1969, it became obvious that the province’s education system needed to provide the means to assist MB students who were enrolled in French school to learn the target language. This lead to the creation of welcome classes, or *classes d’accueil*, established in 1969 as a result of the Quiet Revolution (Mc Andrew, 2001; Steinbach, 2010). These intensive classes aim at raising MB students’ French proficiency. They last for a maximum of twenty months at the primary level of education (Armand, Sirois, & Ababou, 2008), wherein students are excluded from learning with their peers in regular classes (Steinbach, 2010, p. 97), and are transitioned into mainstream classes as soon as possible (MEQ, 1998). Within the same period, francization classes were created to provide tailored French language support for MB students born in Québec. This type of L2 support was first offered
outside of the province’s metropolitan cities, whereby welcome classes could not be justified because of a low proportion of MB students attending these schools.

In 1998, the Québec ministry of education (MEQ; MELS) issued a policy entitled *Politique d’intégration scolaire et de l’éducation interculturelle* (School Integration and Intercultural Education Policy) aiming at creating a sense of unity amongst all Québécois individuals through school curriculums by solidifying Québec’s pluralist, intercultural policy (that translates in the respect and value of diversity – religious, cultural and linguistic). This document justified the mastery of the French language as a way for MB students to cultivate feelings of belonging toward the Québec society by countering feelings of exclusion and marginalization through full participation in social and cultural interactions (MEQ, 1998, p. 7). Its three main axes related to guiding educational communities in the integration of MB students are: 1) the promotion of equal chances, 2) the mastery of French as the common, public language, and 3) citizenship education in a pluralist context (Bahkshei, 2015, p. 33).

Ministry subsidies that aimed at providing more resources to such programs were allotted to school boards having a high percentage of multicultural students in the late 1990s. These included linguistic support for students during their first two years of schooling in French, and pedagogical activities in French for MB students in mainstream classes (Armand & de Koninck, 2017). The MELS (2001) preschool and primary program delineates the foundation of welcome classes and outlines the competencies that need to be addressed for two groups of students at the primary level (i.e., for student who are six to eight and nine to twelve years old). For example, to facilitate their learning of the French language, primary welcome class students of all ages are expected to cooperate with their peers, ask for their peers’ and adults’ help, as well as use every opportunity to produce the target language (MELS, 2001, p. 116). This implies that interactions with other students as well as
with more proficient speakers in French are expected behaviours for these students, according to the MELS.

French is not only a language for MB individuals to use to communicate with others in Québec, but it may also be considered “a fundamental attribute of cultural identity and empowerment, both for the individual and the group” (UNESCO, 2003, p. 16). Mc Andrew (2009) notes that MB students’ mastery of the host language “represents both an essential vehicle of education and social mobility” (p. 1529), which underlines the necessity of Québec’s ministry of education to afford appropriate resources that mirror these students’ L2 needs. Although the process of learning the target language and integration is identified as an ongoing process in government education documents (Allen, 2006; MEQ, 1998; MELS, 2001), students are pushed to leave welcome classes rapidly to integrate mainstream classrooms, perhaps mostly transferring the responsibility of becoming proficient French speakers to MB students alone. As such, they follow the same academic track as mainstream students once graduated from welcome classes, and they may “receive little or no extra linguistic or academic support except what they seek from individual teachers” (Allen, 2007, p. 168).

This is the experience of many students in metropolitan cities of Québec, as 29.6% of immigrants chose to settle in the Greater Montréal in 2011 (MICC, 2015). On the one hand, this shows immense linguistic diversity in Greater Montréal’s French schools and MB students’ rich language repertoire. On the other hand, this social phenomenon may uncover the challenge of some of these students needing additional linguistic support in mainstream classes because of the limited time spent benefitting from L2 programs. In fact, Cummins (1979) argues that while most immigrant children require only two years to become conversationally fluent in the school language, they still require at least five years to be able to perform the cognitively complex tasks necessary to academically achieve at grade level.
2. BACKGROUND ISSUES

2.1. Problems in Practice

2.1.1. Effective models for all MB learners in Québec?

In 1996, following an assessment of the diverse programs offered in the province, the PASAF (*Programme d’accueil et de soutien à l’apprentissage du français*) or the Program of Welcome and French Language Learning Support was created for which the Québec education ministry granted full autonomy to school boards in the organization of the linguistic programs for MB students attending their schools (Armand & De Koninck, 2017). Since then, MB students in Québec have been screened to better evaluate their need to receive support for French language learning.

According to Armand and De Koninck’s (2017) study for the MELS about the diversity of models of integration for MB students in the province, the total integration model with French language support was the most prevalent way to integrate MB students in all Québec regions receiving young newcomers (i.e., students learning in mainstream classes receiving out-of-class French support). Followed was the partial integration model found in half of Québec’s administrative regions; according to this model, students learn in both welcome and mainstream classes. Finally, the fourth most prevalent way of integrating MB students into French schools is the model of total integration without French language support present in five administrative regions, and the least popular model is that of the welcome class with aide à l’intégration (integration support) present in only three of the province’s regions (Armand & De Koninck, 2017).

MB students who attend schools in one of Greater Montréal’s biggest cities receive an average of 120 minutes of French language support per school week (Bahkshei, 2015). This time is offered as part of the total integration model with French language support (Armand & de Koninck, 2017, p. 77), but this support is often not guaranteed for subsequent years (Lorti, 2016). This lack of guarantee may be a concern for some students who need extended support to learn the target language. Moreover, as
Morris (2008) notes, students who constitute the majority of MB students in Québec are also non-native Francophone students, but born in Québec to families who have sometimes been established in the province for several generations. These are the students who are more likely to be directly placed in mainstream classes or provided with a limited amount of francization. The students of the present study were enrolled in mainstream classes in a school from this particular context; they did not participate in welcome classes and received limited French-L2 support.

2.1.2. Mainstream teachers.

Some teachers who are critical of the isolated welcome class model think that this learning context does not cater to some MB students’ French language needs, more specifically for students who come from North Africa where French is present (Armand & De Koninck, 2017). This model may also be perceived as “as a sas between the familiar (…) and the sometimes harsh reality of adapting to a new environment in larger and faster paced classrooms” (Mc Andrew, 2009, p. 1530), which is an unproductive learning context according to some teachers. Instead, they suggest that students who have some experience with the French language go through temporary welcome classes and that there be a diminution of the ratio of such students in mainstream classes (Armand & De Koninck, 2017, p. 80). However, Cummins (1999) argues that L2 learners who are transitioned into mainstream classes with teachers who “know very little about how to promote academic skills in a [L2] (…) are unlikely to receive the instructional support they need to catch up academically” (p. 4-5). Therefore, although teachers may be making valid recommendations to have better chances of retaining inclusivity as a fundamental teaching philosophy in their professional milieu, their lack of training as L2 educators may continue to make addressing MB students’ French language needs a challenge in mainstream classes.
MB students’ linguistic needs are not explored in Québec teacher training programs (Morris, 2008). As such, Québec mainstream teachers who work with this student population may understandably feel overwhelmed with the teaching of compulsory grade-level content since their students’ linguistic needs are increasingly complex – which makes the principle of achievement for all difficult to enforce. Cummins (2000) suggests that education faculties should review their teacher training programs so as to adequately prepare future teachers in the adaptation of academic content to make it accessible and comprehensible to L2 learners. He even suggests that school administrative practices should promote institutional advancement through a criterion based on teachers’ “expertise or success in working with [L2] students” (Cummins, 2000, p.252). Armand (2013) also suggests that the MELS’ professional competencies be an official reference for teachers, and that it include indicators that favour equity in an educational context to bridge the gap between teacher training and stage experience. For example, she puts forth the need for teachers to be able to answer questions such as: “How to be fair while evaluating MB students who are directly integrated into mainstream classes or who have gone through welcome classes?” (my translation, Armand, 2013, p. 83).

Furthermore, Armand (2013) proposes that concrete professional competencies be created to develop teachers’ expertise in dealing with diverse students. Some examples are: know of students’ families’ social, cultural and linguistic characteristics and about their migration history to avoid stereotypes, know and use all available resources to communicate with parents (e.g., translators), and be aware of the effects that students’ L1 may have on their mistakes in French (as well as positive transfers) in order to give feedback more effectively (p. 84). Moreover, studies have shown that effective teacher training pertaining to linguistic diversity has positive effects on teachers’ perceptions of language teaching and its complexities (e.g., sociolinguistic dimension, language status, etc.) (Armand, 2013; Mary & Young, 2011). Integrating these different measures into teacher training
objectives and educators’ teaching practices should be a priority since teachers are the preceptors of an evolving, diverse student population.

2.1.3. MB students’ proficiency in the L2.

The academic needs of MB children learning through and of the target language differ largely from their native-speaking peers (Cummins, 2000). They are required to not only acquire elaborate vocabulary and complex grammatical structures as well as develop their literacy skills while learning content through the target language, but they also need “to manipulate language in increasingly abstract situations” (Cummins, 2000, p.36). According to Cummins (1979; 1999) L2 development may be better understood through Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Language Proficiency (CALP). The former entails conversational skills used in everyday social contexts and the latter relates to language skills needed to succeed in school, hence more cognitively demanding (i.e, reading, listening, speaking, writing). While BICS may only take one or two years to develop, CALP may develop through a lifetime, as the language skills required to achieve academic tasks grow more complex and abstract with every grade level (Collier, 1989). Therefore, evaluating students’ CALP may best indicate their need for targeted L2 support, which educators can take into account when designing instructional tasks.

Although quantitative studies about MB students’ general academic performance suggest these students are not achieving below Francophone students, their results in French (or in subjects where the content has a cultural emphasis) are slightly lower than their French-speaking counterparts (Armand, 2005, p. 147). Accordingly, Armand (2005) puts forth the need for diversified and flexible models of support for MB students who are learning French in order to address their specific linguistic needs. A successful integration of these learners remains, however, a complex undertaking.
for the Québec education system (Armand, 2000, p. 470), and it seems like it remains difficult to effectively assess MB students’ specific linguistic needs once they are in mainstream classes.

### 2.1.4. Empirical studies on MB students’ French development.

To better understand MB students’ French language development, it may be useful to examine how they are already using the language. In Mc Andrew, Veltman, Lemire and Rossell’s (2001) study about MB students’ language use in twenty Montréal primary and secondary schools, the researchers sought to uncover the *force relative du français* (FRF) or relative strength of the French language (in relation to English) in these school contexts. This index was developed to measure non-Francophone students’ preference of French or English as a common language. For example, a FRF value of 100 means that no observed linguistic exchange involved English during the data collection period (Mc Andrew et al., 2001, p. 115). This index also takes into account variables such as the density of the non-Francophone student population in each school, and observations of students’ linguistic choice depicted as “instant portraits of the language spoken by the students” (p. 111) in the schoolyard, cafeteria and hallways. Mc Andrew et al. (2001) found that French occupies an important place in these schools, and even more so at the primary level. They also determined that for every 1% increase in non-Francophone school density, the FRF index showed an increased of 0.375%. What this means is that diversity in school composition does not necessarily equate a decrease in students’ French use, and linguistic diversity seems to be favourable to French being used as a lingua franca between MB students (p.121). Very few studies such as these have focused on MB students’ actual use of the French language, however. It is therefore imperative to look at the ways these learners are making use of their linguistic resources in French to be able to implement strategies to maximize their French language development.
Furthermore, Morris (2008) and his team wanted to better understand the development of Québec born, MB students’ French skills while contrasting them to native Francophone students’ linguistic development at the primary level. They found that there was a clear difference between MB students’ and Francophone students’ linguistic skills. MB students’ lagged behind on lexical, morphological, syntactical, and pragmatic measures of language development, both at their entry to and exit of primary school. The differences were not correlated with students’ gender or SES level, but they indicated the weight of MB students’ linguistic status in their French language development. Also, this study put forth the phonological deafness of first grade MB students that last until grade six, and the impact of this problem on their morphological written production and oral comprehension of these sounds (Morris, 2008, p. 127). While MB students may seem like they are using French as a lingua franca, they are not exhibiting signs of full mastery of the target language, and this may make them academically vulnerable in mainstream classroom contexts.

2.2. My Experience as a Teacher of MB Students

Before starting my M.A in Second Language Education, I was offered a contract for the replacement of a third grade homeroom teacher at a primary school in Côte-Des-Neiges, Montréal. Although my teaching specialty is English as a Second Language (ESL), I found my undergraduate degree to be helpful as all of the students in my group were newcomer children recently emigrated from various countries around the world, and they were therefore learning French as second, third or even fourth language. Many learners in my class had ‘graduated’ from welcome classes (classes d’accueil), where they were learning French intensively. I was struggling as a novice teacher to keep up with the curriculum having started my contract mid-year, and I often felt helpless because I did not feel I was adequately attending to their linguistic needs in the target language. It is important to note that once these learners have graduated from such intensive French classes, they are expected to be on
par academically with their native speaker counterparts. Therefore, the materials and resources I was using were not suited for L2 learners, and I could see how this affected their comprehension in all subjects in addition to French language arts.

However, as I got to know my students on a deeper level by observing how they interacted with each other in and outside of class, I noticed that their general outlook on learning was very different from that of other learners I had been in contact with. The devotion and appreciation that they demonstrated toward the education they received was overwhelming. Not only did they seem to respect my role as teacher more than any other student that I had had in the past, but they also seemed to be appreciative of each other’s differences and were willing to assist each other in various different contexts. More specifically, their natural inclination to linguistically assist each other with the French language surprised me, and it prompted my desire to explore this phenomenon in my master’s thesis. As such, linguistically speaking, their ability to recognize each other’s strengths and needs created a learning atmosphere favouring collaboration over competition which, I believe, is an asset in a context where such young learners are individually responsible for their French language learning.

2.3. Research Questions

Through my desire to understand primary, MB students’ experiences in mainstream classes who do not have L2 support, I decided to also examine teachers’ experiences with this student population as well as interpret the role of peer collaboration in students’ L2 learning in order to decipher its potential in this specific context. Therefore, the aims of this research are twofold and they focus on providing a detailed portrait of a limited number of students to have a deeper understanding of their L2 experiences in mainstream classrooms. I achieved this by examining their and their parents’ perspectives on these experiences, their in-class interactions with other MB students, as well
as educators’ teaching perspectives and beliefs. I therefore investigated the following research questions:

**Question One**

What are migrant-background, Québec primary-school students’ experiences with the French language?

- How do they use French at school? Outside of school?
- What roles does the French language play in their lives?
- What initiatives do these students take to improve their French language proficiency? Do they use other migrant-background peers as resources for their language learning?

**Question Two**

What are teachers’ experiences and beliefs in working with migrant-background students?

- What are teachers’ perceptions of migrant-background students?
- How do they perceive their teaching conditions in this context?
- What pedagogical practices do they use to facilitate these students’ academic success?
- Do teachers perceive peer collaboration as an effective learning context for migrant-background students?

The objectives of this research are to: (a) understand MB students’ experiences with the French language; (b) understand how students’ language practices may affect their French language learning experience in mainstream classes; (c) gain a deeper understanding of the focal students’ collaborative needs and interactional behaviour; (d) understand educators’ experiences with this student population; (e) have a general appreciation of learning activities that may enhance or reduce students’ provision of linguistic assistance; and (f) gain an understanding of MB students’ linguistic needs in mainstream classrooms.
3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1. Evolving L2 Learning Contexts

3.1.1. Implications of multilingualism in the classroom.

The teaching of second languages (L2s) is no longer a homogeneous educational endeavour. As student populations worldwide are increasingly diverse and multilingual (Leung, 2014), the learning of a L2 in its ‘habitual format’ is no longer restricted to isolated L2 courses. This means that teachers are increasingly faced with students who are learning ‘regular’ content through an additional language as opposed to students’ being L1 speakers of the language used as a medium to teach the subject matter. In a study carried out in South Africa on teachers’ perceptions of their own abilities to teach culturally and linguistically complex classrooms, Ball (2008) reported that teachers felt that they were inadequately prepared to teach these students (p. 46). The amount and quality of professional development that was available to them did not necessarily address the needs of students who require a differentiated instruction. Ball (2008) suggests that it is through a reform in teacher training programs, amongst other things, that teachers’ feelings of inadequacy may be replaced with a sense of “agency, advocacy and efficacy” (p. 46) that will aid them in addressing the diversity of their students’ needs to help them achieve their full potential. However, in addition to the lack of teacher training, limited resources and unsupportive administrative structures make it even harder for mainstream teachers to cater their instruction to this student population’s complex linguistic needs.

As a result of teachers’ powerlessness in dealing with students’ culturally and linguistically diverse needs, MB students may have to adapt to their new learning environments without abundant support, which makes them vulnerable to academic insecurity. In other words, the learning parameters surrounding these students’ academic success may be asymmetrical in comparison to students of the
majority language and culture. In Belgium, Belfi, Goos, Pinxten, Verhaeghe, Gielen, De Fraine, and Van Damme (2014) investigated primary students’ language growth, namely in the areas of reading fluency, spelling and reading comprehension in relation to their ethnic background and socioeconomic (SES) status, and to the ethnic composition of their school. The findings of their large-scale study involving 5000 students enrolled in 1700 primary schools indicated that students’ SES and ethnic background mainly affected their language skills in the domain of reading comprehension (for Turkish, Maghreb, East European, and ‘other’ ethnic background) which reflected a lag behind native pupils’ scores. However, it was the ethnic composition of their school that showed a significant impact on their achievement in the three language domains investigated. These findings may be explained through teachers’ lower expectations for these children, which may have negatively affected their ability to succeed academically (Belfi et al., 2014, p. 823). Belfi et al. (2014) concluded that individualized intervention programs should be implemented as an effective way to counter minority ethnic background students’ linguistic achievement gap, as opposed to policy-level changes aiming at desegregating schools which may not be an ethical and realistic enterprise to pursue in line with today’s inclusive educational philosophy.

Furthermore, in characterizing L2 learners’ proficiency levels in the target language, the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has long been driven by the monolingual bias and deficit approaches to language teaching, whereby terms such as native-like proficiency as an ultimate goal have been widely used to describe L2 speakers’ language proficiencies (Kachru, 1994; Firth & Wagner, 2007). Proponents of this purview have therefore characterized the linguistic competence of bi/multilingual speakers as transitional instead of viewing their proficiency as a phenomenon for which, “there is no end and there is no state” (Larsen-Freeman, 2005; as cited in May, 2014, p. 45). As a consequence, the monolingual norm establishes native speakers as having “linguistic ownership
by birth [that] is elevated to an inalienable right and advantage” (Ortega, 2014, p. 36). As a result of this worldview, multilingual speakers’ rich language repertoires (May, 2014) are neither exploited nor valued in the conventional academic context since multilingualism is perceived “as a less natural form of knowing, doing, and learning language than monolingualism” (Ortega, 2014, p. 35).

However, as Duff (2007) notes, “the more proficient one is in first language (L1) and literacy skills (…), the greater the likelihood of success in learning additional languages” (p. 154). This new L2 teaching paradigm was introduced in Cummins’ (1989) idea of additive bilingualism in which he argued that metalinguistic and metacognitive skills are transferable from one’s L1 to the L2.

Although some incentives and programs have been developed in Québec to reflect this paradigm shift as exemplified by the Programme d’enseignement des langues d’origine (PELO) (the Heritage Language Teaching Program in Québec), the reality is that there is still a debate today in relation to offering a more important role to heritage languages in public schools because of a “fear of cultural threat” (Mc Andrew, 2009, p. 1530). In addition to ideological concerns, there are also concrete reasons why the PELO program, established in 1977, has not been as successful as planned. Some of these reasons include teachers perceiving the inclusion of heritage language teaching time during regular school hours as time-consuming, and the unfeasibility of implementing such classes given the diverse range of students’ L1s, as well as the lack of “significant links with [welcome classes], whose students are not allowed to enroll” (Mc Andrew, 2009, p. 1538).

3.1.2. Identity and investment in L2 learning.

The realities of multilingual learners having to adapt to the L2 environment have been widely examined through a social lens, taking into account issues of identity negotiations and constructions, learners’ proficiency in the target language, and the way they interact in the dominant/host language. With regards to students’ identity navigations, Allen (2006; 2007) studied secondary MB students’
sense of agency and their perceived level of proficiency in a Montréal school’s welcome classes. Allen (2007) uses the term *agency-constraining*, which she defines as “limiting the actions of individuals to protect and promote beliefs and practices which those in power see as representing that society as a whole” (p. 166), to characterize these students’ relationship with the host language. She analyzed the ways in which school discourses marginalized these students, and her findings indicated that they perceived the French language as obstructing their academic progression because they were ‘held back’ from integrating mainstream classrooms until they were considered proficient enough in the language of instruction. The host language was therefore perceived as tool of exclusion since the participants could not take part in the wider school culture, and they felt isolated from their native French-speaking peers, hence creating feelings of resentment toward the French language at times (Allen, 2006; 2007).

Thus, school culture may position students’ academic identities and affect their socialization processes. In fact, Ukasoanya (2014) argues that it is the *cultural scripts* of schools that impose marginalized identities to newcomer students as “[s]chools are structured in ways that make conformity to host cultural scripts appear synonymous to successful social adaptation by newcomers” (p. 153). Moreover, Wortham (2005) discusses the relationship between socialization and language acquisition, whereby both are “mutually constitutive” (p. 96), and how this language learning conceptualization is transferable to an academic context where speech events in the classroom are important sites of identity constructions with regards to sentiments of ‘academic appropriateness.’

More specific to L2 learners’ reality, Peirce’s (1995) notion of *investment* is an accurate representation of individuals’ propensity to learn the target language of a host/dominant society (opposing conventional views of learner variables such as motivation), and it refers to how “they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers, but they are constantly organizing
and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world” (McKay & Wong, 1996, p. 579). To put it differently, power relations that take place in and outside of communicative events affect L2 learners’ socialization practices, which thereby also impact their social identity constructions and language learning processes.

In their two-year qualitative study of four Mandarin-speaking adolescents learning English in a U.S high school, McKay and Wong (1996) interviewed these learners and followed their development in the English language. The researchers indicated that, amongst other factors concerning the multiple discourses in which the participants were positioned, students’ investment in learning English was linked to their social identities. In other words, these Chinese students’ complex experiences in and outside of school along with their “historically specific needs, desires, and negotiations” (McKay & Wong, 1996, p. 603) affected their learning of the target language. Thus, these factors should be considered when evaluating newcomer students’ academic investment (in learning a host language). Cummins (2000) claims that it is through the understanding of culturally and linguistically diverse learners’ identity negotiations that we can better explain their academic achievement (p. 247). In the context of Québec, understanding primary MB students’ linguistic and identity negotiations in and outside of the school context may help better evaluate their need for differentiated French-L2 support in view of offering an equitable learning context to these students.

Furthermore, one may understand that the context in which students learn, in addition to their perceptions and understandings of their lived experiences, positions learning as a social activity where interactions are the locus of their language use and identity negotiations. Therefore, one can argue that it is the communication that takes place during interaction along with learners’ “identities (which entail more than simply whether one is a native speaker), histories and linguistic resources constructed in those histories” (Dunn & Lantolf, 1998; as cited in Firth & Wagner, 2007, p. 805) that
encapsulate the practice of language learning. Through this understanding of language learning and
development, it is thus important to closely examine language use in context to operationalize
variables that affect learners’ ability to demonstrate their communicative competence. This in turn
allows for a social perspective of language learning emphasizing an “emic stance towards
fundamental concepts” (Firth & Wagner, 2007, p. 804). Since the learning context of this study was
linguistically diverse and complex, I was therefore interested in “uncover[ing] learning as a
ubiquitous social activity, as an interactional phenomenon that transcends contexts while being
context dependent” (Firth & Wagner, 2007, p. 807).

3.1.3. Collaborative learning.

Students’ social networks are important factors to consider when examining MB students’
language learning experiences because they “make visible the peers, teachers, and adults who are the
mediators of learning” (Carhill-Poza, 2015, p. 679). From a L2 research point of view, this concept
helps to reveal “the linguistically diverse resources available to [students] in ways that affect their
language use and identity” (Carhill-Poza, 2017, p. 679). Since the school and home contexts may be
the main sites of primary students’ socialization, it is worthy to examine the roles that peers and
family members’ linguistic assistance play in these students’ French language learning experiences at
large, which in turn may also affect their learning of the target language in an academic context.

