Ayant droit: An Ethnolinguistic Case Study of three School Shifters in

French-minority Manitoba

by

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<u>Abstract</u>

The purpose of this study was to understand the experience of "school shifters" in Manitoba. School shifters are students who transferred from French immersion to French-language schools, thus changing schools and divisions for their secondary education. Through a study of the ethnolinguistic environment surrounding three cases, this study focuses on the local context, social practices, power elements and individual agency surrounding each case. By using a reflexive, ethnolinguistic case study methodology, this study treated each participant as a case while including the researcher's own experience. Data was collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2000) and analyzed in order to discover the shared patterns of belief between the participants. Results showed that the participants' experience had an impact on their beliefs with regards to the local context, social practices, power elements, identity formation and the importance of making new friends. This study concludes with a call for action that suggests improvements for French immersion and French-language programs in Manitoba.

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Last but not least, I would like to thank all my students and teachers who have taught me the best and most meaningful life lessons.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to *La Grande Ourse* of my dreams whose strength is undeniable and whose light will forever guide us.

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Chapter I: Introduction

One question that has always puzzled me on my *Statistics Canada* survey was the one where you had to choose your language identity: francophone or anglophone? Which one do I pick? In some cases, I've picked both. I have trouble with this because I actually identify with both groups: francophones and anglophones, for different reasons. I speak both English and French fluently. But, that was not always the case. To explain how this occurred, I want to take a look at my family. I come from, as francophones would call it, a *famille exogame* because my mother speaks English and my father French.

Let's start with my father's side. He comes from a typically large French-Canadian family (10 siblings). At home, he spoke in French with his family. In fact, his family's roots on both sides can be traced back to the 16th Century, when Canada began as a French colony. My father lived in a rural community and went to an English-language school. When he was growing up, there were no immersion or French-language schools[1] in his community. For the vast majority of his life, he has worked in an English environment.

My mother is Ukrainian/Polish. Her father was a Ukrainian immigrant and her grandparents were all immigrants from the Ukraine and Poland except for her maternal grandmother who was a first-generation Canadian. Yet, my mother doesn't speak Ukrainian or Polish. When I have felt the need to explain this, I always refer to a story my grandmother told me. When she was growing up, her parents spoke Ukrainian at home. She went to an English school. When her

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[1] French-language schools is the accepted translation for "écoles francophones": French First language schools. It has been used by the following authors Buors & Lentz 2009; Haché, 2001; Rocque 2009.

younger sister started school, they would often speak to each other in Ukrainian. The teacher felt that this was a problem and wrote a letter home, telling my great-grandparents that they needed to speak English at home so that their daughters would speak it at school. The home language began to change. My grandparents were bilingual but my mother, her sisters and cousins only spoke English. Perhaps this one incident alone does not suffice to explain why my mother doesn't speak Ukrainian. Environmental factors and lack of schooling in Ukrainian are certainly other determinants of this. Nonetheless, my mother, all of her life, has only spoken English and therefore considers herself an anglophone. At school, my mother learned Basic French which, at the time, consisted of vocabulary and grammar instruction. My parents communicate in English simply because it is the language that they both share.

My younger brother and I were brought up knowing that our paternal family was French. We started pre-school in French immersion. We spoke mostly English at home. Some French vocabulary was integrated into our daily life. I know that there were a few words that were always said to us in French and that we used because we were never presented with the English equivalent for them. A few that I can remember are, *en cave* (in the basement), *faire dodo* (go to sleep) and *maman* and *papa*. All of our aunts and uncles were called *matante* and *mononcle,* even on our maternal side. Somehow, over the years though, the English speaking aunts and uncles became Aunty and Uncle and my parents became Mom and P.A. P.A., letters pronounced in English, is an abbreviation

my brother and I made up for *papa* that my father has never liked but that we continue to use.

When we moved to a rural community in 1989, I was five years old and ready to start school. My parents had tried to enroll me in the French-language school but were refused because my mother spoke English. Another reason may have been that the main language we spoke at home was English. They were encouraged to send me to the nearby French immersion school. I had never heard of this story until I was in grade 8.

In grade 8, I decided that I didn't want to continue on with the rest of my friends to the French immersion high school. Instead, I applied to the French-language high school. I remember thinking that I would have to pass a test to show that I could speak French. My parents thought that it wouldn't be easy for me to get in, considering that I had already been refused in the past. But, to our surprise, my meeting with the French-language school's counselor ended up being a tour of the school. There didn't seem to have been any issues about the fact that I was an immersion student, at least with my registration. My parents were unaware of the reason why I was allowed to go to the school and why my registration was so easy. It was because I was an *ayant droit*, which translates to a "right-holder" (Landry & Forgues, 2007, p. 5). I had the right to go to that school because my father was francophone; a right that was denied to my family in the past and one that my parents were not aware of. As for my brother, he chose to continue on in the immersion program throughout high school.

My decision to go to the French-language high school was somewhat spontaneous. I know that, at the time, I wanted to become a teacher and I thought that it would be a good idea to improve my French in order to go to a French-language university and have access to more job opportunities. I also assumed that it would be difficult to get into the French-language school and then a challenge to actually take the classes. In the beginning, the classes were challenging and it took a while for me to adjust. But, I can easily say that it was one of the best decisions that I have made so far in my life. At that school, I met my best friends and my husband.

I've become, in many senses, a francophone. I went to school in French, I converse with my friends and my husband's family in French and I work in French. When Manitobans speak to me in French, they hear a francophone. This was not the case during my first years of high school. Still, I have misgivings about whether or not I should check off francophone or anglophone or both. I am sure that my brother has no misgivings indicating that he's predominantly anglophone. Although he says that he still understands French, like many immersion graduates, he lacks confidence in speaking French (Hallion Bres & Lentz, 2009).

As a student, I experienced both methods of schooling: French immersion and French-language. As a teacher, I have also taught in both contexts. With that in mind, I am convinced of the importance of the environment in which you live. It determines the language(s) you will speak, those that you will lose and those that you will not speak. By sharing my history, you will see how this study relates to

me. I am certainly a product of my environment, of my history and of my decisions. They have determined who I have become and who I have not become.

All of this has led me to look at other people like me; others who did their schooling in a French immersion program and then changed over to the French-language school division for secondary school. I wanted to know what they thought were the similarities and the differences between both school programs and also how they identify themselves. Curiously, in French, we have many adjectives that describe someone who speaks French; *francophone, franco-manitobain, québecois, francophile, francophone de souche*. They all mean different things and they all exist because of the environment in which we live. I will be looking at this environment and its history because of their importance in determining the possible identities within Canadian society. All of this will be done in the minority language context in which I live.

An important note is that many students switch schools at the high school mark. Based on my experience as a student and a high school teacher, many immersion students leave for the English school system. Many French-language students leave and transfer to an immersion program or to a private English school. These are common switches, but my switch was more uncommon. Although French-language schools are public, they have the gate-keeping criteria of *ayant droit* which makes it very difficult for someone who does not fit this definition to simply transfer schools. I am studying these unique school shifters because I want to know what motivates someone to make this decision, what

challenges and success they may have faced and how this schooling experience

impacted their life and their environment.

Chapter II: Literature Review

In order to undertake a study of French immersion and French-language schools in Manitoba, it is firstly important to study the environment in which these schools exist. This study will review important aspects of the ethnolinguistic vitality of the French language in Manitoba as it applies to both the French immersion and French-language education sectors.

Bourhis (2001), building on Giles and Taylor (1977), first developed a chart explaining the variables that contribute to a language's level of ethnolinguistic vitality (see Figure 1). In particular, Bourhis (2001) showed that demographic, institutional support and control and status factors all contribute to a language's ethnolinguistic vitality. For example, if a group's population, a demographic factor, is large then their ethnolinguistic vitality will be stronger than a smaller group. They also speak of the importance of institutional and control factors which relate to political power and the control of institutions where the language is used, for example in schools. Their final variable is status. The status factor encompasses the social and economic value that is given to a language not only by the interlocutors but also by speakers of other languages, including the dominant language of that particular location. The status factor is also highly influenced by the historical value of the language and how it has been perceived by others over time.

Ethnolinguistic Vitality

Demographic Factors

Institutional Support and Control Factors

Status Factors

Numbers
— Absolute
— Birth Rate/Mortality
— Mixed Marriages
— Immigration
— Emigration

Distribution
— Concentration
— Proportion
— Territory

Formal
Informal

Socio-historical status
Economic status
Social status
Language status
— Locally
— Internationally

Government Services
(national, regional, municipal)
Education
Military
Mass Media
Linguistic Landscape
Politics
Industry, Business, Finance
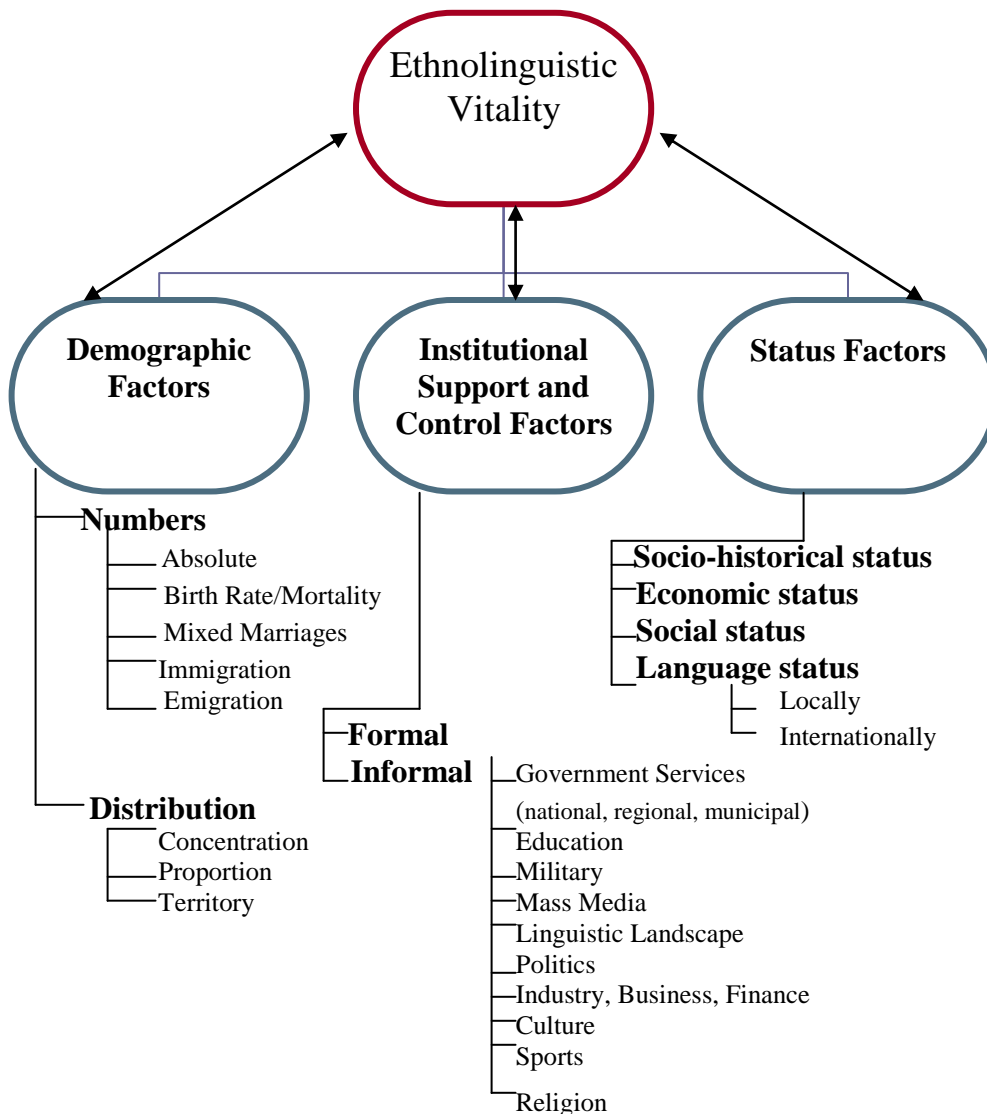Culture
Sports
Religion

Figure 1: A taxonomy of the structural variables affecting ethnolinguistic vitality (Bourhis, 2001, p. 103)

The ideas behind this model of ethnolinguistic vitality were used to measure the vitality of several minority communities in 1963 during the *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*. The results of this study indicated that French, in all provinces other than Québec, had a low ethnolinguistic vitality. It demonstrated that French speakers were being assimilated into the English mainstream due to low demographic, institutional support and control and status factors. The government of Canada deemed it necessary to put into place

measures that would alter the decimation of French. *The Royal Commission* also developed recommendations which were adopted and resulted in the creation, in 1969, of the *Loi sur les langues officielles*. This paved the way for English and French to be recognized, federally and in parliament, as the two official languages of Canada (Hallion Bres & Lentz, 2009). In doing so, they succeeded in increasing the power of the institutional support and control factors of French in Canada. The institutional support and control factors play an important role in determining the ethnolinguistic vitality of a community, as described by the model.

Innovative authors in the field of bilingualism such as Bourhis (2001), Landry & Allard (1991), Landry, Allard & Deveau (2007a, 2007b), and Haché (2001) have used and adapted this same model in their own studies. For these reasons, I too will be adopting and adapting Bourhis' (2001) model of ethnolinguistic vitality. This model is of utmost importance not only due to its influence in changing the ethnolinguistic vitality of French minority communities in Canada but also with regards to its impact on the field of bilingualism.

It is clear that Bourhis (2001) presents many factors that all play a role in determining ethnolinguistic vitality. He divides them, in a hierarchal fashion, into three main factors and then lists sub-factors. In fact, Haché (2001) points out that the most important factors of ethnolinguistic vitality are demographic factors. Later on Haché (2001) states, "The 'institution' variable reflects the degree of formal or informal representation the group has within certain institutions" (p. 118). According to Haché (2001), if a group has more demographic power or

more numbers they will then have more representation in the different institutional levels. Therefore, demographic factors determine the strength of the group's institutional power. Although Haché (2001) gives more importance to the demographic factor, it is clear that he believes all the factors are interrelated and interact with one another. In fact, the author even agrees that, "language behaviour is therefore the result of a social and psychological dynamism in continuous evolution" (p. 119). This idea mirrors Larsen-Freeman's (1997) dynamic view of language.

Recently, in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) there has been interest in a new framework proposed by Larsen-Freeman (1997). Ethnolinguistic vitality relates to SLA in the sense that we often evaluate the ethnolinguistic vitality of a minority language community. An interesting fact about minority language communities is that the vast majority of minority language speakers are bilingual (Fishman, 2001). Thus, at some point in their life, they have learned a second language, generally the language of the majority. Larsen-Freeman, a researcher in the field of SLA, took the idea of chaos/complexity theory from the science world and used it to explain language development. She maintains that language is dynamic; it is constantly changing and "speech is an active process" (Larsen-Freeman, 1997, p.147). Moreover, language is also dynamic in the sense that learners and proficient speakers transform the language "by virtue of using the target language. Indeed, the very phrase 'target language' is misleading because there is no endpoint to which the acquisition can be directed. The target is always moving" (Larsen-Freeman, 1997, p. 151). Thus,

by using the target language, the speakers of the language determine and transform the strength of all the ethnolinguistic factors mentioned in Bourhis' (2001) model. Yet, many processes are involved in SLA. No one variable has been isolated and been found to, on its own, cause SLA. Thus, "these processes are not sequential variables, but rather they occur simultaneously" (Larsen-Freeman, 2007, p. 783).

Larsen-Freeman (2009) is not the only author to propose a perspective on language learning that speaks about the complex and dynamic nature of language. In fact, Swain and Deters (2007) conducted a review on the latest influences on SLA theory. They mentioned that, in general, all the "new" perspectives agree that second language learning "is a highly complex and socially situated process that is dynamic" (p. 826). This certainly resembles Larsen-Freeman's ideas. Another group of authors in the field of SLA, Hall, Vitanova and Marchenkova (2005), are advocates of the Bakhtinian perspective which is another way of viewing language learning as dynamic and complex. Hall et al. (2005) maintain that Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian literary theorist, viewed language "as comprising dynamic constellations of sociocultural resources that are fundamentally tied to their social and historical contexts" (p. 2). These ideas reflect some of the factors mentioned by Bourhis (2001) in his model of ethnolinguistic vitality. Supporters of the Bakhtinian perspective also believe "in the potential liberative power of human agency and local creativity" (Lin & Luk, 2005, p. 78). It goes without saying that individuals have an impact not only on their own language learning but also on the community in which they live.

However, the way Bourhis (2001) and Haché (2001) separate the factors in their model of ethnolinguistic vitality does not clearly indicate the dynamic nature of language learning. Moreover, they list many factors that contribute to ethnolinguistic vitality, even indicating at times that some factors contribute more than others. In the same way that there are many factors that contribute to ethnolinguistic vitality, many factors contribute to SLA. Nevertheless, Larsen-Freeman (1997) maintains that, "perhaps no one of these factors is a determining factor, the interaction of them, however, has a very profound effect" (p. 151). Although Bourhis' (2001) model is complete, it is unclear whether or not he believes in the dynamic nature of language or the importance of the interaction between the variables he identified. Bourhis' (2001) study examines each factor one by one. Larsen-Freeman maintains that when factors are isolated it is possible to "miss their interaction and the fact that the way that they interact changes with time as well" (Larsen-Freeman, 2009, p. 582). Hall, Vitanova & Marchenkova (2005) agree stating, "it is in the dynamic tensions of the past and the present that gives shape to one's individual voice" (p. 3). Lin & Luk (2005) also remark on the importance of individual agency, which is something that is not mentioned in Bourhis' 2001 model on ethnolinguistic vitality. For these reasons, I have summarized the variables in Bourhis' 2001 model so that his model can be adapted to the small scope of this research. Moreover, I have clearly highlighted the interaction between the variables and the importance of individual agency so as to mirror the current dynamic views in SLA (see Figure 2).
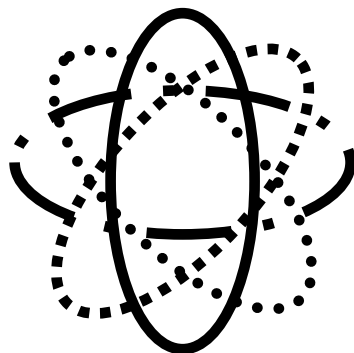
Figure 2: An adapted model of ethnolinguistic vitality

This adapted model has also been influenced by Roy's (2008) critical sociolinguistic theory. Roy (2008) clarifies that when studying a language, linguistic practices must be examined in "the local context in relation to…social practices situated historically" (p. 403). Larsen-Freeman (2007) agrees that "language-using patterns are embedded in a sociohistorical context" (p. 784). With this in mind, in SLA, "it has become more important to study power elements and macro elements of identity negotiation than achievement of language tasks" (Roy, 2008, p. 403). Therefore, the adapted model serves also as a summary of the subjects that will be presented in the literature review. Firstly, I will describe the local context of French in Manitoba by looking at some of Bourhis' (2001) factors. This will be followed by a socio-historical overview of French in Manitoba as it determines social practices. Then, I will review the power elements in Canada, i.e. government policies, related to French. Finally, I will look at individual agency with a focus on identity descriptors related to French in Manitoba.

Although I will be describing each variable one by one, it is not my goal to isolate the variables. It is important to remember that no one variable on its own determines the ethnolinguistic vitality of a community. All the variables are dynamic in that they change over time and are in constant interaction with one another. One variable is not more important than another, proving that there is no hierarchy. Finally, it will be made relevant how these variables interact with the others in the environment and ultimately how they have and continue to influence French education in Manitoba.

