

**Does language learning context influence the dynamics of L2 learner groups?
An investigation of social identity in Canadian French-as-a-second-language programs**

The current research investigates whether high school students enrolled in each of Ontario's primary French-as-a-second-language (FSL) programs: French immersion, extended French and core French constitute social groups. These formal language learning programs are offered in English-majority communities to students of all linguistic backgrounds (Genesee, 1978). Despite having relatively homogeneous student populations, FSL programs have unique structures which may influence students' attitudes towards their FSL program and same-program peers (i.e., ingroup) such as students' i) exposure to the second language, ii) time spent with their ingroup and iii) separation from students outside their program (Canadian Parents for French, 2017). This study seeks to answer the research question: do students enrolled in Canadian French immersion, extended French and core French programs have different levels of social identity associated with their FSL group membership? If yes, how do students describe the social dynamics of their FSL programs?

To test our research questions, we analyzed and compared the social identities of 60 high school students enrolled in either a French immersion ($n=24$), an extended French ($n=19$) or a core French ($n=17$) program in the Greater Toronto Area. Students completed a series of short online questionnaires: i) a linguistic background questionnaire to assure that the participant sample was fairly homogeneous; ii) an ingroup identification questionnaire (adapted from Leach et al., 2008) consisting of fourteen 7-point Likert scale questions that target individuals' social identity through 1) emotional and psychological connections and 2) perceived commonalities with their ingroup; and iii) three open-ended questions targeting the dynamics of their FSL program at their school.

Results of the ingroup identification questionnaire indicate that French immersion students have the highest level of identification with their FSL program membership and ingroup, followed by extended French students and lastly, by core French students. These results were particularly significant with respect to individuals' emotional and psychological attachment to the ingroup. In addition to the Likert scale data, participants' descriptions of their FSL program dynamics i) revealed perceived divides between learners of different programs enrolled in the same school, with particular emphasis on the divide between "English" (i.e., core French) students and "French" students (either French immersion or extended French students); ii) confirmed predictions that in-class separation extends to peer groups outside the classroom; and iii) described strong bonds between members of French immersion programs in particular. These results confirm that French immersion students, who have the most contact with their same-program peers throughout their program, have higher levels of social group identity than either extended French or core French students, and suggest that FSL program influences learners' social identity. While the findings of the current study provide insights for pedagogical research and practice, future studies are required to investigate the role of social identity in L2 acquisition, particularly as it relates to L2 speech.

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