

Linguistic and Cultural Variation in the K12 French Classroom: The Role of Canadian
French

by

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Honors Thesis

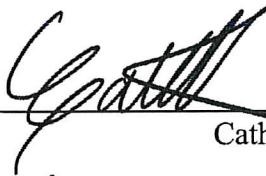
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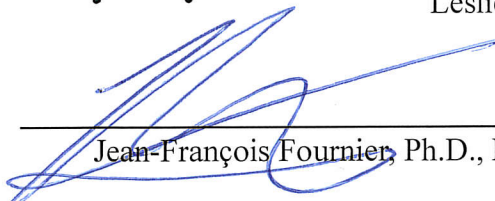
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Abstract

The Francophone world is a vast landscape full of diverse people and cultures that share a common linguistic identity through the French Language. The world is ever-expanding with thousands of new learners. There exist many varieties of French; however, Canadian French is the most distinct variety. The present study sought to explore three essential questions: are teachers aware of the linguistic differences? Do they integrate media from Quebec into their classrooms? Lastly, how do they perceive sociolinguistic attitudes towards Canadian French? A full literature review was conducted to examine current research on the topic and to see where this study would fit in at. A mixed-methods survey was used with over 100 French teachers from various backgrounds across the southeastern United States. Also, after the survey was completed, a statistical analysis was conducted so that conclusions could be drawn about the three essential questions. Teachers were mostly aware of key differences between the two French varieties. They did tend not to integrate media from Quebec as often. Also, attitudes tended to be more neutral than at first thought. Knowing these answers can be used to inform pedagogical practices in the classroom and reshape the usage of authentic materials in additional language learning. Also, teachers can be more aware of how their attitudes could affect their student's perception of the target language and culture.

Keywords: additional language learning, Canadian French, Francophone world, French, linguistic attitudes, pedagogy, sociolinguistics

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Introduction

There are three essential questions that I am trying to find the answer to by researching my topic. Are teachers aware of the linguistic differences between standard French and Canadian French? How often do teachers integrate media from Quebec into their classrooms? How do teachers perceive attitudes towards Canadian French among francophones? By answering these three essential questions I can accurately get a picture of the current state of sociolinguistic variation in the classroom. Also, I can see where there is room for improvement that could affect current pedagogical practices.

While answering the three essential questions and observing current practices in the classroom, I am also gathering data about current French teachers. It is very insightful to learn about the experiences of professionals already in the field. In addition to finding out more about the topic, I am also studying trends within French teachers that include, where have they traveled to, what languages do they speak, etc. Putting together the essential questions and the trends allows me to get a very rich picture of my topic.

Imagine the over one-hundred-million students learning French as an additional language across the globe. What variety of French are they learning is a question that is rarely asked. The francophone world is like no other in terms of diversity, but also the ideology of standardization. In terms of the romance languages French and Spanish both have language academies that regulate the language. However, in the francophone world “standard French”, the variety spoken by the elite in Paris, is still king, whereas in the Hispanophone world the situation is different. Everyone needs to remember that when a person learns a language they are unlocking not just a language, but a whole new world full of different people and cultures.

Especially, at the beginning level, language learners are at the mercy of their instructor to gain linguistic and cultural competence. If an instructor does not expose their students to the many varieties of French, then most students will not gain knowledge of the different varieties. This could go further if an instructor actively introduces any bias that they carry. If students inherit certain attitudes from their social networks early on in their language learning journey, it will be difficult to overcome them later in life.

I chose to study this topic because I am soon to be a French teacher in the K12 setting where most students begin to learn an additional language. There are no standards or guidelines that dictate what exactly a teacher has to teach to their students. While the ACTFL National Standards and NC Essential Standards for world languages provide teachers with a blueprint for the types of content and activities they should be planning for in the classroom, there is no set curriculum and no standardized textbooks or materials for teaching French at the K12 level in North Carolina. It is therefore an instructor's job to choose materials and activities that expose their students to as much variety as possible in order for them to be able to communicate in the real world.

During my secondary education, I started to learn French, and ever since then, I have been on a journey of self-discovery and rapid growth. Culminating with my studies in French and Francophone studies, I became interested in linguistics and how that fits in with my interests. Additional language acquisition and teaching also stood out to me. The topic of attitudes towards languages and its impact on many other facets of language usage is studied very often in the field of sociolinguistics, a subfield of linguistics that I am very interested in learning more about and conducting my own research in. Building upon sociolinguistics I have made the connection to the classroom. Education and pedagogical

practices are very important to me as an up-and-coming teacher. I also wanted to make my topic relevant for French teachers. By narrowing the topic of language diversity to its relevance in the French classroom, I was able to study an issue relevant in the Francophone world, having it tie into linguistics and more specifically sociolinguistics, and lastly connect with education.

In order to write a complete and thorough thesis, I first started by completing a literature review. I completed a wide search of reputable academic research available about the topic. I then analyzed many sources and made conclusions about where my research will fit in. After gaining a solid understanding of current research, I then started my study. I used a mixed-methods approach with a survey to gather data. Once a sufficient amount of data was gathered, I ran a statistical analysis to interpret the data. After all the data was analyzed I could draw conclusions and answer my essential questions. Finally, after everything was complete I could share my findings with academia.

Literature Review

Before diving into the literature review it is important to review the essential questions of the thesis. How are attitudes perceived towards Canadian French and what are its implications in the French classroom? A vast array of research has been surveyed in order to understand the current research in the field and where does this thesis fit in. Sources range from linguistic studies to histories of the French language. Research first centers on the historical context of the origins and spread of the French language across the globe and centers on Quebec. Next several studies were examined to get a perspective on attitudes of L2 learners, before moving on to sociolinguistic performance and pedagogical applications.

History of the French language: From Past to Present

The Francophone world has its roots in the eighth century when the first complete text was written as “Les Serments de Strasbourg” in French Romance (Walter 2003, p. 42). Since then the French language has evolved to cover the whole globe with a very diverse group of speakers. As varieties of romance languages developed in France during the Middle Ages, the country was divided between *les langues d’oc* (also called Occitan or Provençal) in the south and *les langues d’oil* in the north. In 1635 the Académie Française was created to create a new standardized French for France, based on *les langues d’oil*. According to Walter (2003), “the mission of its forty hand-picked members was to observe the language, supervise it, channel its development and contain its excesses, with the production of a grammar and especially a dictionary as part of its programme.” (p. 67) Nadeau & Barlow (2008) also note that, “all languages have three parts: phonetics (pronunciation), grammar and a lexicon (vocabulary), and each part changes constantly” (p. 24), and that it was decided early on that the Académie Française would have tight control over all three parts, and that French was to have a strong resemblance to Latin, from which it evolved. At the time the *Académie* was founded, most of the country was illiterate and only a select few had access to written language. This practice of standardization in France would help to maintain the written standard as the age of exploration dawned, and France began a process of colonial expansion that would take the French language around the world.