<u>Local context</u>

Demographic factors

On a national level, French and English are the two official languages of Canada. However, the majority of francophones live in the province of Québec, where French is the majority language of the province. New Brunswick is the only officially bilingual province of Canada. The official status of both languages in New Brunswick can be explained by the high population of francophones; about 1/3 of the population in this province (Landry & Forgues, 2007). In fact, many francophones migrated to the Prairie Provinces from Québec and Acadia (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island). Yet, "outside of Quebec, francophones comprise only 4.4% of the population" (Landry et al., 2007a, p. 136). Moreover, the majority of anglophones living outside the province of Québec (93%) do not understand French. However, 37% of francophones living in Québec are bilingual (Landry et al., 2007a, p. 154). It is clear that, although

Canada recognizes French and English as the two official languages, English is the majority language of the Canadian population.

English is clearly the dominant language of the province of Manitoba as well. According to the 2006 *Statistics Canada Census*, Manitoba's total population was 1 113 510. Of that population, 845 595 people declared English to be their mother tongue. In comparison, 45 515 people declared their mother tongue to be French (see Table 1). According to the *Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages,* in the City of Winnipeg, 4.1% of the citizens speak French as their first language. Many of these francophones live in the district of Saint-Boniface. Another interesting statistic with regards to Winnipeg francophones is that 96.8% are bilingual. These statistics indicate the minority status of the French language in Manitoba in comparison to English.

Manitoba population by mother tongue

45 515

242 400

845 595
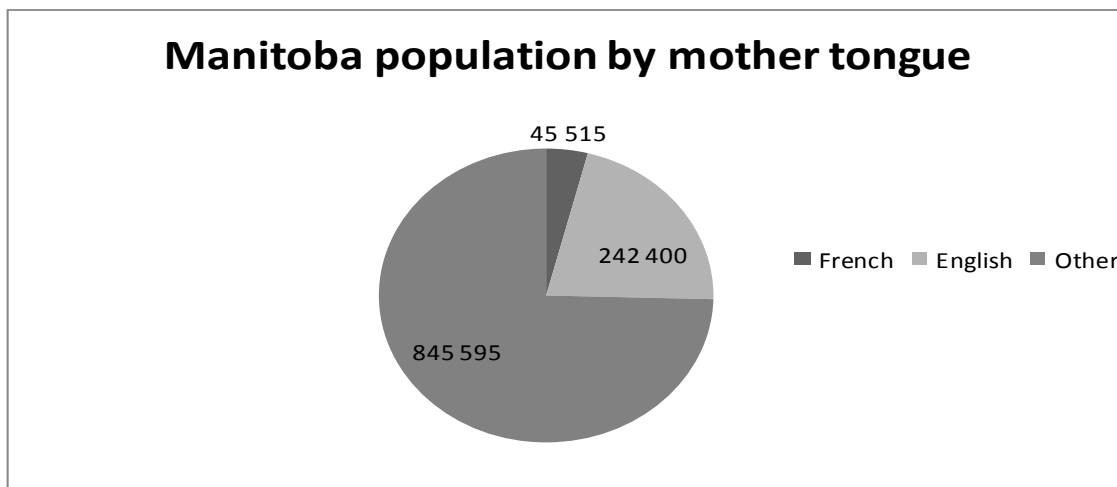
■ French ■ English ■ Other

Table 1: Manitoba population by mother tongue[2]

Because of the sheer number of anglophones in comparison to francophones, the bilingual nature of urban francophones and the national power

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[2] Based on Statistics Canada Census data, 2006

of English, most Franco-Manitobans' linguistic environment is in English.

Therefore, the minority language is generally spoken with family members or at

school. Mass media in Manitoba and many daily contacts are in English.

Because French is a minority language within Manitoba and within Canada,

Franco-Manitobans are fighting an "uneven two-front struggle" (Fishman, 2001,

p.7) against their English neighbours and global English. Landry et al. (2007b)

agree stating that, in Canada, English is the majority language used in public and

economic domains as well as in the media. This reality creates "bilingual,

minority language persons [who] are hybrids both culturally and linguistically"

(Duquette, 2001, p. 103). Although bilingualism is often seen in a positive light,

Fishman (2001) demonstrates how being bilingual in a minority context may have

its disadvantages for the minority language:

> It is a recurring ethnolinguistic reality that the speakers of the threatened language
> are mostly bilingual, almost always speaking (and often also reading and writing)
> the mainstream language as well (or even better than and in preference to) their
> own" (p. 9)

This idea of "even better than and in preference to" reflects two ideas;

substractive bilingualism and assimilation. Firstly, substractive and additive

bilingualism were terms first coined by Lambert (1975). Landry et al. (2007b)

explain how these terms have become common emblems of French-minority

language speakers. Additive bilingualism is a positive term indicating that an

individual adds on another language without it being detrimental to their first

language. In contrast, substractive bilingualism entails the slow loss of the first

language and the replacement of it by the dominant language. Fishman (2001)

demonstrates the idea of substractive bilingualism when he states that an

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individual can speak, read and write "better" in the mainstream language than in his or her own (p. 9).

Next, assimilation into the dominant culture can occur when a minority language-speaker demonstrates a "preference" for the dominant language, which is a more conscious behaviour. It can also occur when an individual's competence in the dominant language outweighs his or her competence in his or her minority language. This is more dangerous because there does not need to be a conscious effort from the individual in order for this to occur. When he or she uses the dominant language in many contexts and with ease, the minority language loses its value. Over time, this can lead, unconsciously, to the extinction of a language. In fact, for francophones outside Québec, the assimilation rate is 38% (Landry et al., 2007b, p. 226). Arguably, a conscious effort is required to maintain a minority language.

Due to the minority context, it is not surprising that, over the years, the number of francophones in Manitoba has been declining. This is attributable to the following factors that Bourhis (2001) describes.

> The isolation of small francophone communities across the country, declining birthrate, French-English exogamy, lack of French-language primary and secondary schooling, the legacy of anti-French laws and the dearth of provincial and federal government services offered in French, combined to erode the number of French-language speakers outside Quebec" (Bourhis, 2001, p. 103).

An interesting demographic factor highlighted by Bourhis (2001) is that of exogamy. Exogamy occurs when an intergroup member marries someone outside that group. When looking at the minority status of French in Manitoba, this term is used to describe a marriage between a francophone and a non-

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francophone, usually an anglophone. In contrast, an endogamous relationship describes a francophone couple. Exogamy can be a factor that encourages the extinction of French especially considering that only 20% of children who belong to exogamous families will actually "have French as a mother tongue" (Landry et al., 2007b, p. 243).

This does not mean however that exogamous relationships lead to assimilation. In fact, Rocque (2009) maintains that even if a parent does not speak French, he or she can still support the use of the language in their household by having a positive and open attitude towards the language. Studies have also shown that if a child from an exogamous relationship speaks French with his or her francophone parent and attends a French-language school, the language is generally maintained. In fact, in grade 12, those children "cannot be distinguished statistically from francophones in endogamous families…on language competencies in French and francophone identity" (Landry et al., 2007b, p. 243). Moreover, in a minority context, endogamy does not necessarily ensure French language maintenance. This is especially true in endogamous families when "*l'anglais demeure la langue d'usage la plus commune au foyer*" (Rocque, 2009, p. 276-277). Therefore, the family's linguistic make-up does not on its own determine language maintenance. This leads me to then speak about the importance of education and demographic conditions in a minority context.

Demographic factors and Education

In Canada, education in French is done is different ways. In particular, in Manitoba, there are French-language (French as a first language), French

immersion and Basic French programs. The details of these distinct programs will be discussed in the socio-historical section. Presently, in all of Canada, each province and territory has at least one French-language school division (Landry et al, 2007a). In Manitoba, this division is called *la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine* (DSFM). In a minority context, the French-language school plays an important role as it is one of the only places where French is the dominant language (Landry et al., 2007a).

In Canada, in 1997, roughly 7% of school-aged children were enrolled in a French immersion program (Swain & Johnson, 1997). Ten years later, this percentage is the same as the percentage of Canadian anglophones outside of Québec who understand French (Landry et al., 2007a). In this sense, French immersion and French-language schools act as factors that reduce the assimilation of French. Both school programs aim for additive bilingualism and as such protect and promote the minority language (Swain & Johnson, 1997).

In 2009, Manitoba's 101 French-immersion schools had an enrolment of 18 562 students. However, this number strongly diminishes at the secondary school level which had only 3 968 students, proving that many students do not continue their schooling in French-immersion at the high school level (Hallion Bres & Lentz, 2009). In order to offer a comparison, the DSFM has 24 schools. In 2009, their enrolment was 4 872 students. In that same year, the French immersion enrolment was more than triple that at 18 562 students (see Table 2). In Manitoba, these statistics show that French-Immersion programs have a higher student population and thus more schools. Although the DSFM's

enrolment has increased over the years, it is still true that not all Franco-Manitobans send their children to French-language schools. Some factors that seem to dissuade parents from sending their children to French-language schools are "transportation availability" and "political influences" (Roy, 2008, p. 397).
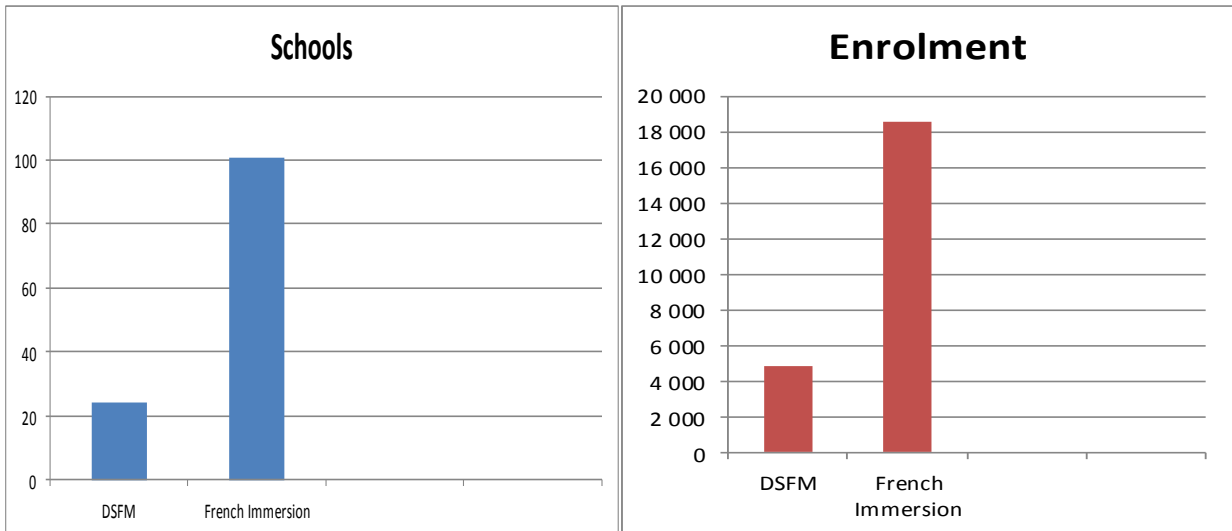

Table 2: Schools and Enrolment: French-language and French immersion in Manitoba[3]

Another factor that determines which school program Manitoban parents will choose for their children is whether or not the families are exogamous. It is important to note that the general population does not make a clear distinction between French immersion and French-language programs (Landry et al., 2007a). This, coupled with the fact that the majority of exogamous parents believe that French immersion "provides the ideal mixture of schooling in the language of each of the parents" tends to increase the number of French immersion students (Landry et al., 2007a, p. 140). Unfortunately, giving equal weight to each language, in a minority context, often leads to substractive

[3] Enrolment Report September 2009, www.edu.gov.mb.ca

bilingualism. The social context on its own increases the weight of English. In order to truly give equal weight to French, parents must provide their children with the most experiences possible in French in order to counter the dominance of English. However, more and more exogamous families are enrolling their children in French-language schools. In fact, 70% of the students who are presently attending French-language schools in Manitoba are products of exogamous marriages (Hallion Bres & Lentz, 2009).

French immersion students are often thought of as examples of additive bilingualism. It was demonstrated as long ago as 1975 by Lambert that French immersion students' English did not suffer from this program. They are examples of additive bilinguals when they maintain their first language, English, while learning another, French. However, if French is the students' first language, these students who attend French immersion schools may become victims of substractive bilingualism. This is perhaps why the Government of Manitoba explains that French immersion schools are for "Non-Francophones"[4]. Many studies show that French immersion students' "fluent oral and written French is markedly non-native" (Swain, 2000, p. 201). Their production abilities in French are generally not up to par with francophones, especially in the areas of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation (Roy, 2008). However, Roy (2008) postulates that "French immersion students cannot be compared to francophone speakers, as the former are not native speakers of French" (p. 399). Yet, as research has shown, in Manitoba, some of these students are native speakers of

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[4] A Guide to French Immersion Schools in Manitoba 2009, www.gov.mb.ca,

French. With that in mind, those francophone students are subject to substractive bilingualism if their English-language competencies become stronger than their competencies in French. It is also important to note that French-language school students are not immune to the phenomenon of substractive bilingualism. Gérin-Lajoie (2001), in her three-year study on Franco-Ontarian high school students, demonstrated that English was the language they used with their group of school friends.

Hallion Bres & Lentz (2009) clearly state that an immersion high school in Manitoba "*acceuille une assez forte proportion de francophones natifs*" (p. 66). This shows that not all French immersion students are anglophones. Many are, in fact, those entitled to French-language education, but who are not exercising their right. Nevertheless, there has been an increase of entitled students enrolled in French-language schools (54% in 1996), indicating that parents are starting to exercise their rights to a greater extent (Landry et al, 2007a, p. 140). The socio-historical status of French in Manitoba can explain in part why francophones are only exercising their right to French-language education half of the time.

Social Practices

Socio-historical status

When explaining Complexity Theory in science, Larsen-Freeman (1997) showed that global patterns were dependent on initial conditions. In this way,

> globally a pattern emerges, but locally it is impossible to predict just what the details will look like. For instance, at the same time that the weather is constantly changing, it also stays within the boundaries of what we call the climate (Larsen-Freeman, 1997, p. 146)

This is why it is important to analyze global historical events as they relate to the local context. It will be made clear that Canada's history has played a role in determining the status of French and English and, in that way, it has also impacted the local Manitoban context. The reason why Manitobans can send their children to French-language, French immersion or English-language schools lies in Canadian history and, more importantly, in the history of French and English in Canada.

In the 16th Century, Canada's first French colonial settlements were established in *Nouvelle France*, present-day Eastern Canada. The British followed soon after, settling more to the South in the present-day United States. France had requirements for settlers; in the beginning they were predominantly male and all Catholic, whereas the British had another tactic. In order to rid England of Protestants, they decided to let anyone wishing to flee religious persecution to do so and to create a new life in the Americas, along the Eastern seaboard. Early on, the English Protestants grew exponentially in numbers while the French in *Nouvelle France* dwindled due to a high mortality rate and a low birth rate. At one point, France realized this was an issue. To increase the birth rate in *Nouvelle France*, King Louis XIV decided to send over *les filles du roi*, French female orphans, who would marry the French settlers. Their union would produce French children and eventually the French population would start to climb (Gillmor, 2001).

The influence of the French and English colonies would prove to weaken, assimilate and in some cases wipe out entire aboriginal groups, the actual First

Nations of Canada (Gillmor, 2001). The purpose of this paper is not to describe these events. However, it is important to note that by making Canada a bilingual nation, we recognized the important role francophones and anglophones played in the creation of the nation. We called them the "founding nations" (Landry et al., 2007a, p. 147) and we created "national duality" (Thériault, 2007, p. 257). But, this way of defining the nation completely excluded the Aboriginal peoples, the true First Nations. Although the idea of national duality excludes many deserving groups, I will continue to describe the moments up until the bilingual transformation of the country as they served to bring us to where we are today.

To continue, the French and the British were in constant competition for Canada's territory. Thus, many wars ensued. Notable treaties that resulted from these wars were the *Treaty of Utrecht* and the *Treaty of Paris*, respectively in 1713 and 1763 (Landry & Forgues, 2007). The *Treaty of Utrecht* was signed after a British victory. Many French colonies were handed over to the British and the French *Acadiens* were deported. The *Treaty of Paris* put an end to *Nouvelle France* by rendering all its inhabitants British subjects, stripping them of their linguistic and religious rights. In 1774, the *Quebec Act* was developed to appease the French so that they would not join forces with the United States during the American Revolution against Great Britain. The *Quebec Act* gave French citizens the right to practice their Catholic faith and to enforce French law. The French citizens became known as the *Canadiens-français*. In 1840, the *Durham Report* was released and it proposed the assimilation of the French in order to bring Canada together.

In 1867, the Dominion of Canada was created. To incite Québec to join, the *British North American Act* "provided rights to French and English for parliament and the judicial system for Canada and the province of Quebec" (Landry & Forgues, 2007, p. 3). Linguistic rights were maintained through religious rights with regards to education. Québec was allowed to keep its confessional Catholic schools. "At the time, religious rights were tantamount to linguistic rights since the French were overwhelmingly Catholic and the English, mainly Protestant" (Landry et al, 2007a, p. 137). During this time, the province of Manitoba counted more francophones than anglophones (Haché, 2001). Manitoba joined the Dominion in 1870 as a bilingual province. *The Manitoba Act* guaranteed the linguistic duality of Manitoba. Both French and English were given official status in the legislature and in the courts. However, in 1890, *The Official Language Act* abolished the official status of French in Manitoba.

The *Révolution tranquille* in the 1960s was a period in time where Québec confirmed its francophone identity and brought together the province's francophones in order to fight for its linguistic rights. The movement changed the province's francophone identity from *Canadien-français* to *Québécois* (Landry et al., 2007a). As a direct result, in 1974, French became the only official language of the province, permitting Québec to "combat English domination and Anglicization" (Roy, 2008, p. 397). One of the main social changes that occurred during this time period was the new awareness of the "threat posed to French through its co-existence with English" (Bourhis, 2001, p. 113). While Québec was affirming its territorial identity, francophones outside Québec were undergoing

strong assimilation which threatened the survival of the French minorities outside

Québec (Bourhis, 2001). In order to create provincial unity, Québec had to

dissociate itself from the French minorities, the other *Canadien-français*. Québec

built up its walls and coined the phrase "*hors du Québec point de salut*, (beyond

Quebec no survival)" (Bourhis, 2001, p. 103). Even they believed the French

minority communities outside Québec were lost.

The federal government responded to the *Révolution tranquille* by creating

the *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism* (B & B Commission)

(Landry et al., 2007a) in 1963 which led to the creation of Canada's two official

languages. Moreover, it proposed recommendations for the minority language

communities: anglophones in Québec and francophones outside Québec. These

propositions included the right to minority-language education. It was not until the

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was signed, in 1982, that these rights

started to be enforced. However, Haché (2001) believes that these

recommendations did not come soon enough for francophones in minority

contexts, like Franco-Manitobans, who had been evidently weakened by

assimilation. In fact, when Franco-Manitobans started to demand that their rights

be reinstated, it created a strong reaction from the anglophone majority

community. The anger that ensued resulted in anti-francophone acts. In

particular, in 1983, the building that lodged the *Société franco-manitobaine* was

burned and the president received death threats. In 1985, the Supreme Court of

Canada sided with the francophones and required Manitoba to translate all of its

laws. This decision overthrew the 1890 *Official Language Act* that banned the

use of French (Corbett, 1990). It is in this historical context that French-language

education began its evolution in Canada.

Socio-historical status and Education

It will now be important to describe two French educational programs that

resulted from this historical context: French immersion and French-language.

