Canada

THE LINGUISTIC COMPETENCIES

OF EARLY FRENCH IMMERSION GRADUATES: AN

INVESTIGATION OF PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS

by

L. R. Scott Hewlett, B. A., B. Ed.

A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate

Studies in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Education

Department of Teaching and Learning

Memorial University of Newfoundland

May 1999

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ABSTRACT

This study was an attempt to determine the expectations of parents of students' linguistic competence upon graduation from the Early French Immersion program. The purpose of the study was to determine the French language performance characteristics as expected by parents in the domains of Oral Production, Reading Comprehension, and Writing Ability. The variables of parental level of French skills, parents of EFI students in grade 3 versus those in grade 9, and previous experience with EFI were also examined in relation to performance expectations.

The study was a census of parents of EFI students in grades 3 and 9 under the Avalon East School Board undertaken in the spring of 1997. A two-part questionnaire was sent to all parents seeking firstly, background information on the parents, and secondly, asking parents to indicate their expectations among explicit descriptions of second language performance

levels adapted from current federal government hiring guidelines. Open ended questions were also provided at the end.

Parental profiles were compiled by frequency count and percentage in Part A of the questionnaire. Responses from Part B of the survey were analyzed using the Chi Square test of independence at $p<.05$ to determine the statistical significance of variables as they relate to parental expectations. Comments provided by parents in response to open ended questions were also discussed.

Findings from this study indicate that parents do not expect nativelike fluency from their child(ren) when they graduate from Early French Immersion; however, they do expect a high degree of second language performance skills in all 3 language domains examined by this study. There were no significant differences found between parents of students in grade 3, and those in grade 9. The level of parents French

knowledge and skills did not have a significant effect on parental expectations. Parents who had previous experience with EFI also did not hold significantly different expectations from parents who were involved with EFI for the first time.

The following data patterns were also noted. The EFI program seems to be a family choice rather than based on any one student's potential for language learning. Parents are not intimately involved with enhancing their own French skills despite indicating that the largest drawback to EFI is parental difficulty in assisting with homework. Future employment enhancement was the principal reason why parents chose EFI.

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Chapter 1

Overview of the Study

In comparison to other methodologies of French second language teaching, the various forms of French immersion (FI) may be termed relatively new. What started as localized experiments firstly at Cedar Park School, Montreal (1958), secondly at the Toronto French School (1962), and later at the famous Margaret Pendlebury Elementary School, St. Lambert (1965), a community situated just south of, and across the St. Lawrence River from, the island of Montreal, has blossomed into a popular parental educational choice currently spanning the whole country (Rebuffot, 1993).

Curriculum planning and immersion research have had to attempt to keep pace with the tremendous growth of immersion programs. This need has been further complicated by the fact that immersion has been subdivided into early, intermediate, and late formats, each producing students with unique attendant

characteristics. Consequently, it is not surprising that the focus of FI research has been conducted principally on the students as language learners in a unique educational environment, a process-product approach. Language skills of FI students have been compared to the two control groups of same age native francophones and anglophone peers enrolled in regular core French programs. The results of these comparisons show both favorable performance characteristics as well as demonstrable limitations of immersion education (Genesee, 1987). Critics point to apparently fossilized inaccuracies in the production of the second language (L2), while proponents of immersion focus on the communicative L2 prowess of FI students (Rebuffot, 1993).

The most vociferous critics claim that FI creates an interlanguage comprised of interference between students' native tongue (L1) and French (L2), and thus produces at best a highly inaccurate L2 performance. Considering the amount of L2 exposure from Kindergarten to Grade Twelve, these critics conclude the FI approach

is seriously flawed and should be abandoned (Hammerly, 1988). This extreme position forms one side of the current debate over French Immersion. Other researchers concede there are inadequacies in the L2 production characteristics of FI students, yet are not prepared to discount the whole FI approach (Genessee, 1987).

This polarized debate notwithstanding, FI programs have remained a popular educational choice in Canada. What started as a localized experiment has grown to encompass the whole country, such that according to Statistics Canada, an estimated six per cent (about three hundred thousand) of all students in Canada are currently (1996 figures) enrolled in some form of immersion education. This situation reflects constant growth in FI since its inception, particularly in the light of the general decline in school populations.

One of the criteria in assessing the success of Early French Immersion(EFI) programs has been parental expectations (Hammerly, 1989). Cummins and Swain (1986) noted the success of FI was not linked to

research claiming high L2 proficiency levels at no cost to other academic skills, but a perception on the part of the public that this was so. Other researchers have gone on to more clearly define the L2 production characteristics of immersion education (Rebuffot, 1993). In comparison to student-based process-product studies however, very little research has been done with respect to determining what parental expectations are. A computer-assisted search in the Canadian Education Index (1997) revealed the main thrust of parent-based research has been centered around FI program attrition rate factors. The domain of parental expectations has been largely unexplored except to determine why students have transferred out of FI.

This thesis seeks to determine the L2 performance characteristics of EFI graduates as expected by their parents. The previously noted success and growth of FI programs indicate general satisfaction among parents. The intent here is to explore the reasons why parents/guardians choose FI, and also arrive at a general description of what competencies in French

these parents/guardians expect their child(ren) to have attained upon graduation from FI. If these expectations are being met, then it would appear the performance shortcomings of FI as noted by critics are acceptable to parents (the term guardians is understood) of FI children.

Parental L2 knowledge may be one of the possible factors in determining L2 performance. Parents with little or no L2 knowledge may hold performance expectations for their child(ren) which are different from those of parents with formal post-secondary L2 experience.

Another possible factor in determining parental expectations is the grade where the child is situated in the education system. Parents of children in early grades may have significantly different expectations than those of students in secondary school. This possibility also suggests that parental expectations may change as their child progresses through the school system.

A third potential significant difference may be previous experience with FI. Parents of more than one child in FI may have different expectations for their child(ren) than those who are encountering FI for the first time.

The research, then, will yield not only what the average parent expects with regard to his/her child's performance characteristics in French at graduation, but also significant factors underlying these expectations. Differences between parents whose children are at different grade levels in the school system will be analysed. The varying degrees of parental L2 education as a possible factor in influencing expectations held for their child(ren) will also be considered in compiling an overall profile of parental expectations.

Criticism of EFI has not yet been compared to the expectations of parents of children in the program, simply because there has been no previous development of a profile of these expectations. Inaccuracies in L2 production by EFI students has been well

documented(Lapkin, 1984; Pawley, 1985; Lyster, 1987; Rebuffot, 1988; Hammerly, 1989; Calvé, 1991). The degree to which these inaccuracies are accepted by parents has not been previously explored. Once a profile of parental expectations has been established, then one can move closer to a decision as to whether these expectations are being reached.

The data profile of parental expectations will compare either favourably or unfavourably with previous research conducted on students' L2 functional capabilities. Hammerly's arguments (1989) that EFI produces little more than a pidgin type of French may be strengthened if parents expect a much greater level of L2 production accuracy than has been evidenced in past research. Conversely, the trend of EFI students' propensity for effective L2 communication in spite of numerous production errors (Lapkin, 1984; Pawley, 1985; Genesee, 1987) may be very close to the L2 skills expected by parents.

Chapter 2

The Literature Review

The FI Debate

From localized experiment to country-wide educational choice FI has been available for about thirty years (Rebuffot, 1993). The body of research associated with the field is considerable given its age. As a result, inroads have been made in quantifying and qualifying this particular educational path. It is also the most thoroughly researched educational option in Canadian education despite its relative youth. The available literature on FI that gave rise to the research endeavor reported by this thesis tends to be divided in its degree of support for EFI. It is perhaps this disagreement among educators regarding the validity of the EFI approach that has produced such a great amount of research in such a short time.

The essence of the FI debate centers around the establishment of an acceptable degree of accuracy in L2 production areas of speaking and writing. Hammerly (1989) claimed the number and types of production errors committed by FI students was shocking enough to fault the whole notion of FI methodology as it was being implemented and called for its dismissal. Lapkin (1984) and Pawley (1985) both earlier noted the oral competence in French of immersion students had been a focus of evaluation and a major source of concern. They concluded, however, that these deficiencies in immersion students' French production did not pose any significant threat to overall communication. Hammerly (1989) drew very different conclusions using not only his own data but findings already reported by Lapkin (1984) and Pawley (1985). These opposite positions form the basis of the current debate in Canada regarding FI. Absent from this standoff is parental input. There is a notable lack of data from the parents of students enrolled in FI programs in spite of the general acceptance that parental expectations are

accepted as one of the criteria in determining the success of educational programs (Hammerly, 1989). This situation has existed over the past two decades in Canada while FI programs have grown at an astonishing rate (Rebuffot, 1993). Since the FI programs remain popular among parents, and given the established lines of debate on the issue, the question of whether parental expectations were being attained arose. Data indicating explicit parental expectations for their child(ren) enrolled in FI is absent from the current body of literature. It was this information defcit that prompted the research leading to this thesis. The establishment of a profile of parental expectations in relation to the production skills of their child(ren) in FI would seem to lend support to one of the current FI debate positions. If parental expectations recognize the limits of L2 production characteristics, then FI can be seen as a satisfactory approach to L2 learning. If, on the other hand, parental expectations greatly exceed the parameters of FI student L2 production, then the FI approach can be termed as

producing unsatisfactory results, which are not in accordance with the expectations of parents. The possibility must also be entertained of this research data being used to further substantiate both divergent positions. Irrespective of this outcome, the current literature does not yield a composite of parental expectations.

During the thirty years or so since the inception of FI as an educational option, a considerable amount of research has been done to document the advantages and drawbacks of the program. The great public acceptance enjoyed by FI programs has found endorsements by several respected educational researchers (Swain, 1981; Carey, 1984; Lapkin, 1984; Genesee, 1987; Day & Shapson, 1991; Harley, 1992; among others). However, the publications by Spilka (1976), Hammerly (1986 with Pellerin, 1988, 1989), Lyster (1987), and Calvé (1991) have given cause for reflection.

Hammerly, perhaps FI's leading critic, contends that FI is an artificially created learning environment

with one model speaker of the second language, the teacher. Students are consequently not exposed to sufficient authentic French to learn the language properly and accurately. In addition, the use of a natural approach such as immersion, encourages students to overextend structures of the first language and impose them on L2. This process produces what Hammerly terms "frenglish" (1989, p.27), a unique blend of L1 and L2 stemming directly from the L2 learning environment. Furthermore, because students hear only their classmates and teacher using French, each class of FI students in Canada speak and write their own peculiar brand of L2. One of Hammerly's assertions is that due to these environmental conditions which affect production skills, French fluency is not really achieved ("frenglish" is); therefore, the FI approach is fatally flawed and should be abandoned.

Lyster (1987) noted the oral production of FI students is often only decodable by those who have had some contact with FI. His recorded instance of "Je sais toi" meaning "I know you" follows Hammerly's

notion of "Frenglish" in that English word order is imposed on the French language. The nuances associated with the division of the verb "to know" in English into "connaître" and "savoir" in French are also not apparent in the construction. Nor is there an awareness of the "tu/vous" difference. These errors are unique to FI students, and render the sentence incomprehensible to a unilingual francophone, yet sentences of this type are comprehensible to those associated with the interlanguage of immersion students. However, Lyster (1990) and others (Harley, 1991; Day & Shapson, 1991) do not hasten to condemn FI as does Hammerly, but prefer to seek solutions within the methodology through a blended teaching approach of both experiential and analytic teaching strategies.

Researchers have tended to concur with Hammerly in concluding that oral and written L2 production of immersion students is not equivalent to that of francophones (Carey, 1984; Lapkin, 1984; Pawley, 1985; Lyster, 1987; Rebuffot, 1988; Calvé, 1991; Harley, 1992). Again, unlike Hammerly, none of these

researchers have concluded that FI is a fundamentally flawed teaching methodology. Where Pawley (1985) observed non-native like proficiency in FI students' French production, Hammerly (1989) saw rampant errors indicative of only a slight knowledge of how the French language works. The abilities of FI students to communicate, albeit with some inaccuracies, in a wide variety of second language situations was recognized as an asset of the program rather than an indication of failure of FI to deliver (Lapkin, 1984; Pawley, 1985).

The general communicative aim of FI is a greater overall proficiency in French than students in the regular core French program with no associated deficits in English nor other subject areas. Hammerly (1989) seems to equate proficiency with accuracy and thus denies this FI goal as attainable. Nevertheless, the analytic language teaching approach which tends to focus on accuracy must be accompanied by an experiential component if nativelike proficiency is to be approximated (Allen, 1983; Genesee, 1987; Lyster, 1994; Day & Shapson, 1991). The FI environment

provides an opportunity for students to gain an operating knowledge of the communicative aspects of the L2. Besnard (1995) suggests motivation which incites learning is better accomplished through a personalization of the material to be mastered. Experiential learning encourages personalization of the target language through which the subject content is taught. Therefore, the FI environment may be seen as inherently motivational in spite of the L2 accuracy limitations of its students. Nevertheless, communicative and motivational aspects of FI methodology have not been sufficient to persuade FI critics, such as Hammerly, that the methodology is indeed sound and worthy of development.

At present, the debate among researchers in FI continues, with considerable effort devoted to the interlanguage of FI students. Very little research however, exists to determine if parental expectations are being met by FI. This is surprising considering the popularity of the FI option.

In 1981 Swain noted the greater the number of hours of exposure to the second language, the higher the L2 proficiency scores tend to be, thus the number of hours of instruction in French in the FI programs became an area of concern. Second language acquisition research has indicated that learning to communicate in a second language involves the development of interlanguage (Corder, 1967; Selinker, 1975), as L1 and L2 components come in contact with each other. Often students will impose semantic and syntactical elements of L1 upon L2, in a process of overgeneralizing between the two languages.