Throughout the French colonial empire, connections began to be formed between the American and African colonies. As mass migration from Africa to the Americas occurred, mostly due to slavery, a new linguistic phenomenon was birthed. From the mixture of French and various African languages, pidgins were created and later formalized into creoles.

The most notable example is Haitian Creole, though several French-based creoles are still spoken in the Caribbean, alongside more standard forms of French (Aub-Buscher, 1993). On the other side of the French-speaking Americas, in New France, “a linguistic phenomenon was taking shape that was almost the opposite of Creole. In its early days the colonists were reputed to speak French as well as or better than it was spoken in France” (Nadeau & Barlow, 2008, p. 103). The newly standardized French that *l’Académie Française* had developed seems to have taken hold to at least some extent in many of the new French colonies.

Canadian French and French-based Creoles have a long intertwined history. Both Canada and the Caribbean were settled around the same time and mostly by the same people, “this explains certain features of Creole vocabulary in particular (and, since Canada was settled about the same time and often by people from the same regions in France, it also accounts for certain lexical similarities between Canadian French and Creole)” (Aub-Buscher, 1993, p. 200). Creoles were formed in diglossic situations and they are not regarded by everyone as true languages. This inferiority complex expressed by some claims that, “it lacks the vocabulary to express complex abstract thought. This is a somewhat circular argument, since if Creole were called upon to express scientific or philosophical ideas, the necessary terminology would be created or borrowed, just as happened in the late Middle Ages when French had to take over functions until then fulfilled by Latin” (Aub-Buscher, 1993, p. 204). Looking at history when the Roman Empire collapsed, Latin was the de-facto language used throughout Europe. French and the other romance languages had to fill the gap left behind. The way some feel about creoles is the same as some francophones feel towards Canadian French.

Since Parisian French is the standard of the French language, all variants in the Americas do not derive from it, “since the settlers who came to the colonies were for the most part not Parisians, they also brought with them terms from their own regional dialects...If these features can be traced back to France (and incidentally also occur in Canada)” (Aub-Buscher, 1993, p. 211). As time went on France’s empire was slowly chipped away at by other powers, most notably the British when France lost the Seven Years War. As a consequence of this war, France was given the option to keep either New France (Canada) or the Sugar Islands (Haiti, Martinique, & Guadeloupe). They chose the Sugar Islands, meaning that in Canada the French-speaking population lost its direct tie to France. The only thing that protected their rights to maintain their linguistic and cultural practices was the Quebec Act of 1774, which gave them some sovereignty and allowed them to keep both their French language and their Catholic religious practices. Nadeau and Barlow (2008) point out that as a consequence of this separation, “French in America was very different...Linguistically, it was the first time that any European language had been completely cut off from its origins and evolved separately from the source of their language” (p. 213). The mid-1700s marks when European and Canadian French varieties started to clearly deviate from each other. With the Canadians cut off, standard French evolved into a dominant language in politics, art, and business of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, while in Canada the French language did not change in the same ways. Nadeau and Barlow (2008) note that, “at first it was not the Canadiens’ French that changed, it was the French spoken in France. Alexis de Tocqueville remarked repeatedly that New France was in fact an Old France—both in speech and in mores” (p. 232).

During the early nineteenth century status and corpus planning was in full swing in *La Belle Province* and in the rest of Canada. Early on, “Il faut cependant souligner que, même s’ils ne s’entendaient pas sur la variante «correcte», ils s’entendaient néanmoins sur une chose, la «bonne prononciation» devait être celle des classes instruites de Paris” (Bouchard, 2011, p. 99). At this time the two varieties of French were starting to drift apart. People did not have in mind exactly how and what they wanted to speak. What was known was that they would use the educated Parisian pronunciation over regional ones.

Some distinct markers were also starting to emerge in Canadian French. One was that Canadians tended to pronounce the final *t* on some words such as *juliet* or *calumet*. In regard to, “ce trait de prononciation que Juneau considère comme l’un des plus typiques du parler canadien, que John Lambert dénonce comme une « corrupt practice »...Suivant Juneau, il serait dû à l’influence des parlers de l’Ouest...Ce serait donc un provincialisme de prononciation, plutôt qu’un archaïsme” (Bouchard, 2011, p. 107). Lambert sees this as being a cruel practice that does not fit with the standard. Juneau sees the marker as being distinct to Quebec and not as an archaic pronunciation. He also points out how Quebec has received influence from the west, in this case he is referring to the United States.

Fast-forward to the present day and French around the world has evolved tremendously from the past. However, due to the historical contexts described above, there still persists an attitude amongst francophones of a hierarchy of Frenches. It is very clear that, “France remains to this day the focal point of standard French whether true or imagined” (Nadeau & Barlow, 2008, p. 369). This ideology of a set standard language has changed very little over the past four centuries. There are some changes; such as when in 2006 Larousse, a popular French dictionary, added many terms from Quebec (Nadeau &

Barlow, 2008). Another difference between the Frenches is how, “anglicisms play completely different roles in European and Quebec French. In France they convey a certain chic. In Quebec, anglicisms are a clear marker of class and education” (Nadeau & Barlow, 2008, p. 234). Here another situation of judgments can be seen; the same phenomenon occurs in both varieties; however, in one variety it is seen as chic and in the other dull. The Académie Française and other purists in French have held control of the standard language for centuries by maintaining an ideology that sets European French above other varieties. As Nadeau and Barlow (2008) put it, “what francophones don’t seem to understand is how discourse on the decadence of French is used to camouflage the real motives of the most extreme purists” (p. 389). However, with the advent of 21st-century technology, it is becoming harder and harder for the purists to maintain their grip on the French language. In the age of constant communication and global connections, languages have to be able to change with the times, and the value of gatekeeping by language purists’ intents on limiting the natural change in language needs to be questioned.