As I am interested in looking at the ways in which students learn a L2 in context and
authentically in mainstream classes, it is essential to underline the ways these terms may be
understood. Authenticity in the field of Second Language Education (SLE) is often used to describe
L2 learning tasks or activities that push learners to use the target language in ways that are similar to
how it is used in real-life situations. One may also argue that certain types and formats of language
learning activities are more conducive to authentic language use such as collaborative and problem-
solving activities that have a communicative orientation. Language use in context refers to the way it is used by learners, taking into account external and internal factors related to identity positioning, investment in L2 learning and learners’ affective states. Therefore, certain language learning activities may encourage authentic language use in an academic context, inasmuch as learning a L2 in a mainstream context may be perceive as more authentic than in a sheltered L2 classroom.

Proponents of task-based instruction argue that group work (GW) achieves the goal of affording authentic opportunities for language learners to use the target language, if properly designed (Davis, 1997). This student-centered approach to language learning provides learners with a new role: “they become partners in instruction rather than the recipients of it” (Davis, 1997, p. 267). Some of the benefits of GW are reported to increase the chances for learners to extend their speech, participate in more spontaneous conversations in the target language and reduce their anxiety. However, it is sometimes hard for teachers to “let go” of their control over students’ language production and accept that they may not be able to correct every mistake (Davis, 1997, p. 269). GW may be a natural way for learners to practice their L2 discourse skills as they use discussion in order to construct “cohesive and coherent sequences of utterances (…) not just (at best) a sentence grammar” (Long & Porter, 1985, p. 209). Moreover, GW also contributes to a positive classroom affective climate reducing the “audience effect,” whereby L2 speakers may feel the pressure to produce short and accurate sentences that are analyzed and judged by the teacher (Long & Porter, 1985).

As posited by the social interdependence theory (Johnson & Johnson, 2009), “interactants’ affective states and the psychological processes that they experience while engaging in a group task” (Sato, 2017, p. 28) may impact individual learning outcomes during collaborative tasks. It is therefore imperative to take these factors into account when pairing students. However, when peers interact with other peers on an equal footing, collaborative monitoring of peers’ L2 production seems like a
less stressful alternative. Accordingly, I am interested in examining students’ collaboration during dyadic tasks in mainstream classrooms because, as eloquently postulated by Sato and Ballinger (2016), “peer interaction activities can be an ecological and effective tool” that do not depend on teachers’ L2 training or expertise, and for which “there is no hierarchy” (p.8).

3.2. Peer Interaction

3.2.1. Theoretical frameworks.

To better understand the perspective that peer interaction (as a social activity) may be conducive to L2 development, it is important to underline the theoretical foundations that make such an assumption possible. Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory (SCT) of learning emphasizes the role of language use in context, and positions language as a tool to mediate knowledge. As such, knowledge is co-constructed with others, and it is other-mediated first (interpsychological plane) to then become self-regulated (intrapsychological plane) through language development and dialogue (Vygotsky, 1986; Swain, 1997). Moreover, as eloquently stated by Storch (2002), “[l]anguage also reflects cognitive development, where development is seen as the transition from social communicative speech to private speech” (p. 121). Vygotsky’s (1978) efforts at theorizing knowledge co-construction made possible the conceptualization of learners’ zone of proximal development (ZPD) – defined as:

(…) the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (…) The actual developmental level characterizes mental development retrospectively, while the zone of proximal development characterizes mental development prospectively. (p. 33)

Here, peer interactions amongst learners can be perceived as being located in the ZPD as students may have the potential to bring each other to higher developmental levels as a result of the
assistance of more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 33). However, the concept of expert/novice may not always be fixed as learners may have strengths in certain areas and not in others (Angelova, Gunawardena, & Volk, 2006), and this also implies that the teacher need not necessarily be the expert (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013). Thus, learners interacting within the ZPD may be able to provide each other with scaffolds to propel L2 development, by using strategies such as “questioning, proposing possible solutions, disagreeing, repeating, and managing activities and behaviors (social and cognitive)” (Swain, Brooks, & Tocalli-Beller, 2002, p. 173; DiCamilla & Anton, 1997; Donato, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 1998).

It is through interaction and scaffolded help that learners may reach “a state of intersubjectivity” (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000, p. 52) necessary for the co-construction of linguistic of knowledge. To put it differently, higher mental functions are first external “because [they] [were] social at some point before becoming [] internal, truly mental function[s]” (Vygotsky, 1981; as cited in Anton & DiCamilla, 1998, p. 316). Therefore, it is language that mediates the process of individuals’ attainment of these higher functions, “which are realized through complex interactions with others in one’s culture” (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998, p. 317).

Furthermore, in her comprehensible output hypothesis, Swain (1985) stated that learners needed to be “pushed” to produce the target language in order for them “to process the language more deeply” (Philp, Adams & Iwashita, 2014, p. 20). While producing the language, learners may “need to create linguistic form and meaning and in doing so, discover what they can and cannot do” (Swain, 1997, p. 117). The researcher’s work also focused on the concept of collaborative dialogue, perceived as a social communication tool between learners (Swain, 1998). Through a joint effort to solve linguistic difficulties, learners may co-construct knowledge of and about language, and the very language used during such exchanges “mediates this process – as a cognitive tool to process and
manage meaning making” (Swain, Brooks, & Tocalli-Beller, 2002, p. 172). In other words, through the analysis of language use and the observation of learners’ collaborative dialogue, one may observe that the language they produce is “both the means of learning and the product of it” (Swain, 1997, p. 127). Contrary to Swain’s earlier work, collaborative dialogue’s emphasis is on the interdependency between each interlocutor’s contribution toward knowledge creation and solving problems (Swain, 2010, p. 6).

In this study, although peer interactions were not examined in regards to students’ ability to provide specific forms of linguistic assistance, it is of importance to briefly explain the role that corrective feedback (CF) may play in their L2 development. CF plays a central role in students’ L2 development because it serves the purpose of “indicat[ing] that an utterance in a learner’s language is deviant and that a change or correction is needed to make it more target-like” (Mifka-Profozic, 2015, p. 156-157). CF in the form of prompts put forth negative exemplars of L2 forms (Mifka-Profovic, 2015), and recasts may be described as providing positive evidence of L2 structures (Lyster & Izquierdo, 2009). Learners’ modified output in response to feedback moves may therefore be contemplated as substantiated interlanguage restructuration − if self-generated and repaired as well as productively initiated by feedback techniques that elicit deeper connections in memory, hence perhaps creating more traceability.

Thus, in this study, taking a closer look at focal students’ language-related episodes (LREs), as a unit of analysis wherein learners treat language as an object which they manipulate to experiment, confirm hypotheses or adjust their own or others’ usage of it, is a useful framework to use to analyze peer learner dyadic interactions (Swain & Lapkin, 1995; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). Analyzing LREs may help decipher the different linguistic resources MB students use to aid their L2 development during dyadic interactions.
Furthermore, in addition to learners’ proficiency levels, their collaborative orientation may also positively influence the frequency of LREs in each interaction (Watanabe & Swain, 2007; Watanabe, 2008; Kim & McDonough, 2008). The concepts of equality and mutuality (Damon & Phelps, 1989; Storch, 2001; 2002) that are interpreted as each contributor’s “authority over the task” and “level of engagement with each other’s contribution” (Storch, 2002, p. 127), play a role in the collaborative inclination of each pair. More specifically, according to Storch (2002), equality refers to “an equal degree of control over the direction of a task” (p. 127), and mutuality to “the level of engagement with each other’s contribution” (p. 127).

Finally, another important factor when considering students’ L2 development is learners’ affective states. SLA theories have looked at how emotions may affect individuals’ propensity to learn a L2, but not much attention has been given to: how learning a L2 affects emotions (Swain, 2010, p. 3). In fact, Vygotsky (2000) established a relationship between intellect and emotions in the SCT wherein he put forth “the existence of a dynamic system of meaning in which the affective and intellectual unite” (p. 10). Therefore analyzing dyadic exchanges through an ‘emotional lens’, where emotions are considered as co-constructed in dialogue (Swain, 2010), may also yield an interesting interpretation of the focal students’ L2 development. In this study, I used cognitive and social theories pertaining to L2 development to offer different analyses of the same interactions in order to maximize our understanding of each dialogic exchange. I wanted to use these different lenses in order to interpret “what leads to and constitutes L2 learning” (Swain, 2010, p.6).

3.2.2. Implications and shortcomings of peer interaction.

Although some of the literature on peer interaction between learners focuses on qualitative studies, such findings may still yield important interpretations of L2 development because they reflect in depth portraits of learners’ collaborative and linguistic behaviours within the ZPD. It may be
difficult to pinpoint the areas of L2 development that are positively affected by learner-learner interaction, but these dialogic exchanges serve as a springboard to identify beneficial aspects that this language-learning context may afford. If one considers learners’ output as evidence of interlanguage development, learner-learner interaction may push learners to “reprocess output” and “may be used as a way of trying out new language forms and structures as learners stretch their interlanguage to meet communicative needs” (Swain, 1997, p. 118-119). Therefore, it is through the social activity of learning that “(…) the interactants, conjointly, do interactional work to overcome potential or real communicative hurdles (…) [and] [i]n doing so, [they] provide for the availability and utility of interactional and linguistic resources that allow for learning to occur” (Firth & Wagner, 2007, p. 808).

While learners interacting with other learners may not always be able to reach solutions, producing the target language may still serve a noticing and awareness function (Swain & Lapkin, 1995). Such an assumption is consistent with Storch’s (1999) finding concerning her participants’ “improved accuracy [that] may be due to the longer time students spent on the exercises when completing them in pairs” (p. 370). Moreover, Sato (2007) argues that learner-learner dyads may push students to “work harder to convey messages” (p. 196) since native speakers may be able to better understand their unaccomplished attempts to convey meaning, hence making L2 learners “more careful in terms of grammatical accuracy when they were interacting with their learner partner” (p. 196). However, the nature of scaffolding in peer interaction may be different. For example, in her study, Ohta’s (1995) reported that the role of the expert in pair work can be quite fluid, with both learners taking turns to act as the expert. Ohta (1995) also showed that both expert and novice learners could benefit from the interaction. This is consistent with van Lier’s (1996) claim that “students can learn from the act of teaching others” (Storch 2002, p. 122). Therefore, when properly structured and modeled, peer interactions may be viewed as yielding productive instances of L2 learning because
they have the potential to enhance students’ experiences with the L2 through collaboration, negotiation of meaning and focused attention to context-dependent linguistic structures.

One shortcoming that may arise in the context of learner-learner interactions is that interactants may co-construct linguistic knowledge based on “incorrect hypotheses and inappropriate generalizations” (Swain & Lapkin, 1995, p. 384). Therefore, feedback may be necessary to control such an inconvenience, and, as Swain et al. (2002) note, “students’ lack of confidence about knowing how to provide useful feedback” (p. 181) may contribute to instances of unproductive learner-learner dialogic exchanges. Furthermore, a high frequency of grammatical LREs amongst peer learners does not necessarily imply constructive grammar learning (Kim & McDonough, 2008), as “metatalk may have a positive effect only on the accuracy of a few individual grammatical structures” (Storch, 1999, p. 364). In addition, some learners perceive learner-learner dyadic exchanges to be helpful to a higher degree for listening comprehension over vocabulary and grammar learning (Kim & McDonough, 2008).

Although studies have demonstrated the potential of pairing learners of different proficiency levels together (Watanabe & Swain, 2007, Watanabe 2008, Kim & McDonough, 2008), asymmetrical dyads may not always be equally beneficial to both partners as the least proficient learner may, in some instances, have difficulty “internalizing all the information coming from the more proficient expert peer[]” (Watanabe & Swain, 2007, p. 138). Also, more proficient learners may spend more time explaining to their partners which may be advantageous to them (van Lier, 1996), but the opposite is not applicable as “less proficient novice participants ha[ve] fewer opportunities to explain language issues to their peers (…), and hence ma[kes] it difficult for them to remember these language problems” (Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Watanabe & Swain, 2007, p. 138). Another potential
risk of pairing learners together is that they may not always display collaborative behaviours, which may result in conflict (Watanabe & Swain, 2007; Swain et al., 2002; Sato & Ballinger, 2012).

In order to maximize learner-learner interactions and to benefit both partners’ L2 development, teachers may need clear guidance in order to plan, design and implement tasks that foster meaningful and optimal collaborative learning. In addition, it is important for teachers to think about the best practices to employ that may render certain linguistic forms salient during pair work. For example, if teachers are interested in prompting negotiation of linguistic form during learner-learner interactions, they may provide learners with instructions that model these kinds of negotiations (Swain et al., 2002), and may use tasks that push learners to use one specific language structure (Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Sato, 2007).

Tasks that involve problem solving may also foster more generative peer learning instances (Angelova et al. 2006), and such activities may even include rule-discovery tasks to collaboratively reach accurate L2 target forms (Lyster, 2004, p. 413). Therefore, teachers’ role is central in structuring and modeling effective strategies for learners to be able to benefit from peer interactions in terms of their L2 development. Moreover, Swain (2010) claims that teachers need to “listen to [] students’ dialogue, (…) to learn a lot about how they are processing the tasks [] give[n] to them” (p.7). It is by carefully listening to the way they are learning the target language during peer interactions that teachers may better understand what language areas students need to “develop further” (Swain, 2010, p. 7).

As such, instructors cannot assume that students will learn the L2 through incidental peer linguistic assistance. It is first important to reassure learners “that their participation in communication tasks with other learners is not linguistically harmful” (Pica, Lincoln-Porte, Paninos & Linnel, 1996, p. 80). In terms of learners’ patterns of collaboration and levels of proficiency during
paired tasks (Storch 2001; 2002), teachers may need to “engage [students] in discussions about the advantages of group work and model collaborative dialogue” (Kim & McDonough, 2008, p. 228), as well as carefully examine their students’ behaviours during dyadic exchanges to encourage a change of partner when necessary. Also, as Kim and McDonough (2008) note, less proficient learners may prefer working with more proficient peers when the latter assumes the role of expert (rather than dominating the interaction) during the dyadic exchange. Therefore, teachers may need to encourage higher proficiency learners to be guides and facilitators during peer interactions with less proficient students (Kim & McDonough, 2008).

Another useful method in promoting learners’ awareness of their own patterns of interactions includes stimulated recall used as an introspective, unobtrusive data collection method used in Watanabe and Swain (2007), Sato (2007) and Watanabe (2008) studies. Learners need opportunities to look back at their own behaviours during peer interactions to “become aware of the value of collaboration” (Watanabe, 2008, p.628) and understand how to alter their actions to maximize L2 learning. For younger learners, this verbalization method should be used along with other ways of modeling collaborative behaviours (e.g., student modeling) to positively influence their patterns of interactions during dyadic exchanges.

This chapter has described the theoretical frameworks used to analyze the focal students’ peer interactions and the impact they may have on their L2 development. The implications and shortcomings of peer interactions were also explained to present the potential and vulnerabilities that such a language-learning context may have on learners’ L2 development. As such, cognitive and social perspectives of L2 development were employed in the analysis of this study’s focal students’ collaborative task accomplishment to offer multiple perspectives of the same dialogic exchanges.
To summarize, because of the modern, evolving student population that causes learners to be more diverse than ever, one can no longer assume that students are learning through their L1 in the conventional academic setting. This phenomenon also implies a transformation in mainstream teachers’ conventional roles since they are now responsible of ensuring each learner’s knowledge of and through the host language. To do so, teachers need to consider learners’ complex identity negotiations and positionings in relation to the host language to allow them to reach their full academic potential. One way of adapting the teacher-centered model of education to encourage students’ sense of agency through the development of the L2 is to favour collaborative tasks in the classroom. This learning dynamic may allow learners to take ownership of the classroom’s social culture and be empowering in terms of their L2 development. As such, learners may be able to develop the L2 along with other learners. According to research on peer interaction for L2 development, a learner-majority classroom context may be beneficial to students since it allows them to produce extended speech and manipulate and experiment with the target language under anxiety-reduced circumstances. In the following chapter, I will describe the research methods that I used to carry the case study examining eight primary MB students’ French language experiences in mainstream classrooms.
4. METHODOLOGY

The current investigation can best be described as a case study since I “explore[d] and investigate[d] [a] contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships” (Zainal, 2007, p. 1-2). Thus, I employed qualitative methods to explore the experiences of MB students in mainstream classes who are not receiving L2 support in the form of francization or welcome classes, and the role of peer collaboration in their academic development. Creswell (2014) notes that a qualitative research design “is especially useful when (…) the subject has never been addressed with a certain sample or group of people” (Creswell, 2014, p. 20). The perspectives and beliefs of MB students, their teachers and parents about these issues have previously been overlooked. Therefore, the methods employed here – observations, interviews and in-class interaction recordings – were intended to offer a detailed portrait of eight students’ experiences and in-class interactions, four teachers’ perspectives, and two of these students’ parents’ beliefs about their child’s experiences as MB learners. I also used a descriptive approach when analyzing the data to be coherent with the qualitative nature of this study.

Moreover, my study may also be qualified as an exploratory case study because this research’s starting point came from my interest toward a phenomenon that I observed as a novice teacher, and which I wanted to explore (Zainal, 2007). I also chose this research method because exploratory case studies “may be seen as preludes to some other form of educational research” (Freebody, 2006, p. 82). Accordingly, I wanted to identify influential factors that contribute to MB students’ collaboration with their peers to perhaps plan an intervention procedure in the future to isolate and control such variables and measure their effect on these learners’ French language development. What is more, Freebody (2006) qualifies some case studies as aligning with affirmative post-modernism that “operate on the
premise that socio-cultural experience is complex but fundamentally relational, and amenable to
explication in terms of those relationships” (p. 61). My research is in line with this paradigm as I
described the data while taking into account the context of the study, and my analysis reflected the
nuances and relations of the different factors investigated.

Furthermore, my study used an emergent design, as I had to adjust my research questions and
design throughout the data collection phase (Creswell, 2014). Exploratory case studies usually require
formulating research questions after having collected data (Zainal, 2007), which is what I needed to
do to best reflect what came out of the data. I also needed to change the design of my study adapting
to the parameters set by my participants and following gatekeepers’ restrictions.

4.1. Context of the Study

4.1.1. Rationale for participants and school context.

4.1.1.1. Participants.

With regards to my choice participants, it is interesting and necessary to examine young L2
learners because they are simultaneously developing their social and linguistic knowledge (Sato,
2017), and Québec MB children are the most represented in early childhood and primary education
(MELS, 2014; Bahkshaei, 2015, p.13). Also, teachers’ perspectives were an interesting avenue to
explore as they are at the forefront of this evolving social phenomenon – that are mainstream classes
of tomorrow. Parents’ perspectives were also important to consider since they were able to provide
insightful input about their children’s French language experiences and collaborative behaviours
outside of class.

Before recruiting my participants, I submitted a proposal to the McGill Research Ethics Board
(REB) and was afforded a certificate of acceptability (See Appendix A: Certificate of Ethical
Acceptability). I recruited all of the participants from the same primary school to gather as much
information as possible from participants involved in the same context (to control for variables such as the demographic characteristics of the school’s student population and L2 programs offered at this school). The four teacher-participants agreed to do so as a result of the school principal sharing my research proposal via email. Eight focal students were then chosen on the basis of their consent form information (i.e., students who agreed to be observed, recorded in class and interviewed) and through their teacher’s recommendation. The two focal students’ parents who participated agreed to take part in the study by indicating this information on their child’s consent form. No other parents of focal students agreed to be interviewed.

4.1.1.2. School context.

Initially, I intended to conduct this study within the French school board on the island of Montréal due to a high enrollment of MB students in that context, but my application to conduct research was turned down. After numerous efforts contacting principals of primary schools in the Montréal vicinity, I was rewarded by getting access to a school in the Greater Montréal that enrolls a high number of MB students. A telephone encounter with the school’s principal allowed me to meet with Magalie², who was kind enough to put me in contact with three other teachers of the school. It is important to note that 64% of students enrolled in the second most diverse school board in Québec are first- and second-generation immigrants (Lortie, 2016), and that the number of MB children has been increasing in the last few years in this particular Greater Montréal city (Bakhshaei, 2015, p. 11). What this means is that this growing city is becoming a hub for migrant families to settle and educate their children, and this is why I chose to conduct my study at this school.

² All of the participants’ names in this study are pseudonyms.
4.1.2. General characteristics of the context and participants.

The four teachers who participated in this study (Danaé, Magalie, Nicole and Julie) had some experience teaching MB students and were working at the North Shore primary school (NSPS) at the time of the data collection (See Table 1 for Teacher-participant profiles). Danaé and Magalie became the focal teachers of the study as they welcomed me into their classrooms. Nicole was the most experienced teacher (i.e., 27 years of teaching experience), and she had a three-year double major in kindergarten/elementary and special education degree. Nicole and Danaé had some experience as welcome or francization teachers at the start of their careers due to a high demand for such teachers at the NSPS at that time. The school offered these programs in the past.

Out of the four teachers, Julie was the only participant who was not a mainstream primary teacher; she was a novice resource educator with five years of teaching experience. She worked with grade two and three students who had learning difficulties. I interviewed this participant because she co-taught the grade three lesson during which I gathered the student interaction data. Usually, NSPS resource teachers pull two to three students out of class at a time to provide them with individualized help, and may also arrange to co-teach lessons with homeroom teachers.

4.1.2.1. Focal teachers.

Danaé and Magalie (teaching the third and fifth grade respectively) were the focal teachers of this study as they helped me target focal students in their classes. They chose them since I was interested in examining Allophone learners’ experiences with the French language. Danaé and Magalie had a four-year bachelor’s degree in kindergarten and elementary education. Danaé had ten

---

3 I later discovered that these students did not fit this category, and that the label itself was problematic, hence my use of ‘migrant-background’ to better represent their French language experiences. Issues related to the linguistic category of Allophone are explained in the Discussion Chapter.
years of teaching experience at the NSPS, while Magalie completed five years of teaching at this school at the data collection time.

**Table 1. Teacher-participant profiles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th># Years Teaching</th>
<th># Years at this School</th>
<th>French-L2 Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Focal Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danaé</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magalie</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie (R.T)</td>
<td>2&amp;3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.1.2.2. Focal students.**

From the eight students who participated in my study, four (eight-nine years old) were enrolled in a grade three class, and the four remaining (ten-eleven years old) were studying in a grade five class (See Table 2 for Student-participant profiles). Lynn, Jo, Ben, and Lisa were born Canada; they were therefore second-generation immigrants. Jen was born in China, Rose in Morocco, Shef in Algeria and Lori in Lebanon, and they were first-generation immigrants.

**Table 2. Student-participant profiles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Services&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Language(s)</th>
<th>Country of Birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lynn</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Francization, N/A&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>French, English, Arabic</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jen</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N/A, resource teacher</td>
<td>Mandarin, French</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;, resource teacher</td>
<td>French, Arabic</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Resource teacher</td>
<td>French, English, Spanish</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

<sup>4</sup> “Services” indicates whether students have received francization or resource teacher support.

<sup>5</sup> “N/A” indicates that these students have formerly been enrolled in a different school board and information about the services they received was not transferred to the NSPS.

<sup>6</sup> “No” indicates that it was confirmed in NSPS documents that these students had not received francization or resource teacher support.
4.1.2.3. Parents.

My intention was to interview all participating students’ parents, but only two of them consented to answer my questions. Therefore the low number of parent involvement in this study does not make their input as significant as originally planned, but I decided to keep the data from these two interviews to corroborate their child’s interview data. I was able to interview Rose’s mother, who had immigrated to Québec five years earlier from Morocco with her husband and daughter. Rose’s mother was fluent in French and had pursued graduate studies in Morocco in French and Arabic. I was therefore able to interview her in French. The second parent who I interviewed was Jo’s mother; she was born in Chile and had been established in Québec for more than twenty years. Jo’s mother learned French upon her arrival to Montréal through intensive L2 courses funded by the Québec immigration ministry, and was therefore also proficient enough for me to conduct the interview in French. As for the other parents, I was not able to gather information about their children’s language use and the languages they spoke with them at home.

