

Panorama

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FSL and ESL Teachers' Perspectives of Their Professions: A Comparative Overview of Two National Survey Projects

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Canadian Association of
Second Language Teachers
Association canadienne des
professeurs de langues secondes

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National Surveys Reported on:

TEACHING FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
IN CANADA: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES*
(Lapkin, MacFarlane, & Vandergrift, 2006)

PERCEPTIONS FROM ESL TEACHERS ACROSS
CANADA: A NATIONAL SURVEY OF THE ENGLISH
SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) TEACHING PROFESSION*
(French & Collins, 2011)

* These two national survey reports are available at www.caslt.org under the "What We Do/Our Research/CASLT Research Reports" section.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the official recognition of Canada as a bilingual nation in 1982, an important mandate for elementary and high schools in all provinces and territories throughout the country has been to ensure second language (L2) education in Canada's official languages – French and English. Over the past 30 years, there has been widespread research in both public and private schools investigating a range of issues in L2 learning and teaching from a variety of educational and political perspectives. However, very little research attention in Canada has been paid to the perspectives that French L2 (FSL) and English L2 (ESL) teachers hold about their profession, including the challenging aspects of L2 teaching.

In 2006, in an effort to better understand teachers' views about the L2 teaching profession, the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) and Heritage Canada jointly sponsored a national research survey of the working situation of FSL teachers in Canada. This research endeavor, led by Sharon Lapkin (OISE, University of Toronto), Alina MacFarlane (CASLT Research Officer), and Larry Vandergrift (University of Ottawa), resulted in the first ever report on the challenges faced by FSL teachers across Canada. CASLT and its board members subsequently recognized the importance of conducting a similar research survey with ESL teachers. Consequently, in 2011, CASLT commissioned a national research survey, headed by Leif French (Université du Québec à Chicoutimi) and Laura Collins (Concordia University), to examine the challenges faced by ESL teachers in different teaching contexts

throughout Canada. The findings from the two surveys yielded valuable information on the perspectives of FSL and ESL teachers working in public and private (K-12) schools across Canada.

The present report provides a comparative overview of the findings of both survey projects and recommendations for future directions. The report is divided into two main sections. The first section contains a brief overview of the two surveys, highlighting the key similarities and differences in the teachers' profiles and their teaching contexts. The second section outlines recommendations for key stakeholders and proposes areas for future investigations of L2 teaching in Canada.

1. COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW OF THE SURVEYS AND PARTICIPATING TEACHERS

The overall aim of both surveys was to collect details about the various challenges faced by FSL and ESL teachers working in public and private (K-12) schools across Canada. In order to reach as many teachers as possible across the country, the surveys were administered electronically via a web-based questionnaire. Both the FSL and ESL questionnaires were similar in design and were composed of multiple-choice and open-ended questions that targeted the following themes: teaching resources, key stakeholder support, professional development, teaching conditions, major challenges, and job satisfaction. (A detailed description of the questionnaire items is provided in the original reports; see French and Collins, 2011; Lapkin, MacFarlane, and Vandergrift, 2006).

In Canada, there is no existing directory of FSL or ESL teachers; therefore, several associations, such as CASLT, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), TESL New Brunswick, the Société pour la promotion de l'enseignement de l'anglais langue seconde au Québec (SPEAQ),

and other national and provincial language and teacher organizations assisted in contacting teachers to invite them to respond to the surveys. In all, 1305 teachers completed the FSL survey, while 512 teachers completed the ESL survey. Table 1 shows the distribution of teachers who participated in both surveys by province and territory. The samples were not “nationally representative” in a statistical sense because they consisted of self-selected groups rather than a stratified sample randomly selected from the total population (information that was not available, given the absence of a national directory of FSL and ESL teachers), but they nevertheless reflected the diversity of teaching contexts within Canada. The samples also reflected the demographics of the country, in that the largest proportion of respondents came from the two provinces with the highest population of school-aged children and adolescents: 43% of the FSL teachers were from Ontario, and 64% of the ESL teachers were from Quebec.

Table 1*: Distribution of FSL and ESL Teachers by Province/Territory

Survey	Provinces/Territories										
	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	TERR.**
FSL	6%	9%	5%	5%	43%	2%	8%	11%	3%	6%	2%
ESL	1%	4%	9%	1%	6%	64%	13%	2%	1%	0%	0%

*A compilation of Table 2.2 (FSL Survey) and Table 1.3.2 (ESL Survey). The percentages presented here were rounded off and may not equal 100%.

**The N.W.T., Nunavut, and Yukon territories are grouped together as per Table 2.2 (FSL Survey).

1.1. TEACHER PARTICIPANTS

The majority of FSL and ESL teachers were teaching their respective L2, worked in comparable teaching contexts, and had a similar amount of general teaching experience. There were differences, however, in their employment satisfaction, including perspectives on their workload (although more information on

the latter was provided in the ESL survey). The following sections provide more detail on each of the factors mentioned here.

