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Evaluating the Use of the L1 in a French
Language Classroom

Joyce Esther Hiaumiti Guidi

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Evaluating the Use of the L1 in a French Language Classroom

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Researchers have explored how different balances of first language (L1) and target language (TL) use in a foreign language classroom impact students' fluency and proficiency in TL acquisition. Research has shown that the use of the L1 in a foreign language classroom is done in order to determine the most effective way to raise the proficiency of second language learners to the level that is expected within their classrooms (Lee & Muncie, 2006). The use of the L1 is not something that is uncommon, even in the highest levels of foreign language instruction, although some believe it could inhibit learner growth in target language (TL) acquisition (Tanveer, 2007). Some scholars contend that there is a place for the L1 to be used in a second language classroom, rather than relying on complete usage of the TL (Biggs, 1999). Results have been mixed when it comes to whether or not the L1 should be used as much as the TL, and studies have seldom investigated what students and teachers believe regarding that matter.

To this end, the present study examines the impact of the use of the L1 vs the use of the TL on 50 students at different levels in the French language classroom. Subjects were all enrolled in French classes ranging from the 101-level to the 201-level, and the 8 student instructors teaching these levels also participated in this study. Both a student survey and a teacher survey were administered at the end of the semester in order to look at the use of the TL vs the use of the L1 among students and teachers in their classrooms.

Results show that the utilization of the L1 in foreign language classrooms is preferred by the students but that it is not fully justified. Numerous proponents of L1 use (Atkinson, 1987; Cook 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Wells, 1999) have cautioned against excessive use, instead recommending that it be used judiciously, and according to learner need. Future researchers might consider surveying students who are learning in an environment where L1 use is similar to student demand on this survey (very high, especially for things like giving instructions), as well as surveying students who are exclusively using TL in their learning environment.

Keywords: first language (L1), proficiency, target language (TL), French language classroom, ACTFL, code switching, learning tasks

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“To have another language is to possess a second soul.” Charlemagne

Research Problem

It is the goal of teachers that their students be as proficient as possible in the language they are being taught. To achieve that goal, teachers seek ways to improve the receptive and productive skills of their second language learners. Among the many techniques that they employ, teachers may experiment with how much they use their students' native language (L1) as opposed to their target language (TL) when teaching. This is done in order to determine the most effective way to raise the proficiency of second language learners to the level that is expected within their classrooms (Lee & Muncie, 2006).

Background

When determining the balance between L1 and TL use in the classroom, views vary from teacher to teacher. As a result, many hypotheses related to striking the balance between the L1 and the TL have emerged within the last century. One notable example is the Direct Method, which consists of a dialogue between student and teacher exclusively in the TL. This method focuses on listening and speaking skills as students intend to be able to do direct communication using the target language (Djauhar, 2021). A contrasting technique is the Natural Approach. The core of the Natural Approach classroom is a series of acquisition activities. For acquisition to take place, the topics used in each activity must be intrinsically interesting or meaningful so that the students' attention is focused on the content of the utterances instead of the form. It is also through acquisition activities that the instructor will (1) introduce new vocabulary, (2) provide the comprehensible input the students will utilize for acquisition, (3) create opportunities for student oral production, and (4) instill a sense of group belonging and cohesion which will

contribute to lower affective filters (Паславська, 2019). These two techniques may be as far 80 years apart, although the discussion continues as to whether exclusive use of the TL or balancing the TL with the L1 is superior. (Cook, 2001; Wells, 1999).

In a second language classroom, instructors have a finite amount of time with which they can help their students become proficient in the target language. Teachers may benefit from research that helps to identify the right balance between the use of the L1 and the TL when teaching, which will maximize students' learning potential. Having this information at hand might also reduce the amount of time that teachers need to spend on deciding how to balance the L1 and the TL in their classrooms, granting them more time to focus on helping their second language learners to improve their receptive and productive skills.

Gap in the Research

Krashen and Terrell's Natural Approach states that there is an emphasis on exposure, or input, rather than practice; optimizing emotional preparedness for learning; a prolonged period of attention to what the language learners hear before they try to produce language; and a willingness to use written and other materials as a source of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1983). These ideas appear to have been developed as Krashen and Terrell observed the behavior of their students over the course of their respective teaching careers. Similarly, many of the hypotheses regarding L1 vs TL use in the classroom seem to focus their research on things like classroom observation and test results. While these research methods have led to important evolutions within second language acquisition, there may be a benefit to approaching research in other ways. The Direct Method and Natural Approach were a revolution at the time that they came out and continue to have an important influence on the field today. However, the field has moved on in many ways, such as with the advent of the American Council on the Teaching of

Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines. The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines stipulate that 90% or more of the target language should be used in the language classroom. One of the ways that this study will attempt to set itself apart from traditional research methods is by surveying second language learners directly throughout multiple levels of French language study. This will be done in the interest of discovering their level of reception to being taught using different amounts of the L1 and the TL, with special attention paid to the techniques that they use to improve their receptive and productive skills.

The Rationale

In addition to teaching and developing curriculum, second language teachers must be able to identify and adapt to the needs of each member of their class. Deciding whether they should use the L1 at all when teaching is entirely left to the discretion of the teacher. Surveying second language learners directly may be an effective way to quickly identify what amount of L1 (if any) and TL teaching they feel would be most beneficial to their learning, and proactively determine how to maximize their language acquisition.

Thesis Overview

The current thesis seeks to answer the indirect questions mentioned in the previous paragraph. To do so, the thesis consists of five chapters. After this introduction, Chapter 2 lays the foundation for the thesis by presenting a review of literature on the different aspects of using the L1 vs the TL in the language classroom. I then turn to Chapter 3 where I explain the research design of this study. Next, Chapter 4 presents the results of statistical analyses for the use of both French and English in the language classroom with the survey results from the study. Finally, in Chapter 5, I discuss these results in light of the research questions. The implications of the study, as well as the limitations and the suggestions for future research, will also be presented.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The Rational for Target Language Use

As mentioned previously, there is a debate regarding the best way to go about second language teaching. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) claims that the target language should be used 90%+ of the time in the second language classroom in order to maximize proficiency development amongst students (ACTFL, n.d.). ACTFL also states that teachers should constantly aim to provide full immersion in the target language except if there are reasons not to do so (ACTFL, n.d.). There are several different reasons behind the why some instructors continue to use the L1 in the second language classroom. Some of them will use the L1 to clarify information regarding the target language, such as its vocabulary, sentence structures, or things that might be of cultural significance. The use of the L1 is not something that is uncommon, even in the highest levels of foreign language instruction, even though some believe it could inhibit learner growth in target language (TL) acquisition (Tanveer, 2007). Some researchers will contend that there is a place for the L1 to be used in the second language classroom instead of complete usage of the TL (Cohen, 2014).

Some justifications have been found for using the L1 in second language teaching. For example, some scholars say that the L1 can be useful for effective planning of organizational goals and to ease student comprehension of vocabulary in the target language. When the L1 is used for planning, the connections that students are able to form between the L1 and the TL are better reflected. When used to help students understand TL vocabulary, the L1 gives students a tool to both provide explanations to fellow classmates as well as enhance private speech (Storch & Aldosari, 2010). Although there are those who will defend maximum target language use in second language teaching (Savignon, 2018; Widdowson, 1978), research has shown that teachers

will use both the L1 and the TL in a foreign language classroom (Chang, 2009; Ferguson, 2003; Macaro, 2001; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002).

In linguistics, code-switching “is defined as the alternation of languages in an utterance” (Zhang, Yi, Tian, Tao & Bai, 2021). Because some second language instructors will code-switch during class, some scholars (Kang, 2008; Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie, 2002; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003; Swain and Lapkin, 2000) have reconsidered the target language-only position. Rather than remove a student’s native language completely from a second language learning environment, those same scholars would approve of using the L1 to help generate language, evaluate understanding, give directions, and clarify sentence structure. Several assertions have been made to promote favoring the L1 vs the TL for things such as providing scaffolding for tasks, bridging the gap from L1 use to target language use, enhancing the structure of course material (Swain & Lapkin, 2000), and raising the motivation and the interest students might show towards the target language.

A few studies have demonstrated the advantages of using the L1 to help students become familiar with the target language. For instance, Villamil and de Guerrero (1996) analyzed the speech of Spanish-speaking college learners while they were engaged in peer modification of their TL (English) compositions. The results of this study appeared to demonstrate that “the L1 was a fundamental device for making meaning of content, recovering language from memory, investigating and extending content, managing their activity through the assignment, and looking after exchange” (p. 60). Additionally, Swain and Lapkin (2000), performed an assessment of L1 use by twenty-two sets of eighth grade French immersion students as they finished a dictogloss (language teaching technique used to teach grammatical structures, in which students form small groups and summarize a target-language text) and jigsaw assignments. Swain and Lapkin found

that if the learners had not engaged in the use of the L1 as a method for positioning and cooperation in completing the assignments, then those assignments might not have been completed as appropriately or might not have benefitted the students whatsoever. Moreover, Hsieh (2000) found that interpretation, one method for using the L1, improved her students' capacity to study English in terms of jargon learning, building a social foundation, as well as understanding awareness and procedures. Despite the fact that there are clear advantages to the judicious use of the L1 in the foreign language classrooms, there are many who still argue that it should never be used, such as education systems in Korea and Taiwan (Pan & Pan, 2010). In some cases, these systems contain strict rules that prohibit educators from using the L1 in their classrooms at all. Regardless, a fair amount of research has concluded that when the L1 is used informatively, it tends to be a facilitative device that will improve the language capability of learners.