4.2. Data Collection

4.2.1. Research instruments.

To have a detailed portrait of the eight MB students’ experiences in the grade three and five mainstream classrooms, I have used qualitative research instruments that allowed me to get a general idea of the participants’ experiences at this school. I took extensive field notes of the two classes’
‘regular’ proceedings, conducted four teacher interviews and two student group-interviews, which lasted thirty to forty-five minutes each. I conducted group interviews with the students (by grade level) because this seemed like a more feasible alternative to do during school hours. As for the two parent interviews, they lasted between fifteen to twenty minutes each. I audio-recorded all of the interviews in this study face-to-face, with the exception of the parent interviews that I recorded over the phone. All of these interviews were semi-structured in order to allow participants to add information whenever they felt like they needed to justify certain answers. Moreover, because of the exploratory and qualitative nature of this study, I wanted to place the control in their hands and not guide the interviews too much, especially with the teachers who had interesting information pertaining to their experience teaching MB students.

Furthermore, for the in-class interactions, I audio-recorded the eight focal students as they completed a collaborative task in pair. Because of the consent form restrictions, I asked Danaé and Magalie to decide on the dyads for the four focal students of their class. In this way, I wished to have pairs that were as close as possible to those they would have chosen for regular in-class collaborative activities. Therefore, for the grade three interaction data, I was able to record approximately thirty minutes of collaborative work; for the grade five interaction data, the collaborative work lasted between fifteen to twenty-five minutes depending on the dyad.

4.2.2. Procedure.

After my first contact with Magalie via email wherein I briefly explained the purpose and implications of her participation in my study, we planned to meet at the school so that I could interview her, for her to formally consent to participate in my study (See Appendix B: Teacher Consent Form), and to give her consent forms to hand out to her students (See Appendix C: Student Consent Form). Shortly after, I set a date with her so that I could observe her classroom. After these
two meetings, I came back to the NSPS to interview Danaé, Nicole, Julie and the eight focal students, as well as to gather the in-class interaction data that I needed from the focal students (See Table 3 for Observation and recording data collection schedule).

Table 3. Observation and recording data collection schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Recording Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17/11/16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/12/16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/12/16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/01/17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/01/17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/03/17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/03/17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2.1. Observations.

For the in-class observations, I asked both focal teachers (Danaé and Magalie) to allow me to observe classes in which they used collaborative activities or group work. They did so at my request since I shared my interest in their students’ interactional behaviours. While observing, I did not use observation grids or schemes since I was interested in the general learning atmosphere of this context. Instead, I took extensive field notes where I included information about the classroom’s unfolding, students’ general collaborative behaviour and Danaé and Magalie’s teaching style. I therefore wrote information such as: the time and date of the observation, the subject being taught, the type of
instructional activity, the ways students interacted with each other, and the teachers’ ways of intervening during such activities.

4.2.2.2. Interviews.

For the interviews with the four teachers, I met at their convenience on the school premises. Before meeting, I communicated with them via email to let them know about the duration of the interview and their involvement in the study (See Appendix D: Teacher Interview Protocol). I used a slightly different set of questions for Julie, the resource teacher (See Appendix E: Resource Teacher Interview Protocol). Regarding the focal students’ interviews, on the days of the interaction data-gathering, Danaé and Magalie kept the focal students in their classrooms during lunch hour so I could have enough time to conduct the group interviews. Therefore, for Danaé’s class, I interviewed Lynn, Jen, Rose and Jo together; for Magalie’s class, I interviewed Ben, Lisa, Shef and Lori together. During these two group interviews, I asked one question at a time for which each student had the opportunity to provide answers (See Appendix F: Student Interview Protocol). Generally, I tried to let all participants talk as much as they wanted, although I needed to redirect their attention to the questions I was asking at times. Also, I asked follow-up questions to some students when I needed them to elaborate on their answers. As for the parent data, I conducted the two interviews over the phone to be as accommodating as possible (See Appendix G: Parent Interview Protocol).

4.2.2.3. In-class dyadic interaction.

For the grade three class, Danaé had planned a reading comprehension activity with Julie in which students had to read a story, Facob, and answer questions about the text (See Appendix H: Grade Three Reading Comprehension Task). Students were taught about different reading strategies pertaining to the plot of a story: Who? When? Where? Wanted…, But… So… Finally… (Qui? Quand? Où? Voulai(en)…, Mais…, Alors…, Finalement…) inspired by Brigitte Dugas’ (2006)
instructional resource: *Le récit en 3D*. These strategies were introduced to the class by Julie prior to the interaction data collection, as she regularly co-taught lessons with Danaé. Both teachers reviewed these strategies before students started the activity in pairs. The students were instructed to read the text individually before they could start answering the questions in pairs. In this classroom, students were seated in pairs, and these were the default partners that students were allowed to work with during collaborative activities. Because of consent form restrictions, Rose and Jen as well as Jo and Lynn were paired for this activity. They therefore needed to change usual partners and seating locations to allow me to record their interactions.

In the grade five class, Magalie introduced an information-gap activity to her class as a collaborative task for me to record. This information-gap activity consisted in each partner having a different drawing on which shapes were scattered and embedded into each other. Each student once had the opportunity to give instructions to their partner and draw what was being described. Students needed shape and preposition vocabulary knowledge to be able to communicate what they saw. This task also required them to be clear and precise in their instructions, to modify the way they described the drawing if needed, and request help whenever they were not able to understand their partner’s descriptions. Since this was the first time that Magalie introduced this type of task to her class, students had some difficulty understanding the goal of the activity (i.e., they showed their drawing to their partner too early into the task or were not careful when hiding the original drawing). Therefore, Magalie needed to frequently intervene during the collaborative work to clarify the purpose of the task. Ben and Lisa as well as Shef and Lori were paired for this task.

During the data collection in the grade five class, I was worried that since the focal students were sitting on the ground and quite apart from one another, I would not be able to properly decipher what they said in the recordings. I therefore arranged to come back on a different day to record the
same activity but using different drawings as a backup. Unfortunately, only Ben and Shef were present on that day because of a snowstorm. Since these two students had been paired with different partners in the previous recording, this additional recording allowed me to compare their interactional behaviours according to partner. It was only after transcribing the original peer interactions that I realized that the quality of the recordings was good enough for me to keep the original data for analysis.

4.4. Data Analysis

4.4.1. Interviews and interactions.

4.4.1.1. Interviews.

For the analysis of the interview data, I used Creswell’s (2014) idea of a qualitative bottom-up model of data analysis. What this implies is approaching the analysis inductively by looking at the raw data first to then be able to formulate categories emerging from the data itself instead of having pre-established categories or themes, hence “organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information” (Creswell, 2006, p. 186). Furthermore, I made sense of this data through a lens that uses the sociocultural theory of learning as its backbone while letting participants’ views inform my interpretations.

After completing the transcription for all interviews, scanning the materials that were relevant and typing up field notes, I (1) read over the transcripts several times; (2) took general notes about the information that surfaced most often; (3) coded the data according to general themes; (4) sub-coded the same data according to more specific themes; (5) constructed a narrative to interpret the meaning of these themes (Creswell, 2014, p. 197). The next step was to go back to my data and compare the narrative that I constructed to the raw data to make sure it was a fair representation of my participations’ perceptions and behaviours. The interviews were analyzed to answer Research
Question One and Two, which were concerned with students’ experiences with the French language in and outside of class and educators’ experiences teaching MB students respectively, as well as participants’ perceptions on peer collaboration as L2 learning context.

4.4.1.2. Dyadic interactions.

For the four pairs’ in-class interactions, I was interested in deciphering their general behaviours during dyadic activities to understand each pair and partner’s peer collaborative characteristics/idiosyncrasies. Moreover, I looked at these students’ general attitudes and affective states towards their partner and the task to decide on their level of peer collaboration. However, due to the qualitative and interpretive nature of this analysis, it is important to mention that drawing on such categories may sometimes be limiting in terms of peer collaborative behaviours.

In order to assess the conversational and task-based moves that each student exhibited, I was guided by the concepts of equality and mutuality (Damon & Phelps, 1989) and Storch’s (2001; 2002) qualitative descriptors used to recognize collaborative pairs. For example, collaborative dyads may exhibit cohesion in their interaction, displayed as “incorporat[ing] or repeat[ing] each other’s utterances and extend[ing] on them (…), or simply complet[ing] each other’s utterances” (p. 130). Also, when analyzing students’ peer collaboration, I used the concept of LREs to isolate instances of language negotiations (Swain & Lapkin, 1998). These LREs were also important sites of potential problem-solving instances and co-construction of linguistic knowledge, and they were analyzed to determine whether students used these opportunities productively. I particularly examined the data for instances in which students focused on language or offered each other linguistic assistance. The dyadic interactions were analyzed to answer Research Question One, more specifically about students’ in-class peer collaboration and their use of each other as resources for their language learning.
4.4.2. Data triangulation.

I used the constant-comparison method throughout the analysis of the data, which implies the comparison of all units of meaning created by refining categories so that “new relationship can be discovered” (Goertz & Lecompte, 1988; as cited in Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 134), to enhance the validity of the themes. I analyzed these categories within each individual case and across different cases (i.e., teachers’ interviews and students interactions) (Creswell, 2014, p. 200). This method allowed me to “explore findings that are anomalous to or disconfirming of original hypotheses and impressions” (Freebody, 2006, p. 83).

Moreover, to heighten the validity of the interview and interaction results, I compared what I found with in-class observation field notes that I gathered during the data collection phase of this study. These were essential in understanding Danaé and Magalie’s teaching style, the way they perceived and incorporated collaborative activities in the curriculum, and their way of attending to students’ oral mistakes. The parent interviews were also helpful in corroborating or adding more information to Rose and Jo’s input during the student group interviews. My detailed field notes were especially useful in understanding the focal students’ interactive and collaborative behaviours during regular classroom activities, and with different partners. This helped me have a better comprehension of their general collaborative orientation. Therefore, the multiple data sources analysis tools helped triangulate the results of this study (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, p. 579).

As a result of these research methods, the interview, interaction and observation data were analyzed cross-sectionally to present results that were reliable and authentic in terms of the context in which the participants learned. Therefore, the interviews with the teachers served as the main data source to elicit these participants’ perspectives, and the in-class interactions and group interviews were considered as the main sources of data to portray students’ perspectives and collaborative
behaviours. The observation field notes and parent interviews were thus considered as secondary sources of data adding to and/or corroborating the main findings of this study.

In this chapter, I have described the research methods used in this study. The classroom observations, in-class recordings of students’ peer interactions and interviews were meant to elicit participants’ behaviours and perspectives while learning and teaching in this context and to answer this study’s two research questions. In the following chapter, I will present a description of the findings that emerged from this study.
5. FINDINGS

In this chapter, I will present findings from the classroom observations and students’ dyadic interactions, as well as from the teacher, parent, and student interviews. I will first provide a short description of each of the focal classroom’s general learning environment to offer a better understanding of the overall context. These descriptions were based on classroom observations and teacher interviews. As for the rest of the chapter, it is divided into three main sections: MB students’ experiences with the French language, their in-class, dyadic collaboration, and educators’ experiences teaching this student population. In the first section, I will present results from the student and parent interviews. In the second section, I will present results from the in-class dyadic interactions and classroom observations, and the findings of the third section will reflect interviews with teachers and classroom observations. I have divided the results into these sections to better represent the research questions of this study:

**Question One**

What are migrant-background, Quebec primary-school students’ experiences with the French language?

- How do they use French at school? Outside of school?
- What role does the French language play in their lives?
- What initiatives do these students take to improve their French language proficiency? Do they use other migrant-background peers as resources for their language learning?

**Question Two**

What are teachers’ experiences and beliefs in working with migrant-background students?

- What are teachers’ perceptions of migrant-background students?
- How do they perceive their teaching conditions in this context?
- What pedagogical practices do they use to facilitate these students’ academic success?
- Do teachers perceive peer collaboration as an effective learning context for migrant-background students?
**Danaé’s Grade Three Class**

This class, with Danaé as the homeroom teacher, was a typical teacher-fronted classroom. The physical setting displayed three rows of ten paired desks facing the board; each student had an assigned desk. Students were allowed to speak when they were called upon, and they were expected to be silent and on-task the rest of the time. During an interview, Danaé explained that she preferred a conventional classroom configuration to have better classroom management control, and to attend to her students’ needs more easily. In this class, the posters and materials were organized in a logical and structured manner. Her students seemed to have been trained to mirror this approach to their own learning as they exhibited regimented in-class behaviours. They also seemed aware of the importance of being neat as Danaé rewarded and encouraged this behaviour extensively. With regards to her approach to language teaching, Danaé exhibited an explicit instruction style, where she clearly stated the “rules” for each French language item taught. Because of the teacher-centered design and approach of this classroom, students seemed to interact with the teacher to a higher extent in comparison to peers. I therefore observed a general lack of collaboration between students during dyadic tasks, and this was obvious because of this class' quiet learning environment.

**Magalie’s Grade Five Class**

Magalie displayed a different approach to instruction, classroom management, and collaborative work. In this class, the desks were physically arranged so that five to six students were able to sit together at large tables; they were also allowed to change seats several times during the day. There were therefore no pre-established desks or groups of students when it came to collaborative work. After observing this classroom, I noticed very few instances of teacher-led activities; all tasks that students did in class were completed with the help of their peers if they needed. Moreover, it was clear that Magalie heavily relied on peer collaboration and differentiation as
a classroom philosophy since she created a list of students who could help each other based on their individual strengths. All students could consult this list. The purpose of this list was for students to choose a peer who was identified as competent in a specific academic area by the teacher. Therefore, Magalie enabled students to work with peers who could provide them with appropriate, targeted help.

In addition, Magalie tried to organize workshops or *ateliers* every day to consolidate knowledge previously learned in any subject matter. For this activity, students went from table to table to accomplish a variety of tasks meant to be carried out with their peers. These workshops were the only collaborative activities where Magalie chose the students in each team. Every month she changed the teams to provide as much variety in peer collaboration as possible. She also tried to carry out two to three reading circles per academic year to give her students the opportunity to read a book of their choice from a selection that she provided. During the reading circle that I observed, I witnessed more structured interaction between the grade five students since they all had a different role that they needed to prepare for and that varied at each of their meetings.

In both of these classes, students and teachers spoke French at all times. I did witness some of Magalie’s students interact in English, but this happened only on one occasion. Danaé and Magalie’s oral French language seemed to be different when addressing their students in comparison to the way they spoke to me. I observed that they pronounced sounds and syllables clearly and slowly when speaking to their students. Furthermore, they often explained and gave synonyms of the vocabulary words they used, even when informally addressing their students. Danaé sometimes further made sure that students understood what she was saying by displaying pictures or video clips on the classroom’s Smartboard. While Danaé seemed to be more focused on the quality of the French her grade three students produced because she often corrected her students' language when they addressed her,
Magalie appeared to give her students more freedom to use French without consistently intervening to correct their oral language.

5.1. MB Students’ Experiences with the French Language

5.1.1. Students’ French language use.

In this section, I will introduce results regarding the eight focal students’ French language use in and outside of school, and in relation to their interlocutor. I will also present results pertaining to the role that the French language played in their lives. While asking students' about the different languages they spoke, I realized that some used their home language for different purposes and with different people, which is why I included this information in these findings. I will therefore portray each student’s findings separately by grade level to offer a description of their individual relationship to the French language and to the other languages they spoke.

5.1.1.1. Grade three.

Lynn

Lynn's parents were born in Lebanon, and out of the three children in the family, two were born in Canada. Lynn was born in Canada and was eight years old. Therefore, the family had been living in Canada for at least eight years at the time of the data collection. Lynn reported mostly using French with her parents and English with her younger brother, and she mentioned that she spoke a little Arabic with her parents at times. Her parents spoke mostly Arabic amongst each other, however. Even if Lynn primarily used French at home and in her daily life, she had received francization services in kindergarten in which she, along with other students of her class, were provided with out-of-class French-L2 support. Although Lynn did not explain why she received francization services in kindergarten, she mentioned no longer needing this kind of support because she was now getting good grades in French. It was not possible for me to learn more about the length of time Lynn had received
this type of support because her student record was transferred from a different school board. Julie explained that there was often a lack of or incomplete information in student records transferred from different school boards.

Lynn reported always speaking French with her peers at school, even during recess and in other outside-of-class contexts. Moreover, when I asked if she had friends outside of school who spoke other languages than French, she stated using French with friends from different language backgrounds:

Alexa: (…) Puis, en dehors de l’école, est-ce que tu as des amis qui parlent d’autres langues que le français? [And, outside of school, do you have friends who speak other languages?]
Lynn: Mais ils parlent toujours français…mais ils viennent[sic] de…d’autres pays. [But they always speak French…but they come[sic] from other countries.]
Alexa: Oui. Puis vous parlez français quand même ensemble? [Yes. And you still speak French with each other?]
Lynn: Oui. [Yes.]

Jen

Jen, a first-generation immigrant, was born in Beijing, China. Her family had been established in Canada for six years at the time of the data collection. Jen was the eldest of three children. Jen and her family members spoke Mandarin with each other, and she mentioned that her parents spoke English for work-related reasons. Jen spoke Mandarin with her parents because she claimed that her parents did not understand French enough to speak it. With regards to the languages she spoke with friends, she reported always using French with her friends in and outside of school.

Although Jen asserted never having received French-L2 support (i.e., welcome class or francization), it was not able to confirm this with her teacher because Jen’s student record had been transferred from another school board where this specific information was not included. However, she did receive the services of a resource teacher for one year during the second grade because of

---

7 When possible, I translated participants’ oral mistakes to retain the authenticity of their speech.
difficulties in French related to oral fluency and vocabulary acquisition. She stated having improved her reading comprehension skills in French, and no longer needing help from a resource teacher.

**Rose**

Rose and her younger sister were born in Morocco, and her family arrived to Canada with her family four years before the data collection time. Rose was therefore five years old when her family settled in this North Shore city. She did not receive francization services at the NSPS where she was enrolled since kindergarten, nor did she take part in welcome classes during her primary-school studies. She did receive the support of a resource teacher for French in grade one however, but like Jen, she stated that she no longer needed that help.

Rose’s parents spoke French with their children and Arabic with each other. In her interview, her mother specified that French was her L2 and that she had completed higher education in Morocco through French and Arabic. While Rose’s mother told me that both of her daughters only spoke French, Rose told me that she spoke French at school and a little bit of Arabic with some friends outside of school. Rose’s mother confirmed that her daughter was once able to speak Arabic but had “lost” it, and could now only understand it. Her mother also said that her daughters had difficulty pronouncing sounds in the Arabic language. The following excerpt from the interview with Rose’s mother (P1) shows the two different languages spoken in the home:

Alexa: (…) *Tout le monde parle en français même (…) quand vous êtes en famille?* [Everybody speaks French even (…) when you are between you?]
P1: *Même quand on est en famille. Avec les filles, on parle en français mais entre moi et mon mari, on se parle en arabe. Mais seulement Rose et Leyla, elles se parlent en français. Elles (…) comprennent l’arabe, mais elles peuvent plus le parler.* [Even between us. With the girls, we speak French, but my husband and I speak Arabic with each other. But only Rose and Leyla, they speak French to each other. They (…) understand Arabic, but they can no longer speak it.]
Jo

Jo was a second-generation immigrant. His parents were born in Chile and had been established in Canada for twenty-one years at the time of the data collection. It was difficult to get clear answers from Jo concerning his language use in and outside of school. Fortunately, I was able to interview his mother to clarify his answers. Originally, Jo stated that he spoke French, English and Spanish with his family. However, his mother asserted that Jo’s L1 was French and not Spanish, and that this was due to the nuclear family not having many Hispanophones in their social network (i.e., extended family and friends) or access to TV in Spanish at home. Jo mentioned that he only spoke French with friends in and outside of school. While this participant had never received francization support nor had he ever been enrolled in a welcome class at the data collection time, he had been followed by a resource teacher since kindergarten for fluency and comprehension difficulties in French. This excerpt shows Jo’s perception of his abilities and academic progression in French:

Alexa: *Puis en français, bien?* [And in French, good?]
Jo: *Euh... pas trop facile.* [Huh... not too easy.]
Alexa: *Non, tu trouves ça dure?* [No, you find it hard?]
Jo: *Avec les examens. Avant, j’étais presque toujours en échec, mais maintenant non.* [With exams. Before, I was almost always failing, but now no.]

5.1.1.2. Grade five.

Ben

Ben, a second-generation immigrant, was born in Canada. Both his parents were born in Iraq, but they had been established in Québec for over thirty years. When asked about the languages he spoke at school with friends, he stated that he spoke French during class-time, and English during recess and on the bus. Outside of the school context, he reported speaking French with a Francophone friend from school. Moreover, Ben asserted not speaking Arabic with his friends even though some of them could also speak it. At home, Ben claimed that he spoke mainly Arabic and English with his family members. He reported speaking English and French with his father, Arabic with his mother.
and grandmother, and English with his sisters and aunt. In the following excerpt, Ben explained how he spoke a different language with each family member and how it was confusing for him to choose the right language with different interlocutors at times:

Alexa: *Une langue différente avec tout le monde?* [A different language with everyone?]

Ben: *Oui mais comme parce que, ma mère, elle comprend pas le français et un peu l’anglais. Mon père, lui, comprend les trois. Alors (...) des fois c’est mélangeant (...) des fois, je parle anglais comme toute[sic] avec ma mère et elle comprend rien. Des fois, je parle (...) ang--français avec ma grand-mère qui connait même pas les autres langues.* [Yes but like because, my mother, she doesn’t understand French and a little English. My father understands the three. So (...) sometimes it is confusing (...) sometimes, I speak English like everything[sic] with my mother and she doesn’t understand anything. Sometimes, I speak French with my grandmother who doesn’t even understand the other languages.]

Ben received help from a resource teacher for French throughout his studies at the NSPS. He stated being satisfied with his grades in math but had difficulty in French with regards to speaking, writing and reading comprehension. He argued that this was because he did not understand the words “too much,” since he did not speak French at home. Even if Ben had received francization services from 2011 to 2014, he reported finding French difficult. However, he was no longer qualified to receive francization support. This excerpt shows his desire to have access to this service again:

Ben: *Oui, comme, elle m’a dit, ma prof de francisation, elle a dit si t’as besoin de l’aide, (...) elle va dire, comme, vient encore. Mais elle va-- m’a jamais dit ça.* [Yes, like, she told me, my francization teacher, she said if you need help, she will say, like, come again. But she will--never told me that.]

**Lisa**

Lisa was born in Canada, and her parents were born in Morocco; she was therefore a second-generation immigrant. Lisa stated being a NSPS student for the past four years at the time of the data collection. She reported alternating between French and English with her family. Outside of school, Lisa claimed speaking mostly French with her friends and Arabic with one friend only. While Lisa maintained that she only spoke French with her friends at school, she also mention that she spoke a little bit of Arabic at times:
Alexa: *Il n’y a pas d’amis avec qui tu parles arabe des fois? Est-ce que ça t’arrive?* [There aren’t any friends with whom you speak Arabic sometimes? Does it happen to you?]
Lisa: *Bien genre je crois-- juste on ami mais (...) je parle juste genre un petit mot puis... parce que je sais qu’on a pas le droit de parler une autre langue, ça fait que parfois je trouve pas des mots français, puis là je les dis en arabe puis les autres comprend[sic].* [Well like I think-- only one friend but (...) I only speak like one small word and... because I know that we are not allowed to speak another language, so sometimes I don’t find the French words, and then I say them in Arabic and others understands[sic].]

Lisa did not recall ever receiving francization services or being part of a welcome class. She mentioned having received the support of a resource teacher in grades two, three and four. She stated that French was difficult for her, especially with regards to reading. Like Ben, she expressed the desire to have French support again because she found French “difficult,” exemplified in the following excerpt:

Lisa: *Ouais, l’année passée, je crois que j’avais l’orthopédagogie ou la... soit en-- c’est presqu’en deux, trois et quatre que j’avais, je crois. Puis c’est ça...* [Yeah, last year, I think I had the resource teacher or the… either in-- It’s almost in two, three, four that I had it, I think. And that’s it...]
Alexa: *Plus cette année?* [Not this year anymore?] 
Lisa: *Oui, plus cette année.* [Yes, not this year anymore.]
Alexa: *Ok, plus besoin maintenant?* [Ok, no need anymore?]
Lisa: *Mais je crois maintenant [sic] ma mère va leur demander parce que j’ai de la difficulté.* [But I think my mother will now ask them because I have difficulty.] 
Alexa: *En-- en français?* [In-- in French?]
Lisa: *Ouais elle va écrire un mot à la madame puis elle va dire est-ce que elle peut essayer de me faire aller euh... à l’orthopédagogie.* [Yeah she will write a note to the lady and she will say if she can make me go huh... to the resource teacher.]