1.1.1. Teachers' Language Backgrounds and Teaching Contexts

It is important to understand how each survey mirrored the other with respect to the language backgrounds of the teachers and the L2 teaching contexts. For instance, the majority of FSL and ESL teachers were teaching their L2 in a predominantly *weak L2 context*. A weak L2 context resembles a foreign-language context where the L2 is generally not present in the community and is generally not the language of instruction in the public school system, which is the case for FSL in officially English-speaking provinces and territories, and ESL in Quebec (QC), the only province in Canada to have French as the sole official language. FSL teachers from a weak L2 context represented 87% of the FSL sample; ESL teachers from QC (a weak L2 context) represented 64% of the ESL sample (see Table 1).

Two other teaching contexts were distinguished in the ESL survey¹: a *mixed ESL context*, referring to the only officially bilingual province of Canada, New Brunswick (NB), and a *predominantly strong ESL context*, referring to officially English-speaking provinces and territories (EP) of Canada. NB teachers represented 13% of the sample, and EP teachers represented the remaining 24% (see Table 1). The language background of the ESL (NB) teachers was similar to that of the FSL and ESL (QC) teachers, in that the majority were also teaching their L2. On the other hand, most ESL (EP) teachers differed from the majority of the survey sample because they were teaching their first language (for specific percentages pertaining to the native language of the participants, see Table 2.8a of the FSL report and Table 2.5.3 of the ESL report).

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¹ The L2 contexts in the FSL survey were distinguished differently from those in the ESL survey. Due to the manner in which the results were compiled and presented in the FSL survey, it was not feasible to classify the FSL findings as per the weak, mixed, and strong L2 contexts.

1.1.2. Teachers' Professional Experience, L2 Certification, and Employment Satisfaction

The amount of teaching experience reported in both surveys was similar, but there were differences in L2 certification and overall employment satisfaction. Table 2 synthesizes results from different tables of the FSL and ESL reports.

Table 2*: Teaching Qualifications, Experience, and Employment Satisfaction

	FSL	ESL			
		QC	NB	EP	
General & L2 Teaching Experience (compilation of Table 2.6a and 2.6b [FSL] and Table 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 [ESL])					
> 10 years of general teaching experience	62%	59%	52%	72%	
>10 years of L2 teaching	56%	53%	31%	27%	
Teaching Qualifications (compilation of Table 2.9b [FSL] and Table 2.4.1 [ESL])					
General teaching license	74%	45%	89%	83%	
L2 Specialization teaching license	32%	56%	11%	26%	
Employment Satisfaction (compilation of Table 2.10 [FSL] and Table 3.1.6a [ESL])					
Considered leaving the profession in the last 12 months	Yes	39%	47%	25%	26%
	No	61%	53%	75%	74%

* The percentages presented here were rounded off and may not equal 100%.

The respondents tended to be experienced teachers. In fact, the majority of FSL and ESL teachers had more than 10 years of *general teaching* experience. In addition, more than half of the FSL (56%) and ESL (QC) (53%) teachers and about one third of ESL (NB) (31%) and (EP) (27%) teachers had over 10 years of L2 teaching experience. Thus, the perspectives offered on the profession reflect views from experienced teachers, many with considerable *L2 teaching* experience. Greater differences existed in terms of L2 certification: a majority of ESL (QC) teachers (56%) were certified L2 specialists, whereas a minority of FSL (32%), ESL (NB) (11%) and (EP) (26%) teachers had completed L2 certification.

A further difference was in the reported degree of employment satisfaction: close to half of the ESL (QC) teachers (47%) and almost 40% of FSL teachers indicated that they had considered leaving the profession within the last 12 months; on the other hand, a large majority of ESL (NB) and (EP) teachers (75% and 74% respectively) indicated that they had not considered leaving the profession within the last year.

1.1.3. Teachers' Workload

It was difficult to quantify and compare the workloads of L2 teachers across the country because this issue was addressed differently in each survey. The student-teacher ratio, which was only available in the ESL survey, showed an alarming discrepancy regarding to the number of students ESL teachers reported teaching (see Table 3). In QC, 59% of ESL teachers had between 101 and 300 students, 18% had between 301 and 400 students, and 9% had 401 students or more. In contrast, the student-teacher ratio was much lower in NB and EP, where the majority of ESL teachers had 50 students or fewer (56% and 65% respectively). By these accounts, ESL (QC) teachers are clearly subjected to heavier workloads than other groups of ESL teachers, and quite possibly to FSL teachers as well. In the FSL survey, the teacher-student ratio was not collected; however, other information was available with respect to manageability of teaching conditions, such as class sizes, proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or special needs, and personal level of stress among others (see Tables 3.4.1., 3.4.2., and 3.4.3. of the FSL report). The findings did not reveal strong satisfaction with these aspects of the profession, as the majority of teachers felt that the manageability of the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or special needs and the personal level of stress was only slightly to somewhat manageable.