The immersion learning environment has produced unique locutions in this respect (Lyster, 1987), the frequency and character of which prompted Hammerly(1989), to term immersion students' L2 output as "Frenglish", a unique blend of the two working languages of the student. In addition, other strategies are used to assist communication when students do not yet have the grammatical or lexical means to correctly express themselves in French, such

as inserting the English word in a French sentence. These coping strategies led Hammerly(1989) to question the validity of the whole immersion approach, particularly when comparing the frequency and types of L2 production errors as applied to Swain's assertion(1981) that hours of L2 exposure and L2 proficiency levels have a directly proportional relationship.

Further classroom research centering around the question of how well FI students spoke and wrote French noted FI students often transfer from English vocabulary and syntax when producing both oral and written French (Lapkin, 1984), echoing the previous findings of Swain (1981). Lapkin, however, went on to evaluate FI students as being able to communicate effectively, but not well enough to be indistinguishable from their francophone counterparts. The immersion concept is associated with recreating aspects of natural L1 acquisition rather than a passive rule-governed approach (Carey, 1984). As such, it is more consistent with the sociolinguistic and

psycholinguistic theories of language acquisition; thus production errors are to be expected. In the same study Carey also uncovered evidence that parents of children in FI were more likely to be interested in speaking French, and taking, or have already taken, French courses than parents whose children were not in FI.

In an effort to describe the L2 production parameters of FI students Pawley (1985), administered the Foreign Service Interview Test to evaluate the French competencies of a selection of EFI students at the Grade Ten level in the Ottawa area. She determined that the majority of participants fell in the 2 or 2+ level, meaning they could satisfy routine social needs and perform limited work needs in French. Listening comprehension was the strongest L2 skill while oral production was the weakest. Hammerly's reaction (1989) to this same set of data was to further his argument that the FI approach does not work in that the 2/2+ scores on a scale of 5 indicated failure of the program, especially when one considers that about 7000

hours of classroom time had been spent exposing the students to the French language. These results were also termed as little more than coping skills (Webster, 1986), and thus inadequate from a parental standpoint. Webster called for explicit expectations to be developed by ministries of education in concert with adequate curriculum materials such that FI graduates would attain the highest possible levels of French proficiency, rather than be classed as simply being able to cope with the language.

The oral production limitations of FI students were linked to deficiencies in vocabulary (Lapkin, Swain, and Shapson, 1990) who also considered this as a major weakness of FI. Furthermore, given the L1 impositions on L2, by the time students are cognitively able to discern abstract linguistic concepts, they may have already fossilized erroneous L2 structures, the correction of which can be very difficult in a restricted classroom situation. (Calvé, 1991). Clipperton (1994) noted FI students can be identified on the basis of their oral production limitations, i.e.

precision and range of vocabulary, and use of idiomatic expressions. The degree to which parents tolerate such L2 production inaccuracies is largely unknown, and is an avenue of inquiry investigated by this thesis.

All L2 learning environments can be considered part of a natural developmental process because the natural order of L2 acquisition based on personal need predominates (Chaudron, 1988). Oxford and Crookall (1990) argue personal interest on a given theme will motivate the learner to expand and develop his/her vocabulary. The teaching methodology is secondary and subservient to the personal motivation of the student. This is the case in L2 learning in an immersion situation. Nevertheless, with several years of program refinement, L2 production errors have continued unabated among immersion students (Hammerly, 1989; Netten et al, (1998). This criticism notwithstanding, FI students often dramatically reduce L2 production errors when exposed to an authentic French milieu (Rebuffot, 1993). The motivation to self-correct is seen as a factor here.

Lyster (1990), Day and Shapson (1991), and Dicks (1992) all suggest that a combined teaching approach, using both formal (analytical) and functional (experiential) teaching strategies will allow students to achieve a higher level of accuracy in L2 oral and written production than the use of an approach based solely on an experiential teaching approach. This balanced approach is not only linked to personal motivation through its experiential component, but also offers an analytical aspect in dealing with both written and oral L2 production. It is therefore seen as an equliibrium to be maintained, if maximum L2 learning is to take place (Germain & Séguin, 1995).

The motivation of the student, irrespective of the teaching methodology, is in part affected by the values and aspirations of the parent (Carey, 1984). This finding leads directly to the question of establishing a profile of parental expectations of FI students. Past studies have indicated that success in French programs is correlated with parental support(Burstall, 1975; Pack, 1979).

Research dealing with parental expectations most often centers around the question of attrition from the program. Hayden (1988) attempted to determine the factors behind parents' decisions to transfer their children out of FI. In that Alberta-based study, the parents, students, and teachers were all consulted. The three most frequent reasons cited by parents in transferring their children out of FI were language arts difficulty (90%), a finding that was correlated in a similar study by Bruck in 1985, the inability of parents to help at home (80%), and task related frustration/emotional stress (70%). Similar results were revealed in a recent study by Ellsworth (1998) completed in Newfoundland where the primary reasons for attrition from FI were lack of academic achievement and a perception that the FI program was too challenging.

In other parent-based research, Brassard (1990) compared FI parents with those of students in the regular English stream and found significant differences between the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the two groups. However, he did not explore the

realm of student performance expectation. Parental differences of this nature have been evident in immersion programs since their inception; even though students in immersion programs are not selected cognitively, their parents are self-selected.

Campbell (1992) examined the attrition rate of EFI students after grade six in Winnipeg and determined that parents were happy with the quality of education in EFI, but that the decision to remove the child from the program was done in the best interests of the child. Explicit notions defining the quality of education with which parents were content were not explored. In a similar review in Ontario, Fine (1992) concluded that FI parents expected their child(ren) to demonstrate stronger French skills than core or extended core French students. Specifying exactly what those expectations were was not a function of the design of the study. Morissette (1992) discussed the level of parental participation in immersion schools, but not discrete performance levels expected of students. Crawford (1993) studied parental perceptions

but only from the point of view of social interactions within a dual-track school where both FI and traditional English stream education options were available. A profile of parental expectations with regard to the L2 performance qualities of FI students has to this point, not been forthcoming.

From reviewing the available literature on FI, the debate among researchers became clear. While FI students' L2 production inaccuracies are generally acknowledged, the interpretations of what these shortcomings represent differ widely among researchers. Hammerly (1989) contends these L2 performance errors constitute program failure; thus, he advocates abolishment of FI methodology, while Lyster (1990), Day and Shapson (1991), and Dicks (1992) portray FI as a still developing methodology, and suggest a blend of form and function style of teaching to improve students' L2 production.

French immersion programs have been and continue to be a popular choice for parents. One might anticipate that a profile of parental expectations

might have been established. This information would indicate whether FI programs were successful in the eyes of the consumers, the parents. A positive answer could then be interpreted as a public acceptance of the results of FI programs and the methods by which these results are obtained. Explicit parental expectations for children enrolled in FI are, however, conspicuously absent from the research literature on FI.

This study, then, will attempt to establish a profile of parental expectations for the EFI program which can be compared to the FI student production characteristics as have already been noted in several studies (Swain, 1981; Lapkin, 1984; Pawley, 1985; Lyster, 1987; Hammerly, 1989; Calvé, 1991; Clipperton, 1994). This comparison will consequently lead to a clearer definition of the success of the program in the estimation of parents. The data patterns may also be of interest in future associated research. If parental expectations are centered around students' increased ability to communicate in the second language rather than accuracy, then Hammerly's (1989) assertion that FI

does not meet parental expectations, would be somewhat diminished. On the other hand, if parents expect a high degree of francophone-like accuracy from their children, then FI teaching methodologies which can provide such results will require identification and exploitation.

The parental voice in determining characteristics of what their children should be able to do in the French language has thus far gone largely unheard. Parents have been regarded as something of an outside interest group, sending their children to FI classrooms in hopes of a good return on this particular educational investment. In surveying the parents, the FI debate will be enriched by the inclusion of a point of view that is extremely relevant but which has been neglected. Such new information will be a real asset to the growing body of research on this particular education option.

Chapter Three

Design of the Study

The study falls under the domain of descriptive research and builds on the current FI debate outlined in the previous chapter. Its focus, however, is not to explicitly support either argument. The purpose of the study is to determine a profile of parental expectations of students' L2 abilities upon graduation from EFI.

In compiling a profile of parental expectations two fundamental areas will be examined. Firstly, the research will attempt to determine the degree to which parental expectations are similar to the actual documented performance of EFI graduates. Secondly, the study will examine factors which have contributed to the creation of these expectations.

The hypotheses underpinning this research reflect the current debate in FI. Researchers have determined the L2 production characteristics of FI students, and have reached dissimilar conclusions (as outlined in

Chapter Two). The hypotheses used as the basis for this study are then:

1) Parents do not anticipate native-like L2 performance from their child(ren) in the three skill areas of oral production, reading comprehension and writing ability.

2) Parental expectations will vary according to previous FI experience, and the grade level of the student.

3) Parental expectations will vary according to parental knowledge of French.

4) Parental choice of EFI is influenced by information received from the school board, and/or proponents of EFI, such as Canadian Parents for French (CPF).

The area of listening comprehension was omitted from the first hypothesis in accordance with the format

of French language skill assessment currently in use by the federal government. Listening comprehension is not explicitly evaluated when the bilingual status of prospective employees is determined. It tends to be implicit in the evaluation of one's oral production . Assessment levels for the language skill areas of oral production, reading comprehension and writing ability were in place, and therefore, were adapted to form the basis of the associated descriptors used in this study.

Focusing a study with specific questions centered around a preconceived hypothesis which has its basis in previous existing data classifies this study as descriptive research (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). The independent variables in the study are the EFI program itself and the parents of EFI children. The dependent variable is the collective perceptions of parents regarding the linguistic performance of their children who are in EFI. Extraneous variables include teacher and student feedback to parents, previous involvement in FI education, and parents' crosstalk among themselves. The initial pre-enrollment presentation

of the EFI education option to interested parents by school boards, as well as promotional material by CPF are also considered possible strong factors in parents' conceptions of what their child(ren) will be able to do in the second language upon graduation from EFI. Osborne (1990) characterized CPF as an extremely successful lobby group actively campaigning for growth in FI education, and credited this organization as being largely responsible for the widespread implementation of FI programs in Canada. It may be suggested that some critics believe that CPF presents an overly positive view of the linguistic competencies developed by the program.

From attending the initial presentation to prospective EFI parents by Avalon East School Board personnel, it was apparent that a balanced view was put forth regarding the advantages and difficulties associated with having children who are enrolled in the EFI. The L2 knowledge of parents varies considerably; some parents of children in FI programs are bilingual, while others claim to have little or no knowledge of

French.   It would seem that these differences could affect parental expectations.   It is also possible that parents who have had some experience with FI have changed their expectations, or that parents' expectations are modified as their child progresses through the grades.   Therefore, all of these factors will be examined in order to determine whether they appear to have an effect in determining the parents' view of the anticipated performance of their child in French upon graduation from the FI program.

In the primary and elementary EFI years, students are encouraged to use French as a means of communication.   French is the language of not only classroom instruction, but also classroom administration (Weber & Tardif, 1991).   This method of learning a second language, through the experience of using it as the principle means of communication, is termed experiential learning. Generally, this approach develops into a somewhat more analytical one in the intermediate years as students grapple with abstract linguistic concepts such as agreements, declensions and

non-parallel structures between English (L1) and French (L2) (Rebuffot, 1993). Parental expectations for their child(ren), therefore, may change as the EFI program focus shifts. The natural linguistic abilities of the maturing learner also become more apparent with time and may contribute as well to parental expectation change. It is for these reasons that parents of children in both primary and intermediate EFI programs formed the target group of EFI students in grades three and nine.

In order to determine parental expectations a census of two different grade levels was taken. All parents under the jurisdiction of the Avalon East School Board who had a child registered in EFI in grades three and nine received a copy of the survey.

Since the data was collected in the urban St. John's area, a predominantly anglophone environment, replication in a different FI environment may well furnish alternate results. The same may be true if this study was circulated to parents of students in Middle or Late Immersion or those with children in the

senior high years of EFI. This research then is limited to parents of children in the elementary and junior high years of EFI who live in a predominantly anglophone environment. It intends within these parameters to assess the extent to which EFI has met the expectations for linguistic competence of the parents of students enrolled in the program.

The data profile of parental expectations will compare either favourably or unfavourably with previous research conducted on students' L2 functional capabilities. Hammerly's assertion (1989) that the quality of French produced by EFI students contains such inaccuracies that it would be inconsistent with parental expectations, may be strengthened if parents expect a much greater level of L2 production accuracy than has been evidenced in past research. Conversely, the trend of EFI students' propensity for effective L2 communication in spite of numerous production errors (Lapkin, 1984; Pawley, 1985; Genesee, 1987) may be very close to the level of L2 skills expected by parents.

The Avalon East School Board was contacted and asked to provide a list of schools under its jurisdiction offering the EFI education option (See Appendix G). Approval regarding the distribution of the survey by the principals in each of these schools was then sought via a letter from the research co-ordinator with the school board to each principal. To guarantee anonymity of each respondent, the School Board did not permit the release of an address list to allow the surveys to be mailed directly to the parents in the target group. Instead, the surveys were sent via internal mail to the concerned schools where, once approved by principals, they were distibuted to the home room teachers who in turn passed them on to the students. It must be noted that all of the principals and teachers cooperated in this venture such that the study was distributed to the entire grade three and nine EFI student population under the jurisdiction of the Avalon East School Board, defining this research endeavor as a census of grade three and nine EFI students in the urban St. John's area.