**Shef**

Shef was a first-generation immigrant born in Algeria, and his family had arrived to Canada six months prior to the data collection. Shef mostly spoke Kabyle with his family, but he also knew Arabic and French since these were the languages of instruction in Algeria. He described his French language experience as starting in daycare, where his parents placed him so that he could learn his third language. Shef mostly spoke French and a little bit of English with his sister, while he stated that he used Kabyle with his parents. Shef also reported predominantly speaking French (and a little bit of
English) with his friends in and outside of school. In this excerpt, Shef shared his hope of meeting a friend who spoke Kabyle to socialize with:

Shef: *Mais j’aimerais (...) avoir au moins un ami qui parle ma langue.* [But I would like (...) to have at least one friend who speaks my language.]
Alexa: *T’aimerais avoir un ami qui parle Kabyle?* [You would like to have a friend who speak Kabyle?]
Shef: *Oui.* [Yes.]
Alexa: *Parce que t'as pas encore trouvé?* [Because you still haven’t found?]
Shef: *Oui, j’ai pas trouvé.* [Yes, I haven’t found.]

Although Shef was not identified as in need of francization at the NSPS, he should have been placed in grade six because of his age; he was integrated into a grade five mainstream class instead.

The only service he received in terms of L2 support was through pedagogical games in French (*midi-jeux*) that were led by a resource teacher, which he attended with other students during lunch break.

*Lori*

Lori was born in Lebanon and came to Canada with her family approximately six months before the data collection began; she was therefore a first-generation immigrant. Although Lori told me that she had completed her fifth grade in Lebanon, she was placed in a grade five mainstream classroom at the NSPS instead of continuing on to the sixth grade like she should have. She justified being kept a grade behind because she needed to learn French. However, her teacher was not able to confirm this information with me. As for the languages she spoke, Lori stated speaking mostly Arabic and sometimes French with her parents at home. Outside of school, Lori reported mainly speaking French with friends with the exception of one friend with whom she spoke Arabic. Lori seemed to imply that she chose French as much as possible with all of her peers even if they also spoke Arabic, as shown in this excerpt:

Lori: *Moi, je parle français, mais s’il y a un ami que[sic]-- il sait pas trop [sic] français, je parle avec lui [sic]arabe. (...) [Me, I speak French, but if there is a friend that[sic]-- he doesn’t really know the[sic] French, I speak with him the[sic] Arabic.]
Alexa: *Alors tu as plutôt des amis qui parlent la même langue que toi, ou c’est plutôt des amis qui parlent pas l’arabe?* [So you do you have more friends who speak the same language as you, or are they more friends who don’t speak Arabic?]

Lori: (...) *il y a les deux.* [(…) there are both.]

Due to the limited French proficiency of this participant, I was not able to ask more refined questions about her experience with the French language. However, I understood that she was getting support from a resource teacher for French through pedagogical games (*midi-jeux*), like Shef.

### 5.1.2. Students’ French language development.

In this section, I will present results related to the different measures taken by students to develop their French language proficiency. These include the resources that they used to assist their learning of the target language, the peer characteristics they found helpful for the accomplishment of French collaborative tasks, and the way they assisted others with the French language more generally.

#### 5.1.2.1. French language resources.

Most of the interview questions pertaining to students’ French language development were framed from a collaborative point of view. For example, I asked students if they liked in-class group work and how they liked to be helped by others. The grade three focal participants did not share answers that reflected an understanding of collaboration, perhaps because of a lack of collaborative participatory activities in the classroom. In comparison, the grade five class was more geared towards group work, and these students’ answers were therefore more insightful and elaborate. The grade three answers were specific to the ways they could identify their language learning; more precisely, identifying tools and resources.

During the grade three group interview, when I asked about requesting help in French, Jo reported mostly asking his mother at home (which was also the case for Lynn) and his teacher in class. He also mentioned seldom requesting help from his Francophone partner who was sitting next
to him in class. Because of the fixed seating arrangement of this class, Jo usually worked with a male peer during in-class activities; he therefore did not usually work with Lynn who was paired with him for the dyadic task that was recorded for this study. Moreover, Danaé intervened during Jo’s answer to confirm that he was “good” at using resources (i.e., workbooks) to find solutions, and that Jo’s partner almost never asked for his help because he was “strong.” In the following excerpt, Jo explained how he interacted with his partner in class:

Alexa: *Quand tu lui demandes, il t’aide pas des fois?* [When you ask him, doesn’t he help you sometimes?]

Jo: *Parfois non parce que… En fait, il m’aide, mais parfois y’a des questions que je ne sais pas; à la place de demander, je regarde dans mon cahier.* [Sometimes no because… In fact, he does help me, but sometimes there are questions that I don’t know; instead of asking, I look in my notebook.]

Alexa: *Ah?*

Jo: *Pour trouver la réponse.* [To look for the answer.]

When I asked the grade three students about the people who helped them when they were looking for a word in French, Jen answered that many people assisted her, namely her partner in class and her father at home. Rose was able to identify her mother as the main person helping her in French, while she was not able to name a peer who did the same for her at school. In the following excerpt, Rose’s mother explained how she encouraged her daughters’ French language development:

P1: *(…) c’est sûr que je les aide, je corrige leur français si elles parlent pas correct, alors je les encourage à-- à corriger *(…) puis c’est sûr que la télé est en français, les ordis sont en français, donc on essaye au maximum possible de leur donner beaucoup de vocabulaire *(…) au moins elle comprennent à l’école. Déjà, elles ont fait un grand progrès dès la première année.* [For sure I help them, I correct their French when they don’t speak correctly, so I encourage them to-- to-- correct *(…) and for sure the TV is in French, the computers are in French, so we try our maximum to give them a lot of vocabulary *(…) at least they understand at school. They have already made a lot of progress since grade one.]*

In the grade five focal group, while Ben expressed that French activities were the only subject matter tasks that he wanted to accomplish through group work, he expressed his ambivalence toward using peers as French linguistic resources, as described in this excerpt:
Alexa: *Comment tu te sens quand tu te fais aider par des amis?* [How do you feel when friends help you?]

Ben: C’est comme-- je veux pas qu’ils m’aident… [It’s like-- I don’t want them to help me…]

Alexa: *Tu veux pas? T’aimes pas ça?* [You don’t want? You don’t like it?]

Ben: (...) comme ils vont penser que je suis, comme, mauvais et les affaires comme ça… Je veux pas qu’ils, comme-- parce que par exemple, des fois je me[sic] doute de comment écrire maison. (...) mais je veux pas qu’ils savoir[sic] que je suis vraiment pas bon. [(…)] like they will think that I am, like, not good and things like that… I don’t want them, like-- because for example, sometimes I doubt myself about how to write house. (…) but I don’t want them know[sic] that I am really not good.]

Finally, when I asked the students to clarify how they provided and received help when working with a peer, only Lynn and Jen out of the grade three students provided responses and stated that help was mutual. When asking the grade five students the same question, Lori described how having someone in her class who shared her L1 was helpful in filling in gaps for French words she did not know:

Alexa: *Et toi, à l’école?* [And you, at school?]

Lori: (...) moi (…) s’il [sic] a des mots que je sais pas en français… [(...) me (...) if there are words that I don’t know in French…]

Alexa: *Oui*… [Yes…]

Lori: (...) je dis à Sam… [(...) I tell Sam…]

Alexa: Ok.

Lori: *Oui, et elle comprend [sic]arabe aussi. Euh oui, je le[sic] dis le mot en arabe et elle sait (…), elle peut dire aux autres.* [Yes, and she understands the[sic] Arabic too. Huh yes, I tell it[sic] the word in Arabic and she knows (…), she can tell others.]

5.1.2.2. *Preferred peer and interlocutor characteristics.*

Because of the young age of the grade three focal group students, I was only able to get answers regarding how they liked to be helped specifically. Therefore, their responses reflected preferred characteristics in terms of the language spoken by their peers only. The grade five students gave more detailed answers and elaborated on different personality traits that they liked or disliked in peers with whom they could potentially work.

Since the grade five students were allowed to choose partners for collaborative activities, Ben chose to work with boys more often than girls because he thought the latter were scared of him.
Shef worked with his best friend most of the time. Ben also expressed that his friends would laugh at him whenever he needed help in French, which, as mentioned earlier, might relate to his uneasiness requesting help from his peers. Similarly, Shef reported negative reactions from his peers when he requested assistance with regards to the meaning or the spelling of French words.

All of the grade three students in addition to Shef and Lori (grade five) reported preferring to receive help in French from multilingual students. Ben was the only participant who stated that he preferred getting help from teachers instead of peers because of their proficiency in French, and he reported that a friend who also spoke Arabic like he did would not be as helpful to provide him with appropriate help in French. As for Lisa, she mentioned that teachers sometimes could not help her because of mutual incomprehension, and that asking a friend who spoke her L1 was better in these types of situations:

Lisa : *C’est que même si tu demandes à un prof, puis la prof comprend pas (...) qu’est-ce que tu veux qu’elle t’explique, elle t’explique puis là elle sait-- puis là elle se demande c’est quoi.* [Even if you ask a teacher, and the teacher does not understand what you want her to explain to you, she explains and then she knows-- and then she asks herself what it is.]
Alexa : *Oui...* [Yes…]
Lisa : (...) *je vais pas arriver à comprendre... [(…) I won’t understand…]*
Alexa : *Oui...* [Yes…]
Lisa : *Puis là euh... je vais dire: Ben ok, c’est plus[sic] mieux d’avoir un ami qui parle arabe qui m’explique...* [And then huh… I will say: Well ok, it’s more[sic] better to have a friend who speaks Arabic who explains to me…]

Rose and Jo also considered peers who shared their home languages (Arabic and Spanish respectively) especially helpful to learn these languages. In this excerpt, Rose shows her readiness to be assisted by a peer who speaks Arabic:

Rose: (...) *la personne (...) qui parle beaucoup comme moi, comme Iris, elle parle la même langue... [(…) the person (…) who speaks a lot like me, like Iris, she speaks the same language…]*
Alexa: *Oui...* [Yes…]
Rose: (...) *un peu français et un peu arabe. (...) quand je sais pas un mot puisque, elle, elle parle beaucoup arabe, je peux lui demander. [(…) a little French and a little Arabic. (…) when I don’t know a word, since her, she speaks a lot of Arabic, I can ask her.]*
With regards to the nature of the relationship that participants thought were more conducive to collaboration and the provision of linguistic assistance, Lisa, Shef, and Ben explicitly reported that respect and trust were fundamental values contributing to a positive learning outcome. Shef explained that he liked to work with students whom he trusted because he felt he could be vulnerable and not “keep secrets to himself” (il faut pas que je garde le secret juste pour moi). Lisa and Lori reported liking to work with peers who were not disruptive, good listeners who did not interrupt them when they spoke, and patient when helping them. Lisa also mentioned not liking to work with a partner who “took commands” (qui prend les commandes). In other words, she preferred working with someone who did not make all of the decisions. Finally, Ben was the only participant who mentioned not liking to work with a stronger or weaker partner than him, as exemplified in this quote:

Ben: (...) je veux comme un[sic] qui est égal à moi et je travaille pas seulement avec les amis. [(..)] I want like one[sic] who is equal to me and I don’t only work with friends.]

5.1.2.3. Students’ propensity to help others.

All grade three focal students admitted that they liked to help others in general and more specifically during in-class activities, but it was only Jen who provided a reason behind this. She said that it gave her satisfaction: “ça fait plaisir.” Jo was more specific about his provision of help and explained that he assisted his younger sister with her schoolwork at home. In Rose’s case, her mother stated that she had witnessed “solidarity” (entraide) in her daughter’s way of helping her younger sister and peers outside of school:

P1 : Des fois, oui, Leyla demande l’aide à Rose, puis Rose euh… Maintenant, elle est devenue quand même capable d’aller faire ses recherches toute seule, donc euh… Oui, elles s’entraident. [Sometimes, yes, Leyla asks for Rose’s help, and Rose huh… Now, she is capable of researching things herself, so huh… Yes, they help each other.]
Alexa : C’est bien, ça! Donc vous avez vraiment-- vous êtes vraiment témoin de... une certaine entraide. [That’s good! So you really have-- you really witness a… a certain form of solidarity.]
P1 : Oui. [Yes.]
Puis avec les autres enfants, est-ce que vous avez déjà remarqué que Rose faisait ça avec d'autres enfants? [And with other children, have you ever observed Rose doing this with other children?]
P1 : Oui. [Yes.]
Alexa : Oui? [Yes?]
P1 : Oui, surtout les nouveaux syriens qui s’en viennent. Y’a beaucoup de voisins qui sont syriens qui habitent avec nous dans le même bloc. [Yes, mostly newcomer Syrians who are coming. There are a lot of neighbours who are Syrians who live with us in the same building.]
Alexa : Oui. [Yes.]
P1 : Eux ils parlent pas en français d’abord, donc eux, ils parlent leur langage maternel c’est l’arabe. Euh… y’en a ceux[sic] qui comprennent l’anglais. [They don’t speak French first, so they speak their mother tongue that is Arabic. Huh… there are some who understand English.]
Alexa : Oui. [Yes.]
P1 : Euh… donc Rose comme elle commence à comprendre aussi l’anglais, donc oui, elle les aide quand même mieux… Les petits garçons là, les voisins qui comprennent pas, donc ils ont des devoirs à faire… C’est sûr que leurs parents le savent pas aussi, ils comprennent pas en français, donc heu… Elle, comme elle comprend, elle-- elle les aide, oui. [Huh… so Rose since she started understanding English too, so yes, she helps them even better… The little boys, the neighbours who don’t understand, so they have homework to do… It is certain that their parents don’t know it too… they don’t understand in French, so huh… Because she understands, she-- she helps them, yes.]

Among the grade five focal students, Lisa reported that she liked helping others in different types of contexts and was generally patient throughout the process. Lori explained that she did not have the opportunity to help students in French, but she did help female peers of her class in math. Ben also proudly asserted that he was once able to help a peer with the meaning of the word *amphibien* (amphibian), which seemed to surprise him because of his peer’s strong French proficiency.

Another interesting finding of this study relates to language brokering. Language brokering refers children having to linguistically assist their family members with the host language (Morales & Hanson, 2005). Through the interview with Jo’s mother, I learned that Jo helped his mother in French, especially with French pronunciation. His mother also reported that Jo’s father would “do his son’s homework with him” to learn French, as he was a beginner French learner. Moreover, Shef also reported helping his father in French for conjugation and spelling, as shown in the following excerpt:
5.1.3. In-class, dyadic collaboration.

In this section, I will address each pair’s collaborative behaviours during the classroom dyadic interactions. I will therefore provide excerpts from the interaction transcripts that are representative of students’ collaborative characteristics and include LREs that occurred during these interactions. The focal students’ collaborative patterns were important to investigate to understand how the participants assisted each other during in-class collaborative tasks; this analysis was in turn essential to decipher the potential of this language-learning context in MB students’ French language development.

5.1.3.1. Lynn and Jo (grade three).

During the completion of the reading comprehension task, Lynn and Jo exhibited some instances of collaboration. For example, the pair reminded each other of the reading strategies previously taught in class. At various points during the interaction, they reminded each other to underline important parts of the comprehension questions and to highlight answers in the text. Moreover, while answering questions, Jo monitored Lynn’s written responses to make sure she was not making spelling mistakes. This excerpt (See Appendix I: Transcription Conventions) depicts both partners’ contributions with regards to reminding each other of the strategies “who” and “where” (lines 8, 9 and 13) and Jo’s monitoring of his partner’s written response with regards to the plural form of the word friend (line 11):

1 Lynn: Facob habite-t-il? Avec qui...? Euh...[Facob live? With whom? Huh...]
2 Jo: Avec sa famille. [With his family.]
3 Lynn: Oui, avec sa famille. [Yes, with his family.]
4 Jo: Mais il faut être très précis. [But we have to be very precise.]
5 Lynn: Avec sa famille et %de nombreux amis. [With his family and %many friends.]
6 Jo: De nombreux amis. % Oui. /---/ Comme ça, on a /---/. Cette question-là, c’est plus dure.
7 [Many friends. % Yes. /---/ Like that, we have /---/. That question, it’s harder.]
8 Lynn: Attends, c’est-- Non y’a deux réponses. C’est aussi qui. Avec qui. [Wait, it’s-- No
9 there are two answers. It is also who. With whom.]
10 Jo: Maintenant, on va écrire la réponse, hein? N’oublie pas un « s » avec « amis », hein?
11 [Now, we will write the answer, huh? Don’t forget an “s” with “friends”, huh?]
12 Lynn: Oui... Voilà. [Yes... There.]
13 Jo: Maintenant, on va trouver le quand. [Now, we will find the when.]
14 Lynn: Ok. Quand Facob est-il né? [Ok. When was Facob born?]

However, overall, the pair had many disagreements when resolving problems, and this was
evident in both students’ task-based moves. For instance, when Jo seemed to experience difficulty
with a higher reasoning question requiring inference, he explicitly requested Lynn’s help to find an
answer related to the strategy voulaï(en)t (wanted) (which focuses on the conflict of the story), but
Lynn did not exhibit a positive reaction to his request. The following excerpt (lines 3–4) shows Lynn’s
irritation towards Jo:

1 Jo: J’ai tout lu, mais j’ai rien compris. Alors tu sais c’est laquelle? [I read everything, but I
2 didn’t understand anything. So you know which one it is?]
3 Lynn: Il faut que tu trouves toi aussi des réponses, c’est pas juste moi. [You also have to find
4 answers, it’s not only me.] (annoyed)
5 Jo: Oui! Je sais, mais c’est pas facile. Hum... alors quel pourrait être... [Yes! I know, but it
6 isn’t easy. Huh... so what could be...]

Another instance causing both partners to be frustrated was related to their different approach
to a question for which they had to find the triggering event leading to the main character’s problem.
In this instance, Lynn did not agree with Jo’s contribution concerning the specific words that they
should find in the text that would allow them to answer this question. Jo argued that they should have
looked for the words un jour (one day), but Lynn did not accept his contribution, until he showed her
“proof” of this strategy in his French workbook. Jo even shared their disagreement to Danaé and told
her: J’avais dit que l’élément déclencheur c’était ‘un jour’ et elle me croyait pas. [I said that the
triggering event was ‘one day’ and she didn’t believe me.]
Furthermore, the following excerpt exemplifies the pair’s overall pattern of interaction through a missed opportunity for productive peer scaffolding during a LRE. In the following excerpt, Lynn addressed a linguistic problem in her partner’s oral language when she noticed her partner misreading a word. Jo read the word *atteindre* (reach) as *entendre* (hear) (line 1), and Lynn explicitly corrected this mistake (lines 2-4), but Jo did not seem to realize that she was correcting him:

1   Jo: *Quel but Facob veut-il entendre?* [What goal does Facob want to hear?]
2   Lynn: *Non, c’est-- attends. C’est quel but-- c’est quel but Facob veut-il atteindre. C’est pas 3 entendre. C’est atteindre. (...)* [No, it’s-- wait. It’s what goal does Facob want to reach. It’s not hear. It’s reach. (…)]
5   Jo: *Euh...*[Huh…]

5.1.3.2. Rose and Jen (grade three).

The conversational and task-based moves that this pair exhibited generally demonstrated a collaborative orientation. In terms of managing the task, both partners were involved in deciding the direction of the reading comprehension answers, thus exhibiting high equality. Like Lynn and Jo, they also frequently reminded each other of the reading strategies they were supposed to use. In the following excerpt, Jen was particularly effective at reminding Rose of these strategies (lines 9 and 14); Rose waited for her partner to finish writing her answer before moving on (line 3), and she showed Jen that her opinion was valuable for the accomplishment of the task (lines 10 and 12):

1   Rose: *Et de nombreux... amis.* [And many… friends.]
2   Jen: *De nombreux... amis.* [Many… friends.]
3   Rose: ... *amis. C’est bon, Jen?* [...] friends. Are you good, Jen?]
4   Jen: *Oui, attends /---/.* [Yes, wait /---/.]
5   Rose: *Euh... heu... Quand Facob est-il né? Euh... quelque mois déjà.* [Huh… huh… When was Facob born? Huh… a few months already.]
6   Jen: *Né...* [Born…]
7   Rose: *Il y avait quelques mois déjà.* [It had been a few months already.]
9   Jen: *Surligne. /---/* [Highlight. /---/*]
10  Rose: *Quel mot t’a aidé à trouver?* [What word helped you find?]
11  Jen: *Né! Euh... attends.* [Born! Huh… wait.]
12  Rose: *Quel pictogramme?* [What pictogram?]
13  Rose & Jen: *Quand.* [When.]
14  Rose: *Surligner le ‘quand’ ici. Ici.* [Highlight the ‘where’ here. Here.]
Rose and Jen also were also able to reach a consensus when they initially provided different answers. Both partners were open to their peer’s contributions whenever one of them needed the other to rectify the form or content of the answers they had previously agreed upon, hence showing mutuality in their way of interacting with each other. In the following excerpt, Rose and Jen were writing and verbalizing the answer to a question as well as completing and repeating each other’s utterances, and at line 5, Rose corrected Jen’s spelling mistake which was then assimilated by Jen (line 6):

1 Rose: ... *ses premières... ses premières leçons.* [... his first... his first lessons.]
2 Jen: *De vol.* [Flying.]
3 Rose: *Leçons...* [Lessons…]
4 Jen: /---/
5 Rose: *Euh... c cédille, leçons...* [Huh… cedilla c, lessons…]
6: Jen: *Oui, c--* [Yes, c--]
7 Rose: *Leçons de vol... (…)* [Flying lessons… (…)]
8 Jen: *De vol...* [Flying…]

5.1.3.3. Lisa and Ben (grade five).

During this pair’s interaction, each partner experienced different types of difficulties related to effectively describing what they saw and understanding their partner’s rendition of the drawing. On the one hand, Ben attempted to solve many communication breakdowns using different strategies ranging from clarification requests to explicitly meta-analyzing his way of giving instructions to help Lisa carry out this part of the task when it was her turn. On the other hand, Lisa was not as collaborative while accomplishing this task both giving and listening to descriptions of the drawings, which made Ben’s attempts to propose solutions often unfruitful. This may have been due to her lack of shape vocabulary and her inability to persevere whenever she or her partner could not reach a solution rapidly. In the following excerpt, Ben tried to scaffold his partner’s knowledge about hexagons (lines 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6), but the only contribution that Lisa made was related to answering her partner’s direct question (line 7):
1 Ben: *Il a six côtés. Ok, mais tu sais comment dessiner un pentagone, un heptagon[sic]?*
2 *Mais tu sais au moins comment[sic] il ressemble...* [It has six sides. Ok, but you know how
3 to draw a pentagon, a heptagon[sic]? But you know at least what it looks like…]
4 Lisa: *Hein? [Huh?]*
5 Ben: *Mais au moins, sais-tu comment[sic] il ressemble?* [But at least, do you know what it
6 looks like?]
7 Lisa: *Non! [No!]*

Lisa’s tone showed feelings of frustration and impatience at various points during the
interaction. She often diverged from the task and addressed Magalie with comments such as:
“*J’tel’ai dit c’est compliqué! J’comprends pas son affaire madame.*” [I told you it was complicated! I
don’t understand what he is doing, Miss.] Conversely, Ben was able to paraphrase his initial
descriptions to help his partner understand. He explained the task to her when she did not understand,
and even suggested that she describe shapes using “simpler” language when she had difficulty finding
specific words.