The Arguments for and Against the Use of the L1

Those who support maximum exposure to the target language defend this argument in saying that it will allow students to be better at their target language capacities (Kang, 2008; Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie, 2002; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003; Swain and Lapkin, 2000). Therefore, these advocates say that the use of the L1 deprives students of opportunities to speak and hear the target language. On the other hand, some say that increasing the use of the TL does not and need not imply that it is counterproductive for an instructor to use the L1 under appropriate circumstances (Turnbull, 2001). According to Turnbull, when utilized properly, the utilization of the L1 in TL learning can be useful. Still, it is vital that the over-the-top utilization of the native language be kept away (Turnbull, 2001). The utilization of the L1 in a foreign language classroom cannot be seen a simple alternative (Turnbull, 2001) to teaching in the target

language, but rather a tool to assist learners. Harmer (2001) states that the overuse of the L1 restricts the students' exposure to the target language and continues suggesting that the use of the L1 to a great extent in TL learning will be a hindrance to achievement in the target language. Additionally, a study by Atkinson (1987) posits that too much dependence on the mother tongue in the foreign language classroom can have some of the following disadvantages:

1. Unless they have been translated into their native language, teachers or students feel that the language items will not be understood.
2. The teacher and/or the students fail to observe distinctions between equivalence of form, semantic equivalence, and pragmatic features, and thus oversimplify to the point of using crude and inaccurate translation.
3. Although students have the ability to express what they mean in the target language, they will speak to the teacher in their native language.
4. Students will fail to realize the importance of the second language (p. 246).

Despite these possible disadvantages, some researchers still feel that switching between the target and the native language can be a feasible method for improving learners' ability in the target language, as long as it is done intelligently. Those in favor of L1 use in the classroom argue that not using the L1 in the classroom denies TL students an important instructive device (Swain & Lapkin, 2000). This assertion somewhat depends on the Interactionist Learning Theory, which proposes that input alone is insufficient for language acquisition (Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996). To allow target language input to become target language uptake, there must be cooperation between TL students and different speakers. Many TL students view the L1 as a basic device in the learning procedure, since they spend time talking to fellow students and teachers (Villamil & de Guerrero) and using the L1 regularly helps TL students create better

opinions and judgments about the language. An instructor's use of the L1 can help learners to create a model of the target language that is compatible with their understanding, and thus advances learning.

Furthermore, the use of the L1 may help students in reducing the emotional fear and stress that they can sometimes feel when trying to learn a new language. L1 use can help to expand their trust in their ability to effectively understand the target language (Kang, 2008). For instance, Kang showed that beginning learners, as a rule, experience issues communicating or speaking with confidence, so they should be permitted to depend on the L1 to understand the TL. Kang noted that when the TL is the main medium permitted in conversations, new learners tend to stay quiet because of their worry about their ability to perform in the TL. However, when allowed to use both the L1 and the TL as ways of communicating for conversations, more investment and significant communication was noticed among new learners. In this way, the use of the L1 brings about an expanded readiness by new learners to speak and express their thoughts in the target language.

To reiterate, there are many advantages that promote L1 use in the classroom, but its overuse may have disadvantages as well. This is especially true for those who consider as much TL exposure as possible to be the best practice. Auerbach (1993), referring to ESL students, states that "the more students are exposed to English, the more quickly they will learn", and in order to learn it, they need to be "forced to use it" (p. 5). However, Ruiz-Funes (2002) states that only when the input in the TL is meaningful are students then able to learn and acquire the TL in a successful way. Ellis (2005) also suggests that the more exposure to the TL, the more and the faster the students learn.

Seligson (1997) sees using the target language (in his study, English) only as a way of giving students the needed amount of exposure to the TL. He states, “By using English most or all of the time in class, you give students vital listening practice, and the opportunity to respond naturally to spoken English” (p. 22). According to this author, using the TL also changes the atmosphere in the classroom considerably, allowing the teacher to “establish much more personal contact with the class in English, breaking down some of the traditional teacher/student barriers” (p. 24). Finally, using the TL in the second language classroom makes the TL a real communicative tool.

When it comes to the use of the L1 in the language classroom, it is necessary to carefully manage its use. For instance, Atkinson (1987) recognizes various possible undesirable outcomes of an overuse of the L1 such as when teachers and/or students feel as if they can only be understood when they are using the L1, using inaccurate translation, not taking into consideration the semantic and pragmatic features of the two languages. The L1 is also often used to speak to the teacher despite learners’ capability of expressing themselves using the TL. It is crucial to emphasize the importance of a TL “input-rich environment”, as Kim and Elder (2008, p.167) state because the success of the lesson depends on the manner in which the teacher uses the TL. Students must be given “optimal opportunities” for using the TL in a meaningful way (Kim & Elder, 2008, p. 167). Bouangeune (2009) goes further and concurs that many scholars in the field wonder how students can truly appreciate the TL if they continually rely on their L1 in the classroom.

Scrivener (2005) proposes various ways to use the L1 in order to help students realize that they will be somehow “rewarded” for using the TL (p. 102). These include the teacher’s positive response to every effort at using the target language, spending a lot of time on fluency

activities without corrections, establishing communication as a goal rather than accuracy, and discussing the point of a particular activity as well as negotiating the ground rules for the language used in the class. According to Seligson (1997), the key factor in minimizing the usage of the L1 is not to accept the students' usage of the L1 in cases when they are able to say it in the TL. He suggests that a teacher should prompt students to repeat what they have said again using the TL before moving on. As Burden (2001) points out, many teachers believe that as the classroom is often the only source of exposure to the TL for the students, the TL should be used as much as possible. Finally, Ellis (2005) agrees with the goal of maximizing the use of the TL and calls for the TL to be "the medium as well as the object of instruction" in the process of teaching and learning (p. 8).

The Positive Effect of the L1

Some second language instructors accept that the most ideal way for students to become skilled in the target language is to think in that language (Levine, 2003). As pointed by Macaro (2005), input change may encourage back-and-forth writing, yet it does not help students in their grasping of complex language information (e.g., language used by experts, expressions, and sentence structure). Macaro's explanation of why this was as follows: if instructors avoid code switching to the L1 to present an expression (e.g., "raised in the gutter") and instead use a summarized form (brought up badly or by poor parents), learners, especially those with lower ability levels, may be kept away from more detailed and nuanced language learning. Macaro hints that both languages should be used because such practices might cause instructors to treat their adult students like small children, instead of the intelligent and advanced people that they are.

The L1 in the classroom satisfies dual functions: to help students who are lacking in their ability to comprehend the TL and as a successful plan to create a positive, emotionally invested learning environment. Both of these seem to exercise a positive influence on the learners' TL learning in couple of ways. First, they secure the smooth flow of classroom communication processes, and these are not hindered by low TL proficiencies. Second, they help create a supportive classroom that helps students lower their emotional filter, something that acts as a barrier to second language acquisition.

A few researchers have welcomed the results of using the L1 in foreign language teaching (Anton & Dicamilla, 1998; Bergsleighner, 2002; Cipriani, 2001; Gallagher & Colohan, 2017; Greggio & Gil, 2007; Kang 2008; Shin, Dixon & Choi, 2020; Storch & Willesworth, 2003). For instance, Anton and Dicamilla's investigation, in which five sets of Spanish-speaking EFL adult learners led English writing tasks, uncovered some of the ways that the L1 is beneficial. These included showing encouraging support and excited interest whenever an activity was completed successfully, as well as helping to make harder and harder assignments more doable. Anton and Dicamilla argue that the use of the L1 is useful for learning since it helps learners with the completion of their assignments and gives them a social and mental space where they help each other complete their work. Moreover, allowing students to think in the L1 helps increase the learning of more and more complex ideas in the target language.

Other studies such as Lally's study (2000) sought to compare the effects of English language brainstorming activities conducted in a French class in terms of their effects on the coherence of compositions drafted by intermediate-level college French students. The results uncovered that learners who arranged a writing task in the L1 got higher scores for compositions written under time constraints with the help of a computer-assisted writing software. In another

examination by Cohen and Brooks-Carson (2001), it was observed that learners who used the L1 had increased comprehension when they had to write and speak in the target language. Their study explored an alternative approach to short essay writing on language assessment tasks. Thirty-nine intermediate-level French students performed two essay-writing tasks. The first was to write directly in French as well as in their first language. The second task was to translate from their first language back into French. Two-thirds of the students did better on the direct writing task across all rating scales while one-third did better with translating from their first language back to French. While the raters found no significant differences in the students' grammatical scores across the 2 types of writing, differences did emerge in the grammatical scores for expression, transitions, and clauses. The students reported that they were often thinking in their first language when writing in French, suggesting that the writing tasks were not necessarily distinct from one another, as in both situations students relied on their first language to complete the task. However, since the study was intended to simulate writing situations that students encounter in typical classroom assessments, the findings suggest that direct writing in French as a target language may be the most effective choice for some learners when under time pressure. In an examination of oral participation lessons in a beginner group, Cipriani (2001) saw that the L1 use was one of the tools that encouraged oral participation among educators and students. Her study illustrates and analyzes some patterns of oral participation strategies identified in the discourse of the teacher and students in a class of beginners in a foreign language. Patterns of oral participation strategies were observed to help students and teachers to initiate and expand conversations in English in the classroom. In total, sixteen classes were observed, recorded, filmed, and analyzed. Her results uncovered that an educator could use the L1 to clarify jargon, to communicate tasks, and to urge learners to talk in English. Moreover, the

students' utilization of the L1 as an oral strategy empowered them to keep communicating in English.