A covering letter of explanation was included with each survey (See Appendix B), along with a stamped self-addressed envelope for the return of completed questionnaires, and a survey summary request form for those parents wishing information regarding the final results of the study. This data collection technique is designed to describe naturally occurring phenomena with as little as possible experimental manipulation.

The questionnaire is composed of two parts. The first section, Part A, deals with the L2 knowledge and FI experience of the parent, along with identification and rating in order of importance of the factors which led to the child(ren)'s enrollment in EFI. Part B is designed to have the parent indicate the graduate L2 performance expectations that (s)he holds for his/her child(ren).

Four different competency levels of L2 production were provided in the three domains of oral production, reading comprehension and writing ability. An "other" option was also provided in the event that respondents felt the given descriptions were insufficient

indicators of their expectations. The parent was asked to select the performance level that (s)he expected the student to have attained upon graduation from the EFI program. The indicated performance levels were adapted by the researcher, from existing federal government guidelines for employee L2 classifications. These performance levels were chosen specifically to relate parental expectations to criteria that are currently being used in assessing the French language abilities of prospective and current employees with the federal government.

The final section of the study contains open-ended questions regarding the advantages and drawbacks of EFI education as perceived by parents. The survey concludes with an "other comment" question where respondents may submit pertinent observances not explicitly requested in the rest of the survey.

Aside from the necessary confirmability, or fidelity aspect of the research findings, internal validity relates as well to representativeness and retrievability (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). The former

requires that the data represent the normal behaviour of the respondents, while the latter stresses the importance of making the data available for re-analysis. Both elements of internal validity are accommodated in this study as the respondents' opinions and expectations regarding EFI performance are sought through a questionnaire to be filled out at their convenience, suggesting normal behaviour patterns of the respondents. The returned questionnaire allows the data to be easily retrieved for re-analysis. Collecting the data via formal questionnaire also assures a reasonable degree of explicitness (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). This explicitness of the data collection process also enables other researchers to replicate the study, an important aspect of descriptive research.

The external validity of well documented descriptive research is present if the findings can be applied or transposed to situations outside those in which the research was conducted (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). The questionnaire strategy of this study does

not manipulate the population, and permits transposition. Limitations on generalizability arise from the milieu which is urban and unilingual anglophone; therefore, the findings from the study are limited to the views of parents of children enrolled in EFI in a predominantly anglophone urban environment. Findings may not be similar in rural settings where the formal education characteristics or socioeconomic status of the parents may differ from those of an urban area. Furthermore, parents of students living in urban centres which have a substantial francophone community (Montréal, Ottawa and Moncton for example), might also render different data.

Analysis of data stemming from descriptive research is undertaken through frequencies, central tendencies, variabilities and correlations (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). For the purpose of this study, frequency tables, means, and correlations between expectation level and parental L2 knowledge are used to examine the first hypothesis posited by this researcher. Statistical significance in non-interval

type data was the situation for this data set which used the chi-square analysis to determine correlation significance. This nonparametric inferential statistical procedure determined whether the distribution of the frequencies in the categories of one variable could be correlated with the distribution of the frequencies in another variable (Heiman, 1996). For example, different performance expectations may conceivably be significantly linked to parental background factors such as CPF, L2 parental knowledge and/or school board influence.

Research questions explored in this endeavor center around the performance characteristics expected of the students by their parents upon graduation from EFI. The major areas of inquiry were:

1) What do EFI parents expect the graduate linguistic performance level for their children to be?
2) Does previous experience with EFI affect expected graduate linguistic performance expectations?

3) Does the French or any second language knowledge of parents affect their expectations?

4) Is CPF a significant factor in the choice of EFI? Does it affect expectations?

5) Does school board presentation of the EFI option affect parental expectations?

6) Are the expectations similar in each parental group(Grade 3 vs. Grade 9 parents)? If not, what may account for the differences?

7) Do parents generally express satisfaction with the results of EFI programs?

Chapter Four

The Results of the Study

The survey was distributed to all students enrolled in Early French Immersion (EFI) in grades three and nine in May, 1997. A total of 370 surveys were issued and 158 were returned. The data therefore represents approximately 43% of the target population. Since the population receiving the questionnaire included all the parents of children in grades three and nine of the EFI program, the percentage of respondents is sufficiently high to represent an authentic profile of parental information and expectations for their children in EFI.

Part A

Parental Profiles

The first question determined the gender of the respondent. The options were male parent/guardian and female parent/guardian. A note indicating the availability of a second

survey per family in the event that male and female responses differed within the family was not acted upon for any of the surveys. Respondents were mostly female (118); males accounted for 35 surveys, 3 were cooperatively completed (M and F), and 2 did not indicate any gender.

Question 2 asked for the current grade level(s) of the respondent's child(ren). Given the fact that some parents have more than one child enrolled in EFI, it is not surprising that the 158 returned surveys yielded data on 247 children. Two surveys did not indicate any grade level, while five others indicated a single grade level other than that of the target population. Table 1 provides an overview of the data. The numbers in grades other than the target grades(3 and 9) indicate once EFI is chosen, this education option is often also adopted for siblings. The returned surveys indicate data on 153 students in the two target grades, and 94

outside. The number of respondents in each target grade area is about even (75 for grade 9 parents and 78 for grade 3). It would seem then that parent interest level in educational research does not vary considerably with the grade level of their child.

Of the total 247 students comprising the database, 62% are in either Grade 3 or 9, while 37% are enrolled in other grades, and are therefore siblings of the students in grades 3 or 9.

Table 1 Grade Levels

Grade	Frequency	Grade	Frequency
K	4	7	12
1	15	8	4
2	5	9	75
3	78	10	6
4	6	11	8
5	16	12	4
6	12	No grade indicated	2

Question 3 asked if this grade 3 or 9 experience was the parent's first experience with EFI. Sixty respondents(38%) indicated yes and 95(60%) said no. Three surveys(2%) were returned with this question unanswered. Those who answered yes were to advance to question 5, while the 'no' respondents were asked to continue on with question 4.

Question 4 sought to determine the circumstances relating to this EFI experience not being the first as was indicated in the previous question. The five options from which to choose followed by the number of respondents who chose them are listed below in Table 2. It is interesting to note that the 95 respondents who had previously indicated this was not their first experience with FI, are joined here by 17 other respondents. While this extra input clouds the issue of determining exactly how many respondents are experiencing first time association with EFI,

it does not alter the observation that EFI can be seen as a family educational choice.

Table 2 Circumstances of Respondents' Children

Circumstance	Frequency (n=117)	Percentage of Total
Another child(ren) currently enrolled in EFI at a higher grade level	47	40
Another child(ren) currently enrolled in EFI at a lower grade level	42	36
Another child(ren) who has/have transferred out of EFI	17	15
Another child(ren) who has/have graduated from the EFI program	7	6
Another child(ren) currently enrolled in LFI (late French immersion)	4	3
Total	117	100

Almost 60% of respondents indicated current enrolment in EFI outside the survey target grades (3 & 9) of at least one other child. This seems to indicate that once EFI is chosen as an education option, it is done so with all children

of the family in mind rather than an isolated decision for any one child. Approximately 15% of respondents reported transferring their child(ren) out of EFI. While this survey did not aim to discover reasons why parents would exercise this option, the frequency of identifiable disadvantages of the program as discussed in Part B, question 5 show a pattern of dissatisfaction with lack of progress in either French and/or English. This trend is discussed later in the chapter (See page 80). The rather small percentage of respondents with children having transferred out of EFI also seems to indicate general approval with the program. This pattern of general program acceptance also re-emerges later in the last question of the survey (See page 86).

One respondent added an option which was not foreseen in the design of the survey. This parent/guardian had a child who had graduated from LFI.

The next question(#5) dealt with parental knowledge of French. There were eleven categories ranging from no exposure to French to experience living in a French milieu. They are listed in Table 3 along with their frequency of occurrence.

The total number of French education options chosen by respondents in this question is 210, indicating that some respondents chose multiple categories in answering this particular question. The data nevertheless seem to portray a general trend that the majority of parents indicated having some understanding of the French language with those having attained high school and a few university courses making up approximately 60% of the total. The data from question 5 are represented graphically in Figure 1 .

Table 3 Parent French Education

Category #	French Education	Frequency (n=210)	Percentage of Total
1	None	15	7
2	Elementary School	18	9
3	High school	81	39
4	Community college courses	6	3
5	Less than 8 university courses	43	21
6	8 university courses (equivalent to a minor)	6	3
7	12 university courses (equivalent to a major)	1	1
8	B. A. in French	7	3
9	Evening/Weekend conversation classes	16	8
10	Immersion experience (4-6 weeks or more)	10	5
11	Other	7	3
	Total	210	100*

*deviations from 100% are due to rounding

Figure 1 Parent French Education
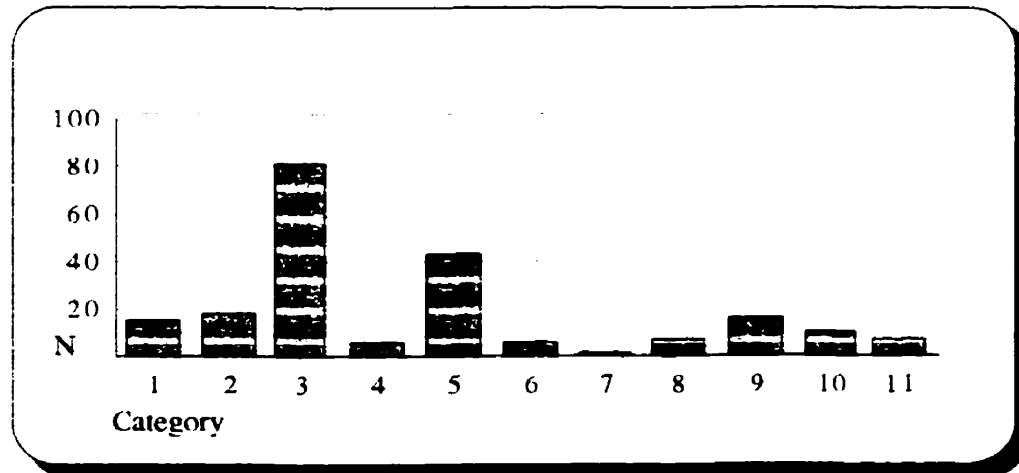
In category 11(the "other" category), four of the seven respondents were raised in a francophone environment, two did not specify, and one claimed a university-equivalent reading competency certification.

Question 6 asked if the respondent was currently enrolled in any form of French education. Of the 158 surveys returned, 157 indicated 'No' to this question. One survey was left blank in this area. It would seem then, that parents of children enrolled in EFI are not actively pursuing upgrading of their own L2 skills. This becomes an especially acute

observation when compared with the identifiable disadvantages question in part B of the survey where parents indicate a high degree of frustration in assisting with homework (See page 82).

Question 7 sought to determine if the respondent had future plans for enrolling in French education of some sort. Thirteen indicated "yes" with nine of these providing details. Conversation/night classes accounted for six of these. Six respondents did not complete this question and 139 (89%) indicated a negative response. Future parental endeavours to augment L2 skills then, do not seem to be a perceived priority among EFI parents and guardians.

Question 8 asked if the respondent had ever lived in a bilingual milieu. Thirty-six respondents (23%) indicated they had. Their length of stay is recorded in Table 4.

Table 4 Francophone/Bilingual Milieu Time

Time Spent	< 1 Year	1 - 5 Years	6 - 10 Years	11 - 15 Years	> 15 Years
Number of Respondents	13	11	3	2	7

n = 36

Question 9 asked the respondent to identify the language(s) used at home on a regular basis. The response was overwhelmingly unilingually English (151 or 96%), with five respondents indicating French, one indicating Greek while one survey was incomplete. From question 8, 24% of respondents spent time in a francophone or bilingual milieu, yet from question nine only 3% of respondents use French in the home on a regular basis. The data represents then a predominantly anglophone arena of operation.

Question 10 asked respondents to indicate the factors involved in selecting the EFI program for their child(ren). Question 11 asked respondents to rank in order of importance those factors indicated in question 10. The factors on

the questionnaire are listed below followed by the number of respondents who indicated that these reasons formed part of their decision to enroll their child(ren) in EFI.

Table 5 EFI Decision Factors

Category	Factor	Frequency
a	school board information	22
b	information from CPF	21
c	parents of other EFI students	48
d	school location	40
e	program popularity	33
f	future employment enhancement	147
g	more stimulating learning environment	109
h	social reasons	15
i	better student/teacher ratio	62
j	other	59

It appears the possibility of future employment enhancement and the perception of a more stimulating classroom environment are the primary reasons why parents choose EFI. These factors are followed by the better

student/teacher ratio and 'other' category. A

graphical representation of this data is provided

in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Decision Factors in Choosing EFI
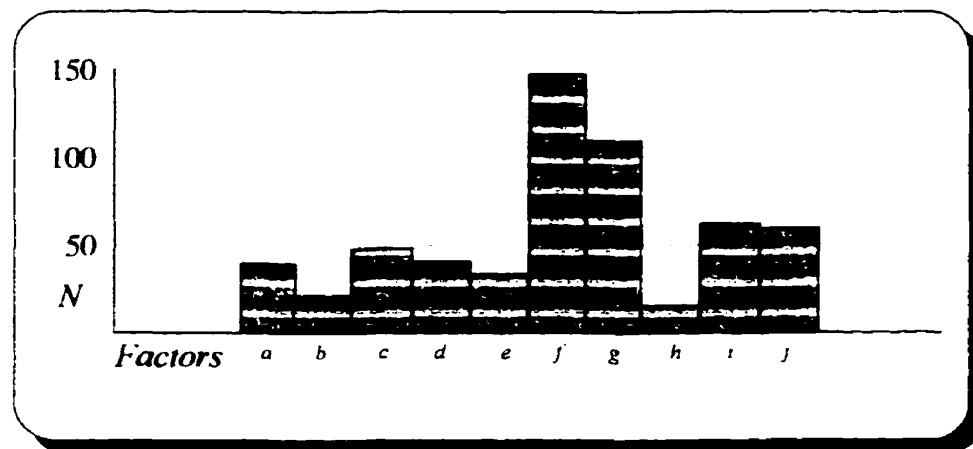
Although 59 people chose option 'j'(the

"other" category) as a determining factor in

question 10, their reasons varied. A summary of

these reasons is provided in Table 6.

Table 6 Option 'j ' Summary (n>1)

Comment	Number of Respondents
bilingual country;opportunity to become bilingual;fluent	17
personal heritage;ability to communicate with francophone relatives	7
general appeal to learn L2	6
best possible education option;broader learning experience	4
expands scope beyond English world/culture/language	4
provides a more promising future	4
possibility to live, travel and/or work in other countries/cultures	4
parental interest (my own) in French	2
easier to acquire L3	2
attended a course offered by Professor Joan Netten	2
EFI parents are proactive re their child(ren's) education	2
personal research I conducted	2

Table 6 contains summaries of option 'j' ideas which were recorded more than once. Appendix H is a list of option 'j' comments which appeared but once. Collectively the 'other' category was chosen by 59 respondents; however, the subdivision by reason as is done in Table 6

reveals a much lesser impact for any single given reason.

Question 11 asked parents to rank those factors of influence chosen in the previous question in order of importance. Factor 'f'(future employment enhancement) was chosen as the most important, the second most important and the third most important decision-making factor. The perception of a more stimulating learning environment (factor g) came in second place in the categories of most important, second most important, and third most important decision-making factor. Factor 'c'(parents of other EFI students) was selected as both the fourth and fifth most important decision-making factor. Table 7 shows the rankings in detail.

Table 7 Rankings of Decision-making Factors[*]

Most Important		2nd Most Important		3rd Most Important		4th Most Important		5th Most Important	
Fac	Fre	Fac	Fre	Fac	Fre	Fac	Fre	Fac	Fre
f	63	f	39	f	23	c	15	c	9
g	40	g	38	g/c	16	e	9	a	4
j	20	i	29	i	15	d	8	d/f/h	3
i	11	j	11	d	13	g	7	e	2
d	5	d	9	e	11	i	6	b/i	1

*Fac is the designation for the factor.
Fre represents its frequency of occurence.
A diagonal indicates a tie.

The most popular decision factors from question 10 (f,g and i) also appear with greater frequency in the above table. It appears then, that future employment enhancement(factor f), the more challenging learning environment(factor g), and an improved teacher/student ratio(smaller classes)(factor i) are the most important reasons why parents opted for EFI.

In conclusion, the parental profile from the data collected in part A of the survey indicates

that, of the 158 respondents to the survey, there is a similar interest level between grade 3 and grade 9 parent groups with the EFI option chosen for the family rather than on an individual basis. The majority of respondents claim some understanding of the French language, and seem to approve of the EFI program with only 15% indicating transfer of children out of EFI. While only 3% of respondents have indicated using French in the home on a regular basis, the vast majority (89%) do not percieve the need to upgrade their French skills. With regard to why EFI was chosen the two most common and also most important reasons cited are respectively future employment enhancement and the perception of a more stimulating learning environment.

Part B

Expected Proficiency Levels

Respondents were given detailed descriptions of four proficiency levels in the language performance domains of Oral Proficiency, Reading Comprehension and Writing Ability. The levels were termed A to D ascending in skill level. An 'other' option, level O, was also provided in the event that the given proficiency level descriptions were insufficient to adequately describe the expected degree of L2 proficiency in the language performance domain in question. The proficiency level descriptions are provided as part of the complete survey in Appendix A.

The 158 surveys received rendered data on 247 children. This was due to some respondents indicating more than one child currently enrolled in EFI. In this section respondents were asked to select a proficiency level for each child in each of the three L2 performance areas. As such,

some respondents tallied multiple votes. The results are contained in Table 8 below.

Table 8 Expected Proficiency Levels

Level	Oral Proficiency		Reading Comprehension		Writing Ability		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
A	1	0.4	0	0	0	0	1	0.13
B	42	16	30	12	43	17	115	15
C	182	69	156	61	152	61	490	64
D	34	13	62	24	50	20	146	19
O	4	1.5	7	3	5	2	16	2
Total	263	100	255	100	250	100	768	100

Data from the surveys indicated 247 children (as tabulated from question 2), yet the totals row in Table 8 shows a discrepancy in all three skill area total figures with this previous total assessment. There may have been some respondent confusion with carrying forth data on multiple children throughout the survey which may have

contributed to these discrepancies; however, the trend to select option C as an expected graduate competency level in all skill areas can be clearly seen in Table 8. Nevertheless, overall, 19 and 15 per cent of respondents chose D and B levels respectively. Figure 3 below shows the distribution of total responses in all performance areas.

Figure 3 Expected Proficiency Level Distribution
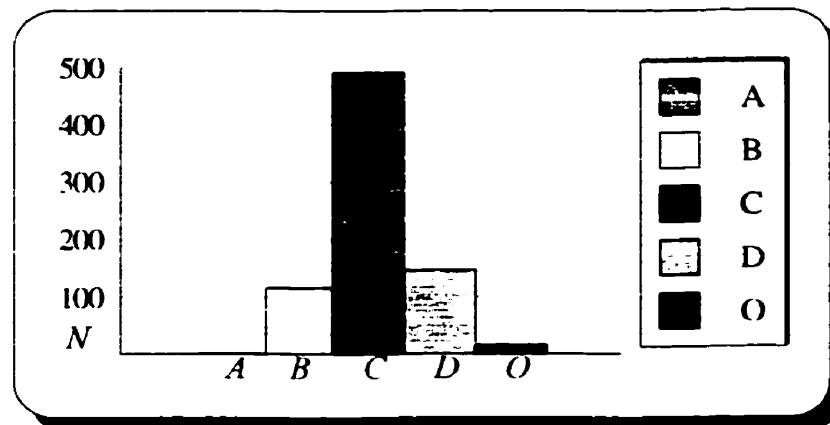
The shape of Chart 3 indicates the data very closely resembles that of a normal distribution curve skewed slightly negatively. The C option in all skill areas was the clear preference by

respondents. While provision was made for inclusion of category A, the numbers were insufficient to produce a column in Figure 3.

Since a clear majority(64%, or almost two thirds) of parents chose level C, then the first hypothesis of the study has been supported: parents do not anticipate native-like L2 performance characteristics from their children upon graduation from EFI.

In compiling the profiles for each of the skill level options, level D characteristics were intended to be unrealistically high performance ideals for EFI graduates. The basis for each level was adapted from federal government hiring guidelines for employment positions necessitating some degree of second language fluency. Positions requiring level D would require at least a B.A. in French, and many would also require or recommend the candidate possess a degree or diploma in translation. It is interesting to note that overall, 19%, or nearly

one fifth of respondents to the survey indicated they expected their child(ren) to be able to function at level D upon graduation from EFI. When each L2 proficiency area is examined, this percentage fluctuates somewhat. The corresponding numbers and percentages of respondents who chose level D is shown in Table 9. As may be seen, more parents anticipate a nativelike level of proficiency in the area of reading comprehension than in oral proficiency.

Table 9 Respondents Choosing Level D

	Oral Proficiency		Reading Comprehension		Writing Ability		Total	
Level D	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
	34	13	62	24	50	20	146	19

The second hypothesis of this study as stated in Chapter 3, relates to an expectation of significantly different scores statistically between the grade three and nine parent groups.

The third hypothesis seeks statistical significance of parental expectations when the French language knowledge/education of parents is compared with their expectations for their children. Therefore an analysis for statistical significance is necessary to determine if these hypotheses underlying this survey are supported. Since this survey collected non-interval data, then the chi-square analysis (x^2) was chosen as an appropriate measure to determine if the sampling distribution of the survey's data is representative of a frequency distribution of the null hypothesis. In the first instance a difference in expectation level was anticipated between those respondents having previous experience with EFI and those who were first-time EFI parents. The data for this chi-square analysis was taken from question 3 on the survey. Of the 158 surveys returned, 155 respondents answered question 3. A further 6 respondents completed this question in either an illogical or

incomplete manner when compared to their answers for questions 2 and 4, resulting in 149 respondents whose answers were acceptable for this statistical computation. This collective group then, was used in the chi-square analysis for statistical significance relative to previous versus first-time EFI experience. The findings are shown in Table 10.

The expected frequencies of occurence(F_{exp}) in all three language performance areas at all levels are consistent with the observed frequencies of occurence(F_{obs}). The critical value for the chi-square is 7.81 for the domains of oral production and writing ability. This lowers to 5.99 for reading comprehension owing to one degree of freedom less in the calculations due to zero respondent choice in level A in this domain. Thus if the observed chi-square values exceed the critical value, then the data is deemed to be statistically significant. In this case the maximum observed chi-square is 1.05, far

below the critical value needed for statistical significance; therefore, the null hypothesis is supported by the data. The conclusion is that there is no statistically significant relationship between the expectations of parents with previous EFI experience and those whose child(ren) are experiencing EFI for the first time.

Table 10 Significance of Previous EFI Experience

	Previous Experience n=31		First EFI Experience n=118		Chi Square Values $\alpha =.05$	
Oral Prod.	F_{obs}	$F_{exp.}$	F_{obs}	$F_{exp.}$	x^2_{obs}	x^2_{crit}
A	0	0.2	1	0.8		
B	6	6.2	24	23.8		
C	21	20.4	77	77.6	0.31	7.81
D	4	4.2	16	15.8		
Reading Comp.	F_{obs}	$F_{exp.}$	F_{obs}	$F_{exp.}$	x^2_{obs}	x^2_{crit} $\alpha =.05$
B	6	5.2	19	19.8		
C	18	17.6	66	66.4	0.36	5.99
D	7	8.2	32	30.8		
Writing Ability	F_{obs}	$F_{exp.}$	F_{obs}	$F_{exp.}$	x^2_{obs}	x^2_{crit} $\alpha =.05$
A	0	0.2	1	0.8		
B	7	6.1	23	23.9		
C	16	18	72	70	1.05	7.81
D	7	5.7	21	22.3		

The survey was designed such that comparisons could be made between the Grade 3 parent group and the Grade 9 parent group. Testing for statistically significant differences in the expectations of these two parental groups using data from question 2 on the survey also yielded statistical support for the null hypothesis. This data is presented in Table 11. Of the 158 surveys returned, 147 respondents answered question 2; thus this collective group was used in the chi-square analysis for statistical significance relative to grade 3 and 9 parental expectation differences.

Once again the observed chi-square values are far below the critical chi-square value necessary for statistical significance; therefore, the null hypothesis is supported by the data. Thus there are no statistically significant differences in the expectations of parents of grade 3 EFI students and those of grade 9 EFI students.

Table 11 Grade 3 vs. Grade 9 Parental Expectations

	Grade 3 Parent Group n=75		Grade 9 Parent Group n=72		Chi-Square Values α=.05	
Oral Prod.	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	x^2_{obs}	x^2_{crit}
A	0	0.5	1	0.5		
B	19	15.3	11	14.7	3.38	7.81
C	46	49.5	51	47.5		
D	10	9.7	9	9.3		
Reading Comp.	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	x^2_{obs}	x^2_{crit}
B	12	12.8	13	12.2		
C	45	42.6	38	40.4	0.63	5.99
D	18	19.5	20	18.5		
Writing Ability	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	x^2_{obs}	x^2_{crit}
A	1	0.5	0	0.5		
B	15	15.3	15	14.7	1.28	7.81
C	43	44.4	44	42.6		
D	15	13.8	12	13.2		

The third hypothesis, which also necessitated analysis for statistical significance, again used the chi-square procedure. This avenue of inquiry was a comparison of parents' French education level versus parental expectations. Question 5 of the

survey asked parents to indicate their current level of formal French education. In tabulating the data from this question it appeared that respondents chose more that one category resulting in a total response number of 210. An attempt was made to consolidate some of the responses to more closely resemble the total respondent number of 158 (i.e. one education level per respondent), thus rendering the chi-square analysis easier to implement.

An overview of the new education levels is shown in Table 12. These new levels start at no formal or informal French education(Level 1), and continue with primary to secondary French studies(Level 2). Post-secondary French training which may or may not include a conversation class component comprises the new level 3. Conversation classes were attributed to this category as they are a typical requirement of first and second year university second language courses; however, they do not offer the same

degree of exposure to the target language as immersion or L2 milieu experience which was chosen to comprise level 4.

Table 12 Previous vs. New Parent Education Levels

Original Question 5 Education Level	Education Level Description	New Question 5 Education Level
1	None	1
2	Elementary School	2
3	High School	2
4	Community College	3
5	<8 University Courses	3
6	8 University Courses	3
7	12 University Courses	3
8	B. A. in French	3
9	Conversation classes	3
10	Immersion Experience	4
11	Other	4

A review of the patterns of parent immersion and milieu French education as reported in question 5 necessitated a subdivision of the new level 4. The final consolidation of categories of parental education characteristics results in six distinct groupings as outlined in Table 13.

Table 13 New French Education Levels

Category	French Education Level
1	None
2	Grade school and /or secondary school
3	Post-secondary studies
4	Secondary School augmented by French milieu immersion experience
5	Post-secondary studies augmented by French milieu immersion experience
6	Other (born/raised in a francophone milieu)

The new categories of 5 and 6 were created to accommodate the parent French education characteristics which did not lend themselves for

inclusion in categories 1 to 4. Reducing the number of categories from 11 to 6 also consolidated the total number of responses to this question. In the original data count for question 5 of the survey a total of 210 responses were noted among the 158 surveys returned. This total has now been reduced to 155 with the new parent education level groupings, thus rendering a one vote per person scenario.

The chi-square analysis was once again used to determine the level of statistical significance in the relationship between the various parent education levels and their expectations for their child(ren). The results are listed in Tables 14A and 14B. As in the previous analyses, the null hypothesis is supported by the chi-square computations. In the domains of oral production and writing ability the parental expectations are quite homogeneous as evidenced by the extremely low observed chi-square values.

Table 14A Parent Education Levels 1-3 vs.
Expectation Level

	Parent Education Levels						Chi-square values $\alpha=.05$	
	1 (n=14)		2 (n=67)		3 (n=42)			
Oral	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	χ^2_{obs}	χ^2_{crit}
A	0	0.1	0	0.4	1	0.3	7.58	25.0
B	1	2.8	14	13.4	9	8.6		
C	11	9.2	43	44.1	27	28.3		
D	2	1.9	10	9.1	6	5.8		
Read-ing	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	χ^2_{obs}	χ^2_{crit}
B	0	2.2	8	10.4	9	6.5	12.6	18.3
C	9	8.1	44	38.7	21	24.3		
D	5	3.7	15	17.8	12	11.2		
Writ-ing	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	χ^2_{obs}	χ^2_{crit}
A	0	0.1	0	0.1	0	0	11.9	25.0
B	4	2.8	3	2.3	0	0.6		
C	10	9.1	5	7.3	2	1.8		
D	1	2.9	4	2.4	1	0.6		

The greatest tendency towards statistical significance occurs in the area of reading comprehension where the chi-square value of 12.6 is much closer to the critical value of 18.3 necessary for significance. Thus, the greatest variance in outcome expectations which can be linked to parent education level occurs in the area of reading comprehension; however, these

differences are not deemed statistically significant. Therefore, there are no statistically significant differences among parent education levels when compared with expected outcomes for their child(ren) in the oral production, reading comprehension and writing ability domains.

Table 14B Parent Education Levels 4-6 vs. Expectation Level

	Parent Education Levels						Chi-square values $\alpha=.05$	
	4 (n=15)		5 (n=13)		6 (n=3)			
Oral	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	x^2_{obs}	x^2_{crit}
A	0	0.1	0	0.1	0	0		
B	3	3	4	2.6	0	0.6	7.58	25.0
C	11	9.9	8	8.6	2	2		
D	1	2	1	1.8	1	0.4		
Read-ing	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	x^2_{obs}	x^2_{crit}
B	4	2.3	3	2	0	0.5		
C	9	8.7	4	7.5	2	1.7	12.6	18.3
D	2	4	6	3.5	1	0.8		
Writ-ing	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	x^2_{obs}	x^2_{crit}
A	0	0.1	0	0.1	0	0		
B	4	2.8	3	2.3	0	0.6	11.9	25.0
C	10	9.1	5	7.3	2	1.8		
D	1	2.9	4	2.4	1	0.6		

Since the number of respondents comprising the new parent education level designated as 6 was only 3, it was felt that a further search for statistical significance should be undertaken, as the small number of respondents could hide the significance of the data(Heiman, 1996). With such a small number of respondents there is minimal room between observed and expected frequencies, making significance difficult to reveal. With this in mind a new set of computations was undertaken, this time using only the first 5 of the new parent education levels. The results are shown in Table 15.

In comparison to the values recorded in Table 14 it appears that the elimination of parent education category 6 had little effect on the subsequent chi-square computations. The values of x^2_{obs} decreased in all areas with the greatest decrease in the area of oral production.

Table 15 Revised Parent Education Level vs. Expectation Level

	1(n=14)		2(n=67)		3(n=42)		4(n=15)		5(n=13)		Chi-square Values $\alpha=.05$	
Parent Education Levels →												
Oral	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	X^2_{obs}	X^2_{crit}
A	0	0.1	0	0.4	0	0.1	1	0.3	0	0.1		
B	1	2.9	14	13.7	3	3.1	9	8.8	4	2.7	6.0	21.0
C	11	9.2	43	44.1	11	9.9	27	28.3	8	8.6		
D	2	1.8	10	8.8	1	2	6	5.7	1	1.7		
Read	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	X^2_{obs}	X^2_{crit}
B	0	2.2	8	10.6	4	2.4	9	6.7	3	2.1		
C	9	8.1	44	38.6	9	8.6	21	24.2	4	7.5	12.0	15.5
D	5	3.7	15	17.7	2	4	12	11.1	6	3.4		
Writ	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	F_{obs}	F_{exp}	X^2_{obs}	X^2_{crit}
A	0	0.1	1	0.4	0	0.1	0	0.3	0	0.1		
B	0	2.7	13	13	4	2.9	9	8.1	3	2.3	11.0	21.0
C	11	8.5	43	40.6	10	9.1	22	25.5	5	7.3		
D	3	2.7	10	13	1	2.9	11	8.1	4	2.3		

Statistical significance is once again not achieved as the chi-square value computed from the observed frequencies does not overtake the critical value necessary to entertain the alternative hypothesis. There is most agreement among respondents in the area of oral production with X^2_{obs} of 6.0 only attaining one fourth of the value of X^2_{crit}. The closest X^2_{obs} value

representing statistical significance occurs in the area of reading comprehension where it again attains just two thirds of the value necessary to be termed significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis is affirmed by statistical manipulation of the data in all selected areas.

The final group of questions in this second part of the survey asked respondents to list the main advantages of EFI as they perceive them to be (question 4), the main disadvantages (question 5), and other comments/observations they might have on EFI (question 6). Table 16 shows the frequency and percentage of responses to each of these three questions. Respondents were quite willing to indicate both the strong and weak points of EFI education. Approximately half of the respondents to the survey went on to add other observations. A compilation of the responses noted in these questions follows in Table 17.

Table 16   Responses to EFI Advantages and
Disadvantages

Question	Frequency of Response (n=158)	Percentage of Total
4	148	94
5	140	89
6	74	47
No response	6	4

Question 4 in Part B asked respondents to
list the main advantages of EFI as they perceive
them to be.   Table 17 provides an overview of
multiple responses in various areas.   A list of
responses ocurring less than five times is
provided in Appendix D.   It should be noted that
some comments have been combined to form a more
general   category.   For   example,   several
respondents referred to the L2 environment and
its associated communicative competencies.   These
comments   have   been   somewhat   abridged   by   the

researcher and are generalized as the second most

popular parental assertion re EFI advantages.

Table 17   Perceived Advantages of EFI

Comment	Fre-quency (n>4)	Percentage of Total (n=148)
Future employment enhancement	58	39.2
Develops functional fluency in a natural,casual approach; students communicate/socialize in a variety of L2 situations at an early age; fair oral competence/fairly good accent; can think/ comprehend in 2 languages; L2 is integrated in daily activities	54	36.5
More challenging /stimulating learning environment; richer educational experience; enhances child's knowledge	51	34.5
Best age to pick up L2;fewer inhibitions/prejudices;easier to learn at this age; L2 accepted as just another part of school	49	33.1
Develops appreciation of other cultures/points of view; reflects national emphasis in this area; broadens world perspective (multilingual/multicultural); more open to new ideas	42	28.4
Better student/teacher ratio	26	17.6
Exposure to/learning of 2 languages at elementary school level	20	13.5

Table 17 (cont'd) Perceived Advantages of EFI		
Promotes independent learning (due to limited parent L2 skills); good study habits/practice in reading and writing; self-discipline; students use a wide variety of learning strategies	15	10.1
L2 exposure is an asset in any future (educational) endeavor; wider choice of post-secondary institutions	13	8,8
Boosts self-esteem and self-confidence	12	8.1
EFI teachers are more resourceful/supportive;generally younger; caring; competent; organized	10	6.8
More enjoyable program; children are having fun while learning; program holds child's interest	7	4.7
Produces a bilingual person; provides excellent grasp of L2	7	4.7
Increases potential for learning other languages	7	4.7
Augments future travel opportunities	7	4.7
Parents of EFI children encourage them to become achievers; exposure to classmates who come from homes where education is given serious consideration	7	4.7
Promotes good listening skills	5	3.4
Expands linguistic horizons/ comprehension of linguistics	5	3.4

The prospect of EFI providing an edge in future employment prospects leads the list of perceived advantages to the EFI education option. This has already been determined to be the single most important factor in selcting EFI. Other previously noted EFI decision factors (learning environment and student/teacher ratio) also placed high on the perceived advantages list. Advantages of L2 communicative competency and a pluralistic linguistic/cultural perspective also placed high on the list. These are "new" data as they were not previously mentioned to any appreciable degree in establishing reasons why parents chose the EFI option. Other new data trends are also revealed in Table 17. The independent learning and self discipline that come from dealing with a second language in an immersion setting was noted by 10% of respondents, while 9% claimed EFI boosted self-confidence. Positive teacher traits were also noted by 9% of respondents. A clearer

picture of why parents choose EFI is available in Table 17. This data reflects and augments that of Table 5 and Chart 2.

Question 5 in Part B of the survey asked parents/guardians to list the disadvantages of EFI education as they perceive them to be. The vast majority of respondents (88%) completed this question. The results where a type of comment was noted as occurring at least five times are tabulated in Table 18. Comments appearing less than five times are provided in Appendix E.

Table 18   Perceived Disadvantages of EFI

Comment	Frequency (n>4) (n=140)	Percentage of Total
Difficulty to assist with homework due to limited parent L2 skills	35	25
L1 skills are below average; not as strong as Eng. stream;	33	24
L2 interferes with L1 development; students often late learning to read; transference errors	27	19
Frustration from lack of L2 comprehension (both parental and student)	18	13

Table 18 (cont'd) Perceived disadvantages of EFI		
No remedial help available; not a place for students with learning difficulties/slow learners; response is removal from program	15	11
Weak command of L2 grammar	14	10
Lack of appropriate resources; texts in Jr. and Sr. high too difficult; novels in Elem. and Jr. high uninteresting	13	9
Segregation; invites prejudice; makes non-immersion peers feel inferior	10	7
No disadvantages	9	6
Lack of committment/misleading information from school board	7	5
Detection of learning problems is slower than English stream	6	4
Transportation problems due to school location; no busing	6	4
Not enough field trips to FL1 milieu; extra-curricular activities focused on L2	6	4
Phonetic spelling in both languages	5	4
Student /teacher ratio too high beyond elementary grades	5	4

Combining the closely related occurences of below average L1 skills and the causatory interference of L2 on L1 will result in a frequency of 60 (42.9%), and become identified as the major drawback to EFI. If the instances of assistance difficulty with homework and frustration level of parents and students can be united under the banner of L2 comprehension difficulties, it will result in 53, representing 37.9% of respondents, the second largest drawback to EFI.

The main perceived drawbacks of EFI as determined by the parents then, are lack of L2 comprehension in completing homework assignments and its associated frustration for parents and students alike, insufficient and/or delayed L1 skills, the developmental interference of L2 on L1, lack of appropriate classroom resources including remedial assistance, and insufficient school board support for the program. Appendix E contains responses to this question which

occurred less than five times in 140, the number of respondents who answered this question. A total of 81 different types of comments were recorded in Appendix E. This is far greater than the 32 of Appendix D where the less frequent EFI advantages are tallied. It seems respondents were more diverse and more personal in their identification of the program's shortcomings than its advantages. This finding may suggest that disadvantages are related to the way in which the parent and/or student responded to the program rather than differentiating general disadvantages of the program. This hypothesis is borne out by the frequency of the response re: negative effects on L1 development. Research has indicated that this lessened L2 competence is not an outcome of the program in general; rather that such results may occur for certain students who share particular learning characteristics (Lapkin & Swain, 1984; Genesee, 1987).

Table 19 Additional Comments

Comment	Frequency (n>2) (n=74)	Percentage of Total
My children have benefitted from EFI; I would recommend it;pleased with program	21	28
A program of great benefit if your child has the ability; better suited to advanced rather than regular or below average students; a real disservice to the struggling child	13	18
My children have not progressed as well as expected; I would not choose EFI again; my child is/has transferr(ing)(ed) out	8	11
My children have discussed transferring out and have refused despite difficulties; I don't regret having chosen EFI	5	7
Insufficient support from the school board	4	5
EFI is an enriched program	3	4
EFI must be equally supported at home as well as at school	3	4
Program requires a lot of hard work especially at Jr. high	3	4
EFI needs more support systems for children with difficulties; should not be an elite program	3	4

The final question on the survey allowed respondents to add comments concerning areas of EFI which were not addressed in previous sections of the survey. Approximately half of the respondents provided supplementary comments. Data representing recurring comments (n>2) are compiled in Table 19. Appendix F provides a list of comments ocurring once or twice.

Overall, the positive comments outweigh the negative. The most popular comment is a statement of unqualified support for the EFI program. The second most popular observation was of a cautionary nature. Respondents were of the opinion that EFI could be most rewarding for some, yet very frustrating and even a negative experience for others. Thirdly, approximately 10% of respondents felt EFI was not an option which provided the degree of benefit expected for their particular child(ren).

In conclusion, the respondents to this questionaire have indicated in general that the

expected degree of L2 proficiency in all three language performance areas of oral production, reading comprehension and writing ability coincides with the characteristics outlined in level C. Accounting for differences from this trend was thought at first to be attributable to the L2 skill level of the parent/guardian. Statistical analysis has shown that this is not so. Furthermore, there was no significant difference recorded when the current grade level of the student was taken into question. Thus, there are no significant differences in parental expectations linked to their child(ren)'s grade level nor the parents' various L2 skill levels. It was posited in the design of this study that parental expectations could possibly be influenced by either the school board's presentation of the EFI option and/or program information from supportive groups such as Canadian Parents for French. From the data collected, parents have indicated that these two

sources of information did not contribute greatly to the decision to enroll their child(ren) in EFI. Some interesting observations have occurred, however, in the purely qualitiative comments offered by the respondents in the last three questions of the survey. Implications of these for interested parties such as the school board, CPF, parents/guardians, and curriculum planners are discussed in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 5

Summary and Implications

The research conducted in FI to date has tended to be process-product in nature. The student has been the centre of inquiry as more data is sought to better define the learner in immersion. While L2 production characteristics of FI students are acknowledged to differ from those of same age francophones, their French skills are more advanced than peers who partake of the basic core French programs. Nevertheless, some outspoken critics of EFI claim that what is accomplished through 13 years of schooling in an artificially created L2 linguistic environment is a flawed L2 production which exhibits frequent errors. These L2 inaccuracies indicate weak comprehension of how the French language works.

The expectations of parents were largely absent from research endeavours defining L2 production characteristics, giving rise to the avenue of inquiry conducted by this study. Data was gathered in two

sections of the study. Background parental information was collected in part one of the study, to allow statistical analysis of the data collected in part two of the study, which was used to compile a composite of parental expectations with regard to their child's French abilities upon completion of the EFI program. Determining the degree of bilingualism expected, and whether this expectation was affected by the parent's French knowledge, the current grade level of the student (elementary versus intermediate), and/or outside influences regarding the decision to enroll the child in EFI formed the basis of inquiry for this study.

The hypotheses underpinning this research were all centered around parental expectations. Firstly, it was posited that parents did not expect native-like fluency from their children after completion of the EFI program. The three domains of assessment were oral production, reading comprehension, and writing ability. Overall 64% of respondents chose level C in all three L2 areas, indicating that, generally, parents do not anticipate native-like French performance

characteristics for their children. The Level C descriptions are as follows:

In the domain of oral proficiency, the person at level C can support opinions or understand and express hypothetical and conditional ideas. (S)he can understand and express subtle, abstract and complicated ideas. The ease and fluency of a native speaker is not expected and there may be errors and deficiencies in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, yet such errors rarely interfere with communication.

With regard to reading comprehension, the person functioning at Level C comprehends texts dealing with a wide variety of topics. Most complex details, inferences and fine points of meaning are understood. Specialized or less familiar material can also be read with good comprehension. Some seldom-used expressions may be missed, however, and there may be some difficulty with very complex grammatical structures.

Characterisitics of writing ability at level C include the production of a variety of coherent explanations or descriptions on a broad range of

topics. The style of presentation and use of vocabulary, grammar and spelling are generally appropriate and require few corrections.

With almost two-thirds of parents expecting level C performance characteristics for their children, the first hypothesis has been supported; the majority of parents do not anticipate native-like L2 performance from their children. The remaining third of respondents' expectation levels varied from 15% who chose level B, to 19% who opted for level D.

The acceptance of different levels of L2 skills from EFI students in relation to same-age francophones in terms of parental expectations echoes the previous findings of Lapkin(1984). She determined, through testing of the students themselves, that EFI students were able to communicate effectively, however, were distinguishable from their francophone counterparts. Subsequent research by Pawley(1985) determined EFI students as being able to satisfy routine social needs and perform limited work needs in French. The level C descriptors of this study would seem to indicate that

parents expect more than the coping level of French as determined by Pawley. Hammerly (1989) claimed this level of coping in French in relation to the total number of hours of exposure to the language was unacceptable. From a parental standpoint, Webster (1986) called for the development of explicit program expectations in concurrence with applicable program resources. Calvé (1991) and Clipperton (1994) noted the oral production limitations of EFI students as a trait by which they could be easily recognized. From this study, it seems parents accept limitations of French production skills; yet, they expect a high degree of fluency and competence when students work in the French language.

The more extensive communicative abilities of EFI students versus regular core French students, as noted by Lapkin (1984) and Pawley (1985), may also be reflective of the overall expectations of the parents with regard to the EFI program as a whole. Hammerly's assertion (1989) that elementary students learning incorrect locutions and structures from each other in

the EFI classroom leading to a low degree of communicative competency in French does not seem to be perceived as a problem by parents in this study. The possibility also exists that linguistic analysis is more a concern of the teacher than the parent, as L2 production errors would tend to be noted more in the classroom than in an outside environment where the student is required to use his/her French skills primarily for communication.

Students in EFI have production characteristics unique to their program of learning (Clipperton, 1994); however, they are able to effectively communicate in a variety of situations (Day & Shapson, 1990). The process of students' learning through natural acquisition rather than a passive rule-governed approach (Carey, 1984) results in non-francophone production errors; yet, these errors rarely impede communication (Lyster, 1987). The degree to which parents are concerned by these differences in production seems to be slight, as this survey has returned data indicating about two-thirds of parents

concede student production characteristics different from that of same-age francophones. Nonetheless success in EFI is interpreted by parents as more than simply being able to cope in the language.

The study was a census of Grade 3 and 9 parents whose children were enrolled in EFI. It was posited that parental expectations may be different between these two points along the K-12 immersion continuum. Students in Grade 3 are not exposed to the same degree of linguistic analysis as are students at the Grade 9 level. The interference of English with its attendant fossilization of errors may also be less apparent in the earlier years of EFI, resulting in the possibility of differing parental expectations between the two grade levels. When the data was analyzed for statistical significance it was determined that the null hypothesis was supported for this comparison. Therefore, there exists no significant difference between the expectations of Grade 3 and Grade 9 parents of EFI children.

The level of parental expectations varying with parents' own French knowledge and skills was the third hypothesis underpinning this study. The inclusion of an unrealistically high performance level (level D) was thought to attract parents who had little or no French exposure and/or formal training. With the application of the chi-square statistical analysis, however, this hypothesis was not supported(See Tables 14A, 14B and 15). There was no clear parent education factor emerging as a statistically significant predictor of exceedingly high parental expectations; therefore, the null hypothesis supported here.

The final hypothesis assessed the possibility of parental expectations being influenced by the school board and other special interest agencies, such as Canadian Parents for French(CPF). In compiling firstly the factors behind the decision to enroll the child in EFI, and secondly, rating them according to degree of importance, it appeared that neither the school board nor CPF rated very highly as a determinant for enrollment in EFI. The highest level of importance

attained by both agencies was that of 5th most important factor, and this rating came from only two of five groupings of ratings of the EFI decision factors(See Table 7). Therefore, promotional agencies, such as the school board and CPF, do not appear to have a significant impact on parents' choice of EFI for their child(ren).

Comparing the respondents' input regarding advantages versus drawbacks of EFI, the general conclusion that parents do not anticipate native-like fluency from their child(ren) tends to be supported. From Table 17, 37% of respondents indicated functional fluency in French was an asset. In tabulating data on the drawbacks of EFI, 19% of respondents suggested L2 interferes with L1 progress, and 10% noted the students' grasp of French grammar was weak(See Table 18). The percentages of respondents was higher in the advantages question than in the drawbacks question. The maximum percentage of negative responses was 25, while positive comments on EFI drew 39% of respondents, indicating general recognition by parents of the

functional bilingualism attained by students, yet simultaneously acknowledging environmental restrictions placed on that degree of bilingual competence.

The data collected by the survey revealed some interesting characteristics which were not part of the hypotheses defining the survey. In determining the number of children covered by the families who made up the recipient base of the survey, data was returned on 247 children from 158 surveys. Although the question was not explicity posed in the survey, the decision to enroll a child in EFI seemed to be a family-oriented choice, rather than a selection based on the linguistic potential of any given child. This trend is revealed with almost 60% of respondents reporting children in attendance in grades outside the Grade 3 and 9 target area.

The respondents to this questionnaire also seemed to regard their childrens' education with some distance, as 157 of 158 surveys contained the answer "no" to question 6 regarding current parental enrolment in some type of French course. When asked if parents

were planning to take such a course in the future, the answer was again largely negative(89%). This statistic would seem to indicate the need for a study of why parents do not intend to increase their personal knowledge of French. In Part B of the survey, one quarter of the respondents indicated that the biggest disadvantage to the EFI program was limited parental French skills resulting in a reduced capacity to assist the child with homework.

The necessity of French as a future employment enhancer and the perception of the immersion classroom as a more stimulating learning environment led the reasons as to why parents opted for the EFI program. The perception that a better student/teacher ratio existed in EFI was also a popular decision factor. These findings further support the conclusion that outside agencies such as the school board and CPF did not figure prominently as EFI selection factors.

Respondents were asked to identify the advantages and disadvantages of EFI in the second part of the questionnaire. The response to this section was quite

high(See Table 16), with the principal advantage being future employment enhancement, an echo of the main reason why EFI was chosen in the first place. The principal disadvantages of EFI were identified as parent difficulty in providing assistance to the student due to limited parent L2 skills, and the perception that the English skills of EFI students were inferior to those of students in the regular English program. Nevertheless, in the final section of the questionnaire, in response to the open-ended "other" question, the greatest number of comments endorsed the EFI program.

Recommendations for further study may be drawn from this research. The environmental characteristics under which the study was conducted also define its limitations. The survey was implemented in the urban St. John's, Newfoundland area, a predominantly anglophone milieu, where only 5 of 158 surveys indicated that French was a language of use in the household. To generalize the results beyond this area, the study should be replicated in further similar

environments. At that point one could possibly project parental expectation profiles of anglophone environments in general. In addition, replicating the study in a more bilingual area such as Moncton or Ottawa would render additional data and assist greatly in compiling a more global indication of parental expectations of EFI.

The profile of parental expectations as compiled by this study may be seen as the first step in determining if this desired student performance level equates with their actual graduate level performance. Recommendations to this end are advanced in a two-step proposal. First a Canada-wide assessment of parental expectations as defined by the measurement criteria employed in this study is recommended. Secondly, development and country-wide implementation of a test for graduates of EFI is suggested. A comparison between the two data sets would better enable curriculum planners in developing materials for EFI. With such a comprehensive data base, criticisms of EFI

as a valid instructional methodology may also be more accurately weighed.

Closely related to the search for significant differences between the grade 3 and grade 9 parent group was the question of previous EFI experience as a factor in determining parental expectation level. Parents who chose the EFI option for their children tended to consider it a family choice rather than a selection based on individual assessment (See Table 2). A chi-square analysis for statistical significant differences in expectations between those parents who had previous EFI experience and those who were first-time EFI parents revealed the null hypothesis was supported (See Table 10). The expectations of both groups were similar. With the implementation of this study on a larger scale, comparisons could also be obtained among parental groups in various locales in Canada to determine if the option to enroll a child in EFI is extended to other family members.

In the design of the study it was thought that the French knowledge/skill levels of the respondents might

have a bearing on their expectations for their child(ren). Parents who had post-secondary training in French might have registered different expectations than those who had little or no formal French education. The assumption is that many parents would have been subjected to a certain percentage of grammar/translation instruction, and may have been expecting a higher degree of accuracy from their child(ren), thus reflecting Hammerly's (1989) criticism that inaccuracies are tolerated, even promoted in EFI. As Carey (1984) pointed out, the immersion approach is more concerned with recreating aspects of natural L1 acquisition rather than a passive, rule-governed approach such as the grammar/translation method; therefore, production errors are to be expected. The data was assembled in Table 3 where 60% of respondents indicated either high school French courses or some post-secondary courses. For purposes of analysis the data was recoded and subjected to the chi-square test seeking significant expectation differences among the parent groups (See Tables 12-15). The results

indicated that once again the null hypothesis was supported and that parental French education level had no significant impact on the expected performance level of the EFI student. This finding may indicate an acceptance by parents of the EFI approach, and a recognition that their child(ren) are able to do more with the French language than they themselves could under other instructional methodologies. This assertion seems to be supported in Part B of the survey in question 6 where over half of the comments registered in a general «other» category were in support of the EFI program (See Table 19). Thus, Hammerly's argument against EFI(1989) is weakened somewhat by parents who seem to focus on the enhanced communicative abilities of EFI students rather than their L2 production inaccuracies. Further study in this area could reveal interesting comparisons among parents' own L2 learning experiences in relation to their child(ren)'s current EFI education.

While the null hypotheses are supported by the data analysis in terms of significant differences

between parent groups, a trend of parental expectations does come clearly forward. The majority of respondents (64% overall) chose option C in all L2 performance areas (See Table 8 and Figure 2). As previously noted in the literature review, Lapkin (1984), Pawley (1985), Lyster (1987), Hammerly (1989), and Calvé (1991) noted that the EFI methodology results in a spoken and written French which contains many errors, some of which reflect interference from the English language. Reversed word order, misplacement of adjectives, inaccurate gender assignments, and the tu/vous distinction are examples of some areas of concern. Although these production inaccuracies render EFI students easily recognizable, they are not considered by parents to present significant difficulty when communicating in the French language. The data from this survey indicates that on an overall basis, 64% of parents expect a high degree of ability of their child(ren) to function in the French language. There is also a recognition by parents in choosing level C overall, that there is a certain acceptance that

students will commit a variety of errors; however, communication is not expected to be adversely affected. Parents then appear to endorse the EFI program while also being mindful that a certain degree of production inaccuracy is expected.

Nineteen per cent of respondents to the survey indicated they expected level D performance characteristics. Statistical analysis revealed firstly, that this percentage was not significant, and secondly, that this choice of answer could not be linked to any one aspect of the parent profiles assembled by this study. It would therefore be of interest to further assess these parents in an attempt to determine the underlying factors which prompted them to choose the unrealistically high level D option. Unfortunately, the ethics guidelines for the implementation of this study did not allow the linking of this survey with the parent's address for further contact. Therefore, with a replication of this study, some adaptations would be necessary to encompass the

possibility of further investigation of those respondents who expect native-like performance.

In addition to data bearing directly on the hypotheses which formed the basis of the study, other trends surfaced which lend themselves to related recommendations. From question 6 in Part A of the survey, all respondents who answered the question (157 of 158 total respondents to the survey), indicated they were not currently enrolled in any form of French education. When asked if they intended to do so in question 7, 89% indicated a negative response. Carey (1984) found that parents of children in FI were more likely to be taking French courses than parents of core French students. This comparison is unavailable from the data gathered by this study; however, one may conclude that EFI parents in Newfoundland are not actively engaged in augmenting their own French skills.

In Part B, question 5, respondents were asked to qualitatively offer their perceived disadvantages of EFI. One quarter of the responses to this question indicated a frustration associated with not having

sufficient French skills to adequately assist with homework (See Table 18). The reasons why EFI parents are not actively seeking to upgrade their own French skills did not figure into the design of the study; however, this situation does impose limitations upon the degree of assistance parents can offer their child(ren). While a quarter of respondents felt frustrated when they attempted to assist with homework, 10% indicated this situation promoted independent learning. Further research could be conducted to determine the reasons why parents do not feel a need to improve their own level of French skills.

One of the avenues of inquiry of this study was to assess the degree of influence the school board had in parents' decisions to choose the EFI program for their child(ren). From Table 7, school board information occured as the fifth most important decision factor in only 4 instances. In Part B, question 6 (the «other comments» question), 5% of respondents indicated a lack of committment and misleading information from the school board. The degree of involvement in promoting

and maintaining the EFI program by the school board seems to be a somewhat underdevelopped area of study in the past. Therefore, a study could be conducted to determine the actual and/or perceived role of the school board in promoting and supporting FI programs.

The issue of detection of individual learning difficulties/disabilities and its associated remedial adaptations of existing curricula surfaced as an additional area of parental concern in the study. A lack of remedial help was indicated by 11% of respondents as a factor which could disadvantage some students(See Table 18). Four per cent of respondents also claimed learning difficulties were often less readily detected in EFI. In early years the L2 environnment was felt to delay the detection of linguistic difficulties which may transcend both English and French languages. The opinion that EFI was not suited to all students reocurred in Part B, question 6 (See Table 19), where 18% of respondents indicated that EFI could be a disservice to struggling children. In addition, 11% of respondents indicated

dissatisfaction with their child's level of progress to the point of not recommending EFI to others. Meanwhile, 7% of respondents' children have encountered difficulties; however, their parents are still supportive of EFI. The fact that the above percentages are small indicates an overall endorsement of the EFI program. Nevertheless, a study to determine the degree of necessity of remedial services to struggling children in EFI could possibly reduce the percentage of parental concerns in this area. Such research could also assist in identifying student learning/behaviour characteristics which might need attention, in order to provide the student with a more enjoyable L2 learning experience.

The recommendations emanating from the data of this survey coincide in part with the findings of Hayden (1988), who sought reasons why students transferred out of EFI. In that study, Language Arts difficulty was cited by 90% of respondents as the major reason for transferral. More recently, Ellsworth, (1998) who researched attrition in LFI in Newfoundland,

determined that there was a concern with a lack of academic achievement, and that the program was perceived as too challenging.

In this survey the explicit question of why students have transferred out of EFI was not asked; yet, 11% of respondents(See Table 19) indicated they have transferred or are transferring their child(ren) out of EFI. While the reasons for this decision have not been explored in this study, the percentage of students transferring out of the program is similar to that described in the two previous studies (Hayden, 1988; Ellsworth, 1998). The previous recommendation of researching the necessity of remedial services to FI students could possibly lead to the implementation of measures which, in turn, might reduce the attrition rate from FI programs as it relates to lack of academic achievement.

In conclusion, the analysis of the data returned by this study indicated an interesting profile of parental expectations which shows future research directions as clearly as current expectation

characteristics. For an anglophone environment, parents do not anticipate native-like fluency from their children; however, they do expect a high degree of French proficiency in all performance areas. Nevertheless these parents are not intimately involved with raising their own level of French, despite indicating that the greatest drawback of EFI is the inability to assist students due to insufficient L2 parental skills. Additional comments provided by respondents were more positive than negative. It seems then, that parents are generally pleased with EFI, even though their own limitations in French often cause frustration in attempts to assist the child with learning tasks. This level of frustration is insufficient, however, to cause them to augment their own level of French. The principal and also most important factor behind choosing EFI for all children in the family as a general trend was the enhancement of future employment possibilities. This notion of future preparedness was also the greatest perceived advantage of EFI.

Appendix A

The Questionnaire

Parental Expectations of EFI

Students

Please answer all questions.

1. Please indicate gender of respondent: (In the event you desire an extra survey to record different responses, please call 739-4857 and a second questionnaire will be forwarded to you.)

Male parent/guardian................____ .

Female parent/guardian...............____ .

2. Please indicate your child(ren)'s current grade level(s).........._____ .

3. Is this your first experience with French immersion?

Y ____ .(Go to question 5.)

N ____ .(Continue with question 4.)

4. If this is not your first experience with French immersion, please indicate the circumstances appropriate to your situation:

a) I have another child/other children currently enrolled in early French immersion at a lower grade level............... a) ____.

b) I have another child/other children currently enrolled in early French immersion at a higher grade level.............. b) ____.

c) My other child/children has/have graduated from early French immersion.........c) ____ .

d) My other child/children has/have transferred out of early French immersion.........d) ____ .

e) I have another child/other children currently enrolled in late French immersion.................e) ____.

5. What is your current level of formal French education?

none ___ .
elementary school ___ .
high school ___ .
community college courses ___ .
less than 8 university courses ___ .
8 university courses
(equivalent to a minor) ___ .
12 university courses
(equivalent to a major) ___ .
B. A. in French ___ .
evening/weekend conversation
classes ___ .

immersion experience
(4-6 weeks or more) ___ .
other (please specify) ___.

_____
_____ .

6. Are you currently enrolled in any form
of French education?

Y ___ .

N ___ .

If yes, what sort?

_____.

7. Do you plan on enrolling in any form
of French education in the near future?

Y ___ .

N ___ .

If yes, what sort?

_____.

8. Have you ever lived in a predominantly
francophone or bilingual milieu?

Y ___ .

N ___ .

If yes, for how long?

_____.

9. Which language(s) are used by you and your family at home on a regular basis for purposes of communication?

English ___ .

French ___ .

Other (please indicate)

_____ .

10. Please indicate the factor(s) involved in your decision to enroll your child(ren) in early French immersion.

a) Program information from the school board.   a) ___ .

b) Program information from the Canadian Parents for French (CPF) organization.
                                   b) ___ .

c) Parents of other children enrolled in the program.   c) ___ .

d) Location of school.   d) ___ .

e) Popularity of the program.   e) ___ .

f) Future employment enhancement. f) ___ .

g) More stimulating learning environment.
                                   g) ___ .

h) Social reasons (i.e. Classmates would already be known to the child). h) ___ .

i) Better student/teacher ratio.   i) ___ .

j) Other (please elaborate)   j) ___ .

_____

_____

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_____

_____

11. Of the factors you have indicated in question 10, please rate them in order of importance from most important to least important.

Example: 1. _b_ (Here "b" is termed
2. _a_ the most important
3. _f_ factor, "a" the
4. ___ second in importance,
5. ___ and "f" the least
important. Only three
factors were identified
as being applicable.

1. ___   6. ___
2. ___   7. ___
3. ___   8. ___
4. ___   9. ___
5. ___   10. ___

Part B : Proficiency Levels

This section of the questionnaire asks you to identify the expectations you have for your child(ren) upon graduation from early French immersion. Please read carefully the descriptions of second language abilities and then choose the level which you feel best describes your expectations for your child(ren) for each language skill area (oral proficiency, reading comprehension and writing ability).

ORAL PROFICIENCY

Level A :   A person at this level can ask and answer simple questions and give simple instructions or uncomplicated directions. Communication may be difficult because a person speaking at this level makes many errors and has deficiencies in grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency. At this level the person may have problems in understanding speech spoken at a normal rate and repetitions may be required to understand what is being said.

Level B :   A person at this level can sustain a conversation on concrete topics, give straightforward instructions, and provide factual descriptions and explanations.   While many errors and deficiencies in grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency may occur, these do not seriously interfere with communication.

Level C :   A person at this level can support opinions through discussion. (S)he can understand and express subtle, abstract and complicated ideas.   The ease and fluency of a native speaker is not expected and there may be errors and deficiencies in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary yet such errors rarely interfere with communication.

Level D :   A person functioning at this level is indistinguishable from a native

speaker of French who has also successfully completed Grade 12 in a regular French school.

1. Upon graduation from the early French immersion program, which level of **oral proficiency** do you expect your child(ren) to attain? Choose one of the following levels. (If you have more than one child currently enrolled in early French immersion, please indicate by the use of multiple check marks in the appropriate category(ies), bearing in mind one check mark for each child.

Level A _____
Level B _____
Level C _____
Level D _____
Level O _____
(Other - please elaborate)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____ .

READING   COMPREHENSION

Level A :   A person at this level can fully understand very simple passages and grasp the main idea of written material about familiar topics.   (S)he would not be expected to read and understand detailed information from complex writings except to extract elementary

information such as dates, numbers or names.

Level B : A person reading at this level can grasp the main ideas of most passages, locate specific details, and distinguish main from subsidiary ideas. Nevertheless written material using complex grammar and less common vocabulary would cause difficulty.

Level C : A person at this level comprehends written passages dealing with a wide variety of topics. Most complex details, inferences and fine points of meaning are understood. Specialized or less familiar material can also be read with good comprehension. Some seldom-used expressions may be missed, however, and there may be some difficulty with very complex grammatical structures.

Level D : A person at this level can verify that the linguistic quality of translated passages corresponds to that of the originals. (S)he can read a wide variety of relatively complex material written in French, such as brochures, press releases and magazine articles to ensure the consistency of the French version, including editing for spelling, grammar or punctuation errors.

2. Upon graduation from the early French immersion program, which level of **reading comprehension** do you expect your child(ren) to attain? Choose one of the following levels. (If you have more than one child currently enrolled in early French immersion, please indicate by the use of multiple check marks in the appropriate category(ies), bearing in mind one check mark for each child.

Level A ____
Level B ____
Level C ____
Level D ____
Level O ____
(Other - please elaborate)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____ .

WRITING ABILITY

Level A : A person at this level can write very limited units of information in the second language. (S)he may write isolated words, phrases, simple statements or questions on very familiar topics using words of time, place or person. Errors of grammar, vocabulary and spelling are to be expected.

Level B : A person at this level has sufficient mastery of grammar and vocabulary to write short descriptive or

factual texts in the second language on familiar topics. While the basic information is communicated, the writing will require some corrections in grammar and vocabulary as well as revision for style.

Level C : A person at this level can write a variety of coherent explanations or descriptions on a broad range of topics. The style of presentation and use of vocabulary, grammar and spelling are generally appropriate and require few corrections. Errors at this level do not interfere with the message being expressed.

Level D : A person at this level can write a wide variety of texts in the second language such as brochures, press releases and magazine articles and/or edit and rewrite them to improve their style such that these texts be of acceptable quality for publication.

3. Upon graduation from the early French immersion program, which level of **writing ability** do you expect your child(ren) to attain? Choose one of the following levels. (If you have more than one child currently enrolled in early French immersion, please indicate by the use of multiple check marks in the appropriate category(ies), bearing in mind one check mark for each child.

Level A ____
Level B ____
Level C ____
Level D ____
Level O ____
(Other - please elaborate)

_____
_____
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_____

4. Please list the main advantages of
early French immersion education as you
perceive them to be.

_____
_____
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5. Please list the main disadvantages (if any) of early French immersion education as you perceive them to be.

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6. Other comments.

_____

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Appendix B

The Covering Letter to Parents

April 7, 1997

50 Respondent Road

St. John's, NF   A2A 3Q9

ATTENTION: Mr. and Mrs. Respondent

Dear Respondent:

As part of the requirements for my Master of

Education degree, I am conducting a survey of parental

second language performance expectations of graduates

of early French immersion education. This research is

being conducted under the direct guidance of Professor

Joan Netten, Faculty of Education, Memorial University

and has received the approval of the Faculty's Ethics

Review Committee. I have developed this questionnaire

in an attempt to define, as clearly as possible, the

proficiency levels in French which parents expect of

their child(ren) upon graduation from grade 12. It is
anticipated that this research will assist both parents
and school boards in better understanding the potential
of early French immersion education.

It would be a tremendous help if you would take a
few minutes out of your busy schedule to complete this
survey. Please be assured that the information
collected will be kept in the strictest confidence, and
that personal information will be reported in a
generalized manner only. Please note that your
participation in this research endeavor is wholly
voluntary. The time required to complete the
questionnaire should be approximately twenty minutes.

Should you have any questions/concerns, please do
not hesitate to call me at 739-4857 (home), or 753 8240
(MacDonald Drive Junior High School), or my faculty
advisor Professor Joan Netten at 737-7620. I am
enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope for you to
return your completed questionnaire, and request you
return it within four weeks of receiving it, as I
intend to start analyzing the data in one month from

the date of this letter. If you wish to speak to a resource person not directly associated with the study, please contact Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean of Education, Memorial University at 737-8588. Should you wish to receive information regarding the results of the study, please complete the attached form and return with the completed questionnaire.