At one point during the interaction, however, both Ben and Lisa were able to solve a semantic
hurdle. On line 3, Lisa asked for the meaning of *quadrille* (squared pattern). Ben used the word along
with *cahier* (notebook) (lines 4–5) to activate his partner’s background knowledge and draw on a
common reference to express what he saw:

1 Ben: *Et dans ce losange, fais-- fais les quadrillés.* [And in the rhombus, do-- do squared
2 patterns.]
3 Lisa: *Quadrillé, genre carré?* [Squared pattern, like squares?]
4 Ben: *Ouais. C’est comme ton cahier /---/ dedans. Le /---/ dedans les cahiers.* [Yes. It’s like
5 your notebook /---/ Inside. The /---/ inside the notebooks.]
6 Lisa: *Ah, ok! [Ah, ok!]*

### 5.1.3.4. Lori and Shef (grade five).

During this pair’s interaction, both partners had difficulty understanding the goal of the
task and how to carry it out. For this task, students were not supposed to show each other their
drawings. However, Lori and Shef often resorted to showing the drawing to their partner instead of
engaging in the other steps of the task. In the following excerpt, although the pair tried to follow the
second step of the task, they were not able to resolve a communication breakdown that occurred in relation to the preposition *au-dessus* (on top). This excerpt demonstrates both their inability to reach consensus (lines 1 to 6), and Shef’s request to see Lori’s drawing (line 7):

1 Lori : *Euh… Y’a... hm... le cercle... le petit cube, c’est pas dedans. C’est au-dessus.* [Huh… There’s… hm… the circle… the small cube, it’s not inside. It’s on top.]
2 Shef : *Je l’ai mis au-dessus.* [I put it on top.]
3 Lori : *C’est au-dessus. C’est pas dedans.* [It’s on top. It’s not inside.]
4 Shef : *Je l’ai mis au-dessus.* [I put it on top.]
5 Lori : *Non. Tu vas le mettre au-dessus.* [No. You will put it on top.]
6 Shef : *Tourne, tourne.* [Turn, turn.]

During the interaction, Shef did not attempt to guess or provide alternative words when Lori was describing the original drawing and when she seemed to be searching for vocabulary words related to shapes. In the following excerpt, on line 11, one can see that Lori was able to detect an inaccuracy in her partner’s drawing after they had finally successfully integrated the task’s instructions. However, Shef seemed to be focused on understanding Lori’s first set of directions about the position of the cube with regards to the circle and ignored (line 4) Lori’s inability to name what she sees; he then disregarded (line 9) her second display of lack of shape vocabulary (line 7-8) to move on in the task:

1 Lori : *Et... il y a, dans le cube, dans le grand cube, il y a /---/, il[sic] ressemble à un losange,*
2 mais c’est pas un losange… [And… there is, in the cube, in the big cube, there is /---/, he[sic] looks like a rhombus, but it’s not a rhombus…]
3 Shef : *Le cube est en dessous du cercle, ou...?* [The cube is below the circle, or…?]
4 Lori : *Non. Le grand cube...* [No. The big cube…]
5 Shef : *Ok, c’est bon...* [Ok, that’s good…]
6 Lori : *Il y a dedans, comme un losange, mais c’est pas un losange.* [There is inside, like a square, but it’s not a rhombus.]
7 Shef : *Hum, hum…*
8 Lori : *Ok, c’est ça... Euh... L’affaire, ça, c’est pas un cube. Ça c’est une /---/ un carré,*
9 mais c’est un cube. [Ok, that’s it. Huh… The thing, that, it’s not a cube. That is a /---/ a square.]
10 Shef : *Ok!*

5.1.3.5. Ben and Shef (grade five).

The interaction between Ben and Shef was taken from the alternative recording that I had collected in case the grade five data was unintelligible. Ben and Shef were not paired with their original partners, and this was therefore their second time accomplishing an information-gap task. Both students seemed to have better understood the task’s goal as they took more time explaining the drawings and asked for clarifications for each drawing description. Nevertheless, Shef still resorted to looking at Ben’s drawing early into the task to rectify or add on to his original instructions, even when Ben was encouraging him to persist describing what he saw. Moreover, like in his interaction with Lori, Shef used gestures to explain his drawing when his partner could not understand his description.

This pair presented an increased number of language negotiations compared to the other grade five focal pairs, as they requested and refined their instructions and attempted to find common sources of knowledge to solve linguistic impasses. In the following excerpt, Shef, who was drawing the picture based on Ben’s descriptions, provided alternative words based on Ben’s description in order to be able to understand what to draw. Shef used the firefighter insignia (line 3-4) as a reference for Ben to confirm his description of a ‘plus sign’ (line 1-2), and then modified it by providing another alternative reference (hospital insignia) (line 6) in reaction to Ben’s disagreement. They were therefore able to clarify the confusion:

1 Ben: \textit{Dessine un... comment dire... un + (plus) mais-- Ok, ouais.} [Draw a... how to say it... a + (plus sign) but-- Ok, yeah.]
2 (...)  
3 Shef: \textit{C’est comme heu... C’est comme le signe des pompiers?} [It’s like huh... It’s like the firefighter insignia?]
4 Ben: \textit{Non.} [No.]
5 Shef: \textit{C’est comme le signe le l’hôpital?} [It’s like the hospital insignia?]
6 Ben: \textit{Oui, oui, oui.} [Yes, yes, yes.]
Another instance of negotiation took place when Shef could not find the specific word for ‘cylinder’, and therefore used ‘electrical poles’ as an example of an object having the same shape. Although Ben did not understand this reference at first, Shef then described the function and appearance of these poles, which allowed both partners to resolve the linguistic problem. Furthermore, both students admitted when their instructions were inaccurate or insufficient during the interaction. This is a sign that they were considering their partner’s perspectives and were concerned about their peer’s ability to understand their explanations, thus showing signs of mutuality.

This section described each the focal pairs’ behaviours while accomplishing in-class dyadic tasks. While some excerpts were provided to clarify and exemplify the different task-based and conversational moves used by students, they were also chosen because they were representative of students’ general behaviors during the accomplishment of the collaborative activities. As previously stated, these collaborative patterns were important to address to better conceptualize the potential and vulnerabilities that this language-learning context may have for MB students’ French language development, as well as to reveal learners’ tendency to use peers as linguistic resources. In the following section, I will address educators’ beliefs with regards to their experience teaching MB students to provide a holistic portrait of these students’ learning experiences.

5.2. Teachers’ Experiences

In this section, I will present the four participating teachers’ experiences in relation to their perceptions and beliefs while teaching MB students. I will therefore present the perspectives of the two focal teachers, Danaé and Magalie, as well as Nicole (the grade two teacher) and Julie (the resource teacher). I will first address their beliefs about the factors affecting MB students’ academic success in the French education system. I will then introduce teachers’ experiences and perceptions on their teaching conditions in this context. Lastly, I will present the pedagogical practices that they have
put in place to facilitate these students’ academic success, and address their perceptions on peer collaboration amongst MB students.

5.2.1. Teachers’ beliefs about MB students.

5.2.1.1. Learning outcomes.

Teachers believed that, although individual differences played a role in MB students’ academic achievement, the educational standards of a mainstream curriculum prohibited some students from reaching their full potential. For example, Magalie, Nicole and Julie believed that it was cognitively demanding for students to process a L2 while learning content. In the following excerpt, Nathalie related to her students’ attention-driven efforts while learning the French language through academic tasks in class:

Nicole: (…) Puis à moment donné, il se rendent même pas au bout de leur lecture des fois aussi… c’est trop décourageant… [And at a certain point, they don’t even finish their reading sometimes too… it’s too discouraging.]
Alexa: Décourageant, oui c’est ça. [Discouraging, yes that’s it.]
Nicole: Alors c’est ça qui est le plus décourageant. C’est ça. Donc là-- on trouve que nos élèves manquent d’attention mais-- moi je me ramène toujours à quand je m’en vais dans un pays où la langue n’est pas le français, et que je me prends des visites guidées en anglais, j’ai une capacité de concentration beaucoup moindre… [So that’s what is the most discouraging. That’s it. So then-- we find that our students lack attention but-- I always bring myself back to when I go to a country where the language is not French, and I go on tours in English, my capacity to concentrate is much lower…]

Teachers reported students experiencing difficulties related to reading, reading comprehension, vocabulary and math word problems. However, Danaé considered students’ ability to reason using mathematical concepts and processes to be generally similar to that of Francophone students because of the universality of mathematical symbols. Magalie also reported persistent problems in MB students’ syntax, spelling, and fluency (difficulty with certain sounds), and she said that it was hard for students to accomplish tasks when they could not properly understand the instructions. Nicole believed that some of her second graders would fail third grade because of their low French
proficiency. In addition, she asserted that it was hard for students to know which vocabulary items were “real words” in French since there were so many words they already did not know, which made their reading of texts arduous in terms of comprehension.

Nicole also expressed that her students would sometimes exhibit frustration when they could not make themselves understood. In the following excerpt, Nicole described situations in which she was not able to help a student because of a language barrier, and that it was time-consuming for her to resolve the communication breakdown:

T: Ça fait que des fois je sais qu’il y a des enfants qui-- qui-- qui tombent dans une euh... une espèce de colère qui serait pas là si ces enfants-là pouvaient parler plus français et s’exprimer mieux. [So sometimes there are children who-- who-- who get angry that wouldn’t happen if these children could speak more French and express themselves better.]
R: Oui. Wow, ça c’est vraiment intéressant. [Yes. Wow, that’s really interesting.]
T: Vraiment, des fois je le sens là, puis ils se ferment puis ils disent : Ah, laisse faire! T’sais mais c’est parce que j’arrive pas à comprendre ce qu’ils veulent dire... puis là ben ça fait comme cinq minutes qu’on essaye, puis un moment donné il décroche t’sais puis-- Là, je voudrais bien insister mais, en même temps, j’ai pas nécessairement toujours le temps de prendre dix ou quinze minutes à comprendre qu’est-ce qu’il veut me dire (...). [Really, sometimes I feel it, and they close themselves off and they say: Ah, forget it! You know but it’s because I can’t understand what they want to say... and then well it’s been like five minutes that we try, and at a certain point he gives in you know and-- I would like to insist but, at the same time, I don’t necessarily always have time to take ten or fifteen minutes to understand what he wants to tell me (...).]

Furthermore, Julie, Nicole and Magalie pointed to the difficult task of teasing out MB students’ low French proficiency from a potential learning disability. Because of that, Julie stated that it took more time for resource teachers to decide to evaluate and then diagnose MB students with a learning disability since they had to take into consideration that these students were still acquiring French. Julie also claimed that the majority of students that she helped were MB students and that they needed her help because they were behind academically. Nevertheless, she stated that MB students who did receive the support of resource teachers were generally able to succeed academically.
5.2.1.2. Parents’ role.

All four teachers asserted the role of parents as pivotal in determining MB students’ ability to succeed academically through the French language. In other words, students who were stimulated and who were properly supervised at home had more chances of succeeding in school. Furthermore, Magalie and Julie put forward the belief that parents’ French proficiency had an impact on their child’s French development because they were better equipped to support their child’s language learning. Nicole also argued that there was a relationship between the language promoted at home and students’ academic success. She believed that parents should learn French with their child to help their child succeed at school. All three teachers reported that they often encouraged parents to push their child to watch TV in French and develop literacy in French and in other languages so that student had as many opportunities as possible to read at home.

Nicole invoked the difficulty of collaborating with some parents, noting that she, contrary to some of her colleagues, would only speak with them in French during parent-teacher interviews. She believed that “always accommodating their language would not push them to learn French” [(…) si on palie toujours à leur langue, pourquoi ils l’apprendraient (…)]. As a former welcome class teacher who had been in charge of evaluating kindergartners’ need for francization support, Danaé observed two general tendencies. She claimed that students who needed francization support were either born abroad or were born in Québec to parents who “did not judge it important to speak French with their children.” She claimed that the latter was the prevailing tendency at the NSPS.

In addition, Magalie discussed the impossibility of some newcomer parents to help their child learn French at home and succeed academically because of the adaptation period that they went through when they immigrated to Québec. She also extrapolated that some parents tended to over-protect their children and therefore inhibited their autonomy because they experienced extreme
insecurity in their home countries. She believed that this could play a role in students’ autonomy and initiative-taking habits while learning the host language. As for the MB students whom they thought were behind academically, teachers believed that parents’ support at home was an even more influential factor for their success at school. In this excerpt, Magalie explained how the help that teachers provided at school might not have always been enough for students to succeed academically, and that their parents could play an important role as mitigating agents:

Rosalie : Ou le parent est pas là, donc l’enfant s’il est en difficulté, ben y’a pas de support, t’sais, pour rattraper... parce que pour rattraper ça demande beaucoup d’aide à la maison. Puis parfois l’aide est pas possible. Donc nous euh... on fait notre possible. Ça peut être décourageant parce qu’il y a certains enfants qu’on[sic] sait que si ce n’était pas de la langue, il serait en réussite. [Or the parent is not there, so if the child is experiencing difficulties, well there’s no support, you know, to catch up... because one needs a lot of help at home to catch up. And sometimes the help is not possible. So we huh... do our best. It can be discouraging because there are certain children that[sic] we know that if it wasn’t for the language, they would be succeeding.]

5.2.1.3. Impacting factors.

Regarding the factors that may affect MB students’ academic performance, Magalie and Danaé believed that newcomer students’ past education in their home countries affected their chances of succeeding in Québec schools. Teachers also suggested that past traumas resulting from having experienced wars or natural disasters in their home countries could negatively affect students’ relationship to school and even their academic performance in the host country. In addition, Nicole pointed out a cultural or linguistic “clash” between students’ home language and their use of French at school as she witnessed some students not wanting to share words in their L1 with her. She believed that they separated each language in relation to home and school and that this perhaps prevented the creation of a more inclusive learning atmosphere sensitive to MB students’ home languages.

Moreover, teachers considered the amount, quality and educational values of students’ past schooling as influencing their chances of thriving academically in Québec. Danaé alluded to MB learners’ self-perceptions as “good students” in their home countries and a different experience in the
host context. She described one student’s disappointing realization that he was no longer excelling academically and the shame that he felt resulting from this:

Danaé: Euh… il réussissait facilement dans sa langue (...) maternelle dans son pays d’origine et puis ici c’est beaucoup plus difficile, puis j’en ai discuté avec la mère qui m’a dit qu’il n’osait pas dire qu’il avait des difficultés… C’était un peu honteux pour lui. [Huh… he was a high-achiever in his mother tongue in his country of origin and here it is much harder, and I discussed it with the mother who told me that he didn’t want to say that he was having difficulties… It was a bit shameful for him.]
Alexa: Ah, oui. [Ah, yes.]
Danaé: Mais, t’sais, ça aussi c’est culturel, hein? [But, you know, that is also cultural, eh?]

Danaé mentioned that this student was not aware of the amount of progress that he made in such a short period of time, and that he was too shy to speak French because he considered it “not perfect.” Finally, Julie also believed that a variety of environmental factors affected students’ propensity to succeed academically, but she suggested that “protective factors” could mitigate negative academic outcomes, such as students’ autonomy, attention, normal cognitive aptitudes and their desire to learn.

5.2.2. Teachers’ perceptions of their teaching conditions.

5.2.2.1. Contextual implications.

All teachers stated that most students attending the NSPS were non-Francophone students and that this had greatly affected their teaching and students’ experiences in mainstream classrooms. Nicole, who had been teaching at the school for 27 years, reported witnessing the student population change throughout her career; she claimed that the majority of students were Francophone when she first started teaching. The diverse context of the school was also discussed by Magalie who pointed out the disparity between the student population in metropolitan schools of Québec and those attending schools in other regions of the province. She stated that student populations in schools in regions outside the province’s major cities were not as linguistically diverse, and that these teachers
did not need to share the same professional challenges. She also mentioned not having been trained to address these students’ needs when she was completing her bachelor’s degree outside of Montréal. With regards to MB students’ access to Francophone peers acting as “good” language models in the classroom, Magalie thought there were too few in numbers to have a positive impact on MB students’ French language development. In the same vein, Danaé also considered it crucial to expose her students to as much French language through native speakers as possible, and she did so by making them listen to oral stories (with closed captioning) read by Québécois personalities during snack time (i.e., Bookaboo).

Furthermore, teachers declared that the pace of learning in the mainstream classroom was too fast for them to achieve curricular expectations. While they often felt like they had to rush through concepts, Magalie was also concerned that the few Francophone students of her class might find instructional tasks “too easy” since she often needed to modify activities to make them reflect MB learners’ French language proficiencies. In the following excerpt, Nicole talked about not being able to use engaging activities because she feared these tasks did not directly address curricular requirements:

Alexa : (...) est-ce que vous trouvez que vous allez trop vite par rapport à ce qu’aux élèves auraient besoin? [(…) do you find that you are going too fast with regards to what students would need?]
Nicole : Ben, y’a des choses qui vont trop vite. Clairement. Mais en même temps, je me dis : Bon ben, c’est souvent des spirales qu’on fait, on reparle de ces mots-là plus tard, on revient, on… Mais t-- des fois, j’aimerais ça faire des activités plus ludiques, plus amusantes mais j’ai pas beaucoup de temps. J’en fais, mais en même temps, j’ai pas beaucoup de temps. Puis des fois je me sens coupable quand j’en fait puis que c’était super le fun, mais que j’ai pas avancé dans mes cahiers (…) [Well, there are things that go too fast. Clearly. But at the same time, I tell myself: Well, we often come back to it, we talk about these words later on, we come back, we… But y-- sometimes, I would like to do more playful activities, more fun but I don’t have a lot of time. I do some, but at the same time, I don’t have a lot of time. And sometimes I feel guilty when I do some and it was lots of fun, but I didn’t progress in my workbooks (…)
Magalie and Nicole thought that the amount of assessments that they needed to administer to their students was too high and reduced crucial “teaching time.” As a grade two teacher, Nicole felt that it was incongruent for her to have to give numerical grades to such young students, and that evaluating students and compiling grades was work that she did for the government and not for her students. Magalie reported that the school’s policy on repeating grades was that students needed to fail both French language arts and mathematics to be kept behind. She argued that this resulted in many students moving on to the next grade, even if when they were doing poorly in both subject areas (i.e., almost failing in one subject and definite fail in the other).

Magalie claimed that it was onerous to evaluate MB students’ oral skills because mainstream curriculum criteria were not representative of their abilities. She also reported being ‘tolerant’ when evaluating MB students’ oral skills and even “boosting” their grades because of the context being so diverse and since she felt she did not have enough time to teach oral communication in class. Magalie compared classrooms with a majority of MB students to special education classes, and she claimed that the only difference was that the student-teacher ratio was not reduced in her teaching context. In the same vein, she asserted that it was not a reflex for mainstream teachers to perform comprehension checks or adjust one’s language to insure students’ comprehension, and she felt that this was even more obvious when outside people came into her class and interacted with her students.

Nicole believed that even if some MB students’ French proficiency levels were low in the second grade, she did not consider them as alarming since students still had time ahead of them to improve their language skills. However, Julie believed that there was a big step between the first cycle (grades one and two) and the second cycle (grades three and four) in terms of curricular expectations, and that students needed to be functional in their reading skills to achieve well in the third grade. In
the following excerpt, Julie explained the difficulty of having to move on to the development of a different skill as a resource teacher even when students were not ready:

Julie: Puis on est entre deux. Y’a des élèves qui ont pas fini d’automatiser leur décodage. Donc en début de 3ème année, on se dit : Ok, c’est notre dernière chance là. Là, on travaille à fond sur le décodage. [So we are between two. There are students who are not finished automatizing their decoding skills. So at the beginning of third grade, we tell ourselves: Ok, now is our last chance. Now, we work hard on decoding.]

Alexa: Oui. [Yes.]

Julie: Puis rendu à la mi-année, on laisse ça de côté. On se dit : Bon, ça a été travaillé en première année, en deuxième année, début troisième. Donc, là on entre dans la compréhension mais de laisser (…) tomber des élèves… C’est jamais facile. De se dire : Bon, ben on l’a assez travaillé, donc là ben… il va continuer à avoir de la difficulté à bien décoder, puis là on va travailler la compréhension. [When we reach mid-year, we leave that behind. We tell ourselves: Well, it has been worked on in grade one, in grade two, beginning of grade three. So now we begin with comprehension but to leave behind (…) some students… It’s never easy. To tell ourselves: Well, we worked on it enough, so now well… he will continue having difficulty decoding, and now we will work on comprehension.]

5.2.2.2. Beliefs and issues related to existing language learning models.

Since all participating teachers had students who were ‘graduates’ of welcome classes or who had francization support in the present or in the past, they shared concerns about the different implications that they thought such models of French support could engender. Teachers generally thought the existing language learning models did not cater to MB students’ L2 needs, and that these students’ direct integration into mainstream classrooms was often not the best solution.

Kindergartners enrolled in schools that were part of the North Shore School Board did not have access to welcome classes. As such, MB students who started their education in kindergarten at the NSPS (with or without francization support) were automatically integrated into mainstream classes in the first grade even if their French proficiency was low.

Furthermore, Nicole stated that mainstream kindergarten teachers’ responsibilities at the NSPS were closer to those of welcome class teachers rather than ‘regular’ kindergarten teachers. She believed that this was the case since most of their students did not speak French when starting school, and they were therefore left to support these students’ French development as efficiently as they
could. She believed that teachers needed to change their teaching practices to cater to this student population because students did not have access to enough francization support at the NSPS, due to school budget cuts. She thought that if this lack of resource allocation was remedied, the kindergarten level would be a good place for students to learn French and that they would not necessarily need to go through welcome classes subsequently. Moreover, at the NSPS, francization support was no longer provided to students in the third cycle (grades five and six), which were the years that Julie believed most crucial for students to continue developing strategies in view of improving their French proficiency.

Furthermore, Danaé observed that although some welcome class students were too shy to speak French in the classroom, these students generally worked harder than students in mainstream classes. She asserted that they were motivated to learn French rapidly to integrate into the Québec society. In her experience teaching both streams of education, Danaé thought that the pace of learning was much slower in welcome classes, and she felt that taking more time to teach the curriculum in mainstream classes would be beneficial to MB students. Moreover, Magalie and Nicole expressed the challenge of having students transferred from other schools’ welcome classes into their class, and how it affected their teaching. For example, Magalie declared that she was using welcome class criteria to evaluate some of her students who were “not ready” to be in mainstream classes. She did so to reflect these students’ abilities and to be fair during the evaluation process. Nicole expressed concerns about pulling students out of welcome classes mid-year to integrate them into mainstream classes and emphasized the destabilizing changes that these students had to go through (i.e., change of school, teacher, friends, milieu) and the lack of support at home for these students – which made the process even more difficult for all actors involved. In the following excerpt, she explains her perspective about this phenomenon:
Nicole: (...) enfin t’sais… c’est tout ça là… qui– moi je– je voudrais que ça s’arrête ça la classe d’accueil euh… comment euh… sauvage, t’sais. Pis le déracinement sauvage de cette classe-là. Puis, y’ont vraiment besoin de plus de bases ces enfants-là pour pouvoir pas vivre de traumatismes. Puis ça a rien à voir avec leur intelligence. Ça a rien à voir avec leur intelligence. (...) [(...) anyways you know… it’s all of that… that-- me-- I-- I would like for it to stop the welcome class that is… huh… how huh… savage, you know. And their savage uprooting from this class. And they really need more foundations these children to be able not to suffer from traumatisms. And it has nothing to do with their intelligence. It has nothing to do with their intelligence.]

5.2.3. Teachers’ pedagogical practices.

In this section, I will present the pedagogical practices that the participating teachers have put in place to ensure MB students’ academic success and present their perceptions about and experiences with peer collaboration amongst this student population. Therefore, I will introduce the different practices and adaptations that they have implemented in their classrooms to cater to these students’ needs, and I will address teacher’s perspectives on and observations of peer collaboration amongst MB students.

5.2.3.1. Differentiation.

Although the four participating teachers were not trained as L2 teachers, they still affirmed that they adapted their teaching to cater to the language learners of their classes. Magalie claimed that developing MB students’ French language proficiency was not a priority for mainstream teachers, but she asserted that differentiating her teaching was essential in this context, even if it was cumbersome at times. She further reported that it was primordial for her students to go at their own pace to achieve the most that they could and reach their full potential, which is why she allowed them to work on different tasks during class time. She also reported drawing from Yves Nadon’s (2007) ideas about developing students’ writing skills. As such, she reported modeling what was expected from learners, showing them successful written pieces, and making her students read each other’s work as much as she could.
To ensure her students’ comprehension of a task’s goal, Danaé had developed a system in which she made her students highlight important information in task instructions and in texts. She treated this process as a classroom discussion in order to elicit students’ ideas about what they perceived as important information. Within instructions, she gave concrete examples of what they needed to perform in the task by, for example, making them circle the word ‘pronoun’ in the instructions whenever that was what was expected in the task. She reported doing so to develop their autonomy and for them to be able to use these strategies at home, as well as to cater to as many students as possible at once. Finally, Danaé reported always circulating in the classroom while her students were on-task to make sure that she could offer individualized help to those having reading difficulties.