Attitudes of L2 Learners

When looking at attitudes towards different varieties of French a population often overlooked is L2 learners of the language. It is more important that new learners of a language are not subjected to the biases of their social networks, as they will carry them from the start. Rachel Lindberg and Pavel Trofimovich, two professors in the department of education at Concordia University in Montreal, had the same idea and decided to conduct a study. The study was designed to address two essential questions, “do L2 French learners demonstrate any biases toward Quebec French” and, “how are learners’ French listening comprehension and speaking performance as well as exposure to and experience with

Quebec French related to their attitudes toward this French variety” (Lindberg & Trofimovich, 2020, p. 826). 106 residents from Quebec were chosen and they all had some level of a college education. Participants listened to two recordings, each recording had a different twenty-one-year-old female from Metz, France who are native speakers of French. Participants listened to both recordings and then made their judgments.

After the study was completed it was found that, “participants appeared to have attributed certain positive descriptors more frequently to the European French guise than to the Quebec French guise” (Lindberg & Trofimovich, 2020, p. 833). It could be seen that the participants did not judge the recordings very differently; however, through the qualitative responses, it could be seen that they did hold some bias against Quebec French. For speakers who preferred Quebec French, they tended to have reported better experiences in Canada and they had larger social networks with Quebecois speakers. Overall there were not many strong RLS (reverse linguistic stereotyping) which is in this study, “a more likely explanation...is that we targeted two native varieties, where ratings could depend on listeners’ familiarity and experience with each variety” (Lindberg & Trofimovich, 2020, p. 836). The researchers did not see as much variance in attitudes as what was predicted. It is interesting that the lack of variance could have been due to some speakers not being familiar enough with different varieties of French.

A decade before the present study, Kang and Rubin (2009) from Northern Arizona University and the University of Georgia studied RLS, a fundamental phenomenon in the 2020 study. They defined reverse linguistic stereotyping as, “the converse of the linguistic stereotyping hypothesis. In RLS, the speaker’s language pattern is not the trigger to stereotyping processes but rather their object. In RLS, attributions of a speaker’s group

membership cue distorted perceptions of that speaker's language style or proficiency" (p. 442). The unfamiliarity of a speaker can in fact lead to misassumptions of a speaker's language as can be seen in Lindberg and Trofimovich's study.

Building upon the familiarity of language, Lindberg and Trofimovich (2020), "expected that lower level learners...would display more neutral attitudes toward the Quebec French guise compared to higher level learners" (p. 837). This hypothesis had been backed up by other studies in the past, however, in this study, the results did not support such a hypothesis. In the field, one could say that lower-level learners would know what "proper French" sounds like, even if they themselves cannot attain such a level of proficiency at the moment. So in their minds, they know what the goal is and they could tell what is not. Higher-level learners, on the other hand, have greater mastery of the language and they have a higher level of linguistic competence, making them more able to appreciate variances in language.

With regard to variance in language, is the idea of registers and formality. Most languages have a formal and informal register that is used appropriately. In the Caribbean this phenomenon appears to be absent, however, "in situations where the Parisian...would change to *français familier*, the average Martinican or Mauritian can turn to Creole...This no doubt in part explains why the French of some people from Haiti or the French West Indies appears stilted or excessively formal to speakers from France" (Aub-Buscher, 1993, p. 205). Living in a multilingual society offers unique opportunities for language usage that are not possible in unilingual societies. In more informal situations the Martinican and Mauritian can code-switch and use a different language to communicate in.

Another study that looked at attitudes towards Canadian French in French-language education was conducted by Meike Wernicke of the University of British Columbia. This study looked specifically at “the SA[study abroad] experiences of K12 in-service FSL teachers from Western Canada who traveled to France on a provincial government initiated and funded professional development (PD) initiative.” (Wernicke, 2016, p. 6). The author used techniques of discourse analysis to explore, “the discursive constructions of participants’ experiences with authentic language and culture, and the relevance of these in constructing and identity as FSL teacher” (Wernicke, 2016, p. 6). Identities are the foundation of language learners, they have to create an identity with the target language. Interaction with authentic language and culture is a fundamental experience to becoming a speaker. However, when certain language ideologies exist, they can sour the experience and even affect the speaker’s relationship with the language.

Canadian teachers encountered many types of linguistic prejudice while in France. One excerpt from a teacher’s study abroad journal that illustrates the attitudes they encountered is, “I was told that ‘vous parlez le français ancien...Notre français continue à évoluer. Comment est-ce qu’il est possible que les Canadiens apprennent le français quand ils sont si loin de la France?’ I felt like the country bumpkin amidst the three Europeans” (Wernicke, 2016, p. 8). There are many judgments being made in this small excerpt, the most poignant being that Canadian French is ancient and that it has not evolved. The teacher in question who has a long relationship with the language now feels out of place and inferior. In a pedagogy workshop, “another teacher said, “Le problème avec Étienne, c’est qu’il parle avec un accent Québécois,” so the resource was not taken seriously/easily dismissed by several other teachers” (Wernicke, 2016, p. 9). In this case, an authentic resource is not

accepted as being valid due to the speaker having a Québécois accent. Not only do the teachers from France see the resource as inferior, but it is dismissed. This attitude would limit language learner's exposure to all varieties of the French language.

Authentic resources in the classroom have to come from all over the Francophone world. Education and more specifically in this case, language learning is deemed as essential in all parts of the world. Looking at French-speaking Caribbean, "in the context of the school, the model is the Parisian standard, but in many others a third entity enters the linguistic forum, viz. the local form of French, *le français local*" (Aub-Buscher, 1993, p. 205). It is difficult to decide how to speak when two varieties of the same language have to coexist yet they are used for different functions in life, and to complicate matters even more, one variety is used for more formal occasions due to the status planning that was performed. The L2 learner must be able to properly code-switch and if they cannot, then they will be judged by their peers as being uneducated.

Sociolinguistic Performance of the L2 Learner

June Ruivivar from Concordia University had their study published in "La Revue Canadienne des Langues Vivantes" in August of 2020. They decided to focus on L2 French Learners' sociolinguistic attributes and they affected their attitudes towards different varieties of French. Ruivivar (2020) expressed based on prior studies, "that spending time in the target language community promotes sociolinguistic development. However, there may be possible barriers to acquisition resulting from learners' desire – or lack thereof – to align themselves with the target language culture" (p. 244). This is where the question of motivation comes into play when determining the success of an L2 learner's sociolinguistic development. Twenty-one Canadian immigrants who attended a university in Quebec were

part of the study. One important condition of being in the study was that they had to have a desire to live and work in Quebec. The data collected included a one-hour sociolinguistic interview and a social network questionnaire. In order to negate the observer's paradox, the interviewer attempted to establish a connection with the interviewee and to make them feel as comfortable as possible to elicit unmonitored speech.

This study examined four sociolinguistic variables of the French language, which included, “*ne* deletion, first-person *on*, the *-tu* question tag, and subject doubling” (Ruivivar, 2020, p. 248). These variables are not unique to Quebec, at the same time they have a high prevalence in Quebec. Each participant was given an engagement profile to quantify why they were motivated to learn French. This was then compared with an analysis of their social networks to see if there were any correlations. Ruivivar (2020) concluded that, “Highly engaged learners had the most complex networks...Minimally engaged learners scored the lowest on all support measures except for practical and emotional” (p. 255). Their findings support the idea that dense and complex social networks play a role in highly motivated learners. In regard to the linguistic variables studied, highly and moderately engaged learners delete *ne* significantly more than the minimally engaged learners. Subject doubling increased with the level of engagement, while the decision to use *on* instead of *nous* did not change with the level of engagement.

The study’s findings are imperative to inform pedagogical practices in the second language classroom. It is important, “for sociolinguistic features to be given more attention...recommends teaching features that are frequently used in the community, are expected of L2 users, and facilitate language acquisition” (Ruivivar, 2020, p. 260). Many teachers do not incorporate such a curriculum into their teaching. Also, many French

teachers do not have much education in the field of linguistics and more specifically sociolinguistics. Certain features do have direct benefits to the learner if they are explicitly taught. As can be seen by the results of the study; it is clearly accepted that, “underuse of certain features may not represent incomplete mastery but rather a deliberate decision to express one’s identity by diverging from local norms” (Ruivivar, 2020, p. 260). When speaking about sociolinguistics, one must not forget about speaker identity in regard to the variation of linguistic features that are used by an individual. Language is a series of choices made by the speaker as their way of identifying with and using their language in a variety of tasks.

Methodology

In order to learn more about French teachers’ thoughts and perceptions about Canadian French, an anonymous survey was designed and distributed. In terms of question design there were in total nine required questions and three optional questions, of the three optional questions two were conditional based on answers to other questions. Refer to Appendix A for the full list of questions. There were many different types of questions used including short responses, multiple-choice, and Likert scales. On some questions, there were options to add additional open-ended responses not already on the survey. When creating the questions, it was decided very early on that all data gathered would remain anonymous to the researchers in order to protect identities and reduce any potential bias. A high priority was to always get the most responses as possible, and having only twelve questions is a relatively short survey. The researchers did not want any potential teachers to be dissuaded from taking the survey, due to length.

Of the twelve total questions, seven were used to gather demographic information about the participants. In regard to their teaching, they were asked which levels of French they taught, how long they have taught, and if they had ever taught in an immersion setting. These questions were designed to give the researchers a picture of who their participants were as French teachers. The next four questions asked about what their native language is, where they have traveled, and if they had stayed somewhere for over a month, all answers were based anywhere considered to be in the Francophone world. These four questions were used to identify a linguistic profile that corresponded to teaching profiles. Both profiles provide insight and context to the last series of questions.

The last series of questions directly pertained to the goals of the project. The three core questions addressed how familiar teachers are with the nuances between Canadian French and Parisian French, how often teachers use media from Quebec in their classrooms, and lastly how do they perceive attitudes towards Canadian French among francophones. The optional questions asked teachers to identify or elaborate on any specific media that they use. The final question offered participants the option to add any comments that were not addressed earlier in the survey. As will be discussed in the Results section, a plethora of extra insights were obtained due to having this final, open-ended question in the survey.

The survey was finalized on February 5th, 2021, and it was opened on the same day. The survey officially closed on March 7th, 2021, the survey was open for exactly thirty days. The goal from the start was to have around one hundred responses so that the data could be considered valid. The goal was reached and surpassed by promoting the survey to be closed so that the results could be computed.

The next task was to gather survey participants and in order to reach the largest group of participants possible an anonymous online survey was used due to potentially having a high respondent rate compared to other methods. Also, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this option was seen as the safest way to get results. Google Forms was chosen as the survey platform due to being popular and easy to use. Most people already have a Google account and do not need to use another application.

In the end, the survey obtained 106 responses. The survey was invitation only and respondents needed to have the link to be able to access the survey. Potential French teachers were chosen based on the availability of information on the internet. High school webpages were accessed and I looked at the staff directories or department pages. In order to raise the chance of finding teachers mostly larger school districts were chosen, however that was not always the case. For example, in Georgia, all respondents were pulled from the four largest districts in the state, which are Gwinnett, Cobb, DeKalb, and Fulton Counties. Once school districts were chosen each high school was looked at and the email address was collected of all French teachers if the information could be found. There were some challenges to this approach, sometimes it was not easy to find who the French teachers were, and/or their email addresses were unavailable. Also, many school districts do not employ a French teacher, such as Ashe and Avery counties in N.C.

Once a large number of email addresses had been collected a direct invitation was sent out with an introduction of the author and the project. Responses then came in large waves that corresponded to when invitations were sent out. In total over 250 teachers received an invitation to complete the survey, and 106 in total responded, a response rate of 39.3%.

Once the survey was completed and closed, the results were available in Google Forms, and the data was exported in the form of a spreadsheet. From there the raw data was exported to a program called StatCruch, which is a statistical computation and analysis web application developed by Pearson Inc. The web application is vital in allowing researchers to run various summary statistics on the data sets and to create corresponding charts and graphs and was used to help compile the results in the following section.

Results

The results of the survey showed interesting trends regarding the topic. A broad profile of educators was gathered and can be analyzed to help answer some essential questions. Here, I will break down the different data sets that were obtained from the survey. Then key results will be presented. The results will start with demographic data of the respondents followed by examining the essential questions of the survey (see Appendix B for full demographic data).

The first key piece of data gathered is what levels of French did the educators teach? There was a wide range of courses taught all the way from the elementary to the college level. Data did tend to pull to four categories being French I, II, III, and IV, each with over 74% of respondents saying that they taught that particular level. Following the top four categories was AP French with 45 respondents and Middle Grades French I with 29 respondents. The lowest two categories were French V with seven respondents and College French with four respondents (refer to Figure B1 for more details).

The next data point focuses on how long have teachers taught French, this question is complementary to the levels of French taught. There were four categories that respondents could choose from. 33.96% or 36 teachers said that they had taught for 20 or more years, the

highest category included in the survey and also the most chosen response. Next was 11 to 20 years with 27 teachers and then six to ten years with 25 teachers. Lastly was the one to five years with just 18 teachers choosing this category (refer to Figures B2 & B3 for more details).