In another case where the L1 was used as an oral communicative strategy, Bergsleighter's (2002) evaluation of language and composition in a pre-intermediate EFL classroom showed that when the L1 was used by students, they were able to be more flexible in their speech and worked with their teacher to accomplish tasks. She also found that the L1 was allowed by the instructor to encourage their learners' understanding of grammar topics in the target language. Furthermore, Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) looked at information gathered from 12 sets of college ESL learners as they worked on a short joint composition task. They showed that the utilization of the L1 promoted meaningful conversation on the topic given to them, allowing the learners to easily finish the task. In addition, the use of the L1 helped these students in defining obscure words more effectively.

Another study took place where Greggio and Gil (2007) recorded twelve class meetings of Portuguese-speaking beginner EFL learners. They established that the teacher of the class used the L1 as a framework to help clarify the punctuation and the contribution of feedback. Learners used the L1 as a practical learning method to both explain their comprehension of course content and as a method for taking an interest in class conversation. In light of these outcomes, Greggio and Gil offer the recommendation that the L1 may assume a significant role in the promotion of exchange between classroom members in target language learning.

Other studies seem to support this hypothesis as well. For example, Liao's (2006) examination concerning the role that the L1 plays for Taiwanese college students learning English identifies three strategic functions in the learners' use of the L1. To begin with, learners use the L1 as a memory system to improve their capacity to remember words, idioms, grammar,

and sentence structures. Second, the L1 is utilized as an effective tool for diminishing learning tension and expanding students' desire to learn their target language (English). Third, students use the L1 as a social methodology to help them in forming questions or helping out others and this, therefore, advances their learning outcomes. Expanding upon these three key capacities, Kang's (2008) contextual analysis of a Korean EFL instructor, demonstrated that the teacher used the L1 for academic reasons, for example, clarifying language, sorting out tasks, managing students, and administering tests. Moreover, the learners showed a positive reaction to their teacher's L1 use in that it improved their comprehension of the course curriculum and kept up their enthusiasm for learning English.

The L1 may facilitate classroom exercises because the use of the L1 gives a useful scaffolding that helps students in understanding their learning tasks and grasping more concept ideas in the target language. While numerous researchers (Cook, 2001; Harbord, 1992; Turnbull, 2001; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002; Wells, 1999) concur that the L1 can be an important asset in the foreign language classrooms, they warned that teachers should not rely upon it entirely. To these researchers, the L1 should only be used to facilitate the gain of knowledge in the TL, facilitate interpersonal interactions, and increase efficiency. They also suggest that teachers use the L1 to consolidate knowledge that students have acquired about the TL, such as the vocabulary, the sentence structures, and the cultural aspects.

Research Questions

The discussion in this chapter leads directly to a number of questions. Consider for a moment that previous research on the impact of the use of the L1 and the use of the TL has produced somewhat mixed results that are not necessarily easy to compare, maybe because of the

different ways used to measure those variables, or because the “why” behind the use of both languages have not been fully explained. For these reasons, I pose the following questions:

- 1) Do students of French at varying levels of language study prefer different degrees of the L1 and the TL use in a language-learning environment?
- 2) For which tasks do students of French express a particularly strong preference for the L1, and for which learning tasks do students express a particularly strong preference for the TL?
- 3) For which learning tasks do teachers and students mostly use the L1 and for which learning tasks do teachers and students mostly use the TL?

It is expected that the use of the TL only in the French language classroom will have a positive impact on the acquisition of the target language (French) by the students. This approach should benefit the students in terms of proficiency and fluency both in writing and speaking because this way of teaching (being fully immersed in the target language) will have helped them produce entirely in the target language.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In order to answer the research questions, I conducted the study outlined in this chapter. I will describe the participants in this study, and I will detail the procedures, tasks, and instruments used to collect data. I will conclude by showing how the data were analyzed and what statistical tests were run.

Participants

The participants in this study were split into two different groups. The first group of participants of this study were 50 students of French 101, French 102 and French 201 (9 males, 45 females, 2 who decided not to mention their gender). These courses are offered at Brigham Young University, a large, private university. The undergraduates' level of oral proficiency ranged from Novice Mid to Advanced Low according to proficiency goals set forth for each class at the end of the semester based off the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. These levels of proficiency were determined by analyzing and studying each level of proficiency in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines though no OPIs were performed. The ages of the participants varied from 18 to 53, with an average age of 22.1. Five of the participants were non-native English speakers, and each of those were native Spanish speakers. Subjects were recruited from the 12 French sections (101, 102, and 201 offered by Brigham Young University's French and Italian Department). In total, 50 of the 116 students (43%) who were enrolled in French 101, 102 and 201 during the Fall 2019 semester responded to the survey, and 8 out of 11 teachers (73%) responded to the teacher survey. The second group of participants in this study were 8 instructors of French 101, 102 and 201 (5 males, 2 females, 1 who decided not to mention their gender). Their ages varied from 21 to 23, with an average age of 22.1. Each instructor who took part in the survey was a native English speaker.

All these French classes took place every day from Monday through Friday, lasting for 50 minutes each. Only one class of each section was administered through Zoom. All the other ones were meeting face-to-face each day. Whether the classes were on Zoom or face-to-face, the program, syllabuses, exams, etc. were exactly the same.

Procedures

Instructors of French 101, 102 and French 201 at Brigham Young University are instructed to exclusively use the target language. The only times when they are encouraged to use the native language is when talking about academic deadlines or clarifying activities and assignments to make sure that the students know exactly what is expected of them. Therefore, the results from the students' surveys are an accurate representation of how that target language requirement is received by the students. Each instructor has been trained to only use the target language and uses the native language only for the reasons stated previously.

The surveys that students and instructors participated in were distributed using a survey generating software called Qualtrics. Brigham Young University provides all students and teachers a license to use Qualtrics. In addition to being a tool for distributing surveys, Qualtrics was used to create visualizations for the responses to those surveys, such as the histograms seen within the body of this thesis. For additional visualization and analyses, the raw data from these surveys were exported from Qualtrics and into Microsoft Excel.

The researcher wrote two different surveys to be administered to two groups with one being made up of all of the students and the other made up of the instructors (see Appendix A and B). The questions asked in these surveys were based on my experience as a French student instructor at Brigham Young University with other questions written in order to answer the research questions of this thesis in particular. Lastly, some other questions were inspired from

previous research done within other second language classrooms such as Spanish and Portuguese. After the surveys were completed, I had them reviewed by the IRB office as well as by my thesis committee to ensure that all questions were relevant to the study and not just asked for curiosity fulfillment. When the study was approved, I proceeded to put the surveys online, using Qualtrics. I then sent the links of the surveys to the instructors of the three levels of French that I was researching and asked them to share the link to the survey with their students so they could complete it at their leisure. I then also asked the instructors to take the instructors' survey as well on their own time and if they desired to do so. All participants were asked to take the surveys on their own time, and everything was completed on a voluntary basis. No compensation was given for completing the survey.

Instruments

Student Questionnaire

Students and teachers were coded in according to the order in which they responded to their respective surveys. Students were also categorized between male and female, depending on the gender the indicated on the questionnaire. A student labeled (F2), would be the second female student to respond to the student survey, while a teacher labeled (T1) would be the first teacher to respond to the teacher survey. The researcher created and prepared a questionnaire (including 37 questions in total) in order to solicit information to determine student preferences in French 101, 102 and 201 classrooms when it comes to assignments, textbooks, as well as the use of the target language and the L1 to learn French (see Appendix A). Students were not compelled to answer every single question of the survey. Therefore, some questions showed more responses than others, depending on if students wanted to answer or skip the questions. The first part of the questionnaire consisted in learning more about the student's background when it

comes to French (previous exposure, family members who speak French, etc.). The next part of the questionnaire looked at the student's motivation when it comes to learning the French language and if they were thinking about pursuing the language in higher levels or not. I then moved to asking questions about the preferred teaching techniques the students liked better. I finished the questionnaire with an entire section dealing only with the use of the L1 vs the TL inside the classroom during activities, exchanges, etc. The questions asked in this survey were based on my experience as a French 101 student instructor at Brigham Young University and previous research.

Teacher Questionnaire

In addition to obtaining student survey results, a questionnaire (36 questions in total) was given to teachers to better understand how they balance L1 vs TL use in the classroom (see Appendix B). The first part of the questionnaire consisted in learning more about the teacher's background when it comes to French (previous exposure, family members who speak French, etc.). The next part of the questionnaire looked at the teacher's use of the L1 vs the TL inside the classroom during activities, exchanges, etc. The last section of the questionnaire consisted of learning more about the teaching techniques used by the teacher inside the classroom. The questions asked in this survey were also based on my experience as a French 101 student instructor at Brigham Young University as well as on previous research.

Data Analysis

The survey data were collected and interpreted using data reporting and analysis software from Qualtrics as well as the descriptive statistics tools found in Microsoft Excel. These surveys contained both qualitative and quantitative questions, all of which have been reviewed and summarized by the researcher. Quantitative data have been analyzed using the graphs and

reporting tool found on Qualtrics and the qualitative data has been analyzed after reviewing each answer provided by the students who responded to the open-ended questions of the survey. Each response was assigned a number in order to differentiate between the individual students. They were organized into categories, more specifically by research questions. The qualitative data were reported in tabs, Word documents, highlighted paragraphs and so forth, thus allowing the researcher to go over each answer one-by-one and sort them out into categories for analysis. The results have been shared in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

The first part of this chapter presents the results of the Mixed Model Analysis. These results are organized to answer the research questions in the following order: Do students of French at varying levels of language study prefer different degrees of L1 and TL use in a language-learning environment? For which tasks do students of French express a particularly strong preference for the L1, and for which learning tasks do students express a particularly strong preference for the TL? For which learning tasks do teachers and students mostly use the L1, and for which learning tasks do teachers and students mostly use the TL? The second part of the chapter will give the results of the qualitative analysis of the post-study that the participants took at the end of the semester of the study.