Table 3*: Number of Students Taught

	FSL	ESL		
		QC	NB	EP
Number of students per teacher				
50 students or fewer	Not available	7%	56%	65%
Between 51-100 students		8%	17%	29%
Between 101-300 students		59%	25%	5%
Between 301-400 students		18%	2%	0%
401 students or more		9%	0%	1%

*A compilation of Table 2.7.4 (ESL). The percentages presented here were rounded off and may not equal 100%.

1.2. TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CHALLENGES

In both surveys, FSL and ESL teachers responded to an open-ended question in which they were asked to comment freely about *what they perceived to be their three major challenges in L2 teaching*. For the FSL survey, a sample of 260 teacher responses, representing 20% of all responses, was divided into sub-categories, generating a total of 643 responses (see section 3.6 of the FSL report). The responses were further divided by Core French (CF) and French Immersion (FI) programs (CF: 410; FI: 233). For the ESL survey, all 1437 responses from the three groups (QC: 911; NB: 182; EP: 344) were sorted into sub-categories similar to those in the FSL survey (see section 3.1.2. of the ESL report). Table 4 presents a compilation of the categories and responses most frequently cited by both FSL and ESL teachers as presenting major challenges in the workplace. The top five categories were resources, class heterogeneity, student motivation, support, and pedagogy.

1.2.1. Resources

By far, the most frequent challenge cited by FSL and ESL teachers is related to resources; however, each group experienced different issues. FSL teachers generally cited issues with the quality, appropriateness, and availability of resources; whereas, ESL teachers tended to indicate that the lack of availability of resources was a challenge.

FSL teachers:

The resource sub-categories were defined slightly differently in both reports. The following sub-categories were used in the FSL report (see Appendix E):

1. *Lack of resources*: lack of materials and resources in general, inadequate grammar exercises, as well as lack of funding for materials such as workbooks and notebooks; and
2. *Appropriate resources*: resources that do not match student needs, interests, and abilities.

Based on the responses to the open-ended question and to multiple-choice questions (see sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the FSL report), the low quality, quantity, and appropriateness of commercial materials, including library resources, computer software, and community opportunities, were challenges for both FSL (CF) and FSL (FI) teachers, but particularly for FSL (FI) teachers, for whom few materials exist, especially materials representing Francophone culture. In fact, lack of resources was cited as being the most frequent challenge by FI teachers (16%), and appropriateness of resources was their second most frequent challenge (14%).

ESL teachers:

The sub-categories were defined as follows in the ESL report (see Appendix C):

1. *Lack of resources*: general lack of resources (either not specified or all combined); and
2. *Lack of teaching/learning material*: lack of specific learning or teaching materials.

Based on the responses to the open-ended question and responses to multiple-choice questions (see section 3.2 of the ESL report), the majority of teachers from all three survey groups (QC, NB, EP) were satisfied with the quality and appropriateness of ESL material and ESL material promoting Anglophone culture; however, they cited the lack of availability of teaching/learning resources and resources in general, including computer software and information and communications technologies (ICT), as being a challenge.

Table 4*: Most Frequently Cited Challenges by FSL and ESL Teachers

L2 Teacher Responses Grouped per Category	Five most frequent responses %					Total % (FSL & ESL)
	1	2	3	4	5	
Resources	38	14	12	9	22	95
Lack of resources	24		12	9		45
FSL (CF) (Sample size: 410)			12			12
FSL (FI) (Sample size: 233)	16					16
ESL (NB) (Sample size: 182)				9		9
ESL (EP) (Sample size: 344)	8					8
Lack of teaching/learning material	14				11	25
ESL (QC) (Sample size: 911)					6	6
ESL (NB) (Sample size: 182)	14					14
ESL (EP) (Sample size: 344)					5	5
Appropriate resources		14			11	25
FSL (CF) (Sample size: 410)					11	11
FSL (FI) (Sample size: 233)		14				14
Class heterogeneity		34	8	13		55
Class diversity		14		13		27
FSL (CF) (Sample size: 410)		14				14
FSL (FI) (Sample size: 233)				13		13
Multi-level groups		19	8			27
ESL (QC) (Sample size: 911)		9				9
ESL (NB) (Sample size: 182)		10				10
ESL (EP) (Sample size: 344)			8			8
Student motivation	26		17		9	52
Student motivation	26		9		9	44
FSL (CF) (Sample size: 410)	16					16
FSL (FI) (Sample size: 233)					9	9
ESL (QC) (Sample size: 911)	10					10
ESL (NB) (Sample size: 182)			9			9
Use/practice English			8			8
ESL (QC) (Sample size: 911)			8			8
Support			14	25		39
In-school respect			14			14
FSL (FI) (Sample size: 233)			14			14
Scheduling/physical space				12		12
FSL (CF) (Sample size: 410)				12		12
Lack of teaching time/periods in schedules				13		13
ESL (QC) (Sample size: 911)				7		7
ESL (EP) (Sample size: 344)				6		6
Pedagogy		8			9	17
Difficulty delivery programs, evaluating		8			9	17
ESL (NB) (Sample size: 182)					9	9
ESL (EP) (Sample size: 344)		8				8

* A compilation of Table 3.6.1 (FSL) and Tables 3.1.2a, 3.1.2b, and 3.1.2c (ESL). The percentages here were rounded off and may not equal 100%.

1.2.2. Class Heterogeneity

Class heterogeneity was the second most frequently cited challenge by FSL and ESL teachers. It refers to managing multi-level groups (e.g., combined grade levels, L2 proficiency levels) and classroom diversity, which mainly encompassed the special needs of students.

Difficulty managing class heterogeneity was cited as the second most frequent challenge by FSL (CF) (14%), ESL (QC) (9%), and ESL (NB) (10%) teachers, as the third most frequent challenge by ESL (EP) teachers (8%), and as the fourth most frequent challenge by FSL (FI) teachers (13%). Moreover, based on their responses to the multiple-choice questions (see section 3.4 of the FSL report and section 3.1 of the ESL report) managing class heterogeneity, namely the proportion of students with learning difficulties/special needs, was a particular challenge for many teachers.

1.2.3. Student Motivation

The student motivation category, defined as student lack of interest and motivation to work in and learn the L2, was cited as a major challenge, particularly by FSL and ESL (QC) teachers. More specifically, the category included negative attitudes towards the L2 (French or English) and, as per teacher accounts, student inability to recognize the importance of the L2. Overall, lack of student motivation was cited as the most frequent challenge by both FSL (CF) (16%) and ESL (QC) (10%) teachers, as the third most frequent challenge by ESL (NB) teachers (9%), and as the fifth most frequent challenge for FSL (FI) teachers (9%). However, for ESL (EP) teachers, student motivation was not identified as a main challenge. In the QC sample, an additional sub-category of motivation was identified as willingness to use and practice English in activities inside and outside of the classroom. This sub-category was cited as the third most frequent challenge by ESL (QC) teachers (8%). Overall, issues pertaining to lack of student motivation appeared to be particularly present

in predominantly weak L2 contexts where, by definition, contact with speakers of the target language is minimal. Furthermore, the number of hours of L2 instruction per group/class per week is also generally low in weak L2 contexts. In the ESL survey, 28% of the ESL (QC) teachers reported teaching 1 hour of ESL per group/class per week, 32% reported teaching 2 hours, and 23% reported teaching 3 hours (see section 2.6.3 of the ESL report). In contrast, although a majority of ESL (EP) teachers reporting teaching 1 to 3 hours per week per group/class (55%), a considerable number reported teaching more than 6 hours per week per group/class (22%). No information on the number of hours of FSL instruction per group/class per week was available in the FSL report. In short, such a drip-feed approach in predominantly weak L2 contexts may negatively influence student motivation and willingness to communicate.

1.2.4. Support

Teachers in predominantly weak L2 contexts (FSL and ESL (QC) teachers) cited support issues as being a major challenge. In the open-ended question, support issues were defined as lack of in-school respect, covering such themes as:

- the lack of importance given by the administration to L2 teaching;
- the absence of other L2 speaking teachers or aids in the school;
- a perceived lack of respect from other staff;
- the requirement to provide “preparation” coverage for other teachers;
- low prioritization of L2 learning/teaching in school schedules; and
- an overall feeling of isolation.

Indeed, the responses to the open-ended question were similar to the results of the multiple-choice questions from stakeholder support sections of the FSL and ESL reports (see section 3.3 of the FSL report and section 3.1.3 of the ESL report). In general, support from parents, students, non-L2 teaching colleagues, and the community was perceived to be lower in the predominantly weak

L2 contexts than it was in the mixed or strong ESL contexts. Although lack of support was not one of the three most frequently cited challenges, nor was it cited by all groups of teachers, it was clearly an issue in the predominantly weak L2 contexts.

1.2.5. Pedagogy

Pedagogy, defined as difficulty delivering programs and evaluating, was cited as being one of the five most frequent challenges by ESL (NB) and ESL (EP) teachers only. They mentioned that professional development (PD) in L2 specialist training would be beneficial.

In both the FSL and ESL surveys, entire multiple-choice sections focused on collecting teacher input regarding professional development, namely their level of participation, the types of preferred activities, and how to improve learning opportunities, among others. Generally, the majority of teachers participated in PD activities at least once a year, they appreciated local workshops that encouraged interaction with other L2 teachers, they suggested that they be more involved in the selection of topics for PD activities, and recommended that the activities be offered during school hours to increase their willingness to participate (for specific results, see section 3.5 of the FSL report and section 3.3 of the ESL report). Recommendations concerning PD opportunities are made in the Future Directions and Recommendations section of this report.

challenges. In addition, the surveys also revealed an unhealthy level of professional dissatisfaction among both FSL and ESL (QC) teachers and an extremely high student-teacher ratio in Quebec (defined as the number of students taught at the same time, across a number of classes). In the following section, recommendations are made to address potential problems of teacher attrition, the QC student-teacher ratio, and the major challenges cited by the teachers. We conclude with comments on the importance of creating a national registry of L2 teachers.