Language is fundamental to the human experience and our native language is a key insight into who we are. In the survey, teachers were simply asked what is their native language? English as an L1 was the most common at 66.67% of respondents choosing it, and French was next at 17.14%. Many speakers also spoke English or French plus another language. Many African languages were spoken including Efik, Lingala, Berber, and two languages native to Cameroon, Mokpe and Keyang. The Caribbean languages Haitian Creole and Jamaican Patois were also represented. Several other world languages were also represented among teachers' L1 including Arabic, Italian, German, and Spanish. Lastly, in total, 13 different languages were reported as the teachers' native languages. (refer to Figure B4 for more details).

The following question focused on if teachers had ever taught in an immersion setting before, as immersion classrooms vary widely from traditional settings. An overwhelming majority of teachers have not taught in an immersion setting, with 79.25% saying no. The remaining 20.75% of teachers have taught in an immersion setting (refer to Figure B5 for more details).

Continuing with teacher profiles the following data points focus on where in the Francophone World have teachers visited. The first question asked generally where have teachers traveled to? A wide range of over 25 countries was reported spanning the entire globe (see Table B1 for more information). The next question was more specific and asked if

teachers had ever spent over a month in a French-speaking location. A majority of teachers with 82.08% or 87 teachers said that they had visited a place in the Francophone world. Only 17.92% of teachers reported that they had not spent over a month in a particular French-speaking location (see Figure B6 for more details).

The next data sets shift from teacher profiles to examining essential questions of the survey (see Appendix C for full essential question data). The first essential data looks at how knowledgeable teachers are of the differences between Parisian French and Canadian French (see Figure C1 for more details). The question was set on a Likert scale from one to five, one being least knowledgeable and five being very knowledgeable. The average is 3.764 and the median is four. The data is skewed left with a few outliers rating their knowledge on the low side of the scale. The standard deviation is 1.019, so the majority of respondents do not skew far from the mean.

The next data set examines how often teachers integrate media from Quebec into their classrooms (refer to Figure C2 for more details). This question was also set on a Likert scale from one to five, with one being rarely and five being often. Here the mean is 2.651 and the median is three. The standard deviation is 1.227 so data tends to be a bit more spread out. There are a few outliers, however, they are on the high side.

The last essential question focuses on how teachers perceive attitudes towards Canadian French among Francophones (see Figure C3 for more details). This question also used a five-point scale with one being negative and five being positive. The average is 3.142 and the median is three. The standard deviation is 1.037. The data is also skewed to the low end due to a few outliers.

Discussion

Now having summarized the results from the survey, it is appropriate to discuss and further analyze the results and their implications for the essential questions. Here I will go more in-depth with the results and discuss my own interpretations and conclusions based on the data.

Demographic Data

When looking at what levels of French that were taught by the survey respondents, it was unsurprising that the vast majority of teachers taught at the secondary level and that most taught French I, II, III, IV. These are the most common offerings provided by most high schools across the Southeast. Also, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate are offered by more schools each year. There were some respondents who said that they taught at the elementary, middle, and college level. When recruiting potential teachers, almost 100% of the participants were recruited based on the secondary level due to the wider availability of information. There was one Local Education Agency (LEA) where middle school French teachers were specifically invited and that was in Winston-Salem Forsyth County schools.

In regard to looking at how long teachers have taught, I was expecting the data to hover in a normal distribution pattern with the majority of teachers being in the five to ten year or 11 to 20 year range. This is somewhat true being that 49.05% of teachers fall into this range. The most common category is the 20 plus range with 33.96% of teachers falling into it. The numbers show that the teachers in my survey have been teaching for a longer time than the average teachers. This is important to take into consideration because the level of experience of teachers can affect their views of curriculum and instruction.

One's native language will always be a major part of their identity and it will affect any other languages that a person learns. Having 13 different native languages spoken across 106 participants represents a high level of linguistic diversity. Knowing the main demographics of the sample population, that is, teachers in US schools, having English as the most common native language was on par with early expectations. The second most common language is French. Again, surveying French teachers, this was somewhat expected. Looking at the data, 10.47% of respondents said that they had more than one native language. All of these participants spoke at least French and/or English as one of their native languages. It is important to remember that around the world the majority of the population does speak more than one language. The most languages spoken was by a participant who has four native languages which include French, English, Mokpe, and Kenyang. Having multiple native languages opens the door to increased linguistic competence, but could lead to hierarchical attitudes towards some languages and varieties.

Immersion programs for language learning are becoming increasingly more common and mainstream in schools all over the country. These immersion classrooms vary widely from traditional world language classes and due to the many potential differences in pedagogical practices, it is necessary to differentiate the two settings. Having seen that almost 80% of teachers in the survey did not teach in an immersion setting it can be concluded that most of the teachers do not implement immersion practices in their classrooms.

In order to examine sociolinguistic attitudes, a whole picture of experiences has to be gathered about the participants. Looking at where they have been can greatly affect many factors including social networks, sociolinguistic attitudes, and levels of competency in the

target language. In terms of where in the francophone world French teachers had spent time, I had not expected a certain outcome, as the variety of places where people have been could be quite immense. This variety was confirmed in the data and over 25 different places were reported. There were some common trends in that most people reported having been to France and Canada. These two places specifically are very popular as France is the origin of the Francophone world and Canada is just up to the north for our Southeast teachers. Many African countries were also visited including Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, all in the Maghreb Region, and countries outside of the northern part of Africa including Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Turning to the Caribbean *les régions d'outre-mer* were visited including Martinique and Guadeloupe. Lastly, in Asia, Cambodia and Vietnam were visited; these countries are also considered part of the francophone world due to being former colonies of France. The wide plethora of places visited indicates that the teachers are well-traveled and have experienced every corner of the Francophone world. Allowing for greater exposure to the target culture and a more complex relationship with “la langue française”.

Building upon the question of where have teachers traveled to was another question asking if teachers had ever spent more than a month in a particular French-speaking location. With 82.08% of teachers saying yes, the majority had indeed spent extensive time abroad. There were many reasons given for having spent extra time abroad including the opportunity to study or teach outside the US. Also, several respondents are from other countries than the United States and would have spent significant time in their countries of origin. There is no question that spending more time in a French-speaking country will enhance the speaker's identity with the target language and culture. Having a majority of teachers who have spent

extensive time abroad adds to their expertise and teaching ability. For the 17.92% of teachers who had not spent over a month abroad, there are many reasons as to why this has occurred. Some had said that they did not have the resources to. I suspect that due to the ongoing Covid-19 worldwide pandemic there will be a temporary increase in world language teachers who have not been able to spend more extensive time abroad immersed in the target language.

Essential Questions

Shifting to the essential questions and their associated data, I will start with looking at if teachers know the linguistic differences between Parisian French (the standard) and Canadian French. Originally I had expected the data to be normally distributed with a slight skew to the right. Differences or alternatives are not always taught to students and it is at the discretion of the instructor to do so. However, the results were basically the opposite. With a median of four most teachers indicated that they know more than the average about the differences between the two varieties of French. This question serves as a first step to investigating the issue. If teachers are not aware of differences then how could they teach differences to their students? Also, how can they integrate media and perceive attitudes towards Canadian French? Knowing that teachers are aware of the differences is promising.

Media from the target culture is an essential component to language learning. Teachers should strive to integrate media from all areas of the Francophone world into their classrooms. With a median of three, most teachers said that they use media from Quebec sometimes. Out of the responses, 21.7% of teachers said that they rarely use media from Quebec. In this case, teachers are tending to not use media from Quebec very often. If teachers are not integrating media from Quebec into their classrooms, then how are students

supposed to be exposed to the different varieties? It is necessary to represent all of the Francophone world when teaching students. France is the birthplace of French; however, it is not the only identity. A conscious effort must be made to expose students to all varieties of French.

In terms of the media that is used from Quebec, I received many examples of materials used by the teachers. The most popular example cited was the use of YouTube for all kinds of content. This makes sense as YouTube is a free application and it has one of the largest libraries of videos in the world. Textbooks were also commonly cited as many do incorporate some aspects from Canadian French. Other applications such as TikTok and Google Chrome are also cited. These applications have a wide range of content and are very popular. Also, a newer trend is listening to podcasts. Podcasts have been around for a long time, however, it has only become trendy in the past few years. The regular radio and other places such as Spotify or Apple Podcasts offer many podcasts from Canadian personalities. It is great to see that 21st-century global technological connections have enabled such a diverse amount of media to be shared around the world with teachers and students.

Moving on, language attitudes are an essential part of sociolinguistics. They may be seen as hidden, however, their effect is very obvious with deep ramifications. I had originally expected attitudes to fall on the lower half of the spectrum, meaning less favorable views of Canadian French due to my own perceived knowledge of the current attitudes towards that variety. In reality, 45.3% of respondents chose three, indicating that most felt that attitudes are neutral, and 29.2% of participants were above the median of three, versus 25.5% below the median. Looking at the data now attitudes tend to be neutral and gravitate towards the higher end of the scale. The data shows that attitudes towards Canadian French

are generally not negative. This goes against my original hypothesis; however, that is a good thing in my opinion.

At the end of the survey, I asked a question to all respondents, if there was anything else that they would like me to know. Almost half of the respondents left a message in this section and the insights these comments provide are very eye-opening and allow me to make more meaningful connections with my topic. For example, one respondent explained how the “French loves French Canadians and they usually called *nos cousins Canadien*”, indicating that there is an amicable relationship between the two cultures; whereas other survey respondents had a more neutral view of the relationship. One respondent felt that the, “Canadian accent is so particular, it takes time/practice to understand...I would compare to the British versus Southern American accent”. In this case, the person is suggesting that the phonological differences are what makes the Canadian variety difficult for other speakers.

In a more negative light, one teacher stated, “last I’d heard the French regarded the québécois accent the way some people look down on English speakers with a southern accent/dialect”. In the U.S. English world, the collection of varieties that are found in the southern states are sometimes seen as improper or inferior to other varieties in the country. The respondent is implying that the same phenomenon takes place in the Francophone world with standard French and Canadian French. Another teacher feels that, “there are some vocabulary and pronunciation in the Canadian French language that seem anglicized that feel wrong”. The impact of anglicisms in the French language has been a heated topic in debate all over the Francophone world. Every variety has a different level of anglicisms based on many factors. However, for this teacher, the anglicisms in Canadian French do not feel natural and therefore the language is inferior for them.

Shifting to a focus on the classroom there were many remarks that provided additional details about pedagogical practices that teachers employ in their classrooms. One teacher stated that they, “also discuss a lot how Louisiana Cajun French has evolved and its connection to Canadian French etc. I feel that this is extremely important culturally as well”. As was discussed earlier there was a great presence of French in the Americas in the late 18th century. This educator is making meaningful connections by exploring all varieties and their relationships to each other to provide context for relations in the 21st century. Another teacher pointed out that, “students seem to engage easier with Québécois material because the Canadian French world feels more tangible to them”. This is an observation that is not always thought of amongst French teachers. The Canadian French world is much closer for students in the southeastern region of the country. It is great to see teachers making connections close to home.

On the other side of the coin one teacher states that, “it is important, especially in the lower levels, to focus on ONE area of French. Just like...you cannot learn Canadian and Parisian French together...Just like British English is world-wide standard, Parisian French is taught predominantly as well”. Here, the instructor is suggesting that the integration of both varieties can be too much of a challenge for novice speakers. The influx of additional phonological and lexical differences could be overwhelming for some. However, in my opinion, introducing alternative vocabulary and structures will lead to a more competent speaker who can draw from a richer lexicon. Also speaking about differences, one teacher thinks that, “American teachers are promoting a negative version of Canadian French calling it a dialect that can be hard to understand. I never heard of Americans speaking a dialect of English comparing them to English from England being much better”. The sociolinguistic

attitude that they reference is one that is believed to be made up by U.S. French teachers. Based on other trends in the survey, a high number of teachers reported being taught by mostly French instructors, so that is what they are most comfortable with. The promoting of a negative stereotype of Canadian French is one based on experience and familiarity. In essence, it is a revolving door, if teachers start integrating more of the Candian variety, then their students will become more comfortable and stop promoting a negative attitude towards Candian French.

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Appendix A

Image A1

First Set of Survey Questions

4/18/2021

Linguistic & Cultural Variation in the K-12 French Classroom

Linguistic & Cultural Variation in the K-12 French Classroom

This survey is entirely voluntary and is part of an undergraduate honors project in French K-12 education at Appalachian State University. Your responses will be completely anonymous and data from this survey will be shared only with the author and the honors thesis committee members.

This survey should take about 5-10 minutes and all responses are appreciated!

Any questions should be directed to Brody Helms at helmsbz@appstate.edu, or Catherine Fountain at fountainca@appstate.edu.

* Required

1. Which levels/courses of French have you taught? (check all that apply) *

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Elementary
☐ Middle Grades Exploratory
☐ Middle Grades French I
☐ Secondary French I
☐ Secondary French II
☐ Secondary French III
☐ Secondary French IV
☐ AP French

Other: ☐

2. Have you taught in an Immersion setting? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Image A2*Second Set of Survey Questions*

4/18/2021

Linguistic & Cultural Variation in the K-12 French Classroom

3. How long have you taught French? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1-5 years
☐ 6-10 years
☐ 11-20 years
☐ 20+ years

4. What is your native language(s)? *

.....

5. Which francophone countries/regions have you visited? *

.....

6. Have you ever spent more than a month in a Francophone region? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7. If yes, where?

.....

Image A3

Third Set of Survey Questions

4/18/2021

Linguistic & Cultural Variation in the K-12 French Classroom

8. How familiar are you with the differences between Parisian French and Canadian French? *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Least Knowledgeable ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Knowledgeable

9. Do you use media (books, films, tv shows, news, music) from Quebec in your classroom? *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Rarely ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Often

10. If yes, what specific materials do you use?

11. How do you perceive attitudes towards Canadian French, among French speakers? *

*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Negative ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Positive