RQ1: Do Students of French at Varying Levels of Language Study Prefer Different Degrees of L1 and TL Use in a Language Learning Environment?

Results showed that students of French at varying levels of language study do indeed prefer different degrees of L1 and TL use in a language-learning environment. Much of this had to do with the fact that students in French 101/French 102 classes had a very hard time understanding what was being taught. The following quotes illustrate this point:

“When I don’t understand the grammatical rule, it is of no help to me to have the teacher explain it in French, I only feel more lost than before” (M1)

“Teachers who speak constantly in French make me discouraged because of how much of the lesson I feel like I'm missing. It also doesn't help when they ask (in French) if I understood, my vacant and lost expression should tell them I don't but I'm not about to admit that to the rest of the class and get labeled as the class dunce. I know that's childish for a 32-year-old but when surrounded by a bunch of 18–21-year old's who judge me for

my advanced age, it's hard to admit weakness. Additionally, for the longest time I didn't know how to say, "I did not understand" in French which is like adding salt to the wound of confusion and embarrassment." (F1)

"My French 101 class was immersion immediately and it was a nightmare." (M2)

The following answer from another participant shows that the desire for exposure to the TL changes from one level of French class to another.

"My teacher never explained anything in English and was not patient whatsoever. My French 202 teacher was much better because he spoke only in French but used almost only vocabulary we already knew." (F2)

Here is what another student had to say about their preference for how L1 and TL should be balanced in the classroom:

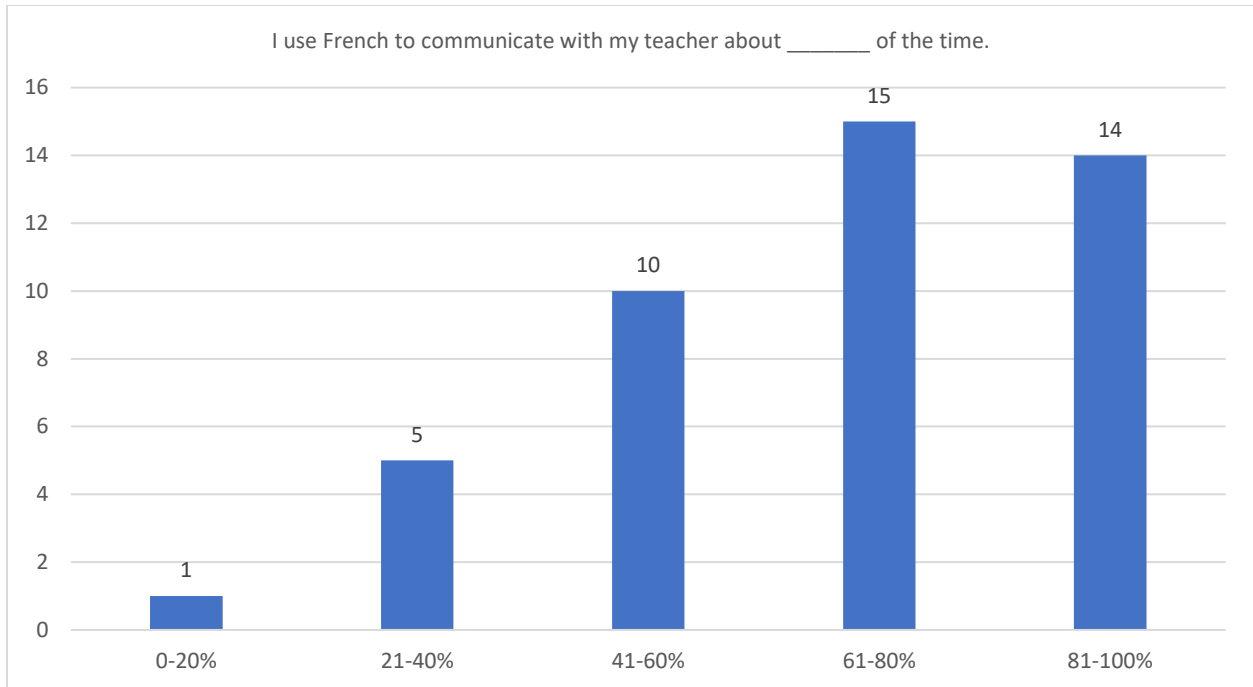
"I worry that I may not understand as well as I think I do, and my comfort isn't as high. However, towards the end of the semester for my 101 class, I felt more and more comfortable." (F3)

To better understand student preferences for the balance between L1 and TL, one of the questions included in the survey asked students what amount of time they typically used French to communicate with their teacher.

Figure 1

Percentage of Time Students Feel that They Use the TL to Communicate with their Teachers

EVALUATING THE USE OF THE L1 IN A FRENCH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

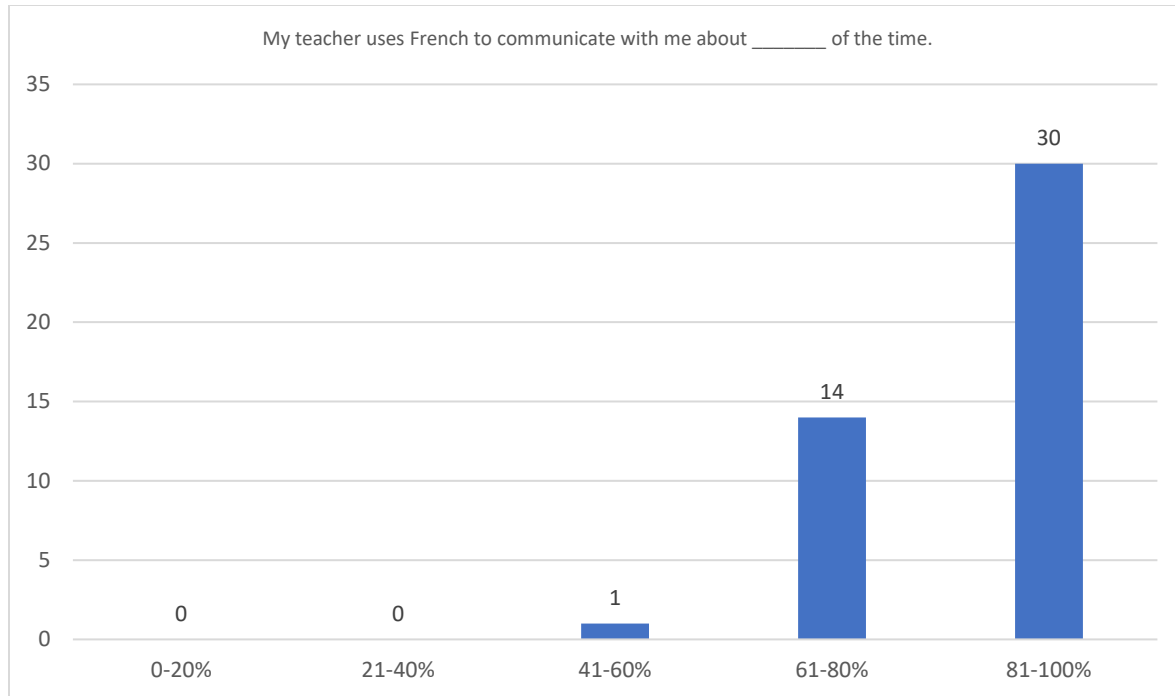


Here the results show that the majority of students used French in their classrooms from 61 to 100% of the time. There were ten students (20%) who said that their TL use was anywhere from 41-60% of the time, while an additional 29 (58%) said they used French 61% to 100% of the time with their teachers. This shows why many students would have liked more L1 use during class time.

Figure 2

Percentage of Time Students Feel that their Teachers Use the TL to Communicate with them

EVALUATING THE USE OF THE L1 IN A FRENCH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM



All of the students were also asked how often their teachers would use French to communicate with them answered that their teachers communicated in French from 41% to 100% of the time. There were 30 students (60%) who said that their teacher would communicate to them in French between 81% and 100% of the time.

RQ2: For Which Tasks Do Students of French Express a Particularly Strong Preference for the L1, and for Which Learning Tasks Do Students Express a Particularly Strong Preference for the TL?

Students may have their own opinions about whether to use the L1 or the TL for certain activities. Although preferences for this may vary from student to student, there appear to be a few consistent opinions as to when L1 use is more favorable for second language learning.

“It is helpful to use both the native language and French when learning the grammar.

Sometimes there are words or phrases that are unfamiliar to me as a student or a concept

that is harder to understand in French, and then the use of my native language usually clears up the confusion.” (F4)

“Sometimes other students wouldn't understand my French when doing group work because their comprehension level was not as high. I would explain things in English because otherwise the activity was awkward/didn't get done.” (F5)

Reading and cultural aspects of the language were mentioned but 90% of the answers were about oral tasks. In their responses, students reported that they felt group work was very ineffective for them because they could not understand their partner.