I thank you in advance for your generous cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Scott Hewlett

cc: Prof. J. Netten

I wish to receive a copy of the results of this survey.

Name:

_____

Address:

_____

Appendix C

The Covering Letter to the Avalon East

School Board

April 7, 1997

Avalon East School Board

Suite 601, Atlantic Place

St. John's, NF

A1C 6C9

ATTENTION: Mr. David Streifling

              Research Request Coordinator

SUBJECT: French Immersion Parental Survey

Dear Mr. Streifling,

As part of the requirements for my Master of

Education degree, I am conducting a survey of parental

second language performance expectations of graduates

of early French immersion education. This research is

being conducted under the direct guidance of Professor

Joan Netten, Faculty of Education, Memorial University

and has received the approval of the Faculty's Ethics

Review Committee. I have developed this questionnaire

in an attempt to define, as clearly as possible, the proficiency levels in French which parents expect of their child(ren) upon graduation from grade 12. It is anticipated that this research will assist both parents and school boards in better understanding the potential of early French immersion education. A copy of the complete thesis proposal is attached for your perusal.

My research involves canvassing parents of children currently enrolled in the Early French Immersion program offered by this school board at the Grade Three and Nine levels. I hope to send out a copy of my questionnaire to each family along with a stamped self-addressed envelope for its return. To distribute the survey I will need the approval of the Avalon East School Board, a list of all schools offering early French immersion in grades three and nine, and the approval of each school's principal to send a copy of my questionnaire home via the students in the target grades. Please be assured that the information collected will be kept in the strictest confidence, and that personal information will be reported in a

generalized manner only. I estimate the data analysis will begin approximately one month from the date the surveys are sent. Once the data has been analyzed, a report will be written and a copy sent directly to you.

The idea for my research stemmed from a series of readings of previous research undertaken in the area of Early French Immersion. It seems educational researchers have either been supporting the Early French Immersion(EFI) option as a viable means of acquiring enhanced second language skills, or have been condemning the program as one which produces a less than acceptable degree of second language competence for the amount of time spent in the program. This polarization of opinion among educational researchers was largely based on process/product research conducted in the classroom. Missing from this debate were parents of EFI children. A computer-assisted search revealed very few references to parental expectations regarding the early immersion option. I regard this as a glaring omission in the research to date, and am undertaking this study to determine a profile of

explicit parental expectations with regard to EFI. I have chosen the Grades Three and Nine levels to attempt to determine if parental expectations are similar, as the linguistic focus in early immersion education tends to shift from experiential to more contextual linguistic analysis as students progress through the grades.

Should you have any questions/concerns, please do not hesitate to call me at 739-4857 (home), or 753 8240 (MacDonald Drive Junior High School), or my faculty advisor Professor Joan Netten at 737-7620. If you wish to speak to a resource person not directly associated with the study, please contact Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean of Education, Memorial University at 737-8588.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Scott Hewlett

c. J. Netten

Appendix D

Part B, Question 4

Perceived Advantages of EFI (n<5)

Comment	Frequency
Provides a strong base in L2; wide vocabulary range	4
Enhances L1 skills	4
Easier transition into university French courses	4
Helps expand creative thinking;cognitive development	4
Class itself is a more varied cultural environment	3
Easier than LFI from a social standpoint (leaving friends)	3
Students in EFI are generally high achievers;above average	3
EFI is available to everyone	2
EFI offers co-ed education	2
Provides a grammatical base in L2	2
Younger children tend to develop a better understanding of L2 as they mature	2
Varied curriculum;full, well-rounded education	2
Social interaction of non-neighbourhood kids	2
Fewer challenging needs students in EFI; lack of resources allocates them elsewhere	2
EFI offers a longer period of L2 learning	2
Parents learn some French	2
Students can benefit from French radio and television	1
EFI enhances potential to become fluent in L2	1
Excellence and reputation of program	1

Students make good friends for the entire program	1
Ability to take a legitimate shot at the Prime Minister's job	1
Open-minded education	1
Students receive diploma in French after grade school	1
EFI students are more adventurous with grammar/written texts	1
L2 development between K and 6 is at an astonishing rate	1
I don't know	1
Broadens ability to conduct research	1
Encourages creativity of oral expression as Fr. is more melodic than Eng.	1
Establishes child's learning potential	1
Students progressively refine their L2 skills as they go through the program	1
Student learns early to accept and not fear challenge	1

Appendix E

Part B, Question 5

Perceived Disadvantages of EFI (n<5)

Comment	Frequency
In high school it is sometimes difficult to switch a subject from Fr. to Eng.	4
Too much homework	4
Friction with pro-English parents	3
Kids were separated from their neighbourhood friends	3
Reduced emphasis on L1 writing skills(vocab,grammar)	3
Delay in concentrating on English studies;G3 is too late	3
Not enough qualified teachers/substitutes	3
Lack of flexibility of course options at higher grade levels	3
Jr. high Science teacher's strength is Fr., not Science/Math	2
Frustration knowing that the child can produce more complex written work in English, but has to simplify for French	2
Reduced opportunities for scholarships in high school	2
Teachers asked not to recommend to parents a child's inability to cope with EFI, which may result in future EFI program failure	2

Learning complex Science/Math concepts may be inhibited if student is having difficulties in L2	2
L2 learning is very slow in the primary grades	2
Students only use Fr. in school and in FL1 milieu	2
Whole language approach is unsuccessful	2
Standardized testing of EFI students is done in L1 before they have started formal English instruction	2
No screening process for basic reading skills in K-6	2
Parents with low L2 skills have difficulty fully comprehending students' creations (poems, stories, school concert performances)	2
Very little emphasis on grammar skills; structure	2
Difficult to maintain high average at Sr. high; leads to attrition	2
Inferior Science program in EFI	2
French propaganda in the curriculum	2
Sr. high subjects have heavy memory load; vocab n/a to daily life	2
Basics in Math have to be retaught/reinforced	2
Children will use English in class as much as possible	2
Science and Math skills inferior to that of English stream students	2
Low expectations re oral and written skills	2
Divides EFI/Eng. enrollment along class/socioeconomic lines	2
Not enough schools offering EFI	2

Difficult to assess child's grasp of content; L2 proficiency	2
No screening process for admission to program	2
Immersion seems incomplete as an instructional method	1
EFI is more restrictive in its approach to teaching	1
At Jr. high and onwards 2 courses in French is not enough to maintain L2 skills	1
All language skills are not developed equally	1
Students are forced to work on their own due to limited parental L2 skills	1
Children are inhibited from expressing themselves	1
Students who withdraw from EFI have far weaker L1 skills than their Eng. stream peers	1
Books for EFI are more expensive	1
Emphasis on oral production can be difficult for shy students	1
Errors are fossilized	1
Siblings can be relegated to different schools if they are not all in EFI	1
Students do not have the same number of Eng. classes as Fr.; L1 skills suffer	1
Many teachers don't even expect students to speak Fr. in class	1
Parental input re perceived student difficulties was dismissed	1
Uni-track FI centers separate students from Eng. peers; not a reflection of the real world	1

School building usually old and in disrepair	1
Religious Education is given less importance in EFI	1
Struggling students are not allowed to leave the program	1
EFI creates difficulty in learning Science at G4/G5 level	1
Lack of L2 culture/environment outside the classroom	1
Expectations of Sr. high teachers are too high	1
Anglophones teach an artificial language in immersion	1
Simplified course content compared to English program	1
Physical Education and Music are not taught in French	1
Performance expectations may be unrealistically high	1
No recognition for graduating from EFI	1
EFI students are marked harder than Eng. stream students	1
Extra stress in studying EFI in L1 home environment	1
Development of class "joual"	1
EFI students are less well equipped for university Fr. especially reading/writing	1
Some difficulty in learning two sets of grammar	1
Some specialized programs available to Eng. stream are n/a to EFI students	1
Insufficient information for parents re possible problems for child	1

Students who transfer out of EFI are stigmatized as "needy" or "troublesome"	1
Unable to enroll in local unidenominational school until students of that denomination were all admitted	1
Small group of students together for years can cause social ostracizations within the group	1
English spelling very poor until G7/G8	1
Students are embarassed by their L1 (in)competencies (K-2)	1
Student did not understand Eng. terminology when writing national standardized Math test	1
Not much French literature available	1
Project work hampered by lack of Fr. material/resources	1
More parental involvement required to keep students focused	1
Jr. high program focuses on grammar, something de-emphasized in Elementary	1
L1 culture somewhat compromised	1
Translation skills are weak	1
Possibility of graduating from EFI illiterate in 2 languages	1
Not enough focus on discipline	1
Francophone teachers with limited Eng. skills cause communication problems with students and parents. At the primary level this is critical	1

Appendix F

Part B, Question 6

Other Parent/Guardian Comments (n<3)

Comment	Frequency (n<3)
Promoters of EFI should indicate some L2 parental skill is necessary	2
Students are shy to show what they've learned; I never hear them speak Fr.	2
I had an initial fear of L1 deficiencies due to EFI, however this did not happen	2
EFI program may get the aqueeze as it is still wrongly perceived as an extra	2
Good to see an educator interested in parental input	2
My children have enjoyed public speaking in French	1
There is more homework in EFI	1
I have met many unilinguals who would like to be bilingual, but never the opposite	1
If EFI students do not get a sound foundation in Science/Math/Computers in English, they will be disadvantaged in the work force of the future	1
It is important for Canadian children to have an opportunity to learn L2	1
Parents should consider the consequences of keeping a child in immersion who is struggling	1
Performance levels of FI teachers do not matter as they are in high demand	1

Unilingual teachers feel threatened by FI teachers	1
My son is a more intellectual person because of EFI	1
I wonder if I made the right decision as my ability to help is reduced	1
Children are doing well but are often frustrated with lack of comprehension; they and I then question the validity of the program	1
Objectives of EFI should be clearly defined for parents	1
EFI not chosen for 1 developmentally delayed child	1
I'm amazed at the number of students who go through EFI without major difficulties	1
Students should be placed in a francophone school for a term	1
It would be interesting to compare EFI graduates' community activity, summer employment levels and post secondary choices with Eng. stream students	1
Many parents who do not choose EFI are intimidated by their own past L2 experiences	1
There is a tendency to blame the school when child is frustrated in EFI	1
No ongoing communication with parents re distinguishing between learning problems and EFI problems	1
I am not convinced of EFI's benefits in Jr. and Sr. high years	1
I will be happy if after EFI my child's English is excellent and French adequate	1
Too early to say if EFI is a better program than the English stream	1

I fear the Dept. of Education and school boards may dump EFI, as it's too difficult to administer and manage	1
Each year the low end of class is advised to switch to English; the next year's class has a newly defined low end	1
EFI is more difficult than the research literature suggested	1
Major problems transferring from one school to another- grades dropped	1
Consistency of teachers is extremely important (our son had 4 teachers in 1 year)	1
Close consultation with teachers is necessary if difficulties arise in student's progress	1
There should be a Spelling program in both English and French	1
I have trouble understanding child's French, however he communicates well with classmates	1
My eldest is in college majoring in Fr. She has a fluency far exceeding that of her classmates. I attribute this to the EFI program	1
My expectations for LFI would be much less than EFI upon graduation	1
Problems in Jr. and Sr. high may be related more to age than the program	1
The less involvement and control parents have in their children's education, the less dedicated they will be to the EFI program	1
EFI is becoming increasingly difficult to administer(funding/support)	1

Finding well qualified teachers is no longer a problem like in EFI's early years	1
On vacation our children saw a real value in EFI; they interacted positively in French with francophone children in Qué, and N.B.	1
Confusion/transference between languages creates more trouble than it generates L1/L2 competencies	1
There is a deficit of knowledge re understanding what happens to EFI learners	1
EFI is only valuable if one parent is bilingual	1
Even if students drop program in high school, their L2 skills will still be useful	1

Appendix G

Participating Schools

The following schools under the jurisdiction of the Avalon East School Board offer EFI in the target grades 3 and 9. All schools complied with the request to conduct research.

<u>Grade 3</u>

Bishop Elementary

Ecole St. Gérard

Holy Trinity Elementary

Park Avenue Elementary

St. Peter's Primary

Vanier Elementary

<u>Grade 9</u>

Holy Heart of Mary

Holy Trinity High

Macdonald Drive Junior High

Mount Pearl Junior High

O'Donel High

Appendix H

Part A, Question 10

Influential Factors in Choosing EFI

Option J - Other

1. FL1 (French - first language) was unavailable after Grade 8.

2. EFI offered co-ed education.

3. Hoping child would be motivated to continue French and become totally bilingual.

4. Present whole language system does not work in English program.

5. Learning a second or third language is an integral part of a good education.

6. Any specialized program is better than the regular classroom.

7. Fewer behaviour problems in EFI.

8. Dept. of Education assessment data(1990-2) on student performance in EFI.

9. Child's ability to communicate before entry to school.

10. We speak several languages (Irish, French, Greek, English, Hebrew).

11. Reputation of school.

12. There are advantages to learning a second language early.

13. It is a privilege to live in a country where L2 can be learned and used.

14. Child demonstrated curiosity about French.

15. The belief that learning languages enhances brain growth and development.

16. Program information provided by the Cabot Children's Centre.

17. Increases skill levels - personal, social, intellectual, cultural.

18. Child was bored with pre-school and needed a challenge.

19. It seemed to be the thing to do at the time.

20. Diversity in teaching techniques as indicated by others with children in EFI.

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