1.3. CONCLUSIONS OF THE COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW

Overall, this comparative overview of the two national survey projects revealed that the majority of FSL and ESL teachers across Canada were teaching their L2 within comparatively weak L2 contexts and experienced similar challenges. Based on their response patterns, a majority of FSL and ESL teachers identified resources, class heterogeneity, and student motivation as their major challenges; lack of support and pedagogy also emerged as important

2. FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, the major findings from the study are highlighted and recommendations are made for addressing some of the concerns that emerged. Areas that merit further research are also identified.

2.1. L2 TEACHING IN CANADA: A VARIETY OF CONTEXTS

The findings of the two surveys highlight that there are at least two distinct L2 teaching contexts in Canada. On the one hand, there is a weak L2 context in which the target language, be it French or English, is taught more like a foreign language and opportunities to practice the target language outside of the classroom are quite limited. On the other hand, there is a strong L2 context in which the target language, again be it French or English, is readily accessible outside of the classroom and resembles more closely a second-language teaching context. These two different L2 contexts bring with them distinct student clienteles, stakeholder support, and teachers. Findings from the surveys illustrate some of the differences. For instance, in the weak L2 context, it appears that student motivation and stakeholder support is lower than that reported in a strong L2 context. In addition, teachers in weak L2 contexts tend to teach their own L2 and share the same first language as the students, whereas in strong L2 contexts, teachers tend to be native speakers of the target language and it is assumed that they do not share the same first language with their students. With the exception of the differences reported in L2 contexts here, there has been relatively little applied research outlining the variety of L2 contexts in Canada. In fact, recent statistics on the rate of bilingualism in Canada (Lepage & Corbeil, 2013) indirectly reveal that L2 learning in Canada is quite diverse.

In May 2013, Statistics Canada published a report presenting the evolution of English-French bilingualism in Canada from 1961 to 2011 (Lepage & Corbeil, 2013). From a nation-wide perspective, the percentage of people who considered themselves bilingual (i.e., able to carry on a conversation in both French and English) dropped slightly from 17.7% in 2001 to 17.5% in 2011, but the overall number of people who considered themselves bilingual has continuously increased since 1961. At a provincial level, the numbers vary. In QC, there was relatively steady growth in bilingualism from 1961 to 2011, but in provinces like NB, ON, AB, and BC the rate of growth increased from 1961 to 2001 and then remained stable between 2001 and 2011. In MB and SK, the rate decreased between 2001 and 2011. In NL, NS, and PE, the rate grew steadily from 1961, but slowed between 2001 and 2011. Two key factors were identified as potentially influencing the reported rate of bilingualism: L2 instruction and international immigration.

In Canada, although language policy is under federal jurisdiction, education policy and instruction fall under provincial and territorial jurisdiction. Consequently, there is little consistency in L2 programs across Canada. Mady and Turnbull (2010) compared the various FSL programs throughout the country and presented the following findings:

- in BC and YK, it is mandatory to study a L2 (French is one of the options) from grades 5 to 8;
- in AB, SK, MB, NT, and NU, the study of French is not mandatory;
- in NB, French is mandatory between grades 4 and 10;
- in ON, NS, PE, and NL, French is mandatory between grades 4 and 9; and
- in QC, French is mandatory from kindergarten to grade 11.

Moreover, it appears that there is no set minimum for hours of instruction across provinces. It would be interesting to investigate how such policies had an impact on the percentage of students enrolled in FSL programs in public schools from 1990/1991 to 2010/2011 because the percentage of students in such programs dropped from 53% to 44% (Lepage & Corbeil, 2013).

Student populations that originate from international immigration are distinct from their Canadian-born counterparts. Little is known about the realities and challenges experienced by teachers in strong L2 contexts, namely the ESL teachers outside of Quebec and FSL teachers in Quebec, in which the student populations speak a language (or often languages) other than English or French (such populations are herein referred to as Allophones). Although it is assumed that Allophones are not only expected to learn the language of their immediate environment but also the other official language of the country, examination of federal language policies and provincial curriculum by Mady and Turnbull (2010) reveals that policies provide obstacles for Allophones who desire learning both official languages to access L2 instruction. Even more so, Mady and Turnbull's research shows that implementation of policy restricts Allophones' access to learning French in English-dominant provinces. Understanding Allophones' language learning needs is not straightforward, as Allophone populations in Canada are clearly not homogenous across the nation. In 2011, Allophones outside of Quebec were less "bilingual"² in English and French than those in Quebec and also less bilingual than the Canadian-born population (Lepage & Corbeil, 2013). Considering that international immigration was cited as a potential contributing factor to the 0.2% decrease in the rate of bilingualism, that education policies limit

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² Note that these populations may have been bilingual or multilingual speakers of other combinations of languages, but the figures cited focus on degree of bilingualism in French and English only.

Allophones' access to FSL learning in English Canada, and that L2 teachers are generally not prepared to teach students who do not share the same first language with other students or even with themselves, more investigation of the realities of the different L2 contexts within Canada is clearly necessary. Recent work on the plurilingual characteristics of students in Canada's major urban centres and the ways in which L2 pedagogy might better recognize plurilingualism as a resource would be of particular relevance for some students (Dagenais, Moore, Sabatier, Lamarre, & Armand, 2009).

Based on the findings of the two surveys (French & Collins, 2011; Lapkin et al., 2006), the report published by Statistics Canada (Lepage & Corbeil, 2013), and the research of Mady and Turnbull (2010), it is clear that the L2 contexts of Canada are diverse. At the same time, there appears to be a considerable lack of factual evidence to explain the different realities and challenges associated with such diverse contexts. As such, it is important not to view L2 instruction and learning in Canada from a one-size-fits-all perspective; there are far too many differences between contexts to make direct comparisons. The first recommendation of this report is therefore to adopt a context-based approach to investigating L2 instruction in Canada, highlighting the features, realities, challenges, and needs that characterize the teaching and learning populations of the weak and strong L2 contexts throughout the country.

2.2. INVESTIGATE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WITH TEACHER ATTRITION

The most troubling finding to arise from the surveys is that experienced teachers may be dissatisfied with the L2 teaching profession. As noted in the comparative analysis, although a majority of FSL and ESL teachers had over 10 years of general teaching experience, nearly 40% of FSL teachers and 47% of ESL (QC) teachers had contemplated leaving the profession in the previous year. To ensure teacher retention

and attract new generations of L2 teachers, it is crucial to gain a better understanding of why so many teachers are looking to leave the profession. Future research should examine, in particular, what specific teacher population is dissatisfied with the profession (e.g., experienced teachers, new recruits), and to what extent other factors such as workload, amount of L2 specialist training, and level of self-perceived efficacy (see Swanson, 2012) might influence the desire to abandon L2 teaching.

2.3. INVESTIGATE THE STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO

The reported student-teacher ratio in Quebec was strikingly high, especially when compared to that of NB and EP. There is consequently a clear need to examine teacher workloads (both class size and also the number of groups per teacher) and specifically assess the potential repercussions that the workload may have on teacher efficacy, student success, and student motivation. Closely related to this workload situation is the amount of time allotted to L2 instruction. Clearly, teachers who see over 400 students in a given rotation cycle are working in situations where the L2 class time is minimal (as little as an hour a week in many elementary schools in Quebec).

2.4. RESOURCES

2.4.1. Greater Availability of FSL and ESL Teaching Resources

The greatest challenge cited by FSL and ESL teachers is their lack of teaching resources, such as teaching/learning resources and resources in general, including computer software and ICT. Improved funding was often cited as a solution; however, interestingly, ESL teachers also mentioned that language associations could contribute to improving the availability of L2 resources (see section 3.4.2 of the ESL report). By working in collaboration, language associations, provincial ministries, and school boards could attempt to find creative solutions that would increase access to and availability of L2 resources.

2.4.2. Appropriate FSL Teaching Resources

FSL teachers, especially FI teachers, were dissatisfied with the quality of available FSL resources. FSL teaching materials, including library resources and computer software, need therefore to be improved to better reflect Francophone culture and also need to be better adapted for different proficiency levels. Moreover, language associations could collaborate with education publishers to contribute to the development of more culturally representative FSL resources with topics geared to different age groups and for distinct proficiency levels. In this regard, Swanson (2012) suggests that the inclusion of cultural instruction and ensuring teachers are pedagogically prepared to teach such concepts increases L2 teachers' sense of self-efficacy, which may also have positive repercussions on student interest, motivation, and even on classroom management.

2.5. MANAGING CLASS HETEROGENEITY

2.5.1. Training in Differentiation Models and Additional Resources

FSL and ESL teachers cited managing students' diverse learning needs, which were related to age, multi-level groups, proficiency levels, and learning difficulties/special needs, as one of their greatest challenges. Research has found that teachers are unprepared for managing the needs of such diverse groups (e.g., Arnett and Mady, 2010). Training in differentiation models of L2 education would help teachers adapt their instructional strategies to manage the diverse learning needs of their students. Moreover, the teachers would need to be equipped with essential resources (e.g., L2 support staff and ready-made material) to ensure that the needs of the students are being met. For pre-service L2 teachers, theoretical and hands-on training in differentiation models in L2 education would better help to ensure that the aspiring teachers acquire a good understanding of

issues regarding inclusion and that they have sufficient instructional tools and training to meet the distinct needs of their future students.

2.6. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2.6.1. L2 Specialist Training

The majority of FSL and ESL teachers, except for ESL (QC) teachers, hold a generalist teaching license only. Learning an L2 is fundamentally different from learning an L1, especially when the L2 is being learned primarily in a language classroom. Specialist training is beneficial in helping students achieve proficiency in the L2. In the short term, there is a clear need for more PD opportunities focusing on improving L2 teaching skills for teachers who have not had the opportunity to receive solid specialist training (and for those with specialist training who are in need of upgrading their knowledge). In the long term, provincial ministries of education clearly need to revisit the requirements for L2 teachers.

2.6.2. Studies Investigating the Type of Required Training

Further investigation is required to identify the specific training needs of L2 teachers. In fact, it is unknown to what extent teachers with no L2 specialist training are prepared for and able to meet expectations associated with delivery of L2 curricula. In the surveys, ESL teachers from NB and EP, of whom only a minority were L2 specialists, did cite that delivering L2 programs and evaluating students were a major challenge; hence, specialist training would be particularly useful. On the other hand, ESL (QC) teachers, of whom a majority have L2 specialist training, expressed that they wished to be more involved in the selection of topics for pedagogical activities, suggesting that PD activities did not necessarily fit their needs. Lastly, little is known about whether L2 teaching graduates are sufficiently prepared for the realities and challenges of L2 teaching. Research possibly involving case studies or in-depth interviews during the induction phase or the first years of L2 teaching may prove helpful in this area. In addition, investigating the

needs of the teachers, while taking their previous experience and training into consideration, may also provide indications on how to optimize PD activities. Such research could be carried out by language associations, with support from provincial and territorial teacher federations and school board administrators.

2.6.3. Target Areas Identified by Teachers and Pedagogical Advisors' Input

The target areas identified by teachers for professional development included, in particular, upgrading language skills and providing information on new language-teaching methodologies. Many of the teachers reported not using computer software for language teaching, indicating a need for further training in the use of ICT. Both FSL and ESL teachers mentioned that PD activities during school hours were ideal and most appreciated activities involving interaction with L2 colleagues during small local workshops. Many also wanted to be involved in the selection of topics for PD activities. However, although teachers expressed interest in participating in PD training opportunities and the majority did so at least once a year, several FSL and ESL pedagogical advisors provided anecdotal evidence at professional conferences across Canada (e.g., SPEAQ, Language Without Borders, Association canadienne de linguistique appliqué [ACLA]) that there is often a lack of interest in participating in such activities. It would therefore be important to examine the perspectives of both pedagogical advisors and teachers regarding proposed PD activities (e.g., teacher interest, attendance, and accessibility).

2.7. STUDENT MOTIVATION

2.7.1. Investigate Factors Influencing Levels of Motivation

Low student motivation in L2 learning and negative attitudes towards the L2 were challenges that the majority of FSL and ESL teachers reported, especially those working in predominantly weak L2 contexts. There is

therefore a need to examine further the potential factors underlying low student motivation in this specific L2 context. Most research in this area focuses on developing theoretical models describing the motivational characteristics and processes involved in L2 learning (e.g., Dörnyei, 2001; Masgoret and Gardner, 2003) or providing suggestions for pedagogical practices that may increase motivation (e.g., Brown, 2001; Dörnyei and Csizér, 1998). However, little research on motivation has examined how pedagogical practices actually interact with motivation in the L2 classroom. Further investigation of the interaction between pedagogical practices and student motivation may help us understand and, hopefully, resolve some of the motivation issues plaguing L2 classrooms across the country.

2.7.2. Offer Sufficient L2 Instructional Time to Heighten Motivation

Accounts of low student motivation for L2 learning and negative attitudes towards the L2 generally existed in FSL and ESL environments in which a drip-feed approach was used, or there was limited exposure to the L2 outside of school. Offering students sufficient instructional time to afford real progress in the learning of their L2 would appear to be one way to heighten student motivation. The initiative to increase and concentrate instruction time in the L2 through intensive programs in the second cycle of primary school exists in some parts of the country; however, more effort could be put towards optimizing L2 teaching/learning by creating longer teaching blocks and increasing the number of hours of L2 teaching per week.

2.7.3. Educate Students About Complexity of L2 Learning

Improving student awareness of the complexity of L2 learning may also contribute to improving their motivation. Learning a L2 in a classroom context takes time, sustained practice, and patience. Unfortunately there are many popular myths about L2 learning, often fueled by commercial material, among other sources, that promotes the notion that L2 fluency can be obtained with relatively little effort (e.g., Horwitz, 1988) and over a short period of time. Beginner L2 learners (and often their parents or caregivers) have a tendency to set unreasonably high expectations, such as attaining fluency after two

years of classroom studies, which can clearly lead to deception when such objectives are not attained. Moreover, student beliefs about how languages are learned may indeed run counter to research results on L2 pedagogy, teacher beliefs, and teaching approaches. Such divergence may leave students dissatisfied with their personal language learning progress (e.g., Brown, 2009). Including concepts of language awareness and language acquisition in L2 teaching may help students better understand the complexity of L2 learning, which may help them to set more reasonable goals, ultimately having a positive impact on attitudes towards L2 learning.

2.8. SUPPORT

2.8.1. Understanding the Relationship Between Stakeholder Support and Student Motivation

The students of yesterday are the parents of today. It is possible that the parents' language-learning experiences and achievements may influence those of their children. Stakeholder support, by the community at large and by parents, was perceived as low in weak L2 contexts; however, the specific reasons for such low support are unknown and may differ between Quebec and the rest of Canada. Statistics Canada reported that many Anglophones outside Quebec "do not retain their bilingualism as they grow older" (Lepage & Corbeil, 2013, p. 4). For instance, in 1996, the rate of bilingualism for the 15-to-19-year-old age group was 15%. Then, five years later, when the group was between the ages of 20 and 24, it dropped to 12%. In 2006, it was at 10%, and in 2011, when the group's age was between 30 and 34, the rate dropped to 8% (Lepage & Corbeil, 2013). Given these accounts, it would be worth investigating why such individuals no longer considered themselves bilingual and how the language learning experience and achievements of parents in general influence those of their children. Contrary to the rest of Canada, in Quebec, the rate of bilingualism peaked when people were in their twenties after they had completed high school (Lepage & Corbeil, 2013). Understanding the relationship between the L2 learning experience of parents and their children may provide another perspective on how to encourage L2 learning in various areas of Canada.

2.8.2. Greater Collaboration Between Teaching Community and L2 Teachers

The low stakeholder support from parents, students, non-L2 colleagues, and the community in predominantly weak L2 contexts may be indirectly related to the low prioritization and optimization of L2 learning regarding class schedules, the number and length of teaching blocks, and the number of students and groups per teacher. For example, in a survey study of 105 Canadian university students who were asked to comment about their core and extended (core) FSL high-school studies, 17% of the students who had wished to pursue French studies at the high-school level reported being unable to do so because of scheduling conflicts, and 15% reported that additional French courses were simply not offered (Canadian Parents for French, 2004). Greater collaboration between school boards, school administrators, and provincial language associations should therefore work towards pedagogical and administrative solutions to optimize scheduling of L2 classes, length of teaching blocks, student-teacher ratios, as well as teachers' overall workload in terms of the mean number of L2 groups taught.

2.8.3. Encourage Collaboration Between Teachers of Different Disciplines

Encouraging collaboration between L2 teachers and teachers of other disciplines could generate greater support for, understanding of, and recognition of the L2 specialist by the teaching community. Such collaboration could consist of bringing together teachers of different subjects to work with L2 specialists and encouraging cross-curricular goal setting between L2 specialists and teachers of other disciplines to enhance student learning (see Horst, White, and Bell [2010] for work on cross-linguistic awareness; see Lyster, Collins, and Ballinger [2009] for a bilingual reading-aloud project by French and English instructors of the same students). The sharing of teaching goals and challenges would seem not only to benefit the L2 specialist, but might also benefit everyone involved in such collaborative efforts. However, more research on the effects of collaborative teaching efforts on both L2 teaching and L2

learning is needed, and more creative in-house solutions are also necessary. For example, language associations could work in partnership with school boards and school administrations to develop programs that promote recognition for teacher collaboration, which in turn might foster a better understanding of the L2 specialist in the workplace.

2.9. L2 TEACHER REGISTRY

To gain a better understanding of the demographic distribution of L2 teachers in Canada and to facilitate future research on the L2 teaching profession, the creation of a registry would be particularly useful. In both surveys, it was pointed out that the absence of such a Canadian L2 teacher registry was particularly problematic because it was virtually impossible to determine the representativeness of the samples of responding FSL and ESL teachers. Moreover, when conducting the original surveys, certain groups of L2 teachers were underrepresented, notably FSL (CF) teachers in British Columbia and ESL (EP) teachers working with refugee and immigrant populations outside of Quebec and New Brunswick. Given their pan-Canadian mandates to promote L2 teaching, CASLT and the CTF, in collaboration with provincial language associations and education ministries, may be particularly well suited to spearhead such an initiative.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The advantage of completing a comparative overview of the two surveys is that it provides a first ever macro-level perspective of the L2 teaching profession in Canada. In particular, these surveys provide interesting insight into the current L2 teaching situation of teachers working in predominately weak L2 contexts throughout the country. However, the surveys also reveal that there is still much to learn about the L2 teaching profession in Canada, especially with respect to strong L2 contexts. Nevertheless, by actively addressing the major challenges reported by L2 teachers in these surveys, it may indeed be possible to improve L2 teaching conditions across the country.

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