“One with partners that neither of us really understood, because it[s] hard to explain things or have things explained in another language.” (M3)

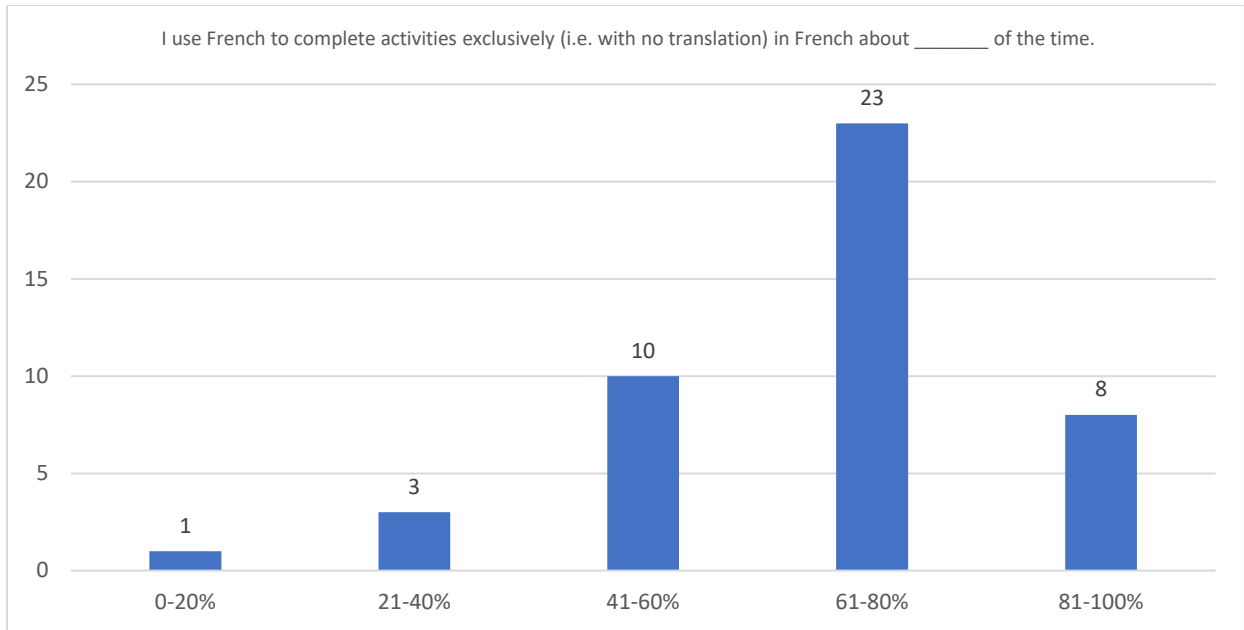
“Group/partner work. It's easy when you know you both understand one language completely — English.” (M4)

The following data (see Figure 3) provide further explanations regarding my second research question that seeks to see for which tasks do students of French prefer the use of the L1 and for which learning tasks do they prefer the use of the TL.

Figure 3

Percentage of Time Students Feel They Complete Activities Exclusively in French

EVALUATING THE USE OF THE L1 IN A FRENCH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM



Students were asked how often they only used French (the target language) to complete activities. Out of 50 students surveyed, 45 responded to this question. Of those 45 students, one (2%) claimed to exclusively use French between 0 and 20% of the time when completing activities. There were three students (7%) who stated that they would exclusively use French to complete activities between 21 and 40% of the time. Students who responded that they used French exclusively between 41 and 60% of the time made up 22% of the 45 responses to this question, or 10 total students. The majority of students who responded to this question (51% or 23 out of 45) said that they used French exclusively to complete activities between 61-80% of the time. Finally, eight students (18%) of all students who responded to this question said that they completed activities in French anywhere from 81 to 100% of the time. All responses considered, 31 out of 45 (69%) students would say that they use French exclusively for over 60% of their activities.

RQ3: For Which Learning Tasks Do Teachers and Students Mostly Use the L1 and for Which Learning Tasks Do Teachers and Students Mostly Use the TL?

Figure 4

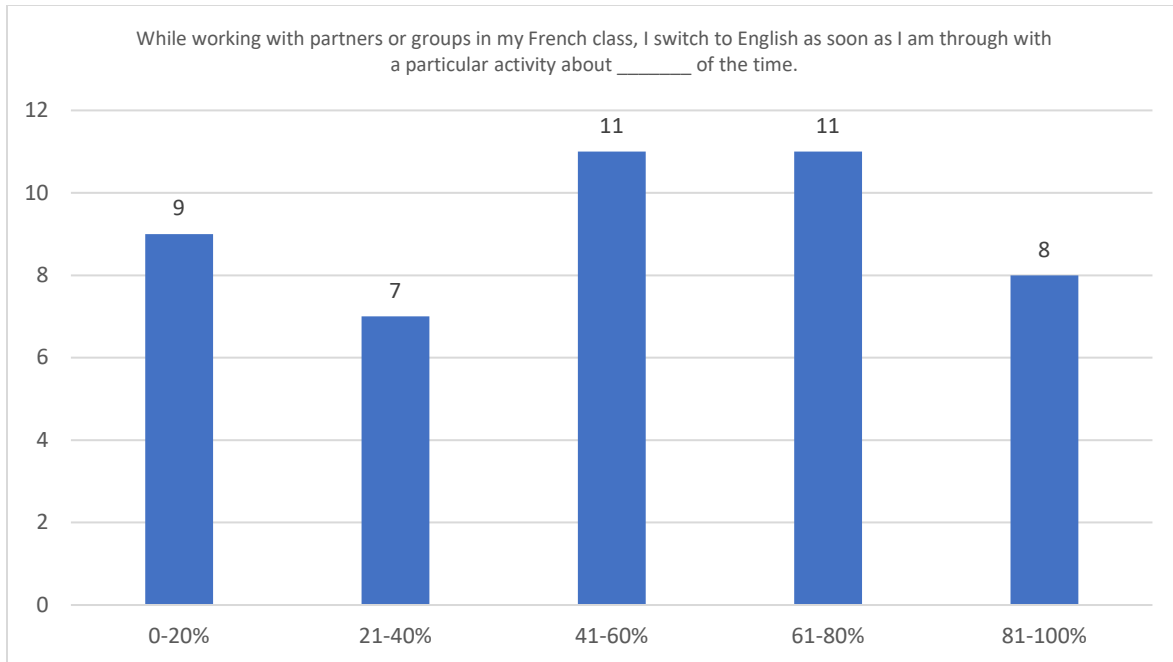
Question: What are some reasons that you would want to use your native language in class instead of French?	Total
I am lacking in vocabulary	33
Too difficult	30
I want to socialize	26
Using my native language is comforting	20
Lack of prior preparation	17
Emotional concerns	11
Problem with teaching methods being used	6
Sickness/physical issues	5
Teacher is unenthusiastic	5
Can't study at home	2
Lesson is redundant	2

An open-ended question was presented to the students asking them what were some of the reasons that they might wish to use their native language in class rather than French. As a desire to socialize, a lack of vocabulary and the material being too difficult all tended to be common reasons as to why students might favor using their native language, students were also asked how often they would switch to English from French as soon as they completed their group projects and activities. Some of the responses may fit into two or more categories, and thus the number of responses in the figure above will exceed the number of total respondents on the survey.

Figure 5

Percentage of Time Students Feel They Switch to the L1 After Activities

EVALUATING THE USE OF THE L1 IN A FRENCH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM



Students were asked how often they would immediately switch from French to English as soon as they were through with a particular activity. Out of 50 students surveyed, forty-five responded to this question. Of those 46 students, nine (20%) said that they would only switch back to English after completing an activity between 0-20% of the time. Seven (15%) said that they would switch back 21-40% of the time. There were 11 students who said that they would switch back to English 41-60% (24%) of the time, and an additional 11 (24%) who claimed they would switch back between 61-80% of the time. Finally, there were eight (17%) students who said they would switch back to English between 81-100% of the time after completing an activity in French.

Preferences between the L1 and the TL amongst Students at Different Levels

According to the survey results, there are students who would prefer to have their classes conducted mainly in English for a few reasons. Some said that learning French at BYU was their first exposure to the language, and because they felt the class was going too fast. For example,

one student said the following about their French 101 course, where their instructor would speak French for a large amount of classroom time:

“[In my] ...French 101 class, my teacher did this for half the class every day and it was pretty useless for beginning students, because no one in the class was able to speak more than a few words so it felt like a waste of time, and I didn’t progress until my French 202 class because my teacher used a lot more games and songs, which I found more effective.” (F5).

Some students said that because their partner was at a different level of understanding and speaking than they were, that they felt that group activities were not efficient and sometimes very frustrating.

“...our teacher spoke in French and while most of the class spoke French either on their mission or in a French class in high school, I had never taken any sort of class and had a desire to learn, but not the ability because I didn't even understand questions we were being asked, content we were being taught, or any class discussion so it was overwhelming...” (M4).

65% of the students who responded to the survey said that they were willing to enroll in higher levels of French in the future. It is possible that this is because some of the students who took the survey had already taken a previous French course, either prior to college or while attending BYU.

When to Use the L1 vs the TL according to Students’ during Learning Tasks

The results for this question seemed to be unanimous among all levels of French learners who took the survey. All participants stated that they would have preferred English use (L1) for

the following tasks like class breakout discussions. For example, one student stated they would prefer English:

“[During] group/partner work. It’s easy when you know you both understand one language completely — English.” (M5).

Another student said that they would prefer to use English when taking oral activities:

“Oral and written. I’m great at writing in French when I have an hour to pour over my book as I write but writing quickly is extremely difficult. Oral activities [are] just humiliating because I struggle to think on my feet (unless it’s in a game format...I don’t know why that is).” (F7).

Furthermore, some students reported that they preferred to use English “when asking questions about exams or tests to clarify answers,” (M6) as well as when receiving instructions about an activity “...all activities, but only at the beginning so I make sure I understand what I’m doing, and then I’m fine,” (M7), and when learning grammar principles “...[it] is difficult to learn / understand in my native language and I often [struggle] to understand why things are happening in French.” (F8).

When Do Students and Teachers Use the L1 vs the TL

Students mostly use the L1 when talking to their teacher, whether it be to ask questions, to answer questions, or to complete oral exams. For example, a student responded that they might use English to “...ask questions, or if the professor is explaining a particularly difficult concept, I would prefer it to be taught in my native language.” (M8). Another student shared that they would prefer to use the L1 for the following reason:

“When I don’t understand the grammatical rule it is of no help to me to have the teacher explain it in French, I only feel more lost than before; in those times it would be greatly

beneficial to explain it to me in English so I know I'm on the right track and not missing anything important.” (F9).