12. Is there anything else that you would like to add regarding this topic?

Appendix B

Figure B1

Levels of French Taught and Relative Frequency to the Total

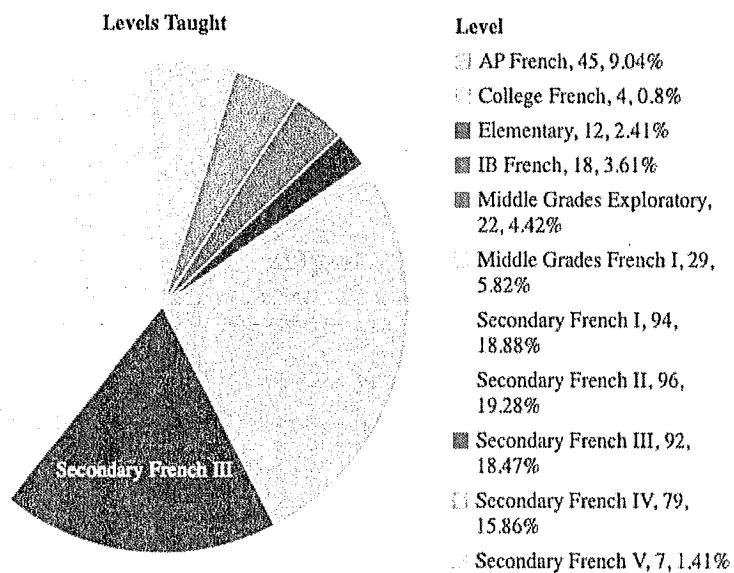


Figure B2

Frequency of Teachers by Years Taught

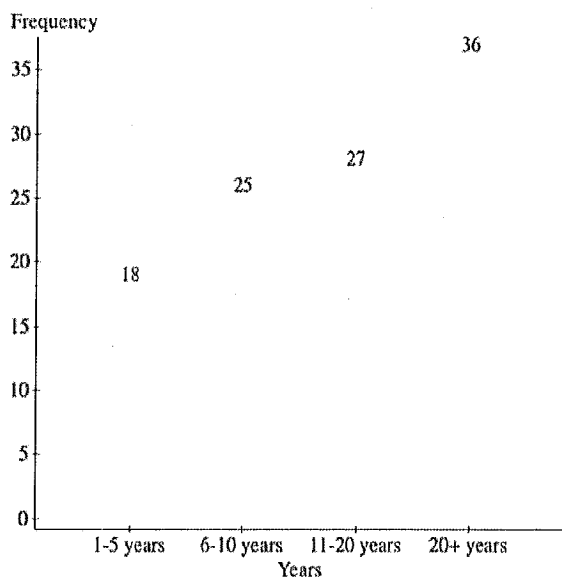


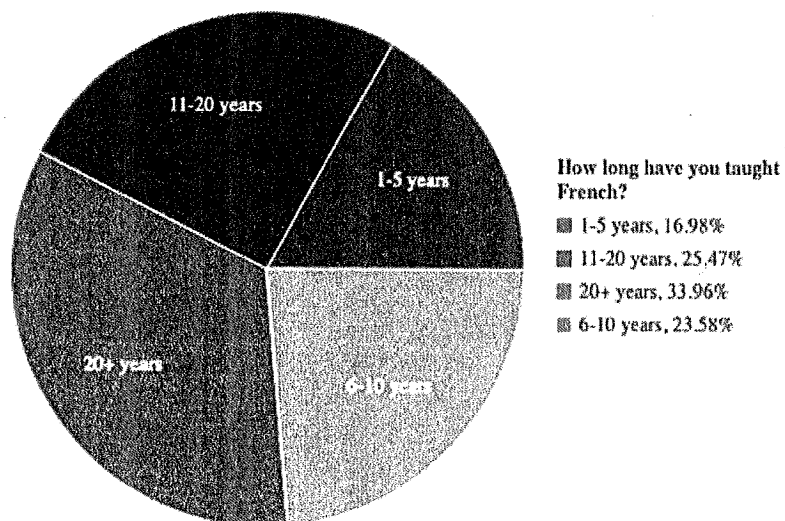
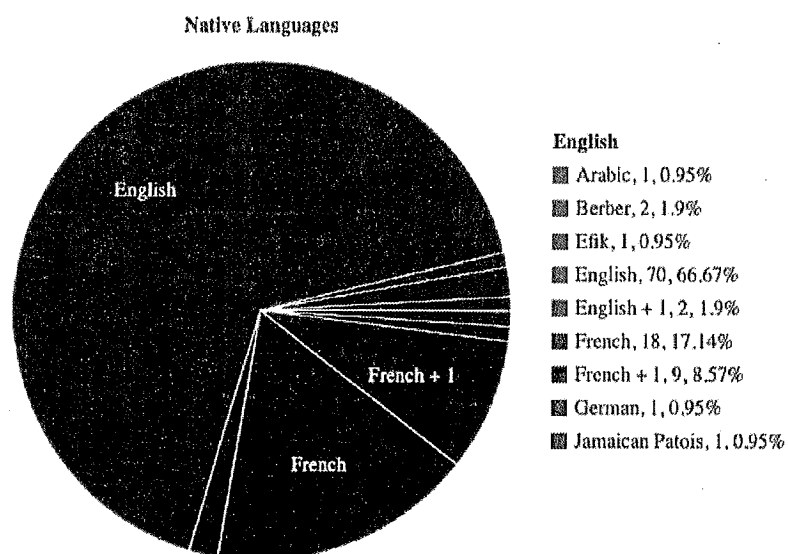
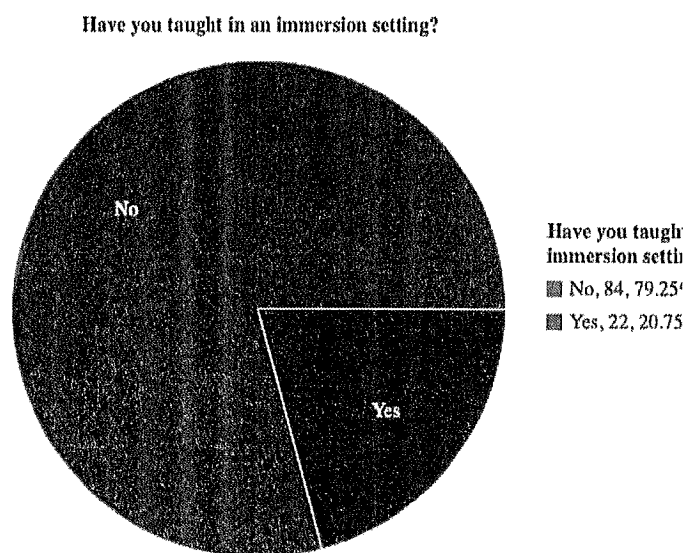
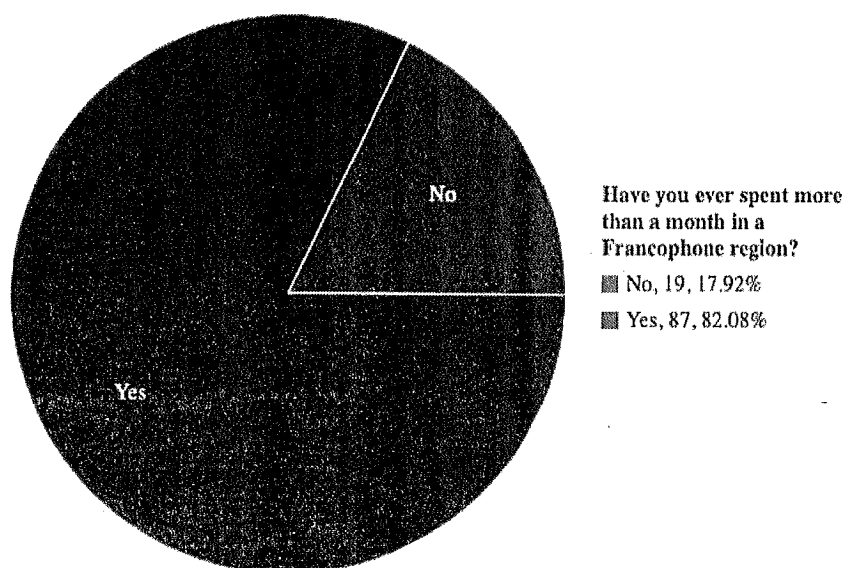
Figure B3*Relative Frequency of Teachers by Years Taught***Figure B4***Relative Frequency of Native Languages Spoken*

Figure B5*Number of Teachers who Have Taught in an Immersion Setting***Table B1***Francophone Locations that Teachers Have Visited*

Algeria	Canada	Haiti	Martinique	Switzerland
Belgium	Congo	Ivory Coast	Monaco	Tahiti
Benin	France	Luxemburg	Morocco	Togo
Cambodia	French West Indies	Madagascar	Senegal	Tunisia
Cameroon	Guadeloupe	Mali	St. Martin	Vietnam

Figure B6

Number of Teachers who Have Spent Over a Month Abroad



Appendix C

Figure C1

Teachers Knowledge of the Differences Between the Two Frenches

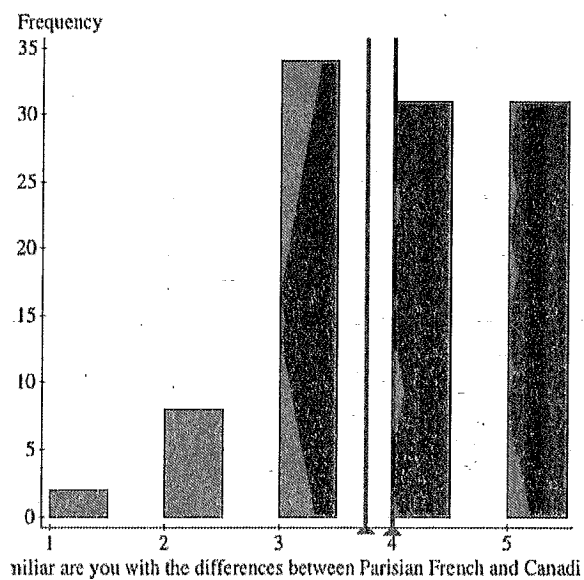


Figure C2

Integration of Quebec Media in the Classroom

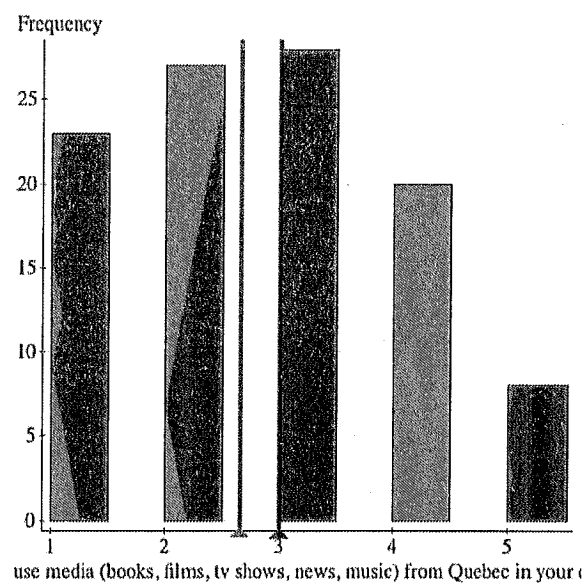


Figure C3*Perceptions of Attitudes Towards Canadian French*