Furthermore, Magalie, Danaé and Julie reported making use of ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) to differentiate their teaching. In fact, Danaé stated that she “supported” what she said in class using the Smartboard, and she provided a list of online resources such as an online dictionary or a conjugation resource for students to be able to access from home. Danaé and Julie believed that students’ use of iPads was beneficial to the development of their listening and comprehension skills since they could hear what they read, hence also making the process of reading more productive for these students. Moreover, Magalie believed that her students profited from a ‘flipped classroom’ pedagogical approach (i.e., in which the traditional model of learning is reversed and students learn concepts at home through online resources) to increase their learning time. Interestingly, Julie thought that using ICTs could be somewhat helpful for some students, while it raised concerns for other students who were experiencing academic difficulties since she thought that it could become a compensatory strategy instead of helping foster their academic autonomy.
5.2.3.2. **Language-related adaptations.**

Danaé and Magalie both considered clear instructions as central in determining students’ successful completion of tasks. As such, Magalie claimed that some publishing companies were better than others in the adaptation of language to cater to MB learners by, for example, including instructions that were shorter and simpler. Moreover, Magalie stated that she adapted the classroom language by: simplifying her own language and the language contained in task instructions, as well as adapting texts used for reading comprehension tasks and assessments. Danaé also emphasized the importance of clear task instructions and reported making instructions shorter. Like Danaé, Nicole also never assumed that students understood all of the words they read or heard, and she therefore encouraged them to ask as many questions as needed. During reading comprehension activities, Nicole made them write question marks on top of words they did not know to then address each of these words as a class.

To cater to their students’ difficulties with the target language, teachers reported making a number of pedagogical adaptations to facilitate their French language development. As reported earlier, Danaé believed that students understood better if they could hear what they read. Therefore, for word problems in mathematics, she read problems aloud to avoid students “blocking” on words that were unimportant to focus on for a successful comprehension of the entire problem. She also stated that she “fragmented” tasks into smaller parts, especially during assessments, to relieve some of her students’ anxiety related to the language contained in such tasks. To help students improve their French language proficiency, Magalie said that she used word and synonym banks for vocabulary development. Nicole, on her part, invoked spending more hours “than she should have” on French, but she claimed that this was not problematic since she did not have to teach as many subjects in the second grade, and because she wanted to adequately prepare her students for the third grade.
Moreover, whenever students were not able to write what they wanted to express, Nicole had them describe what they wanted to write orally so that she could write it out for them. She reported giving them many sentences from which to choose in order to stay as close to the intended meaning as possible.

Furthermore, teachers expressed their helplessness when answering some of their MB students’ language-related questions, and Magalie claimed that she sometimes “couldn’t find any more words” to explain why something in French was inaccurate. Nicole and Danaé reported using MB peers as language resources to help the students that they were not able to assist. Danaé reported that students had a way of explaining things using “children’s words” that were more easily understood by all pupils. As such, she thought that peer help was effective because students were at the same age level in comparison to interactions with teachers, which perhaps made the learning atmosphere more “relaxed.” Danaé even suggested that MB students always seemed to find a way to help each other, and Nicole argued the same when she observed that MB students were used to constantly finding solutions because of their French language learning experiences. In the following excerpt, Nicole explained how students assisted her in helping students of her class with regards to communication breakdowns in French:

Nicole: Des fois-- des fois ils sont même meilleurs que moi pour comprendre les enfants fait que là euh... quand y’a un enfant qui me parle, je comprends pas, là je les regarde puis eux autres ils savent : Peut-être qu’il veut dire ça. Là, ils me pistent. Alors là je peux aider, l’[sic]enseigner à l’enfant à dire : Ah, tu me parles-tu de ça ? Ah, oui c’est ça! Ok, là on va dé-- là j’ai compris de quoi tu me parlais. Là, on essaye de débroussailler un peu pour-- parce que c’est frustrant quand la personne comprend jamais ce qu’on veut dire... en face de nous, hein? [Sometimes-- sometimes they are even better than I am to understand children so then huh... when there’s a student who speaks to me, I don’t understand, then I look at them and they know: Maybe he means that. Then, they lead me. So then I can help, teach him[sic] the child to say: Ah, are you talking about this? Ah, yes that’s it! Ok, now we will-- now I understand what you were talking about. Then, we try to untangle a little to-- because it’s frustrating when the person never understands what we want to say... in front of us, eh?]
5.2.3.3. Perceptions and experiences of peer collaboration.

Teachers shared their beliefs and perspectives about peer collaboration and the learning potential they thought it could yield for students. Julie believed that collaborative activities were essential for practicing new skills while individual tasks were useful when students had mastered those skills (i.e., for evaluations). However, Danaé thought collaborative activities were harder to structure and control in terms of classroom management. In the following excerpt, she explained her views on group work:

Danaé: Oui, parce que c’est quand même un milieu plus ou moins facile… [Yes, because the context is not so easy.]
Alexa: Oui, oui. [Yes, yes.]
Danaé: Euh… et heu… ça--ça peut dégénérer très rapidement. J’ai une bonne gestion de classe mais euh… c’est pas quelque chose que je vais favoriser parce que… j’aime mieux avancer, que les élèves comprennent bien euh… Oui, c’est ça. [Huh… and huh… it-- it can degenerate very rapidly. I have good classroom management skills but huh… it’s not something that I will favour because… I prefer progressing, so that students understand well huh… Yes, that’s it.]

Magali and Julie considered collaborative tasks as beneficial to students if they were properly modeled and when each student had a specific role. Both teachers believed that this could be achieved through reading comprehension tasks where students would be grouped into teams of at least four, and in which each student’s role reflected one of the reading strategies that they were taught in class in order to achieve reciprocal teaching. Moreover, when Julie implemented this type of collaborative activity, she first showed students a video of older learners modeling the strategies and task accomplishment, and then modeled the steps herself. After these steps, she let one team model the task in front of their peers so that the ‘audience’ could decide if they performed their roles and the task adequately. She had students use a script throughout this type of task. In Nicole’s class, most of the collaborative work revolved around reading comprehension tasks, game-form activities in math,
and fixed-parameter tasks for French grammar development, namely sentence restructuring and vocabulary-building tasks.

Although Danaé, Magalie and Nicole encouraged peer help, they believed that each student’s academic aptitude influenced the learning outcome of the task. Accordingly, Danaé reported not placing weaker students with very strong students nor with other students that were “too weak” for paired collaborative tasks. Magalie also expressed some concern about MB students’ language choice during collaborative interactions; she was worried that some did not speak French with each other. Moreover, Magalie and Nicole expressed apprehension towards pairing students who were “not strong” in French because they claimed that students could reproduce each other’s mistakes. In the following excerpt, Nicole expresses this concern:

Nicole: (…) Mais même nos élèves plus compétents dans la langue sont pas excellents dans la- - dans la langue donc des fois ça amène… eux aussi euh… créent des erreurs à l’oral donc l’autre entend des erreurs donc-- puis y’a personne, si moi je suis pas là pour les corriger, ben lui y’entend une erreur qu’il peut reproduire. (…) […) But even our more linguistically competent students are not excellent in the-- in the language so sometimes it brings… them too huh… create oral mistakes so the other one hears mistakes so-- and there’s no one, if I’m not there to correct them, well he hears a mistake that he can reproduce. (…)]

The four teachers interviewed reported that other than the limiting factors stated above, they considered peer collaboration as a positive learning dynamic and they encouraged peer assistance. They had witnessed MB peers both asking for and providing linguistic help to one another. Danaé also thought that students’ “temperament” influenced their conversational behaviours, and that some were more willing to accept oral mistakes and view them as practice. Moreover, she underlined that MB learners did not all have the same level of French proficiency in terms of their vocabulary acquisition or comprehension levels, and that their strengths and weaknesses were also different so pairing them together was not an issue.
Magalie described her grade five students as “not too shy” to speak French with each other and ask questions to one another or the teacher, and she stated that it was because they were more aware of their needs and were able to express them at this age. She also reported that her students supported each other during math activities to a higher extent compared to French writing tasks and grammar tasks, possibly because they were not accustomed to assisting each other during the latter. With regards to MB students’ difficulty expressing themselves in French in front of their peers, Nicole mentioned never witnessing students laughing at each other in her classroom or in the school’s hallways.

While presenting these findings, I have attempted to truthfully describe the participants’ perspectives based on their answers to my interview questions. Through these findings, I have covered MB students’ experiences with the French language, their perceptions concerning peer collaboration, and provided a detailed portrait of the eight focal students’ collaborative behaviours while accomplishing in-class dyadic tasks. Regarding educators’ perceptions about their experiences while teaching this student population, I have carefully described their beliefs concerning MB students’ learning in the French educational context and the practices they used to cater to their needs, as well as their ideas regarding peer collaboration in this teaching context. In the following chapter, I will interpret and discuss the findings presented in order to shed some light on the language learning implications resulting from these participants’ experiences.
6. DISCUSSION

Through this study, I have examined eight MB students’ experiences learning and using the French language and four educators’ experiences working with MB students, as well as all participants’ perspectives on peer collaboration as a learning context conducive to MB students’ French language development. It was also essential to investigate the relationship between students’ needs and teachers’ challenges in meeting their needs. That relationship is further investigated in this Discussion chapter.

Before discussing this study’s findings, it is important to draw the reader’s attention to several items. First, it is important to note that this small sample of participants may not be representative of all students or teachers from the context described. Secondly, the discussion of the educators’ teaching practices in no way intends to criticize their teaching styles and philosophies. Clearly, the four teachers’ attention to MB students’ needs revealed their best intentions to ensure their students’ academic success. They showed dedication and patience towards their students as well as competence in the different approaches they took to help these students reach their full potential as primary-school learners. Finally, through the analysis of students’ in-class dyadic collaboration, I hoped to isolate factors that helped and hindered their peer collaboration during task accomplishment, and I had no interest in attributing ‘fixed’ learning traits or behaviours to specific participants. In the following sections, I will discuss findings according to each set of participant. Therefore, I will discuss findings related to MB students’ experiences with the French language first and subsequently provide interpretations of teachers’ experiences and beliefs in working with these students. Lastly, I will suggest recommendations that take into account the relationship between both sets of findings.
6.1. Discussion Relevant to Question One

The first question was concerned with primary, MB students’ experiences with the French and home language in and outside of school, including the role that French played in their lives, the initiatives their took to improve their French language proficiency, and their perceptions of and interactive behaviours during French language learning collaborative contexts.

6.1.1. MB students’ identities and investment in French.

I decided not to use the label *Allophone* to describe the focal students’ language backgrounds because I did not feel that this was inclusive enough to describe the different experiences they had with French. I moved away from this label because its definition seemed to oversimplify these students’ linguistic knowledge, practices and experiences, and identified them according to the absence of French or English as an L1, which was not always accurate for my participants. The answers they provided during the group interviews, my in-class observations and the outlooks provided by the two participating parents lead me to question the pertinence of this linguistic category in the French primary-school context.

However, this linguistic category seems to prevail in the research and in teachers’ discourse about MB students’ French language development. The issue with this label revolves around positioning their linguistic identity as ‘deficient of” a specific language instead of viewing their emergent multilingualism as a linguistic state in itself. Whether the term *Allophone* is used to imply that these students need assistance to improve their French language skills or to identify them as non monolingual Francophones, the use of the label for the students of this study was not productive in affording them the French-L2 support they needed, and it may have participated in delegitimizing these students’ linguistic identities.
MB students’ imposed academic identities may be shaped by the intersection of their social positioning and their perceived proficiency (Martin-Beltrán, 2010) in the target language. Accordingly, this may create an asymmetrical sense of agency between these learners and native speakers of the majority language since “[t]hose who have the requisite mainstream language tend to have more access to resources” (Egbo, 2009, p. 22). Using the label *Allophone* to identify MB students according to their linguistic abilities in the target language may be disempowering, and these students may perceive the French language as a tool of exclusion (Allen, 2006). As educators, it is imperative to separate the idea of native speakerism and language proficiency (Firth & Wagner, 2007) to characterize MB learners’ linguistic attributes in the diverse context of Québec. Moreover, studies have shown that MB students who do speak French in their everyday interactions do not necessarily identify as legitimate Francophone speakers (Calinon et al., 2015). This was the case of a majority this study’s students, and yet they were still identified as *Allophones*.

As mentioned earlier, the focal students’ experiences with the French language were numerous, and they reported using French to a great extent with their peers inside and outside of school, including with those sharing the same language background. However, this finding should be taken with caution since the NSPS, like many other Québec French schools (Fleury, 2013), discouraged the use of non-target languages, and this may have affected their willingness to share their diverse language practices with me. In fact, Ben was the only participant who claimed using English sometimes with peers at school, and he stated that he never spoke it during class time. However, I observed him using English in class with a peer on one occasion. This participant’s reluctance in sharing his language practices may be another reflection of the school’s restrictive language policy. Moreover, Nicole shared an interesting perspective relating to this phenomenon when she stated that MB students were often unwilling to share words in their home language with
her. As accurately described by Allen (2007), the school discourse may have been *agency-constraining* since students’ actions may have been limited or repressed by the promotion of majority “beliefs and practices which those in power see as representing that society as a whole” (p. 166).

MB students’ successful social adaptation often entails conforming to host cultural scripts in the school context (Ukasoanya, 2014). As such, the NSPS’s *cultural scripts* may have engendered feelings of inappropriateness (Wortham, 2005) with regards to their use of other languages. While this asymmetrical language positioning may have positively influenced their French language use in the academic context, it may have also deprived them of using their “total language knowledge” (Cook, 1999, p. 190) with their peers and as a linguistic resource when they needed. MB students’ investment (Pierce, 1995) in learning the French language would have to come at the expense of investment in their identity as multilingual speakers. This may have in turn affected students’ investment in learning the target language (McKay & Wong, 1996) because of its underlying coerciveness. It may seem counter-intuitive but allowing more flexibility with regards to code switching as a school policy would perhaps eliminate a dichotomy of languages and fixed speaker identities (Lee, Bonnet-Hill, & Gillespie, 2008), which could in turn lead to greater investment in learning the target language since students would not be coerced to speak it, but would be encouraged to use it along with the other languages they know.

Furthermore, although I was not able to access information concerning the NSPS’s proportion of MB students and the languages they spoke, the four participating teachers of this study reported that the school had a linguistically diverse student population with a minority of Francophone students. As mentioned above, the focal students of this study used French as a lingua franca despite the school’s multilingual context, and this corroborates Mc Andrew et al.’s (2001) quantitative findings about Montréal primary and secondary school MB students’ use of the French language
amongst their peers (over English). Mc Andrew et al.’s (2001) research also indicated a stronger ‘strength’ of the French language (FRF - force relative du français) index in primary school contexts and in schools where the non-Francophone student population was higher and more linguistically diverse. This study’s participants therefore exhibited French language practices that are in line with Montréal, MB students’ language practices in the academic context. As such, these findings contradict mainstream discourses that view a high concentration of non-majority language students in schools as an “obstacle to integration” (Mc Andrew et al., 2001, p. 122).

It is important to consider MB students as legitimate French speakers and value their multilingualism to perhaps positively affect these students’ investment in learning French to help them succeed in the French educational system. By extension, this may also contribute to reaching the main objective of Québec’s intercultural policy (that emphasizes the need for social cohesion through the French language and a respect for diversity) since target language practices would be rooted outside of ethnicity (Oakes, 2004) and language proficiency. These perspectives underline the need for educators and policy-makers to construct a different understanding of MB students’ French language experiences to offer linguistic support that acknowledges their identities as legitimate French and multilingual speakers.


As underlined in the Findings chapter, the eight students of this study were all identified as in need of French language support at a certain point during their primary education. However, they did not always have access to sufficient or appropriate French-L2 support as revealed by some of the students’ persistent academic difficulties related to French. The support that these students received was either through francization (usually provided in the early years of their primary studies), the help of a resource teacher or pedagogical games.
Although I was not able to gather detailed information about the different ways these types of support addressed MB students’ French language needs at the NSPS, francization services usually aim at improving students’ French skills through L2 learning approaches (MELS, 2014), while resource teachers focus on assisting students in developing strategies to counter learning disabilities. However, none of the participating students were identified as having a learning disability. The third type of service that was offered to cater to NSPS students’ French-L2 needs were pedagogical games led by a resource teacher; these were offered during lunchtime. This indicates the confusing nature of both types of services since L2 and resource teacher support seemed to be geared at providing MB students’ with linguistic assistance in French but through different approaches.

Furthermore, the NSPS adheres to Québec’s most popular model of integration: the total integration model with French language support (Armand & de Koninck, 2017), in which students may receive francization services if they are assessed and determined to be in need of this support. Welcome classes were not offered at this school. Due to budget concerns, francization services were prioritized for younger students, but even this support was not guaranteed as reported by Nicole and Danaé. Governmental budget cuts and decisions made at the school board level may have played a role in the diminution of resources toward francization attributed to this school. These may have been the result of a high attendance of Syrian refugee children in schools of the North Shore School Board this past year, which made necessary the creation of welcome classes, but also implied MB students’ French language needs being sidelined (Leduc, 2016).

At the time of data collection, it seemed like the grade five students needed extended French-L2 support, as they were either no longer provided access to it through a resource teacher (Ben and Lisa) or received limited support through pedagogical activities (Shef and Lori). This may help explain why Shef was placed in a grade five class upon his arrival, and possibly why Lori was
repeating her fifth grade as well. The NSPS policy about moving on to higher grades could not be applied to these students since they were enrolled in schools outside of Québec prior to being placed in Magalie’s class. Out of the grade three focal students, only Jo was still experiencing difficulties related to French, but he received regular and consistent support from a resource teacher. Therefore, the different types of French-L2 support that the NSPS students were afforded seemed to be influenced by the school’s budget limitations, students’ grade level and the time they were enrolled in the Québec educational system.

6.1.3. Students’ home languages.

From the eight focal students of this study, five used their home language(s) with their parents and/or with friends in and outside of the school context. The three remaining students could only understand their home language. Here, the term ‘home language’ is used to denote the language(s) spoken by MB students’ family members. Although assessing students’ knowledge of their home language(s) was not part of this study’s objectives, this aspect seemed important to consider since it was part of their linguistic identity and because it may have impacted their French language learning (Duff, 2007; Cummins, 2007).

The students who could use their home language justified their language practices by stating that they only resorted to using it with people who were not fluent in French or to aid their French comprehension. They seemed uncomfortable speaking about language practices that did not involve French, and this may yet be another ramification of the school’s monolingual norm. While Arabic was the language that participants reported speaking most often (after French), they did not invoke using it to a large extent with their peers in and outside of school. These students’ shared language background is in line with findings of the MELS (2014) that put forth an increase from 12 573 to 31
On the one hand, some of the focal students used their home language as a cognitive tool to understand information that they learned through French. For example, Lisa and Lori reported using words in their home language, namely to translate French words into Arabic when they were interacting with peers of the same background. Thus, their home language served a scaffolding function since they used the Arabic language as a resource to solve linguistic hurdles in French. Studies about the role of the L1 in peer collaborative tasks have put forth the argument that students’ L1 is a linguistic resource that can be used as a semiotic tool in helping students reach intersubjectivity (i.e., the process of shared meaning making) – that is necessary for the co-construction of knowledge (Cook, 1991; 1999; Anton & DiCamilla, 1998). Therefore, one may argue that Lisa and Lori used Arabic as a semiotic tool to support each other’s French and home language development. In fact, according to Carhill-Poza (2015), learner interactions (and social networks) that emphasize academic uses of target and non-target languages can help students’ development of linguistic skills in more than one language, which helps explain why some students reported preferring to work with partners sharing the same language background as them to continue learning their home language in addition to the target language.

On the other hand, because of the understanding that languages are interdependent in terms of literacy skill transfers, one may think that students’ proficiency in their home language could have affected their French language learning experiences. This was not the objective of this study, but one may question how these students’ proficiency levels in their home language may have played a role in some of the difficulties they experienced in French. Cummins’ (2007) understanding of a common
underlying proficiency (CUP) between different languages helps explain individuals’ learning of additional languages. More specifically, Cummins (2007) states that:

(...) although the surface aspects (e.g. pronunciation, fluency, etc.) of different languages are clearly separate, there is an underlying cognitive/academic proficiency that is common across languages. This common underlying proficiency makes possible the transfer of cognitive/academic or literacy-related proficiency from one language to another. (p. 232)

In other words, according to Cummins' notion of language proficiency, students’ cognitive academic linguistic proficiency (CALP) in their home language may have affected their CALP in French. This was more easily identifiable in the cases of Lori and Shef since they had completed the major part of their primary studies through Arabic. These two students’ CALP in French may have been more developed as a result of their increased time developing academic language skills in Arabic prior to their arrival to Québec. As for the rest of the students, their academic experiences were in Québec, in the French educational system only. By acknowledging students’ past educational experiences, educators may further target French language skills that need to be developed for students to be successful in the host academic context.

Furthermore, concerning Roses’ ‘unlearning’ of the Arabic language that was reported by her mother, it is possible that this participant experienced subtractive bilingualism, where her French language learning may have been to the detriment of her Arabic language development since she was not receiving support for Arabic. Moreover, in the context of Québec, Arabic is a minority language, which perhaps played a role in delegitimizing her use of it in this context. Although programs such as Programme d’enseignement des langues d’origines (PELO) (Heritage Language Teaching Program) have been created to legitimize students’ L1 in order to build on the linguistic relationship between MB students’ literacy skills in the home and the French language, the focal students of this study had
never participated in such classes at the time of data collection. One may speculate that these students’ French language development might have been maximized if they had received support for their L1.

The eight focal students’ different uses of their home language reflect their multilingualism while shedding some light on their experiences learning French. As posited by Cook (2001), “[l]earning an L2 is not just the adding of rooms to your house by building an extension at the back: it is the rebuilding of all internal walls” (p. 407). This conceptualization better elucidates the necessity for educators to evaluate MB students’ French language needs while taking into account their multilingualism. This in turn may allow for a different perspective of French language pedagogy that is more inclusive and holistically representative of these students’ linguistic knowledge that should be treated as a “qualitatively different knowledge base” (Duff, 2007, p. 156). In fact, encouraging peer collaboration between MB students who are drawing on their total language knowledge may help partly achieve this goal.

6.1.4. Peers as French language resources.

The findings of this study point to a disconnect between MB students’ French language needs and the different types of support they were provided to aid their French language development. As this may be the case with many other primary MB students in Québec, it is important to consider pedagogical complements that may help improve their French language skills while being ecological – which is the case with peer collaboration. Not only did the eight focal students of this study use each other as resources to aid their French language development, they were also able to identify what they needed for this mutual support to be optimal. It was therefore essential to deconstruct these students’ perceptions on peer collaboration to shed light on the potential that this learning dynamic
may have for MB students’ French language development, and by extension, to reach their full academic potential as primary learners.

Jo (grade three) stated not often receiving help from his Francophone desk partner during collaborative in-class activities, and Ben (grade five) reported not seeking his peers’ assistance for French-related questions. These students’ reluctant behaviours towards receiving their peers’ support may be explained through negative experiences associated with peer collaboration. Since Jo’s in-class regular partner was a Francophone speaker and Danaé qualified him as academically “strong,” this may have led Jo to feel unhelpful in the collaborative dynamic and uneasy at the idea of requesting his partner’s help. In Ben’s case, his preference for receiving help from teachers rather than students may be due to the negative experiences that he underwent being made fun of by his peers, and perhaps since this learning dynamic “ma[d]e [him] feel or look incompetent” (Lyster, Saito & Sato, 2013, p. 28). Nevertheless, these two students assisted their partners during the in-class dyadic tasks by: reminding each other of the reading comprehension strategies learned in class (Jo), and proposing solutions to reach mutual comprehension (Ben). Swain (2010) argues that, in addition to knowledge, emotions are also co-constructed in dialogue since they are “interpersonal (…)[,] socially and culturally derived, along with cognition, [and] they mediate learning” (p.2). Thus, one may postulate that these students may have had different peer collaboration learning attitudes had they not experienced negative emotions related to seeking their peers’ help. It is therefore important for teachers and students to be aware of the socio-emotional implications of peer interactions so as to reduce negative experiences associated with peer assistance.