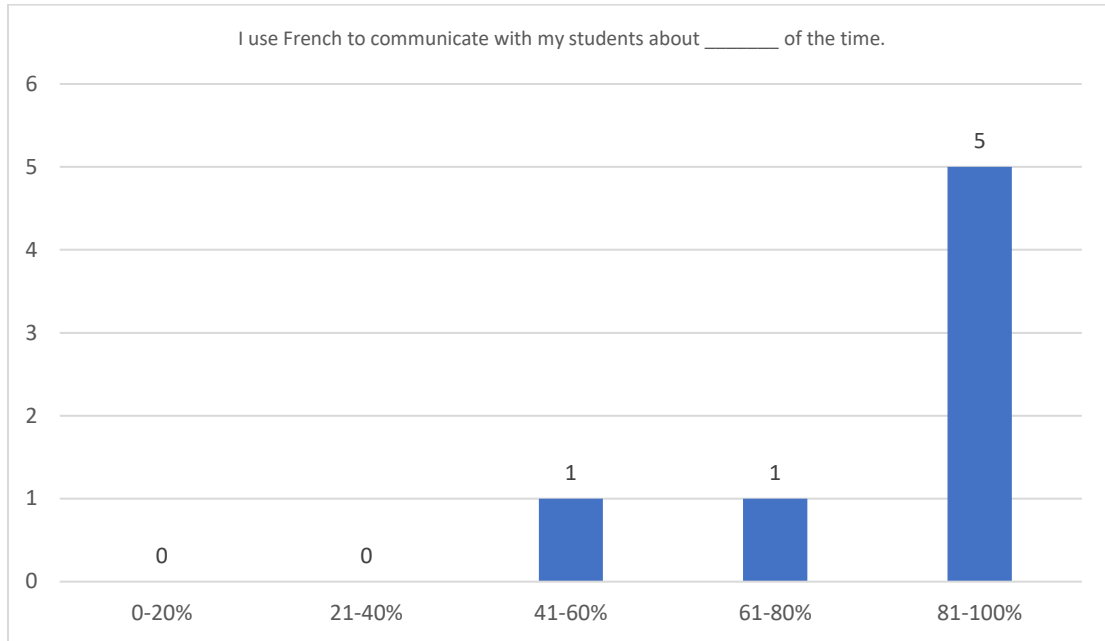
One teacher seemed to share this sentiment when asked, and said the following:

“From my own teaching experience, the biggest factors leading to students wanting to use English were lack of preparation before attending class (they were supposed to learn the grammar principles on their own outside of class) and my own poor job of preparing them for the activities (I was supposed to use models and scaffolding before each activity, and sometimes I didn't spend enough time on this preparation stage). Also, if an activity is too hard or not motivating, it discourages the students from putting in the effort to use French, and I think that some of my activities were too hard and not very motivating.” (T1).

Post-Semester Survey of Preference

The following section introduces the results of the post-survey, taken at the end of the semester. The responses provided by both students and instructors indicates that teachers tend to favor use of the target language when teaching. For example, in Figure 6 instructors indicated what percentage of classroom time they would use to speak to their students in French. Five of the seven teachers (71%) who responded said that they used the target language between 81-100% of the time. This appears to align with what students reported as well (see Figure 2). When asked how often their instructors would use French in the classroom, thirty of them (60%) also said this would occur between 81-100% of the time.

Figure 6



To better understand student preferences for using the L1 rather than the TL, students were asked a few open-ended questions. One question students were asked was “What are some reasons that you would want to use your native language in class instead of French?” and many stated that they might require the use of English to better understand concepts in French:

“Because English makes so much more sense and it’s necessary to explain things. My French 101 class was immersion immediately and it was a nightmare. My teacher never explained anything in English and was not patient whatsoever. My French 202 teacher was much better because he spoke only in French but used almost only vocabulary we already knew.” (M10).

Another student also said that they would use English for the sake of “[asking] clarifying questions...” and because they had a “...lack of knowledge of French vocabulary.” (F10). When teachers were asked why they thought students might prefer to use English rather than French in

the classroom, they provided a few different answers. One such answer was that they felt the students wanted to be able to socialize:

“It's easier/more comfortable. Students want to connect with each other. They have little French skills necessary to make these connections.” (T2).

Other teachers said that students might lack motivation or the amount of preparation necessary to do well when using French, and even felt that they might be lacking in some areas of their teaching.

“From my own teaching experience, the biggest factors leading to students wanting to use English were lack of preparation before attending class (they were supposed to learn the grammar principles on their own outside of class) and my own poor job of preparing them for the activities (I was supposed to use models and scaffolding before each activity, and sometimes I didn't spend enough time on this preparation stage). Also, if an activity is too hard or not motivating, it discourages the students from putting in the effort to use French, and I think that some of my activities were too hard and not very motivating.” (T3).

However, a few responses did seem to indicate that teachers were aware that students might prefer L1 use for clarification purposes as well. One teacher said that students might favor using English because of “[uncertainty] of how to say something in French, nervous on how they will appear in front of their peers, nervous to get something wrong, fatigue, stress from other aspects of their life distracting them and making them forget how to say something.” (T4). Another said that it might be because students were “Not understanding the instructions or not being able to ask questions in French.” (T5). One answer tied in the various factors that these teachers provided as to why students might prefer using English over French:

“I think it's just a lack of motivation or lack of desire. This could be due to fatigue, emotions, frustration with the language, or even difficulty of the task. Usually, they speak in English to clarify what they're saying or have side conversations.” (T6).

Summary

To conclude this chapter, the results showed that students of French at varying levels of language study do indeed prefer different degrees of L1 and TL use in a language-learning environment. In Figure 1, the results show that the majority of students used French in their classrooms from 61 to 100% of the time. There were ten students who said that their TL use was anywhere from 41-60% of the time, while an additional 29 said they used French 61% to 100% of the time with their teacher. Figure 5 shows the use of the L1 is highly preferred amongst students while they are not in the presence of their teachers and while working with partners or groups in their French class. This demonstrates that students are mostly using the L1 in for group activities as soon as they can. Although they weren't asked to disclose which French class they were currently taking, there were some students who indicated that which class they had been taking through their open-ended survey responses. Among the students who identified themselves as being enrolled in French 101, there were a handful who said that they were frustrated with the high amount of TL use because French 101 was their first exposure to the language, or because they felt the course was moving too fast. Students who said they were in French 102 students had some very similar answers, but seemed to express less frustration, and 65% of all students said that they would be willing to enroll in higher levels of French in the future.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

Discussion

Overall, students and teachers have provided mixed answers when it comes to their opinions about how much L1 is the right amount to use in a second language learning environment. The students who were frustrated with the “target language only” policy, and who said that they were enrolled in French 101 and 102 might be feeling discouraged and overwhelmed by the policy due to having little to no previous exposure to French. They seem to say that they do not feel inspired to move forward with learning the language as a result. Students self-reported as being in French 201, as well as those who had taken French prior to college appear to fare better with the “target language only” policy. This is reflected across the answers that they provide regarding how likely they are to continue their French studies, or how often they might switch back to English when working with a partner. However, it appears that most students would still like the opportunity to ask and answer questions regarding assignment instructions in order to feel more confident that they understand what is expected of them. They also shared that they would like to be able to ask questions in English related to their course, because they felt that they could not adequately explain their concerns in French and would feel discouraged from doing so in the future.

The feedback provided by these students all seems to point to the idea that a “second language” only policy is one that they find to be challenging for them, both mentally and emotionally. For the students who have had less exposure to the target language, or who have a hard time understanding classroom expectations, this is especially true. After evaluating the feedback providing by students, it may be beneficial to have a discussion about the “target language only” policy and determine if any adjustments need to be made. A policy that is less

strict might benefit the students who share the above concerns. This research and the feedback therein suggest that the current policy may be preventing students from seeking higher levels of second language learning. If that is true, it may be that adjusting the policy might compel students to continue expanding their knowledge of a target language by seeking more challenging courses at a higher level. Although many of the students and teachers who participated in this survey said that they would be inclined toward using more L1 as opposed to talking solely in the target language, there surely exist others who would favor a classroom where L1 use is not permitted, even for providing instructions, socializing, etc. Proponents of the “target language only” method are certainly supported by existing policies like ACTFL’s 90%+ recommendation. Even here, within the French Department at Brigham Young University, ACTFL’s guidelines are the ones that student instructors have been asked to apply in their classrooms.

Whatever the right balance is between L1 and TL use (if any), research has found that students struggle to learn new vocabulary for several reasons. According to them, students are given too much to learn in a very short period, and this does not allow them to have time to assimilate what they have learned into their knowledge foundation. Some students have also said that sometimes vocabulary is not explained to them in a class setting (such as during lectures in the TL), which leaves them looking for the meaning and pronunciation of words on their own, often preventing them from finding accurate definitions. In my experiences as a teacher, I have found that using visual aids to provide context for my lectures in the target language have allowed students to quickly pick up on what I am saying, and even develop new vocabulary. I have found that using images, videos, or any other kind of visual material is very effective in students’ learning and retention process, even if they do not completely comprehend the words I

am saying in the target language. Of course, consideration also has to be made for students whose L1 is not English. If the majority of students' L1 is English, and English is used to do things like provide instructions in the classroom to all students, then those students whose L1 is not English might fall behind due to a lack of English proficiency or because they feel alienated from any native English speakers.

Still, in a situation where all of the methods an instructor might use to teach vocabulary in the target language had been exhausted, I could see how it might become necessary to use the L1 to ensure student understanding. Regardless, a particular department policy might prevent someone in my position from being able to do that, or at least make them feel that they could not do that. Teachers who participated in the survey expressed that they felt a certain type of pressure by not being able to teach the way they felt was best, because they had to follow the department's rules. On the other hand, other teachers expressed that it pushed them out of their comfort zone and encouraged them to stay away from English more than what they would have done without a policy in place.