Before linguistic rights for francophones were obtained, education in French was

an illegal, clandestine act in the province of Manitoba. In particular, in 1916,

Franco-Manitobans no longer had the right to French instruction (Tetley, 1982).

However, some francophones participated in a "covert form of education:

students had to hide their French texts and revert to English whenever an

inspector was doing his or her rounds" (Laplante, 2001, p. 91). The only publicly

funded form of French education was through the French-Catholic, private school

system that only a small elite population could afford. In 1970, the *Public Schools*

Act was changed in order to clearly indicate that both French and English could

be the languages of instruction in public Manitoban schools. French instruction

depended on the number of parents who requested it. Interestingly enough, this

resulted in an influx of French immersion schools because anglophone parents

were requesting that their children be instructed in French as a second language

(Tetley, 1982).

The French immersion program first began in the suburb of Saint-Lambert

in Montréal, Québec. The idea came about from anglophone parents who felt,

with the growing social and economic changes in Québec, the need for their

children to be competent in French (Heller, 2001). They were dissatisfied with the

results of the existing French second language programs (Hallion Bres & Lentz, 2009; Roy 2008). They consulted professors at the *University of McGill* and developed their immersion program. The goal of this program was to fully immerse the children in the French language. This meant all the subjects and instruction were to be done in French. The results were very positive and supported by Lambert's 1975 report. The students developed good levels of French without any adverse effects on their English (Landry et al., 2007a). This French immersion model continued to gain popularity and was used across Canada.

With the transformation of Canada into an officially bilingual nation, anglophone parents wanted their children to be reflections of this. French immersion was seen to be a way to bring the two very separate linguistic communities together (Swain, 2000). They also wanted their children to have access to the federal job market that required bilingual employees (Hallion Bres & Lentz, 2009). To this day, French immersion students believe that being bilingual will give them access to more jobs than if they were unilingual (Heller, 2001).

French immersion programs are practiced in public schools and promote a "content-based approach that integrates language-teaching into the rest of the curriculum" (Roy, 2008, p. 396). Swain & Johnson (1997) present the *Core features of a prototypical immersion program*:

1. The L2 is the medium of instruction
2. The immersion curriculum parallels the local L1 curriculum
3. Overt support exists for L1
4. The program aims for additive bilingualism

5. Exposure to the L2 is largely confined to the classroom
6. Students enter with similar (and limited) levels of L2 proficiency
7. The teachers are bilingual
8. The classroom culture is that of the local L1 community (p. 6-8)

It is important to note that Swain & Johnson (1997) define L1 as the first language, English, and L2, the second language, as French. Although most French immersion schools in Manitoba follow these guidelines, the *Guide pour l'éducation en langue française au Manitoba* indicates that the goal is for French immersion students to become functionally bilingual. The Manitoban goals for its French immersion students are:

> • *maîtrise la langue anglaise;*
> • *est capable de communiquer en français dans sa vie personnelle et professionnelle;*
> • *fait preuve d'une appréciation de la langue française, de la francophonie et de sa diversité culturelle;*
> • *voit l'apprentissage du français comme un outil de développement personnel, intellectuel et social;*
> • *apprécie les autres langues, cultures et communautés du Canada et du monde entier.*[5]

The current model clearly states that the goal is not for French immersion students to have native-like competencies in French. French is seen as a communication tool to be used in one's personal or professional life.

In Manitoba, the French immersion program is offered in different formats. The most popular program is 'early immersion' in which instruction starts completely in French as of kindergarten. Depending on the school, English Language Arts generally begins in grade 1 (Ewart & Straw, 2001). Other less popular programs are 'early partial immersion' where French is presented as of kindergarten but for only 50% of the day. The other two programs 'mid' and 'late

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[5] *Guide pour l'éducation en langue française au Manitoba*, www.dsfm.mb.ca

immersion' start French instruction as of grade 4 or 5 and grade 6 or 7,

respectively (Swain & Johnson, 1997).

In Manitoba, the French immersion programs that currently exist are early (entry in kindergarten or grade 1), mid (entry in grade 4) and late (entry in grade 7). The programs are all designed for non-francophones and aim to develop functionally bilingual students.[6] Moreover, French immersion programs exist in two different models: single track and dual track. The models are described as followed:

- the single track model in which the entire student population is enrolled in the French Immersion Program
- the dual track model in which both English and French Immersion Programs coexist in the same school[7]

In rural Manitoba, 15% of the immersion schools follow the single track model

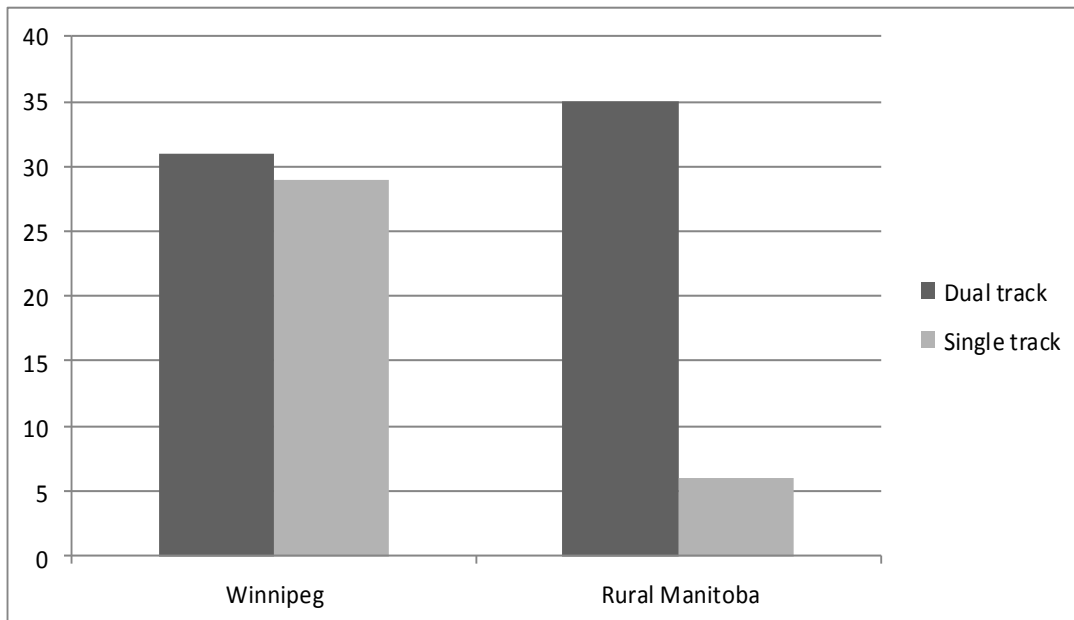whereas in Winnipeg 48% of the immersion schools are single track (see Table

3).

Table 3: Dual and single track immersion schools in Winnipeg and rural Manitoba[8]

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[6] A guide to French Immersion Schools in Manitoba 2009, www.edu.gov.mb.ca
[7] A guide to French Immersion Schools in Manitoba 2009, www.edu.gov.mb.ca
[8] These numbers were taken from A guide to French Immersion Schools in Manitoba, www.edu.gov.mb.ca

In the beginning, French immersion schools were often criticized for being elitist, serving only middle-class anglophones. Dagenais & Berron (2001) show that to no longer be true. With a climbing immigration level and a new policy on inclusion, immersion teachers are reporting a drastic change in their clientele. Immersion schools must take into consideration that many of their students are not mother tongue English-speakers, creating a need for program adjustments.

The first French immersion school in Manitoba was *École Sacré-Coeur* which was originally a French-language, private, Catholic school in downtown Winnipeg. Five anglophone parents, interested and informed by the Saint-Lambert experiment, decided that they wanted to enroll their children in French immersion. The easiest way to do this was to transform a private French school into a public one. The parents eventually won and "*l'école Sacré-Coeur accueillera, en septembre 1973, 41 élèves appartenant à la majorité anglophone*" (Hallion Bres & Lentz, 2009, p. 56). The popularity continued to grow as the anglophone majority started to realize and to become convinced of the benefits of the French immersion program in Manitoba. It is important to note that these schools appeared despite an environment which was still sensitive about la *Révolution tranquille*, an environment where a misunderstanding of the francophone community, due to Québec's desire to separate from Canada, was prevalent. Hallion Bres & Lentz (2009) agree stating,

> Il est vrai que les rapports entre la communauté anglophone majoritaire et la communauté franco-manitobaine, pour des raisons sociohistoriques, n'ont pas été exempts de tensions dans le passé. Et ces rapports restent encore aujourd'hui parfois tendus (p. 73).

Because of its audacity and the time period into which it was born, the French immersion program is sometimes described as a type of *révolution tranquille* within the rest of Canada (Hallion Bres & Lentz, 2009). Yet, despite the French immersion program's success, it would have to wait until 1995 in order to be recognized as an official school program alongside the English and French-language programs (Hallion Bres & Lentz, 2009).

In contrast, the Franco-Manitoban community had to fight much harder in order to create French-language schools. Landry et al. (2007a) note, "it is somewhat ironic that while these bilingual [immersion] programs flourished across Canada, many francophones outside Quebec did not have access to French schooling. Privilege had precedence over right" (p. 134). In order to take advantage of public education in French, many francophone parents simply sent their children to French immersion schools (Laplante, 2001). Nevertheless, in the early 1980s, French-language schools were opening and being placed in English school divisions, spanning over the vast territory of Manitoba. The following section will describe the characteristics of French-language education in Manitoba.

The French-language program can be differentiated from the French immersion program in its clientele and its goals. Firstly, students attending French-language schools must be *ayant droits*; meaning that they must have a francophone heritage. The policies with regards to *ayant droits* will be explained in the section on government policies. Next, French-language schools promote the French language and culture. In its *Guide pour l'éducation en langue*

française au Manitoba, the Government of Manitoba indicates the characteristics and goals for French-language students:

> • *maîtrise la langue française comme langue première;*
> • *maîtrise la langue anglaise;*
> • *s'engage à se construire une identité francophone positive;*
> • *a un sentiment d'appartenance à la communauté francophone;*
> • *apprécie les cultures de l'espace francophone;*
> • *apprécie les autres langues, cultures et communautés du Canada et du monde entier.*

It is clear that the French-language school division strives to promote the Franco-Manitoban identity in its students by ensuring that their first language is French and that they feel a sense of belonging to the Franco-Manitoban community. An important role of the French-language school is the promotion of French for "cultural survival and the ethnolinguistic vitality of the group" (Landry & Forgues, 2007, p. 6). Therefore, schools play an important role in maintaining the French language by shaping the francophone leaders of future generations.

Although a mastery of the English language is a goal, the schools do not necessarily have to strive for additive bilingualism, it simply happens due to the minority context. Lafontant (2002) explains that Franco-Manitoban children naturally learn English and add this language on to their first. "*L'anglais n'est pas perçu par les jeunes comme une langue apprise, dans le sens scolaire du mot: il leur est venu naturellement, comme le français, à force de l'entendre, dès le jeune âge*" (p.86). Nevertheless, substractive bilingualism is also a reality, especially if French is only used in the school context. In order to counter the dominance of English, French-language schools do not present English instruction until grade 3 or 4, depending on the school. All subjects are taught in

French, except English, from elementary to secondary school (Landry et al., 2007a).

In July of 1993, the DSFM was created based on a Manitoba law that was developed to enforce francophones' rights to run their own schools.[9] This law resulted in the adoption of Bill 34, *Act to Amend the Public Schools Act* in order to allow the management of French-language schools by Franco-Manitobans. Therefore, French-language schools offer "*un enseignement dans la langue maternelle… et sont gérées entièrement par la minorité linguistique*" (Gérin-Lajoie, 2010). The DSFM brought all the francophone schools of the province together, resulting in it becoming the school division with the largest territorial span in Manitoba. The vast divisional territory, as well as the fact that students arrive in kindergarten with very mixed levels and knowledge of French, prove to be ongoing challenges for French-language education (Blain, 2001). Government policies have also influenced the creation of these various schools and programs in Manitoba.

Power elements

Government policies

An important result of the B & B Commission in 1969 was the recognition of both French and English as official languages in Canada. In 1982, *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* legally recognized this status. Articles 16 and 20 of the Charter promote bilingualism in the political arena and give the right to all Canadian citizens to request governmental services in either French or English. By giving equal status to both French and English at the federal level,

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[9] http://www.dsfm.mb.ca/dsfm.php

The Charter was influential in creating official language minorities in each province (Thériault, 2007).

Following the enactment of the Charter, language rights were implemented and public funds were also used to support these linguistic policies. This indicates a federal ideology of pluralism; an ideology that recognizes and respects minority groups. There is a marked distinction between pluralism and civism. Civism "reflects tolerance for language minorities. However, no public funds are provided to foster their vitality" (Landry et al., 2007b, p. 232). Landry et al. (2007b) also argue that Canada's present-day Conservative government is seen to be more supportive of a civic ideology because they have cut funding to many social programs. Thus, we can see how government policies can play an important role in promoting or demoting a language's status. This can be done overtly by creating language policies or more covertly by cutting funding. Therefore, those who are in power also determine how those policies will be interpreted, implemented and funded.

It is important to note that bilingual services are only required at the federal level. Each province then determines on their own to which degree they will support that national ideology. For example, New Brunswick, at the same time that the Charter was signed, also adopted a provincial model of bilingualism. Because Canada's provinces were left to their own devices, each francophone community must work within a specific provincial context (Landry et al., 2007b). Thus, it is no surprise that provincial legislation often dictates the non-use of the

minority language by offering "unilingual services in the majority language" (Landry et al., 2007b, p. 243).

Government policies and Education

In 1970, the *Official Languages in Education Program* was created to financially support second language education (Roy, 2008). Article 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982) is certainly the policy that has made the most difference for francophone minority communities outside Québec. It reads,

> Section 23.[10]
>
> (1) Citizens of Canada:
> *a*) first language learned and still understood is that of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province in which they reside, or
> *b*) who have received their primary school instruction in Canada in English or French and reside in a province where the language in which they received that instruction is the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province, have the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in that language in that province.
> (2) Citizens of Canada of whom any child has received or is receiving primary or secondary school instruction in English or French in Canada, have the right to have all their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the same language.
> (3) The right of citizens of Canada under subsections (1) and (2) to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of a province:
> *a*) applies wherever in the province the number of children of citizens who have such a right is sufficient to warrant the provision to them out of public funds of minority language instruction; and
> *b*) includes, where the number of those children so warrants, the right to have them receive that instruction in minority language educational facilities provided out of public funds.

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[10] http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/pdp-hrp/canada/frdm-eng.cfm

Section 23 of the Charter is the definition upon which *ayant droit* is based. The interpretation of this section has resulted in this presentation by the DSFM of the definition of *ayant droit*:

> *Un ayant droit est un résident du Manitoba dont la première langue qu'il a apprise et qu'il comprend encore est le français __ou__*
> *Un ayant droit est un résident du Manitoba qui a reçu au moins quatre ans d'enseignement scolaire dans le cadre d'un programme français au Canada __ou__*
> *Un ayant droit est le père ou la mère d'un enfant qui reçoit de l'enseignement scolaire dans le cadre d'un programme de français ou qui a reçu un tel enseignement pendant au moins quatre ans.*[11]

Essentially, in order to attend a French-language school in Manitoba, you must be a resident of Manitoba and speak French as a mother tongue. However, this definition excludes many citizens who, due to the banning of French education in Manitoba, have lost that language. Therefore, the *ayant droit* policy also allows those who have already studied for four years in a French-language school to attend.

Because of this definition, francophones outside Québec were able to petition the courts in order to get French-language schools and to manage them. In Section 23.3 b, the Charter gives the right of school management to minority language groups "where the number of those children so warrant". Haché (2001) shows how school management is an important symbol of power. He goes on to say that simply giving official status to a language is not enough. In order to truly have that official status, minority groups need to control their own institutions. Duquette (2001) also agrees, declaring that if institutions are run by the majority population, they will undoubtedly reflect the ideology of that population and will

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[11] www.dsfm.mb.ca

only serve to their benefit. Because provincial jurisdictions were separate from the federal, court cases had to be fought individually in each province and territory. Those cases were fought, even up to the level of the Supreme Court of Canada until francophone "parents were given complete control of their own schools" (Laplante, 2001, p. 91). The impact of Section 23 can be noted by the fact that every province and territory in Canada now has "one or several French school boards" (Landry et al., 2007a, p.139).

If the federal policies had not been created, bilingual employment at that level would be non-existent. French immersion parents state that access to economic capital is one of the main reasons they choose to send their children to French immersion schools (Hallion Bres & Lentz, 2009). Therefore, French immersion enrolment has also been affected by these federal policies.

Although many positive impacts occurred because of the creation of these rights, and even if the federal government of the time supported a pluralistic ideology, that does not guarantee that individuals who speak those languages will automatically live together harmoniously (Langlois & Lapointe, 2007). In fact, Heller (2001) mentions that current Canadian beliefs are based on the past "relations of power between conquering English-speakers and conquered French-speakers which [have] informed Canadian society ever since" (p. 48-9). We cannot escape our history as it plays a role in defining who we are.

<u>Individual agency</u>

Identity descriptors

The local, socio-historical and political contexts greatly impact how an individual chooses to identify him or herself. Dubé (2009) believes that the historical relationship between French and English in Canada has had and continues to have an impact on Canadian identity formation. In particular, Dubé states "*notre histoire nous situe d'emblée dans une mouvance identitaire dynamique*" (2009, p. 64). History has actually resulted in a variety of identity descriptors for various groups of francophones across Canada. Before the *Révolution tranquille*, all francophones, including those that lived in Québec, belonged to the same group: *Canadiens-français*. However, once the francophones of Québec adopted their new identity as one specific to territory, it required francophones outside of Québec to redefine their own identity. Thériault (2007) believes that this also "redefined the French Canada/ English Canada opposition as that of Quebec/ the rest of Canada opposition" (p. 260). Manitobans could not simply define themselves as Manitoban as it did not describe their linguistic situation in the same way *québécois* did for Québec. Haché (2001) agrees stating, "it is difficult to define oneself as a group when the group has no control over the territory it inhabits or over the fundamental rights which are still not recognized by the dominant society" (p. 117). It is then not surprising that the Franco-Manitoban flag was created in 1980, a time when linguistic rights were improving for the francophone community.

Dubé (2009) also shows how identity is dynamic and is constantly changing over time. He clarifies that the francophone identity changed during Trudeau's time because the French language in general was seen in a more positive light, allowing francophones to regain pride in their linguistic identity. It is interesting that many researchers in the field of francophone and bilingual identity formation all define identity in a similar way. Gérin-Lajoie, Gosse & Roy (2002) affirm that identities form "*à l'intérieur de rapports sociaux dialectiques complexes*" (p. 72). Identity develops through socialization and it is not something you are born with; it develops over time.

When speaking of language identity, it is clear that the family's linguistic identity determines a child's maternal language but the local and political context, combined with the child's own choice, will play a role in determining his or her identity. That is why, Gérin-Lajoie et al. (2002) state that "*le fait de naître dans une famille francophone ne veut pas dire pour autant que l'on est automatiquement francophone ou qu'on le demeurera*" (p. 72). Perhaps the fact that there are many identity choices for francophones is what makes the notion of identity in a minority context so complex and dynamic. Many francophone authors who write about francophone identity in a minority context describe identity using the same words: "*complexe*" (Gérin-Lajoie, 2001, 2010; Dubé, 2009; Laflamme, 2001; Gérin-Lajoie, et al., 2002; Deveau, 2008), "*dynamique*" (Dubé, 2009; Dallaire, 2004; Gérin-Lajoie, et al., 2002) and "*en mouvance*" (Dubé 2009; Gérin-Lajoie, 2001; Gérin-Lajoie, et al., 2002). They maintain that identity can change and that the factors that influence it are complex and dynamic. Their

definition fits well with my adapted model of ethnolinguistic vitality (see Figure 2).