Furthermore, students enumerated optimal partner qualities when performing group work, and these were in line with Storch’s (2001; 2002) qualitative descriptors of collaborative orientated pairs. In other words, students liked to work with partners who were not dominant, and whom they
respected and trusted. These peer characteristics fit into the concepts of equality and mutuality (Damon & Phelps, 1989), which translate into an equal distribution of the task’s decision-making process and engagement with each other’s contributions. In other words, they value each other’s role in the task accomplishment. Also, students generally reported preferring being helped by multilingual peers and they reported these peers as more helpful than teachers’ assistance at times. This is an important finding in light of their teachers’ reports about their inability to adequately assist their students in French on occasions. The focal participants’ preferences for peer assistance reflect findings from studies comparing the effectiveness of learner-learner L2 interactions with learner-native speaker interactions (Sato, 2007; Mackey, Oliver & Leeman, 2003), which have shown that these dyadic combinations may at times be more helpful and offer increased opportunities for L2 development.

Two students reported that help was often mutual during their peer collaborative activities. These students did not play a fixed role during their peer interactions, but switched fluidly between expert and novice roles (Angelova, Gunawardena, & Volk, 2006; Ohta, 1995). van Lier (1996) notes that one of peer interaction’s benefits is that both students engage in ‘the act of teaching’ and Storch (2002) argues that “[t]he act of (…) explaining to others may help L2 learners construct a more coherent and clearer representation of their own L2 knowledge” (Storch, 2002, p. 122). Therefore, these students may have experienced more productive instances of peer collaboration in their classroom context since they were able to engage in reciprocal teaching.

6.1.5. In-class peer collaboration.

During the in-class dyadic task recordings, the eight focal students exhibited different conversational and task-based moves that I interpreted using cognitive and sociocultural perspectives of L2 learning. More specifically, I analyzed students’ collaborative behaviours and LREs during task
completion. It is important to note that the peer interactions amongst students of this study was subject to the same potential and vulnerabilities as has been found among other group of students. However, one pair (Rose and Jen) exhibited peer collaborative traits particularly helpful for L2 development, while the other pairs presented behaviours that were influenced by their collaborative mindsets and different levels of proficiency in French.

DiCamilla and Anton (1997) suggest that using repetition may be beneficial to learners during peer collaborative tasks as it acts as “a single voice [], (...) link[ing] their discourse, and thus their minds, in a shared perspective of the task at hand” (p. 627). Rose and Jen (grade three) used this strategy to manage the task while deciding on and writing out answers together. These students co-managed the task, built on each other’s contributions and valued their partner’s opinions. More generally, Rose and Jen constructed “a dialogue that [was] effective in the construction of collective scaffolding” (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998, p. 325) which may have been positively influenced by their similar levels of proficiency in the target language (Donato, 1994; Ohta, 1995; Anton & DiCamilla, 1998). These strategies were helpful in creating the “means by which students construct and hold in place scaffolded help while achieving and maintaining intersubjectivity, which are two successful elements of collaboration within the ZPD” (DiCamilla & Anton, 1997, p. 614). As such, this pair put forth clear instances of problem-solving, collective scaffolding and overall collaboration that was necessary for successful task completion and that perhaps contributed to their French language development.

However, this successful, collaborative learning dynamic was not always observed in the other pairs’ interactions. For example, higher-proficiency partners did not always take on the role of expert in the pair, hence missing opportunities to act as “facilitator[s] when interacting with less-proficient peer[s]” (Kim & McDonough, 2008, p. 229). Moreover, another potential shortcoming observed in
the pairs’ interactions was that students were focused on task-completion and therefore solved communication breakdowns “using any kind of communication strategy including body language, which can be followed by simple acknowledgments such as ‘yes’ or ‘no’” (Lyster et al., 2013, p. 28). These strategies may be unhelpful in pushing learners to experiment with and manipulate language forms. In fact, according to Toth’s (2008) examination of learner- and teacher-led discourse, learners do not attend form as much as teachers, which mediates the benefits of peer interaction since it “come[s] at the expense of consistency in attention to the target form” (p. 269).

Collaborative dynamics and their potential for language negotiations may be contingent on the nature of interaction – in this case the relationship between students and their proficiency levels in French. According to Kim and McDonough’s (2008) study, intermediate peers who collaborated with higher proficiency peers exhibited a high frequency of lexical LREs, which helps explain Shef and Ben’s dialogic outcomes. As such, Shef exhibited many instances of language negotiations when he was paired with Ben for the alternative recording as compared to his first interaction with Lori. This may have been influenced by a smaller gap between each partner’s language proficiency levels. In other words, these students’ closer proficiency levels may have permitted them to produce more lexical LREs that may be considered helpful in the co-construction of L2 knowledge. Moreover, Shef and Ben’s collaborative mindset during the completion of the information-gap task may have also played a positive role on the productive instances of LREs exhibited by this pair (Watanabe, 2008).

Finally, two pairs exhibited negative emotions (i.e., frustration, irritation, impatience, etc.) that we co-constructed (Swain, 2010) during the completion of the dyadic tasks. These feelings may have mediated students’ overall attitude toward the task, which in turn may have impacted their opportunities for productive instances of peer collaboration towards co-construction of L2 knowledge (Swain, 2010). In Lisa’s case, her frustration may have prevented her from recognizing her partner’s
incentives in trying to solve communication breakdowns (i.e., providing alternative descriptions, guessing, offering advice). In the case of Lynn and Jo, their overt displays of dissatisfaction might have impacted their ability to productively use peer corrective feedback (PCF) as a means for L2 development. This phenomenon was observed in Yoshida’s (2008) study about the negative association between students’ dissatisfaction with each other’s contributions and their integration of PCF.

By closely examining students’ interactive behaviours, I have put forward the different factors that influenced each pair’s success during the in-class dyadic tasks that lead to the identification of the potential and shortcomings of peer collaboration amongst MB students. In the next section, I will interpret findings relevant to the second research question that was geared toward educators’ teaching experiences.

6.2. Discussion Relevant to Question Two

The second question was concerned with educators’ experiences while working in a context where a majority of their students are learning content through an additional language. I will discuss the different views they held about their teaching context, the pedagogical practices they put in place to ensure their students’ academic success, and their perceptions about peer collaboration as a learning context conducive to MB students’ French language development.

6.2.1. Teaching context.

Out of the four teachers whom I interviewed for this study, three had extensive experience teaching at the NSPS. Nicole had the longest experience teaching at this school (i.e., 27 years) and reported a dramatic change over the years from a Francophone-dominant student population to a predominantly MB student population. This observation comes as no surprise since the number of MB students attending Québec schools increased from 14% to 23.7% from 1998 to 2012 (MELS,
Moreover, these students constitute a little more than 50% of the total number of students attending schools within the North Shore School Board (MELS, 2014). The North Shore School Board educators’ teaching endeavours may be different to that of Montréal teachers since students are often directly integrated into mainstream classroom as opposed to Montréal MB students who are more likely to be afforded with French-L2 support through welcome classes (Collin, Karsenti, Fréchette, Murataj & Fleury, 2011). Therefore, these teachers have been experiencing new professional challenges with regards to teaching language and content simultaneously in mainstream classrooms.

Some NSPS students in mainstream classes were graduates of welcome classes from other schools, and teachers therefore needed to facilitate their transition by, for example, evaluating them using welcome classes criteria (bulletins d’accueil - welcome class report cards). Another implication of rapidly integrating these students into mainstream classes was that teachers could not easily communicate with students’ former welcome teacher, which made collaboration more difficult. Therefore, mainstream teachers increasingly face groups of students from different ages, academic and SES levels, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and varying French language proficiency, which is similar to the composition of a typical welcome class (Collin et al., 2011, p. 53). For these reasons, consistency and cohesion in the mainstream classroom may be at stake since teachers need to modify their teaching practices in directions that they may not be able to decipher, and students need adapt to a faster learning pace.

The participating teachers of this study reported adapting their in-class practices to cater to their students’ needs and facilitate their academic success. They needed to differentiate their teaching to a greater extent as the 2000 educational reform placed great emphasis on academic success. As such, teachers’ adaptation of their practices now plays a crucial part in ensuring MB students’
academic achievement. This reform raised standards regarding the academic success of students enrolled in schools with heterogeneous student populations (Bissonnette, Gauthier & Richard, 2009). This placed a great amount of pressure on NSPS teachers to help their MB students succeed academically, and in the absence of support to make that happen, it may also account for the fact that students rarely failed even when their academic achievement may have warranted failure. In differentiating their teaching for both MB and Francophone students, their teaching responsibilities encompassed those of both welcome class and mainstream teachers. It is therefore comprehensible that they felt overwhelmed.

Although the language of mainstream classrooms may seem authentic, contextualized and abundant for MB students to become proficient French speakers, they may not have “received explicit feedback or instruction on the target language, leaving them to depend on somewhat faulty intuitions about language forms” (Harklau, 1994, p. 266). Moreover, teachers’ lack of training with regards to catering to MB students’ French-L2 needs (Morris, 2008; Cummins, 1999; 2000) along with insufficient school incentives for French-L2 support (Leduc, 2016), may have further intensified these teachers’ feelings of “insecurity, discomfort and inadequacy” (Ball, 2008, p. 46) in teaching these students.

Furthermore, the teachers of this study emphasized the necessity for a strong school-home relationship. Teachers underlined the need for parents’ collaboration through academic support at home (i.e., with homework) and through their own motivation to learn French to support their children’s French language development. As such, they perceived a relationship between the parents’ level of commitment to learning French and their children’s French proficiency and academic success. However, teachers seemed to be aware of the mitigating effect of families’ pre-migration trajectories on their abilities to support their children academically. In fact, families who experienced trauma or
wars may experience increased acculturation stress (Kanouté, Vatz-Laaroussi, Rachédi & Tchimou Doffouchi, 2008), which may have in turn impacted their ability to make learning French a priority. Moreover, students’ stress related to their acculturation processes may have been heightened in such circumstances and “added to an already existent stress related to learning and interactions in school” (my translation, Kanouté et al., 2008, p. 270).

Moreover, two students reported helping their parents to learn French at home, which may be considered as language brokering—defines as “the practices of translating and interpreting (…) [and] learning a language for their own and their family’s survival” (Morales & Hanson, 2005, p. 473). MB students’ linguistically assisting their parents may be beneficial since they may be required to use a wide spectrum of genres entailed by ‘adult-like’ conversations, which could accelerate their French development (McQuillan, Tse, 1995; Buriel, Perez, DeMent, Chavez, & Moran, 1998). However, this may also mean that language broker children have the added responsibility of becoming proficient in the target language to have the capacity to aid their parents’ French learning. Accordingly, it may be helpful for teachers to recognize both students’ and parents’ initiatives in developing their French language skills to acknowledge the efforts made by MB families to know French, as opposed to viewing MB parents’ limited French proficiency as a way of refusing to integrate. To value parents’ role in the school context, teachers could make them collaborators and community liaison agents by, for example, welcoming them into the classroom to participate in and help their child during French-language workshops. In order to do so, teachers may need to increasingly reach out to parents in view of eliminating a school-home disconnect.

Teachers believed that all the factors mentioned above impacted MB students’ academic success and French proficiency, which sometimes made them lag behind their Francophone peers. Therefore, the complex classroom environment and institutional factors influencing these educators’
daily teaching practices did not facilitate MB students’ academic success. One may even postulate that teachers’ lack of support in making them competent language, cultural and academic facilitators exacerbated their difficulties in attending to their students’ diverse needs.

6.2.2. Mainstream teachers as French-L2 content teachers?

The ways that the teachers of this study modified their in-class practices to attend to MB students’ French language needs were obvious though not always conscious on their part. In other words, they were not necessarily attempting to raise these students’ French language proficiency, but the different linguistic adjustments they performed may be interpreted as conducive to these students’ French language skills improvement. For example, Magalie’s reading circles, may have benefitted students’ reading comprehension skills, and the importance that Danaé afforded to French oral input through making her students listen to audio stories in French and using Ipads may have contributed to the improvement of her students’ French listening skills.

Examples of language related adaptations that may be considered ‘conscious efforts’ include making French comprehensible to students by using simpler language, articulating clearly, and adapting the texts they used in class. All teachers reported also emphasizing students’ vocabulary development and they facilitated this by creating vocabulary banks and explaining problematic words from texts as a class. However, although the teachers took different measures to cater to their students’ French language needs, they still reported students having difficulty with reading, reading comprehension, vocabulary and syntax, which corroborates the findings of Morris’ (2008) study about Québec born, MB students’ French language skill development in primary schools.

Nicole dedicated an extensive amount of class time to develop students’ French language skills because she wanted to prepare them for the third grade, which Julie alluded to when she reported about the difficult task of having to leave some third graders ‘behind’ because they had not
acquired grade-level academic linguistic skills. Nicole did so even if she thought that second graders had time to improve their French proficiency during the remainder of their primary studies. In this case, Nicole’s teaching practices may fit Cummins’ (1979; 1999) idea about the importance of developing language skills as they are closely linked to students’ cognitive and academic development. Although the teachers of this study tried their best to contribute to MB students’ French language development by adapting their teaching practices through conscious and unconscious efforts, these may not have been sufficient for students to succeed at manipulating the French language in increasingly complex ways (Cummins, 2000), and thereby satisfy grade-level criteria expectations.

In fact, research about adapted practices to cater to diverse students’ linguistic needs demonstrate the effectiveness of applying a single explicit, teaching approach (to the contrary of an array of different practices) but to different intensity levels according to students’ needs (Bissonnette et al., 2009, p. 2). As such, primary “[MB] students’ development of French language skills depend on a systematic teaching of vocabulary, background knowledge necessary for the accomplishment of different activities, and on the explicit teaching of the formal school language” (my translation, Bissonnette et al., 2009, p. 2). Here, ‘formal school language’ may be described as academic French language skills that students need to accomplish in-class activities. This makes, by extension, Cummins’ (1979; 1999) argument about the necessity of developing MB students’ CALP crucial to increase their chances of succeeding academically, since it is “what schools focus on in this endeavour[] [and] [i]t reflects the registers of language that (…) they need to use effectively if they are to progress successfully through the grades” (Cummins, 2000, p. 59).

Moreover, Nicole’s concern about students’ inability to distinguish between actual French words and pseudo-words may be a consequence of their limited vocabulary knowledge which can
perhaps not be remedied through teachers initiatives only. According to Blachowicz and Fisher (2007), teachers can focus on students’ vocabulary development through peer scaffolding which is particularly helpful in dyadic activities since they create a need for students to negotiate the meaning of words (Montésinos-Gelet, Saulnier-Beaupré, & Morin, 2011, p. 45). Also, teachers’ concerns about their inability to correct all of MB students’ oral mistakes, their perceptions about not having enough Francophone students in their classroom to act as authentic and accurate language models for them, and a lack of time to address students’ language difficulties contribute to a need to reconceptualize language learning tasks that position MB students at the center of their own language learning.

Although the teachers of this study may not have necessarily perceived themselves as L2 educators, they still differentiated their teaching according to MB students’ language needs as efficiently as they could within their educational context. However, they heavily relied on their own capacity to cater to MB students’ linguistic difficulties, ignoring peers as productive partners for the co-construction of their French knowledge. In the next section, I will discuss their views about peer collaboration as a student-centered approach that may contribute to MB students’ French language development.

**6.2.3. Teachers’ views on peer collaboration.**

The four teachers of this study generally thought that peer collaboration through collaborative tasks was a favourable and productive learning dynamic for their students. They also all used this learning dynamic (to different extents) in their classrooms for French and other subject matter activities. However, because of their particular classroom contexts, Danaé and Magalie believed that collaborative activities could sometimes be cumbersome to enforce and not always benefitting all students.
Julie and Magalie believed that collaborative activities should be structured in ways that allow each student to have a specific role. These approaches to collaborative work emphasized content more than language development reflecting a content-focused, reciprocal learning pedagogical approach. It is possible that these two teachers did not perceive collaborative tasks as also having the potential to improve MB students’ French language proficiency, which may have made them consider this learning context for knowledge consolidation activities only. In fact, pair work may be helpful in developing learners’ accuracy levels in the target language as demonstrated in Storch’s (1999) study about the advantage of this learning context over individual task completion.

Furthermore, with regards to teaching MB students communication skills through peer interaction, Magalie claimed that it was time-consuming to monitor and evaluate students in such contexts, and that teachers often used oral presentations as assessment occasions for these skills. Fleury (2008) suggests that teachers should favour “spontaneous, but structured oral activities over conventional oral presentations” (my translation, p. 49) to reduce MB students’ stress related to oral presentations. Moreover, to structure more spontaneous communicative activities and to facilitate the integration of targeted communication skills, teachers may assign one student within each group to monitor their peers’ production (related to specific skills or language forms) so that “the teacher is giving [her]self the freedom to monitor the learners’ overall communication strategies and to check on the areas which would still require attention” (Bruton & Samuda, 1980, p. 62).

Although teachers were concerned with pairing students from different proficiency levels, they still witnessed MB peers adding to each other’s strengths during peer interactions, which further substantiates the perspective that the expert/novice relationship may not necessarily be fixed in learner-learner interactions (Angelova, Gunawardena, & Volk, 2006). Moreover, as discussed earlier, research about pairing different proficiency-level learners together for language-related tasks do not
disprove the productivity of different peer combination for L2 negotiations (Ohta, 1995; Watanabe & Swain, 2007; Watanabe, 2008; Kim & McDonough, 2008). While students’ and teachers’ perceptions were interpreted separately in the two previous sections, the last discussion section will describe the implications of and possible solutions to both parties’ educational needs and challenges.

6.3. Bridging the Gap between Teachers’ and Students’ Educational Needs

Mainstream classes of tomorrow will be increasingly filled with linguistically diverse students, and teachers are influential actors in these students’ academic journey. It is therefore imperative to capitalize on each agent’s abilities to attempt to counter contextual limitations in view of offering a productive and empowering educational setting to all. Through the case study of eight MB students and through the examination of four teachers at the NSPS, I have found that students’ French language needs were not always catered to and that teachers were able to, at best, inconsistently attend to their linguistic needs. Therefore, in this section, I will attempt to bridge the gap between teachers’ and MB students’ experiences in a mainstream classroom context to put forth pedagogical approaches that suit these participants’ realities.

As teachers were concerned about the ways they could improve their teaching practices to attend to students’ oral mistakes, it is important to acknowledge the role that different instructional settings in relation to teachers’ oral practices may play in fostering students’ language development. One may argue that it is crucial in a context where MB students are not only developing their French language proficiency, but they are also required to develop academic language skills while learning mainstream content matter. In the context of this study, Danaé and Magalie both exhibited opposite instructional styles. Danaé being more teacher-centered and Magalie being more student-centered. They also taught language differently. While Danaé tended to teach language explicitly and to give
overt and explicit oral correction, Magalie seemed to adopt more of a communicative approach with regards to monitoring and correcting her students’ oral mistakes.

On the one hand, while observing Danaé’s class, I noticed that in-class tasks were predominantly performed as a whole class or individually. Completing activities as a class gave her more opportunities to provide corrective feedback (CF) to her students that served as ‘language interventions’ beneficial to all students in the classroom. Magalie, on the other hand, may not have had as many chances to address her students’ oral mistakes as a class since these happened during peer interactions. However, she attended to her students’ oral mistakes by providing more implicit forms of CF so as to not disturb the tasks’ communicative orientation. From a cognitive L2 development perspective, learners’ modifying their output resulting from CF may push learners to retrieve target language forms, hence stimulating the development of connections in memory (Lyster & Mori, 2006), which is helpful in improving students’ French proficiency. Even if this study did not examine students’ responses to CF provided by the teachers, teachers may manipulate the way they attend to their students’ oral mistakes in relation to the instructional activity at hand. Lyster and Mori (2006) argue, in their counterbalance hypothesis, that:

[i]nstructional activities and interactional feedback that act as a counterbalance to the predominant communicative orientation of a given classroom setting will be more facilitative of interlanguage restructuring than instructional activities and interactional feedback that are congruent with the predominant communicative orientation. (p. 294)

In classrooms like that of Danaé, using implicit types of feedback (i.e., recasts) to respond to students’ mistakes may maximize learners’ opportunities to improve target language forms. Conversely, in classroom contexts similar to Magalie’s, using more explicit forms of CF (i.e., prompts) to attend to students’ oral inaccuracies may promote learners’ interlanguage restructuring–
where this CF is seen as disrupting the meaning-based exchange at stake. This may be explained through the assumption that learners engaging in interactions that require them to shift their focus of attention may have better chances to restructure ill-formed language forms (Lyster & Mori, 2006, p. 294). Thus, teachers may be able to manipulate the way they attend to their MB students’ oral inaccuracies by counterbalancing the CF they provide according to the instructional activity they choose.

Furthermore, in the context of Danaé’s classroom, she reported that MB students were often too shy to speak at the beginning of the year. This may have been intensified by the instructional style of the classroom favouring teacher-student interactions, but it may also be related to them feeling “afraid of being criticized or laughed at in class because of their [French], [and] [s]ilence protected them form humiliation” (Duff, 2002, p. 312). As such, students having more opportunities to interact with peers (i.e., where this dynamic may be considered as more democratic), and the potential that it yields in terms of increasing students’ opportunities to produce the target language may be favourable to students’ French language development and socialization processes.

Collaborative activities that involve interactions amongst language learners may afford MB students with increased opportunities to develop their French language proficiency as compared to interactions with teachers or Francophone speakers. As theorized by Swain (1985; 1997) interactions wherein learners need to negotiate the target language, and communication breakdowns during which they need to experiment and manipulate language forms may contribute to L2 development. In addition, collaborative work may offer a less stressful setting for students to produce the target language since students are not focused on forming short and accurate sentences for teachers to scrutinize (Long & Porter, 1985). One may argue that this was a reason why the focal students preferred working with other multilingual MB students because they had more time to think about
what they wanted to say which may have led them to experiment with the target language to a higher extent in this context in comparison with whole class interactions (Lyster et al., 2013; Swain et al., 2002).

However, peer interactions do no equate successful peer aid as it “tends to be haphazard when left to its own devices” (Bruton & Samuda, 1980, p. 62), which may help explain the unsystematic affordance of peer linguistic assistance during the focal students’ in-class dyadic interactions. On the one hand, the analysis of these students’ interactions and their preference in terms of partner characteristics during collaborative tasks confirmed the advantageous nature of this learning ecology by putting forth these students’ abilities to afford linguistic assistance. On the other hand, these analyses were essential in deciphering the areas that need more attention. For example, students may need more guidance concerning the value of collaboration (i.e., for the development of communicative skills and for accuracy through PCF), and they may need to “reflect on their own interactions” (Watanabe, 2008, p. 627). They may also need to understand that “communication breakdown is a normal feature of face-to-face interaction and they must be taught to both expect it and deal with it when it occurs” (Bruton & Samuda, 1980, p. 61). Therefore, effective teacher management and planning should not be underestimated for such type of interactions to be productive and collaborative.

Furthermore, to improve MB students’ language accuracy through peer collaboration (i.e., through the provision of PCF in the form of prompts), it is essential for teachers to give explicit instructions that encourage negotiation of linguistic forms before letting them accomplish conversational tasks, and design tasks that push students to talk about specific linguistic forms (Swain et al., 2002). Information-processing models of language learning may be helpful in understanding how to plan effective collaborative tasks that focus on L2 accuracy, and Lyster (2004) suggests that
“noticing activities[,] (…) awareness activities[,] (…) [and] practice activities employing both analysis and fluency-based tasks” (p. 413) be used in order to increase learners’ chances of proceduralizing new L2 representations. In doing so, it is possible to design collaborative activities that demand increasingly complex levels of abstraction so that “heavier demands will be slowly made on the learners’ repair strategies and (…) the teacher is also maintaining some measure of indirect control over their output” (Bruton & Samuda, 1980, p. 62).

Because of the difficult nature related to fostering MB students’ CALP levels in the mainstream context, these students may have to “catch up with a moving target” (Cummins, 2000, p. 36) if their unique language needs are not acknowledged and catered to in the instructional setting. In linguistically diverse classrooms, Bissonnette et al. (2009) suggest that teachers adopt an explicit approach to the teaching of the school language in the classroom through clarifying the meaning of words and common phrases and expressions, as well as through the in-depth teaching of concepts (p. 3). This is crucial for MB students’ CALP development since they may face abstract and decontextualized language on an everyday basis in the classroom (Bissonnette et al., 2009), but they may not be able to rely on background linguistic knowledge to understand it. Moreover, these teaching objectives may be facilitated through peer collaborative activities that require students to use this type of language. Teachers may design these collaborative tasks keeping in mind that their goal is to develop students’ CALP; and they may facilitate these by explicitly teaching peer scaffolding and guiding them through this process (Bissonnette et al., 2009).

Furthermore, the students of this study and other MB learners may be learning in environments that are designed to cater to Francophone students’ needs rather than to a linguistically diverse student population. In the school context, teachers may be viewed as the main adults responsible for students’ academic, linguistic and social success. As such, “[i]n Canada and other
parts of the Western world, schools are no longer simply academic environments; they are social sites where identities and power relations are negotiated and renegotiated with language issues featuring very prominently in the process” (Egbo, 2009, p. 22; Cummins, 2000). In fact, MB students’ French language proficiency is often associated with their status (Kanouté, et al., 2008, p. 285) which may further position them at a disadvantage. In the worst cases, MB students may “perceive the environment as unsupportive as a result of actions and inactions by both teachers and peers” (Ukasoanya, 2014, p. 152), and develop a negative relationship with the school environment as well as perceive the host language as hindering their identity constructions (Allen, 2006; 2007).

What this means is that teachers need to acknowledge students’ migration and linguistic trajectories (Duff, 2007) and perhaps even address these as a class so as to help MB students reclaim their sense of agency as multilingual learners. A good way to do so may be to ask students to write their linguistic biography (Cummins, Bismilla, Chow, Giampapa, Cohen, Leoni, Sandhu, & Sastri, 2005; Dagenais, Walsh, Armand, Maraillet, 2008) with their parents, in which they could write about their trajectories in the home and target languages. This type of activity would perhaps allow them to affirm their multilingual identities while creating a positive school-family relationship.

It is important to note that these practices do not aim at discouraging MB students of speaking French in the classroom context. Teachers may continue promoting the French language by using an opposite language policy to what we are used to see in Quebec French schools. In other words, instead of punishing students when they speak another language in the classroom, teachers may consider rewarding them when they see pupils making an effort to speak the target language (Fleury, 2013). These practices may value students’ multilingual repertoires, as they encompass and are representative of their multiple identities.
In this section, I have attempted to bridge the gap between MB students’ and teachers’ realities when learning and teaching in a Greater Montréal primary school context. I have proposed instructional strategies and approaches for teachers to be better equipped in dealing with these students’ linguistic needs in the classroom. I have also proposed that peer collaborative tasks that are carefully designed and that cater to students’ language-related needs may help students develop their French CALP. Finally, I have also suggested concrete strategies to make the school and classroom environment more considerate of MB students’ migration and linguistic trajectories to counter hegemonic forces that may position them at a disadvantage in the school context.
7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study’s qualitative and observational nature imply limitations for the interpretation of the findings. A consequence of observational studies is that the researcher’s presence may alter participants’ behaviours and responses. In this study, my role as observer during the in-class observations and dyadic task recordings may have altered students’ French language use in the classroom, and the participants’ responses during the interview may have been influenced by my role as researcher. Also, the design of this study did not allow for a comparison of students’ interactional behaviours according to instructional setting since they were enrolled in two different grade levels and performed different tasks. It is also important to note that this was a short-term study consisting of a small number of observations making the findings non-generalizable. The evolving methodology of this exploratory study was both a strength and a weakness as I needed to adapt to the context of the research which may have also made me missed opportunities to collect important information.

MB student may be required to draw on alternative strategies to develop their French language skills as a result of insufficient L2 support afforded in the Québec academic context. However, MB students’ experiences related to assisting and getting from support peers may establish French language learning as a collective endeavour for these students. As such, further research regarding MB students using each other as French language resources in the context of Québec primary schools is needed to measure the effectiveness of this learning context. A quantitative study investigating collaborative tasks according to students’ French proficiency levels, L1, collaborative orientation as well as strategy instruction would be useful to productively integrate collaborative work into mainstream classrooms that aim at improving MB students’ academic French language skills.
Moreover, multiple data elicitation methods would be helpful in understanding how this learning context may be helpful in affirming these students’ agency and multilingual identities. Mainstream and resource teachers’ roles in facilitating MB students’ French language development is also an important area of research that needs further attention.

7.2. Conclusion

This exploratory study examined the cases of eight Québec, MB students’ experiences learning French in a primary school as well as four primary educators’ experiences and beliefs teaching this student population. In Québec, the educational implication of the French Language Charter entails most MB families sending their children to French schools. As a consequence of this and because of an increasing immigration influx to cities that are part of the Greater Montréal, student populations are no longer homogenous (i.e., in terms of language and cultural backgrounds) in French public schools. To facilitate students’ linguistic integration to primary mainstream classrooms, different PASAF are offered that vary according to each school and school board. In the context of the present study, the NSPS offered SAF incentives (i.e., francization classes) offered for the first grades of students’ primary studies only and disposed of four resource teachers to help MB students’ French language learning.

However, because of the fast pace and superior academic demands of mainstream classrooms, MB students are often left behind and expected to succeed academically without extensive French-L2 support. Studies about MB students’ academic experiences in mainstream classrooms reveal issues relating to students’ identity navigations and school positionings as well as unrealistic L2 expectations. Research about collaboration through peer interactions prove that this may an effective learning context for L2 learners’ development of the target language. In the present study, focal
students’ in-class dyadic, peer collaborative strategies, and students and teachers’ perceptions about this language learning dynamic were examined to interpret its effectiveness in this context.

The eight students’ different linguistic trajectories and experiences with the French language were unique but all lead them to need French language support at one point during their primary studies. This finding underlines the weakness of the existing structures meant to support their French development. Moreover, the students of this study were all multilingual children. They reported using their home language to different extents inside and outside of school. In addition to already using other MB children as language resources to develop their home and the target language, these students displayed peer collaboration during the in-class dyadic activities. These moves were productive as they may be considered instances of collaborative learning of and through the French language which may have been helpful in improving their French language proficiency. The analysis of their task-based and conversational moves also revealed problematic areas, namely relating to a lack of teacher guidance and collaborative strategy instruction that may reduce the effectiveness of this learning context.

Educators’ experiences and beliefs teaching this student population revealed a difficult instructional context where the four teachers of this study differentiated their teaching to support these students’ French language in the best ways they could. By analyzing the two focal teachers’ separate instructional styles, I offered strategies to enhance their pedagogical practices so as to maximize their students’ French language development using a peer collaborative lens. More generally, I also made recommendations with regards to empowering these students’ identities in the classroom through the acknowledgement of their linguistic and migration trajectories.
REFERENCES


http://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/education/201609/09/01-5018605-commission-scolaire-de-laval-faute-de-fonds-le-service-de-francisation-ecope.php


Ministère du conseil executif. Available online:

Sarkar, M. (2005). À l’école on parle français: Second language acquisition and the creation of
community in a multiethnic Montreal kindergarten. In Salili, F. & Hoosain, R.
(Eds.), Language in multicultural education (Research in Multicultural Education and
International Perspectives series) (pp. 310-342). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Kartchava (Eds.), Corrective feedback in second language teaching and learning: Research,


In Sato, M. & Ballinger, S. (Eds.), Peer Interaction and second language learning:
Pedagogical potential and research agenda (pp. 1-30). Amsterdam: John Benjamins
Publishing Company.

Sato, M., & Ballinger, S. (2012). Raising language awareness in peer interaction: A cross-context,
cross-methodology examination. Language Awareness, 21(1), 23.

learner and learner–NS dyads. JALT Journal, 29(2), 183–208

eng.cfm/?/english/census06/analysis/language/pdf/97-555-XIE2006001.pdf

eng.htm.


APPENDICES

A. Certificate of Ethical Acceptability

McGill

Research Ethics Board Office  Tel: (514) 398-6831
James Administration Bldg.  Fax: (514) 398-4644
845 Sherbrooke Street West, Rm 325  Website: www.mcgill.ca/research/researchers/compliance/human/
Montreal, QC H3A 0G4

Research Ethics Board III
Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

REB File #: 111-0716

Project Title: Peer interaction in primary school allophone students’ French language development: a potential pedagogical complement?

Principal Investigator: Alexa-Savan Ahooja  Department: Integrated Studies in Education

Status: Master’s student  Supervisor: Prof. Susan Ballinger

Approval Period: September 7, 2016 – September 6, 2017

The REB-III reviewed and approved this project by delegated review in accordance with the requirements of the McGill University Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Participants and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct For Research Involving Humans.

Lynda McNeil
Associate Director, Research Ethics

* All research involving human participants requires review on at least an annual basis. A Request for Renewal form should be submitted 2-3 weeks before the above expiry date. Research cannot be conducted without a current ethics approval.
* When a project has been completed or terminated, a Study Closure form must be submitted.
* Unanticipated issues that may increase the risk level to participants or that may have other ethical implications must be promptly reported to the REB. Serious adverse events experienced by a participant in conjunction with the research must be reported to the REB without delay.
* Modifications must be reviewed and approved by the REB before they can be implemented.
* The REB must be promptly notified of any new information that may affect the welfare or consent of participants.
* The REB must be notified of any suspension or cancellation imposed by a funding agency or regulatory body that is related to this project.
* The REB must be notified of any findings that may have ethical implications or may affect the decision of the REB.
B. Teacher Consent Form

Formulaire de consentement pour participant

Chercheure: Alexa-Savan Ahooja, candidate à la maîtrise (M.A Second Language Education), université McGill, département DISE, 514-290-8283, alexa-savan.ahooja@mail.mcgill.ca

Directrice: Dr. Susan Ballinger, DISE, (514) 398-4527, Ext. 094715, susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca

Le français comme médium d’interaction entre élèves allophones au primaire: un complément didactique pour le développement d’une langue seconde?

Ceci est une invitation pour participer à mon projet de recherche qui porte sur l’apprentissage du français des enfants allophones. J’aimerais enregistrer votre enfant lorsqu’il/elle est en train de travailler en classe de français. De plus, je désire demander quelques questions à votre enfant, et vous-même si vous l’acceptez, afin d’obtenir des renseignements généraux sur la place du français dans leur vie.

J’aimerais vous demander quelques questions à propos votre enfant. Si vous acceptez de répondre à mes questions, cette entrevue pourra être organisée à votre convenance sur les lieux de l’école ou ailleurs et sera enregistrée. L’identité de votre enfant et de vous-même sera préservée car j’utiliserais des pseudonymes à la place des noms complets. Les résultats de cette recherche seront disséminés dans mon mémoire et dans de possibles présentations académiques ou publications de journaux scientifiques.

Votre participation à ce projet de recherche et celle de votre enfant est sur une base volontaire ce qui veut dire que votre enfant et vous pouvez refuser de participer, refuser de répondre à quelque question ou le/vous retirer de l’étude à n’importe quel moment ce qui impliquerait la destruction de toutes informations recueillies le/vous concernant, à moins d’indication contraire de votre part. Votre refus de participer ou de laisser votre enfant participer n’aura en aucun cas de conséquences sur le cheminement scolaire de votre enfant.

Votre participation à cette recherche contribue à l’avancement des connaissances en éducation et permettra aux éducateurs de trouver des façons innovatrices d’aider l’intégration linguistique des élèves allophones au primaire.

Oui: ___ Non: ___ Je consens à ce que mon enfant soit enregistré en classe.

Oui: ___ Non: ___ Je désire laisser mon enfant se faire interviewer pour ce projet de recherche.
Oui: ___ Non: ___ Je désire me faire interviewer pour ce projet de recherche.

Oui: ___ Non: ___ Je consens à ce que les données obtenues dans cette étude me concernant soit utilisées dans des recherches futures reliées à ce sujet.

Veuillez signer ci-dessous si vous avez lu ce document et consentez à la participation de votre enfant et vous-même à cette étude. Votre consentement à participer à cette étude n’implique en aucun cas le renoncement de vos droits ou la décharge des responsabilités des chercheur(e)s. Pour assurer que cette étude est menée de façon appropriée, certains individus autorisés (notamment ceux du comité d’éthique de recherche) pourraient avoir accès à vos informations ou à celles de votre enfant. En signant ce formulaire de consentement, vous acceptez ces conditions et autorisez cet accès à l’information. Une copie de ce formulaire vous sera donnée et la chercheure en gardera une autre.

Nom de l’enfant: _________________________________________

Votre nom: ____________________________________________

No. de téléphone: _______________________ Courriel: ________________

Signature: ____________________________________________ Date: __________

Pour toutes questions éthiques, de plaintes relatives à votre participation à cette étude ou celle de votre enfant et si vous désirez contacter quelqu’un qui n’est pas dans l’équipe de recherche, veuillez vous adresser au comité d’éthique de recherche de l’université McGill par téléphone (514-398-6831) ou par courriel (lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca).
Le français comme médium d’interaction entre élèves allophones au primaire: un complément didactique pour le développement d’une langue seconde?

Ceci est une invitation pour participer à mon projet de recherche qui porte sur le développement des compétences linguistiques en français des élèves allophones au primaire. Le but de ma recherche est de mieux comprendre les comportements linguistiques en français de cette population d’élèves lorsqu’ils interagissent avec d’autres élèves allophones. J’aimerais analyser leur capacité à se supporter mutuellement en français en classe et connaître les stratégies qu’ils utilisent pour s’aider avec la langue, une fois gradués des classes d’accueil. Mieux comprendre cette réalité pourrait avoir des retombées sociales importantes, compte tenu de la population immigrante grandissante à Montréal et au Québec. De plus, cette étude peut contribuer à trouver des solutions réalistes pour ces apprenants, ce qui pourrait en conséquence alléger le travail des enseignants dans ces contextes.

J’aimerais observer votre classe et vous interviewer afin d’en savoir plus sur les habitudes linguistiques en français de vos élèves allophones. L’observation d’une de vos leçons se fera à votre convenance et implique une prise de notes exhaustives de ma part sur le déroulement de celle-ci (date et heure de la leçon, matière enseignée et information générale liée aux comportements linguistiques des élèves allophones de cette classe). Ces notes ne comporteront pas d’informations qui pourraient compromettre l’identité de vos élèves. De plus, j’aimerais vous interviewer et ces entrevues de 15 à 20 minutes peuvent être organisées selon vos disponibilités sur le site de l’école et vont être enregistrées à l’aide d’un appareil d’enregistrement audio pour être ensuite transcrites. Ces transcriptions seront essentielles lors de l’analyse des données recueillies pour l’étude afin que je puisse les incorporer à mes résultats de recherche et pour mieux les interpréter. Des extraits de ces transcriptions pourraient se retrouver dans mon mémoire afin d’interpréter certaines de vos réponses. Votre identité sera conservée car j’utiliserais un pseudonyme à la place de votre nom complet. En raison des enregistrements en classes des interactions des élèves allophones participants, il est possible que si certains d’entre eux s’adresse à vous, vos échanges avec ceux-ci soient enregistrés aussi.

Votre participation à ce projet de recherche est sur une base volontaire ce qui veut dire que vous
pouvez refuser de participer, refuser de répondre à quelconque question et/ou vous retirez de l’étude à n’importe quel moment ce qui impliquerait la destruction de toutes informations recueillies vous concernant, à moins d’indication contraire de votre part. Votre refus de participer n’aura en aucun cas de conséquences sur votre poste d’enseignant(e).

Ce projet de recherche ne présente pas de risques anticipés en relation avec votre participation. Votre participation à cette recherche contribue à l’avancement des connaissances en éducation et plus précisément afin d’amener un apport pédagogique pour la facilitation de l’intégration linguistique des élèves allophones au primaire. Votre participation ne sera pas compensée pour ce projet de recherche.

Confidentialité:
Votre identité, informations personnelles et le contenu des entrevues seront conservés et protégés à l’aide des fichiers cryptés sur un ordinateur nécessitant un mot de passe dont j’aurai seul l’accès. Ma directrice, Dr. Susan Ballinger, et moi-même seront les seules personnes ayant accès aux enregistrements audio des entrevues et ceux-ci ne seront pas disséminés publiquement. Il est aussi important de noter que le nom de votre école ne sera pas identifié dans cette étude afin de conserver votre anonymat. Les résultats de cette recherche seront disséminés dans mon mémoire, lors de présentations académiques et dans de possibles publications de journaux scientifiques.

Oui: ___ Non: ___ Je consens à l’observation par la chercheure d’une de mes leçons.

Oui: ___ Non: ___ Je désire participer à la portion entrevue de ce projet de recherche.

Oui: ___ Non: ___ Je consens à ce que certains de mes élèves soient enregistrés en classe.

Oui: ___ Non: ___ Je consens à ce que les données obtenues dans cette étude me concernant soit utilisées dans des recherches futures reliées à ce sujet.

Veuillez signer ci-dessous si vous avez lu ce document et consentez à la participation de votre enfant et vous-même à cette étude. Votre consentement à participer à cette étude n’implique en aucun cas le renoncement de vos droits ou la décharge des responsabilités des chercheur(e)s. Pour assurer que cette étude est menée de façon appropriée, certains individus autorisés (notamment ceux du comité d’éthique de recherche) pourraient avoir accès à vos informations ou à celles de votre enfant. En signant ce formulaire de consentement, vous acceptez ces conditions et autorisez cet accès à l’information. Une copie de ce formulaire vous sera donnée et la chercheure en gardera une autre.

Nom: _________________________________________
Signature: ______________________________________ Date: ____________

Pour toutes questions éthiques, de plaintes relativement à votre participation à cette étude ou celle de votre enfant et si vous désirez contacter quelqu’un qui n’est pas dans l’équipe de recherche, veuillez vous adresser au comité d’éthique de recherche de l’université McGill par téléphone (514-398-6831) ou par courriel (lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca)
D. Teacher Interview Protocol

1. Quelle est votre formation professionnelle?

2. Combien d’années d’expérience avez-vous accumulé en tant qu’enseignant(e)?

3. Combien de temps avez-vous enseigné à cette école?

4. Pouvez-vous me décrire votre expérience avec des élèves allophones?

5. À votre avis cette population étudiante expérience-t-elle des difficultés académiques en comparaison avec d’autres élèves dont la langue première est le français?

6. Comment qualifieriez-vous les compétences linguistiques en français des élèves allophones de votre classe?

7. Vous arrive-t-il d’offrir une aide personnalisée (en terme linguistique) à certains étudiants allophones de votre classes? Sinon, quelles stratégies utilisez-vous pour subvenir à leurs besoins linguistiques?

8. De quelle façon est-ce que les élèves allophones de votre classe collaborent en classe?

9. Quels styles d’activités planifiez-vous lors des cours de français? Avec quel matériel didactique travaillez-vous?

10. Lors d’activités collaboratives (s’il y en a), contrôlez-vous les groupes?

11. Comment vous sentez-vous par rapport à placer des élèves allophones ensemble pour des tâches en français et d’autres matières?


13. Aimeriez-vous ajouter quelque chose en lien avec les allophones de votre classe?

14. Quelles sont vos attentes quant à cette étude?
E. Resource Teacher Interview Protocol

1. Quelle est votre formation professionnelle?

2. Combien d’années d’expérience avez-vous accumulé en tant qu’enseignant(e)?

3. Combien de temps avez-vous enseigné à cette école?

4. Pouvez-vous me décrire votre expérience avec des élèves allophones?

5. À votre avis cette population étudiante expérience-t-elle des difficultés académiques en comparaison avec d’autres élèves dont la langue première est le français?

6. Comment qualifiez-vous les compétences linguistiques en français des élèves allophones avec qui vous travaillez?

7. Quelle approche utilisez-vous pour aider les élèves allophones en difficulté?

8. Lorsque certains élèves allophones ont des difficultés d’apprentissage reliées au français, quels styles d’activités planifiez-vous pour les aider? Préconisez-vous une approche collaborative?

9. Croyez-vous que les élèves allophones, si correctement guidés lors d’activités collaboratives en pair, peuvent bénéficier de l’apport linguistique de l’autre pour promouvoir le développement du français?

10. Lors d’activités collaboratives (s’il y en a), contrôlez-vous les groupes?

11. Aimeriez-vous ajouter quelque chose en lien avec les allophones que vous avez aidé que vous continuez d’aider durant votre carrière?

12. Quels sont vos attentes quant à cette étude?
F. Student Interview Protocol

1. Quel âge as-tu?

2. Combien d’années est-ce que ça fait depuis ton arrivée au Québec?

3. Est-ce que toute ta famille est arrivée en même temps? Avec qui habites-tu?

4. Quelle langue parles-tu avec tes parents/famille à la maison?

5. Quelle langue parle-tu avec tes amis à l’école?


8. Comment vont tes cours? Trouves-tu cela difficile parfois? Si oui, pourquoi penses-tu?

9. Aimes-tu travailler en équipe en classe? Avec qui?

10. Aimes-tu aider tes ami(e)s en français quand tu le peux en classe? Et en dehors de la classes et de l’école?

11. Aimes-tu te faire aider par tes ami(e)s ou d’autres élèves de ta classe en français? Et en dehors classes et de l’école?

12. T’es-tu déjà fait aider en français par un(e) ami(e) dont la première langue est le français? Est-ce que tu as aimé ça? Y-a-t-il une différence quand tu te fais aider par un(e) ami(e) en français dont la première langue n’est pas le français? Si oui, est-ce que cette personne est francophone? As-tu aimé ça? Ou c’était quelqu’un qui apprend le français comme toi? Si oui, préfères-tu cela?
G. Parent Interview Protocol

1. Combien d’enfants avez-vous et quels âges ont-ils?

2. Quelle est votre expérience avec la langue française?

3. Dans quelle langue est-ce que votre enfant joue à la maison?

4. Cette langue diffère-t-elle dépendamment des enfants avec elle/il joue?

5. Encouragez-vous votre/vos enfant(s) à parler français en dehors de l’école?

Un jour, ses parents lui annoncèrent que la saison des migrations débutait et qu’il fallait s’y préparer. Aussi, ils organisèrent un pique-nique à la Mare aux nénuphars, à une heure de vol de là. Voyant son fils muet devant l’annonce du départ, la maman de Facob exigea qu’il lui montre comment il volait. Après un décollage plutôt chancelant, il s’éleva de quelques
centimètres dans les airs avant de tomber dans l’eau. Les larmes aux yeux, le petit Facob regrettait d’avoir menti, car il savait qu’il venait de décevoir sa mère. Cette dernière vint le rejoindre et le consola. Une fois les larmes de Facob séchées, sa mère lui confia qu’elle l’aimait beaucoup, qu’elle l’aimerait toujours, même s’il faisait des erreurs ou ne réussissait pas du premier coup tout ce qu’il entreprenait. Elle le rassura en ajoutant que ses parents étaient toujours là pour l’aider et qu’il est normal d’avoir besoin d’aide.

Enfin, Facob apprit à voler en moins de temps qu’il ne l’eût cru sous la supervision de sa mère. Il découvrit qu’il aimait voler et prit plaisir à migrer avec les autres canards. Facob devint un canard heureux.

1. Qui est Facob?

2. Où Facob habite-t-il?

3. Avec qui Facob habite-t-il?

4. Quand Facob est-il né?

5. Quel but Facob veut-il atteindre? Encercle la bonne réponse.
   a) Chanter avec les grenouilles.
   b) Apprendre à voler.
   c) Donner des leçons de nage synchronisée.

6. Nomme un talent que possède Facob.
7. Quel problème Facob vit-il?

8. Que Facob décide-t-il de faire pour résoudre son problème?
   a) Il demande conseil à ses amies les grenouilles.
   b) Il demande l'aide de ses parents.
   c) Il décide de cacher ses difficultés à ses parents.

9. À quel endroit les parents de Facob organisent-ils un pique-nique?

10. Trouve le marqueur de relation dans le dernier paragraphe.

11. Comment l'histoire se termine-t-elle?
## I. Transcription Conventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(text)</td>
<td>note from transcriber (in parentheses and in italics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/---/</td>
<td>unintelligible speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% %</td>
<td>encloses utterances made simultaneously by two or more speakers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…</td>
<td>pause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>interrupted speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>underscore</td>
<td>indicates stress on syllables/words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>French to English translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[sic]</td>
<td>mistake in participant’s speech</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>