On the whole, the feedback provided by teachers and students throughout this research suggests that while there may not be a one size fits all answer to the question of how to balance TL and L1 in second language teaching, students and teachers would benefit from more flexibility when it comes to being able to balance TL and L1 use. Teachers seem to be compelled by a policy that pushes them to use the target language more frequently, but also have said that they would like to have more room to adapt their teaching to the needs of their students by being able to use the L1 when they feel it is necessary. Similarly, students' complaints regarding a "target language only" policy are less directed at not wanting to learn the language, and more directed at wanting to use their L1 as a catalyst for learning it more effectively.

RQ1: Do Students of French at Varying Levels of Language Study Prefer Different Degrees of L1 and TL Use in a Language-Learning Environment?

Results showed that students of French at varying levels of language study do indeed prefer different degrees of L1 and TL use in a language-learning environment. Much of this had to do with the fact that students in French 101/French 102 classes had a very hard time understanding what was being taught. Based on these results, one might infer those different levels of French learners prefer a different balance of L1 and TL use in a language-learning environment depending in their motivation for taking a French class. The amount of work a student puts into a class appears to change dramatically between students who are motivated to learn the language and students who are satisfying requirements of graduation.

The data indicate that students and teachers tend to point toward the same reasons as to why students might favor L1 use. As demonstrated in Figure 4, many students indicated that they might prefer L1 use because they want to socialize with their peers, they lack vocabulary in the target language, a lack of preparedness, or that they found the target language to be too difficult. Per the answers provided by teachers as shown in the previous section, it seems that teachers are aware of these factors as well. Figures 2 and 6, which apply to students and teachers respectively, appear to demonstrate that students and teachers have roughly the same views on how often the target language is being used by teachers in a classroom setting. The preferences for using L1 that students and teachers have shared seems to also be supported by previous research. As stated by Bozorgian and Fallahpour (2015):

L1 can be used and actually should be used as an aid by the teachers to convey meaning, manage the classroom, make a friendly environment, reduce the students' anxiety,

facilitate communication, elaborate on the course objectives and clarify the ambiguous points in the pre-intermediate level (p. 79).

With this new research and prior research to support it, teachers may find that increasing the amount that L1 is used for the above reasons may be a critical motivator for students in their classroom participation and continuing second language education.

RQ2: For Which Tasks Do Students of French Express a Particularly Strong Preference for the L1, and for Which Learning Tasks Do Students Express a Particularly Strong Preference for the TL?

RQ2 investigated the tasks for which students express a preference for the L1 and for which they prefer a use of the TL. Results showed that although preferences for this may vary from student to student, there appear to be a few consistent opinions as to when L1 use is more favorable for second language learning. Reading and cultural aspects of the language were mentioned but 90% of the answers were about oral tasks. In their responses, students reported that they felt group work was very ineffective for them because they could not understand their partner. Shabir (2017) stated, “There could be a strong role of students’ L1 in specific activities, like explaining complex grammar concepts, instructions for class activities and classroom management etc.” (p. 50). This relates to the present research because it has shown that these are some of the reasons that students and teachers might favor using the L1 rather than using the target language. These findings are important because if teachers realize that the current methods for teaching oral tasks (especially the ones that are target language focused) are discouraging for their students, they made need to adapt their teaching to include more L1 use.

RQ3: For Which Learning Tasks Do Teachers and Students Mostly Use the L1 and for Which Learning Tasks Do Teachers and Students Mostly Use the TL?

The same authors mentioned in the examples from RQ1 and RQ2 might also be applicable for RQ3. It appears to be the opinion of previous studies that judicious L1 use can benefit the processes of clarifying grammatical complexities about the target language, establishing a more social environment, reducing anxiety of learners, and encouraging more communication. The responses provided by students in RQ3 supplement this idea, as students provided answers about which tasks they preferred to use the L1 over the TL. An open-ended question was presented to the students asking them what were some of the reasons that they might wish to use their L1 in class rather than French. Figure 5 showed that the use of the L1 is highly preferred amongst students while they are not in the presence of their teachers and while working with partners or groups in their French class. This demonstrates that students are mostly using the L1 in for group activities and during moments where socializing with their peers is required. Similarly, a total of 63 responses in Figure 4 said that they either would want to use the L1 instead of French in the classroom either because they found themselves to lacking in French vocabulary or found speaking French to be too difficult. Each of these reasons might fall under the category of managing grammatical problems that students have with the target language. Additionally, Figure 4 revealed that a total of 31 students would prefer to use the L1 for more personal reasons, such as finding it to be comforting or emotional concerns. These reasons could likely be categorized under the “dealing with anxiety” problem to which Shabir (2017) refers.

Implications

The implications of this study go beyond the original three research questions I set out to explore. In this section, I turn to the implications of the findings, based on the results of the study discussed previously. While also addressing issues such as motivation, I focus especially on what

contributions this study makes in comparison to those already conducted regarding language use inside the French language classroom.

Code-switching

This thesis showed that students constantly switch between French and English in their classroom for various reasons. While some shifts are unintentional in that it is easier to think in one language than another and so the easier language is used, some shifts are intentional in that another language is used to help understand the grammar or vocabulary of the target language. As mentioned previously, Shabir's (2017) research concluded that the L1 has a strong role in the language learning process since it helps with "...explaining grammar concepts, giving instructions for class activities, helping with classroom management, etc." (p. 50). While both unintentional and intentional shifts are noted in the data, the reading strategies reflect the intentional shifts to the L1 by the students in assisting their attempts to understand the learning tasks that were given to them and also in order to be understood and understand their classmates and/or teachers.

Comprehension

There was a tendency to resort to the L1 when students were faced with difficulties that hindered their comprehension. When tackling vocabulary difficulties, the L1 was used by the students to confirm, to reason through or to guess an unfamiliar TL word. In addition, in tackling idea-related problems, the L1 was used to help verify the accuracy of their comprehension or to check their comprehension. In a way, this finding supports Vygotsky's (1986) hypothesis regarding the verbalization of one's inner speech when faced with problems during a task so as to gain control of the task and to direct problem-solving strategies. Per this research, it is clear that encouraging more use of the TL is believed to benefit students and should be encouraged in

students with low TL proficiency. However, it may also be wise for instructors to anticipate a certain amount of student dependence on the L1, especially for things like concept comprehension or reducing their own anxiety about learning a language.

Limitations

Despite receiving a good number of results, this study has some limitations, which could possibly be refined going forward. The most difficult problems to address were a lack of motivation from some of the participants and the relatively low number of students that responded (when compared to the entire student population between French 101, 102, and 201). One possibility is that a student's experiences with second language learning might create its own biases within students or cause them to respond in a certain way. While the reasons that might be the case are no doubt varied, it is still important to consider the possibility that only those students who felt strongly about the topic of learning French (whether positively or negatively) were the ones who responded to the survey.

The survey was administered to 169 students and 50 (30%) of them answered. As far as teachers were concerned, the survey was administered to 11 of them and 8 (73%) answered. This may have been due to the timing of the survey's release, which was after those students' semesters had ended. It may also be that students felt the survey was too long, or that the questions were difficult to answer. There were some questions that students declined to answer, or for which they gave vague answers that were difficult to interpret into meaningful data. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that was taking place at the time this survey was administered, the survey had to be issued online. Students often reported that they had difficulty with this, and some said the login portal for the survey's website often would not allow them to log in or view the questions. The pandemic also made it difficult for instructors to verify if their students had participated in the

survey, and to communicate its needfulness to them. One wonders if perhaps the time the survey was given at would have changed the level of commitment from participants.

Another limitation of the analysis was that students were not specifically asked what level of French they were currently studying. They were however asked about whether they had taken French prior to attending college in order to gain a better understanding of their level of experience with the language, however understanding the level of French they were currently taking might have provided additional insights into how one's level of French comprehension could have affected these survey responses. While students had been asked why they would want to use English in their French classrooms, they were not asked why they would want to use French in that same setting. Asking this could have helped with getting students to answer positively regarding the study and not only get students who felt strongly about not speaking in French or who favored L1 use for personal reasons.

The study may also have benefitted from being able to conduct interviews with students, which would have allowed for more in-depth analysis of their responses to the survey questions. Interviewing some students may have also been helpful in identifying any survey question that they found difficult to understand or otherwise answer. Lastly, the survey may have benefitted by not asking students their gender, in the interest of being respectful of their privacy, or toward students who do not identify as male or female.

Suggestions for Future Research

A number of future research projects naturally emerge from this study. Education is expanding into the online space more and more. Over time, going online has proven to be a viable solution to providing education to individuals who could not otherwise have it due to scheduling conflicts, their location, or any number of other hindrances. The flexibility that online

learning provides has made it an obvious solution to the problems created by the recent pandemic as well. It is unlikely that the amount of people who prefer to learn online will decrease going into the future, and so it is entirely possible that the majority of second language learning will one day take place in a virtual environment. Given that possibility, it may also become necessary for educators to adjust their methods and policies for second language teaching to this emerging group of online learners, and to re-evaluate how much or how little they ought to incorporate L1 use into second language learning. In future research, the use of the L1 vs the TL could be observed more in depth in an online setting to see if the amount of use of each one varies between online and face-to-face teaching environments. The results might have been different if the teacher were not present at all times when students were communicating with each other (which is possible in an online setting).

Future researchers might consider surveying students who are learning in an environment where L1 use is similar to student demand on this survey (very high, especially for things like giving instructions), as well as surveying students who are exclusively using the TL in their learning environment. Once those surveys are completed, it might be useful to compare results to see how satisfied students are with each type of environment as well as their overall proficiency in the TL.