Historical and social factors have already been shown to impact identity. Local

factors, such as the linguistic environment, and individual agency can also play a

role in determining identity.

Living in a minority language setting can solidify a speaker's sense of

belonging to its linguistic minority group. Individuals are not simply products of

their environment; they are greatly influenced by it. But, they are also free to

choose to which degree they will integrate into the dominant or minority language

group. Landry et al. (2007b) show that even if assimilation has greatly affected

francophone minority groups in Canada, there are still individual members who

have strong francophone identities and use French as much as possible.

Individuals are generally very conscious of the minority status of their language

because of socialization experiences in the dominant language. This creates a

group of autonomous and conscious individuals who play an important role in

language maintenance (Landry et al., 2007b). In a minority context, the language

"is often viewed as a very special gift, a marker of identity and a specific

responsibility *vis-à-vis* future generations" (Fishman, 2001, p. 9). Certainly,

negative socialization experiences will also impact individuals. In some cases,

these experiences will push them to consciously abandon or reject their first

language and to adopt the dominant linguistic identity.

The minority context of French in Manitoba can also create a split in

identity. Boudreau (2001) explains that francophones in a minority context realize

that they cannot live in French in all aspects of their public life which can create

contradictory feelings towards the language. Moreover, children learn or not to reconcile this contradiction "*ce qui est le propre des locuteurs vivant en milieu diglossique conflictuel*" (p. 98). The conflict is evident when French-language school students are only allowed to speak French at school and are sometimes punished for speaking English (Gérin-Lajoie, 2010). Because the two languages co-exist in the community, some individuals may choose not to identify with either language group, but rather to develop a bilingual identity. In fact, Gérin-Lajoie's (2001) study on Franco-Ontarian high school students, demonstrated that the vast majority of the students preferred to define themselves as bilingual, as opposed to francophone or anglophone (p. 65). A bilingual identity can develop when an individual feels a strong, emotional attachment to his or her minority language but, at the same time, is "strongly attracted to the majority language for "status" reasons" (Landry et al., 2007b, p. 245). Bilingualism then becomes a way to resolve this type of internal conflict. French immersion students were also found to prefer the bilingual identity. Makropoulos' (2010) study on French immersion engagement showed, for example, that the students tended to identify themselves as "bilinguals that are more than just anglophone but not yet francophone" (p. 518). It is clear that the bilingual definition seems to be the best way for these students to define their linguistic identity.

However, there are contradictions inherent in the adoption of a bilingual identity. This is because "mixed varieties" of bilingualism are discouraged (Heller, 2001, p. 48). It appears as though the only acceptable form of bilingualism is "double monolingualism" (Heller, 2001, p. 48). Therefore, in order to be accepted

as a "good" bilingual, one has to speak each language as a native speaker (Heller, 2001, p. 48). This certainly creates another conflict in identity formation.

Minority language speakers experience social categorization because they are different compared to the majority population. A strategy used to combat this is to develop an "us-them" relationship with the dominant language and to adopt an intergroup categorization. In Manitoba, this is clear when Franco-Manitobans add the descriptor Franco- in front of Manitoban in order to represent this categorization. In the same way that Quebeckers territorialized their identity, blocking out francophones outside of their territory in order to reinforce group identity, Franco-Manitobans are known to make a distinction between themselves and *francophiles*. The term francophile is used in Manitoba to define those who have learnt French as a second or additional language (Hallion Bres & Lentz, 2009). Although the term simply means 'someone who loves French', which anyone, even Franco-Manitobans, can be, the word acts as a strategic way to reinforce group identity. Even within the definition of Franco-Manitoban, we sometimes have the distinction of *francophone de souche*, meaning "old stock francophones" (Heller, 2001, p. 56). However, this term is generally avoided as it can be perceived as discriminatory.

Recently, the use of these identity terms has been a "hot" topic in francophone circles. Many individuals feel that Franco-Manitobans should welcome whoever wishes to be a part of their linguistic community no matter whether French is or is not their first language. Daniel Boucher, President of the *Société franco-manitobaine*, states that the community is more open to the idea

of enlarging the francophone sphere (quoted in Hallion Bres & Lentz, 2009, p.

73). Sociopolitical changes have created a variety of types of francophones such

as, those who are products of exogamous marriages, francophone immigrants,

and francophiles coming from French immersion programs. In order to ensure the

survival of the French language, Franco-Manitobans need to include all "*les gens*

qui s'intéressent à valoriser la langue française" (Boucher, quoted in Hallion Bres

& Lentz, 2009, p. 73). Diallo (2001) describes the unique facets of the Franco-

Manitoban identity as such:

> Certains affirmeront que naître au Manitoba fait d'une personne un Franco-
> manitobain. Grandir dans le milieu culturel minoritaire, c'est se laisser façonner
> par cet environnement… D'autres iront plus loin, en insistant que le Franco-
> manitobain doit sentir un attachement à ses racines manitobaines. En effet,
> certains sont fiers de leurs ancêtres métis. D'autres, de souche québécoise
> lointaine, savent exactement de quel patelin sont issus leurs ancêtres. Et que dirent
> de ceux qui fêtent la Bastille? Ce qui prouve au moins que notre communauté
> n'est pas aussi homogène qu'on ne serait porté à le croire. Et que se définir n'est
> pas très facile. (Diallo in Fauchon, 2001, p. 121-122)

Diallo (2001) clearly shows how the Franco-Manitoban identity is in

constant evolution and is no longer homogenous. Individuals who choose to

belong to the group belong for different reasons. He also highlights the unique

internal conflicts with regards to identity that speakers living in a minority context

are faced with.

Identity descriptors and Education

As francophones and anglophones complete their schooling, they are also

developing their identities. In Manitoba, they will come to know the difference

between the possible identities available to them. Sometimes they will make a

choice and other times an identity will be given to them. One of the goals of the

Division scolaire franco-manitobaine is to play a part in constructing the Franco-Manitoban identity that its name reflects. In French immersion schools, the goal is more to foster an appreciation of the French language and culture. The goal is not for French immersion students to become francophones. Therefore, a "francophile" identity is more the target of the French immersion program as that identity does not replace their anglophone or allophone identity. French immersion and French-language schools have different programs from one another and from English programs in Manitoba. These programs are run by different groups of people in different schools and even in separate divisions. These schools then represent the historical separation between the two language groups. In doing so, it is impossible for them to ignore past and present conflicts between these two groups. According to Heller (2001) these conflicts are heightened in minority contexts simply due to the "the greater presence and power of English and English-speakers" (p. 56). Those factors all contribute to create a distinction in identity and potential conflicts in identity formation.

Many of the studies done in education on French immersion and French-language programs do not delve into the socio-historical, local and political contexts in which these programs take place. Studies in French immersion have looked at classroom interaction (Swain, 1998), the importance of error correction (Lyster, 1998) and the effectiveness of instructional strategies (Laplante, 2001, p. 92). Other quantitative and qualitative research has looked at the bilingual nature of minority francophone communities (Landry et al. 2007a, 2007b; Landry & Forgues 2007) and francophone versus bilingual identities (Boudreau 2001;

Buors & Lentz 2009; Dallaire 2004; Deveau, 2008; Dubé 2009; Gérin-Lajoie 2001, 2010; Lafontant 2002). However, the qualitative studies mentioned mostly looked at how high school students attending French-language schools identified themselves. There is a need for more qualitative research to be done on the two types of school programs. Students who have experienced the different French programs need to be given a voice in order for us to truly understand the different yet similar programs as they exist in the local, socio-historical and political contexts of a minority language.

With that in mind, the purpose of this reflexive, ethnolinguistic case study was to explore and to understand the experiences of French language school shifters. Noyes (2006) and Weller (2007), who both conducted qualitative research on the transition between elementary and high school, use the term school transfer to describe the act of changing schools. In using this term, the importance is put on the action or the verb transfer. In order to give importance to the individual, a noun is used to describe the participants in this study: school shifters. This implies that the participants were agents of change instead of the objects of a transfer. It will be shown that they had an impact on the decision to change schools. It was not simply a transfer all students undertake at a certain age.

Also, the term "transfer" has been used to describe the transitional period between elementary and high school (Aikins, Bierman & Parker, 2005; Noyes, 2006; Weller, 2007). It is not sufficient to describe the nature of this particular shift. The participants have not only transitioned to high school but have also

changed school divisions and programs. The term "school shifter" shows how their transition was not simply a transfer but a shift: a shift in identity and certainly a shift in programming.

When looking at the field of linguistics, the term "shift" is also used to describe a change in language, especially phonetically. Language shift, as defined by Fishman (2001), occurs when first language speakers shift to the dominant language and lose their first language. Fishman clearly identified how bilingualism in these contexts can threaten the first language. Other researchers (Bourhis, 2001; MacKinnon, 2004; Hornberger & Coronel-Molina, 2004) speak about "reversing" language shift and "revitalization" with regards to endangered languages in Canada, Ireland and the Andes, respectively. Thus, language shift is an internationally accepted term and sadly it occurs across the globe. In all of these cases, the minority language's vitality was analyzed and schools were seen to be important factors for language maintenance. However, individuals who speak the dominant language as their first but attend a minority language school have not been studied.

In changing schools, the participants in my study experienced language shift, but a language shift that promotes minority language maintenance. This particular shift in their environment impacted their own language and language use. In the case of Manitoba, these participants shifted from a majority context to a minority one. Furthermore, this is a shift not only in language, but in environment, identity and potentially attitudes. This shift is rather rare because language shift usually results in snuffing out the minority language. The

participants of this study fit into the category of school shifters. Therefore, the central research question is: What are the experiences of French-language school shifters in Manitoba?

This question can further be divided into 5 sub-questions that fit the literature review and my adapted model of ethnolinguistic vitality:

1. How was their educational experience influenced by demographic factors, such as numbers, family composition and types of language schools?

2. How was their educational experience influenced by socio-historical factors such as the historical status of French in Manitoba and in Canada?

3. What were their perceptions of the differences and the similarities between French immersion and French-language schools in Manitoba?

4. How was their educational experience influenced by power elements, such as government policies?

5. How has their educational experience influenced their identity?

Chapter III: Methodology

Firstly, it is important to define the approach chosen for this reflexive, ethnolinguistic case study. The term "reflexive" is borrowed from the methodology "reflexive ethnography" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Reflexive ethnographies are a form of autoethnography that lean more towards traditional research. They are defined as such: "the researcher's personal experience becomes important primarily in how it illuminates the culture under study" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740). Even within reflexive ethnographies, the researcher may choose to only share his or her personal experience in the introduction, to study his or her own experience alongside the experience of the subjects or to reflect on his or her experience with regards to conducting research (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). In this particular study, I have chosen to include my own experience alongside the experience of others. Because reflexive ethnographies fall under the umbrella of autoethnographies, it will be important to look at this methodology as well.

Ellis and Bochner (2000) dissect autoethnography, defining it as auto ("self"), ethnos ("culture"), and graphy ("the research process") (p. 740). In the past, ethnographies studied *natives* and their culture. The researcher was an outsider. In a way, writing an autoethnography became a "postcolonial refusal of the West as the only authorized purveyor of knowledge about others" (Clough, 2000, p. 283). Research is no longer being done exclusively by researchers on subjects. Through autoethnography, the researcher can be the subject. Because autoethnography studies the "self", it is a way of countering the insider/outsider dilemma, wherein the researcher has an outsider perspective simply because he

or she does not belong to the community under study. Autoethnography validates the writing of one's own culture from within. Thus, it gives a voice to those that might have been silenced in the past and also perhaps brings about more "human understanding" (Eisner, 1996, p. 409). Muncey (2005) agrees and states, "the deviant case might…also be the plaintive voice of that silent minority of people whose voice is unheard" (p. 7). In this sense, an autoethnography is a valid methodology for any minority person to use when writing about his or her own culture.

Nevertheless, a common critique about autoethnographies stems from the lack of "ethnos" and "graphy" in many of the studies. Clough (2000) and Anderson (2006) believe that autoethnographers spend too much time describing the "self" and thus are not analyzing the culture, something crucial in any type of ethnography. It is clear that when writing about yourself, it is sometimes difficult to analyze your own cultural context. There is always the danger in any ethnography that you might be too close to the subject or subjects or too familiar with the culture, resulting in a bias-laden study (Hornberger, 1994). This seems even more of a danger for an autoethnographer, "given that the researcher is confronted with self-related issues at every turn [thus] the potential for self-absorption can loom large" (Anderson, 2006, p. 385). This is why reflexive ethnographers tend to put more emphasis on the culture and the research. Reflexive ethnographies are a way of including the researcher in his or her research. That does not mean, however, that the researcher speaks only about his or her experiences. In reflexive ethnographies, the "self" is simply a part of the

project; a project that cannot exclude an emphasis on research practices and cultural analysis.

Another way to guard against self-absorption is to include the participation of other members of the culture in the study. Their participation can act as a safeguard against an autoethnography becoming too self-absorbed. Szafran (2008) agrees that "adding a multitude of voices to anthropological investigation can serve to counterweigh the shortcomings of solitary reflexivity" (p. 5). By including others, the study becomes a reflexive ethnography. Also, autoethnographies, in general, are "particularly suited for bringing to light unique life experiences to create more understanding and empathy between people of various backgrounds." (Defrancisco, Kuderer & Chatham-Carpenter, 2007, p.238). With that in mind, a reflexive ethnography suits this project because, as a member of the culture under study, I can include my story. That does not mean, however, that research practices or cultural analysis will be excluded. Furthermore, the subject of this study, as demonstrated in the literature review, is certainly unique due to the fact that school shifters are rare and due to the lack of studies conducted in this area. Ultimately, this study may bring about a better understanding between the anglophone and francophone communities in Manitoba.

It is evident that reflexive ethnographies are not classic autoethnographies in the sense that they do not speak exclusively about one experience: the author's. However, if one wishes to study a culture, various types of ethnographies would be applicable. Being reflexive is not crucial to the success

of an ethnography. At the same time, it is impossible to detach myself from this study simply because the participants' experience is one that I have gone through myself. When the author chooses to exclude his or her own experience, he or she is ignoring an important influence on the research. Not revealing one's own biases can be just as dangerous as being self-absorbed. As a result, the "self" will be present but it will not overshadow the research or the culture under study. That is why a case study approach has been selected to look at various cases within this culture. My own experience will be included when it presents a unique viewpoint on the themes chosen.

Yoshimoto (2008) used a similar methodology that she coined as a "hybrid design of case study and autoethnography" (p.1). In this study, Yoshimoto looked at the experience of being a Japanese woman learning English. Yosimoto had four cases, one of them being her own. However, Yoshimoto's study differs slightly from mine in the sense that she studied her own experience as a case. Yet, her study can also fall under the definition of reflexive ethnography because she also included her reflections as a researcher. My study differs from Yosimoto's (2008) in the sense that the "reflexive" piece of it will be that my own experience is presented in the introduction and I have included my own reactions to some of the themes when I felt it was relevant. Overall, it was important to and for me to value the participants' experiences. In order to value each participant's experience, they were studied as individual cases so as to give them equal weight.

Additionally, the participants were made aware that we had this experience of shifting in common, which demonstrated to them the reason why I had chosen to study this subject. In sharing this similarity with the participants, it may have helped them see me in a less hierarchical fashion (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen & Liamputtong, 2007). Although I was the researcher, I felt that the participants saw me as another school shifter. The only difference was that I was researching the experience by talking to others. In fact, this form of sharing often leads to rapport-building between the researcher and the participants. Moreover, because I no longer work for a school division, this may have made it easier for the participants to speak about difficult memories without the fear of a biased interpretation on my part. I certainly felt that I built a rapport with each one of the participants and I felt that, because of that, they felt comfortable speaking to me about their personal experience and the context in which it took place. Because there are "intricate charged relations between stories and spaces, events and sites, making history and taking place in contemporary cultural economies" in any qualitative study, it is important to show how the stories exist in their context (Frow & Morris, 2000, p. 333). An ethnolinguistic study accounts for that context.

Therefore, we cannot say that a case study that is described as being ethnolinguistic is one that represents the complex, ethnolinguistic context in which the experience of each case occurs. The purpose of any ethnographer is to give a global picture of the culture surrounding the case. The unique nature of French as a minority language in Manitoba has been explained in the literature

review. This picture of the context "reveals the interrelatedness of all the component parts", which is the purpose of any ethnography (Hornberger, 1994, p. 688). Thus, the ethnolinguistic elements of the local context, social practices, power elements and individual agency guided this research. The research and interview questions were based on these factors. However, more traditional ethnographies in the field of education generally take place in schools and they analyze the context of that particular school. This study instead focused on individuals and not a particular school but rather particular educational programs in Manitoba. Eisenhart (2001) believes that educational ethnographies need to expand "outward" and "downward" in order to:

> trace relationships that stretch out across time and space; and if we are going to analyze activities and cultural forms that are taken up locally but formed or controlled elsewhere, we would seem to need some new ways of doing ethnography, or at least some different methodological priorities (p. 22)

Therefore, it seems necessary in this study to have a methodology that borrows from reflexive ethnography, ethnolinguistic studies and from case study methodology.

With regards to case study methodology, this particular case study is a collective one as defined by Stake (2000): "a researcher may jointly study a number of cases in order to investigate a phenomenon, population or general condition" (p. 437). More than one case is beneficial as it gives a more complete picture of the phenomenon in its context. Moreover, it also allows for differences within cases to be analyzed. As well, the similarities, if found in each case, can be used to make generalizations. In any collective case study, "redundancy" and

"variety" are both important as they give us a better idea of how each case represents individually a phenomenon (Stake, 2000, p. 437).

To be more specific, collective case studies are instrumental as they seek to illuminate a particular issue (Creswell, 2008). The particular issue under study is the experience of French-language school shifters in Manitoba. In instrumental case studies, generally one case is studied; a school or an individual, for example. That one case is instrumental in describing a particular phenomenon and can be used to make generalizations. However, when studying more than one case, there is a more general understanding of the phenomenon as we can see more clearly how each case represents the phenomenon. In fact, Stake (2000) shows that collective case studies are important especially when "we cannot understand this case without knowing about other cases" (p. 436). Knowing about others cases is paramount when the initial case is your own. It is very easy, especially if you have experienced what you are studying, to make your own generalizations. However, without others to support these findings, these generalizations simply remain personal beliefs supported by personal experience.

When doing collective case study research, it is important to study each case individually. That results in understanding each case on its own. It is then possible to look at the cases together. Sometimes, when looking at a phenomenon, from the onset, the researcher is looking for similarities between all the cases. Yet, Stake (2006) argues against this type of collective case study. He maintains that the researcher should, "concentrate on one single case as if it is

the only one" (Stake, 2006, p. 1). In that way, the researcher is better able to understand that specific case in its local context. In order to ensure appropriate emphasis on each case in my study, data analysis was done on individual cases first and then on the group of cases.

In order to verify findings and to establish trustworthiness in a case study, triangulation is often used. It is the "process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation" (Stake, 2000, p. 443). In collective case studies, triangulation can be done within each case. This means that the researcher must verify that a theme is mentioned more than once by the individual in order for it to count as a finding. Another way that triangulation can be done in a collective case study is to verify the findings between each case. This means showing repetition between all of the cases for a theme to be considered as important.

Another important aspect of case study research is the description of the local context. This means that an analysis of each case's ethnolinguistic factors would be important. "The researcher also locates the "case" or "cases" within their larger context, such as geographical, political, social, or economic settings" (Creswell, 2008, p. 477). In fact, most case studies speak about "historical", "cultural" and "political" factors, among others (Stake, 2006, p. 12). This is because these factors, when analyzed, have been shown to greatly impact a case. It is important to describe them in order to better understand each case. Additionally, when each case is studied individually, this ensures that each individual is properly represented within these contexts. Therefore, a reflexive,

ethnolinguistic study fits collective case study methodology well. This methodology respects each individual, the local context and it allowed me to include my own experience without it overshadowing the others.

Theoretical Framework

Throughout this study, I have adopted a sociolinguistic perspective. Language is socially situated, complex and dynamic (Hall et al., 2005; Larsen-Freeman, 2009; Vitanova & Marchenkova, 2005). Language is acquired and linguistic identity is developed in a social, historical and local context. When the language that is being studied is a minority language, it is important to consider ethnolinguistic vitality factors (Bourhis, 2001) as those factors make up the social, historical and local context. Although I am not studying ethnolinguistic vitality or language acquisition per se, I am studying a school experience that revolves around language acquisition and ethnolinguistic vitality. Therefore, a sociolinguistic perspective allows me to delve into the social context that surrounds the educational experience studied. Choosing a sociolinguistic framework shows that I believe in the importance of languages for our society. In this study, I assume that French is important, not because the language itself is superior to others but simply because it is a language and therefore deserves to be maintained. If the situation was entirely different and English was the minority language, this study might still exist but it would be about the importance of maintaining English. For me, language cannot exist without society and society cannot exist without language. Therefore, the constant belief that language, in this case French, is important permeates throughout this study.

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Chapter IV: Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection

   In order to select participants for this study, I used purposeful, homogenous sampling (Creswell, 2008). Because it was important for the participants to be school shifters, they could not be selected randomly. Therefore, purposeful, homogenous sampling was used to ensure that the participants met my criteria. I was looking for participants that were 18 years and older. This ensured that some time had elapsed since their initial school shift, enabling them to better reflect on the impact of that experience. Participants could be either male or female. In fact, this type of sampling strategy is common in collective case studies as "the sample sizes are usually much too small to warrant random selection" (Stake, 2000, p. 446). Using this sampling strategy, I recruited 3 participants. Before recruiting the participants I received approval to conduct this research from the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba. In order to recruit participants, I sent out a letter (see Appendix 1) to various Franco-Manitobans requesting that they forward my letter to any potential participants who fit the criteria listed in the letter.

   Once the participants were located and had accepted the invitation to participate in the research, I proceeded to interview them (see Appendix 2 for a copy of the interview questions). Because I was speaking to the individuals about their experience as school shifters, it was important for them to recall this past event. Interviewing is an appropriate method for this type of research because "biographical memory is better understood as a social process" (Fontana & Frey,

2000, p. 656). The interview itself is a social act. It can shed light on important events in a person's life. Especially if that event occurred in the past, the individual is able to reflect, in present time, on the impact that event has had on them. Moreover, my study's participants were able to identify whether or not that event had changed them. Because the purpose of this study was to understand a phenomenon, interviewing the participants was an excellent way to better understand their experience. In fact, "interviewing is one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 645).

My interview questions were open-ended. This was done in order to gain a deeper understanding of the participant's views. In structured interviews, the participant has "a limited set of response categories" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 650). This means that they are not given the choice to answer in any way they wish. Their response is determined by the question. My interview questions allowed for the participants to respond in any way they saw fit and to share their opinions on the subjects. Trusting my participants and their views was the first step to presenting their ideas in an authentic manner. As a result, the data for this study was collected through the medium of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the participants. The interviews were defined as semi-structured because the participants were asked the "same series of pre-established questions" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 650). However, the questions were open-ended and the participants were not given response choices. This allowed them to speak candidly and openly about their experience. In-depth interviews generally result

in more description which is important for any case study that wishes to better understand the individual and the context.

In this study, I used the emic approach. The point of the "emic view" is to "describe the culture as its members understand it and participate in it" (Hornberger, 1994, p. 689). This is a valid way of interpreting the interview data because you are using the person's own words to tell his or her story. Emic interview data was collected and solely provided by the participants. Creswell (2008) maintains that emic interview data can be presented by using quotes from the participants in order to construct their perspectives. Haig-Brown (2003) agrees that a story told in the words of the participant "maintains an integrity" because the participants are not forced to yield to the researcher's idea of "truth" (p. 416). This is why open-ended questions were used to unravel each participant's interpretation of the phenomenon. The participants were therefore responsible for describing the phenomenon in their words and the researcher trusted their perspective.

When studying minority language people, it is important to enable them to come to their own conclusions. This way, they can "reclaim and tell their stories in their own ways" (Smith, 2005, p. 89). In order to ensure that the participants were represented in the way they wanted, I sent each participant a copy of the interview transcripts for their approval. The participants were encouraged to review the transcripts and to offer any modifications or to eliminate any passages that they no longer wanted to include. If they felt any changes were required, I made them according to their wishes. Due to the fact that the participants belong

to a small minority language group, it was also important to ensure confidentiality. I did this by creating pseudonyms for the participants. Also, if they mentioned the name of specific schools, teachers, individuals or places, they were replaced by pseudonyms in order to maintain the participant's anonymity.

As already mentioned, the participants were asked open-ended questions and their interview was recorded. The interviews were one-on-one and the interview data was transcribed by me immediately after the interview. The interviews took place at either the participant's home or in a comfortable location, depending on the participant's choice. The first interviews were approximately one hour long (see Appendix 2 for a list of the first interview questions). Participants received the questions before the interview via e-mail. They were also given the choice to answer in either French or English. All the participants decided to do their interview in English.

A second interview was conducted with each of the participants to facilitate the member checks and also to clarify any questions. Those interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, depending on the participant. Each participant received a copy of the transcript from the first interview. The participants were encouraged to ask me questions and to verify the content of their interviews. They were also invited to send me any questions or changes by e-mail if they thought of anything after the second interview.

Data Analysis

The specific analytical strategy used for this research is described by Yin (2011) in his book entitled *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*. Yin (2011)

suggests that qualitative research analysis should be conducted in five phases: "Compiling, Disassembling, Reassembling, Interpreting and finally Concluding" (p. 178). The first step, *Compiling*, involved rereading the transcripts and relistening to the interviews with the purpose of looking for relationships to literature and seeking out emergent themes. This step was conducted after my first interviews and it led me to compose my second interview questions. In this way, I was able to expand on emergent themes or get information that was not previously collected. The second interviews were transcribed and I reread and relistened to them once again. Each participant's interviews were then organized in a question and response format.

In the next step, *Disassembling*, each case transcript was then highlighted. Yin (2011) believes in using the literature review to sort the initial codes in the data. Ryan & Bernard (2005) agree, stating the researchers should start "with some general themes derived from reading the literature and add more themes and subthemes as they go on" (p. 275). This analytical strategy was also used by Bent (2009) in her case study research that she conducted on teachers' perceptions of peace education. Bent (2009) describes her analytical strategy: "while I allowed for themes to emerge from the collected data, my early review of theories around peace education…influenced the factors I looked for when on site and when reviewing the data" (p. 41). In the same way that the authors suggest, I used the initial large themes of local context, social practices, power elements and individual agency found in my literature review to help me sort the data.

The data sorting process was done by giving a colour to each of the themes from the literature review. Each passage was then highlighted depending on what theme it fell under. Then, a code was given to that passage that served as a summary of what was said. The code generally used the actual words of the participants. Therefore, many of the codes were in vivo codes which are often used in qualitative research (Creswell, 2008; Stake, 2000; Yin, 2011). At the same time, codes were given to passages that did not fall under the themes represented in the literature review. Those codes became the emergent themes. Each participant's transcript was coded on its own, without comparing it to the other cases in the beginning.

The next step was *Reassembling*. Yin (2011) describes this step as "proactively sifting and sorting your ideas, searching for patterns" (p. 193). Yin (2011) also suggests using the organizational tool that best suits the researcher's style. One of the tools suggested was a matrix. Essentially, I placed all of the codes in a table. Each participant had their own table that had a list of the themes from the literature review and the emergent themes. The codes were placed below their respective themes. A number in the table represented the amount of times that particular code appeared in the participant's transcript. First, the codes that resembled one another were brought together under one or more subthemes. This was done for each of the individual transcripts. Then, subthemes and codes were compared across the cases. This demonstrates that triangulation was done, first, within each case and then across the cases as Stake (2000) suggests.

The next step suggested by Yin (2011) is *Interpreting.* In order to interpret the themes, I went back to my literature review and made adjustments based on the new literature I had read. I was able to fill in the gaps that occurred and find relevant research on the emergent themes. The data was then presented using quotes from the participants to explain and present the themes. According to Yin (2011), "a common kind of narrative data would take the form of quotations and paraphrased passages, representing your study participants' descriptions of their own lives, actions and views" (p. 234). The discussion section of this research which follows will start with vignettes describing each of the participants' experience. These vignettes were paraphrased but also include some short quotations from the participants. This will then be followed by an exploration of the themes that resulted from the data analysis. Finally, the *Conclusion* is written in the form of a call for action. Yin (2011) indicates that this form of a conclusion in qualitative research essentially "lies in such concepts as "lessons learned" and "implications of the research" (p. 220).

Chapter V: Research Findings

<u>Time and Space</u>

　　The participants of my study were asked to choose a constellation that would serve as their pseudonym. The choice for constellations was inspired by Hall, et al. (2005) who state that language is comprised of "dynamic constellations of sociocultural resources that are fundamentally tied to their social and historical contexts" (p. 2). It will be demonstrated that these participants and their experiences are clearly linked to their social and historical contexts. The participants were also asked to describe why they chose their particular constellation. This description is an example of how the participants see themselves. Capricorne picked the constellation represented by the goat. She described how she felt her personality aligned with this constellation, "I'm very hard-working, strong-willed, dedicated and loyal, all the good things and some bad things too, stubborn". The constellation Cassiopeia is symbolized by the queen. Cassiopée explains why she chose it, "I love that constellation, maybe I've conquered things, I don't know". Finally, Lion explains why he chose his constellation:

> When I started to get more comfortable in my school, I started saying things and was kind of loud and I had certain opinions that others didn't necessarily agree with. But I think it's important to sometimes say things that don't want to be heard.

　　In the end, all the participants chose constellations that I would consider to be very powerful. Moreover, it is important to note that all the participants were given the choice of the Latin, French or English name for their constellation. They all chose the French name. The constellations were also used to determine

pseudonyms for the schools mentioned in their interviews. For example,
Cassiopée's schools are all named after constellations found near hers. See
Table 4 for a summary of the schools attended by the school shifters and the
pseudonyms given to those schools.

Participant	Elementary school	High school
Cassiopée	École Girafe[12]: Single track immersion	Collège Persée immersion: Dual track immersion and Collège Céphée: French-language school
Lion	École Bouvier: Single track immersion	Collège Dragon immersion: Dual track immersion and Collège Ursa: French-language school
Capricorne	Collège Piscis: Dual track (French-language and immersion) and École Aquila: Single track immersion	Collège Piscis: French-language school
Gail (researcher)	Dual track immersion	French-language school

Table 4: Schools and programs attended by school shifters

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[12] Pseudonyms have been used for all school names.

The following vignettes describe in more detail each of the participant's experience.

Cassiopée

Cassiopée is the oldest child of six. Her parents are anglophones but her father speaks French as well. She explained that her father was a teacher and taught in a francophone community where he learned about the struggles the community had gone through. Although the family language was English, there was a strong support for French. There was a strong desire for the children to become bilingual. All the children of the family went to an immersion elementary school and the acquisition of the French language was supported at home as well. Cassiopée remembers having francophone babysitters and piano teachers, listening to the radio in French in the car and going to French restaurants. Her father even promised her a trip to France if she was bilingual by the age of 12. She certainly maintained her end of the bargain and enjoyed a trip to Paris when she turned 12. She has positive memories of learning French and of her friends at her single track immersion elementary school. She spoke fondly of some of the activities they had done in immersion. For example, she remembers going to the *Festival du Voyageur* and on an exchange trip to Québec.
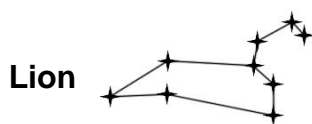
When Cassiopée started high school it was her greatest disappointment that the quality of French was not maintained at the dual track high school. She felt there was a strong separation between the two school programs due to the types of students that participated in each program. She felt that she was not making any improvement in French and was certainly not academically

challenged. Also, the school was very rough. She stated that the school had to deal with drug and violence problems and so it was hard for them to make French a priority amidst all of that. Because her father was a teacher, he knew about the French-language school division and the school in their area. Her parents made inquiries and Cassiopée was invited to write a French exam to see if her French level was high enough to attend the French-language school. She remembers going to the school with her Mom and meeting the principal and then writing the French exam in the library.

Evidently her results were satisfactory and, as a result, the school accepted her. She transferred three weeks before the first semester exams. She remembers being nervous about having to read all the books and to study all the information that was taught throughout the semester in three weeks. Although it was a challenge, she successfully passed all of her courses. In the beginning, she felt especially nervous about oral presentations. But, she made an effort to participate in school activities and she made friends. Over the course of the summer between grade 9 and 10, Cassiopée participated in a private exchange with a Québec student she had met through her elementary school exchange program. She believes that this trip helped her to feel more confident in French. During the next three years, she participated in many school activities and became *Co-présidente* of the school in grade 12. She graduated in 2003 and continued her studies in French by attending Université de Saint-Boniface in Manitoba. She went on to study overseas and obtained a chiropractic doctorate degree.

Because her experience was so positive, her brother transferred from the French immersion elementary school to the French-language high school as well. However, Cassiopée explained how their personalities were very different and that the shift was more challenging academically for him. After two years at the French-language school, he returned to the dual track French immersion high school where he excelled. By that time, the immersion high school had improved so the rest of Cassiopée's siblings went there as well.

Just as her parents had wished, all Cassiopée's siblings are bilingual. She explained that many of them made an effort outside of the school setting to improve their French by participating in activities, living in Québec or France and dating francophones. She also mentioned that because she went to the French-language school, her siblings also benefited in that they were more exposed to the francophone community. Cassiopée considers herself *franco-manitobaine* and speaks highly of the friendships she developed in high school that she still has today. She mentioned that "switching to Collège Céphée was probably the best thing I ever did".

Lion

Lion comes from a family of four. Both his parents are anglophones and the only language spoken in their home is English. When he was ready to start school, his parents had heard that the single track immersion school in the community was a very good school. So, Lion ended up attending that school until grade eight. Lion spoke fondly of his first years learning French. He was proud

that he could speak a language that his parents could not. Because his experience was so positive, when it came time for his brother to start school, the decision for him to attend the immersion school was the obvious choice. Lion remembers practicing *dictée* at home with his mom and the fact that his parents came to school concerts and activities even if they didn't always understand. Lion believes that the eight years he spent at the single track immersion school enabled him to learn the foundations of the language.

However, when he transferred to the immersion dual track high school, he became quickly dissatisfied with the French environment and the lack of academic challenge. In speaking about his experience at this high school, he mentioned "I found that whenever I wasn't in class we didn't really have the option to speak French because it was sort of rude because ¾ of the people you were around didn't understand". Lion also talked about being very advanced in his Math class. The school suggested that he print off math activities from the Internet if he wanted to do more advanced work. Lion and his parents were extremely dissatisfied with the school for those reasons, so they started looking at other schools and programs. Lion remembers visiting private and public schools, schools that followed single and dual track models as well as French-language schools. In the end, the French-language school Lion attended proved to be a good choice because he received free transportation there as he lived in the school's catchment area.

However, Lion had to go through a lengthy process in order to be admitted to the school because he was not *ayant droit*. He remembers meeting the

principal with his mom. The principal asked three questions: do your parents speak French, do your grandparents speak French or did one of your parents or grandparents learn French for four years? Because the answer was no to all these questions, Lion was technically not allowed to go to the school. He remembers the principal saying that there was a "back-door way into the school". Lion and his parents decided to go through the process which included a written and oral French exam as well as a Math exam. This was followed by a meeting with the principal who verified his test results and who accepted him into the school. However, the principal indicated that even though he approved, his case would have to be presented to the Parent Committee who would make the final decision.   Lion attended the meeting with his mom. He remembers that the parents mostly asked how his mom felt she would be able to participate in the school. His mom responded by explaining that for the past eight years her son had attended an immersion school where all the concerts and activities were in French and that even if she didn't understand, she helped out. The entire process took two months, but Lion was finally allowed to attend the school.

Lion started the second semester of his grade 9 year at the French-language school. He doesn't remember having any difficulties academically especially because he felt he already had a good foundation in French. While in elementary school, Lion was passionate about French and that passion continued on throughout his high school years. During the three and a half years he spent at the French-language school, Lion participated actively in extra-curricular activities and even created a division-wide fundraiser to support people

in need. Lion graduated in 2011 and is currently a university student. Lion's younger brother left his immersion elementary school in grade 6 in order to concentrate on dancing. He is currently attending an English high school. Although Lion's school experience has made him realize that there is no perfect school, he has never regretted his decision to change schools. He proved that "an English kid who doesn't have French parents can do well in a French school".

Capricorne

Capricorne grew up in a francophone community. Both her parents were francophones and spoke to her and her brother in French until Capricorne was about three years old. After that, the language of the home became English. Capricorne wondered why her parents had made that decision. She felt that the decision was probably influenced by the time period in which she grew up and her parent's experience learning English. At that time, it wasn't uncommon for shame to be associated with the French language. As well, it was a time where francophones were fighting for their rights and many anglophones did not support the francophone community.

When it was time for Capricorne to start school, her parents decided to enroll her in an immersion school. Capricorne attended a dual track school. However, at that time the two programs in the school were immersion and French-language. Before her younger brother started school, a new immersion single track school opened up. The parents at the dual track school had the choice of keeping their children there but transferring them over to the French-

language program or sending them to the new school in the immersion program. Capricorne's parents thought it would be best to send her to the new immersion school just because they weren't speaking French at home. When it was time for her brother to go to school, he was also enrolled in the French immersion program at the new school.

Capricorne explained how she did well in school and that it was almost too easy for her. By grade eight, her parents started to question the quality of French taught at the immersion school and the quality of education in general. In order for Capricorne to be more challenged, they decided to enroll her in the French-language high school. It is important to note that although she attended a French-language school, it was not a part of the DSFM because that division did not exist in the time period in which Capricorne was a student. At the same time that Capricorne changed schools, her parents also decided to remove her brother from the immersion school. In his case, they chose to send him to a private English school. Capricorne's parents felt that they were two different children and that Capricorne had a better chance of succeeding in a French environment. In order to transfer to the school, Capricorne was interviewed by the principal to ensure that her French-language skills were up to par. She also believes that the fact that her parents were francophones helped to get her into the school.

Capricorne remembers being excited about the change and happy that she already knew some of the students. She had met some of the students through after-school programs such as Beavers and Girl Guides that she had done in French. Although in the beginning she felt self-conscious about her

French skills, especially orally, she was happy to be academically challenged and didn't mind working harder. In 1994, she graduated from the French-language school and then moved to Montreal. She came back to Winnipeg two years later to attend university where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts. She is currently working as a pharmaceutical sales representative. Capricorne is married and has two young children. She spoke a lot about her decision to speak to her children in French even if her husband is an anglophone. The pride that she demonstrated in the French language and culture was clear. She mentioned, "I would definitely identify myself as Franco-Manitoban just because I am proud. I am proud of my heritage and I think that you should be and want to preserve that cultural identity with your children and yourself as well".

School shifter characteristics

Although it is not the purpose of this study to prove that all school shifters have certain characteristics in common, it is interesting to note some unique similarities. Table 5 summarizes the school shifters' demographic factors. Firstly, all the participants mentioned that they had a certain academic ease. They had good marks not only in elementary school but in high school as well. Although Capricorne mentions that she "had to work harder" at her French-language high school, she maintains that her marks still remained high. Another interesting similarity between the participants is that they were all the eldest child of their family. Although they all reported their school shifting experience to be a positive one, it is interesting that their younger siblings did not shift schools as they had done. In Cassiopée's case, her brother shifted schools like her but returned to the

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French immersion high school after spending two years in the French-language high school. She explains why he did not stay in the French-language school by stating, "academically we're very different people so he had a very hard time". The rest of Cassiopée's siblings went to an elementary and high school in the French immersion program.

Participant	High school graduation year	Languages spoken by parents	Birth order	Gender
Cassiopée	2003	Mother: English Father: English and French	Oldest of six	Female
Lion	2011	Mother: English Father: English	Oldest of two	Male
Capricorne	1994	Mother: French and English Father: French and English	Oldest of two	Female
Gail (Researcher)	2002	Mother: English Father: French and English	Oldest of two	Female

Table 5: Summary of school shifters' demographic factors

In the second interview, the similarities found between the school shifters were shared with them and they were asked to speak about any personality traits they felt would assist someone in shifting schools. Cassiopée said, "I think you have to be willing to work harder and to take risks. And, you have to be strong because you are going to be judged because you have a different accent". Lion

highlights motivation while at the same time stating that anyone can do it, "I think the fact that if somebody is even considering it, I think it shows that they can do it. I think if you even considered it in your head, it means that somewhere you have that love for the language and that you want to learn more". Finally, Capricorne's comment is similar to both Lion and Cassiopée's. She affirms, "I was ambitious, willing to try new things and wanting to learn and better myself. If somebody was committed to this, then I can't see why there wouldn't be an improvement making the switch". It should be noted that there are only three participants in this study, therefore it is not possible to generalize that these are the characteristics that all school shifters share. However, they are important insights into how the participants see themselves and what they felt helped them succeed.

Local Context

English and French majority

The school experience of the participants has made it possible for them to see two different majority communities: the French and English communities in Manitoba. Although the francophone community in Manitoba is a minority language community, the participants emphasized that their school experience in the French-language school took place in a French environment where all the students spoke French and had French ancestry. The school is then an important arena for language development and community building as it is one of the only, if not the only place, where the French minority is a majority.

Capricorne spoke about the French majority environment in her high school: "there was a lot more exposure to French at the new school. I mean everybody I went to school with, they were all French-speaking, though some of them didn't speak French at home. But I'd say probably 80% of them it was a French environment". Cassiopée mirrors this idea by stating, "the people are francophone so their identity is wrapped around the French culture". Lion also talked about the French environment of his high school:

> A lot of the students had, say one English parent and then one French parent or both French parents. It really depended on the student. A lot of the time they would speak French with the one parent or they would just speak English at home. Some of them it was always in French, even family reunions, even if there was English-speaking people there, it was always in French. Every student in my school had at least that one French-speaking parent.

Despite the fact that the French-language schools succeeded in creating an environment where French was the language of the majority, it is important to note that outside the school setting the students lived in a society where, for the most part, English was the dominant language.

The influence of English was shown in both Lion and Capricorne's comments. They mentioned that not everyone at the French-language school spoke French at home, despite being able to do so. Lion also delves into a reality of French-language schools, "your classes are all in French and when you're not in class, most of the time you speak English". I certainly found from my teaching and schooling experience that there was often this bizarre phenomenon that French was not "cool". Lion talks about the different views held by the teachers and the students with regards to speaking French: "at least at the DSFM I had the option if I wanted to leave class and speak French and it not be frowned

upon. It might have been frowned upon by my friends, but at least all the teachers, and the principal they really supported that". This example shows that even when students go to school in a relatively homogenous language environment, they are still influenced by the global power of English. Capricorne's statement supports this idea, "whether we spoke French to each other or not, out of school, I think it was probably like a 50/50, like a *franglais*. There was always French being spoken but a lot of English as well". Lion continues with another example of this phenomenon in the French-language school:

> Unless I chose to, the language that you would speak was English, in the halls, even in class whenever we had free time, it was always in English. There was the odd student who would always speak French and I would try to do that as well but it was hard because it was almost like if you spoke French, you were kind of an outcast because you were different. And I definitely wasn't expecting that going to the francophone school where everyone was supposed to speak French.

In this case, it is clear that if the majority acts a certain way, for example, by speaking English outside of class, it takes a conscious effort to counteract that power. Especially in high school, when no one wants to be different, going against the majority is not that easy to do.

Cassiopée described the French immersion high school she attended for a few months as being "rough" and also mentioned that "French was definitely not cool". Although she didn't expand on whether or not this was a sentiment held by the immersion students or the English program students, it is certainly a feeling that she remembers. She also spoke about her university experience and having to take a course on French grammar, "because it was mandatory everyone rolled their eyes and maybe I did too, I don't know. But I just remember feeling it was so good to get that *base*." This example highlights the negative attitude students

sometimes have towards French. What is surprising, though, is that Cassiopée actually believed that the course was very useful and she probably was not the only one who thought that either.

Cassiopée also mentioned that this attitude towards French existed elsewhere, "people when they're kids at school they roll their eyes when they have to talk French and do French class, if you're in an immersion school, or even if you're in an English school and you're doing French". Perhaps, in these contexts the fact that French is mandatory contributes to the negative attitude towards learning. In conducting a case study on French immersion students' engagement and disengagement, Makropoulos (2007) noticed that the "students often disliked speaking French at school" (p.178). Makropoulos further explained that when this negative attitude presented itself in the students it was sometimes due to academic difficulties or the feeling that French immersion was their parent's choice and not their own. More research will be required to determine when and where this negative attitude occurs in Manitoban educational contexts and the reasons behind it.

Assimilation and positive language shift

Despite the fact that French-language schools have to deal with the potential negative attitude towards the French language, it is interesting that the school division was able to convert all the participants of this study into Franco-Manitobans or to reaffirm that identity. As mentioned in the literature review, the francophone community in Manitoba is not exempt from the loss of language speakers that is so common in minority language groups. Assimilation was

mentioned in different forms by the participants. Cassiopée affirms that in a

society where English is the majority language, many francophones simply

choose to no longer speak the language:

> If you're a francophone family that doesn't care about French you would have given it up and you would have switched to the English schools. And I know there's a lot of francophone families who have. They have a French last name but they're English now; they can't speak French.

This passage also demonstrates that passing on the French language from

generation to generation is a choice. In the same way, a francophone parent can

choose to send their child to an English, a French immersion or a French-

language school.

In order to counter assimilation, Landry et al. (2007a) argue how important

it is for francophone children to attend French-language schools. Although, more

and more francophones are doing this (Landry et al.,2007a). Hallion Bres & Lenz

(2009) showed that French immersion high schools in Manitoba actually have a

student population with a good number of *ayant droits* who could be going to a

French-language school. Lion's experience seems to corroborate that fact:

"there's lots of French students with French parents going to immersion schools

just because there's different opportunities." However, a risk associated with

francophones attending such schools is that their French-language skills might

suffer. Due to this experience, it is possible that English will become the main

language of the children. As a result, the children may remain bilingual but that

bilingualism would be characterized as subtractive. Capricorne speaks about how

she felt she almost lost the French language: "I think it was more losing it and

then trying to find it again when I made the switch". Although she feels that she

never really lost it all together, she does mention that she lacked fluency in French when she started high school. After spending four years at a French-language school, she strongly believes that her French improved in general. Another example of subtractive bilingualism is Capricorne's brother. Although he can still speak French, "he wishes that he was more fluent. He's disappointed that his "parents made the decision that they made." This shows that he believes that had he not gone to an English school, his French-language skills would be better than they are. Thus, these examples show how French-language schools can contribute to the maintenance of the language.

Other examples of assimilation mentioned by the participants related more to their family situation. For example, Capricorne talks about the loss of French in her family, "my Dad's closest brother raised his children in French and they went to Collège Piscis. But everybody else, for the most part, they actually switched over and raised their children in English, which is a shame". She also mentions how this was a phenomenon that did not only exist in her family but also with her parents' friends, "most of my parents' friends were francophones as well. However, they spoke amongst each other in English, which is strange when you think about it." Although these examples clearly show how easy it is for language loss to occur in minority language communities, Capricorne believes that this has started to change. She mentions again her parents' friends, "it's funny because all of their children are now speaking French to their kids. So it's like the opposite." With regards to her own family, she has noticed a change as well, "now with my parents we make an effort to speak French, for the sake of my

children and because I want to preserve that." Capricorne believes that over time

there has been a revival of the French language:

> I think it's actually stronger now than it was probably back in the 80s when I was in primary school. I think that a lot of my friends are making an effort to speak French to their children and to send their children to French day-cares and French schools because we know how important that is.

This passage also shows that perhaps the French community has become more

aware of the importance of speaking the language and believes in the importance

of maintaining it. This could then demonstrate a positive language shift.

Language shift is often defined as minority language speakers being assimilated

to the language of the majority (Fishman, 2001). Whereas, in this case, the

language shift is returning to the minority language. However, maintaining the

language requires effort and Capricorne reveals how it can be more challenging if

your partner is an anglophone:

> The only challenge is that when you're speaking to your partner who doesn't speak French, it's in English. So you find that your children are still exposed to a lot more English than French. Like my son, I only speak to him in French, he understands and he speaks French but I would say he speaks a lot more English.

It is also important to note that some people in this situation simply use English

as the family language because all the members of the family understand it. This

is why speaking in French in such a context requires more effort. Moreover, this

shows why it is important to send francophone children to French-language

schools in order to counteract some of the power of the language of the majority.

Another example of positive language shift lies in self-identification of the

participants of this study. As mentioned beforehand, all the participants identify

themselves as Franco-Manitobans. Capricorne speaks to her children in French.

Although the other participants do not yet have children, they all mentioned that they would like to speak to them in French. Cassiopée comments on the importance of speaking French to the next generation, "we both want to raise our kids in French, and English obviously. But, you don't have a choice for that one; we live in an English society". Her comment highlights Fishman's (2001) belief that the minority language is often seen as a "special gift, a marker of identity and a specific responsibility *vis-à-vis* future generations" (Fishman, 2001, p. 9)

Cassiopée's comment also takes into account the knowledge that English will be acquired; French is the language that needs to be focused on because of its minority status in the province. Although all the participants mention examples of assimilation and the power of the English language, they all seem to be determined to maintain the French language. This would indicate a positive language shift within the participants and perhaps within the larger community as demonstrated by Capricorne's remarks on her friends speaking French to their children. In the end, a positive language shift at least occurred within this study's participants. As Cassiopée mentions so clearly, school shifters contribute to the francophone community because "the more anglophones that become francophones the better, right"?

Social practices

Fighting for their rights

The history of the French language in Manitoba has impacted the speakers of that language. It is then not surprising that all the participants spoke about the history of Franco-Manitobans and how they had to fight to regain their

linguistic rights in the province. Capricorne, who went to elementary school in the

80s, describes the political atmosphere at that time:

> There was a lot of bitterness about wanting to preserve the French language. I
> don't know if it was that people felt threatened or if it was a financial burden on
> the economy. It was so heated back then. It just doesn't seem to be much of an
> issue now.

This certainly references the time period where the Manitoba government was

struggling to reinstate francophone rights despite a backlash from the

anglophone community. Capricorne grew up in a time period when the building

that housed the *Société franco-manitobaine* was burned and when the president

of the organisation received death threats (Corbett, 1990). She even believes

that the events leading up to the reinstatement of francophone rights in Manitoba

may have contributed to her parents' decision to no longer speak French in the

home. Capricorne remembers that speaking French:

> was more of a stigma, it was a very political time where they were trying to
> maintain bilingualism. I don't know, for whatever reason, my parents maybe
> didn't agree with some of the things that were going on in the media or it was
> shame. I don't know why but they just decided to speak to us in English for some
> reason.

Thus, the socio-political movements of the time affected Capricorne and her

school experience. It is important to note that although Capricorne went to a

French-language high school, the DSFM had not yet been created.

Lion and Cassiopée both attended a school that belonged to the DSFM.

They were not yet in school when the events Capricorne spoke about occurred.

However, it is clear that they are aware of the historical importance of these

events and the creation of the French-language school division for the

francophone community. When speaking about some of the policies related to

French-language schooling, Lion mentioned that "especially in the past, francophones had to fight for their rights and I think there's still that fear of losing them". Lion did not expand on when he learned about these rights but Cassiopée went into detail about how she learned about these events:

> In my four years at Collège Céphée, I never learnt about the Franco-Manitoban culture; their struggles, how they fought for their rights. I never learnt, we never learnt about any of that. I learnt all that from my Dad or speaking with other francophones. And I think there has to be more in the education system about that. Otherwise, people are ignorant to it. They don't understand how lucky they are to have that French school or why it's even necessary. I thought that was really bizarre that we didn't learn more about the history.

Cassiopée's words confirm the importance of educating the future generations about the Franco-Manitoban history.

The foundations of immersion

As mentioned in the literature review, the history of Canada's two official languages has impacted the educational system. For that reason, we have different types of schools in Manitoba. The participants in this study attended two of these different types of schools and commented on the differences and the similarities between the two. This first section will review the participants' impressions about the immersion schools they attended.

In general, the participants felt that the goal of an immersion school was to learn French by taking all their courses in French and essentially being immersed in the language. Lion remembers the general philosophy of the school to be "let's reward the students and be happy that they're speaking French. We were told please don't speak English but it was always promoting the French". Capricorne remembers a similar sort of philosophy, "at recess, it was English. And I know that I think they encouraged you to speak French but a lot of the kids couldn't

even speak French". Evidently, Capricorne felt there was a mismatch between what was desired of the students and what they could actually do. Cassiopée also commented on the fact that the goal of her immersion school was for the students to learn French. However, she makes a distinction with regards to the different context in which French immersion students learnt compared to French-language students, "it's a school filled with anglophones. French isn't their first language. So there's a sense of learning French, but it's definitely not their identity." Although Cassiopée did feel they learned much about the Franco-Manitoban culture at her immersion school, she was happy with the quality of French that she learned throughout her years at her single track elementary school.

Lion also had positive memories about learning French and also about the quality of education in general at his single track elementary school. He felt that the knowledge and language skills he gained were what enabled him to succeed in his French-language high school. Lion did not have trouble adjusting to his French class at the French-language school because he "had learnt a lot of grammar throughout the immersion because they really focused on that because it's not something that comes natural. That's one of those big things in immersion is that they teach you the foundations".

However, Capricorne's experience was not as positive as the other participants. In fact, the reason why she left the school was because her parents felt the quality of education was substandard. She remarked specifically on the quality of the teachers, "a lot of them couldn't really speak French all that well. It

was just shocking to be honest with you." Her school experience coupled with her nephew's experience has led her to question the quality of French immersion schools in general:

> I have a nephew who went to French immersion all of his life, I've never heard him speak French. That just goes to show you, that's scary. So, I don't know, is it worth it? Okay so they can understand it, but what's the quality of their education if they've gone through 12 years of immersion schooling and they can't even speak it?

Capricorne's comment reflects some of the literature that indicates that French immersion students often lack confidence in speaking the language (Roy, 2008; Swain, 2000). However, it's important to note that the quality of education and teachers are specific to each school and that this can vary. It is important to avoid generalizations about the French immersion program, especially since the other participants felt they had had a positive immersion.

Although it is true that Capricorne and Lion commented positively about their French immersion experience, all their comments were related to their elementary school experience. Both Lion and Capricorne went to a single track elementary school. When they transferred to the French immersion dual track high school, they both had a similar negative experience which made them question the success of the dual track model. Lion felt that "the problem was it was a dual track school, you didn't even have the option to really speak French once you left class". This was in strong contrast to his elementary school where all the staff spoke French, inside and outside of class. In this passage, Cassiopée explains her opinion about the dual track model based on her experience:

> I wasn't satisfied with the level of French at the dual track high school. I guess with the elementary single track school was good quality French but the high

school was dual track so I wasn't satisfied. I wasn't getting any better at French. If you're going to be doing French, might as well be doing it well. I don't think dual track works. I think if you're going to have a French immersion program, make it French immersion. That way you can make an environment where you're immersed in French, right? It just seemed counterproductive.

Both Cassiopée and Lion voiced their concerns about the dual track model where they found it was very difficult to support French-language acquisition because the French environment existed only in their classrooms.

In contrast with all the participants, my experience differs because I attended a dual track rather than a single track elementary school. However, I tend to agree with Lion and Cassiopée's concerns with regards to the dual track model. I remember in my dual track elementary school there was a clear separation between the English side and the French side; the school was physically separated. There was certainly a sense of competition. The immersion students felt they were better than the English ones. The French section of the school even had the luxury of air-conditioning whereas the English wing did not. The challenge with a dual track school, even when the programs are physically separated, is that those programs belong to one school with one particular mission. In my experience, all the assemblies, divisional activities and sports were in English. My music class was in English and even though the gym teacher was francophone, my gym class in grade 8 was in English because we were combined with the English students to facilitate programming. If immersion, as Heller (2001) mentioned, was supposed to bring about unity between Canadian anglophones and francophones, I question whether the dual track model is actually helping that relationship.

Another element mentioned in the literature was the perception that French immersion schools were elitist in the past (Dagenais & Berron, 2001). Cassiopée commented on this tendency, "by the time you hit grade 3, if there was any kind of troubled kids, dysfunctional families, it was a bit too hard to do the immersion so they would switch over to the English schools". She noticed the same phenomenon in her French immersion dual track high school, "you could tell within the dual track system though the kids that were working harder and getting better marks and really succeeding and going somewhere in general tended to be from the immersion side". As indicated by Dagenais & Berron (2001), this tendency has begun to change and French immersion schools are now catering to a diverse population of students. Moreover, this tendency was not mentioned by the other participants which perhaps supports the current findings that indicate that French immersion is no longer an elitist program.

The French-language school culture

A strong similarity that all the participants found between the French immersion and French-language schools was that they had a common purpose: French. This encouragement and support of the French language was seen through the staff who promoted the use of French in both types of schools and in the courses that they took which were always in French. For the participants, however, the differences went a lot deeper than the programming. Firstly, the real difference they found was with respect to the French environment which created a tangible difference in the cultural identity of the students in the French-language school.

Capricorne explains how the French environment of French-langugae schools promotes the Franco-Manitoban identity, "culturally, I mean, there's a bit of a difference. Just being immersed in French, where everyone was a true francophone. So you'd go to their homes and their families spoke French." This difference was felt by Cassiopée as well and she explains in detail how the Franco-Manitoban culture was alive in the school:

> The people are francophone so their identity is wrapped around the French culture. As much as they try to give you the culture in immersion schools, in the DSFM it's there. So there's all the different activities, the *déjeuner aux crêpes*, *festival, banquet de Noël*, there's all these different things and you have all the different generations. *Les grand-mères*, *les petits-enfants*, everyone's speaking in French. So I think that's one of the main differences that you see is the identity.

This particular passage also highlights how language and culture go hand in hand because Cassiopée code-switches quite a bit when she describes the Franco-Manitoban culture. Lion also commented on the cultural identity of the school, "I think a big part of the French school division is that cultural aspect. When you're there, there is a different culture. And I think it's important that the division has a different culture because it's what makes it unique." Based on the comments by the participants, it is safe to say the French immersion and French-language programs are different in the fact that the DSFM contributes to the construction of the Franco-Manitoban identity in their students.

Capricorne also commented on the promotion of academic excellence she felt when she started attending the French-language school, "I was being more challenged. My marks weren't quite as high but I still had very high marks. But definitely I had to work a little harder". Nevertheless, in the same way that the participants had constructive criticism about the French immersion program, they

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also had interesting comments about their experience in the French-language schools. In particular, Cassiopée remembers being surprised that she was not being challenged in her French classes:

> I have to say that I was extremely disappointed with the quality of our French classes. In grade 9, we were coloring. We didn't practice much in terms of grammar. In grade 12, we watched a French movie that had no words. I don't know how you can expect to be producing good quality French-speaking graduates if you're not even teaching them the *base*.

Cassiopée maintained that the quality of French was the most important thing the DSFM had to work on. Although her experience in general was very positive, she still felt that improvement was required in that area. My personal experience tends to parallel Cassiopée's. I wouldn't say I was disappointed with my French classes, however, I remember finding it odd that we seemed to be more challenged in our English class than in our French class. For example, in grade 12, we were required to write an essay in English but not in French. Also, in grade 12, we had the choice of taking either the Literary or Comprehensive Focus course in English. However, in French, all the students took the same course. I remember feeling at the time that the same options should have at least been offered in French as well.

Another element that is worth mentioning is the message that Lion felt was being transmitted in his French-language school,

> When I was in the French school, because it was K-12, especially in the elementary, if they heard you speaking English, you were punished for it. You had to go and make an announcement and say, my name is ___ and I was speaking English in this class. From what I've heard from a lot of different French schools, it's don't speak English, English is bad and it's never thank-you for speaking French because it's looked at that everyone should be anyway, but it's not that way. It's kind of like if you tell somebody not to speak English, odds are they're going to speak English. Should teachers have to reward students for

speaking the language they're supposed to speak? Technically no. But, when in the school everyone is speaking English anyway, maybe you should.

I'm not sure if rewarding the students who speak in French in high school would improve the situation, however, I feel that the rhetoric needs to be changed, especially when one considers that 98.6% of Franco-Manitobans are bilingual and that one of the DSFM's goals is the mastery of English. Reprimanding the use of English by instilling fear and using humiliation tactics is not going to promote the use of the French language. In fact, these types of strategies are similar to the anti-francophone acts that circulated in the 80s (Corbett, 1990). In the same way, tactics like these can only serve to hurt the community. However, this is not to say that all French-language schools react to English in this way. It was simply something both Lion and I noticed. In her research, Gérin-Lajoie (2010) has also commented on how the use of English was being punished in Franco-Ontarian schools.

In the end, this review on the various schools that these participants attended demonstrates, as Lion stated, that "there is no perfect school". However, many of the positive points and constructive criticism warrant to be taken into consideration. These participants had a unique experience that enabled them to comment, based on personal experience, about the positive aspects and the areas that require improvement. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that personal experience is just that and is not representative of a general experience that a student should necessarily expect to have if they choose to register in either one of these educational programs in Manitoba.

<u>Power elements</u>

Ayant droit policies

All of the participants were affected by the policies that dictate who can or cannot attend a French-language school. Because I was *ayant droit*, I was not required to take an exam and neither was Capricorne. Capricorne believes, "the only reason I was able to go to Collège Piscis was because I was *ayant droit*, like my parents were francophones, there was that entitlement to a French education". In Capricorne's case, she was simply interviewed by the principal and, in my case, I was given a tour of the school by the guidance counsellor. The *ayant droit* policy ensures that francophones have the right to an education in French. In the following example, Lion questions whether or not this right should be exercised at any given time:

> One story that I sort of have is there were some people who moved onto my street when I was in third grade. They tried to get into the immersion school. They didn't know a word of French and they were told sorry, we can't catch you up from being that far behind in grade three. They went to the French school which was a couple of blocks away and it was sure come on right in, just because their parents spoke French.

It is clear that this is an interesting situation. Would it have been better to simply deny the right to French education to these *ayant droits* just because they arrived in grade three? In a minority context, situations like these are very complex because the parents themselves might have been denied the right to an education in French. This is perhaps the only way to start repairing and rebuilding the community through education. This example and the fact that Capricorne and I were able to attend our respective French-language schools demonstrate that

amendments are being made in order to undo the wrongs of the past, no matter how recent or old those wrongs.

When the prospective student cannot claim *ayant droit* status, another process is followed. The simple fact that another process is followed can give the impression that the *ayant droit* is a policy that promotes exclusivity in French-language schools. Arguably, without one such policy, French-language schools would have to accept a diverse body of students and would no longer be able to promote community values and language maintenance as they do presently. However, what bothered Lion with regards to the *ayant droit* policy was that he noticed inconsistencies in the way non-*ayant droits* enrolments were dealt with:

> One thing I've heard is that a lot of the policies, especially who gets into the schools, is up to the principal's discretion. You can go to one DSFM school and you can get in right away or you can go to another and be told you have to go through tests or you can go to another and be told right off the bat no.

It is important to note that non-*ayant droits* attending a French-language school are rare. This may explain why Lion noticed an inconsistency with regards to the way in which these situations were handled. When searching for participants for this study, I was only able to find four school shifters, one of whom I was not able to interview. This is not to say that these were the only ones but to simply say that there really are not that many. Moreover, Capricorne, Cassiopée and Lion were the only school shifters in their school over the four years that they attended that school. However, with such examples of success and a rising number of new immigrants arriving in Manitoba, the potential that more non-*ayant droits* will wish to attend French-language schools is certainly a possibility.

Although Cassiopée was required to write an entrance exam, she feels that writing an exam is a good way to ensure that the non-*ayant droit* student has an adequate level of French:

> Both of my parents were anglos, so I didn't have the *ayant droit* so I had to do the French entrance exam. But, I think it's really important in order to keep the quality of French at the schools. You need to have some kind of entrance criteria, otherwise you lose that. So, I think it's good to have a criteria.

Therefore, it seems necessary to allow those who are willing and able to attend French-language schools but at the same time to ensure that their enrolment will positively affect the school atmosphere by at least verifying competency levels with a French exam and an interview. Moreover, all non-*ayant droit* applications should be dealt with in the same way.

Official status of French in Manitoba

In the same way that the *ayant droit* policies impacted the school experience of the participants, so did the official status of the language granted by the B & B Commission. The official language policies made French-language schools possible and enabled the minority population to become the majority in their schools. By analyzing the official status of French in Manitoba, the participants spoke about how they viewed this status. For example, Cassiopée felt the official status "helps you in terms of getting funding and being recognized". As indicated by Landry et al. (2007b), recognition of the minority language from the greater community is important for the survival of that community. Moreover, government funds that support that status equally play a part in strengthening the community. In the same way, Lion felt that "being a French official minority group, it gives power in the way of certain laws and

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services that you're supposed to be guaranteed to have and gives you the grounds to fight for them". It is clear that the official status gives more weight to the community and strengthens it. The federal policy served to legitimize the minority language group in Manitoba.

Guaranteed services and funding are concrete examples of how the official status affects the community. Interestingly, the participants also spoke about the official status of French in the abstract. Cassiopée explains how having access to services and funding strengthens the community from within and reinforces a sense of belonging:

> It just helps if you have this sense of community. It allows you to, you're not an individual trying to pursue whatever your life goals are. You have a community behind you who's willing to help. Within the francophone community they've got all these different services set up for you, scholarships, bursaries, they have their own schools, they have their own programs, they have their own activities and events and parties. That's important for humans, to have a sense of belonging.

Capricorne also had an abstract appreciation of the official status of French. She felt it created "more of a consciousness that we want to protect our rights and protect the language. Maybe there's more pride". According to her, having the official status is just another reminder that the language is worth protecting. Capricorne remembers a time when shame was associated with the French language. Therefore, it seems that the official status recognizes the legitimacy of the French language. This recognition is perhaps in part responsible for the renewed sense of pride in the language that Capricorne felt in her francophone friends and family. The national promotion of bilingualism is another theme that resurfaced throughout the participants' comments.

Bilingualism, the national ideology

Bilingualism was seen in a very positive light by all of the participants. They felt that learning both languages was viewed as an opportunity and a way to represent that national ideology. Although not all Canadians are bilingual, the participants tended to define Canada as a bilingual nation. Another rationale that explains this national ideology can be linked to the history of Canada as Cassiopée shows in her comment, "you look at history and it's like this could have very well been a French country had the French won, so you keep both". No matter what the cause of this national ideology, it is clear that the participants of this study supported it. For example, Capricorne mentions, "we live in a bilingual nation and it definitely offers a lot more opportunities for our children. It's something to be proud of". She feels this sentiment of pride demonstrates a change in the way Manitobans and perhaps Canadians in general feel about the French language. Cassiopée certainly shows how positively she feels about the French language and how others around her feel as well:

> I've never met anyone who looks at me and says like oh that really sucks that you speak French, I feel really bad for you. How could it not be this great thing, right? I've never met anyone who's 20 and who's bilingual and regrets it. But, I've met a lot of 20-year-olds who regret not having learnt another language.

Perhaps one of the reasons Cassiopée and others have a positive attitude towards bilingualism lies in the advantages associated with being bilingual. Cassiopée expands on this idea in her next comment, "I think of all the opportunities I've had to travel, to make friends, to live in France and Québec, just because I speak French, why wouldn't you do that?". Although it is true that there are advantages associated with being bilingual, the participants only

mention the French-English form of bilingualism which represents the ideology of

their nation. This supports Heller's (2001) view that the only acceptable form of

bilingualism is "double monolingualism" (p. 48). In speaking about advantages for

bilinguals, Dagenais (2003) clarifies that there are economic advantages for

bilinguals in Canada, however, these advantages, at this moment, only apply to

English-French bilinguals.

> Drawing on census data…those who declare knowledge of both official languages have greater incomes than those who know only French or English. However, those who declare knowledge of two official languages plus a nonofficial language do not earn more…In other words, knowledge of more than one language is advantageous for people of Anglophone or Francophone heritage, but it is not helpful to those of other language origins" (p. 280).

In fact, Lion's positive view on bilingualism is presented in exactly that way, "if

you speak English great, if you speak French great, if you speak both even

better." In this comment, it is clear that the national ideology that promotes

French-English bilingualism affects the way Canadians feel about bilingualism.

This sentiment and also the positive experiences the participants have had

with bilingualism has led them to think about ways in which the education system

should support this. Lion believes in a form of mandatory French immersion for

all Canadians:

> I think it would be a great thing, across Canada, that from kindergarten till 12th grade you learn French that you're capable of at least holding a conversation, you don't have to be totally fluent and know every word. I don't really know if there's a disadvantage to knowing a second language.

Although Cassiopée did not specifically call for mandatory French immersion for

all Canadians, she believes education is the key to convincing anglophones of

the importance of learning French:

> I think helping anglophones realize that it's not a battle between the two but it's this wonderful choice and opportunity that from a very young age when the human brain is so eager to learn and malleable and full of this opportunity to make these new circuits to learn a new language. I think you're silly not to take that opportunity. And I think the more awareness that comes out about that the better. I think immersion schools should be busting at the seams, really.

All the participants said without a doubt that they were bilingual and that they all supported the national ideology of bilingualism as was clear in their comments. It seems as though being bilingual is an important facet of their identity.

Individual agency

Linguistic identity choice

According to Bucholtz and Hall (2005), identity is a form of categorization; this categorization can be intentional or made up of others' perceptions. In the literature review, linguistic identity was defined as dynamic (Dubé, 2009) and was shown to develop through socialization (Gérin-Lajoie, et al., 2002). To combine these two ideas, linguistic identity is a form of categorization that can change over time and that develops in a social situation. The difference between linguistic identity and ethnic identity, for example, is that linguistic identity is more invisible. You will not be able to determine whether someone speaks English or French simply by looking at them. Also, a person can also have more than one linguistic identity. Therefore, bilinguals have the choice between two linguistic identities and sometimes they are attributed a specific linguistic identity.

Gérin-Lajoie's (2001) study on Franco-Ontarians showed that they had more of a tendency to define themselves as bilingual because it was an identity term that seemed to fit their situation well. Makropoulos (2010) showed that the bilingual identity was also popular with French immersion students. My

participants did not choose the "bilingual" identity even though that is a part of who they are. They defined themselves as Franco-Manitobans. This is perhaps a unique characteristic of the participants or perhaps of Franco-Manitobans in general. However, determining whether this is a tendency among Franco-Manitobans will require more research. A way of explaining this situation might be that being Franco-Manitoban generally means you can speak English as well. Cassiopée alluded to this when she noted that if she had children and spoke to them in French, they would learn English anyway "we don't have a choice for that one, we live in an English society".

Belonging to the Franco-Manitoban community is a source of pride for Capricorne: "I definitely would define myself as *franco-manitobaine* and why just because I am proud. So definitely *franco-manitobaine*. Not just Manitoban, *franco-manitobaine*". Cassiopée also demonstrated a sense of belonging to the Franco-Manitoban community when she stated "I identify myself as *franco-manitobaine*". This definition does not seem to take away from the fact that they are bilingual it just simply reinforces the French part of who they are. Although Lion also defines himself as Franco-Manitoban, he demonstrated a sort of ambivalence in defining himself that way, "maybe *franco-manitobain*, but again I just like being me". Clark (2007) explains that it is common for individuals in minority contexts to be unsure of their identity or to have hybrid identities, "many individuals find themselves in perpetual tension between self-chosen identities and others' attempts to position them differently" (p. 97). Lion seems to explore

this difference between a chosen identity and an identity that is given to him by others:

> By definition I'm technically not a francophone because I was only in a French school for three and a half years and not the four. But, I've never really thought of myself as an anglophone, but I've never really thought of myself as a francophone, so I'm kind of just in the middle somewhere.

It's interesting that Lion refers to the *ayant droit* policy when speaking about who counts as a francophone. This demonstrates that school policies have an impact on the community. When asked to describe what it means to be a francophone, Lion again referenced the *ayant droit* policy, as if *ayant droit* was synonymous with francophone or Franco-Manitoban, "francophone, for me, personally it's anyone who speaks French, has a love for the language or the culture. Here, it's somebody who has a parent or a grandparent who speaks French or has learnt it for four years". The other participants had a tendency to reference a specific culture or heritage that represented their linguistic identities. For example, Cassiopée defines Franco-Manitoban as "someone who's French-speaking from Manitoba and from French culture". Capricorne also mentions a similar idea, "francophone is also a pride, like being proud of your French heritage." Therefore, the French language is not the only characteristic that makes someone Franco-Manitoban.

The term Franco-Manitoban serves as a form of intergroup categorization. This identity term distinguishes Franco-Manitobans from other Manitobans, but it also territorializes their identity in order to indicate a difference between them and other francophones. Cassiopée highlights this idea when she speaks about the Quebeckers:

> *Les québécois*, they don't even know there are French people outside of their province sometimes, you know, they're surprised. You'll meet a québecois and you speak to them in French and they'll, they get this really confused look. So, I think it's nice to have the term *franco-manitobain*.

In this sense the term Franco-Manitoban gives a certain legitimacy to the group even if it is situated outside Québec.

However, Lion argues that making distinctions between different types of francophones is a form of categorization that should be avoided. He proves his point by speaking about the Francophile identity:

> Francophile, to me, it's a term used by francophones to classify immersion students in a different category. Coming from an immersion school, we had never really heard of it. It was something that I was exposed to once I was out of the immersion environment and in the francophone environment because I was a Francophile and not a francophone because I learnt French and wasn't raised that way.

Considering that immersion students are unaware that they are being categorized as Francophiles, which is a fact Cassiopée also mentioned in her interview, it might not be a linguistic identity term they would choose for themselves. This is exactly the point Lion makes with regards to linguistic identity, one should be able to choose one's own identity rather than have it imposed:

> I think the most important thing it's something that you should self-identify with and not necessarily something that you should be told. It shouldn't be up to anyone to tell me which one I am. So if somebody from an immersion school feels that they're francophone, then let them feel that way.

In the same way that the Franco-Manitoban identity was developed within the community and was the community's choice, I would argue that French

immersion students should also have the right to create their own identity or to choose their own if they so wish.

To conclude, it seems important to look at the way Cassiopée defines not only her experience as a school shifter but also her shift in identity as a result of her school experience:

> I guess when I went to École Girafe it made me French-speaking but I guess once I switched to Collège Céphée it made me francophone. So that's a big difference, you go from someone who speaks French to someone who is French which is a big shift. All of a sudden you're connected to this whole other world, starting in your community and it goes all the way to French-speaking Canada. It's given me this whole other life really.

The immersion accent

Although the participants of this study choose to identify themselves as Franco-Manitobans, they remember feeling very different when they first arrived at their respective high schools. In some cases, this difference was the accent they had when they spoke French or it was simply the other students knowing that they came from an immersion school. In particular, Capricorne remembers "being nervous and self-conscious and everybody knowing that I was from an immersion school and you know having doubts about the words I was using." Doubting their French language skills, especially oral skills, was a common similarity between all the participants. Cassiopée describes how she felt self-conscious and different from the other students:

> The thing about being different, because you're an anglophone right, so you sound different, you speak different. I had the immersion accent. And it was also not knowing when to say *le ou la*, you know. My biggest fear was presentations.

Lion expands on how he feels this "immersion accent" is perceived by the francophone community:

When immersion schools do plays, some French students or adults will laugh at the accent. And I find it interesting and unfortunate because if you don't have those people with the different accents around you, you don't even notice that you speak differently because in your head you're saying everything the same way as someone else. And you only learn that accent by having the people around you.

Capricorne, as well, remembers fearing oral activities and being self-conscious about her French-language skills:

I always second-guessed myself. When you don't speak it all the time, it doesn't flow as naturally. So that was probably the biggest thing, having to read in front of the class or to speak to my friends' parents in French. I had to work a little harder. Definitely, it didn't come quite as naturally.

This passage clearly demonstrates that Capricorne felt she lacked fluency and accuracy in French, which was also another common element among all of the participants. The accent or questioning of their French-language skills was an important aspect of their experience because it was what set them apart from the other students. It also reflects Hallion Bres & Lenz's (2009) study on French immersion students that indicated that they felt they lacked fluency.

Interestingly enough, although both Capricorne and Lion admitted that they had an English accent when they started high school, they both lost it by the time they graduated. Lion explains how this process occurred:

I felt that I became more fluent and more comfortable speaking it because I lost some of that say English accent and just certain things changed because all my teachers, all my friends had that French accent, so it changed in that way. So I think like fluency, definitely it helped, like the way I said things, it helped being in the school. I don't think it's really necessarily because of the classes but more so because of the people I was around, the teachers, the other students, the principal, going to the different events division-wide.

Lion's passage demonstrates that an accent and fluency in general are learned through participating in activities, sometimes outside of the school. It also shows

how key the French environment is for developing fluency in the language.

Participating in activities also requires students to use their language skills

outside the context of the classroom which assists in developing new vocabulary

and fluency. Cassiopée comments on how participating in activities gives you

more confidence and allows you to practice more as a result. In particular, she

felt that her exchange trip to Québec was the boost of confidence she needed to

start participating more in school activities:

> So, being immersed in Québec for a month that really helped. When I came back I felt a bit more comfortable, it was a bit easier. By grade 11, I was doing presentations, I was the *maître de cérémonie* for the *Boîte à chansons*. In grade 9, I never would have done that, because I felt different. I think there was definitely an improvement and I became more comfortable and when you become more comfortable you practice more so you improve more.

In the same way that Capricorne made an effort to participate in school

activities, Lion also mentioned being actively involved in extra-curricular activities.

Capricorne also participated in activities outside the school, such as "being in *les*

guides and we always went to church in French". When asked if they felt their

French had improved over the four years in which they had attended the French-

language school, all the participants responded yes. However, when asked to

describe what they felt caused that improvement they mentioned the activities

listed above and simply an exposure to a French environment. Therefore, having

the opportunity to participate in activities in French in and outside the school

setting also played an important role in the fluency development of the

participants of this study. Moreover, this French environment was one where

French was the majority language. The French language was honoured simply

because the students and teachers used it in a wide variety of contexts. Thus,

the French majority environment also contributes to a positive association with the language and a pride in its identity.

<u>Making new friends</u>

Although the literature review did not mention friends as being an important aspect of the participants' experience, it was certainly an emergent theme of this study. In fact, making new friends seemed to have an impact on all the other themes mentioned above. When the participants made new friends in high school, they were exposed to French-speaking families and culture, they learned more about the history and about the rights francophones were guaranteed because of their official status. Learning through their friends became the first step towards becoming francophone. Through their friendships, they were introduced or reintroduced to a possible identity, the Franco-Manitoban identity, that they all ended up acquiring. Once they had made those friends, it became a cause and effect relationship. They participated more in school and extra-curricular activities, they met new people and they improved their fluency in French as a result.

Hamm and Faircloth (2005) conducted a study on how friendships in high school impacted the students' sense of belonging to that school. "Through rich interactions with friends, adolescents derive a sense of companionship, which renders shared activities highly enjoyable and promotes feelings of inclusion" (p. 63). It is clear that Cassiopée felt that participating in activities helped her to meet friends which ultimately ended up improving her fluency as well. Cassiopée describes how this happened, "I think I got into *impro* (improvisation), I think I just

started doing things. Just kind of to get into the groups. A huge accomplishment was making the friendships then that I still have now". MacIntyre, Baker, Clément & Conrod (2001) confirm that "social support, especially from friends, [is] associated with higher levels of willingness to communicate outside of the classroom" (p. 369-370). Thus, if supported, the school shifter will be more willing to communicate in his or her second language which will in turn positively impact his or her fluency.

Hamm and Faircloth (2005) remarked in particular how a transition, such as going to high school, impacted the students. They "felt disconnected earlier in their school experiences but had found a sense of school belonging once they located friends" (p. 69). All of my participants described a sense of fear when they started high school, in particular with regards to making friends. Lion describes this fear:

> I also had the general fear of I don't know anyone there, like, the first day of school half way through the year, everyone already has all of their friends and I'm just going to be jumping in. As I got more and more involved and started meeting people, I guess I felt more independent in the school. I definitely integrated well, I thought it was good.

Notably, both Cassiopée and Lion's fears about making new friends seemed to be intensified simply because they didn't start at the beginning of the year with everyone else. Cassiopée mentions how she felt throughout her school shifting experience, "I think the first like year or year and a half were hard. Everyone was welcoming and nice but it's not the same. They had been friends since kindergarten and I was the new girl." Capricorne as well speaks to the difficulty of

her transition but how it was made easier for her because she had already met some of her classmates in the community before starting high school:

> I had a lot of French friends, or I knew them, they were acquaintances. So it wasn't that drastic of a change, but it still was a tough transition. But, it was exciting at the same time, it was new friends. In terms of accomplishments it was just maybe incorporating myself into the activities and making new friends, it was probably more of a social thing.

Throughout the description of this unique experience that all the school shifters had, the friends they met, and still have, were a common source of happiness.

Making new friends at this point in their life might have impacted their identity choice. French, Seidman, Allen & Aber (2006) are developmental psychologists who researched the transition to high school and its impact on the development of an ethnic identity. They felt the transition to high school "served as an encounter, that is, an event to stimulate one to think about what it means to be a member of his or her racial or ethnic group" (p. 3). I would argue that because the participants shifted from one type of educational program to another during this transition, they might have thought even more about their linguistic identity than others. By the end of high school, all the participants made the conscious decision to identify themselves with the Franco-Manitoban community. This may have been greatly influenced by their friendship groups. In fact, Cassiopée mentions how her high school friends have had a very positive impact on her:

> So I always think of my, the group of girl friends that I graduated with, there were eight of us. We've all gone on to be very successful in our lives, not just professionally, but in our personal lives, we've travelled. And it's funny because it's like we feed off of each other from our successes and we inspire each other.

Making new friends is not only an important part of high school and adolescent development, it can also have an impact on a person's future, especially if those friendships are maintained. Moreover, friendships made in high school can be an important link back to the French language and the Franco-Manitoban culture even years later simply because it was something all the students shared.

"*Change de ciel, tu changeras d'étoile*" (*Proverbe corse/*Corsican proverb)

Chapter VI: Conclusion

In conducting this research, the themes which emerged showed that the participants' school experience enabled them to comment on their local context, the social practices, the power elements and the individual agency that was involved in each one of their experiences. They also highlighted the fact that making new friends was an important aspect of their school experience. I would now like to comment on areas of the current educational system in Manitoba that require work, as they were important aspects of this project.

Firstly, it was shown that the French environment in which the students participated during their experience in the French-language schools helped to improve their fluency. With that in mind, it is clear to me that the DSFM has to continuously work to maintain and promote that French atmosphere as it greatly impacts their student population. In that same vein, French immersion programs should strive to create as much of a French environment as possible in order for the students' language skills to be used and perfected within and outside of the class. In general, the participants critiqued the dual track program for not being able to promote a French environment. One reason that there are not more single track immersion programs may be simply that the number of students does not warrant them. However, if dual track programs want to truly promote the French language, they need to immerse the students as much as possible in the language by ensuring that all the staff speak French and that extra-curricular activities are conducted in French.

Another aspect that I believe would be important for French immersion and French-language schools to consider is the punishment of the use of English. It is clear that it is important, in order to maintain a French environment, that the students speak the language. However, humiliation tactics and punishment do not seem to have been effective. I would call for a change in the negative message students are receiving. The message should simply be "speak in French" rather than "Don't speak English", as this places the languages in a juxtaposition against one another. Considering that we cannot avoid the fact that even French-language students are mostly bilingual in a minority context, I think that the way the English language is dealt with has to change. The message we should transmit to all students, French immersion and French-language students, should be "Let's speak in French because…" Teachers and staff should reflect on why they speak the language and share that with their students. The participants mentioned many advantages of speaking French, such as being able to travel and to participate in the local Franco-Manitoban community.

With regards to the social practices, Cassiopée mentioned the importance of teaching DSFM students about the history of the community and explaining to them the reason why they have the right to education in French. As time goes by, more and more students may be unaware of the struggles the Franco-Manitoban community underwent in order to ensure that future generations would have the language rights that they did not. I strongly believe that this is an important aspect of the Franco-Manitoban culture and history and that they should be taught, for example in the form of a history course. At this point, I would like to

mention an interesting project that was done in an elementary school of the DSFM in 2012 to celebrate the history of the community. The school chose the theme of Franco-Manitoban history for their annual concert. Each grade was responsible for presenting a year or an important event that occurred throughout the history. This is an example of a project that I believe is relevant and necessary. Moreover, it demonstrates that even elementary school children can be exposed to such complex subjects as the history of the Franco-Manitoban culture. I would call for similar such projects in all of the schools of the DSFM.

As was also discussed by the participants, it seemed as though each school had a different way of processing non-*ayant droit* applications. I would call for there to be more consistency and transparency with regards to this process. However, it is important to mention that while I was conducting this research, the DSFM released in 2012 a policy with regards to non-*ayant droit* applicants. According to the policy (see Appendix 4), all DSFM schools are required to accept children whose parents are non-*ayant droits* providing the applicants submit a written request for admission to the school. In these cases, the principal is required to evaluate the student's linguistic and academic abilities. The applicant's parents must also promote the French language and culture in their home. As well, the division has the right to create an Admissions Committee to evaluate the applicant. I believe that this policy will ensure more consistency in the sense that all schools may at least accept non-*ayant droit* applicants. However, the policy does not clearly describe how the applicant will be evaluated. It does not describe how linguistic and academic ability will be

measured. Are the applicant's abilities compared to the norm of the DSFM

student population? How does a student pass such tests? Does each school

develop their own test? Would current DSFM students have to pass these tests?

Finally, how does one go about evaluating a non-*ayant droit* parent's ability to

promote to the French language in their home? All these questions demonstrate

that this policy is a step in the right direction but that to ensure true consistency,

more work needs to be done to develop fair and consistent assessment tools.

Implications for Research

One of the most rewarding aspects of conducting this research was to

hear from my participants that they thought the research subject was important.

In writing this thesis, I feel that I created a space for voices that otherwise might

never have been heard (Hutchinson, Wilson & Wilson, 1994). This leads me to

reflect on other research that should be conducted not only for the sake of filling

a gap in literature but to give back to the participants: essentially, for someone to

say that their experience is important. Muncey (2005) agrees that this type of

research can empower minority groups and should be conducted.

This research looked at school shifters' experience after it had occurred in

order for them to be able to reflect on how this experience impacted them.

However, it would be equally important to research current school shifters to see

how they are feeling about their transition. The other forms of school shifters

would be equally important to research as their experience would offer even

more information. For example, students who left a French-language school to

attend a French immersion or an English-language school might also have experienced a change in identity.

This study focused on students who shifted schools at the high school level. In the interest of language and identity acquisition, it would be motivating to study non-*ayant droit* and *ayant droit* students who start kindergarten at a French-language school but who have not yet acquired the French language. In these cases, the French-language school immerses those children in the language. What then are the differences and similarities between a kindergarten French-language class and a French immersion one? This study and others might be able to determine whether or not the age of the child makes a difference in language and identity acquisition. Moreover, it would be interesting to look at how personality traits, motivation, anxiety, "willingness to communicate" (MacIntyre et al., 2001, p. 369) and cognitive ability impact the transition and whether or not certain traits are more important in young children or in older school shifters.

Although this study explored the experience of school shifters, another group of people that should be researched are teachers. Ellis (1996) maintains that teachers are "model[s] of the language" and, as such, they are also cultural representatives (p. 213). That being said, how does a teacher's linguistic identity impact their students' identities? Considering that "learning and teaching occur simultaneously and mutually" (Noddings & Shore, 1998, p.158), what can we learn from the student-teacher relationship in French immersion and French-language schools? What have teachers learned about language and linguistic

identity from their students? Furthermore, are French immersion graduates teaching in French-language schools? If so, according to them, what are the differences and similarities between the two programs?

Another element not explored in this thesis that would be equally important to study is immigrant children who do not speak French as a first language who attend French-language schools. If they acquire the language and the identity of the Franco-Manitoban community, do they choose this language and identity over their home language? Is it beneficial for immigrant children who speak a language other than French or English to attend a French-language school? Does attending a French-language school assist in language maintenance of languages other than French simply because the children are less exposed to the majority language? Considering that the student population in French-language schools is changing, or will change due to the new non-*ayant droit* policies, these are important questions to research.

Moreover, current French-language and French immersion students should be asked questions about identity, language and their perceptions of the similarities and the differences between the two educational programs. In the end, the common goal of both these educational programs is the French language and they both contribute to ethnolinguistic vitality of French in Manitoba. Do immersion and French-language students learn about assimilation and the factors that contribute to the ethnolinguistic vitality of a language? Are they ever made aware of the important role they play in language maintenance? I believe that more research involving students would bring about a better

understanding of the two educational programs and their role in society. Perhaps, such research would also permit the two programs to build on their positive similarities and to work together more often. Along that same line, current teachers, pre-service teachers, parents and community members should also be given the opportunity to speak about what they perceive are the differences and similarities between the two educational programs. Such information would be able to inform changes to the programs and to the way they are being marketed.

Although any one of these research topics could be conducted anywhere in Canada or elsewhere for that matter, it is important to research the social, historical and local contexts in which these programs exist especially when the research is conducted with minority language speakers. If I did not have personal experience and had not researched the social, historical and local contexts, the meaning of my participants' words might have been lost. For example, in looking at the case of immigrant minority language speakers in Europe we can see differences and similarities between French speakers in Manitoba:

> In the case of majority language speakers, language transmission at home and at school are commonly taken for granted…In the case of immigrant minority language speakers, there is usually a mismatch between the language of the home and the language of the school. Whether parents in such a context continue to transmit their language to their children is strongly dependent on the degree to which these parents, or the immigrant minority group to which they belong, conceive of this language as a core value of cultural identity (Extra & Kutlay, 2004).

French speakers in Manitoba are similar to the immigrant minority language speakers in Europe in the sense that they also are faced with the task of transmitting the language or not to their children. English speakers in Manitoba are also similar to the majority language speakers in Europe because they

generally take language transmission for granted. However, most Franco-Manitobans are not immigrants and there does not have to be a difference between the language of the school and the language of the home. Thus, language acquisition and transmission are different and influenced by different factors. Therefore, when conducting research, we can make comparisons only if the social, historical and local contexts in which a language exists are understood.

Although I could end this thesis by exposing the declining rates of francophones in Manitoba, or by critiquing the French-language skills of French-language and French immersion graduates, or by exploring students' negative attitudes toward the French language, I choose otherwise. I choose to end with hope; hope that there will be more school shifters like the ones in this thesis who have added themselves to the number of Franco-Manitobans, hope that all *ayant droits* are given the chance to learn the language and hope that the educational system and the people I know will ensure that there will always be a Franco-Manitoban school division because there will always be Franco-Manitobans.

"*L'espoir fait vivre*" *(Proverbe français*/French proverb).

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Request for Participants/Demande de participants

My name is Gail Cormier and I am Master's of Education student at the University of Manitoba. I am studying the experience of people who have transferred from a French immersion to a French-language school (DSFM) for their secondary education. I am presently looking for individuals who would be willing to be interviewed for this research project.

In order to participate in this study you must; (1) have transferred from a French immersion to a French-language (DSFM) school at the secondary level in Manitoba; (2) be willing to speak about your experience; (3) be available and willing to participate in two to three interviews lasting no more than one hour each; (4) be 18 years of age or older.

If you fit this criteria and are willing to participate or would like more information about the study, please contact Gail Cormier at …

Je m'appelle Gail Cormier et je suis étudiante de Maîtrise en éducation de l'Université du Manitoba. J'étudie l'expérience de personnes qui auraient transféré d'une école d'immersion à une école francophone au niveau secondaire. Je suis présentement à la recherche d'individus qui voudraient participer à une entrevue aux fins de cette recherche.

Afin de participer à cette recherche, vous devez; (1) avoir transféré d'une école d'immersion à une école francophone au niveau secondaire au Manitoba; (2) vouloir parler de votre expérience; (3) pouvoir participer à 2 ou 3 entrevues qui ne dureront pas plus d'une heure chacune; (4) avoir 18 ans ou plus.

Si vous répondez à ces critères et vous voulez participer à cette recherche ou si vous voulez plus d'information au sujet de cette étude, svp contacter Gail Cormier ….

Appendix 2 : First interview questions

Interview Questions
Questions (sub-question 1)
1. Describe your family as you were growing up. What were the languages spoken by your parents and in your home? What were the languages spoken by your extended family?
2. Describe the community that you lived in; your friends, their parents. What were the languages spoken outside your household?
3. Describe some of your close friends growing up. What were their families like? What languages were spoken in their households? (in both schools)
4. Explain why your parents chose the elementary school that they did for you? If you have any siblings, was this choice different for them and why?
5. When you were going to school, in both schools, what were the other students' families like? To your knowledge, what were the languages spoken at home, religion and cultures practiced?
Questions (sub-questions 2 and 3)
1. Explain why you or your parents decided to change educational programs for your secondary education?
2. Can you remember how those around you felt about your decision to change schools?
3. In your experience, what were the similarities and the differences between the French immersion and the French-language schools you attended?
4. What were some, if any, of your fears in changing schools?
5. After changing schools, what were some of your first accomplishments?
6. At any time, did you regret your decision to change schools? Why or why not?
7. How would you define your own bilingualism and that of your family members?
8. What do you see for the future of French in Manitoba?
9. If you choose to have children, what languages will you speak to them and why?
Questions (sub-question 4)
1. How do you see the relationship between Francophones and Anglophones in Manitoba? What do you believe are the causes of this relationship?

2. How would you explain the term *ayant-droit*? How has this term impacted your life?
3. What do you think about the policies related to who has the right to attend French-language schools?
Questions (sub-question 5)
1. What are the differences and the similarities between the following terms, according to you: *Québécois, Canadien-Français, Francophone, Francophone de souche, Francophile, Franco-manitobain*?
2. How would you identify yourself and why?
3. How do you think your classmates saw these terms? Were they aware of them? (in the two different schools)
4. What were some of your first memories or experiences with French?
5. In what ways has your school experience impacted your identity?

Appendix 3: Second interview questions

Second interview questions
1. Did you feel that your French improved over the course of the four years at the new school? If so, what caused this improvement?
2. A unique similarity between all the participants was that they were all the oldest child of his or her family and their younger siblings did not switch schools as they had done. Do you think a person who considers a switch like yours needs to have certain characteristics in order to succeed?
3. What are the characteristics of an official minority community, specifically the francophone community in Manitoba?

ADM-03

DIRECTIVE : Admission des enfants dont les parents sont non ayants droit

SECTION : Administration

La Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM) assure l'épanouissement de chaque apprenante et apprenant dans une perspective d'inclusion et de respect au profit de la communauté franco-manitobaine d'aujourd'hui et de demain.

OBJET

La présente directive découle de la mise en œuvre de la limite de la direction générale 3.3 traitement des parents et des élèves et cette limite fait l'objet d'un rapport annuel de monitoring.

La DSFM veut s'assurer de bien remplir le mandat qui lui est conféré par la *Loi sur les écoles publiques du Manitoba* et par l'article 23 de la *Charte canadienne des droits et libertés* en offrant une éducation française de qualité à tous ceux qui y ont droit. Dans l'esprit de l'article 23 de la *Charte*, qui est d'assurer la vitalité des communautés francophones en milieu minoritaire, la DSFM accepte d'admettre aussi des élèves dont les parents sont non ayants droit.

DESTINATAIRES

Le chapitre 33 de la loi modifiant la *Loi sur les écoles publiques* accorde, aux citoyens suivants, le droit à une éducation en français au sein de la DSFM :

21.1 *ayant droit*
a. résident du Manitoba dont la première langue qu'il a apprise et qu'il comprend encore est le français;

b. Citoyen canadien qui réside au Manitoba et qui a reçu au moins quatre ans d'enseignement scolaire au niveau élémentaire dans le cadre d'un programme français au Canada ou;

c. Citoyen canadien qui réside au Manitoba et qui est le père ou la mère d'un enfant qui reçoit de l'enseignement scolaire au niveau élémentaire ou secondaire dans le cadre d'un programme français au
Canada ou qui a reçu un tel enseignement pendant au moins quatre ans.

21.15 (5) La commission scolaire de langue française peut admettre tout autre enfant dont le père ou la mère lui ont présenté une demande écrite d'admission.

21.16 La commission scolaire de la langue française peut constituer un comité d'admission afin que celui-ci étudie l'admission d'enfants à des programmes qu'elle offre et lui fasse des recommandations.

MODALITÉS

1. L'admission des enfants dont les parents sont des non ayants droit et aussi non-résidents du
Manitoba se fera en conformité avec la directive administrative ADM-02 *Admission des élèves non-résidents du Manitoba*.

2. Les parents devront s'engager à promouvoir la langue et la culture françaises chez leurs enfants.

3. Les parents devront s'assurer que leurs enfants aient accès à des ressources pédagogiques françaises à l'extérieur de l'école.

4. Les parents devront reconnaître que le français est la langue de communication et de fonctionnement entre l'école et les parents.

5. La direction de l'école devra faire effectuer une évaluation des compétences linguistiques et académiques de l'élève.

6. La direction de l'école pourra recommander que l'élève participe à une programmation adaptée.

7. L'élève pourra être renvoyé de l'école et de la division par la direction générale si les parents et/ou l'élève manquent à leurs engagements.