If one were to adapt instructions based on these results, not much of the French language classroom would be taught in the target language. It would be interesting to conduct further research on how the students' experience with the French language classroom would be if all of their desires about using the L1 were to be met. It would also be interesting to see what their level of French at the end of the semester would be, compared to a class who would stay true to the department policy, which is to use the target language only.

As much as students and teachers have a preference for where they learn, they must also have a preference for how they learn. All of the research previously mentioned has been effective at showing how different approaches impact student and teacher performance in second language learning, but it may be lacking in direct feedback. Future research that asks students and teachers for their insights about how L1 use positively or negatively influences their experiences with second language learning may provide crucial insights into shaping and adapting policy to an ever-changing (and growing) educational landscape.

Conclusion

Numerous proponents of L1 use (Atkinson, 1987; Cook 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Wells, 1999) have cautioned against excessive use, instead recommending that it be used judiciously, and according to learner need. To these researchers, the L1 should only be a tool to help develop student comprehension in the target language, promote both cooperation and participation, as well as assist classroom efficiency. In a learning environment, the L1 should not be regarded as equally significant to the target language. Foreign language instructors must help their students to use their L1 to learn their target language. If L1 use is considered during curriculum development, it can be an important asset that will help learners to more rapidly develop their understanding of the target language. Students can use the L1 in their learning environments as a means of understanding and retaining target language concepts, as well as avoiding target language mistakes. Teachers use the L1 to help students consolidate the target language knowledge that they have gained, like its jargon, cultural nuances, etc. There is no universal standard for how much L1 use should take place in a learning environment, but ACTFL recommends that learning take place through the target language for 90% or more of classroom time except in immersion program models where the target language is used

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exclusively. However, in some circumstances, how much L1 use should take place in a learning environment is determined by the instructor, according to the needs of their students. This includes deciding at what point (if at all) during a course L1 use should be introduced, whether at the beginning, or only when it becomes necessary for translation or understanding purposes.

New learners can benefit from the clarification of language structure use and guidelines that their native language can provide. Overall, L1 use can be a powerful learning tool, and should not be overlooked in second language classrooms. Instructors would do well to consider the benefits of incorporating their students' L1 into their lessons, for as I have seen, it can be a significant asset for target language learning.

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Appendix A

Survey of French 101, 102, 201 Students

You are invited to participate in this research study about students' reasons for studying a foreign language. This study is being conducted by Joyce Guidi, an M.A. student in the Center for Language Studies at Brigham Young University.

You have been invited to participate because you are currently enrolled in a lower-division foreign language class at BYU.

The study involves filling out an anonymous questionnaire in class that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

This survey involves minimal risk to you. Your participation in the study may help educators better understand students' foreign language motivations.

If you decide to participate, all the information you provide will remain anonymous and you will not be contacted again in the future. You will not be paid or receive extra credit in your language course for being in this study.

Involvement in this research project is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without penalty or refuse to participate entirely. There will be no reference to your identification at any point in the research.

If you have questions regarding this study you may contact the researcher, Joyce Guidi, at (801) 448-5626 or at guidijoyce22@gmail.com. You may also contact Dr. Greg Thompson at (801) 422-2282 or at glt@byu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact the IRB Administrator; Brigham Young University, A-285 ASB; Provo, UT 84602; irb@byu.edu or (801) 422-1461. The IRB is a group of people who review research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

The completion of this survey implies your consent to participate.

Personal Information

1. Gender: Male Female Age: _____

2. What is your native language? _____

3. Where are you originally from? Precise the city, the state and the country _____

4. Do you have family members who are native French speakers?

No Yes If yes, what is their relationship to you? _____

5. Do you speak any other languages? If yes, list all that apply as well as precising your level of proficiency in that language by putting a 1, 2 or 3 next to your answer (1 being a beginner and 3 being fluent)

Language Information

6. Did you study French prior to college?

No Yes If yes, in where? _____

For how long? _____

7. Have you ever been to a French speaking country?

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No Yes If yes, which country? _____

For how long? _____

For what reason? _____

8. Besides French, have you ever studied any other foreign language?

No Yes If yes, which languages? _____

How did you learn them? _____

9. How likely are you to take a French class next semester? Why?

Very likely

Most likely

Not likely

Why: _____

10. How likely are you to take advanced-level (300+ level) classes of French in the future? Why?

Very likely

Most likely

Not likely

Why: _____

11. Please explain the reasons why you chose to study French instead of another foreign language? Be specific.

12. What leads you to wanting to use your native language in class instead of French?

13. Among the following factors, which of these might cause you to use your native language in class instead of French? (Circle all that apply)

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Personal Factors	Classroom Factors
-Fear of not understanding -Sickness or other physical issues -Emotional concerns -Lack of preparation prior to the class -Unable to study at home -To talk about things not related to the class (socialization) -Others:	-Redundant lessons -Unenthusiastic teacher -Methods used -Level of difficulty (too easy or too hard) -Comfort -Lack of vocabulary -Others:

14. What techniques does your teacher use in your class to teach French? (Circle all that apply)

- Videos
- Quizzes
- Songs
- Games
- Written comprehension
- Oral comprehension

Others: _____

15. What language for each teaching technique that you will cite would you like to see being used in your classroom? Explain why.

16. What are the teaching methods that you find most effective for learning French without having to use English?

17. According to you, what time of the day is best to take a French class?

18. At what point during the class do you feel like turning to your native language the most? Explain why.

19. The following section asks your opinion about learning French. Please answer each question below, using the following key:

5 = Strongly agree

4 = Agree

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3 = Somewhat agree

2 = Neutral / undecided

1 = Disagree

Knowing this language will help me in my future career.

1 2 3 4 5

Knowing this language will help me to be considered an educated person in society.

1 2 3 4 5

Knowing this language will help me with my hobbies and personal interests.

1 2 3 4 5

Knowing this language will help me communicate with family and/or friends who speak the language.

1 2 3 4 5

I am interested in cultural aspects of countries where this language is spoken.

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1 2 3 4 5

I am interested in travelling to countries where this language is spoken.

1 2 3 4 5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix B

Survey of French 101, 102, 201 Teachers

You are invited to participate in this research study about students' reasons for studying a foreign language. This study is being conducted by Joyce Guidi, an M.A. student in the Center for Language Studies at Brigham Young University.

You have been invited to participate because you are currently enrolled in a lower-division foreign language class at BYU.

The study involves filling out an anonymous questionnaire through Qualtrics that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

This survey involves minimal risk to you. Your participation in the study may help educators better understand students' foreign language motivations.

If you decide to participate, all the information you provide will remain anonymous and you will not be contacted again in the future. You will not be paid or receive extra credit in your language course for being in this study.

Involvement in this research project is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without penalty or refuse to participate entirely. There will be no reference to your identification at any point in the research.

If you have questions regarding this study you may contact the researcher, Joyce Guidi, at (801) 448-5626 or at guidijoyce22@gmail.com. You may also contact Dr. Greg Thompson at (801) 422-2282 or at glt@byu.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact the IRB Administrator; Brigham Young University, A-285 ASB; Provo, UT 84602; irb@byu.edu or (801) 422-1461. The IRB is a group of people who review research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

The completion of this survey implies your consent to participate.

Personal Information

1. Gender: Male Female Age: _____

2. What is your native language? _____

3. Where are you originally from? _____

4. Do you have family members who are native French speakers?

No Yes If yes, what is their relationship to you? _____

5. Do you speak any other languages? If yes, list all that apply as well as precising your level of proficiency in that language by putting a 1, 2 or 3 next to your answer (1 being a beginner and 3 being fluent)

Language Information

5. How long have you been studying French?

6. Have you ever been to a French speaking country?

No Yes If yes, which country? _____

For how long? _____

For what reason? _____

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7. Are you regularly in touch with other native French speakers? If so, how often?

8. Do you practice French with them? If yes, how often on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is rarely, and 10 is very often?

9. Besides French, have you ever studied any other foreign language?

No Yes If yes, which languages? _____

How did you learn them? _____

10. How likely are you to teach a French class next semester? Why?

Very likely

Most likely

Not likely

Why: _____

11. How likely are you to teach advanced-level (300+ level) classes of French in the future? Why

Very likely

Most likely

Not likely

Why: _____

12. Please explain the reasons why you chose to teach French. Please be as specific as possible.

13. Is this your first-time teaching? If not, how long have you been teaching for?

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14. According to you, what are the factors leading to students wanting to use English instead of French in the classroom?

15. Using the list below (De La Campa & Nassaji, 2009), what are the factors that lead to the students wanting to use English instead of French in the classroom the most? (Circle all that apply)

- Level of difficulty (too hard or too easy)
- Fear of not understanding
- Sickness or other physical issues
- Emotional concerns
- Lack of preparation before attending class
- Non-favorable at home learning atmosphere
- Redundant lessons
- Non-motivation teacher
- Methods used
- Comfort
- Others: _____

16. Using the list above, rank the factors of the use of English in order of importance.

17. What are the methods that you use to avoid speaking English?

18. Among the methods that you use, what are the ones that work best and why?

19. The following section asks your opinion about teaching French. Please answer each question below, using the following key:

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5 = Strongly agree

4 = Agree

3 = Somewhat agree

2 = Neutral / undecided

1 = Disagree

Knowing this language will help my students in their future career.

1 2 3 4 5

Learning this language can be challenging

1 2 3 4 5

Teaching this language can be challenging

1 2 3 4 5

I feel comfortable and motivated to teach this language

1 2 3 4 5

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My students are involved in the assignments given to them

1

2

3

4

5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION